

Kenyan Official Calls for Vote Probe

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NAIROBI, Jan. 3 - Kenya's attorney general on Thursday called for an independent group to verify the results of a recent presidential election, as protests over the outcome continued to roil the country.

In a televised address, Attorney General Amos Wako said that because of the violent clashes touched off by the vote "it is necessary . . . that a proper tally of the valid certificates returned and confirmed should be undertaken immediately on a priority basis by an agreed and independent person or body."

Wako's comments represent a departure from the stance of President Mwai Kibaki, whose re-election Dec. 27 was denounced by challenger Raila Odinga as a sham.

While Kibaki says the vote was fair, international observers said voting irregularities cast "serious doubt" on the results.

Odinga's party led the voting for parliamentary seats, and his narrow loss of the presidency angered supporters. Rioting and intertribal violence has claimed an estimated 300 lives in Kenya since then, including 17 people killed when a church sheltering members of Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe was [set ablaze in the village of Eldoret](#).

Protesters and police clashed in Nairobi Thursday after opposition groups threatened a mass demonstration. But the protest was called off in what an official with Odinga's party said was an effort to ease tension.

Officials with Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement said a rally would be held instead Jan. 8.

"We are a peaceful people who do not want violence," party leader William Ruto shouted to supporters on a Nairobi street, encouraging them to return home.

It was not immediately clear whether Wako, a Kibaki appointee, could order a review of the presidential vote on his own, or whether that would require the approval of the president, who has so far rejected widespread criticism of the election's conduct. It was also unclear whether Wako envisioned a review conducted by Kenyan officials or international experts.

With the economy at a standstill, U.S. and European officials were discussing how to restore calm to a country that had built a reputation for stability in recent years and avoided the type of tribal infighting damaging to other African nations.

In Brussels, a European Union spokeswoman said that E.U. foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spoke about the situation by phone on Thursday and agreed to push Kibaki and Odinga toward some sort of coalition government.

"They agreed the focus should be on pressing the parties to engage in dialogue and make every effort to agree on seeking to establish a coalition," the spokeswoman said, according to the Reuters news agency.

Schneider reported from Washington.

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