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Kenyan Opposition Calls for New Rallies and Sanctions

By [JEFFREY GETTLEMAN](#) and KENNEDY ABWAO

NAIROBI, [Kenya](#) — Kenya's opposition leaders on Friday called for three days of nationwide protests next week and urged foreign governments to impose sanctions over the country's flawed elections last month.

Opposition leaders vowed to hold "mass action" from Wednesday through next Friday, heightening the standoff with the government in a crisis that has pitted ethnic groups against one another and left hundreds dead.

Mediation efforts have so far failed, and ethnic tensions are continuing to rise in some parts of the country. Kenyans are getting worn down by the killings, destruction, travel restrictions and uncertainty. But the opposition and the government seem to be only hardening their positions. [Mwai Kibaki](#), the president, and [Raila Odinga](#), the top opposition leader, still have refused to meet.

"The Kibaki side does not want a just solution," Anyang Nyong'o, an opposition leader, said on Friday. "It is hellbent on clinging to power."

Alfred Mutua, a government spokesman, responded by saying that opposition leaders "have ashamed our country."

As for the opposition's call for a new election and a transitional government, Mr. Mutua said, "The president is not crazy; he is not nuts."

Opposition leaders say the government rigged the results from the Dec. 27 election.

Several election observers have said that although both sides were guilty of some fraud,

the government had raised final vote numbers to give itself a victory. The country's top election commissioner has said that he regrets certifying the election and now does not know who really won.

The result is that Kenya, a country that until last month was considered one of the most stable in Africa, is now steeped in turmoil. One of the most disturbing aspects is a burst of ethnic violence, fueled by longstanding tensions over access to power, wealth and land. More than 450 people have been killed, many hacked to death with machetes and stoned by mobs.

[Kofi Annan](#), the former [United Nations](#) secretary general, has agreed to lead a panel of African dignitaries to help find a political solution. He said Friday that “political negotiation is not an event, it is a process that can take a very long time, or a short time — all depends on the cooperation of the leaders,” Reuters reported.

Mr. Annan, who is from Ghana, is expected to arrive in Kenya soon, and opposition leaders here said the rallies next week would fortify “the mediation by involving the people.”

“Kofi Annan will see the message loud and clear,” Mr. Nyong’o said. He also called sanctions “necessary,” saying, “It would be irresponsible to trust such a government with resources, knowing it would be used to oppress the people.”

The government has banned all political rallies and live news media coverage of election-related events. Opposition leaders have called for the rallies to be peaceful, but most major protests have degenerated into bloodshed.

On Friday, the government urged people to stay away.

“The leaders calling on you as a Kenyan to take to the streets to burn shops and destroy property will not be with you or your family when you have no jobs anymore,” said a government statement. “They will be in their well-protected fortresses eating sumptuous meals and sending their children overseas to study.”

Jeffrey Gettleman reported from Nairobi, Kenya, and Graham Bowley from New York.

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