

Kenya: Stalled police reform is a risk to elections 30 January 2013 Amnesty International

Violence in the aftermath of the 2007 Kenyan elections which claimed 1,300 lives shows just how vital it is Kenyan police are properly prepared ahead of polls this March, Amnesty International said in a new report, *Police Reform in Kenya: "A Drop in the Ocean"*.

The report details how delays in implementing new laws on policing mean that many of the same police structures in place during 2007-8 post-election violence will be responsible for security for the 4 March vote.(...)

One government official told Amnesty International that new laws and equipment introduced since 2008 are just a "drop in the ocean".

The report documents continued human rights violations by the police, despite ongoing reform, including arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment.

The police have also failed to protect people from human rights abuses in the Tana Delta, where 200 people have been killed and 112,000 displaced since August 2012.

And there has been little movement towards bringing the police to account either collectively or individually for these human rights violations.

The report urges the authorities to take immediate steps to improve capacity so that security officials are able to prevent abuses, and ensure that they themselves refrain from human rights violations during the elections. (...)

After the elections, the newly inaugurated government should act swiftly to demonstrate its commitment to police reform, and address shortcomings which underpin impunity for police abuses.

This must include ensuring that all police bodies, including those responsible for standards, have the necessary funds to carry out their vital work.

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