



MEDIA RELEASE

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AFRICAN AUSTRALIANS CALL FOR URGENT KENYAN RESPONSE

Dr Berhan Ahmed, Chairperson of the African Think Tank, has called for Australia to join the international movement to end the escalating ethnic violence and burgeoning humanitarian crisis across the Republic of Kenya.

“Both the British and American Governments have already made official appeals for a halt to the violence, but strong international action is required if calm is to be restored and the principles of democracy upheld,” Dr Ahmed said today.

“The support of the Rudd government for UN intervention in Kenya is urgently needed to help prevent the potential for an even greater humanitarian crisis on the African continent.”

According to international reports, at least 300 deaths have already occurred in Kenya following December's disputed elections, including the horrific torching of a church in which up to 35 people died, many of them children.

“Kenya is far from wealthy, but has been a good world citizen by taking African refugees from conflicts in neighbouring countries. Refugees who were denied shelter in other countries,” Dr Ahmed added. “But the republic needs our help now.”

Austcare estimates Kenya's present refugee population to number 230,000.

“Kenya has earned the right to international support,” said Dr Berhan Ahmed, “It needs the intervention of neutral third parties, such as the UN, to prevent the entire peninsula descending into the throes of civil strife.”

“As we have seen too many times around the globe, delayed international intervention can lead to devastating consequences, not least the potential to create refugees of Kenyans themselves.”

“In the past, Australia has shown itself to be generous and compassionate in fulfilling its international obligations in response to world crises, but we must not be satisfied with simply offering assistance after the event. When it comes to potential human tragedies on a scale such as we are witnessing in Kenya, prevention is still the best cure we have.”

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