

Kenya's Opposition Switches Its Tactics From Street Protests to Business Boycotts

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Evelyn Hockstein for The New York Times

Mourners with the bodies of two people killed in Nairobi.

NAIROBI, [Kenya](#) — Protests cooled in Kenya on Friday as opposition leaders, still furious about last month's presidential election, announced that they were switching tactics from street demonstrations to boycotts.

After three days of nationwide rallies that degenerated into battles with police officers, the country was mostly calm, save for a few flash points. Witnesses said police officers shot and killed at least two people in Kibera, a huge slum on the outskirts of Nairobi, the capital. Earlier in the day, vandals uprooted a length of train tracks running through Kibera, where a freight train was looted Thursday.

In Narok, a town near the Masai Mara game reserve, ethnic clashes erupted with men battling in the streets, using bows and arrows and machetes. Witnesses said at least five people were killed, and a Kenyan television network showed images of men dancing around a body in Narok's downtown.

In Mombasa, Kenya's second-largest city and a major port for East Africa, hundreds of protesters emerged from mosques to call for a new election. Police officers responded with tear gas and gunshots. Witnesses said at least one person was killed, bringing the deaths from the week's disturbances to more than 20, including several children.

The zero-tolerance policy of the Kenyan police is drawing increasing criticism. Western diplomats in Nairobi have urged the government to allow peaceful rallies —currently banned — and to stop using lethal force against unarmed demonstrators.

Opposition leaders and their supporters have been protesting the elections in December in which [Mwai Kibaki](#), Kenya's president, was declared the winner by a narrow margin over [Raila Odinga](#), the top opposition leader, amid widespread evidence that election officials had tampered with results.

On Friday, a consortium of Kenyan election monitors and human rights groups announced that there had been so many glaring irregularities in the balloting that it was impossible to tell who had really won, a position echoed by American diplomats who have done their own analysis. The consortium issued a report called "Countdown to Deception: 30 Hours That Destroyed Kenya."

David Ndii, a researcher for the anticorruption group Transparency International, said that election officials had siphoned away votes for Mr. Odinga and increased the number of votes for Mr. Kibaki during the tallying process. "The suspicious votes are sufficient to alter the outcome of the presidential elections," Mr. Ndii said.

It is unclear how much impact this will have because Mr. Kibaki and his tight circle of advisers have insisted that the president won the election fairly and that there will be no rerun.

As for the boycotts, Salim Lone, a spokesman for Mr. Odinga, said the plan was to focus on businesses owned by Mr. Kibaki's allies, like one of Kenya's biggest dairies and a bus company in Nairobi. "The strategy is to weaken those who are hard-liners and using their wealth to undermine democracy," he said.

The government has said that Kenya's economy, which up until last month was the dynamo of East Africa, has been hurt enough. Tourists are leaving, much trade has been blocked and the currency is weakening. "Let us please leave private businesses out of politics," was the message that Alfred Mutua, a government spokesman, sent via cellphones on Friday.

Police officials on Friday arrested three foreign journalists, including a filmmaker following Mr. Odinga, on charges of terrorism after accusing them of filming vital installations.

Kennedy Abwao contributed reporting.

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