

## **Comment by UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Jeremy Laurence on Kenya protests**

Geneva, 14 July 2023

The UN Human Rights Office is very concerned by the widespread violence, and allegations of unnecessary or disproportionate use of force, including the use of firearms, by police during protests in Kenya. Reports say up to 23 people have been killed and dozens injured in the demonstrations in the past week.

We call for prompt, thorough, independent and transparent investigations into the deaths and injuries. Those responsible must be held to account. Effective measures to prevent further deaths and injuries must be adopted.

In light of calls for further protests next week, we call on the authorities to ensure the right to peaceful assembly as guaranteed by the Kenyan Constitution and international human rights law. The policing of protests must seek to facilitate peaceful assemblies, and any use of force must be guided by the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and non-discrimination. Firearms should never be used to disperse protests.

We appeal for calm and encourage open dialogue to address social, economic and political grievances, with the aim of identifying lasting solutions in the interest of all Kenyans.

ENDS