



## **Doubts about the credibility of presidential election results hamper Kenya's democratic progress**

**Nairobi, 1 January 2008** - The General Elections in the Republic of Kenya have fallen short of key international and regional standards for democratic elections. They were marred by a lack of transparency in the processing and tallying of presidential results, which raises concerns about the accuracy of the final result. On a more positive note, the parliamentary election broadly appears to have commanded greater confidence amongst Kenyan people.

*“On election day, voters turned out in large numbers and showed a genuine commitment to legitimate elections.”* said Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, Chief Observer for the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM). *“However, problems started after the close of polls. EU observers were turned away from tallying centres, particularly in Central province, without being given results and were denied access to the tallying room at Electoral Commission (ECK) headquarters on several occasions. In addition, EU observers reported tallying results from the Kieni and Molo constituencies which contained a significantly lower number of votes for one of the candidates than the ones announced at ECK headquarters in Nairobi. Lack of transparency as well as a number of verified irregularities therefore cast doubt on the accuracy of the result of the presidential election as announced by the ECK.”*

During the campaign period, freedom of speech in the media was generally respected. However, journalists were ejected from the Kenyatta International Conference Centre following the announcement of the presidential results and ordered to suspend all live broadcasts. This seriously infringes the right of the media to report without undue interference from the State.

*“The leadership of political parties must now take responsibility for keeping Kenya free from civil unrest”* said Graf Lambsdorff. *“We believe it is vital that an impartial investigation into the accuracy of the presidential results is conducted and the results from all polling stations are published to enable an independent audit to be carried out.”*

Up until the point of tabulation, the elections were competitive and generally well run. The campaign period was largely conducted in an open and free environment. However, the strong ethnic-political division between the camps of the two main presidential candidates led to a tense atmosphere in parts of the country and there were significant levels of ethnically based violence, both during the campaign period and after election day, leading to the deaths of a number of people.

There was also a trend of intimidation and violence directed against women throughout the electoral process, showing a lack of respect for the fundamental rights of women and minorities in Kenya, despite the presence of an active civil society. State resources were used for campaign purposes and state owned media was heavily biased in favour of PNU.

The EU EOM will remain in Kenya to observe the remainder of the electoral process and will issue a final report including recommendations for future elections in February.

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