

Kenyan opposition rallies called off

by UPI

NAIROBI, Kenya -- The leader of Kenya's main opposition party called off planned anti-government rallies Monday as post-election violence drove the death toll higher. Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement canceled the rallies planned for Tuesday as various reports placed the death toll anywhere from 350 to 1,000, various local media reported. Odinga claims vote-rigging allowed incumbent President Mwai Kibaki to remain in power, and violence swept the country after the Dec. 27 election results were announced. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes, and a group of about 100 armed men Sunday laid siege to a police compound in Cherangany where 3,000 people had taken refuge, The Nation newspaper reported from Nairobi. Two people were killed by gunfire along with five of the attackers, police said. Tuesday, the head of the African Union, Ghanaian President John Kufour was scheduled to arrive in Nairobi to spearhead mediation between the two parties. Other international attempts have been made by South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer.

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