UNITED NATIONS
PRESS STATEMENT
Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide
Friday, 24
th
 February 2023, Abuja, Nigeria.
Distinguished members of the press, Media representatives,
I thank you all for coming here today.
Tomorrow, Nigerians will be casting their vote, celebrating a democratic process that has seen,
since 1999, election results respected, demonstrating Nigerians’ commitment to democratic
values.
Since I arrived in Nigeria, I have met government officials, the National Peace Committee,
political, religious, and traditional leaders, women’s groups, youth, representatives of the civil
society, the diplomatic community, members of election observation missions, and presidential
candidates.
I wish to begin by acknowledging with respect the work done by all national authorities, and
notably the Independent National Electoral Commission towards holding free, fair, and
transparent elections, including by using innovation and technology.
I welcome the signing of the Peace Accord on Wednesday, 22 February 2023 as a commitment
to national unity and peaceful elections.
My job is to prevent genocide and related crimes. More specifically, I am charged with raising
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Early warning signs and risk factors include dissemination of hate speech and absence of
independent mechanisms to address it; politicization of identity; proliferation of local militias
and other armed groups; particularly dehumanizing types of violence inflicted upon civilians
based on their ethnicity, religion, race or nationality, intergroup tensions and attacks against
civilian populations, long-standing structural discrimination, deep economic inequalities and
social exclusion, and shrinking democratic and civic spaces among others. While elections are
not a risk factor, they have in some instances provided excuses for exacerbating tensions that
could lead to violence.
I should emphasize that my role as Under Secretary General and Special Adviser on the
Prevention of Genocide is not to decide whether Genocide, has taken place. This is the
responsibility of independent courts of justice that have the jurisdiction to make those
judgements. Our focus is on prevention of genocide and related crimes, detecting risk factors
with the objective of mitigating and deescalating them.
This mandate is global, meaning that my office looks at situations worldwide where there is a
risk that genocide and related crimes could occur. No part of the world is immune to the risk of
these crimes and indeed all societies have some indicators of risk. It is however often how

I also emphasize accou ntability for electoral related violence. Lack of accountability can b e

detrimental to making and sustaining peace. Peace and justice are not contradictions or mutually

exclusive categories. Accountabili ty constitutes a key component of peace.

Last year, my office convened traditional leaders from across the world here in Abuja to develop

a Plan of Acti on for Atrocity Preventi on. The drafting of this plan of action was led by traditi onal

leaders from Nigeria. The plan includes enhancing the engagement of my office with tradit ional

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