

For immediate release

Statement by Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on the worsening security situation in Nigeria

(New York, 2 February 2023) The United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, expresses her strongest condemnation of the air strike on 24 January 2023 resulting in the killing of reportedly at least 40 civilian herders predominantly from the ethnic Fulani community and the injuring of scores more in Rukubi village, at the border of Nasarawa and Benue States. Recalling another airstrike that in 2017 resulted in 54 civilian casualties in an IDP camp in Borno state, the Special Adviser is appalled that once again civilians are targeted in an indiscriminate manner in Nigeria. The Special Adviser urges the Nigerian authorities to ensure that counterterrorism operations are conducted in full respect of international human rights and humanitarian law and calls on the authorities to promptly fulfill their obligations to investigate the airstrike and hold accountable the perpetrators of this heinous attack, which could amount to serious violations and abuses of human rights.

-West and North Central regions of Nigeria, where the air attacks resulting in casualties from the Fulani community took place. These dynamics of targeting communities along identity lines, if unaddressed, risk further fueling intercommunal tensions, recruitment by armed groups and retaliatory attacks, with

The Special Adviser is also deeply concerned about the worsening security environment in Nigeria characterized by the politicization of transhumance, and increasing divisions among communities, including based on stigmatization along religious and ethnic lines. These are all indicators of increasing risks of atrocity crimes as established by the [UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes](#) developed by the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. In this extremely volatile environment, it is important that the general elections scheduled to be held on 25 February 2023 do not trigger violence and even atrocity crimes the Special Adviser warns.

The Special Adviser also reiterates her concern for increasing trends of hate speech along identity lines and incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence that permeates the political discourse in Nigeria. I call on all political actors and authorities to abide by the National Peace Accord they signed that includes their commitment for peaceful campaigns in Nigeria. I also encourage all actors to respect the rule of law, and discard stigmatizing and discriminating narratives

the Special Adviser highlights. She also urges Nigerians to use their

judiciary system to address disputes instead of recurring to violence and the

incidents

The Special Adviser also expresses concerns about the manipulation of transhumance in the political