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Seven Turkish Citizens Abducted by Armed Men Despite UN Protection

Nairobi, Kenya – October 19, 2024 – A deeply concerning incident has unfolded in Kenya, raising alarm within international circles. Seven Turkish citizens, including women and children, were forcibly abducted by armed men despite being under the protection of the United Nations. Video footage reveals the victims were intercepted at various locations, igniting fears about the safety and security of individuals under international protective measures.

According to reports, three of the abductees were later released but were threatened against disclosing any details about the incident. The fate of the remaining four individuals remains unknown, further escalating concerns.

The abducted individuals have been living in Kenya for two years under UN protection, awaiting relocation to a third country due to the risk of persecution in Turkey. They are affiliated with the Gulen Movement, inspired by the teachings of Fethullah Gülen, a movement considered a terrorist organisation by the Turkish government but not recognised as such by Western governments. Their abduction has raised serious questions about Kenya's role and capacity to protect vulnerable individuals, with some speculating that Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) may have been involved. MIT has a history of targeting Turkish dissidents abroad, raising fears of transnational repression.

Kenya's Responsibilities Under Scrutiny

Critics argue that Kenya, as a host country, is responsible for ensuring the safety of asylum seekers and refugees. International law requires that individuals under UN protection be safeguarded, but the country's silence and inaction so far have led to speculation about possible negligence.

Human rights organisations and the UN have called for an immediate, transparent investigation into the abductions. Kenya is now at a critical juncture—how it handles this incident will have far-reaching implications for its standing in the international community and its adherence to international laws.

Broader Concerns About UN Protection

This alarming situation also raises broader questions about the efficacy of international protective measures and the vulnerability of asylum seekers. The international community is closely watching how Kenya will respond. A failure to act decisively could send a dangerous message to foreign intelligence agencies, further endangering individuals seeking protection in host countries.

The abduction of these Turkish citizens, seemingly targeted for their political views, demands urgent attention from the Kenyan government and international actors. Kenya must uphold its obligations and ensure the safety of those under its protection, lest it risk becoming a country where foreign operations can be conducted with impunity.

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