

Students' safety in schools questioned

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KENYA. The death of eight students at Moi Girls School Nairobi last Saturday has once again put into sharp focus the safety of students in boarding schools.

The incident comes four months after a government led taskforce recommended drastic measures to ensure the safety of students in schools but whose implementation still remains unclear.

The report on unrest in learning institutions last year that was released in May pointed out that dormitories in most schools had no emergency exits or had blocked emergency.

"Some had empty fire extinguishers cans while others were placed in inappropriate places where they were of no use during fire emergency. In most schools visited, there were no fire assembly points," said the report that was compiled by a special investigation team which was led by former

provincial administrator Claire Omollo.

Ms Omollo and her team had recommended that the ministry of Education establish a monitoring and evaluation section to enforce compliance with policies and ensure accountability by school management within six months. The report pointed out that most schools did not have the necessary safety policy.

"The inadequate preparation for fire disasters had led to inability to salvage student's school property leading to loses even in cases where such loses could have been prevented. The evidence of unpreparedness could have been a reason for students' use of arson to express their grievances and to force the administration to allow them to go home. This situation was found to be risky to the lives of students in the event of fire outbreak," noted the report.

It also raised concerns over narrow doors that compromised the safety of students.