

At Kenya funeral, Kobia decries criminal violence: Causes more deaths than warfare

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Criminal violence, like the murder of a retired Presbyterian missionary and her daughter during a carjacking in Kenya, is claiming many more lives than warfare, lamented Samuel Kobia, the head of the World Council of Churches.

Kobia, a Kenyan Methodist minister, called for an end to violence globally while attending a funeral service near Nairobi for his onetime mentor Lois Anderson, 80, a four-decade missionary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and her Ugandan-born daughter, Zelda White, 52.

“As the WCC and all the churches around the world, we urge those who love life and human dignity to join hands in praying for an end to violence in this country and this world,” said Kobia, the WCC’s general secretary, at the February 2 funeral.

The women were killed by carjackers January 27 near Nairobi while on their way to visit a friend. Anderson, a native of Pennsylvania, had worked as a missionary in Kenya and Sudan.

In expressing disbelief at her death, Kobia declared that personal, communal and civil violence had claimed more lives since the Second World War than any declared war. “One of the greatest threats to human life is this violence,” said Kobia. “And especially when we ponder to imagine that nuclear weapons can be accessed by those who have no value for human life.”

Since the killings, church leaders have demanded action against criminals who keep Kenyans under siege.

“The world is becoming the road from Jerusalem to Jericho,” said David Githii, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, alluding to the biblical story of the Good Samaritan who helped a man who was robbed and beaten on the road to

Jericho. "When the world comes to that state, it becomes the responsibility of all governments and all churches to fight and crack down on crime." -*Ecumenical News International*