

# MEMORIAL NARRATIVE



**Memorial to the Victims  
of Torture and Ill-Treatment During the Colonial Era (1952–1960)**

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## **MEMORIAL NARRATIVE**

The narrative in Swahili and English is inscribed on granite stone plaques,  
displayed from the memorial entry to exit

The plaques consist of the  
Opening (also in Braille), Recognition of Contributions,  
Kenya Land and Freedom Army (Mau Mau), State of Emergency,  
The Mau Mau Movement, Reconciliation and Commemoration Tree  
The inscription above the exit gate is from the National Anthem,  
“Justice be our shield and defender”

The narrative is compiled by the Memorial Steering Committee:

Mau Mau War Veterans Association  
British High Commission  
Kenya Human Rights Commission  
National Museums of Kenya  
(Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts)  
Nairobi City County

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**MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS  
OF TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT  
DURING THE COLONIAL ERA (1952–1960)**

This memorial is a symbol of reconciliation between the British Government, the Mau Mau, and all those who suffered during the Emergency Period (1952–1960)

On 23rd June 2009,  
the Mau Mau War Veterans filed a case in the  
Royal Courts of Justice in London  
Following an out-of-court settlement,  
the British Foreign Secretary, William Hague,  
announced on 6th June 2013  
that the British Government would support the establishment  
of this memorial as part of the settlement

This memorial was inaugurated  
on 12th September 2015

## **RECOGNITION OF CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **REDRESS FOR THE VICTIMS OF TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT**

All the liberation heroes who took part in the struggle for Kenya's freedom

The many Mau Mau war veterans for their testimonies and perseverance

The Mau Mau War Veterans Association (MMWVA) and the  
British Government for the out-of-court settlement

The board and staff of the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)  
for supporting and partnering with MMWVA in seeking redress

Leigh Day & Co (UK) for representing the MMWVA at the Royal Court of  
Justice, overseeing the out-of-court settlement and payments to  
the Mau Mau victims of torture

The Government of Kenya, the Centre for Multi-Party Democracy,  
the Kenya National Archives and the National Museums of Kenya for support

The late Ndungu wa Gicheru, the former chairman of the  
Mau Mau War Veterans Association, Gitu Wa Kahengeri and the  
Mau Mau lead claimants for their commitment and perseverance

John Nottingham, a District Officer in the colonial administration and  
later Kenyan citizen, for speaking out against colonial-era torture

Lawyers Hon. Paul Muite and Hon. Gitobu Imanyara, Mbugua Mureithi,  
scholars, individuals and organizations who contributed towards the redress for  
Mau Mau victims of torture

### **REALIZING THE MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT**

#### **Memorial Steering Committee**

The Mau Mau War Veterans Association (MMWVA)

British High Commission (BHC)

Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)

National Museums of Kenya, Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts

Nairobi City County

#### **Memorial Site**

Nairobi City County for allocating the site at

Freedom Corner , Uhuru Park and surrounding works

#### **Memorial Designers**

Dr. Diana Lee-Smith AA Dipl. MAAK(A) PhD

Davinder Lamba B.Arch. MES

#### **Memorial Sculpture**

Kevin Oduor

## **THE STATE OF EMERGENCY**

A state of emergency was declared by the colonial administration on 21 October 1952. During the emergency many Kenyans were detained without trial, and some were subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment in detention camps run by the colonial administration. Many were killed. The majority were Kenyan

In 1960 the state of emergency was lifted, and negotiations began over a new constitution. On 12 December 1963 Kenyans achieved independence and Jomo Kenyatta became the first Prime Minister and later President

## **THE MAU MAU MOVEMENT**

The Kenya Land and Freedom Army (KLFA), popularly referred to as "Mau Mau", was a national movement that opposed British colonial rule in the 1950s. The Mau Mau waged an armed struggle between 1952 and 1960 with support from across the country

However, even after independence, the Mau Mau remained a proscribed group in Kenya until the ban was lifted by the government in 2003. At that time, the Mau Mau War Veterans Association sought redress from the British Government for acts of torture and ill-treatment they suffered during the emergency period

## **RECONCILIATION**

“The British Government understands the pain and grievance felt by those who were involved in the events of the emergency in Kenya. The British Government recognises that Kenyans were subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment at the hands of the colonial administration.

The British Government sincerely regrets that these abuses took place. Torture and ill-treatment are abhorrent violations of human dignity which we unreservedly condemn

Although we should never forget history and indeed must always seek to learn from it, we should also look to the future, strengthening a relationship that will promote the security and prosperity of both our nations”

***British Foreign Secretary, William Hague,  
6 June 2013***

“ Mau Mau veterans believe that nations, tribes, and human beings are interdependent and that each one of them is a condition of the others’ existence

Mau Mau veterans concur with the British Foreign Secretary’s statement on the result of the out-of-court settlement agreement, and sincerely believe in reconciliation for a better future relationship with the British people and their Government”

***Shujaa Hon Dr. Gitu Wa Kahengeri, OGW,  
Secretary General MMWVA,  
6 June 2013***

**Kenya Land and Freedom Army  
(Mau Mau)**

Men and women fighting in the armed struggle operated mainly from the Mount Kenya and Aberdare forests

Other women, who also formed part of the struggle, brought them food. They both looked away when the food, covered and in a Kiondo, was handed over

This was a policy of the Mau Mau movement, so that they could not identify each other later even in fear of torture and other forms of ill-treatment

At the inauguration of the memorial  
this sculpture was unveiled by

**Hon. Dr. Willy Mutunga, D. Jur. SC, EBS**  
Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court of Kenya

**COMMEMORATION TREE**

Mau Mau War Veterans Association (MMWVA) and H.E. Dr. Evans Odhiambo Kidero, Governor of Nairobi City County, planted this tree to commemorate the inauguration of the memorial

**MTI WA UKUMBUSHO**

Muongano wa Mashujaa wa Mau Mau (MMWVA) na Mheshimiwa Dkt. Evans Odhiambo Kidero, Gavana wa Kaunti ya Nairobi, waliupanda mti huu kwa ukumbusho wa uzinduzi wa mnara



