

Mau Mau File Suit Against UK

Written by Westside ID227

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Plans by Mau Mau veterans to sue the British government for reparations have gathered momentum following the completion of the first stage of collecting evidence from former freedom fighters.

Nearly 100 former freedom fighters have recorded statements detailing a shocking catalogue of injuries, deaths and injustices meted by colonial forces in the 1950s, The Standard has established.

And excitement is building up among members of a team preparing the case, following the impending publication of the first book ever detailing the brutal torture of Mau Mau fighters by the colonial government.

The book, Imperial Reckoning – The Untold Story of the End of the Empire in Kenya, is being hailed as a shot in the arm for the case because of the amount of torture evidence it reveals.

The bestiality of punishment detailed in the book by Harvard Professor Caroline Elkins has been compared to the infamous treatment of Iraqi prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad.

It is scheduled for publication in the US next January, at about the same time that the case is due for filing in the UK. The British edition of the book titled Briton's Gulag – The Brutal End of the Empire in Kenya, will be out in March, The Standard learnt.

Those preparing the case say the evidence by surviving Mau Mau veterans and in the book, prove that the colonial administration committed war crimes especially after the state of emergency was declared in 1952.

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Kabete MP Paul Muite, who is among Kenyan lawyers working out details of the case, said Prof Elkins has agreed to give evidence in support for the Mau Mau veterans' case.

"The evidence is compelling; it is watertight. What we have now cannot be shaken. I doubt if the British government can stand up against it," said a former colonial administrator, who has also agreed to testify.

The statements by former fighters have been collected by the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), which has also been mandated to push the case by the veterans.

KHRC's deputy executive director, Mr Steve Ouma, said statements that have been collected include those of two men castrated by colonialists and two others whose legs were amputated.

Women revealed how they were raped by whites, and a "systematic" method of silencing dissidents also emerged as the statements were being collected, Ouma said.

Some of the statements are supported by documentary evidence unearthed by Prof Elkin, he added.

The book catalogues scores of documents detailing torture officially sanctioned by the colonial administration in London. It also contains at least one instance where the then Governor Sir Evelyn Baring reportedly failed to order investigations into the brutal killing of a man by one Chief Mundia in Mathira, Nyeri.

Prof Elkins has spent nearly a decade unearthing evidence of torture of Mau Mau fighters and their sympathizers. He has made frequent visits to Kenya s.

Part of her startling evidence was made into a BBC documentary, White Terror, screened in November 2002.

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In the Abu Ghraib case, American and British soldiers allegedly subjected Iraqi prisoners to inhuman treatment, greatly embarrassing US President Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and their allies in the invasion of Iraq.

"Neither Caroline, nor I could have predicted that the last year would introduce the Abu Ghraib prison scandal as well as increasing British and American disillusionment over the occupation of Iraq," an editor, Ms Vanessa Mobley, writes in New York.

She continues: "The research and reporting that make up Imperial Reckoning began 10 years ago – the single best indication of the extent to which the British were until now successful in suppressing virtually all records of this time." The lawyers are now fine-tuning details on the planned suit, in what they believe will build into a watertight case against the British government.

But only 15 "of the very best" of statements by the war veterans will be used in filing the case before more victims are enjoined, an official said.

"We are looking for cases with glaring and visible injuries, such as those maimed, raped and even castrated, to ensure the case sails through," he said.

The London end of the presentations is being handled by UK law firm Leigh, Day and Co.

[Source](#)