

Bob Marley 60th Anniversary Kicks Off

Written by Robert ID805

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Bob Marley

Thousands of Bob Marley fans and Rastafarians gathered in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa on Tuesday for the start of weeks of festivities to mark the 60th anniversary of the reggae icon's birthday.

Marley, who died of cancer in 1981, won global stardom with his music and helped popularize the Rastafarian religion which venerates the late Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie.

The celebrations were due to open in a colorful ceremony featuring prayer and music at Addis Ababa's city hall later on Tuesday, kicking off a month of events including concerts, film festivals and debates.

Organizers say up to 300,000 people are expected to converge on the city's Meskal square on Sunday for a birthday tribute to Marley, known for anthems such as "No Woman No Cry" and "Get Up Stand Up."

The musical extravaganza will feature artists including reggae hip-hop rap artist Shaggy, along with Benin's Angelique Kidjo and soul singer India Arie as well as members of the Marley family.

Organizers have also invited former South African president Nelson Mandela, a champion of human rights whose causes resonate in the lyrics of Marley song's decrying conflict, discrimination and hatred.

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Many Rastafarians consider smoking marijuana as a religious rite, but Ethiopian police are reminding people that they take drug offences seriously.

Ethiopia occupies a holy place in Marley's Rastafarian faith. Many Rastafarians venerate Haile Selassie, who was murdered in 1974, as an incarnation of God.

Ethiopia's government will honor Marley with a monument on one of Addis Ababa's popular avenues and a park to be named after Marley at Entoto, the mountain chain surrounding the city where Emperor Menelik II built his capital in the 20th century.

Officials of the Bob Marley and Rita Marley Foundation said they plan to build a museum in the former Jubilee Palace of Emperor Haile Selassie where treasures including the late emperor's crown and sceptres will be displayed.

[Source](#)