

URGENT



International Center for Policy and Conflict

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Press Statement on

Remembrance Key to Reconciliation; Don't Politicize Kiambaa Issue

International Center for Policy and Conflict and Civil Society Working Group on Transitional Justice believe that appropriate preservation of historical memory, a comprehensive reassessment of Kenya's traumatic history, and country-wide recognition of all historical aspects of Kenya will strengthen Kenyan societal integration. Kenyans should not politicize remembrance and memorialization of massive atrocities committed against innocent people such as Kiambaa Church victims and any other unfortunate past gross violations of human rights. Instead, the memories of Kenya's tragic past must be kept alive in order to honour the victims, condemn the perpetrators and lay the foundations for reconciliation based on truth, justice and remembrance.

ICPC condemns strongly and unequivocally the crimes against humanity and other gross human rights violations committed by unacceptable intolerance tendencies; extends to the victims of these crimes and their family members its sympathy, understanding and recognition of their suffering. We call for a genuine effort towards opening up archives, including those of the former secret security services and intelligence agencies responsible for torturing and detaining people without trial. We cannot have sustainable peace without genuinely interrogating and dialoguing on our past.

Several human rights groups and victims of Nyayo House torture have successfully filed a suit in the High Court of Kenya preventing government of Kenya from interfering with or destroying Nyayo House Torture Chambers. It is Kenya's monument of shame and remembrance of those who suffered fighting against tyranny and oppression. Remembrance underlines that, in order to strengthen Kenyans' awareness of crimes committed by intolerance, totalitarian and undemocratic tendencies, documentation of, and accounts testifying to, Kenya's troubled past must be supported, as there can be no reconciliation without remembering. Those who control the past, controls the present and the future. It is only fair that the past be documented and archives opened to avoid repetition.

We believe that according to the perspective of the victims, it is immaterial which regime or people deprived them of their liberty or tortured or murdered them for whatever reason but that constant vigilance is needed to fight undemocratic, intolerance and xenophobic ideologies and tendencies.

Whenever people engage in remembrance, it renews their commitment to a peaceful and prosperous country founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. ICPC is convinced that the ultimate goal of remembrance, disclosure and assessment of the crimes committed by intolerance and totalitarian regimes is

reconciliation, which can only be achieved by admitting responsibility, asking for forgiveness and fostering moral renewal.

Signed by

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Executive Director.