

One Year Later in Kenya – The Struggle Is Not Over, The Struggle Is Never Over

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2025 marks a century since the birth of Frantz Fanon, Malcolm X, and Patrice Lumumba, revolutionaries whose words and lives continue to rattle our bones and keep our spirits awake. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Fanon says:

During the colonial period the people are called upon to fight against oppression; after national liberation, they are called upon to fight against poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment. The struggle, they say, goes on. The people realise that life is an unending contest.



Trevor Coleman (South Africa), *Santorini*, 2006.

It was this unending contest that erupted in the streets of Kenya one year ago. The streets filled with the

energy of a people betrayed for too long. Young voices, unfazed by teargas and batons, **declared** boldly: 'The Finance Bill is professional theft.' That was more than a mere protest slogan, it was a poetic diagnosis, an unmasking of a system polished with bureaucratic language and foreign-approved smiles of IMF and World Bank. It was a scream from the belly of a people who have had enough.

June 2024 was a rupture years in the making, years of organising by grassroots organisations and left parties. A generation born into debt, disillusionment, and neoliberal lies stood up and said:

We reject your austerity.

We reject your corruption.

We reject your IMF policies.

The youth led the country into a political awakening long overdue.



Portia Zvavahera (Zimbabwe), *Kubatwa kwemazizi* ('Captured Owls'), 2022.

And what was it for? A finance bill? No. That bill was only the spark. The fuel was decades of political betrayal masquerading as governance built on a state of contradictions. Kenya is a country rich in resources yet

starved of opportunity, helmed by a government that speaks the language of development while tightening the chains of debt, plagued by leaders who claim to serve but endlessly extract. It was land stolen, education priced out of reach, hospitals emptied of care, and taxes laid on the backs of the hungry while politicians bathed in luxury. The fire that burned in the streets was rage at the historical memory of colonialism recycled as policy.



Cyrus Kabiru (Kenya), *Hot Pot*, 2025.

We are building on the shoulders of those who came before us, the long, unbroken line of Kenya's resistance. From the forests of the Mau Mau war for land and freedom, to the workers' strikes, the student uprisings, the mothers of political prisoners, and now the youth-led rebellions of our time, this is one continuous river of struggle.

But this uprising, this moment of truth, did not end in June. It seeded something deeper. Today, one year on, we do not merely remember the protests, we honour the possibility they unlocked. For the first time in decades, young Kenyans refused to wait for the next election cycle, refused to queue for crumbs. For the first time in recent history, they did not knock on parliament's door; they occupied it on 25 June 2024, making sure things will never be the same again.

They tactically turned social media into a weapon of mobilisation, education, organising, and consciousness raising. In doing so, they pulled the masks off the bourgeois political parties – exposing their empty rhetoric, their opportunistic alliances, and their betrayal of the working class. They also criticised the silence of religious leaders, those who have long traded in the currency of fear and false promises.



Pamela Enyonu Nambo (Uganda), *Cornucopia*, 2024.

And in their thunderous refusal, they reminded us of something precious, the people do not need permission to dream of a different worldview. Liberation is the ground upon which we can begin to build a society anchored in abundance, dignity, and justice for the majority. It is the presence of life-affirming systems where education is not a privilege, where land is not stolen, where food is not commodified, and where dignity is not rationed.

We mark this anniversary with hope – revolutionary, dangerous hope. Because though repression came, it did not win. Though over 60 young people were killed, their voices still echo through our streets, our hearts, our inspiration that it was not in vain. Though political leaders tried to hijack the moment, the people have not forgotten the taste of resistance. To stop struggling is to surrender the future. The forces that have long benefited from our misery do not sleep; we cannot afford to either. It is in the furnace of struggle that our finest virtues emerge – solidarity, courage, clarity, and the discipline to imagine and fight for something greater than individual survival. Now, the work of building a dignified Kenya for the majority continues – and now, it must do so even more boldly, more organised and a programme for the people. Make sure to read ***Kenya Is Not in Crisis – Kenya Is the Crisis***, as part of the Interventions series, where I expand on the history that brought Kenyans to this moment as well as possibilities for the future of our country.



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