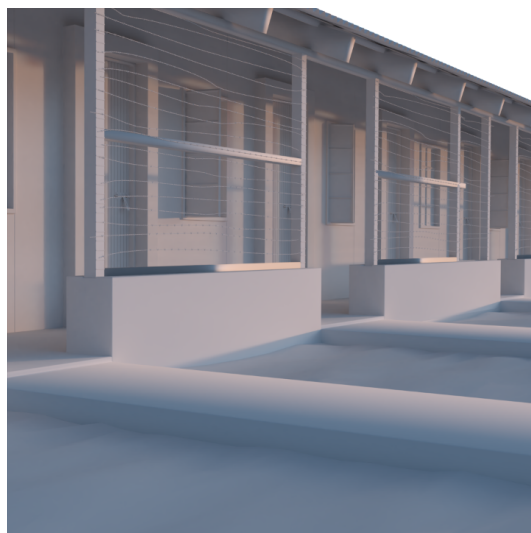




Hi Museum supporters!

We may have been a bit quiet recently, but it's only because we have a lot to share! Read more below about what we've been up to, and what's coming up over the summer!

Take a First Look at Our Digital Reconstructions!





We are very excited to share a first look at our 3D digital reconstructions of Aguthi and Mweru, both detention centres in the Central Region. The models were created by our new digital creatives, Mike Wanjala and Grace Sampao, under the expert guidance of our co-founder Chao. Special thanks goes to the Pat Finucane Centre for providing the funds to support this development!

You can read more about the process on the [African Digital Heritage website](#).

MBC in the News!

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Locations > Some of the camps are in Lodwar, Kapenguria, Athi River and Lamu

Thanks to the efforts of the Museum of British Colonialism, one can now check online and see all the torture camps that were in the country

BY ELVIS ONDIEKI

Tayiana Chao is convinced that there was a deliberate move by government officials five decades ago to hide evidence of the more than 50 camps across Kenya that were used by British colonialists to detain, torture, enslave and sometimes kill locals.

That is why, she says, you can hardly find a history book detailing the "pipeline" system of detention camps that ranged from exile stations for hard-core detainees to work camps for the more forthcoming detainees.

Ms Chao, a history enthusiast with a master's degree in international heritage visualisation, is working hard with a group of like-minded people to ensure the information is now made public and accessible through technology.

One of the tools they are using is the book *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*.

The text, written by British history professor Caroline Elkins, was released in 2005 and it uncovered hitherto-hidden details about colonialists' brutality.

The blurb of the book says: "Until now, these (brutal) events have remained untold, largely because the British government in Kenya destroyed most of its files. For the last eight years, Caroline Elkins has conducted exhaustive research to piece together the story, and interviewing several hundred Kikuyu survivors."

Thanks to the details revealed in the book, and the efforts of Ms Chao's team, anyone can now visit a website under development where they can view the location of the camps.

They include special detention camps in Lodwar, Kapenguria, Athi River, Mageta Island in Lake Victoria and Takwa Island in Lamu. There are also work camps in Narok, Bomet, Kajiado, Hindi among other areas. Equally, there are work camps in various areas of Embu, including Teteere, Gahigiri, Mwea, Thiba and Kandongu.

The makers have assigned colour codes of the camps on the map to differentiate the severity of the treatment detainees faced while there.

Most of the places, Ms Chao says, have now been turned into schools or prisons.

She learnt that first-hand when she visited two former work camps in Nyeri late last year.

One is a camp formerly known as Aguthi Works Camp where today, Kangubiri Girls' High School stands.

"Kangubiri" is a corruption of 'can go free'. You were either to remain in detention or go free, because it was one of the last camps in the pipeline," says Ms Chao.

Another one she visited was the former Mweru Works Camp, now Mweru High School. At Mweru, some of the classrooms and dormitories are former cells, and she photographed the barbed wire on the caves of the structures.

She says the idea behind camps was to "tush" peoples' minds of the rebellious Mau Mau spirit.

"They (colonialists) were not looking at Mau Mau as a legitimate group with legitimate concerns. They rubbished it off as a primitive, tribal curse," she says.

"They must have decided that the only way to get rid of this curse was to develop a pipeline where people confessed that they had taken the oath. They would renounce the oath and by the time they are leaving the pipeline, they would be free of the Mau Mau 'curse'. So, they established this series of detention camps where you went through depending on your willingness to renounce Mau Mau," she adds.

Ms Chao made the visits using funds raised by the Museum of British Colonialism — a team of 10 comprising Kenyans and Britons. The group of volunteers was formed in January 2018 to revisit parts of colonial history that may not have been so public before.

Their current tool of trade is a website through which they publish their discoveries.

"Although currently only virtual, we hope for a physical space one day and still call it a museum, because we think the definition fits," they say on the website.

Last year, the group released a documentary titled *Operation Legacy*, detailing the efforts by the British government to hide records that could paint the UK in negative light.

The documentary has aired in Kenya before and on August 8, there will be a rescreening in Nairobi.

Another Kenyan who is part of the team is Susan Wambui, an archivist. Ms Wambui played a vital role in the development of the *Operation Legacy* documentary.

She believes the documentation of such details may erase many Kenyan prejudices.

"Looking at our history, you will find that the animosity between Kenyans was being fuelled by the British," she said. She added the group's plan is to have Kenya's history, starting with the concentration camps, documented.

FILE | NATION

Students take notes during a visit at the Kapenguria Six detainees' cells in Kapenguria in 2011. These detained at the facility by Britons were Bildad Kaggia, Kung'u Karumba, Jomo Kenyatta, Fred Kubai, Paul Ngel, and Achieng' O'neko.



Group in race to list online 50 colonial torture dens in Kenya

We're so honoured to have been featured on page 3 of Kenya's highest circulation newspaper, The Daily Nation! A big thank you to Elvis Ondieki who wrote our feature. We also appeared in an [online article](#) about the unsung heroes of the Mau Mau Uprising.

We are still young, still unfunded, and still volunteer led - so to see our work being shared to such a wide audience is very exciting, and fills us with hope for the future!

Just imagine what we could do with more funding...

Blog Update



Chao was recently on an episode of Anna Rose Kerr's podcast [British Subjects](#), where she spoke about her work with the Museum and her work documenting the remains of the Uganda-Kenya Railway. We partially transcribed the podcast to read on our blog:

"We have 60 years of a railway serving millions of Kenyans, but never being written from their perspective. The history of the railways is always looked at in terms of European or Asian perspectives, with the romanticised lions and carriages and safaris and hunting trips."

[Read more](#)

Support Us On Patreon



Patreon is a membership platform that connects creatives with... well, Patrons. We were excited to announce the launch of our Patreon page last month and already have a small number of Patrons. But we need your help.

By becoming our patron - for as little as \$5 a month! - you'll become a key supporter our work, allowing our team to continue mapping and digitally recreating camps, sharing knowledge at conferences and screening our documentary at universities, arts centres, and community spaces. With just 5 more supporters, we'll also be able to launch our oral archive, with interviews from Mau Mau veterans such as Muthoni wa Kirima and Wambugu wa Nyigi.

[See more and become a patron here!](#)

Upcoming Events



We're joining our friends at the [Pat Finucane Centre](#) on August 9th at the West Belfast Festival (Féile an Phobail) in Northern Ireland! We'll be screening *Operation Legacy* and joining a talk on counterinsurgency and empire in India, Kenya, and Ireland.

For more news on the event, follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to stay updated!



We're excited to announce another screening of *Operation Legacy* in collaboration with our friends, [Book Bunk](#). The screening will take place on August 8th at the Macmillan Library, in Central

Nairobi. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion and showcase of our work.



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