

TWENDE PICTURES, AFROFILMS INTERNATIONAL, MUIRAQUITĀ FILMES

IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH AUTENTIKA FILMS PRESENT

OUR LAND, OUR FREEDOM

A FILM BY MEENA NANJI & ZIPPY KIMUNDU

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MIRA NAIR



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Our Land, Our Freedom

For General Release

The critically acclaimed documentary *Our Land, Our Freedom* continues its festival run. Directed by Kenyan filmmakers Meena Nanji and Zippy Kimundu, and executive produced by acclaimed director Mira Nair, the film brings to light Kenya's colonial past through the untold stories of freedom fighters and their families.

The documentary follows the extraordinary journey of Mukami and Wanjugu Kimathi, the widow and daughter of Dedan Kimathi, one of Kenya's most iconic freedom fighters. Their mission to locate Dedan Kimathi's remains exposes the brutal realities of British colonialism in Kenya, including concentration camps, land theft, and the oppression faced by those who resisted colonial rule.

"Our Land, Our Freedom" is not just a film; it's a reclamation of history. This is a Kenyan story told by Kenyans, focusing on the lived experiences of those who fought for independence but whose stories have been sidelined in history books. It's about honoring our freedom fighters and confronting the lasting impact of colonialism that still affects us today,"

- Directors Meena Nanji & Zippy Kimundu

Having premiered at the prestigious IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam) in November 2023, *Our Land, Our Freedom* has since captivated audiences at major festivals, including Sheffield Doc Fest, Movies That Matter at The Hague (where it received an honorary mention), FIFDH Geneva, and Docs Barcelona (Special Jury mention and the Catalonia Amnesty International Award). The film's African premiere at Encounters Documentary Festival in South Africa earned it the 'Encounters Adiaha Award for Best Documentary by an African Woman,' followed by a win for Best Documentary at the Zanzibar Film Festival in 2024, and most recently winning the Thomas Sankara Award, Premier Prix, at FESPACO 2025.

The film stands out for its deeply personal storytelling, featuring firsthand accounts from Kenyan freedom fighters and land rights advocates. Wanjugu Kimathi's journey is central to the narrative, and her transformation into a leading advocate for justice and land resettlement underscores the film's relevance to ongoing struggles over land and identity in Kenya.

In making *Our Land, Our Freedom*, the filmmakers have emphasized the importance of telling the story from a distinctly Kenyan perspective. Rather than relying on foreign narrators or experts, the film elevates Kenyan voices, providing an authentic and powerful account of the country's history.

"It's crucial that we own our history, and this film is our way of ensuring that the legacy of our freedom fighters is preserved for future generations," added the directors.

The film is produced by Meena Nanji (Twende Pictures), Zippy Kimundu (Afrofilms International Ltd) and Eliane Ferreira (Muiraquitã Filmes), with co-producers Paulo de Carvalho and Gudula Meinzolt (Autentika Films). It is executive produced by Mira Nair (Queen of Katwe) and Eliane Ferreira, alongside a talented Kenyan production crew. The cinematography is by Andrew Mungai and Steve Ruiyi, with editing by Jordana Berg and Franki Ashiruka.

CONTACTS

PRODUCTION

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SYNOPSIS

OUR LAND, OUR FREEDOM

KENYA | USA | PORTUGAL | 2023 | 100'

Our Land, Our Freedom tells the story of 2 extraordinary Kenyan women - a mother and daughter, Mukami and Wanjugu Kimathi - who share a mission to shine a light on the too-long-kept secret atrocities of British colonial rule in Kenya.

After the legendary freedom fighter, Dedan Kimathi, was hanged by the British colonial regime in 1957 for leading Kenya's 1950s independence struggle, they secretly dumped his body. Now, his daughter, Wanjugu, joins her mother's decades long quest, searching for his remains. Along her journey she meets elder freedom fighters and land rights advocates who tell her of British concentration camps, torture, starvation and land theft that left hundreds of thousands of Kenyans destitute. Wanjugu's mission expands and, working closely with her mother, she transforms into a powerful leader, exposing colonial crimes, while building a grassroots movement for land resettlement.

This intimate portrayal of a daughter's mission to bring peace to her mother, exposes the dark chapter of colonialism in Kenya, and features Mukami and Wanjugu's powerful interventions to shift it's legacy: a story that will reverberate not only in Kenya, but also in countries impacted by colonialism across the world.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Kenya was colonized by Britain from 1895-1963. During this time, the British carried out a program of dehumanizing Kenyans in order to justify their reign of terror and massive theft of land. Colonial policies subjugated Africans in all spheres: they were not allowed to own land, their crops and livestock were severely limited and they were forced into wage labor. Beatings, sexual mutilation and torture were common with few, if any, avenues for recourse. With early attempts at negotiating a peaceful return of their land ignored by the British, armed resistance arose in the late 1940s through a movement called the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, led by Dedan Kimathi.

A lot of knowledge about this period of time has been buried. Information that does exist is still dominated by British perspectives that largely glorify British rule. Omitted is the daily violence of colonialism, as is the fact that the British set up concentration camps, indiscriminately detaining over a million Kenyans - and killing thousands - in their attempts to crush the independence movement. They also waged fierce disinformation and propaganda campaigns, employing all media: movies, radio, newsreels, books, academic texts, posters, terming the independence fighters as the "Mau Mau", and portraying them as "savage", "barbaric" "senselessly violent and bloodthirsty", powerful stereotypes that still persist today.

But the British were unable to stop the movement for freedom, and in 1963, Independence was gained. However, it was largely on British terms: the British handed political power and land to Kenyans that had collaborated with them: the "Loyalists", while marginalizing the Mau Mau. The first Kenyan President, Jomo Kenyatta, banned the Mau Mau - a ban that was to continue for 40 years, with those who spoke out, silenced. Mau Mau experiences have barely been recorded, and their history is not taught in schools. Many younger Kenyans have little knowledge about what really happened.

Now, people want justice. Not just for past atrocities, but to reclaim their history and their land. Waniqu is one of those leading this fight.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR/PRODUCERS



MEENA NANJI

Meena Nanji is Kenyan-born of Indian heritage. She is an award-winning director/producer of feature documentaries, experimental and fiction shorts. Her work has been recognized by the Sundance Documentary Fund, Just Films, Perspective Fund, IDA, IDFA Bertha Fund. Her films have screened on television and at film festivals internationally and largely focus on women and social justice issues, as well as race & gender rights and representation, including projects filmed in India, Afghanistan and Kenya. She is a co-founder of GlobalGirl Media, a non-profit organization that trains girls from underrepresented communities of the world in citizen journalism. She has also worked as curator/programmer for film/video festivals, served as juror for foundation grants, and led film workshops and trainings, including in the US, Morocco, S. Africa, and India. She is based in Los Angeles.



ZIPPY KIMUNDU

Zippy is an award-winning Kenyan Filmmaker who has been working in the film and television industry across continents as a director and editor for over a decade. She co-directed a short documentary, *A Fork, A Spoon and A Knight* with Mira Nair for Tribeca Film Institute's 'Power of Word Series', and was the assistant editor on the Disney film *Queen of Katwe*.

Zippy holds a masters in Fine Arts from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and is a film educator for under-represented communities at I'll Tell You My Story, who give storytelling workshops in Africa for teenage refugee girls. Besides this, she is the founder of AfroFilms International, a women-led film and TV production company and creative collective based in Nairobi and Kilifi, Kenya. She recently completed *Widow Champion*, her second feature documentary.

ABOUT THE PRODUCER

ELIANE FERREIRA

Eliane is the founder of Muiraquitã Filmes, a production company based in Portugal and Brazil. Her first feature film as a co-producer was *Fish Dreams* by Kirill Mikhanovsky, winner of Prix Jeune at Critics Week of Cannes Film Festival 2006.

She produced award-winning documentaries such as *Fabricating Tom Zé*, best documentary by a popular jury in 2006 at both Rio IFF and São Paulo IFF, *Cinema Morocco* by Ricardo Calil, winner of Golden Dove at Dok Leipzig 2018, *I Owe You a Letter* about Brazil by Carol Benjamin, Honorable Mention at IDFA 2019 First Appearance Competition, and *The Repentants* by Armando Antenore and Ricardo Calil, Best Documentary at It's All True Festival 2021.

Besides working on *Our Land, Our Freedom* by Meena Nanji and Zippy Kimundu which premiered at IDFA Frontlight in 2023, she's producing *Regarding Memory and Neglect* by Ricardo Martensen, supported by IDFA Bertha Fund, Sundance Institute and selected at the competitive pitching at IDFA Forum 2021.

She is also preparing the release of four fiction features for 2024: *Portrait of a Certain Orient* by Marcelo Gomes, *Garden of Silence* by Henrique Dantas, *Cyclone* by Flávia Castro, and *Pasárgada* by Dira Paes.



CREDITS

Directors

Meena Nanji
Zippy Kimundu

Production

Meena Nanji for Twende Pictures
Zippy Kimundu for Afrofilms International Ltd
Eliane Ferreira for Muiraquitã Filmes

Executive producers

Mira Nair
Eliane Ferreira for Muiraquitã Filmes

Co-production

Gudula Meinzolt for Autentika Films
Paulo de Carvalho for Autentika Films

Cinematography

Andrew Mungai
Steve Ruiyi

Editing

Jordana Berg
Franki Ashiruka

Sound

Willis Abuto
John Paul Gichengo

Sales Agent

First Hand Films

***Our Land, Our Freedom* was pitched** at the Durban Film Market, Hot Docs Deal Maker, IDFA Forum and CPH:DOX, SunnySide, and was **funded by** Sundance Documentary Fund, World Cinema Fund, Just Films, Chicken & Egg Pictures, Perspective Foundation, IDFA Bertha Fund, Hot Doc Blue Ice Grant, DocuBox, Storyboard Collective, InMaat Foundation, among others.

