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Rule of law reels in Kenya

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KENYA'S SHAKY UNITY

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FEATURES AND BACKGROUND



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Wako.

No surprise [registered](#) when the Kenyan government rejected the report (which they had commissioned) and accused Professor Alston of exceeding his brief, which was to draw up an independent assessment of alleged illegal killings by police.

Murderous reputation

The Mungiki is a murderous organisation that traces its origins to the Mau Mau rebellion against British colonial rule in the 1950s and '60s.

It gained prominence in the 1980s when it coalesced around attempts to protect land belonging to Kikuyu [farmers](#) in the Kenyan highlands north of Nairobi.

It has since spread its tentacles into many other areas of Kenyan life and it turned criminal.

It has raised a lot of money by extorting money from Kenya's ubiquitous matatu buses.

Virtually every matatu operating in Central Province in Kenya has had to pay a "levy" of a few hundred Kenyan shillings (less than \$10) a day to operate.

Mungiki has also recruited among the country's large population of disaffected Kikuyu youth. It has been used by some Kenyan politicians to intimidate the electorate and frighten off political opposition.

Mungiki mobs surfaced during Kenya's troubled election in December 2007. More than 1,500 people were killed in an orgy of violence which followed the disputed result.

Warring groups divided down ethnic lines, and while I was covering the violence I saw gangs wearing tell-tale Mungiki emblems (red scarves and bits of scarlet cloth tied around forearms) on the [rampage](#).

Police behaviour, Mungiki violence and now the murder of two human rights activists call into question the rule of law in Kenya. Kenyan society is trying to heal itself after the inter-tribal violence.

It has a coalition government intended to draw together both political and ethnic differences. But the new joint administration is riven by divisions and gives the appearance of being deeply corrupt.

The murder, rape and rioting which threatened to plunge Kenya into civil war a year ago have ended, but Kenya still faces a crisis of huge proportions.



Nairobi has seen lethal clashes between police and Mungiki mobs

PROFILES

Mungiki sect

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