



## KOITALEEL SAMOEI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

(A Constituent College of the University of Nairobi)

### FIRST INTERNATIONAL KOITALEEL CONFERENCE

### CALL FOR PAPERS

#### CONFERENCE THEME: CONTESTED PASTS, IMPERATIVE FUTURES - KOITALEEL SAMOEI AND THE PRAXIS OF MEMORY AND RESTITUTION IN KENYA

**Conference Dates:** Thur./Fri. 19-20 March 2026

**Venue:** Koitaleel Samoei University College, Mosoriot Campus

**Format:** Hybrid (Mosoriot in-person + online participation, with links for online participants)

#### Core emphasis

In October 1905, the killing of Koitaleel Samoei, *orkoiyot* of the Nandi, brought to a violent close one of the most sustained resistances to British colonial expansion in East Africa. Over the past century, Koitaleel has been remembered as prophet, warrior, martyr and national hero. His name has circulated in Nandi and Talai oral traditions, colonial archives, Kenyan historiography, church sermons, school textbooks and political speeches.

How do archives, oral histories and memorials interact in African colonial history? What happens when cherished atrocity narratives are historically unstable? How should museums and universities deal with contested stories about remains and objects / artifacts? What are the implications for contemporary struggles over restitution, recognition and reparations?

The Koitaleel Conference invites contributions that engage with these questions, using the figure of Koitaleel and the history of Nandi resistance as a focal point, while situating them within broader debates on colonial violence and politics of memory.

#### Thematic Areas:

##### 1. Resistance, Authority and the Colonial Frontier

- Koitaleel Samoei as *orkoiyot* and leader: prophecy, ritual, military strategy.
- Nandi resistance in comparison with other Kenyan and African anti-colonial movements.

- British representations of “rebellion,” “pacification” and frontier war.

## **2. Evidence, Memorials and Narrative**

- Interplay between colonial archives, official records, oral histories and family narratives.
- Concepts around colonial atrocities in wider Kenyan society: critique, defence and alternatives.
- Methodological reflections on writing histories of violence when evidence is fragmentary or politicised.

## **3. Museums, Human Remains and Contested Objects**

- Provenance research relating to human remains and objects linked to East African resistance.
- Ethics of collecting, retaining, displaying or returning remains and sacred objects.
- Models of co-curation, co-authorship of exhibitions, and community-based interpretation.

## **4. Law, Reparations and Historical Injustice**

- Legal frameworks for addressing colonial harms (Kenya, UK, international).
- Lessons from existing cases (e.g. Mau Mau) for other communities’ claims.
- How “factual disputes” affect reparations debates.
- Theological, philosophical and moral perspectives on restitution and repentance.

## **5. Community Memory, Pedagogy and Public History**

- Talai, Nandi and other Kenyan community perspectives on Koitaleel and colonial violence.
- Teaching Koitaleel and Nandi history in Kenyan schools and UK universities.
- Oral performances, poetry, music and visual art as forms of historical work.
- Designing memorials, commemorations and civic rituals around contested pasts.
- Interdisciplinary approaches are strongly encouraged. We welcome historians, anthropologists, theologians, legal scholars, museum professionals, artists, educators and community-based researchers.

### **Submission Guidelines**

#### **Individual papers**

Abstract of 250–300 words, including:

- Title
- Main argument or research question
- Methods/sources
- Thematic area (from the list above)
- Short bio (max 150 words) including institutional affiliation (if any) and location.

## **Creative / Community contributions**

We also welcome proposals for non-traditional formats, including:

- i. Storytelling sessions
- ii. Short films or digital projects
- iii. Artistic performances (poetry, music, visual work)
- iv. Community testimonies (with a clear framing for the conference context)

Please describe the format, duration (10–20 minutes) and necessary support in terms of infrastructure.

## **Important Dates**

- Deadline for abstracts/proposals: **[15 February 2026]**
- Notification of acceptance: **[20 February 2026]**

## **Submission of abstracts and proposals**

Please send all abstracts and proposals to: [conference@ksu.ac.ke](mailto:conference@ksu.ac.ke)

For queries about themes, formats or logistics, contact:

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## **APPROVED BY:**

**PROF. WINSTON AKALA**

**PRINCIPAL KOITALEEL SAMOEI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

Date.....05/02/2026.....Sign ..... 

