

ABSTRACT

There has been an extensive and disturbing history of human rights violations in Kenya from 1952 to 2013. The Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki regimes presided over shocking and, sometimes, brutal human rights violations including abductions, arbitrary arrests, detentions without trial, political executions, assassinations, harassment, imprisonment, torture and other forms of oppression against the citizenry. These systemic methods of human rights violations were used to terrorize, silence or otherwise neutralize those in opposition to the state system, and sometimes carried out under inhumane laws. This study traces human rights violations in Kenya from 1952 through the immediate post-independence period to 2013, demonstrating that human rights violations were a sediment problem that involved different players at different critical junctures. The study extends the possible repertoire of human rights violations to also include other categories of rights, assessed structural imbalances between the conflicting cultural identities of different ethnicities and the discriminatory and persecutory citizenship documentation policies. This thesis reconstructs the narrative of gross human rights violations and traces the roots of Kenya's sullied human rights record over the last six decades and also argues that post-independence architecture failed to provide truth, justice and reparations to the victims and in putting an end to a culture of impunity that became entrenched in Kenyan society. The study is premised on the Kenyan state as a unit of analysis. The main objective of this study was to examine the history of the role of the state on human rights violations in Kenya from 1952 to 2013. To achieve this objective, the study was informed by three theories: neopatrimonialism, the theory of the African state and post colonialism as major tools of analysis of data in the political hierarchy of the state in an attempt to critique human rights violations in Kenya. The study adopts a historical research design to investigate past historical events, examines their description and interpretation as well as explaining the underlying causes of these events and their influence of the role of the state on human rights violations in Kenya from a historical context. Methodologically, the study utilizes both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected from the archives and from Oral interviews in the field. Data analysis was done through documentary review, content analysis and direct quotations. After collection, data was grouped to form chapters of the thesis. The study adds new knowledge to the history of human rights violations to explain and gap up the scanty historiography of the role of the state on historical human rights violations in Kenya. The study is also expected to influence decision makers in development agencies.