

Rage Against The Machine

Issue 0001

MAY 2023



Maasai child from [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

The Latest on the Maasai Struggle

By Elizabeth Sims-Easton

For those who do not know the background to the Maasai, they are semi-nomadic herders who [migrate](#) between Kenya and Northern Tanzania with primary livestock of cattle and goats. Their rich [culture](#) involves traditional dress called ormisinbiji along with distinctive beaded jewellery, sandals, hairstyles, music, and dancing. They live [in huts](#) within enclosed encampments called boma's. They are at risk of becoming [endangered](#) due to the actions of the Tanzanian government.

Back in the 1950's the Maasai were moved to the Ngorongoro crater from their ancestral lands in the Serengeti. Due to the Serengeti being taken over for [conservation](#) reasons. At the time they were told they would [never](#) be moved on again. Both these statements turned out to be false. Conservation meant tourism and game hunting. Now this same [story](#) is being used to move the Maasai from the Ngorongoro region.

It has been proven in court the sale of the village land was done [illegally](#). However, the government are still evicting the Maasai and allowing the [hunting](#) lodges to replace them. The evictions became [violent](#) and many Maasai were shot at and attacked with tear gas, many crossed the border into [Kenya](#) for medical aid, as staying in the area risked arrest. Speaking to the [media](#) about the problem also increased the risk of arrest and violence from government sources. Visits from the [African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights](#) were controlled by government agencies and those that would speak against the eviction were kept away from the Commission.

The information did reach the [media](#) regarding the violent [evictions](#) which meant the government moved to other methods to force the Maasai to move. They started to shut down essential [resources](#) including water taps, schools, and

[medical](#) facilities. Thus, making survival difficult for those wishing to remain. A few Maasai took up the offer to move but they have discovered that Msomera also has problems with a lack of infrastructure.

Residents of Msomera were not consulted on the move which has caused [conflict](#) between the communities. There is not enough land in the current village for the newcomers and residents to share. Grazing land is becoming scarce and is impacting the livestock as well as the residents. For those still at the crater's edge the situation is worsening and some groups worry that the Maasai are now one of the most [endangered](#) tribes in Africa due to [exploited](#) and being moved from their land.

Cattle in Msomera © [The Oakland Institute](#)



This is an ongoing situation, Urgent action needs to be taken to stop the evictions. There are current [petitions](#) that can be [signed](#) and [shared](#) that will enable the word to be spread. Letters to the mainstream media and Tanzanian [Government](#) supporting the Maasai will help along with [signing](#) up to some of the many organisations that are working to assist the Maasai.

This stand is not over yet, to protect the Maasai and their rich culture we need to keep fighting!