

Naomi Lere more

Location: **Nairobi, KENYA**

Mission: **Christian education**



The Cult of Death

We're in the midst of an unfolding tragedy in Kenya, involving a self-proclaimed pastor and tele-evangelist called Mackenzie. He started his church 20 years ago at the coast and slowly began radicalizing his members, teaching that the Bible does not support education. Those with exam certificates were encouraged to burn them and remove their children from school. The faithful in his congregation were taught not to let their children receive vaccinations or seek medical attention when sick.

After his church and TV station were closed down, Mackenzie went underground. He started "farming" on 800 acres within the vast Shakahola forest. His teachings were based on visions and included end of the world prophecies. With no need for earthly treasures, some fanatical followers gave up their jobs and sold all their properties – cars, land and houses, to bring their tithes and offerings to Mackenzie.



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The doomsday cult members believed that the end of the world would come on 15th April 2023. Mackenzie instructed them to begin "fasting" by which he meant starving to death - in order to be the first to meet Jesus! The deaths were to happen in a specific order with the children dying first, followed by the women, the men, and lastly – the pastor. Almost half of the bodies being found in the shallow mass graves are of innocent children.

The "Shakahola forest massacre" is one of the worst religious tragedies in Kenya's history. At the time of writing, the death toll stands at 110, with the Kenya Red Cross registering 410 missing relatives - 227 of whom are children.

As post-mortem examinations begin, one grisly theory being explored is that of organ harvesting. A commission of inquiry is to be set up to unearth the truth behind the mass killings. In Matthew 7:15 Jesus says, "Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves."

Prayer Points

- For those who have been rescued from the cult - that they will receive the physical, emotional and spiritual help they need to recover and start life afresh.
- Remember those who are waiting to find out if their loved ones are among the dead in Shakahola Forest. Thank God for the help these families are receiving from the Kenya Red Cross Society.
- That this massacre will be properly investigated so that the truth behind what happened is revealed. And that the findings become a wakeup call for the government and church bodies to agree on regulations that will prevent similar tragedies in the future.