

# SUBMISSIONS TO THE TASK FORCE ON TRUTH, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

## Submission by

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## Submission

On behalf of all progressive Kenyans, I submit that the basic human rights of Pio Gama Pinto have been violated during the rule of the successive Kanu Governments.

### Background

Pio Gama Pinto was born in Nairobi on March 31, 1927. He was assassinated in Nairobi on February 24, 1965. In his short life of 38 years, he has become a symbol of anti-imperialist struggles in Kenya. His selfless work for Kenya set a new standard for judging patriotism and commitment. His contribution to the struggle for real freedom spanned two continents - Africa and Asia. It covered two phases of imperialism - colonialism and neo-colonialism. His enemies saw no other way to stop the lifelong struggle waged by Pinto except through an assassin's bullets fired at point blank range.

It is generally believed that those in senior position in the Government were involved in, or were aware of, the plot to assassinate Pinto. The Government has not appointed an independent review to establish the facts in this matter; nor have any official attempts been made subsequently to research Pinto's role in the liberation of Kenya. Those who have attempted to do so have been intimidated by the former Kanu Government and stopped from doing any research on him.

### Loss and damage suffered

- Pinto suffered the ultimate violation of his human rights - loss of life.
- Pinto's family has been deprived of a loving husband and father.
- Pinto's sacrifice and that of his family [1] has not been honoured or compensated for.
- Kenya has been denied the wealth of ideas, experience and commitment that Pinto brought to the struggle for liberation of Kenyan people
- People struggling for liberation in Goa, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and other parts of the world have had one of their most ardent supporters removed from their midst.
- Pinto's right to justice has been violated by the Government of Kenya by not investigating and bringing to court the people who were really responsible for his assassination.

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<sup>1</sup> When Pinto died Emma and Pio had three young children.

- The Government of Kenya has deprived the young generation of Kenya from knowing the real history of Pinto's contribution to the struggle for independence and liberation in Kenya.

### **What I expect to be done**

- Immediate independent and public investigation of the assassination of Pinto. Those responsible to be charged for their crime.
- Compensate Pinto's family for the immense loss they suffered with the assassination of Pinto.
- The greatest tribute that the Government can pay Pio Gama Pinto is to show the same concern to Pinto that Pinto himself had about those who sacrificed their property, educational and other opportunities, limbs or even lives in the cause of independence. He wrote:

The sacrifices of the hundreds of thousands of Kenya's freedom fighters must be honoured by the effective implementation of the policy - a democratic, African, socialist state in which the people have the right to be free from economic exploitation and the right to social equality. Kenya's uhuru must not be transformed into freedom to exploit, or freedom to be hungry and live in ignorance. Uhuru must be uhuru for the masses - uhuru from exploitation, from ignorance, disease and poverty.<sup>2</sup>

- Erect national monuments in all major towns in Kenya to honour the memory of Pinto and other freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for Kenya's struggle for liberation.
- Set up of a National Liberation Research, Museum and Archives Centre where the histories, publications and material culture of all national heroes can be collected and used as part of Kenya's heritage. This needs to happen urgently so that Pinto's contemporaries can be interviewed. Many such prominent people have died over the years and Pinto's real history is in danger of being lost.
- Set up a Pio Gama Pinto International Award to honour those who make an outstanding contribution to the political, economic and social liberation of Africa.
- Set up a Pio Gama Pinto Chair of History at the University of Nairobi to encourage research on the Kenyan struggle for liberation.

**Shiraz Durrani**

London.  
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<sup>2</sup> Pinto, Pio Gama (1963) "Glimpses of Kenya's Nationalist Struggle". *Pan Africa*. December 12, 1963. p.39.