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978-1-107-02970-5 - Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency

Huw Bennett

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## Fighting the Mau Mau

British Army counter-insurgency campaigns were supposedly waged within the bounds of international law, overcoming insurgents with the minimum force necessary. This revealing study questions what this meant for the civilian population during the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya in the 1950s, one of Britain's most violent decolonisation wars. For the first time Huw Bennett examines the conduct of soldiers in detail, uncovering the uneasy relationship between notions of minimum force and the colonial tradition of exemplary force where harsh repression was frequently employed as a valid means of quickly crushing rebellion. Although a range of restrained policies such as special forces methods, restrictive rules of engagement and surrender schemes prevented the campaign from degenerating into genocide, the army simultaneously coerced the population to drop their support for the rebels, imposing collective fines, mass detentions and frequent interrogations, often tolerating rape, indiscriminate killing and torture to terrorise the population into submission.

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Huw Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contents

---

<i>List of maps</i>	page viii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 ‘A determined campaign against the terrorist bands’	8
Chapter 2 ‘Harmonious relations’: soldiers, civilians and committees	31
Chapter 3 ‘Possibly restrictive to the operations’: marginalising international law in colonial rebellions	60
Chapter 4 ‘The degree of force necessary’: British traditions in countering colonial rebellions	83
Chapter 5 ‘Restraint backed by good discipline’	108
Chapter 6 ‘A dead man cannot talk’: the need for restraint	128
Chapter 7 ‘A lot of indiscriminate shooting’: military repression before Erskine’s arrival	160
Chapter 8 ‘Severe repressive measures’: the army under Erskine	194
Chapter 9 ‘An essential part of the campaign’: civil-military alliances	229
Conclusion	264
<i>Bibliography</i>	270
<i>Index</i>	296

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02970-5 - Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency

Huw Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Maps

---

1 Kenya Colony	<i>Page</i> 9
2 Administrative areas affected by the Emergency	10



Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02970-5 - Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency

Huw Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Abbreviations

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ADALS	Assistant Director of Army Legal Services
AG	adjutant-general
BEM	British Empire Medal
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
C-in-C	commander-in-chief
CO	Colonial Office
CO	commanding officer
CPEC	Central Province Emergency Committee
CPM	Colonial Police Medal
CSCCC	Chief Secretary's Complaints Coordinating Committee
CSM	company sergeant-major
DALS	Director of Army Legal Services
DC	district commissioner
DCM	Distinguished Conduct Medal
DDOps	deputy director of operations
DEC	district Emergency Committee
DIS	director of intelligence and security
DMIO	district military intelligence officer
DO	district officer
DOKG	district officer Kikuyu Guard
FIA	field intelligence assistant
FIO	field intelligence Officer
GM	George Medal
GOC	general officer commanding
G(Ops)	General Staff Operations Branch
GSO1 Ops (K)	general staff officer, grade I, operations, Kenya
HAA	heavy anti-aircraft artillery
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICRCG	Inter-departmental Committee on the Revision of the Geneva Conventions

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Huw Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## x List of abbreviations

IMT	International Military Tribunal
IWMD	Imperial War Museum Department of Documents
IWMSA	Imperial War Museum Sound Archive
JAPOIT	joint army–police operational intelligence teams
JSCSC	Joint Services Command and Staff College
KAR	King’s African Rifles
KCPIS	Kenya Colony political intelligence summary
KGCU:	Kikuyu Guard Combat Unit
KIC	Kenya Intelligence Committee
KICFA	Kenya Intelligence Committee fortnightly appreciation
KISUM	Kenya intelligence summary
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KPR	Kenya Police Reserve
KRA	Kenya Regiment Archive
MELF	Middle East Land Forces
MIO	military intelligence officer
MM	Military Medal
NAM	National Army Museum
OC	officer commanding
ODRP	Oxford Development Records Project, Rhodes House, Oxford
PA	prohibited area
PEC	provincial Emergency Committee
PMIO	provincial military intelligence Officer
QPMG	Queen’s Police Medal for Gallantry
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
RMO	regimental medical officer
RSM	regimental sergeant-major
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
SBFIS	Special Branch fortnightly intelligence summary
SFT	special force team
SIB	Special Investigations Branch
sitrep	situation report
TCT	tracker combat team
TNA	The National Archives, Kew
VCIGS	Vice-Chief of the Imperial General Staff
WOPC	warrant officer platoon commander

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-02970-5 - Fighting the Mau Mau: The British Army and Counter-Insurgency in the Kenya Emergency

Huw Bennett

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii Acknowledgements

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