

COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF WAJIR



COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF WAJIR

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THE COMMITTEE ON GENDER, CULTURE, CHILDREN, SPORTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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REPORT ON THE 98<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL KENYA MUSIC AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL HELD IN  
MOI GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL-ELDORET IN UASIN GISHU COUNTY.

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Office of the Clerk,  
County Assembly of Wajir.

Jan, 2026

REPORT ON THE 98<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL KENYA MUSIC AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL HELD IN  
MOI GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL-ELDORET IN UASIN GISHU COUNTY.

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## **1.0 PREFACE**

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

Culture, heritage, and library services are fundamental pillars of identity, peace, governance, and sustainable development in Wajir County. Anchored in Article 11 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010), culture is recognized as the foundation of the nation and a critical driver of unity, development, and social cohesion.

Wajir County is endowed with a rich and diverse cultural heritage encompassing both tangible and intangible assets. Tangible heritage includes historical and heritage sites, traditional wells, museums, libraries, rock art, sacred landscapes, and monuments. Intangible heritage includes oral traditions, indigenous governance and justice systems (xeer), pastoral and environmental knowledge, traditional food systems, crafts, rituals, and social practices that continue to guide daily life and community cohesion.

Despite this richness, the culture, heritage, and library sector in Wajir County faces significant challenges. These include limited funding, weak policy and legal frameworks, inadequate documentation, low public awareness, insufficient staff capacity, underdeveloped infrastructure, and limited use of digital technologies. As a result, many heritage assets remain undocumented, unprotected, and underutilized for socio-economic development.

This report is presented to the County Assembly of Wajir in order to:

- Provide a comprehensive overview of the current status of culture, heritage, and library services in the County;
- Demonstrate the socio-economic and development importance of culture and heritage;
- Highlight key challenges and existing gaps; and
- Propose strategic actions and policy directions that require legislative, budgetary and oversight support by the County Assembly.

## **1. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **1.2 Constitutional Mandate**

Article 11 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) obligates both the National and County Governments to:

- Promote and protect cultural heritage;
- Recognize and safeguard indigenous knowledge systems;
- Support libraries, museums, arts, and cultural expression as foundations of national values and identity.

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### 1.3 County Government Mandate

Under the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution, County Governments are responsible for:

- Cultural activities and cultural development;
- Management of public libraries;
- Establishment and management of local museums and heritage sites.

### 1.4 Alignment with Development Frameworks

The culture and heritage sector in Wajir County aligns with and contributes directly to:

- The Wajir County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP);
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly on peace, education, decent work, and sustainable communities;
- UNESCO Conventions on the Protection of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage; and
- The National Culture and Heritage Policy.

## 2.0 Establishment of the Committee

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

The Committee was established on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022 pursuant to provision of Standing Order 201 (1). The Committee is mandated, among others;

- Investigate, inquire into and report on all the matters relating to the management, activities, administrations, operations and estimates of the assigned ministries and departments
- Investigate and inquire into all matters relating to the assigned ministries and departments as they may deem necessary, and as may be referred to them by the house
- To vet and report on all appointments where the constitution or any law requires the county assembly to approve except those under the standing order 192
- Make reports and recommendations to the county assembly as often as possible, including recommendations of proposed legislation.

## 2.1 Committee Composition

**Mr. Speaker Sir,** the committee comprises of the following Members: -

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1. Hon. Amina Ibrahim Mohamed- Chairperson
2. Hon. Mariam Abdi Mohamed - Vice Chairperson
3. Hon. Abdirahim Farah - Member
4. Hon. Fardowsa Abdullahi Mohamed - Member
5. Hon. Rashid Billow Adam-Member
6. Hon. Umulkatum Abdisalan - Member
7. Hon. Aden Abdi Bulle - Member

## **2.2 Acknowledgment**

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

The completion of this crucial activity and report has been a collective effort made possible through the unwavering support and dedication of numerous individuals and offices. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to:

**Office of the Speaker, County Assembly of Wajir:** Your leadership and commitment to the principles of transparency, accountability, and democracy have been instrumental in overseeing the public participation process. Your guidance has ensured the integrity and inclusivity of our legislative efforts.

**Office of the Clerk, County Assembly of Wajir:** Your administrative prowess and unwavering dedication to facilitating and coordinating the various aspects of the public participation process have been pivotal in ensuring its smooth execution.

**Members of the Committee on Gender, Culture, Children, Sports and Social Services:** The members of this committee, who brought their expertise and passion to the fore, have been central to the development of the Wajir County Miraa and Other Substances Control Bill, 2025. Your commitment to representing the interests of our constituents in matters of their participation in governance has been invaluable.

**The Technical Team of the Committee:** The dedicated staff that formed the technical team of the committee, your expertise, tireless effort, and unwavering commitment to the legislative process has played a crucial role in the drafting and analysis of the bill.

Your collaborative efforts have been vital in making this activity a success. Your support

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and dedication have paved the way for the creation of informed and equitable policies. Thank you for your unwavering support and partnership.

SIGN.....

DATE.....

**Hon. Amina Ibrahim Mohamed**  
**Chairperson - Committee on Gender, Culture, Children, Sports and Social Services**

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### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

Culture and heritage refer to the values, traditions, knowledge, practices, and material expressions passed down through generations that define a community's identity.

It includes:

- Natural Heritage: Landscapes, ecosystems, and natural features with cultural, historical, or environmental significance (e.g., sacred forests, wells, rangelands).  
*Wajir has SIMBA HILL in Bute as one*
- Tangible Heritage:
  - Movable: Physical objects like tools, clothing, artworks, or manuscripts. *(Our cultural items, like Ganbar, Xero, Qarsin, Haan, Dakal, Amal Etc)*
  - Immovable: Structures or sites such as mosques, graves, or traditional huts.
- Intangible Heritage: Non-physical cultural expressions like language, oral traditions, music, dance, rituals, and traditional knowledge. *Wajir has poetry, oral traditions, riddles, food ways, herbal knowledge, pastoral knowledge etc*

Together, these elements preserve a community's history, guide its way of life, and can support economic and social development.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

Tangible cultural heritage refers to physical and visible cultural resources that people can see, touch, visit, and protect. These assets narrate the story of Wajir County's history, belief systems, governance structures, and survival strategies in an arid and semi-arid environment. When properly protected and promoted, tangible heritage assets provide significant opportunities for tourism, education, employment, and generation of County Own Source Revenue (OSR).

#### Gazetted Cultural and Heritage Sites

The following sites are officially gazetted under the National Museums and Heritage Act and are legally protected:

- Orahey Wells Complex • Orahey War Bunker (World War II Site) • Italian War Relics and Armories • Commonwealth War Graves Site • Kenya Armed Forces Old Comrades Association (KAFOCA) Building • Officers' Mess Building • War Bunker (Wajir Town) • Armory Building • Former District Commissioner's Office (Current DC's Office) • District Registrar of Persons Office • Wajir Museum

These sites reflect Wajir's strategic role in global history, colonial administration, military operations, governance evolution, and pastoral survival.

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### Non-Gazetted but Significant Heritage Sites

Several culturally important sites are not yet gazetted but remain critical to Wajir's heritage:

- Lesayu Rock Art • Batalu Rock Art • Shallete Historical Wells • Old MCH Buildings • Wajir Police Station Old Prison Cells • Masjid Nur (Old Town Mosque) • Wagalla Massacre Mass Graves • Lake Yahud (Bottomless Earth Dam constructed by Israel)

These sites require urgent documentation, protection, and legal recognition.

### Potential Heritage Sites for Future Gazettement

- Simba Hills (Bute Sub-County) • Maqarale Wells • Rihfeyt Wells • Caves in Sarman • Mansa Cultural Centre

These sites hold strong historical, cultural, ecological, and tourism potential and should be prioritized for assessment and gazettelement.

### 3.1 Historical and Heritage Sites

Wajir County has nineteen (19) gazetted monuments and one (1) gazetted site, reflecting local, national, and global history. Key sites include:

- Orahey War Bunker (World War II Site)  
Reflects Wajir's strategic role during World War II and colonial military operations.
- Italian War Relics and Armories  
Remnants of colonial conflict providing insight into Kenya's wartime and colonial history.
- Commonwealth War Graves  
International heritage sites commemorating soldiers who died during global wars, attracting national and international visitors.
- Wagalla Massacre Graves and Memorial Sites  
Sites of remembrance, reconciliation, justice, and national healing.
- Masjid Nur (Historic Mosque)  
One of the earliest mosques in Wajir, symbolizing Islamic heritage, learning, and spiritual continuity.
- Colonial-Era Administrative Buildings  
Represent the evolution of governance from colonial administration to post-independence systems.

#### Income Generation Potential

- Heritage and memorial tourism through entry fees;
- Guided tours led by trained local youth;

- Educational tourism involving schools, colleges, and researchers;
- Sale of souvenirs, refreshments, and cultural products around heritage sites.

#### Benefits to the County

- Increased Own Source Revenue through entrance fees and permits;
- Job creation for guides, caretakers, and security personnel;
- Growth of small and medium enterprises around heritage locations.

### 3.2 Water and Pastoral Heritage

Water heritage is central to life, survival, and cultural identity in Wajir County. Key sites include:

- Orahey Wells Complex;
- Traditional wells such as Shallete and Maqarale.

These wells are not merely water sources but cultural institutions governed by customary law (xeer). They demonstrate indigenous engineering, shared resource management, cooperation, and environmental sustainability developed over generations.

#### Income Generation Potential

- Cultural and learning tours on indigenous water management;
- Eco-tourism showcasing traditional water conservation in arid lands;
- Research and documentation projects funded by development partners;
- Employment for local custodians and guides.

#### Benefits to the County

- Promotion of climate-smart indigenous solutions;
- Attraction of research institutions and development partners;
- Strengthening of sustainable water governance systems.

### 3.3 Rock Art, Sacred, Archaeological, and Natural Heritage Sites

These sites reflect Wajir's deep historical roots, spirituality, and connection to nature. They include:

- Lesayu Rock Art  
Ancient paintings and engravings showing early human expression, beliefs, and lifestyles.

- Batalu Rock Art  
Ancient horse-foot engravings reflecting early human settlement and symbolic expression.
- Sarman Caves  
Archaeological sites linked to early settlement and refuge.
- Simba Hill (Bute Sub-County)  
A unique natural heritage site named after its lion-like shape, holding strong cultural symbolism and eco-tourism potential.

#### Income Generation Potential

- Eco-cultural and nature-based tourism;
- Photography and storytelling tourism;
- Academic and research partnerships;
- Community conservation and site management jobs.

#### Benefits to the County

- County branding as a cultural and eco-tourism destination;
- Employment opportunities for youth and community scouts;
- Protection of heritage through income-based incentives.

### 3.4 Museums and Libraries

#### Wajir Museum

The Wajir Museum is the only pastoralist-focused museum in Northern Kenya. It houses cultural artifacts, tools, oral histories, and indigenous knowledge.

#### Income Generation Potential

- Entry fees from visitors;
- Paid exhibitions and cultural events;
- Research and documentation grants;
- Sale of cultural publications and replicas.

#### Benefits to the County

- Revenue generation through services and partnerships;
- Preservation of cultural knowledge;

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- Educational support for schools and researchers.

### Community Libraries

Community libraries are located in Wajir, Tarbaj, Griftu, Bute, and Habaswein. They serve as centers for literacy, research, digital learning, and cultural documentation.

#### Income Generation Potential

- Space hire for meetings and trainings;
- Digital services and internet access fees;
- Adult literacy and skills training programmes;
- Employment for librarians, archivists, and researchers.

#### Benefits to the County

- Improved literacy and human capital;
- Long-term preservation of cultural and educational resources;
- Revenue from service provision and partnerships.

## 4.0 The National Kenya Music and Cultural Festival

### Mr. Speaker Sir,

The Kenya Music and Cultural Festival is one of the flagship programmes of the Department of Culture, in the Ministry of Gender, Culture, The Arts and Heritage. The festival, held annually, brings together all communities in Kenya showcasing the diversity of the Kenyan cultural expressions including music, dance, drama, chants, oral traditions, artifacts, crafts, traditional foods and indigenous practices. It is held for 8 days in the last week of November and the first week of December.

The Kenya Music and Cultural Festival (KMCF) promotes Kenya's diverse cultural heritage and nurtures artistic talent as a vehicle for national cohesion, creative economy growth and cultural diplomacy. The festival brings together performers and cultural practitioners from across the country to celebrate Kenya's rich traditions through music, dance, drama and spoken word.

This year's 98th Edition festival was held from 30th November to 8th December, 2025 at Moi Girls High School, Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County, under the theme "Threads of Culture, Weaves of Opportunity," (Nyuzi za Utamaduni, Urembo wa Fursa). The theme underscores

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the interwoven nature of culture as a source of identity, creativity and opportunity for sustainable development.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

The 98<sup>th</sup> National Kenya Music and Cultural Festival was held in Eldoret from the 30<sup>th</sup> November to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025 with following objectives: -

1. To identify and safeguard Kenya's tangible and intangible cultural heritage
2. To promote and enhance learning, practice and appreciation of the arts, culture and cultural and creative industries (CCIs)
3. To promote cultural exchange at national, regional and international levels
4. To promote peace and national values of integrity, inclusivity and cohesion amongst the Kenyan communities
5. To enhance livelihoods and contribute to the realization of Kenya's development through the promotion of cultural and creative industries (CCIs)
6. To entrench culture in climate action by enhancing the participation of communities in preservation of the environment
7. Recognizing culture as a vital source of prosperity and linking performing artists to the broader creative industry to contribute to the overall growth and sustainability of the creative industry.

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

Despite our rich culture and heritage as depicted above, Wajir County was conspicuously missing from the event and has therefore missed a golden opportunity to showcase and exhibit our diverse and unique cultures in order to build understanding, foster identity, promote unity and drive innovation by sharing traditions, values and perspectives which reduces prejudice, enhances well-being and creates inclusive communities where people feel seen and connected to their heritage and others.

## 4.1 Challenges Facing the Culture Department in the County

### 4.1.1 Limited Funding

Culture, heritage, and library services receive very low budget allocations compared to other sectors. As a result:

- Many heritage sites cannot be maintained, restored, or protected.
- Documentation of cultural practices and historical sites is delayed or not done at all.
- Libraries lack books, equipment, and learning materials.

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- Cultural events, festivals, and awareness programmes are rarely organized.

Limited funding also makes it difficult to attract and retain skilled personnel or partner effectively with development agencies and donors.

#### 4.1.2 Weak Policy and Legal Frameworks

Wajir County currently lacks a specific county policy and legislation on culture, heritage, and library services. This creates several problems:

- There is no clear guidance on how heritage sites should be identified, protected, or managed.
- Cultural custodians and elders are not legally recognized or protected.
- Budgeting and planning for culture is often overlooked.
- Enforcement against destruction, neglect, or misuse of heritage sites is weak.

Without a legal framework, culture and heritage remain vulnerable and poorly coordinated.

#### 4.1.3. Limited Awareness Creation

Public awareness on the value of culture, heritage, and libraries is very low, especially among the youth.

- Many community members do not understand why heritage sites should be protected.
- Youth increasingly view traditional culture as outdated and irrelevant.
- Libraries are underutilized because people are unaware of the services they offer.
- Cultural knowledge is rarely promoted through schools, media, or community forums.

This lack of awareness leads to neglect, destruction, and loss of cultural assets.

#### 4.1.4. Documentation Gaps

Most of Wajir’s cultural heritage—especially intangible heritage—remains undocumented.

- Oral traditions, poetry, indigenous knowledge, and customary laws are passed verbally.
- Elders and skilled custodians are aging, and many pass away without recording their knowledge.
- There are limited archives, recordings, or written records.

This leads to permanent loss of cultural knowledge and history, making it difficult to preserve or teach future generations.

#### **4.1.5. Poor Infrastructure**

Cultural and heritage infrastructure in Wajir County is underdeveloped and inadequate.

- Many heritage sites lack fencing, signage, or protection.
- Libraries have limited space, outdated furniture, and insufficient learning resources.
- The museum lacks modern exhibition facilities, storage, and conservation equipment.

Poor infrastructure discourages visitors, learners, researchers, and tourists, limiting economic and educational benefits.

#### **4.1.6. Digital Divide**

There is limited use of technology in managing and promoting culture and heritage.

- Most heritage records are not digitized.
- Libraries have limited computers, internet access, and digital content.
- Rural communities have minimal access to online cultural resources.
- Youth lack platforms to engage with culture through digital media.

The digital divide reduces visibility, limits access to knowledge, and excludes Wajir from global cultural platforms.

### **4.2 Committee Recommendations**

#### **4.2.1 Policy and Legislation**

- Develop and enact a County Culture, Heritage and Library Policy
- Establish a County Cultural Heritage Committee

#### **4.2.2 Financing and Budget Support**

- Increase budgetary allocation for culture and heritage
- Mainstream culture in CIDP and sectoral plans

#### **4.2.3 Documentation and Digitization**

- County-wide heritage mapping and registration
- Establish digital archives within libraries

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#### 4.2.4 Public Awareness and Youth Engagement

- Cultural festivals, school programmes, and media campaigns
- Use the department's cultural teams for entertainment during public holidays.
- Take part national festivals like Kenya music and Cultural festival

#### 4.2.5 Infrastructure Development

- Restore heritage sites
- Upgrade libraries and museum facilities.

### 5.0 Conclusion

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

Culture, heritage, and library services are strategic assets for peace, identity, food security, education and economic development in Wajir County. With strong policy backing, adequate financing and institutional support, these assets can significantly contribute to sustainable development and County Own Source Revenue.

This report respectfully calls upon this house to provide legislative leadership, budgetary support, and oversight to safeguard, promote, and sustainably utilize Wajir County's rich cultural heritage for present and future generations.

### 6.0 Adoption of the Report

**Mr. Speaker Sir,**

In light of this, the Committee adopted this report as signed below and prays that the Wajir County Assembly passes and adopts this report with the proposed recommendations, as a vital step toward realizing our shared vision of a people-centered government and an empowered community in our County.

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S/NO	NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
1.	Hon. Amina Ibrahim Mohamed	Chairperson	
2.	Hon. Mariam Abdi Mohamed	Vice Chairperson	
3.	Hon. Abdirahim Farah	Member	
4.	Hon. Fardowsa Abdullahi Mohamed	Member	
5.	Hon. Rashid Billow Adam	Member	
6.	Hon. Umulkatum Abdisalan	Member	
7.	Hon. Aden Abdi Bulle	Member	

Thank you for your attention and consideration in this important matter and God bless us all.