



Statement of Concern

2 September 2025

We, the Northern Block Residents Limited (NBRL), representing Resident Associations including Gigiri Road, Hill View, Kunde Road, Kitisuru, Lakeview Estate, Mitini Estate, New Muthaiga, Olcani Rosslyn, Peponi Road, Rosslyn Alliance, Rosslyn Heights, Rosslyn Lone Tree, and Spring Valley, wish to express our deep concern regarding the abrupt changes in the management of Karura Forest.

Our member associations, many of which border Karura Forest or lie in its immediate vicinity, have directly benefited from the forest's transformation over the past 15 years. We therefore state as follows:

1. Transformation through Joint Management

The joint management arrangement between the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and the Friends of Karura Forest (FKF) has been a model of success. This partnership has ensured security, environmental stewardship, and strong community participation. The establishment of fencing, professional rangers, and community engagement programs turned Karura into one of Nairobi's safest and most accessible green spaces, attracting over 70,000 monthly visitors.

2. Residents' Historical Experience

Many of our member communities recall when Karura was synonymous with insecurity and neglect. Burglaries, violent robberies, and land-grabbing in the 1990s made the forest and its environs unsafe. It is only through the collaborative approach with FKF that confidence was restored, with our children once again able to play outdoors and residents able to walk and recreate in safety.

3. Abrupt Removal of Friends of Karura Forest

The sudden removal of FKF from the management of Karura Forest, without consultation or public participation, risks undoing these hard-won gains. Even more concerning, there was an agreement that **KFS and FKF would manage the forest together until 2041**, and this change goes against that understanding. We fear that this unilateral takeover by KFS will jeopardize security, conservation, and accountability. Recent reports from the Auditor General citing chronic weaknesses in KFS financial management further deepen our concern.

4. Fear of Encroachment and Development

Our member associations are deeply worried about potential encroachment and illegal development within Karura Forest. Already, we have noted with alarm the construction of a

tarmac road inside the forest near marker 15. Such actions raise legitimate fears that Karura could again be exposed to land-grabbing or incremental destruction.

5. Representation within FKF

It is important to emphasize that the board representatives of Friends of Karura Forest (FKF) are drawn directly from Resident Associations that abut Karura. This structure has ensured that those most directly impacted by the forest's wellbeing are active decision-makers in its management. Removing FKF from this role not only undermines a proven conservation model but also sidelines the very communities who have the greatest stake in protecting Karura.

6. Our Position and Demands

We therefore respectfully urge the Ministry of Environment, Kenya Forest Service, and all relevant authorities to:

- **Retain Friends of Karura Forest (FKF) in the co-management framework** and uphold the principles of joint forest management.
- **Guarantee transparency, accountability, and public participation** in any decision-making regarding Karura.
- **Prevent any development or land allocation** that compromises the integrity of Karura Forest.
- **Review and reverse the fee increases** and revenue collection changes that undermine accessibility and community trust.

7. Karura as a Shared Heritage

Karura Forest is a legacy that belongs to all Nairobians. Its protection cannot be subject to unilateral decisions that disregard the community. As we reflect on this moment, we remind all stakeholders of this truth:

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” – Edmund Burke

We remain committed to constructive dialogue and collective action to safeguard Karura Forest for present and future generations.

Sincerely,

For and on behalf of **Northern Block Residents Limited**