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Despite ethnic tensions, a robust political climate and occasional terrorist attacks, Kenya is marching forward with confidence.

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Kenya Today

At first glance, Kenya appears to be facing the future with its customary swagger. But beneath the facade of confidence that comes from being a regional African powerhouse lies a country that can feel like it's just one step away from declaring war on itself. Here, too, is a country increasingly sure of its place in the world even as it longs to tell the rest of the world to mind its own business.

Best in Print

Out of Africa (Karen Blixen, aka Isak Dinesen; 1937) The definitive account of colonial Kenya.

A Primate's Memoir (Robert M Sapolsky; 2002) Funny, poignant account by a young primatologist in Kenya.

No Man's Land (George Monbiot; 1994) The modern struggle of the region's nomadic tribes.

The Flame Trees of Thika (Elspeth Huxley; 1959) A marvellously told colonial memoir.

Petals of Blood (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o; 1977) The story of four Kenyans struggling to come to terms with their newly independent country.

The Worlds of a Maasai Warrior: An Autobiography (Tepilit Ole Saitoti; 1988) Extraordinary insight into the Maasai world.

Best on Film

The Great Rift (2010) BBC documentary about the Rift Valley.

Echo of the Elephants (1993) Elephants of Amboseli National Park.

Enough is Enough (2004) Critically acclaimed portrayal of the Mau Mau uprising.

Born Free (1966) Lions of legend return to the wild.

Out of Africa (1985) Caused a generation to dream of Africa.

The Constant Gardener (2005) Gripping Hollywood story set in Kenya.

A Robust Democracy

It may seem a strange question to ask of a country that has proved to be one of Africa's most stable, but one of the hottest topics of conversation among ordinary Kenyans is this: can Kenya hold together? Kenyans were badly scarred by the post-2007 election violence, a conflict that pitted members of one ethnic group against another in an outbreak of score-settling and bloody pogroms. An estimated 1300 people died in the violence and some 600,000 Kenyans were forced to flee their homes. For a time, it looked as if the country might disintegrate, or even go the way of Rwanda circa 1994. The country pulled back from the brink.

Thus it was that when Uhuru Kenyatta scraped over the line in the 2013 presidential elections amid allegations of electoral irregularities, the country and the world held their breaths. This time – and again a year later amid rising political tensions between the government and the opposition – a fragile peace prevailed. But somehow, a threshold was passed and the country held together – again. Had Kenya's political leaders grown in maturity sufficiently to recognise the dangers of escalating tensions? Or did they decide to bide their time for some future battle? At the time of writing, the question remains unanswered.

ICC & the International Conspiracy

Kenyans love a good conspiracy theory, particularly when it concerns Western relations with African countries. And given Kenya's experience of colonial interference and exploitation, who could blame them?

In March 2011, the International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted six prominent Kenyans, including presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta and former government minister William Ruto, for crimes