



Press Release

Friends of Karura Forest ‘increasingly concerned’ over Forest’s future

Nairobi, 1 September 2025 – The Friends of Karura Forest (FKF) Community Forest Association is calling for immediate restoration of the Forest’s ongoing 20-year Joint Management Agreement.

This comes after the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) abruptly announced that on Friday 29 August it was taking over collection of all forest entry payments via eCitizen and that all management personnel and Scouts employed by FKF should leave the forest by 1 pm that day.

“We are growing increasingly concerned about what will happen to Karura going forwards as there is no clear path for how it is being managed,” said Professor Karanja Njoroge, past chair of FKF and Board Member. “We are also shocked by the entrance fee increase which could stop Kenyans from enjoying one of the largest urban forests in the world.”

The new eCitizen payment system includes an extra KSH 50/= platform payment plus 16% VAT for each transaction. After nearly 20 years paying the same entrance fee, adult Kenyans now pay 174/= instead of 100/= and the Kenyan child fee more than doubles from 50/= to 116/=.

As a result of the fee increase and the general uncertainty as to who is actually running the forest, residents confirm the numbers of visitors over the weekend fell dramatically.

The future of the 122 regular staff including the Scouts who were at the gates and patrolling the forest remains unclear, as well as the prospects for casual support staff including 400 women from local communities. They were paid from the entrance fees, collected and managed under a Joint Management Agreement between the Kenya Forest Service, a government agency and the Friends of Karura Forest, a non-profit Community Forest Association (CFA).

The jointly managed funds were used for security, general operations, and infrastructure management including maintaining the electric fence, forest access logistics and forest ecosystem regeneration. Implementation contracts are in the name of the Friends of Karura Forest CFA making it contractually liable for the obligations.

“We need to urgently get Friends of Karura in again to jointly manage the forest day-to-day operations and work with local communities,” said Professor Njoroge.

“Our Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai saved this forest for the people of Kenya and then the Friends of Karura and many other dedicated Kenyans helped transform it from a no go zone into the green paradise we see today. We owe it to them and the 70,000 visitors who come every month to make sure the forest is run smoothly and safely for the benefit of all.”