

Kenya, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo back Israel's genocidal assault on Palestinians in Gaza

Kipchumba Ochieng
15 October 2023

The governments of Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya, home to some of the most horrific crimes of imperialism in the twentieth century, have joined the US and European governments in their support for Israel's campaign of mass murder and ethnic cleansing of Gaza.

They are rushing to reinforce the howls of outrage emanating from Washington, London, Berlin, Paris and Madrid. But any examination of the record of these rotten regimes, and of imperialism's crimes against their peoples historically, instead underscores the political amnesia required for anyone to swallow this torrent of hypocrisy and lies.

Kenya's President William Ruto, indicted over crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court over his role in instigating ethnic violence after the 2007 elections that left over 1,500 dead and half a million displaced, posted a statement expressing "solidarity with the State of Israel".

Kenya, he pontificated, "unequivocally condemns terrorism and attacks on innocent civilians in the country" and supported actions against "perpetrators, organizers, financiers, sponsors, supporters and enablers" of terrorism.

Rwanda, under the three-decade brutal dictatorship of Paul Kagame, issued a similar statement, condemning the Palestinian armed uprising as an "act of terror", and expressing "sympathy" for "Israel following the terror attacks on Israeli territory... leading to the loss of lives, numerous injuries and the abduction of hostages."

Democratic Republic of Congo President Félix Tshisekedi, who recently sent the army to crack down on anti-United Nations protestors in Goma city, killing over 50 demonstrators, "firmly condemned the terrorist attacks... causing heavy loss of life and many injuries."

Despite the lying propaganda campaign of the mass media, the populations in all these countries, like the vast majority of the world's people, solidarise with the Palestinians who have been subject to decades of oppression and persecution.

Kenya gained independence in 1963 after a 10-year anti-colonial struggle waged by radicalized peasants against Britain. The Mau Mau uprising was an armed rebellion launched by mostly Kikuyu peasants in central Kenya, whose fertile land was expropriated by British settlers.

Like today's Netanyahu's regime portrayal of Palestinians as

"animals", the British colonial authorities decried the heroic fighters—who were armed with homemade guns, machetes and bows and arrows against the modern equipped British army and its local collaborators—as animals and savages animated by backward beliefs. As one official study of the colonial authorities said, the Mau Mau were "an irrational force of evil, dominated by bestial impulses and influenced by world communism".

Kimathi, the most important Mau Mau general, was captured, subject to a kangaroo trial and executed. An estimated 150,000 Kenyans died in the war. Studies have showed how the UK detained half a million people in de facto concentration camps as a punishment for being potential Mau Mau sympathisers.

Thousands were beaten to death or died from malnutrition, typhoid, tuberculosis or dysentery. Inmates were used as slave labour and subjected to sexual assault. Interrogation under torture, castration and using broken bottles inserted in vaginas was widespread. The number of white civilian colonialists killed by Mau Mau attacks the basis of British imperialist propaganda denounced the uprising—was just 32.

DR Congo is the home to one of the most horrific crimes of imperialism. Colonised by Belgium, an estimated eight to ten million Africans died as victims of King Leopold's "rubber-terror" from 1885 to 1908—because of forced labour to collect rubber for export, together with epidemic disease and famine. Parents who refused to participate in rubber collection were threatened with having their children's hands cut off and their entire villages razed.

After independence in 1960, Belgium and the US worked to murder the democratically elected Patrice Lumumba, the leader of the anti-colonial struggle. Lumumba's demand that the Congo should control its own extensive mineral wealth signed his death warrant. He was captured by pro-imperialist forces, tortured and executed, and his body dissolved in acid. The Belgians kept his teeth as souvenirs.

Over the next decades, Congo was ruled by the CIA's proxy, Joseph Mobutu, who ran the country as a kleptocracy. He looted an estimated \$5 billion before his removal in 1997. The spilling over into the Congo of the Rwandan crisis of the 1990s cost as many as 5.4 million lives over the next decade, dubbed the world's deadliest since World War II, in what has come known as the First Congo and Second Congo wars.

Rwanda was colonised by Germany and then Belgium. The roots of the 1994 Tutsi Genocide, which saw 900,000 people butchered in 100 days, has roots in the colonial era. Belgium enforced strict hierarchical divides among otherwise fluid and overlapping ethnic groups, the Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa, as a way of maintaining control in Rwanda.

At first, Belgian colonial authorities reinforced existing Tutsi elite power structures. But during the late 1950s, when the Tutsi monarchy started calling for independence, Belgian imperialism responded by magnifying long-simmering resentment among the Hutu peasant majority and reversed the discrimination, elevating Hutu over Tutsi and creating a new oppressive state based on the exclusion of Tutsi.

When Rwanda gained independence from Belgium in 1962, French imperialism intervened to shore up its diminishing influence in Africa. Paris provided military and economic support to the Hutu extremist government of Juvénal Habyarimana. Paris deployed French troops, arms, and training to the Rwandan army in the immediate lead-up to the genocide, as it carried out mass arrests, torture and executions of predominately Tutsi opponents.

When the genocide broke out in 1994, France launched a new military intervention, providing safe passage out of the country of many perpetrators, most to Congo. Paris was determined to maintain its backing for the Rwandan regime against the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi armed group led by US-trained Kagame and stationed in neighbouring Uganda, a key US ally. From Uganda, the RPF waged a civil war for control of Rwanda. The Rwandan genocide was the product of this imperialist struggle between France and the United States over influence within the region, which Paris regarded as critical for the maintenance of French control in Africa.

The “support” of these states for the genocidal war now being waged by Israel is in fact only the support of bourgeois ruling cliques that have enriched themselves through the immiseration of workers and the rural masses since independence. They function as the local representative of the imperialist powers, their banks and corporations, when the imperialist powers are determined to subjugate the resource-rich continent, especially to curb Russian and Chinese influence. They are all responding to legitimate social and democratic aspirations of workers amid soaring levels of inequality with the same authoritarian, police-state measures and violence of the imperialist states and Israel.

Kenya is run by millionaire President William Ruto. Since his election last year, Ruto has implemented brutal International Monetary Fund-dictated policies. He has slashed fuel and maize subsidies. His infamous Finance Bill, that includes tax hikes on income and goods is opposed by nearly 90 percent of a population that has already suffering under the collapse of the Kenya shilling, job losses and precariousness, and soaring inflation.

Since the rise of anti-austerity protests in March, police have outlawed demonstrations, carried out mass arrests, imprisoned opposition leaders, and used teargas, batons, water cannon and live bullets that have killed at least 75.

Ruto has solidified Kenya’s traditional role as a US proxy in Eastern Africa. He has continued the deployment of Kenyan troops in Somalia to suppress the al-Shabaab Islamist insurgency.

Located on the Indian Ocean and the entrance to the Red Sea, Kenya is geopolitically key: around \$700 billion in maritime shipping passes through every year, including nearly all Europe’s trade with Asia. It is one of Washington’s chokepoints in case of war against China.

Ruto has also signed up to Western-backed East Africa “peacekeeping” force to Congo’s mineral-rich east to assist President Félix Tshisekedi’s attempt to stabilise the war-torn region to allow imperialism to plunder minerals such as cassiterite, columbite-tantalite, wolframite, beryl, gold, and monazite. Congo’s resources are also viewed by Washington and its European imperialist allies as key to waging war against Beijing.

Ruto’s latest actions has been to call for the reinstatement of a Western-backed, French puppet president—President Mohamed Bazoum—in Niger. He has signed off on Washington’s idea to deploy Kenya’s infamous corrupt police force to *Haiti*, the Western Hemisphere’s most impoverished country to suppress heavily-armed gangs allied with competing factions of Haiti’s pro-imperialist ruling elite.

In Rwanda, Kagame has ruled with an iron fist for nearly three decades. In 2021, he deployed 3,000 troops funded by the European Union to suppress an Islamist rebellion in the impoverished north of Mozambique. French energy giant Total has US\$20 billion of liquefied natural gas investments in the area. Kagame has also accepted becoming the British sub-contractor in charge of enforcing Britain’s racist migration policies. Announced in April 2022, a deal with the Conservative government would see thousands of asylum seekers sent to Rwanda. Kagame has received an upfront payment of £140 million.

The degeneration of the bourgeois regimes in the former colonial countries shows that there is no national road to the liberation of oppressed peoples. There is tragic similarity between Zionism and African nationalism. The idea that new African states, created on the borders forged by European imperialism, could meet the social and democratic aspirations of Africans has proven as false as the Zionist myth that the Jews could find sanctuary through the creation of a religiously exclusivist state founded through the dispossession off its Arab inhabitants. Instead, all these countries, ruled by a parasitical minority, are in a headlong descent into police state forms of rule, fascism and war. This can be prevented only through the unification of the working class, beyond all borders created by imperialism, in a joint struggle for socialism.



To contact the WSWP and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)