

# Demand the immediate release of Communist Party Marxist-Kenya leader Booker Omole!

Statement of the International Committee of the Fourth International  
25 February 2026

The Central Committee of the Communist Party Marxist Kenya (CPM-K) has reported that its secretary general, Booker Ngesa Omole, was violently abducted on Monday in Isiolo town by the Kenya Police Service.

In a public statement February 24, the party wrote: “This was not an arrest. This was not lawful detention. This was a kidnapping.” Omole was “beaten severely. Tortured. Brutalised to near death. His tooth was broken. His finger was cut with a pen knife.” They state that after the assault he was “dumped at Mlolongo Police Station,” a facility associated with extrajudicial kidnappings and killings. His phone signal, they report, was traced there.

The party posted a photo of Omole in a Mlolongo Police Station cell February 25, explaining that he is being held unlawfully, “and the police have refused all access to him. No lawyers. No comrades. No family.”

The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) denounces Omole’s abduction and demands that the Kenyan regime release him immediately.

That Omole was singled out by the “broad-based unity” government of President William Ruto—uniting the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) and the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) founded by the late political fixer Raila Odinga—is clear from the repeated and escalating character of the attacks against him and other CPM-K members. A year ago, he was targeted for assassination as part of a broader campaign of intimidation and repression directed at the party’s leadership.

The assassination attempt came days after the attempted abduction of CPM-K National Chairperson Mwaivu Kaluka in Mombasa—Kenya’s second-largest city—along with two other party members, by plain-clothes police officers. While Kaluka was eventually released, the operation came just weeks after a crackdown on the CPM-K following its national congress in November. At that time, Kaluka and former National Chairperson Kinuthia Ndungu—who had been beaten repeatedly and arrested 10 times—were detained at Central Police Station in Nairobi. No reason was given for their arrest.

The repression against the CPM-K is part of the escalating violence of the Ruto regime since he came to power in 2022. In 2023, Ruto’s first year in power, security forces killed at least 31 demonstrators. In June 2024, during the Gen Z protests against Ruto’s International Monetary Fund (IMF) Finance Bill that sought to impose savage tax hikes, police killed more than 60. In 2025, at least 50 were killed in protests and hundreds injured.

The abduction of Omole takes place amid an escalating campaign of repression against opposition figures in the run-up to next year’s elections. Weeks ago, police violently dispersed a rally in Kitengela organised by the former and expelled the general secretary of ODM, Senator Edwin Sifuna, firing tear gas and live rounds at thousands of supporters. One of the victims, 28-year-old Vincent Ayomo, was shot in the eye as he crossed the road from work and another 50 attendees were injured.

This deepening turn to repression unfolds against a backdrop of extreme social inequality and mounting economic hardship. Oxfam reports show that nearly half of Kenya’s population lives in extreme poverty, surviving on meagre daily incomes, even as wealth accumulates at the very top. A minuscule layer of the super-rich has amassed obscene fortunes: the richest 125 individuals now control more wealth than 77 percent of the population—over 42 million people.

Meanwhile, average real wages have fallen by 11 percent since 2020, the cost of food has surged by 50 percent over the same period, and household expenses for transport and energy remain punishingly high. Public services are deteriorating under the impact of IMF-dictated austerity and debt servicing, exposing millions to collapsing health, education and social support systems.

The trade union bureaucracy is backing this assault on the working class and rural masses. Francis Atwoli, Secretary General of the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU), recently declared that workers should “support him [Ruto] and ignore the noise,” hailing him as the only leader capable of transforming Kenya into a “first-world”

industrialised economy. “The only person who can take us to that level is none other than William Ruto,” Atwoli insisted, presenting the regime’s pro-capitalist agenda as the path to jobs and development.

Atwoli has openly backed Ruto’s violence on protesters after last year’s July 7, 2025 “Saba Saba” protest massacre, when security forces gunned down scores of protesters nationwide commemorating pro-democracy protests in the 1990s against the Western-backed Daniel Arap Moi regime. Speaking days after the bloodshed, Atwoli instructed young people to “forget about demonstrations, remain home, silent, and promote peace,” warning that protests were “scaring investors away.” He called on the government to take “firm measures to curb the unrest.”

By urging youth to stay off the streets while police deployed live ammunition, mass arrests and abductions, the trade union bureaucracy is providing political cover for state repression. It has made clear that it stands not with workers and youth facing austerity and bullets, but with the capitalist state and its demands for “stability” and investor confidence.

The attacks on the CPM-K, the abductions, arbitrary detentions and cross-border renditions to neighbouring Uganda under brutal dictator Yoweri Museveni, carried out by the Kenyan government, are political preparations for far broader assaults on the democratic rights of the population as a whole. What is being tested against one organisation today will be used tomorrow against striking workers, protesting youth and impoverished communities resisting austerity.

These events lay bare the grave dangers confronting the masses as social tensions intensify and the ruling elite closes ranks in defence of its wealth and power.

The turn to open repression in Kenya is being emboldened by the example set by would-be dictator Donald Trump in the United States. Thousands of armed ICE agents have been sent into major urban centres, while detention centres have been built across the country, with 66,000 people held in immigration custody—the highest level in US history. These crackdowns have left two American protesters killed.

In France, President Emmanuel Macron and the political establishment have exploited the death of fascist activist Quentin Deranque—following clashes around an event addressed by Rima Hassan of La France Insoumise (France Unbowed)—to whip up a reactionary campaign against the left. Backed by the neo-fascist National Rally (RN) and the Socialist Party, a broad political front is seeking to criminalise opposition and prepare the ground for an authoritarian shift in advance of next year’s presidential elections. As with Charlie Kirk in the US, the death of a fascist is being weaponised to strengthen the repressive powers of the state and legitimise far-right forces.

In South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) government is deploying the army into townships under the pretext of restoring order. It follows the mass killings of protesters in Tanzania in the aftermath of last year’s elections, where thousands were reported killed or disappeared amid a brutal post-election crackdown, and the ongoing suppression of opposition forces in Uganda under President Yoweri Museveni.

These developments are expressions of a global crisis of capitalism. From Washington to Paris, Pretoria to Nairobi, ruling elites confront deepening inequality, mass anger and political instability. Their common response is to fortify the police state apparatus, promote far-right forces and normalise violence against social opposition.

Workers and youth must draw the necessary conclusions. The defence of democratic rights cannot be entrusted to the courts, the opposition factions of the bourgeoisie, or the trade union bureaucracy. Mass meetings, demonstrations and workplaces must establish their own defence committees to protect protesters from police violence and state-sanctioned gangs. Those targeted for repression must not be left isolated but defended collectively.

Above all, the working class must build its own independent political movement, rooted in factories, neighbourhoods and schools, and guided by an international socialist perspective. This means breaking from all parties and trade union apparatuses tied to the capitalist ruling class and uniting with workers across Africa and internationally in the struggle against imperialist domination, austerity and state repression. Only through the conscious mobilisation of the working class for socialist transformation can democratic rights be secured and defended.

The ICFI has well-documented and irreconcilable political differences with the CPM-K, which have been clearly presented in the *World Socialist Web Site*. But it unequivocally opposes this brutal attack on the organization’s general secretary, demands Omole’s immediate release, and calls for an end to all state threats and repressive acts against the CPM-K.



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