

Museveni sends Ugandan troops to Gaza as proxies of US imperialism

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16 August 2026

Ugandan troops are being deployed to the Gaza Strip as part of the US-orchestrated International Stabilisation Force (ISF), placing the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) at the disposal of US imperialism's attempt to disarm Palestinian resistance and transform the Palestinian territory into a US-dominated colony.

Videos posted by Ugandan soldiers and circulating on social media show uniformed UPDF personnel carrying equipment aboard aircraft, with soldiers captioning the footage, "Gaza here we come." The locations at which they boarded and subsequently landed were not disclosed.

The deployment follows the August 6 vote in Uganda's parliament. Introducing the motion to deploy troops, Defence Minister Kiryowa Kiwanuka told MPs that "Following the invitation by His Excellency Donald Trump ... the President of the Republic of Uganda is ready to deploy in the Gaza Strip the desired Uganda People's Defence Forces contingent".

That parliament was merely rubber-stamping a decision already taken by the executive was evident from the outset. The size of the contingent and the timetable for deployment had not been determined, while the defence minister acknowledged that the Status of Forces Agreement would only be concluded after parliamentary approval. MPs were being asked to authorise the mission before the legal status and command arrangements governing Ugandan troops had even been settled.

The defence minister justified the proxy intervention, claiming that the UPDF "will aid in preventing further conflicts in the region thus contributing to broader international security by reducing risks of renewed armed conflict between Israel and Palestine, preventing extremist groups from exploiting instability and sabotaging the ceasefire implementation process."

Such statements are bogus. The aim of Trump's "Board of Peace" under which the ISF is being organised is to exclude Palestinians from any governing role, giving Israel and the US free rein to police Gaza according to their geopolitical and economic interests. By signing onto this reactionary

framework, Museveni is seeking to demonstrate his regime's usefulness to Washington and shore up imperialist backing for its survival.

In pledging its services in "the elimination of terrorist groups," the Ugandan government is adopting the language of Washington and Israel used to legitimise the suppression of Palestinian resistance. The invocation of "terrorism" serves to obscure the fundamental historical and political reality: the Palestinians are an oppressed people subjected for decades to dispossession, occupation, blockade and repeated Israeli military assaults, culminating in the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

If Hamas and other Palestinian organisations do not voluntarily surrender their weapons, Ugandan soldiers could find themselves fighting against armed groups and, inevitably, Palestinian civilians.

Kiwanuka attempted to legitimise the mission by invoking Uganda's record of "peacekeeping." In reality, since taking power in 1986, Museveni has transformed Uganda into one of Washington's key regional military allies. The UPDF maintains more than 15,000 troops across Somalia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, operating within imperialist frameworks sponsored by US and European powers while simultaneously advancing the predatory interests of Uganda's ruling elite in some of the continent's most resource-rich areas.

In March, UPDF commander General Muhoozi Kainerugaba, Museveni's son and heir apparent, publicly declared that Uganda would enter the Middle East war on Israel's side if Israel faced destruction. Days before parliament approved the Gaza deployment, Muhoozi unveiled a monument at Entebbe airport to Israeli commando Yonatan Netanyahu, Benjamin Netanyahu's brother, and hailed the security relationship between Uganda and Israel.

Uganda will be joining other proxies within the ISF, including Indonesia, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Kosovo and Albania. Morocco's participation is particularly revealing.

The monarchy has maintained covert ties with Israel since the reign of Hassan II in the 1960s, including intelligence cooperation, before normalising relations openly in 2020.

For decades, the Moroccan regime has functioned as a pillar of imperialist interests in North Africa, maintaining intimate ties with Washington and Paris while suppressing opposition at home and enforcing its brutal occupation of Western Sahara. As for Kosovo and Albania, the first emerged from NATO's 1999 war against Yugoslavia and remains heavily dependent on Washington's aid, while the latter is a NATO member and close US ally.

Indonesia's involvement follows the same pattern. President Prabowo Subianto is deploying troops to seek closer relations with the US and advancing the interests of the Indonesian bourgeoisie. Prabowo's political career is inseparable from the bloody history of the Suharto dictatorship. As a general in the notorious Kopassus special forces and later a senior army commander, he was implicated in repression, kidnappings and disappearances.

Trump's use of Ugandan troops has already been tested in neighboring Kenya. In 2024, Kenyan President William Ruto sent police to Haiti in a US-orchestrated intervention aimed at propping up a neocolonial order in the Caribbean.

The Ugandan bourgeois opposition led by Bobi Wine and his National Unity Platform has offered no principled opposition. Leading NUP representatives made clear in the parliamentary vote that their objections concerned procedure, oversight and the conditions under which UPDF would serve, not the dispatch itself.

The official account published by Uganda's parliament states that John Baptist Nambeshe, the acting NUP president and MP for Manjiya County, "supported Uganda's participation in peacekeeping operations". NUP Kampala MP Shamim Malende declared: "We do not have a problem with the deployment, but we need to know the terms and conditions under which our soldiers will serve."

Wine escaped Uganda following the fraudulent January election, marred by abuses, intimidation, fraud and violence, amid a nationwide internet blackout. At least 16 NUP supporters were killed and hundreds arrested. Wine has since established himself in Washington. There he has been conducting an intensive campaign among US politicians and foreign-policy circles. He has met US senators and representatives and pressed for targeted sanctions against Museveni and senior regime figures.

Africa Confidential reported that Wine has been working with Washington lobbyist Jeffrey Smith and lawyer Robert Amsterdam and that his campaign has found support from Republican Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Jim Risch, who called for a review of US security relations with Uganda and raised the possibility of sanctions against

senior Ugandan officials.

The Independent described Wine as moving his struggle into "the corridors of power in Washington". He is seeking to convince Washington that the NUP can serve as a more dependable political instrument for defending US interests in Uganda than the increasingly discredited and unstable Museveni dynasty.

The deployment of Ugandan troops to Gaza is a warning to workers and youth across Africa. The continent is being drawn ever more directly into a developing third world war, not only as a source of strategic minerals and cheap labour but as a recruiting ground for military manpower. African youth are to extract the resources that feed the imperialist war machine and then be sent abroad as cannon fodder for operations serving Washington and its allies.

Museveni's decision exposes the role of the African bourgeoisie as an intermediary for imperialism. Governments that hand mineral wealth to multinational corporations, impose IMF austerity and repress their own populations are also prepared to dispatch troops wherever the major powers require them.

The bourgeois opposition offers no alternative. The struggle is not between pro- and supposedly anti-imperialist factions of the ruling class, but between the working class and all those forces subordinating Africa to imperialist interests.

The war question is international and can only be answered internationally. The decisive task is the building of a socialist movement of the working class in Uganda, throughout Africa and worldwide, independent of every bourgeois and pro-imperialist faction, to oppose war, colonial domination, capitalist exploitation and the transformation of workers and youth into cannon fodder for imperialism.



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