

Communist Party Marxist–Kenya leader Booker Omole acquitted after eight-month prosecution

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Booker Ngesa Omole, General Secretary of the Stalinist (CPM-K), has been acquitted of all criminal charges following an eight-month prosecution initiated after his violent arrest and torture by Kenyan police in February.

According to a statement issued by the CPM-K last week, the court acquitted Omole on every count after the prosecution's case was seriously undermined by the withdrawal of the original complaint and statements by a key prosecution witness, Andrew Amoth. Amoth submitted a sworn affidavit on March 9 withdrawing his earlier allegations. The party states that the court also ordered the immediate return of property seized by police, including KSh 319,000 (\$2,460).

Omole was seized in Isiolo in late February by plainclothes police officers who initially failed to identify themselves or produce an arrest warrant. He was severely beaten and tortured, sustaining injuries to his arm, tooth and fingers. He was subsequently taken to Mlolongo Police Station, where he was denied access to lawyers, relatives and party representatives, before being transferred to Kitengela Remand Prison.

Police advanced a series of extraordinary accusations, including assaulting and attempting to kill police officers, unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition, and purported connections to international drug trafficking involving Venezuela.

Omole maintained that he was a licensed firearm owner, had been unarmed when arrested and that his firearm was voluntarily surrendered during a subsequent police search of his apartment, with the licence provided. The allegations of connections to Venezuelan drug trafficking followed CPM-K demonstrations opposing the US military intervention in Venezuela and demanding the release of President Nicolás Maduro.

Omole was eventually released on bail in early March, but the court imposed a KSh 500,000 (\$3,850) bond, part of consolidated bond requirements of KSh 1.4 million (\$10,800) for him and his co-accused. He remained under the threat of prosecution until the October acquittal.

From the outset, the World Socialist Web Site (WSWS) and the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI)

opposed Omole's arrest, mistreatment and prosecution. On February 25, the ICFI issued a statement demanding his immediate release, denouncing the police operation and warning that the attack on Omole formed part of a wider assault on democratic rights in Kenya.

The following day, the WSWS published a detailed examination of the charges, exposing the contradictions in the accusations, reporting Omole's claims of torture and the denial of medical treatment, and challenging the attempts to associate his political activities with drug trafficking and criminality.

The ICFI reiterated its demand for his immediate and unconditional release, the dropping of all politically motivated charges, and guaranteed access to legal representation and medical care.

Following Omole's release on bail, the WSWS reported on March 6 that the criminal charges remained in force and condemned the punitive financial conditions imposed on him and his co-accused. The WSWS drew attention to the continued arrests and harassment of CPM-K members, including three activists detained while submitting a petition against extrajudicial killings.

The ICFI has fundamental and irreconcilable political differences with the Stalinist CPM-K. We took a stand as a principled defence of democratic rights, including the right to organise, speak and conduct political activity without intimidation, arbitrary detention or police violence.

The persecution of Omole took place amid the broader repression carried out by President William Ruto's government. Since taking power in 2022, security forces have killed more than 250 protesters, during the anti-austerity demonstrations of 2023, the mass Gen-Z uprisings against IMF-dictated tax hikes in 2024 and 2025, and renewed protests this year.

In April and May 2026, police violently suppressed demonstrations against soaring fuel prices triggered by the US-Israeli war against Iran, killing at least four protesters. In June, police killed another three demonstrators in Nanyuki protesting a proposed US Ebola quarantine facility. Thousands more have been injured and arrested, whilst scores have been abducted and

disappeared as the government has sought to crush mounting opposition to austerity, poverty and its collaboration with imperialism.

The criminal proceedings against Omole have ended without a conviction. But it does not resolve the serious allegations surrounding his arrest, torture, detention and treatment by the police. Those responsible for any unlawful conduct must be investigated and held accountable. Moreover, democratic rights cannot ultimately be entrusted to the courts, the bourgeois opposition or the trade union bureaucracy.

The courts have not convicted a single policeman over the deaths of over 250 protestors and scores abducted or disappeared. The intelligence units implicated in abductions and enforced disappearances have escaped any accountability. Court orders have not prevented further repression. On June 25, 2026, Ruto's government sealed off central Nairobi, blocking roads, surrounding Parliament with barricades and arresting at least 355 people nationwide. Police continued deploying masked and unidentified officers despite court orders requiring officers policing demonstrations to be identifiable.

Nor can workers and youth look to the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU). Its Secretary General, Francis Atwoli, has repeatedly backed Ruto's suppression.

Last year, he demanded government censorship of social media, declaring, "Now, we will be forced to ask the government to regulate social media," insisting, "Social media must be regulated." Following the bloody July 2025 Saba Saba crackdown, he instructed Gen-Z youth to "forget about demonstrations, remain home, silent, and promote peace," warning that "Demonstrations are scaring investors away." Ahead of the June 25, 2026 protests, Atwoli urged Kenyans to "stay far away from demonstrations" and appealed to the Inspector General of Police to "come out in full force" to protect those reporting to work.

The bourgeois opposition offers no alternative. Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka served for decades under Daniel arap Moi's Western-backed dictatorship, as National Organising Secretary of KANU and later foreign minister, while the regime imprisoned, tortured and murdered political opponents, students and trade unionists.

Martha Karua, now leader of the People's Liberation Party, served as Kibaki's justice minister and was among the foremost defenders of his election theft of 2007. The ensuing violence left more than 1,100 dead and hundreds of thousands displaced, with police responsible for the majority of the killings.

Rigathi Gachagua, now an opposition leader, was Ruto's deputy president during the bloody repression of the 2024 Gen-Z uprising. In 2023, he justified police attacks on demonstrators, declaring: "You cannot go to the streets destroying property and expect police to come kiss you."

Former Interior Minister Fred Matiang'i, another opposition figure, served in Uhuru Kenyatta's government during the

2017 post-election crackdown, when police killed at least 37 people in Nairobi.

Edwin Sifuna is now the presidential candidate for for the Linda Mwananchi opposition movement in next year's elections. When mass protests erupted against Ruto's austerity measures in June 2024, Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) came to the rescue of the deeply discredited government, with four senior party officials entering Ruto's "broad-based" cabinet, including John Mbadi as Treasury minister responsible for enforcing austerity. Although Sifuna publicly denied that ODM had formally joined the government, he remained its secretary-general and helped draft the March 2025 cooperation agreement with Ruto.

The government continued its violent repression, with 65 deaths recorded during the June and July 2025 protests. Even after these killings, Sifuna announced ODM's decision to continue cooperating with Ruto's government in the name of "stabilising the country." Although he later broke with ODM's leadership over support for Ruto's 2027 re-election, his Linda Mwananchi movement has continued to demand implementation of the same agreement.

Ruto's repression has continued unabated. Yesterday, just ten days after Omole's acquittal, police arrested several activists in central Nairobi demonstrating against soaring fuel prices and the cost of living. The same day, reports indicated that Tanzanian opposition activist Twaha Mwaipaya was abducted in Machakos County. Mwaipaya had reportedly been seized by unidentified men the previous day, amid a continuing pattern of cross-border abductions of political opponents on Kenyan soil. His abductors have not been identified.

The defence of democratic rights demands the independent political mobilisation of the working class, uniting workers and youth across ethnic and national divisions in a common struggle against the capitalist system that gives rise to repression.



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