

Kenya's President Ruto Defies His Own Country's Constitution and High Court to Invade Haiti on Behalf of the U.S.

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I spoke to William Sakawa, a producer and reporter with the Nairobi-based media outlet African Stream, about Kenyan President William Ruto's agreement to invade Haiti for the US.

ANN GARRISON (AG): Why do you think the Kenyan government is willing to send 1000 Kenyan police to Haiti, another Black nation in the developing world?

WILLIAM SAKAWA (WS): I think the government feels so bold as to do something so clearly traitorous because Kenya has always been a colony. It has never really attained independence. Since the time of the handover in 1963, we have remained dependent on institutions like the World Bank and the IMF. So our government has always leaned West and eagerly executed Western agendas.

An example is the 1978 incident in which Kenya served as a launchpad for the Israeli operation in Uganda to go on the offensive against Idi Amin, in what was framed as an attempt to free Israeli hostages. Kenya was used for that.

At the same time, Israel was supporting apartheid in South Africa, and the majority of the African Union condemned that. Only a few countries like Kenya and Malawi maintained a semblance of relations with both Israel and South Africa. That was during the President Jomo Kenyatta era, from 1964 to 1978, then the President Daniel arap Moi era, from 1978 to 2002.

Mwai Kibaki became president from 2002 to 2013, then Uhuru Kenyatta from 2013 to

2022. When Ruto was elected nothing much changed. Corruption remained endemic, and I think this explains a lot, though you don't see it highlighted in Western media, because Kenya is a Western ally. Same thing with Ukraine. I think this corruption creates a pressure point for Western nations. Our leaders store their ill-gotten wealth in the West, in property, tax havens, and so forth, and it could all be sanctioned and seized if they didn't do what the West wants. The same is true of a lot of African leaders.

Also, our president now, William Ruto, is one of six guys who were sent to stand trial at the ICC for crimes committed during the political violence of 2007-2008, but his case was dismissed in 2016. His lawyer, Karim Khan, became the ICC prosecutor in 2021, and I think the convenience around all this is just too stark. It looks to me as though, in exchange for what was a good deal for him, Ruto agreed to serve the Western agenda and ultimately pledged 1000 Kenyan police to Haiti.

Kenya has not invested in the education of its people enough for them to understand or care about this deployment to Haiti. Most of them are disengaged and just trying to survive; they don't participate in Kenyan foreign policy. The centuries of suffering of the Haitian people at the hands of their Western oppressors don't register with them. There's just a tiny but growing minority, including those of us at African Stream, who are concerned and outspoken about this.

AG: Sounds like the US, where most people are disengaged and unconcerned with this deployment as well.

WS: With our disengaged public, Kenya doesn't have a coherent foreign policy based on principle. It's much more transactional, and this deployment to Haiti is one more transaction with the West.

They've made a deal with Ruto and called it a Pan-African affair. And Ruto is of course eager to call it Pan-Africanism when it's obviously the exact opposite.

I think the original intervention budget was nearly \$250 million, and now it's more. This is to pay for the deployment, but [the majority of it is administrative cost](#), which will no doubt make it into the pockets of the elites, including William Ruto's. How do you think Uhuru Kenyatta became a near billionaire? It wasn't because he founded a hugely profitable business.

AG: This week Haitian Americans demonstrated outside the Kenyan Embassy in the US chanting "Still a Slave" in reference to Ruto. Do the tiny minority who oppose the deployment visibly protest there in Kenya?

WS: Protest of foreign policy is not something that happens here, not only because the population is disengaged, but also because it's not safe. Our constitution guarantees freedom of assembly, but that doesn't mean it's a reality, and Kenyan police are very brutal. I think that's one reason they've been chosen for this deployment.

AG: I know the story of Dr. Abdiwahab Sheikh Abdisamad, who was kidnapped off the streets in Nairobi, held in captivity for 10 days, then unceremoniously dumped back on the streets.

WS: Yes, that's an example of how Kenyan police operate beyond the law with impunity.

AG: What about the High Court of Kenya, which [ruled](#) in January that the deployment to Haiti violated the Kenyan Constitution? Isn't President Ruto violating the court's ruling?

WS: Yes, but no one will do anything about that.

AG: So the apparatus of force will not uphold the law if the executive refuses to?

WS: That's right. Like you, we have three branches of government—the executive, legislative, and judiciary—but in fact the executive holds most of the power.

AG: So Ruto is just blowing off your Constitution and High Court to deploy these troops to Haiti?

WS: Yes.

AG: While the US lauds Kenya as a tranquil bastion of liberal democracy.

WS: Exactly. And Kenya's subservience is especially important to the West now that it's being kicked out of the Sahel nations.

AG: Hasn't Kenyan politician Ekuru Aukot gone to court to demand that the ruling be respected? He's [told the press](#) that the agreement between President Ruto and Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry was invalid, and Ariel Henry isn't even the prime minister anymore.

WS: Ekuru Aukot can go to court all he wants, and that will at least generate headlines, educate, and make his point, but ultimately Ruto will ignore the results and do what he wants. He and the US have made too great an investment in this to back down, and neither have a political constituency that will force them to.

Kenyan police will go to Haiti, and if the violence leads to some coming home in body bags, Ruto will describe them as heroes who died for a Pan-African cause.

AG: Isn't there some complaint that Kenya has problems at home, particularly in its northern districts, that its police should address before going overseas? I believe that a reporter for your leading television outlet [questioned Ruto](#) about this at a press conference while he was here.

WS: That's true, and there are problems in the northern district that Ekuru Aukot hails from, but in the end, again, Ruto and the US will both do what they want.

AG: Those Kenyan police will get paid a lot more serving in this US-led force in Haiti than they could get paid at home. This same has been true of African troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan or who now serve with AFRICOM or in various "peacekeeping" deployments, like those in Somalia, which include Kenyans, or like the Rwandan deployment to protect TotalEnergies' interests in Mozambique. Isn't this likely to create a self-interested constituency in support of the deployment, as it has in these other instances?

WS: That's quite likely.

AG: Has African Stream been in touch with the resistance on the ground in Haiti?

WS: Yes, we interviewed grassroots organizers with [MOLEGHAF](#), the National Movement for

Liberty and Equality of Haitians for Fraternity, and we are staying in touch. The main thing we can do right now is to keep talking about this so that it doesn't all take place in darkness.

AG: William, thank you for speaking to *Black Agenda Report*.

WS: You're welcome.

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