

Haiti in struggle

Kenyan Troops in Haiti and Peasant Resistance

On June 25th, over 400 Kenyan officers arrived in Haiti as part of a neo-colonial strategy to undermine Haitian sovereignty. The United States, through the Core Group and more recently CARICOM, has promoted the escalation of violence witnessed in Haiti by failing to take sufficient measures to stop arms smuggling from its territory, which has been exploited by criminal gangs now controlling the capital, Port-au-Prince.

This provoked crisis serves as a pretext for a new intervention in Haiti, requested by CARICOM as part of the transition process implemented by the presidential council. Composed of former government officials and a single representative from the Montana Accord, with almost no influence, the council appointed Garry Conille as the new interim Prime Minister after Ariel Henry's resignation.

Conille had previously held leadership roles at the UNDP in New York, the WHO, and the United Nations.



The current government's mandate is to pacify the country, stabilize the economy, and hold general elections within two years.

The deployment of Kenyan police forces in recent weeks has not prevented recent incidents of insecurity, such as the takeover of a police station in Port-au-Prince and attacks on food transporters on provincial roads, such as National Route 1 where gangs massacred civilians in the agricultural areas of Lower Artibonite, resulting in numerous casualties.

Growing insecurity, inaction and indignation

Representatives of La Via Campesina in Haiti have noted that since their arrival, Kenyan troops have remained inactive, stationed at Toussaint Louverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince, the government palace, or moving to other regions, without intervening to combat gang violence. As insecurity grows alongside public indignation, the interim government and its new international force have failed to apprehend criminal gangs and their leaders, whose whereabouts have been identified in reports by CNN and other media outlets. The population questions whether there is genuine intent to apprehend them or if they are allowed to act with impunity.

Despite assurances of cooperation from the Haitian government, skepticism persists about its effectiveness and goals, especially following the appointment of a new police director who previously served under Ariel Henry's regime. Faced with the reintroduction of figures who previously failed to address Haiti's complex security challenges, La Via Campesina organizations in Haiti once again call for a national security plan devised by Haitian civil society experts, offering diverse strategies to combat organized crime and illicit arms trafficking for a definitive solution to Haiti's security challenges.

Moreover, internal political tensions have been reported between the presidential council and the newly appointed interim government, following unannounced bilateral meetings between Prime Minister Garry Conille and Anthony Blinken at the UN, during which the United States secured \$109 million in funding to maintain the presence of Kenyan troops. Public outrage in Haiti reached new heights last week when the newly arrived Prime Minister suggested potential negotiations with gangs, proposing amnesty for their crimes, including the gang leader, Jimmy Chérizier, nicknamed Barbecue, one of the most wanted by the CIA.

The substantial financial backing of Kenyan troops by the United States raises concerns among local organizations about the possibility of civilian and peasant populations being caught in a conflict between foreign troops and criminal gangs.

Kenya's presence also evokes memories of past interventions with lasting consequences for Haitian families, who oppose what they perceive as foreign occupation and imposition of policies without local consent. This situation is exacerbated by an atmosphere of fear in Port-au-Prince, where even trips to buy food are considered risky due to stray bullets from criminal gangs. In this context, the population refrains from demonstrating or protesting. Furthermore, concerns are heightened by an agreement between Haiti and Kenya ensuring no repercussions for the actions of foreign troops.

La Via Campesina organizations in Haiti continue to oppose foreign military presence, advocating instead for sustainable, community-led solutions to address the country's security and governance challenges. They underscore the importance of establishing an autonomous and representative oversight body to ensure a transition that meets the Haitian people's aspirations for peace and social justice. Additionally, they emphasize the need for international solidarity to resist these new forms of neo-colonial interference, which could exacerbate Haiti's historical problems rather than resolve them.