



Reparations for the people of Kenya, not debt!

June 27, 2024

Workers World is in full solidarity with the people of Kenya, who have been carrying out a popular rebellion for almost a week. They are protesting a bill passed by the parliament to raise taxes on basic necessities of life, such as food, gas, health care and education. Kenyans are demanding a cut in spending, not higher taxes.

Thousands of people took to the streets in a “7 Days of Rage” beginning on June 25

following anti-austerity protests the week before after police killed dozens of unarmed protesters, with hundreds more wounded. Parts of the parliament building were torched.

What ignited this uprising? The answer is the growing debt crisis imposed by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank on Kenya and the rest of Africa. Former colonies and now developing countries such as Kenya pay a steep price for billions of dollars in loans, which supposedly pay for building infrastructure but in reality extort high interest payments that cannot be paid back even over many lifetimes.

In order to just cover the interest payments, local governments are compelled to impose devastating tax increases or price hikes on the masses, who struggle on a daily basis to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads. It is the imperialist banks that eventually destroy local economies — forced to succumb to the cut-throat, competitive, profit-hungry nature of the capitalist world market.

According to a report from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Kenya’s domestic and foreign public debt is a mind boggling \$80 billion, nearly three-quarters of Kenya’s entire economic output. Interest payments alone are eating up 27% of the revenue collected. These numbers are despite the fact that Kenya reportedly has the fastest growing economy on the African continent. (tinyurl.com/42nc939p)

The heroic uprising has propelled Kenyan President William Ruto, an ally of President Joe Biden’s administration, not to sign the controversial bill, at least on a temporary basis. Many Kenyans are now demanding that their president resign.

The Communist Party of Kenya stated: “The blood spilled on the streets of Kenya lies squarely in the hands of the IMF, the World Bank and their local puppets led by President Ruto in Nairobi. Ruto resign or be overthrown.” (communistpartyofkenya.org, June 26)

This unimaginable debt should be canceled once and for all. Reparations are owed to the people of Kenya along with the entire African continent for hundreds of years of stolen resources and super-exploited labor, first on the part of the imperialist ruling class of Britain, France, Germany and other rich European countries and presently by the imperialist banks dominated by the U.S. □



Nairobi, Kenya protest, June 27, 2024.