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After a year of protest, bloody clashes, and demands for reform by the people of Kenya; a diverse, battle-tested mass movement has emerged in opposition to the ruthless, neo-colonial police-state that rules this east African country. Grassroots forces who long clamored for long-promised democratic elections have now made uncompromising demands for, at the very least, sweeping constitutional reform before voting takes place. Daniel arap Moi, billionaire dictator of Kenya for 19 years, has refused to set a date to elect a new government, that is due to take office in January 1998, and has defied numerous demonstrations of thousands with tear gas and bullets.

Current laws dating from the British colonial era allow detention without trial, arbitrarily restrict freedom of speech, media, assembly, the freedom to build independent political organizations, and give broad powers to local traditional ethnic leaders. International and local human rights advocates

have singled out police brutality as a major abuse legitimized by these laws. Two of the more prominent attacks have been against student activist Solomon Muruli and Rev. Timothy Njoya. In February, Muruli was discovered burned beyond recognition. He was blown up in his residence hall at Nairobi University. Two months earlier he was abducted, tortured and left for dead. In July, Njoya was beaten bloody and left unconscious in his church, All Saints Cathedral, which was invaded and desecrated by police. The church was reportedly giving refuge to fleeing demonstrators.

After an early August rebellion by ethnic groups that traditionally oppose Moi in Mombassa, a resort city on the Indian Ocean coast, the state threatened to cancel talks planned with opposition leaders seeking reform. The police force's body count was especially high. However, after a general strike in Nairobi, in which the air traffic controllers prominently participated, crippling tourism for a couple of days, international capitalist forces told Moi to go back to the negotiating table. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has begun to withhold much needed loans promised to insure the Kenyan state bureaucracy runs smoothly. Kenya is considered a relative "success" story by the international capitalists who profit from their economy and exploit the Kenyans' labor.

The overthrow in May of Moi's ally Mobutu Sese Seko, former longtime billionaire dictator of Zaire (now Congo-Kinshasa), by armed forces led by Laurent Kabila, has inspired ordinary people to chant "Moi-butu" at demonstrations. Some are talking of a "Kabila solution," and are planning for a possible insurrectionary armed struggle on the horizon. The IMF, UN, and multi-national capitalists, and their bureaucratic bidders, are also eyeing that possibility, like foxes; "Kabila solution" just might suit their needs as well.

If Moi's neo-colonial government does not administer Kenya more efficiently he will become expendable to his Big Business overlords Reaping profits for himself and imperialism is not

enough; Moi must minimize the frequency of rebellions that can't be crushed without massive exposure by the international media. The possibility exists, just as in the Congo, that if the present Kenyan regime can not be reformed, imperialists will be happy to sponsor its overthrow by uniting with and if necessary, inventing, a more conservative faction of the movement for liberation like they did at the moment of Kenyan "independence" from British colonialism in 1963.

The Kenyan parliament is preparing to adopt a package of constitutional reforms that should give more space to this freedom struggle. While armed struggle will continue to be illegal and necessary, maintaining and broadening mass democratic participation among the people in the struggle against Moi's regime is paramount. Only through mass education and debate can ideas such as the abolition of capitalism, the state, and neo-colonialism be raised so they can be fought for. An armed struggle in the absence of mass democratic institutions and participation is much easier for imperialist forces to co-opt or if necessary initiate. In the coming days, ordinary people and international capitalists will make decisions in struggle which will determine the immediate future of Kenya. Moi will follow or be removed—one way or another.