



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. WILLIAM
SAMOEI RUTO, Ph.D., C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF
THE DEFENCE FORCES, DURING THE HIGH-LEVEL SIDE
EVENT ON THE MULTINATIONAL SECURITY SUPPORT
MISSION TO HAITI: KENYA'S PERSPECTIVE**

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Building
Our Future
Together

**Mr António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General,
Excellency Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the
African Union Commission,
His Excellency Laurent Saint-Cyr, Chair of the
Transitional Presidential Council of the Republic of
Haiti,
Excellencies,
Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I am truly honoured that you accepted my invitation to take part in this high-level event on the Multinational Security Support (MSS) Mission to Haiti. Your presence here underscores our shared commitment to support Haiti and her people in building a peaceful, secure and politically stable future.
2. Excellencies, the history of Haiti reflects both the heights of human courage and the depths of adversity. It is the story of a people who rose from the shackles of slavery to claim independence and inspire movements for freedom across the globe. Yet, paradoxically, for decades the promise of that triumph has been undermined by betrayal, compounded setbacks and the enduring consequences of a painful legacy.
3. For many years, the people of Haiti have repeatedly called on the international community to stand in solidarity with them and to help overcome their challenges. Too often their appeals have been met with indifference or with support that was hesitant and inadequate.



4. When the Government and people of Kenya heeded the request by Haitian authorities, it was to join a global multinational effort. Drawing on our decades of peace support operations around the world, we stepped up, offered to lead the international effort and committed to deploy Kenyan police officers to help tackle the runaway menace of gang violence in Port-au-Prince and its environs.
5. We therefore welcomed and fully embraced Resolution 2699, by which the United Nations Security Council authorised the deployment of the Multinational Security Support (MSS) Mission to Haiti, with Kenya as the lead nation.
6. On 25th June 2024, the first contingent of 200 police officers from Kenya arrived in Port-au-Prince for a task many thought impossible. Today, the MSS mission in Haiti has a police contingent of 989 personnel, of whom 735 are from Kenya, 150 from Guatemala, 78 from El Salvador, 23 from Jamaica, 3 from The Bahamas and 1 from Canada.
7. Excellencies, in a few days, the UN Security Council will make a critical decision on a successor mission to the MSS. I therefore considered it prudent for us to share our experiences, successes, challenges and lessons learnt in the 15 months that we have been privileged to lead this mission.
8. Around this time last year, I visited Port-au-Prince to gain first-hand experience of the situation on the ground. I had the distinct privilege to engage with the Haitian Presidential Council, representatives of partner countries, as well as the MSS personnel.



From this historic visit, I became convinced beyond any reasonable doubt that the MSS was indeed a mission possible.

9. When we first stepped into Haiti, the airport had been surrounded by gangs, and many people found it unsafe to land there. Today, the airport is operational, with passenger and cargo flights. We have driven the gangs out of the airport, and it is a safe place. The presidential palace was under siege; today it is secure. The police headquarters and training centres had been overrun by gangs; today, the police headquarters is safe, and the police academy is working. In fact, they have just graduated 750 police officers from that training centre, which was initially a haunt for gangs.
10. The routes to most of the townships were blocked by gangs who were charging for access. Today, those routes have been opened, and there is continuous improvement in security along them. The port had also been captured; today, the port is operational, with cargo moving in and out, and we have our security personnel stationed there. Most schools and hospitals were closed; today, the story is different. Just a few weeks ago, there were graduations in many schools. We have also brought hospitals back to life.
11. I must commend the Haitian Government for the support they have given the MSS, without which it would have been a lot more difficult to achieve what we have achieved. I must also single out the Haitian police leadership. They have been immensely useful and have worked in collaboration with the MSS.



12. I must, however, say we have been operating at 40% capacity. Initially, it was expected that 2,500 security personnel would be made available. Unfortunately, it did not happen. It was expected there would have been force multipliers, armoured vehicles and logistical support to make the mission successful. I must commend the United States for giving us vehicles. Unfortunately, most of them were second-hand, and they broke down and put our people in grave danger when it happened in hostile areas. We did not get any useful support from any other quarters.
13. I must be as candid as possible. I believe the situation can be solved. It is not Mission Impossible. I believe the international community must do right by Haiti. The women and children deserve better. What is going on that we cannot marshal support to drive out the gangs is unacceptable, indefensible and simply wrong.
14. The gangs are cowards. With very minimal intervention, they have gone into hiding. I thought I should use this meeting to bring to the attention of the international community that the situation in Haiti can and must be solved. I am happy we are having a conversation on a successor mission for the MSS. But I believe I need to give insights on what success would look like; otherwise, it will not succeed.
15. If we are sending a security team, the mandate must be clear. We must also have a predictable resource package, not what Kenya has gone through - a game of guesswork. It must be predictable, and I do not understand why we cannot be serious.



The people of Haiti may be of African descent, but, for heaven's sake, they are members of the human race like us, and they deserve as much, not less.

16. It is also necessary that we sort out the issue of logistical support. A case in point - we wanted to set up 12 operating bases in territories that were secured from gangs. But that was not possible because of the logistical support architecture that could not allow equipment, food and other essentials to leave Port-au-Prince. We have a historic opportunity to solve the problem of Haiti.
17. As the curtain draws on the MSS, I salute all the gallant men and women in the mission for their sacrifice, diligence and service, not only to the Haitian people but also to humanity. They overcame tremendous odds to deliver on an onerous but vitally important mandate. We particularly honour three Kenyan officers - Samuel Tomoi Kaetuai, Benedict Kabiru and Kennedy Nzuve - who lost their lives in the line of duty. May their precious souls rest in eternal peace.
18. I am equally proud that the MSS personnel have continued to exhibit the highest standards of transparency and conduct. They have adhered to the guiding instruments, including the Concept of Operations, the Status of Protection Agreement and the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.



19. Excellencies, when we deployed our officers, we were clear in our minds that while the MSS was a critical and innovative intervention, it was not the ultimate solution. We knew that Haiti's stability could only be accomplished through a multi-pronged approach that addressed the root causes of the challenges. In this regard, the MSS has, from the outset, coordinated its work closely with the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), the UN country team and the Haitian Government.
20. I am deeply grateful for the support of Haiti's political leadership, particularly the members of the Transitional Presidential Council, including Edgard Leblanc Fils, Leslie Voltaire, Fritz Alphonse Jean and Laurent Saint-Cyr, each of whom has been steadfast in supporting the MSS. In spite of prevailing difficulties, the government has facilitated and supported three operating bases for the MSS troops. Similarly, the Dominican Republic has supported the Force Commander and officers through the provision of medical facilities and care.
21. Ladies and gentlemen, I can state without equivocation that the achievements of the MSS are too often understated. When the first contingent arrived in Port-au-Prince, few could have imagined that a Boeing 787 would one day land at the local airport without the risk of being brought down.



22. I want to commend all the countries and friends who have stepped up to make us achieve what we have achieved in Haiti. I look forward to Kenya participating in the next mission, but the one thing we will not do is walk away from Haiti in haste because we believe they are members of humanity, and we owe them a clear transition from what has been achieved. If we do not transition properly, we may lose what we have achieved.
23. The mandate of the MSS is coming up for review in the next 11 days. I want to persuade the international community, the P5, to provide a transition that will not let the people of Haiti down.

I thank you.

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