# Protests in Nairobi Turn Violent Over New Finance Bill, Leaving Five Dead



On June 25, 2024, protests erupted in Nairobi, Kenya, against a new finance bill that introduces several taxes. The protests resulted in clashes with the police, who used teargas and live ammunition, leaving at least five people dead and dozens injured. Among the protesters was Auma Obama, sister of former U.S. President Barack Obama, who was tear-gassed during the demonstrations.

President William Ruto has defended the bill as necessary to address Kenya's financial woes but has faced considerable public backlash. The bill aims to raise an additional $2.7 billion in taxes. The frustration stems from rising living costs and new taxes on essential items like sanitary products, which were particularly contested by the population.

The situation escalated significantly when protesters stormed and set fire to parts of the Kenyan Parliament. President Ruto condemned the violence, declared it a national security threat, and deployed the military to restore order. International reactions included a collective statement from 13 Western embassies expressing shock and calling for restraint.

The protests mark a significant challenge for President Ruto, who has emphasized security and economic reforms, even as his domestic approval ratings decline. His recent designation of Kenya as a major non-NATO ally by the U.S. and a visit that included securing significant investments are now overshadowed by the turmoil at home.