



By: TA | AP Brief

At the Africa summit, Macron presents a new policy for the continent



French President Emmanuel Macron kicked off a visit to Kenya on Sunday ahead of the Africa Forward Summit, a gathering meant to showcase **France's new policy** for the continent — a shift from a former colonial power seen as dominating to what Paris describes as a partnership of equals.

Held for the first time in an Anglophone country, the summit is expected to draw reactions to the withdrawal of French troops from West Africa that was completed last year amid **France's waning regional influence** in recent years.

Since the independence of France's former African colonies, France had maintained a policy of economic, political and military sway dubbed *Françafrique*, which included keeping thousands of troops in the region.

But leaders in those countries — and opposition figures — have often criticized France over what they described as a demeaning and heavy-handed approach to the continent.

Macron's host, Kenyan President William Ruto, said both leaders expect the summit to be a "turning point" toward a better partnership.

Macron commented on the changing geopolitical landscape, saying France can "disagree" with West African governments but "never disagrees with the people."

Investments in various sectors

The two-day summit, which starts on Monday, is expected to welcome 30 heads of state. Ten have arrived so far.

Kenya's opposition leader Kalonzo Musyoka slammed the choice of Kenya as a venue, describing it as country where democracy remains under threat, the opposition is under attack and human rights are being violated even as it prepares for the 2027 general election.

"There will be an air of pretense that we are a

cohesive nation," Musyoka said. "We know that is far from the truth."

Kenya and France signed 11 agreements involving investments in various sectors

Ruto on Sunday said Nairobi seeks to nurture a wide array of relationships and was "neither looking East nor West" but "looking forward."

Also Sunday, Kenya and France signed 11 agreements involving investments in various sectors, including an ambitious nuclear energy plant, modernized transport, and sustainable agriculture.

Macron said the investments were aimed at strengthening "human capital," in line with the summit's focus on innovation and Africa's growing young population.