

Macron arrives in Kenya ahead of Africa summit

By: Viateur Nzeyimana

France is looking to rebuild its relationship with Africa after losing influence in several West African countries in recent years. A major summit starting Monday in Nairobi is expected to play a key role in that effort and will be the first time the gathering is held in an English-speaking African country.

For French President Emmanuel Macron, the summit is a chance to present a new approach to Africa — one focused more on investment, cooperation, and shared economic interests rather than the old legacy of colonial-era ties.

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The change comes after a difficult period for France across the Sahel region, where a series of military coups led several governments to cut ties with Paris and remove French troops. Some of those countries later turned to Russian-backed groups, including the Wagner Group, for security support.

France has also faced growing resistance from longtime partners such as Senegal, where leaders argued that maintaining French military bases no longer reflected the country's sovereignty and independence.

In response, France has been trying to broaden its partnerships across Africa. Paris has increased investment in sectors like infrastructure, clean energy, technology, and education while also strengthening security cooperation with countries beyond its traditional allies.

The Nairobi summit underline that wider strategy. France is attempting to remain an important partner on the continent, but through economic cooperation and modern partnerships rather than relying on the influence it once held in former colonies.