The United States has intensified pressure on Kenya’s President William Ruto regarding allegations of extrajudicial killings and abductions by police during recent protests. U.S. Senator Chris Murphy, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, conveyed this message during his visit to Kenya last week.

Senator Murphy, who is a potential candidate for Secretary of State in a future Kamala Harris administration, emphasized the necessity for accountability. “It’s really important for U.S. leaders to convey those concerns and make it clear that our relationship can’t be at its strongest level unless there is a real commitment from the Kenyan government to hold anyone that engages in abuse, particularly in the context of these protests, accountable,” Murphy said in an interview with Semafor Africa.

The protests, which began in June, have resulted in significant casualties. According to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), 60 people were killed, over 60 went missing, and several others were injured. Despite these figures, no police officers have been prosecuted or dismissed in connection with their conduct during the protests. The Kenya Independent Policing Oversight Authority has stated that it is investigating the allegations of abuse.

The U.S. has made it clear that it seeks justice for the victims and is pressing Kenya for tangible actions to address these human rights concerns. The message from Murphy underscores the broader implications for U.S.-Kenya relations, suggesting that a commitment to accountability and reform is essential for the strength of the bilateral relationship.