

## **RUD-URUNANA**

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### **PRESS RELEASE PP No. 02/JULY/09**

#### **RWANDAN REFUGEES IN EASTERN DRC: POLITICAL DIALOGUE IS THE ONLY VIABLE OPTION**

In recent weeks, several reports have been issued by numerous organizations with the main goal of proposing solutions to the ongoing problems in the African Great Lakes region in general and in Eastern DRC in particular. One of these reports was published by ICG under the title: "Congo: Une stratégie globale pour désarmer les FDLR", Rapport Afrique No 151 of July 9, 2009.

The Rally for Unity and Democracy (RUD-Urunana) and the Rassemblement du Peuple Rwandais (RPR) Coalition would like to seize this opportunity to reflect on these reports while dispelling some misconceptions on our organization. However, it is also an occasion to contribute to solving the problem of the presence of tens of thousands of Rwandan Refugees still in Eastern DRC.

#### **RUD-URUNANA IS NOT THE FDLR**

While reading the ICG report, one may come up with an impression that the RUD-Urunana is a subsidiary of the FDLR. We would like to recall the International Community that, due to profound divergences, certain members departed officially and publicly with the FDLR in September 2004. These individuals were subsequently formally expelled from the FDLR. Among those individuals were the entire RUD-Urunana leadership. One cannot thus be expelled from an organization while remaining its member. RUD-Urunana is an independent organization with its own leadership and independent political vision.

Therefore, in spite of what has trickled in recent various reports, our organization would like to categorically demystify any contacts between the President of RUD-Urunana and any element of the FDLR/FOCA. Hence, the allegation included in the Report S/2009/253 of UN Group of Experts is unfounded since Dr. J-M Vianney Higiho has never been and is not in contact with any member of the leadership of the FDLR/FOCA neither in the field nor anywhere else.

#### **ALL RWANDANS DESERVE A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

As Dr. ML King once said: "Justice is indivisible; injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" and before him, Thomas Jefferson entrenched the principle of the modern democratic systems: "all men are created equal"

Most of the recent reports paint a rosy picture of the current rwandan society. Most of them cite economic progress as well as the current stability of the regime. However, when one scratches slightly under the surface, one uncovers a society ridden with rampant structural inequalities, injustice, nepotism, corruption, and flagrant abuse of human rights.

The right of lawful dissent has been systematically denied to rwandans; hence, anyone who

dares to criticize Paul Kagame's regime is quickly labelled as "genocidaire, negationist, and/or revisionist". More recently, the regime has come up with an ingenious scheme to silence any person perceived as a threat: what it takes is to label the individual as "harbouring a genocidaire ideology". Such labels are enough to have someone killed, disappear, or thrown in prison without any recourse. There is no viable internal political opposition since any challenge to Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and Paul Kagame's rule has been met with fierce repression. If not killed or thrown in prison, the only other options opposition leaders have consist of accepting the RPF hegemony or going into exile. The entire economy is in hands of occult operators that are linked one way or another to the RPF or to the Akazu of Kagame's cronies that control, manage, and allocate the country resources while pillaging resources of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Political coercion, intimidation, and blackmail have become a system of governance. Score of people are forced to join the RPF otherwise they would have to pay a huge price. For example, just before a recent graduation ceremony held at Mutobo on July 17/2009, several hundreds of "Umoja Wetu" rwandan returnees who completed the so-called "re-education" were asked by a RPF official to join the ruling party. The few who hesitated realized that their future may be uncertain; they thereafter promptly decided to come back and join. Such cases are not isolated since there have been similar reports throughout the country where the targeted population has been mainly teachers, civil servants, and well off individuals. Who ever dares to refuse, finds him/herself facing the ignominious Gacaca courts that have become the regime repressive instruments. Officially, such jurisdictions were setup to trial individuals who committed despicable crimes in 1994. However, it is apparent that these courts are more to settle scores with the Hutu population than pursuing the truth and rendering justice.

Meanwhile, a lot of the regime supporters make arguments intended to justify the denial of democratic and civil rights in Rwanda by the Kagame's regime based on what happened in our country recent history. While no one will deny what our brothers and sisters went through since 1990 and the abominable crimes committed in 1994 till today, there is no moral ground to deny basic rights such as presumption of innocence and fair trial to innocent rwandans irrespective of their ethnic groups. Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa criminals shall respond of their deeds before fair, independent, and impartial jurisdictions while innocent fellow rwandans shall be left to enjoy their fundamental inherent rights and freedoms. This has been the RUD/RPR position and firm conviction since the coalition inception.

No one in the Hutu population is spared. Only high profile cases are widely publicized such as that of Gen. Seraphin Bizimungu alias "Mahoro" who was sentenced to life in prison while Gen. Paul Rwarakabije's is still pending. As long they were useful to bolster the regime image to foreign donors, both generals who returned from DRC were hailed and treated as heroes. Once their usefulness and aura faded, they have then to face the Gacaca courts with almost no chance of clearing their names. This has been the wholemark of the regime, starting from the former President Pasteur Bizimungu to Stanley Safari who recently managed to flee the country. However, this is not limited to Hutus since even Tutsis have been fleeing the regime. One may wonder what happens to ordinary people living away from the scrutiny of the media.

On the other hand, most pro-eminent members of RPF inner circle including Paul Kagame have tried to avoid appearing before any courts of law despite overwhelming evidence that points to their involvement in the assassination of the late Presidents Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi on April 6/1994. Recent indictments of Fernando Andeu, Spanish Judge and Jean-Louis Bruguière, French Magistrate indicate clearly that the current regime does not have any moral authority of dressing lists of the so called "genocidaires". Over the years, such lists made by the Kigali's regime have become a way the regime stifles genuine dissent by accusing anyone who dares to challenge the political establishment of being "genocidaire, revisionnist, and/or negationnist". The latest of such lists comprised almost 7000 names. Asking the regime to come up with a list is giving the regime cronies a license to silence anyone who dares to challenge the ill-thought policies and the regime itself. The is credible

information stating that there are new lists being dressed in secret all over the country that will be unearthed after the upcoming presidential election. Therefore, such lists should be considered void.

### **KASIKI, A BEACON OF HOPE**

Although acknowledged in the ICG report, its significance was minimized and downplayed. However, it is evident that, during the entire process that led to the Kisangani Roadmap and the official inauguration of the Kasiki Centre on July 31, 2008, Kasiki represented a glimmer of hope for local people, rwandan refugees as well as numerous observers. The hope that was palpable on the day of the inauguration in spite of a lot of logistic shortcomings, continued to shine during subsequent high profile visits from local dignitaries, representatives of several churches to ambassadors of western countries. It is important to remind the presence of a rwandan official delegation during the aforementioned ceremony.

Contrary to what was alleged in the aforementioned report, General Musare has never hampered the establishment of that centre. In fact, he was one of the speakers during the inauguration ceremony in which he delivered a heartfelt address that stressed once more why few combatants accepted voluntarily to give up their arms and the desire expressed by rwandan refugees of the region to voluntarily return home if their inherent rights and security would be effectively guaranteed by the International Community. He explained why such gesture was also a real testament of the combatants willingness to contribute actively in finding peaceful solutions to the instability that has gripped the region for more than a decade.

On the question of Justice, Gen. Musare stated clearly and forcefully the willingness and commitment of RUD/RPR combatants to cooperate fully with the international jurisdictions as long such courts are fair, impartial, and committed to try anyone who may have committed the crimes in Rwanda and DRC irrespective of his/her ethnic background and/or political allegiance.

Hence, the firm desire to return to their homeland was subsequently confirmed by individual surveys in which rwandan refugees re-stated it to the MONUC personnel. That is when an exploratory visit of the Kasiki resettlers delegation requested to pay a visit to Rwanda in order to assess the conditions of their return. Thereafter, an ad-hoc report was made public after this visit of few days that started on Jan. 23/2009.

However, towards the end, it was apparent that there were underground forces that did not want the Kasiki experience to succeed. Although, on Jan. 27/2009 an agreement was signed in Rome between a delegation of the RUD/RPR coalition and the DRC government in presence of independent observers to declare Kasiki and its surroundings as a peace heaven entity, it was not put into effect and then elements of RDF/FADRC/CNDP coalition targeted the site in order to dismantle the centre by all means on Feb. 10/2009. Luckily, the occupants managed to find refuge in nearby communities and surrounding jungle avoiding to be either forcefully repatriated or killed in case of refusal. Unfortunately most of these refugees are still unaccounted for.

It is important to mention that the Kisangani Roadmap and subsequent agreements stated clearly three options for the rwandan refugees: either voluntary return to Rwanda, resettlement in local communities or resettlement in other countries. Unfortunately, the attack of the Kasiki Centre has administered a huge blow to the entire Kisangani Process.

This is reminiscent to what happened in 1996-1997 when hundreds of thousands of rwandan refugees and Congolese citizens were savagely killed by the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) and its allies. Contrary to what was stated in the ICG aforementioned report, the dismantlement did not start with the attack of the Mugunga -Lac Vert refugee camp in North Kivu that took place on Nov. 15/1996. These attacks started by RPA elements investing refugee camps in South Kivu on Oct. 7/1996 and continued unabated till all the rwandan refugee camps in Eastern DRC were totally destroyed. Along such destruction, the refugees were hunted down over the entire DRC

territory.

These massacres were subsequently qualified as acts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity by several independent organizations including the UN report. It is important to remind the International Community that the main perpetrators of such horrendous crimes hold even today positions in the current rwandan military administration and no one has ever been brought to justice.

#### **ROAD TO THE LASTING PEACE IN THE REGION**

1. The RUD/RPR Coalition remains committed to peace and peaceful solutions as it has already demonstrated during the short-lived Kisangani Process that led to Kasiki settlement Centre.
2. Our organization remain convinced that the principles that were laid in Kisangani Roadmap and subsequently updated in Rome on Jan. 27/2009 may form a foundation in contributing to the lasting solution of the rwandan refugees problem in Eastern DRC and the region.
3. As our organization has always pointed out, the Rwandan problem is political in nature and requires political solutions. It is our firm conviction that as long as the Rwandan problem is not resolved the Africa Great Lakes region will remain unstable.
4. In order to foster a reconciliatory Justice system, the only foundation of genuine Reconciliation, we urgently ask to hold, under the auspices of the International Community, an Inter-Rwandan Dialogue. In addition, our organization calls for the organization of a "Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation" Commission in our homeland that would help heal a traumatized society.
5. We remain convinced that only this Dialogue would lead to lasting peace, stability, and the establishment of new political, judiciary, and security institutions that would be the reflection of the legitimate aspirations of all the constitutive groups of the Rwandan society.
6. Our organization has the firm commitment to constructively and actively contribute to the finding lasting and peaceful solutions to the problems that have plagued our homeland and the Africa Great Lakes region.

July 16, 2009

DR. AUGUSTIN DUKUZE  
SPOKESPERSON