

RUD-URUNANA

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RESPONSE TO HRW REPORT ON EASTERN DRC: RUD-URUNANA IS COMMITTED TO DIALOGUE, PEACE, AND FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS

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. The latest in kind was published by Human Rights Watch (HRW) under the title: "You will Be Punished: Attacks on Civilian in Eastern Congo", December, 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 this report 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.

To our knowledge, we never met the HRW delegation. Hence, are we surprised that the HRW has chosen to publish this important report containing allegations against RUD-Urunana without even seeking to meet the leaders of our organization. We would like to point out that RUD-Urunana leadership has always expressed their readiness to meet anyone, within the International Community.

RUD-URUNANA IS NO ALLY OF THE FDLR

While referring to the report recently issued by the UN Group of experts on DRC, HRW statements leave an impression that the RUD-Urunana is a subsidiary of the FDLR. We would like take this opportunity to state categorically and unequivocally that RUD-Urunana is not a subsidiary and/or an ally of the FDLR. We would like to remind HRW and 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 was 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. Recent initiatives including the Kisangani Roadmap subsequently reinstated in Rome (January 2009) between the representatives of the DRC government and our delegation before the Sant'Egidio facilitation attest to the independence of our organization. Therefore, RUD-Urunana has never had and does neither have political nor military ties with the FDLR.

As we have publicly and forcefully stated, our organization has only allied itself to the Rassemblement du Peuple Rwandais (RPR) with which we share common vision. Trying to link RUD-Urunana to organizations other than RPR, is tantamount to foster the Kigali regime agenda that has been put forth in one of African Rights reports whose "experts" are known to be on the

Rwandan government payroll.

CRIMES IN SOUTH LUBERO: THE WORK OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE “COALITION”

Our organization categorically denies any involvement in the killings reported by HRW that took place in Eastern DRC in general and in southern Lubero in particular. Our organization has consistently and strongly denounced and condemned any human rights abuse perpetrated against innocent people including Rwanda refugees and Congolese citizens. That is why any member who would engage in such conduct would not be tolerated and would be treated as a criminal. If there were any individual who would have engaged in such conduct, he would have done it in its own capacity and shall respond of his actions before competent jurisdictions.

As in our Press Release PP/No. 02/Feb/09 date Feb. 8/09, the Kasiki resettlement centre was dismantled by the elements of the FARDC/RDF/CNDP coalition in order to forcefully remove the Rwandan refugees who resettled in Kasiki following the Kisangani Roadmap. Such process was subsequent to the negotiations between the DRC government and RUD/RPR coalition under the facilitation of the Sant'Egidio Community and the auspices of the International Community. If the Kasiki occupants managed to flee, the coalition forces that were now occupying the resettlement centre pursued the Rwandan refugees in nearby communities and surrounding jungle accusing the local population of helping and/or offering refuge to the hunted Rwandans.

It was during such manhunt that several innocent Congolese were brutalized, had their houses torched and were even killed by the forces of the coalition. It is important to mention that our organization did denounce in the Press Release PP No. 03/Feb/2009 do Feb 14/09 such brutality and crimes that were being perpetrated by the “Umoja Wetu” forces. Reliable sources in the region have clearly indicated that such reprisals against the refugees and the local population were perpetrated by the “allied” forces continued unabated in South Lubero region for several months.

In order to drive a wedge between the local population and the Rwandan refugees, the FARDC/RDF/CNDP coalition engaged in operations against Congolese citizen that subsequently were to be attributed to Rwandan refugees. According to information at our disposal, that is how the killings of Luofu referred to in HRW report came to be. In addition, the undated and unclearly signed letter of Miriki supposedly issued by RUD was part of psychological operations that the “coalition” launched during its on-going military campaign.

What took place in that region 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. That is why the only mission the RUD/RPR combatants have is the protection of the Rwandan refugees. 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 LASTING PEACE IN THE REGION

Our organization does concur with all independent observers that a lasting solution to the problem of Rwandan refugees has to emerge if lasting peace and stability in the region were to be achieved. RUD-Urunana would like to reaffirm the following principles that constitute the cornerstone of finding lasting solution of the plight in which the Great Lakes region has been enduring for decades:

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. Hence, the most urgent action is for the UN Secretary General to appoint without delay a Special Representative for Rwandan refugees in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, as this constitutes the best way towards a timely and durable resolution of the impasse.

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.

December 20, 2009

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SPOKESPERSON