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RUD-URUNANA URGES THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC) TO ENGAGE THE RWANDA GOVERNMENT TO NEGOTIATE WITH ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS IN ORDER TO RESOLVE THE POLITICAL IMPASSE IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

As the Rwandan Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Dr. Charles Muligande, visits Kinshasa from September 3-4, 2007, RUD-Urunana urges the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to take the opportunity to send a clear signal that it intends to stay the course on engaging the governments of the region to resolve the long standing crisis in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. RUD-Urunana would like to encourage the DRC government to engage the Rwandan Government so that the latter embarks on the path of negotiations with its own armed opposition groups in order to resolve not only the ongoing military conflicts in Eastern DRC, but also the political impasse in the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

The visit by the Rwandan minister happens while heavy fightings have flared up in Eastern DRC and the border regions of Rwanda have become war zones. Over the last weeks, thousands of Rwandan troops have deployed in areas bordering DRC, especially in Mutura, Mukingo, Kinigi and Nkumba. Rwandan Government military commanders and political leaders are explaining to the people in these areas that the purpose of troops deployment is to preempt attacks by the forces of the Armée Nationale-Imboneza of RUD-Urunana, RPR-Inkeragutabara, and the FDLR. However, the real motives behind the deployment appear to be serving as rear bases to the forces of the renegade Congolese General Laurent Nkunda and logistical transit points for reinforcements and supplies.

Since August 27, 2007, the combined forces of General Laurent Nkunda and the Rwandan Government have been crossing the border from these bases to launch attacks in Masisi. The troops specifically target Congolese Hutu and other ethnic groups and Rwandan refugees. This new invasion of the DRC territory by Rwandan Government forces and their proxies, the troops loyal to General Nkunda, has already generated hundreds of thousands of Congolese refugees and internal displaced persons and led to systematic massacres of civilians.

RUD-Urunana would like to draw the attention of the Congolese Government on the fact that the UN Secretary General and independent non governmental organizations have recently qualified General Laurent Nkunda as the single most ominous threat to peace in the DRC.

Therefore, as the leaders of the DRC hold talks with the Rwandan minister, RUD-URUNANA would like to remind them of the following:

- The crisis in the Great Lakes Region since the 1990s is political in nature and its solution must be political.

- General Paul Kagame and the RPF regime have become the single most important source of instability in the Great Lakes region of Africa.
- Like other governments in the region, the RPF regime must engage on the path of national reconciliation and reconstruction, instead of reinforcing an autocratic and repressive system with the dire consequences of producing an endless flow of refugees and internally displaced people across the Great Lakes Region.
- Any solution aiming at the repatriation of the Rwandan refugees, whether forced or not, will have to take into account the political reality in Rwanda and the aspirations of the Rwandan opposition groups, and give political and security guarantees to both the Rwandan neighbors and the refugees in the DRC.
- All attempts to forced repatriation of Rwandan refugees will certainly lead to events similar to the humanitarian tragedy of 1996-97. It is during this manhunt that war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide were committed by the Rwandan Patriotic army (RPA) against Rwandan refugees and under the indifferent eye of the International Community. These crimes remain unpunished to this day.
- The return of peace, security, and sustainable development in the Great Lakes Region requires the intervention of the International Community in addressing the roots of the problematic first.
- The International Community must put sustained pressure on the current Rwandan Government in order to stop it from interfering in internal affairs of the other states in the region, the DRC in particular, and to engage in a dialogue with the opposition.
- A highly Inclusive Inter-Rwandan Dialogue is most likely to unlock the political impasse and bring peace in the Great Lakes region. The Congolese people have suffered enough and deserve peace. Hence, all foreign troops and neighbors must respect the DRC territorial integrity and leave DRC and the Congolese people alone. That is why RUD-URUNANA has limited the military operations of the Armée Nationale (AN)-Imboneza to the Rwandan territory. However, AN-Imboneza reserves the right to intervene anywhere if the combined General Paul Kagame's and General Nkunda's forces continue their war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide against the Rwandan refugees. Confident of the principles and approaches outlined above, RUD-Urunana is ready to work with the Congolese Government and engage in negotiations with key stakeholders to find a way to resolve the crisis in Eastern DRC and the Great Lakes Region and to implement the Inter-Rwandan Dialogue.

Washington, DC, September 1, 2007

Signed

Felicien Kanyamibwa, PhD
 Secretary General
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