



Inkingi
Forces Démocratiques Unifiées
United Democratic Forces

+ + (250) 728636000 Fdu.inkingi.rwa@gmail.com

www.victoire-ingabire.com - www.fdu-rwanda.com

Kigali - Rwanda

"Pour un Etat de Droit, la Democratie et l'Egalité de chances"; "For the rule of law, democracy and equal opportunity"

Kigali, 29th April 2013

The case against Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza falls apart as prosecution witnesses admit their testimonies were framed.

On the 8th day of Ingabire's appeal, the Supreme Court heard the prosecution witnesses namely Lieutenant-Colonel Tharcisse Nditurende, Lt Colonel Noël Habiyaemye, Captain Jean Marie Vianney Karuta and Major Vital Uwumuremyi. They all criticized the prosecution's case especially in regard to the formation of an armed organization.

These witnesses had pleaded guilty in the High Court to have formed a military organization, the CDF which allegedly was to be a military wing of FDU-INKINGI. They affirm they have never been members of such organization because it has never existed. Mrs Victoire Ingabire's conviction by the High Court was based on these confessions.

With regard to talks that these witnesses would have had with Madam Ingabire, Tharcisse Nditurende declared that they contacted Ingabire to see if she could be of any use to them, but she never responded positively, especially that she was more concerned about her intention to return to Rwanda and to enter political scene. He added that he immediately realized that he could not expect anything from someone who wanted to return to Rwanda.

Nditurende declared that the help they needed was not to form a military wing of the FDU, but financial support in order to withstand attacks from their fellow FDLR and from the Congolese army.

Coming back to the e-mails, Tharcisse Nditurende told the Supreme Court that during his detention, the Ministry of Justice had forced him to reveal his password so they could have free access to his email account. However, this could not be possible without the Attorney General's authorisation as Ingabire's defense counsel has emphasized.

Ingabire's defense counsel had questioned the authenticity of these messages, because the investigators had access to the email account of the co-defendants, and that they could make them up. It also noted many contradictions in their content.

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Meanwhile, like Mrs Ingabire, Major Uwumuremyi Vital has asked the court to take into account the agreement between Rwanda and the DRC under the auspices of the UN, which states, among other things, that the ex - FDLR fighters, who would lay down their arms or be repatriated following Umoja Wetu operations, would not be prosecuted for acts committed in the DRC, with the exception of crimes of genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity that were already the subject of an arrest warrant issued by Rwanda or by the international community.

All these former FDLR combatants wrapped up their hearings by asking the court to do justice to them and to decrease punishment inflicted on them by the High Court in violation of the law as argued by their counsel.

All along her trial, the Defence of Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza had told the court that the so called CDF armed group never existed and that the idea was merely invention of the State to put Mrs Ingabire behind bars and to stop her from running in presidential elections. It is noteworthy to recall the statement made President Kagame in an interview with "Monitor Newspaper" Managing Editor DANIEL KALINAKI in May 2010, three months before presidential elections. I quote:

"This woman will certainly be where she belongs. She was charged in the court of law, she's now out on bail but the matters are serious and are there as a matter of fact. How then do I explain myself or for this country beyond that? Now the outsiders who want so badly Ingabire to be an opposition leader here or later on be our president, well, they may wait for a while".

Now that the "serious matters" are more no more than a concoction of the State we are still to see how independent the Supreme Court will be as a guarantor of the rule of law.

FDU-INKINGI
Twagirimana Boniface
Interim Vice-President