

PRESS RELEASE.

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RWANDA : POLITICAL OPPOSITION WELCOMES TANZANIA PRESIDENT J. KIKWETE'S WISE AND HISTORIC ADVICE FOR LASTING PEACE.

In Addis Ababa, on 26th May, 2013, in a speech before the African Union, at the first meeting of the regional oversight mechanism of the peace, security and cooperation framework for the DRC and the region, H.E. Jakaya Mrisho KIKWETE, President of the United Republic of Tanzania advised that comprehensive and lasting peace will be realised at the negotiating table and that time has come to reach out to FDLR, ADF and other negative forces with the view to ending the circle of violence. The President of Tanzania reiterated that supporting a peace deal in the Democratic Republic of Congo, necessitated a global peace deal that would include negotiating with the rebel groups.

"I am of the view that the enlargement of MONUSCO and the deployment of Intervention Brigade to play a dissuading role will not end the war. Ultimately, and comprehensive and lasting peace will be realised at the negotiating table. Let us give serious attention to peace talks. Let the Mechanism support the process in Kampala. Time has come to reach out to FDLR, ADF and other negative forces with the view to ending the circle of violence", he said.

We, the undersigned, representing the political opposition to the Kigali regime, welcome President Kikwete's wise and historic advice. For there to be a just and lasting peace in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region, the RPF government in Kigali has to engage, unconditionally, the Rwanda's political opposition and other forces.

The RPF government has now launched a vicious media and PR campaign against H.E. President KIKWETE. This is a misguided and counter-productive approach that does not contribute to peace and security in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region.

Tanzania has historically been a major player in resolving the conflicts in Africa, and specially in Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Tanzania is providing troops to the Intervention Brigade in eastern DRC as part of a United Nations mandate to support the peace process. Tanzania is a respected member of the international community.

We call upon Rwandans, Africans and the whole international community to support President KIKWETE's call for a global peace process in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

We call upon the Government of Rwanda to stop its gross human rights abuses, release all the political prisoners, open the political space, and unconditionally start dialogue with the opposition.

This is the only viable pathway toward sustainable peace, security and development in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region.

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