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COMITE DIRECTEUR – STEERING COMMITTEE

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

PRESS RELEASE

**FDU-INKINGI PARTY VERY CONCERNED BY THE NEW RESTRICTIONS OF RIGHTS
OF THE POLITICAL PRISONER MRS VICTOIRE INGABIRE UMUHOZA**

The Rwandan government is leaving no stone unturned in its efforts to squeeze Mrs Ingabire Umuhoza in her cell, prohibiting normal visits to her, denying her access to socio-cultural activities as well as obstructing working visits of her defence team. Today January 29, 2016, prison authorities turned away a group of 5 people, the only number of people who were allowed this day to visit her. We are concerned that this could be signalling the final act of solitary confinement.

Today, the authorities have imposed more restrictions of her rights. While she was entitled to a weekly visit of five people from his family and friends, this number has been reduced to one person without any valid justification. The prison authorities initially claimed that the measure applied to all prisoners to "ease the workload of the guards," but it turned out that the measure targeted Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza alone.

We would like to recall that Madame Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza, was sentenced, after a political trial, to 8 years' imprisonment. It was brought to 15 years in 2013, against all logic, when she appealed against the sentence by the Highest Court in the land. And since then she is kept in an isolated cell in the infamous "1930" prison in Kigali. Since her detention, Ms. Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza has seen many changes in her life in prison. On several occasions, her lawyer has been searched or prevented from seeing her; In a bid to humiliate her, the food brought to her is fiddled with by a security guard allegedly to check if there is any hidden object and as if that was not enough, her calendar prayer and reading books were confiscated.

The stakes at play in the latest Rwandan government decision

This measure comes at the most crucial moment, for Madame Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza when she is called to appear before the judges of the African Court of Human Rights in Arusha in early March 2016, to challenge the political trial that was subjected to her by the Rwandan courts. Because it is

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Join us on **Facebook**: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Victoire-Ingabire-Umuhoza-for-President/109504816547> - Watch us on **YouTube**: <http://www.youtube.com/user/FDUInkingi123> - Follow us on **Twitter**: <http://twitter.com/VictoireUmuhoza>

the crucial time that she needs to consult more with her family and lawyer to prepare her case, the authorities want to break her morale by deciding to reduce to a minimum visits and contact with her defence team.

Indeed, Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza needs to consult with her defence team and her family and friends to be ready to appear before the Court in Arusha. If the Rwandan authorities decide to restrict to the minimum the level of contacts with the outside world, the aim is to deprive her of adequate preparation for the upcoming trial, so that she is unable to take advantage of her appearance before the African Court of Human Rights.

We would like to recall that detention without visits, like solitary confinement, is a practice punishable by international legal norms since the nineteenth century and is considered today as a form of inhuman treatment. Rights to visits and enjoyment of socio-cultural rights of Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza, namely visit by five people per week and the right to participate in worship are inalienable rights. Moreover, there are many prisoners in the same prison who receive better treatment including getting more than 5 visitors per week and therefore her treatment amounts to pure discrimination.

The FDU-Inkingi Party would like to express its utmost concern over the deliberate attempt of the Rwandan authorities to push Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza to depression instead of allowing her to prepare her defence to recover her rights. She is entitled, pending her appearance before the Court of Arusha, to get in touch with her relatives and friends and to have unhindered access and real time with her lawyer.

We appeal to the international community and friends of Rwanda to remind the Rwandan government of the irrefutable minimum standards of treatment that a person in detention is entitled to under international law to which Rwanda is a party and rein of the Rwandan regime to end all restrictions on the rights of Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza, political prisoner, languishing unjustly in the infamous Kigali prison.

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