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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

THE RWANDAN STATE WITHDRAWS INTEMPESTIVELY FROM THE TRIAL WHICH OPPOSES IT TO Mrs. VICTOIRE INGABIRE UMUHOZA IN THE AFRICAN COURT OF HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS AT ARUSHA IN TANZANIA.

The Unified Democratic Forces (FDU Inkingi), a political party opposed to the regime of the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), would like to inform the public that the Rwandan state did not show up on Wednesday 22 March 2017 at the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Arusha, Tanzania, to defend itself in the appeal case No. 003/2014 brought against it by political prisoner Mrs. Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza.

The reasons given by the Rwandan government in a letter to the ACHPR, include lack of impartiality of the Court due to the sources of its funding. The Rwandan government accuses the funders of the African Court for Human and Peoples' Rights, namely USAID (United States Agency for International Development), the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) and FIDH (the International Federation of Human Rights League), of having bribed the Registrar and the Judges of the Court, on account of having accepted the defendant's appeal application. It considers this acceptance to be a ploy to get the Rwandan State accused of committing the crime of human rights violations.

The Rwandan Government further alleges that the Court's judgment of June 3, 2016 which ruled that proceedings in the cases pending before the Court would continue, was changed. However, the only changes made relate to typing errors which have been corrected.

Another reason brought forward to withdraw from the appeal case is that, according to the Rwandan State, there is a lack of independence and of impartiality on the part of the Court because the Court has accepted the defense's requests.

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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>

At the hearing on March 4, 2016, the defense filed four applications, namely:

1. A motion requesting the dismissal of the arguments put forward by the CNLG to justify the status of Amicus curiae;
2. A motion to order the Rwandan state to facilitate access of defense lawyers to their client;
3. A motion to order the Rwandan State to take the necessary steps to ensure that Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza follows her trial by videoconference;
4. A motion to ask the Rwandan State to comply with the Court's directives, regarding its decision of 7.10.2015 on the tabling of the relevant documents.

The Court rejected the first and third applications and accepted the second and fourth applications.

The hearing took place in the absence of a representative of the Rwanda government. It took place in a calm atmosphere. Many questions were asked by the court particularly with regard to procedures followed in Rwanda in reviewing court rulings. After closing court deliberations, the parties will submit their concluding remarks. Deliberations on the case will then follow.

The UDF finds this untimely withdrawal unjustified and shows the true face of the Kigali regime. Indeed, the regime of Paul Kagame only accepts its own justice which lacks impartiality and is unfair. The regime has no problem receiving financial aid from donors to fund its justice system and would not want anyone criticize it. This is used to raise its image and credibility. However, when the same donors fund a different court where the RPF has no say then it becomes corruption.

International human rights organizations such as [Amnesty](#), [HRW](#) and the [European Union](#) as well, have always denounced the politically motivated trial of Mrs. Victoire Ingabire.

We call upon donors to put pressure on the RPF government for unconditional release of the President of the FDU-Inkingi, Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza.

Done at Brussels on 22 March 2017

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