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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

## **CONDEMNATION OF UNHUMAN AND DEGRADING TREATMENT OF RWANDAN REFUGEES SECTIONED IN A MILITARY BARRACKS OF LT GENERAL BAUMA KISANGANI**

FDU-Inkingi is very concerned about alleged starvation of Rwandan refugees sectioned in General Bauma barracks of Lt Kisangani. We have received information from reliable sources that Rwandan refugees detained in the above location have not received food for the last 14 days. 62% of the refugees who have been denied food are children. The aim of this unhuman treatment is to force them to return to Rwanda against their will. The FDU-Inkingi condemns in the strongest terms possible the alleged cynical use of the starvation to Rwandan refugees in Bauma transit camp to force them to hand themselves over to a notoriously repressive regime of Rwanda. Heads of these families are former FDLR combatants who had willingly accepted to surrendered and wanted guarantees for safe return to Rwanda. UNCHR has failed to offer these guarantees for safe return and therefore the tactic to send them through coercion.

The same cynical tactics were used in June 2015 in the various transit camps to force Rwandan refugees to return to Rwanda. A week-long blockade of food supplies, medical staff human rights organisations' was imposed leaving the most vulnerable at risk including children, mothers, elderly expecting mothers, inside Kisangani transit camp to force them to return. Alleged leaders were stripped naked and kept in unknown locations where they were tortured regularly to convince them to return to Rwanda. Forty-two (42) persons went missing including a mother, separated from her children. Refugees reported that several women refugees were raped by Units of the Congolese army involved in the raid on the Kisangani transit camp. We would like to recall that such acts constitute a violation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law i.e. "deliberate starvation as a means of achieving political goals" and the violation of the UN Convention relating to the status of refugees that prohibits forceful return of refugees to countries of origin.

The FDU-Inkingi would like to appeal to all peace-loving people and human rights organisations to put pressure on the UN to intervene and stop the use of unlawful and cynical tactics to force Rwandan refugees to return to Rwanda. The threat of the use of starvation to force them to forcefully return home was also tried in January this year without success due to international outcry.

The FDU-Inkingi call upon the UN system and in particular MONUSCO, UNCHR and UNICEF to help stop this unhuman and degrading treatment of Rwandan refugees living in Lt General Bauma military barracks.

Done in London, on August 23, 2018.

Justin Bahunga,

FDU-Inkingi Commissioner for External Relations and spokesperson.

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