

RWANDA

Amahoro People's Congress - FDU-INKINGI - PS Imberakuri - RNC

PRESS RELEASE.

Date: 24 July 2013.

OPPOSITION DEMANDS UNEQUIVOCAL STAND ON RWANDA SUPPORT TO THE M23.

In a US Department of State Daily Press Briefing issued in Washington, D.C. on 23 July 2013, Spokesperson Jen Psaki stated: ".....we believe there is a credible body of evidence that supports the key findings of the Human Rights Watch report, including support by senior Rwandan officials to the M23 and of Rwandan military personnel in the D.R.C. We call upon Rwanda to immediately end any support to the M23, withdraw military personnel from eastern D.R.C., and follow through on its commitments under the framework." Responding to a journalist's question inquiring whether Rwanda's failure to stop its support to the rebels in the Eastern DRC is attributable to the fact that the US Government has to date only issued lame appeals to Rwanda instead of signaling preparedness to apply the leverage necessary to ensure Rwanda's compliance, the spokesperson responded: "We will take that all into consideration."

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry will this week chair a meeting of the U.N. Security Council aimed at strengthening efforts to achieve peace in Central Africa's Great Lakes region. Commenting on this high-level Security Council session, Acting U.S. United Nations Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo said:

"The session will build on several events that have brought renewed energy to this effort.....Secretary-General Ban has accepted our invitation to brief, as has World Bank President [Jim] Kim. [U.N.]Special Envoy Mary Robinson and high-level representatives from the Democratic Republic of Congo.Uganda and the African Union have also been invited to brief the Council. Also a high-level representative of Rwanda has been invited to speak as a council member."

The people of the Great Lakes region have their eyes turned towards this U.N. Security Council session and expect candid discussions and unequivocal measures, including but not limited to the prosecution of Rwandan leadership at the International Criminal Court for organizing, arming, supporting, and directing insurgent groups responsible for past as well as on-going atrocities in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Rwandan Defense Forces have been fighting into the DRC directly and by proxy rebellions since 1996. The official pretext for the catastrophic suffering Rwanda's government has visited upon the people of Congo is the pursuit of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), whose units are scattered in various locations of the DRC. Millions of civilians have died as a result of Rwanda's never ending military invasions, interventions, occupations and plundering of precious minerals in the DRC.

In view of the undeniable fact that Rwanda's costly, 18 year campaign of waging war in the DRC has failed to destroy the armed rebel groups that are a pretext for its campaigns, it is timely that the international community consider new strategies for ensuring peace in Rwanda and the region. Some African leaders have recognized and expressed grave concerns over the stalemate towards achieving peace in the Great Lakes region. On 17 June 2013, the extraordinary summit of the Heads of State and Governments of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) held in Maputo (Mozambique) urged Rwanda and Uganda to consider peace talks with the armed opposition groups that their governments are fighting as the path to lasting peace in the Great Lakes region. During the last African Union Summit, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete advised Rwanda in particular to have peace talks with its opposition.

We encourage the UN Security Council, the US government, the European Union and other key partners of Rwandan President Paul Kagame to use the full leverage of their relationship with Rwanda to influence Rwanda to withdraw from the DRC territory, to stop support for armed groups fighting the government of the sister state and to instead adopt sound policies that promote domestic, regional and international peace. We call upon the international community to support direct talks between the government of Rwanda and its internal and external oppositions under international facilitation.

We reiterate that there can and will be no lasting solution to the acute problems that Rwanda and the Great Lakes region face as a direct result of crucial issues of governance in Rwanda that continue to be ignored. These issues include lack of political space and extreme violations of fundamental rights. We particularly call to the attention of the international community the plight of political prisoners i.e. Madame Victoire Ingabire (Chairperson FDU-INKINGI), Bernard Ntaganda (Founding President PS Imberakuri), Deogratias Mushayidi (PDP Imanzi), Dr. Theoneste Niyitegeka (Presidential candidate in 2003), and Sylvain Sibomana (FDU-INKINGI interim Secretary General), whose incarceration reflects the regime's absolute intolerance for the Rwandan people's legitimate aspirations for democracy. We urge the international community to address continuing impunity in Rwanda and to hold the Government of Rwanda accountable for past war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as on-going disappearances and extra-judicial killings assassinations of political figures, journalists and human rights defenders. There will be no end to impunity or prospect for peace and stability in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region until there are credible steps towards ensuring international prosecution of President Paul Kagame and warlords operating under his direction and control to commit atrocities on the DRC territory.

Sincerely,

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