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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

**POLITICAL PRISONER MRS INGABIRE UMUHOZA DENIED HER INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF WORSHIP
AND ACCESS TO A LAWYER.**

Since the Rwandan regime launched the process of changing the constitution to pave the way to make General Paul Kagame life President, repressive measures against political prisoner, Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza have escalated. The latest measure has been to deny her the right to attend religious Sunday service on the 14th of February 2016. [This comes after prison officials have blocked all contacts between Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza and her lawyer.](#) The complaints of the lawyers have remained unanswered.

We would like to remind the public that since our last press release regarding the scheduled examination of the case of Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza by the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Rwandan regime has not yet allowed her lawyer to meet her in order to prepare her case, now that we are two weeks away from the date that the case will be heard on the 4th of March 2016.

We would like to recall that other repressive measures have included limiting the number of people who can visit her to five people, a measure that does not apply to any other prisoner, reducing the number from five to one person per week and painting black the windows of her prison cell in order to stop any natural light filtering into the cell.

These measures against Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza, do reflect the underlying lack of belief by the regime in the myth of a support of 93% of the population. On the other hand, they demonstrate a moral panic caused by inherent fear and belief of the regime in the popularity of the political prisoner Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza. We challenge the government to prove the contrary by releasing her, creating a level playing ground and engaging in a fair, transparent and democratic competition.

FDU-Inkingi would like to condemn in the strongest terms possible the inhuman and degrading treatment of political prisoner Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza and the denial of her inalienable rights of worship and access to a lawyer. We call on key financial donors of Rwanda particularly the US, UK, the Netherlands and the EU to ask the Rwandan regime to stop violating international conventions regarding the treatment of prisoners, right to a fair trial and the UN convention relating to unhuman and degrading treatment.

We warn the international community and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights that there is no way we can expect a fair outcome in the ruling of the court when the client and her defence team have not been given ample time to prepare the case.

Done in London, February 15th, 2016

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