



Rwandan Platform for Dialogue, Truth, and Justice

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From Justice Perspective: The RDTJ responds to Tony Blair and Howard Buffet

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In 'Stand with Rwanda: Now is no time to cut aid', an article appearing on *Foreign Policy.Com* on 21 February 2013, Tony Blair and American billionaire Howard Buffet called on the international community not to freeze their financial support for Rwanda. Their plea, targeting in particular to their respective countries (Rwanda's biggest donors) came after the UN Group of Experts Reports released in July and November 2012 which revealed that Rwanda was spending money intended for the promotion of social and economic projects on military meddling in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In addition to violating DRC territorial integrity, Rwanda has been found to support M23, a deadly rebel group operating in eastern DRC which has displaced 900 000 people, left millions of others dead, and whose leaders are wanted by International Criminal Court. Blair and Buffet argue that because Rwanda has developed economically and has been paying the World Bank debts, the international community should continue to support President Kagame regardless of his implication by various UN Experts or Special Rapporteurs and human rights organisations reports in committing flagrant human rights violations in DRC as well as in Rwanda.

The Blair and Buffet article was met with dismay by the Rwandan Platform for Dialogue, Truth and Justice (RDTJ). RDTJ strongly stresses that economic development should not be applauded when it is known to be at the cost of political oppression of the majority of the

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population in Rwanda; war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Rwanda and DRC; and exploitation of mineral wealth in the DRC. What's more, Rwanda has a large and growing disparity of wealth between a small elite and the majority who remain excessively poor.

In supporting President Kagame, Blair and Buffet are placing their personal benefits above the people of Great Lakes Region's peace, freedom and justice. In our view, their article defeats and obstructs the ends of justice. They are making claims as to President Kagame's innocence on the basis of development instead of evidence. Their judgments are blurred by the fear of losing their investment in President Kagame to exploit the Great Lakes region and the fear that their business will come to a standstill if their agent is internationally condemned. These men are capitalists, racists, and neo-colonialists. As capitalists, they are using their agent (President Kagame) as a tool to exploit DRC. As racists, they support exploitation which has the result of killing millions in DRC and thousands in Rwanda in the pursuit of natural resources. These crimes against humanity are heinous in nature and shock the collective conscious. They do not however shock Blair's and Howard's conscious. This is because the lives at stake are African lives. It is shameful that Blair and Buffet can at once estimate that 5.4 million lives have been claimed by the so called 'Second Congo War' over the last 15 years but at the same time do not dare calling for justice for the dead and those who are caused to live in suffering, misery, degradation and humiliation because the reason that they offer for this contradiction is that a proxy war is a 'complex problem' which the international community cannot resolve. If they could be peace-lovers or champions of freedom, democracy and good governance, they could have been part of solution but not a part of problem. It is obvious that they are among people who make this issue complex.

From a justice perspective, the RDTJ argues that the authors of those atrocities committed mainly in DRC should be brought to book and Blair and Buffet should be called to answer for their interference with the course of justice. No matter how Blair and Howard manipulate the situation, international justice, in whatever form, will catch up with President Kagame. Mr

President, being subservient to the westerns' will and caprice will neither prove anything superior in you – strong man – nor will not absolve you from misdeeds – innocent person. Buffet and Howard pretend to be with you; however, their intention is to subjugate, to exploit and to exterminate weaker people (including you Mr President) with whom they come into contact for the purpose of fulfilling their own material desires on one hand and consolidation of western powers.

These colonialists have not been called to answer for atrocities committed during the colonial era, they are proudly supporting President Kagame in day light because they know that Africans are like a dogs without teeth. Blair and Howard insult Africans by consciously funding atrocities in the Great Lakes region through the Tony Blair's "Africa Governance Initiative" and "Howatt G. Buffet Foundation". These institutions are vehicles for promoting national and international criminal activities and authoritarian regime and aid the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity. These institutions have played a role in furthering division, hatred and polarisation in the Great Lakes region. The region has gone beyond division and is now shattered. Blood is spilled and people are crying for peace, unity, truth, democracy, justice, and freedom. However Blair and Buffet do not care about millions of people dying from suffering or the scourge and misery caused by their business in Great Lakes region as long as they benefit. Instead of supporting measures taken by international community to end the suffering, they are vehemently against them.

Evil cannot be corrected by another evil. And, an evil man cannot understand justice. Blair and Buffet justify their actions by declaring that "*Rwanda has lifted 1 million people out of poverty, created 1 million new jobs, and is poised to meet most of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals*" and that "*Rwanda ranks as one of the most effective investors of aid in the world. It is frequently cited for its aid effectiveness by the World Bank*". This is an absurd argument because Rwanda is not recovering because of the production of Rwandans themselves rather the foreign aid and pillaging DRC. This is what Blair and Buffet call '**investment**'. They turn a blind eye to millions of Rwandans who are in jail and hundreds of young generations who are recruited to fight a proxy war in DRC. This is what they call '**creation of jobs**'.

The biblical proverb says 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a life a time'. They have been teaching President Kagame to govern by “**terror and fear**” and to stay on in power for a life time. Instead of teaching him how to be productive so as to become economically independent and self-sufficient, they are teaching him to steal and pillage. As a good student is usually rewarded for excellent performance, they are rewarding him a fish on a plate by calling for a foreign aid on his behalf and supporting his position and his claim that the UN Group of Experts Report which revealed that Rwanda and Uganda are the main culprits to be mere fabrications and unsubstantiated. Alas, they call on international community to accept the Rwandan contention without doubt. The RDTJ questions how the UN always commissions the incompetent and inexperienced so called experts; the point of view of President Kagame, President Museveni, Rwandan advisor Blair and billionaire Howard put forward?

Experts who investigated these atrocities have shown irrefutable evidence that Rwanda and Uganda were in the DRC under the facade of protection of Banyamulenge (Tutsi tribe) and hunting down FDRL (*Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rwanda*). In actual fact they invaded the DRC with the aim and purpose of creating a Hima empire and destabilising the region for the benefit of their western supporters. With regard to human rights violations, these reports indicate that Rwanda has committed atrocities which are, if proven before a competent court, crimes of genocide. These reports range from the Mapping Report to the UN Group of Experts Report. All these experts were commissioned by the UN.

Hunting down FDRL who are claimed to have been involved in Rwandan genocide does not justify the killing of 5.4 million in the DRC and leaving millions of Internal Displaced People and thousands of Congolese refugees. It does not justify the violation of DRC sovereignty and territorial integrity. Neither does it give a green light to Kagame and Museveni to create and support rebellions towards supporting Banyamulenge in DRC through a proxy war. Nor does it legitimise the destabilisation of the Great Lakes region. The moral obligation to defend their tribe in DRC - solidarity - should occur through legitimate means. The international

community knows the truth and must act accordingly as it responded to the holocaust and Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Lebanon, Kosovo, Guatemala, East Timor and the Rwandan genocide by creating *ad hoc* or special international tribunals to try the perpetrators or as it did when it arrested former President Slobodan Milosevic and Charles Taylor or as it did when it issued an arrest warrant to the President of (North) Sudan due to perpetrating crimes against humanity in Darfur. Presidents Kagame and Museveni are no different. To hold some members of FDLR accountable, due process must take its course, because they are also equal in dignity and rights. Non-Tutsi tribes that are found in Great Lakes region are not inferior races. The Museveni and Kagame's philosophy that holds one race superior and another inferior, which is supported by Blair and Buffet, must be condemned and discredited.

Giving financial aid to President Kagame is rewarding him for crimes committed and promotes impunity, and thereby frustrating the restoration of peace, justice and reconciliation. Justice must not be selective. Justice must be seen to be being done. As regard restoration of sustainable peace, Blair and Buffet must acknowledge that reconciliation is a two way-process. It cannot be achieved if the other party of the process is being hunted down and eventually killed or jailed. Yet, it cannot be achieved if the other party is treated as social outcast and undeserving of political participation. In this light, they should promote their own business and trade in the facade of '**installation of good governance**' devoid of promotion of social division, ethnic conflicts, political violence, discrimination, and ethnic superiority. Rather, they should, in the words of American President Obama, promote the "essential truth of democracy", which is based on people's self determination of their destiny and not merely on "economic progress" political rhetoric. They should promote dignity of all people and enjoyment of freedoms. All citizens must be equally entitled to the rights, privileges, and benefits of citizenship. The practice of grouping Rwandan citizens into categorization on the basis of good citizens (supporters of Kagame's philosophy) and bad citizens (dissidents) should be stopped for the Rwandans to move forward.

The argument of economic progress is invoked to cover international crimes and to promote impunity by disregarding the fact that all people are equal before the law irrespective of their social, political, and economic status - wealth does not elevate one above the law. Blair and Buffet trading endeavours should never override people's fundamental human rights. Their

respective countries – Britain and America, members of the United Nations and of its security council understand this better than they do. If you can hang Saddam Hussein, Mr Blair, you cannot surely support Kagame’s evil. That is not how a formal business is run.

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