



Rwandan Platform for Dialogue, Truth, and Justice

NPO NO. 187-133

PRESS RELEASE

Friday, 16 November 2012

RWANDAN DIPLOMATS INTENSIFY THREATS AND INTIMIDATIONS TOWARDS RWANDAN REFUGEES

The **Rwandan Platform for Dialogue, Truth and Justice “RDTJ”** is concerned with unending interference of Rwandan Embassies worldwide into Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers plights in their host countries.

The RDTJ is a non- profit and apolitical organization of Rwandan exiles living in South Africa that strives to create a platform where Rwandan Hutus, Tutsis, and Twas of all walks of life meet and discuss ways to achieve durable peace and reconciliation among themselves and debating on the root causes of ethnic and political problems that Rwanda has endured for a period exceeding 400 years and continues to experience today.

In South Africa, the Rwandan Embassy embarked on activities aimed at destabilising the security and peace of Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers since year 2000. Most of these activities were carried out by the Rwanda South Africa Alliance (RSAA) known as “Rwandan Diaspora”, an organisation supporting the current Rwandan regime, created in 1997 by Dr Dennis R. Karangwa, a former Rwandan diplomat in Pretoria, South Africa. Despite numerous acts against refugees, Embassy officials held unauthorised meetings with some Rwandan refugee elites in various cities where many refugees live. Later on, intimidating anonymous calls and cell phone messages were given to selected refugees who distanced themselves from such activities. A year later, the South African authority warned the former Rwandan High Commissioner in Pretoria, Col Dr Joseph Karemera for causing insecurity, fear and terror among Rwandan refugees living in South Africa.

Recently on November 08, 2012, Mr Seth Hakizimana, a Rwandan refugee recognised in Zambia and a PhD student at University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) was informed by UKZN International Student Office that the Rwandan High Commissioner, Mr Vincent Karega, sent an email asking the university to assess the cause of his fear to return to Rwanda and the reason he did not report to the Rwandan Embassy nor to his colleagues from Rwanda who study at the same campus. This occurred when Mr Hakizimana, fearing that he would lose refugee protection after the Zambian Government invokes cessation clause to Rwandan refugees by 30 June 2013, spoke to the New Age online news paper in an attempt to draw attention of the South African Department of Home Affairs to consider his application for permanent residence filed in 2009. One of reasons supporting his application is that he cannot go back to Rwanda because he may face detention or harassment as a survivor of Rwandan refugees' massacre in DRC and as someone who speaks his mind.

However, the Rwandan High Commissioner, in his email, emphasized that Mr Hakizimana cannot be granted a permanent residence because he holds no Rwandan passport where he says *'the government of Rwanda is eager to deliver passports to those Rwandan refugees willing to abandon their refugee status'*. The RDTJ is concerned with this call which intends to nullify refugees' arguments of seeking asylum, intimidate them and damage their reputation.

Furthermore, Mr Karega states that *'[t]here is no threat to any Rwanda into new Rwanda even for those who committed genocide as they face fair trials' and that 'Rwanda does not block anyone for speaking but only prosecute them when they call for political civic unrest or genocide'*. The RDTJ would like to ask him whether the members of the Rwandan opposition parties, such as FDU Inkingi, Green Party, PDP Imanzi, and PS Imberakuri, who are being assassinated, jailed, persecuted and harassed are called for civil unrest or genocide while they are themselves survivors of those 2 evils.

Can Rwandan diplomats like Mr Karega explain the reason why Rwanda keeps producing refugees and political prisoners if UNHCR has declared it safe and inclusive as he boldly states? It is clear that to the Rwandan authorities, fleeing one's motherland is a criminal act which warrants death or jail as it happened to many Rwandan refugees in some but not limited to the following examples:

- October 6, 1996, Colonel *Théoneste Lizinde* and *Augustin Bugirimfura* (businessmen) were assassinated in Nairobi, Kenya;
- May 5, 1998, former Interior Minister *Seth Sendashonga* was assassinated in Nairobi, Kenya;
- In the night of February 14-15, 1999, former CEO of Rwanda African Continental Bank (BACAR) *Pasteur Musabe* was assassinated in Yaoundé, Cameroon;

- December 2000, *Regina Uwamariya*, the sister of Colonel Théoneste Bagosora was murdered in Brussels, Belgium;
- June 2003, Col. Laurent Bangaya was assassinated in Nigeria;
- June 2010, Gen. Kayumba Nyamwasa survived an attempted murder in Johannesburg, South Africa;
- 2010, *Déo Mushahidi*, a Rwandan opposition party leader and genocide survivor, was kidnapped from Burundi by Rwandan security services and is serving life sentence;
- 14 October 2010, Ms. Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza, President of opposition political party - FDU INKINGI was arrested and now is sentenced to 8 years;
- 01 December 2011, Charles Ingabire, a Rwandan journalist refugee in Uganda was murdered;
- 22 August 2012, Frank Ntwari, a Rwandan refugee in South Africa was attacked in Johannesburg;
- 15 October 2012, Théogène Turatsinze was murdered in Maputo, Mozambique.

To this end, RDTJ opposes invocation of the cessation clause to Rwandan refugees because there is no hope for their safety and security at home if the government they fled keeps sending them hit men and traumatising them even in exile.

The RDTJ calls upon South African and other States hosting Rwandan Refugees to keep protecting these refugees and to investigate sensitive matters pertaining to their safety with regards to such dangerous activities by Rwandan diplomats. The RDTJ takes this opportunity to thank all countries which protect Rwandan refugees and appeal to their humanity not to endorse the UNHCR-recommended Rwandan cessation clause for now.

Only truth and love will set us free!

Callixte Kavuro

RDTJ

National Executive Chairman

Cape Town

South Africa