



Rwandan Platform for Dialogue, Truth, and Justice

PRESS RELEASE

President Kagame's medieval ideology of visiting the iniquity of the Hutu fathers upon children divides Rwandan society

On June 30, 2013, at the Youth Connect Dialogue, President Kagame called for every child, adolescent, and young adult of Hutu descent or blood to apologize for the crimes committed “in their name” by their parents and relatives during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. These youth were attending an event organised by his wife Janet Kagame’s “Imbuto Foundation” as a part of nationwide indoctrination campaigns.

The RDTJ, striving to promote dialogue, truth justice and reconciliation, strongly denounces medieval thinking of the sins of the fathers to be transferred on to their generations. Children cannot, at any given time, inherit the guilt of their parents. The RDTJ is deeply concerned by the collective guilt attributed to and associated with all Hutu population irrespective of age and birth. President Kagame’s call shows that Rwanda lacks a good governance and leadership. His call negates a commitment towards reconciliation and, essentially, reveals his ultimate goals in the field of political retaliation and revenge against Hutu population by humiliating and degrading them in public. His statement reveals his untrue believes that Rwandan social reconstruction is not possible under his leadership. Indeed, social reconstruction demands respecting the rights of one’s detests.

The Hutu adolescents and young adults who were among the youth that met the President Kagame categorically and miserably apologised for the crimes they did neither commit nor participate in. These crimes were committed before their births or during their infancy. However, this apologetic game has far and dire consequences because the theory of apology in criminal justice system means an admission of guilt or acceptance of the blame.

Passing on the sins of the parents on to their offspring is a breach of Rwandan and international laws. Both domestic and international laws recognise that a criminal liability must be individual, hence the accountability should be individual. In this context, only guilty children’s parents should individually answer to their social behaviours. Their children cannot be burdened with their parents’ criminal accountabilities.

Rwandan genocide was committed in 1994. That is 19 years ago. This suggests that the Hutu adolescent/teens generation was born around, during, or after the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Majority of young adults between the age of 20 and 27 were, at the time of genocide, infants who were, according to criminal law, incapable of committing crimes. They should be judged in

accordance with their actions and each must be responsible for his/her criminal conduct. Requesting the Hutu youth to apologise implies that all Hutu are “*genocidiare* by nature” or have “deviant behaviour.” And this is a serious social problem because it leads to the consequences of:

1. Fostering social fragmentation and polarisation on the basis of ethnicity. This challenges the Kagame’s regime political rhetoric that there is no ethnicity in Rwanda.
2. Visiting the invented collective guilt of Hutu upon their generations a thousand times illustrates the promotion of a legacy of hatred and mistrust. It creates superiority of one ethnic and reduces others to second-citizens.
3. Opening the door to the practices of suppression, dehumanisation, degradation, and humiliation. These practices just fuel acute fear, tension, and strife.
4. Excluding every Hutu from Rwandan political, social, economic, and cultural affairs because, in President Kagame’s point of view, Hutu lacks mental ability to take rational decisions because of carrying genocide genes or having deviant behaviours. He admits that there is a line that a Hutu cannot cross in terms of political space. Only political space conferred upon them is freedom of movement in Rwanda, because, otherwise, they deserve to be in custody or not to exist at all.

It is however essential to point out that the Rwandan government should, for a dignified, unified, and harmonious society, acknowledge that in Rwanda there are those who are survivors of horrific mass atrocities and others who are perpetrators irrespective of their ethnic background. Justice cannot be neither bias nor selective. The visitation of genocide crimes on to Hutu children would not bring about a reconciliation that will pave the way to a united society in its diversity. It does not lay the foundation for the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa to transcend the factual and historical divisions or to break the chain of the persistent strife and social exclusion.

Yet, during the speech, President Kagame gave threats to Tanzanian President, Dr Jakaya Morisho Kikwete when he stated that he “will wait for him at the right place and hit him.” It is claimed that President Kagame was angered by a wise advice provided by President Kikwete during a meeting of the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa. He advised Rwanda to open the doors of talks to Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) as well as other opposition political parties as a means to achieve a lasting peace in the Great Lakes region. President Museveni, who was also present, was advised to negotiate with his rebel and political opponents too and he accepted President Kikwete’s advice in the following striking terms: “without talks we cannot go anywhere.” On the contrary, Rwanda resorted to threats, intimidation, and calling his Excellency President Kikwete names, such as “terrorist sympathiser and *genocidaire*.”

Threatening to kill a head of state for just giving advice should not be taken lightly but as a serious matter of a serious concern. This should serve as an evidence of how Rwandans are ruled with iron fist as well as supporting evidence of the Rwandan refugees’ dread to return for fear of their safety. They are called terrorists and *genocidaires*, too. It is likely that he is awaiting them to strike them upon their return.

As regards President Kikwete’s advice, his suggested peace talks between Kigali regime and the FDLR is so far supported by the UN and SADC. Prime Minister Didier Reynders is another head of state and government who individually and publicly share the same approach with President Kikwete.

The RDTJ supports both President Kikwete and Prime Minister Didier Reynders' positions that the recycling conflict in the Great Lakes region cannot end without Uganda and Rwanda sitting down with their rebels and political opponents to find a viable and durable solution. This is one of the means that can defeat the social division in Rwanda, superiority and ethnocentric as well as monopolisation of power in Rwanda and Uganda.

The RDTJ calls to the Rwandan government to release all political prisoners and others who were arrested and sentenced for fabricated charges of genocide ideology and divisionism. President Kagame is the one who has been sowing sectarian conflict, social division, mistrust, fear, and hatred among Rwandans. He should apologize to the Rwandan youth in particular, Rwandans and the world at large for the denial of ethnicity in Rwanda and intensifying conflict. He should also say sorry and apologize to Tanzanian President for calling names, harassment, and death threats and to Congolese people for their sufferings and misery he caused them. He should know that this medieval thinking has, in the human rights era, no place.

Without dialogue, there will be no long-lasting peace and stability in Rwanda and in the sub-region.

Done at Cape Town, South Africa, July 18, 2013.

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