



EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE

RDR

Rassemblement pour le Retour des Réfugiés et la Démocratie au Rwanda
Rally for the Return of Refugees and Democracy in Rwanda
Ihuliro Liharanira Itahuka ry'Impunzi na Demokarasi mu Rwanda

Pour un Peuple Reconcilié dans un Etat de droit - For a Reconciled People in a Rule of Law
Duharanire Ubwiyunge bw'Abanyarwanda mu Gihugu cyubahiriza Amategeko

Press Release No.13/2001

RDR CONDEMNS THE ON-GOING CAMPAIGN AGAINST RWANDAN REFUGEES IN THE AFRICAN GREAT LAKES REGION

On behalf of the oppressed people of Rwanda struggling for democracy, freedom and justice, the RDR (Rally for the Return of Refugees and Democracy in Rwanda) strongly denounces and condemns the on-going misleading Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)-led dictatorial government's campaign portraying as criminals or simply war displaced persons who sought refuge outside their own country Rwandan citizens fleeing Rwandan government's persecution and seeking asylum in Tanzania and other neighboring countries.

On 20 July 2001, after a meeting with the Tanzanian government and UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) which discussed the repatriation of Rwandan refugees in Tanzania, the Rwandan dictator General Paul Kagame's special adviser, Mr Abdulkarim Harerimana, declared on Radio Tanzania that there was no fundamental reason why refugees should continue entering Tanzania as peace had been restored in Rwanda, following the setting up of his so-called «government of national unity». He said that the refugees entering Tanzania currently were criminals fleeing justice in Rwanda. On 28 July 2001, Rwandan ambassador to Tanzania, Mr Zephyr Mutanguha, declared to journalists in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, that the refugees could now be returned to their homes without any fear, because peace and security had been restored in the country. Mr. Zephyr Mutanguha said there were some people suspected of involvement in 1994 Rwandan genocide who feared arrest and who were persuading the innocent citizens not to return home. Even though this kind of reasoning might seem probable to non-informed outsiders, it is not only false but also dangerous. Rwandan refugees are not criminals fleeing justice nor simply people displaced by war who sought refuge in neighboring countries, as alleged by Rwandan government's officials; there are genuine political refugees fleeing dictatorship, terror, oppression and ethnic discrimination from the current Rwandan regime.

Rwanda is currently ruled by a dictatorial government controlled by RPF political and military leaders co-responsible of the Rwandan tragedy and distrusted by the people. Most of current prominent RPF political and military leaders are responsible of numerous crimes against peace and humanity, war crimes and acts of genocide committed and still being committed in Rwanda since October 1990 and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) since August 1996, crimes which make them unfit to govern the country. Incapable to win the heart of the people, they have banned all political activities for other political organizations and muzzled all forms of political expression by legal and peaceful means. The Rwandan people has no say in the actions of the government nor in the choosing of those who make them. People who are not members nor sympathisers of the RPF are excluded in the civil service, territorial administration, education, army, police, judiciary and other spheres of public life. Rwanda is ruled by the machine guns and the jail keys. The continuous flow of Rwandan refugees out of the country is the result of a bad RPF leadership. Those who have the means go directly to western countries. Among those who have left are two former prime ministers Faustin Twagiramungu and Pierre Celestin Rwigema, Jean Baptiste Nkuliyingoma, a former minister of information, Joseph Sebarenzi Kabuye, a former speaker in the RPF-appointed parliament, Seth Sendashonga, a former minister of the interior who was later assassinated in Nairobi in 1998, and many others. Instead of eliminating the root causes of the evil forcing Rwandans to flee their homeland, the current Rwandan rulers shift the blame on host countries and humanitarian organizations helping them to survive in refugee camps. However, the obstacles preventing Rwandan refugees to return home voluntarily are in Rwanda itself and not in countries hosting Rwandan refugees. Rwandan exiles cannot return to their homeland while the evil political system which forced them to exile is still in place. It is

info@rdrwanda.org
<http://www.rdrwanda.org>

Victoire Ingabire, President
Postbus 3124
2280 GC, Rijswijk, Netherlands
Phone/Fax : 00-31-180633822

Emmanuel Nyemera, Vice-President
P.O. Box 5352, Postal Station B
Montreal, Canada, H3B 4P1

RDR is member of the
Union of Democratic
Rwandese Forces (UDRF)

the responsibility of the Rwandan government to create a political climate in Rwanda conducive to the voluntary return of Rwandan exiles.

According to declarations made by the current Rwandan rulers, the solution to the problem of Rwandan refugees, as it is presented by them, should be a military solution in order to kill or arrest imaginary intimidators and free bona fide refugees. Even though the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), the RPF's army, cannot invade all countries around the world hosting Rwandan refugees, this idea has been used to justify the first invasion of Ex-Zaire/Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by the RPA. In 1996-1997, the RPA invaded the Ex-Zaire/DRC, committed crimes against peace and humanity, war crimes and acts of genocide during the destruction of Rwandan refugee camps in Eastern Congo in which more than 200,000 Rwandan refugees were massacred. These crimes had been condemned by the United Nations Security Council in its Presidential Statement S/PRST/1998/20 of 13 July 1998 and leading international human rights organizations (Amnesty International (<http://www.amnesty.org>), Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org>), International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development (<http://www.ichrdd.ca>), etc.) but are still unpunished. Many Rwandan refugees forcefully repatriated back home had been massacred by the RPA. RDR asks the UNHCR, the government of Tanzania, other governments in the African Great Lakes region and all governments around the world to give no credit to the rhetoric of the oppressors of the Rwandan people and to continue to shelter Rwandan asylum seekers at risk of being killed if forcefully returned to Rwanda.

During the celebration of the seventh anniversary of the seizure of power by the RPF on 4 July 2001, the Rwandan dictator, General Paul Kagame, appeals again to Rwandan exiles to return home and join hands with other Rwandans in developing the country. However, the mere repetition of this appeal every year without establishing dialogue with the political opposition in order to resolve, once for all, the Rwandan conflict by peaceful means has failed to produce any miracle. Normally, in a democratic and free country, citizens are free to leave their country and return to it as they wish whenever they want, no need of any official declarations to do so. General Paul Kagame's hollow appeals to Rwandan exiles cannot produce any tangible result. Instead of continuously making hollow appeals for a rhetoric of unity while waging war on their own people and embarking on costly military adventures in neighbouring countries which finally produce nothing else than killings and sufferings to the people, it would be wise for the current Rwandan rulers to engage frank and sincere dialogue with their political opponents in order to establish true democratic institutions, among them a true non-partisan national army, capable to reconcile the Rwandan people with itself and its neighbours by respecting all Rwandan citizens' rights and freedoms as well the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other nations.

Done in Montreal on 1st August 2001

For the RDR

Emmanuel Nyemera, Ph.D

Vice-President