

## **To H.E. President Paul Kagame**

A call to curb the increasing political oppression in Rwanda.

**Mr. President,**

AMAHORO People's Congress is deeply troubled by the tense political and social atmosphere prevailing in Rwanda, on one hand, and its increasing isolation in the region, on the other. Mr. President, you must realize the consequences of such an atmosphere in a country that is still recovering from the 1994 genocide, two wars in the DRC, a war against Uganda in the DRC, and the continual tensions between Rwanda and virtually all her neighbors.

We are particularly alarmed by the fact that you and your government are the source of the said atmosphere. On April 3rd, 2003 at Bwisige, you gave a speech that was reminiscent of those heard then from the government officials during the 1990-1994 war. We are greatly concerned by the strongly worded threats that you issued in your speech, such as your threat to « wound » (nzabakomeretsa) those who disagree with you and your government, and that of firing from civil services those you suspect would flee the country if they did not hold government jobs. By your own affirmation, the upcoming elections are a foregone conclusion. You indicated that you knew, one hundred percent, those who will be elected!

Following your speech, human rights organizations in Rwanda reported a number of people being rounded up, and some simply disappearing. Mr. President, it goes without saying that these actions, following your speech, are directly imputable to you. Furthermore, following your speech, the un-elected Parliament recommended the dissolution of the « mouvement democratique republicain » (MDR).

The MDR, signatory to the ARUSHA agreement, has for the past decade, been a staunch supporter and ally of the RPF in your government. It has provided 3 prime ministers who have implemented the political program of the RPF since 1994. One might wonder why it took the RPF nine years to want to dissolve the MDR if indeed it preached Parmehutu IDEOLOGY among Rwandans. One might wonder, with reason, about the motives of such a move, given the fact that the MDR is the only political party among those allowed to exist by your government, which is capable of mounting a credible challenge to the RPF during the upcoming elections.

Mr. President, your government has illegally forbidden new political parties from being formed inside Rwanda. Mr. Pasteur Bizimungu who dared to form one, after the then Secretary General of the RPF and the current minister of foreign affairs declared that it was perfectly legal and allowed in Rwanda for new political parties to be formed, has been jailed for it for over a year. Now, even some existing political parties are being dissolved, not to mention that those remaining are only allowed to function at the political bureau level. Clearly Rwanda is moving in the wrong direction. We call on you and your government to return to the democratic path.

As we clearly demonstrated in our analysis and evaluation of your unilaterally drafted constitution, it is not a desirable constitution for any country aspiring towards a true democracy. We repeat our recommendation that a new and more representative commission be set up to draft a truly national constitution that will guaranty freedom and liberty for all

Rwandans. We renew our call for the release of all political prisoners and the immediate cessation of harassment, threats, and intimidations of human rights organizations such as the LIPRODHOR.

Notwithstanding the contribution of the international community, peace, security, and prosperity will come from Rwandans themselves. It is for this reason that we call upon you and your government once more, to open up the political domain, so that Rwandans can freely participate in the affairs of their country without fear for their lives or their livelihood.

Mr. President, the politics of exclusion that your government has practiced to date, have led to increased tension inside the country, and animosity with virtually all neighboring countries. These alone should be the hallmarks to the failure of your government.

We hope Mr. President, that you and your government will heed our call.

Sincerely,

Alexandre Kimenyi

President

AMAHORO People's Congress

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