

## **Statement written by Kajeguhakwa's Family Attorney**

Date: Thu, 26 Aug 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

On August 11, 2004 Rwandese dissident, Valens Kajeguhakwa was arrested in Naples, Florida by the United States government as the first step in his being sent back to Rwanda to face persecution and certain horrible reprisals, which will be visited upon him solely because he spoke out against his government's a right we take for granted in the United States. His arrest represents a terrible failure in policy, or an error that must be corrected.

Mr. Kajeguhakwa was a leader in the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a group that fought to stop the Government-backed 1994 Rwandese genocide while the rest of the world, including the United States of America, sat back and watched 800,000 people die in the most brutal mass slaughter in modern times. The RPF sought to end the genocide and bring democracy to Rwanda. Nevertheless, upon the RPF's seizure of Power, its leader, Mr. Paul Kagame, far from bringing democracy and freedom to Rwanda, became intoxicated by power and molded himself into yet another in a long line of entrenched autocratic despotic African rulers. Rwanda is today a one-party state where basic human rights and civil liberties are a luxury only provided to Kagame and his inner circle, and anyone who dares speak critically of Mr. Kagame will find himself hunted and persecuted as Mr. Kajeguhakwa has been for the past ten years.

Mr. Kajeguhakwa, for voicing his opinions on the necessity for democracy and reform in Rwanda was driven from his home where he left everything he owned and knew behind to live in relative poverty in America. While here, Mr. Kajeguhakwa has been a dissident voice in exile, working for change in his native land. He should be an inspiration to this country, not its prisoner.

To attempt to discredit him, the Kagame government fabricated charges of theft, which are laughable on their face. The charges against him are false, fabricated by the Kagame government in order to silence one of its critics in exile. The American government? Its cooperation with the Rwandese government in arresting Mr. Kajeguhakwa holds no more moral authority than if America had sent Alexander Solzhenitsyn back to the USSR so that he could perish in a gulag instead of serving as a beacon of freedom. It is ironic and abhorrent that the United States of America purports to value freedom, human rights, and civil liberties, yet when it is politically expedient, it lies in bed with brutal dictators to suppress those very freedoms.

Mr. Kajeguhakwa fled to the United States with the belief that it would embrace and shelter him from political oppression. It is apparent that an error or a horrible failure in policy has led to his arrest. Mr. Kajeguhakwa should be treated as a welcome guest in the United States, and should not be served on a silver platter to a government that is wholly dismissive of political and human rights.

If you wish for any more information on this incident, I am available to speak with you at your convenience.

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