



RWANDA ELECTION AUGUST 9, 2010



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Imishyikirano-huriro NyaRwanda • Dialogue Inter-Rwandais • Inter-Rwandan Dialogue

August 9, 2010

President Barack Obama
United States of America

President Herman Van Rompuy
European Union

Prime Minister David Cameron
United Kingdom

Subject: A call for rejecting the legitimacy of Rwandan Presidential election of August 9, 2010

Dear President Obama,
Dear President Van Rompuy,
Dear Prime Minister Cameron,

In my capacity as President of both Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation (HRRF) and the Initiative for a Highly Inclusive inter-Rwandan Dialogue for peace, justice and reconciliation (DIRHI), I am writing this letter to your Excellencies to formally request that you withhold official endorsement of the legitimacy of the Rwandan Presidential election which will be held today August 9, 2010 in total absence of democracy and irregularity.

The governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Union have been not only the primary political and diplomatic backers but also the unconditional funding powers of the RPF regime of President Paul Kagame since coming to power in July 1994. Since Rwanda operates on a budget that is 60% funded by foreign aid which primarily comes from the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union, you have the power to insure that this aid package - which is part of tax payer money contributed by your citizens - is used for the benefit of all Rwandans and to uphold and strengthen democratic values in Rwanda rather than serve the interests of a small RPF clique in power and entrench its dictatorship. In other words, you have a big share of responsibility in the suffering the RPF government has inflicted upon the Rwandan population over the last 16 years without being brought to account. The good news is that you have also the power to change that trend today, and demand that President Kagame play by democratic rules or loose your funding. That is the reason why I chose to write to the three of you. Rwanda currently is hanging in the balance, and failure to act now may lead to another Rwandan tragedy of genocidal proportions, and you will have been pre-warned.



International Network for Truth and Reconciliation in Central Africa
Réseau International pour la Vérité et la Réconciliation en Afrique Centrale



Excellencies, you are aware that Rwanda's Presidential ballot today is unfolding against a backdrop of terror, coercion and intimidation, disappearances, imprisonments and assassinations, and that President Kagame will face a token opposition represented by figurehead candidates while real opponents have been excluded. You are also aware that President Kagame is a man widely suspected of having played a role in triggering the Rwandan genocide and of having murdered millions of people in the last two decades both in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. President Kagame is also under international arrest warrants from the French and Spanish justice systems for having killed innocent citizens of those two countries. Therefore, you know President Kagame should be brought to justice for his alleged crimes, and currently has no moral authority to stand in this election.

For all intents and purposes, here's a quick rundown of what has been happening in Rwanda not only in the recent past but also in the last few months: from arbitrary arrests to kangaroo Gacaca courts, to mass imprisonments and secret deportations of youth to the isolated Iwawa island, to unsolved disappearances, to the unlawful persecution and exclusion from participation of many political parties in tomorrow's upcoming presidential election, to the recent suspension of independent Umuseso and Umuvugizi newspapers, to the on-going repeat imprisonment of Ms. Agnes Uwimana, editor of Umurabyo independent newspaper, of Bernard Ntaganda, President of the PS-Imberakuri party and house arrest of Ms. Victoire Ingabire, chair of the FDU-Inkingi party, to the abduction and imprisonment of Déogratias Mushayidi, President of the PDP-Imanzi party, to the recent gruesome decapitation of opposition figures Denis Ntare Semadwinga, former chief of staff of General Laurent Nkunda in Gisenyi on June 20, 2010, and André Kagwa Rwisereka, Vice President of the Green Party in Butare on July 14, 2010, to the recent killing of independent journalist Jean Léonard Rugamabage of Umuvugizi newspaper on June 24, 2010 in Kigali, to the attempted assassination of General Kayumba Nyamwasa in South Africa on July 17, 2010, to the recent wave of arrests in the army, to the brazen interference and intimidation of the U.N.'s International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) defense lawyers, especially the jailing of American lawyer Peter Erlinder for three weeks in May-June in Kigali and the killing of Tanzanian lawyer Jwani Mwaikusa in Dar es Salaam on July 13, 2010, to the impoverishment of the population in rural areas, to the rampant ethnic discrimination in schools, businesses, administration and the army, to widespread corruption and poor governance as evidenced by the RPF ruling party's stranglehold monopoly of all wealth production institutions, companies and channels, to the shocking self-enrichment of the ruling class, and to the scandalous plunder of Congolese mineral resources and the mass killing of Congolese people, there is absolutely nothing to suggest that today's election is taking place under even minimally acceptable conditions.

That is why I question the wisdom of the European Union in providing millions to fund this election while at the same time refusing to send in a group of neutral observers to sanction the election, which seems like a tacit acknowledgement that Kagame's victory is a foregone conclusion.





That is why I question the U.S and U.K.'s moral leadership in their continued support of Kagame, especially in not objecting to his nomination as co-chair of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals. I want to take this opportunity to thank Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero for having the courage, moral strength and leadership in distancing himself from President Paul Kagame and refusing to shake his hands on July 16, 2010 in Madrid.

For all the reasons lined up in this letter and for the sake of peace, justice and democracy in Rwanda, I kindly request your Excellencies to not recognize Kagame's pre-ordained victory in today's election, and from now going forward not welcome him among other heads of State in international gatherings as a duly elected representative of Rwanda, until he has agreed to an inclusive inter-Rwandan dialogue and a peacefully negotiated settlement of the current crisis among Rwandans across the entire political spectrum, so that we can lay the foundations for a better, safer, stronger Rwanda tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Paul Rusesabagina

CC:

- Pope Benedict XVI, Rome
- Archbishop Rowan Williams of Canterbury, London
- Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, United Nations
- José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain
- Jean Ping, African Union President
- U.N. Permanent Security Council Members (all)
- Hillary Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State
- Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, U.S. Congress
- Harry Reid, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
- Robert Zoellick, President, World Bank
- Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Managing Director, IMF
- Secretary General Salil Shetty, Amnesty International
- Executive Director Kenneth Roth, Human Rights Watch
- Executive Director Maja Daruwala, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
- President and CEO Louise Arbour, International Crisis Group
- Media Outlets

