

**Press release****RWANDANS STAND TO GAIN BY GETTING RID OF THE DICTATORIAL REGIME THAT OPPRESSES THEM RATHER THAN WAGING WAR AGAINST THE CONGOLESE PEOPLE.**

Following Rwandan President Paul Kagame's statements on Radio France 24<sup>(i)</sup> to the effect that his country is ready to fight the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which he has been underscoring repeatedly during his election campaign tour, the Institut Seth Sendashonga pour la Citoyenneté Démocratique (ISCID asbl) wishes to communicate the following to all Rwandans and friends of Rwanda :

- 1) It is 30 years since the RPF Inkotanyi seized power through a war that ended in a bloodbath. During all these years, President Paul Kagame and a handful of acolytes have monopolized power and, resorting to numerous political assassinations and other manoeuvres to ensure a reign of terror, plunged the country into endless wars, which have taken the lives of many people. It is therefore all the more disturbing that, after a two-year war waged by Rwanda in the province of North Kivu under the cover of the M23 rebels, the Government of Rwanda is now preparing to launch an open war this time against the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is happening at a time when many Rwandans inside the country are so oppressed that they do not have the capacity to oppose this belligerent policy, which will only exacerbate the hardships they are already faced with. The regime that has been shedding blood for 30 years seems to have no choice but to continue holding Rwandans hostage by engaging them in a war that will only worsen their situation and exacerbate the tense relations with their neighbours.
- 2) The problems between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have their origins in the RPF Inkotanyi policy, according to which the enrichment of the clique in power in Rwanda must come from the plundering of the mineral resources of which this neighbouring country is replete with. In this context, for more than 25 years, Rwanda has been one of the world's leading exporters of precious stones and strategic minerals on

the international markets. This has led some people to praise President Paul Kagame's dictatorial regime, claiming that it has developed Rwanda's economy at a rate rarely seen elsewhere in the world. Since the real motive for its military adventures in the DRC was therefore unmentionable (plundering the mineral wealth of a neighbour), more acceptable pretexts had to be found. The exploitation of the Tutsi genocide being the crucial element guiding the RPF's strategies, the problem of the Banyamulenge and other Congolese Tutsis became a major political issue over the course of the 30 years. Those of them who had fled the fighting and are in camps in Rwanda are precisely the hostages of the Rwandan government, serving to show the world that the Tutsis are still being persecuted in the region and more particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In this same logic, another no less important card of the RPF regime is the FDLR. This is a rebel group which, according to the RPF's widely spread version, has been founded by the perpetrators of the 1994 Rwanda genocide. But for many years this group has been intensely hunted down. Some of its leaders were killed while others surrendered to the Kigali Government. However, in the interests of the RPF, this rebel group must continue to exist because it serves as a justification as to why Rwanda continually sends its troops to the DRC, thus covering up the pillaging motive.

- 3) The fact that the Government of President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo has shown its determination and put a great deal of effort into fighting the rebels used in this plundering is an alarming problem for President Paul Kagame and his cronies because this could have many disastrous implications on the country's economy and politics, and may even hasten the end of the regime. Therefore an open war between the two countries is perceived as the last trump card the Kigali regime is prepared to play. Some analysts claim that Kagame believes that he could easily capture towns such as Goma and Bukavu, which border Rwanda, forcing the Government in Kinshasa to accept negotiations. An open war between the two countries would be taken in fact as a continuation of the current war,

which in recent weeks has turned to the advantage of the Congolese government.

- 4) The Seth Sendashonga Institute calls on Rwandans throughout the world and all other peace-loving people to denounce this war mongering policy that continues to ravage the region. If not suicide, what benefit do Rwandans have in fighting with their Congolese neighbours while, at the same time, the border between Rwanda and Burundi is closed for several months now? Is it really appropriate for the countries of the Great Lakes region to borrow heavily in order to buy fighter jets and other heavy weaponry instead of investing that money in projects that can help their peoples secure jobs and eradicate poverty? For how long can we stand and watch this policy of ethnic discrimination, which would have us believe that President Paul Kagame has the right to interfere in the internal problems of neighbouring countries in order to look after the interests of the Tutsis or to create problems when it suits him? For how long will the ideology of genocide continue to be the RPF regime's trump card? As Rwandans prepare for elections, issues such as these should be addressed now, but they cannot be discussed inside the country because, in fact, these elections are a mere formality as the people have neither the freedom to express themselves nor to choose a candidate other than Paul Kagame. At this 30th anniversary of the end of the war that plunged Rwanda into mourning, these pressing problems should be discussed in order to find lasting solutions.

Done in Brussels, 29 June 2024

Jean-Claude Kabagema

Chairman of ISCID asbl



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<sup>i</sup> FRANCE 24: Rwanda 'ready to fight' with DR Congo if necessary, President Paul Kagame says...  
<https://youtu.be/GkYITUcuiRg>