

Press release:**KAGAME'S WARS HAVE LED TO SEVERE SANCTIONS AGAINST RWANDA****A new government that restores trust in the region and reconciles Rwandans is needed**

At present, the international community is imposing severe sanctions on our country due to its involvement in the war in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Seth Sendashonga Institute for Democratic Citizenship (IsCID asbl) delivers the following message to Rwandans and friends of Rwanda:

- 1) It is a major step forward that the international community has finally understood, beyond any doubt, that the war ravaging eastern DRC for nearly 30 years is rooted in the predatory policies of President Paul Kagame's regime. This government, which came to power through bloodshed in July 1994, has largely survived thanks to substantial foreign aid. We have no doubt that the ongoing sanctions, which primarily involve the suspension of this aid, are an appropriate response that will put an end to the arrogance and disregard of a regime that has destabilized the region for three decades.
- 2) The Seth Sendashonga Institute fully supports Resolution 2773, adopted by the United Nations Security Council on February 21, 2025, to ensure global peace. This resolution demands that Rwanda immediately and unconditionally withdraw its troops from the DRC and cease all support for the M23 rebels. The fact that this resolution was adopted unanimously (15 out of 15 votes) clearly demonstrates that the Rwandan government's justifications claiming to intervene in the DRC to protect itself against the FDLR threat and defend Congolese Tutsis from alleged discrimination and violence are mere pretexts. The real reason behind Rwanda's wars in the DRC, waged through ever-changing rebel groups, is the looting of mineral resources. This is evident in the fact that Rwanda has, through these conflicts, positioned itself among the world's leading exporters of strategic minerals, despite being

unable to demonstrate where these resources are mined within its own territory.

- 3) The Seth Sendashonga Institute sincerely appreciates the nations that have refused to remain indifferent to the atrocities committed by the Rwandan army in eastern DRC, including the violation of a neighboring country's sovereignty, mass killings, sexual violence against women, and other war crimes. It is crucial that legal proceedings against those responsible for these crimes be expedited, as this is the only way to eradicate the root causes of these wars, which stem largely from the belief that perpetrators will face no consequences. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF-Inkotanyi) regime has remained in power for 30 years mainly because the international community has chosen to turn a blind eye to serious crimes despite clear evidence committed in Rwanda, the DRC, and beyond.

- 4) Regarding the issue of the FDLR, which has often been used as a pretext by the Rwandan government to justify its wars in the DRC, the Seth Sendashonga Institute emphasizes that this issue is primarily a consequence of Rwanda's authoritarian regime. It is important to recall that, apart from the Rwandan refugees living in the DRC, many others fled the massacres carried out by the RPF-Inkotanyi and are now scattered across the globe. The international community should focus its efforts on fostering genuine reconciliation in Rwanda, which must involve opening up the political space and ensuring citizens' full rights to express their views and choose their leaders. The Great Lakes region will never experience lasting peace unless Rwanda's deep-rooted political problems are resolved.

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