

Press release:**“PRESIDENT KAGAME IS HEADING TOWARDS DEFEAT IN THE WAR HE HAS WAGED FOR 30 YEARS IN EASTERN DRC”**

At the end of 2025, marked by the consequences of the war that Rwanda continues to wage in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Seth Sendashonga Institute for Democratic Citizenship (ISCID asbl) addresses the following message to Rwandans and friends of Rwanda:

- 1) The peace agreements between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, signed in Washington on 27 June 2025 and definitively ratified on 4 December 2025, when the presidents of both countries, Paul Kagame and Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, affixed their signatures in the presence of the President of the United States, Donald Trump, represent a major step towards the restoration of peace in the Great Lakes region. The Seth Sendashonga Institute welcomes the important role played by President Donald Trump, as well as the commitment expressed by the powerful nation he leads to continue applying pressure to ensure that these agreements are effectively implemented.
- 2) It should be recalled that this war has lasted for nearly thirty years. It has claimed the lives of approximately ten million of our Congolese brothers and sisters, displaced millions of other civilians from their homes, and been marked by serious atrocities. Many Rwandans have also lost their lives, particularly following the dismantling of refugee camps in 1996. The report by United Nations experts, known as the Mapping Report, indicates that around 250,000 Hutu refugees were massacred in the forests of the Congo. The report further states that the establishment of a competent tribunal could lead to these crimes being legally classified as genocide. The Seth Sendashonga Institute welcomes the fact that the Washington agreements provide for the creation of such a court. In addition to innocent civilian populations, this war has also claimed the lives of many soldiers on both sides, as well as foreign troops deployed under MONUSCO, the EAC and the SADC.

- 3) The regime of President Paul Kagame has used the war in eastern Congo as a means of strengthening its power, notably because it facilitated the looting of strategic minerals that are now in high global demand. Rwanda even managed to secure a leading position on the international market for these resources, prompting admiration within the international community for the speed of its economic growth. Paul Kagame benefited greatly from this situation, to the point where many regarded him as a model leader. This is the main reason why he did everything possible to ensure that the war in eastern Congo never came to an end. The various armed groups that emerged under different names, AFDL, RCD-Goma, CNDP, M23 or AFC/M23, were all used and supported by the Rwandan state.
- 4) The fact that President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo placed the defence of his country's territorial integrity and sovereignty at the centre of his action through diplomatic channels, with the support of the international community, led the United Nations Security Council to adopt Resolution 2773, demanding the withdrawal of Rwandan troops from Congo. The Washington peace agreements confirmed this requirement. This represents a major turning point, offering hope and demonstrating that military force alone does not provide a lasting solution. This development stripped Paul Kagame of the power he had arrogated to himself to violate the sovereignty of another state and exploit its resources. This is why he now appears deeply unsettled, openly stating that whether he respects or disregards the commitments he signed amounts, in his view, to a certain death.
- 5) The Seth Sendashonga Institute considers that the return of lasting peace in the Great Lakes region necessarily requires a change of governance in Rwanda. It is essential for a new authority to take over, carrying a vision based on respect for neighbouring countries, democratic principles and human rights. Such an orientation would form the foundation for the free movement of people in the region, the development of cross-border trade and a sustainable solution to the refugee issue. By contrast, President Paul Kagame and his close associates, who for thirty years have killed, plundered and destabilised the region, have no

interest in implementing agreements that require them to put an end to a war that has become their main source of profit.

- 6) The Seth Sendashonga Institute expresses its deep compassion to all those affected by this war over the past thirty years. We think in particular of our brothers and sisters in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the many Rwandans who have been wounded by this conflict, left bereaved or turned into orphans. We pay tribute to the soldiers from different countries who fell in this shameful war. We also think of the populations affected by the economic sanctions imposed on the Rwandan state in order to secure the withdrawal of its troops from Congo. Nevertheless, many signs allow hope for a return of peace in the near future and a gradual normalisation of the situation.

The Seth Sendashonga Institute takes this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

May the year 2026 be a year of abundance and peace.

Done in Brussels, 24 December 2025

Jean-Claude Kabagema

President of ISCID asbl

