

Press release:**IS PRESIDENT KAGAME PLANNING MORE ATROCITIES?**

Following the remarks made at the Unity Club Intwararumuri meeting held in Kigali on November 16, 2024, the Seth Sendashonga Institute for Democratic Citizenship (ISCID asbl) issues the following statement to the Rwandan people and friends of Rwanda:

1. It is deplorable to observe that the RPF continues its effort to rewrite Rwanda's history, aiming to portray the monarchy, abolished in 1961 through a referendum supervised by the United Nations, as an impeccable regime, allegedly a guarantor of national unity and free of ethnic discrimination. This narrative is reflected in the "Ndumunyarwanda" program, presented as a model, and is taught to the youth in a distorted form, making it a cornerstone of current national policies.
2. It is important to recall that at the end of the 19th century, European colonizers arriving in Rwanda found a monarchical system ruled by a small elite from a single ethnic group, maintaining its power through a secret system known as "ubwiru". The majority of the population was subjected to "ubuhake", a form of slavery abolished at the request of the United Nations due to its violation of human rights as established in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Under Belgian trusteeship, King Mutara Rudahigwa was compelled to abolish this system. How can the RPF today claim that this monarchy was a model of national unity?
3. Certain so-called historians praise the values and traditions of the monarchy, asserting that it made Rwanda a prosperous country. However, history shows that by the time Europeans arrived, the country was already in turmoil, as evidenced by the Rucunshu massacres. During these events, King Mibambwe Rutarindwa was burned alive, followed by mass killings targeting the Abanyiginya clan, orchestrated by the brothers of Queen Kanjogera, ancestors of Paul Kagame. Additionally, the violent reign of

King Kigeli Rwabugiri, marked by mass murders and family feuds, illustrates a grim chapter in Rwanda's history. What values, then, are these defenders of the monarchy referring to?

4. The ISCID expresses grave concern over the alarming statements made by President Paul Kagame at the Unity Club meeting, where he announced plans to intensify repression and violence against his political opponents, implying his dictatorial regime, described as a “killing machine”, is poised to commit further atrocities. He specifically targeted Ms. Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza, president of the Dafa-Umurinzi party, for her open criticism of the government, a right guaranteed by the Constitution. While the Unity Club praised the monarchy, Kagame portrayed Ms. Ingabire as an obstacle to his ambitions of establishing a modern monarchy.
5. The ISCID condemns these threats as scandalous and unacceptable. Such remarks reveal Kagame's inability to address the challenges facing the country, notably the war in eastern DR Congo, which he conducts under the guise of the M23 rebels. This conflict, ongoing for three years, has caused significant human and economic losses, highlighting the regime's inability to resolve it either militarily or diplomatically.
6. The ISCID commends Ms. Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza for her courage and resilience despite the severe personal consequences she faces. Kagame's repeated reference to the presidential pardon he granted her serves as an implicit threat that he could imprison her again at any time. These remarks expose the fears of an authoritarian leader unwilling to tolerate the idea of a democratic transition.
7. Finally, the ISCID calls on all advocates for change in Rwanda to remain united and steadfast in the face of the authoritarian regime. Kagame's threats and provocations must not deter those striving for freedom and democracy. History has shown that even the most brutal dictatorships eventually fall.

Kagame must understand that Rwanda is not his personal property or that of his family.

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