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The Honourable Carolyn B Maloney
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 26, 2020

Dear Representative Maloney

Thanks for your compassion and kind consideration.

We, the undersigned members of Rwandan political and civil society organisations in exile, would like to convey to you our deepest gratitude for your compassion and kind consideration in appealing for the release of Mr Paul Rusesabagina, a champion of lasting peace and genuine reconciliation in Rwanda.

We highly appreciate your personal letter to President Paul Kagame urging him to release Paul Rusesabagina immediately because a day that he passes in Rwanda's jail is one day too many. Indeed, Kagame feels safe dealing with cases of the dead than of the living. The resources and audacity, including flouting international and national laws, that he put in kidnapping Paul Rusesabagina indicate the virulence of his animosity against him and against the opposition in general. Indeed, part of these resources are subsidised by foreign donors over which he depends greatly.

The rendition happened hardly six months after a 38-year-old peace activist, icon of national reconciliation Kizito Mihigo died in Police custody under suspicious circumstances and the Rwandan government ignored calls by human rights organisations and the Assistant Secretary of State, Tibor P. Nagy¹ to conduct an independent enquiry. The complacent attitude of the US government over the Rwandan government total disregard for international law will make totalitarian leaders that violate any international and national law be tempted to believe that they are immune from being made accountable for their crimes as long as they are friendly to the US government.

We would like to remind you Honourable Representative that this rendition is a tip of the iceberg and a clear outcome of impunity which has been going on for too long. The US State Department has consistently produced reports about the appalling human rights violations in Rwanda. In its latest report for the year 2019, the State Department highlighted: *“unlawful or arbitrary killings by state security forces; forced disappearance by state security forces; torture by state security forces; arbitrary detention by state security forces; political*

¹ <https://chimpreports.com/us-top-diplomat-raps-rwanda-over-mihigo-death/>



prisoners; arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; the worst forms of restrictions on free expression, press, and the internet”².

Prof Filip Reyntjens, one of the leading experts on Rwanda has warned that *the “complacent attitude has incrementally, step by step, contributed to a situation that may well be irreversible and that contains seeds for massive new violence in the medium or long run”³.*

The rendition of Rusesabagina has a direct link to this complacency by those who could act, like the United States to put an end to the plight of Rwandans and indeed of people of the Great Lakes region.

Another stern warning about future instability in Rwanda unless the issue of political and civil rights are not addressed, was raised by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in Rwanda, Maina Kiai, in his June 2014 address to the Human Rights Council saying: *“a society without room for critical voices to speak freely and peacefully is unsustainable”* adding that *“the fear of a new genocide cannot be invoked to Impede fundamental freedoms in any society, which in fact are necessary to prevent conflicts and genocide”*.

Dealing with the case of Rusesabagina swiftly and saving his life is not simply a noble humanitarian act as well as right response to a serious breach of international and United States laws as well as Rwandan laws, but it would also help end impunity which is the root cause of the wars and conflicts in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region since 1990 that have caused the death of more than 6 million⁴ lives, the heaviest humanitarian disaster since the second world war.

We would be very grateful if you can save the life of Paul Rusesabagina because any other life of a peace activist lost is a life too many. It is also our very considered view that the United States government, biggest aid donor and champion of democratic values, should lead in stopping the excesses of the Rwandan totalitarian regime for the sake of durable peace and stability in Rwandan and indeed in the region.

Sincerely yours,

RBB Signatories:

1. Action citoyenne pour la Paix
2. Amahoro-PC
3. Association des rescapés du génocide des réfugiés rwandais au Congo (Ex-Zaire-RDC) ARGR-Intabaza
4. Centre de Lutte contre l'Impunité et l'Injustice au Rwanda (CLIIR)

² <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/RWANDA-2019-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf>

³ African Affairs, Vol. 103, No. 411, April 2004, pp. 208-9

⁴ <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/conflict-great-lakes-region/>



5. Comité pour l'Unité, la Paix et la Réconciliation au Rwanda (CUPR)
6. Congrès rwandais du Canada (CRC)
7. Convention Nationale Républicaine (CNR-Intwari)
8. Comité de Suivi de la Problématique des Réfugiés Rwandais (CSPR)
9. COVIGLA, Collectif des victimes des crimes de masse commis dans la région des grands lacs africains
10. Democratic Rwanda Party, DRP-ABASANGIZI
11. FDU-Inkingi
12. Fondation Ibukabose-Rengerabose, Mémoire et Justice pour tous
13. Global Voice of Rwandan Refugees (GVRR)
14. Groupe d'initiative France-Rwanda
15. Inganzo Gakondo
16. Initiative du Peuple pour l'Alliance Démocratique (IPAD-Umuhuza)
17. Initiative Humanitaire pour la région des grands lacs (IHRGL)
18. Initiative HUMURA
19. Institut Seth Sendashonga pour la Citoyenneté Démocratique ISCID asbl
20. JAMBO asbl
21. Liberté d'Expression Culture et Paix, LECP Info
22. Mouvement Républicain pour la Paix et le Progrès, MRP
23. Norway Sub Sahara Africa development organization (NSADO)
24. Observatoire des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda (ODHR)
25. Organization for Peace, Justice and Development in Rwanda and Great Lakes Region (OPJDR)
26. PS Imberakuri
27. Rassemblement des Jeunes pour l'Avenir du Rwanda (RAJAR ASBL)
28. Réseau International pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda (RIPRODHOR)
29. RNC-Ihuriro
30. Rwanda National Forum (RNF)
31. Rwandan Alliance for the National Pact (RANP-Abaryankuna)
32. Rwandan American Youth Association
33. Rwandan Platform for Dialogue, Truth, and Justice (RDTJ)
34. Rwandiska föreningen för mänskliga rättigheter (RFMR)
35. Rwandiske Forum i Oslo, FORUM RWANDAIS D'OSLO (RFO), Norvège
36. United Freedom Fighters (UFF-INDANGAMIRWA)