



RWANDA PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP)

Email: rppimvura@rwandapeopleparty.org

rppimvura@yahoo.com

Facebook: [johnvkaruranga](https://www.facebook.com/johnvkaruranga)

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Ref: RPP-0001-CNK/J03-GN01-DRC/C-JKV/CD/12J03

RE: *CONFLICT IN NORTH KIVU PROVINCE OF THE DRC*

Today is not a day for pointing fingers and trading accusations as to who is supporting who or who is fighting who in the DRC. But it should be a day for consoling and showing our sympathy for the thousands of Congolese citizens who have been displaced and made homeless in their own country, and many forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. The FDLR in particular has been a source of instability in the DRC and their links with the Interahamwe has never been broken.

Murders and gross human rights abuses have been going on in the DRC for many years but the United Nations Organisation Stabilising Mission in the RDC (MONUSCO) has been totally ineffective in controlling, let alone eradicating these abuses. This is the biggest UN force in the entire world but is also the most ineffective.

Today, some people are using the current political instability in the DRC to try to implicate Rwanda in the crisis in DRC.

We believe the conflict in the DRC is political that can be resolved through negotiations on the basis of the March 23, 2009 Amani Leo Peace Agreement (ALPA) between Gen Ntaganda and the President Joseph Kabila. We therefore, think that the intention of the so called warrant of arrest by the ICC wasn't well thought through.

Gen. Ntaganda is just a fig leaf for the political failure by international community to resolve the deep crisis in the DRC. Gen. Ntaganda is a product of the crisis in the DRC, but he is not the cause of it. Sending him to the ICC will not solve the problems

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of the DRC and this is why we argue for a peaceful, negotiated settlement. Rwanda was not the one that ordered the arrest or declared war on Gen. Ntaganda. Rwanda was not responsible nor the source for the violation of the M23 Accord that led to its failure. Hence, this marketing of dreams and tales of fabricating allegations about Rwanda's involvement in the DRC crisis is not helpful and does not contribute to bringing peace and stability in the Great Lakes of Region of Nations.

We agree that Gen. Ntaganda may have committed crimes as some people may allege that he recruited children in his ranks. What these people don't understand, however, is that these children were orphans roaming around and seeking shelter and protection because their parents and relatives were brutally raped or killed. As a party, we are wondering why the ICC should punish Gen. Ntaganda for giving protection to these poor children and yet the same body rewards people laundering these children to destitution

Though Rwanda is a small and poor country, but that doesn't mean that it has no national interest like any other country in the world. As a party, we support the Rwanda-DRC new agreement aimed at undertaking joint-military actions against the FDLR and other terrorist groups that operate in the Eastern parts of the DRC. We will also support Rwanda government, if necessary in taking all necessary measures such as sending stabilising forces in the DRC should the DRC government request such forces. The DRC people are our neighbours and friends and we cannot watch their country disintegrate into anarchy and terror.

It would also be a very grave mistake and sign of weakness if the Rwanda government allows the political instability and violence in the DRC to spill to Rwanda's door steps. This is why the RPP is requesting all the warring factions in the DRC to show their political maturity by putting the interests of DRC and Congolese people on their fore-front so as to return to a peaceful, negotiated settlement.

We are, as a party, Rwandan patriots and we naturally support the Rwandan people. We ask the entire international community to join hands with us to build a new Rwanda that is a beacon of hope, not only for Rwandan people but for the entire people of Africa.

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Rwandan people yearn for national democratic change, one that is not imposed from outside, they want Rwanda governed by the rule of law, not one governed by the fears and terror of the FAR and Interahamwe. Rwandan people want all Rwandan responsible for the Rwandan anarchy, terror, killing and raping of Rwandan people to be brought to justice. People of Rwanda want people who abused the Gacaca system to be brought to justice.

Our party has political differences with RPF regime as to which direction our country should take and it is still committed to a peaceful and democratic political revolution that would give breathing space in order to build the Rwanda that we all want. This is why our party sees the (M5) Rwanda Road Map to Peace as the only hope and viable channel to bring a peaceful political change desired by our people.

At the same, when it comes to the matters of national interests, our party will never tremble to stand firm and shoulder-by-shoulder with Rwanda government to encounter any foreign threats and fears that may be directed at our people. The welfare of our children is non-negotiable and that goes at the core values of our party.

We the RPP will remain opposed to many policies of the RPF Rwanda government and the political direction it is taking Rwanda. But will remain united by our common desire to protect our people and especially our children from threats and fears and to ensure that never and never again will they be subjected to terror or intimidation. We will also ensure that never and never again will our country slip back into the hands of those who littered it with bodies and painted it with blood of its children.

As someone who lost 186 members of my family including my mother and son in the Rwandan genocide, I would not like my experience to be inflicted on other Rwandans. That's why we need to act swiftly, collectively and responsibly to prevent the recurrence of our dark history.

We also believe our region is quite rich, probably richer than Europe but our people live in poverty. This is the main cause for its civil wars and gross human rights abuses.

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My party, the RPP, wishes to appeal once again to member states of the EAC group to admit the DRC, South Sudan, North Sudan and Ethiopia to the club. We are convinced that bringing these countries into the EAC will help to create jobs, better social conditions that may lay solid foundation for the regional political stability.

The RPP believes that people are fighting because of poverty and not ethnicity as portrayed by sectarian politicians and their foreign backers. Hence, ability to manage well regional economy is the only key to end regional political instabilities and conflicts.

We also believe that the position of MONUSCO in the DRC should be re-evaluated and reconsidered. The organisation has lost legitimacy and credibility as it has turned into a symbol of corruption and political instability in the region rather than a bridge that foments peace in the region.

Thank you all

John V Karuranga, President
Rwanda People's Party
www.rwandapeopleparty.org
Facebook: Rwanda Peoples Party
Email: rppimvura@yahoo.com

C.c. H.E. President Paul Kagame, Kigali, Rwanda
H.E. President Joseph Kabila, Kinshasa, DRC,
The M23, Kivu, DRC
The Head of the MONUSCO, UN, New York
The President of the ICC, Hague

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