



Observatoire des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda

RWANDA: ODHR CONDEMNS CONTINUOUS ASSASSINATION OF POLITICAL OPPONENTS AND CRITICAL VOICES IN RWANDA

Paris on March 16, 2019

The red line to be assassinated or disappear

The ODHR learned that on Friday, March 08, 2019, Mr. Anselme MUTUYIMANA was assassinated. His body was found on Saturday, March 9 in the Gishwati Forest in northwestern Rwanda. Mr. Anselme MUTUYIMANA was a member of the FDU INKINGI party and advisor to Mrs. Victoire INGABIRE UMUHOZA Party President, herself released in September 2018 after eight years of arbitrary imprisonment. He had been arrested at a station by police officers who had taken him a few hours before his body was found on March 9 in the forest. Rwandan police engaged in diversion and intimidation of relatives, friends, members, and supporters of the party to prevent them from massing up to the burial of this politician.

Mr Anselme MUTUYIMANA joined the FDU Inkingi party at a very young age (21). Arrested on 15 September 2012 at his home in Rutsiro by the police for belonging to an illegal political organization, he had spent 6 years in prison and had not been released until 2018

Rwandan legislation abolishes the death penalty. Criminal law also punishes murder, murder and enforced disappearances. But the murders and disappearances of political opponents, journalists and others who defend their rights or the rights of others have become the daily lot of people in the land of a thousand hills, with the utmost impunity.

There is every reason to believe that these killings and disappearances are being carried out by the public bodies at the top of the state, which cannot launch investigations against its own agents. This explains expedited or partial or partial investigations and impunity. In this paper, we briefly and exclusively present the summary executions and disappearances of people with critical voices. Many other cases of summary executions have been reported but will not be reported in this report.

In his address at the annual government retreat held in Gabiro in the north-east of the country between 09 and 12 March, the President of the Republic, Mr. Paul KAGAME indicated that the Rwandan Government is accused of murder his citizens. And he confirmed this in a context of tension between Rwanda and Uganda in acknowledging the assassination of Seth SENDASHONGA in Nairobi on May 16, 1998. He said he was assassinated because he would have gone over the line. red. According to his



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words, he would have approached the Ugandan generals to destabilize the country and that would explain its elimination.

This assassination took place in the same period and in the same context as that of Colonel LIZINDE Théoneste and BUGIRIMFURA (Rwandan businessman) in Nairobi, Kenya. Colonel LIZINDE as prefect of Byumba prefecture occupied by the RPF from April 1994 and Seth SENDASHONGA Minister of the Interior in the RPF government and member of the RPF had just expressed, through the press, their desire to testify on the abuses committed by the army of the RPA in the country and particularly in the zone occupied since October 1990 until their departure in exile. Should not we rather see the red line in this context?

The assassination of MUTUYIMANA Anselme intervened only a few hours before his speech. Other members of the FDU Inkingi opposition party, whose Rwandan Government has so far refused registration, have been murdered or reported missing under conditions that the Rwandan Government has refused to elucidate despite calls from national and international organizations.

They are: Mrs. IRAGENA Illuminée (nurse), missing on March 26, 2016 while traveling to work at King Faisal Hospital in Kigali; Mr. TWAGIRIMANA Boniface (Vice-President of the Party) who is reported missing since October 2018 while detained in a high security prison in Mpanga; Jean Damascène HABARUGIRA, a local representative of the FDU-Inkingi party in Ngoma in the east of the country, who was reported missing in early May 2017 but whose body was found on 8 May 2017 on contact with the Nyamata hospital in Bugesera.

Other members of the party, including INGABIRE Victoire UMUHOZA Party President, were harassed, intimidated or arrested for exercising their freedom of association and expression without fear and their right to participate in the management of the country. The others are notably GASENGAYIRE Léonille, Assistant Treasurer, Fabien TWAGIRAYEZU representative of the mobilization and Gratien NSABIYAREMYE Assistant Commissioner who were arrested in the wake of the presidential elections of August 2017.

Members of other political groups assassinated or missing

Members of political parties that are not part of the ruling party RPF are harassed, intimidated, murdered or reported missing.

André Kagwa RWISEREKA, Vice President of the Democratic Party of the Greens was found beheaded on July 14, 2010, a month before the presidential elections and no light has been made to this day. The National Party Secretary for Organizational Affairs, Jean Damascène MUNYESHYAKA, National Secretary of the Green



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Democratic Party, has been missing since 27 June 2014 and no investigation has ever explained the circumstances of his disappearance.

Attempted assassination of General Kayumba Nyamwasa and assassination of Colonel Patrick KAREGEYA: The two soldiers regularly received threats from the Government of Kigali.

General Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa, was the subject of an assassination attempt on June 19 in Johannesburg, while all eyes were on football MUNDIAL that was held in South Africa. Kayumba and his family directly questioned Kigali's intelligence services. He was a fellow soldier of Mr. KAGAME Paul in the Rwandan Patriotic Front Army and Chief of Staff of the Rwandan Army. He has been a refugee in South Africa since February 2010 and since then he has received regular threats from the Kigali government. He is the founder of the Rwanda National Congress (RNC), an opposition party in exile.

On January 1, 2014 Colonel Patrick KAREGEYA was assassinated. A former fellow soldier of Mr. KAGAME Paul, he led Rwanda's external intelligence services and was a founding member of the Rwanda National Congress (RNC) party. His body was found strangled in a hotel room in Johannesburg, South Africa.

On January 12, 2014, Rwandan President Paul Kagame made jubilant remarks about his assassination in front of an audience assembled for a prayer in Kigali and who cheered him. These remarks had provoked critical reactions from several human rights organizations as well as some influential states in the international community.

Disappearance of Parliamentarian Dr. Léonard HITIMANA and Colonel Augustin CYIZA: Cases of disappearance of MP Leonard HITIMANA of MDR party (dissolved party) during the Transitional Government and Colonel CYIZA Augustin -ex military FAR- (Rwandan armed forces) former government) which had joined the APR (Rwandan Patriotic Army of the Rebellion) have never been elucidated. The government of Paul KAGAME has never moved despite denunciations of his silence. Their bodies have never been found. Their cases have been submitted in alternative reports to the United Nations Committee against Torture (CAT) in 2011 and 2017 by FIDH and other international organizations.

Just before the end of the Transitional Government, in 2001, former President Pastor BIZIMUNGU, forced to resign, tried to create a political party called Democratic Renewal Party (PDR) UBUYANJA. He and his supporters were threatened, harassed, arrested and put in prison or murdered. The best-known case is that of Gratien MUNYARUBUGA (a member of this party) who was assassinated in full day in Kigali in December 2001. So far the circumstances of his death have never been elucidated.

Human Rights Defenders, Lawyers, and Journalists are also targets



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Human Rights Defenders are intimidated, threatened, harassed or murdered: the case that has been the focus of attention since July 2013 is that of the assassination of Gustave MAKONENE, Transparency International Rwanda employee in Rubavu (former Gisenyi). His body was found strangled on July 17, 2013, on the shore of Lake Kivu. He was working on allegations of corruption and smuggling of minerals involving senior members of the army and police. The denunciation by the international organizations of the stagnation of the judicial inquiry into this assassination led to the arrest of two police officers but of lower rank (2 corporals). They acknowledged his murder and involvement in smuggling minerals from the DRC. They were sentenced to 20 years in prison (lesser penalty in relation to the gravity and circumstances of the murder by persons with authority). The investigation was certainly closed without going to the end of the chain of high-ranking members of the security forces (army and police) involved.

Lawyers are also concerned: Disappearance followed by assassination of Mr. MUTUNZI Donat: reported missing by his family on April 13, 2018, the police announce his death by suicide in the police station of Ndera in Rwanda on April 23, 2018, when the police recognize his arrest. The members of his immediate family found during the delivery of the body by the police hospital, torture and were intimidated, threatened and harassed not to disclose and denounce these facts. They were much intimidated in the burial process, harassed, watched, and caught up until they went into exile. Mr. MUTUNZI Donat, a lawyer at the Rwanda Bar, was in the process of registering and registering lawyers with the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Assassinated journalists: Assassination of Jean-Léonard RUGAMBAGE on June 24, 2010- he was the deputy editor of the fortnightly Umuvugizi. He was killed by four bullets fired at close range in front of his home in Kigali. He was investigating the shooting of June 19, 2010 that targeted KAYUMBA Nyamwasa, a former fellow soldier of Paul KAGAME and former chief of staff of the Rwandan army in exile in South Africa. In October 2010, two suspects were found guilty of this homicide but the trail of political assassination that would have led to true sponsors was not investigated.

On November 30, 2011, Charles INGABIRE, editor of the website Inyenyerinews.org was murdered in Kampala where he had been a refugee since 2007, after openly criticizing Paul Kagame's regime.

Disappearance of blogger Jean de Dieu NDAMIRA: He has been missing since 09 March 2018. No sign of life from him or from his relatives or friends has since been recorded. NDAMIRA was originally from Kimisange in Kigali City and resided in Nairobi, Kenya. His disappearance was reported when he went to Kigali to renew his passport.



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In the alert launched by ODHR, it was said that he has gone on Friday, March 2, 2018 in Kigali by bus via Kampala to renew his passport. He arrived in Kigali on Saturday 03 March 2018 around 02H00. But since March 9, 2018, no sign of life.

As the power of Kigali is known, all these situations of assassination and disappearance would not occur if they were the work of isolated individuals not acquired by the regime. But the Kigali regime wants to present another image of its governance outside while inside, it deprives its citizens of an essential element for their dignity - the freedom to speak without terror in their eyes.

Influential businessmen are also targeted: The accidental death of RWIGARA Assinapol, a Rwandan businessman in Kigali has also generated a lot of reactions from his family and Rwandans. RWIGARA Assinapol was among of of the major funders of the RPF party in power but fallen out of favor after the arrival in power of KAGAME Paul. He died on February 4, 2015 and his family is challenging the official version of the accident. His death was followed by the destruction by the State of some of his real estate and the auction of his industrial properties. His daughter RWIGARA Diane tried to present her presidential candidacy which was rejected. She was threatened, harassed, arrested and put in prison with her mother for daring to denounce situations of human rights violations and freedom to speak without fear. They were released in November 2018 after more than a year of arbitrary detention.

In conclusion :

In this context, the Government of Kigali makes it clear to relatives and Rwandans the red line overtaken by these murdered or missing persons and why exceeding this line means a death sentence banned in and by Rwandan law. These persons exercised their rights under the constitution and international human rights instruments ratified by the Rwandan State, including freedom of association, expression or the right to participate in the governance of their country.

The ODHR deplores the lack of transparency of the Rwandan government in these situations when it must guarantee the protection, security and equal access to justice of all Rwandan citizens without discrimination.

The ODHR congratulates all the organizations and media that, in complete independence, denounce these situations of human rights violations in Rwanda and call on the Rwandan State to fulfill its obligations as guarantor of the life and security of Rwandan citizens.

He deplores, however, the silence and complacency of the political parties at the national level, the media and the civil society who give up their mission to bring the voice of the people so that the Rwandan government respects its responsibilities.



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The ODHR calls on diplomatic missions in Rwanda, international organizations and Rwandan state partners to call on the government to stop terrorizing and kill its citizens and to authorize independent international investigations into these assassinations.

The ODHR calls on the Rwandan Government to respect the right to life, to stop terrorizing its citizens, to open the political space to a real opposition and the free space for media and an independent civil society carrying the aspirations of the population in order to contribute to the real development of the country and for a true living and participative democracy.

For the ODHR

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