

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 14, 2020

President Paul Kagame
Office of the President
Kigali, Republic of Rwanda

Dear President Kagame:

I write to request that you immediately release and safely return Paul Rusesabagina, a United States Legal Permanent Resident and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, to the United States to be reunited with his family. Known for saving the lives of 1,268 people during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, I have serious concerns about the events leading to Mr. Rusesabagina's arrest and the life-threatening conditions he continues to endure as a prisoner.

On August 27, 2020, Mr. Rusesabagina boarded a plane in Dubai he believed was headed to Burundi. The next day, however, the plane landed in Kigali, where Mr. Rusesabagina was arrested immediately by Rwandan authorities. While specific details around the arrest remain unclear, what is clear is that the Republic of Rwanda extrajudicially kidnapped Mr. Rusesabagina to incarcerate and imprison him for unfounded crimes stemming from his long-documented and internationally acclaimed human rights advocacy efforts.

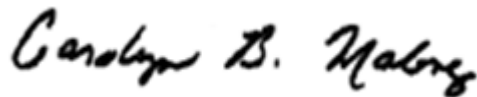
By utilizing clandestine methods to lure and arrest Mr. Rusesabagina, the Rwandan government purposefully ignored the legal avenues available via our deportation laws to request a deportation, violating United States law. United States deportation law provides a legal procedure to deport persons for various crimes, including those accused of engaging in terrorist activity. The United States deportation process complies with due process of law while enabling the United States to deport those who should face criminal prosecution in another country. For example, in the last two decades the United States has deported four people to Rwanda and will deport four more after they complete their criminal sentences in the United States. Given this record of bilateral cooperation when legal standards are met, Rwanda's decision in favor of the secretive, extrajudicial transfer of Mr. Rusesabagina demonstrates both a disregard for United States law and a lack of faith in the evidence supporting his arbitrary detention.

As COVID-19 continues to ravage the globe, I also implore you to release Mr. Rusesabagina on humanitarian grounds. Mr. Rusesabagina suffers from hypertension, cardiovascular disorders, and is a cancer survivor in remission. COVID-19 poses a far greater risk to Mr. Rusesabagina given his age and preexisting conditions and the crowded, unsanitary prison environment only elevates his risk of contracting the virus. Despite these concerns, Mr. Rusesabagina continues to be denied medical bail even though he has been taken to the hospital multiple times since first being arrested. It has been more than three months since he was detained, and I urge you to release Mr. Rusesabagina in recognition of these dangerous factors that continue to jeopardize his life.

As a senior member of the House and the Democratic leadership team, I want to underscore the strong support in the United States Congress for Mr. Rusesabagina and our desire for your government to return him swiftly and in good health. I – along with other colleagues in the House and Senate that have demonstrated their support for Mr. Rusesabagina – will continue to monitor his condition and utilize our power as Members of the United States Congress to advocate for his immediate release.

Paul Rusesabagina, an internationally acclaimed human rights advocate, was extrajudicially kidnapped by the Rwandan government and now faces the prospect of spending his life or dying behind bars. It is in the best interest of U.S.-Rwandan relations that he be afforded the same legal rights and treatment – as well as humanitarian relief – as others historically have been afforded under U.S. and international law. As such, I urge you and your government to immediately release and safely return Paul Rusesabagina to the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn B. Maloney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress