



## Press Release

### **The guilty verdict against human rights activist Rusesabagina is a judgement on the world political system.**

It was public knowledge that Rusesabagina would never get a fair trial after the Rwandan President Kagame boasted of the efficiency of his services in bringing him to Rwanda and the Minister of Justice saying on Al Jazeera, all shame drunk to the dregs, that hiring the private plane to kidnap Rusesabagina was lawful. Members of Rwandan political and civil society organisations in exile grouped in The Rwanda Bridge Builders (RBB) as well as each and all people peace and liberty lovers were shocked because the world has so far failed to stand up to one of the smallest aid dependent Rwandan regime when it violates national and international law, especially when the victim is an EU citizen and a permanent resident of the United States and recipient of the US highest civilian medal. Mr. Rusesabagina received the presidential Medal of Freedom for his heroic role in saving Tutsi during the 1994 genocide against Tutsi while the current leadership that is trying him was busy lobbying the UN against sending of an international force to Rwanda to stop genocide. <sup>1</sup>

RBB would like to thank the Belgian and the US governments for publicly denouncing the sham trial of Rusesabagina marked by lack of international standards including lack of confidential, unimpeded access to his lawyers and relevant case documents and lack of access to counsel of his choice. His lawyers have well-argued to prove that charges against Rusesabagina were false and that there was no credible evidence nor witnesses leading to the guilty verdict of Paul Rusesabagina.

RBB calls on the international community and especially the US, Belgian governments, and European commission to apply international standards regarding violation of international law and of human rights. We invite, Brussels, London and Washington that imposed new sanctions against senior Russian officials over the poisoning attack and jailing of opposition leader Alexei Navalny to do the same in the case of Rusesabagina who is an European citizen and permanent resident of the US. It is ironic that one of key players in the kidnap of Rusesabagina, the former Minister of Justice Mr. Busingye has been appointed as High Commissioner to the UK and probably, if nothing done, will join his new station very soon.

RBB strongly believes that the trial of Rusesabagina is a show trial by the Rwandan repressive regime aimed at silencing genuine opposition by demonstrating that it can get to any critic including those who received the citizenship of other countries once they try to criticise the regime. It is also a test of international community's resolve to defend and promote the values of peace, democracy, justice for all, equal opportunity, and human rights.

We would like to recall that the current regime came to power through the barrel of the gun and is responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo as UN Mapping report points out. "*The systematic and widespread attacks described in this*

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<sup>1</sup> [COURRIER-DU-30-AVRIL-1994-DU-FPR-INKOTANYI-SIGNE-CLAUDE-DUSAIDI-ET-GERARD-GAHIMA.pdf](https://www.sciencespolitiquesrwandaises.fr/COURRIER-DU-30-AVRIL-1994-DU-FPR-INKOTANYI-SIGNE-CLAUDE-DUSAIDI-ET-GERARD-GAHIMA.pdf)  
([sciencespolitiquesrwandaises.fr](https://www.sciencespolitiquesrwandaises.fr))



*report, which targeted very large numbers of Rwandan Hutu refugees and members of the Hutu civilian population, resulting in their death, reveal a number of damning elements that, they were proven before a competent court, could be classified as crimes of genocide."*

The situation for civil and political rights is appalling. For example, the ranking in terms of civil and political rights has come down from 24% 2017 to 21% in 2020 according to Freedom House. The world Happiness Index report 2021, ranks Rwanda 147 out of 149 countries surveyed: Press Freedom Index 2020, Rwanda ranks 156 out of 180 countries. US State Department 2021 report "unlawful or arbitrary killings by the government; forced disappearance by the government; torture by the government; harsh and life-threatening conditions in some detention facilities; arbitrary detention; political prisoners or detainees; politically motivated reprisal against individuals located outside the country" ... restrictions on political participation" etc. President Kagame is considered among the twenty most brutal and ruthless dictators in Africa since independence Filip Reyntjens, a Belgian scholar whom many consider the world's foremost expert on Rwanda, describes *Kagame as "probably the worst war criminal in office today."*

RBB is of the view that letting an all-time donor recipient go away with the verdict of the show trial of Rusesabagina is promoting impunity which is the root cause of the instability in the Great Lakes region that has caused the death of more than five million people.

RBB call on the international community and key donors to stand up and call for the release of Paul Rusesabagina and ensure that the government of Rwanda accept to open up the political space and enter in all-inclusive dialogue with the opposition in order to find a lasting solutions to the problems of the country.

Done in Ottawa, September 23<sup>th</sup> 2021

**Signatories:**

1. Action citoyenne pour la Paix, **Suisse** ;
2. Association des rescapés du génocide des réfugiés rwandais au Congo (Ex-ZaïreRDC) ARGR-Intabaza, **Nederland** ;
3. Centre de Lutte contre l'Impunité et l'Injustice au Rwanda (CLIIR), **Belgique** ;
4. Comité pour l'Unité, la Paix et la Réconciliation au Rwanda (CUPR), **France** ;
5. Congrès rwandais du Canada (CRC), **Canada** ;
6. Convention Nationale Républicaine (CNR-Intwari), **Suisse** ;
7. Comité de Suivi de la Problématique des Réfugiés Rwandais (CSPR), **Suisse** ;
8. COVIGLA, Collectif des victimes des crimes de masse commis dans la region des grands lacs africains, **France** ;
9. Forces Démocratiques Unifiées-Inkingi, **UK** ;
10. Fondation Ibukabose-Rengerabose, Mémoire et Justice pour tous, **France** ;



## **Rwanda Bridge Builders**

Breaking barriers and building bridges

11. Global Campaign for Rwandans' Human Rights (**UK**)
12. Global Voice of Rwandan Refugees (GVRR), **South Africa** ;
13. Groupe d'initiative France-Rwanda, **France** ;
14. Inganzo Gakondo, **Russie** ;
15. Initiative du Peuple pour l'Alliance Démocratique (IPAD-Umuhuza), **USA** ;
16. Initiative Humanitaire pour la région des grands lacs (IHRGL), **Belgique** ;
17. Initiative HUMURA, **Belgique**;
18. Institut Seth Sendashonga pour la Citoyenneté Démocratique ISCID asbl, **Belgique** ;
19. JAMBO asbl, **Belgique** ;
20. Liberté d'Expression Culture et Paix, LECP Info, **USA** ;
21. Mouvement Républicain pour la Paix et le Progrès, MRP, **Belgique** ;
22. Observatoire des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda (ODHR), **France** ;
23. Organization for Peace, Justice and Development in Rwanda and Great Lakes Region (OPJDR), **USA**;
24. PS Imberakuri, **Belgique**;
25. Rassemblement des Jeunes pour l'Avenir du Rwanda (RAJAR ASBL), **Africa**.
26. Réseau International pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda (RIPRODHOR), **France** ;
27. Rwanda National Congress - RNC, **USA** ;
28. Rwanda National Forum (RNF), **USA** ;
29. Rwandan Alliance for the National Pact (RANP-Abaryankuna), **Africa**.
30. Rwandan American Youth Association, **USA**;
31. Rwandan Platform for Dialogue, Truth, and Justice (RDTJ), **South Africa** ;
32. Rwandiske Forum in Norway (RFN), FORUM RWANDAIS DE **NORVEGE** (RFN);
33. PDR Ihumure, **Belgique**
34. Rwanda Revolution Movement (RRM), **South Africa**

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