



*TRUTH- INTREPIDNESS – SOCIAL JUSTICE*

**PRESS RELEASE N° ISH2022/08/006**

## **THE US SECRETARY OF STATES' VISIT TO RWANDA SHOULD SPARK THE OPENING OF THE POLITICAL SPACE**

On behalf of members of ISHEMA Party and on behalf of all Rwandans, we would like to welcome the United States (US) Secretary of State, Hon Antony BLINKEN to the country of a thousand hills, Rwanda.

On this occasion, it is imperative to raise some important issues faced by our people because of lack of good governance, violations of human rights, lack of an open political space, which, if not well managed are driving the country and the whole region into a chaotic end. The American government has played a major role in supporting the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) despite its liberticide and warmongering nature in the Great Lakes region. While the RPF has a heavy responsibility, its partners, and donors such as the US cannot escape the public judgement. To confront these ills and correct what is popularly seen as mistakes of the past, a call to act is sent to the American People as well as to all the international community.

1. From October 1990 Rwanda was involved in an armed conflict originated from Uganda, a country that supported the cause of refugees who claimed their rights to participate in political life of their motherland. The failure to consider all important factors, and implications of that war culminated in the 1994 genocide that took millions of lives and drove others in exile creating more refugees.
2. Despite the unequivocal and unreserved support from the US government, the RPF missed the most important points in healing and re-building the nation, to which any political actor should aspire in the aftermath of a tragedy such as genocide. Instead, all diplomatic, financial, and political assistance was used to track, kill, and fabricate legal charges to annihilate real and perceived opponents. The regime enthroned terror and a police state violating all basic, civic, and political rights. The US government keeps silent and refuses to reason its strongest ally, Paul KAGAME.
3. As a result, 30 years after, Rwandans have a feeling to be at the eve of 1990. The number of Rwandan refugees is estimated at more than a million, and the regime has rejected any initiative<sup>1</sup> for political dialogue to find a peaceful solution to the predicament.

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<sup>1</sup> [MEMORANDUM TO THE UNITED NATIONS: "A CONTRIBUTION TO THE UN STRATEGY FOR PEACE CONSOLIDATION, CONFLICT PREVENTION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION" - Ishema Party](#)

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*ISHEMA Party Seeks to Promote Democracy in Rwanda through the Values of **Truth, Intrepidness, and Social Justice***

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4. The Constitution of 2003 that provided for presidential terms limit has been manipulated to allow Mr KAGAME to overstay in power until 2034, and to add insult to injury, the president has recently announced that he would stay in power for more 20 years<sup>2</sup>, revealing an intention to trample with the Constitution again.
5. In meanwhile, the RPF used all means possible to control the political space and exclude political actors perceived as threats. Dr Theoneste NIYITEGEKA is languishing in prison for having dared to announce his intention to run for president's office. Mrs Victoire INGABIRE UMUHOZA, Mr Bernard NTAGANDA, Miss Diane RWIGARA were unjustly sent in jail for trying to run against Mr KAGAME. In 2016 and 2017 the delegation of ISHEMA Party was refused entry in Rwanda to participate in 2017 presidential elections<sup>3</sup>.
6. It should be recalled that today Rwanda counts about 50 political and civil society organizations in exile, the highest number in the world, and that inside the country, the most recent registration of a political organization was allowed in 2009 despite numerous pending requests.
7. In meanwhile records of the RPF in terms of respect of human rights keep worsening horrendously. Looking at the trends presented in the annual reports produced by US Department of State, it is less probable that the RPF will be forced to change its behaviour by reports. Every new year, new crimes are committed making the old ones forgotten. In 2020, the RPF kidnapped Mr Paul RUSESABAGINA an American legal resident and Belgian citizen, tortured him before sentencing him to 25 years in prison through sham legal procedures. That took place after Mr Kizito MIHIGO was arrested in the South of the country and mysteriously was found dead in a police cell in Kigali. All calls for independent investigation<sup>4</sup> into circumstances of that death went unanswered by the regime. The year 2021 was characterized by a series of arrests targeting journalists, political activists, and youtubers. The US government is dragging feet instead of taking strong measures against its strong ally, Mr KAGAME, even when an American resident's life is at stake.
8. Rwanda has been accused of involvement in destabilization of peace in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and all material evidence as well as first eye testimonies confirm the looting of natural resources orchestrated by, and in interests of Rwandan current regime. Thousands of civilian lives have perished, and survivors have lost their homes despite the presence of UN peacekeeping mission. The

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<sup>2</sup> See Kagame's interview with France24 on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 <https://youtu.be/mTYWYNUHRRk>

<sup>3</sup> [Kenya forced to keep prelate as Rwanda denies him entry - Voice of Djibouti](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Call for Independent Investigation into Rwandan Singer Kizito Mihigo's Death | Human Rights Watch \(hrw.org\)](#)



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US government is aware of all the situation, we are yet to see tangible actions of the Nation whose national motto is “**In God We Trust**”.

9. In Kigali Mr BLINKEN will discuss these and other matters with high officials of the government. It would be too naïve to think that this time the US is going to dare raising tone in front of Mr KAGAME or that the RPF leaders would give in easily after three decades of getting away with numerous crimes including genocides<sup>5</sup>. Every keen observer would anticipate the readiness on behalf of Kigali to sacrifice anything to protect the status quo, hence, they will bring to the table unthinkable proposals susceptible to keep the American complicity on their side. The American government has a moral responsibility to stand for human rights and democratic values, *inter alia*, and should desist any cooperation with liberticide regimes.
10. The partnership between USA and Rwanda cannot be reduced to partnership between the two countries’ leaders, rather between the two nations. In fact, leaders come and go but the nations remain. For this reason, this trip would make sense if and only if:
  - The political opposition’s inputs could be considered during discussions concerning Rwanda. While in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mr BLINKEN will find time to discuss with the opposition, it is unclear as to why a meeting with Rwandan opposition is not on his schedule. Since most of us are forced into exile, the Secretary of State should make special efforts to meet with key opposition leaders, Mrs Victoire INGABIRE and Mr Bernard NTAGANDA who will be present in Rwanda during that moment.
  - Special measures could be put in place to facilitate:
    - i) An immediate release of political prisoners, prisoners of opinion, journalists
    - ii) Rehabilitation of political prisoners to allow them to enjoy their political rights and freedom
    - iii) Opening the political space to allow an effective multiparty system, and dissent.
    - iv) Unconditional acceptance of return of Rwandan political opposition and civil society organizations from exile

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<sup>5</sup> [Declaration – Hutu Genocide](#)



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- v) Organization and patronization of the highly inclusive intra-Rwandan dialogue to shape the socioeconomic and political future of our country.
- vi) Necessary measures for repatriation of all refugees

ISHEMA Party remains committed and open to further exchanges on matters arising in cooperation between our two nations.

Long live the people of Rwanda

Long live the people of the United States of America

Long live the Rwanda -US cooperation based on respect of democracy and human rights.

Done at Montreal on 5th of August 2022

Nadine Claire KASINGE

President of ISHEMA Party

Presidential Candidate for 2024 elections