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MULTI-ETHNIC RWANDA OPPOSITION GROUP LAUDS U.K. ARREST OF KAGAME'S INTELLIGENCE CHIEF, GEN. KARAKE

DR THEOGENE RUD... JULY 03,2015



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Rwanda's Gen. Paul Kagame--removing term limits would allow him to rule perpetually

Rwanda is a small country full of big drama. One such drama played out on 20th June, 2015, at [London](#) Heathrow Airport. General Karenzi Karake, who heads Rwanda's notorious National Security and Intelligence Service, was arrested by the London Metropolitan Police on a European Arrest Warrant, in connection with a 2008 Spanish indictment for the deaths of Spanish and other European [citizens](#).

The second and most dramatic event was President Paul Kagame's address to

the Rwandan Parliament on 25th June, 2015. Responding to General Karenzi Karake's arrest, President Kagame could hardly conceal his anger and total despair before a somber audience, as he fired a mixture of a victim's lamentations, vitriolic denunciations against the British and the West, pan-Africanist rhetoric, and the now much familiar insults and threats to Rwandans and all who speak out against injustice in Rwanda. He once again castigated the 2014 BBC documentary, Rwanda's Untold Story, and the recent U.S. Congressional Hearing on Rwanda's human rights abuses, as evidence of the West "hobnobbing with thugs and criminals" in a conspiratorial move to turn heroes (meaning himself and his associates) into killers.

At one point in his fifty minute speech, President Kagame asks two questions whose answers he knows but could not provide for obvious reasons: "Since when did we become killers?" and, "First it was France, then Spain and now the United Kingdom. Who is next?"

President Paul Kagame is a man burdened with a lot of dirty secrets. He is a leading [factor](#), and knows much about, human rights abuses committed by some in the [army](#) he has commanded since 1990, including those documented by the Robert Gersony Report, the shooting down of President Habyarimana's [plane](#), the assassination of the Rwandan Bishops, the Kibeho massacres, those documented by the U.N. Mapping Report in the Democratic Republic, countless assassinations and disappearances, and indeed his own role in the triggering of the 1994 genocide.

Since coming to power, he has subverted and frustrated any attempt to give a more [accurate](#) narrative of Rwanda's tragic story that would otherwise show that all Rwandan communities- Hutu, Tutsi and Twa- have suffered immensely in mutual destruction, led by cliques at the top. The post 1994 RPF-dominated national and international justice systems have investigated and punished crimes against Tutsi, while deliberately ignoring the crimes committed against the Hutu. The near pathologic obsession against BBC's Rwanda's Untold Story, the indefinite closure of BBC Kinyarwanda Service, the vitriolic attacks on the British due to the arrest of General Karenzi Karake, and the insults against Rwandans who urge the search for change based on an accurate narrative, is part of President Kagame's end-game strategies. He is firing the remaining arrows in his quiver.

Part of President Kagame's frustration is due to the fact that the United Kingdom and the United States, which out of guilt and strategic considerations have shielded him from accountability in the past, are finally taking steps to speak out and act in the interest of all Rwandans. On 25th June, the United States State Department published its Annual Report on Human Rights, Rwanda (2014) that accurately represented the harsh crisis of governance and human rights in Rwanda:

The most important human rights problems in the country were disappearances, government harassment, arrest, and abuse of political opponents, human rights advocates, and individuals perceived to pose a threat to government [control](#) and social order; disregard for [the rule](#) of law among security forces and the judiciary; and restrictions on civil liberties. Due to restrictions on the registration and operation of opposition parties and nontransparent vote-counting [practices](#), citizens did not have the ability to change their government through free and fair elections.

Other major human rights problems included arbitrary or unlawful killings, torture, harsh conditions in prisons and detention centers, arbitrary arrest, prolonged pretrial detention, and government infringement on citizens'

privacy rights. The government restricted freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association.

Earlier, in a response to the now-advanced attempts to manipulate Rwanda's Constitution by the ruling RPF so as to allow President Kagame to rule without term limits [after](#) 2017, the US State Department had this to say:

The United States believes that democracy is best advanced through the development of strong institutions, not strongmen. For that reason, as Secretary of State Kerry has said, we do not support changing constitutions to benefit the personal or political interests of individuals or parties. Changing constitutions and eliminating term limits to favor incumbents is inconsistent with democratic principles and reduces confidence in democratic institutions. The U.S. is committed to support a peaceful, democratic transition in 2017 to a new leader elected by the Rwandan people.

President Kagame's harsh critique of the United Kingdom, the US and the West by citing slavery, colonization, killing of millions, and "practicing shooting targets on Africans" was an attempt to change the subject, to mobilize Rwandan and Africans against the U.K.'s and U.S.'s new efforts and public calls for accountability, and intimidate his former allies into silence and inaction. And he needs to remain in power to shield himself from accountability through Presidential immunity.

As for his pan-African credentials, the facts bear a different story.

Since coming to power in 1994, President Kagame and his regime have been a source of aggression and instability in the Great Lakes region. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, his endless interventions have left close to six million dead by some estimates. He has fought Ugandan, Zimbabwean, Angolan, and Namibian troops. He has made enemies with Tanzania and South Africa because these African countries urged him to adopt [politics](#) of inclusion through peaceful and negotiated means, and to abandon his acts of terror in foreign lands. Currently, he is engaged in a deadly destabilization campaign against neighboring Burundi.

The Rwanda National Congress (RNC) welcomes and fully endorses the arrest of General Karenzi Karake by the UK authorities in the search for justice.

The Rwanda National Congress (RNC) welcomes and fully endorses the efforts of the U.S.A. and the U.K. in taking visible and public steps to encourage better governance, full accountability for human rights abuses, and justice for all Rwandans.

The Rwanda National Congress (RNC) is dedicated to peaceful and democratic change to avert and reverse the perils of genocide and cyclical civil wars in Rwanda. Freedom and justice are our over-arching foundational goals as the premise on which everything else must be built. Without them, nothing is worthwhile. With them, Rwandans can [live](#) to their dignified full potential, in prosperity and peace.

To establish and entrench a sustainable rule of law, democracy, prosperity and peace, we need as a matter of urgency, in a post-Kagame era in 2017, and beyond:

1) security sector reforms to make security institutions inclusive and accountable so as to defend all citizens; 2) unconditionally open and free participatory space for political parties, civil society, the press and intellectual activity; and 3)

prepare for and conduct an unrestricted truth and reconciliation process that will lead to restorative justice for all Rwandans, towards genuine reconciliation and healing from repeated cycles of trauma.

Thank you for a courageous act, London Metropolitan Police.

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Dr. Theogene Rudasingwa formerly held positions of RPF Secretary General (1993-1996), Ambassador of Rwanda to the United States (1996-1999), and Chief of Staff for President Paul Kagame (2000-2004). He has testified before French Judges Marc Trevidic and Natalie Poux in the investigation of the shooting down of the President Habyarimana plane in 1994, as well as before the Spanish Judge Fernando Andreu Merelles in the case in which General Karenzi Karake and others are indicted. He has authored "Healing A Nation" and "Urgent Call."

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