

DRC CONFLICT: SECOND MESSAGE TO WORLD LEADERS

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The World Leaders, heads of:

United Nations (UN) Member states,
UN non-member states with status of observer at UN,
Intergovernmental organizations with status of observer at UN,
Other entities with status of observer at UN,
Specialized agencies and related organizations with liaison office at UN

c/o **Respective representations at the UN**

Dear World leaders,

It has been exactly four months and a week since I published a petition that I addressed to you on the conflict in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).¹ I am sending you this message now as a reminder and update in seven propositions.

1. It is imperative to put an end to all governance based on colonial racialism in the African Great Lakes region. It was Belgium which established this governance based on genocidal racism in Rwanda after having perpetrated the first genocide against the Tutsi from November 1959. This ideology has since spread throughout the region and is the main cause of extreme violence and political instability. If Rwanda has ceased to be the nerve center of this racist and genocidal governance of colonial inspiration since the liberation of the country by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1994, it is the DRC which has become the new epicenter.

Faced with the biased analyses which dominated the Western media after the final capture of Goma on 28 January and later of Bukavu on 16 February 2025 by the AFC/M23 rebellion, I published an article which recalls and demonstrates that it is colonial racialism which is the main cause of the current conflict in the DRC. Here is the link: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389052438_Colonial_racialism_is_the_cause_of_the_conflict_in_eastern_DRC_not_minerals. I had previously sent a newspaper version of the article to *The New York Times* as a 'guest opinion essay' in an attempt to reach a broad Western audience, but they did not publish it. It's their editorial choice and it's their right. I finally published it at *Rwanda News Agency* (RNA) for which I thank the owner and Managing Director.²

2. The relentlessness of certain Western countries and organizations against Rwanda and the Congolese rebel group M23 is misplaced. The sanctions - announced or implemented- targeting Rwanda in particular are purely and simply the continuation of the colonial strategy of 'destroying all truly African agency governance in Rwanda' as I indicate in the article above, citing German colonial officials in 1899 and 1903; a French missionary of Africa (aka White Father) in 1902; and an officer of the Belgian colonial army in 1914. These Western countries and organizations include Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the United States of America (USA), and the European Union that joined the cohort this Monday 24 February 2025.³ Some decision-makers within these countries and organizations are perhaps not sufficiently aware of this link with colonial ideology, but that is the reality.

Rwanda decided on 18 February 2025 to suspend 'the remainder of the 2024-2029 bilateral aid program with Belgium' because the latter 'has led an aggressive campaign, together with DRC, aiming to sabotage Rwanda's access to development finance, including in multilateral institutions'. And the statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues: 'Rwanda will not be bullied or blackmailed into compromising national security. Our only aim is a secure border, and an irreversible end to the politics of violent ethnic extremism in our region'.⁴ As for the United Kingdom, its 'punitive measures ... are regrettable' for the Rwandan government which considers that 'It is unreasonable to expect Rwanda to compromise its national security and the safety of Rwandans.' Rwanda is outraged that 'The Government of the DRC has a lot more to answer for than any other party within the DRC itself and in the region, but gets away with all manner of violations for reasons that are obvious to all.' The government reaffirms that 'Rwanda will continue to insist on security guarantees, which the DRC and the international community have so far been unwilling or unable to provide'.⁵

3. The sanctions imposed by the USA on Retired General and Rwandan Minister of State for Regional Integration James Kabarebe, linking him to 'violence and human rights abuses in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)' is simply an insult to the Rwandan people.⁶ James Kabarebe is certainly the most prestigious of the many living heroes after President Paul Kagame, who played an invaluable role in the liberation of Rwanda; the stopping of the genocide against the Tutsi and the effective protection of Rwanda against the genocidal threat coming from outside, and mainly from the DRC. And Rwandans of sound heart and mind admire not only his military bravery and his many credentials in the country and abroad, but also and above all his constant loyalty to President Paul Kagame, the person to whom God gave the wisdom, courage and leadership to liberate Rwanda; protect the Rwandans with his many comrades still alive or dead on the field of honour; and continue to lead the country towards greater well-being and prosperity.

4. The USA would be better advised to bring to justice and possibly sanction their own citizens including coordinators of UN Group of Experts on DRC and so-called human rights activists who played a determining role in provoking the creation of the M23 in 2012, in collaboration with other 'Western diplomats in Kinshasa'. Their conspiracy aimed to 'gradually weaken' the 'role and influence' of the Kinyarwanda-speaking (especially Tutsi) in the army and other institutions of DRC in the conspirators' own words as shown in my previous publications. The eighth of nine recommendations in my October 2024 petition stated that 'It is imperative that individuals like Steve Hege, Jason K. Stearns, Kenneth Roth and others who sparked the conflict in eastern DRC in 2012 and who continue to fuel it with their false and racist narrative can be prosecuted.'

5. President Paul Kagame has poignantly shown the hypocrisy and lack of consistency of the main Western powers on the crisis in the DRC, while renewing his determination to defend the security of Rwanda despite the extent of threats and sanctions. It was on the occasion of the Diplomatic Luncheon on 16 January 2025 in Kigali.⁷ In this document I provide the full transcription of the President's remarks, but also the link in the endnotes for those who wish to follow them on screen.

Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Representatives of International Organizations, Members of the Consular Corp, Senior Government Leaders, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

It has been some time since we last met. And it is a pleasure to connect today. We are delighted that Rwanda's diplomatic community, as well as our own presence abroad has grown. This reflects Rwanda's vision and intention to open our doors to the world for collaboration, innovation, and mutual growth.

The year 2024 was meaningful for Rwandans; we marked the dual anniversaries of *Kwibuka* 30 and *Kwibohora* 30 followed by national elections. So, it was a very busy year for us, but productive as well.

Over the last three decades, you have been with us every step of the way. And we see you as stakeholders, as partners in our transformation journey. This is why moments like this, when we get to interact, are valuable and we want to always express our gratitude first and foremost to you all.

For, we have benefited from this collaboration which has also brought a lot of support to us, to Rwanda; for us to be able to continue making progress on this transformation journey we have undertaken in the last thirty years.

For the North, we have had very good collaborations, support and good results originating from that. From the South, we have had extremely beneficial, helpful relationship with our brothers and sisters on our continent; it has been a good journey with everyone. So, I take this moment to thank you all very much for this.

Now, you know I; earlier I was telling our people, when the Minister and the Representative of the Diplomatic Corp were taking times to speak, I asked that mine comes much later. For a reason. First, I wanted to take time with you, telling you, expressing to you my feelings, my understanding of many things; this is an opportunity I can't miss. Even added that I wanted to come later when everybody has had something to eat, just in case some of the things I would be saying may not go well with your appetite. But you will bear with me in any case. That is part of our; of the lives some of us have to live.

Let me update you on some of the key issues regarding peace and security and politics and governance in our region.

One. In our relationship with each other and the globe as it is divided and so on and so forth, you see there are people who; and maybe rightly so, it should really be fine. There are people who talk about; a lot about values, and interests and; so, those must be fulfilled. I actually agree. We should all have certain values that guide us through whatever we do and over many years. But, when you say that, what do you really mean? Do you mean values and interests for some and not for others? Or you mean values and interests that should apply to all of us, irrespective of where we come from. Now, if you have taken responsibility; a global responsibility to say there are certain values you are going to insist on; you are going to push for as hard as you can; and these ones should also come along with the interests as we know them. Still, that is fine. But it also gives you a responsibility; to really walk the talk. Or to mean what you are saying. If you are talking about values, then, I am sure you mean that and the first person to respect those values are those who emphasize them. But as we see things happening across the world and; I will not talk so much about other parts of the world; I will confine myself to our part of the world, the region and continent.

Then I will also raise another question. Is there moment where the values, where the interests people talk about become incompatible with truth, with facts or with evidence? I don't think they need be incompatible. It is actually possible to drive hard for values that you believe in, even mind so much your interests, but at the same time those could very easily be served by truth, evidence, facts, as you interact with other people, and other parts of the world.

Let me give some examples. And I had the opportunity recently to address journalists, and bringing up questions that are important. On my mind, there is this problem we have in our region. There are many problems across the continent, but let me talk about our region. And I am going to do that because Rwanda bears disproportionately a huge amount of burden relative to our responsibility in any wrongdoing, if at all. And again, it plays out like that, selectively. And on the basis of the disparities there are in the world where evidence, facts, even what is right don't really matter. What matters is what somebody else must say, irrespective of whether what they are saying takes into consideration facts, evidence or truth.

You know the problem we have in our region, in eastern Congo that has brought in so many countries to be part of it from our continent. But there have been more, even more countries from outside of our continent, involved in one way or another, and unfortunately many times in the wrong way. And this wrong way, we are told must be the one to prevail. Now, let me start with saying: if you want to really address a problem, there is no better way of doing that than bothering to look at and addressing the root cause of that problem. It doesn't matter how powerful you are. You just stick to the basics of facts, of evidence, of reality. You just don't come in because you are powerful and, I mean; the evidence is simple.

We have had the UN; the peace keepers under the UN in that country for close to three decades. The continued presence for three decades. When they went there to address problems. Means: there are still problems to address or that actually the first problems to address were not addressed. Otherwise, why would you stay in a place purportedly to address a problem and you are there for close to 30 years. Normally you would come in, maybe it takes you five years, maybe it takes you ten, and you would exit because you would have addressed the problem that brought you. So, what are the returns for that investment? Of such a big force, under such a big body like UN, and so much money spent on that. What is the return on that investment? Other than continuing to have problems getting worse.

That also shows, or maybe prove; this will prove why Rwanda has to carry the burden of this problem. It is a way of escaping responsibility. That is the shortest, easiest answer when people ask: "Why have you been there for this time and you still want to be there? It means you didn't address the problem?" So, the easiest answer is: "No, but Rwanda keeps being part of the problem". Well, what that means; maybe you should get rid of Rwanda. And find a way of removing it from the map; just find a way that like it happened thirty years ago; Rwanda was being destroyed to the point we should not be existing anymore.

And again associated with that; the very people who murdered people here in Rwanda; those who carried out the genocide still exist; are still armed; are still practicing the ideology of genocide in our neighborhood, in eastern Congo, supported by government; supported by leaders in that place, on the watch of this international community that talks about values, interest, that deployed this UN force into Congo, to actually eradicate, among others, that problem that originated from here, be it the genocidaires or the ideology itself. And people do it with impunity. And then arguments start; we have heard arguments, again through different quarters of this international community: "oh, you mean these FDLR? These genocidaires? But are they there? Are they still there? But we are told they are few. We are told ...". When you say: no, no, but you see it even in broad daylight. The statements made by government leaders. And you are wondering whether they still exist? Whether they are there? Or what they are doing? You still, you pretend for thirty years? You can pretend?

Now the problem becomes: “Ooh, Rwanda is in Congo, you have forces in Congo, you are occupying Congo, you are doing what”. In this day and age, and even with the ...; Rwanda, its capacity. Are we people, who can actually do that? That limited capacity of ours and But even why? Why do you What came first? Is it this problem that we have to deal with? Threats, daily threats, regular threats against our country and relating to our history? Or, because of that or on addition to that, we now want to become people who can go and occupy places? Really you, the people, can they convince anybody that they even believe it? Or they are using it simply as an excuse. Even if you believe it. Why don't you find a way of denying Rwanda this excuse? And remove these people from there, because that is even in the mission that took there the UN peace keepers. What happened?

So, then. You know, talking about ourselves. I leave many others out of this continent outside of it. When I see, I know leaders when I see them. I also know, idiots, when I see them. You can imagine the combination of both of them, the disaster it is. If you are a leader and an idiot, it's a disaster. Absolute disaster. It is even worse, even more dangerous, if the very people who hold the power in their hands decide that they will be manipulated and played around for some interests by idiots. Really, you know it is. I have had interactions with many of our leaders on the continent. And among the things we talk about, is, if we don't take ourselves and what we do seriously, nobody will. Nobody will take us seriously. And we will always remain, just neither here nor there and, people doing with us whatever they want without any of us asking why? What is this? And then in the end we start complaining about “ah, you know, this is racism; this is bla bla bla”. Well, but I think we are the ones who drive ourselves in that kind of situation. There are things we need to be rejecting and doing so openly and without fear or favor or Why? Why can't we do that? Why are we not the kind of people? Why do we even need to have a problem like that one in eastern Congo needing a solution from the UN, from some countries. Why? Why can't we? There is no explanation.

Now, but at another level, we have a mix of all kinds of things. And that is why we open up ourselves for manipulation. You have seen, you know of a so called “Group of Experts”. The Group of Experts, what do they do? What are they experts in, actually? They are experts in what? You don't need to be an expert in anything, you just have to toe the line, of those using you; of those who put you in place, including the very people from whom originate this problem, as of the history that goes way back to colonial times. The colonial times that divided our people here in Rwanda, in our region and elsewhere. So, they come, they are the experts, to explain the problem. The problem is not that “do you know why these Kinyarwanda-speaking people are in Eastern Congo”? By the way we have the same situation, let us say with Uganda. The South-western part of Uganda has a whole district with a big population of Kinyarwanda-speaking. And when I am talking about Kinyarwanda-speaking, I am not talking just about speaking Kinyarwanda; these are people who are even relatives. There are people in this country, as we speak, who have their uncles, their grand-fathers, their ...; who live across on the other side of the border, and others who live here in Rwanda. Like for example in Uganda, there has never been a problem to do with that district. It has never caused a problem between Uganda and Rwanda. No; they are taken as Ugandans. And we accept that. They are not claiming anything.

Why is it not the same with eastern Congo? They are simply Congolese who hail from Rwanda as of history, of whatever other ways they happen to have gone there. It is a fact.

So, but if you are going to have an expert who is associated in a wrong way with this history, to come and say the problem is something else, not what it is exactly, don't you have a problem? So, are you going to be able to address the root cause of this problem? When your first thing is to distort the facts and evidence? So, that is why it is easy to blame Rwanda for it. We didn't draw borders. By the way even the genocide ideology that I referred to earlier originates from that beginning of the history. That is where it comes from. So, we go

on and on and on, for how long? So, if you think Rwanda is in eastern Congo causing problems, would you mind bothering to understand why would Rwanda be in eastern Congo, fighting there? Why? You need to answer that. It will lead you, maybe, to some of the things you need to address and not to run away from. But to simply keep making statements, threatening, doing all kind of things. Let me tell you. We have been there. We have paid our highest price ever, in our lives: this genocide. I don't think; we can be made to suffer in all kinds of ways; we can do. But we will never, never, never go back to paying that similar price we paid thirty years ago. It doesn't matter how powerful anybody is. Maybe it will come to a point if anyone insists on that, then that is maybe one way of wiping Rwanda off the map. Because we will not yield an inch. Never.

But we can work together, to look at the causes if we are ready to listen to each other, and address that problem the right way. But if there is somebody who is saying "no, no, no. Me, I don't want to address it that way, I want to address it my way, and says "You see, if you don't allow me to address it my way, I will deny you this, I will deny you that, and I will take it to China, I will take it to Russia, I will take it ...". "No, no, no, no. Rwanda is something we can do away with. Don't worry, we ...". That is called babysitting. Babysitting leaders. And not pushing them to take their responsibility. But it won't work. One way or the other, it will not take us Rwanda back where we started from thirty years ago. No way. I know of course, there are even some who after thirty years are still questioning: "What happened? Who killed who? Who ...?" You know? The sort of pretense that exists is just what gives us that justified anger, and above all the energy to fight back sufficiently.

Now, I get to the values. You know, I keep telling people. They come: "You see, every year we understand you, you see, everything is OK, but you see, we are failing to explain why Rwandan forces are said to be in Congo." Oh, I asked them and said: even before we are sure of what you are talking about, can you explain to me why FDLR is in Congo, and being supported by government of Congo, and they have brought in Burundi under the same ideology, supposedly to fight M23 which is of Tutsi ethnicity, therefore related to Kagame and others, and these ones have no chance of living; they need to be gotten rid of? So, you leave all that intact, and then you come to complain about Rwanda possibly having a force in eastern Congo? What do you think you are really talking about? And then you say: "OK, you see, defensive measures that Rwanda has taken should be removed and we shall make sure that no FDLR, we get rid of it". That has been thirty years there and they have not gotten rid of it! And then they say: "We shall convince the government in Kinshasa. After all you know it is not the President who is a problem; it is his advisers and it is ...; you know these ones who are openly talking about genocide ideology are just some people; we are going to tell him to take care of them and to put them aside". I mean, this story has gone on; I mean, do you really think you are talking to kids, also who...? Why would you even be talking to anybody like that?

So, let's leave the problem as it is; you Rwanda be silent about it; and we will see how we can address it.

And then recently oh! Rwanda blamed: we didn't go to Luanda. Luanda, Luanda! Luanda? I am friends with Angolans, and the President and Luanda and so on. But it was not a visit of that kind. It was a visit to address problems. It was not a visit to have an opportunity to take pictures and ..., no. It is not going to be the case. The problem must be addressed and it can be addressed. It can be addressed. We all need peace. Rwanda actually needs peace more than anybody. Because we have already tested the lack of it, and the meaning of that.

And then to see the double standards and the hypocrisy that add up to really nothing. You know, we talked earlier about the elections we had here, and so on and so forth and So, people tell us, they want democracy everywhere. They encourage elections. The person who is causing problems in this situation I am talking about between Rwanda and DRC, has never, twice, been elected. And you know it. You know it. This is why I was saying it doesn't matter evidence; it doesn't matter the facts; it doesn't matter the claim, it is just

what you think applies to you for that moment for your benefit, the rest doesn't matter. This man Tshisekedi was never elected first; he didn't at all, and you know it. So, I am not telling anyone ...; only that you don't talk about it publicly, I am talking about it publicly, that is the only difference, you know it. The second time, nothing happened. And you know it. So, what values are you telling us that you beat up some people for, and then others you, you don't know what to do? So, you think I will realize that and really respect you for it? Or even listen to what you tell me that doesn't add up to anything?

So, I know I am talking to innocent people here, all of us. Because some of you, even representing the countries that cause us so much trouble. I am sure you; I don't want to claim too much. But I think you understand and maybe you report rightly what needs to be reported. But in the capitals, there are people who: "No, no, no. We want this to happen like this, and ...". It doesn't matter what you tell them. But, while that can happen, it affects you the least; it affects me the most. I can't afford to behave the way you want me to behave in dealing with this problem. I can't. It is life and death to me; and my people. For you, it is just; something you talk about; you can call and give instructions while you are playing football or while you are playing tennis, or doing golf. It is as simple as that for you. But for me, just a blink at the wrong time; it's life and death for me.

So, I just; I am just saying: please, also understand us, and understand the people you are dealing with. We are not the same old idiots you dealt with fifty years ago. We are not. Not at all. Not anywhere near to that.

So, if you espouse these values; the values that are so much talked about, I want again to say there is no incompatibility in espousing these values that you talk about and I agree with, and, even fulfilling your interests. There is no incompatibility.

Eeh, so; abiding by these values also must cost you something. That is why some truth has to ...; you know, with our partners, we are even told: "We want you to develop, to prosper, to do this, to do that". At the same time, I remember the story. You know, there is something called AGOA (African Growth Opportunity Act). We were part of. A wonderful thing. Really well thought out. But little did we know it was to serve some of us more than others. And what I mean is this. Rwanda, we made a mistake; a happy mistake; we made a mistake of saying: you know what? We have found some way of growing our textile industry. Because there was an effort; it is continuing, and please, we want to reduce on and even get rid of -here in the region they call it "*Chagua*"-. *Chagua*; these are second hand clothes. They would be shipping into Rwanda tons and tons of this. And we said: we can't grow our industry when we are giving preference to this. But we did it believing that actually this provision for AGOA was to help us make progress. They said; what was unfortunate, we agreed with others, some countries in the region to do that. And then before we realized, all the countries we had been discussing this matter and agreeing to the approach had been persuaded into reversing their decision, and they didn't tell us. So, the next day, we were being struck off the list of those countries who benefited from AGOA. Just because of Rwanda's stubbornness. "How dare you refuse *Chagua*?" "How did you refuse *Chagua* to enter your country?" And we explained, we begged, we said: "Sir, you know; really we thought". They: "Unh, unh". So, that is how we So, really, what is this, that we are talking about? From that time; it is several years ago, to this day; but, those with oil, with abundance of minerals and so on, and who are not stubborn, those are the ones who continue to benefit.

I mean; so, I pointed out all those things; you just get a feel of: what is it that is happening? That we should; what is it that is right? What is it that is wrong for one to do and to make progress? You can't be sure. And meaning you can't be yourself; you can't decide for yourself; you have to wait until somebody says: "I want you to do this; you should be doing this; including, telling you that you should be making yourself open to some vulnerabilities. Like: "You should keep quiet; you should do nothing about dealing with insecurity around your borders". Well! But insecurity around my borders affects me; it doesn't affect you; it affects me.

You are not even ready to help me to actually be able to deal with my situation; now they start: “Oh, no, no; you see Rwanda”. They started striking us off some lists of beneficiaries for that, for that. They even say we have; because, when they found out it was not the case, when they said you; you know, something to do with child soldiers. You know I convened a meeting and called commanders and said: do we have children in our army? I have never known this. They said: “No, no, no, Sir. There is no truth in that. But what you are being accused of is that the country is being associated with an entity that has child soldiers in another country. I said: ooh! At least on that one, even if it is wrong thing by somebody against me and there is nothing I can do about it, I just relax and keep quiet. So, we kept quiet. Other things we can’t; we have nothing to do about and we can’t do anything; we just become humble and wait it out.

Then, we have operations in Mozambique, in Central African Republic; and by the way, for Central African Republic, we were asked by the country to go and help; and we were also asked by other countries; developed countries; actually that we should help. And we agreed. When we agreed and went there, the country that asked us to help and even airlifted us to that place; we never heard from them a few months after. Then, we were asked to do the same in Mozambique. We went there. Before we realized; when we were telling Mozambique and the partners, we say: you know what? We are able to do what we can do, but we can’t do everything. At least with Rwanda limited resources in all ways, we can’t afford to finance our operations there. It either has to be the country where we are running the operations, or partners who want peace there, and who have made investments there by the way after all. And we were left on our own. And when it came to some help that came from European Union, it came grudgingly. And we asked and said: why are you grudgingly assisting us? They said: “Yeah, you see; some people are saying you are in Congo”. We said: no, yeah, but let’s put that aside. Here, we are in Mozambique. We are talking about Mozambique. So, are you going to punish Mozambique for our crimes; for our offenses; for doing what you don’t like in DRC? It is a bizarre situation? Why don’t you take care of Mozambique and help them and; for us we are helping Mozambique. If you are helping us to help Mozambique, you are still helping Mozambique. It has nothing to do with Congo. For Congo, we shall handle that with you and anybody else who is interested on the merits of that situation.

But the mix-up is so confusing that So, in short and in summary; and I should end here.... The relationship across comes out as; I mean; I think somebody needs to give a direction. You can’t have things going in all directions when you really want certain; if you want peace, there is a way to get peace; and that is addressing the root causes and doing things the right way. If you want development, you need peace, and then you empower and allow people who need development to move in the direction you can discuss and agree, but allow them to drive that. If you are talking about interests, I have said values, right thing; whatever it is, the truth, the evidence; is not incompatible with interest. But, if you drive it in a direction that is messy already and think that is the right way, I think we end up with nothing.

So, dear friends, that is why I said I wanted us to take our lunch first and; so that you can bear with me on all this. I am sure maybe you don’t need it as a dessert either, but Again, I want to thank you, those partners of ours who are here in the room, with whom we have done many interesting things together and some of which have tremendously benefited our country. We want that to continue. We will do our best wherever we can, but we will also not agree with everything; and it’s normal. And actually you tell us that it is normal; some of you? You tell us that it is normal to disagree? So, I think we might disagree, but we can also always find ways to resolve matters where we don’t agree; that would be everybody’s wish; and again I thank those partners who helped us during the Marburg virus disease that we have overcome. We very much appreciate the help that came our way and working together and; so, I wish you once again- I have done that before- a very happy new

year, -we are still in January- and I hope the new year 2025 will be prosperous, fruitful and a very good one for all of us. All the best to you.

6. Western scholars, media and activists of all kinds create with frenzy, narratives that poorly hide their lack of professionalism, their bias on DRC conflict and their hostility towards the post-genocide Rwanda. I will limit myself here to a single case by way of illustration; that of the Belgian professor Filip Reyntjens who, while relaying the press release on the 'sanction' of Minister James Kabarebe by the USA on 20 February 2025, was able to add the following comment: 'All this is long overdue, but better late than never. The #Rwandan regime will become increasingly isolated. This small and poor country's arrogance will backfire.'⁸ The following day, the same professor could repost a security alert from the American Embassy in Kigali, once again with his own comment: 'Risky #Rwanda. Don't@visitrwanda_now, but keep out'.⁹ I leave it to the reader to evaluate, after having taken into consideration the remarks by President Kagame and the comments of the Belgian professor, who, from Rwanda or the West, really shows arrogance. Professor Reyntjens was, however, for a very long time a great reference in the West and in the world as a specialist in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region. In 2011, he published an article in the prestigious British journal *African Affairs* in which he asserted that 'there is consensus in the international scholarly community that Rwanda is run by a dictatorship with little respect for human rights', with the sole exception, according to him, of two academics; a professor from the University of Oxford and another from the National University of Ireland.¹⁰

These recent postings from Professor Reyntjens reminded me of an email exchange we had almost ten years ago. I had just published an opinion article on President Kagame's third term at *Agence Rwandaise d'Information / Rwanda News Agency (ARI-RNA)*,¹¹ and Professor Reyntjens sent me a congratulatory email which led to a brief exchange, the texts of which I have kept and from which I provide extracts translated from French:

Dear Mr. Rutazibwa,

I read with great interest your opinion on the third term on the ARI website. ...Even if I do not agree with everything you write, you have the merit of arguing on the merits, an unusual fact in the "debates" concerning Rwanda. I hope that you will continue to fuel the debate,

Kind regards,

Filip Reyntjens.¹²

My response the same day was as follows:

Good evening, M. Reyntjens,

I don't know if I should rejoice at your compliment, as I consider you the most active ideologue and promoter of ethnicism (also called genocidal ideology) in recent decades. You are also driven by an almost pathological hostility and relentlessness against the RPF. These are the two reasons which put us in total opposition, since

for my part I consider ethnicism as a criminal ideology responsible for numerous human tragedies in Rwanda and in the region; and the Rwandan Patriotic Front as the antidote which, among other things, restored life, dignity and prosperity to Rwanda after decades of poor governance, exclusion and persecution which culminated in the genocide against the Tutsi.

However, thank you for taking the time to send me a note. I also remember that a few years ago, you called me to discuss an article that I had published in *ARI-RNA* in which I mentioned one of your statements according to which you had finally found "your service Tutsis"!

If these contacts are sincere and aim for dialogue; personally, I cannot resist it, even if some will object that it is not ethically appropriate to dialogue with someone who is in bad faith.

You could indeed be accused of bad faith, Mr. Reyntjens, since you are intelligent enough to know that ethnicism is an abominable thing and that it is not good to attack those who are trying to restore Rwanda after having long flirted with those who governed it through discrimination and led to the genocide against the Tutsi.

Despite everything, I remain open. I belong to a generation of Rwandans who sincerely believe in repentance and conversion.

Sincerely,

Privat.¹³

To which Professor Reyntjens replied again:

Dear Mr. Rutazibwa,

It is clear that we do not agree, but we have known that for a long time.

One of the criticisms you make of me is false, the second is true. The first: I am not and I have never been a promoter of ethnicity and even less of genocidal ideology.

I plead guilty to the charge of criticizing the RPF (I would not call it "almost pathological hostility and relentlessness" but I will not insist on that). Despite its economic performance, the impasse into which it has led the country seems extremely dangerous to me. This is a point on which we clearly disagree.

My repentance and my reconversion could only be inspired by a scientific observation that I am wrong and that the RPF wants the good of all Rwandans. I'm not convinced, far from it.

However, I hope that we will have the opportunity to exchange ideas intelligently and constructively in the future.

Sincerely,

The case of Filip Reyntjens is typical of the classic Western narrative on Rwanda and Africa, and I purposely put together academic writing, half-public, half-private messages; and communication on social networks. Their combination allows us to better understand the character. Classical Western standards of research have accustomed us to 'objective' and impersonal analysis thanks to which an individual like Reyntjens can write about Rwanda, get published and pass as a specialist, imposing his personal and highly biased opinions as universal truth. But postcolonial studies and especially the decolonial and interpretivist approach to which I adhere recommend rather displaying and assuming one's positionality from the outset, even if it means developing a solid academic argument, with convincing evidence and analyses.

Referring to my publications, one of my thesis supervisors observed in an administrative evaluation note that 'His strategy to publish open access papers containing a lot of material but are at the same time also political and ideological interventions is ambivalent.' I thanked him for his overall assessment of my performance which was very positive and thanks to which I received yesterday a correspondence confirming the renewal of my scholarship next year which is also my last year of doctorate. But I would like to emphasize that my publications are not 'political and ideological interventions'. They rely on solid documentation, and my supervisor recognizes this. If I sometimes take the liberty of giving them an unusual format like that of a 'petition' addressed to world leaders, it is because I believe I can offer an expert opinion on a matter of great concern, often in total contradiction with the 'consensus in the international scholarly community' and other Western knowledge producers on my country and the region, a consensus which is neither ethical nor scientific, but which unfortunately continues to dominate in public opinion and global decision-making circles.

7. I would like to thank the German Federal Foreign Office for responding to my letter to the Minister of State which expressed, among other things, some of the concerns contained in my petition last October.¹⁵ In my acknowledgment email, I indicated that

I thank Dr. Henzschel for his response, even if there are things on which we do not agree, especially on the role of the UN. My analyses are based on well-documented facts, reports and official declarations from this organization, the sources of which I show. Fortunately, there are other researchers who do the same. But I understand that politicians and diplomats can base their judgments on other imperatives, even if it does not always advance the cause of truth and justice.¹⁶

Indeed, if the UN has committed a mistake of omission in two cases of genocide in the past, this is the first time that it has taken an active part in a genocide, notably in the current conflict in the DRC. It was under the trusteeship of the United Nations that Belgium was administering Rwanda when it perpetrated the first genocide against the Tutsi from November 1959. The United Nations was also present but inactive in Rwanda with its UNAMIR force when the last genocide against the Tutsi was committed in 1994. But it was the first time in 2006 and 2013 that the United Nations used its tanks, helicopters and other weapons to shoot at the fighters of the only rebel groups which had a just cause, that, among other things, of defending the right to life and nationality of the Congolese Tutsi.

It is above all the first time, during the current conflict relaunched by President Tshisekedi himself since the end of 2021, that the United Nations has militarily allied itself with a Congolese government which does not hide its genocidal intentions and actions against its Tutsi populations of North Kivu, Hema of Ituri and Banyamulenge of South Kivu; a government whose generalized violence unfortunately also increasingly affects its entire population and even foreign nationals. It is also the first time, during the current conflict, that the United Nations found itself in a military coalition of the Congolese government including the FARDC; the Burundian forces; the armies of South Africa, Tanzania and Malawi; European mercenaries and the Mai-Mai, Wazalendo and FDLR militias. The latter militias, members of the same coalition as the United Nations, were seen filming themselves burning 300 houses of Congolese Tutsi in the village of Nturo in North Kivu in October 2023 in the presence of Burundian forces. These same militias, members of the same coalition as the United Nations, were also seen filming themselves inflicting atrocious tortures, killing, cutting of heads, burning alive and eating the flesh of Batutsi in broad daylight, in villages or cities like Goma although patrolled by government security forces and blue helmets.

If the United Nations was created to maintain international peace and security and ward off any new threat of genocide after the Holocaust, it is clear that in this specific case, it did not only fail in its mission. It betrayed it and even became a danger to humanity, as I wrote in my October 2024 petition. The League of Nations was considered a failure and abandoned in favour of the United Nations simply because it failed to resolve the major international crises that led to World War II. The collaboration of the United Nations with a Congolese government coalition guilty of acts of genocide against its Tutsi and assimilated populations but also of threats and attempted armed attacks against Rwanda still having a genocidal dimension is much more serious than a failure. It is a horrendous crime that demands its removal and replacement with a new global organization.

Dear World Leaders,

I conclude this message by reminding you of the 9 recommendations of the petition that I sent you in October 2024:

Recommended actions to world leaders

1. It is imperative that Congolese President Felix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo be apprehended and tried for the crime of genocide, as well as other accomplices within his regime.
2. It is time to disband the United Nations for its military support of a genocidal regime and militias in DRC, and to criminally prosecute those involved in the decision-making process.
3. The heads of state of South Africa, Tanzania, Burundi and Malawi must also be prosecuted for complicity in genocide in DRC, as well as all those who intervened in the respective decision-making processes.
4. It is time for Rwanda to release Congolese General Laurent Nkunda whom it sacrificed to make peace with the DRC - a sacrifice that successive Congolese authorities have made useless - so that he can join his comrades in their liberation struggle.
5. The Rwandan authorities should seize the African Union (AU) to reflect seriously on an ultimate solution for a definitive peace for Rwanda and the populations concerned on the other side of the current border where massacres and persecutions of a genocidal nature already take place on a recurring basis, as the Congolese state seems determined to make the conflict intractable.

6. The Pope will honor God and humanity by outright abolishing the society of the White Fathers (also known as Missionaries of Africa) because of its involvement in the first genocide against the Tutsi towards the end of Belgian colonization, and by declaring genocide perpetrators the White Fathers Léon Volker, Superior General at the time, André Perraudin, bishop of Kabgayi, Alphonse Van Hoof, provincial of the White Fathers of Rwanda and others who were personally involved.
7. Belgium should recognize its responsibilities in the first genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda from 1959, and clearly condemn as genocide perpetrators the personalities who were involved in it such as King Baudouin, Minister for the colonies August Edmond De Schryver, Vice Governor General of Belgian Congo and Governor of Ruanda-Urundi Jean-Paul Harroy, Colonel Guy Logiest and others.
8. It is imperative that individuals like Steve Hege, Jason K. Stearns, Kenneth Roth and others who sparked the conflict in eastern DRC in 2012 and who continue to fuel it with their false and racist narrative can be prosecuted.
9. Germany should, given its historical role in the convening of the Berlin Conference and being the least harmful of the three European colonial and neo-colonial powers in Rwanda as it left without committing genocide, consider an initiative to coordinate reflection and action of reparation with regard to Rwanda, involving all Western countries and organizations having played a role in the tragic colonial and neo-colonial history of Rwanda, namely Germany, Belgium, France, the Roman Catholic Church and the organization that will have replaced the UN.¹⁷

World Leaders,

By implementing these recommendations, you will have served truth and justice, and given the chance to lasting peace in our region.

I ask you in the name of Jesus.

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¹ Privat Rutazibwa, 'Petition for the dissolution of the United Nations and the prosecution of certain personalities and their associates for the crime of genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo', 21 October 2024, *AfricArxiv*, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385133535_Petition_for_the_dissolution_of_the_United_Nations_and_the_prosecution_of_certain_personalities_and_their_associates_for_the_crime_of_genocide_in_the_Democratic_Republic_of_Congo>.

² Privat Rutazibwa, 'Colonial racialism is the cause of the conflict in eastern DRC, not minerals', *Rwanda News Agency*, 17 February, <<https://www.rnanews.com/colonial-racialism-is-the-cause-of-the-conflict-in-eastern-drc-not-minerals/>>.

³ *RTBF*, 'Violences dans l'est de la RDC : l'Union européenne prête à sanctionner le Rwanda mais "le moment venu"', 24 février 2025, <<https://www.rtb.be/article/violences-dans-l-est-de-la-rdc-l-union-europeenne-prete-a-sanctionner-le-rwanda-mais-le-moment-venu-11508924>> (25 February 2025).

⁴ Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 'Rwanda suspends development cooperation with Belgium', Kigali, 18 February 2025.

⁵ Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 'Rwanda regrets measures by the UK', Kigali, 25 February 2025.

⁶ Tammy Bruce, Department Spokesperson, 'Sanctioning Drivers of Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', Press Statement, U.S. Department of State, 20 February 2025.

⁷ *Rwanda TV*, 'REPLAY: Diplomatic Luncheon | Remarks by President Paul Kagame', 16 January 2025, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4N8N8hdoTM&t=68s>>.

⁸ See <https://x.com/freyntje/status/1892621830994776219>, @freyntje, posted at 6:06 pm on Thu, Feb 20, 2025.

⁹ See <https://x.com/freyntje/status/1893032970803429769>, @freyntje, posted at 9:20 pm on Feb 21, 2025.

¹⁰ Filip Reyntjens, 'Constructing the truth, dealing with dissent, domesticating the world: governance in post-genocide Rwanda', *African Affairs*, 110/438, (2011), pp. 1–34.

¹¹ Privat Rutazibwa, 'A propos du troisième mandat du Président Kagame', *Rwanda News Agency*, Sunday, 12 July 2015.

¹² Filip Reyntjens à Privat Rutazibwa, 'Objet : Votre opinion sur ARI/RNA', 14 juillet 2015 à 4h05 PM.

¹³ Privat Rutazibwa à Filip Reyntjens, 'Objet : Votre opinion sur ARI/RNA', 14 juillet 2015 à 8h05 PM.

¹⁴ Filip Reyntjens à Privat Rutazibwa, 'Objet : Votre opinion sur ARI/RNA', 14 juillet 2015 à 10h30 PM.

¹⁵ Dr Thomas Henzschel, Head of Division 300 to Privat Rutazibwa, Researcher, African History, Humboldt University. 'Subject: Your letter to Frau Katja Keul, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, dated 16 November 2024', File No:300-630.01, Berlin, 17 February 2025.

¹⁶ Privat Rutazibwa, email message to an official in the German Federal Foreign Office, 17 February 2025.

¹⁷ Rutazibwa, 'Petition for the dissolution', pp. 115-116.