

## **The world leadership has failed Burundi**

The current Burundi crisis clearly demonstrates world leaders' lack of commitment to democracy, human rights and genocide prevention. It all started with the violation of the constitution and the Arusha peace agreements that had successfully kept a relative balance of power and peace for the last 10 years. Since the ruling party CNDD-FDD forcibly imposed President Nkurunziza to run for a 3rd mandate in April, there is no single day that goes by without the killing of innocent civilians by the government police aided by the ruling party organized, trained and equipped youth wing - the Imbonerakure.

Some world leaders and institutions, from secretary-general of the UN Ban Kim-moon, former South African President Thabo Mbeki, the US Government, the kingdom of Belgium, the East African Community constitutional court, the European Union and others, have all indicated that Nkurunziza's ambition to run for a 3rd term was illegal, unconstitutional, violated the Arusha peace accords and most importantly was dangerous to the nation's stability.

President Nkurunziza response has been: Just watch me!

From April to today, the world leaders have been comfortably & remotely watching human suffering (killings, refugee's exodus, harassment, beatings, and imprisonment). They have been watching forced elections. Their complaisance has contributed to the deterioration of the situation in the country as President Nkurunziza felt and still feels that he could get away with mass killing of his own citizens, violate the constitution and the complementary Arusha peace accords, and conduct illegal elections to stay on power. He is clearly confident that he could take advantage of the gaps in the foreign policies of the leading nations in the world!

Where are the nations that advocate the rule of law, democracy, human rights and good governance? How can a young boy or girl growing up in Burundi today have faith in the world leadership? Where is Bill Clinton who, together with the late President Nelson Mandela rushed to Tanzania in 2000 to endorse and witness the signing of the Arusha Peace Accords? Nelson Mandela is gone but where are the Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, Tony Blair and other influential leaders of this world? How many more deaths do you want to see before you pay attention?

Next week or at a date chosen prior to August 26, 2015 expiry of his second term, President Nkurunziza will freely complete his constitutional "coup d'état" by holding illegal and forced Presidential elections at the watch of world leaders! The whole world is expecting the continuation of violence, more victims, more refugees, more orphans and possibly the beginning of a civil war & genocide as a result of Nkurunziza's transformation into an uncontrollable dictator! Yet, no one is willing to stop him!

Yes, some have released empty diplomatic rhetoric statements; some have threatened to impose economic sanctions, visa restrictions, threatened to bring Nkurunziza and his stooges to the International Court of Justice but for the suffering people of Burundi, these calls are not enough, not enough to protect them from daily police bullets, daily militia machetes and daily grenades!

The people of Burundi call upon the world leadership to show care, to show its resolve, to protect a democratic process, to turn words into actions and finally to give hope to the citizens of Burundi.

When tomorrow comes and the genocide has happened in Burundi, please don't release the usual false compassionate statements. In the recent history of the African Great Lakes, we have seen world hypocrisies after the fact, the empty slogan "never again"! As in Rwanda, the early warning signs of genocide have happened in Burundi.

I would like to conclude this desperate plea by acknowledging the Canadian government quiet but effective stand for democracy. Through the Honourable Rob Nicholson, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Honourable Christian Paradis, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Canada has made it clear to the Burundian authorities that: **a forced vote is a stolen vote!**

Canada extended its democratic measures by ensuring that the planned June 29, 2015 legislative and communal elections voting by Burundians living in Canada (traditionally held at the Burundi embassy in Ottawa) doesn't happen on its soil.

As Albert Einstein once said, *"The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing."*

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=1414>

<http://www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/news-communiqués/2015/07/01d.aspx?lang=eng>

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