

**PLATFORM AMAHORO PC – FDU INKINGI – PDP IMANZI – PS IMBERAKURI – RWANDA NATIONAL CONGRESS (RNC)**

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His Excellency Paul Kagame

President of the Republic of Rwanda

July 20, 2018

Your Excellency;

**Reference: Request for direct, open and inclusive dialogue between the government of Rwanda and the political opposition**

We are pleased to convey to you our warmest greetings and wishes in your duties as the president of the Republic of Rwanda. We are writing to you as a platform of five political organizations made of Rwanda National Congress (RNC), Social Party (PS – Imberakuri), People’s Defence Pact (PDP – Imanzi), United Democratic Forces (FDU – Inkingi) and Amahoro- Peoples’ Congress. Though we claim to take the initiative in this endeavour, we are sure that many other such organisations, including civil society organisations and any other aggrieved Rwandans for that matter feel the same need to sit around a table and have frank, open and inclusive discussions on the future of our country. An astute observer of current Rwandan politics and social relations will notice that your leadership style and governance have taken a dangerous turn and tensions have visibly increased. Citizens’ coexistence over the last twenty-four years has been marked by a situation of ‘no-war-no-peace’.

In other words, we are facing a situation of covert conflict, with tensions mounting on a daily basis. Our fear is that the clock is ticking; and if nothing is done right now, at some boiling point, tensions may peak dangerously.

The longstanding yet silent tensions between ordinary Rwandans, the claims of the political opposition and the unconscious and unresponsive approach of the country's leadership have not yet been elevated to open confrontation. Despite the deep historical, social and humanitarian bonds that link Rwandan citizens, a continued disregard of legitimate claims may lead to open, destructive tragedy and horrors of a magnitude far beyond the genocide against the Tutsi of 1994. The worst-case scenario should not be accepted as a *fait accompli*. Nations write their own histories and determine their own fates, with historical inevitability playing no part. We shall never pretend that we were caught by surprise or that a devastating conflict was inevitable. While the clock cannot be turned back, one can at least benefit from the lessons of history. If you candidly look back into your own story, you claimed that you were denied your rights when you were still in exile and that you were forced to resort to war to regain your rights and human dignity; you know the price the Rwandan people paid to be where you are today. Now that you are in power, which should rather put you in the better position to extend those rights to other Rwandans; you have instead chosen to deny to other citizens the same rights you were claiming just few years back and for which you went to war.

It is our intimate conviction that Rwanda cannot continue swimming against the stream. When you look around the world, only dialogue and dialogue alone has ended all kinds of misunderstanding and conflicts. In the recent history, the following examples are inspiring: rapprochement between North and South Korea, reconciliation between the yesterday enemies in Kenya political landscape, Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump handshake, peace agreement between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar's sides in South Sudan. We do not need to go to war and register casualties before we can agree to sit together and talk.

The current political climate in Rwanda – in spite of its objectionable effect on ordinary citizen– will not overshadow the awareness of a common destiny, or the depth of the historical, cultural, social and humanitarian roots binding Rwandan citizens. As responsible citizen, we should look beyond our self-serving interests and avoid the paradigm of the 'no-war-no-peace' that mostly suppresses tensions but sometimes sharply escalates them.

It is therefore our firm conviction that only dialogue before anything else, is the only tribute and honour we can, as responsible citizens, pay to the numerous victims, destitute and all those who have now lost hope because of secular and bloody conflicts that have characterized our nation because of

irresponsible leadership. Dialogue will pave a way for a better future, peaceful coexistence and nation-building spirit of current and yet-to-come generations after we will have left this earth. Dialogue does not, after all, occur between interlocutors that share the same vision, but rather between those who have opposing views and approaches, while being conscious of imminent dangers and being bound by mutual respect and a willingness to listen attentively. Dialogue is a process; it cannot be constructive through a single engagement; it is not a pronouncement of intentions or a media event.

It is our firm belief and hope that as the current head of the Rwandan State you should take a lead in lifting all barriers that prevent political formations from operating freely, legally and legitimately in Rwanda as enshrined in national and international legal instruments to which Rwanda is a party. Members of political formations and civil society who so wish shall be allowed to run their activities unhindered in Rwanda if all legal and/or physical impediments are lifted by your government; you as the head of state taking the lead.

It is an open secret that all dissenting voices have been silenced through various means including physical eliminations, imprisonments; forced exiles or criminal labels arrived at through trumpeted up charges and prosecutions. This is one among the many reasons the majority of political opposition has opted and will continue to exercise that right from abroad. Under your leadership, Rwandans, mostly inside the country, have opted to keep quiet to be able to live another day.

It is an open secret that Rwandans are persecuted inside Rwanda and many are followed up even where they have taken refuge for their safety, solely because they view things differently. Citizens hardly earned movable and immovable properties are constantly seized by the state either in show trials or without following any legal and legitimate processes under your watch. Neighbouring states are also concerned by Rwanda's continued interference into their internal affairs and many harbour animosities against innocent and peaceful Rwandan citizen. This means that something is not right in your leadership perspective; and you should know and attempt to be part of the solution when time is still ripe to do so.

The current Rwandan leadership cannot, responsibly, continue to ignore, demean, undermine or otherwise avoid to acknowledge that those political and civil society formations which are the voices of many Rwandans do in fact exist and oppose your currently leadership style of Rwanda. It is an undeniable fact that these formations stand and strive for political change in Rwanda; and may offer better alternatives to the current leadership in Rwanda in a spirit of true national reconciliation.

It is time to put an end to your government ostrich policy and acknowledge that there are many problems in Rwanda but also that problems can find adequate solutions when people meet and tackle

those problems. There should not be such a thing and situations as to think that some problems or issues are not subject of compromise. Any issue should lend itself to discussion, compromise and consensus.

It is against the background we have already set and from many other contentious issues we may put forward at a convenient time that we once again appeal to you to initiate and facilitate a dialogue between your government and the opposition. This is the ripest time to embark on this much waited and needed process. The talks between your government and the opposition shall be as direct, open and inclusive as possible; and if need be, the parties may agree to a third party to facilitate that dialogue.

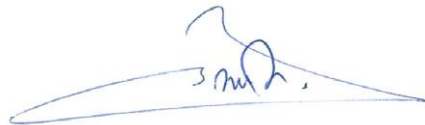
You will bear the greatest historical responsibility if you do not take the lead when the time and the people all call you to do so. As the head of State, it is your responsibility to initiate this process and give a chance and hope for a better future of Rwanda; and eventually be remembered as one who has initiated a peaceful dispensation for Rwanda.

We thank you for most kind understanding

**For the Platform P5**

Joseph Bukeye

Current Chairman



CC:

-H.E. Paul Kagame, Current Chairman of the African Union

-Their Excellences African Union Head of States and Governments (All)

-Members of the United Nations Security Council (All)

- EU Commission president

-PM of the Kingdom of Belgium

-President of the republic of France

-Chancellor of the republic of Germany