



INKINGI
Forces Démocratiques Unifiées
United Democratic Forces



(:(+250) 728636000

+ info@fdu-rwanda.com

(: (+32)478973762 , (+33)650293997, (+44)7982381717
<http://fdu-rwanda.com>, <http://victoire-ingabire.com>

COMITE DIRECTEUR – STEERING COMMITTEE

"Pour un Etat de Droit, la Démocratie et l'Egalité de chances" ; "For the rule of law, democracy and equal opportunity"

**URGENT CALL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION INTO ATROCITIES
ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED BY THE REGIME OF GENERAL PAUL KAGAME.**

FDU-INKINGI calls upon the international community to order an independent international investigation into the recent discovery of bodies wrapped in plastic sacks floating in the Lake Rweru in the north-eastern Burundi bordering Rwanda. Local residents have said that they had seen around 45 bodies during the months of July and August 2014 in the lake. They revealed that the bodies came down from a tributary river flowing from Rwanda, an overflow from the Akagera River. It was also revealed that thousands of bodies wrapped in sacks with heavy weights attached to them could have been thrown into the Akagera River and might never be recovered.

The allegations are based on the fact that thousands of people have disappeared in Rwanda since the beginning of July this year according to local residents who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of Rwandan government reprisals. Contacted authorities in Burundi expressed fears for pointing a finger at their powerful neighbour Rwanda. Suspicions aimed at finger pointing the Rwandan government were heightened following an incident in which an unidentified group of people "aboard several boats", crossed the Lake Rweru on the night of September 21 to 22, with intent to steal the bodies. The group suspected to be Rwandan security agents, were chased away by Burundi security services¹. Since then the Burundi army is guarding the area where some of the bodies were buried while awaiting for an investigation.

This horrendous discovery comes in the aftermath of a warning made in Nyabihu District, northern Rwanda, on the 5th of June this year 2014 by President Kagame against those suspected of threatening state security. In his public address, General Kagame ridiculed external condemnations of arbitrary arrests, detentions and enforced disappearances in Rwanda and declared that security agents would not only continue such arrests but also make a further step and shoot suspects in broad daylight.

The latest discovery of bodies wrapped in sacks after execution and thrown into Lake Rweru and which has drawn public outcry is but a tip of an iceberg.

¹ http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20140923-lac-rweru-groupe-non-identifie-tente-voler-cadavres/#./?&_suid=141156673938606989186681745878 "

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Indeed, on June 2nd, authorities in the Ministry of Local Government reported that 16,000 people have disappeared in the district of Ngororero². On July 30, 2014, the Hironelle News Agency reported the disappearance of 30,000 Rwandans sentenced to community service³.

While we praise the US government for its “*urgent call on the Burundian and Rwandan Governments to conduct a prompt, thorough, impartial and concerted investigation of these deaths with the assistance of independent, international forensic experts*”, we join the FIDH⁴ plea for a totally independent investigation as there is a conflict of interest in allowing Rwanda and Burundi governments to lead on such an independent investigation.

Indeed, even though Rwanda continues to deny its responsibility in those deaths, on October 14, Reuters in Bujumbura reported that “*The general prosecutor of Burundi said on Tuesday that an investigation into 40 bodies found in a lake on the border with Rwanda has concluded that the dead were Rwandans, even though Rwanda has previously denied this.*”⁵

It is mind blowing to witness that the international community continues to turn a blind eye and that some countries maintain political, diplomatic and financial support to a regime that has proved to be a killing machine.

FDU-Inkingi would like to remind the international community that the impunity status quo given to the repressive regime in Rwanda could slowly but surely lead to another humanitarian disaster in Rwanda and in the whole Great Lakes region.

Done in Brussels, on October 20, 2014

FDU-Inkingi

Joseph Bukeye

2nd Vice-Chairman

² <http://igihe.com/amakuru/u-rwanda/article/ngororero-abaturage-ibihumbi-16>

³ <http://allafrica.com/stories/201407311017.html>

⁴ <http://www.fidh.org/en/africa/rwanda/16216-rwanda-burundi-an-independent-investigation-must-be-carried-out-on-the>

⁵ <http://mobile.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSKCN0I31XB20141014?irpc=932>

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