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**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”*

## PRESS RELEASE

The United Democratic Forces (FDU-Inkingi) have learned with profound dismay and deep indignation of the death of Aimable Karasira, which occurred on May 7, 2026, at Nyarugenge Hospital in Kigali, under circumstances that demand clear answers and which, at this stage, strongly suggest a political assassination.

Aimable Karasira was not an abstract symbol. He was a man. A former Information Technology lecturer at the University of Rwanda and host of the YouTube channel *Ukuri Mbona* (“The Truth as I See It”), he was above all a Tutsi survivor of the 1994 genocide — someone who had looked death in the face and survived, carrying on his shoulders the burden of the loss of his family and his people. He chose to speak where others remained silent, to publicly testify about what he said he had experienced in 1994 and afterwards, including the loss of relatives which he attributed both to Interahamwe militias and to soldiers of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA).

That courage cost him four and a half years of detention, a criminal conviction, allegations of torture which he himself raised before the court, and ultimately his life. We honor his memory with respect and extend our condolences to his surviving relatives and to the entire community of genocide survivors for whom he had become a voice.

For the record, Aimable Karasira was arrested in May 2021 following several videos critical of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the official narrative surrounding the genocide. Detained for more than four years before trial, he was sentenced on September 30, 2025, to five years’ imprisonment for “incitement to division,” after prosecutors dropped — without convincing explanation — the charges of genocide denial, money laundering, and illicit enrichment. During the hearings, Mr. Karasira and his lawyer publicly denounced acts of torture (sleep deprivation, exposure to constant light and deafening music, beatings), denial of adequate medical care for his diabetes and psychological condition, as well as forced court appearances despite his inability to participate.

May 6, 2026, was supposed to be the day of his release. He had signed his release papers the day before. According to his lawyer, Maître Félicien Gashema, during their last meeting he was in good spirits, eagerly awaiting his freedom and preparing for life after prison.

He never walked out alive.

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The Rwanda Correctional Service claims that he ingested an excessive quantity of prescribed medication within the prison premises and that he died at Nyarugenge Hospital as a result of this alleged “overdose.” The autopsy report is still pending.

This official account raises more questions than it answers. How could a man on the verge of regaining his freedom — lucid, calm, and reportedly happy to finally be free according to his lawyer the previous day — suddenly decide to endanger his life and jeopardize his long-awaited release? Why did this death occur precisely on the very day of his release, at the exact moment when his voice was about to become public again?

Indeed, the Rwandan government routinely labels as “genocide denial,” “divisionism,” or “genocide ideology” any voice that departs from its official narrative. It was under these accusations that Aimable Karasira was prosecuted. Yet the facts must be stated clearly: Aimable Karasira was himself a Tutsi survivor of the genocide. He did not deny its reality; he was living testimony to it. What the regime does not tolerate is not genocide denial, but rather the freedom to testify outside the framework it controls — especially when such testimony implicates the responsibilities of the RPF. Criminalizing the voice of a genocide survivor in the name of protecting the memory of victims is a contradiction that Rwandans and the international community can no longer ignore.

Deaths in prison are not unprecedented. In February 2020, singer Kizito Mihigo — another voice for reconciliation who had become inconvenient after speaking about the suffering of all Rwandan communities — died in a police cell. Suicide, the authorities claimed at the time. Six years later, Aimable Karasira dies in detention. Overdose, the authorities now claim. Two men, two inconvenient voices, two official narratives of self-destruction, and each time the material impossibility of independently verifying what actually happened. This parallel is not rhetorical flourish: it is a documented pattern. And this is precisely what the United Nations Minnesota Protocol addresses, as Human Rights Watch has recalled: when a political opponent or human rights defender dies in detention, it is the State’s responsibility to prove that it was not responsible for the death. Rwanda must now publicly shoulder that burden of proof.

The death of Aimable Karasira is not a mere news item. It is the symptom of a State that has chosen fear as a method of governance — a State where justice is an instrument, prison a weapon, and silence the primary condition for survival.

FDU-Inkingi reaffirm that the construction of a truly reconciled, truly secure, and truly free Rwanda can only be achieved through truth — the whole truth — and through full respect for the rule of law for every Rwandan, without exception, privilege, or vengeance.

Aimable Karasira paid the price for speaking out. That voice now belongs to all of us. It will not be silenced. It will not be forgotten.

FDU-Inkingi demand:

- An independent autopsy conducted by international forensic experts chosen in agreement with Mr. Karasira’s family and legal counsel, with the full findings made public.
- An independent international investigation into the circumstances of his death and the conditions of his detention, in accordance with the Minnesota Protocol, without interference from the Rwandan government.

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- Immediate and unrestricted access for independent human rights organizations to Rwandan detention facilities, particularly the Nyarugenge prison known as Mageragere.
- Concrete and verifiable guarantees for the safety of other genocide survivors, political opponents, journalists, and all individuals whose lives are threatened because of their opinions or testimonies.
- An urgent review of the laws on “genocide ideology” and “divisionism,” whose implementation is clearly being used to criminalize free speech, including that of survivors themselves.
- An end to the instrumentalization of genocide memory for the purposes of domestic repression.

We call upon Rwanda’s international partners — the European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth, the African Union, and the East African Community — to condition their cooperation on concrete and verifiable progress regarding these demands. The diplomacy of silence has so far only lengthened the list of the dead.

Done in Paris, May 8, 2026

**Dr Emmanuel MWISENEZA**

Vice-President and Spokesperson of FDU-Inkingi

*Emmanuel MWISENEZA*

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