



ISHYAKA RIHARANIRA ITERAMBERE N'UBWISANZURE KURI BOSE
LE PARTI DU DÉVELOPPEMENT ET LIBERTÉ POUR TOUS
THE PARTY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND LIBERTY FOR ALL

Tel: + 250 782 559 520
Email: info@dalfa.org
Website: www.dalfa.org

New Year message 2020 by Victoire Ingabire Umuhuza, President of DALFA

**Fellow Rwandans ;
Friends of Rwanda ;**

It gives me a great pleasure to me to address myself to you at this moment that marks the end of the year 2019. I would to invite you all to thank God for ending this year peacefully.

I would like to extend my empathy and express my solidarity with those whose houses were destroyed recently and have not found an accommodation with no hope in their future. There are others whose properties were destroyed by the vagaries of weather that our country has experienced this month. I would also like to convey my condolences to and express my solidarity with families that have lost their loved ones this year 2019 for no valid reason. God is the Almighty, trust in Him always.

Those of us who are fighting for democracy in Rwanda have met a lot of obstacles and constraints during the year 2019. As far as I am concerned, the people that worked closely with me including Anselme Mutuyimana and Syldio Dusabumuremyi were killed. Another close colleague Habarugira was assassinated in 2016 and another one Eugene Ndereyimana disappeared under suspicious circumstances this year 2019. Two other colleagues Illumine Iragena and Boniface Twagirimana disappeared under similar circumstances in 2016 and 2018 respectively. The plight of Sylvain Sibomana and other languishing in prison has not changed. It is one year after I have left prison, I have now been summoned for interrogation several times by the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) and I don't know how many more times I shall be summoned for interrogation and the final outcome of the interrogations. However, all these obstacles do not diminish our resolve to fight for the respect of the rule of law in Rwanda.

In our difficult journey to change the mindset of Rwandans in their understanding of what politics is about and becoming aware that people cannot the same hold the same views and that diversity of ideas can be a strength to build on, we decided to create a new Party. We created a party to promote development and liberty for all (DALFA-Umurinzi). This is why many Rwandans welcomed the creation of the party and have been attracted by its vision, aims and objectives. This was clear evidence that Rwandans were thirsting for building a country that cherishes the values of

democracy which create opportunities for citizens to participate in decisions that concern them.

Once again, I would like to thank all those who are fighting with us for democracy and in raising awareness among Rwandans about the need for democratic change which is necessary for sustainable and equitable development for all Rwandans.

The new year 2020 was the year that the RPF regime had promised that we shall become a middle-income country. The achievements were less than one would have expected. This was not due to lack of financial or human resources. The key problem was lack of good governance. Rwandans were not involved in taking decisions on issues that concern them and government officials did not take on board ideas that come outside of their circles.

As long as the regime refuses to acknowledge those in the opposition as politicians with the same rights to have a say in the running of the country there is no way that the country will leave the group of the 25 least developed countries in the world. As long as the citizen is not allowed to take part in decisions that concern him or her there is no possibility of achieving sustainable development. Rwandans need to understand that we need one another. We must practice tolerance towards one another and have equal rights and equal opportunity in accessing national resources. No one should feel entitled to be above everyone else deciding what others should get, that they are more Rwandan than anyone else. We are all Rwandans with equal rights and the same obligations towards our country. Once we get this common understanding, we will be conscious that we need to work together, complementing one another in our common effort to develop our country.

In order to dispel the fear of a return to the dark days of our history it is vital that we build institutions and security services that protect and reassure every Rwandan citizen wherever he or she is. We must build institutions that give hope to every Rwandan, that protect his/her interests and life. It is very sad when one realizes that there are some Rwandans who consider others as their enemies. There are even times that government officials consider other Rwandans as enemies of the regime and even of the country. There are also those who take members of the regime as their enemies. If we maintain this attitude and behave accordingly, we will be leading the country into an abyss, we would be leaving our children a bad future. This is why I invite every Rwandan that for this year 2020 to wish well for their country and for all Rwandans. When there a will there is a way.

I have asked many times the RPF regime to be the one to take initiative as they are in an advantageous position and open the political space, to accept to enter into dialogue with the opposition so that we put in place a strong foundation of good governance in our country. Good governance creates a conducive environment for economic development and wellbeing of the people in a sustainable way. We cannot

copy the model of development of some countries like China because we have different history and cultural values. We have our own history and culture that should form the foundation of our development.

A good leader is a person who is conscious that his/her position is not for life, who is conscious that his task is to work with others to lead the country to progress. He/she refrain from oppressive attitude and behavior, incitement to hatred, nepotism, clientelism and sectarianism. We must think out of the box thinking about more about the whole country than about ourselves, abandon the confrontational mental attitude in the social media, a leader must understand that his/her role is to lead the people and not to oppress them or to decide arbitrarily the type of service and the time to deliver it. Once we adopt this attitude, we shall make progress.

You the governed should not be contented of being a mere spectator in what is being done for you. The constitution gives you the right to participate in decisions that concern you. You are entitled to participate in the governance of the country. The government official is there for you. Feel comfortable to ask him/her to provide the service you are entitled to. Not fearing to ask for a service is not being rude or lack of respect for an official. No Rwandan should accept injustice under the excuse that there is nothing else to do. There is another way. The other way is to ask yourself the role you can play in bringing about the needed change to improve governance in our country. Don't say that that this is the job politicians out there. Politics permeates all life activities. We the governed have to make those governing accountable for what they do.

It is not the muzzle of the gun that will bring good governance, it is rather the change of mental attitudes to a position that each one of us understands that he/she has a role in bring about the change in the way that we are governed in our country. This task concerns both the governed and the governing. Change will start with ourselves when we change our way of thinking and start opposing injustice, underpinned by a belief that we have equal rights in our country. At the same time all of us will have to respect the highest law in the land which is the Constitution.

It is only when we have been able to achieve genuine national reconciliation and built a country in which life is sacred and citizens freely decide on the way they are governed that we shall be able achieve economic progress, good quality education, provide employment for the unemployed or underemployed youth, healthcare for all, improve agriculture as a means to get out of poverty, promote small trade to help people get out of poverty, deal with environment protection and establish a policy good neighborliness with neighboring countries and so on.

As a matter of fact we shall not achieve much if we not decide to establish the rule of law that protect each individual Rwandan, and to put in place a system of

governance that allows citizens to choose their leaders freely and according to the law of the land instead of being imposed through the barrel of the gun.

Fellow Rwandans ;
Friends of Rwanda ;

To conclude, allow me to wish you peace that comes from God. May 2020 be a year of happiness and prosperity.

Thank you.