



Press release Jambo ASBL - 2022/01

Jambo ASBL calls for exemplary sanctions against the Kigali regime

Friday, June 3, 2022

Jambo ASBL condemns the Rwandan aggression against the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) under the cover of the terrorist group called the *March 23 Movement*, also known as "*M23*".

This is the umpteenth in a long series of attacks that have taken place over the past 28 years. Indeed, during the last three decades, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in power in Rwanda has used all means to infiltrate and destabilize the East of the DRC. The RPF has been at the origin of two continental wars (between 1996 and 2003) and of multiple armed movements and groups that have gradually contributed to making Eastern DRC a territory where tragedy and insecurity reign.

The Rwandan regime is leading an ambitious policy to be recognized as a hub for luxury and business tourism. But in the mind of the Kigali government, this development policy can only have results if Rwanda has a comparative advantage over its neighbors. Rwanda considers that its security and interests depend on a weakened, neutralized and fragmented DRC. This partly explains why Rwanda regularly conducts insecurity operations against the DRC, but also against its three other direct neighbors.

The latest resurgence of the *M23* terrorist movement is deliberately designed by the Rwandan government to destabilize the eastern DRC and thus undermine the initiatives of President Félix Tshisekedi to bring peace in the region and President Uhuru Kenyatta's facilitated Nairobi Peace Process.

Since the accession to power of President Felix Tshisekedi in 2019, Rwanda has been using every means to force the Congolese government to accept the official entry of Rwandan troops into Congolese territory. Faced with repeated refusals from the Congolese state, President Kagame has decided to repeat the same method he used in 1996 with the AFDL, in 1998 with the *RCD-Goma*, in 2006 with the *CNDP* and in 2012 with the *M23*. That is, to use an armed proxy group that acts as a Trojan horse and defines itself as "Congolese" in order to serve Rwandan interests in the DRC.

We reach out to all countries that champion democracy and respect of people's sovereignty and more globally to the international community, to ask them to :

- Suspend all bilateral and multilateral military cooperation agreements and partnerships with Rwanda. This implies in the medium term replacing all Rwandan forces involved in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions.
- Suspend Rwanda from the UN Human Rights Council.
- Suspend all commercial agreements with state-owned and RPF's companies such as the Crystal Ventures party investment fund.



- Suspend all international flights of the state-owned company Rwandair.
- Suspend all international political, commercial, economic, tourist and sporting events scheduled to take place in Rwanda during the next 12 months.
- Suspend all general budgetary support that was to be provided to strengthen the Rwandan budget.
- Freeze the assets of Rwandan political and military dignitaries directly or indirectly involved in this aggression.

Following the first *M23* attacks in 2012, the U.S. authorities and the entire U.N. Security Council finally took strong sanctions against Rwanda, notably for war crimes (recruitment of child soldiers), and this was followed by the European Union and several member states such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Great Britain.

These countries had either suspended budgetary aid or military cooperation before deciding to set up a UN intervention brigade, led by South Africa and composed of troops from Tanzania and Malawi.

The *M23* terrorist movement was defeated within three months, but its main leaders found refuge in Uganda and Rwanda before reappearing a few months ago.

One would have thought that Rwanda would no longer dare to conduct such operations under the nose of the international community. In reality, the Rwandan government has felt it could do better since the European Union accepted and assumed responsibility for providing significant support to the military operations carried out by Rwandan forces in Mozambique and the Central African Republic. Considering itself indispensable to the European Union states and endorsed by them, in particular by France, the Rwandan regime has seen fit to relaunch a subversive project that was unanimously criticized by the international community at the time.

Jambo ASBL would also like to stress that the image and credibility of the European Union would be seriously damaged if the equipment and military aid that have been promised to Rwanda in the coming weeks were to be used in the destabilization process of the Eastern DRC.

For almost 30 years, the Rwandan regime has used conspiracy theories and pretexts to try to justify its "right" to violate the sovereignty of the DRC. Lately, Rwandan officials have gone so far as to insidiously evoke the existence of a certain "genocidal ideology" that would spread among the Congolese population with the aim of eradicating the Rwandans. While Rwanda's heavy past should lead its officials to weigh the importance of such statements, this is not the case. This strategy of reversing guilt should not fool anyone. In this case, the aggressor and the aggressed must be clearly identified and distinguished.

For 30 years, the Congolese people and Rwandan refugees in eastern Congo have been the victims and those who have paid the highest price. It is now essential that the cost of aggression be borne by the aggressor and no longer by the aggressed.



International law must be applied against the aggressor so that this type of behavior does not become generalized and is not repeated over and over again. By applying harsh, heavy and massive retaliatory measures capable of dissuading the aggressor, showing him the consequences of such unilateral acts and making him understand the necessity of respecting international law when it comes to State to State relationship.

The case of the DRC is similar in many ways to that of Ukraine. There is an aggressed country, which is the DRC and there is an aggressor country, which is Rwanda. Kagame as well as Putin, put forward fallacious and conspiracy arguments to justify their interventions and their crimes.

Jambo asbl thinks that the best message that the international community could give to the Africans would be to show that it is able to mobilize to try to solve an African conflict by punishing the leaders of the aggressor country (Rwanda) as it is perfectly done with Russia.

We are at a turning point where some autocrats increasingly believe that they can circumvent international law to do what they want. We therefore support President Biden's initiative to reinvigorate the notion of democracy and create a democratic front to stem the threat of autocrats. Paul Kagame is without doubt one of the worst dictators of our time and must be vigorously opposed.

Only by weakening his regime can we create credible alternatives to his rule. Only then can a positive dynamic develop in the African Great Lakes region that will allow for peace, prosperity, fruitful exchanges between peoples and openness to the world.

Jambo ASBL wishes to emphasize that the support to the *M23* is the work of one man and his army, General Paul Kagame.

The Rwandan people, in all their diversity, have also been victims since Paul Kagame came to power in 1994. Rwandans are living under the yoke of one of the most ferocious dictatorships, with no political freedom and no say in the affairs of the country.

It is therefore essential that the international community, the Congolese state and the Congolese people make a distinction between the regime of Paul Kagame in power in Kigali and the Rwandan population, which is also a victim.

In conclusion, Jambo ASBL wishes to reiterate its support to the Congolese people and to all the forces of goodwill that are fighting with dignity against the aggression of the Rwandan Defense Forces (RDF) and their *M23* proxy.

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