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United Democratic Forces

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

Dear fellow Rwandans
Dear friends of Rwanda,

As we are ending the year 2009 and entering the New Year 2010, it is a good opportunity to exchange good wishes. I would also like to seize this opportunity to convey to you my best wishes for happiness, good health and prosperity. My sincere wish is that the New Year 2010 fulfils the deepest aspiration of all Rwandans which I would like to say is a fundamental change to a peaceful Rwanda where the rule of law, democracy, equal opportunity, social justice and the respect of human rights are a reality for every citizen, a change to a society where human difference is valued and celebrated as source of strength rather a cause for self destruction, a change from militarism and violence to a country at peace with itself and at peace with her neighbours.

As everyone is aware this aspiration is systematically denied to Rwandans by the present regime in Rwanda.

2009 has been a particularly bad for the vast majority of Rwandans. The repressive machinery has been reinforced and Rwandans inside and outside Rwanda live in a state of fear. The absence of the rule of law weighs heavily on people's daily lives as anyone can be arrested and detained under any pretext even for the fundamental right of having a different opinion or for being what he or she is. The press is constantly harassed and journalists face all sorts of intimidation including arrest when they stray from the official line; the tradition gacaca courts formerly used for reconciliation in the village have been transformed into state instrument of repression and persecution thus exacerbating ethnic group relations; opposition political parties are harassed and prohibited from exercising their normal activities; discrimination in employment opportunities through the unplanned introduction of English has put thousands of Rwandans out of work. At the social level the regime has impoverished the population through an imposed agricultural reform that has fuelled malnutrition in rural areas.



As is characteristic of many undemocratic regimes, the RPF regime has exported its violence to the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, to unite the people inside the country and mobilise external support under the pretext that the country is under external threat. The Rwandan grief has become a blank check for the regime to violate the fundamental human rights in both Rwanda and the DRC. The regime of General Paul Kagame are sent as soldiers or as prisoners in the plunder of the resources of our neighbour for the profit of a small group that wallows in riches while the rest live in abject poverty. Many have lost their lives or are disabled physically and psychologically. UN reports made in 2003 on the plunder of DRC resources by Rwanda is on record and once the regime has lost favour with the sponsor of the plunder Rwandans might be asked to compensate the DRC for the wealth stolen by a few.

Such a situation that puts the country at risk of internal explosion and external threat from neighbours must be stopped. All of us must be agents of that change; we must take responsibility for ourselves and our children and grandchildren.

FDU has taken a historic decision to lead that fundamental change by participating in the forthcoming presidential elections of 2010. FDU aim is not to seize power from those who seized it. The aim is to seek people's mandate to use their power to bring the fundamental change that they want. It is not against one person, a region or an ethnic group but a dictatorial system. FDU believes that whether a dictatorship has a Hutu at its top or a Tutsi, the impact on the ordinary person is the same: fear, misery, denial of fundamental human rights. Dictatorship and criminality cannot be equated with ethnicity. This is the reasons why the rule of law will be the cornerstone of our policy. This is why we are inviting every Rwandan, whatever his social or ethnic group to support the change.

The task is huge and difficult given the financial, material resources and the instruments of repression available to the regime in place. But that makes the cause: **a peaceful Rwanda, reconciled with itself and with neighbours**, more exalting and worthy of our efforts and sacrifice. If we keep our eyes on the prize we shall overcome all those problems.

We are confident that history is on our side, we believe in the power of our ideas and particularly the resilience and courage of the Rwandan people to make necessary sacrifice to live in human dignity and as masters of their destiny. We are sure that physical and psychological terrorism will not break their will to demand their inalienable human rights. We cannot allow the future of the country to be compromised by anyone, a group or any regime.

Fellow Rwandans

All of us who are capable must spearhead the struggle to bring power back to its owners, the people. We must mobilise ourselves to end dictatorship and install the rule of law, democracy, equal opportunity and justice. I have no doubt that many of you have analysed the situation in Rwanda and have ideas on how the situation can be reversed. You will agree with us that fundamental human rights including democracy and freedom of expression are non negotiable.



Fellow Rwandans

My earnest wish for the year 2010 is dialogue among Rwandans, openness and self confidence as a nation and one people in all its social components and in particular keeping level headed after all the tragedies that we have gone through.

The fact that we call ourselves Rwandans as one entity invites us to be cool headed in analysing our past and our future. Unity must be realised as a people conscious of ourselves and of others. The spirit of oneness as Rwandans must help us transcend individual and group selfishness.

Fellow Rwandans,

I am sending this message to all of you who aspire for political change in our country. We must rise up head high to defend the higher interest of the Rwandan nation and fight together to propose an alternative to the present regime. The alternative that we are offering is: peace, prosperity, mutual trust and justice. We believe that these will be achieved in an environment of the rule of law, democracy and equal opportunity which constitute the pillars of our political struggle.

Let us build together a society where all Rwandans enjoy, without discrimination their political, economic, social and cultural rights where human difference is valued and celebrated as source of strength and not buried under the carpet for political propaganda.

Once again, I convey to you all my very best wishes. Let us build one Rwanda, drawing strength from in all its components.

Done in Zevenhuizen, 28th December 2009

Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza

Chairperson of UDF

