



Réseau international des Femmes pour la Démocratie et la Paix asbl (RifDP)
International Women's Network for Democracy and Peace asbl (IwnDP)
Internationale Netwerk van Vrouwen voor Democratie en Vrede (InvDV)

Baroness Patricia Scotland
Secretary General
Commonwealth Secretariat Headquarters
Marlborough House
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Email: secretary-general@commonwealth.int

Brussels, June 14, 2022.

Dear Secretary General,

Subject: Follow-up to our letter of April 5, 2021.

On April 5, 2021, our organization - the International Women's Network for Democracy and Peace (IwnDP) sent you a letter in which it shared its concerns about Rwanda, as a country deemed to host CHOGM 2021, which was not complying with the Commonwealth core values (letter attached).

Here we are in 2022 and your organization has again chosen this country for the holding of this meeting and to preside over the Commonwealth for the two years to come, while no change has been recorded in respect of human, civic and political rights. Worse, the situation has deteriorated.

We still remind you that the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) had told the Commonwealth that an admission of Rwanda despite its bad human rights record "would tarnish the reputation of the Commonwealth and confirm the opinion of many people and civic organizations that the leaders of its governments do not really care for democracy and human rights, and that its periodic, solemn declarations are merely hot air". Rwanda is also known as a country which uses women empowerment to strengthen its hold to power¹ by deceiving the whole world. We hope you already are aware of this.

¹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/06/03/autocrats-gender-equality-women-rights-rwanda/>



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We are not going to dwell on the totalitarian excesses of the regime and the ever-increasing deterioration of freedom of expression, association and participation in the country's political life. Other associations have already filed these concerns to you and we totally agree with them².

The year 2023 will be a pivotal one where Rwanda will have to prove its political maturity. The RPF has been the only political party to govern since 1994, it's high time that political plurality be reinstated before the country organizes new elections. The "Road map for a promising future of Rwanda"³ proposed by **Ms Victoire Ingabire Umuhuza and Maître Bernard Ntaganda** of unregistered Dalfa-Umurinzi and PS-Imberakuri political parties, offers sustainable solutions for lasting peace in Rwanda and in the Great Lakes region as a whole.

Today, Rwanda has the highest numbers of refugees than at any other time of her history, cutting across regions, faith, ethnicity, social profession, and social background, across all the continents. Yet, the UK has chosen that country for hosting unwanted refugees in your country. Yet, nothing is done to help Rwanda tackle its own refugee issue. We believe that a highly inclusive dialogue with Rwandan different opposition groups and refugees for voluntary return will guarantee peace in the country and in the east of the DRC in particular, the hunt for refugees having become the good excuse for Rwanda to invade neighboring Congo.

While looking forward to hearing from you, we are highly interested to know the moves your organization will take regarding our concerns. We are reachable by email at international@rifdp-iwndp.org or by phone on +32 472 44 48 12.

Yours sincerely,

Perpétue Muramutse, IwnDP in Canada

Kami Runyinya, IwnDP in Belgium

Gloria Uwishema, IwnDP in The Netherlands

Jacqueline Mukamihigo, IwnDP in France.

² <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/10/call-commonwealth-leaders-speak-rights-rwandans>

³ <https://dalfa.org/en/roadmap-for-a-promising-future-of-rwanda/>