

January 2, 2014

PDR-IHUMURE CONDEMNS THE KILLING OF COLONEL PATRICK KAREGEYA

The leadership of the Party for Democracy in Rwanda (PDR-Ihumure) is saddened by the news of the assassination of Colonel Patrick Karegeya in the night of December 31, 2013 in Johannesburg, South Africa. We wish to express our most sincere and heart-felt condolences to his family and his political organization, the RNC.

The killing of Karegeya has sent shock waves across the Rwandan refugee community worldwide and within the Rwandan political opposition as it brings to mind eerie memories of political opposition figures who have met a similar fate in recent years inside and outside Rwanda. The early suspect in this assassination is the Rwandan government in Kigali which has the most to gain in the elimination of this man who held many secrets of the RPF regime from his former position as Chief of Rwanda's External Intelligence before he fell out with President Paul Kagame and became one of his most vocal critics. General Kayumba Nyamwasa, another former Kagame collaborator turned political opponent, narrowly escaped assassination twice in 2010, also in South Africa where he lives in exile. We are now left to wonder who, when and where the ruthless RPF killing machine will strike next.

Colonel Patrick Karegeya's tragic end is an urgent wake up call to all Rwandans and a vivid reminder that we are at the mercy of a criminal government in Kigali. We should all pause and reflect on the profound message of German anti-nazi theologian and lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller about collective action against tyranny and injustice and the danger of indifference:

"First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out -- Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out -- Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out -- Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me -- and there was no one left to speak for me." (Martin Niemöller)

Time has come for all of us to unite our forces and face the reality of the common threat of the RPF regime upon us. Over the last 20 years, President Kagame has successfully marketed himself as the hero who "stopped the Rwandan genocide" and a polished gentleman who frequents and dines with royalty. But deep down this is a brutal, uncouth, vindictive man with no tolerance for contrary opinion and whose only instinct when faced with opposition is to kill. There are harrowing stories of how Kagame's path to power following the RPF invasion of Rwanda from Uganda from 1990 to 1994 is littered with thousands of bodies of young fighters from Burundi and DRC whom he ordered killed by hitting them on the head with a used up hoe because "they could not be trusted", or scores of military commanders he has ordered executed on trumped up charges because he feared them as unwanted rivals. He is on record in national and international media calling Karegeya and Nyamwasa "human waste" and opposition leaders "useless cards that he will soon destroy". Now that he has moved from threat to action, the international community should seriously consider taking its responsibility to protect all Rwandans at risk. Finally, President Kagame's foolhardy attempts on the lives of Karegeya and Nyamwasa in their country of asylum really shows how much contempt and little respect he has for the government of South Africa and his true nature as a thug.

We sincerely hope that when the investigation into this killing is complete, the suspects are apprehended and brought to justice, and that the Rwandan government finally meets the consequences of its criminal activities against political opponents.

Paul Rusesabagina
President,
PDR-Ihumure