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A CALL FROM FORTY TWO

*Forty-two professors and researchers
from the National University of Rwanda,
Ruhengeri Campus, address an open
letter to President Musevini.
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[photo]

Yoweri Musevini at the OAU tribune

Human Rights

Georges Martres, French
Ambassador to Rwanda,
speaks on Human Rights
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Banking

Prohibitively high interest
rates are set up with the
Program for Structural
Adjustment. The craze for
bank loans is over. Page 4

Agriculture

The Current agricultural
practice in Rwanda is not
viable. All must be staked
to be marketable, says
National Commission on
Agriculture. Page 5

Elephants

To communicate over long
distances, elephants use...

POLITICS

Rwandan intellectuals write an open letter to President Museveni

A group of forty-two intellectuals at the university campus in Ruhengeri, doctors and professors of letters and education sciences alike, write an open letter to the Yoweri Museveni, Ugandan Head of State. A chance for these Rwandan intellectuals to reproach Museveni for his responsibility in the repeated attacks from Uganda since October 1990. Some excerpts of the letter...

"We believed that you, of anyone, as current President of the OAU and leader of a friendly and brotherly people, would do everything in your power, in collaboration with your peers, to find a solution to this unfortunate and deplorable situation.

And yet now all the evidence seems to prove and would make any observer believe that you are rather continuing to advance and maintain, if not provoke, the situation.

Indeed, Your Excellency Mr. President, it has been officially announced that the army which has been attacking Rwanda from Uganda since 1 October 1990 is made up of Rwandan refugees who want to return to their country. We will indeed agree, Your Excellency Mr. President. In fact, these refugees, who have been arriving into your country since 1959, fully have the right to return to their native land of their own free will, with no pressure whatsoever, and in full respect of their rights under international conventions and regulations. What is deplorable is that they have sought to return by force of arms by attacking Rwanda from Uganda, at the precise moment when their problem was in the final stages of being resolved peacefully and definitively.

You are in a good position, Your Excellency Mr. President, to be aware of all the efforts that have been made since the early years of the Rwandan Republic up to today, to find a peaceful solution to this refugee problem in order to attain sustainable peace in our region. You know very well how the government of the Rwandan Second Republic, in place since 1973, as well as your own government, which has existed since 1986 when you became Head of State, have worked together on this issue to find peaceful and sustainable solutions..."

For this purpose, two meetings were held from 14-17 November 1989 and from 27 to 30 July, in Kampala and Kigali respectively.

"During these two Rwando-Ugandan meetings, firm resolutions were adopted to solve the problem quickly and peacefully, among them:

1. Voluntary repatriation of all Rwandan refugees who so desire.
2. Voluntary naturalization in the host country.
3. Freedom to settle in host countries upon their agreement, all the while maintaining Rwandan nationality.
4. Voluntary installation in the country of their choice.

"And yet what is truly surprising and entirely disappointing is that just two months after adoption of these resolutions, an army of more than 10,000 men trained and armed on Ugandan soil, would invade Rwanda from 1 October 1990 from the Northeast along the Rwanda-Uganda border.

Immediately after the first attack, you met with the Rwandan president in Washington, Mwanza, Goma, and in Cyanika to examine the issue of this invasion together. During these meetings, you asserted to the Rwandan president and to your peers that you were not sufficiently vigilant with these assailants, but that from that point you were going to seal your borders to stop any further infiltration of troops. Unfortunately, we observe with much regret that since that attack in October, and up to this day as we write you, Rwanda continues to endure repeated armed attacks by these Inyenzi-Inkotanyi coming from Uganda..."

"Can we really continue to believe that you have been insufficiently vigilant with respect to these new attacks? Or rather, should we conclude that you deliberately chose to discount those promises and assurances that you indeed gave to the Rwandan, Zairian and Tanzanian presidents?

You know very well, Your Excellency Mr. President, that a large portion of the assailant force is made up of purely Ugandan troops, and that they all wear the NRA uniform. Your own brother, Salim Saleh, is rumored to have been seen on the war front. During the above-mentioned meetings with the Rwandan president, you described these people as 'deserters' and 'rebels', and assured him that if ever they returned to Uganda, they would be brought before the Ugandan judicial authorities. We must observe, however, that that has never been the case since these rebels, after being driven out of Rwanda back to Uganda, get re-armed and return to attack Rwanda..."

"At any rate, it is impossible not to think that there are strong – but unadmitted – motives which have brought a current president of the OAU to snub the OAU Charter and all the conventions dealing with the problem of refugees (UN Convention of 1951, OAU Convention of 1969)..."

You know furthermore, Your Excellency Mr. President, that our region is unfortunately full of refugees. Your Excellency Mr. President, current president of the OAU, have you ever thought about what would happen if we armed them all and then

had them invade their respective countries? It would embarrass our region, to the detriment of peace and unity in our beloved Africa, which we strive to build.

It is true that all these refugees must enjoy all the rights recognized for human beings. Above all, they have the inalienable right to their citizenship, but their problem will have a sustainable solution only if it is achieved through peaceful negotiations and not by force of arms, pursuant to the OAU Charter. In any case, you yourselves have been able to observe that that attempt of the Rwandan refugees was unsuccessful, as the aggression was contained.

Allow us to tell you that neither the Rwandan people, tormented by fear and desolation, nor the Ugandan people, themselves thrust into this dreadful war, nor the whole of Africa have anything to gain from these fratricidal confrontations.

If your main concern is truly the issue of the humanitarian problems these refugees face, the upcoming regional conference on this subject will no doubt lead to a happy and final resolution. We therefore invite you to contribute all of your influence, to restore peace in our region which needs it so badly..."

Selections by Innocent Nsengimana