



Inkingi Forces Démocratiques Unifiées United Democratic Forces

☎ ++(250) 728636000 ✉ Fdu.inkingi.rwa@gmail.com

www.fdu-udf.org - www.victoire-ingabire.com - www.victoire2010.com

Kigali - Rwanda

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

PRESS RELEASE

Kigali, 11th February 2011

SHAME VERDICT ON THE WAVE OF POLITICAL SENTENCES.

The justice nightmare against political leaders continues. Today a Kigali Court sentenced Mr Bernard Ntaganda, Parti Social Imberakuri president, to a 4 year jail term (2 years for the crime of threatening state security and 2 years for divisionnism) and a Frw 100,000 fine while Sylvain Sibomana, FDU-INKINGI interim Secretary General ; Ms. Alice Muhirwa, FDU-INKINGI Treasurer and Martin Ntavuka received a Frw 100,000 fine for complicity in the crime of illegal protest. Jean Baptiste Icyitonderwa was found not guilty.

This trial is in direct line with the «war on the opposition» that followed the swoop down on political leaders to prevent peaceful demonstrations in Kigali on 24th June 2010. Some of them were assaulted, arrested and tortured.

Other political key figures are languishing in jail on politically motivated charges. Ms. Victoire Ingabire Umuhuza, Chair of FDU-INKINGI is detained in maximum prison since 14th October 2010; Deogratias Mushayidi (PDP Imanzi) is serving a life sentence while Dr. Theoneste Niyitegeka (arrested after his Presidential campaign in 2003) and Charles Ntakirutinka (arrested after launching a political party PDR-Ubuyanja) have already spent many years in prison. Last week two journalists were handed heavy jail terms, 17 years for Agnes Uwimana Nkusi and 7 years for Saidati Mukakibibi. In January 2011, other opposition members, General Kayumba Nyamwasa, Colonel Patrick Karegeya, Dr. Theogen Rudasingwa and Dr. Gerald Gahima were sentenced in absentia by a military High Court to 24 and 20 years. Some of the family members of exiled opposition figures remaining in the country have disappeared, threatened or detained. Cases of deaths have been reported as well.

Justice in Rwanda is under influence. It is the judicial painting of the ruling state-party. This politically motivated justice parody is keeping Rwandans in terror due to unrelenting interferences of the executive. The calls to President Paul Kagame for a judicial relief and political space have fallen on deaf ears. The country is heading to uncertainty.

Boniface Twagirimana

FDU-INKINGI

Interim Vice President.

Tel : (+250) 728636000 Fdu.inkingi.rwa@gmail.com

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