

Joint candidatures to the 2012 SAKHAROV Prize



Mrs Victoire INGABIRE
UMUHOZA



Mr Déogratias
MUSHAYIDI



Lawyer Bernard NTAGANDA

Rwanda has witnessed, during the last decades a cycle of systematic violence aimed at excluding a great part of the population from governance of the country. Cleavages of Rwandan society, both of ethnic origin or based on regionalism have brought about disastrous effects on the country and its population.

Each one of the three Rwandans proposed for the 2012 SAKHAROV Prize, have tried to put a stop to the self-destructive cycle by fostering dialogue, reconciliation and non-violence. They are representatives of Rwandan society and belong to the Hutu and Tutsi communities. Their commitment to the defence of the most elementary of citizens' rights has led them to the prisons of the current regime. After many years of fratricide struggle, the Rwandan people seek a common destiny for all citizens and reject being ruled by an avid oligarchy like today.

By supporting three personalities of the democratic opposition the European Union will restore not only hope and courage, but also faith in an authentic democracy.

" The world is a dangerous place to live in, not only because of those who do wrong but because of those who watch and accept wrongdoing. " (Albert Einstein)

Mrs Victoire INGABIRE UMUHOZA



Forced into exile in the Netherlands, following the Rwandan genocide, Victoire Ingabire became very quickly engaged in community life. She became a founding member of the Contact non-profit organization, then of Dialogue and Charity Actions (CODAC) where she was co-Director until 2.000 ; she was also co-Director of URAHO, an organization of Rwandan women exiled in The Netherlands and was also a founding member of the PRO JUSTITIA – Rwanda, then CEO of the ZWALU association, a platform gathering all expatriate women in The Netherlands ; later on she helped in the creation of HARAMBE, also a platform of African women in same country.

Simultaneously she was an active sponsor of the Inter-Rwandan Dialogue (DIRHI), an effort to bring together Rwandans of all ethnical origins in order to discuss the future of their country. Furthermore she is an active militant in different political movements of the Rwandan diaspora. She became a member of the Republican Democratic Rally, of which she is president since 2.000, afterwards she joined the Union of Rwandan Democratic Forces and became its vice-president from 2003 to 2006, and finally was elected president, in 2006, of the Unified Democratic Forces (UDF-INKINGI).

She went back to Rwanda on January 16, 2010, in order to run for the presidential elections to be held in August. She was not only forbidden to participate in those elections but was also detained in October 2010 and charged with attempting against State security and espousing a genocide ideology, a crime defined by the U.N. human rights Committee – as well as by the majority of organizations for the protection of same - as an infringement to liberty. She is currently kept at the infamous central prison of Kigali.

Before being arrested she was subject to the worse humiliations by the regime's security forces. She was thus physically attacked and robbed at the administrative bureau of the Kinyinya sector, where she had been caught in a trap laid by the authorities. This attack was carried out in front of the police and the responsible officer of said sector. No charges were brought up, although, according to the authorities the perpetrators had been arrested. During a visit to political prisoners in Kigali's central prison, her car, although parked besides the high security prison, was assaulted. The thieves, surprisingly well informed, only took away her portable telephones, leaving behind a purse containing money.

Seeking to push her to the limit of her nerves, security forces went as far as forcing house-owners not to rent them to Victoire in order to condemn her to street-life wandering. During her house arrest, police broke into the premises and confiscated her electronic goods (cameras, computers, etc.) ; all of which was never registered in her judiciary files. At the same time, her family also suffered severe constraints. After she announced her intention to run for the presidential elections, her old-aged mother, living in the Netherlands was charged with genocide and condemned *in absentia* to a heavy imprisonment term.

Mrs Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza is a symbolic example of the peaceful combat for the defence of citizen's fundamental rights. Her innermost conviction affirms that only a nation living in reconciliation will be able to put an end to the political culture of exclusion and violence that has defined the history of Rwanda by far too many years. By striving for the stability of Rwanda, she is simultaneously working for the same result in the Great Lakes region.

Mr Déogratias MUSHAYIDI



Born in 1961 at Sake in South-East Rwanda Déogratias Mushayidi is a tutsi having escaped the genocide, during which he lost many members of his family. Albeit being himself a victim, he refused to caution the deadly crimes committed by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the tutsi movement in power in Rwanda since 1994. A former representative of that military-political movement in Switzerland from 1990 to 1994, and even having

brilliant prospects within the RPF, it was shocking news when he resigned to his post of RPF assistant Secretary General. He condemned the army of that movement, which boasted from having stopped Tutsi killings, for becoming itself a war-machine aimed at slaughtering hutu communities having nothing to do with tutsi extermination. Before leaving the spheres of tutsi power, he wrote to the RPF : "*I have been a victim of injustice since I was born and I cannot – in any case - inflict on others a suffering I have always cried against.*"

After entering journalism in Kigali, his tenacity in discovering responsibilities in the April 6, 1994 missile attack and in denouncing the regime's misdemeanours against its own population, he was forced into exile.

In Belgium, where he is a refugee, Mr. Mushayidi has actively worked in favour of a dialogue among Rwandans of all ethnical origins. Aware that only this path could lead his fellow citizens towards reconciliation and to outline a common destiny. He loved to openly recall that : "*Union is not achieved against but with.*"

Having been kidnapped in Burundi in March 2010, Déo Mushayidi was deported to Rwanda against all international conventions. At the conclusion of a trial without any witnesses for the prosecution he was sentenced to life imprisonment for attempting against the security of the State on behalf of his articles and his political views. It is from the Kigali central prison that he declares : "*Yes, I am in prison and according to Rwandan justice I must remain here all my life. That would do me no harm if I were the only one to be unjustly condemned to life imprisonment and that my people could avail of its full freedom to determine its future. The freedom of my people can only be achieved through a dialogue which is open to everyone and aimed at surpassing past, present and future conflicts.*"

In Brussels, Déo Mushayidi was the first tutsi to have admitted that besides the genocide against tutsi, a large number of Rwandan hutu had been slaughtered by the RPF led by Paul Kagame. He was the first tutsi to have recognized in public that victims of the genocide (mostly tutsi) and victims of war and of the massacres carried out by the RPF (mostly hutu), all of them deserve respect and the duty of remembrance. Due to his stand, he has been called " The man of Dialogue. "

While returning to Africa to obtain official recognition of his political party in Rwanda, the Covenant for People's Defence Pact (PDP Imanzi), Déo Mushayidi was aware of the risks he was running. He has always affirmed that even those who hold power in Rwanda need to be reassured by their opponents. He also shared the conviction that the only way to do it was to approach them and speak about democratic values. He considered his return to Rwanda as a necessary sacrifice to bring about a more open political space and strengthen the right to freedom of expression in Rwanda.

Lawyer Bernard NTAGANDA



He was born in 1969 in the township of Ntongwe (Gitarama). Beginning in his youth he was pushed by the love to his brethren, defence of human rights and fundamental freedoms. On this basis he made the choice to study law. After secondary school he began his political career. He was appointed as assistant Mayor in charge of juridical and political affairs in his native township. At that time he was 21 years old. With the arrival of a multi-party system in 1991, he became a member of the Social Democratic Party (PSD). He was chosen as head of his party in the National University of Rwanda (1993), then

at the Gitarama prefecture and afterwards as member of the PSD political bureau(2001-2008).

On December 14, 2008, Lawyer Bernard NTAGANDA took the initiative of convening in Kigali numerous colleagues of the democratic opposition. Together, they carried out a critical assessment of the political situation in Rwanda. They remarked the absence of an opening in the political arena, non-respect of human rights and the absence of an independent justice, absence of freedom of expression, drastic inequality at the economic level, and absence of a project of society to overcome it and provide an answer to the people's basic needs. They then decided to carry out a peaceful combat to eradicate impunity and injustice and bring about democracy. It was on these bases that they created the social party IMBERAKURI as a result of an inaugural congress, held on January 18, 2009. The party was officially registered by decree Nr. 07/07/01 as of 7/08/2009, thus becoming the first opposition political party registered in Rwanda. This daring move was followed by other parties like the UDF Inkingi¹ and the Green Party. These parties also tried to register but all their attempts failed despite respect of all legal procedures.

Lawyer Bernard NTAGANDA put thereafter into effect mechanisms to bring awareness to the population towards national reconciliation, by promoting the right of memory comprising all victims, respect of fundamental rights by means of an independent, equitable and law-abiding judiciary. He has also stressed the need to abolish distinctive national or regional identities sapping the Rwandan society for decades as well as to the indispensable respect among the countries of the sub-region so that they may recover peace, stability and prosperity.

Mr NTAGANDA has always privileged collaboration with his equals. On January 16, 2010, he organised a triumphal reception of Mrs INGABIRE in Kigali, as she returned from exile. He was the first politician to retrace the whereabouts of Déogratias Mushayidi, President of the PDP Imanzi², who had been kidnapped in Burundi. Following the systematic persecution against opposition members, he launched the initiative of regularly visiting jailed opponents and attending their political trials. This process is still relevant within the democratic opposition.

Following multiple attempts to neutralise his party, on June 24, 2010, the RPF sent Lawyer Bernard NTAGANDA to prison. This was the same date when candidatures to the presidency of the Republic (elections being called on August 9, 2010) had to be registered. Since his imprisonment, he was regularly beaten and held in total isolation. On October 14, 2010, he had to be taken to intensive care due to torture inflicted on him. Despite the ill-treatment given to Lawyer Bernard NTAGANDA as well as to other responsible officers of his party and of the democratic opposition, the democratic youth IMBERAKURI want to show that the seeds of democracy sewn by their president are alive and growing.

On April 22, 2012, Lawyer Bernard NTAGANDA was sentenced, with no possibility of appeal, to 4 years in prison for the mere fact of having founded an opposition political party.

¹ United Democratic Forces

² People's Defense Pact