

Women United Against Violence, Rape and Hate Speech in Burundi

THE VIDEO OF HORROR: STOP CALL TO RAPE

Since 2015, an unprecedented crisis is shaking Burundi with the establishment of a regime of terror using violence as a mode of governance. Many Burundian girls and women have already been victims of rape and indescribable horrors organized jointly by the militia *Imbonerakure* of the ruling party and the national intelligence service; under the supervision of the CNDD-FDD party and Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza.

The recent video showing *Imbonerakure* calling for the rape of women and girls perceived as opposition supporters, confirms what hundreds of women have already disclosed: Burundi women live in fear of rape every day. Hundreds have been raped, hundreds have died from it... Fear and shame push the majority of them to remain silent.

These crimes continue to be perpetrated in complete impunity. This cannot continue under a deafening silence of the world! We must break this silence and more importantly prevent the trivialization of this violence inflicted on women and girls, since the terrible genocide of Tutsis in Rwanda. The profound and lasting consequences are well known, not only on the victims but also on the communities and families in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Our **COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY** requires us to protect Burundi, women and girls, to have their physical integrity and dignity respected by taking effective concrete measures and beginning legal proceedings against the perpetrators. Let **"Never Again"** not remain an **Empty Slogan** but an **Invitation** for the realization of a real responsibility to protect.

By signing this statement, we express our pain and indignation at the hideous crimes inflicted upon Burundi Girls and Women, and express our solidarity with the victims.

We call upon the international community to:

- Support the collection of testimonies from the many victims.
- Institute legal proceedings against the rape perpetrators and those calling for rape.
- Protect Burundi women and girls by sending an international protection force;

As a reminder, - the United Nations Charter mandates the international community to ensure the safety and security of any civilian population whose protection is no more guaranteed by their governments; Furthermore, the status of the International Criminal Court has explicitly recognized that crimes of a sexual nature constitute crimes against humanity in Article 7 (1) (g)-1. Furthermore, international jurisprudence recognizes rape as constituting genocidal crime when committed with the intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.