

# Open Letter: Justice for Cyuma Hassan & All Rwandan Prisoners of Conscience

*As Rwanda hosts the UCI World Cycling Championships, we cry out for Cyuma Hassan — and for the thousands silenced while the world looks away.*

Dear world,

There are moments when silence becomes betrayal. This is one of them.

As the world gathers to cheer Rwanda's hosting of the UCI World Cycling Championships — as cyclists ride through freshly paved streets and international delegates toast to Kagame's "success" — a father is crying out for his son. A journalist named Cyuma Hassan is wasting away in prison for daring to tell the truth. And no one is listening.

We write this letter from a place of deep sorrow. Sorrow for Cyuma. Sorrow for his father. Sorrow for the countless Rwandans and Congolese who live — and die — under a system of fear, while the world looks away.

Cyuma is not alone. He is one name among many. We cry for him because his father had the courage to cry out. But what about the thousands whose fathers were killed, silenced, or too afraid to speak? What about those who vanished in the night, whose names we'll never know?

We cry, too, for Déogratias (Deo) Mushayidi, a genocide survivor and journalist, sentenced to life for daring to challenge the regime. And for the Congolese women raped by militias armed and backed by the same Rwandan regime now praised on global stages. Who cries for them?

The world is celebrating Kagame. But we are grieving.

To understand our grief, you must understand the man the world calls a hero.

Paul Kagame was not forged in leadership schools or democratic movements. He was forged in war. In exile. In bitterness. As a young man, he joined Museveni's army and fought in the Luwero Triangle — one of the most brutal and traumatizing war zones in modern African history. Tens of thousands of civilians were slaughtered. Kagame didn't just witness horror — he participated in it.

He never came back from that battlefield. He brought it with him — into Rwanda, into power, into every structure of the state. The man the world applauds is a man who never healed — and whose governance is built on the belief that control is safety, and silence is loyalty.

Rwanda is not a miracle. Rwanda is a wound.

Behind Kigali's clean streets lie: - Mothers who still don't know where their sons went - Prisoners who have never stood trial - Children taught not to ask questions - Entire regions kept in check by terror

And beyond Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo bleeds. Villages destroyed. Women raped. Children conscripted. And the world? It funds the man responsible — calling it “development.”

The silence of the international community is not neutrality. It is complicity.

World leaders, diplomats, donors, journalists — you know what is happening. You’ve seen the reports. You’ve met the survivors. And yet, your aid continues. Your praise continues. Your cameras film the cyclists, but not the suffering.

We ask you: When will it be enough?

How many more must disappear? How many more must flee into exile, only to be hunted there too? How many Congolese must die before Rwanda is held accountable?

We are not against Rwanda. We are for a Rwanda free from fear. A Rwanda where journalists don’t rot in cells. Where children don’t grow up fatherless because someone dared to speak. Where being a survivor doesn’t mean being targeted.

So we say:

- Free Cyuma Hassan - Free Déogratias Mushayidi - Free all political prisoners — in Rwanda and across the region - End international support to regimes that kill, silence, and exploit - Stop calling bloodshed “stability” and tyranny “progress”

If you’re reading this, you have a choice. You may not be able to change everything. But you can speak. You can share. You can stop applauding killers and start standing with the people who live under their boots.

This letter is written in mourning — for lives taken too soon, for voices silenced too long, for hope buried beneath fear. But it is also written in defiance — with the unwavering belief that truth still matters. And above all, it is written in love — love for Rwanda, for Congo, and for all those who dream of justice even when it feels out of reach.

Until the world dares to look honestly — not at the stage, but behind the curtain — we will not stop speaking.

Remember this: You looked away in 1994 — and one million lives were lost in Rwanda. You’ve looked away since 1995 — and over seven million lives have been lost in Congo and Rwanda combined.

This cannot be called ignorance anymore. It is choice. And silence, in the face of this suffering, is not neutrality.

It is complicity.

#FreeCyuma #JusticeForRwanda #JusticeForCongo #LetRwandaSpeak  
#DictatorshipsIsNotDevelopment #CyclingForFreedom

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