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## **PRESS STATEMENT**

### **ON THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION OF FORMER AND CURRENT ICTR/IRMCT DETAINEES AND ANY PROPOSED TRANSFER TO RWANDA**

*For Immediate Release*

**12 June 2026**

The ISHEMA Party takes note of the discussions taking place from 12 June 2026, within the United Nations Security Council concerning the future of former and current detainees of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) managed by the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT).

In light of these deliberations, we express our deep concern regarding any proposal that would result in the involuntary transfer of these men and women to Rwanda against their expressed wishes. Such a decision would raise serious legal, human rights, and justice-related concerns and would undermine confidence in the international justice system.

Our position is based on the following considerations:

#### ***1. Concerns regarding human rights protections in Rwanda***

ISHEMA Party remains concerned about reports from international human rights organizations and independent observers regarding restrictions on civil liberties, freedom of expression, due process guarantees, and the treatment of political opponents in Rwanda. Any transfer decision must fully consider whether the individuals concerned would enjoy effective protection of their fundamental rights upon return.

#### ***2. Lack of genuine political openness***

A democratic society requires meaningful political pluralism, freedom of association, and the ability of citizens to participate in public affairs without fear of intimidation or persecution. We

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*LE Parti ISHEMA recherche à Promouvoir la Démocratie au Rwanda à travers les Valeurs de VERITE, INTREPIDITE et JUSTICE SOCIALE*

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believe that Rwanda's political environment continues to present significant challenges in this regard. Individuals associated with politically sensitive cases may face particular risks in a context where political space remains restricted.

***3. Respect for the principle of non-refoulement***

International law recognizes the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the transfer of persons to a state where they may face persecution, serious human rights violations, or other substantial risks. Many of the former and current detainees under IRMCT authority have expressly stated their opposition to being returned to Rwanda. Their concerns must be taken seriously and assessed through independent and transparent procedures consistent with international legal standards.

***4. Need for independent custody and preservation of historical and judicial records***

The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and related crimes remain among the most thoroughly investigated international criminal matters in modern history. Allegations and debates concerning the conduct of various actors during that period—including members of the former rebellion, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), and other military and political actors—continue to be subjects of historical and legal discussion.

For this reason, ISHEMA Party believes that archives, evidence, and records related to ICTR and IRMCT proceedings should remain under independent international custody. The credibility of international justice requires that sensitive judicial archives be preserved and managed in a manner that guarantees impartiality, transparency, and accessibility for future generations of researchers, victims, and judicial institutions. Any arrangement that could create a perception of conflict of interest should be avoided.



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***5. Concerns Regarding Rwanda's adherence to united nations principles and regional stability***

ISHEMA Party is concerned by Rwanda's lack of adherence to certain fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the principles of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of states. Allegations and findings by various international bodies and experts concerning the involvement of the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) in the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have raised serious questions regarding Rwanda's commitment to these principles.

A State accused of violating the sovereignty of a neighbouring country cannot give assurance that the rights and security of individuals returned to its jurisdiction will be fully respected. These concerns are particularly relevant when considering the fate of former and current ICTR and IRMCT detainees.

Furthermore, reports and testimonies from former detainees and other individuals who have returned to their homes after serving their sentences suggest that some continue to live under fear, surveillance, social exclusion, or other forms of pressure despite having fully completed the penalties imposed by courts. Such circumstances raise legitimate concerns regarding their ability to enjoy their rights, security, and dignity upon return.

The United Nations Security Council and the IRMCT should therefore decide that no transfer to Rwanda can take place unless international human rights standards, including the protection of individual freedoms and the right to political participation, together with the broader principles underpinning the international justice system, are fully respected.

***Conclusion***

As the United Nations Security Council deliberates this matter from 12 June 2026, ISHEMA Party calls upon Council members, the IRMCT, Member States, and all relevant international actors to ensure that any decision is guided by international law, human rights obligations, due process guarantees, and the principles of justice and fairness.

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We urge the international community ***to reject any involuntary transfer*** that would disregard the expressed wishes of the affected individuals, compromise the principle of non-refoulement, or undermine confidence in the independence and integrity of international justice mechanisms.

The rights, safety, and dignity of all affected individuals must remain paramount. The pursuit of justice must never be separated from the obligation to protect human rights and uphold the rule of law.

Done at Montreal, on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Nadine Claire KASINGE

President

ISHEMA Party

**About ISHEMA Party**

The ISHEMA Party is a Rwandan political organization committed to promoting democratic governance, the rule of law, human rights, and a peaceful political transition in Rwanda.



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