

# Paul Kagame : « Understand Rwanda is not the creator of the problems in Congo »

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**Exclusive Coverage - Afrikarabia asks Rwandese President Paul Kagame his answer to congolese criticisms these lasts months.**

**- Jean Francois Dupaquier : Mr. President, in DRC the public opinion seems very unfriendly to Rwanda and yourself sometimes cartooned as a new Hitler. Do you think this hostility may disappear in a foreseeable future or do you feel it may seem a basic part of Congolese identity?**

- Paul Kagame: Well, I may start with the fact that Hitler is not known for creating problems in the Congo, maybe they should have talked of King Leopold but they prefer to look for problems somewhere else that tells the story.

The second point is, I wish the reality was that actually Congo's problems were anyway related closely with Rwanda or with the leader of Rwanda. That would have been the easiest way to deal with, to resolve, we would have resolved this problem long time ago because we don't wish Congo, the Congolese, the leaders of Congo any bad luck at all, we don't wish them any of that. In fact a good Congo, Congo that is strong, that is well governed, whose people are dealing with their

problems the way they should and improving their lives, all these are in the interest of Rwanda as well. Rwanda would wish to live with a neighbor that is thriving especially Congo, we would be happy if Congo was making good progress because this translates in good progress for us as well there is no doubt about it, it is as simple as that.

As for the public opinion in Congo, I'm not responsible for what happens in Congo with the public opinion there. If they have decided to say that Rwanda is our problem, we have no other problems, it's up to you to decide whether this is true or not. Really if Congo's problems are Rwanda and the leader of Rwanda, it's up to you to make that judgment but also that also masks the bigger problem of Congo that is not being addressed, the problems will remain for a long time, it doesn't matter whether they have in their mind, but the more they have it in their mind that Rwanda is the problem, the more the problem will stay with them. So a different problem that is real and is affecting them will remain and therefore they remain where they are and that would be more pathetic but of course the problem, even additional problem is for outsiders who

would have been helpful to address the problem to see it also that way, or judge the situation in Congo from what Congolese are saying in this regards; that Congo's problems originate from outside and that they don't have problems inside, but again let me take you back a little bit, do the Congolese; I'm told now they are about fifty to sixty million people, are all these people united over this problem, that Rwanda is the problem Congo and Kagame is to be seen . . . is it an opinion?

Again this one is misleading, I'm sure you have people who think like that, maybe they are even many but are they the representative of the Congolese opinion of this population putting aside how erroneous the thinking is, is it really what it is? But for being even a little clear, this question which I think is good in a way to bring that you brought up is the answer to it supposes to help Rwanda or to help Congo? I don't know but this is something people can talk about. If I answered it and it stays, Rwanda remain what it is; we make progress or we fail to make progress, irrespective of what goes on in Congo and Congo's problems will remain the way they are.

The other big problem people talk about ; the Eastern Congo, all the time and this is the wrong way of looking at things. Many times I have confronted questions, they ask me about Eastern Congo, actually in their mind

and they give this impression widely as if Eastern Congo has turned into another country on its own. The problems in eastern Congo are not the problems of the whole Congo. But I think and this is the mistake people are making, they don't know one, they don't know that people in other parts of that very huge country are suffering, secondly they don't understand that how and what happens in Eastern Congo carries an image of what happens elsewhere in the country because this is supposed to be one country, you know one government, same institutions and so on and so forth.

Again it goes back to whether people see things the right way, the way they should, there goes the answer. Let me just summarize to say, Rwanda is not the creator of the problems in the Congo, in fact is not the problem, Congo should be looking at their problems, the best way to look at Rwanda as sharing with Congo in addressing that we all face as Africans as neighbors, we can all work together to deal with these problems instead of looking at each other as enemies. Despite what Congo says that you raised their opinion, the opinion of Congolese, we still see Congo as our good neighbors, people as Africans that we need to relate with in a more positive way than the impression that is always given.

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