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Hate speech and incitement to genocide against Congolese and Rwandan Tutsi in DR Congo

We are incredibly concerned about the rapidly growing hate speech targeting Kinyarwanda speakers in the DRC, particularly those of Tutsi ethnicity. As we know from history, hate speech against a particular group is one of the first stages of genocide and urgent action is needed to prevent widespread violence.

Incitement to violence against Tutsi has escalated in recent weeks, such as the planned mass coordinated attacks in different parts of eastern DRC that were scheduled for Saturday 25 June. Congolese were called to round up Tutsi and to appear at Tutsi houses with machetes to expel and kill them (see video [here](#)). While evidence has not yet emerged that these attacks took place, this is clearly incitement to genocide which must be stopped before another genocide targeting the Tutsi population is committed.

A document released on 20 June 2022 by the politico-military party Front Populaire du Salut accused Tutsi of infiltrating Congolese government institutions and the Armed Forces, naming 10 'infiltrators' and offering payment to anyone who can prove that these individuals have been 'neutralised'. The identification of 'enemies' and the naming of people to be killed were tactics used by the hate radio RTLM and the *Kangura* newspaper in Rwanda before and during the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994. It is extremely worrying to see similar tactics being employed in the DRC today.

A further echo of the genocidal rhetoric of 1994 is the targeting of Tutsi women. Several fake news stories have been circulating on social media in recent weeks, using photos of women who are known Tutsi genocide survivors, claiming that they were due to marry Congolese men and congratulating the future in-laws for cancelling the weddings and sending the women away.

Anti-Tutsi hatred is not a new phenomenon in the DRC, having developed over several decades against a backdrop of complex socio-political struggles in the country, particularly in the North and South Kivu provinces. The situation was exacerbated by the refugee crisis and influx of *génocidaires* who fled Rwanda after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The DRC has subsequently suffered two wars (1996-1997; 1998-2003), and continued weak governance and the prevalence of over 100 militia groups has seen regular outbreaks of prolific violence and ethnic divisionism.

Today, with the re-emergence of the predominantly Tutsi M23 armed group, which the DRC government has accused Rwanda of supporting, hate speech and incitement to violence against the Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge people is rapidly intensifying, amplified through social media platforms such as Twitter (see the recent study by Félix Ndahinda and Aggée Mugabe [here](#)).

The international community has time and time again failed to act and prevent genocide. As Rwandan survivors of genocide, organisations, partners and friends of survivors, we understand first-hand the dangers of identity-based discrimination, dehumanisation and hate speech. We are reminded of the inaction of the international community and the failure of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in 1994. The UN is now failing to provide peace for the people of the DRC; despite having had a peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) in the DRC for decades on which it has spent billions of dollars, there has been no improvement to the security in the Kivu region.

We call upon regional governments in collaboration with the international community to condemn this incitement to genocide and to provide tangible solutions to protect Tutsi populations in the DRC and prevent this dire situation from escalating further. The warning signs are there and immediate intervention is required.

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