

Rutaremera hails parents' role in liberation struggle

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Tito Rutaremera, the Chairperson of Rwanda Elders Advisory Forum .Courtesy

Tito Rutaremera, the Chairperson of Rwanda Elders Advisory Forum has hailed parents' role during the liberation struggle in a Twitter thread posted on November 9.

The RPF-Inkotanyi senior cadre said that in recruiting people to join the struggle, parents would allow their children to go and often encourage them to sacrifice themselves for it and become cadres.

He declared that when the liberation struggle started and some of the young people got injured, they would return to their parents and get healed and later be encouraged to go back to the battlefield.

“Youth who were joining the liberation

struggle were escorted by cadres and would stay with RPF senior members. Whenever they came in a big number, they would be admitted to different homes of the RPF members. Whatever country they came from; Europe, America, Zaire, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda,...they would be received by members,” Rutaremera wrote in the thread.

“Those from Rwanda would be brought to Burundi or Tanzania or Zaire by our cadres. The RPF members in those countries would receive them, stay with them and get them all the required travel documents.”

Rutaremera added that the cadres would usher those who would come from Burundi and hand them over to the cadres in Tanzania who passed them to those who were in Uganda who would then take them to the battlefield.

Talking about Rwandans who passed at Bukavu, he said the cadres who lived in Bukavu would escort them to Goma, and those in Goma would take them to Uganda, and then the Rwandans who lived in Uganda would take them to 01 which was RPF's zone.

Rutaremera also noted that the members of RPF were security sensitive wherever they

were because the security of fellow members was their responsibility which propelled a feeling that every member needed to be protected and supported.

“At the battlefield, the soldiers who were in critical condition would be treated in their units. All other patients would go to sick bays where they would find doctors, nurses, caretakers, physiotherapists,” he said. “Those who were very sick and needed treatment that we didn’t have would be received by our members from different regions and get treated.”

According to Rutaremara, when the liberation struggle started, the system wasn’t established yet, and in the beginning, after the commanders died and before the arrival of President Paul Kagame, they had a lot of quandaries and multiple casualties.

“The members,” he continued, “were the ones to receive them, hide them, get them cured and healed, and after getting better, they would go back to work. The time came and we started establishing stealthy sickbays in the zones where members were so that we could look for doctors who could come and treat them all together.”

Rutaremarara gave an example of the sickbay of Nyakivara which he said was established when the members were more troubled, highlighting that RPF members are the ones

who helped the casualties to receive treatment, protected them, fed them, found doctors and nurses to treat them and that they were committed to safeguarding the sickbay.

He revealed that there was a time senior Ugandan officials sent undercover agents and when the members found out, they gathered young and old women as well as sorghum and maize then started hitting and dusting them while singing.

“When the undercover agents asked,” writes Rutaremara, “the people replied : when it’s harvest period, we harvest together and store the produce together ; that is what we are doing. The undercover agents were bewildered and left.”

According to Rutaremara, in the homes near the borders of Rwanda with Uganda, Tanzania and Zaire, “you would find many casualties in the homes of RPF members being treated while also being protected and when their injuries got worse, they would secretly be sent in towns where they could receive better medical treatment.”

“You will hear that wherever the parents were, they were called Mama Cyama ; these are young women or old women who sacrificed themselves for young people and cadres coming or going to the battlefield, including casualties,” he said. Follow @patricknimpa