

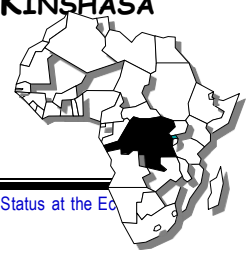


COLLECTIF DES ORGANISATIONS DES JEUNES SOLIDAIRES DU CONGO KINSHASA

« **COJESKI/RDC** »

COORDINATION PROVINCIALE DU NORD-KIVU

Projet : Global Refugee Leaders Forum (GRELEF)



Personnalité Juridique : N°385/CAB/MIN/J & GS/2003 du 30 avril 2003, NGO with a Special Econsultative Status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) & Jouissant d'un Statut d'Observateur auprès de la Commission Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples / UA.

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September 6<sup>th</sup> 2023

**Open letter to Didier Reynders the European Union Commissioner in charge of justice during his visit in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Calling upon the EU to make refugees one among key priority for cooperation in the Democratic Republic of Congo,**

Dear Commissioner,

We have heard through various media reports your visit currently in the Democratic Republic of Congo and your scheduled agenda on various issues, *however once again the problematic of refugees in DRC seems absent yet since 1996 up to now with the current war of M23, Rwanda has justified her military interventions in DRC on allegations against refugees who are perceived as a danger to the current regime in Kigali.*

First of all we warmly welcome you in DRC and wish all the best during your stay. We also appreciate the currently interventions of the European Union in the sector of Justice, the construction of the new Court of Justice in Goma North Kivu through the funding from the European Union is an indicator of the all efforts to improve in this sector.

On top of what we received with hope the intentions of the EU to facilitate negotiations between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, which we believe is a great move, however as citizens we should be involved in order to ensure that issues are solved once for all and that any step forward does not compromise our aspiration as people in DRC. Let us bring to your attention that we do hear about negotiations with Rwanda by those who argue for such move but they do not provide us more details on what to they mean in terms of negotiations and what should be negotiated. We remain perplexed what is that Agenda Congolese people have brought forward to the EU in order to seek deals with Rwanda.

We also remain wondering about the manner in which the European Union defines key priorities for cooperation in the Democratic Republic of Congo and who are the stakeholders who participate in the whole decision making process right from the field to the final stage. Whereas the EU puts particular attention on the situation of refugees in other countries such as Uganda where refugees are inclusive in the whole cooperation package, in the Democratic Republic of

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Congo the European Union is not clear on her position and her interventions towards refugees, especially towards Rwandan refugees who have been living in the country since 1994 up to now.

Let us get this opportunity to remind you some gaps which are observed in the Democratic Republic of Congo, being based in the Eastern part, there is no single Civil Society Organization being supported by the EU to render services to refugees, most of the field visits of EU Delegations in Eastern DRC does not include interactions with refugees, no statement about the situation of refugees, a total silence on the World Refugee Day about refugees in DRC, and above all the selective sanctions against members of FDLR accused of serious violations against humanity but at the same we do not observe the same severe sanctions against M23 and Rwandan Army Officers who have abused refugees since 1996 up to now.

While we join hands together with the European Union to punish and impose sanctions against any person accused of human rights violations in DRC, we remain worried that targeting FDLR members who are generally refugee victims and who remain the only visible alternative currently for potential refugee shield in DRC, may frustrate the desire and efforts of refugees especially Rwandan refugees to seek for protection and asylum and this may continue exposing them to the brutality of the Rwandan Army operating in eastern DRC.

**We therefore get advantage of your presence in DRC to bring forward the following recommendations:**

To put in place a Special Department at the EU Offices in Kinshasa which will be mainly responsible for the situation of refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo,

To include refugees as part of the European Union Cooperation package in the Democratic Republic of Congo,

To put in place a special and flexible funding towards Civil Society Organizations involved in the protection of refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo,

To work together with all various actors in order to come up with a comprehensive approach towards the solutions to the problematic of refugees in DRC,

To engage the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to put in place structures, policies and specialized human resource that will handle issues of the refugees, and at the same time to engage with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to put in place a policy that favors the protection of refugees in DRC,

With the current Global Refugee Forum Summit being organized in Geneva, the European Union Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo should ensure that key concerned actors do fully participate among them concerned Ministries, the Civil Society and refugees from their various communities,

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We call upon the European Unity to maximize the opportunities offered by the Global Refugee Forum Summit in order to support initiatives that may generate debate and dialogue at local, provincial and national level for the protection and the management of refugees in DRC,

Kulihoshi Musikami Pecos

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