

Rwanda: Kagame Says Criticism of Genocide Law is “Nonsense”

By [Global Research](#)

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President Paul Kagame has angrily dismissed any criticism of the Genocide ideology law coming from donors, human rights groups and exiled opposition, saying nobody has the right to undermine what happens in Rwanda, RNA reports.

Since the passing of a law in 2007 criminalizing negating the Genocide – described here as “Genocide Ideology”, critics have claimed that it has been used to stifle free speech and oppress the opposition. The harshest criticism came last year from the Commonwealth Human rights Initiative, which was strongly opposed to Rwanda’s admission into the British Commonwealth block.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, as well as the US government in its annual human rights reports, have repeated the same concerns. The latest came when New York-based Human Rights Watch claimed Wednesday that government was using the law “as a way of targeting and discrediting its critics”.

Amnesty International has also said that the terms of the law criminalizing “genocidal ideology”, are very “vague and ambiguous”. The group also says this law can restrict the ability of the accused to put forward a defence in criminal trials. The offence is punishable by 10 to 25 years’ imprisonment.

President Kagame on Friday seemed to have had enough. Addressing the judiciary, senior government officials and diplomats at the Parliamentary building at the start of the judicial year, Mr. Kagame described the criticism as “complete nonsense”.

The President wondered why international media and diplomats accredited to Kigali repeatedly claim the Genocide Ideology law is not clear.

“Sometimes a person wonders...‘but how come your laws criminalizing divisionism and others against negating the holocaust are not ambiguous?’ How come you implement them? What specialty do you have that others cannot have?”, said Mr. Kagame, in a mixture of English and Kinyarwanda.

“What they are trying to say is that all of you here seated with huts and robes have no brains,” he said, amid muted laughter from some of the audience. The President accused the West of consistently undermining “Rwandans and Africans” by always being suspicious of everything done on the continent.

With an unusually high-pitched tone, suggesting that he was very angry and not reading

from his prepared speech, Mr. Kagame fired in English: “We’ve lived this life. We’ve lived the consequences. So, we understand it better than anyone from anywhere else.”

“Apart from this over-bearing attitude of always wanting to decide for others what they should do, what do these people have in their brains...heads that we don’t have?. What is it? Why almost everyday question what people do for themselves?”

Turning to Kinyarwanda, President Kagame told his audience that critics can only be found to be wrong depending on how the country’s institutions are built.

“We ensure all is done with ultimate courage...explain to whoever doesn’t understand...such that even if we remain with some who do not want to understand, just like we even have them,” he said.

Mr. Kagame said criticism from the outside should not make those implementing policies internally to lose morale because they are doing it all for themselves and the country.

“This is the only way that we will silence those who are always speaking nonsense,” he said.

The judiciary had earlier presented several achievement attained over the past year, and President Kagame was on hand – thanking them. He also promised to avail them with his contribution at anytime “because it is my responsibility”.

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