

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 29, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to convey our ongoing concern with the continued detention of Mr. Paul Rusesabagina, a U.S. Lawful Permanent Resident and Presidential Medal of Freedom honoree, by the Rwandan government and to urge you to use all of the diplomatic means at your disposal to ensure his safe return to the United States.

In December 2020, 36 members of Congress wrote to President Kagame to urge him to return Paul Rusesabagina safely to the United States to reunite him with his family. We continue to have serious concerns with the extrajudicial means used by the Rwandan government to detain Mr. Rusesabagina and reports from his family and his Foundation that the Rwandan government is refusing to grant him access to international counsel, as well as the ongoing violations of attorney-client privilege with his local legal team. Additionally, the Rwandan judge presiding over Mr. Rusesabagina's case refused him bail. Instead, the authorities have reportedly confined him to his prison cell for twenty-three hours a day and continue to deny him necessary prescription medicine. Several of us have met with members of his family and supporters who have reported that Mr. Rusesabagina was subjected to severe physical abuse during periods of interrogation.

Moreover, since sending our letter, the President of St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, raised concerns of espionage to the FBI after Rwanda's diplomatic corps inappropriately accessed an online presentation hosted by St. Mary's on Mr. Rusesabagina's detention. Such behavior supports a recent Freedom House report that describes the Rwandan government's transnational repression of its critics globally.

During your confirmation process, you committed in writing that the Biden-Harris Administration would work to ensure that Rwanda would conduct Mr. Rusesabagina's trial fairly and transparently. We write to ask you to detail the Administration's actions to date regarding the fairness of Mr. Rusesabagina's trial, and the response of the Rwandan authorities.

Several questions remain unanswered. If the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs is still leading the Department's efforts to secure Mr. Rusesabagina's release, we would like to know what the Special Envoy's impact has been on the U.S. effort to date. Given that the Rwandan judicial system continues to violate Mr. Rusesabagina's due process rights despite the Administration's public calls for a fair trial, we would like to know what repercussions, if any, you foresee for U.S.-Rwanda relations. Finally, we would like to know what actions you are pursuing, in cooperation with other federal departments, to protect other

Rwandans residing in the United States from extrajudicial harassment, intimidation, and violence.


Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator


James E. Risch
United States Senator


Robert Menendez
United States Senator


Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

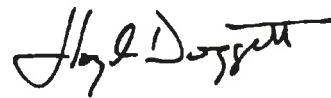

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Tony Gonzales
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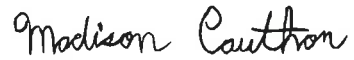
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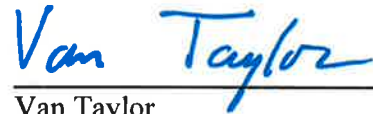
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