

Rwanda: Mushikiwabo Explains Controversies in UN Report
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"Last week, we shared our views and concerns regarding their accusations on Rwanda with the authors of the report and the addendum," declared Mushikiwabo. She further said that Rwanda explained itself on each accusation in the report.

"After that we made up our own report on the issue, and sent it to all those who have asked for our views, especially those suspending their aid based on false allegations."

She added that the report was also sent to the UN Security Council. "We do not hope that they will retract what they have published, but the important thing is that we have been given time to express our concerns because one should look at both sides' explanations before taking his decision."

One by one, the minister highlighted the controversies and rebutted the accusations in the report that accuses Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF) to have trained M23, a mutiny fighting in the eastern DRC.

She also explained that some of the weapons which the UN group of experts found with the M23 rebels and were allegedly supplied by Rwanda, are no longer used by the Rwandan army. "Since 2008, Rwanda has destroyed such arms as they were useless. Surprisingly, one of the experts in the group was there when the arms were burned."

In addition, Mushikiwabo said that the mention of Rwandan military uniforms among the rebels makes no sense. "You can get that tissue from a shop. The uniform is not even that of our military forces."

She then emphasized that the report includes many rumors. "It shows that those who have written it had the intention of making it look like Rwanda is supporting the DR Congo mutiny in a 'convincing' way. There are so many forged allegations in it."

For instance, the Minister cited the case of an RDF officer who has been teaching at Gako military academy for one year and never missed any of his class, but he is accused of being in command of the mutineers in eastern Congo. "The report says that he lives in the North, which is not true -- you cannot be at Gako and in the North at the same time," she said.

"We have answered with facts to all of the accusations. Even those explicitly mentioned had time to present their evidence that they were in Rwanda doing their normal jobs," Mushikiwabo said.

Mushikiwabo went on explaining that the country has no interest to cause instability to its neighbor, Congo.

"The eastern Congo unrest doesn't interest Rwanda, we have no reason of backing any mutiny in the region," she declared, stressing that it was the basis over Rwanda's concerns on the report. The minister took her time to give background over the role Rwanda has been playing in sake of peace and stability in DRC.

"Since 2009 Rwanda has done all in its possibilities to solve the problem. President Kagame and his Congolese counterpart shared their understanding on the concern, but still the thing prevails," she noted. "Any country does anything without any reason; there is no reason for Rwanda to back the reported mutineers."

Moreover, Mushikiwabo said that Rwanda is tired of false (inaccurate) reports. "We've provided our counter-allegations facts, and we await the final report which is scheduled to be released in November this year." She added that there are certainly people behind these reports, who want to look at Rwanda in certain. "They are determined to tarnish Rwanda's image. As a fact, Rwanda enjoys support of friends than enemies."

Concerning countries cutting aid basing to the aforementioned report, Mushikiwabo said that Rwanda was not counting absolutely on external aid. "We do need aid but if it stops, we have to figure out a way of living without it. So if the aid-cut sticks, we'll do so and I am confident that, given our experience, we can do that."

On Congo's officials themselves accusing Rwanda, Minister Mushikiwabo said that Rwanda has become accustomed to behaviors of some Congo officials, fleeing their responsibility and putting the blame on Rwanda.

"We put that on the account of frustration of officials of a country that has been dealing with crisis situations and wants to put the blame on others. That's usually a good way of staying away from your responsibilities."

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