November 2, 2026

Open Letter
To:

H.E. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

H.E. Ambassador Sanita Pavļuta-Deslandes
President of the United Nations Security Council (Latvia)

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix
Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations

Mr. Martin Kimani
Assistant Secretary-General for Africa

RE: Immediate Removal of Rwandan Forces from UN Peacekeeping Following United States Sanctions

Your Excellencies,

I write this open letter as a formal and urgent demand. The United States government has only recently sanctioned Rwanda's Ministry of Defence, the Rwanda Defence Force, and its commercial arm, Zigama Credit and Savings Society (Zigama CSS). These sanctions — still fresh — were imposed because Rwanda has refused to withdraw its forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and continues to support the M23 militia.

The consequences are clear and non-negotiable: doing business with the Rwandan Ministry of Defence, the Rwanda Defence Force, or Zigama CSS is now illegal under United States law. Any continued financial or operational relationship with these sanctioned entities exposes the United Nations to serious legal and reputational risk.

Therefore, the United Nations must not continue to deploy and reimburse Rwandan forces as if nothing has changed.

As of 2025, Rwanda was the second-largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping missions, with 5,880 troops and police deployed.

Under the standard reimbursement rate of US$1,474.68 per soldier per month, this arrangement alone transferred approximately US$104.1 million to the Rwandan government in a single year — before equipment and self-sustainment payments.

As the United States designates Rwanda's defence establishment for aggression and support to an armed group, the United Nations must not continue to place those same forces under the blue helmet and write them large monthly cheques.

This contradiction cannot stand.

We demand a clear and public answer on the following:

What is the precise timeframe for the complete removal of all Rwandan military and police personnel from United Nations peacekeeping operations, given that the United States sanctions are still fresh?

Specifically:

- By what date will all Rwandan contingents be withdrawn from current missions?
- By what date will all personnel reimbursements and related payments to the Rwandan government cease?
- What contingency arrangements are being made to replace the approximately 5,880 Rwandan personnel without delay?

The sanctions are recent. The obligation to act is immediate.

Continued inaction will confirm that the United Nations prioritizes operational convenience and financial transfers over the very sanctions regime designed to restrain Rwanda's conduct in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I expect a substantive, dated response — not procedural deflection.

Most sincerely,

Dr Emmanuel Hakizimana
on behalf of the Rwandan National Congress and
Affiliated Rwandan civil society organizations