



DEMOB *RWANDA*

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In this edition



FP-ICGLR Delegation Witnesses Rwanda's Efforts in
Demobilising Former Combatants



Former Armed Group Members Find Hope and New
Beginnings in Rwanda

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EDITORIAL

Demob Rwanda Newsletter: Promoting Peace and Reintegration

We extend our warmest gratitude to all our esteemed readers for choosing to engage with the Demob Rwanda Newsletter. As we delve into the highlights of this quarter, we witness the ongoing commitment of Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) towards fostering peace and stability within the region.

This quarter, RDRC proudly welcomed delegations from the Republic of Mali, the Republic of South Sudan, and esteemed members of the FP-ICGLR. These visits epitomize the collaborative spirit in understanding and appreciating Rwanda's demobilisation and reintegration processes. Such engagements not only foster mutual learning but also strengthen the bonds of solidarity and cooperation amongst nations committed to sustainable peace.

One of the notable events featured in this edition is the launch of the Pre-Discharge Orientation Programme for the beneficiaries of Phase 71. Held at the Mutobo Demobilisation Centre, this initiative marks a significant step towards equipping beneficiaries with essential knowledge and skills essential for their successful reintegration into society. The programme underscores RDRC's unwavering dedication to ensuring that each beneficiary receives comprehensive support on their journey towards a brighter future.

Furthermore, RDRC organised a seminar tailored specifically for Phase 71 beneficiaries, aimed at fortifying their reintegration process. Such initiatives not only empower beneficiaries but also reaffirm RDRC's commitment to providing holistic support at every stage of the reintegration journey.

As you peruse through the pages of this newsletter, we invite you to immerse yourself in the stories of resilience, hope, and transformation. Each article reflects the collective efforts of RDRC and its partners in advancing the cause of peace and resilience.

In conclusion, we extend our best wishes to all our readers. May the insights shared within these pages inspire continued dialogue, cooperation, and action towards building a more peaceful and prosperous future for all.

Happy reading.

FP-ICGLR Delegation Witnesses Rwanda's Efforts in Demobilising Former Combatants



On 29 February, 2024, A delegation from the Forum of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR) recently concluded their mission to Rwanda, where they bore witness to the nation's remarkable efforts in reintegrating former combatants into society. Their journey took them to the Mutobo Demobilisation Centre, a crucial hub in Rwanda's strategy for peace and stability.

At the heart of their visit was the observation of Rwanda's ongoing endeavor to transform ex-FDRL combatants into productive members of society. The delegates, comprising MPs from the FP-ICGLR Fact-Finding Mission, were given firsthand insight into the demobilisation process at the Mutobo center.

During their tour, the FP-ICGLR MPs had the opportunity to meet beneficiaries of Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRC). These individuals, currently in phase 71 of the pre-discharge orientation program, shared their stories of transition from armed conflict to civilian life. Many among them had voluntarily surrendered their weapons and returned from the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, illustrating Rwanda's commitment to facilitating the repatriation of its citizens.

Among those who shared their experiences was retired Staff Sergeant NIZANE Anne Marie, who spent nearly 26 years with the FDLR. With courage, she recounted her time in the jungles of eastern DR Congo and delivered a poignant message calling for the remaining members of armed groups to follow suit and return to Rwanda.

Retired Colonel Nshimiyimana Augustin, known as Bora, echoed this sentiment, emphasizing his voluntary return to Rwanda under the leadership of President Kagame. He underscored the national ethos of contribution to Rwanda's rebuilding efforts, highlighting the inclusive approach adopted by the government.

Vice President for Peace and Security of the Forum of the Great Lakes Region, retired Brigadier General Morgan Sitwala, expressed appreciation for the initiatives undertaken at the Mutobo Demobilisation Centre. He extended gratitude to the Rwandan government for its commitment to peace and reconciliation, acknowledging the importance of such endeavors in fostering stability within the region.



RDRC chairperson Hon. Valerie NYIRAHABINEZA thanked the delegation for choosing Mutobo DC as their learning center on demobilization and reintegration process and she said : "The FP-ICGLR delegation's visit not only shed light on Rwanda's efforts in demobilisation and reintegration but also served as a testament to the collaborative approach advocated by regional stakeholders in addressing the challenges of armed conflict in Eastern DR Congo and fostering sustainable peace in the Great Lakes Region.



The FP-ICGLR MPs had the opportunity to meet and discuss with beneficiaries of the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRC).

Rwanda's Demobilisation Efforts Garner Praise from International Delegations



The dawn of 2024 saw a significant moment at the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) as two distinguished delegations, hailing from Mali and South Sudan, embarked on a journey to explore Rwanda's groundbreaking initiatives.

Their destination: the Mutobo Demobilisation Centre, a symbol of Rwanda's resilience and commitment to peace.

Amidst the tranquil surroundings of Mutobo, the Malian team engaged in fruitful discussions with RDRC commissioners, led by Dr. Sidiki Traore, Secretary General of Mali's Ministry of Reconciliation.

Expressing gratitude and admiration, Dr. Traore commended Rwanda's unwavering support in reintegrating former combatants, lauding the nation's efforts in promoting unity and resilience among its citizens.

Meanwhile, the South Sudanese delegation received a warm reception from RDRC Chairperson, Hon. Valerie NYIRAHABINEZA, and her team. Their exploration of Mutobo DC uncovered the centre's pivotal role in demobilising ex-combatants and providing essential skill training in various fields such as construction, masonry, agriculture, and tailoring. The delegation left impressed by Rwanda's comprehensive approach to demobilisation and reintegration.

The visit of these international delegations serves as a testament to Rwanda's enduring commitment to peace and stability. As Mutobo continues to transform ex-combatants into inspiring citizens, its impact resonates far beyond the borders, inspiring nations to emulate Rwanda's success in fostering unity and rebuilding communities torn by conflict.



RDRRC Empowers Beneficiaries towards Socio-Economic Empowerment



In a bid to equip beneficiaries with essential socio-economic opportunities, the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRRC) organised a sensitisation seminar on the 20th and 21st of February 2024. The seminar, held at the Mutobo Demobilisation Centre, focused on phase 70 beneficiaries who were discharged in December 2023.

Partnering with LODA, Mr Jean Claude Rwahama, the Acting Director of the Social Protection Unit, delivered a comprehensive overview emphasising the importance of engaging in governmental initiatives such as the Vision Umurenge Program (VUP) and accessing business support services. These initiatives, integral to ensuring a stable future for Rwandans, were highlighted as avenues for socio-economic advancement. Mr Rwahama also stressed the significance of enrolling in the Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI) for medical coverage and ensuring early childhood education.

Lieutenant Colonel Vianney Higiho, the Regional Reserve Force Commander in Rwanda's Northern Province, addressed the beneficiaries, urging them to unite in the fight against poverty, which he identified as Rwanda's primary adversary.

He underscored the imperative to overcome ignorance, citing it as a barrier to progress.

"Let us wage war against ignorance," he urged, rallying attendees to embrace knowledge as a potent weapon in their journey towards socio-economic empowerment.

The seminar, viewed as a beacon of hope for Rwanda's discharged ex-armed group members, equipped participants with tools and knowledge necessary for a brighter and more prosperous future.

Beneficiaries Ready to Take Charge

Beneficiaries Ready to Take Charge HAKIZIMANA Alexis, expressing gratitude for the seminar, highlighted its value in reinforcing Rwandan culture and self-motivation. He outlined his plans to pursue a welding project, inspired by his training at Mutobo TVET School, and encouraged those still in the jungles of DR Congo to return to Rwanda and contribute to the nation's development.

FURAHA Penina echoed similar sentiments, emphasising the importance of becoming self-employed and seeking support to achieve aspirations. Trained in hairdressing at Mutobo, she aspires to start her own business and urged those in DR Congo to return and participate in Rwanda's reconstruction efforts.

The seminar concluded with beneficiaries empowered and ready to embrace opportunities for self-improvement and contribute to the nation's development.

Former Armed Group Members Find Hope and New Beginnings in Rwanda



In a poignant display of resilience and reconciliation, former members of armed groups returning from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have discovered solace and a fresh start in Rwanda.

The latest phase, Phase 71, of the pre-discharge orientation programme commenced at Mutobo DC in Musanze District on Wednesday, 17th January 2024. This significant event was attended by all RDRRC Commissioners.

Over 29 individuals, comprising former members of various armed groups and their dependents, will undergo an intensive five-month civic education and vocational training skills before their reintegration into communities. Anticipation is high as more returnees are expected to arrive in the coming days.

Upon their arrival in Rwanda, the returnees undergo screening and are segregated from former combatants for tailored pre-discharge orientation programmes.

Notably, this includes provisions for young children accompanying former armed group members.

RDRRC Chairperson Hon. Valerie NYIRAHABINEZA warmly welcomed the returnees, expressing profound satisfaction at their repatriation. She reassured them, urging them not to fear, as they are now in a secure and welcoming environment.

NYIRAHABINEZA emphasised the significance of their return, stating, "I am happy to see you as children of Rwanda who have returned to your motherland. Welcome to Rwanda, and embrace the opportunities that await you after enduring the hardships of the jungles in the DRC."

She further implored the ex-combatants to utilise communication channels to encourage their peers still dwelling in the forests of DRC to return home, highlighting Rwanda's safety and security.

Echoing the sentiment of hope and gratitude, returnees shared their stories of struggle and redemption.

Jeannette UWIMANA recounted the harsh conditions in the forests and contrasted them with the peace and comfort found at the Mutobo centre. "We were living in the forests without basic amenities, but here in Rwanda, we are safe, clean, and well-cared for," she shared.

Similarly, Anaclet NTAKIRUTIMANA reflected on his journey, expressing regret for his past actions and embracing the opportunity for a fresh start. "What I was doing in the jungles was not right. I escaped and returned home voluntarily," he confessed. NTAKIRUTIMANA urged others to follow suit, dispelling the false ideologies instilled in them in the DRC. "Rwanda is safe, and everything they told us was based on lies," he emphasised.

As Rwanda continues its efforts towards unity and reintegration, stories like these underscore the resilience of the human spirit and the promise of a brighter future for all its citizens.



Background

Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) was created in 1997 by a Cabinet decision and approved by a Presidential Decree No.37/01 of 09/04/2002 instituting the Commission in order to support the design, implementation and administration of the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme. The presidential Decree has been repealed by the Law N°50/2015 of 14/12/2015 establishing Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission and determining its responsibilities, organisation and functioning.

Mission

To facilitate the reinsertion and reintegration of the former military member to empower him/her to develop him/herself and contribute to the comprehensive development of the country.

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