



STAND FOR OUR PARENTS

— A S S O C I A T I O N —

OPEN LETTER

To the public, the media and human rights defenders

8 May 2026



To all those who believe in justice, in human dignity and in the respect of fundamental rights,

We are the children, the spouses, the brothers and sisters, the close relatives of persons detained in connection with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and its successor, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. Our parents are currently detained in several African countries. Others remain in Niger, some having been acquitted and released, others having served their sentences and been released. Our parents find themselves in a situation we shall describe further below.

We speak today, publicly, because a decision with far-reaching consequences is being prepared in the silence of chancelleries, and because it seems right that you should be informed of it.

What is happening

United Nations funding for the housing and care of IRMCT detainees is reaching its end. In this context, the option of a transfer to Rwanda — the State directly concerned by the facts adjudicated — is now being mentioned. An official decision could come within the coming weeks.

Our detained parents have, together, formally declared their refusal to be transferred to Rwanda.

Why this refusal

We understand that, at first glance, the public may consider it a formality to complete a sentence in one country or another. But what looks like a simple question of place of enforcement is, in reality, a question of law, of protection, and of dignity.

International law prohibits trying or punishing a person twice for the same facts. It also prohibits transferring a person to a State where they would face a real risk to their fundamental rights. It recognises, in the practice of enforcement of sentences, that the consent of the person and the consideration of their objections are essential elements. It sets aside, where the contemplated State has a direct interest in the outcome of the proceedings, that type of transfer.

Rwanda is the State that joined as civil party in several ICTR proceedings. It therefore has a direct, manifest interest in the enforcement of our parents' sentences. Entrusting custody of the convicted persons to that State would amount to confusing the very roles that international law seeks to keep distinct.

To this must be added factual elements documented over recent years by international and regional organisations: systemic difficulties in the protection of detainees on Rwandan territory, particularly when those persons are perceived as connected with politically sensitive matters.

The parallel situation in Niger — distinct yet linked



Another situation, distinct yet linked, deserves your attention: that of persons acquitted by the ICTR and others who were released after serving their sentences. They were all transferred from Arusha in Tanzania to Niger.

These persons should, on that basis, enjoy all the rights attached to any free person. Yet they have remained for years in an unresolved administrative situation, without effective freedom of movement, without clear status, without prospect.

Several of their companions have died in this state of waiting. The United Nations Security Council, in its Resolution 2740 (2024) — paragraph 7 — expressly calls for durable solutions for these persons. That obligation has not been honoured. We ask that the United Nations find for them a third country willing to receive them and guarantee their fundamental rights, under international guarantee.

What we ask

We ask the United Nations and the States concerned to look at this situation seriously and in good faith, and:

- that the transfer of our detained parents to Rwanda not be envisaged;
- that a lawful solution be put in place without delay for the persons at liberty in Niger;
- that the formal refusals expressed by the detainees themselves be fully taken into account;
- that alternative options — maintaining current arrangements, neutral third State, transfer of administrative control without physical movement, examination of early releases — be examined in good faith.

What we ask of you

We do not ask you to take sides in debates that go beyond the scope of this letter. We ask that you look at the situation as it is, and exercise the role that is yours — whether you are attentive to these questions through your profession, as a journalist, a legal practitioner, a parliamentarian or a human rights defender, or simply as a citizen:

- inform yourself, verify, ask the questions;
- address the institutions concerned, through their proper channels;
- do not let an irreversible decision be taken in silence.

Our parents are human beings. Their dignity, their fundamental rights, their security do not depend on how one looks at their past: they depend on the respect that international law guarantees to every person, without exception.

We are their families. We speak for them because they cannot speak freely. We count on your support.



Done in Brussels, on 8 May 2026.

SPOKESPERSON

Porte-parole

SIGNATURE

Jean De Dieu NSANZABANDI

NAME / NOM

8 May 2026

DATE

Stand For Our Parents

The families of ICTR / IRMCT detainees

C O N T A C T

Stand For Our Parents — Association
contact@standforourparents.org

Freely shareable document — please disseminate widely.