

Victoire Umuhoza Ingabire, AfroAmerica Network Black Woman of Year 2010.

In January 2010, she decided to return from a 16 years exile and run against the dictator of Rwanda, General Paul Kagame, taking what most of the Rwandan observers said were and turned out to be true: grave risks for her and other opposition members' life. Not only was she barred from running in presidential elections, but also her political party was banned, her supporters and associates were persecuted, killed or jailed and her lawyer was thrown in jail. Most importantly, she ended up being arrested and risks life imprisonment, accused of attempts to state security and divisionism.



She, Ms. Victoire Umuhoza Ingabire, has come to represent the face of the victims of the repressive regime of Rwanda. Her troubles epitomize the risks African opposition leaders and democrats who seek to promote democratic values and institutions in their countries run, and the courage some of them are willing to take to change the destiny of their countries.

Ms. Victoire Umuhoza Ingabire, has been trying to make a difference in the lives of her Rwandan fellows for close to two decades. She was born in Rwanda in October 3, 1968 but had been in exile in the Netherlands since 1994, before she returned to Rwanda in January 2010. She is married and a mother of three kids, some still pre-teens.



She started her involvement in Rwandan political affairs in 1997 and has been associated with several political and non political organizations opposed to the current Tutsi ethnic minority Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) led regime. It is after denouncing the dominance of the Rwandan political, social and economical landscape by the small clique of individuals, mostly from the Tutsi minority, that the regime decided to squash her bid for the presidential post. After months of harassment, judicial investigation, arrests, persecution by intelligence and other security services and apparatus, and house arrest she was finally thrown in jail and has been held since in squalid conditions of a solitary confinement. Her persecution has attracted overwhelming worldwide diplomatic, media, and political condemnation. Her American lawyer, Professor Peter Erlinder, who flew to Rwanda just for her defense was also arrested on the charges of divisionism and genocide denial. He spent three weeks in jail and was released only after the intervention by the US Government.

The seemingly arbitrary detention and trumped up and preposterous charges against Ms Victoire Umuhoza Ingabire have led most of the international community to view her as a political prisoner and has further isolated the current Rwandan government led by General Paul Kagame.