



UNITED NATIONS

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

The International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals ("Mechanism") was established on 22 December 2010 by the United Nations Security Council to continue the jurisdiction, rights, obligations and essential functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda ("ICTR") and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia ("ICTY") which closed in 2015 and 2017, respectively.

STATEMENT

REGISTRY

(Exclusively for the use of the media. Not an official document)

Arusha, 23 February 2023

Remarks by Mr. Abubacarr Tambadou Registrar of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

Handover Ceremony of the United Nations Detention Facility 23 February 2023

Hon. Mzee Ramadhan Nyamka, Commissioner General Tanzania Prisons

Hon. John Mongella, Arusha Regional Commissioner

Mr. Peter Anatory, Assistant Commissioner of Prisons, Arusha

Mr. Leonard Burushi Assistant Commissioner of Prisons, Kilimanjaro,

Mr. Charles Mwakasege, Assistant Commissioner of Prisons, Manyara

Ms. Angela Shija, Regional Immigration Officer – Arusha

Representatives of the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Office of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Jonston Weston, Senior Advisor of the ICRC mission in Tanzania

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Colleagues, and friends,

It is my great pleasure to extend a very cordial welcome to you all this morning, at the premises of what is currently still known as the United Nations Detention Facility – the UNDF – here in Arusha. I am honoured and pleased to see so many important stakeholders present here today, to take part in the official handover ceremony of the UNDF back to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania.

On 20 May 1996, the United Nations entered into an Agreement with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the construction and use of a detention facility in Arusha. Since then, the facility has been used to detain persons indicted by the ICTR for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda and Rwandan citizens responsible for genocide and other such violations committed in the territory of neighbouring States, between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994. On 1 October 2015, a few months prior to the closure of the ICTR on 31 December 2015, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, assumed responsibility for the management and operations of the UNDF.

Distinguished Guests,

Today's historic occasion, therefore, started 27 years ago when, in support of the important mandate of the ICTR to pursue international justice for the horrendous crimes that were committed in Rwanda in



1994, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania graciously and generously offered the ICTR an area within the Arusha Prison to serve solely as a detention facility where those indicted by the ICTR and arrested will be brought and detained while awaiting trial by the ICTR or the enforcement of their sentences in third States if convicted. The Government also provided labour and supervisory personnel during the construction of the Facility at no cost. The UNDF was thus designed with 89 individual cells, a kitchen, a clinic, a library and a gymnasium. It served as the first purpose-built detention facility of the United Nations.

Over the next several years since its establishment by the United Nations, the UNDF has played a crucial role and has been an integral part of the international criminal justice system. It ensured detention in compliance with international standards, and contributed to upholding due process through fair criminal proceedings. To this end, the UNDF has supported the fulfilment of the mandates of the ICTR and the Mechanism in bringing justice to the victims of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide.

The first three persons detained at the UNDF arrived on 26 May 1996. They were Jean Paul Akayesu, former Bourgmestre of Taba Commune; Clement Kayishema, a medical doctor and former Prefect of Kibuye region; and George Rutaganda, a former vice-president of the Rwandan Hutu militia known as the Interahamwe. Since then, more than 90 individuals indicted by the ICTR and Mechanism have been detained at the UNDF at different periods of time. These include several high-profile detainees such as Jean Kambanda a former Rwandan Prime Minister, Augustin Bizimungu and Augustin Ndingiriyimana, the Chiefs of Staff of the Rwandan Army and Gendarmerie respectively, and several other Government Ministers and senior officials.

Distinguished Guests,

Today's historic occasion of handing the UNDF back to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania underlines the strong partnership between the Mechanism and its predecessor the ICTR, and the Host State. On behalf of the Mechanism and the Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. Antonio Guterres, I wish to record the sincere gratitude of the United Nations family to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for being a gracious and generous host for the United Nations Detention Facility here in Arusha for the past 27 years. I also wish to acknowledge, with deep appreciation, the support that has been generously provided by regional and local Government authorities here in Arusha, alongside that of the central Government in Dodoma, in facilitating the operations at UNDF. Indeed, it is a demonstration of Tanzania's long-standing commitment to international justice.

The collaboration and mutually beneficial partnership between Tanzania and the Mechanism is also evident through the support of highly skilled Tanzanian Prison and Police Officers deployed to support the UNDF throughout its existence. Around 500 of these officers have provided their assistance to the UNDF over the past 27 years and in the process, have also acquired on-the-job training in handling detainees with the highest international standards. Some of them have also received training in First Aid, firefighting techniques, team building and confidence building in the course of their deployment at the UNDF. More recently, in the run up to this handover ceremony today, the Mechanism organised a three-day refresher training programme for Tanzanian Prison Managers and potential Prison Managers, from 20 to 22 February 2023, as another token demonstration of our appreciation. This training

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programme focused on international standards of prisons management in the context of prisons in Africa. Thirty (30) officers and trainers from Prison training institutions were in attendance. I am particularly pleased to note that the officers came from twenty-three (23) different Prisons across Tanzania, including from Mbeya, Lindi, Dar es Salaam, Iringa, Tanga and Dodoma, to name a few. We will have an opportunity, later this morning, to witness the issuance of Certificates of attendance for this training.

Distinguished Guests,

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The ICTR, and subsequently the Mechanism, have partnered with the International Committee of the Red Cross - the ICRC - throughout the operations of the UNDF. The ICRC conducted periodic inspections of the conditions of detention at the UNDF to ensure adherence to the international standards of detention. I highly appreciate the work undertaken by the ICRC in support of the mandate of the Mechanism and in particular, the ICRC's commitment to the welfare of the detainees at the UNDF. We are also grateful to them for their partnership and strong support over the years.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all staff associated with the UNDF facilities throughout its operation, including successive Commanding Officers and their dedicated staff, past and present, as well as the cooks and cleaners associated with the UNDF over the years. Collectively, they have made operations at the UNDF a success. My particular thanks goes to Mr. Suraj Olarinde, the last serving Commanding Officer of the UNDF, who is here with us today, and whose dedication and commitment to our mandate has been commendable in the run up to this final moment.

Today, Distinguished Guests, we complete what I consider to be a historical mission. The UNDF in Arusha, Tanzania, has been an instrumental component of the international justice system. While it was anticipated that one of the last individuals to be indicted by the ICTR, Mr. Félicien Kabuga, would be detained here while being tried at the Mechanism premises in Arusha, this was not meant to be. With no other individuals indicted by the ICTR for statutory core crimes to be tried by the Mechanism, the handover of the UNDF back to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania on 28 February 2023, will mark the official closure of the UNDF in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, by the United Nations and will represent the closure of an important chapter of the Mechanism's mandate.

I thank you all once again for coming to share this historic occasion with us today.

Asante sana.