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By Jorge Engels and Jennifer Hansler, CNN

## Blinken raised 'serious concerns' about human rights with Kagame in Rwanda

*Е. Блінкен висловив П. Кагаме «серйозне занепокоєння» щодо прав людини в Руанді*

*Держсекретар США Ентоні Блінкен заявив, що під час зустрічі з президентом Руанди Полом Кагаме в столиці Кігалі він висловив «серйозну стурбованість», пов'язану з правами людини, а також питаннями регіональної напруженості з сусідньою Демократичною Республікою Конго. Е. Блінкен окремо згадав випадок громадянина Руанди та постійного жителя США Пола Русесабагіни та висловив стурбованість відсутністю наданих йому гарантій справедливого судового розгляду. Е. Блінкен на прес-конференції з міністром закордонних справ Руанди Вінсентом Бірутою заявив, що «люди в кожній країні повинні мати можливість висловлювати свої погляди, не боячись залякування, ув'язнення, насильства чи будь-яких інших форм репресій».*

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/08/11/africa/blinken-human-rights-rwanda-intl/index.html>



*US Secretary of State Antony Blinken*

(CNN) US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday said he had raised "serious concerns" related to human rights as well as issues about regional tensions with the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo during a meeting with Rwandan President Paul Kagame in the capital Kigali.

Speaking at a press conference with his Rwandan counterpart on Thursday, Blinken said he raised "serious concerns" about human rights during his earlier meeting with Kagame, including the case of Rwandan citizen and US permanent resident Paul Rusesabagina.

"We believe people in every country should be able to express their views without fear of intimidation, imprisonment, violence or any other forms of repression," Blinken said at a press conference with Rwandan Foreign Minister Vincent Biruta.

"[We] underscored our concerns about the lack of fair trial guarantees provided to him," Blinken added, referring to Rusesabagina's case.



### [US senator questions aid to Rwanda over human rights, role in Congo](#)

"We continue to urge the government to address concerns about the legal protections afforded to him in this case and establish safeguards to prevent similar outcomes in the future," Blinken added later, responding to a journalist's question.

Rusesabagina, who inspired the film 'Hotel Rwanda,' was [convicted of terrorism-related charges and sentenced to 25 years in prison](#) by a court in Kigali in September 2021. The US State Department previously said he was wrongfully detained, according to a statement released in July.

Anaïse Kanimba, one of Rusesabagina's daughters, told CNN following Blinken's meetings with Rwandan government officials, "We trust that if the US relationship with Rwanda is strong enough to be deserving of financial and trusted cooperation, then it is strong enough to push for the release of our father on humanitarian grounds."

In a conversation prior to Blinken's visit to Kigali, Kanimba told CNN that the family has strong concerns about Rusesabagina's health. She said he was believed to have had a stroke three or four months ago, and without proper treatment, he could have another one.

"He's a 68 year old man who's been in prison for two years now under tough conditions. He's also a cancer survivor," she said.

"So anything can happen to him and they don't have a proper medical care for him, they're not willing to give it to him over there, and so that's why we want the Secretary of State to fully advocate for our dad so he can come back home and get proper medical attention," Kanimba said.



### [Paul Kagame is seen by some as a liberator. But critics say Rwanda is only safe for those who toe the line](#)

Rwandan Foreign Minister Biruta said Rusesabagina's judicial process had followed Rwandan and international laws.

"We will request our partners to respect Rwanda's sovereignty and Rwanda's laws and its institutions," Biruta said.

Blinken also said he had raised with Kagame the issue of "credible reports" relating to Rwanda's alleged support for rebel group M23 and allegations of Rwandan forces being sent into neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo.

"My message to both [DRC] President Tshisekedi and President Kagame has been the same. Any support or cooperation with any armed group in eastern DRC endangers local communities and regional stability. And every country in the region must respect the territorial integrity of the others," Blinken said at the press conference.

Rwanda has previously denied allegations by Congo's government that it backs M23 and that it has sent soldiers over the border, according to previous CNN reporting. M23 has also denied it receives Rwandan support.

Blinken added that Tshisekedi and Kagame have agreed to engage in direct talks with each other and that both leaders are ready to restart talks with armed groups.

Later on Thursday, Blinken participated in a wreath laying ceremony at the Kigali Genocide Memorial to commemorate the victims of the 1994 genocide.