

EURAC general assembly November 2010 in Berlin

„Democratic space in Rwanda after the presidential elections of August 2010“

26.11.2010, 9:30 -11:30

Panelists: Kerstin Müller (MP Green Party), Jean-Marie Kavumbagu (LDGL), Lars Waldorf (Academician)

Moderator: Kris Berwouts (EurAc)

- Support of the peace building process in Rwanda must come along with an open and critical dialogue with the Rwandan government.
- The Genocide laws (for instance law 18 on Divisionism) do not conform to the international human rights standards as does the Gacaca-Processes.
- Human Rights Organizations have major difficulties to do networking and their work in Rwanda.
- Democracy deficits are visible in Rwanda: detention and persecution of opposition leaders, critical journalists and media censorship. The government restricts press freedom.
- In the moment Rwanda is on the way to become a one-party state. Therefore the establishing and opening for a pluralistic democracy is a must in Rwanda.
- The Rwandan government should come to terms with its past in a transparent and comprehensive way.
- Since Kagame lost support from his former political allies his political space and support is going to be limited. As consequence President Kagame is becoming increasingly an autocrat. Since 2003/04 the inner circle of power has narrowed (for instance Ex- ally general Kayumba is in the opposition now).
- The repression targeted in particular against the Green Party and journalist. Parts of them were former RPF- supporters, now they are seen as traitors.
- The donor countries have a long time prioritized the economic growth of the country and thereby the development fundamentally mistaken. Poverty and social disparities are still existent and do not decline.

Recommendations:

- The Rwandan government should enter into an open and critical dialogue with its critics and political opponents.
- The international slogan for Rwanda: “Development first, democracy second” cannot be maintained anymore.
- Donor money for Rwanda should not be completely stopped. Rather should the civil society and independent media be strengthened and protected by international financial support and not governmental structures as the national reconciliation commission.
- Donors need to limit the budget support if good governance structures are not given.
- International political measures und pressure for mending the controversial laws in Rwanda (law for NGOs, law on Divisionism...).