

# EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## Washington DC



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## President Kagame addresses the Nigerian Governors' Executive Leadership Retreat

Saturday, 26 August - President Kagame attended the Nigerian Governors' Executive Leadership Retreat, organized by the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF) and the United Nations Development Programme UNDP.



President Kagame delivered remarks and participated in an interactive session on

“Leadership in Shaping the Future of Pan-Africanism and Integration in a Changing World.” The retreat, which convened 19 Nigerian State Governors for 3 days in Kigali, focused on digital and socio-economic transformation, local revenue generation, managing diversity and social cohesion, urbanization and climate change.

## President Kagame receives President Rajoelina on Official Visit

Monday, 7 August - President Kagame received President Andry Rajoelina of Madagascar for a tête-à-tête discussion and bilateral talks together with their respective delegations to deliberate on the status of bilateral cooperation between Rwanda and Madagascar.



## Foreign Correspondents in Washington gain insight into Rwanda's Media Landscape

On August 3, 2023, the Embassy of Rwanda in Washington D.C. hosted a delegation of 34 foreign correspondents. The group was led by Eileen O'Reilly, President of the National Press Club, a media fraternity in Washington D.C.

This visit offered an opportunity to explore Rwanda's transformative journey, with a particular focus on its media landscape. Ambassador Mathilde provided insights into Rwanda's historical trajectory and its recovery after the genocide. She highlighted the role of media during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and how hate speech was propagated through media channels.



[More pictures](#)

## President Kagame opens Giants of Africa Festival



Sunday, 13 August - President Kagame and First Lady Jeannette Kagame alongside Masai Ujiri, Toronto Raptors president and vice-chair and Giants of Africa co-founder, opened the Giants of Africa Youth Basketball Festival which brought together more than 2000 youth from 16 African countries in celebration of Giants of Africa's 20th anniversary.

The Giants of Africa Festival aims to inspire and encourage young people from across the African continent, while acknowledging their immense potential and the collective effort to create positive change.

## President Kagame officiates First RICA graduation

Tuesday, 8 August - President Kagame alongside Howard G. Buffet attended the inaugural graduation ceremony at the Rwanda Institute of Conservation Agriculture (RICA), where 75 students received their Bachelor's degrees in Conservation Agriculture.

The Howard G. Buffett Foundation (HGBF) has pledged \$170 million for the establishment and initial operations of RICA's campus. Buffet has confirmed his foundation's commitment to support RICA until it becomes financially independent.

60 percent of the graduating class are business owners with ventures spanning from service provision, input manufacturing, to seed production. The remaining graduates have either secured employment in companies or plan to further their education. President Kagame also formally inaugurated RICA, which admits 84 students each year and currently hosts a full roster of 250 students.

RICA, in collaboration with One Acre Fund, has established a Seed Hub—a research center designed to address the challenges of Rwanda's seed industry. The center will start operations in September 2023 with 16 trainees, half of whom will be RICA graduates and the rest from the seed industry. RICA has also teamed up with Volkswagen Rwanda to test the functioning of their electric tractor prototype.



## Ambassador Mathilde Mukantabana receives US Ambassador Designate to Rwanda



August 16, Ambassador Mathilde Mukantabana received US Ambassador Designate to Rwanda, Mr. Eric Needler at the Embassy for a courtesy call.

They both exchanged on defense, education, health, prospects for aviation, expanding tourism, followed-up on nuclear energy and potential partnerships in the field, professional fellowships (such as the MECEA program, Media fellowship), as well as followed-up on opening a General Consul in California.

Both Ambassadors also agreed to collaborate on conveying current developments from Rwanda, and facilitating each other's work in both capitals.

The Senate confirmed Eric Kneedler as Ambassador-Designate to Rwanda on July 27, 2023. A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister Counselor, Eric previously served as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi from January 2021 to August 2022 and Deputy Chief of Mission from April 2019 to January 2021.

Eric began his assignment in Nairobi in 2017 as the Counselor for Political Affairs.

## US Journalists briefed on the RDF transformation journey and regional security dynamics



Sunday, 27 August - A group of US journalists visited the Rwanda Defence Force Headquarters as part of their tour in Rwanda.

The Head IMC, Brig Gen Patrick Karuretwa and the RDF Spokesperson, Brig Gen Ronald Rwivanga briefed them on the RDF transformation journey and regional security dynamics.

## Rwandans in the US celebrate UMUGANURA

On August 19, 2023, Ambassador Mathilde Mukantabana joined the United States Rwandan Community in Seattle, Washington State, to celebrate Umuganura, the "National Harvest Day". The event drew Rwandans, friends of Rwanda, as well as guests including representatives from the Bill Gates Foundation and the former president of Washington's Jewish community.

Ambassador Mukantabana expressed her admiration for the community's exceptional efforts in organizing such a remarkable event that beautifully encapsulated Rwanda's history of sharing the harvest.

"I extend my heartfelt gratitude for what can easily be termed the finest Umuganura celebration we have ever experienced within our community" she warmly remarked.

The ambassador went on to acknowledge and appreciate community members who generously contribute their expertise in diverse areas, recognizing that this act of knowledge-sharing exemplifies a contemporary way of embracing the Umuganura spirit.



Immaculate Busingye, a member of the Rwandan community, took the opportunity to share insights regarding financial literacy. She underscored the significance of prudent financial planning, including savings and insurance strategies. She cautioned against finding oneself in a financial crisis during critical moments. She articulated that proactive steps taken while alive can prevent families from resorting to tedious fundraising processes for unexpected expenses, such as burial costs.

Mr. Yehoyada Mbangukira, the President of the United States Rwandan Community Abroad, expressed that the National Harvest Day embodies how Rwandans contribute to the development of the places they reside, not only in Rwanda but also in the US. He commended the Rwandan community in Washington State, led by Jean-Paul Kamali, for their efforts and encouraged other Rwandan communities to take inspiration from their example.

“Today the Rwandan community of Seattle has proven to us the beauty of Rwanda, our culture, and unity stemming from collaboration towards building the Rwanda we want.”

The gathering was entertained with cultural performances, featuring traditional dance troupes and plays that portrayed Rwanda's heritage and values.

Umuganura is a Rwandan cultural festival in which communities come together to share the harvest. It includes celebrating the start of the harvest within each community across all the 60 plus agricultural value chains in Rwanda. During this year's celebrations, citizens affected by the recent floods and landslides were given cows.

### **Ambassador visits Starbucks Coffee in Seattle, WA**

On August 21st - Ambassador Mathilde Mukantabana visited the headquarters of Starbucks Coffee in Seattle Washington. The visit was on the sidelines of the celebration of Umuganura (National Harvest Day) in Seattle by the Rwandan community.

During the visit, Ambassador Mathilde and the commercial attache at the Embassy met with Ms. Michelle Burns, Executive Vice President, Global Coffee, Tea and Cocoa and others from the leadership team. They discussed “Farmer Support Center in Rwanda”, a starbucks commitment to the future of coffee. The discussed also touched base on the restart of the “Origin Experience” travel for Starbucks partners to Rwanda.

Starbucks Coffee has established a number of partnerships with government organizations.



## RWANDA GOVERNANCE BOARD

Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) is a public institution established by law N°56/2016 of 16/12/2016. RGB's mandate is to promote good governance principles, to monitor service delivery across public and private sector institutions, to promote media sector and advise the government on its functioning, to conduct research on governance, to preserve and protect Home-Grown Solutions and to register Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and Political Organisations (POs) but also to grant legal personality to Civil Society Organisations.

### The key functions of the Rwanda Governance Board

- 1.RGB conducts research and engages with the relevant institutions to discuss the findings, promote ownership, and explore strategies for addressing identified issues, ultimately aiming to enhance performance.
- 2.RGB annually publishes two key documents: the Rwanda Governance Scorecard (RGS) and the Citizen Report Card (CRC). Additionally, the Rwanda Civil Society Barometer is also published by RGB.
- 3.The RGS evaluates the state of governance across eight pillars, which include the Rule of Law, Political Rights and Civil Liberties, Participation and Inclusiveness, Safety and Security, Investing in Human and Social Development, Anti-Corruption, Transparency and Accountability, Quality of Service Delivery, and Economic and Corporate Governance. Among these pillars, Safety and Security has demonstrated the highest performance, reaching a score of 95.53% in 2022.
- 4.RGB has been entrusted with the responsibility of preserving, protecting, and promoting Rwanda's Heritage and Governance Systems (HGSS). Additionally, it has been granted the authority to certify that the practices implemented in Rwanda genuinely qualify as HGSSs. Currently, there are 12 HGSSs that are locally protected, including Abunzi Committees, Gacaca, Girinka, Imihigo, Ndi Umunyarwanda, Ubudehe, Umuganda, Umwihero, Umushyikirano, Kwita Izina, Itorero, and Abajyanama b'Ubuzima. Furthermore, there are three HGSSs that have international protection, namely Abunzi, Imihigo, and Umushyikirano.
5. RGB conducts a service delivery campaign called "Nkuwikorera," aimed at promoting and increasing awareness among service providers and recipients. During this campaign, the participants are educated about the significance and role of effective service delivery in the country's development.
- 6.RGB is responsible for the coordination, monitoring, and capacity building of the media sector. In partnership with various stakeholders, RGB aims to promote a professional, independent, and sustainable media sector. The 2021 edition indicates that the overall development of the media sector in Rwanda is ranked at 80.6%. This includes efforts to enhance access to information and foster an environment conducive to media growth.

## RWANDA GOVERNANCE BOARD

7. RGB consistently offers financial support to Civil Society and Faith-Based Organisations, Political Organisations, and media organisations to sustain their operations. This support has been particularly beneficial in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely affected these organisations that were already facing financial sustainability challenges.

8. RGB has established an online system called “e-Imiryango” to facilitate the registration, monitoring, and reporting of National Non- Governmental Organisations (NNGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs). This electronic management system streamlines the processes involved in managing and overseeing these organisations.

9. RGB consistently receives unqualified audit opinions on the utilisation of the budget allocated by the State and for projects. This applies to the financial statement audit, compliance audit, and value for money audit. Moreover, the publications released by RGB are frequently utilised by the Parliament to engage with various institutions, addressing the research findings and ensuring accountability.

10. RGB regularly hosts delegations from diverse African countries who are primarily interested in understanding the distinctive aspects of RGB’s work in promoting Good Governance, including its status, tools, and approaches. These visitors also display a keen interest in Rwanda’s strategies for combating corruption, monitoring service delivery quality, ensuring accountability among public servants, and the role of Home Grown Solutions in the country’s development.

### Rwandan Peacekeepers under UNMISS decorated with UN Medals

Thursday, 10 August - Rwanbatt-3 and Rwanda Aviation Unit 11 peacekeepers serving under the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) were decorated with UN medals for their contribution to peacekeeping and security in South Sudan.



### Rwanda's Constitution published

Friday, 4 August - In a special official gazette, the Ministry of Justice announced the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda after both chambers of the parliament examined and approved the proposed changes to the constitution’s provisions related to the parliamentary and presidential elections.

Read the constitution [here](#).



# FC BAYERN AND VISIT RWANDA AGREE PARTNERSHIP UNTIL 2028

Sunday, 27 August – German football club Bayern Munich announced a five-year football development and tourism promotion partnership with Visit Rwanda.

The five-year deal partnership, unveiled during FC Bayern's first home game of the season, will see the club work specifically with Rwanda's Ministry of Sports to set up a football academy to strengthen the development of football in the country.

In addition, the club will display Visit Rwanda branding on matchday LED boards at the club's 75,000-seater Allianz Arena and different activities will be organised to promote tourism and investment opportunities in Rwanda.

Jan-Christian Dreesen, FC Bayern Chief Executive Officer, said: "I am very pleased with this collaboration agreed upon until the summer of 2028. FC Bayern can become active on the African continent and gather important experiences.

The new platinum partnership is aligned with long-term goals. We will promote 'Visit Rwanda' and help Rwanda grow in sports with projects for youth football. These are challenging and responsible tasks. Africa is a continent of opportunities. For FC Bayern, this is the next important step in internationalisation."



H.E. President Paul Kagame, graced the final stage of the Tour du Rwanda with his presence.



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