

Rwanda wins UN Security Council seat despite rebel support claims

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USPA News - The United Nations General Assembly on Thursday elected Rwanda to one of the five rotational seats on the UN Security Council, despite recent reports which accuse Rwanda of actively supporting a rebel group in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The 193-member UN General Assembly elected Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, South Korea and Rwanda for rotational seats from January 2013 through December 2014. The newly-elected members will replace Colombia, Germany, India, Portugal and South Africa, whose terms end on December 31. But Rwanda's selection is controversial as new reports have claimed the Rwandan and Ugandan governments are actively supporting a rebel group known as the March 23 Movement (M23).

The eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has witnessed increased fighting in recent months between Congolese armed forces and the M23, which is composed of renegade soldiers who mutinied in April. Rwanda and Uganda have both strongly denied the latest reports. "No matter what haters say [and] do; [always] justice and truth will prevail," Rwandan President Paul Kagame said on his official Twitter account on Thursday, commenting on the UN vote. "Sometimes it just requires a bit of good fight for all that..!!!" Rwandan Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Minister Louise Mushikiwabo thanked the 148 UN member states who voted in favor of a rotational seat for the African country. "We particularly thank our friends and allies throughout Africa for their overwhelming support," she said. Rwanda last served on the UN Security Council in 1994-95, which coincided with the Rwandan genocide that began in April 1994. An estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slain over the course of about 100 days, following the deaths of then-Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana and his Burundian counterpart Cyprien Ntaryamira. They both died when their plane was brought down as it prepared to land in Kigali. "The contrast could not be sharper between that previous tenure -- when a genocidal government occupied a prized Security Council seat as its agents waged genocide back home -- and the Rwanda of today: a nation of peace, unity, progress and optimism," Mushikiwabo said on Thursday. The foreign minister said Rwanda's violent past will enable them to offer a unique perspective on matters of war and peace at the UN Security Council. "Working with fellow members, Rwanda will draw on its experience to fight for the robust implementation of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine that demands that the world takes notice -- and action -- when innocent civilians face the threat of atrocities at the hands of their governments," she explained. Mushikiwabo also promised that Rwanda will seek opportunities to work with fellow members to ensure it is responsive and reflective of the views and aspirations of the developing world, in particular Africa. "The world is undergoing a period of exciting but uncertain change. Africa is not just growing economically, but our vision of ourselves and the contribution we can make to the world is also expanding," she said. During Thursday's vote, Argentina won its seat with 182 votes, Australia with 140 votes, Luxembourg with 131 votes and South Korea with 149 votes. Cambodia, Bhutan and Finland failed to secure two-year seats on the Council, which has the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD

483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS

contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

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