

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY GERVAIS RUFYIKIRI ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING CEREMONY OF COMMAND POST EXERCISE CODENAMED “**USHIRIKIANO IMARA 2013**”, AT MUZINDA BARRACKS, BURUNDI, 13TH -26TH OCTOBER 2013

Bubanza, october 18th, 2013.

Honorable Ministers;

Honorable Secretary General of the East African Community;

Excellencies Ambassadors representing your countries in Burundi;

Governor of Bubanza province;

Chiefs of Defense Forces from EAC Member States;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All protocol observed.

1. It is a pleasure for the Republic of Burundi for being honored to host this important event: The East African Community Command Post Exercise (CPX) codenamed “**USHIRIKIANO IMARA**” which involves all Armed Forces, Police Forces, Prisons, Migrations, Civilians and other key stakeholders of military operations.
2. On behalf of His Excellency Pierre NKURUNZIZA, President of the Republic of Burundi and Commander in Chief of Burundi National Defense Forces, who has graciously honoured me by sending me to deliver this message, I would like to welcome all of you both military and non-military in this important occasion where our Armed Forces and other security agents meet in order to build the cohesion through exercises.
3. I wish all of you a pleasant stay in our country and fruitful work. Your presence in Burundi is an outstanding sign of cordial relations that link our countries and a proof that East African Community is on the right way working under one destiny.

4. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the East African Community (EAC) member States for having sent their delegations in this mandatory appointment. I also recognize and appreciate the success of previous exercises of this nature held in other member States.

Your Excellencies;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

5. The Exercise **"USHIRIKIANO IMARA"** is one of the initiatives that cement the East African Community integration process and has been planned and implemented to harmonize defense and security matters, as it was agreed by East African Community Partner States in their Memorandum of Understanding on Defense. I seize this opportunity to thank very sincerely and congratulate all the organizers of this event. I wish them every success.
6. What is going to be done is an exercise commanded by military section. It is for this reason that today's event is occurring here in Muzinda Barracks and not in one of our usual public places. Therefore, the Republic of Burundi through the High Command of the Burundi National Defense Forces will also be attentive to provide any possible assistance that may be required during this exercise.
7. These activities will undoubtedly reinforce skills of our Armed Forces and build their capacities in order to resolve the evolving security challenges. Among those challenges, we can mention civil wars, terrorism, robbery, human traffic, anti-government strikes which may result in insurgency, mutiny, religious conflicts and natural disasters which require particular attention from military and non-military forces.
8. The challenges rising from Science and Technologies development also need to be integrated in this kind of exercises although the ability of logistics to provide the appropriate equipment is still posing some constraints in our countries.
9. EAC member States share a lot regarding their geographical situation. In fact, whatever happens in Burundi may happen in any one of the member States and it is now the time to study and understand every challenge that may occur and know how to deal with it. Together with the capacity

building of our Armed Forces, these exercises will be more successful if they result in establishing cohesion and solidarity among our Forces.

10. The future trends of the East African Community are to have one Currency, one Federal Government and one Defense System. It is from this aspect that our Armed Forces have conducted series of exercises within our respective member States in order to get the required skills to accomplish whatever task assigned to them.
11. Though our Armed Forces are in a right truck to gain the required skills to face security challenges that may be encountered by our respective countries; the success will also depend on their credibility. The experience has shown that in many political conflicts some officers favor conflicts instead of peace and national brotherhood. Some very high ranked officers have been initiating political chaos by persuading the population on disobeying government policies. Nowadays, the African community in general and the East African Community in particular are satisfied with the achievements and the loyal behavior of their Armed Forces. Thus, we encourage them to continue on the same path to consolidate peace, security, stability, democracy, human rights and development in our community and all over the world.
12. To conclude, I would like to invite all participants to be active and to do their best so as to find solutions to challenges mentioned earlier. On behalf of the Government of Burundi, I would like to take this opportunity to address my condolences to our brothers from Kenya for loss of lives caused by terrorist attack in West Gate Shopping Mall in Nairobi last month. **May I request you to stand up and take one minute of silence to pay tribute to the victims of that bloody attack.** I also congratulate our brothers from Uganda for the celebration of the fifty-one years of their Independence.
13. Once more, I thank the East African Community member States for sending participants and assure you that the Government of Burundi will spare no efforts for the success of this event. It is by these words that I declare **the East African Community Command Post Exercise "USHIRIKIANO IMARA 2013" officially open.**

Thank you very much for your kind attention!