



PUBLIC STATEMENT

Subject: Clarification on Organizational Position and Disassociation from Mr. Bahati Ghislain

“RELON-KENYA Condemns Misrepresentation, Reaffirms Neutrality, and Strengthens Governance Commitments...”

Nairobi, Kenya – 17th of July, 2025

The Refugee-Led Organizations Network of Kenya (**RELON-KENYA**) acknowledges the resignation of Mr. Bahati Ghislain from his position as Chairman of the Board, effective immediately, following the public circulation of a photograph that has sparked concern within our community and beyond.

The image, which shows Mr. Ghislain in the company of individuals affiliated with the M23/AFC rebel group at Mahama Refugee Camp in Rwanda—regardless of the context of academic research—has resulted in reputational risk and public misinterpretation, falsely linking him and, by extension, RELON-KENYA to armed rebel groups.

We wish to make it unequivocally clear: RELON-KENYA condemns and disassociates itself from any actual or perceived affiliation with armed groups, including those listed under the Kenya Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2023, and any entity that operates in violation of international humanitarian law and principles.

RELON Kenya is founded upon and remains committed to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence, and humanity. Our mandate as a refugee-led network is to promote peace, protection, and dignity for displaced persons in Kenya and across the region, and we will not tolerate any action—intentional or otherwise—that compromises this mission.

In light of this incident, the Board of RELON-KENYA is taking the following immediate steps:

1. Strengthening Internal Governance:

We are initiating a thorough review of our governance framework, including the development and enforcement of a Code of Conduct and Ethics for Board members, staff, and affiliated representatives.

2. Zero-Tolerance Policy:

We are instituting a Zero-Tolerance Policy on any engagement, collaboration, or appearance that could be interpreted as supportive of armed groups, rebel movements, or entities sanctioned under Kenyan or international law.

3. Mandatory Training:

All representatives of RELON-KENYA will undergo mandatory training on humanitarian principles, political neutrality, conflict sensitivity, and legal compliance under Kenyan national law and global standards.

We appreciate Mr. Ghislain's prior service to the organization but firmly stress that his actions and affiliations during his academic engagements were personal and did not represent or involve RELON-KENYA in any form.

RELON-KENYA remains fully committed to transparency, peacebuilding, and lawful humanitarian advocacy. We thank our partners, communities, and stakeholders for their continued support and reaffirm our promise to uphold the highest standards of integrity in all that we do.

The person in question has never received any financial support from RELON-KENYA in any form. Also RELON-KENYA is happy to take any measures to ensure partners and collaborators that there is no association with this person.

This statement is issued by:

The Board of Directors
Refugee-Led Organizations Network of Kenya (RELON-KENYA ASSOCIATION)
Nairobi, Kenya

Dated: 17 July 2025

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