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His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta
President of the Republic of Kenya
Office of the President
Harambee House
NAIROBI

16th February, 2017

Dear Mr. President

RE: RECOGNITION AND REGISTRATION OF THE MAKONDE COMMUNITY

The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) is a premier Non-Governmental human rights organizations with a mandate of entrenching human rights centred governance values at all levels. We work and partner with many communities and stakeholders-both state and non-state actors in addressing emerging and historical injustices in the society.

The KHRC is grateful for the leadership that Your Excellency has provided in resolving the problem of statelessness that members of the Makonde community have faced in Kenya for decades. In doing so, your government resolved a problem that all other governments before yours had overlooked and neglected.

The KHRC, together with other civil society organisations working at the coast, has been responsible in mobilising and organising the Makonde community to seek official recognition as Kenyan citizens, and as part of this, we were responsible for organising and managing the trek by the Makonde from Kwale to Nairobi which culminated in their meeting on 13th October with you at State House, Nairobi.

We are grateful that you made time to meet with the Makonde trekkers when they reached Nairobi, and also for the fact that you provided decisive leadership on how their issue should be addressed.

We commend the support and cooperation that we have received from members of your administration towards giving effect to your directive for the registration of the Makonde as Kenyan citizens. In particular, officials from the Department of Immigration and those from the

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An independent non-profit organization with a mandate of enhancing human rights centered governance at all levels.

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National Registration Bureau worked tirelessly towards meeting the December deadline that you had provided in ensuring that the Makonde community had their citizenship registered.

We are grateful that in addition to addressing their statelessness, you also directed affirmative action measures to bring members of the Makonde community to the same level as other Kenyan citizens is still ongoing. The affirmative action measures in question include resolving their land grievances, providing the community with employment opportunities in the National Police Service, Kenya Defence Forces, and their inclusion in the country's social protection programmes. Your leadership saw the commencement of the registration process for the Makonde Community after previous failed attempts under three successive governments. The KHRC will continue working with officials in your government towards giving effect to this directive.

We would also like to bring to your attention the fact that your leadership in resolving the Makonde issue has been noticed by the African Union. During its 59th session in Banjul, in the Gambia, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights recognised Kenya as providing best practice in resolving the problem of statelessness which afflicts many countries around the continent.

The Commission would be grateful to partner with relevant officials from your administration in exploring ways in which your leadership on the issue of statelessness can be projected in the African continent in a sustainable manner.

Finally, as you are aware, there are other stateless communities in the country that have not received the attention that your government has given the Makonde. Again, the Commission will continue working with officials in your government to give effect to your commitment to also give these communities the benefits of official recognition.

Yours faithfully


GEORGE KEGORO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Cc:

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