

Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete

AfroAmerica Network Black Man of 2013



Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania is considered as one of the most influential among the current African leaders. In fact, along with Angolan President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and South African President Jacob Zuma, Jaya Kikwete is perhaps the most important president of modern day Black Africa. The three presidents have become the wise people the international community consults before any major action

regarding Central, Eastern and Southern Africa. In 2013, Jakaya Kikwete has become the center of the World attention, and has left a mark on the continent and the international community.

In May 2013, he dared to challenge three presidents of his neighboring countries: Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Uganda, when he openly proposed a roadmap for peace in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. He did not do it behind closed doors, during a one-to-one meeting with each of the three presidents. He did it in front of more than 11 African presidents and heads of state and while celebrating the most important day for the African Continent: at the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Organization of African Unity celebrated this weekend in Addis Abeba. His proposal generated heated debates among and hate speech from Rwandan leaders. However, this did not daunt him.



In late May- early June 2013, President Jakaya Kikwete was a star at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V), an event held every five years since 1993. He was received with the highest honors by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. He was the first to be received at the Prime Minister 's official residence in Tokyo on May 30, 2013.



A half year earlier, in December 2012, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited three countries. He had chosen Tanzania, along with South Africa, and Congo.

In September 2013, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete arrived in Ontario after a two-day visit to the United States, that took him from California on the West coast to Washington, DC, on the East coast. In Washington, DC, he was warmly welcomed by members of the US Congress.

After Canada, the Tanzanian President flew to New York City where he attended the United Nations General Assembly. On September 24, 2013, The Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete and his wife Salma Kikwete met the US President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama in New York City. Afterwards, he was received by Melinda Gates of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He then flew to Europe to meet by several leaders.

However, among all the signs that highlight the growing influence of the Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, the visit of Tanzania by the US President in July 2013 is a hall mark. While addressing the Tanzanian people and the World, US President Barack Obama Said:



“Regionally, I thanked President Kikwete for Tanzania’s contribution to security, including its peacekeepers in Darfur and the Congo. On the Congo, we agreed that all parties need to implement their commitments under the Framework for Peace, that armed groups need to lay down their arms, and human rights abusers need to be held accountable. And I very much want to commend President Kikwete as well for the leadership role that he’s played in the Southern African Development Community on the issue of Zimbabwe”.