

15 April 2013

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić,
President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Annual Commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Madam Foreign Minister,
Distinguished Guests,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The staggering horrors that took place in Rwanda about nineteen years ago profoundly shocked the conscience of mankind. In some one hundred days of savage anarchy, more than 800,000 people were ruthlessly murdered, as a great evil befell the beautiful ‘land of a thousand hills.’

We come together this evening, at a solemn ceremony of commemoration, to honor the victims of the Rwanda genocide, and to show solidarity with its survivors widows without husbands, orphans deprived of their parents, brethren robbed of their siblings, and to all the others who were physically, sexually or psychologically assaulted during the months of infamy.

May their resilience and dignity serve as an inspiration to us all.

The memories of those terrible days remain powerful in our collective consciousness, calling to mind what is written in Scripture:

They behaved like men wielding axes
to cut through a thicket of trees.
They smashed all [who were around]
with their axes and hatchets.

In the years which have followed, Hutus and Tutsis have managed to come together with a renewed sense of purpose. Led by President Paul Kagame, the people of Rwanda have joined hands to build a House of justice and prosperity on a foundation of unity and reconciliation.

They remain committed to ensure that vengeance is truly forsaken, and that the ‘axes and hatchets’ stay at rest for good.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The reconstruction has been long and difficult, but the results of the recovery are now clearly visible a tribute to the strength and perseverance of a great nation, steadfastly devoted to live freely and securely in a country where the rule of law reigns supreme and those responsible for suffering are held to account.

As President of the General Assembly, I salute Rwanda's recent achievements, informed by the vision of communities living side by side, and driven by the dedication to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

Thank you for your attention.