



15th Commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide

Statement by

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To the United Nations

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Your Excellency the President of the General Assembly, Your Excellency the Secretary General, Your Excellency the Permanent Representatives of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya representing the Chairman of the African Union, Your Excellency the Permanent Representative of the United States Your Excellency the Permanent Representative of Israel, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your presence here today, on this 15th Commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide, the Genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda, is of tremendous significance to the people of Rwanda. Allow me to therefore, convey my Government's sincere appreciation for the support and commitment your presence here symbolises. My government and the Rwandan people welcome and thank the Secretary General for his message marking the 15th Commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide. May I also extend my utmost gratitude to the United Nations Department of Public Information who have worked tirelessly to ensure that we remember the victims of the 1994 Genocide at the United Nations.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is 15 years since the genocide of over a million Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The ramifications of this tragedy are felt by genocide survivors, their children and Rwandans everywhere. We gather here today to honour the memory of the victims and reflect upon the challenges faced by survivors. The 15th Commemoration of the Genocide in Rwanda was marked earlier today at Nyanza, Kicukiro, In April 1994 about five thousand men, women and children had sought refuge with the Belgian contingent of the United Nations peacekeeping force, based at the E.T.O (a technical school), near Nyanza-Kicukiro. Even though they were surrounded by their killers, the UN force withdrew, leaving them to be slaughtered by Interahamwe militias and the then Rwandan Armed Forces. This site symbolises the international community's failure in Rwanda and serves as a warning to world leaders of the consequences of ignoring the propagation of ethnic or religious hatred and of failing and abdicating their responsibility to protect people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the 15 years since the genocide the government and the people of Rwanda have registered tremendous progress in the reconstruction of our country. We have undertaken the challenges of reconciling our people and rebuilding our shattered economy. 15 years after the genocide a new Rwanda has grown putting forward unity and reconciliation, not division; peace and not hatred. Like a new dawn it provides hope. 15 years after the genocide, a new generation has also grown outside Rwanda who should learn about genocide in order to prevent the needless destruction of human life. 15 years is a short time for those who survived. Although support has been given to survivors thousands struggle materially, physically and with trauma.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

15 years after the genocide we continue to witness the negation, revisionism and denial of the Rwandan genocide. Gregory H Stanton, formerly of the US State Department has classified denial as the eighth and final stage of a genocide. It is therefore imperative that the International community stands up and rejects denial of the genocide either through legislation as has been done in some countries or through General Assembly resolutions. 15 years after the genocide some of the key perpetrators remain at liberty in Europe, North America and Africa and are at the forefront of genocide denial. In order for us to eradicate the culture of impunity and bring about true reconciliation they must be brought to justice. I also wish to reiterate the desire of my government to see that the archives of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda are housed in Rwanda to foster the process of education on the genocide and reconciliation.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, let me thank you once again for being here today and thank all those governments and organisations that have played a role in helping Rwanda build a new future for itself, one that is characterised by hope for a prosperous future for our people.

I Thank You