

PRESS RELEASE
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Commemoration 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi

Today, the Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda in the Kingdom of the Netherlands held a virtual ceremony marking the 27th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi. In observance of all measures taken in this country by the Dutch Government aimed at limiting the spread of Covid-19, the online program was developed in cooperation with Ibuka Netherlands and the ceremony was broadcasted today at 15.00 hours.

The online Kwibuka27 ceremony was organised to remember and honour those we lost, comfort those who survived and pay tribute to the sacrifices that brought Rwanda back to life. The diplomatic community, Rwandan nationals living in the Netherlands, friends of Rwanda and many others were invited to join for Kwibuka27.

After a minute of silence, a speech was given by Mrs Christine Safari, President of Ibuka Netherlands, which is an umbrella organization of survivors of the Genocide committed against Tutsis in 1994 in Rwanda. She applauded the genocide survivors for sticking to life. “You find that one accepts consequences of the genocide, then, goes on to become self-reliant, and rebuild themselves. This is great bravery.” Mrs Safari also said that she appealed to the Government of the Netherlands to permit to build a genocide memorial site where wreaths can be layed during the commemoration period. “I also appeal to the Government of the Netherlands to continue tracking perpetrators of genocide and bring them to justice. We request everyone's support in fighting genocide minimization which is now on its peak, as these deniers continue to misname and misrepresent the facts by spreading a false narrative of double genocide,” she said.

After a moving testimony by Mrs. Naila Clarisse, Genocide survivor, Judge Agius Carmel, President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) gave his remarks. He assured that the Rwandan people are more than ever present in his heart and in his mind. “People all over the world are commemorating with you, you are not alone!” he said. Judge Agius Carmel continued to say that denialism does not only affect the pain and suffering of the victims of the genocide, it delays reconciliation and there’s an overall danger to peace and security. “Lies written in ink (or on social media) will not erase truth written in blood. Indeed, the ICTR judgements are filled with facts written in blood,” the Judge said.

“I’m pleased to share with you that the Mechanism has now completed the translations in Kinyarwanda of all remaining ICTR trial judgements and is in the process of making them available and accessible to the Rwandan people in their own language,” he added.

Representing the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secretary General Paul Huijts said in his speech that educating our children about what happened in 1994 is crucial, because they will have to prevent atrocities from happening in their lifetime. “For over 25 years, the Government of the Netherlands has been providing expertise and capacity to help Rwanda rebuild its justice system. To honour our partnership Rwanda and the Netherlands will jointly organize a conference in Kigali in June of this year. We have invited Rwandan and Dutch students to engage in a friendly debate on the last day of the conference. Because the future of justice is in their hands,” Secretary General Huijts said. He also said that genocide suspects will not find a safe haven in the Netherlands.

Ambassador Olivier Jean Patrick Nduhungirehe concluded the Kwibuka27 ceremony with his keynote address. He said that 27 years have passed, but the wounds are still fresh and the memories are still vivid. The Ambassador promised that the Government of Rwanda will continue to stand by side of the survivors and support them in the long journey towards healing.

“We are particularly grateful to the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the decisive actions it took in this regard. Not only did our host country support our justice sector in the wake of the genocide, but it also investigated, arrested, prosecuted, convicted and extradited a number of genocide fugitives. The Government of Rwanda remains actively engaged with Dutch authorities to ensure that the remaining genocide suspects, who are still roaming the streets of Dutch cities and towns, are also brought to book,” Ambassador Nduhungirehe said. He continued to say that H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, once stated that the security of peoples who have once been targeted for extermination can never be exclusively physical. Until all ideologies which justify killing as a patriotic duty are defeated, our world is not truly safe. “In this regard, I recall that ‘Never Again’ was the world’s commitment after the Holocaust. This commitment was renewed after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. It is our view that ‘Never Again’ should not be just a sincere sentiment or a convenient slogan but should be translated into a fortress against the ever present threat of extermination,” the Ambassador stated.

In closing and to honour the victims of 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, Ambassador Nduhungirehe once again invited everyone to remember, unite and renew, by speaking and acting against hate, against racism, against antisemitism, against bigotry, against discrimination, against mass atrocities and against the crime of crimes - Genocide.

More information, including the video of the Kwibuka27 ceremony in the Netherlands, is available on the following webpage: www.bit.ly/Kwibuka27intheNetherlands

Note (not for publication)

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