

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



Statement by

Lambert Dushimimana

Ambassador to the Kingdom of the Netherlands

On the occasion of the celebration of the 31st
Liberation Day of the Republic of Rwanda

The Hague, 4th July 2024

*Mr. Jelte van Wieren, Director for Sub-Saharan Africa in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
Excellencies Ambassadors, Heads of Mission and international organizations, members
of the diplomatic corps;*

Dear compatriots and friends of Rwanda; ladies and gentlemen;

Good evening,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the 31st Anniversary of the Liberation Day of Rwanda. It is the first Liberation Day for me as Ambassador so it makes this day a little bit more special from a personal point of view. I therefore thank all of our guests and friends who have accepted to join us on this special day.

The month of July is very significant in the history of Rwanda. The 1st of July marked the day Rwanda acceded to its independence from Belgium and started its journey as a Republic. These early years were unfortunately characterized by short sighted and ill-advised politics of exclusion and discrimination that inevitably laid the groundwork for the tragedy that was to strike our country in 1994 with the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Today we come to the end of commemoration period which began on 7th April, and celebrate the liberation of our country by the Rwanda Patriotic Front who overthrew the genocidal regime that plunged our country into abysmal darkness 100 days prior.

On this day we celebrate and honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice to give us a country that we are all proud of.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

After the genocide, Rwanda faced a lot of challenges, It was therefore crucial to ensure the security for all Rwandans without distinction and for the armed forces to reflect and incarnate the unity and safety which was to serve as the foundation on which our country would rise from its ashes. The ultimate end of the liberation struggle was to build a state in which each Rwandan is valued, and citizens are always at the centre of government policies and action.

31 years after the liberation of our country, Rwanda continues to strive forward as a country united and driven by the ambition of improving the lives of its citizens and achieving sustainable development in all sectors. We continue to invest in our people and make bold choices to transform Rwanda into a success story on the African continent despite the numerous challenges and negative taboos and assumptions.

As the old adage goes, “alone you go faster but together you go further”. This day, gives us the opportunity to also celebrate friendship and cooperation which was and continues to be instrumental in Rwanda’s journey. Friendship of Rwanda with the Kingdom of the Netherlands, but also with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, to which I look forward to being accredited.....soon.

Bilateral cooperation with the Netherlands has been very productive over the past 31 years and played a key role in our journey of reconstruction to which the Netherlands played a crucial role in supporting our judicial sector and promoting and upholding accountability for genocide.

As our two countries have now transitioned from aid to trade, we hope that our friendship and cooperation will continue to flourish and reach new heights and I look forward to strengthening our ties with the Baltic countries and foster mutually beneficial cooperation in various areas of interest.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Celebrating our national day in the Hague gives us the opportunity to shine a light on the merits and importance of multilateral diplomacy in bridging gaps among nations in this troubled world of diverging geostrategic interests, tensions and conflicts in our respective regions. We look to International organizations and legal institutions to continue to play their role as a crucial instrument for addressing global challenges, promoting peace and security, and fostering cooperation. Rwanda re-affirms its belief in multilateralism and remains committed to playing an active role.

As I conclude, allow me to take this moment to address few words to my compatriots here in the room. “ Banyarwanda, Banyarwanda kazi, bavandimwe.

Nongeye kubashimira ko mwabashije kubona umwanya wo kwitabira iki gikorwa kuri uyu mugoroba kugira ngo twifatanya mu kwizihiza umunsi wo kwibohora ku nshuro ya 31;

Uwa 4 Nyakanga 1994, ni umunsi ukomeye mu buzima bwa buri munyarwanda; dukwiye kumva ko ari umunsi w'intangirira y'urugendo rutugejeje aho tugeze ubu, aho u Rwanda rwumvwa ku isi yose, aho umunyarwanda ahabwa agaciro aho ageze hose. Ni umunsi abanyarwanda benshi bafata nk'uwamuvuko kuko mbere yawo batariho nk'uko ikiremnamuntu gikwiye kubaho.

Dukwiye buri gihe kujya tuzirikana ko kugira ngo tugere kuri uyu munsi, hari ibitambo byinshi byatuwe. Kwitura iyo neza, bidusaba kudasubiza amaso inyuma, tukunamira abo batanze ubuzima bwabo bagatuma u Rwanda rugera aho. Tukazirikana kandi ko inzira ikiri ndende kugira ngo u Rwanda turugeze aho twifuzza.

Ni inshingano yacu twese rero, buri munyarwanda aho ari hose ko tudakwiye kuba ba nyamwangababo; dufite inshingano ikomeye yo gusigasira ibyo twagezeho muri iyi myaka ishize, tukabitoza abana bacu, bakabikurana kuko aribo u Rwanda rw'ejo ruhanze amaso. Tureke kubaraga ibyatunaniye, ahubwo tubasigire u Rwanda buri wese yifuzza guturamo.

I thank you all for your attention, Happy Liberation Day.