

**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
THE SENATE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE**

**ADDRESS TO MARK THE OFFICIAL CLOSING OF THE NATIONAL
MOURNING FOR THE 27TH COMMEMORATION OF THE GENOCIDE
AGAINST THE TUTSI (KWIBUKA 27)**

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Rebero, 13 April 2021

- **Your Excellencies leaders of Rwanda’s higher institutions,**
 - **Distinguished members of the diplomatic and consular corps,**
 - **Senior officials here present,**
 - **Fellow Rwandans,**
 - **Ladies and gentlemen,**
1. Allow me to thank you all for joining us here today as we mark the official closing of the national mourning week, whilst bearing constantly in mind that the journey to commemorate the Genocide against the Tutsi remains ongoing throughout the next 100 days.
 2. We have come here today out of our desire to join hands and hearts with families whose loved ones are laid to rest here at Rebero Memorial Site that holds the remains of over 14,000 victims who were killed in the various parts of the City of Kigali during the Genocide against the Tutsi.
 3. Of particular note, however, is that – as every year – we are gathered here today in memory of and to pay homage to the Politicians who were filled with love for Rwanda and Rwandans, and who were slaughtered, because of standing up against the genocidal plan to exterminate the Tutsi. We are here to pay homage to them, and we will always remember them! To their families, we also say: Be strong.
 4. The remembrance of the Politicians who stood up against the genocidal plan, and who were ultimately killed for this cause, is indeed an act of great significance, one that takes place as part of the prominent events usually organized to commemorate the Genocide against the Tutsi.

5. As revealed by genocide experts and researchers, as well as the presentation by the Executive Secretary of CNLG we have just had, no genocide can take place without the involvement of the State machinery. Being no exception, the Genocide against the Tutsi was also planned and made possible by bad leaders who executed their ghoulish plan, making use of political parties, all the State capabilities and other State administrative structures.
6. Those we remember today are more than the names you can see over there. They are humans like ourselves, and for those of us who lived in this country, the experience of seeing their names results in us reminiscing of friends, blood brothers and sisters, parents, relatives and those we used to converse and discuss with. They are the ones who were brave enough to distance themselves from the then unscrupulous leaders and refuse to compromise their Rwandanhood, knowing full well that it would cost them their lives.
7. They were not hunted down because of their ethnicity, but instead because of standing up against hatred, discrimination, divisions and genocide ideology; but we must also remember that there are those who fell prey to killers, because of being both ethnic Tutsis and good politicians.
8. Those who lost their lives, because of trying to save the Tutsi and oppose the genocidal ideology include other Rwandans from all walks of life — old and young, rich and poor. All those victims were characterized by self-sacrificial acts so much so that they accepted to sacrifice their lives to save the Tutsi who were being hunted down. We are gathered here today to remember and express gratitude to them all.

- **Your Excellencies,**
- **Dear brothers and sisters,**

9. The Government of Rwanda has never denied that there are Rwandan and foreign nationals who were killed during the genocide, not because of their ethnicity, but rather because of their political ideology, and their good deeds which had the regime that was committing the Genocide treating them as traitors or co-offenders of those who were viewed as the enemy, namely whoever was ethnic Tutsi.
10. We have had a presentation by the Executive Secretary of the CNLG in which he gave a clear view of what was going on at that time. To hear him expound upon the events, you would take him for an eyewitness. He has ample knowledge of what happened, even better than those who were there, including myself, have. Allow me to pick just one thing from the many examples I can give you to corroborate what he said, and show you how that the narratives he has been sharing with us are not an imaginative, but factual recount of events.
11. On 26 April 1994, in the midst of the genocidal killing spree against the Tutsi in Butare, the number of Tutsi to kill began to decline, with ethnic Hutu starting to be killed as well as a result of it. In response, the then-President wrote to the Prime Minister a letter, the content of which unfolded as follows: *“As we discussed earlier this morning, I want to tell you that people have begun to get rid of those they consider to be bothersome: those who stand in their way. I have also given you a list of my family members. Should you do harm to any of them, I will give up on this. I am tired of serving the ungrateful.”* For those of you who understand Kinyarwanda, you must realize that they themselves had started turning against each other. In the same vein, he closed the letter, saying, *“If this continues, even the Hutus themselves will kill each other, and this is what the enemy wants, then history will hold us accountable.”* This same letter remains etched in history and publications.

12. As I just said, it is a paradox that whilst those who planned and led the execution of the Genocide admit to having committed the Genocide, those who were born after the Genocide claim that the Genocide never happened. Here, I will give the example of former Prime Minister Kambanda and others who admitted the Genocide. Mugesera and CDR members never stopped publicly declaring they would commit extermination. And yet today, it comes as no surprise to see someone dare say that never happened! One cannot help but wonders about its associated implication.
13. At the national level, the unity Government erected this special memorial site as an expression of gratitude to those who, despite not being hunted down for their ethnicity, sacrificed themselves to oppose the genocide and genocidal ideology. It is a special memorial site, but still remains a memorial site, because it is the final resting place for all other victims whose bodies, as you will certainly recall, were collected from areas in the City of Kigali to be interred here.
14. At one point, an announcement was issued that instructed all drivers of MINITRAPE (former Ministry of Public Works and Energy) to transport bodies from various areas of Kigali to the CHUK. It was in 1995 that bodies were exhumed just behind the CHUK, and brought here at Rebero Memorial Site. Those who were there can recall it. Bodies interred here are those of the Tutsi who were slaughtered in Kigali in the early days, and those of politicians which have been discovered so far, because bodies of many other politicians were thrown away, with whereabouts thereof remaining unknown.
15. The Government initiated this annual national ceremony back in 1995, and ever since then the ceremony is observed nationally every year with a view

to particularly paying tribute and due respects to those who were killed, because of their ideology and for standing up against the Genocide.

16. That is why here in Rwanda we do not need to see foreign countries, or anyone else, come and dictate to us how to remember those who were killed during the genocide, because of standing up against the genocidal plan or trying to save the Tutsi.
17. No one should ever dare try to claim to have lessons for us as to how we need to remember the brave politicians who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the unity of Rwandans, and others who were killed as they were standing up against the genocidal plan or trying to save the Tutsi. In Rwanda, we are the ones who know such heroes and their outstanding achievements better than anyone else does.
18. The same is true of the narrative that some continue to peddle, one which suggests that the use of the wording “*Genocide against the Tutsi*”, does not capture some other people who were killed during the genocide.
19. The truth is that, unless they play dumb for reasons of their own, they know full well that Genocide, that is, the “intentional action to destroy an ethnic, national, racial or religious group, as such” was committed against the Tutsi. It is the Genocide during which the Tutsi were singled out and killed because of their ethnicity. Even those who were killed because of standing up against the genocide against the Tutsi and its ideology, they were killed, not because of their ethnicity, but because of taking such stances. Therefore, this should not be something up for debate.
20. Although the genocidal plan was aimed at destroying the Tutsi ethnic group, however, we also remember politicians and other people who were killed for standing up against the Genocide or saving the Tutsi, but that in no way

contributes to changing the fact that it was the “*Genocide against the Tutsi*”, because those other people were not killed because of their ethnicity.

21. As we go back in history and look at historical facts, all members of the Tutsi ethnic group were targeted during the Genocide because of their ethnicity, and simply because they were born as Tutsi. This differs from the case of politicians who were killed because of standing up against the genocide, or trying to save Tutsi. These are two different concepts.
22. In 1994, there was no other genocidal plan other than to exterminate “the Tutsi”.
23. Those who want to give the genocide other names, testing various wordings do so for their own agenda or reasons which have nothing to do with the historical clarity around the Genocide against the Tutsi.
 - **Your Excellencies, dear brothers and sisters - and here I appeal specifically to the youth;**
24. Our country is part of the international community. We are governed by the same norms and rules. We cannot forget, however, that some countries, for their own interests, caused the international community to abandon Rwanda during the genocide against the Tutsi. We often point it out, but allow me to share with you one example people rarely remember.
25. After the Arusha Accords, as expounded upon by the CNLG Executive Secretary, a coalition government, including the RPF, was expected to be formed. We expected this government to bring salvation to us. People believed that the formation of the government would mark the end of killings, ethnicity and regionalism. Negative forces, however, engineered delays in the installation of the government to the point where the international community ended up being fed up with waiting. Lots of talks were organized, with some

people and friends of Rwanda trying to step in to help. Here, too, I must remind you that back in March 1994, the then-President of Tanzania instructed his Minister of Foreign Affairs to come to Rwanda, and tell Habyarimana: “We too are really fed up, you are shaming us, the Accords have been signed in our country, and we will be the ones to be shamed in case of failure to implement them.”

26. On 18 March 1994, former Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu announced the composition of the coalition government, that is what used to be referred to as “broad-based government”, promising that his government would be sworn-in on 25 March 1994. And the following day, former Prime Minister Agatha Uwilingiyimana also provided a list of MPs who would be sworn-in. Two days later, however, President Habyarimana reached out to Twagiramungu, telling him that they had not agreed on those people, adding that Deputies should include CDR members. Did they tell you what CDR is?
27. Those who have been listening and watched a video clip in which Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza were reminded of CDR which was saying, “We cannot join that Government”. CDR had even refused to sign Arusha Accords, namely what was then known as “Political Code of Ethics”. They had refused. However, as the solution had just been found for the formation of the Government, Habyarimana said, “You must ensure that the CDR is included.” People were awe-struck, left wondering how the CDR that had announced its intention not to join the Government would be part of the same Government. The hope, of course, of having the Government sworn-in on 25 March 1994 soon evaporated.
28. But I must tell you that it was surprising to note in the meantime that all members of diplomatic and consular missions in Rwanda, including the then-

Apostolic Nuncio, and the Episcopal Conference, issued a statement in support of the inclusion of the CDR in Government. They were for the allocation of cabinet portfolio to the CDR. This had General Romeo Dallaire equating the stance with burying the Arusha Accords.

29. The game was not over yet. On the night of 5 and 6 April 1994, the UN Security Council convened that included former Rwandan representative who, as we all know, was a CDR member, and also adopted Resolution 909 (1994), urging both sides in Rwanda to resolve their differences, failing which UNAMIR troops would be withdrawn within a period of four (4) months.
30. This state of affairs sent to the Rwandans, especially politicians, a negative signal that the international community was abandoning us. On the day before yesterday on 11 April 2021, I saw people in Kicukiro condemning the way the Belgian contingent left them to die at ETO. It is not just the date of 11 April 1994; because also on 5 April 1994, the international community abandoned Rwanda, urging people to resolve differences with the CDR, and include it in the Government, sounding the warning that failure to do so would result in withdrawing foreign troops, thus leaving Rwanda to its own fate. The onus is on all of us here to give some thought to this.
31. Even though our country is part of the international community, we must be conscious of our history. We must know where we have come from, and where we are going, because we know exactly what we want. It is for these reasons that we are committed to being part of the international community, working to be useful and doing our part.
32. However, countries which - sitting at the UN headquarters in 1994 - vetoed intervention in Rwanda, and objected to the fact that “genocide” was being

committed should not be allowed to re-write our history or effect our journey to liberate and build the Rwanda we want.

33. And as if that were not bad enough, some went as far as to object to the recognition of Genocide at the UN, thus hindering the taking place of the intervention that could have rescued people from the hands of murderers; but people are not ashamed to try to distort the true history of the “Genocide against the Tutsi”, giving the genocide other names without valid justification, and ignore the responsibility to bring to justice genocide fugitives living on their territories.
34. Objecting to the fact that genocide was being committed in 1994 is a problem in itself. However, the fact that, 27 years later, these same people are giving complex names to the genocide they were reluctant to recognize, only adds to the problems caused by the genocide, in addition to fueling the denial and revisionism of the Genocide against the Tutsi.
35. In our opinion, as Rwandans, despite those countries’ failure to fulfil their obligations in 1994, it is not too late for them. Rather, it would be a good thing for them not to persist in their mistakes, instead we invite them to admit they erred in abandoning Rwanda, and work with us towards a better future.
36. We also seize this opportunity to express gratitude to the international community for the establishment and observance of the International Day of Reflection on the Genocide against the Tutsi. It is a good step forward, based on true historical facts.
37. In the same vein, we must recall that in 2014, the United Nations adopted a resolution calling upon the international community to: condemn the crime of denial of the Genocide against the Tutsi, and bring to justice fugitives

accused of the genocide against the Tutsi residing on foreign territories, including those who are FDLR leaders.

38. We also want to use this opportunity to thank those countries that, in collaboration with Rwanda, bring proceedings against fugitives suspected of the Genocide against the Tutsi, either trying them or extraditing them to Rwanda.
39. We welcome some countries' growing interest in considering their role in the Genocide against the Tutsi, as well as the enactment by countries of pieces of legislation punishing the denial and revisionism of the Genocide against the Tutsi in response to a call from the United Nations Security Council in 2014.
40. This should serve as an example for those countries interested in giving the "Genocide against the Tutsi" other names in order for them to refrain from fueling the denial and revisionism of the Genocide against the Tutsi, as it was observed around the 27th commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi.

- **Your Excellencies, dear brothers and sisters,**

- **Fellow Rwandans, ladies and gentlemen,**

41. As we marked the start of this mourning week, His Excellency the President of the Republic stressed that "we also credit Rwanda's rebirth to the fact that the larger part of Rwandans wanted to build a better nation and overcome the manipulations of the bad leaders of the past."
42. The people of Rwanda have built the strength that we continue to reinforce, one that helps us protect the gains we have made. Those inclined to distract us, and divert us, will continue to fail.

43. As always, Rwandans need to continue to work to have good relations with all countries, but we should not yield to anyone attempting to undermine our history and choices, and take us backwards.
44. I would like to conclude by urging each of us to perpetuate the legacy of the good Politicians we remember today, ensure that Genocide never again occurs, condemning deniers and revisionists of the Genocide against the Tutsi and their acolytes.
45. This is what will continue to give a concrete meaning to the goal we have set for ourselves “REMEMBER-UNITE-RENEW”.

I thank you all, and wish you to stay strong!