

Rwanda: UN Admits Failure in 1994 Genocide, Pledges Support
By Dawnn Anderson and Eugene Kwibuka, The New Times
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The United Nations has pledged to unreservedly support Rwanda's road towards development, self-reliance, and peace after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, despite the organisation's poor response during the Genocide.

The pledge was highlighted by the UN Resident Coordinator, Lamin M. Manneh, during an event organised by the entire UN staff in Rwanda to mark the 19th anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsi, and to remember former UN employees killed in the Genocide.

"For 19 years, the UN has joined with you to foster peace and reconciliation in Rwanda and lay the foundation for the process of transformation that is already underway. We commend the Government of Rwanda for the tremendous progress it has made in rebuilding, uniting, and reconciling the country," Manneh said after admitting that the organisation used poor judgement in response to the Genocide, which claimed over a million people.

He said the UN has a responsibility to future generations worldwide by taking a stand against evil and standing up for human dignity. "It gives me comfort to note that after the initial terrible mistakes and errors of judgment the UN made in the run up to, and during the Genocide, it has been a faithful partner for Rwanda's remarkable recovery and reconstruction," Manneh said.

The event took place at the UNDP compound in Kigali where UN staff, government officials, and relatives of slain former UN Kigali office employees gathered and prayed for the victims.

Self-reliance:

The Executive Secretary of the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide, Jean de Dieu Mucyo, who graced the event, thanked the UN staff for taking the time to remember the victims, saying it is the best way to honour them. Mucyo reminded participants at the event to strive for self-reliance, noting that the Genocide was stopped by Rwandans under the banner of the RPF-Inkotanyi to topple the Genocidal regime.

"We have to live in this country together. We have to be self-reliant," Mucyo said. Every year, during the commemoration week, the UN staff in Rwanda host a remembrance ceremony in memory of its 68 staff killed during the Genocide.

Some of the victims were allegedly killed by fellow colleagues, such as Callixte Mbarushimana, who is accused of directing and participating in the murder of 32 people, including workmates at the time. Mbarushimana, who is the executive secretary of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), is accused of having used logistics of the UN Kigali office to hunt down and kill Tutsis.

But he remains free in France despite not only his role in the Genocide, but also the continued atrocities attributed to the militia group he heads. Based in DR Congo, the FDLR rank and file are composed of perpetrators of the Genocide. The UN's staff in Kigali stressed the need to pursue justice, especially at a time when many Genocide suspects are still roaming the world scot-free.

At the weekend, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said his organisation had made efforts against impunity and would not give breathing space to Genocide suspects and fugitives. "Suspected genocidaires and other would-be criminals around the world now know that they will be held

accountable," Ki-moon said. The UN-backed International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has tried some of the main actors in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

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