

LAUNCH OF (RWANDAN) AGACIRO DEVELOPMENT FUND IN CANADA
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Gatineau, Quebec
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Chers amis/ cheres amies du Rwanda,

Permit me first to repeat a point I made recently about the Genocide at a Responsibility to Protect (R2P) event at the U of Ottawa, which Romeo Dallaire was to address but could not because of the passing of his dear mother:

- The slaughter ended only when Paul Kagame and his soldiers took Kigali, declared a cease-fire and formed a new government without international or UN help. The role of the UN during the genocide was unforgivable to the Rwandan people and shocked everyone who thought that the UN under its Charter was supposed to represent all peoples equally. "Are some more human than others?" asked Dallaire.

Chaque année en avril nous commémorons le triste anniversaire du génocide contre les Tutsi du Rwanda.

I agree with President Kagame when he said to a large audience at the tenth anniversary of the genocide in Kigali, which included a number of us Canadians, including Romeo Dallaire:

"I start where we must all start, by paying tribute to them (Rwanda's genocide victims) not as statistics, not as a nameless, faceless, anonymous mass of humanity but as our mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and our children. They all should have been a part of our future, not our past."

Vous êtes les survivants intrépides du manquement du monde à protéger plus d'un million d'innocents Tutsi en 1994 pendant les horreurs et les atrocités des cent jours du génocide et ses conséquences. Je vous salue pour votre détermination à survivre et à réussir dans votre nouvelle patrie, le Canada. Vos contributions à notre pays sont appréciées.

Here are some thoughts I had after returning from the commemoration ceremonies in Kigali in 2004:

- It's easy to see, even from an airplane window, how Roméo Dallaire fell in love with Rwanda, "the Switzerland of Africa," when he first saw it in 1994,
- The just-opened (in 2004) Kigali Memorial Centre, which overlooks the burial site of 250,000 victims murdered in the capital district, offers much information about what has taken place. For example:
 - >Eighteen national clans lived together peacefully in Rwanda for centuries until their Belgian governors introduced identity cards in 1932, which classified all nationals as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa, depending on how many cows one owned.
 - >The first organized killing of Tutsi began in 1959, when about 700,000 of them fled to Uganda, Canada and elsewhere.
- No one should allow the passage of time to erase judgments about what happened. How can the world ever forgive the 15 member governments of the UN Security Council, which two weeks after the killing began voted unanimously to reduce Dallaire's force to a few hundred hapless peacekeepers? This decision signaled the *génocidaires* that the UN body mandated to protect world peace was giving them a free hand to murder as many as one million human beings in 100 days.
- The roles of a number of other governments were simply terrible. Had the Belgians not withdrawn their soldiers after ten of them were killed, many more lives might have been saved, including the 2,000 Tutsi who placed their lives under Belgian protection. They were predictably all massacred within hours of being abandoned. To his credit, Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt apologized to the Rwandan people at the memorial ceremony.
- The international community attempted to cover its earlier indifference by sending aid and advisors after the fact.
- If the international community had acted promptly and with determination, it could have stopped most of the killing.
- If we are not prepared to breathe life into the UN Genocide Convention of 1948 and the Stockholm Declaration on Genocide Prevention, then, as the Kigali memorial reminds visitors, "Never Again!" seems destined to be, "Again and again." What we really need are elected national leaders with the courage to combat genocidal activity wherever it occurs.

In closing, I'm delighted to join you all tonight and will make a donation to the fund, which will supplant others revenue sources and hasten Rwanda's complete independence from international assistance.

Merci.

