

Your Excellency Mr. President,

Madame, First Lady,

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Rwanda,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with deep emotion and feeling that I stand before you, in front of this memorial, full of significance, history, tears, sorrows, grandeur and dignity. 23 years ago, something horrible, indescribable happened in this beautiful country, I am here referring to the genocide. During this extreme level of human folly, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children were massacred for the only and sole reason that they were congenitally different from the others. Yes, in 100 days a hideous ideology unleashed like a weapon of mass destruction, one of the worst human tragedies. Yes, the machetes in the hands of killers are a weapon of mass destruction.

Mr. President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

My first thought is to bow humbly in the memory and the souls of the thousands of human beings. I pray for their eternal peace. Let their souls find in the immortalization erected for them through this memorial, the best comfort and the most salvaging relief of their sorrows. What I have heard, what I see, what I feel, affect me deep down my being and my conscience. Who has been here will not be, once gone, it is because he was here when coming. And then, can we imagine how the survivors, orphans, widowers and widows feel, those who have lived this tragedy in their flesh and soul? All I can say is that I RESPECT you.

But what consoles me is the strength, the courage, the dignity and the formidable resilience of this wonderful people who set the best example of human recovery. The Rwandan people are like the phoenix which rises again from its ashes. Extricated from the depths of the abyss, Rwanda has risen, rebuilt itself, restructured itself and climbed high on these beautiful hills, and even higher up in Africa and the world.

People of Rwanda, you deserve respect and admiration.

Your Excellency,

You know that since long before my appointment by your peers as Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the immense esteem I have always had for you. Your leadership, your ability to transcend what Mandela called "the human frailties of egoism, revenge and the inability to forgive", has enabled you to raise and rebuild your country, establish a multidimensional governance. You are today a builder and a valuable symbol of the African

Renaissance. To succeed this challenge it is necessary for an exceptional being forged in steel better in the alloy more solid than steel!

The venue and the moment do not lend themselves to political speeches.

I would simply, with all humility, bow to our dead and reaffirm the fidelity of Africa to their spirit. I would also like to swear, by my presence here, in the loudest voice to do everything possible to make sure that the horrors of the 1994 genocide do not recur on our African soil and that history must record this tragedy that must be taught to our children and grandchildren. We will thus avoid oblivion, revisionism, trivialisation and negativism about the genocide of Tutsis by commemorating this Day throughout and always in Africa.

I thank you.