

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

AU Commemorates Kwibuka30 with renewed promise to prevent genocide

The Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union Commission (AUC), in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda in Ethiopia, solemnly observed the 30th Commemoration of the Genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda, at the AU Headquarters, under the theme "**Remember-Unite-Renew**".

During a span of 100 days, over one million Rwandan citizens lost their lives in the Genocide committed against the Tutsi in 1994. Since April 7, 2010, the AU has been organizing annual commemoration events. The year 2024 signifies the 30th anniversary of those tragic days.

This significant event, known as Kwibuka30, is a call to all AU Member States, continental organizations and civil society organizations to reaffirm their unwavering support to the prevention and the fight against genocide and to ensure that it never happens again in Rwanda or anywhere else. The overall purpose of this annual commemoration is to continuously awaken greater awareness of the African peoples and the international community about the value of life and humanity, and to renew our collective commitment to protect and uphold fundamental human rights. The commemoration provided a fitting opportunity; to stand in solidarity with the survivors, to honor the victims while pledging our commitment to fight hate speech, genocide ideology and discrimination.

The commemoration featured various activities, including a "walk to remember" in honor of the victims and survivors; prayers by religious leaders, a minute of silence to pay homage to those who fought to end the genocide, a candle-lighting ceremony as a sign of hope and resilience; a documentary highlighting the root causes of the genocide against the Tutsi and thus debunking the theory of spontaneous killings and a video recorded testimony by a genocide survivor who bravely shared her ordeal and that of her family during the 1994 genocide against Tutsi.

In his welcome remarks, Commissioner Bankole stressed: "This 30th anniversary of those tragic days, is a significant moment for us all to honour the deceased, stand in solidarity with survivors, and join together to prevent such atrocities from occurring again in Africa. Additionally, it presents an opportunity to gain insights into Rwanda's journey of healing, reconciliation and nation-building."

"Due to the ephemeral nature of human memory, it is of immense importance that the remembrance of this day be used as a moment of deep reflection and opportunity to adopt practical strategies to counter bigotry and hate speech." said, Amb. Jainaba Jagne, Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the African Union and the AU Peace and Security Council Chair of the month.

The deputy Chairperson of the AUC, Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, in her remarks, on behalf of the Chairperson, stated: "For us at the African Union Commission, we are inspired by the lessons learnt from the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, to put measures and

mechanisms in place against hate speech, hate crimes and ethnic intolerance, genocidal ideologies, and xenophobia on the continent.”

“To those who would seek to divide us, we must deliver a clear, unequivocal and urgent message: never again. On this solemn day of remembrance, let’s pledge to stand as one against all forms of hatred and discrimination. Let’s ensure that the acts that began on April 7, 1994 are never forgotten- and never repeated. Anywhere.” said, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of UNOAU.

In his address, Amb. Mesganu Arga Moach, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, remarked: “It is a solemn promise, etched in the hearts of all gathered here, that such horrific crimes will never again stain the tapestry of human existence. As we pay tribute to the memory of those who perished, let their sacrifice serve as a beacon, guiding us towards a world where tolerance and understanding prevail.”

In his closing statement, Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Charles Karamba, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the AU said, “In marking this 30th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the ‘Renew’ component of its theme serves as a ringing call to the international community, with a view of revitalizing a collective commitment to timely protect and uphold fundamental human rights.”

The event was attended by officials from AU Commission, representatives of the AU member states, members of the diplomatic corps, AU organs, religious institutions, human rights institutions, intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, UN agencies, think tanks, International organizations, academic institutions in Ethiopia, staff of the AUC and members of the Rwandan Community.

As part of the pre-event activities of the commemoration, on 4 April 2024, the AU Peace and Security Council held an open session on Hate Crimes and fight against Genocide Ideology in Africa.

On 6 April 2024, the AUC Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, appointed Mr Adama Dieng of Senegal as the first African Union Special Envoy for Prevention of the Crime of Genocide and other mass atrocities, to drive the AU Agenda to combat the ideology of Hate and Genocide on the Continent. Furthermore, the AUC staff observed a Moment of Silence at 12pm, 8 April 2024, at the AUHQ.

There will also be a Symposium on the Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and dissemination of draft Policy Brief on 23 May 2024.

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