

UN SG Ban Ki-moon's statement on International Day of Reflection on the Rwandan Genocide

Office of the Spokesperson for the UN Secretary General New York 7 April 2010 UN SG Ban Ki-moon's remarks commemorating the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, observed annually on 7 April:

Today, we observe the sixteenth commemoration of the genocide in Rwanda. We cherish the memory of more than 800,000 innocent people who lost their lives. Our thoughts are also with the survivors, whose haunting testimony woke us to the reality of a tragedy that was all too preventable.

The United Nations is fully committed to securing justice for the victims of genocide and to preventing future atrocities. The International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda (ICTR) delivered the first-ever verdicts in relation to genocide by an international court. These and similar actions from the halls of justice have sent a clear message to the genocidaires and would-be genocidaires. Simply put, their heinous crimes will not go unpunished.

The United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda continues to deliver justice and ensure accountability. I salute Member States for their continued support and urge cooperation with the ICTR to arrest and hand over the remaining 11 fugitives.

The countries of the region have also made important progress with the historic Pact on Security, Stability and Development for the Great Lakes Region, which includes a protocol on the prevention and punishment of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The UN is working to enhance cooperation with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, particularly in implementing critical aspects relating to peace and security. The Office of my Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities is also working to see these horrible crimes never happen again.

As we look forward, I have been encouraged by the General Assembly's response to my report on implementing the Responsibility to Protect, a concept endorsed by world leaders at the 2005 World Summit. Debates will continue on the three pillars of responsibility that I outlined in my report. But the international community stands firm and in solidarity against genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing.

Together, let us pledge our determination to prevent genocide as the best way to remember those who lost their lives so tragically in Rwanda.

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