



The International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals ("Mechanism") was established on 22 December 2010 by the United Nations Security Council to continue the jurisdiction, rights, obligations and essential functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda ("ICTR") and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia ("ICTY") after the completion of their respective mandates.

# STATEMENT

PROSECUTOR

(Exclusively for the use of the media. Not an official document)

The Hague, 7 April 2019

## Remarks at the 25<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide

### Chief Prosecutor Serge Brammertz

*Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen, Dear colleagues*

Good evening,

The Rwandan Genocide was a humanitarian failure. The global community could have prevented it, but lacked the political will to do so.

So today's commemoration is an occasion for solemn reflection; a moment for all of us to reaffirm our commitment to preventing others from suffering the horrors of genocide.

The Rwandan Genocide was not a spontaneous outburst of anger or vengeance.

It was a planned attack intended to destroy the Tutsi group. It was designed at the highest levels and implemented by organized and coordinated action.

The organizers of the genocidal campaign manipulated the people. They dehumanized their fellow citizens, and used fear, distrust, hatred and greed to lead ordinary men and women to commit the most horrific of atrocities.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was established to try those most responsible for the genocide, including military and political leaders, media personalities and influential men and women. 93 individuals were indicted, and 61 have so far been convicted.

The ICTR showed that those who led the genocide could be brought to justice for their crimes. It established the facts in a public court for the world to see and understand.

Yet the work is not done. More accountability is still needed.

At the Mechanism, we are continuing the fight for justice for the victims of the genocide.

In particular, securing the arrests of the 8 fugitives is a top priority for my Office.



For the victims, it is difficult if not impossible to move forward when those indicted for horrific crimes remain free and have not had to face their day in court. For a criminal tribunal like the Mechanism, our work remains unfinished so long as fugitives remain at large.

And for international criminal justice as a whole, fugitives are an illustration of ongoing impunity that threatens the effectiveness of our work.

But we were reminded only a few weeks ago that we can succeed. Radovan Karadzic was among the most notorious fugitives from the former Yugoslavia. He evaded arrest for more than 13 years. Yet he was sentenced to life in prison by the Mechanism's Appeals Chamber for his crimes, including the Srebrenica Genocide.

The victims are the reason we continue our pursuit of the fugitives, and they are the reason we are here today. We take this opportunity to pay our respects to the victims and survivors of the Rwandan Genocide. No one understands the pain of the genocide more than the survivors, who miraculously survived the campaign.

But even if we cannot know their pain, we know that it must be recognized.

The survivors are a constant reminder to us of the need for justice. They deserve to see all perpetrators of the heinous crimes face justice. That would be a truly fitting tribute to them, more than any words that we can offer them today.

We are indebted to the more than 3500 witnesses who testified before the ICTR and the Mechanism. Their courage in reliving the past and confronting the accused made justice possible.

The UN General Assembly designated today as the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda recalling that Hutus and others who opposed the genocide were killed. The Rwandan Genocide is a fact of history that we must all accept and remember.

Unfortunately, genocide denial, in all of its forms and manifestations, continues. Efforts to minimize the scale of the death and destruction or point to other factors to detract attention from the facts of the genocide are intolerable and unacceptable.

My Office firmly rejects genocide denial and is committed, with our Rwandan partners, to promoting education and remembrance as key tools in the fight against genocide ideology.

In such efforts, my Office will investigate and prosecute all those who interfere with witnesses with the aim of undermining the established facts of the Rwandan genocide. Such contempt of court is a form of genocide denial and must be opposed.

So today we call upon the international community to resist any efforts to rewrite the history of the Rwandan Genocide. Attempts to present an alternative history must be emphatically rejected.

Further, States can demonstrate their commitment to the rule of law by arresting fugitives in coordination with my Office. Today, my Office needs cooperation to urgently arrest a fugitive who has been located, and we continue to need strong cooperation to help us locate the others. Our Rwandan partners, who are searching for 500 fugitives themselves, also need assistance and support.

At the same time, it is unfortunately the case that in many places today, genocide ideology continues to present clear risks to international peace and security. Ideologies of discrimination, division and hate are promoting conflict and crimes around the globe.



The mass killings, sexual violence and widespread arson against Rohingya in Myanmar. The Islamic State's horrifying attacks against religious minorities, including the Yazidi. The ethnic and religious divisions leading to atrocities against civilians in South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

The Rwandan Genocide is a permanent reminder to us that we cannot afford to watch and wait as the warning signs flash red and evidence of atrocities overwhelm us. Prompt intervention is necessary.

And the Genocide also reminds us that after conflicts end, accountability must be part of the solution, together with reconciliation.

This is an example that Rwanda can offer the world. It brought together the efforts of international courts, national courts and traditional Gacaca courts to achieve immense justice for the victims.

And Rwanda showed that the question is not peace or justice, but how to achieve both. In Rwanda, we see that justice and the truth – not impunity and forgetting – are the foundation for reconciliation.

Education is key. What has been established in the courtroom must be taught in the classroom. Future generations need to know the dangers of genocide ideology. They need to know the truth so they can firmly reject genocide denial at all times and in all places.

Thank you for your attention.

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