

Genocide: New Zealand hands over diplomatic archives

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In April, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern urged world leaders to remember as well as commemorate the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi if humanity is to prevent the repetition of such cruelty anywhere.



New Zealand's former envoy to the UN, Amb. Colin Keating hands over diplomatic archives to Rwanda's Permanent Representative to the UN, Valentine Rugwabiza. / Courtesy

The Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the UN on Saturday received a copy of New Zealand's diplomatic archive on Rwanda during the latter's tenure on the Security Council in 1993-94, as the Genocide against the Tutsi unfolded.

The copy was delivered by New Zealand's former envoy to the UN, Amb. Colin Keating, and Craig Hawke, New Zealand's current Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN.

"Amb. Keating was one of the few voices of courage to speak out against the genocide amidst other Council Members' inertia in the face of Genocide against the Tutsi," the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the UN tweeted.

"For that, in 2010, President Paul Kagame decorated him with the 'Umu-rinzi' Medal for the Campaign against Genocide."

Craig Hawke @CraigHawkeNZ

A poignant moment. @NZUN hands over NZ's diplomatic messages on the Rwandan genocide to @RwandaUN, in the presence of former NZ Amb. Colin Keating. Pleased to do this in company of NZ and Rwandan interns - the future of both our countries. @VRugwabiza @MFATgovtNZ @Mark_R_Ramsden

Earlier this year, New Zealand became the first country to hand over archives of the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi.

Keating was the Security Council president during the 1994 Genocide, and relentlessly sought the intervention of the international community to end the carnage.

The National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) Executive Secretary, Dr. Jean-Damascène Bizimana, told *The New Times* that the historical facts of the Genocide against the Tutsi need to be gathered, continuously, and kept safe so that the memory of the Genocide is preserved for generations to come.

Bizimana said : “One of the reasons why the memory exists is because there are historical documents that help people to properly understand how the Genocide was planned, how it was executed and the role of various institutions in carrying out the extremely cruel act of Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994.”

“The United Nations was one of the institutions that failed to prevent and stop the Genocide until it claimed more than one million lives before it was stopped by the RPF-Inkotanyi.”

Bizimana said the copy of New Zealand's diplomatic archive on Rwanda during the latter's tenure on the Security Council in 1993-94 will help to shed more light on how the Security Council failed to live up to its duty of preventing and stopping the Genocide.

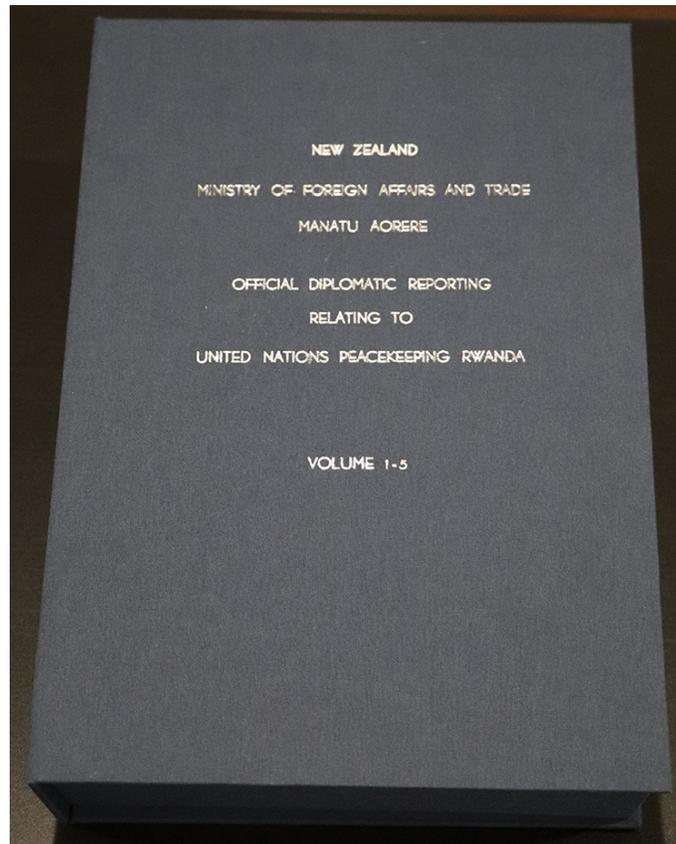
There are some genocide fugitives living in New Zealand, a sovereign island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, however, both Kigali and Wellington are cooperating on the matter.

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Belgium, France need to release archives

Bizimana also took aim at Belgium and France, two other western countries that are yet to release documents that reveal much about the dark history of Rwanda.

He said : “We are waiting for other such archives from Belgium and we also hope that if the team of French historians established by President [Emmanuel] Macron really works and is given access to all archives, this will also further help in shedding light on the cowardice of nations in being accomplices in the Genocide against the Tutsi.”



A copy of the diplomatic archives was handed to over to Rwanda on Saturday.
/ Courtesy

In September last year, Belgium announced that it was willing to return to Rwanda some of its artifacts, including archives of the colonial period but this has not yet happened.

Seven months later, in April, this year, Macron's appointment of a team of researchers and historians to look into archives of France's actions in Rwanda during the 1994 Genocide was welcomed with mixed reactions in Rwanda. On this too, Kigali is still waiting.

But these two are not the only countries yet to hand over such archives to Rwanda.

The United Kingdom too, despite verbal promises in April, to hand over to Kigali archives they have in their possession related to the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, has not yet walked the talk.