

Petition to Queensland Parliament by Survivors in Solidarity Network

over Commemoration by Group Promoting Denial of UN Recognised Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.



OPEN LETTER TO THE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE QUEENSLAND STATE

Dear Mr. Speaker – Right Honorable Curtis Pitt (Queensland Parliament),

We, the undersigned, are organizations representing survivors of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the descendants of victims of the Holocaust, the Genocide Against the Armenians, the Arameans, the Assyrians and the Pontic Greeks as well as members of the United Kingdom’s Bosnian Genocide Community and other victims of the crimes of genocide in Cambodia and Darfur. We are committed to preserving and honoring the memory of the victims as well as to fighting impunity of these crimes, including their denial, wherever and by whomever.

That is why we are writing to express our gravest concern over the event to be hosted at the House of Parliament of the Queensland state, in Australia on 7 May 2022. The event is purportedly the ‘Annual Rwandan Genocide Commemoration’, organised by the Rwandan Association in Queensland Inc (RAQ).

We wish to draw to your attention the fact this group’s leaders are widely known for their denial of the Genocide Against the Tutsi and some of them have publicly called themselves “Interahamwe”, the notorious militia which was heavily involved in the mass killings during the genocide targeting the Tutsi across the country. The idea of people claiming the legacy of genocidal killers and trivializing the Holocaust purporting to organize a remembrance event makes a mockery of memory and amounts to an egregious insult to their victims.

Indeed, the words ‘Rwandan genocide’ in the title of the event reveal their less than high - minded intentions, by failing to refer to the Genocide Against the Tutsi. Yet, this is a matter of public notoriety, according to the ruling by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 2006. This terminology was further adopted by the United Nations’ General Assembly in its Resolution A/72/L.31 of 2018, arguing ‘the need to avoid any potential ambiguity regarding who was targeted during the genocide.’ This has helped combat a plethora of genocide denial theories surrounding the subject.

Survivors of the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Australia and around the world are deeply disappointed, hurt and saddened that the House Parliament of Queensland is hosting this gathering, which is more likely to provide a prominent platform for those who continue to deny the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda and to promote hatred and bigotry.

Australia prides itself on the country’s record on respect for the rule of the law, national and international. We therefore urge you to intervene personally and ensure Parliament in Queensland reconsiders the welcome to this group and heeds the call of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who affirmed on the UN International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda held on each 7 April that ‘We always have a choice.’



We hope that the authorities in Queensland will consider the harm that the denial of the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda at this event can cause to the Tutsi survivors who call Australia home and the damage to the good name of the country abroad.

We are confident that, after careful consideration of these risks, you will agree with us that there can be only one choice for the Queensland's House of Parliament; to cancel the upcoming event and to leverage Australia's moral, political and diplomatic clout in fighting the denial of the Genocide Against the Tutsi.

¹ See [video of members of the Rwandan Association in Queensland \(RAQ\) claiming to be proud of being 'Interahamwe'](#) during a rally in front of the House of Parliament of the Queensland State at 102 Main St, Kangaroo Point QLD 4169 on 2nd Apr. 2022

Signed on this 3rd of May 2022, by:

- Egide Nkuranga : President, IBUKA Rwanda
- Étienne Nsanzimana: President, IBUKA France and Europe
- César Murangira: President, IBUKA Switzerland
- Ernest Sagaga: President, IBUKA Belgium
- Christine Safari: President, IBUKA Holland
- Honorine Mujyambere: President, IBUKA Italy
- Wolfgang Blam: President, IBUKA Germany
- Jason H Nshimye: President, IBUKA US
- Josine Kanamugire: President, IBUKA Sweden Belgium
- Marie Christine Umuganwa: President, IBUKA Denmark
- Yves Rwogera Munana, President, IBUKA Senegal
- Valerie Mukabayire: President, AVEGA Rwanda
- Egide Gatari: President, GAERG
- Eric Murangwa Eugène: Founder and CEO, Ishami Foundation, UK
- Marie Chantal Muhigana: President of Urukundo Rwandan Organisation, Norway
- Iligoga Faina: Founder and President of RTGSA – Impore, Australia
- Déogratias Mazina: Président, Réseau International Recherche & Génocide (RISING asbl), Belgium
- Smajo Beso: Founder and Chair, Bosnian Genocide Educational Trust, UK
- Benjamin Beeckmans: President, Centre Communautaire Laïc Juif David Susskind (CCLJ),
- Karen Visser: CEO, Compelled By Love, Australia

Cc:

- High Commissioner of Rwanda to Australia, based in Singapore – H.E. Jean De Dieu Uwihanganye
- Honorary Consul-General of Rwanda to Australia – Mr. Michael Roux
- Secretary General of the United Nations, New York, United States of America
- Australia's Diplomatic Missions (All)
- Minister of National Unity & Civic Engagement of the Republic of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda
- Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and East African Community, Kigali, Rwanda

