

Time to bow to Genocide victims and listen to survivors – Macron

By James Karuhanga

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Photo: Igihe

Visiting French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday, May 27, stressed the importance of his country facing its history regarding the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

At the Kigali Genocide Memorial - the final resting place for more than 250,000 victims of the Genocide against the Tutsi - Macron left a message and then proceeded to lay a wreath and honour Genocide victims.

Before his speech, he wrote in the memorial's guest book, that: "*Ndibuka*. I will remember. These names, these faces, these lives that a genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi deprived of a future. The time has come to reconcile our memories, to recognize the past, to bow to the victims and listen to the pain of the survivors. It is France's honor to face its history. It is up to us to build the future for all these children."

Ndibuka is Kinyarwanda word for 'I remember'.

Earlier, genocide survivors showed optimism that his visit will send a message that Genocide fugitives and deniers are not welcome in France.

France is home to at least 47 indicted Genocide suspects and hundreds of deniers and revisionists.

Macron arrived in Kigali earlier Thursday for a two-day official visit.

French historian Vincent Duclert in April released findings of an inquiry commissioned in 2019 by Macron to examine archives related to the role of France in the days leading to and during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

The 1,200-page report, among others, concluded that France "bears heavy and overwhelming responsibilities" over the Genocide but indicated there was evidence of French complicity.

The report said that France, under President François Mitterrand at the time, was "blind" to preparations of the massacres.

However, a separate investigation commissioned by the Rwandan government established that France was not blind to what it called "a foreseeable genocide".

The inquiry, led by Robert Muse of the US law firm Levy Firestone Muse, concluded that the French government saw all the signs and was aware of the planning and execution of the Genocide, and did not act to prevent it—instead it extended military and political support to the Rwandan regime of the time.







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