

31st Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi #Kwibuka31 | Remarks by President Kagame | Kigali, 7 April 2025

[Home](#) / 31st Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi #Kwibuka31 | Remarks by President Kagame | Kigali, 7 April 2025



APRIL 7, 2025

Good afternoon to you all. I'll start with the historical account that Bizimana just shared with us, which he clearly elaborated, with a lot of evidence.

But first, I want to thank all of you for coming to stand in solidarity with Rwandans, especially those of you coming from abroad, or representing your countries here.

I thank you because, as we've come to see often these days, the truth is no longer respected.

A friend of mine once asked me, "But how do you live? How do you manage to reconcile the dark past and the cruel present? How do you manage that?"

But the way I understood it, he wasn't just asking me personally; he was asking about Rwanda.

What I answered was: from the beginning, we were not under any illusion that the two were not siblings, and we had to deal with them as such. We have to deal with the cruel present knowing that it is very much related to the dark past. They are inseparable.

For us, we have a choice to make. You are either crushed in between and you stop existing, or you stand up and fight.

When people were saying in the testimony that they have hope that what happened here thirty-something years ago will never happen again, it won't be because those responsible for the dark past will not try again—or are not even trying now. It will not happen again because there will be people who will stand up and fight.

It's not because there are fewer people who wish to perish, or who would have wished all of us to disappear—for this country to disappear.

How can people accept that? Can people not stand up and fight?

Yes, there is a risk. You may die when you stand up to fight. But if you don't, it's a sure thing—you are going to die. So why don't I try? Why don't I try to stand up and fight—with the chance that I might survive and live my life as I want it—instead of giving up, and letting people treat me as if living is a favor they are going to do for me?

I've also had people come to me and warn me: "President, you know, you are too vocal. You say things that challenge these people who have the power in their hands. They are going to kill you."

Well, first of all, it means they are killers. But my answer to them is: you know what? If I were to be there just to accept these things to happen, I don't think I would count myself as living. It's like I would already be dead. To live a life of lies, of pretense, and owe my life to somebody else—I would be dead anyway. So why don't I die fighting?

So you Rwandans, why don't you die fighting, instead of dying anyway, just dying like flies? Why? My message also goes to other Africans who live like this on a daily basis. Who are dehumanized, and they accept it, and they beg. I can't beg to live. I can't beg anybody. I will fight. If I lose, I lose.

But there is a chance, a significant chance, that if you stand up and fight, you will live. And you will have lived a dignified life. A life you deserve. A life anybody deserves.

These people who are there at the UN, in these Western capitals, they are everywhere, saying: "Rwanda, Rwanda, this small country..." When you talk about Rwanda and gang up together against Rwanda, you would think it's some giant country. Then I remember the facts about it, and I just imagine the world has gone amok.

But in the midst of all that, we have to live. We have to live our lives. We have to fight for it. We have to live the way we want. And I tell anybody to their face: go to hell.

If anyone comes around and thinks they can say: "We are going to sanction you" – to do what? Go to hell. Just go. You have your own issues to deal with, go deal with them. Leave me to mine.

This is the spirit I think Rwandans must have in their daily lives.

So my worry is not about how powerful these people are who come down upon us and throw anything at us. I'm never worried about that. I worry about one thing, which has lived on for centuries: It's for Rwandans, it's for Africans, who sit back and find nothing wrong with accepting to be treated like that. That's my only worry.

When can Rwandans, when can Africans, refuse to be mistreated like this? To be told they have no value? To be told their lives have to be lived as a result of a favor being done by somebody else? What a shame for people to accept that, even for a moment. You must not accept it. You must get up and fight for yourself.

Then you have fools leading countries, being used as puppets, and stealing from their own resources, which they should be putting to the good use of their people and developing them. Instead, they put everything to their own use. Billionaires in a sea of poverty. Millions of people going hungry, and their leaders are billionaires, money stolen from the resources of their people. These are the ones received in Western capitals, and praised.

When Rwanda is being crucified, literally, at the UN, everywhere, these are the ones who show up. And everybody is doing their bidding. They don't talk. These ones don't even say a thing, there is somebody to say it for them. They don't say a thing.

Even in meetings where solutions are being thought about and crafted, they are absent. Because somebody else is there on their behalf. When their name comes up, someone else answers.

I see it on a daily basis. Somebody has agents, orders them, pays them, to go everywhere preaching hate speech, killing people, setting fire to these people, burning them in broad daylight. And when it comes up for discussion? They say: "No, no, no, it's not this one. No, we're looking for them."

But the person keeps coming up. He said: "I will take the war to Kigali. I will remove the government. These Tutsis, we are tired of them." Just like they were tired of them 31 years ago. And it's okay.

These wonderful people, these powerful people who tell us what to do and what not to do, they are okay with that. They are fine with that. And they expect us to accept it also.

In broad daylight, hate speech, killings of people for their identity, uprooting them from their homes, and most of them are refugees here in this country. We have 125,000 people as refugees who have been living in camps, uprooted from their homes in eastern Congo.

Then these powerful, "good" people come here and pick one, two, three, another day five...to go and settle in their beautiful countries. They leave the majority here, and they expect us to be thankful. That's a huge gesture of generosity?

First of all, they take them knowing they are actually refugees from the neighboring country. They don't take them as Rwandans. They take them as refugees from Congo. Only, they take very few. I wish they could take all of them, those who wish to, go and resettle them.

What they do is cleanse eastern Congo of all these people, bring them to Rwanda, take to your countries those you want, a few, very few, not even 0.1%. The rest should remain Rwanda's problem, because after all, these ones are Tutsis like Kagame? That's a simple conclusion.

But ask ourselves how did these people end up being across the border of Rwanda? Was it really done by Kagame? Was it done by Rwanda?

No. For us here, we are lucky that we are alive, that we survived. But as I said this, even for my sanity and the country's sanity, we have to sometimes just try to do things differently. Meaning that if you want to be helpful, if you want to be partners, we are happy to play our part. And you can be sure you will find a reliable partner in us, irrespective of what we think about you.

This thing you see every day about "Group of Experts" – you've heard of them? These are people who go around, "experts" who are supposed to know our situation better than ourselves. Can you imagine?

The ones who lead those groups are the very people connected with this history I'm talking about, or that Bizimana was talking about. Can you imagine the cynicism?

The whole thing about genocide, this ideology that has killed millions of people—has been turned into a problem of minerals? Let's imagine it's a problem of minerals now. Was it a problem of minerals in 1994? Which minerals were we fighting for here?

Second, if it were to be minerals, how many are actually fighting for these minerals in those places? Assuming you found evidence about Rwanda being implicated in what's happening around minerals in eastern Congo, are you really saying it is just Rwanda?

Why don't you be brave enough to say: "Rwanda is invading the territory we have created for ourselves, and is encroaching on the minerals we are also encroaching on in eastern Congo?"

If these allegations were true, Rwanda would be as rich as you are, those of you who make the accusations. Actually, we would not be needing your money at all, of which you give us nothing and come and beat us up for everything. That is the world between the dark past and the cruel present.

But what didn't kill us and finish us 31 years ago has hardened us, has prepared us for the bad things that will always come, any time these people want and wish.

I want to assure you, we will not die not fighting like last time. And fighting does not involve invading anybody's territory, does not involve going after something that is not ours.

The fighting, I mean, is if you find us here and want to treat us the way you want, that we have seen in the past, I just want to assure you—you will not succeed.

I beg all Rwandans, we should be itching for a fight with anybody who wants to come here and turn things upside down. And I think there are many who are ready to join for that.

But for our friends, our partners, please don't misunderstand us, don't mistreat us. We have had enough of it. Take it somewhere else.

In the cruel present, facts don't matter, evidence doesn't matter, the truth doesn't matter. What matters is what pleases you on any day. It doesn't matter what the facts are.

I was saying this because this Bizimana made another presentation at another time that involved the same people he was talking about. The next day, people from embassies came to threaten him. They so foolishly brave. They went to him and I think another message went through Foreign Affairs. They started threatening that he will not get a visa to travel to some places—face to face, like that—somebody from the embassy threatening our minister.

Of course, I can't blame them, given this history we have heard, someone from the embassy thinks they are above the minister. He wasn't saying this was contrary to the truth or evidence we have – no, he was saying, "Whether lies or truth, you shouldn't have said it." That is the cruel present we live in. But we must confront it. And we will. We shall. No question about it.

I've also told people that, for us, we are in a sort of, not bad position, because the worst has already happened to us. I don't think any worse will happen. Ever.

For those who are scared, fearful of anything—I just want to console you in some way, if I may—the worst has already passed. When we lost the people during that time, what the young man was giving testimony about—do you think anything like that would ever happen again? I don't think so.

So why would we be scared of anything?

The worst, the hurricane came and we took cover, and it has passed. And we rebuilt. We rebuilt our strengths, of all kinds. I don't think there's any other hurricane that will come and sweep across the country, destroying everything. I don't think so.

This day always reminds us of some of the things that I ignored. Remember the book written by somebody many of you know—Philip Gourevitch—with a very long title. This is a man who, at least I would have wished that they could think of such a man and put him in the Group of Experts, maybe they would benefit. But you bring somebody just because they come from a country that colonized Rwanda, and that becomes the expert? I think that's not serious.

The title of the book was: *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families*. Who were they informing? And who was going to stop that? Who was going to come to their rescue? Nobody. It just happened as they said it.

People kept telling the world, "We want to inform you that tomorrow we are going to be killed with all our families." And who cared? The families were killed indeed—including the family of the young man who was testifying here.

Well, including our families—those of us standing here—who have been demonized every single day about our history. The history where there is a force that always has been attempting to turn victims into perpetrators. Where these people who give testimonies and say what happened to them—are actually now perpetrators. They are no longer victims. The cynicism I was talking about, is that these very people who barely survived and who lost everything and their families, are now the perpetrators. No longer victims. That's what the world wants to create about us.

During the war times, to keep my own balance—there used to be battles taking place across the country, militias killing people, RPF soldiers fighting government forces... Sometimes in our movements, one of the commanders would come to me and say, "Please come and see what has happened here."

I went there once and saw a mass grave that they had just dug, with caterpillars. I think they had put in over 2,000 people. From that lot, we found 12 people were still breathing. And we got them out.

I was told the other day—of the 12, I think they lived for some time, there are remaining 7 out of 12. I kept following the story—seven are still alive. I think five died.

But from that moment, I told the commanders that they should never bring my attention to this kind of thing. They should just handle it. And we agreed how they would be handling it. I didn't even need to be informed of it—and the reason was simple.

The reason was: I didn't want my judgment and my conduct of the war, and the leadership I was supposed to be providing, to be impaired in any way by the anger of what we saw. I wanted to keep my own balance. Otherwise, if I kept seeing this—pulling people out of a mass grave—and then the mind goes, "But who is this—whoever is doing this—why is he doing it?"


Let me end here. There will always be another day, another year, to commemorate our lost people. But for Rwandans, I beg you: don't you owe your life to anybody else. And please, have the courage to deal with the situation and moment as it is.

Don't offend anybody, but always fight for what is yours. Don't allow anybody to dictate to you how you should live your life. Because the moment you accept it, that is the day you have lost your life.

God bless you.

Posts from @PaulKagame



Follow

Paul Ka  @PaulK · 21h 
Good partners PSG rooting for you tonight. Put this one in the bag :). Bless

 533  7.4K 

Paul Ka  @Paul · Apr 8 
Here Gunners we Go. Big victory and game. Alwz had faith....Congrats. :).)

 1.5K  27K 

Paul K.  @Pa · Mar 30 
[#EidMubarak](#) to all Muslims in Rwanda and around the world celebrating Eid al-Fitr. May this joyous occasion bring you and your loved ones peace, happiness, and prosperity. Let us continue to uphold the values of compassion, unity, and generosity that define this celebration