

# STATEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE

CONDEMNING THE ONGOING PERSECUTION AND KILLINGS OF KINYARWANDA-SPEAKING CONGOLESE TUTSI PEOPLE IN DRC.



December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## Statement on the Prevention of Genocide, condemning the ongoing Persecution and Killings of Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese “Tutsi” community populations in the DRC.

Following the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, 9 December, last Friday, we, the undersigned and on behalf of organisations representing survivors of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, wish to urgently sound the alarm and speak out against the ongoing persecution and killings of Kinyarwanda-speaking people in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), particularly those belonging to the “Tutsi” community populations.

Such violent attacks are intensifying, with strong evidence from social media, video footage and media articles promoting hatred against - and calling for the extermination of Tutsi. As we know from history, hate speech and violence against a particular group

is one of the first stages of Genocide, and urgent action is needed to prevent this widespread violence from turning into another mass atrocity.

Incitement to violence has rapidly escalated since June 2022. As the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide highlighted in her recently published statement on the escalation of violence in the DRC, “there are indicators and triggers contained in the [UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes](#) that are present in DRC including; dissemination of hate speech and absence of independent mechanisms to address it; politicisation of identity; proliferation of local militias and other armed groups across the country; widespread and systematic attacks, including sexual violence, against especially the Banyamulenge on the basis of their ethnicity and perceived allegiance with neighbouring countries; and intergroup tensions.”

We wish to recall that the identification of 'enemies' and the naming of people to be killed were tactics used by the hate radio RTLM and the Kangura newspaper in Rwanda before and during the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994. It is extremely worrying to see similar tactics employed in the DRC today.

Anti-Tutsi hatred is not a new phenomenon in the DRC, where it has developed over several decades against a backdrop of complex socio-political struggles in the country, particularly in the North and South Kivu provinces. The situation was exacerbated by the refugee crisis and influx of génocidaires who fled Rwanda after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The DRC has subsequently experienced two wars (1996-1997; 1998-2003) and continued weak governance. The prevalence of over 100 militia groups in the country has also led to regular outbreaks of prolific violence and ethnic divisionism.

Today, with the war between the M23 armed group and FARDC (DRC Army Forces) raging again and the ongoing inter-communal violence across North and South Kivu, we are deeply concerned that the mistakes of the past are being repeated with the risk of another human catastrophe in the region.

It is essential that we, as organisations representing survivors of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, draw the world’s attention to echoes of the hate speech that contributed to the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, present in anti-Tutsi propaganda in the DRC today. Hate speech incites communities to violence, and the international community's ignorance and indifference towards the crisis in the country is only encouraging the situation.

As organisations representing survivors of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, following the 9 December, a day that marks the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and the Prevention of this Crime, we call on world leaders, as well as global and regional institutions such as the UN, EU, AU, EAC to condemn this incitement to Genocide. We urge them to live up to their obligations under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle by providing concrete and practical measures to protect Tutsi populations and other at-risk communities in the DRC, thus preventing this dire situation from escalating further.

We appreciate the statement by the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Ms Alice Wairimu Nderitu, condemning the situation in DRC. We, however, call for more tangible actions to stop the situation from worsening. The Genocide Prevention Day

underscores the international community's commitment to "never again". The international community, however, has consistently failed to act to prevent Genocide. As organisations representing survivors of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, we have first-hand understanding of the dangerous nature of identity-based discrimination, dehumanisation and hate speech. We are reminded of the international community's inaction and the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) failure in 1994. The UN is now failing to provide effective peace for the people of the DRC. Despite having had a peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) in the DRC for decades, at the cost of billions of dollars, there has been no improvement of the security in the Kivu region. Hundreds of thousands of Banyamulenge and other Rwandan-speaking Congolese "Tutsi" communities who fled their villages more than two decades ago remain in refugee camps in neighbouring countries like Rwanda, Uganda and others.

We strongly recommend to the UN and global powers to:

- conduct an independent investigation detailing all the massacres against the Banyamulenge and other Kinyarwanda-speaking Tutsi Congolese populations;
- qualify the kind of crime being committed against those belonging to "Tutsi" community populations in DRC and to set up mechanism for its repression and prevention;
- take serious steps and actions to establish a co-ordinated regional and international peacekeeping presence to ensure the safety of "Tutsi" populations;

We, the organisations representing survivors of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, are committed to providing our contribution to the UN, governmental institutions or any person of goodwill in order to make "never again" a reality.

The warning signs are there, and immediate intervention is required.

### **Signed by**

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- **Etienne Nsanzimana, Ibuka-France**
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