

Kwibuka30 Commemoration in Kolkata Marks 30 Years Since 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda

Indian Chamber of Commerce and Sister Nivedita University collaborate to uphold a ceremony that honours the past while renewing the commitment to prevent future atrocities.

Kolkata, 21st June 2024: The High Commission of the Republic of Rwanda in India and the Honorary Consulate of Rwanda in Kolkata commemorated Kwibuka30, the 30-year of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, on Friday, 21st June 2024 at Sister Nivedita University. This event marks three decades since the tragic genocide in 1994, which claimed over one million lives. The commemoration offers an opportunity to understand the historical context of this human tragedy and draw lessons to combat genocide ideology, sectarianism and discrimination. It also serves as a noble cause, reflecting our moral and human duty to honour the memory of the victims. Distinguished dignitaries who attended the commemoration included H.E. Mrs. Jaqueline Mukangira, High Commissioner, Republic of Rwanda; Mr. Rudra Chatterjee, Honorary Consulate of Rwanda in Kolkata & Past President, Indian Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Satyam RoyChowdhury, Chancellor of Sister Nivedita University; and Prof. (Dr.) Dhruvajyoti Chattopadhyay, Vice-Chancellor of Sister Nivedita University.

H.E. Mrs. Jaqueline Mukangira, High Commissioner, Republic of Rwanda, expressed, "India's solidarity is highlighted by the illumination of the Indian Monument in Rwanda's colors and the high-level delegation sent to Rwanda. This year's commemoration, themed "Remember, Unite, Renew," honours victims, comforts survivors and pays tribute to those who stopped the genocide. It serves as a call to action for the younger generation to reflect, learn and prevent future genocides. From April to July 1994, over one million Tutsis were brutally killed, including my own family members. The genocidal government systematically prepared these atrocities, aiming to eliminate all Tutsis. Post-genocide, Rwanda faced immense challenges but was determined to rebuild. President Paul Kagame acknowledged the sacrifices of survivors and soldiers, urging the international community to address ongoing hate speech and acts of genocide. Rwanda's progress includes increased life expectancy, significant economic growth, and notable gender parity in government. As we commemorate this anniversary, we call on the international community to fight genocide ideology and hate speech, educate future generations on unity and ensure justice for genocide fugitives. Rwanda remains committed to human rights, global peace and security, urging all to prevent such atrocities from happening again."

Mr. Rudra Chatterjee, Honorary Consulate of Rwanda in Kolkata & Past President, Indian Chamber of Commerce, stated, "We commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, recognising that many here were not yet born when it occurred. It's crucial to remember that both perpetrators and victims were ordinary people, just like us. The idea of "othering" is dangerous and can lead to discrimination and violence. During British colonisation, "divide and rule" was used to control populations but true patriotism lies in unity. As the Honorary Consul of Rwanda and a businessman, I've seen Rwanda's remarkable recovery, marked by improved infrastructure and a thriving economy. Kigali is now a beautiful, clean and economically vibrant city. However, this event is about more than business. It's about reconciliation and forgiveness, recognising our shared humanity to prevent future atrocities. Despite the Tutsi being a minority in Rwanda, the genocide impacted every family. No one deserves such suffering. Differences in appearance or background should not lead to separation. In a city like Kolkata and at a university founded on principles of consciousness, we must reject all forms of discrimination. Commemorating the Rwandan genocide is about recognising our collective responsibility to prevent such

tragedies globally. Despite past horrors, humanity hasn't fully learned from them. We must confront prejudice within ourselves and end violence in humanity."

About Kwibuka:

Kwibuka, meaning "to remember" in Kinyarwanda, is an annual observance of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda. It provides a moment for Rwandans and friends of Rwanda worldwide to reflect on the atrocities, pay tribute to the victims, and support the ongoing journey of healing and reconciliation for survivors. On 7th April 2024, the Government of India illuminated the Qutb Minar with the colours of the Rwandan flag as a gesture to honour the memory of the victims of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda. Additionally, Shri Dammu Ravi, Secretary of Economic Relations in the Ministry of External Affairs, led an Indian delegation to the commemorative event held in Rwanda.