

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. KAIRIE MBUENDE

AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND CHAIR OF
ACP COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS

AT THE

25TH COMMEMORATION OF THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

Held at ACP House on Monday, 8 April 2019

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REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, CHAIR OF THE ACP COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS
AT THE 25TH COMMEMORATION OF THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE AGAINST THE
TUTSI TO BE HELD AT ACP HOUSE ON MONDAY, 8 APRIL 2019

- *H.E. Mr. Amandin Rugira, Ambassador of Rwanda,*
- *H.E. Dr. Patrick Gomes, ACP Secretary-General,*
- *Excellences Ambassadors of ACP States to Brussels,*
- *Representatives of ACP Regional and Continental Organisations,*
- *Distinguished invited guests,*
- *Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am humbled by the honour of making a Statement on behalf of the ACP Group at this commemoration of one of the most atrocious tragedies to have occurred on the African continent, and indeed in the world.

The tragic slaughter of human beings by fellow human beings should be a constant reminder of the human ability to be cruel when rationality and simple consideration for others is sacrificed. We are therefore charged with the call to be consciously alert and concerned about the recurring cases of genocides and crimes against humanity, despite the existing appropriate international prevention mechanisms. We should also remain concerned at the current trend of alarming outspread of violence, extremism and terrorism in different regions of the world. These are the very foundations of elements that give rise to genocides that must not be allowed to continue to see the light of day.

It is critical that we as a community begin to acknowledge that genocide is the ultimate crime with irreversible consequences, and call upon all states to bring their utmost contribution to the strengthening of genocide prevention mechanisms, emphasizing the role that various governments, parliaments, international organizations and civil society have in the prevention of genocide and their contribution to efficiency of human rights protection, the strength of the culture of tolerance and non-discrimination.

- *Mr. Ambassador,*
- *Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Now more than ever we must reject any form of denial particularly at the state level towards whichever forms of genocide and stress the importance of timely condemnation of genocide by Member states and the need to efficiently address their consequences as an important tool for prevention and reconciliation.

It is thus with good reason that the 79th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers in 2004 charged the ACP Group to annually commemorate 7 April in honour and memory of all those that lost their lives in the 1994 genocide against Tutsi, and indeed to ensure that we remain vigilant against any such manifestations.

In 1994, it seemed that all the international treaties and conventions that were meant to protect human dignity, and which should bind us all citizens of this planet into one human family failed us lamentably. They failed the Rwandese people. The genocide in Rwanda served to awaken the international community to the realization that arguments for territorial integrity and

national sovereignty should not be an excuse not to rise to the defense of any group of people facing genocidal annihilation by another.

This annual commemoration is therefore a solemn occasion in which we remember and pay homage to men and women who lost their lives 25 years ago for no other reason than their ethnicity, and others who were courageous enough to stand up in their defense. Rwandese extremists rose up against their compatriots to instigate a genocide that I hope we shall never again have to witness in Africa or elsewhere.

During this commemoration we celebrate the resilience, courage and capacity for forgiveness and reconciliation of the Rwandese people, who have managed, out of the conflagration of the genocide, to fashion a unified and rapidly progressing nation in a region that had long been characterised by a precarious balance between peace and insecurity.

This commemoration is also an occasion for us to reiterate our commitment as the ACP Group to ensure that no more genocide occurs again. This is in accordance with the objectives and principles Article 9 of the Cotonou Agreement on the promotion of good governance, human rights and rule of law.

The ACP Group has gone further to ensure that in the Post Cotonou Agreement all forms of intolerance are addressed in the various articles under the Title on Peace and Security. This reiterates our firm commitment to ensure that genocide does not occur in any of our member states.

– *Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Yesterday marked the 25th anniversary of the Genocide against Tutsi, let us endeavor to commemorate this day from the eyes of the Rwandese with humanity at the center of our approach which will ensure we continue to stand with survivors that remain the hero's among us and also pledge our determination to prevent genocide as the best way to honor the victims of the genocide in Rwanda.

Let us together resolve to honor the survivors of this atrocious tragedy, who are amongst us today and whose strength and love for their country has enabled Rwanda build one of the most flourishing nations.

– *Mr. Ambassador,*

– *Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I wish to thank you for your kind attention and request us all to raise and observe a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the genocide.