

The remains of 154 victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi were laid to rest in Bugesera on Wednesday, as officials and survivors renewed appeals for information on the locations of still-undiscovered mass graves.

The burial ceremony was held at the Ntarama Genocide Memorial, one of Rwanda's key sites of remembrance for genocide victims.

Local authorities said 148 of the remains were recovered in Mwogo sector, three in Nyamata, and one each in Mayange, Musenyi, and Ntarama.

Officials noted that the continued discovery of remains more than three decades after the genocide underscores both the scale of the killings and the ongoing lack of information about burial sites.

Speaking on behalf of bereaved families, Angélique Mukandeze urged residents with knowledge of mass graves to come forward so victims can receive dignified burials.

"We are still finding our relatives in places where people live and farm," she said. "Those who know where victims were taken should have the courage to speak out."

Bugesera District Mayor Richard Mutabazi said the recovery of remains after so many years reflects the brutality of the genocide and efforts that were made to conceal evidence. He added that the continued absence of information about burial sites continues to slow reconciliation and unity efforts in affected communities.

Yves Iradukunda said remembrance should serve as a lesson in preventing future atrocities and strengthening national unity. He called for continued efforts to counter genocide ideology and warned against divisive narratives, including those spread on digital platforms. He also urged young people to learn Rwanda's history and reject messages that promote ethnic division.

During a KT Radio talk show, survivor Adeline Munganyinka recounted how she survived the violence at Ntarama church in the early days of the genocide.

She said her family had been relocated to Rwanda in the 1960s under government policies that encouraged the settlement of Tutsi communities in areas later associated with difficult living conditions.

When violence began on April 7, 1994, she said some residents attempted to flee while others initially stayed in their homes, believing they could resist attacks by

Interahamwe militias targeting Tutsi civilians.

Munganyinka said the situation escalated after a local policeman, identified as Isaac, shot at older men who had tried to defend themselves, triggering panic among residents.

“My mother took my hand and led me and my siblings to the Ntarama church,” she said. “When we arrived, many others had also sought refuge there, and we believed it would protect us.”

She said the church instead became the site of a mass killing.

Attackers surrounded the building, threw grenades inside, and forced their way in, killing those who had taken shelter.

“I saw someone throw something I did not understand at the time,” she said. “Later I learned it was a grenade. It exploded and people died. The Interahamwe entered the church and started hacking people.”

Munganyinka said she tried to reach her mother near the altar but was unable to due to the chaos. Another explosion later brought down part of the structure.

“I kept calling my mother by name,” she said. “I could see her near the altar, but she could not hear me. Then a grenade hit that side of the church and the wall collapsed.”

Despite the trauma, she said she rebuilt her life, pursued education, and now has a family.

“We are still here, even though our parents are gone,” she said. “We have grandchildren. We did not remain trapped in grief. We studied, we rebuilt our lives.”

She urged genocide deniers to seek the truth and listen to survivor testimony rather than spreading false narratives online.

“We are living testimony,” she said. “They should come, see for themselves, read the history and listen to survivors.”

The Ntarama Genocide Memorial, where more than 5,000 victims are buried, remains one of Rwanda’s most significant sites documenting the atrocities of the

1994 genocide.