Rwanda’s High Commissioner to Nigeria, Moses Rugema, has called on the international community to intensify efforts in combating the ideology that fuels genocide.

Speaking at the Kwibuka 32 commemoration on Tuesday at an annual event marking the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi — Rugema described the occasion as both “a moment of reflection for Rwandans, and a call to conscience for the world.” The genocide, which took place over 100 days from April 7 to July 4, 1994, claimed more than one million lives.

While honoring the memory of the victims, Rugema warned that remembrance must go beyond ceremonies and speeches. He urged nations and individuals alike to confront denial, distortion, and divisive narratives, particularly in today’s digital age.

“The genocide against the Tutsi was a deliberate, systematic extermination carried out by the Hutu extremist government and its militias. It targeted not only Tutsi civilians but also moderate Hutu and anyone opposing the killings,” he said, describing it as one of the gravest crimes against humanity.

Rugema cautioned that the ideology behind such atrocities remains a danger, increasingly amplified by modern technologies, including artificial intelligence. “These tools, while powerful, can be misused to manipulate narratives, sow division, and obscure the truth. Stronger laws, education, and accountability are urgently needed,” he added.

Reflecting on the world’s response in 1994, the envoy lamented the international community’s delayed action, noting that early warnings were often dismissed or mischaracterized. He, however, acknowledged a few diplomats, including Nigeria’s former UN representative Ibrahim Gambari, Karel Kovanda, and Colin Keating, who spoke out to expose the atrocities.

The genocide was eventually halted by the Rwandan Patriotic Army, the armed wing of the Rwandan Patriotic Front led by Paul Kagame. In the years that followed, Rwanda focused on national unity and reconciliation, abolishing ethnic identity cards and establishing a government of national unity. The Gacaca courts played a pivotal role, handling over two million cases to deliver justice and foster community healing.

Despite these efforts, Rugema warned that extremist ideologies continue to threaten parts of the Great Lakes region, fueling violence and displacement. “Silence in the face of such warnings is complicity,” he said, urging the global community to uphold justice, human dignity, and accountability.

Also speaking at the event, Mohamed Fall, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, emphasized that Kwibuka 32 is a time not only to remember the victims but also to renew commitment to preventing future atrocities. He highlighted the growing danger of hate speech and incitement to violence in the digital era.