By Pascal MUTEMBEREZI;

Rwanda and the International Community is remembering victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi for the 26th time where over a million innocent lives were killed in just 100 days making it the cruelest genocide of its kind in the 20th century. Comparatively with other genocides in the world like the Holocaust (1941-1945) or the Armenian Genocide (1914-1923) it turns out so clearly that what happened in Rwanda in 1994 was lethal in nature, killing so many lives in such a short period of time.

To understand what happened in Rwanda, let us first look at the definition of the genocide to adeptly discuss related issues. The UN Convention on the Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG)] adopted by the United Nations Assembly on 9/12/1948 and later implemented on 12/01/1951 as UN general assembly resolution sought to define genocide and its major characteristics. The genocide can be described as any of the following acts with the intent to destroy in part or in whole, a national, racial or religious group such as; (a) killing members of group, (b) cause serious bodily mental harm to members of group, (c) intentionally endanger or inflict poor conditions of life on a group of people aiming at their physical destruction in whole or part, (d) initiate and impose measures that will stop births among members of a group, (e) taking the children of one group away by force and give them to another group that is unknown and unrelated to them.

With this definition therefore, when you look at what happened, it turns so clear that there was intent to kill all Tutsis in Rwanda to the extent of not sparing anyone. Even those who survived, one can say that, it was God's mercy or the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) intervention as the war was intense. The 1994 genocide against the Tutsi was the cruelest in a sense that even parents killed or plotted the killing of their own children just because one of the parents was a Tutsi either sides father/mother. This is well documented in the book entitled "Ma Mère M'a Tué" authored by NSENGIMANA Albert. His testimony is also available on YouTube. In short, his mother killed eight of his elder and younger brothers and surrendered him to the killers, fortunately he survived.

Secondly, it should be noted that the target group in this context was exclusively Tutsi which is why United Nations recognized what happened in Rwanda as the genocide against the Tutsi. Therefore, those who masquerade as human right

activists should know this as truth and stop their ill habits of hoodwinking the world on what happened in Rwanda. The truth about the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi is well recorded and available in different genocide memorial sites and research institutions.

During the 1994 genocide against Tutsi, perpetrators used traditional weapons of all sorts to kill the victims. Some were even thrown in holes live and rivers with an intention of eliminating them all. So, for those who deny the genocide against the Tutsi should know that a genocide is a humanitarian crime punishable by related laws. Also, they should be able to at least know that genocide victims are killed not because they are directly involved in fighting or wars but because of who "they are". The perpetrators are often the ones who dictate the criteria to base upon while eliminating a certain group of people or ethnic.

Understanding of the eight (08) stages of the Genocide

For any genocide to occur, it evolves into stages. In other words, it is a process. These stages are predictable but not inexorable. At each stage, preventive measures can stop it. The process is not linear and the stages operate throughout the process. Therefore, the following are the stages: ***classification, symbolization, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, extermination and denial***.

Historians argue that from 1959-1990s, Rwandans were divided on ethical lines to the extent of being marked on people's identity cards (INDANGAMUNTU). These kinds of categorization were meant to distinguish people on "Us against Them". Tutsis were labelled as "Snakes, Cockroaches and other negatives or animal names aimed at dehumanizing them until they were killed in 1994.

Gerald Prunier in his book *"Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*" states that between 1961-1963 at least 10,000 Tutsis were killed in Bugesera only. This implies that both the first and second republics were repressive against their survival at the time hence justifying what happened in 1994. He further says that between 1972-1973, they commissioned the mapping of Tutsi who supposedly worked in civil services, schools, universities and public sectors so as to know their exact number. This commission was termed as "vigilant committee" obliged to scrutinize all Tutsi that may be employed in the sectors mentioned. The implication of such actions was meant to localize them for easy elimination by all means.

Having said that, it should be noted that the genocide against Tutsi was well planned, organized and executed by the post-independence regimes more specifically in 1994. The introduction of the Hutu 10 commandments by Gitera in 1959 and later published in Kangura in 1990 clearly demonstrates how hateful propaganda was spread in the communities that later climaxed into the genocide in 1994. People were tortured, denied almost all rights to everything, dehumanized, destroyed their properties and assets to mention but a few. There are some people who tend to believe that the genocide was caused by Habyarimana's plane crush but if you read through what was happening before the plane crush on 6/4/1994, it becomes clear that it was in offing. Such schools of thought should be able to answer the following questions if they really believe so. Do you think that the weapons used were bought in the one night of 6/4/1994? What time did the interahamwe militias get mobilized? All these were planned and organized before the plane crash.

Reconstruction of Rwandan Society after 1994

A lot has been done by the government to restore peace and security of Rwandans in 26 years after the genocide. Rwandans are thankful to the initiatives undertaken to restore peace, promote unity and social coexistence among Rwandans. The RPF government inherited a country that was shaken in all spheres. It was characterized by loss or inadequate human capital resource because so many educated people were killed, institutions were down and destroyed, refugees roaming in all neighboring countries and a traumatized society as a result the genocide.

The government introduced all the necessary possible mechanisms and established institutions that would deal with the issues available thus the creation of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, Gacaca Courts that tried several cases of genocide perpetrators, schools and university resumed operations. There was also introduction of different policies that allow private sector growth through investments that would provide employment to Rwandans. The country currently is ranked among the fast growing economies in the world.

Conclusively, let us all embrace "NDI UMUNYARWANDA" Program as it unites us for the betterment of our societies. The youth as the future leaders should stick to this and desist from any kind of negativity that can be spread by social media platforms as there are so many genocide deniers using them. I could not end this article without conveying my sympathies "IMPORE" to all genocide survivors and Rwandans at large. As this year's theme states, let us remember, unite and renew.

NEVER AGAIN.

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