

A symposium on the history of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and the struggle that stopped it was held Friday at the Parliament of Rwanda, bringing together about 500 participants from government institutions, security organs, political organizations, religious groups and civil society.

Before the symposium began, Jeannette Kagame visited the Campaign Against the Genocide Museum located at the Parliament building.

Unity Club Intwararumuri said the symposium was intended to deepen understanding of the genocide's history and origins and to strengthen efforts aimed at preventing genocide ideology.

Jeannette Kagame, who chairs Unity Club Intwararumuri, said in her opening remarks that after the genocide, Rwandans chose unity and committed themselves to rebuilding the country. She said commemoration of the genocide cannot be separated from remembering the struggle that ended it.

She said the memory of genocide victims and those who died in the liberation struggle remains central to national remembrance.

"Rwandans chose to unite in order to work for the country that gave them life. Commemorating the Genocide against the Tutsi cannot be separated from remembering the struggle to stop it. Those we lost and our soldiers who sacrificed themselves live forever in our hearts, and for all those who are gone, we have a solemn commitment to remain devoted to the Rwanda they did not live to see," she said.

She praised the Inkotanyi for their decision to stop the genocide and liberate the country, saying their actions reflected extraordinary courage in the face of national destruction.

"There is nothing else we can give the Inkotanyi who accepted to confront and overcome all those challenges except our endless gratitude. To many people, it seemed impossible that Rwanda could ever live again because of how completely destroyed it was in every aspect," she said.

Jeannette Kagame urged leaders and other stakeholders involved in national rebuilding to continue strengthening unity among Rwandans, warning against the re-emergence of hate speech in some parts of the world and the region.

“We Rwandans cannot watch this from afar and act as if it has nothing to do with us. We know very well where hatred can lead a country,” she said.

She also reflected on the scale and brutality of the genocide and the failure of the international community to intervene, saying Rwanda’s experience highlights the importance of national responsibility in protecting the country.

“This shows that even today, it is we ourselves who must defend our nation, especially in this world that is constantly changing every day,” she said.

The Parliament building, where the symposium was held, was formerly known as the CND (Conseil National de Développement). During the 1993 Arusha Peace Accords, it housed 600 RPA soldiers alongside RPF-Inkotanyi political representatives. It now hosts the Campaign Against the Genocide Museum.

The symposium included two main components: a guided visit to the museum and panel discussions on the history of the genocide against the Tutsi and the liberation struggle.

Discussions focused on the history of divisionism leading up to the genocide, the armed struggle that stopped it, and the role of regional political dynamics in the events preceding 1994.

Participants included senior government officials, security leaders, members of Unity Club Intwararumuri, parliamentary commission chairpersons from both chambers, political party leaders, heads of public institutions and agencies, provincial and Kigali City leaders, religious leaders, civil society representatives, Guardians of the Covenant (Abarinzi b’Igihango), and representatives of women and youth organizations.