The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) on Friday commemorated more than 800 former employees of the ministry, affiliated institutions and projects who were killed during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

The 32nd commemoration event, held at MINAGRI headquarters in Kacyiru, brought together survivors, former colleagues, government officials and representatives of Ibuka, the umbrella organisation for survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi.

According to ministry figures, more than 800 victims have so far been identified among the over 5,900 people employed by MINAGRI, its institutions and projects in 1994.

The Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources Telesphore Ndabamenye said remembrance is a collective responsibility for all Rwandans.

“It is a moment to reflect on the painful history our country went through, honour innocent victims of the Genocide against the Tutsi, and renew our commitment to ensuring that genocide never happens again,” Ndabamenye said.

The Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources Telesphore Ndabamenye

He said the genocide severely disrupted Rwanda’s agriculture and livestock sectors, destroying infrastructure and crippling research and development projects intended to improve citizens’ livelihoods.

Despite the destruction, Ndabamenye said Rwanda rebuilt through resilience and unity, with the agriculture sector now playing a major role in economic development, job creation and poverty reduction.

He also conveyed condolences to families of the victims and recalled President Paul Kagame’s message that “Rwanda will not die twice.”

“Despite the devastation left by the Genocide, Rwandans chose unity and rebuilding the country together,” he said.

Christian Bizimana, an official from the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement, said agriculture and livestock were among the tools used during the

colonial era to divide Rwandans.

“In order for the Genocide against the Tutsi to happen, divisions were first sown among Rwandans using issues linked to farming and livestock,” Bizimana said.

He added that remembrance serves to restore dignity to victims who were killed and humiliated during the genocide.

Bizimana noted that genocide ideology had spread within institutions, including tea factories and agricultural projects, where some employees were killed by colleagues.



Janvier Bayingana, representing Ibuka, said the genocide destroyed lives, humanity and national unity, while its effects continue to affect survivors nearly 32 years later.

“Even after 32 years, some survivors still carry physical and psychological wounds. Commemoration remains important as part of the journey of healing and fighting the effects of the Genocide,” he said.

During the event, survivors shared testimonies about the impact of the genocide.

Laurent Gashugi, a former MINAGRI employee, recounted losing his two children while he was in Japan for a training in 1994.

His daughter, Aliane, 9, and son, Patrick, 5, were killed on May 15, 1994.

“Aliane’s last words were, ‘Remain in prayer.’ Patrick said, ‘I’m sorry, I will not be Tutsi anymore,’” Gashugi recalled emotionally.

Gashugi, who joined the Ministry of Agriculture in 1979, said he had experienced discrimination at the workplace before 1994, including accusations of supporting the then-RPF Inkotanyi rebels.

He also paid tribute to former Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Frédéric Nzamurambaho, who opposed the genocidal ideology and was killed at the beginning of the genocide.

Jotham Niyogakiza, representing survivors whose relatives worked in former MINAGRI institutions, said his brother, an employee of OCIR Thé, was killed in the early days of the genocide after being betrayed by colleagues and friends who had promised to protect him.

“Some victims were buried alive by people they trusted,” Niyogakiza said.

He thanked Rwanda’s post-genocide leadership for restoring unity and rebuilding the country, and called on Rwandans to continue supporting survivors.