

Rwanda's minister of national unity and civic engagement said Wednesday that no African country has prosecuted suspects who participated in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and remain in hiding.

Dr. Jean Damascène Bizimana made the remarks while opening an international conference on genocide prevention held April 8 in Kigali. The event drew more than 500 participants, including government officials, diplomats, researchers and representatives of survivors' organizations.

Bizimana highlighted the unique nature of the 1994 genocide. It was the first genocide in Africa formally recognized under the 1948 U.N. Genocide Convention and one of the last major crimes of the 20th century.

He also noted that the first woman in the world to be convicted of genocide was Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, Rwanda's former minister for family and women's affairs. Born in 1946, Nyiramasuhuko was sentenced by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 2011 for planning, committing and inciting genocide, as well as crimes against humanity including torture and sexual violence. Her sentence was reduced to 47 years on appeal in 2015.

"Thirty-two years later, not a single African country has tried even one suspect on its soil, despite numerous international arrest warrants issued by Rwanda," Bizimana said.

He criticized the Democratic Republic of Congo for supporting the FDLR, an armed group linked to genocide perpetrators, and accused the government of integrating them into its army. "In the West, no country would cooperate with Nazis while the world looked away. Yet the DRC continues to spread genocide ideology and aid the FDLR openly," he said.

Chaloka Beyani, the U.N. secretary-general's special adviser on genocide prevention, said the 1994 killings could have been stopped if the international community had acted on available intelligence.