

“Today, our hearts are filled with grief and gratitude in equal measure. We remember our dead, and are also grateful for what Rwanda has become.” President Paul Kagame shared with thousands assembled at BK Arena stadium on Sunday for the 30th Commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Sunday’s events marked the start of a week of national mourning, in remembrance of over a million people killed. Over 100 days, starting on April 7 1994, Tutsis were systematically massacred by Hutu extremists regime using the army and Interahamwe militias.

Our journey has been long and tough. Rwanda was completely humbled by the magnitude of our loss, and the lessons we learned are engraved in blood, Kagame said.



*President Paul Kagame during the commemoration event at BK Arena in Kigali*

Today, we also feel a particular gratitude to all the friends and representatives here with us from around the world. We are deeply honoured by your presence alongside us on this very heavy day. The contributions you have made to Rwanda’s rebirth are enormous, and have helped us to stand where we are now.

He emphasized that Rwanda’s development is the culmination of deliberate choices made in favor of the country’s growth.

Joined by world leaders, the commemoration event commenced with a wreath-laying ceremony at Gisozi Genocide memorial, comprising of three sections: first, senior Rwandan officials and their guests and representatives from international organizations; followed by former heads of state and concluded with current heads of state and government.

As the day progressed, leaders joined thousands of people in Kigali Arena holding up candles in memory of those killed in the genocide.

President blamed the international community for inaction to stop the genocide, saying that, they failed all of us, whether from contempt or cowardice.

Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission said that “no one, not even the African Union, can exonerate themselves from their inaction.

The Head of State extended his gratitude to the allies of Rwanda who have stood by the nation in its journey to confront the Genocide against the Tutsi and to rebuild the country.

He mentioned a few, Uganda that it carried the burden of Rwanda's internal problems for so many years, and was even blamed for that. Ethiopia and Eritrea helped rebuild,

Kenya, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo hosted large numbers of Rwandan refugees, and gave them a home.

Tanzania and its former late President, Julius Nyerere helped in unique ways, the Republic of Congo, South Africa's support in reviving Rwanda's shattered health system and education, as well as many other countries that were represented at the event played a role in bringing peace and rebuilding Rwanda.



Kagame also singled out the late Captain Mbaye Diagne of Senegal, as a peacekeeper who died rescuing many and extended gratitude to ambassadors from Nigeria, the Czech Republic, and New Zealand to the United Nations Security Council in 1994, who showed courage to call the genocide by its rightful name, and resist political pressure from more powerful countries to hide the truth.

Over the years following the genocide, many countries in Africa, Europe, the United States, Asia, and many international organizations and philanthropies extended tangible support

For the first time during commemoration, President Kagame shared some personal stories like his cousin who was tragically killed during the Genocide against the Tutsi.

He emphasized that Rwandans will never again suffer rejection and violence, underscoring the importance of commemorating and affirming the significance for all Rwandans.

“Our people will never — and I mean never — be left for dead again.”

The president said that Rwandans have cast aside all fears. “We had lost all fear. Each challenge or indignity just made us stronger.”