

Rwanda is renewing its request for the United Nations to relocate the archives of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) from Arusha, Tanzania, to Kigali, saying the documents are vital to preserving the country's history and supporting justice for victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Ambassador Martin Ngoga, Rwanda's permanent representative to the U.N., raised the request Wednesday during a Security Council session on the operations of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), which oversees the ICTR's remaining functions.

Ngoga emphasized that the archives—which include more than 900,000 documents, over 6,000 days of court audio, testimonies from more than 10,000 witnesses, and final judgments—are a critical part of Rwanda's national memory. He said they should be accessible to survivors, families, researchers and future generations.

"These documents carry deep historical meaning," Ngoga told the council. "They should be housed in Rwanda, particularly for the benefit of genocide survivors, their families and scholars."

This is not the first time Rwanda has made the request. A similar appeal was submitted in 2015 when the ICTR closed, but the Security Council cited concerns about the safety of witnesses, many of whom testified under strict confidentiality.

Some of those witnesses were individuals who denied or downplayed their roles in the genocide, leading to concerns that their identities could be compromised if the archives were moved.

Ngoga sought to reassure the council that Rwanda is capable of securing the sensitive materials.

"Rwanda stands ready to provide all the infrastructure necessary to ensure the archives are properly and safely preserved," he said. "If the U.N. prefers to maintain oversight, Rwanda will host the construction of a dedicated facility in Kigali."

The archives also include documents contributed by Rwanda's Ministry of Defense, embassies, banks and other institutions, along with materials provided by individuals accused of crimes.

Ngoga argued that allowing public access to the archives would strengthen ongoing research, education and legal efforts related to the genocide and international

justice.

Historians and justice experts have previously called for the archives to be relocated, saying they contain vital truths about Rwanda's past and should not remain solely in Tanzania.

"The preservation of these records in Kigali would help safeguard the legacy of the tribunal," Ngoga said.

The ICTR was established in 1994 to prosecute those responsible for the genocide, in which more than one million people, were killed. The tribunal formally closed in 2015, and its remaining responsibilities were transferred to the IRMCT.