

Remembering Rwanda: 10th Anniversary Memorial Project (RR10)

OTTAWA-GATINEAU EVENTS

Background

Almost ten years have passed since a million Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus were systematically decimated in just 100 days in Rwanda. It was the worst genocide humanity had to witness since the Holocaust, and the wounds are still fresh in the memory of survivors.

The 10th Anniversary of the Genocide needs to be commemorated by the International Community and by Canadians in a major way. The activities planned in the nation's capital region to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the 1994 Genocide are being coordinated by Humura Association with the input, and participation of the Rwandan Association of Ottawa Gatineau members, concerned groups and individuals in the region. Humura Association will put together a series of events that will give survivors of the genocide, Rwandans, friends, academics, politicians and human rights activists in the region a meaningful space for reflection and expression of their perspectives.

HUMURA is a Canadian association for survivors of the 1994 genocide of the Batutsi of Rwanda. It was created in Ottawa-Gatineau in Canada on June 30, 2001, by genocide survivors and those who lost their relatives to alleviate the suffering and consequences of the genocide on the survivors in Canada and Rwanda. Since its creation, Humura has organized three commemorations, conducted a campaign in francophone high schools in the Ottawa-Gatineau to raise awareness on the plight of their counterparts, survivors in Rwanda. The result of this initiative has been a meaningful engagement between Canadian and Rwandan youth in the form of letter exchange. Humura continues to mobilize the Rwandan community in the capital region and the general public for justice and commemorative issues. Hence, Humura endorses Remembering Rwanda Project and will continue to work with other organizers across the country to ensure that the goals of the 10th Anniversary Memorial Project are reached.

Logic and Guiding Principles:

The memory of the victims and conditions in which survivors live will take center-stage. Therefore, the process leading to the implementation of activities will be participatory, and Rwandans will contribute to the content that adequately represents their culture and perspective. Furthermore, the planning committee has achieved a balanced male-female participation to ensure that content and decision making remain un-gendered.

The involvement of Rwandan will be especially encouraged in the drafting of testimonies, the making of a documentary focusing on their reflections of the last 10 years and the meaning of being a (female) survivor, and in producing a play.

Public education and outreach beyond the circles of Rwandan community will be the secondary goal key and a factor for success. For that, we will reach out to

community organizations, African organizations, and like-minded groups, including Jewish and Armenian organizations.

Partner Organizations include The Rwandan Association of Ottawa-Gatineau, World Inter-action Mondiale, and CKCU Radio. Other organizations, groups and individuals may include, but not limited to: Committee on Women, Peace and Security; the Independent Filmmakers' Cooperative of Ottawa, Broken English Theatre Company, Festival Couleurs d' Afrique planning committee, Gallery 101, Saw Gallery, etc.

Particular efforts will be made to lobby the Government of Canada a) to declare April 7/or April in memory of the 1994 Genocide, and b) to erect a memorial for the victims. The mayors of Ottawa and Gatineau will also be approached to declare April 7 the day of remembrance.

Chronology of events

February-March:

Fundraising activities include a film night, evenings of music by various local artists, such as the Mighty Popo. A silent auction is also scheduled on February 28, 2004.

Public lectures will be held on the Genocide at Carleton University and Ottawa University.

CAMPAIGN: Lobbying the Government of Canada to declare April 7a day of reflection of the Rwandan Genocide and tribute to the righteous people such as Roméo Dallaire who saved many lives.

The night of April 6-7: Candlelight Vigil at the Parliament or at the Human Rights monument (Depending on permit). The vigil starts at 7:00 pm for as long as there are people.

April 7:

11:00 -2:00 pm: Gathering at the Parliament (speeches/testimony/moments of silence/declarations).

Chimes to officially launch the commemoration at 12:00 Ottawa time

3:30 pm – 10:30: Launch of April commemoration events, Panel Discussion (themes: Justice After 10 Years, Remembrance, Mental Health/Trauma, the History of the Genocide, and Current Status of the Survivor, particularly young orphans, heads of households).

Invited guest speakers: Esther Mujawayo, Bishop Alexis Birindabagabo (Founder of Barakabaho), Chantal Kayitesi, Jean Bosco Rutagengwa, Edda Mukabagwiza (Rwandan Minister of Justice), Francine Rutazana, local speakers, and survivors of genocides around the world.

Screening of Reflexions of the Genocide Tragedy of 1994 --- Documentary

A documentary consisting of segments covering people's personal experiences with the tragedy of 1994, the failure of the international community, the displacement of women and children, the aftermath and the future of the Rwandan people.

Reading of testimonies

Launch of a Photo Exhibition (Through the Eyes of Children and or Gacaca Photo Exhibit depending on sponsorship)

April 9 (all night): The first of up to three evenings of remembrance/wake that will take place in April to allow Rwandans to mourn their losses and share their stories.

These events will be semi-structured to allow spontaneity. Music, pictures projected through a PowerPoint presentation, testimonies, and eulogies will be featured.

April 10-11: Trip to Montreal in solidarity with organizers of Remembering Rwanda Events

April 12-16:

Art Exhibit-Auction: Local artists will be mobilized to donate pictures, paintings and other artwork (themes ranging from war, holocaust, to peace and protection) for an exhibit/auction in April/May/or June.

Photo Gallery:

Through the Eyes of Children: photography by Ambreen Qurachi, based in New York

Gacaca Photography: photography by Michal in Massachusetts (22 prints of the Gacaca process)

Exhibition of books and journal articles: The community is currently collecting all that has been written on Rwandan to create a salon de livre during the events.

High School Speaker tour: Bishop Alexis Bilindabagabo to share experiences working with children heads of households. This initiative will reinforce HUMURA's awareness-raising work in High Schools of the region.

Making a Documentary: This documentary will focus on the lives of survivors in Canada as they reflect on the Genocide. The making of the documentary will be possible with active involvement of Rwandan youth who will not only learn and refresh their minds through interviewing survivors, but will also learn the skills of making a video. This project, the interviewing and filming will take place during the month of April 2004.

Screening of 100 Days, a film by Nick Hughes and Eric Kabera

100 Days will be screened as a benefit at the Bytowne Cinema in collaboration with Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) during Colors of Africa Film Festival.

We will present documentaries such as *The Last Just Man*, *War Babies*, and other commentaries that have been aired around the world.

April 17: *Symposium: Rwanda, the Genocide and the Aftermath*

The responsibility to Protect: potential speakers will be from the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (yet to be confirmed).

Justice: 10 Years After: speakers to be confirmed

The portrait of the Survivor, focus on children heads of households.

Invited speaker: Bishop Alexis Bilindabagabo.

The Portrait of the Survivor, focus on women. Invited speaker: Chantal Kayitesi (Confirmed)

Remembrance: A Collective Responsibility with Jean Bosco Rutagengwa (To be confirmed)

The Anatomy of the Genocide: local speakers to be determined

The New Rwanda

Women and the massive release of prisoners

And more topics...

Music, Theatre and Poetry: Mennonite Children's Choir, music from Rwanda, and poetry. There will be a short play featuring Rwandan and Canadian actors with the help of the Ottawa-based Broken English Theatre Company.

April 18:

Ecumenical mass: to take place in Ottawa the weekend of April 17 to 18th. Testimonies, film, music and a vigil will follow.