Concept Note for the 28th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

Panel organised within the framework of the 71st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights

Monday 25 April 2022
09:00 – 09:45am
Virtual

Within the context of the Assembly/AU/Dec.695 of July 2018, designating 7th April of each year as the African Union Day of Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the UN General Assembly Decision 72/550 of 26 January 2018 designating 7th April as the International day of reflection on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the annual commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi takes place during a three month period corresponding to the three months period during which the genocide took place.

As part of the African Union and the human and peoples’ rights community, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (African Commission or ACHPR) as part of its human and peoples’ rights promotion and protection mandate welcomes the 28th commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi, which constitutes the most grave and systematic human and peoples’ rights violation to happen on the African soil outside of the colonial era. It is to be recalled that during its 33rd extraordinary session held in July 2021, the African Commission adopted Resolution 485 on the commemoration of the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the Prevention of genocide and genocide denial and revisionism.

The commemoration on its own is significant for the mandate of the African Commission, particularly in the context of its engagement in transitional justice and human and peoples’ rights, serving as an occasion for paying homage to the lives lost and express solidarity with survivors in the context of remembrance as mechanism of justice and for fighting genocide denial and revisionism. The commemoration is also significant to draw attention to current conditions that give rise to threats of occurrence of mass atrocities and advocate for respect for human and peoples’ rights as basis for preventing the occurrence of genocide and other mass atrocities.

The African Commission recognizes that the annual commemoration of the 1994 genocide also serves as a reminder that genocide, as the most gross and systematic violation of human and peoples’ rights, entails the complete negation of nearly all the rights and freedoms guaranteed in the African Charter including, among others, the right to non-discrimination under Article 2, equality under Article 3, inviolability of human beings and the right to life and integrity of every human being under Article 4, respect of the dignity inherent in a human being and protection from torture under Article 5, the right to the security of the person under Article 6, the right to free association under Article 10, the right to physical and mental health under Article 16, the right to culture under Article 17, the right to family
under Article 18, the right of peoples to equality and to be free from domination by other people under Article 19, and the right of all peoples to existence under Article 20.

Against the foregoing and within the framework of ACHPR Resolution 485, the Focal Point of the African Commission on Transitional Justice and Human and Peoples’ Rights convenes a panel discussion as part of the 71st session of the African Commission. This also aims at reflecting on the issues of concern as far as the prevention of genocide in Africa is concerned including the spread hate speech, xenophobia, religious radicalism and extremism, violent nationalism, the propagation of inter-communal violence, and denialism of the 1994 genocide, which create the conditions for mass violence including genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Panelists

i. Moderator: Hon. Commissioner Remy Ngoy Lumbu – Chairperson, ACHPR
ii. Hon. Commissioner Solomon Ayele Dersso – ACHPR Focal Point on Human Rights and Transitional Justice;
iii. H.E Ambassador Hope Tumukunde Gasatura – Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union

Agenda (1 hour)

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09:00 – 09:45am

- Opening Remarks and Introduction of Panelists by Hon. Commissioner Remy Ngoy Lumbu (3 minutes)
- Keynote Statement by H.E Ambassador Hope Tumukunde Gasatura, the Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union (8 minutes)
- Statement by Hon. Commissioner Solomon Ayele Dersso, ACHPR Focal Point on Human Rights and Transitional Justice (8 minutes);
- Statement by Mr. Brian Kagoro, Pan-Africanist Development Practitioner, and Transitional Justice Expert (8 minutes);
- Plenary discussion (interactive discussion, with interventions by other members of the ACHPR, and also by Session participants) and responses from Panelists (15 minutes);
- Closing Remarks by Hon. Commissioner Remy Ngoy Lumbu (3 minutes)