

Minutes for Rwandan Roundtable II Hosted at the Town house Hotel, Cape Town, on 9 April 2016 (Topic I and II)

Mrs Shirley Gunn – Director of the Human Rights Media Centre

Mrs Gunn welcomes all present at the Rwandan Roundtable II discussion. She gives a special word of welcome to all those who travelled from far. She acknowledges a few apologies. The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs could unfortunately not make it due to the voter's registration. Adv. Andre Gaum is representing the Department of Home Affairs in an observer capacity. The Deputy Minister Fatima Chohan is very happy that we are having this event and is interested to read the report. She is hoping to meet us mid-year when cabinet has had a conversation about Rwandan cessation. Based on this discussion with the Deputy Minister, it seems as if Rwandan cessation is coming up and soon. The ambassador of Burundi could also not make it. He could not make it due to other commitments. Jasmin Sooka, a former commissioner of the TRC, could not make it. The representative of Amnesty International could also not make it. But he has expressed his interest in the deliberations of the day. Shirley acknowledges the presence of important stakeholders like the representative of UNHCR, Mrs Linmei Li. Shirley highlights that it is really up to all of us to make this a deeper experience. Before she opens the session, she encourages all to express their opinions and to contribute.

Father Emmanuel opens with a prayer.

Gaspard Hitiyaremye, our moderator, encourages us to engage in vibrant discussion. Before we commence, however, we are asked to observe a moment of silence in memory of the Rwandan Genocide. We are asked to remember all Rwandans who died in this tragedy, Tutsi, Hutu and Twa. Mr Hitiyaremye poses this question to the floor: 'What is it that we would like to achieve today?' He describes how the culmination point of the Rwandan civil war, from 1990 to 1994, was the shooting down of the then Rwandan Hutu president, Juvenal Habyarimana. This episode was the trigger of what followed, namely, the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. What is striking is that 22 years later, we are still talking about what happened in 1994. This should indicate to everyone that there is 'unfinished business' with what happened in 1994. Part of the 'unfinished business' is determining who shot down President Juvenal Habyarimana's plane. Also part of the 'unfinished business' is the question of reconciliation. How do we repair what happened? While some would argue that reconciliation has started, others would say that it is completed. Yet others would argue that reconciliation has not happened. From that perspective, we still have unanswered questions. The purpose of this roundtable, according to the speaker, is to bring to the attention of the international community what has happened in Rwanda and to see things through different eyes, from different angles, and ask the questions: Was it really planned? Will it happen again?

Topic I: Summary of Rwandan Roundtable I: How far has Rwanda come in achieving lasting peace?:

Mr Karam Singh – SAHRC Regional Manager

1. Purpose:

Rwandan Roundtable I (17 May 2014, Townhouse Hotel) brought together both Rwandan refugees and non-Rwandan stakeholders in order to reflect on and evaluate the judicial, social and economic situation in post-genocide Rwanda and finally propose some recommendations.

2. Notable Disappointments:

- 2.1. That this conversation could not have taken place in Rwanda itself.
- 2.2. South Africa's role in Rwanda's transitional justice program is unclear.

3. **The Rwandan Roundtable I** took place in 3 parts.

3.1. Following Shirley's welcoming, we had Session 1 chaired by Jean-Marie Gasangwa with presentations from Vivence Kalitanyi and Etienne Mutabazi. Much of these presentations and the discussions thereafter focused on Rwanda's history – covering the colonial and post-colonial period and events leading up to the 1994 genocide. The presentations and discussion did also touch upon the Rwanda post 1994 and began to touch upon some of the challenges facing the country in terms of issues of transitional justice.

3.2. In session 2, Salim Bavugamenshi and Epiphanie Mukasano made presentations. This session was mostly about hearing voices from the Rwandan diaspora including the personal testimonies of the two speakers. The presentations and discussions were rich in information including deepening our understanding of the Rwanda economy and more critically recognition there is no one single voice of Rwandans within the South African context – that there is a diversity and range of such voices. In session 3, we watched the film **Coexist**.

3.3. As Rwanda and the world note the 20th anniversary of the genocide in that country, much of the focus has been on reconciliation. "**Coexist**," a documentary by Adam Mazo, at first seems as if it is merely going to be another effort to draw positive stories out of an impossibly ugly moment in history. Ultimately the film proved to be more sophisticated by exploring whether forgiveness that is mandated by the government can be genuine. In the film, survivors relate their experiences from 1994, and some of them sound as if they are buying the maxim that the current government is selling: *Forgive, and resume living side by side*.

But as the interview subjects open up, cracks in this official facade became evident. A man who did some of the killing begins to sound as if he is merely parroting whatever the authorities say, just as he followed the instructions to kill 20 years ago.

A woman who experienced unimaginable loss is not at all on board with the forgiveness plan. “If I could afford to, I would leave,” she says, “because I don’t want to see the people who killed my family.” The film is teaching tool, part of an initiative to show the destructiveness of “othering”: dividing people into us/them categories. The documentary reveals as its ultimate lesson that reconciliation is difficult to manufacture.

4. Transitional Justice:

- 4.1. Transitional Justice is essentially a discipline that deals with redressing past violations and has emerged in the wake of societies transitioning from gross violations of human rights.
- 4.2. The classic retributive model of transitional justice were the Nuremberg Trials following the Second World War.
- 4.3. More recently – in the past 30 years we have seen the emergence of so-called Truth Commissions – such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.
- 4.4. We heard from Advocate Howard Varney about the work of the **International Centre for Transitional Justice** was referred to as “international best practice when it comes to dealing with the past” and is comprised of six parts: (from ICTJ website)
 - 4.4.1. The **investigation and prosecution of international crimes** is a fundamental component of transitional justice.
 - 4.4.2. States have a legal duty to **acknowledge and address widespread/systematic human rights violations**, in cases where the state caused the violations or did not seriously try to prevent them.
 - 4.4.3. **Societies and individuals are entitled to know the truth** about mass human rights violations. All cultures recognize the importance of proper mourning to achieve personal and communal healing.
 - 4.4.4. Public institutions—such as the police, military, and judiciary—are often instruments of repression and systemic violations of human rights. **When transitions to democratic government occur, reform of such institutions is vital.** This deals with changing formally abusive and repressive institutions so that they work and serve the people going forward in a way that promotes tolerance and a respect for the rights of others.
 - 4.4.5. **Gender-based violence** is often a common element of conflict and authoritarian regimes. In these contexts, impunity for violations against women is pervasive. At the same time, women are often absent or underrepresented in efforts to address such abuse.
 - 4.4.6. **Children and youth** are especially vulnerable to the effects of conflict and gross human rights violations. They are often specific targets of human rights abuse due to their age and societal status. Children and youth also risk losing the benefits of education, adequate healthcare and other services at the time in their lives when these are critical to their development, often with long-term consequences.

4.5. It asks what can be done to address victims' suffering and pain and what we can learn from the past to build a more democratic and compassionate future.

5. **The Integrative Approach:**

- 5.1. The multi-disciplinary endeavor of transitional justice can employ
- 5.2. These measures go beyond mere concepts of criminal or retributive justice.
- 5.3. Truth-seeking mechanisms are important because the healing process is often rendered meaningless if people are left with doubts and uncertainty about what transpired. The truth-seeking process provides a platform to those who suffered to express their pain (cathartic).
- 5.4. New 'organic law' at the national level: role of the military courts, and about the 'gacaca' trials that have taken place at the community level.
- 5.5. The work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was mentioned.

6. **Pitfalls of Rwanda's integrated approach:**

- 6.1. Rwanda has only really approached the concept of retributive justice through the criminal courts at different levels.
- 6.2. Criminal justice systems has not provided justice in its fullest and most comprehensive sense; it's skewed justice, or what might be described as 'victor's justice'.
- 6.3. The international criminal tribunal applying international criminal law failed to pursue justice in its fullest sense by confining cases to one side of the conflict.
- 6.4. Perhaps courts are not the best place to pursue the truth:

6.4.1.**Limitations of the prosecutorial system:** When a prosecutor has to pursue charges whether at the domestic or at the international level, the prosecutor is required to prove and demonstrate elements of the offense (legal principles). The prosecutor is not required to investigate and interrogate context and historical causes. In cases of crimes against humanity context is very important.

6.4.2.**Decontextualised approach to reconciliation:** It has been said by Rwandan officials that the reason why they haven't engaged in some national truth-seeking exercise, such as in South Africa, is that the Rwandan context is totally different to South Africa. But does that contrast justify a decision not to engage in meaningful truth seeking?

Unlike the post-conflict situations in South Africa, Sierra Leon, East Timor, Peru, Argentina and Chile there has not been an endeavor by all role-players to interrogate the causes of conflict and understand the historical and environmental context of Rwanda that led to the genocide.

6.4.3.**The National Reconciliation Commission:** did not have a truth-seeking mandate and it was not required to engage in coherent fact-finding. Its primary

mission was to pursue healing, closure and reconciliation. This mandate seems less meaningful without coherent truth/fact seeking.

- 6.5. With the exception of the military courts, 'only one side of the conflict has been pursued in all the other courts'. Even in the military courts there have only been a handful of cases, and the penalties that have been issued have been quite light by comparison and many of those convictions have also been overturned. Why?
- 6.6. It was asked why similar cases were heard in different court systems: military courts/ international tribunals/national tribunal/'gacaca' courts. "Why is there this discrimination? What does this say about the application of the Rule of Law in Rwanda?"

7. Further Issues:

- 7.1. **Discriminatory compensation schemes:** No coherent national programme of reparations in Rwanda apart from a fund for Tutsis only. This was resented.
- 7.2. **Institutional reform and Corruption:** is an area of great concern. Political dissent in Rwanda has been crushed in the last twenty years; elections are heavily one-sided; opposition leaders are either in exile, in jail, dead, or missing.
- 7.3. **State Order:** appears to be maintained with an iron fist/oppression.
- 7.4. **Comparison: Constitutional reforms in Rwanda and Burundi:** dealing with the question of representation and the question of ethnicity, there has been an effort in the Rwandan constitution to do away with characterization of ethnicity. By contrast, the Burundian constitution hasn't attempted to do away with ethnicity. Burundi recognizes differences and the system requires fair representation of ethnic groups at different levels within government. However, in Rwanda the vast majority of those who hold important positions of power, influence, and prestige are Tutsi. Technically, the 'Tutsi' group does not exist in law; so there can be no legal discrimination but practically this is a different story.
- 7.5. **Theme of Forgiveness:** who said forgiveness is set in stone? It is a human emotion that can change and shift.
- 7.6. **Theme of reconciliation:** need to communicate and understand the 'other' on a base/human level in order to facilitate true reconciliation. To understand that the 'other' is capable of same human suffering as you are.

8. Conclusion:

Rwanda has yet to confront its history in a coherent, inclusive and participatory truth-seeking endeavor.

Topic II - PEACE DYNAMICS IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION:

Discussants: 1) Frank Ntwali: The role of Rwanda in GLR since 1990

2) Elie Bagona: Political situation in Burundi & regional implications

3) Dr Augustin Gasarasi: Peace and reconciliation programme

1.) Frank Ntwali: The role of Rwanda in GLR since 1990

Mr. Frank Ntwali expresses his great pleasure to speak to those present about his country. However, in his reflection on the immensity of the task before him, namely, to describe the role of Rwanda in the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Bogana found that he could not identify a single way in which Rwanda has contributed positively to the Great Lakes Region. Before he commences, he reminds the audience that he is expressing his opinion and is open to being challenged. He then introduces himself. Mr. Twali is Tutsi. He was born in Uganda. He has been a refugee for his whole life. He is a lawyer by profession.

Before 1990, Rwanda was a stable country. Its foreign policy practices did not constitute a violation of other governments. In 1994, the Rwandan Genocide, which was planned, occurred. Whether or not the Genocide would have happened had the plane not been shot down, we do not know. It is a moot point. But we really believe that the trigger of the genocide which took place in Rwanda was purposefully caused by the shooting down of the plane of President Habyarimana. The plane contained two presidents. Whether or not the shooting down of the plane was in aid of protecting the Rwandan people, it is also debatable. If those who shot the plane down knew what the repercussions would be, namely, a catastrophe, then they have responsibility to bear. Rwanda, which borders the DRC, Uganda and Burundi, was severely impacted by the Genocide. It caused immense suffering of people. It caused unimaginable pain. Not only to Rwanda but to the region because we lost human capacity, skill and we got an influx of refugees into African countries.

A modest appraisal of Rwanda's role is that this role has been nothing but negative to the African agenda. A brutal assessment of Rwanda's role in the region is that it has been nothing but disastrous and catastrophic. After the genocide, there is a mass of refugees that move to neighboring countries. As these refugees were moving *en masse* in the DRC, the Rwandan government carried out its agenda. The government of Rwanda is built on a personality cult, the personality of Paul Kagame, who claims that he single-handedly stopped the Rwandan Genocide. For example, when he invaded the DRC from 1996-1997, a rebellion which was led by Laurent Kabila, he acknowledged in an interview that Rwanda, with its army, usurped power. Rwanda is a personality cult where whatever the president says, must happen. Kagame has held his people hostage. The rights of the people are not considered. Mr. Ntwali disputes the façade of the so-called 'economic miracle.' Although it is growing at a rate of 6%, Rwanda produces and exports nothing besides coffee.

After the Genocide, the Rwandan government did not extend a conciliatory-hand to those who had fled the country. Rather, we see the government of Paul Kagame pursuing one agenda, 'We shall bring those whom we have to bring. We will kill those we have to kill.' There are many documented massacres in the DRC. UN experts, with journalists, have recorded statements and evidence that points to the Government of Rwanda's role in the

massacres, including through the creation of militias. All these successive military campaigns that go on in the Congo have been attributed to the Rwandan government, led by Paul Kagame. The refugees that fled Rwanda have subsequently caused wars in those countries. The locals of host countries have become hostile to Rwandan refugees as a result. The Rwandans have been coerced into these situations. This is all as a result of the violations of local law and international law by Rwanda. The instability of the DRC has brought in Uganda and Burundi also. The current humanitarian catastrophe afflicting the people of Rwanda in the Great Lakes Region is a creation of President Paul Kagame. He is a factor and should be held responsible.

There is a direct and indirect link between natural resources and conflict in the region and the conflict which Rwanda keeps causing in these countries. At a point, Rwanda was spontaneously one of the leading producers of diamonds. If we know where the source is and what cost is that source of those minerals we cannot really say that that is one of the raw materials found in Rwanda. Rwanda incursions into the DRC, in the name of national security, against the so-called 'negative forces,' is a pretext to keeping the DRC perpetually weak and looting the minerals of the DRC, trading them for their own benefit and fuelling the wars. It is the presence of Rwanda and whose policies and actions which perpetually destabilize the Great Lakes Region. Mr. Ntwali finds no positive role played by Rwanda, as attested to by the United Nations which puts UN troops in the DRC to keep the peace because of the destabilizing factor of Rwanda. When the Rwandan-backed AFDL, which usurped power in the DRC from 1996-1997, fell out with the Rwandan government, the Rwandan government created another rebel group called LCD. When the LCD was integrated into the DRC's army, the Rwandan government created yet another called the CNDP in 2009 etc. Rwandan diplomats have been expelled in Kenya, South Africa, the UK, Norway due to the elimination of political opposition-in-exile. Thus, Rwanda has not only played a destabilizing role in the Great Lakes Region.

There has never been a willingness on the part of the government of Rwanda to actually foster real reconciliation. Gacaca was a tool used to beat people into submission and control them upon the so-called findings of guilt that they had. Democracy is a façade in Rwanda. Paul Kagame's 'wins' the vote by a 99% margin. It is unfortunate that other African democracies hail Rwandan democracy as 'ordered.' If this is not challenged, we are going to see other African leaders following in Rwanda's footsteps. This will lead to a catastrophe in Africa because without a peaceful resort to regime change, people are going to resort to violence. This trend cannot be allowed to continue. A roundtable like today should be a platform where the truth should be brought forth, more engagements can be created to discern and bring forth the deceit and lies of such kinds of regimes. To save the Great Lakes Region requires Kagame to relinquish power and to allow Rwandans sit about a roundtable and find a future for themselves.

2) Elie Bagona: Political situation in Burundi & regional implications

Mr. Bagona begins by thanking the program director and greeting everyone present. Mr. Bagona continues by introducing himself. He is from Burundi. He stays in Cape Town, working for the company Steps for the Future. He is the chairperson of the Burundian diaspora in South Africa. He is also the chairperson of a board called International Action of

Burundian Diaspora, based in Norway. Mr. Bagona would like to share with us his experience from his individual point of view and not in his capacity as a researcher.

While Burundi's political instability has been ongoing for a long time, Mr. Bagona starts in 2000 when the Arusha Peace Accord was signed. This accord brought some stability to Burundi. This accord was mediated by the international community (e.g. Nelson Mandela, Jacob Zuma etc.). The peace accord also ratified a constitution. Both documents stipulated that the President of Burundi should only rule for two terms. However, in 2005 there was an election. Due to the fact that Burundi had just experienced a civil war, the constitution stipulated that the first president would be elected by parliamentary vote. It was in the people's eyes a fair election which was won by Pierre Nkurunziza. He ruled for 5 years, his first term. In 2010, there was another election, which was won by President Nkurunziza, who started his second term of office. In the view of the speaker, this election was not fair. Some of the political parties and opposition were in exile; some were imprisoned. As the 2015 elections were approaching, there were attempts at changing the constitution, attempts which were overruled by parliament.

With some exceptions, the initial impression was not that President Nkurunziza was preparing to run for a third term. Domestic and international commentators and actors of note, including the United Nations, the African Union etc., had begun to express their concern that it would not be fair that President Nkurunziza runs for a third term. In April 2015, President Nkurunziza announced that he would run for a third term based on a certain interpretation of an article in the constitution. This is when the political turmoil started in Burundi. Sectors of society engaged in peaceful demonstration showing their unhappiness. Even members of Nkurunziza's own party advised against his decision to run for a third term (e.g. the Head of Intelligence; the spokesperson of the President etc.). Nkurunziza, however, did not heed their advice. Many who opposed were Hutus. More than 70 people left his party. On 13 May, there was an attempted coup by members of the security forces. It was at that time that Nkurunziza was expected in Arusha to attend a conference where the leaders of the East-African community would voice their unanimous opposition to Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term.

Nkurunziza returned to Burundi and started pursuing and harassing those who opposed his candidacy for a third term. Many were forced into hiding or exile. Current statistics say that 350,000 Burundians are now refugees who are in Rwanda, the DRC and Tanzania. Having no solid basis upon which to ground his intransigence, President Nkurunziza resorted to the ethnicization of the conflict, saying instead that it is the Tutsi who are trying to destabilize the country and that oppose him. According to the speaker, this is incorrect because the majority of those who expressed their opposition were Hutu. The army which was united after the Arusha accords became divided. The soldiers who opposed President Nkurunziza's decision and Tutsi forces splintered from the army. Purges have been carried out against high-ranking officials. Youth are being tracked down because they expressed their opposition to Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term. The African Union has tried to intervene. It was suggested that 5000 soldiers should go to make peace in Burundi. However, due to the international community being divided on the issue, an expeditionary force was not sent to Burundi. Rather, a delegation of Heads of State was sent, including President Jacob Zuma.

This was an attempt to persuade President Nkurunziza to negotiate with those who are opposing him.

When the elections took place in 2015, President Nkurunziza was the only candidate. Many opposition parties were in exile and did not participate. The situation in Burundi is a source of great anxiety. There are stories of casualties. Another cause for concern is that when the attempted coup took place, all the private radios and the television were clamped down on. It is said that it was politically motivated as these were the dissenting voices, charging the President with violating the Constitution and Arusha Accords. All these voices went into exile. Burundi does not have independent radios or television. The only sources of news are from such sources as social media (Whatsup, SMS etc.).

Moving to the impact that the situation in Burundi has on the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Bagona highlights the impact/damage on diplomatic relations. There are reports that youth are being trained in Rwanda to go and attack Burundi. Another impact could be a deviation of the regional agenda. Instead of the region concentrating on development projects for the region, leaders are making all effort to stop this unnecessary war. This constitutes a loss in terms of development. There are also potential or actual rebel movements which also destabilizes the region, exacerbated by the existing instability of the DRC, Rwanda and Burundi. This would have a clear impact on these countries. There are also certain actors in the region who would want to use the situation in Burundi to advance their interests. Mr. Bagona thanks all present for listening to his assessment of the impacts of the situation in Burundi on the Great Lakes Region.

3) Dr Augustin Gasarasi: Peace and reconciliation programme

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to address this august **Rwanda Roundtable**. Greetings to all of you!

Introduction.

First of all, let me introduce myself. My name is Augustine Gasarasi. I am 75 years old. Rwandan of origin, of Hutu ethnic group, a retired Medical Officer, living in South Africa since 1997. I wrote two books, one in English, entitled "Rwanda, who's responsible for the genocide?" and the other one in French whose title is "Rwanda, retour d'exil piégé".

The topic is: Peace and Reconciliation program in Rwanda?

To understand the situation that is prevailing in Rwanda today, we need to make a quick survey of the past History of Rwanda.

The country of Rwanda had been dominated by the rule of the minority Tutsi ethnic group since many years, even centuries. The rule was characterized by a system of master-servant relationship, holding the Hutu in disdain and giving no consideration to his or her dignity. The ruler was an absolute Tutsi monarch, a king called "Mwami" in Rwanda, who exercised the right of life and death. The people made in their great majority of Hutu ethnic group, 85% of the population, and a few low class Tutsi, were despised and exploited. This people gradually became overloaded with heavy duties such as digging the land, maintaining the building and the cleanliness of the Tutsi homestead, fetching water and many other duties in the house of their Tutsi master, hoping to be rewarded the use of a cow excluding any kind of its ownership.

When the colonial era stepped in, it brought with it not only the Christianity and general literacy, but also worsening the plight of the low people, by new types of burden and forced labor. Eventually the low people felt abused and exploited. A few learned people from within started to reclaim their share of the national cake.

After the elite Tutsi refused to take the grievances of the people into consideration, stating that there was no share with the Hutu ethnic group who had always been historically servants of the Tutsi ethnic group, the angry frustration reached its culminating point in 1959 in what was called “Rwandan Revolution”.

All the Tutsi elite including the king-Mwami fled the country and became refugees in the neighboring countries, mainly in Uganda.

The ruling of the country was taken over by the Hutu elite pledging to bring in a democratic practice in the government of the nation. Two Republican regimes followed, the first one headed by President Grégoire KAYIBANDA and the second one born of a coup d'état in 1973 by President Juvénal HABYARIMANA. The former never tried to bring back home the refugees, while President HABYARIMANA built his regime on the concept of peace and unity.

In spite of his efforts to engage genuine talks with the representatives of the refugees in Uganda, the leaders of those people were in fact practicing and playing game. They had formed a political party called Rwandese Patriotic Front well known as RPF, comprising a military wing called RPA Rwandan patriotic Front whose non disclosed objective was to invade their homeland and seize power by force. Indeed, on 1st October 1990 they attacked Rwanda from Uganda. The war lasted 4 years amid of lot cruel killings at hands of the RPF soldiers under the direction of General Paul KAGAME, spreading terror and desolation from the northern region of the country towards the end point: Kigali, the capital.

The government armed forces gradually lost ground and had no more resilience, especially at the time of the Arusha peace accord in August 1993, where negotiations between the gvt in Kigali and the refugees in RPF were signed. But this couldn't stand.

The only thing Paul KAGAME had in mind was to seize the entirety of power in Kigali.

Trigger of the 1994 Genocide.

Credible sources, such as one of the prominent Tutsi dissidents of the KAGAME regime who denounce today its supremacy ideology, Dr Theogene RUDASINGWA, former Secretary-general of the RPF, wrote on 1 st October 2011, I quote: “By killing President Habyarimana, Paul Kagame introduced a wild card in an already fragile ceasefire and dangerous situation”. telling us then that it is the same KAGAME who plotted and gunned down the plane of the two Presidents, HABYARIMANA of Rwanda and NTARYAMIRA of Burundi and in so doing, he triggered the 1994 Genocide which marred the History of Rwanda and destroyed profoundly the social fabric of the Rwandans.

It was at that very moment that the RPA launched a general offensive and the political youth militia INTERAHAMWE affiliated to the Rwandan government party MRND, largely infiltrated by RPF agents, staged a killing spree of machetes against the Tutsi population and all those

looking alike. Madness and total chaos descended on the whole nation. All Rwandan families were affected. My father and part of my own extended family, 49 peoples were decimated either by RPF soldiers or by INTERAHAMWE.

Those INTERAHAMWE were wrongly considered as Hutu while their President was Robert KAJUGA, a well-known young man of the Tutsi ethnic group and themselves broadly infiltrated by KAGAME's agents. Hence INTERAHAMWE do not equate Hutu and therefore even Hutu INTERAHAMWE do not represent the whole Hutu population as the victorious RPF made and still makes it believed by the International Community. The RPA as well as the INTERAHAMWE acted as a killing machine. Bishops, priests, religious, elders, women and children were slaughtered indiscriminately.

The RPF regime.

As I said, the RPF emerged victorious with the bottom line policy of divide, deprivation and subjection of the people. Indeed their first decree was to deprive the peasants of the swampy portion of their lands without any compensation, to reserve it to the grazing of their cowherds. This is one of the causes of the current widespread famine among the lower people, while the KAGAME regime keeps lying about its win over poverty.

And out of their fear of the Hutu majority as a threat to their hunger of power, they immediately undertook to eliminate Hutu leaders, intellectuals and all those who were perceived to be able to organize any resistance to the RPF power. The most shocking of all their crimes has been undoubtedly the bombing of the displaced Hutu camp of KIBEHO on 22 April 1995 where several thousands of people were massacred.

Thus after the Genocide was declared stopped by the new authorities, KAGAME decided to pursue into DRC those Rwandans more than 2 million who had fled his armies. "Mapping Report" published in October 2010 had described extensively the atrocities committed by KAGAME's soldiers. Nearly half a million Hutu have been slaughtered there to the extent that the UNHCR report said that the human Rights violated then might be declared Genocide if brought before a court of justice.

Which peace and reconciliation in Rwanda?

In the process of consolidating its hold on power, the KAGAME regime was first helped by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda based in Arusha (ICTR) which prosecuted only the Hutu leaders while the logic would have been to prosecute both sides for their share in the gross Human Rights violations. Of course, that impunity for one side did not contribute to the Reconciliation.

Later on, the RPF government organized its own system of justice it called "Gacaca" to prosecute the perpetrators of Genocide. Still there, the RPF lied and manipulated the traditional substance of "Gacaca" which meant to reconcile the two conflicting sides. P.4 But here, once more, the Hutu ethnic group were alone accused and condemned. And... goodbye Reconciliation!

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) set up by the RPF government since 1999 brought in nothing more than imposing rituals through a public biased narrative of the Rwandan History, banning the ethnic labels of Hutu – Tutsi – Twa as a means of preventing any recurrence of Genocide in the future.

But the reality is to dissimulate the fact that the government and all important State offices and Services are run by the sole Tutsi cronies of Paul KAGAME.

One could say that the NURC functions as an office of propaganda, striving to sell the Machiavellian slogan of “Ndi umunyarwanda” meaning “I am a Rwandan”. The whole is wrapped in lies, manipulations and tortures. The media are muzzled, journalists killed. Crackdown on civil societies. Political space closed. Politicians beheaded such as Andre RWISEREKA of the Green Party or jailed such as Deo MUSHAIKI and Victoire INGABIRE. Exiled dissidents of the RPF are hunted and even assassinated abroad, such was the case for Patrick KAREGEYA strangled in Johannesburg at the end of 2014.

In brief, no political party could operate in Rwanda unless allied to RPF.

For the common people, coercive laws, such as the law against the genocide ideology, and the rule of arbitrary, are the order of the day.

Besides, year after year in April, just as at this present time, there is an exercise of remembrance. Those taken into account are only Tutsi. A complete discrimination against the dead. No memorial for the people of Hutu ethnic group killed during the Genocide. And God knows, among all those skulls exhibited against the elementary cult due to the dead, how many Hutu skulls in those memorials and yet presented as Tutsi skulls. Nevertheless, simple arithmetic, as down by two American researchers, Allan Stam and Christian Davenport, there were 680 thousands Tutsi in Rwanda at the time of the Genocide. IBUKA, an umbrella association of the genocide survivors said that the number of the Tutsi survivors was 300 thousands. What suggested that out of the 800.000 to 1 million believed to have been killed, more than half were of Hutu ethnic group!

Which way out?

All the above said point to the need of a genuine program of Peace and Reconciliation in Rwanda.

Do not think I am an extremist! Remember that Barry Goldwater said in the US Republican National Convention of 1964, that “Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice; moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue”.

The tragedy of the Rwandan Genocide whose magnitude is far beyond comprehension that the KAGAME regime imposed the World to qualify as the “Tutsi Genocide” engulfed more than 1 million lives. So, inspired by Nelson MANDELA and the successful South African TRC model, we should think hard to bring Peace and Reconciliation to the Rwandan people and let them enjoy a sustainable stability, the rule of Law and Freedom of speech, by exploring positively the following directions:

- Recognize and accept the ethnic realities of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa as an identity of the Rwandan people.

- Help the Rwandan people to develop a spirit of Truth, tolerance, openness and forgiveness of one another.
- Stop all support, be it financial, diplomatic or otherwise to the current criminal regime in Kigali.
- Assist in creating a climate conducive to a free will return of all Rwandan refugees in their homeland.
- Free all political detainees such as MUSHAIDI and INGABIRE.
- Organize an inclusive debate among Rwandans under the auspices of the International Community on how to truly set up Peace and Reconciliation of the people.
- To establish a Democratic State respectful of the Human Rights, the rule of LAW and whose government is truly accountable to the people.

Yes! As Albert Einstein once said: “The World won’t be destroyed by the wrongdoers, but by those who stand idle and refuse to bother doing anything”.

Thank you. God bless you.

4.) Questions:

The first question from the audience is directed to Mr. Bagona. He is asked to give his take on whether Rwanda is in fact stoking the situation in Burundi by training Burundi refugees to go and fight in Rwanda. Is it a coincidence that while we have Burundian refugees in the various surrounding countries, it is only Rwanda that is being accused of training Burundian refugees to fight in Burundi.

Mr. Bagona: It may be the case that some governments may seize the situation of Burundi to advance their interests. That does not preclude that Rwanda or Kagame can seize that situation and advance his interests. Mr Bagona acknowledges the international community’s condemnation of Rwanda for training Burundian refugees. He adds that, in his view, if President Nkurunziza were to have discontinued his pursuit of a third term that the current turmoil in Burundi would not have happened. He also does not see how Kagame could have been particularly influential in compelling Nkurunziza’s decision to run a third term. He continues that it is not impossible that Kagame might be behind the training of Burundian refugees to fight in Rwanda. It is also not impossible that any other president might have something to do with it.

The second question is addressed to the various stakeholders, asking whether they are ready to take the message they have received at the roundtable to the UN and to other stakeholders, namely, that the Rwandan people are traumatized and have cried enough about the cessation decision which was not fair and was taken without the consultation of the Rwandan refugees?

One of the stakeholders, UCT’s Refugee’s Rights Unit (i.e. Fatima Khan), asserted that she is prepared to take the message to one of the stakeholders, namely, the UNHCR. But the refugee community has to give her the message. She wants a clear message from

the Rwandan community on why the cessation clause should not be invoked. She praises the morning's presentations. She points out that a lot came out of the first presentation, namely, Frank Ntwali's treatment of the role of Rwanda in GLR since 1990, that could help the Rwandan community package a message to UNHCR on why they do not want to return. The ICTR was the first to recognize rape as a form of genocide. There are many women in South Africa that are victims of that. Fatima encourages Shirley to get those women together and have a statement from those women to say why they can't return; why it is impossible to return to Rwanda. The justice which took place in Rwanda was a 'victor's justice.' Of the 93 people which were indicted by the ICTR, they were all Hutus. We can also have a statement from the youth, the Rwandan children who were born in South Africa that have been here for longer than 18 years. Why should they not be naturalized in South Africa? A statement from those Rwandans who were involved in the politics of Rwanda, who cannot go back and will be persecuted, would also be useful. Fatima reassures Shirley that if she prepares these statements, she (i.e. Fatima) would gladly take these statements to the UNHCR.

An intervention is made to the effect that the Rwandan 'Genocide' is a fact and that Rwandan history is a cycle of lies that has to be broken. It is essential that we be objective and speak the truth.

...A refugee knows his or her country the best while a researcher can research for forty-four years and not exactly find what he or she wanted. Many things are hidden from a researcher. The researcher is always going about with the image that the government is giving to them...

...Rwandan history is made up of lies. The history that the speaker heard as a child is not the history we hear today. Rwanda today is the only country in the world where history is not included in the school curriculum. If the real truth is not out, there will be no basis for reconciliation...

Final remarks:

...So far, what has been spoken about points to the fact that Rwanda is not a peace-conducive country. What we really need is to build a country where unity is key, but where difference (i.e. Hutu, Tutsi and Twa) is recognized. We should build on our diversity. The youth need to know that the past has affected Hutu and Tutsi. Now we need to build a better Rwanda where Tutsi, Hutu and Twa feel proud of their country and that they need to build their country in unity so that we can progress and have a developed country and not continue to drag ourselves in the past. We want to build a future that our children can be proud of. We want to build from what we have, namely, three ethnic groups. It is wealth upon which we can build. We have to find a way to overcome those ethnic conflicts and rather seek to build our country.

...What has destroyed the community of Rwanda is a life of deception. We don't like to be honest and to speak the truth. I don't think there was a denial of the Rwandan 'Genocide,' that is a fact, but you cannot stop a person from having an opinion. I am

someone who has been in the RPF and is a Tutsi, the Rwandan community is built on a fabric of lies...Can you have reconciliation without a platform?...Let us not have talks where there are boundaries. Let us examine everything.

...The one thing that is coming out of this discussion is that the implementation of the cessation will be premature and extremely dangerous. It is inimical to the achievement of peace and reconciliation in Rwanda. We have had experiences of the Department of Home Affairs taking no note of submissions at the urgings of civil society in South Africa. The role of the UNHCR is going to be crucial in attempting to persuade Home Affairs not to proceed with the disastrous cessation and repatriation program.

5.) Rwanda's Untold Story: BBC documentary (2014)

This BBC documentary, *Rwanda's Untold Story*, exposes evidence that contests the official narrative of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. While the current president of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, has long been depicted as the person who stopped the Genocide and rescued Rwanda from impending doom, the documentary throws doubt on the role of Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front in the dark days of 1994 and in the 20 years since. The film interrogates evidence concerning Kagame's role in the shooting down of the presidential plane that sparked the killings in 1994 and questions his claims to have ended the genocide. Moreover, it also investigates claims war crimes perpetrated by Kagame's forces and its allies in the wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo and allegations of human rights abuses in present-day Rwanda. Former comrades from within Kagame's inner circle and government speak out from hiding abroad. They paint a very different picture of a man who is lauded for presiding over an exemplary African state. It is due its reputation as an 'economic miracle' and as ethnically united that has led to the country being one of the biggest recipients of aid from the United Kingdom. The film calls into question former British Prime Minister Tony Blair's and other western leaders' closeness to Rwanda's president.