

Open Letter to All UN Member States Re: the 'Genocide Fax' and the 20th Commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994

Your Excellency,

Twenty years ago, on 11 January 1994, the Hon. Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Roméo Dallaire, then Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, sent his infamous 'genocide fax' to UN Headquarters warning that Hutu extremists were stockpiling arms and preparing lists of Rwandan Tutsis to be exterminated. Between 7 April and 19 July 1994, after Dallaire's warnings of impending atrocities went unheeded, over 800,000 Rwandans were killed during the genocide. The horrific events that transpired during those 100 days later served as the impetus for all UN Member States to commit in 2005 to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

The commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide is an important opportunity for the international community to honor the victims. In this spirit, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect calls upon all UN Member States to take concrete steps during this period to demonstrate their commitment to the prevention of mass atrocity crimes and R2P.

States can do this by:

- **Appointing a National R2P Focal Point**, a senior-level government official responsible for mainstreaming the prevention of mass atrocity crimes and R2P domestically. Thirty-five countries from across the globe have already appointed a R2P Focal Point;
- **Publicly affirming that the prevention of mass atrocity crimes is a national priority** and demonstrate this by **developing a national action plan** to strengthen domestic and international capacities to prevent mass atrocity crimes;
- **Recognizing the 20th commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide within national legislatures** and fostering all-Party initiatives on the prevention of mass atrocity crimes;
- **Ratifying relevant legal treaties**, including the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, if they have not already done so;
- **Supporting multilateral initiatives aimed at the voluntary restraint on the use of the veto** in situations of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In particular, the Global Centre encourages the five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – to publicly commit to this during the 20th commemoration of the Rwandan genocide.

The Rwandan Genocide was a preventable tragedy. Conscientious reflection and determined action by all UN Member States during the 20th commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide will make it clear that the world will no longer tolerate genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Yours truly,



Dr. Simon Adams
Executive Director

THE WORLD
HAS EMBRACED
THE RESPONSIBILITY
TO PROTECT – NOT
BECAUSE
IT IS
EASY, BUT
BECAUSE
IT IS
RIGHT.
BAN
KI-MOON

MASS
ATROCITIES
CANNOT BE
UNIVERSALLY
IGNORED AND
SOVEREIGNTY
IS NOT A
LICENSE
TO KILL.
GARETH
EVANS