

French anti-terror prosecutor pays tribute to Genocide victims, calls for continued fight against impunity

Frank Ntarindwa

The New Times, March 12, 2024



Jean-François Ricard lays a wreath to pay tribute to victims at Kigali Genocide Memorial. ALL PHOTOS BY CHELSEA NKUBITO

Jean-François Ricard, the Head of French National Anti-Terrorism Prosecution Office, on Monday, March 11, visited Kigali Genocide Memorial and paid tribute to more than 250,000 victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi interred within the memorial's grounds.

The official called for continued fight against impunity and ensure justice for the victims of the Genocide that claimed over one million people in just 100 days.

Accompanied by a delegation of French prosecutors, including Serge Brammertz, the Chief Prosecutor of International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), Aimable Havugiyaremye, the Prosecutor General, National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA), they also laid wreaths at the mass grave at the memorial where over 250,000 Genocide victims are buried.

The delegation led by Ricard, walked through the memorial's exhibition, and observed the chronology of events that led to social-political factors that fueled the genocide against the Tutsi.

The group were particularly engaged, as they were able to witness firsthand the consequences of hatred, intolerance, and ethnic divisions, serving as a evident reminder of the importance of promoting peace, unity, and reconciliation.



Speaking to the media, following the visit, Ricard emphasized the need for the continued international efforts to combat impunity and ensure justice for the Genocide victims.

“It gives me a clearer picture of what’s going on and what’s happening, and it also helps me understand how Rwanda managed to achieve reconciliation afterwards and invites us, the prosecutors and judges, to continue the fight against impunity,” Ricard said.

He noted: “There can be no impunity; those who took part in the genocide must be prosecuted and judged wherever they may be. No matter how much time may have passed, justice must prevail; there is no future without justice.”

After the visit, Ricard penned a message in the memorial’s guestbook, stating “I bow with immense respect and infinite pain before the numerous victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.”

“This visit can only convince us, if it’s still necessary, that the genocidaires must be prosecuted wherever they may still be today, and that the fight against impunity cannot stop.”

The visit is part of Ricard’s two-day working trip to Rwanda, from March 11 to 13.

Before the visit at the Kigali Genocide Memorial, Ricard and his delegation held a tripartite meeting at NPPA office to discuss cooperation in investigating and prosecuting suspects of genocide and crimes against humanity, living in France and that it is a responsibility of the French justice system to try the fugitives of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi living in France, while adding that time is running out.

However, much as French judiciary has shown some progress in recent years to bring to book fugitives who have found a safe haven in their country, several of them continue to live freely and propagate the genocide ideology.



The Head of French National Anti-Terrorism Prosecution Office Jean-François Ricard during his tour at Kigali Genocide Memorial to pay tribute to the victims on Monday, March 11. Photo by Nkubito



Ricard was accompanied by Serge Brammertz, the Chief Prosecutor of International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals , Aimable Havugiyaremye, the Prosecutor General, National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA)





©THE NEW TIMES 2024







