



April 17, 2024

**The Honorable Antony Blinken**

Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

***Subject: Request for Corrective Action on Statement Issued for Kwibuka 30***

Honorable Secretary Blinken,

We the survivors of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda were immeasurably shocked by how your tweet of April 7, 2024, especially given its timing during Kwibuka 30, the 30th anniversary of the genocide against the Tutsi, when we remember the victims of this atrocity.

For reference, your tweet stated: ***“The United States stands with the people of Rwanda during Kwibuka 30 in remembering the victims of genocide. We mourn the many thousands of Tutsis, Hutus, Twas, and others whose lives were lost during 100 days of unspeakable violence”.***

Honorable Secretary of State Blinken,

In not explicitly stating that the genocide specifically targeted Tutsi, your statement obscures the primary, intended victims. While some Hutus and Twas also lost their lives, they were not the primary targets; the genocide overwhelmingly aimed at exterminating the Tutsi population. Indeed, it was extremist Hutu factions who orchestrated these atrocities.

Please allow us to elaborate:

Your statement blatantly contradicts the definition of genocide as stipulated in Article II of the UN Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide as adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 8, 1948. Therein, genocide is defined as a “crime committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such”.

Therefore, for a crime to qualify for a genocide, the following conditions must be met (i) victims are deliberately targeted, not randomly because of the real or perceived membership to the target group, (ii) there must be a proven intent on the part of the perpetrators to destroy the target group, and (iii) the intent is associated with the existence of a state or organizational plan or policy. Additionally, this crime needs to be established by a court of law, which must demonstrate that members of a given group as defined in the UN convention was targeted, as such, to be destroyed in whole or in part. An illustration of the above definition is the Holocaust, in which Jews were intentionally targeted by the Nazis for extermination.

For the case of Rwanda, it is impossible that the 1994 genocide targeted “Tutsis, Hutus, Twas, and others” indiscriminately. That would mean there were three separate genocides in Rwanda – one against each group. Alternatively, a single genocide against the Rwandan national group, which would mean that victims would have been targeted, not for their “ethnicity” but for their Rwandan nationality. And we know that both options are historically not true.

Let us provide a few historical facts to prove that the tragic event in the spring of 1994 in Rwanda was indeed a genocide against the Tutsi:

1. The UN International Criminal Court for Rwanda (ICTR) in its judgement in the trial of Jean-Paul Akayezu on September 2, 1998, concluded that the crime of genocide was committed in Rwanda in 1994 against the Tutsi as a group.
2. The judgement was upheld by the Appeals Chamber of the ICTR on June 16, 2006, in its judicial notice (ICTR-98-44-AR73(C) and reaffirmed that it was a “fact of common knowledge” that between April 6 and July 17, 1994, there was a genocide in Rwanda against the Tutsi ethnic group.
3. The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda was recognized by the United Nations in multiple steps: (1) by the UN Security Council Resolution 2150 of April 16, 2014; (2) by the UN General Assembly Resolution 72/550 of January 26, 2018; and (3) by the Resolution A/RES/74/273 of April 20, 2020, in which April 7 was dedicated as the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.



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REMEMBER • MÉMOIRE

The above context unambiguously shows that there was indeed a genocide specifically against the **Tutsi** in Rwanda in 1994.

Survivors of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda have been incredibly emotionally devastated and offended by your misleading statement issued on the day they were mourning the loss of their loved ones that were brutally killed during that genocide. Not enough words can express our disappointment in someone of your caliber, Honorable Secretary of State Blinken, whom we have no doubt is aware of all the judicial and historical background explained in this letter and even much more about the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Your tweet has retraumatized many survivors, exacerbated our pain and suffering, and undermined the effort to advance knowledge and understanding of the genocide and human rights.

Thus, we are profoundly hurt and outraged by your misleading statement issued on a day of mourning and reflection for the loss of Tutsi lives. We urge you to rectify this misrepresentation by retracting your previous statement and issuing a new one that accurately reflects the historical truths of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi.

Sincerely,

**Signatories:**

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- **Office of Global Criminal Justice, U.S. Department of State**
- **U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda**
- **United Nations Secretary-General**
- **The White House, Office of the President, Washington, D.C.**