

Senators want think tank on genocide studies expedited

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Senators have called on the Government to expedite the process of setting up a national centre of excellence on genocide studies to bolster research on genocide, fight against genocide ideology and denial both in Rwanda and abroad.

The call was made following research findings on people denying the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in foreign countries.

“We recommend the establishment of a Centre of Excellence on Genocide Studies bringing together researchers, scholars and experts in genocide studies both from Rwanda and abroad,” said Senator Margaret Nyagahura.

“The centre will be conducting research, provide training, a library and disseminate research findings on Genocide, Genocide ideology as well as Genocide denial,” she said.

The think tank, if set up, could also monitor all research about the

1994 Genocide against the Tutsi so as to fight its deniers.

“The centre could assess those given permission to carry out research about the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi with an aim to analyse research quality and its contribution to preventing it and its ideology,” she noted.

The study highlighted that Genocide denial was communicated through various channels that include radios, televisions and online media established by Genocide deniers, perpetrators and radical political groups.

Genocide denial crimes are also committed by publishing houses set up by Rwandans and foreigners as well as researchers who deny the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

They include “Editions Sources du Nil” by Eugène Shimamungu, Editions La Pagaie by Jean Marie Vianney Ndagijimana, Editions du Panama, and Editions Duboiris by

Charles Onana.

“These have published books with ideas that deny genocide ideology,” the research showed.

Particularly, Editions Sources du Nil published books of Genocide perpetrators convicted by TPIR such as Ferdinand Nahimana, Edoard Karemera, Jean Bosco Barayagwiza. and Augustin Ndirabatware. Protais Mpiranya, a wanted Genocide fugitive being hunted by justice has also published there.

Other channels of genocide denial include books denying genocide published by foreign journalists, cartoons as well as social media. They also include Non-Governmental Organizations, churches, demonstrations, public speeches, international judges, lawyers and international courts. In a bid to strengthen fight against genocide denial both abroad and inside Rwanda,

Genocide denial is most often committed by using books, publications in media, public speeches and it still continues. Therefore, it requires to continue carrying out research and reveal the truth about the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and combat the deniers, she said.

Need for publishing house

Nyagahura added that a publishing house for books fighting genocide should also be established

“It requires building the capacity of Rwandan writers in carrying out research, writing books about the Genocide as well as responding to deniers by writing the truth and disseminating the books in Rwanda and Abroad,” she said.

The government should put in place an ambassador-at-large or special ambassador to monitor the compliance with national and international laws related to preventing and punishing genocide crime, fighting genocide denial and eradicating genocide ideology, a recommendation reads.

Senators requested more capacity building for embassies in mobilizing Rwandans abroad to participate in initiatives aimed at fostering unity and reconciliation, Genocide commemoration activities, national civic training programme-Itorero, fighting Genocide and its ideology, among others.

Senator Chrysologue Karangwa suggested that the third Senate should focus on recommendations from the research.

“Parliamentary diplomacy should be well done towards the strategy of fighting Genocide denial,” she said.

Senate President Augustin Nyamunyema called on foreign countries and international organisations to introduce laws preventing and punishing genocide and its denial in their countries.

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