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# Humanitarian activists commit to fight Genocide denial

By: JEAN MUGABO

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The New Times

Bishop Rucyahana (L) interacts with Dr Lindner in Kigali. (Doreen Umutesi)

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Visiting humanitarian activists have committed to fighting Genocide denial and revisionism as well as raising awareness about the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

The group of academics, artists and writers from across the world was in Kigali for the four-day 25th Annual Conference of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HDHS) network, which closed yesterday.

Dr Evelin Gerda Lindner, the founding president of HDHS, said when she first visited the country, she could never imagine that anyone can deny the Genocide.

“I was here in 1999 and I talked to many people. I got facts about the Genocide, but now I am profoundly shocked to hear that there are people around who deny or trivialise it. We will raise awareness about what happened here, what is happening and we are able to bring the truth to the world,” Dr Lindner said.

She was speaking shortly after her team met with Dr Jean Damascene Gasanabo, the director-general of research and documentation at the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide, on Thursday.

Dr Gasanabo told the group that the Genocide was a result of long-established discrimination, ethnic division and hatred instigated by former regimes but that, presently, there are deniers in the country and beyond.

“Among the deniers include more than 70,000 people convicted of Genocide crimes in absentia. We urge you to help us get these criminals face justice,” Dr Gasanabo said.

Prof. Magnus Haavelsrud, a lecturer at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, said Genocide deniers have no place in the world because nobody can succeed in denying an occurrence that researchers and the international community have confirmed.

Seif Sekalala, a lecturer and PhD student at Drexel University in Philadelphia, US, said Genocide denial is beyond shame.

“I have been profoundly shocked as I saw the bodies and clothes of the Genocide victims when we visited Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, but it is so sad that people dare deny this. We will encourage our students and the general public to avoid entertaining nonsense that there was no Genocide against the Tutsi,” he said.

Born in Uganda to a Rwandan mother, Sekalala added that he is proud of his heritage as a Rwandan decent.

Earlier, Bishop (rtd) John Rucyahana, the president of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, said the dignity that Rwanda boasts of today was not donated, but earned.

“The Genocide against the Tutsi undignified this country but now we boast of the recovery that the world is coming to learn from. In only 21 years, we have made tremendous achievements to restore our dignity,” Rucyahana said.

Dr Lindner said their global movement wishes to bring more dignity into the world and less humiliation, to diminish a cycle of violence, humiliation and revenge.

Rucyahana said the visit was an opportunity for the country to share its true story with the world.

“Their being here is very important. They are learning about who we are, where we come from, what we suffered, what we have achieved and our policies so that they can tell the truth about us to the world,” he said.

“It is more believable when our true story—atrocities and success—is told by foreigners other than ourselves. We have to work for our dignity, nurture and protect it and then pass it on to those who try to distort it,” Rucyahana said, adding that human dignity is not made by what one possesses but what they are and feel.

Dr Lindner lauded the country’s progress in restoring dignity and said nobody can deny the tangible facts they had seen.

“I appreciate this country’s solidarity and social cohesion; that is what dignity means. I am because you are but this cohesion has been weakened in different parts of the world. However, I want the world to listen and learn from Rwanda’s experience,” she said.

The group visited Kigali Genocide Memorial, Gisozi, on Wednesday, where they paid tribute to Genocide victims.

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**ndindamahina** • a day ago

Rwandans are united in the aftermath of Genocide against Tutsi. Deniers will defeat them as because they are build on rumors while we rely on truth

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