

Opinions

Neither victim nor perpetrator? Kabuga's 'trial' at The Hague is a disgrace for us all

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I must first remind this UN court (the International Residual Mechanism Criminal Tribunals) that genocide is an unspeakable crime against humanity.

The UN witnessed without action all the massacres against the Tutsi, from 1959 onwards. The impunity that surrounded these massacres led ultimately to 1994, when the UN blue helmets were present but packed up and left, abandoning the Tutsis to the genocidal forces of Félicien Kabuga.

The genocide perpetrators killed without

pity. They murdered hospital patients on their death beds, old people, babies, the mentally ill. Nobody was spared. But Kabuga himself is too sick to be held accountable? They can't be serious. What are his lawyers for? Are they also sick?

Let's talk about old age. I remember a neighbour, Kankindi, the wife of Bwankoko, one of the oldest political prisoners, incarcerated because he was Tutsi, condemned to death and then released twenty-five years later by sheer chance. Kankindi was so old she didn't even know her own name any more.

She was carried to her deathbed on her daughter Daphrosa's shoulders, killed with a machete and thrown into a mass grave, along with my own children. Her age didn't matter to the perpetrators, nor did her dementia. But today the illness of one of the worst genocide perpetrators is enough reason for him not to be brought to justice. What a sad state of affairs.

I would like this UN tribunal to know that we have amongst us people even older than

Kabuga who miraculously survived his genocide in 1994. People who are sick, disabled and waiting for justice to join their loved ones with peace and serenity. Not to give them justice is to deny their suffering.

Maurice Papon was older than Kabuga and sick. Yet he was still judged for his crimes during the Holocaust. Why such double standards when it comes to the genocide against the Tutsi?

The Tribunal plans to continue Kabuga's trial but they say it won't lead to any judgement. Be serious!

What good can possibly come from a trial without judgement? A trial without sentencing isn't worth the bother. Stop torturing us genocide survivors! It's crucial for us to remind this UN tribunal that not providing justice for the genocide against the Tutsi has serious consequences.

If there is no justice, genocide survivors cannot rebuild their lives. The failure of justice denies the humanity of those victims killed simply for who they were. It goes to far

as to deny they existed, or even suggests that they deserved to be killed, that they weren't innocent victims. It also denies the humanity of the perpetrators because lack of justice prevents them too from rebuilding their own humanity. Are they alone guilty and not the man who armed them? A lack of justice hinders the world's efforts to prevent the crime of genocide. It hinders the difficult steps Rwandans have taken towards reconciliation, to live together, alongside each other, once more.

Quite simply, failing to provide justice denies the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi. It is a disgrace.

The author is a survivor of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. This article was a reaction to a recent declaration by the UN Court that Genocide mastermind Felicien Kabuga was unfit for trial after he was diagnosed with dementia.

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