



September 23, 2017

Rwandan Community Abroad- Toronto

Email: [REDACTED]

The Executive Committee, City of Toronto
10th Floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Sir or Madam:

Re: Recognition of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda & Commemorative Events:

International Recognition:

From a global perspective, April 7th was designated and adopted by the United Nations as a day of reflection in honor of the victims and survivors of the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. The United Nations encourages its member states and civil societies to recognize this day and to make bold steps to prevent genocide from ever happening again.

National Recognition:

The Canadian Government has since 2004, recognized April 7th as a day of remembrance to commemorate the genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda. Canada has continuously supported the [International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda \(ICTR\)](#) since the Tribunal was established in 1994 to prosecute those responsible for the genocide.

In June 1999, amendments to the Canadian *Extradition Act* and other legislation were adopted, in order to allow the surrender of accused individuals to the ICTR.

In 2000, Canada enacted the [Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes Act](#), which authorizes the initiation of proceedings in Canada for these offences, even if they have been committed abroad, when the individual is on Canadian soil.

In 2015 Canadian Parliament unanimously adopted Motion M-587. This important motion calls on this and subsequent governments to honour the victims of all genocides by recognizing the month of April as *Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation and Prevention Month*.

The Rwandan Community of Toronto includes many survivors of this horrific genocide. Since 2009 Rwandan community in Toronto has appreciated the fact that we were allowed to raise the Rwandan flag over the City Hall on April 7th in a symbolic gesture of solidarity by the City to remember and honor the victims of the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda. It has been a tradition where we came together as a Rwandan community, survivors as well as all other communities to raise the Rwandan flag at city hall. However, this tradition was disrupted by the Item on the discussion table this year without notice;

Honorable council members, allow me to say that the commemoration of 1994 Genocide against Tutsi on April 7th is very important to our community of genocide survivors in all aspects of our healing journey.

- ❖ It's a grieving moment for us to grieve and reflect since the majority of our genocide survivors did not have an opportunity to bury or mourn their loved ones during the genocide.
- ❖ It's a time that we come together to support each other as well as an opportunity for other communities to join hands with us which contributes to our healing process.
- ❖ We believe as we continue to commemorate publicly; we are re-affirming the "Never again" world commitment and keeping the memory alive.
- ❖ Raising awareness and educating the Canadian society at large especially young people.

In reviewing your report, we wish to highlight the importance of distinguishing between Genocide vs. Massacres and other violent acts; Genocide is intentional, systematic, planned and executed against a given race and yes it is preventable whereas massacres and violent acts can be random and spontaneous therefore referring to them as somehow the same or to be treated the same undermines the magnitude of genocide. Thus we would like this committee to consider reviewing the context and implementation of such wording.

We are here today to request the Executive Committee to continue to support this act of solidarity with the survivors of the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda who proudly call Toronto, their home. On behalf of Rwandan community, we urge this committee to allow us to keep this tradition of raising the Rwandan flag to kick off the commemoration events at

the city hall. It should be noted that other cities across this great nation has followed the same direction where our communities reside in large numbers; examples are Hamilton, Edmonton, Regina, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax.

Finally, Rwandan Community of Toronto kindly urges the City of Toronto to consider providing a designated area for public displays and education of such horrific events on commemorative days as well as recognize the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda.

The Rwandan Community of Toronto thanks you for your understanding and solidarity.

Sincerely,
Caleb Mabano
President Rwandan Community Abroad – Toronto

