

# 'Learn the lessons of Rwanda,' UN chief said, calling for a future of tolerance, human rights for all

7 April 2017 – Marking the twenty-third anniversary of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, during which Hutu and others who opposed the genocide were also killed, United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres today said the only way to honour the memory of the victims is to ensure such events never happen again.

The [1994 genocide](#) in the East African country saw the systematic murder of more than 800,000 people. The vast majority were Tutsi, but moderate Hutu, Twa and other groups also suffered during the 100 days of violence.

In his [message](#) to commemorate the [International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda](#), Mr. Guterres said: ‘Preventing genocide and other monstrous crimes is a shared responsibility and a core duty of the United Nations. The world must always be alert to the warning signs of genocide, and act quickly and early against the threat.’

‘History is filled with tragic chapters of hatred, inaction and indifference – a cycle that has led to violence, incarceration and death camps,’ he added.

However, he warned that ‘the poison of intolerance’ still existed around the world. ‘Even today, minorities and other groups suffer attacks and exploitation based on who they are.’

The Secretary-General noted that survivors of the genocide continue to face struggles, but praised their resilience and capacity for reconciliation.

He also called on society to ‘learn the lessons of Rwanda and work together to build a future of dignity, tolerance and human rights for all.’

A ‘[candle lighting ceremony](#)’ and a minute of silence will be observed at UN Headquarters in New York today to mark the Day of Reflection. The annual memorial ceremony will be moderated Maher Nasser, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications and feature a poetry performance by Malaika Uwamahoro, Artist and Rwandan student at Fordham University, as well as remarks by Carl Wilkens, Co-Founder and Director of World Outside My Shoes, Linda Melvern, journalist and author, and Valentine Rugwabiza, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations.