REMEMBERING RWANDA
The Rwanda Genocide 10th Anniversary Memorial Project

The purpose of Remembering Rwanda is to commemorate and learn from an event that most of the world has all but forgotten.

Beginning on the morning of April 7, 1994, and for the next 100 days, a small clique of power-hungry extremists organized the systematic slaughter of three-quarters of all Rwanda’s Tutsi and many thousands of its moderate Hutu. It was one of the classic genocides of the past century.

Yet outside of Rwanda itself, only a small number of diaspora Rwandans and their friends seem to care if the memory of the genocide is allowed to fade away, its lessons ignored. To supporters of Remembering Rwanda, this is the world’s second betrayal of Rwanda. First the world deliberately chose to abandon Rwanda to its terrible fate. Then the world chose to suppress the memory of what it had done—or failed to do—and of the hundreds of thousands of innocents who paid the price of that failure.

Among all the terrible crimes that humankind seems determined to inflict on itself, the crime of genocide is the most terrible. But this crime is compounded when it is then ignored, when the memories of the victims, the survivors, the perpetrators and the betrayers, are all allowed to disappear into thin air.

Remembering Rwanda is a widespread international network whose goal is to promote the commemoration in April 2004 of the 10th anniversary of the genocide so that it will not be buried again and that its lessons will not be ignored.

We want the genocide never to be forgotten, and we want no more genocides. We want those responsible to know they are accountable for their actions and that there is no impunity. We hope to inspire a new commitment to policies and behaviors that would transform “Never again” from a jaded slogan into a meaningful call for action.

Remembering Rwanda is a network of individuals and groups--- all of us volunteers-- that includes diaspora Rwandans, friends of Rwanda, civil society in Rwanda itself, and several Armenian and Jewish individuals and organizations.

Remembering Rwanda is international, with supporters actively preparing major events for the 10th anniversary in the USA, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Israel, and South Africa. We are cooperating with people in Rwanda as they prepare the country’s 10th anniversary commemoration. We are a highly decentralized network whose supporters will choose the most appropriate ways their own communities will commemorate the genocide.

Remembering Rwanda is completely non-partisan, non-political, and independent of all parties and governments. Our only direct interest in Rwanda is in keeping alive the memory of the genocide and working to assist its victims and to document its history.

Recently, the executive council of the Africa Union unanimously adopted a resolution calling on all member states and civil society groups in Africa to recognize and commemorate the 10th anniversary of the genocide next April, and to urge the United Nations and the entire international community to follow suit. Remembering Rwanda is playing an active role in these activities.

Complete information on Remembering Rwanda is available on our website, www.visiontv.ca/RememberRwanda/index.htm [2].

The volunteer coordinators of Remembering Rwanda are
Greetings to friends, supporters, and colleagues around the world. We send you season’s greetings and our hopes for a more peaceful and just new year.

With little more than 3 months to April 7, the official start of the 10th anniversary of the genocide, there are far more activities being planned than we can summarize in this brief update. While there has been an overwhelmingly positive international response to Remembering Rwanda [RR10] since it was launched 18 months ago, we urge you to keep spreading the word and to encourage others to memorialize the 10th anniversary this coming April. Feel free to pass this report on to your own lists.

If you have questions or want to participate, please contact us---Gerry Caplan (caplang@rogers.com [3]); Louise Mushikiwabo (lmushikiwa@aol.com [5]); Carole Ann Reed (ca.reed@sympatico.ca [4]).
We are also using the Remembering Rwanda website to report on new developments as well as dates of commemoration activities around the world as we learn of them. Please check www.visiontv.ca/RememberRwanda/index.htm regularly until April.

Significant commemoration efforts are in process in Rwanda itself, in Addis Ababa, home of the Africa Union (in effect the UN of Africa), and at the United Nations General Assembly.

In Rwanda, a National Steering Committee has been formed to plan the commemoration for the 10th anniversary of the genocide in April. The Committee includes the government, Ibuka (the survivors’ association), Avega (the association of genocide widows), Africa Rights, Never Again (a students’ group), and Remembering Rwanda. The theme chosen for this year’s commemoration is “Preventing and abolishing Genocide through effective universal solidarity”. Remembering Rwanda is recommending that all its supporters adopt this theme as well, to signal our solidarity with the Rwandan Steering Committee. In Rwanda, April 7 is the date on which the 10th anniversary officially begins, and the subsequent week will be spent in a series of events of commemoration. We will post further information on the Rwandan plans very soon.

At the Africa Union in Addis Ababa, plans are being discussed for a major commemoration featuring video hook-ups with African leaders across the continent. We expect to hear more in the new year.

At the United Nations, a resolution initiated by the Africa Group is about to be presented to the General Assembly. It recognizes the 10th anniversary of the genocide and calls on all UN agencies and states to take steps to commemorate the occasion. We’ll post the complete resolution when it’s passed.

Plans for national or local memorial events continue to expand. Major initiatives include:

* Denmark and Sweden, where Rwandans, anti-genocide and human rights activists and students in the two countries are working closely together;  
* Belgium, France and Switzerland, with members of the Rwandan community working in collaboration as well as with academics and anti-genocide activists in all three countries;
* in each of Brussels and Paris, where several organizations—Prevention genocides, Medecin sans frontiers and others—are organizing film festivals and follow-up panels dealing with issues of the genocide (Brussels April 2-3, Paris April 9-10);
* Canada, where six cities are coordinating their separate events;
* The UK, where Never Again, SURF (UK Rwandan Survivors’ Fund- www.survivors-fund.org.uk), and RUGO (Rwanda-United Kingdom Good Will Organization) are all planning special commemorations;
* Washington, DC, where an ambitious 3-day program is being organized;
* Boston, where a committee representing all of the New England states is at work;
* New York, where Helen Fein’s Institute for the Study of Genocide is convening a special memorial panel on May 8;
* and in various other American cities as well as at numerous universities where departments of African studies or political science or institutes dedicated to genocide and the Holocaust are holding special ceremonies or convening panels to discuss the legacy of the April-July 1994.

We will add all these efforts to the Local Initiative section of our website throughout the next 3 months.

If you would like your 10th anniversary project to be included in this section, please contact us.

Some notable activities of RR10 supporters:

Daniel and Nina Libeskind, the architectural team selected to replace the World Trade Centre, has offered to present to Remembering Rwanda a 10th anniversary memorial commemorating the genocide. Depending on the nature of the memorial, still unknown, Remembering Rwanda will in turn
dedicate the Libeskind project to the victims and survivors of the genocide.

Media events

Documentaries marking the 10th anniversary.

We note here just a few of the many television programs that are planned in many countries of Europe plus the US and Canada next April. We will open a documentary section on our website to keep track of all the documentaries to be shown.

PBS Frontline is producing a major documentary on “Rwanda, 10 years later, scheduled to have its premier at the Holocaust Museum in DC on April 1, 2004, then to be shown on PBS stations in the US and may also be shown on BBC Panorama.

NPR (National Public Radio—USA) is presenting a one-hour news magazine on courageous Hutu who saved Tutsi lives during the genocide, risking their own in the process. To be aired around April 7th.

Anne Aghion’s sequel to her acclaimed 2002 documentary, “Gacaca, Living Together Again In Rwanda?“ will be released in late March or early April.

Radio Rwanda: Archives from 60s and 70s depicting hate policies in Rwandan official circles to be aired at various times between April 7-14. April.

Religious activities.

In the US, the United Methodist Church has become supportive of Remembering Rwanda. Its magazine, Christian Social Action, which goes 45,000 United Methodist pastors and lay leaders, has published the Remembering Rwanda mission statement in the hope that American Methodist churches are stimulated to participate in commemoration events next April.

The National Council of Churches USA has also decided to participate in Remembering Rwanda. They are planning a major event next April working together with the Armenian Orthodox Church and NCC-affiliated churches with large African American ministries.

Recent individual offers of support.

Several people have generously offered their resources for use during next April’s commemorations. We note them briefly here; detailed information is available on the resources section of our website.

· William Ferroggiaro, formerly of the National Security Archive in DC, is responsible for having declassified key documents on U.S. policy toward the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. www.nsarchive.org [8]. wferro@gwu.edu [9].

· Camille Karangwa has published in French a book called Le chapelet et la machete, dealing with the involvement of church members in the genocide. camijour@yahoo.com [10]

· Michal Safdie michal.safdie@verizon.net [11] Cambridge, Mass. 617 864 6783. A photographic exhibition of the Gacaca process. Michal will gladly send her photos to supporters of Remembering Rwanda, and they are also available on the RR website.

· "Through the Eyes of Children: the Rwanda Project" Ambreen Qureshi ambreen@pixelpress.org [12] A documentary project of photographs taken by the children of the Imbabazi Orphanage in Gisenyi,
Rwanda. This traveling exhibition is the result of continuing photographic workshops for children who live at this orphanage. Visit their website [http://www.rwandaproject.org](http://www.rwandaproject.org) [13].

If you’d be interested in hosting the exhibition to commemorate the 10th anniversary, they would reduce/waive exhibition rental fees.

**Categories:** Human rights [14]

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**Article-Summary:**

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