

PRESS RELEASE



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MCW MARKS 19th ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1994 GENOCIDE AGAINST TUTSIS IN RWANDA

Tibi Galis of the Auschwitz Institute for Peace & Reconciliation speaks about genocide prevention on grassroots level.

NEW YORK, April 14, 2013 — MCW held its seventh annual commemoration of the 19th anniversary of the genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda at New York University's Law School on April 14, 2013. To remember the lives of more than one million people who were killed during the genocide and to highlight the challenges currently facing survivors, almost one hundred people gathered to learn about the importance of "prevention," not only in Rwanda but also in other areas of the world, where mass atrocities are taking place and not receiving the attention from the international community and/or media that is needed.

Tibi Galis, Executive Director of the Auschwitz Institute for Peace & Reconciliation, delivered the keynote address, highlighting two ways individuals can prevent genocide and mass atrocities on a community level. "The first way is to not look away at things that are happening in your community. Mass atrocities and genocide do not start big; they start with little things in your community and at times when intervention doesn't take place. When we see problems and look away we are supporting the roots of evil."

He continued, "The second way is to look at your community and its service of prevention and to think of and do what you're best at. Some people are best at speaking to politicians; some are best at being caring and creating environments that make people feel safe; and some of us are best at creating economic models that take care of people's needs. There are many ways we actively engage in prevention, but most of the time we don't see it as prevention; however, that is the right thing to do. The good news is that this happens a lot; the flip side is that it could happen less."

The program opened with the premiere of a short video on Rwanda genocide survivor, Jacqueline Murekatete. Born in Rwanda in 1984, Jacqueline was not yet ten when she lost her entire immediate and most of her extended family to the 1994 Genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda. Since giving her first presentation in 2001, Jacqueline has spoken in more than 300 forums, including high schools, universities, community centers, NGO events, UN agencies, and faith-based communities around the world. Jonathan Scheinberg, Associate Producer, CBS-60 Minutes prepared the video.

Afterward, Galis and Murekatete were joined by Scheinberg for a roundtable discussion that covered a range of topics including intervention, the role of the media in prevention, and the obstacles facing the development and implementation of genocide prevention policies and tools. Roberta Richin, a member of the MCW Board of Directors Emeritus, facilitated the discussion.

Speaking on behalf of the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations, Jeanne d'Arc Byaje shared some measures Rwanda has taken since 1994 to prevent genocide in Rwanda and around the world.

In her closing remarks, Murekatete said, "While it is necessary and important for all of us to gather here and elsewhere around the world, to remember those who were murdered during the genocide, I want us to also pay attention to the survivors, like the widows and orphans who still suffer as a result of the genocide. Many survivors still lack many basic needs and we need to find ways to address the physical and emotional wounds they suffer as a result of the genocide. Survivors are still waiting for reparation, and many are still calling for justice, nineteen years after the genocide. We cannot continue to ignore these calls."

Co-sponsored by NYU's Latino Law Students Association, the commemoration was organized under the umbrella of MCW's partner initiative, MCW Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner. Event participants included members from the Rwandan community living in the Tri State area, educators, NGO representatives, NYU law students, media and documentarians.

The program wrapped up with a memorial, beginning with two poems read by Rwandan student Jessica Gatoni and followed by a slideshow with photographs of individuals and families who died in the genocide, including a number of family members of the survivors present at the event.

For a full gallery of photographs from the event, visit MCW's flickr site at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/miraclecorners/sets/72157633244245567/with/8651182159/>.

About MCW Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner

Established in 2007, MCW Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner is led by Rwanda genocide survivor and human rights activist Jacqueline Murekatete. Jacqueline's vision is a world without genocide and a peaceful and stable Rwanda. MCW Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner has two main goals: first, to raise awareness about the crime of genocide around the world; and second to support the MCW community center in Bugesera District, Rwanda. Jacqueline was an MCW Fellow from 2007 to 2012. For more information, visit www.mcwglobal.org.

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