

STATEMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY DR. SALIM AHMED SALIM,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAU AT THE STATE DINNER
OFFERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF RWANDA - 4TH APRIL 1995

Your Excellency, Mr. Pasteur Bizimungu,
President of the Republic of Rwanda,
and Madame Bizimungu,
Excellency, the Prime Minister, Mr. Twagiramungu,
Excellency, the Vice Prime Minister, Colonel Alexis Kanyarengwe,
Excellencies, Government Ministers,
Excellencies,
Honorable Members of Parliament
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Four days ago, on the 1st of April 1995, I and my delegation arrived in this beautiful country at the very kind invitation of the President of the Republic. I am, Mr. President, grateful to you for this opportunity to visit once again, this picturesque country of a thousand hills.

Mr. President, the essence of our visit has been to see, learn and discuss with you and your colleagues what exactly the Organization of African Unity can do in concert with your Government, in order to be helpful and indeed to consolidate peace and the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation which your Government, from what we have heard and seen has so far ably embarked upon in the last eight months.

I am not new to Rwanda; neither is Rwanda new to me. First and foremost because I come from a neighbouring country Tanzania and secondly because I have been here on previous occasions as part of our common and determined effort to bring peace, security and stability to your country, her people and to the sub-region as a whole. But, Mr. President, Excellencies, this is my first time

since the genocide and the most gruesome massacres in living memory. We had seen on television screens whether in Europe, America or in our own continent the results of man's inhumanity to man as the Rwanda tragedy has now come to epitomize. But this visit has been most instructive just as it has been painful. Instructive because of the considerable and impressive efforts you and your Government have deployed to bring this country back to normalcy.

I am encouraged by the zeal and determination of your people. Everywhere we went we were faced with a ready smile despite the wounds and ugly scars of the recent past which can still be seen everywhere.

Mr. President, as far as the OAU is concerned, never, never again should Africa and indeed the world allow such brutal acts to be committed on this continent. Africa and the international community remained indecisive while Rwanda was burning. To avoid future genocide and massacres of such unprecedented magnitude the OAU believes there is an urgent need to bring to justice all those who planned, executed and perpetrated these massacres and the genocide. This would serve as a lesson and a deterrent. But above all, Mr. President, bringing all such perpetrators to justice would contribute positively to the process of national healing and national reconciliation which your Government has embarked upon. But national reconciliation in Rwanda is not the business of the Government and people of Rwanda only. It is a collective responsibility - Africa and international community have a significant role to play - to assist the Government and the people of Rwanda morally, materially and financially in order to put in place an effective machinery of Government which includes a workable judicial system. The need for the immediate operationalisation of the international tribunal cannot be over-emphasized.

As of now there are hundreds if not thousands of the planners of the genocide who have fled from this country. The world should give credibility to the world body's decision, UN Security Council resolution 978 by pursuing these people wherever they may be so that they can account for their actions which have robbed this country of its most valuable resource, its people.

Mr. President, in the course of my visit to the various parts of the country, as well as in my discussions with high ranking officials of the Government, representatives of the diplomatic corps and NGO's, I and my delegation had the opportunity to see first hand the devastation and general destruction that befell this country in the wake of the massacres and the genocide. In Nyarubuye, we saw the extent and brutal nature of the decimation of human life. Never had I before anywhere on this continent, and indeed, outside this continent, seen such hell on earth.

In Nyamata, we were encouraged by the sight of the young children in the orphanage. The orphans in Nyamata and elsewhere in this country gave us hope that the future which these children represent is right; but this brightness can only shine when the international community and Africa in our collective will and determination come to the immediate assistance of your Government. In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to call upon the international donor community through the representatives present here to do everything possible to ensure that the pledges made by their countries at the Round table in Geneva last January are translated into concrete deeds by providing the urgently needed financial assistance to the Government of Rwanda.

For our part, Mr. President, Excellencies, the OAU shall continue to work in tandem with you, the neighbouring countries and indeed with the international community in order to ensure the return of the refugees from the neighbouring countries and the restoration of peace and stability to Rwanda and the sub-region as

a whole.

Mr. President, as a gesture of the OAU's continued support for the efforts of your Government and the determination of the people of Rwanda to rebuild their country and following our visit to the Nyamata orphanage, the OAU is making a donation of 200 beds and 200 mattresses to that orphanage. In addition, we are donating a vehicle in the form of a minibus to serve the Nyamata orphanage.

Mr. President, I am indeed encouraged by the determined efforts of your Government. Consequently, the OAU is making a financial contribution of US\$ 100.000 to support other orphanages in this country.

Mr. President, the staff of the OAU have not been oblivious to the suffering of their Rwandese brothers and sisters. In solidarity with the Rwandese people, the staff is making a modest yet symbolic financial contribution to the Government of Rwanda. At this juncture, Mr. President, allow me to call on the President of the OAU Staff Association, who happily is with me, to present the cheque to you.

(PAUSE)

Let me at this point, thank the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) for the logistical support they gave me in the course of our visits to the various parts of the country, including our visits today to the African contingents serving with UNAMIR, notably, the Ethiopian Battalion in Cyangugu, the Tunisian Battalion in Mutura-Ruhengeri and the Ghanaian Battalion in Kibungu.

I also wish to specially thank the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Amb. Sharhayar Khan with whom I have remained in consultation. Amb. Khan, throughout the period he has

been in Rwanda, has shown great understanding of the actual situation prevailing in the country.

Mr. President, Excellencies, we came to Rwanda; we saw and indeed we learnt a lot. Let me therefore assure you that the OAU and I personally would continue to serve as a goodwill Ambassador of your country and people.

In conclusion, I wish on behalf of my delegation and indeed on my own behalf to thank Your Excellency most sincerely and through you the Government and people of this country for the warm and brotherly hospitality we have enjoyed throughout our stay in your country.

MURAKOSE CHANE.