

France promises to try a genocide suspect every six months

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Antoine Anfré, French ambassador to Rwanda. Photo by Dan Nsengiyumva

The French government is mulling ways that will see at least two suspects of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi tried every year, as part of the efforts to give justice to the over a million victims.

The move, according to the Ambassador of France to Rwanda, Antoine Anfré, comes at a time France is making up for the time lost while denying the magnitude of her responsibilities in Rwanda's dark history.

"Normally, we should have a trial every six months. Maybe it's not enough, but this is significant". He added, "This is an effort which

is both encouraged by the executive, but also the police play their role in it and the judiciary plays a role in it so that (the) French and Rwandan judiciary collaborate on this."

Ambassador Anfré was speaking yesterday during a conversation with diplomats that attracted 200 members of the Diplomatic Corps, including officials from both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as well as the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement.

The conversation was organised with an aim to reflect on the lessons learned during the genocide and the role of the international community, as part of the ongoing Kwibuka 28 activities.

According to Anfré, two of the main threats that hinder reconciliation efforts is the denial against the genocide and the denial by states.

"And in France, unfortunately, there was nothing done for too long. And now we are making up for the lost time", he highlighted.

Today, he said, there have been many procedures in light of genocide suspects being tried in various courts based in Paris includ-

ding that of Claude Muhayimana who was recently sentenced to 14 years.

Another trial, which he said was ongoing for months, was that of Laurent Bukibaruta, former Prefet (Governor) of Gikongoro.

"The knowledge about the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi will continue to be revealed and shared. When genocide is recognized, it's important for the victims, but it's also very important for the state that has a responsibility in that genocide. It opens the horizons for the peoples of that country."

Anfre said that much as France was long involved in denying the Genocide against the Tutsi and its 'heavy' role, there have been

positive strides to ensure a fresh momentum of relations between the two countries.

This, he said follows several positive developments including that of a 600-page report that detailed the role of France in the Genocide against the Tutsi.

The report showed that the French government was neither blind nor unconscious about the genocide and provided unwavering support to the Genocidal government that was in power then.

Equally important, he said, was a historic visit made by French President Emmanuel Macron, who during the visit apologized and expressed solidarity to the survivors.