

# Canadian General relives Rwanda experience in new book

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Romeo Dallaire with his wife Marie Michaud during a visit to the Kigali Genocide Memorial on Friday, August 11 2023. Photo by Craish Bahizi

Romeo Dallaire, a military general-turned humanitarian and human rights advocate, is set to launch his fourth book, whose sole message is a call on humanity to strive for peace.

Dallaire, a retired Canadian lieutenant general who was the commander of the United Nations forces in Rwanda during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, has made peace activism his new weapon.

In his forthcoming book, titled “The Peace: A Warrior’s Journey,” Dallaire draws from

his own experience as a soldier to appeal to the world to prevent atrocities like the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi he witnessed in Rwanda.

“*It is a strategic perspective of how we can actually create lasting peace for all of humanity to go beyond our borders and all of humanity,*” the 77-year-old former senator said in an interview with *The New Times*.

“*As we are now able to talk to all of humanity, we will, with peace, security and justice, move through. We will ultimately [achieve peace]. It might take a century but what’s a century? We’ve been slaughtering each other for 10,000 years,*” Dallaire said.

## **In search for paradise on earth**

“The Peace” will be published in April 2024 by Penguin Random House Canada, first in English and later in French.

“*The book looks back at the hell of war, the purgatory of truce we are living today, and the ‘paradise’ of security and peace we*

*can reach in the future,”* said Jessica Dee Humphreys, Dallaire’s personal chief of staff, who co-authored it. *“Most importantly, once humanity can achieve peace, we will finally be able to realize our true potential in the universe.”*

Dallaire recently visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial, which is the resting place of more than 250,000 victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. In his 2003 award-winning book “Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda,” Dallaire laments the UN’s failure to allow his troops to intervene.

As the commander of UN forces in Rwanda from 1993-1994, who had seen the massacre unfold, Dallaire asked for permission to intervene, which he was denied.

He wanted the UN to double the troops to at least 5,000, but they were instead asked to withdraw, leaving Tutsi men, women and children at the mercy of a genocidal regime and machete-wielding Interahamwe militias.

The Genocide that claimed more than one million lives within 100 days left a permanent mark on Dallaire, who later suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental condition that affects people who witnessed traumatic events.

He remains an advocate for military veterans suffering from PTSD. His 2016 bestselling memoir, “Waiting for First Light: My Ongoing Battle with PTSD,” is one work in that regard.

Dallaire’s experience in Rwanda is the core of “The Peace.” He examines the period before, during and after the Genocide, and especially the grotesque history of colonization,

which laid the foundation for the tragedy that befell Rwanda towards the end of the 20th century.

## Dallaire’s quest for global peace

The man who’s now devoted to ending the use of children in war has written extensively about the subject, notably in his 2010 book “They Fight Like Soldiers, They Die Like Children: The Global Quest to Eradicate the Use of Child Soldiers.”

Through his organisation, the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security, he champions a holistic approach to preventing the recruitment and use of children in armed violence.

Dallaire has faith in the power of young people to change the world into a better place.

*“I believe that we are moving to a new era and the young people – what I call the generation without borders because they’re communicating on these [smartphones] all the time – they’re global, they are seeing global peace. And that’s what we’re going for and I believe we will achieve it,”* he said.

“The Peace” is different from Dallaire’s previous three books.

While “Shake Hands with the Devil” was at the operational level, and his second and third were at the tactical and individual soldier levels, “The Peace” is a strategic assessment, Humphreys said.