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## Govt: Catholic apology for role in Genocide inadequate

By Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti

THE GOVERNMENT has questioned the recent apology by Catholic Church leaders on the role of some its members played during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, saying it is inadequate.

In a statement, released yesterday, the Government said that, while the clerics apologise on behalf of a few unnamed individuals, the bishops "appear to take the extraordinary step of exonerating the Catholic Church as a whole for any culpability in connection with the Genocide."

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## Architects push for tougher policies for green growth



Eng. Coletha Ruhamya, director-general of Rwanda Environment Management Authority, speaks during the meeting between government stakeholders and the Rwanda Institute of Architects as Innocent Kabenga, country director of Global Green Growth Institute, looks on in Kigali yesterday. **Story on Page 3. N. Imbabazi.**

### Students urged to

# Government questions clerics apology 'that exonerates' Catholic Church's role in Genocide

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"This step is welcome, as individual expressions of remorse. However, its profound inadequacy only serves to highlight how far the Catholic Church still remains from a full and honest reckoning with its moral and legal responsibilities," reads the statement in part.

"Everything in the historical record contradicts this divisive claim," it adds.

The Catholic Church, on Sunday, released a joint announcement apologising for the role some of its members played during Genocide that claimed over one million innocent lives.

This so-called apology was contained in a joint resolution signed by nine bishops representing all dioceses in the country.

However, the announcement denies any direct role played by Church as an institution, insisting that the Church sent nobody to do any harm during the tragedy.

"Although the Church sent no body to do harm, we, the Catholic clerics in particular, apologise, again, for some of the Church members, clerics, people who dedicated themselves to serve God and Christians in general who played a role in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi," the bishops communiqué, read.



A visitor observes some pictures of kids killed in the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi. Nadege Imbabazi.

While the announcement was to be read in all masses as per the bishops' guidelines, it was realised that in some churches, especially in Kigali, it was not read out.

"It is regrettable that some priests apparently declined to read the bishops' message to parishioners as intended, thus disassociating themselves from even this mild expression of regret," the Government statement adds.

The statement also called for Papal apology.

"Given the scale of the crimes, there is ample justification for an apology from the Vatican, as has occurred repeatedly with other cases of lesser magnitude," the statement said.

However, the Government commended the bishops' points of combating genocide ideology, saying it would continue to engage in an open and frank dialogue with Church leaders to encourage the Catholic Church to face up to its own past without excuses or fear, just as Rwandans them-

selves have been doing over the past twenty-two years.

Over the last two decades, the Catholic Church in Rwanda has been under fire for allegedly protecting some of its clerics linked to the Genocide, with some suspects and convicts still conducting masses in Europe.

An example is Fr Wenceslas Munyeshyaka, who was convicted by a Gacaca court, but remains a serving priest in France.

Thousands of Tutsi sought refuge in Catholic churches across Rwanda when the Genocide broke out in 1994 only to be butchered at the places of worship, many betrayed by the same men and women of God they initially hoped would protect them from the marauding killers.

In some extreme cases, some clerics openly took part in the slaughter, while some churches have since been turned into Genocide memorials.

While some analysts welcomed the Catholic Church's apology they also say, it falls short of acknowledging the Church's key role in sowing the seeds of hatred and division and ultimately backing the genocidal regime in its apocalyptic agenda or doing nothing to stop the killings.