



Montreal Institute For Genocide and Human Rights Studies
Concordia University
1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. West
Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1M8 Canada
Tel.: (514) 848-2424 ext 5729
<http://migs.concordia.ca>

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PRESS RELEASE

MARKING TWENTY YEARS SINCE GENERAL DALLAIRE'S GENOCIDE FAX

2014 marks the 20th Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide. Twenty years ago, on January 11, 1994, United Nations military commander LGen The Honourable (Ret'd) Roméo Dallaire sent a fax to UN Headquarters in New York, warning his superiors of a plan to exterminate Tutsis. But U.N. member states, led by the five permanent members of the Security Council, refused to listen and watched as over the course of hundred days from 500,000 to 800,000 Tutsis were deliberately massacred. As Roméo Dallaire recalled in a press conference last Tuesday "The international community did its best to ignore Rwanda. It wasn't on their radar, it was of no self-interest, it had no strategic value."

To commemorate the anniversary of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect organized "Genocide: A Preventable Crime," a panel discussion continuing the global conversations advancing understanding of early warning of mass atrocities. The event featured a keynote address by MIGS' Distinguished Senior Fellow, LGen The Honourable Roméo A. Dallaire (Ret'd) as well as presentations by Jan Eliasson, UN Deputy Secretary-General; H.E. Mrs. Mathilde Mukantabana, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda to the U.S., Eugenie Mukeshimana, a Rwandan genocide survivor; and Dr. Stephen Smith, Executive Director of the Shoah Foundation.

BUILDING THE PATH TO GENOCIDE PREVENTION

Twenty years after the Rwanda genocide, have we made any progress? The 2005 "responsibility to protect" report and the principles it elaborated have given us the tools to intervene with UN support. But, as Ambassador Mukantabana asked, "As a global community, would we act differently today if the genocide fax was received? Would we take any action, not only to intervene, but to stop the genocide?" The answer, as Syria

shows, is that despite progress, “we are still standing on the sidelines as lives are being lost.”

In an [open letter to UN Member States](#), Dr. Simon Adams, Executive Director of the Global Centre for R2P, writes that “the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide is an important opportunity to honor the victims”, an opportunity for states “to demonstrate their commitment to the prevention of mass atrocities and R2P (Responsibility to Protect).”

Dr. Frank Chalk, Director of the Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS), and Kyle Matthews, Senior Deputy Director of MIGS’ Will to Intervene project at Concordia University, join Dr. Simon Adams’ call for states to show their commitment to the prevention of mass atrocities. As part of its mandate, MIGS has been working hard to mobilize political will and institutional change in Canada and the U.S. to prevent future mass atrocities and genocide. MIGS’ Will to Intervene Project (W2I), mentioned in Roméo Dallaire’s UN speech, identified the strategic and practical steps needed to raise the capacity of governments to advance the implementation of the responsibility to protect. Because mobilization of the will to intervene is still but a dream, Lieutenant-General Dallaire called for the creation of a new conceptual framework of conflict prevention and leadership.

MIGS CALLS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO ADOPT ITS GENOCIDE PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS NOW

MIGS’ 2009 policy report, *Mobilizing the Will to Intervene: Leadership and Action to Prevent Mass Atrocities*, made concrete recommendations to the Canadian Government addressing the need for leadership; enhancing coordination; and building capacity. Today, while Prime Minister Stephen Harper is leading a Canadian mission to Israel, would be a highly appropriate time for the Prime Minister to commit himself and his government to the difficult work of genocide prevention. We urge that he accomplish this by implementing the recommendations arising from MIGS’ 2009 research study of the Rwanda genocide and Canada’s failure to prevent.

Prime Minister Harper, on the anniversary of the Genocide Fax, MIGS respectfully requests that you:

- Make preventing mass atrocities a **national priority**.
- Appoint a focal point leader for mass atrocities prevention within the Government of Canada
- Create an Interdepartmental Coordinating Office for the Prevention of Mass Atrocities.
- Enhance the Canadian Forces’ capabilities by increasing its force strength and developing specific operational concepts, doctrine, force structure, and training to support civilian protection in mass atrocity prevention operations
- Foster public discussions emphasizing Canada’s national interest stake in preventing mass atrocities.

In addition, we urge that you:

Propose that the Parliament of Canada convert the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity into a standing joint committee of Parliament.

Encourage **parliamentarians to** exercise individual initiative and use their existing powers and privileges to **make the implementation of the responsibility to protect an international norm** and embed it as a vital part of Canada's foreign policy.

Mister Prime Minister, twenty years after General Dallaire's Genocide Fax, Canada's leadership, determination and skills are needed more than ever in the international arena. Now is the time to act! Your leadership and vision can make the difference. We urge you to answer our renewed call swiftly and positively!