# GENOCIDE IN RWANDA: MEDIA, MEMORY AND DENIAL

The Spanish philosopher George Santayana warned that, *"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."* Santayana's warning stands in stark contrast to the universal pledge of "Never Again" when it comes to the recent history of genocide in the world. The lack of remembrance, or the conscious denial of past atrocities, has led to the repetition of genocide despite the resolve in 1948 not to let it happen again.

Genocide survivors are confronted not only with the self-protective refusal to remember the trauma of what happened to them, but also with the ongoing public campaign of genocide denial. The numerous voices of denial are gaining more prominence in the traditional media as well as in social media outlets. In addition, genocide deniers often argue that laws against genocide denial violate their right to freedom of speech and amount to political suppression by governments enacting such laws.

The challenge remains how to keep memory alive when "the killers of memory" are exploiting the electronic social media to drown out or silence the survivors' voices. Countries that endured genocide usually rely on survivors to speak about the past because as eyewitnesses they can testify more forcefully than a physical monument recognizing genocide.

- But what will happen once the survivors are all gone?
- What will happen if they are completely silenced in the media by the voices of genocide deniers?
- Can genocide denial laws work without conflicting with the freedom of speech?
- Should memorial sites be destroyed, periods of mourning be cancelled, and genocide testimonies be silenced to avoid re-traumatization of the victims, to of reconciliation, allow the politics healing and forgiveness in the society?
- Is it possible for post-genocide societies to move forward to a democratic and peaceful future without confronting and acknowledging the crimes of the past and the sufferings of victims?

These are some of the central questions that panelists and participants will reflect on at this interdisciplinary symposium to explore recent genocides and the forces that promote forgetting and denial. Participants will also be examining issues of history, memory, denial, memorialization, trans-generational transmission of trauma, media manipulation and representation, freedom of expression laws, state ideology and silencing.

## DAY I: THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2012
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**EVENING SESSION: 7:00-9:30: Mumford Auditorium #133**
**FILM Screening: *"Brussels-Kigali"***

The film, "*Brussels-Kigali"* is based on the 2009 trial in Belgium of Ephrem Nkezabera, who was convicted in absentia for his involvement in the genocide against Tutsi in 1994. In the film, the testimonies of genocide survivors are set in parallel with the trial. Among the witnesses, is the Belgian Martine Beckers, whose sister Claire Beckers (then married to a Tutsi) was killed with her family in Kigali. Martine Beckers, one of the participants in the symposium, will introduce the film.
*Coproduction Zeugma Films / Cobra Films (Brussels) Broadcasting: RTBF and Vosges Télévision - Images Plus*

## DAY II: FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2012
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**MORNING SESSIONS: 9:00-12:15, Student Center #2206 ABC**

**9:00 am:** Welcome remarks by *Dr. Flore Zéphir***,** Chair, Department of Romance Languages,
**University of Missouri-Columbia**

**9: 10 am**: Opening remarks by *Ambassador James Kimonyo*
**Embassy of Rwanda—Washington, DC**

**Session I: 9:30-10:45: Memory and Denial**
**Chair:** *Dr. Mamadou Badiane***, University of Missouri-Columbia**

9:30-10:00: "A Survivor's Perspective on Genocide Denial" -- *Mr. Isidore Munyakazi*, Genocide survivor and former Rwandan diplomat, Kigali, Rwanda
10:00-10:30: "Commonalities of Genocide" -- *Ms. Bianca Bagatourian*, Hollywood, California
10:30-10:45 – Questions and discussion/ **Coffee Break**

**Session II: 10:45-12:00: Memory, Representation and Historiography**
**Chair:** *Dr. Carol Lazarro-Weis***, University of Missouri-Columbia**

10:45-11:15*:* "Representing Hatred in the Rwandan Film *Munyurangabo*" -- *Dr. Chantal Kalisa,* University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska
11:15-11:45: "Historiography and Genocide Denial" -- *Dr. Aimable Twagilimana*, Sate University of New York, Buffalo
11:45-12:00 -- Questions and discussion

**12:00-1:30: Lunch break**

## AFTERNOON SESSIONS: 1:30-5:00, Student Center #2206 ABC

**Session III: 1:30-3:15: Media and Denial**
**Chair:** *Dr. Pascale Perraudin*, **Saint Louis University**

1:30-2:00: "Genocide, Memory, Denial and Western Media: The Case of Léon Mugesera" -- *Dr. Dominique Payette*, Université Laval, Québec, Canada
2:00-2:30: "Contested Claims or Manipulating Fictions? Teaching Academic Debate While Respecting Sacred Histories" -- *Dr. Gerise Herndon,* Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, Nebraska
2:30-3:00: "Le Génocide contre les Tutsi dans le miroir du Devoir" -- *Dr. Philippe Basabose,* Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada
3:00-3:15 -- Questions and discussion

**3:15-3:30: Coffee break**

**Session IV: 3:30-5:00: Justice, Human Rights and Genocide Denial**
**Chair:** *Dr. Michael Ugarte*, **University of Missouri-Columbia**

3:30-4:00: "Freedom of Expression, Media Manipulation, and Denial of Genocide in Rwanda" -- *Dr. Tim Gallimore*, Vice President, Higher Learning Commission, Chicago, Illinois (Former Spokesperson, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda)
4:00-4:30: "Testimony as relief to survivors and as act against denial of genocide" -- *Ms. Martine Beckers,* Human Rights Advocate & also trained in Victimology, Belgium
4:30-5:00 -- Questions and discussion

**5:15-6:45: Dinner/Reception (By invitation)**
**Venue**: Student Union, Faculty Lounge #S304

## EVENING SESSION, ELLIS AUDITORIUM (Ellis Library Building)

**7:00 pm: KEYNOTE SPEECH by** *Mr. Carl Wilkens*
**Title: WHY I CHOSE TO STAY IN RWANDA**

Mr. Wilkens, a Seventh-day Adventist missionary, was the only American to stay behind after all U.S. citizens were evacuated from Rwanda in 1994. His interview with PBS is featured in the documentary *"Ghosts of Rwanda."* See his website at: http://worldoutsidemyshoes.org/

## DAY III: SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2012
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### MORNING SESSION: Student Center #2206

**Session V: 10:00-12:00: Theory, Rhetoric, Ethics and Religion**
**Chair:** *Dr. Rangira Béa Gallimore*, **University of Missouri-Columbia**

10:00-10:30: "Silenced Victims, Memory Killers, and Afterward Third-Party *We's*" -- *Dr. Michèle Vialet,* University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio
10:30-11:00: "Confronting Denial: The Surprising Role of Catholic Social Teaching within the Hutu Revolution of the 1950s" --*Dr. Tim Horner*, Center for Peace and Justice Education, Villanova University, Villanova, Pennsylvania
11:00-11:30: "Genocide as Moral Obligation: On Leon Mugesera's Speech" -- *Dr. Jean-Pierre Karegeye*, Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota
11:30-12:00: Questions and discussion

**12:00-2:00: Lunch Break**

### AFTERNOON SESSION: Bush Auditorium, Cornell Hall #201

3:00**: Remarks by Vice Provost of International Programs,** *Dr. Handy Williamson*

3:20**: Introduction of Senator Dallaire** by *Ambassador Joyce Leader*

3:30: **KEYNOTE SPEECH** by *Senator Roméo Dallaire*
**Title: ARE ALL HUMANS HUMAN?**

Senator Roméo Dallaire is a Canadian retired Lieutenant General who was the head of the United Nations peacekeeping mission when the genocide took place in Rwanda in 1994. He stayed behind with a handful of soldiers until the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) army stopped the genocide. See Senator Dallaire's website at: www.**romeodallaire**.com/

### EVENING SESSION: Hampton Inn & Suite, Banquet Hall [University Room]

**6:00-10:00 pm: * STEP UP BANQUET/SILENT AUCTION**

**Banquet Speaker:** *Senator Roméo Dallaire*
**Title: THE CASUALITIES OF HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION**

*Step Up! American Association for Rwandan Women is a non-profit organization founded in 2004 to respond to the ongoing trauma experienced by Rwandan women during the

1994 genocide. For more information, visit the following website:
www.stepuprwandawomen.org