



For immediate release

NEW YORK STUDENTS UNITE ON 7th APRIL FOR READING OF THE TESTIMONIES NYC

(NEW YORK) Students from across New York will unite on Monday 7th April from 10am to 2pm in Washington Square Park to read the testimonies of Rwandan survivors to commemorate the 14th anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide.

Students from New York University, Columbia University, Yeshiva University, along with local high schools, will each read one of 100 testimonies of young survivors, to remember the 100 days of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The testimonies will be supplemented by survivors including Jacqueline Murekatete, Marie-Claudine Mukamabano and Gasana Mutesi, who will speak on the importance of commemorating the genocide, and supporting young survivors in Rwanda.

Reading of the Testimonies NYC will specifically call on the Office of the US Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) to recognize HIV+ survivors of the genocide as an at-risk population for antiretroviral (ARV) treatment as part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Despite the fact that many survivors are HIV+ today due to a systematic program of rape and deliberate infection during the genocide and are particularly vulnerable, PEPFAR currently does not recognize survivors as an at-risk population for HIV and AIDS counselling, testing and treatment.

Mary Kayitesi Blewitt OBE, Founder of SURF, who will lead the reading, commented:

*"There is a thread that runs through all the work of Survivors Fund, a motivation to ensure that the voice of survivors is heard, that the memory of the genocide is kept alive and that the victims are never forgotten. This **Reading of the Testimonies** is hugely important as it will demonstrate that the students of New York not only remember the one million Rwandans who died in 1994, but that they care about those still living with the legacy of the genocide."*

She added:

*“There are thousands of HIV+ survivors in Rwanda dying from AIDS, with no help and no hope. The **Reading of the Testimonies NYC** is a call to action to ensure that these survivors are not ignored and abandoned by the international community for a second time. As well, in light of the ongoing genocide in Darfur, we hope that the event will raise awareness of the importance of acting to prevent atrocities – and the repercussions that result from inaction, as witnessed in Rwanda.”*

The event is the first outdoor event to be held in New York commemorating the genocide. The event is staged in association with:

Jacqueline’s Human Rights Corner (www.miraclecorners.org)

Kuki Ndiho (www.freewebs.com/kukindiho)

Foundation Rwanda (www.foundationrwanda.org)

Voices of Rwanda (www.voicesofrwanda.org)

Agahozo Shalom Youth Village (www.agahozo-shalom.org)

Amani Africa (www.africagrassroots.org)

Orphans of Rwanda (www.orphansofrwanda.org)

Wagner Student Alliance for Africa (www.wagnerstudents.org/clubs/wsafa.html)

Wagner International Public Service Association (www.nyu.edu/clubs/wagner.iprsa/)

The *Reading of the Testimonies NYC* is part of a two-day programme organized by Miracle Corners of the World which includes a commemoration in film and dialogue at the Museum of Jewish Heritage on Sunday 6th April from 4pm to 6pm; and a panel discussion on genocide at the Tishman Auditorium at NYU Law School on Monday 7th April from 2pm to 4pm. For more information visit www.miraclecorners.org

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