

I want to thank you deeply for choosing to honour me at Milan's Garden of the Righteous Worldwide. However, it is with sadness and utmost reflection that I have found myself in this position—being honoured for my role, as a participant of history, in one of the worst tragedies man or God could ever design.

Indeed, it was just yesterday that we commemorated most solemnly the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. We should have learned from the Holocaust, we should have learned from Bosnia, from Rwanda, Darfur. Too many times we should have learned. Too many times have we heard “never again” which, time and time again, has been used to justify continued *inaction* against responding to genocide and mass atrocities.

Genocides do not occur by accident. They are caused by human will, and can be prevented by human will. And for all our failings we, members of the international community, have begun to improve our mechanisms for responding to genocide, even if our preventive tools have been slower to adapt.

The Responsibility to Protect doctrine—which requires the U.N. Security Council to take action when a country fails to protect its citizens and was unanimously adopted by all countries of the U.N. General Assembly in 2005—has opened the door to stop the abuse of sovereignty as our absolute. This is the greatest reform to advance human rights in the world.

I often ask during my presentations and speeches, “Are some humans more human than others?” The answer, of course, is “no.” This is why I continue to champion the human rights of people in distant places, like Rwanda and elsewhere. This is why it is so important not just to *remember* those who have fallen victim to the dangers of hatred and murderous violence, but to *act* to ensure their tragedy does not befall others.

I commend and applaud the work you do to universalize the lessons of genocide in order to teach not just about tolerance but to embrace difference. Every action, no matter how small, makes a huge difference to someone. So as you work to memorialize the dead and honour the righteous, I implore you to continue raising your voices to help avert the tragedies that continue to lurk at our doorsteps.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dallaire", enclosed within a large, irregular, hand-drawn loop.

LGen the Honourable Roméo A. Dallaire, (Ret'd), Senator