

Panel 3: International media coverage of the Genocide

Introduction

Allan Thompson: Hello, welcome back. We're about to resume, if we could. I'd like to begin the afternoon's session. I just want to take a moment. I'm going to give the floor for a couple of minutes to Mr. Gerry Caplan, who is the head of the Remembering Rwanda commemorative exercise, and Gerry would just like to speak briefly to that, and then I'll have a couple of public service announcements before we move to panel three. Mr. Caplan.

Gerry Caplan: Thank you, Allan. This is wonderfully impressive meeting, and I want to personally congratulate Allan Thompson. I've been in touch with him through the months he's put this together, and one of the things that excites me, I wrote a report for the Organization of African Unity called, "Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide," and it built on the work of most of the people here today, and it's a pleasure to listen to them. It's a pleasure to see them, and to learn from them that this was not a made-in-Rwanda exercise, exclusively. That if it hadn't been for external forces, if it hadn't been for international forces, the genocide might never have happened, and could easily have been prevented. One of our colleagues, Howard Adelman calls it "the most easily preventable genocide imaginable," and we didn't prevent it. And beyond that, once we didn't prevent it, we failed to bother to remember it. And it occurred to me, and to those of us in the field that it was slipping out of public consciousness, and unless we did something dramatically and deliberately, pretty soon the genocide would only be known to Rwandans, and a few remote friends and scholars of Rwanda. So we created an organization called "Remembering Rwanda," with a specific mandate to try and encourage as many people around the world to commemorate and remember the genocide on April 7 of this year, and the African Union passed a resolution accordingly, and the United Nations passed a resolution accordingly, and you'll be surprised to know the Parliament of Canada two weeks ago passed a similar resolution, which Geoff Salat (?) of the Globe did not know about until I told him today, and you can expect it to be a major story on the front page of Monday's Globe.

Many things are being forgotten; one is this was one of the most grotesque incidents of the 20th century. The other is that nobody is remembering the survivors, that no one is paying attention to the victims, that the perpetrators are still getting off scot free, most of them, and above all for my own personal passion, that the international community, the so-called bystanders have not been held accountable. I mean the Catholic Church, and I mean the French government, and I mean the Belgian government, and I mean the Clinton administration, and I mean the Major government in Britain, and one of the things we want to do in the next month is to commemorate these events, and to remember these four components, and above all to say that accountability still must be paid, and we must make those who didn't intervene, those who allowed it to happen, accountable for their sins. Across Canada there will be events from Vancouver, all the way to the Atlantic. I just came back from two days in Nova Scotia, and it will include for your students, Allan, some significant events here in Ottawa. There's a desk outside. The

Rwandan community is preparing a series of really interesting events. I urge your students. I urge all of you to get involved. For those outside guests, who have come today, in almost every country you come from, you will find that there are commemoration events. We talk about never again. And the truth is, if we leave it to our governments and our politicians, never again will just a cliché. It can only be never again if people like us get involved. So I urge you to do so in the next month, and we will remember Rwanda, and make sure the world remembers it. Thank you Allan.

Allan Thompson: Thank you very much for coming back, for being so disciplined. You're almost as disciplined as our panelists. Now we're going to move to basically the other half of the equation that I described this morning, the rest of this dichotomy of the media, beginning with the third panel on the international media coverage of the genocide. Briefly before I forget, and I will remind you of this again before we conclude, immediately following the proceedings, when we close at panel four, there'll be a brief video presentation, then the official part of the event will be over, but we invite you to please follow-up the stairs to the upper foyer. There's a reception that's being hosted there by the Journalists for Human Rights local chapter here at Carleton, and Humura, the Rwandan Community Survivors' Organization. So that reception will be immediately following the closing of the event.

At this time, I would like to call on Jocelyn Coulon, who is the chair of panel number three. Jocelyn is at present with the Pearson Peacekeeping Center, Montreal Campus. Like myself, he worked for 17 years with one of Canada's major newspapers, in his case *Le Devoir*, before he made a career change, and I'm glad he could be here with us today. He doing conference duty this weekend, because yesterday and this morning he was at another event here in Ottawa. So thanks very much, and Jocelyn I'll turn it over to you.

Jocelyn Coulon, Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, formerly of Le Devoir: Thank you very much Allan. Do you hear me? Yes okay. I will chair this meeting in French, then people who need to adjust their device, you have a few seconds to do it. So we have up until 3:30 to discuss the topic presented to us today, "International media coverage of the Genocide." I will not introduce the speakers. You have their biographies and their information in the agenda, in the program. So each of these four speakers will have 10 minutes to speak on the topic of interest, and immediately afterwards Gil Courtemanche will ask questions to some of these speakers or to all of the speakers, and immediately afterwards around 3:00 or 3:10, we will go to the question period, which will allow you to ask questions to these speakers. So I would invite Steven Livingston from George Washington University to come up to the mic, and give us his talk. Steven it's all yours.