

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**1st March, 1998****THE PRESIDENT**

**Mr. William Jefferson Clinton,
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C**

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to thank you for your invitation to attend a regional summit in Kampala on 24th and 25th, March 1998. I also wish to take this opportunity to welcome you to Africa and to the region. This will give you and African leaders an opportunity to work out principles that would guide the new partnership.

Mr. President, I am keenly aware of your strong sentiments against genocide as is evident from our frequent correspondence and messages from you through some of your most notable officials. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, former Secretary of Defense William Perry, Anthony Lake, Susan Rice have all conveyed your messages on several occasions. It is with this in mind that I expressed our strong wish that you include Rwanda on your forthcoming tour of Africa.

A stop-over in Rwanda, however brief, would give you a unique and historical opportunity to re-affirm your personal condemnation of genocide on one of the sites where it took place only recently. An opportunity to repeat the call to "NEVER AGAIN"; to denounce the heinous crimes; to show solidarity with the survivors, and to lead the international community in a rededication to deter genocide.

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E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

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Unfortunately, your visit to Africa which does not include Rwanda will be judged, fairly or unfairly, as diminishing the tragic events that occurred in our country. Indeed, some countries and individuals have attempted to dismiss genocide in Rwanda as insignificant, thus complicating the management of its aftermath. Those who deny or minimize its significance give comfort to its perpetrators, hence the continuation of acts of genocide in Rwanda and in the region. To our people who suffered and still suffer the trauma of the genocide, and who so gallantly fought to stop it, GENOCIDE has a meaning.

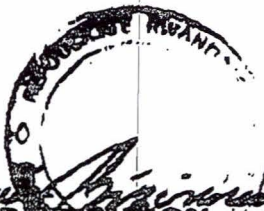

Besides the fact that that would be in stark contrast to your usual position, both on domestic and international issues, this interpretation would be aggravated by my going to Kampala to discuss, among other things, the continuing acts of genocide. The confusion and embarrassment this would cause in Rwanda puts me in a rather difficult position with regard to attending the meeting, in the event that the stop-over does not occur.

The issue here is not a visit to Rwanda. It is the unique and historical opportunity for the US to re-affirm its moral leadership.

Mr. President, I still hope, against all odds, that you will make the stop-over.

In the event that this is not so, and because of the importance we attach to our relationship and our support for your vision of US-Africa partnership, I propose to meet you in Washington, DC after your African tour. This will enable me to discuss bilateral issues and to inform you on our shared efforts to reconstruct our country and to create an environment in which national reconciliation can be nurtured.

Sincerely,



Pasteur Bizimungu
President of the Republic of Rwanda