

15 years on, the plight of survivors

As we look back on these last 15 years, we can say nothing other than: THANK YOU LORD. We are amazed to see how the little that remained can cope after the loss of 1million innocent loved ones. Some survivors are literally alone after having lost their entire families. Added to this, the horrendous experiences known during the 3 months of darkness from April to July 1994 have left behind deep marks of shattered lives with visible and invisible scars and wounds.

Indeed, 15 years is a short time for those who survived. Although support has been given to survivors, many thousands continue to struggle materially, physically and with trauma. They remain vulnerable not because they live in a poor country, but because they are disadvantaged from losing the support of a family.

The concern we have is that the past is in the past indeed and the genocide of Tutsis in 1994 is becoming history for many. But how can we overlook the predicament of that little which remains?

Many widows and orphans are still searching for those in whom they can confide to share or to lay down a heavy memory they have.

Currently thousands of children and young people need support for formal or informal education, and families of orphan headed households need support for their daily upkeep and housing. Widows need understanding, compassion and empowerment for their own socio-economic development. And finally, each one of them needs a family environment.

Solace Ministries deals with thousands of widows and orphans that survived the tragedy, who have struggled and are still struggling with various hardships including all PTSD and HIV/AIDS contracted through rape. This is in obedience to the call: *Comfort, comfort my people (Isaiah 40:1)* as received just after of the genocide.

We have seen through the obedience to the call thousands of widows and orphans restoring hope and the desire to live on.

We rejoice in seeing many out of them carrying on the message of hope and comfort to reach out to those who are still overwhelmed by sorrow.

The concept of an alternative family is being materialized through a local solace community where everyone is responsible for everyone. Forgiveness and reconciliation have their place here where the spirit of mutual support is encouraged.

We thank the Lord for all of you who have committed yourselves to participate in one way or another by becoming part of the large family of Solace dedicated to comforting the broken hearted and encouraging the little that remains to live on.

May God bless you
Jean Gakwandi