Aloisea Inyumba: Mother of New Rwanda

Abstract

Aloisea Inyumba, a Senator in the Parliament of Rwanda, has played a critical role in the early days of the post-genocide era in the formation of new Rwanda. Dialogues to promote reconciliation between Hutu and Tutsi in post-genocide Rwanda. This compilation examines the work of Inyumba in her role as the mother of a new Rwanda nation.

Keywords: Rwanda, tutsi, hutu, genocide, reconciliation, orphans, motherhood, maternal nation-building, gacaca justice system

Mother of a New Nation

To state that Inyumba is the mother of new Rwanda is to say something intrinsically important about her professional skill as well as her administrative role and policies in the post-genocide era. As the Minister of Family and Women’s Affairs, Inyumba functioned as the mother of the nation, selflessly concerned about the welfare of all her charges, and intolerant of divisive politics that draw distinctions between Rwandans. Given a background in social work, she devised policies to assuage the trauma of Tutsi victims, allay Hutu fears of collective punishment, and soothe Twa fears of discrimination. She treated everyone as Rwandan, and worked with all families to lay the foundation for an inspiring new nation.

Gacaca Judicial System

The 1996 Organic law established the trial of genocide crimes in civil and military courts, the rules and procedure for confession and the guilt plea of genocide suspects. The Gacaca system was initially a traditional judicial system which the NURC adopted to legally try suspects. Prior to the implementation of the provisions of the 1996 Organic Law, the NURC utilized the “peace volunteers” to facilitate a nation-wide open discussion at the local levels about what transpired during the carnage. The initial objective was not reconciliation, but to initiate communication and dialogue. People began discussing the causes and effects of the conflict. While the impact on women whose children had been killed by their neighbors was unimaginable, the Gacaca system which the Commission announced it would
work with, promised some catharsis for victims of the genocide. The system’s participatory process and restorative philosophy empowered citizens to speak out against atrocities, judge and punish perpetrators of those crimes, with the exception of those in the first category who will be tried by common law.

Structure of Gacaca Courts

In utilizing the traditional system of justice, the NURC extensively upgraded the Gacaca to bring it in line with the society’s present needs, and the government’s political objectives in a post-genocide era. The upgraded Gacaca Courts has four levels of jurisdiction, corresponding to the government’s administrative units in an ascending order of hierarchy, the Cell Gacaca Courts, the Sector Gacaca Courts, the District Gacaca Courts, and the Province Gacaca Courts for Appeal. In formalizing the traditional system, the law setting up the Gacaca courts defined the various levels of competences of the courts in the system. The Cell Gacaca is competent for the trial of persons in the category 4 and for appeals against sentences given in the absence of prisoners.

Example of

The Sector Gacaca is competent for the trial of suspects whose acts fall in the third category and for appeals against sentences given in the absence of prisoners. The District Gacaca is competent for the trial persons in the second category, and for appeals against sentences given by the Sector courts and for appeals of sentences given in the absence of prisoners. Lastly, the Province’s Gacaca court hears appeals of sentences of the District courts’ and of sentences given in the absence of prisoners.

Conclusion

As we reflect on the tremendous accomplishments of the new generation of Rwandan women leaders,

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