

Never again:-

# One Hundred Days of Mourning....

Every April

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# 1994 was the Rwandan Genocide...

For those who may not be aware or even remember, it was on the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> April in 1994 when the Presidents plane was shot down and he was killed, almost immediately the parliament building was targeted and over the next 100 days, one of the worlds biggest atrocities, the Rwandan Genocide, took place. It went for 100 days when an estimated 1.5million men, women and children were traumatized and brutally murdered because of their tribal group.

It is remembered on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April and I am yet to experience exactly what it will be like living in Rwanda on this day. I have been told that for a week people mourn, and for those survivors of course different days will trigger different memories for various people. Some may wale as they relive it and others may just quietly reflect. For the week though I understand that business's close early and community meetings occur in the afternoons. There are no weddings during the month of April and the bars are not allowed to be open – there is no celebrating in the month.

The people of Rwanda don't have the many luxuries that we, in the western world have and so for many survivors, there has not been counselling or systems put into place to allow them to manage how they feel. For many of them they find comfort in alcohol and thus a life of poverty becomes their only outcome. For others the hope they have in Christ in their comfort.

Today my house helper Lea, asked me if it is possible, every 7<sup>th</sup> of April she goes to Amahoro Stadium (where the genocide started) to remember her family that she lost. She of course doesn't remember as she was not yet conceived, she told me today that her Mum was 28 at the time and lost both of her parents as well as eleven siblings and her first born son aged four years. Her parents and her eleven siblings were burnt to death in their house and the four year old was killed by a machete. For so many of us westerners it just seems so incomprehensible, and certainly living here in the place they call the safest and the cleanest in all of Africa – the country is unrecognizable to the Rwanda of 1994. The people live with a hope and a future, there is no longer any tribes – everyone is Rwandese and the majority of the time it is a quiet and peaceful nation with the slogan – 'Never Again'.

I went to the memorial last week with a friend from Sydney and it was my first time in there since 2007 – it has been redone since last time I was in there and it has been done very respectfully. The children's section is still the hardest to walk through, especially, when I have my one little brown eyed girl who greets me at the door when I come home.

Please help me remember these beautiful and brave people of Rwanda today and tomorrow and over the next 100 days as they remember and many relive their history. I'm sure it wont make it to your own news stream.

