

Kigali: 35 students from the University College of Southeast Norway came to visit CNLG to enhance their understanding of the history of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the justice mechanisms employed in its aftermath, and the strategies implemented by authorities to lay the foundations for a peaceful future.

Dr. Jean-Damascène Gasanabo, Director General of the Research and Documentation Center delivered a presentation to the students, who are studying human rights, reconciliation and, conflict resolution, detailing CNLG's work in commemoration, prevention, advocacy, documentation, and the fight against genocide denial and ideology both within Rwanda and abroad. This also included a broader discussion of how CNLG and its mandate fit into the broader scope of the national fight against genocide ideology and denial.

According to the CNLG, the presentation focused in particular on the employment of Gacaca and Abunzi as justice mechanisms, the situation of genocide perpetrators still at large, and collaboration between Rwanda and the international community to bring justice to all of those involved in the Genocide. This included the ways in which genocide denial and ideology still persists within Rwanda and abroad, and the various laws that are in place to combat its spread, to which the students were able to add their own knowledge.

Of particular interest to the students was the use of home-grown solutions to foster reconciliation among Rwandans and promote unity through community development. They were especially intrigued by the role of Abunzi in facilitating conflict dispute between neighbours and comparing this to Norwegian forms of justice and conflict resolution. The efforts of the Rwandan Government in promoting unity and tackling the aftermath of ethnic divisions was also of high interest to them, where they were particularly fascinated with the process of prosecution for perpetrators, and the support given to victims.

Having already established study trips to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Palestine, Iraq, and South Africa, and with a variety of professional backgrounds, the students of the University College of Southeast Norway were able to build upon their understanding of post-conflict transitional justice and expand their knowledge through exposure to a new viewpoint. Their visit to CNLG also afforded them a unique opportunity to understand how the Rwandan government itself has responded to the issues of reconstruction and transitional justice from the perspective of an institution heavily involved in that process.

During their visit to Rwanda, they were also received by agencies and institutions affiliated with the post-genocide reconstruction process, such as NURC. After visiting CNLG they met with AVEGA and AERG representatives at AVEGA's Remera office. They will also complement their visit to CNLG by visiting genocide memorials such as those in Kigali and Nyamata in an effort to develop a firsthand understanding of the evidence left behind by the genocide, as well as the policies put in place by the government to promote memorialization and understanding of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. (End)