

Lieutenant-General, the Honourable Roméo A. Dallaire, (Retired), Senator, speaks to Beach residents

In a recent event hosted by the Honourable Maria Minna, Member of Parliament for Beaches-East York, Senator Roméo Dallaire spoke with local residents about his experiences in Rwanda and the failure of humanity to act in the genocide that wiped out over 700,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

The event, which was also a screening of the movie "Shake Hands with the Devil" based upon the book by the same name written by Senator Dallaire, was held on May 6, 2008 at Malvern Collegiate Institute with an audience of approximately 500 members of our community and students.



Prior to the screening, Senator Dallaire described the importance of educating citizens of the world of the atrocities in Rwanda and other genocides occurring even today in Darfur. "Every nation state failed the people of Rwanda," said Senator Dallaire, who led the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR). Countries did not supply the United Nations (UN) with the necessary manpower, equipment, and funds that could have allowed the UN to stop the genocide.

For months the international community turned a blind eye to the mass killings taking place in the small African country. Countries like the United States, Great Britain and others did not want to act because it was not strategically beneficial to them. There was no oil or resources; only people. After 18 American Soldiers were killed in Mogadishu, the United States government did not see the need to send their soldiers to protect the people of Rwanda stating that they would not interfere, nor would they support any other nation that went into Rwanda.



The retired General, now a Liberal Senator, faced serious post-traumatic stress disorder following his return from Rwanda and was medically discharged from the Canadian

Armed Forces. Senator Dallaire is now working on his new book dealing with the troubling issue of child soldiers.

In 2001, General Dallaire was a guest speaker at an international conference on war-affected children, organized by Maria Minna as Minister for the Canadian International Development Agency. Maria was so impressed by the General's passion, conviction, and knowledge on the issue that Maria hired General Dallaire to be her special advisor on war-affected children at the ministry. This was the General's first job following his retirement from the army. Senator Dallaire continues his work on human rights and social justice through his work on the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights.



The Honourable Senator speaks to audiences all around the world promoting human rights and educating people of the atrocities in Rwanda. It was a great privilege and honour that we were able to have Senator Dallaire speak to members of our community.

