

## **Genocide Survivor Will Share Story of Forgiveness at Women’s Leadership Conference in Las Vegas**

*Keynote speaker Immaculée Ilibagiza, a Rwandan American who survived the slaughter of more than one million fellow Rwandans, will share her story of hope and resilience at WLC 2018*

**LAS VEGAS, April 26, 2018** – Immaculée Ilibagiza – regarded as one of the world’s leading speakers on faith, hope and forgiveness – will share her powerful story with attendees at the MGM Resorts Foundation’s 12<sup>th</sup> annual Women’s Leadership Conference (WLC).

The conference will be held Aug. 27 & 28 at MGM Grand Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, NV.

“Every day in my life, I strive to pass on the many lessons I have learned through the most difficult times,” Ilibagiza said. “I am humbled to have the opportunity to share my story with the attendees of the Women’s Leadership Conference.”

Dawn Christensen, conference organizer and Executive Director of National Diversity Relations for MGM Resorts International, said of Ilibagiza: “Her story of survival and resilience serves as an example for all people. We are all going through something, and her willingness to share her story will give our attendees hope when it comes to their own personal battles. We are honored to have her presence at WLC 2018 and there’s no doubt she will leave an indelible mark on our attendees.”

Ilibagiza was born and raised in a small village in Rwanda, Africa. In 1994, while she was home from college on Easter break, the Rwandan President’s plane was shot down, sparking months of massacres throughout the country. To protect his only daughter from rape and murder, Ilibagiza’s father told her to run to a local pastor’s house for protection. She and seven other women hid in a 3 x 4 ft. bathroom for three months. During that time, Ilibagiza taught herself English using only a bible and a dictionary.

After 91 days, Ilibagiza emerged from the small bathroom weighing just 65 pounds. She discovered that, except for one brother who was studying abroad, her entire family had been brutally murdered. Nearly one million fellow Rwandans – including her extended family, friends and neighbors – had been massacred during those three months.

After the genocide, Ilibagiza came face-to-face with the man who killed her mother and one of her brothers. She was able to offer the unthinkable, telling the man, "I forgive you."

In 1998, she emigrated from Rwanda to the United States where she continued her work for peace through the United Nations. During that time, she shared her story with co-workers and friends who were so impacted by her testimony they insisted she write it down. Three days after finishing

her manuscript, she met best-selling author Dr. Wayne W. Dyer, who, within minutes of meeting her, offered to publish her book.

Iibagiza's first book, *Left to Tell; Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust* (Hay House) was released in March of 2006. *Left to Tell* quickly became a *New York Times* Best Seller. To date, it has been translated into seventeen languages and has sold over two million copies. Iibagiza's story has also been made into a documentary entitled *The Diary of Immaculée*. She has appeared on 60 Minutes, The CBS Early Show, CNN, EWTN, CBS Evening News, The Aljazeera Network as well as in *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Newsday*, and many other domestic and international publications. She was recently featured in Michael Collopy's *Architects of Peace* project, which has honored legendary people like Mother Teresa, Jimmy Carter, Nelson Mandela and the Dalai Lama.

Iibagiza has received honorary doctoral degrees from the University of Notre Dame, Saint John's University, Seton Hall University, Siena College, Walsh University and the Catholic University of America. She has been recognized and honored with numerous humanitarian awards including The Mahatma Gandhi International Award for Reconciliation and Peace, the American Legacy's Women of Strength & Courage Award and the 2015 National Speaker's Association's Master of Influence Award.

*Left to Tell* has received a Christopher Award "affirming the highest values of human spirit," and part of the curriculum for dozens of high schools and universities, including Villanova University, which selected it for their "One Book Program," making *Left to Tell* mandatory reading for its 6,000 students.

Iibagiza has written six additional books in recent years - *Led by Faith: Rising from the Ashes of the Rwandan Genocide*, *Our Lady of Kibeho*, *If Only We Had Listened*, *Visit from Heaven*, and *The Boy Who Met Jesus*, and *The Rosary*.

A major motion picture about her story is under production with an international release in theaters in 2019.

**Conference background:**

The 2018 Women's Leadership Conference theme is "Women Inspiring Women." Early registration pricing of \$399 runs through April 27; after that, the cost will increase to \$499. Registration includes the two-day conference and all workshops and lectures, a networking reception, and continental breakfasts and lunches catered by MGM Grand Hotel & Casino. Time is also allotted for attendees to build key professional relationships with others.

The mission of the WLC is to provide women, and men who attend, the developmental tools they need to continuously advance their lives and careers. Through WLC, women from all walks of life are offered a variety of ways to impact their personal and professional lives, including

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networking opportunities, educational workshops and exposure to other women who can serve as role models, heroes or mentors.

The conference will offer a wide range of learning opportunities, career guidance and personal growth tools, including:

- Exposure to diverse and nationally recognized speakers and accomplished women role models.
- Two days of career-oriented workshops that will give women hands-on opportunities to develop skills based on their career needs.
- Three distinct learning tracks: Emerging Leaders, Emerging Executives and Executives.
- Workshops for entrepreneurs who are well-established or just thinking of starting their own businesses.

The conference is open to women of all ethnicities, professions and social backgrounds, locally and nationally, and men who support them. The MGM Resorts Foundation is the conference's presenting sponsor. Each year, proceeds from the conference after costs, are donated to one or more local nonprofit agencies devoted to the welfare and development of women and children.

Participating sponsorships are available to organizations or companies who share the vision and goals of this conference. For more information about WLC, please visit [mgmresortsfoundation.org/WLC](http://mgmresortsfoundation.org/WLC).

**About the MGM Resorts Foundation**

The purpose of The MGM Resorts Foundation is to collect and distribute monies and assets donated by employees of MGM Resorts (NYSE: MGM) for the aid and support of qualified community nonprofit programs, agencies or organizations designated exclusively by MGM Resorts' employees. In addition, the Foundation collects and distributes donations to the Foundation by third-party non-employees to support charitable, scientific, literary, and educational activities approved by the Foundation's Board of Directors and organized by MGM Resorts employees to benefit qualified non-profit charitable organizations designated by the Foundation's Board.

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