

Committee: Historical Crisis

Question: The 1994 Rwandan Genocide and the role of the United Nations

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INTRODUCTION

The Rwandan Genocide of 1994, which occurred between April 7th and July 15 of the same year was a mass slaughter of Rwandan ethnic minority group Tutsi people, orchestrated by Hutu politicians in an attempt to wipe out the existing Tutsi population living in Rwanda at the time. Around 70% of the total Tutsi population is estimated to have been killed during the genocide, accounting for up to 1 million Tutsi people. Up to 500,000 women are believed to have fallen victim to sexual assault and rape in the hands of Hutu supported militia. Victims of the genocide were massacred in their homes, in churches and in schools, many times by neighbours as many feared being killed themselves. The events of 1994 shocked many worldwide, however, a variety of countries chose to ignore the massacre at the time.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1894 - Colonization of Rwanda by Germany

1918 - Belgium assumes control of Rwanda

1933- Identity card issued by Belgians classifies all Rwandan citizens as either Hutu, Tutsi or Twa

1948- UN passes resolution declaring genocide as a crime under international law

1959- Hutus begin to rebel against Tutsis and Belgians

1962- Rwanda gains its independence

1973- Hutu Army Chief of Staff Juvenal Habyarima seizes presidential power in a coup

1989- Rwandan economy hurt severely due to a global coffee price plummet, due to the importance of coffee exports to the Rwandan economy

1990- Invasion of RPF causes the Civil War to begin

1991- New constitution allows for multiple political parties.

1993- RTLM (Radio Télévision des Mille Collines) begins to broadcast

August 3 1993- Arusha Accords are signed, allowing government positions to both Hutu and Tutsi.

April 6 1994- Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana dies when his plane is shot down by a surface-to-air missile. This marks the official beginning of the Rwandan Genocide.

April 7 1994- Political opponents including the Prime Minister are killed by Hutu extremists.

April 9 1994- Massacre at Gikondo - hundreds of Tutsis are killed in a catholic church.

April 15-16 1994- Massacre at the Nyarubuye Roman Catholic Church - thousands of Tutsi are killed

April 18 1994- The Kibuye Massacres. Around 12,000 Tutsis are killed after being found in a stadium. Another 50,000 are killed in the hills of Bisesero. More are killed in the town's hospital and church.

April 28-29- Around 250,000 Tutsi people escape to Tanzania as refugees

May 23 1994- RPF assume control of the palace of the president.

July 5 1994- A safe zone is established by the French in south western Rwanda

July 13 1994- Around 1 million Hutu people flee to the Republic of Congo

July 1994- RPF gain control of the country and the genocide ends

KEY TERMS

Genocide

The deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular nation or ethnic group.¹

Militia

A military force that is raised from the civil population to supplement a regular army in an emergency²

Coup d'etat

A sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government.³

Constitution

A body of fundamental principles or established precedents according to which a state or other organization is acknowledged to be governed.⁴

¹ "Genocide: Definition of Genocide by Lexico." Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, www.lexico.com/en/definition/genocide.

² "Militia: Definition of Militia by Lexico." Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, www.lexico.com/en/definition/militia.

³ "Coup: Definition of Coup by Lexico." Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, www.lexico.com/en/definition/coup.

⁴ "Constitution: Definition of Constitution by Lexico." *Lexico Dictionaries | English*, Lexico Dictionaries, www.lexico.com/en/definition/constitution.

Massacre

An indiscriminate and brutal slaughter of many people.⁵

Colonization

The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area.⁶

⁵ "Massacre: Definition of Massacre by Lexico." Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, www.lexico.com/en/definition/massacre.

⁶ "Colonization: Definition of Colonization by Lexico." Lexico Dictionaries | English, Lexico Dictionaries, www.lexico.com/en/definition/colonization.

BACKGROUND

The Rwandan genocide features a rich historical and geopolitical background, which must be understood in order to understand how this atrocity came to happen in the first place.

Rwanda was first inhabited by the Twa, a Pygmy ethnic group, in 8000 BC, and were largely the only inhabitants of the region until about 700 BC, when a wave of migration from neighbouring regions by Bantu peoples, the precursor to the Hutu and the Tutsi, first started appearing⁷. By 1500 AD, a clear distinction between the Hutu and the Tutsi was in place; the historical consensus stipulates that the Tutsi emerged as the “superior” ethnic group, due to their economic activity, herding cattle instead of cultivating land, or due to their territorial provenance when they first appeared in Rwanda.

The principal form of organisation before the 17th century was the clan, which evolved into the small kingdom; in the early 1700s, there were eight kingdoms in Rwanda, and the Tutsi-led *Kingdom of Rwanda* quickly became dominant in the country. The policies instituted by king Kigeli Rwabugiri in the mid-19th century saw the Hutu further disenfranchised, being reduced to the status of subordinate serfs, and a major rivalry between the two peoples soon grew⁸.

Rwanda, as with virtually all of Africa, was a victim of the colonialist policies that Western European countries pursued in the late-19th century, as part of the *Scramble for Africa*. The conclusion of the 1884 Berlin Conference on Western Africa left Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi, territories with very similar demographic compositions⁹, to the newly-formed German Colonial Empire. The German administration kept the Kingdom in place and appointed Tutsi regional dignitaries, due to their presumed “ethnic superiority”. Of course, nothing was done to relieve Rwanda of the issue, and the Tutsi-led status quo remained largely untouched.

The end of World War I and the subsequent disbandment of the German Empire saw Rwanda and Burundi being ceded to Belgium, as part of a League of Nations mandate. While the kingdom was kept in place nominally, the Belgian administration selected a more direct rule, but

⁷ https://books.google.gr/books?id=QUEamxb89JcC&redir_esc=y page 61

⁸ https://books.google.gr/books?id=QUEamxb89JcC&redir_esc=y 69

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<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/by.html><https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rw.html>

nothing was done to solve the perennial issue; instead, it was worsened, as mobility between the two castes was prohibited through an identity card system that included each person's ethnic group¹⁰.

In the 1950s, the worldwide democratic and anti-imperialist emancipation movement was brought to Rwanda, with Hutu emancipation gaining a very prominent position in politics of the era. The road for the Revolution started being paved in the early 1950s, when the Hutu, supported by the newly-appointed working-class Flemish priests of the Catholic Church, were able to move between classes; this phenomenon created a new Hutu intellectual counter-elite. In the meantime, relations between the two major elites, Hutu and Tutsi, improved dramatically, as the primary issue at hand was the leap to independence and democracy¹¹.

By 1956, however, relations deteriorated; the plans for an independent Rwanda gave little provision for political power to the Hutu, and they were furious at the ruling minority. The first universal elections, organised in 1956, resulted in a staggering 66% of Hutu sub-chiefs, but the Tutsi still were the overwhelming majority of national-level dignitaries¹². The Hutu rightfully saw this as an attempt by the rulers to consolidate themselves as the sole political power even after independence, and nine of their intellectuals promptly wrote the *Bahutu Manifesto*¹³, a ten-page-long document advocating for the ceding of power to the Hutu "based on statistical law".

When a leading Hutu intellectual, Joseph Gitera, visited King Rudahigwa in his palace in 1958, he was treated contemptuously, to the dismay of many formerly pro-monarchist institutions and papers, including the Belgian administration; they nullified his political role, and could have been involved in his death, one year later. Kigeli V was then unilaterally appointed king, with no Belgian approval, in order to speed up the independence process; meanwhile, the pro-monarchist and Ugandan nationalist UNAR (Union Nationale Rwandaise) was created by Tutsi dignitaries and palace members, presumably to take up government duties immediately. The Hutu responded by increasing their support of the sectarian PARMEHUTU over the inclusive APROSOMA. The threat of a civil war breaking out was imminent.

¹⁰ https://books.google.gr/books?id=8OiMfpTiApQC&redir_esc=y 56-7

¹¹ https://books.google.gr/books?id=lawzAAAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y 70

¹² https://books.google.gr/books?id=lawzAAAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y 74

¹³ <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/bahutu-manifesto-1957/>

On November 1st 1959, Dominique Mbonyumutwa, a leading Hutu activist and member of PARMEHUTU, was confronted and attacked by young members of UNAR, sparking country-wide protests and riots; many Tutsi houses were burnt down, leading to a mass exodus to neighbouring countries. Kigeli then ordered a brutal counter-attack, in order to suppress the riots and arrest the leading Hutu activists, to no avail. Ultimately, Belgian forces, under Colonel Guy Logiest, a social-democrat and vehement Hutu supporter, suppressed the Tutsi actions, while a UN visit in March 1960 saw further political violence. In the end, elections were scheduled for June of the same year, and were a landslide victory for the Hutu. The two following years saw violence decline, but persist; full independence was given in 1962, with Rwanda's political scene turned upside down in just a few years.

The Rwandan Republic became a one-party state, ruled exclusively by Parmehutu, for the next ten years, with extensive repression of the rights of the Tutsi, and a complete ban on any other political parties. In 1973, Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu colonel from the disenfranchised North¹⁴, assumed power in a coup d'état; while the ruling party changed from Parmehutu to the MRND¹⁵, the repressive policies instituted were largely the same. The Tutsi, while partially exiled to neighbouring countries, could not remain completely disenfranchised; in 1979, during the peak of Habyarimana's rule, the Rwandan Patriotic Front was created by the Tutsi intelligentsia in Uganda, slowly evolving from a political advocacy organisation to a militaristic liberation movement while stationed in the country. The RPF fought alongside the rebels of the National Resistance Army in the Ugandan Civil War, capturing the capital Kampala in 1986, and had the political support to mobilise towards their home country.

On October 1st, 1990, the RPF started marching south towards Rwanda, in order to capture the country, with more than 2000 people, and equipment and weapons taken from the Ugandan Army¹⁶. The Rwandan Army and the international community immediately responded by sending troops to combat them; France, Belgium and Zaire sent hundreds of troops, either to protect their nationals living in the country, or as a move of political support to Habyarimana, in the case of Zaire. The third day of fighting saw the RPF's military leader, Fred Rwigyema, die; morale among troops dropped significantly. Within less than a month, the initial RPF attacks were fended off; soldiers would flee towards Uganda, or outright desert. On October 30, the

¹⁴ Somerville, Keith (2012). *Radio Propaganda and the Broadcasting of Hatred: Historical Development and Definitions*. Palgrave Macmillan. p. 164.

¹⁵ Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement

¹⁶ <https://books.google.com/books?id=O3aNPwAACAAJ> 93

Rwandan government announced that the war was over. However, the government saw this attack as an opportunity to arbitrarily arrest 8000 Tutsi, and radio urged the Hutu to organise local pogroms¹⁷.

Paul Kagame, another leading member of the RPF who was studying in the US at the time, was quickly summoned to assume command. From November 1990 onwards, he withdrew from the front and restructured the RPF's forces¹⁸. After 1991 and some organised attacks against northern cities, the conflict devolved into a guerrilla war, through which the RPF started controlling parts of the country. In 1992, a ceasefire was instituted, and peace talks between the government and rebels, with a prospective new democracy in sight, started in Arusha, Tanzania, but they were to little avail; there were four main factions participating, each with their own beliefs and demands, and a consensus was extremely hard. In the end, all factions withdrew from the talks and the agreement.

The president's MRND and the hard-line Hutu factions, as well as their youth wings, reacted extremely angrily to a proposal of a pluralist multi-party democracy, and started becoming indiscriminately violent against Tutsi civilians in Kibuye; in August 1992, 85 were killed, and 500 homes burnt. This was reflective of the motivation behind the genocide, two years later; the idea of a "final solution" on the Tutsi was first laid down in late 1992, roughly converging with the events of August.

In February 1993, the RPF ended the ceasefire, and started attacking the north again, with a better efficiency. They themselves cited the hard-liners' violence as their main reason, but it is widely believed that they engaged in order to have more negotiating power at the bargaining table. The civilian cost was great, as many were killed, and thousands of Hutu fled their homes, to join refugee camps near the capital. France, committed to supporting Habyarimana, sent 250 well-equipped troops and fended off the RPF's attacks, at just 30 kilometres from Kigali, by the 20th of February. That day, the RPF declared a ceasefire, to retain their international legitimacy; by the end of the month, however, over a million Hutu left their homes, in light of the imminent approach of the RPF. The Hutu started becoming further radicalised and plans for a genocide of the Tutsi were being laid out.

¹⁷ Guichaoua, André (2015). *From War to Genocide: Criminal Politics in Rwanda, 1990–1994*. University of Wisconsin Press. 34/114

¹⁸ https://books.google.gr/books?id=22QqTsY3CkgC&redir_esc=y

Two days later, the RPF-controlled territory was recognised by Rwanda and the international community (not the UN), and a demilitarised zone was created between the two. The following months, Habyarimana created an anti-RPF front with France's support, but he soon understood that Hutu hard-liners, rallying under the moniker *Hutu Power*, were the real opposition. He then symbolically supported the Arusha Accords, in order to appeal further to the Tutsi and retain power more easily; that meant making concessions to the RPF on matters such as the military. Finally, the deal was struck with the UN's help on August 4; the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was created to preserve the ceasefire and protect diplomats involved in the accords until April 7, 1994. The following months were characterised by the increasing radicalisation of Hutu Power groups, but little was done in the way of breaking the ceasefire's terms, which held on until its end - almost.

On April 6, President Habyarimana's aircraft was abruptly shot down by a man-portable anti-air rocket; subsequently, Habyarimana himself, as well as the Hutu president of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira, were killed, and this event marked the beginning of the Genocide. In the era, it was widely presumed that Tutsi rebels perpetrated the assassination, but new historical arguments favouring a hard-line Hutu origin of the rocket have emerged lately; these argue that the act was a provocation, specifically organised to start the genocide, planned much earlier¹⁹.

¹⁹ https://books.google.gr/books?id=O3aNPwAACAAJ&redir_esc=y 222

PARTIES INVOLVED

Hutu, Government

- *Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND)*: The governing party of Rwanda, from 1975 until the end of the Genocide; it was the only party allowed to participate in Rwandan politics, and its leader, *Juvenal Habyarimana*, had created a system of totalitarian, autocratic rule. From 1990 onwards, when the Hutu threat seemed closer, he became increasingly liberal, allowing opposition parties to be formed and negotiating with the Tutsi rebels of the RPF, to the dismay of many hard-line Hutu. Its radicalised youth-wing-turned-paramilitary-militia, the *interahamwe*, would play a crucial role in perpetrating the atrocities of the Genocide.
- *Akazu*: An informal group of hard-line Hutu dignitaries, close to Habyarimana, but especially closer to his wife *Agathe*; they were decisive in planning and executing the genocide, effectively acting as its political masterminds. They also were instrumental in killing many moderate Hutu dignitaries, including Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, during the Genocide.

Hutu, other

- *Hutu Power groups*: Various, loosely-connected political movements, whose ideology was conflicting both with the RPF, for racial reasons, but also with the moderate Hutu, including the government. They are the main inciters of the genocide, and were funded by various Hutu businessmen and powerful politicians, like the aforementioned *Akazu*. The main medium through which they spread their propaganda was the *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTL)*, a radio station opened in 1992 by Hutu extremists, then in dismay over the increasingly non-partisan stance of state media.
- *Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR)*: A hard-line Hutu party, created by Hassan Ngeze after the legitimisation of opposition parties in 1991; it often cooperated with the MRND, but its agenda and ideology was much more concerned with racial issues than the government's. Its paramilitary wing, the *Impuzamugambi*, was responsible for many killings, even though smaller and less organised than the *interahamwe*.

Tutsi groups

- *Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)*: The main Tutsi resistance organisation in Rwanda, it was formed in 1979 by Tutsi exiles, then living in Burundi; its military wing was active in a plethora of regional conflicts, such as the Ugandan Civil War, thus gaining experience and political support internationally. During the Genocide, the RPF fought against the government and the other Hutu factions and won the War, paving the way for a new Rwanda.

International bodies and stakeholders

- *UNAMIR*: The UNAMIR was created in 1993, as a result of the Arusha Accords, at the request of both parties of the deal, to support the country's transition towards a pluralist and democratic government, in a plethora of security-related duties. Protecting the capital – as well as the diplomats partaking in the ratification of the Accords stationed there, clearing minefields, repatriating refugees and preventing the escalation of violence in cooperation with Rwandan authorities were its main duties. However, the fiasco of their operation, or rather lack thereof, is considered by many catalytical to the proliferation of genocidal atrocities; its charter prevented it from launching military operations, and it was reduced to a powerless bystander by the start of the genocide.
- *UNSC*: The UN Security Council was overwhelmed when the genocide broke out; as such, it was of little use in curbing the atrocities. With the Yugoslavian Civil War and its own extensive atrocities well under way, and with the Somali Civil War of the early 1990s being a fiasco directly attributed to the United States and the Council itself, its members felt reluctant to act immediately, in order to protect and support those in danger; instead, after the death of ten Belgian peacekeepers, the Council removed the remaining 2500, thus further weakening the UN's power in the region. Moreover, it had left the UNAMIR without any real support; its commander became powerless and unable to act. The UN has issued a formal apology to Rwanda in the aftermath of the tragic events.
- *France*: France was a major participant in virtually all matters involving Africa, as part of its global influence strategy; the situation in Rwanda was no exception. France extensively supported Habyarimana's government, both politically, since its outset, and militarily, with detachments of commandos sent to protect government buildings in Kigali, during the Civil War; moreover, she was extensively involved in arms trading with the government, well into the 1990s. Its involvement in the Genocide was initially composed of rescue missions, concerning mostly expatriates, but also senior members of the government, and excluding absolutely all Tutsi, despite their obvious danger. The *Opération Turquoise*, initially deemed an effort to prevent further atrocities, saving almost 15000 lives, as per the Radio France International, was then found to be a mission of protecting the Hutu from the RPF, in line with France's earlier policy; the *Génocidaires* were able to escape to neighbouring Zaire through the safe zone created by the operation.
- *United States of America*: The US was heavily involved in the Somali Civil War, and the fiasco of the Battle of Mogadishu a year earlier led lawmakers to refuse to send material aid to Rwanda, further pushed by a gross misestimation of the overall situation. This led to President Bill Clinton repeatedly and deliberately refusing to act, instead debating over the use of the word "genocide" when referring to these atrocities. After the declassification of many documents regarding the event, it became known that Clinton was well aware of the situation, but instead opted to deliberately remain silent.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Your aim in this Security Council simulation is to draft a resolution which will wholly address the Rwandan Genocide.

This would encompass a variety of areas, including, but not limited to:

- The way in which criminal actions of possible belligerents will be dealt with.
- The possible use of humanitarian aid in Rwandan territory.
- The possible deployment of peacekeeping forces in Rwandan territory.
- Procedures aiding the decolonisation process.
- The use of economic aid to rejuvenate Rwandan development.
- Reconciliation to victims of the Rwandan genocide.
- Ways to encourage and ensure political stability.
- Ways to reduce tension between the Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups.

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