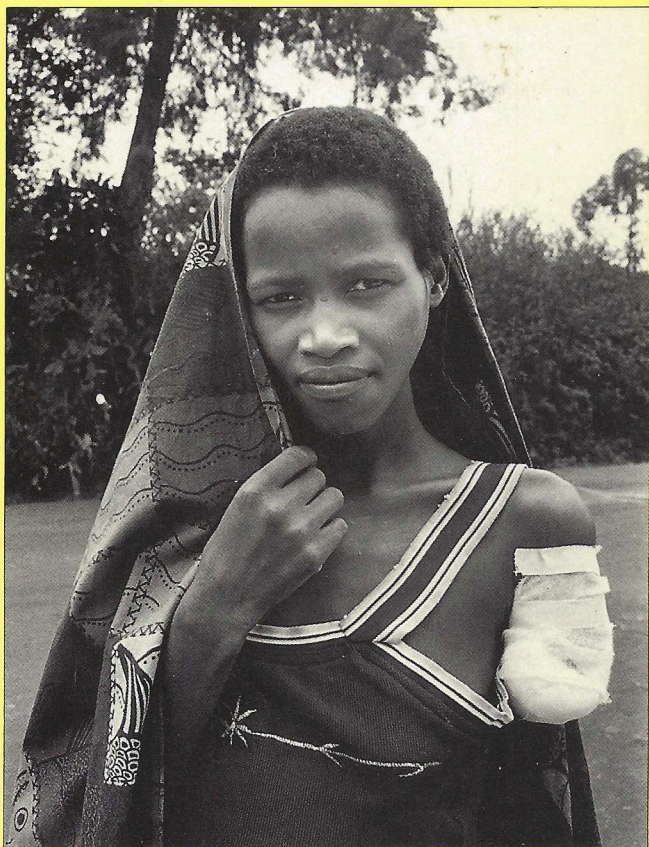


# RWANDA

## DEATH, DESPAIR AND DEFIANCE



*African Rights*

Revised 1995 Edition

## The Killers and their Accomplices

Nsabimana told the same journalist:

I am not afraid to go home. But first I want to be cleared of these African Rights allegations, because even in Kenya, someone can kill. People from the RPF... who do not know what I did for the people as *préfet*, they can kill me.<sup>17</sup>

What Nsabimana "did for the people" was to ensure that they died in huge numbers. He has tried to use the footage as a prop to "prove" his innocence. To prevent exposure of his crimes, he attempted to limit the evacuation to children below the age of twelve. Unfortunately for him, some of the older children survived. One of them is Chantal Umosoni, seventeen, who was a secondary school student at the Group Scolaire Santa Mater Dei of Nyanza, Butare. She lives in the cellule of Ngoma, in the sector and commune of the same name in Butare.

I was living in the buildings of the social school of Karubanda where the organization, Terre des Hommes, had put us to try to evacuate us to Zaire via Burundi. There were whites of Swiss nationality and some Rwandese like Damien and some nuns who worked at Terre des Hommes.

There were many of us, about eight hundred people. The majority were children. There were really small children, babies of just a few months or weeks; the older ones amongst us tried to look after the younger ones. There were also some women and some boys, both Hutu and Tutsi. In mid-June, the white Swiss started evacuating certain refugees amongst us. But the *préfet*, Sylvain, was an obstacle for us. He said that it was necessary only to evacuate children of less than twelve years. [That is those] who were not in a position to relate what had happened in Rwanda. The whites accepted this and evacuated the small children.

The second time they came to evacuate, Sylvain was no longer the *préfet*. It was right at the beginning of July. The French soldiers were the escort for the employees of Terre des Hommes. Everybody had panicked as bombs were falling intensively near our camp, the social school of Karubanda. That is how we were evacuated to the Burundi frontier. When we got there, the so-called *préfet* Sylvain who was with us did not reveal to the Burundi

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<sup>17</sup> Gregory Barrow, "Exiles 'fund Hutu militia in camps'", *The Guardian*, 29 December 1995.

## The Killers and their Accomplices

military authorities that he was the former préfet of Butare. On the contrary he asserted that he was an employee of Terre des Hommes.

From the Burundi frontier, the cars of the NGOs drove us to Bujumbura to the camp near the road which led to the airport of Bujumbura. We were still with the former préfet Sylvain. There, we found other survivors of the Rwandese genocide who were trying to identify the guilty or criminals amongst us. They were drawing up lists of criminals; préfet Sylvain was frightened and did not sleep in the camp. He spent the night outside and the following day he went and sought refuge in the Rwandese Embassy in Burundi and [the Embassy] helped get him to Kenya where he wanders around.<sup>18</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Among the men and women mentioned in this chapter, and thousands of others who remain to be identified, there are many who have committed unspeakable crimes against their fellow-citizens—those they have killed or caused to be killed, wounded, traumatized, widowed, orphaned, exiled, impoverished and made homeless. The others, their accomplices, have assisted this genocidal project, directly or indirectly. They have destroyed their country and set back for years, if not for decades, the prospects for peace, democracy and reconciliation that the Arusha Accords of August 1993 had put within the reach of the Rwandese people. The depth and breadth of their crimes against humanity is mind-numbing. In addition, they have destabilized neighbouring countries, causing serious political and economic tensions in certain regions of Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania.

The credibility, not just of the Rwandese judiciary, but of all international organizations committed to principles of human rights and humanitarianism rides on bringing the genocidal criminals to trial. If the killers escape unpunished, it will be an advertisement for the hollowness of human rights rhetoric and the impotence of human rights and humanitarian organizations, as well as of the U.N., the OAU, the churches and of the governments that have repeatedly called for the respect of human rights in Africa and elsewhere. It will also be an advertisement for the impunity of political criminals, no matter how immense their crime.

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<sup>18</sup> Interviewed in Ngoma, Butare, 28 May 1995.