

## *African Rights*

Rwanda's northwest region of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi has become the theatre for sustained clashes between insurgents, organised and led by the former army, and the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA). Based on interviews with former military and civilian insurgents, survivors of the violence, residents of the northwest, local government officials and RPA soldiers, *The Insurgency in the Northwest* documents a cross-section of incidents, examines all the aspects of the violence and brings them together in an effort to understand the political and social context which facilitated the insurgency and which has made it intractable. It discusses the aims, strategies and identities of the insurgents, the network of internal and external allies which they have established, their source of arms and the economic and social impact of the insurgency. It follows the evolution of the insurgency, looking at the impossible pressures upon civilians, and analyses the government's response. Linked to conflicts in neighbouring countries, it is also a source of profound regional instability. *The Insurgency in the Northwest* puts forward suggestions for alleviating the distress of local people and for addressing some of the pertinent regional issues.

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## RWANDA

# The Insurgency in the Northwest

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## *What is African Rights?*

*African Rights* was founded in the belief that human rights are a universal entitlement, but in the recognition that securing them depends upon comprehensive local action. Solutions must be sought at the political, social and economic level and they must be sought among Africans. The organisation was established in 1992, when the US military intervention in Somalia highlighted the need for an independent critical voice. Too often international efforts to resolve African problems have been ill-conceived or poorly co-ordinated and have stood outside scrutiny. *African Rights* works for transparency and accountability of international institutions, as well as encouraging governmental, military and civilian actors to address the needs of their people.

*African Rights* has carried out research on some of the gravest human rights abuses in Africa's recent past, including the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the steady slaughter of the Nuba people of Sudan. It concentrates upon abuses suffered by communities rather than individuals and takes its priorities from the people it is trying to help. In some cases it has provided practical assistance to help those communities to strengthen their own support systems.

*African Rights* does not claim to be 'neutral': we advocate on behalf of those suffering injustice and oppression. This means not only documenting abuses, but seeking to understand them in historical and political context and to make a direct contribution to the search for solutions. Over time, the need for justice has become a guiding principle in our work. We have exposed accusations against individuals and institutions and have fought to ensure that suspects are brought before the courts. We have also produced detailed critiques of judicial systems in Africa.

As a small organisation with limited resources, *African Rights* works only in those countries and situations where its particular approach can be of use—sometimes because we feel the international response has been inadequate. With a focus firmly on the interests of the ordinary people whose lives have been damaged by violence, at *African Rights* we are not afraid of controversy.

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**ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY**

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ADFL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire
ALIR	Liberation Army of Rwanda
CDR	Committee for the Defence of the Republic
CNDD	National Council for the Defence of Democracy
DRC	The Democratic Republic of Congo
FAR	Rwandese Armed Forces
FAZ	Zairian Armed Forces
FDD	Forces for the Defence of Democracy
FNL	National Forces of Liberation
ICTR	The United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
MRND	National Revolutionary Movement for Development (1975-91) and National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (1991-94)
PALIR	Armed People for the Liberation of Rwanda
PALIPEHUTU	Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People
RPA	Rwandese Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandese Patriotic Front
RTL	Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNHRFOR	United Nations Human Rights Field Operation for Rwanda
<i>Abahubiri</i>	Spirit mediums, mainly women, used by the insurgents to boost the morale of their fighters and to make prophecies about the future
<i>cachot</i>	Detention centres attached to commune offices

*infiltrator*

The insurgents fighting in the northwest are commonly referred to as “infiltrators” although most of them are living in Rwanda. The term owes its origins to the infiltration raids organised from the refugee camps into Rwanda in 1995/6

*inkotanyi*

The Rwandese Patriotic Army

*interahamwe*

The militiamen who played a key role in the genocide

*inyenzi*

A term of abuse for the Rwandese Patriotic Front meaning “cockroach”

*inzirabwoba*

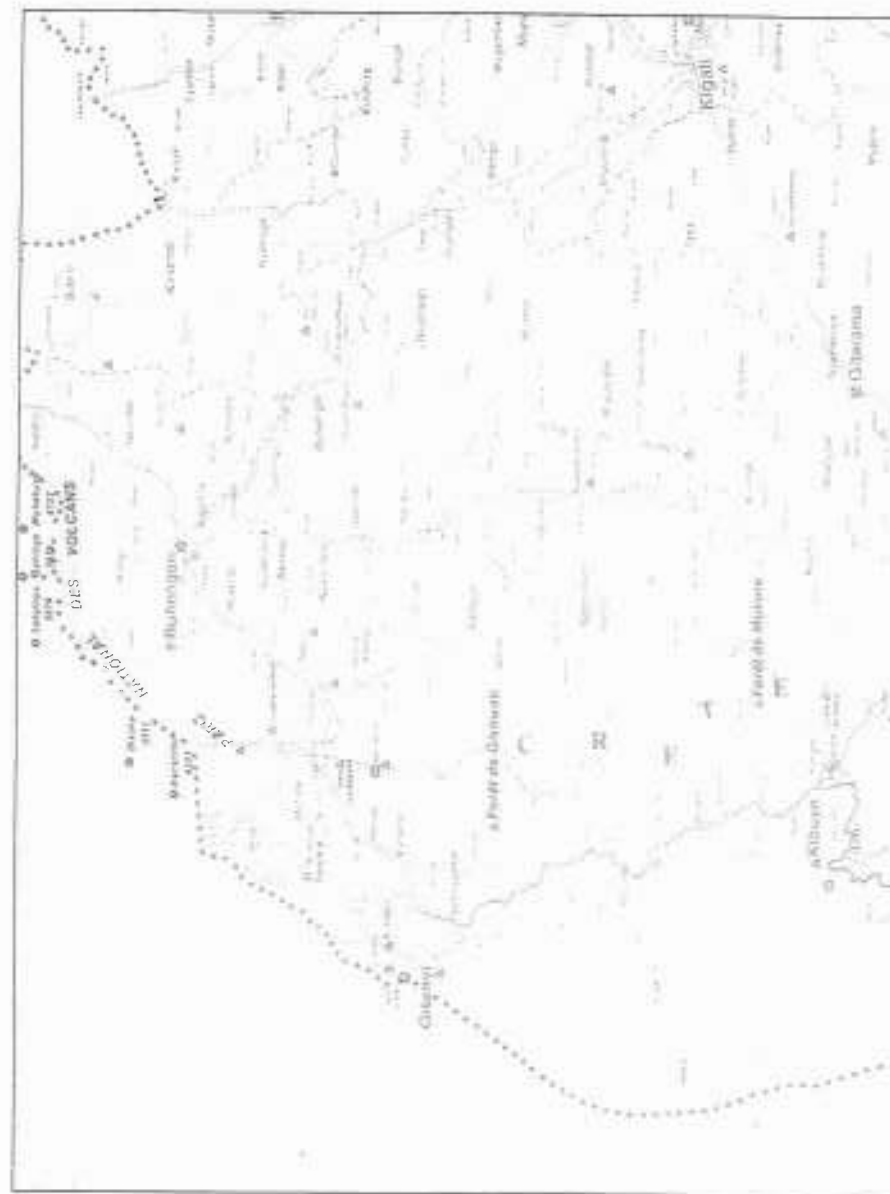
A name adopted by the ex-FAR meaning “those who are never afraid”

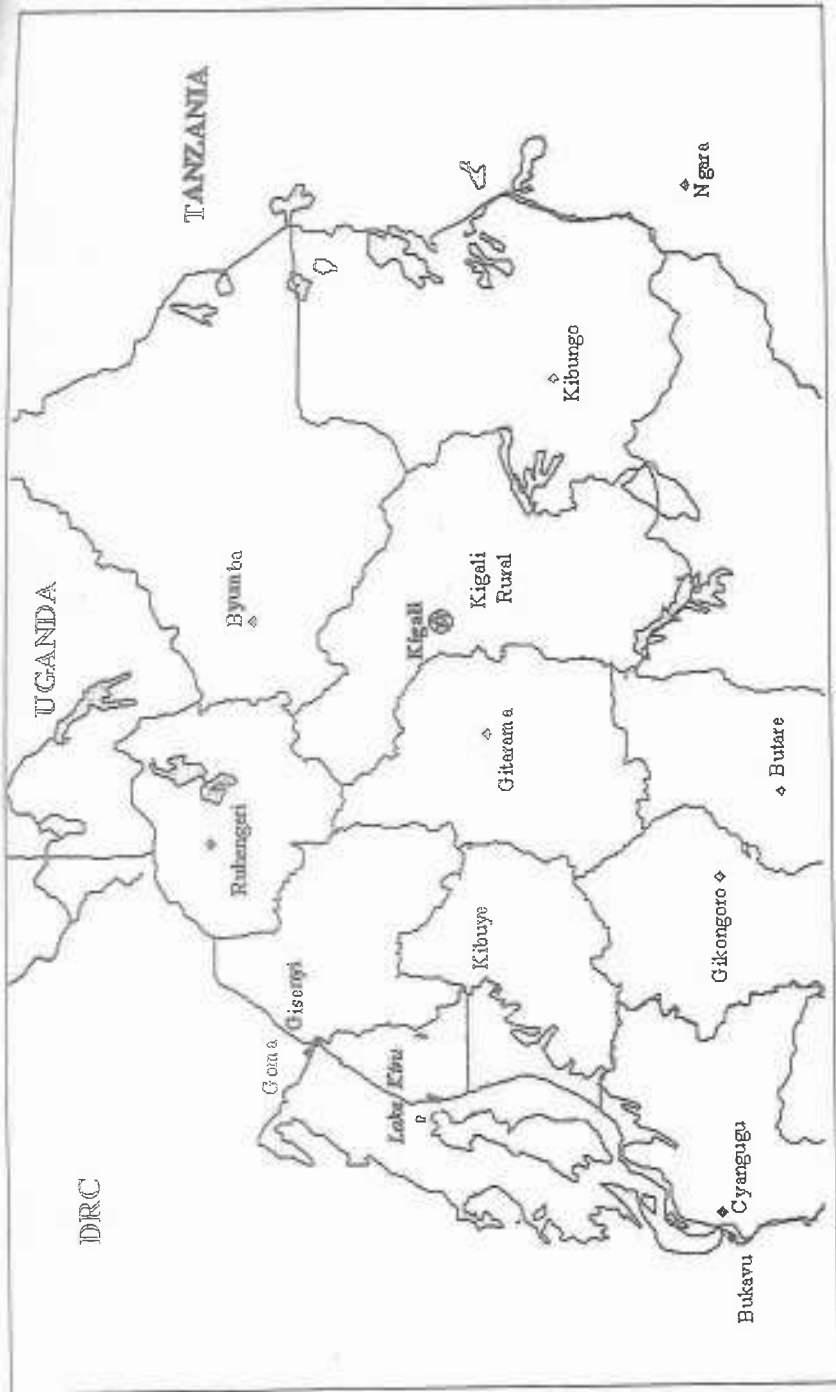
Zaire is used for the period before May 1997, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is used for the period after May 1997

Refugee: The Rwandese who took refuge in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi in July 1994

Returnees: The refugees who returned to Rwanda from the refugee camps between November 1996 and March 1997

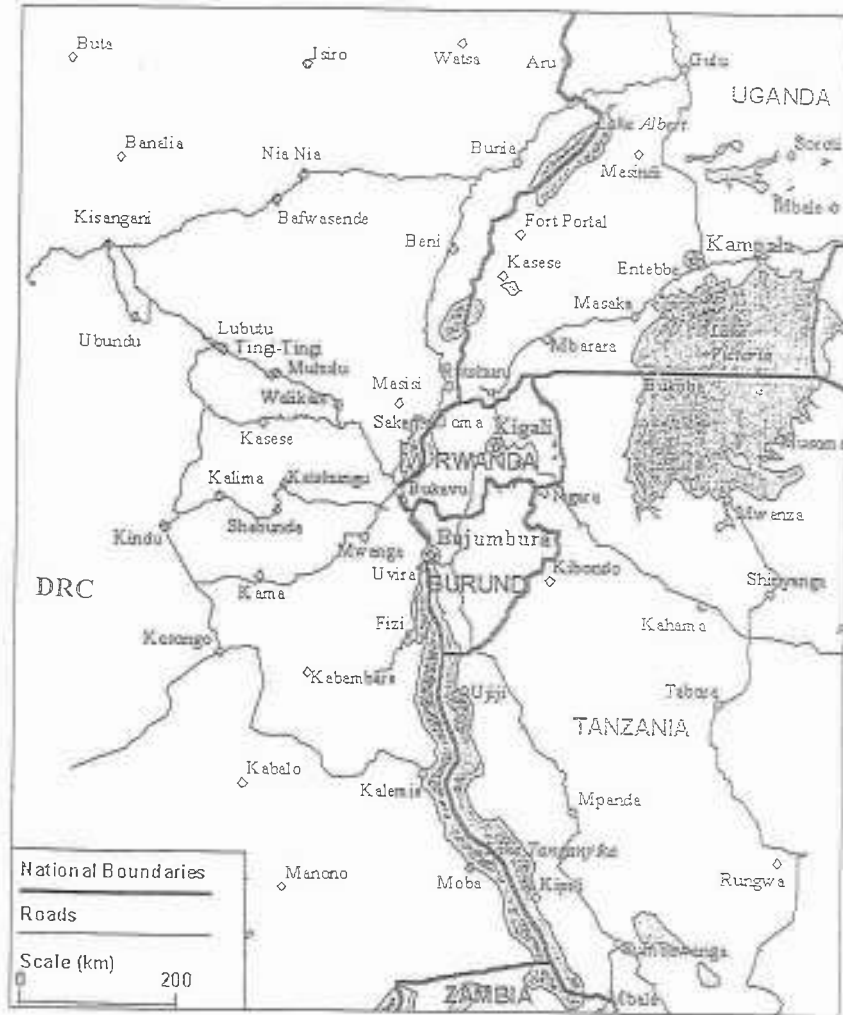
1959 Refugees/Returnees: The Rwandese who fled the country in 1959 and the early sixties, and who returned from exile in neighbouring countries after July 1994





### THE REGION OF KIVU IN DRC

### PREFECTURES IN RWANDA





## INTRODUCTION

Killings in the préfectures of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, in the northwestern region of Rwanda, increased dramatically in 1997/98. Armed insurgents in the region present the greatest challenge to security since the forces which implemented the genocide were defeated in July 1994. Isolated incidents began after the mass repatriation of refugees from the former Zaire in November 1996, but developed into a full-blown, organised insurgency in May/June 1997, after the fall of Mobutu Sese Seko. Conflict between the insurgents and the army has led to the deaths of thousands of Rwandese: civilians, prisoners, insurgents and soldiers. Hundreds of Congolese refugees, and a number of foreign nationals, have also been killed. Parts of the region have effectively become a war zone with losses on both sides. In certain communes attacks have taken place on an almost daily basis over several weeks; residents of the region are living on the battlefield.

The insurgents' central ambition is to recapture Rwanda for the former regime. They have become known as "infiltrators" although most of them are living in Rwanda. Their hard-core consists of ex-FAR and interahamwe "refugees" who sustained a campaign to destabilise Rwanda throughout their exile in camps in Zaire.<sup>1</sup> Many of them are veteran fighters who have survived military defeats by the RPA in July 1994 and by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) in 1996/7.

With the destruction of refugee camps in eastern Zaire in late 1996, the infiltrators lost their operational bases. Initially many of them retreated to Masisi, where they obtained considerable support from the mainly Hutu local population. But the loss of any territory they could claim as their own was a serious blow, and any conspicuous concentration of troops or weapons became a target of the ADFL forces. Their military strategy was pre-empted and the infiltrators have now taken their battle home, although not under the circumstances they intended. They have chosen the préfectures of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi to pursue their goals with increasing desperation, though the fighting and insecurity has also spread to neighbouring communes in Kibuye, Gitarama and Greater Kigali.

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<sup>1</sup> To avoid numerous references to the "former Zaire", Zaire is used throughout for the period before May 1997.

The insurgents have used the language of Hutu extremism as a rallying cry. The northwest is the historical homeland of Hutu extremist politics. The rural interior of the region is still almost entirely Hutu<sup>2</sup>. Here, there are few genocide survivors and support for the infiltrators' agenda is at its highest. It is also the most geographically strategic battleground, bordered by a chain of volcanoes and a large natural bamboo forest—ideal terrain for covert operations. Over the Congolese border is the zone of Masisi which also has a large Hutu population, favourable to the infiltrators. Bases have been established in this area with access to arms and ammunition. Military and political alliances have been formed with the defeated FAZ and militia groups opposed to the government of the DRC,<sup>3</sup> as well as with Ugandan and Burundian rebels.

The infiltrators have manufactured considerable support for their campaign of violence among local residents, despite the reality that they are almost all suffering, in one way or another, from the consequences of the insurgency. Many communities have been psychologically prepared to welcome the infiltrators since early 1995 by propaganda encouraging hatred of the current government and the Tutsi people. Similarly, the refugees, recently returned from Zaire, were fed a constant diet of anti-RPF fervour in the camps, making it easier for them to sympathise with the ambitions of the infiltrators, or to be directly involved. Even within the local administration, there are many individuals who have helped to facilitate the insurgents' mission.

The obvious targets for the infiltrators would be RPA military positions, but more often they have attacked civilian villages. Most vulnerable are genocide survivors and Tutsi returnees—refugees who fled in 1959/61 and who came back in 1994. They have often grouped together in trading centres and transit camps near military installations, but all too often this has not been adequate protection. Hutus who refuse to accept the agenda of the extremists have been sought out and intimidated or killed, in particular local government officials, sending an unmistakable signal to the wider community. In recent months, many of the attacks have been indiscriminate, a strategy to force the Hutu population to "take sides."

<sup>2</sup> Between 1959 and 1961, large numbers of Tutsis from Ruhengeri and Gisenyi were forcibly relocated to Bugesera, which accounts for the small pockets of Tutsis in the rural areas of these two préfectures.

<sup>3</sup> All mention of forces opposed to the government of DRC refers to the period prior to the rebellion which began on 2 August 1998.

The infiltrators intend to make the region ungovernable. They have ambushed vehicles and murdered passengers; killed schoolchildren; burned down commune offices and freed genocide suspects and common prisoners. They have also encouraged people to abandon their homes and to live with them in bases in the forest. They aim to win converts by making the state appear incapable of protecting its citizens, and to oblige it to become an occupying force ruling through coercion.

Residents of the northwest are caught between a rock and a hard place. They may choose to work alongside the government in trying to maintain security, thereby singling themselves out as the prime targets of infiltrators. Alternatively they may be pressured by relatives or friends into supporting the cause of the ex-FAR and militiamen, and then risk being killed during RPA search operations. Or they may simply be caught up in naked conflict between RPA soldiers and those from the ex-FAR.

In addition to the loss of human life, the economic and social consequences of the insurgency have been an unmitigated disaster for the people of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi. From being the breadbasket of the country, the region is now characterised by acute shortages and widespread hunger. Trade has been badly affected. The insecurity has made farming difficult and displaced thousands, far from their fields. The insurgents' demands for food and money have depleted the local population's meagre supplies and resources, and the violence has forced international aid organisations to leave the region. Unlike those who returned from the camps in November 1996, the people who have abandoned the insurgents since April, and who are now displaced in the northwest, returned weary and malnourished; many of them were evidently sick. Education has also suffered. Some schools have had to close; even where they remain open, many children are too fearful to go to school, or are forced to study under unbearable pressure and difficult material conditions. The poor exam results recently registered in the northwest reflect the impact on education.

The insurgency is tearing families apart. Insurgents have murdered or wounded their own relatives, including their parents and siblings, who have refused to support them. Many families have left their houses and fields to escape a similar fate. Other families have become separated, either in the search for peace and economic survival, or because some members have opted to remain with the insurgents while others chose to leave them.

At a national and regional level, the insurgency has brought renewed fear to the people of Rwanda, and is a cause for deep concern in neighbouring countries. A huge number of crude tracts have been

disseminated, heightening suspicion and mistrust. Representing a clear military threat, the insurgency has overshadowed the achievements in the peaceful integration of the refugees who have begun to rebuild their lives in most other parts of the country. It has grabbed the headlines and hardened attitudes, both nationally and internationally.

In an effort to halt the violence, the government response has been to deploy RPA troops to enforce security. Some of these soldiers have behaved brutally, particularly during search operations. The army has been responsible for a series of attacks in which civilians have been killed. There have also been instances of revenge attacks by soldiers whose colleagues were killed by the insurgents. Some soldiers have exploited the situation to intimidate civilians for financial gain. Both soldiers and senior officers have been brought before military tribunals, and some have been dealt with in a harsh manner in front of people whose relatives and neighbours they killed. Nevertheless, discipline remains an important issue. Despite the difficulty for soldiers in distinguishing civilians from insurgents, killings by RPA soldiers are unacceptable and the individuals responsible must be punished. Such behaviour has also fuelled popular support for the insurgents.

According to some human rights groups reporting on the conflict, abuses committed by the RPA in the region have exceeded those by infiltrators. There have been suggestions that the RPA is exacting retribution upon recently-returned refugees, reflecting a deliberate government policy. The findings of this book are significantly more hesitant; there is, in particular, no evidence that the abuses by soldiers reflect a calculated policy decision taken by the government and army. The remote location of most of the reported abuses, which have not been the result of on-site investigations, makes verification of general charges difficult. The testimonies of infiltrators and the local Hutu population contained in this book show that where communities are living in fear, statistics about the killings are not easy to compile.

While it is incontestable that in the northwest a human-rights catastrophe is occurring, in any one attack, several fictions about who is responsible may be immediately put into circulation. The strength of the infiltrators' hold over the residents of the northwest, has yet to be adequately acknowledged. Equally underestimated is the use infiltrators have made of propaganda, with expertise gained during the genocide. The reality is that thousands of peasants, including women and children, are actively supporting the insurgents, taking a direct part in most of the

attacks. This book contains the testimony of an eight-year-old boy who was recruited to help the insurgents.

Misunderstandings of the situation in the northwest will continue for as long as organisations continue to use terms like "unarmed civilians" without clarification of their role in the violence. It is not enough to attribute killings to RPA soldiers, "armed opposition groups" or "unidentified gunmen" without placing them in context. This can only obscure the dynamics of the conflict. It is important to recognise that the insurgents are the remnants of an army, with a single chain of command and that they are mostly former refugees and génocidaires. Inaccurate reports about who is killing and who is dying are detrimental in a society where every death feeds into the political and social insecurity.

The insurgency in the northwest is a condensed example of how violence can spiral. At its heart it is propelled by political aims and rhetoric, but it has created terror independent of political considerations, where anger and fear have caused civilians on both sides of the conflict to engage in attacks and reprisals. Most of the infiltrators have little or nothing to lose. Evading justice remains a driving force behind the insurgency. As former participants in the 1994 genocide, many prefer to fight to the death rather than be judged for their crimes.

Resolving the conflict will require more than a huge military operation. At a minimum there will need to be a sustained political initiative to tackle, not only the immediate grievances of the civilian population of the region, but also their political resentment of the government—which has deep and long-standing historical roots. On all sides of the conflict, past suffering has produced strong feelings which must be addressed. The insurgency has exposed how fear and mistrust continue to plague Rwandese society and it must be treated as a national political crisis. Defeating the ex-FAR and interahamwe who are leading the insurgency will be of limited value unless something is done to make the environment less hospitable to their message of hatred.

Firstly, the government must show civilians that it can protect them against the insurgents. Secondly, it must punish, in a severe and exemplary fashion, soldiers who go beyond self-defence and their well-defined military duties. We found people realistic about the difficulties of protecting people and of distinguishing them from infiltrators who use them as a human shield. But they are critical of the harsh tactics which the army has used and its lack of understanding for the impossible predicament in which civilians find themselves. There are encouraging signs that the army

has learned important lessons. Since early 1998, it has adopted a more political, and less militaristic, approach. When thousands of fighters, peasants and educated supporters started to abandon the insurgents in April, they did not suffer reprisals, which in turn encouraged others to come forward. The intelligence and assistance they have given the RPA has, in recent weeks, enabled the army to weaken the insurgents militarily and politically. This is the kind of collaborative effort which needs to be nurtured.

So much damage has already been done, both to the region of the northwest, and to the confidence of all Rwandese citizens. Many people are in need of direct and immediate assistance. However, any political or humanitarian initiative on the part of outsiders must be based on a clear understanding of the local politics. Members of the international community must reflect upon their own past actions and demonstrate that the lessons of the refugee camps in Zaire have been learned.

Ultimately the insurgency can only be fully tackled through a regional strategy; as the current upheaval and suffering in the DRC shows, it is related to conflicts in the Kivu region of DRC and western Uganda. It has also affected Burundi. The creation of new rebel movements active in Kivu, in south-western Uganda and in Burundi, bound together by defeat and anti-Tutsi sentiments, are of direct relevance to the situation in northwestern Rwanda. These groups are a source of military, financial, strategic and political support for the fighters operating in the northwest. There have been moments at which the insurgency looked set to fail, but the insurgents are unlikely to lay down their arms as long as they have both internal and external support. The conviction among the fighters that war is their only option has already destabilised Rwanda and has contributed to a war which involves the Great Lakes Region and Southern Africa.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This book analyses more than a year of attacks on the people and institutions of Rwanda's northwest region. It is based upon extensive research in the two préfectures where the insurgency has focused—Ruhengeri and Gisenyi—and visits to the communes in Gitarama, Kibuye and Greater Kigali which have also experienced insecurity. Through interviews with former insurgents and with the people who have been affected by the violence, it builds a picture of the insurgency and its consequences, laying bare the political and social context which have made it so intractable. The book does not attempt to give a comprehensive account of all the attacks since May 1997, but rather provides a cross section of them, touching on all the key elements of the violence. We hope it will promote understanding of the situation.

- Since the mass repatriation of refugees, security in the northwestern préfectures of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri has been fragile, with regular attacks taking place. The insurgency was planned long before their defeat in Zaire, but was forced ahead because of it. In May 1997, infiltration missions and isolated incidents developed into a full-scale military operation, intended to challenge the Government of Rwanda, either by toppling it or by forcing it into negotiations. Planning and training for the insurgency began in refugee camps in Zaire, under the control of the political and military leaders of the previous government. Refugees were taught that their only hope of returning home lay with the invasion of Rwanda and the overthrow of the current government. After the refugee camps were destroyed at the end of 1996, some of the refugees believed they had no option but to begin a war for the "liberation" of Rwanda.
- Between 30-40,000 soldiers began to arrive in the northwest in May 1997, with around 5,000 remaining in Zaire in bases around Masisi and Rutchuru in North Kivu. They were mostly ex-FAR soldiers, militiamen and former refugees recruited in the camps in Zaire. They are united by fear of the RPF—they have been encouraged to believe they are fighting not only for their country, but for their lives. Many of them are génocidaires who have good reason to avoid returning home. After the fall of Zaire, doors were closed to them in the region and elsewhere in

Africa—their only remaining hope of evading justice lay with this insurgency.

- The “infiltrators”, as they are usually known, set up bases in the volcanic forests which border the region and which straddle the northwest and Masisi. From there they began launching their operations. Although the obvious target would have been RPA bases, the insurgents favour hit-and-run attacks upon key state institutions and target groups. They aim to gain political control over the northwest corner of Rwanda and with it the power to destabilise the entire country. To this end, they have set out to systematically eliminate members of those groups which present an obstacle to their control of the region.
- Their leaders are all ex-FAR soldiers who held important positions in Rwanda before July 1994 and in the military structure set up in the refugee camps. Although a number of factors constrain command and control of their forces, they have a clearly defined military structure. They belong to the Liberation Army of Rwanda (ALIR); their political wing is known as the Armed People for the Liberation of Rwanda (PALIR). Below the high command are the operational sectors, the battalions, the companies etc... Many of the civilian fighters recruited in the camps and in Rwanda only have the rudiments of military training. Their supplies of arms and ammunition are often less than adequate, particularly in the face of the armoured personnel carriers and helicopters used by the army. They do not have the resources to confront the army head-on; when they do so, many infiltrators are killed. Moreover, the insurgents lack supplies of food and medicine and life in the forest is tough, with many soldiers falling ill or dying from disease. Lack of food, exposure to the cold and the absence of medical care is also killing people recruited by force, including both ex-FAR and civilians.
- The insurgents have made it clear that they intend to wipe out the small Tutsi population of the northwest. They aim to complete the genocide by killing survivors of the 1994 genocide, 1959 Tutsi refugees and Congolese refugees of Tutsi origin who have fled violence in their own country. Not only have they succeeded in killing many people, but they have driven others from their homes in fear. Some have fled as far as Kigali to escape the violence.

- The insurgents have also killed Hutus hostile to their agenda. Local government officials are especially vulnerable and many of them have been killed for their commitment to peace. Murdering the families of those described as “traitors” is standard practice. Many have left their homes, settling near commune offices and army bases for protection. In recent months, indiscriminate killings, designed to force the Hutu population to “choose sides” and to spread panic, have been a prominent feature of their campaigns.
- The backbone of the insurgency are the local people, as so often in guerrilla warfare. The northwest was fertile ground for rekindling the hardline ideology known as Hutu extremism; Hutus are overwhelmingly in the majority in the region which was the powerhouse for Habyarimana’s regime. Habyarimana was from Gisenyi, and appointed many high-level officials from Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. The insurgents knew they would find support in this area, particularly since so many of the leaders and the fighters have families and friends living in the northwest.
- Local supporters are feeding and financing the insurgency with regular donations. They act as informants, messengers and as reinforcements during large-scale attacks. They give shelter to infiltrators and are also being used as human shields for infiltrators fleeing the army. There is a well-organised network of supporters operating from within the civilian population, known as *partisans* and *résistants*. Those in the lower echelons of government service, including councillors, *responsables* and *nyumbakumis*, play a vital role in protecting and assisting infiltrators and act as intermediaries with the local population. But this relationship is also founded on fear. There are high penalties for those who refuse to collaborate. Many of those who have opposed their plans have been killed. The widespread use of propaganda and brutal intimidation go some way to explaining the persistence of sympathy for the insurgents’ cause, despite the suffering it has brought.
- The foundations for the insurgency were laid as early as 1996. The insurgents have been carefully preparing the people of the northwest for what was to come with a programme of “sensitisation” as vicious as the propaganda campaign which launched the genocide. They continue to

distribute tracts designed to incite hatred, promote fear and win support in the northwest region and beyond. The tracts call for a popular uprising of the Hutus against "their historical and present oppressors", the Tutsis. They speak of the need for Hutus to set aside regional and political differences and unite in a battle for self-preservation against Tutsi "domination." Hutu opponents are described as selfish and warned that they deserve to die a merciless death.

- Assaults upon commune offices and the prisons attached to them, have brought insurgents into direct conflict with RPA soldiers on many occasions. These attacks are some of their most daring and most important. The commune office is the locus of official power and insurgents have been able to loot administrative seals which stamp travel permits and to free genocide suspects and people held for common crimes.
- Most of the communes of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri have experienced the violence, although none of them are permanent warzones. Rather the sites of conflict are continually shifting. In February 1998, the insurgents began to expand their operations into Gitarama, principally the communes neighbouring Gisenyi and Ruhengeri—Nyabikenke, Nyakibanda and Bulinga. In April/May, they started to concentrate on other communes in Gitarama, closer to Kigali—Nyamabuye, Taba, Kayenzi and Rutobwe. In 1998, there was also a focus on Greater Kigali, in particular the communes of Rushashi and Tare which border Ruhengeri and are strategically located along the Nyabarongo river.
- The military fortunes of the insurgents have undergone significant changes in the course of the year. At one time, infiltrators were deserting in considerable numbers because of a lack of arms and ammunition. This became less common towards the latter part of 1997, suggesting that they had found new sources of weapons. Between September and November 1997, many ex-FAR throughout the northwest started to drift towards the infiltrators; these three months saw the largest number of recruits. However, by December there is evidence that the insurgents were resorting to forced recruitment and that they had begun imposing severe punishments upon those who failed to comply with the increasingly harsh regime. This was counterproductive—infiltrators continued to desert despite the risk of death at the hand of their leaders.

- The RPA is fighting back and both infiltrators and RPA soldiers are regularly killed in open battles. However, the campaign to crush the insurgency has also shown up failings in the army. It has been unable, on numerous occasions, to distinguish and separate civilians from the insurgents. Although the RPA has undoubtedly killed many of the insurgents in search operations following attacks, it also stands accused of murdering civilians. Infiltrators have confirmed support among local people and are often hiding within communities and fleeing with civilians when they come under attack from the RPA. This strategy of hiding amongst civilians and using them as a human shield is responsible for the highest number of casualties in this war. But there are also cases of RPA soldiers killing those suspected of working with the insurgents and incidents of looting. Beyond the tragic loss of life, the killings by the RPA have increased support for the insurgents' cause. The last six months have witnessed a change in the tactics of the RPA; there has been a shift from a tough militaristic approach to a policy that seeks to win people over politically.
- Thousands of military and civilian supporters have abandoned the insurgents voluntarily since April 1998, prompted by the insurgents' failure to take and administer substantial territory; the death toll among civilians; hunger and disease and the change in the strategy of the RPA. They have provided the RPA with considerable intelligence; as a result, the insurgents have recently suffered serious military setbacks, losing the heads of both ALIR and PALIR and many other leaders and fighters. Even so, they show no signs of giving up; on the contrary, they have intensified their efforts to eliminate Hutu "traitors." Deserters are increasingly being replaced by forced conscripts.
- The dangers of travelling in the northwest and attacks upon UN and NGO personnel has forced foreigners out of the region; most information about what is happening there is often given at second hand rather than through field research. The result is that the killings have been misunderstood and estimates of the number killed must be treated with caution. With infiltrators and civilians often cohabiting or collaborating, and the blanket of Hutu extremism once again smothering communities, the identity of the killers and the victims is not always readily apparent. Whatever the atrocity, fear and anger can prevent the

truth from being told. Only independent and thorough research within the affected communes is adequate for any assessment of the situation there. It is for this reason that we have confined ourselves to discussing only the incidents we have investigated thoroughly.

- The war in the northwest has transformed the region. Living there has become not only dangerous, but also not viable economically, with peasants unable to harvest their crops as a result of insecurity. Prices have risen sharply, trade has been badly affected, education has suffered and families have been torn apart. Towards the end of 1997, some areas were virtually deserted, as people either left their homes on a temporary basis for fighting to calm down, or because they had fled with the insurgents.
- The insurgents' goals have enmeshed with the military and political interests of rebel groups which sprung up in neighbouring countries after the fall of Mobutu Sese Seko. At the time, such groups saw the governments of Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and DRC as closely tied and sought to challenge them simultaneously. Whether this is more than a temporary coincidence of interests remains to be seen. It may be that this broader initiative to destabilise the region will provide the insurgents with the best long-term means of prolonging their war. To bolster and sustain these external ties, they rely on their close links with leaders of the former government who are in exile.
- If the insurgency came out of a regional context, it has in turn helped to shape political developments in the Great Lakes region; the current turmoil in the DRC has been triggered, in part, by the extent to which political and military developments in North Kivu and the northwest have become intertwined. This small-scale insurgency has already claimed a disproportionate number of civilian lives and has proved a source of profound regional instability. Regional and international initiatives are essential to prevent this small-scale insurgency from pushing the entire Central African region, and beyond, into crisis.

## THE ROOTS OF THE CONFLICT

In pre-colonial times, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri were independent principalities, the *Abahinza*; colonial initiatives to incorporate them into the centralised state ruled by the Tutsi monarchy met with fierce resistance. Outright revolt by northern Hutus in 1912 was followed by harsh repression, leaving them with a strong sense of grievance and a distinct identity from Hutus of central and southern Rwanda.<sup>4</sup>

This resentment shaped post-independence politics and found its greatest expression during the tenure of President Juvénal Habyarimana, from 1973 to 1994, a native from Gisenyi.<sup>5</sup> Habyarimana came from commune Karago, as did his powerful wife, Agathe Habyarimana, and her influential brothers. Habyarimana's bloody coup d'état, overthrowing President Grégoire Kayibanda—who came from Gitarama—sharpened divisions between Hutus of the north and those from the central and southern regions. Gisenyi and Ruhengeri came to be known as the “blessed region.” Natives of these two préfectures, and to a lesser extent, Byumba, exercised a near monopoly of political power and control over the country's limited economic resources. They dominated the upper echelons of the army, security services, the civil service, the diplomatic corps, para-statal and the university. The commanders of the Presidential Guard were drawn exclusively from Habyarimana's home ground. At the summit was a small group known as the *akazu* or “little household”, many of whom were related to Agathe Habyarimana. They had access to the best land and houses, the most lucrative business opportunities and easy credit facilities. It was their children who obtained grants to study and train abroad and who landed the best jobs. They came to believe their own propaganda, namely that the privileges they enjoyed were a birthright, and that they would last forever.

Between 1990 and 1994 the regime faced the challenges of war with the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), the creation of opposition political parties and the existence of an openly critical media. To counter

<sup>4</sup> For further details, see African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, pp.1-45.

<sup>5</sup> Even though the north did not benefit politically during Kayibanda's presidency, northerners were regarded as good fighters and many were recruited into the army towards the end of the Belgian colonial period and subsequently. The fact that Habyarimana himself was chief of staff under Kayibanda is evidence of this trend.

the threat to the political status quo, the northwest served as the main centre for Habyarimana's party, the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND) and its even more extremist offshoot, the Committee for the Defence of the Republic (CDR). It also became home to propagandist media, including radio RTLM and the newspaper, *Kangura*, whose mission was to spread hatred. Many of the original shareholders of RTLM were natives of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. Its chairman was the wealthy businessman, Félicien Kabuga from Byumba whose close relations with Habyarimana led to marriage between their children. The opposition political parties hardly got a toehold in the area.

While his hold over the northwest remained intact, Habyarimana was besieged, nationally and internationally. As it became apparent that he could not win the war against the RPF, Habyarimana had little choice but to compromise. After painstaking negotiations, a detailed and comprehensive agreement was signed with the RPF at Arusha, Tanzania, in August 1993. At a meeting on 6 April 1994, Habyarimana agreed to begin implementing the Arusha Accords. His plane was shot down as he returned to Rwanda the same day.

Although it is yet to be established who gave the order to assassinate Habyarimana, the powerful clique which surrounded him had most to gain from his death. The Arusha Accords spelled the end of their domination. The prospect of power-sharing and the principle of accountability threatened their power and impunity. The death of Habyarimana also provided them with a pretext to launch the genocide of the Tutsis and the murder of Hutu politicians who did not share their political outlook.

The interim government which immediately took over also included a disproportionate number of northerners—Col. Théoneste Bagosora, believed to have been the mastermind behind the planning of the genocide, and a *chef de cabinet* in the Ministry of Defence was born in Gicizi in Gisenyi, but grew up in Habyarimana's commune, Karago. The minister of foreign affairs was from Ruhondo in Ruhengeri; the minister of health was from Nyamugali in Ruhengeri; and the ministers of public works, of planning and of labour and social affairs were from Gisenyi. Indeed, from the top down, many of the military and political leaders of the routed regime, and the propagandists of the genocide, were natives of the northwest who had used their proximity to power to promote family and local interests. Some of these powerful men are today held in the detention facilities of the United Nations Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in

Arusha. They include Bagosora; Col. Anatole Nsengiyumva, the military commander of Gisenyi; Joseph Nzirorera, secretary-general of MRND; Ferdinand Nahimana, one of the foremost exponents of Hutu extremism and a founder member of RTLM and Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, one of the leading spokesman of the CDR. Many others have been indicted by the ICTR. For many of the people of the northwest, their defeat by the forces of the RPF in July 1994 meant the loss of benefits and opportunities. The fact that some of these former leaders, their relatives and benefactors, are now being brought to justice has undoubtedly reinforced their sense of grievance.

According to the préfet of Cyangugu, Faustin Munyakabera, where security has improved considerably, attitudes in the northwest are so ingrained that what has worked in his region would not apply there.

Gisenyi and Ruhengeri were, historically speaking, the core of the Habyarimana regime; many soldiers, and high-ranking civilian officials came from this region. During conversations, the locals from this region showed that they were accustomed to thinking that this regime belonged to them. Ethnic and regional segregation had been implanted in them, to the extent that they would say: 'Any Rwandese who does not come from the north is Tutsi'. With the fall of the regime, they heard that their power had been 'stolen' by the government that they considered 'Tutsi'. It is therefore understandable that they would support someone who promised to restore the power which the members of their families, still in exile, used to have. Cyangugu has only repatriated 1,000 ex-FAR or less and they live with the civilians.<sup>6</sup>

His opinion was echoed by Eugène Muzuka Kayiranga, the sous-préfet of Bugumya which had been badly affected by infiltrators in 1995/96.

The north of the country had a large number of soldiers and important figures of authority from the previous regime. Few of them have come back voluntarily. Their ambition was to come back to regain power. Therefore, almost every family from this region has a relation or a friend amongst those who insist that they will come back to take power. The people in the north are fighting in the name of an ideology which they learned a long time ago.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Interviewed in Kamembe, Cyangugu, 19 July 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Interviewed in Bugumya, Cyangugu, 18 July 1997.



Unlike Cyangugu, certain communes in Kibuye have been destabilised by the insurgency based in Gisenyi. Nevertheless, Assiel Kabera, préfet of Kibuye until December 1997, drew sharp differences between the two areas.

There is really no comparison between the population of Kibuye and that of Ruhengeri or Gisenyi. The support given to the infiltrators by the population in the north of the country is based upon ethnic ideology. In Kibuye, the infiltrators are helped by their families.

Not only does every family in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri have relations or friends amongst those determined to recapture power, but the insurgency is presented as the only opportunity to re-establish the privileges lost in July 1994, and the best chance to keep justice at bay.

## AT THE HELM: SOME OF THE OPERATIONAL LEADERS OF THE INSURGENTS

As discussed in the section on arms and regional alliances, the former leaders of FAR based in West Africa, Congo-Brazzaville and Kenya, including the former chief of staff, Major-General Augustin Bizimungu, are playing a critical role in helping the insurgents with arms, the provision of training facilities, funds and diplomatic support. Below is a list of some of the day-to-day operational leaders who move between northwest Rwanda and North Kivu in DRC.<sup>8</sup>

- Lt. Col. Dr Froduald Mugemanyi, alias “Mugarura”, was the ALIR chief of staff until he was killed by the RPA on 3 August 1998 in Rusebeya, Bwishya sector in commune Nyarutovu. He came from Mudasomwa, Gikongoro. Mugemanyi, a medical doctor, was the director of Kanombe military hospital in Kigali until July 1994. In Zaire, he was head of medical services for the 1st Division of the ex-FAR based in Bukavu. His wife, Rose Ndamage, is living in exile in Belgium together with her sister, Major Jeanne Ndamage, an ex-FAR. Appointing a southerner to this position was intended to attract fighters and supporters from the south, and to camouflage the reality that the insurgency is largely a northern affair.
- Lt. Col. Léonard Nkundiye was, until his death at the hands of the RPA on 23 July 1998, the deputy chief of staff of ALIR and the co-ordinator of PALIR’s activities. He was one of the key military figures associated with the insurgency from the very beginning. He helped the ex-FAR to regroup and re-organise, to recruit additional fighters amongst the civilians who had received military training in the camps and to establish new political allies and sources of weapons. He is a former

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<sup>8</sup> There is a strong likelihood that the responsibilities and whereabouts of the individual leaders changed during the period in which this book was being researched and written. It is also possible that some of them, in addition to those already mentioned, have since died. The families of some of the senior officers listed here are living in West Africa, particularly Cameroon, where they were evacuated after the camps were closed, or even before. The families of some others are living in Belgium or France.

commander of the Presidential Guard; he then became head of military operations in the Mutara region. When the genocide began, he was commander of the military base at Kanombe. In Zaire, he was deputy commander of the 2nd Division based in Goma. Like Habyarimana, he comes from sector Rambura, Karago in Gisenyi. He was killed in Shaki, sector Rweru in commune Giciye.

- Lt. Col. Paul Rwarakabije, like Nkundiye, has been involved with the insurgents in North Kivu from the outset. He has been in charge of training, recruitment and military operations and has other responsibilities similar to those exercised by Nkundiye. He became head of the military camp of Katale housing the refugees in Zaire, commander of the 242nd battalion established in Goma and a member of the ex-FAR "patrimony and finance commission." He comes from Nkuli, Ruhengeri.
- Lt. Col. Emmanuel Kanyandekwe worked in training, recruitment and operations (G3) in FAR before July 1994 and then became a brigade commander in the 2nd Division in Goma. After the camps closed, he first went to the Central African Republic and then made his way to Masisi. He comes from Nkuli in Ruhengeri.
- Lt. Col. Marcel Bivugabagabo was in charge of military operations in Ruhengeri before July 1994. He too first went to the Central African Republic but now operates out of Gishwati forest in Gisenyi. He comes from Gisenyi.
- Lt. Col. Augustin Rwamanywa was a logistics officer prior to July 1994; in Zaire, he became a member of the FAR high command and worked in logistics. He comes from Mudasmwa in Gikongoro.
- Major Pierre-Célestin Haguma, a pilot, has played a critical role in mobilising the insurgents in Masisi, organising their departure for Rwanda and has helped to ensure communication between the infiltrators established in Rwanda and those in Masisi. He is from Gisenyi. Prior to the genocide, he was in charge of the Escave battalion for pilots; he became a G3 officer in Goma.

- Major Pierre-Célestin Habimana is commander of the operational sector known as Nazareth which covers most of Ruhengeri and parts of Greater Kigali and Byumba. He is currently known as "Jules Bemera", but in the past he has also been known as "Bishushe" and "Kambari". He worked in the "Division of Public Relations" of the Ministry of Defence and was in charge of the 64th battalion in Shyorongi commune before seeking exile in Zaire. He comes from Muhungwe sector, Karago commune, but his family has been living in Mutara for many years.
- Major Modeste Rwabukwisi comes from Gafunzo in Cyangugu; he operated in Masisi before he was sent to prepare the ground in his native Cyangugu. He was killed in late 1997 by the RPA after his presence was revealed by neighbours.
- Major Célestin Bahemba's task was to co-ordinate the different teams working in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. He was commanding officer of the 243rd battalion in Goma. A shareholder in RTLM, he comes from Nyamutera, Ruhengeri. He was killed during the attack on the commune office of Cyabingo, Ruhengeri, on 13 June 1997.
- Major Joel Bararwerekana was in the military police before July 1994 and had also served in military operations in Byumba. In Zaire, he became a commander of the 23rd brigade in Goma. He comes from Nkuli, Ruhengeri.
- Major Gaston Iyamuremye, an engineer from Nyakinama in Ruhengeri, was head of the G5 department of ALIR, the political department responsible for relations with civilians. In Zaire, he became a commander in the 25th brigade in Goma. He was killed during a battle in Nyakinama on 28 July 1998.
- Major Apollinaire Hakizimana, alias "Poète" is head of ALIR's department of military intelligence (G2); he had worked in military intelligence before July 1994 and was also a shareholder of RTLM. In Zaire, he was a commander in Goma. He comes from Mwinyake sector in Karago, Gisenyi.

- Major Laurent Rwagakinga, alias "Kabore", is head of the operational sector named Quebec, previously known as Charlie. In Zaire, he was a commander in the 214th battalion. He is a native of Rushashi, Greater Kigali.
- Major Augustin Budura arrived in the northwest at the end of 1997 from the Central African Republic. In Zaire he was a commander in Goma and deputy to Rwarakabije as head of Katale camp. He comes from Ruhengeri.
- Major Ngororabanga, alias "Ngango" led operations in the communes of Mukingo, Kinigi, Nkumba, Kigombe and Kidaho in Ruhengeri. A native of Nkumba in Ruhengeri, he was killed in a clash with the RPA on 13 January 1998 in Bisate, Kinigi.
- Major Théophile Gakara works in ALIR's department of administration and personnel (G1); before July 1994, he was in GI for the gendarmerie; after the genocide, he was based in Nairobi. He comes from Kibari in Byumba.
- Captain Alfred Rusigi is head of the operational sector Bethlehem, previously Echo, which covers the communes of Rwerere, Kanama, Rubavu, Nyamyumba and Mutura in Gisenyi. One of the most active leaders, he comes from Akanyirabukima, sector Mubona in Rwerere. In 1992, he was an instructor at ESM, the officers' training school.
- Captain Alexandre Shumbusho, alias "Gashumba" used to work at Kanombe military hospital and was a shareholder in RTLM. While in exile, he belonged to the 213th battalion. He had returned to Rwanda as an infiltrator long before the refugee camps in Zaire were closed. There are conflicting reports as to whether he was killed, or was only wounded, when the insurgents attacked the commune office of Cyabingo on 13 June 1997.
- Captain Marcel Kamanzi, who commanded the insurgents in the communes of Nkuli and Nyamutera in Ruhengeri, was killed recently by the RPA in sector Muvumba, Nyarutovu. In exile, he was a member of the ex-FAR commission in charge of information and documentation and served as a battalion commander.
- Captain Gelase Harelimana, alias "Kaceri", commanded the operational sector Charlie until recently; in Zaire, he was a battalion commander in Bukavu. Before exile, he was an officer in the gendarmerie.
- Captain Boniface Hasengeza, from Rukore sector, Cyabingo commune, used to be active in commune Kinigi, and later in Masisi, supplying weapons to the insurgents.
- Captain Mugabo from Nyamugali, Ruhengeri, carried out many operations in the communes of Nyarutovu, Cyeru, Nyamugali and Ruhondo in Ruhengeri. He is reported to have died.
- Lt. Innocent Ndamyumugabe, known as 'Kazungu', is one of the best-known insurgents. A native of cellule Muremure, sector Gihira in Gicuye, Gisenyi, he was particularly active in his home commune. He returned to Rwanda before the massive repatriation and was re-integrated into the RPA, but he left before completing his training course in Gako. He then joined the ex-FARs in Zaire from where he began to launch infiltration raids into Rwanda long before the return of the refugees. He was killed in early October 1997 when the insurgents, led by Kazungu and Captain Alfred Rusigi, launched an attack against the town of Gisenyi, commune Rubavu, which was repulsed by the army. Kazungu died when the insurgents were retreating to Byahi, near Rubavu. His wife, Béatrice Mupfasoni, has also been active as a fighter.
- Lt. Musare, alias "Ndibabaje", is a member of the operational sector Nazareth, working in Ruhengeri, western Byumba and Greater Kigali.
- Lt. Sébastien Ngororabanga is an engineer. Before the defeat of the ex-FAR, he was a platoon commander in mining and demining; he comes from Ruhengeri.
- Lt. Uwayo, a native of commune Rwerere in Gisenyi, was head of the company "Cobra" and a leading insurgent in commune Karago, Gisenyi. Before the genocide, he was a platoon commander in mining and demining.

## Some of the Operational Leaders of the Insurgents

- Lt. Nizeyimana, alias “Bigaruka”, was commander of the sector known as Delta which operated in the sous-préfecture of Ngororero in Gisenyi and parts of Gitarama and Kibuye.
- Sub-Lt. “Sankara” from Byumba was commander of CRAP company which covered, amongst other areas, Kinigi in Ruhengeri.
- Stanislas Simbizi, a civilian, was a member of the national political bureau of CDR and one of its most prominent propagandists. He died recently. He had helped to obtain arms in Masisi and had also been one of the men charged with writing the insurgents’ tracts. He was from Kabwende in Kinigi.



Lt. Col. Léonard Nkundiye, killed on 23 July 1998 in Shaki, sector Rweru, Giciye



Lt. Col. Léonard Nkundiye (at the back) during a reception with President Habyarimana



Stanislas Simbizi



Major Augustin Budura



Major Gaston Iyamuremye, killed on  
28 July 1998 in Nyakinama.



Major Célestin Bahemba,  
killed on 13 June 1997

## THE INSURGENTS AND THEIR ALLIES

The insurgents claim to be fighting on behalf of the political will of the majority of the Rwandese people. They present themselves as an army engaged in a liberation struggle. When the insurgency began in earnest in May/June 1997, their intention appeared to be to force the government to share power with them, if they could not defeat it outright. However, a few months later, the genocidal aspect of their programme began to take precedence. By killing and threatening Tutsis, they intend to drive them out of the northwest altogether and to pit Hutus and Tutsis—not just in Rwanda, but all over the Great Lakes region—against each other in an all-out war.

They are targeting civilians and involving them in the conflict in an effort to control the region without directly engaging the RPA too frequently. Increasingly they are using their bases in the northwest to launch attacks in Gitarama, Kibuye and further afield, spreading the violence. They are trying to wear down the RPA and turn them into a repressive army of occupation in the eyes of the population. They are using guerrilla tactics, but they recognise that their objectives cannot be accomplished simply by force. Alongside the military offensive, and equally important, is the distribution of propaganda, the creation of terror and the recruitment of a network of civilian supporters.

The insurgents have a well-defined programme of violence. At the forefront of their objectives is the elimination of survivors and witnesses of the genocide, and all other Tutsis, who are viewed as government allies and principal targets. Hutu civilians, including women and children, are expected to support the insurgents' campaign. They have been bombarded with propaganda; the insurgents have convinced many people that they are on the verge of defeating the RPA. They have recruited civilians to act as informants and intermediaries and to provide practical assistance. Hutus who fail to comply with the demands of the insurgents are subject to political persuasion, intimidation and outright violence. Opponents are being murdered, particularly Hutu government officials who refuse to work with them.

They have succeeded in making the northwest region virtually a no-go area. Early on in the conflict they began targeting foreign nationals, forcing most international agencies out of the area. They are reinforcing the atmosphere of terror by blocking roads, blowing up bridges and ambushing vehicles and have begun killing indiscriminately to force Hutus to "take

sides". By encouraging local people to flee with them into the neighbouring volcanic areas and forests, they have, at times, made parts of the northwest a deserted region, with severe social and economic consequences.

An important aspect of the insurgents' strategy is the destruction of the state administrative apparatus. Although direct confrontations with the army are less common than assaults upon civilians, there have been attacks upon military positions and convoys, partly prompted by the need for supplies and weapons. By laying siege to commune offices and detention centres, insurgents have been able to free genocide suspects and common criminals and destroy a key element in the government administration. They have also destroyed health centres, killing patients and looting medicines. Violence directed at schools, and the murders of Hutu and Tutsi students, have had a damaging impact upon education in the area.

The attacks upon state institutions, like those upon civilians, are intended to send the message that the government is incapable of protecting its citizens. Although the insurgents are increasingly facing narrow odds, and the army has had a series of military successes in recent months, they have managed to establish a condition of fear which influences the choices made by all residents of the northwest. And it is spreading. Since February 1998, the insurgents have expanded from their bases in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri into the préfecture of Gitarama. They have concentrated on the communes that border on the northwest—Bulinga, Nyakabanda and Nyabikenke. Many sectors in these communes are separated from Ruhengeri and Gisenyi by the Nyabarongo river. But since May, they have begun to venture into the communes of Nyamabuye, where the town of Gitarama is located, and of Taba, Kayenzi and Rutobwe, in the direction of Kigali. The assault on Gitarama appears to have a simple message: to spread panic by making it clear that the insurgency is not confined to the northwest, and to reinforce the fear by inching towards Kigali itself.

The insurgents themselves have no doubt about the importance of Gitarama. Diogène Niyonsenga, a civilian from Kibilira, Gisenyi, arrived in Gitarama on 27 February 1998 and was arrested in April.

Gitarama is a strategic préfecture for Rwanda. After the downfall of this préfecture, the population of Kigali town, mostly made up of foreigners, will flee towards Uganda and Tanzania. The soldiers themselves will run away. We will leave Gitarama and head towards Kigali on foot, without meeting any obstacles. The last confrontations will take place in Umutara, the cradle of the Tutsi leaders.

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**“The take-over of Gitarama will cut off all communication between Kigali and the south-west of Rwanda. The population of the southwest, bordering Burundi and Congo, will also flee”.**

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Tell our brothers of Kigali to be courageous and optimistic because victory is near. I am prepared to do anything, even to die, in order to free the country.

In recent months, the insurgents have also launched operations in the sous-préfecture of Rushashi, which consists of the communes of Rushashi, Tare and Musasa. Located between Ruhengeri and Kigali, this area offers them a number of military advantages; it is situated along the Nyabarongo river and is covered by papyrus bushes.

### Who is Fighting and Why

In the minds of the insurgents, the conflict in the northwest is one more battle in the war which began in 1990. Many of them are ex-FAR who have been training or carrying out military operations aimed at bringing about the defeat of the RPA for as long as eight years. Although they are now fighting under very different conditions, their loyalties remain the same, as do many of their leaders. They are holding together a force which also includes large numbers of interahamwe or new recruits with little training or experience, but who, as fugitives from justice, often have good reason to join up. These insurgents have little to lose and nowhere to go. They believe that violence is their only means of re-entry into Rwandese society.

Having spent some time with the insurgents, Théophile Munyandekwe, an ex-FAR, made the following useful summary of their aims which corresponds with our own findings.

The few weapons the infiltrators have allow them to terrorise the population, to force them to feed and shelter them, and to carry out certain acts of sabotage, which they hope will force the regime to negotiate with them. Among these acts of sabotage are the assassinations of Tutsis, who are blamed for the existence of the present regime, and their Hutu collaborators. The aim is to complete the genocide if possible, or force the ‘Tutsi regime’ to negotiate with them if that fails.

The assassination of Tutsis aims to show the Hutus that the infiltrators work only in the interests of Hutu. As for the assassination of Hutu collaborators of the regime, it aims to show the Hutu population that the present regime is incapable of protecting its population and that they should hate the regime. All this, and the burning of vehicles and commune offices, proves their strength to the population.<sup>9</sup>

The foundations for the insurgency in the northwest were established in camps in the former Zaire. The majority of the insurgents were once “refugees”. They include perpetrators of the 1994 genocide who have returned from exile with their ideas reinforced. Refugees were recruited, trained and indoctrinated with a vision of the RPF as the oppressor of the Hutu people. Amongst themselves, they sometimes refer to each other as “*le fils du vieux*” (the sons of Habyarimana). They began infiltration missions from camps, conveniently based near the Rwandese border, as early as 1995. Diogène Niyonsenga described the first steps towards war.

Infiltration into Rwanda began very shortly after exile and was one of the methods of preparation to attack this country. When they returned to Zaire, the infiltrators were introduced to us during our ideological awareness meetings. They portrayed the situation in Rwanda as negative, without any respect for human rights and above all hostile to the Hutus.

### *A Driving Force: Fear of Justice*

We have interviewed a substantial 37 former infiltrators who gave details of how and why they became involved. Those that took part in the genocide cannot return to their communes of origin where they could be identified and arrested. This prevents them from claiming their new identity card, which is essential for reintegration into Rwandese society. They are prepared to fight to the death rather than be brought to justice. In early 1997, they found that Rwanda’s neighbours were no longer prepared to offer them refuge, let alone the political, military and logistical support they once enjoyed in Zaire. The dramatic regional impact of Mobutu’s overthrow also influenced other African nations; in West and Southern Africa, as well as Kenya, they encountered a new hostility towards their cause.

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<sup>9</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 5 February 1998.

Above all, the infiltrators are driven by hatred and fear. They have been taught to believe they are fighting not only for their country, but for their lives, as Célestin Mutabaruka, an infiltrator captured in battle in August 1997, explained.

People used to tell us that the *Inkotanyi* kill all male Hutus, especially the ex-FAR. We were well aware that some ex-FAR were in the country and had not been killed. But we thought it was because friends in high places protected them. My own theory is that they had been invited back by these friends.

Warrant Officer Célestin Mutabaruka is from sector Gati, commune Muhazi in Kibungo. He graduated from military school in October 1983, and then trained as a motor mechanic in Kanombe camp. When the war began in October 1990, he repaired the vehicles needed for battle. Following the genocide, Célestin left Rwanda for Zaire, staying first in Kibumba camp and then in Katale. As soon as they arrived in the refugee camps, ex-FAR and militiamen regrouped and began training new recruits. Their aim from the outset was to reconquer their homeland; the camps became their new operational bases. Célestin spoke of the preparations in his camp.

In Katale, the military chief was Col. Paul Rwarakabije [currently one of the insurgents' key leaders commanders]. The officers with him included Lt. Nsengiyumva. There were many of us, especially since there were also new recruits. Recruiting other soldiers became necessary because it was the soldiers who were meant to win the country back again. Recruitment was voluntary, but after a sensitisation programme, almost all of the young male civilians in Katale volunteered for military training, apart from the disabled.

Superior officers like Col. Tharcisse Renzaho<sup>10</sup> held meetings at the camp, reassuring the soldiers that there would be no shortage of arms and that they would be supported by the Zairian authorities. Meanwhile, the

soldiers were taught that returning to Rwanda individually would mean almost certain death.

We stayed together as a military unit. Since the idea was to come back and liberate our country using military means, each one of us wondered whether we should abandon our colleagues and risk being killed by the *Inkotanyi*. That is why we had to wait to come back together and liberate our country.

We were never convinced that the ex-FAR who went home peacefully were still alive. Apart from people like Lt. Col. Munyakazi,<sup>11</sup> we had no hope for the others.

When the camps came under attack in late 1996, Célestin was in a battalion under the command of Lt. Nsengiyumva; they immediately retreated to Masisi. The soldiers camped there with the permission of local people, who also gave them provisions. Then, in April 1997, they were chased out again by the ADFL. Célestin went to Kamonyi *groupement* where he met up with about 200 other soldiers who had come from Kisangani, led by a Lt. Mugabo. Célestin was given charge of a platoon of 36 men, then ordered to take them to Rwanda. They arrived in July.

The commander informed us that ex-FAR soldiers had come from the different corners of North Kivu and had gone to Rwanda. He said that we should join them in the volcanic forest in Rwanda. We came from the area around camp Rumangabo [a military camp in Masisi] and went past Kalisimbi volcano. When we reached the volcano, we heard explosions which confirmed that the war was already under way. We were in Kinigi by 21 July.

My platoon was in charge of operations in Mutura commune and in one part of Karago [in Gisenyi]. The 36 men in our platoon had 22 guns; mine was a Kalachnikov; there were also four R4s. Everyone had two or three loaders full of cartridges. We were determined to use this pathetic material in the hope of obtaining more weapons during the course of the confrontations. Guerrillas usually operate like this.

Soon after their return to Rwanda, the platoon dispersed, in search of ex-FAR who had returned before them. After one night in Kinigi, Célestin and his companion were identified by local people as infiltrators,

<sup>10</sup> Col. Tharcisse Renzaho was the préfet of Kigali during the genocide and a member of the "crisis committee" established by the interim government after Habyarimana's death. He is one of the most important architects of the genocide. Subsequently, he became one of the senior military leaders of the ex-FAR in North Kivu, a member of its high command.

<sup>11</sup> Lt. Col. Munyakazi, integrated into the RPA, was head of the gendarmerie in Muhima, Kigali, during the genocide.



captured and taken to the local military commander, who arrested them on 1 August.

Célestin estimated that around 40,000 men entered Rwanda at the same time as he did, with 5,000 more remaining in the Congo. Asked if those who had participated in the genocide were afraid to return and face their fate, Célestin said:

Perhaps there were, but the ordinary rank and file soldiers were not worried. They were only afraid of being killed by the *Inyenzi* and were determined to chase the *Inkotanyi* out of the country.<sup>12</sup>

Like many other ex-FAR interviewed for this book, Célestin made no mention of his own role in the genocide. But according to the residents of Muhazi, Kibungo, he led a massacre at a place known as Kuri Chapelle near Lake Muhazi on 16 April 1994. He is said to have rounded up soldiers and militiamen and transported them there to support the local militia. Thousands died in the attack which lasted almost twelve hours. The allegations against him come from both Hutu witnesses and Tutsi survivors. One of them described seeing him shoot into a group of women, killing several. Others say that he was the only genocidaire with a gun in the sector of Gasi and suspect him of having shot at Tutsis as they fled an attack at the commune office on 15 April. He is alleged to have obtained weapons for several militiamen and to have participated in looting on 12 April. Even Célestin's former neighbour, Léonard Gakwisi, is prepared to testify that he organised the hunt for Tutsis near his home. Célestin has not returned to his home commune since the genocide.

This illustrates the extent to which fear of justice is a central motive driving the insurgency in the northwest. According to Corporal François Mbonanza, a 27 year-old former infiltrator:

Many infiltrators are determined to continue the fight. Their determination is, for the most part, based on the fear of being punished for their bad behaviour during the genocide. They would rather die fighting.

François was arrested in September 1997 during a battle with the RPA. He comes from sector Muramba, commune Cyabingo in Ruhengeri. He joined the former army in 1989, serving in various posts in Byumba and Kigali. He did not go into exile in 1994; in early 1995, he returned home to

Cyabingo and began to farm. In August 1995, he was persuaded to lend a hand to the infiltrators.

I learned that Major Bararwerekana of Nkuli had the Tutsis who were sheltering in some church killed, when he was the commander of Kami camp during the genocide. [Kami camp was the FAR headquarters of the Military Police, and Bararwerekana was the commanding officer there]. Also, Byiringiro of Rwerere told us one day that he had killed a large number of Tutsis during the genocide, and that he couldn't return because of the few survivors who were left.

A number of the former infiltrators we spoke to were prepared to name individuals they knew had played a part in the genocide, and most agreed that the fear of being arrested lies behind the commitment of many individuals to the conflict. But also involved is the commitment of soldiers to their army, and some soldiers have been following orders since they left Rwanda in July 1994.

Fabien Niyonsenga, 25, joined FAR in 1993 and went to Zaire on 14 July 1994, using an illegal entry point at a place known as Mu Birere so that he could cross with his gun. He was hired in Goma to unload supplies for the World Food Programme. After the destruction of the camps in November 1996, Fabien fled to Walikale, Hamisi, Tingi Tingi and Ubundu. There he was advised to return to Rwanda.

When Major Karegeya from Ruhengeri, the highest-ranking soldier of the 600 there [in Ubundu], told us to go and die in Rwanda since our ex-FAR colleagues had already begun the war to liberate our country. I had my gun, M-16 -SAR 80, which I had obtained in Tingi Tingi. When we left Ubundu to go to Rwanda, I also had 1200 cartridges; each of my colleagues had his own gun and a number of cartridges too. We also had some heavy machine guns. We were led by ten Zairians who knew the way to Rwanda and who knew Masisi. When we got to a certain place, we formed into groups of sixty to avoid being identified and threatened by Kabila's rebels.

In June 1997, they reached Gatoyi in Masisi; a month later a group of 200 left for the Kalisimbi volcano on the border with Rwanda. They spent nearly another month in the forest there, under the command of Major Pierre-Célestin Haguma, Major Karegeya and Sub-Lt. Mucyo, waiting for guides to take them into Rwanda.

<sup>12</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 31 August 1997.

Eventually, Lt. Kaceri came along with eight other ex-FAR to take us. Before we left, he advised us to throw away all our possessions except our weapons. That night we reached commune Mutura; in the morning we arrived close to [the military] camp of Mukamira. We spent the day in the bush and then we continued our journey. On the second day we were put up in the homes of local people. The people from this place (I forget the name) supported us and they willingly gave us food to eat.

Some of the group left with Sub-Lt. Mucyo for Gikongoro, while Fabien joined the unit of about 1000 men, under the orders of Lt. Pasteur, operating in the communes of Ramba and Kibilira, in Gisenyi.

My role was to obtain information about the RPA and other intelligence which I had to take to my boss, Lt. Manu from Kibungo, who was in charge of all intelligence work in S2. My unit was positioned in sector Sovu, commune Ramba, next to the communes of Rutsiro and Kivumu in Kibuye.

On 2 April 1998, Fabien was arrested in Bulinga, Gitarama, after an old woman who had housed him alerted the *responsable* of her cellule.

Daniel Munyabikari became a soldier in 1992 and left for Zaire in July 1994, settling in Mugunga camp. Situated near the Rwandese border, the infiltrators were able to launch missions throughout 1995 and 1996.<sup>13</sup> Daniel believes they were in an ideal position to achieve their objectives when the camps were demolished.

The infiltration operations had begun when we were in the camps. At first the missions were to sensitise the population which hadn't fled, and to carry out isolated acts of sabotage. Had the camps not been destroyed and our military preparations ruined, Rwanda would have gone up in flames. The military authorities had warned us to be ready and had begun training the recruits, I think that we were ready to attack when the refugee camps were destroyed and the people scattered. Some weapons had already arrived at our headquarters in Mugunga, including 120mm mortars, which we had to abandon there.

<sup>13</sup> Two other prefectures bordering the former Zaire—Cyangugu and Kibuye—were also particularly hard-hit by infiltration raids. See African Rights, *John Yurifu Munyakazi: The Killer Behind the Refugee*. *Witness to Genocide*, Issue 6, June 1997 and African Rights, *Killing the Evidence: Murder, Attacks, Arrests and Intimidation of Survivors and Witnesses*, April 1996.

Daniel, 27, returned to Rwanda in November 1996 and registered as an ex-FAR in his home commune of Kinigi, Ruhengeri, living in sector Kagano. In December he joined the insurgents, but he found little to compare with life in the army. In January 1998, he gave up on their cause and deserted. He explained why.

I would describe the infiltrators' determination as suicidal. They are mostly génocidaires who are wanted by the judiciary. They would rather attempt to make war with a few weapons.

Jean Marie-Vianney Cyizere, a civilian from Kinigi, said he became an insurgent in September 1997. He described the insurgents' living situation as "terrible", adding "they risk death on a daily basis". Nevertheless, many of them were willing to endure these harsh conditions or "even to die", including members of his own Alpha battalion. He too attributed their persistence to the fear of justice.

The key reason for this is the fear of being punished for their actions during the genocide. Amongst those I lived with I recognised some génocidaires, including a militiaman called Kanyetangi; Kavalisi, the councillor of sector Kanyamiheto during the genocide and Etienne Havugimana, the bourgmestre of Kinigi during the genocide. I was in Alpha battalion with them. These people cannot return peacefully because of their actions during the genocide. In addition, councillor Kavalisi played an important role in the massacres of the Bagogwe Tutsis in 1991.

Théophile Munyandekwe, an ex-FAR from Kinigi, commented:

In our commune, the recruitment of ex-FAR repatriated in November 1996, began in earnest in December 1997. But some had joined the infiltrators several months before, after having problems with the population, or being hunted for genocide. This happened to Eliezer from sector Nyabitsinde. There are more than five other ex-FAR whom I know by sight who have joined the infiltrators.

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“When all attempts to avoid justice have failed, the committed infiltrator would rather die on the battlefield than any other way”.

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Emmanuel Musabyeyezu, from sector Hindiro in Satinsyi, Gisenyi, is 28 and was a sub-lieutenant who had joined FAR soon after Habyarimana's death. He pointed out that he has been training for battle since August 1994, when he arrived in Goma.

From our arrival in Zaire, we were told to be ready to reconquer our country, which was occupied by foreigners. We waited for the signal which never came.

He learned military engineering—planting mines, clearing them, and destroying bridges and houses—under the command of Brigadier-General Gratien Kabiligi<sup>14</sup> and Col. Tharcisse Renzaho. Emmanuel agreed that the fear of justice is an important reason why the insurgents are fighting, but he added a further explanation.

The dogged determination of most of the infiltrators rests on their criminal behaviour during the genocide for some, and on the continued looting of the country for others.<sup>15</sup>

Some of the infiltrators prefer to define their campaign as a struggle for their rights. Gaspard Tegera, forty, was a member of the privileged Presidential Guard, Habyarimana's hand-picked escorts, from 1981-1994. He is from Habyarimana's commune of origin, Karago in Gisenyi. His team became responsible for the security of Théodore Sindikubwabo, the head of the interim government. In July 1994 he and his family settled in Mugunga camp, still with his commander, Major Protais Mpiranya. From there, he made his way to Masisi and was arrested in Goma on 4 February 1998.

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<sup>14</sup> Gratien Kabiligi was promoted from colonel to a brigadier-general on 8 April 1994, shortly after the genocide began. He fled to Bukavu and became deputy commander of the ex-FAR, with responsibility for the 1st Division, based in Bukavu. He also became a member of their high command and a member of the commission charged with information and documentation. He was arrested in Nairobi on 17 July 1997 and is currently in the custody of the ICTR in Arusha.

<sup>15</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 31 August 1997.

Saying “he never touched, killed or saved anyone during the genocide”, he explained:

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“Our intention in this current war is to demand that the Rwandese government recognise our rights, which include the sharing of power and dropping these accusations that we are *génocidaires*”.

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We should forget what happened and, together, start again to build up our country.

### *Preparing for Battle: Regrouping in Masisi*

The closure of the camps at the end of 1996 all but destroyed the military strength of the ex-FAR. It deprived them of their operational base, some of their weapons and the military, political, logistical, financial and practical support they received from Zaire. It also destroyed the cohesion of the military structure they had established in the camps. Many of their fighters were either killed, obliged to return to Rwanda or to seek refuge elsewhere. In a more general sense, the return of the refugees to Rwanda was a political disaster for them; the refugees were not only potential fighters, but the military's most important political asset. Their hold over the refugees gave them clout internationally; at a practical level, the camps were an ideal cover for their military activities and were also an important source of funding. Faced with the unexpected loss of the camps, the leaders of the ex-FAR ordered their troops to retreat to Masisi, to regroup and re-organise. Emmanuel Musabyeyezu named several of the commanders who gathered in Masisi to take stock of the situation and to plan the destabilisation of Rwanda, men whose names feature prominently in this book.

When we arrived in Masisi, I immediately went into the forest. I was with Lt.Col. Rwarakabije; Lt.Col. Nkundiye; Major Gakara; Captain Kaceri; Captain Shumbusho and others. One day Rwarakabije brought us together to see how many soldiers were present in Masisi. He noticed that several battalions had lost some of their members and reformed them, integrating new civilian recruits who had been trained in the camps.

Emmanuel was with his battalion in Masisi when the order came to return to Rwanda, a week after the fall of Kisangani on 15 March 1997, an

event that marked a fundamental turning point in the political fortunes of the infiltrators. Lt.Col. Paul Rwarakabije organised a meeting in Mityanja; the aim was to define the next stage in the war.

A week after the fall of Kisingani, Captain Harelimana, known as 'Kaceri', our battalion commander, took part in a meeting organised by Lt.Col. Rwarakabije and the other senior commanders, after which he came and told us: 'The solution is to begin the war as soon as possible, either to overthrow the regime or force it to negotiate with us'. Lt. Habimana asked about the lack of weapons and Kaceri replied: 'We cannot do otherwise. We are going to conduct a guerrilla campaign which does not necessarily require many weapons. Consider the case of Museveni who began his guerrilla war with only ten rifles! The weapons will come from the battlefield and from the *Inkotanyi* positions we will attack'.

Having decided what to do, the different groups entered the country one at a time, after we, the student warrant-officers, had been promoted to the rank of Sub-Lieutenants on 25 May.

Another soldier who attended the meeting was Sylvère Twahirwa. Sylvère, 26, is a native of Muhora in commune Mbogo, Greater Kigali. He was recruited by the army in 1991; his Muvumba battalion was operating in Mutara in April 1994. He was wounded by a bullet to the head while fighting in Kigali. In Zaire, he was based in Kahindo camp.

We ex-FAR from the camps of Kahindo, Katale and Kibumba were all led by Lt.Col. Rwarakabije. After we were settled in Masisi, the soldiers were invited to sign up with Rwarakabije who was in Mityanja. He was assisted by Major Gaston Iyamuremye of Ruhengeri, who commanded the 21st battalion and Lt.-Col. Nkundiye, in charge of recruitment. I signed on and was invited with the other soldiers to go to Butenderi, where I was placed in the 44th battalion, led at first by Captain Nzabonimpa, from Mutara commune, who was then transferred and replaced by Lt. Pacifique.

Sub-Lt. Sylvestre Nzabonariba, 32, a soldier since 1990, fought in Kigali in April 1994. In July of that year he went to Kahindo camp; in October 1996, he trekked to Masisi, along with his wife and child, and remained there until 15 March 1997 when, he said, "the Banyamulenge chased us away". At the end of April, Sylvestre's wife and child were repatriated to Rwanda by UNHCR, while he spent two weeks in the volcanic forest, preparing for war against Rwanda. He acknowledged that the war in the northwest was an act of desperation.

There were lots of other teams like our own. No less than 30,000 soldiers entered Rwanda, each one aware of the commune or préfecture where they would be carrying out their mission.

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**"We were stuck between Zaire, Uganda and Rwanda and none of these countries could take us in. We were shifted around between the east and the west. The fact that we were confronted with such a painful dilemma pushed us to come and die in Rwanda by attempting to fight for power. In other words, we had decided to die fighting"**

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Sylvestre then went to meet up with other FAR soldiers in Karago, Gisenyi. He said he only fought in one battle against a small group of RPA soldiers before he deserted the infiltrators.

The 200 soldiers, my companions, came from all the different préfectures in Rwanda except for Cyangugu, which was represented by less than ten men. Other teams are deployed in each préfecture.

Sylvestre was not willing to talk about how he had used his time in Kahindo camp to prepare his men for military activity in Rwanda. Cyprien Ruzindana, who was under his command at the camp, mentioned his role. This is a reminder that it is not only those who killed during the genocide who fear justice, but also those who were involved in infiltration missions. Cyprien, 23, from Gihora in Kinigi became a soldier in 1993.

In June 1995, Sub-Lt. Sylvestre Nzabonariba from Karago commune was my company commander. He told me to prepare myself for a mission in Rwanda. He had already sent out a platoon of 25 men, led by Sub-Lt. Boniface Muhayimana from Mukingo. A week later I decided to escape back to Rwanda before this dangerous mission was confirmed. That is how I returned.<sup>16</sup>

The links between the activities carried out in the camps in Zaire and in the northwest are so direct that some of the men who joined the insurgency in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi continued their training with the same

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<sup>16</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 27 September 1997.

men who had initiated them in Kivu. Diogène Niyonsenga, the civilian mentioned earlier, became an infiltrator in February 1998, but had started to receive military and what he called “ideological” training from May 1997 onwards. He had in fact begun his military training while at Mugunga camp. He is 25 and comes from cellule Shaka, sector Mikingo in Kibilira, Gisenyi.

I was trained with 149 other civilians, all young men from various sectors of Kibilira. We were trained by a man known as Kunja, a corporal. He was an old man from Gitarama who, before exile in Zaire, was based in a military camp in Gitarama. The training sessions, which were often on the handling of weapons such as R4s and R5s, and on camouflage techniques, took place once a week, either on a Thursday or Friday, on a hill situated in Nyakibari cellule, Ntaganzwa sector in Kibilira. Corporal Kunja did most of the training; sometimes he was helped by a man known as Gaca. Kunja, whose first name is Vincent, had also been my instructor in Mugunga. The training sessions are really hard. That’s why eight out of the 149 died during the training period which ended in December.

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**“When someone dies, we are told that the blood is spilt in the name of the country”.**

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Eugène Micombero, 26, enlisted in the army in 1991. He is from commune Gikoro, Greater Kigali, and suffered a minor injury when the RPA shelled camp Kanombe in Kigali. When Kigali fell, he made his way to Goma, via Gisenyi. After Mugunga camp was dismantled, he stayed with his company and was ordered to move to Tambi, from where small groups of soldiers were sent into Rwanda. In May 1997, it was Eugène’s turn to enter Rwanda. He came with forty men, but only eight guns, under the command of warrant-officer-in-training, Twahirwa.

We arrived via Mutura commune in Gisenyi; our area of operations was commune Musambira in Gitarama. We were guided by Corporal Ayirwanda of commune Mutura, and crossed from Mutura to Karago. We had hoped that the Karago infiltrators would make it easy for us to find shelter that night, but this didn’t happen. We went into a forest. The next day, an RPA search operation dispersed us. I stayed with Corporal Kayiranga of Cyeru commune. As I knew that I could survive quite easily in Cyabingo, which I knew before our exile, I asked a peasant the way there.

In sector Ngege, Cyabingo, a peasant called Fabien, who knew me, sheltered us for two weeks. After he drove us out we went to stay with Rwajekare of sector Rutare. Rwajekare put us in touch with infiltrators staying with Munyenkusi in Rutare. These infiltrators thought we were RPF spies, tied our arms up and took us to Mukungwa river with the intention of throwing us in. They beat us as they led us to the river; when we got there, they changed their minds, untied us and allowed us to leave. We went into a forest for a while. We were afraid of being discovered by the *Inkotanyi* during their searches and being killed. We returned to see these infiltrators on 28 August, begging them to welcome us in. They saw how insistent we were and became convinced that we were on their side.<sup>17</sup>

On 2 December, Eugène was shot in the right leg by the RPA and captured. Not only are there weaknesses in the organisation of the insurgents, but there are divisions within them. Among the insurgents are some ex-FAR and militiamen who originate from different préfectures; however many of the rank and file, and most of the leaders, are from Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. The testimony of Eugène Micombero sheds light on the favours enjoyed by the men from the northwest, and the resulting tensions.

There was a lot of regionalism in our unit. Apart from the soldiers Maniraho from Kigali and Ayirwanda from Butaniwa [Greater Kigali] and I, the others were from Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. Our commander, Cobra, was from Gisenyi. This regional segregation manifested itself in insults and other comments directed against us. For instance, I used to ask for water to wash my hands before eating and they would say: ‘You want to show us that you come from Kigali and that you are cleaner than us!’ We were also not issued rifles. I remember that a first soldier nicknamed Cameroon, from Nkuli in Ruhengeri, was given an R5 rifle straight away, before me and the two others from Kigali, who had been there a long time.

The manner in which the refugees came back to Rwanda made screening impossible, allowing many ex-FAR to register as civilians, and enabling those who had carried out infiltration raids from the camps to escape notice. Emmanuel Ntezimana, a former teacher in Kinigi, mentioned one such man.

The violence seems to have started with the mass arrival of Rwandese refugees from Zaire. This was because some people had mingled in with

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<sup>17</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 4 December 1997.

them. One of them was an infiltrator called Nzabahuza, whose code name was 'Figaro', a squadron commander. He had completed his secondary school studies at Musanze and was attending military school in 1994 before he left. He returned with the mass of people and was employed by an NGO, either the ICRC or the HCR, for which he distributed supplies to refugees in Kinigi.

Some of the leading insurgents had been operating in the northwest for some time when the majority of the infiltrators returned around April/May 1997. However, many of the ex-FAR who returned to Rwanda in the first wave of repatriation in November 1996 or before, were not involved in the insurgency initially. They had been living legitimately within the community for several months, reporting regularly to the commune authorities, before they were enticed into fighting on the side of the insurgents. Corporal Joseph Nsanzabera, 28, a native of commune Mukingo, Ruhengeri, was arrested in Ruhengeri on 30 November 1997, one year after his return to Rwanda. His story of how he joined the infiltrators explains the pressures and temptations which have led ex-FAR soldiers in the area to take up arms again.

When the war of October 1990 began, Joseph was with the Para Commando battalion based in camp Kanombe in Greater Kigali, under the command of Major Aloys Ntabakuze.<sup>18</sup> In the early days of the genocide, he was one of five soldiers positioned at a roadblock in Remera, Kigali, checking vehicles and inspecting identity cards. Any Tutsis they discovered were driven away by Major Ntabakuze. Later, Joseph was transferred to the military hospital in camp Kanombe. In July 1994, home became camp Kibumba camp in Goma.

Saying that a return to Rwanda was "the only way out" after war erupted in Kivu, he came back to Rwanda in November 1996. Along with 222 other ex-FAR, he presented himself at Mukingo commune office, as required by the government. He continued to report every Thursday, following the instructions issued to the former FAR among the returnees. In April, he received a visit from another soldier.

Lt. Bunani from cellule Rukingo, sector Gatanga, a repatriated ex-FAR like myself, came to see me at the house. He told me: 'I want to bring you a gun for your protection because, as an ex-FAR, the *Inkotanyi* will undoubtedly kill us. Besides, you have heard that our brothers have begun

<sup>18</sup> Major Aloys Ntabakuze was arrested in Nairobi in July 1997 and is currently detained in the ICTR detention facilities in Arusha.

the war; we should help them'. He brought me a Kalachnikov with a loader of cartridges. I hid it in the trees which made up the enclosure of my house.

Joseph and Lt. Bunani teamed up with three other ex-FAR in Mukingo, all of them known to the commune authorities as repatriated former soldiers. They were Corporal Baptiste Ntibarikure from sector Shingiro, Corporal Jean-Népomuscène Ziragobora from sector Kimonyi and Léonard from cellule Rusambu. Their first venture as a group was self-enrichment. Armed with grenades, they went to the home of a businessman in Gataraga to extort 70,000 francs, which they divided up. Next, they stole three cows from peasants living in sector Muhingo, which they sold for 120,000 francs. With their own financial needs taken care of, they turned their attention to the war against the RPA.

One day in July, at about 6:00 p.m., we tried to ambush a military truck in Rwinzovu. As we saw it pass, we noticed that it only contained a few soldiers. Bunani went to fetch six other ex-FAR to shoot at this vehicle when it came back. We were eleven ex-FAR altogether. The other six that Bunani brought were not known in the area. I don't know where they came from. On its return, we shot at this vehicle which immediately burst into flames, at the Mudakama river in Rwinzovu. We had nine guns. Two of the four RPA soldiers died on the spot and the other two managed to escape. From this car, we retrieved two Kalachnikov guns. The two guns were kept at the home of the leader, Bunani.<sup>19</sup>

At the beginning of August, the group went to steal medicines from a health centre located next to St. Joseph Institute in Busogo in Mukingo. They obtained about ten cartons of anti-malaria tablets, which were stored in Bunani's home. They agreed to sell them and divide the money, but Joseph believes Bunani gave them to the infiltrators. Despite these activities, Joseph said that he and his companions continued to report to the commune office each Thursday. He believes some of them may still be "at liberty" in Mukingo, unless they have joined the infiltrators.

Between September and November, many soldiers throughout the northwest started to drift towards the infiltrators; these three months saw the largest number of recruits. About thirty ex-FAR in the commune of Nkuli, Ruhengeri alone had joined the infiltrators. All of them had returned to the country after the fall of Mobutu.

<sup>19</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 4 December 1997.

Not all the recruits during this period took up arms of their own volition. One of the men who was put under pressure is Jean Marie-Vianney Cyizere. He had just completed his third year of secondary school in Musanze, Ruhengeri, when he left for Zaire in July 1994. He and his family lived with relatives who had long been settled in Buvunga, near Katale camp. The family returned home to Bisate, commune Kinigi in January 1995. Jean Marie-Vianney, 22, stayed with the insurgents from September to early December 1997.

My recruitment by the infiltrators was preceded by their intimidating visits to our house. One day they turned up and took the food, cooked and uncooked, by force. The next day, at 3:00 a.m., four infiltrators arrived. Three were from Gitarama and the fourth, their commander, was Emmanuel. He had been a trainee warrant-officer who had been at Musanze school in 1992; he had been a teaching assistant before going to military school. He is from sector Tero in Kinigi. He was carrying a *Tchechenie* gun, and his companions had R5s. They were part of the Alpha battalion, and Emmanuel was a platoon leader.

Emmanuel, who knew me well, spoke of their mission to recruit me and the reason why: 'You have studied, but you remain unemployed. The present regime doesn't want to hire you. And now we have conquered the entire préfecture of Gisenyi, which gives us hope of conquering the whole of Rwanda. You will then have a job. Even before then, you will obtain a military rank'.

Two weeks later Corporal Phocas Habiyambere, my cousin, who is ex-FAR himself and an infiltrator, came to my house and told me the same thing. All this happened in August 1997, and I joined the infiltrators in September.

His first assignment was to monitor RPA positions, followed by taking part in confrontations with the RPA.

I took part in two operations, in sector Kabwende and sector Bisate. Both times we were defeated by the RPA. One day in sector Bisate, about thirty RPA soldiers discovered us. Although we were about 200 strong, we fled after a two hour exchange of gunfire. We were commanded by Sub-Lt. Sankara<sup>20</sup> of Byumba.

Although a number of factors constrain command and control of their forces, the infiltrators have a clearly defined military structure. Below the high command are the operational sectors and sub-sectors, the

battalions, the companies, the platoons etc... They do not have permanent headquarters; this tends to shift between different sectors and communes. From the interviews with insurgents, it was possible to establish the operational sectors which existed over a period of time and to identify the commanders.

- The sector known as 'Alpha' grouped together the communes of Kinigi, Nkumba, Kidaho and Butaro in Ruhengeri, and Buyoga in Byumba; it was commanded by Lt. Sébastien Ngororabanga, an engineer;
- The sector known as 'Bravo' included the communes of Mukingo, Nyakanama, Nyamutera, Ndusu and Gatonde in Ruhengeri, and certain communes in Greater Kigali. It was commanded by Captain Nzabonimpa, alias 'Ruvaga';
- The sector known as 'Charlie' encompassed the communes of Rwerere, Kanama and Rubavu in Gisenyi. Its commander was Captain Alfred Rusigi;
- The 'Delta' sector included the communes of Karago, Giciye, Satinsyi and Ramba in Gisenyi and was headed by Captain Gelase Harefimana, alias 'Kaceri';
- Captain Pacifique Ntawunguka was head of sector Kingogo which grouped together certain communes of Gisenyi and of Kibuye.

Insurgents interviewed in June/July 1998 said that ALIR had recently been restructured, with the merging of sectors, the creation of new ones and a reshuffle in the leadership. There are currently only four operational sectors, namely:

- Nazareth includes most of Ruhengeri, the sous-préfecture of Rushashi in Greater Kigali and parts of Byumba; its commander is Major Pierre-Célestin Habimana, alias "Jules Bemera";
- Bethlehem (formerly Echo) covers the communes of Rubavu, Kanama, Mutura and Rwerere in Gisenyi and is under the command of Captain Alfred Rusigi;
- Quebec (formerly Charlie) controls certain communes in Gisenyi, such as Karago and Giciye; its commander is Major Laurent Rwagakinga, alias "Kabore";
- Delta includes the sous-préfecture of Ngororero in Gisenyi, parts of Kibuye and of Gitarama, and is under the command of Lt. Nizeyimana, alias "Bigaruka".

<sup>20</sup> Sankara is undoubtedly a nickname.

In addition to their formal names, each sector also has a code name known principally to the fighters. Nazareth has the code name Zulu, Delta's is Lima and Bethlehem's is Mike. The code name for ALIR's high command is Magreb.

### *Recruitment by Force, December 1997*

Despite the large number of new members they gained between September and November, especially amongst former soldiers, in December 1997 the insurgents began a new offensive—recruitment by force. In January/February 1998, we interviewed a number of former insurgents, most of them ex-FAR or civilians who had received military training in Zaire, who had abandoned their colleagues and who said they had been recruited at gunpoint in early December. Some of those who did not heed the call to "duty" were killed, reminding others of the price of refusal. They also described a punishing regime intended to discourage defections.

Théophile Munyandekwe, 23, comes from cellule Kivumu, sector Rugano in Kinigi. Théophile had become a soldier in 1993 and left Rwanda in July 1994, living in camp Kahindo. He returned to the country in November 1996, and said he was a regular attendant at the weekly meetings organised for the former soldiers in the commune office.

On 6 December 1997, at about 6:00 p.m., three armed people wearing civilian clothes arrived at my house. They asked me: "Weren't you a soldier?" I said that I was. One of them took out a piece of paper and said: "These are the orders from headquarters; they specify that the ex-FAR of Kinigi must come and help the others, or be shot".

I thought about Corporal Emmanuel Rwubahiriza, who had been beaten to death a few days before after he refused to follow them. I went with them without asking any questions. They led me to the border between sector Nyabitsinde and sector Bisate, where we met 23 others, who had been recruited in the same way. We were housed with local peasants and told not to leave the house unless RPA soldiers came, when we were to flee with the local people. The next morning we met Sub-Lt. Sankara, commander of Crag company.

Sankara began by lecturing us, telling us that we had left them on their own to free the country, and had preferred to follow the bad *Inyenzi* ideology. "You must now forget those lies they have put in your heads". He added that we must wait for guides to take us to Gisenyi, controlled by the Charlie battalion. He said that since they didn't trust us yet, we couldn't operate in our native commune.

On 1 January 1998, Théophile reported to the commune office of Kinigi. Shortly afterwards, he was integrated into the RPA. He gave the following reason for his desertion.

The very harsh penalties, including death. Four infiltrators were killed during our stay, suspected of being accomplices of the regime.

Daniel Munyabikari received a visit at his home, in Kinigi, on exactly the same day as Théophile, and was also presented to Sankara.

On 6 December 1997, at 7:00 p.m., two armed infiltrators came to see me at home. "Let's go to work", they said. I wanted to know what work they meant, and they told me: "Let's go, you'll see". As my refusal would mean my death, I said goodbye to my wife. They led me to sector Bisate, cellule Ruginga, where I joined eight other ex-FAR who had been led there in the same way.

These infiltrators introduced their commander, Sub-Lt. Sankara, of Byumba. He took us to a major nicknamed 'Kambari', who was leading many other ex-FAR recruits. This major told us: "You are late. 117 other ex-FAR left yesterday for Gitarama, and you should have left with them".

Daniel became part of a large group of ex-FAR, most of them recruited through intimidation.

We were 85 ex-FAR from Kinigi. We were supposed to go to Gitarama when we were ready. Among the 85, probably 25 had been voluntarily recruited. The others had been recruited by force.

The infiltrators are not paid. They either ask their families for money or steal some from the population. Nevertheless, theft is punishable by death. When I was there I witnessed the execution of Private Ngororabanga, from sector Musanze in Kinigi. He was accused of stealing 1500 francs from a peasant. Yet the commanders can order looting with impunity.<sup>21</sup>

Daniel also decided to desert after a few days, returning home on 9 January.

Corporal Pierre-Célestin Ngendahimana, 38, had been a soldier for seventeen years by the time he went into exile in Zaire in 1994. He was, at one time, a Presidential Guard; during the genocide, he was in the Para

<sup>21</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 5 February 1998.



Commando battalion commanded by Major Aloys Ntabakuze. He returned from Mugunga camp in November 1996 and moved into his old home in cellule Ruhanga II, sector Kabwende in Kinigi, reporting regularly to the commune office.

In February 1998 two infiltrators came to my home and forced me to go with them to Bisate. They didn't listen to my argument that I was too old. At Bisate, I learned, along with other ex-FARs who had been brought there, that some of us were to be sent to Gitarama and some to Rushashi. Once again, I emphasised the reasons why I was unsuitable for military activities—my advanced age and my family obligations. I have seven children. The leader of the local infiltrators told me that such an excuse could only be granted by Major Ngango, who, judging from the way he speaks, is certainly from Gisenyi or Ruhengeri. One day, at 8:00 a.m., I was taken to see him in Bisate sector by warrant officer Karekezi. After I told him of the obstacles I faced, he asked: "Are you campaigning for us or for the *Inyenzi*?" The final solution was that warrant officer Karekezi would give me a job suitable for my situation. When asked what I could do, I said that disseminating information amongst the population would be easy for me. We agreed on this, but I opposed his wish to send me to Nkumba commune. I preferred to do this work in Nyarugina sector, Kinigi, about eight kilometres from my home. So, I began to serve ALIR by asking the people to prepare food for the infiltrators; to avoid collaboration with state services, to flee from RPA soldiers and to inform others of their presence.

Recruitment by force was not only a feature in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, but also in Masisi. Régis Niyibizi, a former soldier, escaped the trap.

Major [Pierre-Célestin] Haguma asked us to sign up, voluntarily, to go and help in the war of liberation. The signing up took place, but they needed more people. So the forced recruitment stage began with the major's return from Rwanda, where he often went, on 5 January 1998. That day he came to see me, at 6:30 p.m., and asked me to come with him to a place called Muhayirwa, *groupement* Gatoyi. As I could see that he intended to send me to Rwanda I told him that Sadi's mother, with whom I was staying, needed me to do the driving, and to supervise the workers in the fields. He left, furious with me. He went to Muhayirwa, where he picked out between 100-150 young men from the meeting held there and sent them to Rwanda. Musabye from Butare, who attended the meeting, told me about this.

Even those who had joined earlier became disaffected with the ruthless regime administered by the insurgents by the end of 1997. Jean Marie-Vianney Cyizere had been fighting with them since September, but decided to quit in December.

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**"The rules governing the conduct of infiltrators are very hard to bear, especially for new recruits. This creates a desire for desertion among the new recruits. But this desire is constrained by political intimidation on the part of leaders who say: 'He who deserts will be savagely killed by the *Inkotanyi*; otherwise we will hunt him down and kill him ourselves'".**

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On 20 December I was transferred to commune Giciye. I was chosen along with 74 ex-FAR who had just been recruited in communes Mukingo, Kinigi and Nkumba, where they had been living since they returned in November 1996. We were led by four guides, the only ones with guns.

He was promoted from a civilian to a soldier.

Our commander, Major Ngororabanga, alias 'Nganga', told me before we left: 'From today you are a private'. This major was head of operations in the commune of Mukingo, Kinigi, Nkumba, Kigombe and Kidaho.

All sexual relations, willing or not, drunkenness, and unauthorised looting are punishable by death. Seven infiltrators who were accused of the same crime—stealing 13,000 francs from a peasant—were executed while I was an infiltrator. They included the soldiers Frédéric Nsenga, Singirankabo and Wanga. They were killed in front of us, by small hoes and strangulation. The death penalty is also applied to infiltrators who show fear in combat. Only the commander can give the order to withdraw. I also opposed their cruelty, which consisted in killing any Tutsi and any Hutu who opposes them.

I realised that commune Giciye was not controlled by the infiltrators, contrary to what we had been told before leaving Kinigi. I decided to abandon them.

His decision had tragic consequences for his immediate family.

Félicien Niyoyita, my younger brother, and Uwimana, my niece, were assassinated. The infiltrators abducted my mother, Laurence

Nyirandihoreye, and my two sisters. I don't know what has happened to them.

Sentences are meted out according to a harsh code of conduct whose preamble declares that "discipline is the pillar of army organisations all over the world." "Treason and espionage; insubordination, mutiny and revolt; desertion; unauthorised use of arms; embezzlement, stealing and selling of the organisation's properties; failure to fulfil military duties [cowardly behaviour]" are punishable by death. Lesser offences are met with severe beatings. To maintain morale and discipline, the consumption of alcohol is frowned upon and religious fervour is encouraged.

The infiltrators are not paid since, in the words of one infiltrator: "we were told that we would be sufficiently rewarded when we regained power". To survive they must rely upon help from people within the local community, hiding in their homes or banana plantations. The fighters are only the most visible participants in the war and are dependent upon support from a range of individuals, without whom the insurgency would have failed.

### *The Role of Women in the Insurgency*

Although most of the infiltrators interviewed in this book are male, it is important to note that there is considerable evidence of the involvement of women and children in the killings in the northwest, as there was in the 1994 genocide.<sup>22</sup> The testimonies of infiltrators and local people suggest that women play a vital part in gathering information, feeding and sheltering the infiltrators and in swelling their ranks during military operations. Female spirit mediums act as morale boosters, as do the groups of women who encourage the violence by singing, ululating and beating drums. An even larger number of women accompany the insurgents during when they camps, commune offices and commercial centres in order to loot.

Women were essential to the infiltrators' cause from the outset. Clarisse Mukamugema spoke about how women returning to Rwanda from the camps were used to disguise weapons.

<sup>22</sup> For details about women's participation in the genocide, see African Rights, *Not So Innocent: When Women Become Killers*, August 1995. Many former refugees have also spoken of the involvement of women in the infiltration raids into Rwanda.

Women were taught how to carry bullets woven into their hair, and guns inside bundles of firewood.

Dieudonné Musabyimana said that women are used to point out the "enemy."

We chose certain girls to be our informants so that we could identify those who were against us, as well as Hutus who were accomplices of the RPA.

He named one of them, the wife of another leading infiltrator.

One of the girls was Béatrice Mupfasoni, the wife of Lt. Kazungu. Béatrice and her parents are neighbours of President Pasteur Bizimungu's family. She is also an infiltrator and fights using a Uzzi gun or a pistol. I saw her one day using the Uzzi as we were fighting in Rubaya. There was also Nyanziga, Mupfasoni's younger sister.

According to Jean Marie-Vianney Cyizere, his Alpha battalion counted women among its fighters.

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**"Our platoon alone included five girls, who had all returned from Tingi Tingi. They were as effective as the boys".**

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Sub-Lt. Consoïée Mukangwije from Nkuli became a soldier in October 1991, after a year of accelerated training. She worked in the social services department of Kanombe military camp until she went into exile in July 1994. She decided to return to Rwanda in April 1995 with her children, leaving her husband, Sub-Lt. Jean-Bosco Ushimiyimana, in Masisi. In an interview in July 1998, she said that "he died either at Masisi or as an infiltrator in Rwanda". She became an insurgent on Christmas Day 1997, after she had relocated to the home of her aunt in Rugera sector, Nyamutera commune. She surrendered in June, after a battle with the RPA in Rugera.

When I got to Nyamutera, I realised that the region was controlled by the infiltrators because it was rarely visited by the *Inyenzi*. Lt. Col. Rwarakabije was there with about 33 soldiers. We took at least two infiltrators into our house each night, and fed them as well. Major Habimana was in charge of the operational sector now called Nazareth.

Major Habimana, who knew me, said he wanted to employ me in social services. I was assigned to sub-sector Zulu One (Z-01) operating in Nkuli, Mukingo, Kinigi, Nyakinama and Nyamutera communes. I was head of social services in this sub-sector, specifically in charge of identifying the number of sick people, and assessing their needs until they had recovered. Lt Buturu from Ruhengeri is in charge of Z-01. I had assistants in each commune who provided me with reports about the commune. I used the reports to evaluate the needs and then passed on the information to the sector commander. He was the only one who could order the delivery of the medicines from Dr. Claude, a civilian. My assistant in Nyakinama was Corporal Sinanga from Mukingo; in Nyamutera, it was Corporal Mutazihana from Marangara sector. A civilian girl called Béatrice was responsible for Kinigi and the soldier, Ndagijimana, represented me in Nkuli and Mukingo.

She confirmed that women took part in military assaults and mentioned several other female soldiers who are currently in the insurgents' front-line.

Amongst the women infiltrators are: Sub-Lt. Jeanne Mukarinanira, alias 'Aminata', from Kibuye, who operates in Habimana's sector; Sub-Lt. Fabiola Dusabimana from Gisenyi, who works in sector Charlie and Sub-Lt. Mukamanzi, the wife of Lt Nizeyimana, alias 'Bigaruka', the commander of sector Delta. She fights alongside her husband and they live with their two children.

Consolee said that women also had other responsibilities.

There is a means of communicating by Motorola charged by collaborators in Kigali. I know some people by face, mainly women, who are sent to Kigali for this type of thing. The S2, the intelligence service, mostly uses women because they are rarely suspected.<sup>23</sup>

Many survivors of the infiltrators' attacks have also spoken about the active role played by women and children. The home of Sheria Muyango, a school inspector in Giciye, Gisenyi, was damaged and his office burned to the ground when the commune office in Giciye was attacked on 17 November. In his report of the incident, he wrote:

<sup>23</sup> interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 15 July 1998.

At about 5:20 a.m., the commune office of Giciye was attacked by an armed band estimated at about 400 men, women and children, all mixed up.

Louise Mujawimana referred to "a huge assault" in July 1997 against the secondary school of Rwankeli, commune Nkuli in Ruhengeri.

Women, men, children and ex-FAR took up arms to attack this school. There were more than 300 assailants. They killed Pascasie, daughter of the pastor Ruterahagusha and the wife of Ruzibiza, together with her three daughters, as well as Samuel, a teacher at Rwankeli. Soldiers intervened quickly. Ruzibiza used to be the vice-rector of the University of Mudende. In 1990, he was threatened and forced to leave the country with his family. He returned after the genocide and became director of the secondary school of Rwankeli. And now his family was wiped out in 1997.

Rachel Mukamugema, a Congolese refugee, lived in Mutura where there have been two massacres, in August and in December 1997, at Mudende refugee camp. In December, most of the victims were killed with machetes, axes and clubs covered with nails, but again the assailants were a diverse group, as Rachel commented:

It is not only the infiltrators who kill; even the women and children join in the massacres.

Janvier Mundere lost his mother, sister and wife on 8 June 1998 in Kayove, Gisenyi. His baby daughter was wounded with *massue* blows to the head. He escaped with his older child. He identified many of his neighbours amongst the assassins.

I saw women among the killers. Above all, the women sang and blew whistles.<sup>24</sup>

Women have another key role to play in supporting the fighters, as spirit mediums or *Abahubiri*.

<sup>24</sup> interviewed in Gitesi, Kibuye, 21 June 1998.

### *Seeking Divine Inspiration and Protection: The Spirit Mediums*

To sustain the faith of their fighters in the war, the leaders have impressed on them the belief that they are fighting for a just cause that has divine blessing. Fighting always starts with a prayer led by a "prayer leader" known as an *amuhubiri*. Spirit mediums have been recruited to provide inspiration and discourage surrender. Fabien Niyonsenga, who expressed great faith in the prophecies of the woman attached to their battalion in Gisenyi, commented:

After the *Abahubiri* have communicated with God, they have the power to know what will happen. Our troops had two spirit mediums, both women. One was a corporal from Ruhengeri, and the other a civilian from Ramba. When the attack against the military camp of Ngororero [commune Satinsyi] took place in February 1998, four spirit mediums who lived with the commander sacrificed a whole week for prayers. Afterwards, they revealed what we would be able to take from the camp: 'After an hour of fighting with the soldiers of the camp, the RPA will flee and this will be your opportunity to take what you want, such as two vehicles of weapons'. We did win this attack and we still have the weapons in the two vehicles which we took. Our spirit mediums went back to Gisenyi. They send us predictions in writing.

He believes God is on the side of the insurgents.

From what the *Abahubiri* said, God promised that we would take the military camp of Gitarama where we would capture 75 soldiers and also that a plane, Kagame's helicopter, would crash. We had already obtained the weapon which would be used to explode the plane. The weapon was called a MIAA which shoots bullets which are like bombs.

Diogène Niyonsenga took part in the same operation against the garrison camp in Ngororero. He said that the fighters and their civilian supporters had to "respect the time which had been set by a spirit medium, a woman who comes from Masisi, whose prophecies are always authentic".

On the previous day, two spirit mediums, both from Masisi, had gathered us together in a place called Gashyushya, at about 7:00 p.m., to pray to the All-Powerful for the success of the attack. Then we went to sleep, four

infiltrators to a family, to wake up at 2:00 a.m., the hour at which we were supposed to take up our positions at the market of Ngororero.

The insurgents lost seven recent recruits and fifty civilians who died while they were engaged in a looting spree. Diogène blamed their deaths on their own failure "to follow the instructions of the best spirit medium who had discouraged us from looting".

Sub-Lt. Consolée Mukangwije does not fully believe in the prophecies of the *Abahubiri* herself, but she described how their presence is vital to the morale of the soldiers.

There were about 100 spirit mediums in our operational sector [Nazareth]. For them, this is a holy war, and as such, even during confrontations, we sing religious songs to keep us going. Usually, before an attack, they ask the infiltrators to confess to God and ask forgiveness for their sins. Afterwards, they explain that the people who were killed from amongst our ranks had not asked for forgiveness for all their sins. Some of their prophecies have been accurate, for example concerning about the military camp in Bigogwe. Despite the deaths, the infiltrators of Echo sector acquired the number of arms which the spirit mediums had predicted.

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**"According to the *Abahubiri*, the murders of Tutsis and of Hutus collaborating with the regime are acceptable to God because these people are an obstacle to the holy war".**

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Recently I spent the night in Kinigi with a spirit medium from Masisi, Maman Ukwishaka. At around midnight, she got up and said: 'Let's leave this place, the *Inyenzi* have surrounded it'. We were against it to begin with because the *Inyenzi* would not attack us at midnight. But to be safe, we agreed to leave for the volcanic forest. Very early the next morning, we discovered that the region had indeed been surrounded by the *Inyenzi* but that they hadn't found anyone.

Though many of the *Abahubiri* are natives of Masisi in DRC, not all of them are women. Jonas Nshimiyimana came across a group of men during his time with the insurgents in Kinigi, and noted the extent of their influence over the soldiers.

One day, I saw six men, *Abahubiri* from Masisi, carrying bibles and claiming to be messengers from God to the infiltrators. They said: 'The

infiltrators who rape women and those who loot from the people must be killed'. So in April 1998, in Nyabitsinde, two infiltrators who had looted excessively from the people, Faustin and a soldier, Kazungu, both from Kigombe commune, were killed by their colleagues.

Where resources are scarce and conditions harsh, there is no doubt that spirit mediums can be a very effective way of keeping soldiers motivated. They have been traditionally used by rebel forces, from the Lords Resistance Army in Uganda and Renamo in Mozambique, to the liberation fighters in Zimbabwe.

### *Under Siege: June-August 1998*

The insurgents have suffered a number of serious military setbacks since mid-July. In a carefully prepared offensive involving a huge number of soldiers, the RPA killed Lt.Col. Léonard Nkundiye, one of ALIR's top military commanders and the co-ordinator of PALIR, on 23 July, along with a substantial number of other fighters. The operation took place near the Nyirantarengwa river in Mutunda sector, commune Nyamutera in Ruhengeri. Other experienced ex-FAR soldiers died in subsequent weeks, including ALIR's chief of staff, Lt.Col. Proquaid Mugemanyi; a number have also been captured. Former fighters who knew the identities, tactics and hideouts of the insurgents provided the RPA with the necessary intelligence. Many of them have been integrated into the army. Thousands of young civilian fighters known as *résistants* have abandoned the insurgency in the last few months, along with ex-FAR, educated supporters and peasants. The exodus which began in April has intensified since June. The knowledge that those who left in the first waves did not suffer reprisals encouraged others to come forward. The reasons why people have left, and continue to leave, are many and varied. They include the insurgents' failure to take control of, and administer, territory, notwithstanding propaganda to the contrary; their inability to protect their supporters during confrontations with the RPA; their evident lack of weapons; the hunger, cold, lack of shelter and medicines which characterised life in the volcanoes and forests where the insurgents gathered them.

Corporal Laurent Nkurunziza, who deserted on 9 July, commented on Nkundiye's death:

The operation was successful due to the close collaboration between the RPA soldiers and the inhabitants, particularly the *résistants* who

accompanied the soldiers during the mission. These *résistants* pointed Nkundiye out to the soldiers.

The deaths of Nkundiye and Mugemanyi have, according to Laurent, "reinforced and exacerbated the other problems which the infiltrators face". He identified these as:

- The lack of weapons;
- The shortage of food; they only have sweet potatoes which, when eaten alone, causes an illness known as *ikirungurira* and leads to stomach upsets;
- The lack of hospital facilities for the sick who have become more numerous;
- Desertion by the inhabitants.<sup>25</sup>

Jonas Nshimiyimana spent six months as a *résistant* in his commune of Kinigi "without seeing any progress made". Worried about the future, he feigned illness and was given permission to stay with his family while his fellow-insurgents searched for medicines. When his family told him that other *résistants* who surrendered had not been killed, he gave himself up to the military base in Kagano.

There were precise motives behind my desertion. From the moment we were recruited, we were assured that certain regions, such as Gisenyi, were under their control, but it had not been possible for me to check the truth of this. The infiltrators couldn't compete with the heavy weapons of the RPA and were even less capable of protecting the population which they had exposed to danger. We wanted to know where we could place our relatives in safety. One of the local leaders advised us to place them in Bisate sector: 'which we have already conquered.' This sector borders on the forest of volcanoes. My colleagues sent their relatives there. However, the RPA arrived and organised two large-scale operations during which both infiltrators and civilians were killed. The RPA then set up a permanent military base there. That made me think that they hadn't taken control of any region where they could keep their relatives and friends in safety.

<sup>25</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 6 August 1998.

One *résistant* spoke of their contribution to the fight against their erstwhile allies.

The *résistants* act as guides for the soldiers during military operations. We show them the places and the system used by the infiltrators to hide things. Together with the soldiers, we recently found an underground hiding place in Maho cellule, Kagano sector, which contained ammunition cartridges. During another operation which was carried out in Gasiza, we killed fourteen infiltrators, including Nsenga from Kabwende and Kanyandekwe. We also acquired eight of their guns. It is evident that our collaboration with the army has hit the infiltrators in Kinigi very hard. That is why they are fleeing from this commune and going elsewhere, for example Nkumba and Nyamutera. The main reasons for their departure are the military operations and hunger.

A teacher who became an insurgent confirmed this account.

I was initially surprised by the welcome we received, since there were people like myself who had been helping their opponents. Having been welcomed, we gave the army a lot of information concerning the infiltrators' hiding places and their tactics.

It is not only young men drafted in the last year who have broken ranks with the insurgents. Corporal Pierre-Célestin Ngendahimana is the soldier cited earlier who spent seventeen years with FAR and who became a propagandist for the insurgents. He criticised their failure to separate themselves from civilians during battles. He gave other reasons for his disaffection.

I abandoned for several reasons: the difficult conditions in which we were living, in particular the three days and nights which we once had to spend in the forest of volcanoes in extreme cold; the fact that there wasn't a single sector which the infiltrators controlled and where they could place and guard their sick, their children and their old people; the news on Radio Rwanda about the ceremony closing the ex-FAR solidarity camp in Nkumba; the news about another ex-FAR solidarity camp in Mudende, Mutura, an area which the infiltrators had assured us they controlled completely; and finally confirmation of the news that Warrant Officer Kagabo, an ex-FAR, had been integrated into the RPA without problems. So, my seven children, my wife and I came to Kinigi commune office at 4:00 a.m. trying not to be seen by the infiltrators or their allies.

Pierre-Célestin urged the state to help the *résistants* dissociate themselves from the insurgents.

Apart from the important activities which the *résistants* perform for the infiltrators, they are also the recruitment ground for future fighters.

Sub-Lt. Consolée Mukangwe, captured by the RPA, said she hoped to use her experience and contacts to encourage other insurgents to give up the battle.

I am under arrest at the moment, but I have asked the soldiers who are holding me to allow me to work for them. I have assured them that I won't rejoin the infiltrators. I could certainly be useful to them in certain areas, such as information. I could go and ask the other infiltrators, especially women, to give themselves them up. I think that one day my request will be accepted; they are gradually gaining confidence in me.

Nevertheless, the insurgents cannot be written off. They will, for the foreseeable future, continue to wreak havoc on the people of Rwanda and its neighbours, even if they represent less of a threat today than at the beginning of the year. Corporal Laurent Nkurunziza cautioned against hasty judgements about their demise.

The fact that the infiltrators' are experiencing problems does not mean that the war is over. There is still a large number of them. In the face of these difficulties, the infiltrators have now begun to re-educate the people who haven't deserted them yet and to cruelly murder anyone who collaborates in the slightest way with the regime. This is why six members of my family were killed on 14 July 1998 after the infiltrators heard that I had turned myself over to the authorities.

Sub-Lt. François-Xavier Nayigiziki only parted company with the infiltrators on 4 August.

My main reasons for leaving the infiltrators was the lack of a home and of stability and the infiltrators' strategy of involving civilians in a war which was only causing the deaths of local people.

He too believes that the infiltrators will not give up easily. As he says, much will depend on the nature and extent of their external support.

The death of Nkundiye and Mugemanyi doesn't mean that the infiltrators have failed. If they don't receive any outside support, they certainly won't be able to win. However, the weapons they have could always be used in acts of sabotage.

As Nayigiziki points out, the question of foreign support is critical to the future of this insurgency. The following section looks at the history of the insurgents' links with foreign sympathisers.

## Regional Alliances

The ability of the insurgents to gain access to arms, ammunition and the fake travel documents which facilitate freedom of movement, has depended upon their contacts in foreign countries and their connections to other rebel movements in the region. Masisi, a zone of North Kivu province in eastern DRC is, in this respect, the most vital rear-base for them. From early 1997, opposition forces to the Kabila regime<sup>26</sup> gathered in Masisi and their interests enmeshed with the political ambitions of the infiltrators. The authorities who were in eastern Zaire during the Mobutu era have an interest in destabilising the region, along with all those who lost powerful political positions with the fall of Mobutu. The insurgents sought support from local people of several different ethnic groups who reacted with hostility towards what they perceived as the increasing influence of Tutsis in the government, army and business in Kivu. The majority of Masisi residents are Hutu of Rwandese origin. The reports of massacres of Hutus in the region by the ADFL and Rwandese forces have also produced anger and resentment. The Congolese rebels—the *Combattants* and the Mayi Mayi, composed of Hunde, Batembo and Bangana—saw the alliance with the insurgents as a means of reinforcing their opposition to Kabila's regime by weakening his allies in Rwanda. Whether this is more than a temporary coincidence of interests remains to be seen, but it should be noted that the Mayi Mayi fought on the side of Kabila during the rebellion in Zaire and only switched allegiances after Mobutu's fall. In the words of André Rushemeza Gatanzi<sup>27</sup>, a refugee from Masisi:

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**“This coalition is fighting against ‘the same enemy’ but for different and sometimes opposite reasons”.**

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Masisi has an abundance of food and the local population, like the infiltrators, speak Kinyarwanda. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Belgians brought Rwandese to work on their plantations; they were followed by

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<sup>26</sup> As noted earlier, all references to anti-Kabila forces predate the rebellion which began on 2 August 1998 and refer specifically to the groups which opposed his government between May 1997 and July 1998.

<sup>27</sup> Interviewed in Mudende, Gisenyi, 5 October 1997.

other Rwandese who went to Masisi as economic migrants. More Rwandese families left for Masisi during the terrible famine of the early 1940s. Without their support, the insurgents in the northwest could not sustain their warfare. They have provided arms, food, intelligence and a place to hide.

### *A Helping Hand in Masisi, the Democratic Republic of Congo*

The military and civilian support which the insurgents rely upon in North Kivu is based on a long history of co-operation between the Habyarimana and Mobutu regimes, including direct military ties. In October 1990, Mobutu despatched troops to Rwanda to repulse the RPF, as a gesture of solidarity. Between 1990 and 1994, civilian and military leaders in Kivu were courted by their counterparts in the préfectures bordering Zaire—Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, Cyangugu and Kibuye—in an effort to tackle the Zairian Tutsis who were swelling RPF ranks.

Upon their arrival in Zaire in July 1994, FAR commanders and the civilian leaders of the refugees exploited these existing contacts with local officials, including the governor of North Kivu, Christophe Moto Mupenda. They cultivated their support for a political programme to make Kivu a Tutsi-free zone. With arms, bribes and lethal propaganda, they encouraged hostility and violence against Tutsis who had settled in Kivu as refugees, some of them since 1959. The impact was felt immediately by Tutsis throughout Kivu, but particularly in Masisi and in the urban areas; many fled to Rwanda.

In 1993, Masisi itself had been the scene of extreme violence, triggered by conflicts over land and a struggle over political power, principally between the Hunde and the Hutu, supported by some members of FAZ. It was during this period that militia groups, such as the *Combattants*, were established. Thousands of people were killed, and many more were displaced, in fierce fighting between March and July. The Banyarwanda—comprising both Hutus and Tutsis—were pitted against groups known as *autochtones* [meaning natives of the area], which consist principally of the Hunde, but also include the Tembo, Yanga and Nande. However, with the arrival of the Rwandese refugees in July 1994—and under their schooling—allegiances shifted and the local Hutus and the Hunde united against the Tutsis.

Seninga Habinshuti, 34, is Congolese, a farm manager and former head of the *Combattants* in *groupement* Matanda where he lived; he comes from Rutingite in Masisi. He spoke of the arrival of Rwandese refugees.

Some were welcomed by relatives who were originally from Rwanda. My own ancestors are from Rwerere in Gisenyi. The new arrivals took the opportunity to promote hatred, explaining that they had been driven out of Rwanda by the Tutsi. The *interahamwe* quickly gained the confidence of the young unemployed Hutu, and began organising attacks to capture the Tutsis' cows, beating up their owners and the shepherds. Gradually, the Tutsi began to move away.

In particular, the Rwandese refugees strengthened existing ties with the Magrivists, the Hutu members of a co-operative created in the mid-80s for farmers and cattle-herders, (*Mutuelle des Agriculteurs et Eleveurs du Virunga*) which the Habyarimana regime had supported and used in Masisi, Rutchuru and Kalehe to garner political support in North Kivu. The Magrivists encouraged all Hutus to unite and fight for a common cause, and in addition to stand up to the Hunde. They received arms and military training and were then set loose on their neighbours. Their first targets were families whose sons had joined the RPF. Many people were killed; many more lost their livestock, homes and belongings. Interviews with those forced to seek refuge in Rwanda from late 1994 onwards, are dominated by references to the murderous activities of the Magrivists.

When the militia and FAR were driven out of the camps in November 1996, their historical and political bonds with people in Masisi served them well. Many soldiers spoke of the friendly reception they were given, particularly by people whose ancestors had come from Rwanda. In October 1996, Sylvère Twahirwa was one of many soldiers looking for somewhere to stay after he was ejected from the camps; he found the residents of Masisi to be very hospitable.

When we arrived at the *Ruhinzi groupement* at Gakingi, the chief, Semivumbi, welcomed us warmly. His people housed the arriving refugees, family by family. I was housed and fed by Kinono Iyamuremye. He gave me the use of a house and *colocases* to eat. Like the others I had no problems.

Emmanuel Musabyeyezu said that the Congolese rebels and other locals supported his group of soldiers as they awaited the return of the ex-FAR and ex-FAZ from Kisangani.



We got on well with the militia known as *Combattants* of Masisi, composed of ex-FAZ, young civilian men with some military training and local officials. Our commanders had good relations with their representatives, often local officials.

Though we were not housed by the peasants in Masisi, we did receive free food from them. I personally received a *colocase* field from a man called Mvuyekure, living in Ruhinzi, Miyanja. I commanded a group of fifteen men—eleven soldiers and four new recruits. We lived in tents in the forest.

Ignace Habumuremyi, a civilian who had received military training in the camps, joined camp Gahira where civilians were living alongside Congolese *Combattants* and ex-FAR, including Lt.Col. Paul Rwarakabije, one of the overall leaders of the infiltrators.

The remaining ex-FAR soldiers and we, the civilians, lived in tents quite close to the authorities. The 21st, 23rd and 44th brigades were there. There were about 7,000 men with about 3,000 guns. My tent was set up in the courtyard which belonged to Kahindo, a trader at the Gahira market. Not only did he allow me to put the tent up on his property, but he also gave me access to his *colocases* and their leaves which I ate. This man, a *Combattant*, had a Kalachnikov gun and quite a few cartridges.

Sub-Lt. Consolée Mukangwije and her husband, a soldier, also lived in Gahira where she witnessed infiltration raids. Among those who began the fight against Rwanda was Major Karegeya from Mukingo commune. Consolée, with two small children and pregnant with her third child, returned to Rwanda on 5 April 1997, to the home of her in-laws in Nyamutera, Ruhengeri. There she met some of her former colleagues, including Karegeya, who had used his time in Kivu to obtain arms.

Major Karegeya had returned from Ubundu with his team and a large quantity of arms including heavy machine guns. He said; 'We saw the weakness of the Zairians who only had us to count on, and we decided to come back here'. These infiltrators appeared in our sector—Muko in Nyakinama—from September 1997 onwards.

Around May 1997, some of the leaders of the insurgency began holding meetings to convince the soldiers who had gathered in Masisi of the necessity of invading Rwanda. Régis Niyibizi attended a meeting led by

the pilot, Major Pierre-Célestin Haguma; all the Rwandese living in the area were invited.

The topic of these meetings was the situation in Rwanda: a bad regime, hostile to the Hutus, etc... Towards the end of the meeting, he told us that a war of liberation had started. There were so many of us that he was forced to divide our group into two, with a meeting on different days. He was assisted by four lieutenants, including Pasteur, who was ex-FAR, but whose parents were Congolese and lived in Kanyenzuki, in Kibabi.

Military and civilians officials who had held important posts in Kambanda's government or during the Habyarimana regime took part in Haguma's meetings. They were unarmed to avoid identification, but were escorted by other armed men. They lived close to the refugee camp in Mangeri and Mbeshimbeshi and Kibuwa in *groupement* Gatoyi. In particular, Régis named Eliezer Niyitegeka, minister of information in the Kambanda government; Jean-Damascène Hategekimana, a former minister [of finance in the early 1980s]; Jean Damascène, a former sous-préfet in Kibuye; Lt.Col. Dr Froduald Mugemanyi, who went on to become the ALIR chief of staff<sup>28</sup> and Stanislas Simbizi, a leading member of CDR and one of ALIR's key propagandists.

Seninga Habinshuti, the *Combattant* leader in Matanda, described one of the routes used by the infiltrators from Masisi to Rwanda.

They usually go from Gatoyi, their base, and the home of some of their leaders, through Kibabi, then *localité* Kironko of *groupement* Matanda, then they meet in farms between Mushaki, Ruvunda and Kagusa, including that of Madame Merlon. They then go into Rwanda through Birunga national park.

I saw them using this route many times. I remember seeing about 200 infiltrators in Kadirishya one day, on their way to Rwanda. They march during the day at a time when they know that there are no soldiers around, because the population doesn't worry them, and will not betray them. When they need food and water, the people help them, sometimes voluntarily, sometimes through coercion.

Seninga also commented on the infiltrators' relations with local officials in Masisi.

<sup>28</sup> Dr. Froduald Mugemanyi was killed by the RPA in Nyarutovu on 3 August 1998.

The civilian officials in Masisi are generally favourable to the Rwandese infiltrators. But I think some are only co-operative in order to avoid problems with these infiltrators who scare the population.

The common cause which binds the interahamwe and FAR to rebels in North Kivu extends to joint military action. The leaders of the Congolese rebel groups include a number of ex-FAR. Thousands of Congolese Tutsis have been driven out of Masisi and Rutshuru by their combined forces stationed in North Kivu. In Rwanda, the refugees were settled in Mudende, commune Mutara, where they suffered two massacres (see below). Both infiltrators and refugees interviewed for this book made many references to the military links between the Rwandese insurgents and their allies in North Kivu.

Daniel Munyabikari, a former insurgent, spoke of their partnership with Congolese rebels.

The Rwandese infiltrators collaborate with certain Congolese. I personally saw a Congolese called 'Shitani' [devil] among the infiltrators. He was recognised as a top killer, with no pity for anyone. He was part of the platoon commanded by Staff Sergeant Hussein of Alpha battalion.

Kamari Mpamyabigwi, a 25 year-old farmer from Minove in Kalehe, took refuge in Masisi when the FAR, FAZ and interahamwe, fleeing the ADFL's advancing troops, arrived in Kalehe at the end of 1996. He returned home and was rebuilding his life when he had an unexpected encounter in July 1997.

I bumped into a group of *Combattants*, interahamwe and Mayi Mayi, armed with guns, sticks and machetes. Some were in military uniform and others were completely naked. They saw me and I attempted to flee but the killers caught me. I lost consciousness just from being hit with *massives*. As they hit me they were saying: 'Kill Runyenzi's' snake'. They left, thinking that I was dead, congratulating themselves for having killed the so-called snake.

The predominance of Congolese citizens as spirit mediums for the insurgents was noted above. They have also taken part in military assaults organised by the insurgents. During the 17 November attack on the

<sup>29</sup> *Runyenzi* is an emphatic manner of describing someone as an *Inyenzi*.

commune office of Giciye, supporters from Congo set up roadblocks to prevent intervention by the army, and helped to loot the commune office and the surrounding buildings. Some of the cows and goats were retrieved from Buhumba in *collectivité* Bwishya.

Another important issue in Masisi is the extent to which the insurgents received help from the Congolese army under Kabila. Seninga Habinshuti said that the "deep-rooted spirit of corruption" which existed among the ex-FAZ has played a role in ensuring a measure of support, along with fear. Seninga undertook a mission to encourage the *Combattants* and the Mayi-Mayi to disarm and reintegrate into the army.

Among other things, I was to report any concentrations of interahamwe in the area. I reported the presence of fifteen interahamwe in Ngungu, and sent it to Major Kasereka, head of operations (S3), but he didn't intervene in order to fight them. I also reported the presence of 150 armed ex-FAR in Gatoyi, and 6,000 others in Mangeri, but he didn't respond. I believe that this Major Kasereka was a collaborator of the Mayi-Mayi and interahamwe militia. He has been replaced by another S3.

Also, I think the army is afraid to fight these infiltrators when they pass by on their way to Rwanda. I cannot, however, entirely deny that weapons used by the Rwandese infiltrators came from the Congolese army.<sup>30</sup>

Régis believes that the presence of the former Rwandese civilian and military authorities in Masisi is the root of the problem and that the Rwandese and Congolese authorities should work together to trace them.

They not only negotiated Congolese support for the infiltrators, but also prevent the refugees, whom they use as a resource, from returning to their country. The senior Congolese authorities, both civilian and military, should also put pressure on the local authorities—heads of *localité*, *groupement* and zone—in Masisi and Rutshuru. If they had been hostile to the infiltrators, Masisi would never have become their rear base.<sup>31</sup>

However, he believes that local authorities are encouraging the Rwandese to stay because "they are an important source of labour for the local inhabitants. The Congolese take advantage of the refugee's hunger to exploit them to do manual work".

<sup>30</sup> Interviewed in Goma, 10 February 1998.

<sup>31</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 9 February 1998.

Ramadhan Barendayabo, bourgmestre of commune Rwerere in Gisenyi, has gained considerable insight into the depth and breadth of co-operation between the insurgents and their allies in Kivu, including elements in the Congolese army. Like other residents of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, Ramadhan believes that North Kivu holds the key to security and stability in the northwest.

The essential solution to the infiltrator problem needs to come from the Congo. Five of the sectors of our commune border North Kivu, and the infiltrators come from this part of Congo, inhabited in the main by Hutus. If they are defeated by the RPA, they escape back to this region. One of the ex-FAR leaders living in North Kivu is Lt. Col. Emmanuel Kanyandekwe from Nkuli, Ruhengeri. His family live in the town of Gisenyi. Kanyandekwe collaborates with other ex-FAR like Lt. Col. Marcel Bivugabagabo, to support the insurgents. For example, the lorry of Godfroid Makombe, head of *groupement* Buhumba in Congo, was used recently to transport Rwandese recruits for the infiltrators. The Congolese population living between the Gitimba and Bunungu hills in this *groupement* were recently driven away, under the pretext that the Congolese army wants to use the area. Yet the population of sector Kinyanzovu, bordering this *localité*, have learned that this land has been given to the infiltrators to use as a rear base.

My commune will therefore not be safe if serious steps are not taken by the Congolese themselves. The local authorities in the Buhumba *groupement* should be replaced, and the entire Congolese-Rwandese border should be properly patrolled by the Congolese army.

He told the story of Daniel Harelimana, a Zairian who had been brought up in Rwanda and joined the FAR. Having fled to Zaire in 1994, he was involved in the early infiltration missions to Rwanda. Later he managed to persuade the Congolese military at Rumangabo camp to give him weapons on the strength of his Zairian origins. On 2 December 1997, he led an attack against the commune office of Rwerere, with the support of different military officials belonging to Kibumba *groupement*. Among the prisoners which the insurgents succeeded in freeing was a former bourgmestre, Alphonse Butsingiri, who had his own contacts in the DR. This relationship has facilitated the escape of genocide suspects, as Ramadhan underlined.

Butsingiri made it to the home of his friend, Godfroid Makombe, chief of Kibumba *groupement*. Makombe offered old Butsingiri a house while Lt. Harelimana—who, after the success of his mission, was welcomed into the

Congolese military camp of Rumangabo—pays the rent. Butsingiri drives a Suzuki Samurāi, registration KV 47 43 C. Makombe has been providing Congolese identity cards to the genocidal killers of Rwerere freed by the infiltrators led by Harelimana. Ever since his entry into the Congolese army (in camp Rumangabo), Lt. Harelimana has been in charge of finding weapons and military uniforms for the infiltrators.

In a subsequent interview, Ramadhan said that Lt. Harelimana was killed in Rwanda on 5 June 1998, emphasising the ease with which the infiltrators' move between Kivu and the northwest.

This lieutenant learned that he was being looked for in the Congo and decided to rejoin the infiltrators in Rwanda and take part in their activities. He was the 'intelligence officer' for the operational sector Echo. He was killed on Mount Buzuta in this zone during an operation carried out on 5 June by the soldiers in the sectors of Burinda and Murambi in commune Rubavu and Rwanzekuma and Muhanda in Rwerere.<sup>32</sup>

The alliances which the insurgents forged in Masisi affected, above all, Tutsis from the region. Mordicaille Kavaruganda has experienced attacks on both sides of the border. After repeated threats, he left his home in Masisi, arriving in Rwanda in September 1997. He took refuge in Mudende camp, where there was a massacre on 10 December.

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**“The killers are practically the same. There are Rwandese in the rebellion at home in Congo who work closely with the insurgents in Rwanda”.**

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However, most people believe that it was the influence of the interahamwe which encouraged the *Combattants* to attack Tutsis. Mukasine Mukebwamanzi, a farmer from *groupement* Ngungu, *collectivité* Ufamando, lost her husband and a twenty-year-old daughter in the massacre at Mudende on 10 December. The family had been in Rwanda since September.

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<sup>32</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 10 December 1997 and 16 July 1998.

Whether in Congo or in Mudende, our killers are the same—the interahamwe and the *Combatants* who work in close collaboration. The more cruel of the two are the interahamwe; they are the ones who intoxicated the Hutu of Congo who are not, in general, particularly cruel. Without the interahamwe, the Hutus in our area might have chased us out of our region, but without the intention of killing us.<sup>33</sup>

Berchimas Mvunabandi, widowed in the same massacre, commented:

I think the ex-FAR and the ex-FAZ want to exterminate us so that they can have the region of North Kivu to themselves. The ex-FAR must help the ex-FAZ to kill Tutsis, as they committed the genocide in Rwanda, and cannot go back there easily. The ex-FAZ failed too, so they must all collaborate together to get territory.

### *The Search for a Common Cause: Ties with Rebel Groups in Burundi*

The insurgents in Rwanda share many characteristics and objectives—political and military—with Hutu rebel groups in Burundi at war with the Burundian army. These groups operate out of northern Burundi and Tanzania. Nevertheless, the size and geography of Burundi, and the nature and strength of its army, means that Burundi cannot offer the insurgents the facilities and support they have found in DRC.

The two main Burundian groups with whom the ex-FAR have enjoyed formal and informal links since their period of exile are PALIPEHUTU (Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People) and its armed wing, the National Forces of Liberation, (FNL) and the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD) and its armed branch, the Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD).<sup>34</sup> The contacts are long-standing. Close relations were established with the 1st Division of FAR based in Bukavu under the command of Brigadier-General Gratien Kabiligi. The

<sup>33</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

<sup>34</sup> Relations between the Burundian groups have been, and continue to be, characterised by internecine warfare and public disputes, as even the letters to ALIR show. There are, in addition, factions within the political and military wings of each movement. This has not, however, hindered their collaboration with FAR or the insurgents. Letters and press releases issued by the different groups make explicit reference to the involvement of FAR soldiers in the various groups.

head of CNDD, Léonard Nyangoma, a former minister in the government of President Melchior Ndadaye, was also based in Bukavu until the war broke out in 1996. This proximity made co-ordination easier. In addition, the refugee camps in South Kivu, particularly those in Uvira and Tanzania, housed not only Rwandese but also Burundians, who were also liable to be recruited as fighters, to undergo military training and to be absorbed into an established military structure. Finally, the friendship and political and military ties which bound both sides to Mobutu and the Zairian authorities of South Kivu was an important common factor.

A formal agreement was signed on 22 May 1995 in Bukavu between the high command of FAR, represented by Major-General Augustin Bizimungu, and CNDD represented by Léonard Nyangoma. Saying that “the destiny and the political future of our two countries are henceforth intimately linked... and are perceived in the same manner on the regional and international chessboard,” the agreement calls for common military and diplomatic strategies, educational, media and “ideological mobilisation” initiatives and the creation of mechanisms to implement these shared policies. In the military and intelligence field, the agreement recommends the “establishment of a programme of military co-operation and the need to take stock of the logistical, financial and human needs”, and the “creation of a common military and civilian intelligence service.”

The agreement was implemented on many fronts. During 1995 and 1996, the frequent and deadly infiltration raids into Cyangugu were carried out by FAR’s Kagoma battalion based in Bukavu and operating in Cyangugu, in the Nyungwe forest and in north Burundi. To reach Cyangugu and the Nyungwe forest, the soldiers and militiamen passed through the provinces where the rebels’ were strong, Cibitoke and Bubanza; here, they received intelligence and practical assistance, including the provision of guides.

On 13 September 1995, an agreement was signed in the FAR military camp of Bulonge in Bukavu, in which FAR gave radio equipment to CNDD to be used for the installation of “Radio Democracy”, which closed down after the camps were dismantled. The equipment was handed over by Lt.Col. Edouard Gasarabwe, commander of camp Bulonge, to Amissi Ntangibingura, security advisor to Nyangoma.<sup>35</sup> Those described as “witnesses” to the transfer included Charles Muvunyi, listed as an official

<sup>35</sup> Gasarabwe now lives in Congo-Brazzaville and, along with other senior ex-FAR based there, has helped the insurgents obtain weapons.

of the Rwandese Office of Information (ORINFOR), and Félicien Uwumuremyi, a technician with Radio Rwanda.

Lt. Col. Gasarabwe travelled many times to Burundi as a military advisor to FDD. These links were formalised by a letter dated 27 August 1995 in which Bizimungu gave official authorisation to Gasarabwe to travel to Burundi. His assignment was to act as "military advisor to the FDD chief of staff at all levels; to provide further training to members of the FDD General staff in the field of military management and leadership" in addition to other tasks to be decided upon by FDD. Gasarabwe was requested to "submit regular reports to the FAR chief of staff, with a copy to the FDD chief of staff." In March 1996, Bizimungu and Nyangoma signed an agreement in Bukavu to enable Gasarabwe to serve as a "technical expert to oversee FDD's operations." Shortly afterwards, joint military training exercises took place in Nyakarambi and Nyankarange in Bubanza. FAR officers also gave lessons in the handling of certain sophisticated weapons; in return, they received valuable lessons in guerrilla tactics, such as hit and run operations, night-time raids, reliance on the local population and long-distance walking.

The military and political ties nurtured in 1995/96 between FAR and different rebel groups in Burundi have been the basis for continued collaboration. A formal agreement, marked Cibitoke, was signed between PALIPEHUTU and FAR on 21 May 1997, a few days after the fall of Mobutu.

In light of the war situation in Zaire, in particular the expulsion of all the Rwandese Bahutu refugees from Tanzania in December 1996 and the expulsion of hundreds of Bahutu militants belonging to PALIPEHUTU from Tanzania in the same month of December;

Given the perilous situation in which the Hutu population of Burundi and Rwanda find themselves;

We, the delegations of Kagoma battalion and the National Forces of Liberation, after our successive meetings of 25 and 26 April 1997, 5 May 1997 and this 21 May 1997, have agreed to form a coalition to fight together against our common enemy, namely the Mututsi and his acolytes, in order to liberate our beloved country.

To make this possible, at the end of our meeting this 21 May 1997, our project of co-operation succeeded and we agreed upon the following:

1. To merge the forces under the heading "National Forces of Liberation";
2. The mission of the merged forces will be the total liberation of the Bahutu nation;
3. To fulfil the objective that has been assigned to the National Forces of Liberation, it was decided to launch our struggle through the Burundi front, and subsequently through the Rwandese front;
4. Throughout the process of liberation, the human, material and logistical resources of the two forces will be commonly shared;
5. At the end of the meeting of 21 May 1997, the representatives of the Kagoma battalion, namely Sub-Lt. Silas Mugira, Sub-Lt. Boniface Karinganire and Lt. Casimir Ngarambe will become the representatives of FAR to the FNL;

Sub-Lt. Silas Rugira, one of the signatories on behalf of the Kagoma battalion of FAR, comes from Nyakabuye in Cyangugu. He was well-known as an infiltrator in Cyangugu prior to the return of the refugees. He worked with Cyangugu's best-known infiltrator, Gahutu, killed in a shoot-out with the RPA in February 1997. Rugira fled to Burundi after Gahutu's death.

It is clear from the correspondence cited below that meetings continued to take place. On 20 November, an additional protocol was signed, this time marked Bubanza, which said that in addition to the Kagoma battalion, "elements of the former Rwandese Armed Forces have reached us, either as individuals or in groups, and that others can and might reach us."

Intermediaries familiar with both Rwanda and Burundi have served as go-betweens. One of them is Fr. Robert Athanase Nyandwi, a Catholic priest of Burundian origin who worked at the Parish of Kaduha in Gikongoro until he fled in July 1994. Well-known in Rwanda for his extremist views, he played an important role in preparing the huge massacre that claimed thousands of lives in his parish on 21 April 1994.<sup>36</sup> In a letter dated 20 November 1997, and addressed to Lt. Col. Nkundiyiye of ALIR, Fr. Nyandwi emphasised the need for a closer collaboration between ALIR and rebel groups in Burundi. Writing as a member of PALIPEHUTU, he refers to previous meetings with ALIR and explains how Rwandese soldiers retreated from "sector F" in Rwanda to Burundi because of limited resources and large losses, adding that some of them had joined the FNL.

<sup>36</sup> For details, see *Death, Despair and Defiance*, pp.315-328.

I have informed FNL of the special mission that you entrusted to me, namely the collaboration between ALIR and the Burundian opposition. The chief of staff of FNL is aware of this request; he feels honoured by it, and was delighted by it. This collaboration seems indispensable at this time when the FNL have made a lot of progress in their struggle against the government army; serious support from ALIR would finish off this war to the advantage of all the Bahutu from Burundi and Rwanda.

This collaboration between Burundians and Rwandese is already effective as shown by a protocol for co-operation between the FNL and the former FAR, a document which is always open to possible subsequent amendments. Exploiting this method of work will enable us to solve, in the shortest possible period and for good, the secular Hutu-Tutsi problem in our sub-region.

A day later, 21 November, Sylvestre Nibayubahi, described as the "commander of operations in the western zone", wrote to the "commander of the Liberation Army of Rwanda in Gisenyi" about "the liberation of the Bahutu nation", in which he refers to the "messenger" sent to them by ALIR. After describing the background of PALIPEHUTU, he defined one of their aims as fighting "all the combined Tutsi forces of the entire planet". He then touched on the various contacts that had already taken place between their two forces.

... with regard to the project that you transmitted to us through your messenger, we request that you act speedily because it is necessary for the territory of the north to meet up with the territory of the south (*ubwami bwa Ruguru bahuza N'ubwepfo*). We want to let you know that your element in sector F has had such problems that at least a part of it has had to join us.

Given the contents and dates of the two letters, there is a strong likelihood that Fr. Athanase Nyandwi was, in this instance, the messenger who facilitated the contact.

Corporal Laurent Nkurunziza recalled an incident when two of his colleagues, fearing retribution, went over to the Burundian rebels.

Two infiltrators killed the relative of another infiltrator who was an important member of ALIR. They joined the rebels in Burundi because they were afraid of being punished for their actions. They were Staff Soldier Butwaza from Nkuli and Corporal G.P. 'Desire' from Rurembo.

## *Allies Elsewhere*

The insurgents have also found new allies and opportunities beyond the DRC and Burundi. The fall of Mobutu has led to a proliferation of rebel groups throughout the Great Lakes. One of the groups which has emerged out of this complex new web of alliances is the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). An umbrella for various groups opposed to President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, it operates in the Rwenzori mountains in Western Uganda, close to the border with eastern DRC. A briefing paper published by IRIN on 13 August 1997 discussed the history and the regional implications of ADF's existence.

Elements within the... ADF had been based around Beni in eastern DRC where they had been used by former President Mobutu Sese Seko to fight the Zairian 'Kasindian' dissident group led by Kisase Ngandu, and to destabilise western Uganda.

The ADF is said to include the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) based in the Rwenzori mountains.

[It] ran a low-key destabilisation campaign backed by the FAZ. They are believed to have attracted a following from Bakonjos in the DRC lured by the promise of cars and money once the war is won. According to a GTZ<sup>37</sup> doctor who was briefly captured when the ADF took Bundibugyo [in June 1997].. he also heard what he believed was Kinyarwanda spoken by two of the soldiers, adding to the general impression that among the ADF are Hutu interahamwe and/or former FAR. There are further reports that ex-FAZ soldiers have joined...

It was only a matter of time before the existence of ADF spilt over into Rwanda's troubled northwestern region. Rwanda and Uganda established military co-operation in an effort to contain the activities of ADF and its allies. Officials from the affected areas in both countries met and established a permanent committee on border security.

Uganda and Rwanda have agreed to set up a permanent committee on border security and to extradite suspected criminals, the state-owned *New Vision* reported today. The decisions follow a meeting on Wednesday

<sup>37</sup> GTZ is a German NGO.

between officials from Rwanda's Ruhengeri prefecture and their counterparts in Uganda's southwest Kabale and Kisoro districts.<sup>38</sup>

Uganda and the DRC also established a security committee. But the ADF has continued to wreak havoc in western Uganda, as shown by the horrific massacre of eighty students burned to death in their dormitories in Bundibugyo in June 1998. Since then, the Ugandan army has been fighting the ADF inside Kivu.

The creation of the Democratic Resistance Alliance, which brings together elements from Rwanda, the DRC, Burundi and Uganda, has also been announced, with its military headquarters in Kigoma, Tanzania, and its political representatives based in Dar es Salaam. The choice of Kigoma as a military base is not accidental; a significant number of well-known Rwandese génocidaires settled in Kigoma, close to the camps set up by UNHCR there, after the closure of the camps in Zaire and Benaco, Tanzania. Most of the refugees are Burundians transferred from camps in South Kivu, but there are also a small number of Rwandese. One of the group's original leaders is Léonard Nyangoma; the other is Célestin Anzuluni Bembe from the DRC who, like Nyangoma, co-operated closely with members of the defeated interim regime of Rwanda during their time in exile. Anzuluni Bembe, vice-president of parliament, played a key role in the denial of nationality to Zairians of Tutsi origin, and was instrumental in the violence and war that erupted in South Kivu in 1996.

As discussed below, Congo-Brazzaville has become an important base of support with regard to arms and training. Congo-Brazzaville and the Central African Republic became the two most common destinations for senior FAR commanders who left Zaire in late 1996. In Congo-Brazzaville they helped Denis Sassou-Nguesso and his Cobra militia wrest power from President Pascal Lissouba. For example, the airport of Maya Maya was captured for Sassou-Nguesso by an ex-FAR, Lt.Col. Jean Marie-Vianney Ndahimana from Kibuye. Ndahimana was the deputy commander of the 1st Division in Bukavu. Lt.Col. Edouard Gasarabwe, Nyangoma's former military advisor, and Major Léodmir Mugaragu who had been based in Goma, also played important roles in the re-organisation of the FAR forces in Congo-Brazzaville.

The insurgents are able to travel to Rwanda and Kivu on forged Kenyan, Tanzanian and Ugandan travel documents and passports.

According to Corporal Laurent Nkurunziza, an infiltrator from December 1997 to July 1998, rumours about extensive outside support are a tactic to maintain the fighters' morale. But there was, he said, little doubt about relations with Rwandese groups living outside.

I can't deny that means of communication exist between ALIR's high command and some Rwandese exiles abroad. Otherwise, I wonder how the Kinyarwanda-Kirundi section of the BBC radio could have found out the radio wavelength which ALIR was using, except through the Rwandese exiles who are collaborating with ALIR? It was indeed Lt.Col. Léonard Nkundiye who called himself 'Shyaka Komeza' when acting as spokesperson for ALIR to answer questions from BBC journalists. He was at that time in Shaki sector, Gicije.

This book was close to completion by the time the anti-Kabila rebellion began in Kivu on 2 August. At the time of going to press, the war continues and the military and political situation on the ground remains fluid. Given the speed of developments, and the unpredictable nature of the alliances which have evolved, it is too early to talk about the probable impact on the insurgency in Rwanda. But if the insurgency came out of a regional context, and has been supported by sympathisers in neighbouring countries, it has also contributed significantly to the turmoil and suffering in the DRC. There is little doubt that the upheaval has been triggered, in part, by the extent to which political and military developments in North Kivu and northwest Rwanda have become intertwined. This illustrates the regional implications of the insurgency and underlines the potential of this small-scale insurgency to push the entire Central African region, and beyond, into crisis. Most likely, the war in the DRC will enable the génocidaires resident in West Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Southern Africa, Europe and elsewhere to find the insurgents new sources of political and diplomatic support, financial assistance and most important of all, weapons. The section below discusses what have, until now, been the insurgents' supplies of weapons and ammunition.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in IRIN Update, No. 307 for Central and Eastern Africa, 5 December 1997.

## Arms And The Insurgents

Some of the weapons now being used in the northwest were the legacy of the FAR. They were either brought to Zaire by the refugees in 1994, or hidden in caches in Rwanda and recovered after their return. Other arms were acquired by the ex-FAR leaders while in exile in Zaire. They used the proceeds of the genocide and financial assets of the former regime to rearm, despite an arms embargo on Rwanda. They received arms shipments through Zaire, as well as buying on the open market. Although weapons were lost in the war against the ADFL, they were also bought or inherited from ex-FAZ soldiers who were anxious to encourage the FAR to fight on their side. Weapons, particularly a gun known as a *Tchechenie*, have also arrived from Congo-Brazzaville, a bequest organised by the FAR who helped bring about Sassou-Nguesso's victory in 1997. This serves the insurgents well, given the number of senior FAR soldiers who are currently in exile in Congo-Brazzaville. In addition, Congo-Brazzaville has a long history of acting as a gateway for arms shipments in the region, including to Angola.

Because of the unexpected circumstances in which they began their war in 1997, the insurgents initially faced a serious shortage of arms and ammunition. Among those interviewed by African Rights between June and August, there were a number of deserters—including some ex-FAR—who had, as a result, lost confidence in the battle to regain power.

Ignace Habumuremyi is from sector Muhoza in commune Kigombe, Ruhengeri. He is only seventeen; when Habyarimana died, he was a student. He left for Goma in July 1994, and was a refugee at Katala and then Butembo camp. He returned to Katala to visit his family a few hours before it was attacked in November 1996. After some time in Masisi, he was again forced out by the war and eventually moved to the Mikeno volcano where the infiltrators were preparing the insurgency. While he was there, 480 ex-FAR soldiers arrived from Kisangani, bringing with them 1,500 *Tchechenie* guns. Ignace gave details of the weapons available to his group at the time they entered Rwanda in August 1997.

I was part of a group of eighty people, two of whom were civilians. We had 47 firearms, including Kalachnikovs, R4s, R5s and *Tchechenies*. The *Tchechenies* come from Congo-Brazzaville. The number of cartridges varied between five and forty for each gun. Our commander, Sub-Lt. Kanimba carried a *Tchechenie*. My infiltrator colleagues confirmed that

amongst the fighters of Denis Sassou-Nguesso in Congo-Brazzaville, there were some ex-FAR who would facilitate our task of obtaining weapons. The *Tchechenies* arrived along with twelve machine guns with them.

The following morning, at 7:30 a.m., Ignace decided to give himself up to the authorities. He explained why.

The threat of death on the battlefield and the lack of weapons influenced my decision. We came at the time when they were waiting on volcano Mikeno for the other delegates to arrive. They had been sent to Congo-Brazzaville to bring back other types of weapons. However, the journey there and back took a whole month on foot.

Nevertheless, he did not believe that the infiltrators' fight was entirely hopeless as long as they had connections both outside and within the country.

When we were in Zaire, Lt.Col. Rwarakabije had a radio which weighed about thirty kilos. We were supposed to install it so that he could communicate with Kenya. Only if the population wants it will there be a complete failure on the part of the infiltrators.<sup>39</sup>

Sub-Lt. Sylvestre Nzabonariba reached a similar conclusion: on 6 June 1997, he decided to give up fighting and contacted the bourgmestre of his commune, Giciye. He had been with the FAR since September 1987. His decision was prompted by a belief that the infiltrators had little chance of achieving their aims.

All the soldiers had one common problem: insufficient arms. In order for a soldier to know about the commune where his operation was to take place, he had to resort to the plan which had been worked out while we were still in the camps. I joined a group of 200 people, all soldiers, led by Captain Alfred Rusigi from Rwerere and four or five sub-lieutenants. We had less than fifty guns between us and no grenades. Some of these guns were Kalachnikovs with twenty cartridges. I was carrying an R4 gun with thirty cartridges.

Our principle mission was to fight for power. However, taking the insufficient weapons into account, this amounted to a form of suicide. Fighting with insufficient weapons exposed us—and the population

<sup>39</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 26 September 1997.



supporting us—to death. For me, this was the final reason I needed to quit.<sup>40</sup>

Like Ignace and Sylvestre, Jean-Pierre Ntakaberaho was disheartened by the inadequacy of weapons. Jean-Pierre, aged twenty and a native of Giciye, has been fighting for the ex-FAR since April 1994. He had gone into exile in Mugunga camp in Goma and then retreated to Masisi. He then entered the forest of Urugano in commune Mutara, Gisenyi, with around 140 soldiers under the command of Sub-Lt. Nzeyimana from Ruhengeri. Conditions in the forest were harsh and Jean-Pierre left the infiltrators before, he said, he had participated in a single mission.

We were on the Kalisimbi volcano with one heavy machine gun, two light machine guns, three G3s and numerous Kalachnikovs. We had forty weapons between 140 fighters. We also had insufficient ammunition:

- Forty rounds for a Kalachnikov;
- One box of ammunition for the heavy machine gun;
- One belt of cartridges for the light machine gun.

Sub-Lt. Nzeyimana told us we were going to regain power using these weapons and others we would take from the soldiers in battle.

Jean-Pierre returned to his home in Giciye convinced that the insurgents could not achieve their mission and only exposed the population to danger.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, sometime after this interview, Jean-Pierre, who had not been arrested, went back to the insurgents, reflecting the complex nature of the situation in the northwest.

Emmanuel Musabyeyezu entered Rwanda on 28 June 1997 through Mukingo in Ruhengeri, with a group of thirty men; less than half of them were armed, according to him.

I was assisted by Staff-Sergeant Habyarimana. But there were only thirteen rifles in my group—eight Kalachnikovs, two R4s and three R5s. Heavy weapons existed at company and battalion level. Our company had only one heavy machine-gun; the whole battalion had three, including the one in our company, and one 60mm mortar with only two shells.

I had two ammunition clips, as did two others in my group. The other groups had between ten and twenty cartridges each.

Sylvère Twahirwa used his skills as a soldier to disrupt the communes of Nyamutera and Nyakinama in Ruhengeri. But he was quickly disillusioned by the paucity of weapons.

When we attacked Rwanda we entered via Rugari. We were 300 soldiers, armed with seventeen rifles, including a rocket-launcher with two rockets, an R5 rifle which we had found in Zaire and Kalachnikovs. We arrived between two volcanoes, Visoke and Nyamuragira. The lack of sufficient weapons and our 1994 defeat against the *Inkotanyi* led to my decision to abandon these people.

One day he was sent to Masisi to fetch supplies; instead, he escaped to his parents' home in Mbogo, Greater Kigali on 17 May 1997.<sup>42</sup>

Dieudonné Musabyimana described one way in which the rebels hope to resolve the problem of arms.

We carried out an ambush in Vunga, Giciye, where we succeeded in taking two guns from the RPA soldiers, one rifle and one Kalachnikov.

With every attack on the RPA the infiltrators aim to gain more weapons, but this strategy alone is not enough, as Marc Nyirimpunga explained. The failure to storm the commune office of Cyabingo in Ruhengeri in June 1997 made Marc realise that the ex-FAR were, in his words, "incapable of seizing power with such a system of war". He returned to his parents' home in Cyabingo, but when they saw their son armed with a Kalachnikov, they encouraged him to surrender. However, during our visits to the northwest from September onwards, it became increasingly difficult to find infiltrators who had deserted. Most importantly, and connected to this, there were no longer complaints about the inadequacy of arms. Eugène Micombero, an ex-FAR arrested on 2 December, attributed the infiltrators' increased optimism during this period to the flow of arms from Masisi.

We have noticed more hope and optimism. I have heard that there are armed ex-FAR coming from Mbandaka in Congo. The arms being received in Ruhengeri come from Gisenyi, where the infiltrators receive enough arms, probably from Masisi, and send some on to Ruhengeri.

<sup>40</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 19 June 1997.

<sup>41</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 19 June 1997.

<sup>42</sup> Interviewed in Mbogo, Greater Kigali, 3 July 1997.

Corporal François Mbonarusa's company obtained weapons from a variety of sources. He was arrested in mid-September during a search operation in sector Basa, commune Rubavu in Gisenyi.

In our company of 300 men, only twenty lacked guns. A large number of the weapons came from ex-Zaire. Our company also had a few *Tchechenie* guns carried by ex-FAR who had fought alongside the FAZ at Kisangani and Lubutu, such as Staff Sergeant Bagirubwira of Kigali. Their magazines could hold fifty cartridges, but there was a lack of ammunition for them. These ex-FAR said that these weapons had been left to them by Moroccan mercenaries who had come to fight for Mobutu.

Each company commander has a Motorola, and their communications are assured by a large radio, kept by Lt.-Col. Nkundiye and Lt.-Col. Paul Rwarakabije.

Another source of weapons was the rebels in Masisi.

The main weapons supply source I know of, and which I may be underestimating, is the rebels fighting Kabila in Masisi. There, we have ex-FAR, led by Captain Boniface Hasengineza from Rukore sector, Cyabingo commune, who are fighting together with the *Combattants* and the *Mayi Mayi* against Kabila's regime. This captain first operated as an infiltrator in Kinigi commune, and has since been sent to Masisi to support the Congolese rebels. I think he is the one sending us weapons.

But while September-November appear to have been the most successful months for the infiltrators, the tide appears to have turned in early December, when they also began their programme of forced recruitment. According to insurgents who left them in January/February, there was, once again, a shortage of weapons and ammunition.

On 6 December, Théophile Munyandekwe and a large group of new recruits joined CRAP company, part of Alpha battalion. Théophile and his companions were assembled together by their commander, Sub-Lt. Sankara.

Sankara clearly stated that a shortage of weapons was a general problem, and suggested the following solutions:

- 'Those who have 100 dollars should bring it, and we will find them a gun in the DRC'.
- 'If you come across an *Inkotanyi* soldier on his own, you can jump on him and try and grab his gun'.

- 'During fights with the army those without guns should quickly grab them from the dead or seriously wounded soldiers'.

Sankara's admission about the scarcity of weapons contradicted assurances they had received that a consignment of 300 guns was on its way from Gisenyi. Théophile explained the source of the weapons which the insurgents were relying upon in December.

A number of guns belonging to the infiltrators included R5s, *Tchechenies*, Kalachnikovs, G3s, etc. Before the destruction of the camps these R5 guns belonged to the Zairian Contingent for Camp Security (CZSC); the guns had been provided by UNHCR to ensure the safety of the refugees. The only ex-FAZ with this type of gun were the members of this Contingent. They gave them to the FAR who fought for Mobutu, and they were then used in Rwanda. Nevertheless, the infiltrators have serious problems obtaining cartridges for the R5s and *Tchechenies*. The owner must save the rounds that he receives with the weapon. The ammunition for Kalachnikovs, G3s and FAR are obtainable, but still difficult to find.

But the army's possession of heavy weapons made it an unequal fight when it came to battle.

Sankara's company of fifty had no more than thirty guns. The army not only has more weapons, but also heavy weapons which the infiltrators don't have. Whenever an armoured car intervenes, the infiltrators take flight.

Disappointment about the lack of weapons pushed Théophile to desert the insurgents a few weeks later, together with two other companions, including Daniel Munyabikari who was also interviewed for this book.

Since late 1997, the infiltrators have resorted to rustling or purchasing cattle in order to buy guns from Congolese soldiers and sometimes civilians. Between September and 29 December 1997, Jean Marie-Vianney Cyizere was part of a platoon "which consisted of between fifty and sixty infiltrators, with 27 guns". He spoke of the trade in which guns are bartered for cows.

During October, November and December 1997 the infiltrators moved between Rwanda and North Kivu to get arms, mostly ammunition and some R4 rifles bought from the DRC soldiers. To buy these guns, our

leaders collected money from the population and looted cattle here and there. From our infiltrator colleagues we found out that a good cow, given to a Congolese soldier, was worth two Kalachnikov guns.

Emmanuel Nzabarinda, recruited as a *résistant* in February 1998, said he took part in robbery expeditions organised by the insurgents, including the theft of cows.

An infiltrator, Paulin, told me that the remaining cows were going to Zaire so that they could be sold to buy guns and cartridges. According to him, one cow was worth a gun and three buckets of bullets.

Daniel Munyabikari confirmed the existence of this trade.

At present, the arms are bought from Congolese soldiers or armed civilians. A cow is worth 2000 rounds of ammunition. That is why the infiltrators have been stealing cattle recently.

Théophile Munyandekwe made the same observation.

The infiltrators have the open support of the Congolese in North Kivu. Cows belonging to Tutsis or Hutu opponents of the infiltrators are exchanged for guns in Congo. A good cow can buy two or three rifles, or 2000 rounds of ammunition. It all depends who you negotiate with.

Insurgents who left of their own volition, or who were captured between June and August 1998, have all emphasised the shortage of weapons and the resort to the cross-border trade in cows. Sub-Lt. Consolée Mukangwije, surrendered in June.

Since May 1998, the infiltrators have had a serious problem with weapons. Currently, the only ways of getting cartridges are either by stealing cows and exchanging them for cartridges with the Congolese, or from money collected by supporters, like those in Kigali, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. The only other way of getting ammunition cartridges is from the attacks launched on military positions. Unfortunately, since the beginning of this year, this last method has proven very difficult for us. The *Inyenzi* have become extremely vigilant and careful not to let anything go, even when they are seriously threatened.

The assessment given by Sub-Lt. François-Xavier Nayigiziki is the most recent; he left the insurgents in early August 1998.

We got our weapons from the DRC. The ammunition and sometimes the guns were bought from Congolese civilians and soldiers. The money to buy these weapons from the DRC came from the sale of cows or collections from the population. Other weapons were acquired from RPA positions, but this became pretty much useless to us because the RPA had heavy weapons which we don't use.

The most detailed account of the "guns for cows" trade has come from Théoneste Hakizimana, a *partisan* in his commune of Rwerere, Gisenyi, until 15 July.

Sector Echo [the operational sector which covers Rwerere] had difficulty getting weapon supplies. The only way to get arms, and in particular ammunition, is with cows. It works in the following manner. The cows are stolen by the infiltrators, mainly from Mutura and Kanama communes which include a part of Gishwati natural forest where a large number of cows are bred. The cows are taken to Rwerere, either to Ntango market in Bwanzekuma sector or to Bikoro market in Rubavu commune [where the main town of Gisenyi is located]. The cows are then bought by six traders who are known by the infiltrators. These traders are:

- Samvura from Bikoro, Rubavu. He is now living in Ryabizige, Muhanda sector, Rwerere. He was a butcher in Gisenyi town market before the exodus to Zaire;
- Bitota who has one leg missing;
- Adolphine, a widow from Bikoro. She was a Sunday school teacher prior to July 1994;
- Rambo, a militiaman who walks with his head tilted to one side. He comes from Bikoro;
- Japhet;
- Donat from Muti cellule, Muhanda sector, who is living in Ryabizige.

Samvura is the richest one and has six armed infiltrators as escorts which he was given by Alfred Rusigi [the commander of sector Echo]. The traders and the infiltrators agree on a price for each cow in Rwandese francs. The cows are sold on credit. The traders will pay either in money or preferably in ammunition cartridges. Once the traders have the cows, they are slaughtered (often in Ryabizige or in Ntango) and sold to the peasants for cash payment in Rwandese francs. These peasants buy large quantities of meat when they have the money. They eat some of it themselves and sell the rest to the Congolese. The sales take place in nearby Congolese markets, such as the place called Birere in Goma. There

is a large profit to be made. Once the six or seven traders have the money, they go to the Congo to buy the ammunition cartridges from Congolese soldiers and civilians that they know. It is because of their connections with these Congolese traffickers that the traders have won the trust of the infiltrators' leaders. The traders return from the Congo and pay the infiltrators in a quantity of ammunition cartridges equivalent to the price of the cows. Ordinary peasants, who are also able to get hold of cartridges in the Congo, take them to the traders I have named. I have heard that a cartridge costs around 5,000 New Zaïre francs, which is about fifteen Rwandese francs. The cartridges are bought for forty Rwandese francs by the infiltrators (paid for in cows).

Samvura is the only trader to take live cows to the Congo.

Théonèste said that three routes are used.

The first goes from Ryabizege in sector Muhanda, Rwerere, often leaving at 4:00 a.m., via Bushanga in Kinyanzovu, Byahi in Rubavu and finally arriving in Birere, DRC. That is where the buyers are. The second route involves the cows leaving Ryabizege, crossing Gabibo sector in Rwerere and the vast infertile plain, to reach Kibati in Nyiragongo zone, DRC. The third route goes from Ryabizege, through sector Busomba and across the vast plain, to reach Kibumba, DRC.

The cartridges bought in the Congo are often dirty and covered in mud because they are buried in the ground by the Congolese for safekeeping. I once saw some that a man called Eliphath Nsengiyumva brought back in a little bag.

While much of the trade centres on ammunition, guns are also bought in North Kivu.

In June 1998, Samvura brought two Kalachnikovs for Sebahutu, the president of PALIR in Rwerere [and the brother-in-law of Théonèste]. These guns were for the use of PALIR's communal police. Sebahutu told me that the two guns had cost 150 dollars, paid for by the PALIR commune treasury. The money either comes from the contributions paid by people or from taxes paid by the butchers. A butcher pays 500 francs into the fund for each cow killed in Rwerere commune. Apart from this method of getting weapons—which is, as far as I know, the main one—the other way of getting ammunition is by attacking military positions.

Corporal Laurent Nkurunziza commented on the situation prior to his departure in July. His company, Chasseur, was under the command of

Lt. Lokodi and was part of the operational sector Quebec, previously Charlie.

Even before I left the infiltrators, there was a shortage of weapons. RPA soldiers had, for some months, been jealously guarding their own ammunition. Previously, we had received enough equipment, particularly in Ubugoyi region, Gisenyi. When I took part in the attack on Gisenyi town [October 1997], I personally had 200 cartridges for my gun, a light automatic rifle.

The fact that a number of the insurgents worked for foreign NGOs in the camps in Zaïre has also proved an asset, according to Laurent.

The infiltrators have Motorolas which they have acquired during fights with the RPA or from NGOs where many ex-FARs were working during their exile in Zaïre.

Some of the weapons from the DRC have also come from former members of FAZ who were integrated into the army under Kabila. A number of infiltrators interviewed for this book mentioned the "good relations" which exist with camp Rumangabo in Masisi. There are different reasons—individual and political—which lie behind their continuing support for the insurgents' cause. But some of them, in common with a number of those recruited during the ADFL's sweep through the country in 1996, share the anti-Tutsi sentiments that have become more pronounced in Kivu.<sup>45</sup>

The *Combattants* militia in North Kivu have also helped the insurgents with weapons. Gaspard Tegera, a former Presidential Guard, commented:

Some of the guns used by the infiltrators come from the *Combattants* while the others were stolen from the RPA military during the fighting.

Weapons are also of course bought on the open market and shipped through various transit points. Senior FAR soldiers who held key positions in the military structure set up in the camps and powerful civilian backers with important international connections reside in Gabon, including Agathe Habyarimana. The former chief-of-staff, Major-Gen. Augustin Bizimungu

<sup>45</sup> For example, a number of Congolese refugees interviewed by African Rights complained of lack of protection by DRC soldiers, as well as rough treatment.

has also spent considerable time in Gabon. Kenya hosts, amongst others, Col. Tharcisse Renzaho; Major Protais Mpiranya, head of the Presidential Guard during the genocide and Félicien Kabuga, a wealthy businessman and chairman of the board of directors of RTLM. Congo-Brazzaville, the Central African Republic and amongst other countries, South Africa, are home to a large number of politicians and soldiers supportive of the insurgents' cause.

### *Training Facilities*

The insurgents have been training in a number of camps, including refugee camps, in countries neighbouring Rwanda. In DRC, the insurgents' bases, which are the most important, are linked to a corridor in the volcanic region of Sabyinyo, Gahinga and Kalisimbi. As the testimonies above show, there is an important base in *groupement* Gatoyi located between Masisi and Walikale. Others are scattered in Rutchuru and other areas of North Kivu.

Military training is taking place in Congo-Brazzaville, in camps for Rwandese refugees located in Loukolela, Kintele, Ndjoungou and Liranga. There is also said to be a concentration of ex-FAR, between 2000-3000, in Oyo, Sassou-Nguesso's birthplace and political base, 400 km from the capital.

In Tanzania, the insurgents and some former FAZ soldiers have drawn on their connections with the Burundian rebel group, CNDD, based in Lukole refugee camp for Burundian refugees. But more significant is the training carried out in forests close to Burigi camp and in Kiminsi forest.

When they were driven out of Zaire, a substantial number of armed soldiers made their way to the Central African Republic. They are now settled in Mboki, Obo (where the militia of the former President, Gen. André Kolingba's is based) and Rafai, not far from the Sudan/DRC border.

For a long time, there have been allegations that ex-FAR soldiers are fighting alongside the Sudanese army against the forces of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The Sudanese government may be using Rwanda as a proxy target for its war against the government of President Museveni. It is said to have provided weapons and money to the insurgents, via North Kivu. It has also provided training facilities in Sudan itself. There are said to be over 3000 ex-FAR training in camps in Juba, Yambio, Amadi and Khartoum, under the supervision of Col. Tharcisse Renzaho, described above, and Col. Aloys Ntiwiragabo, one of the four principal leaders of FAR during the period of exile in Zaire. Both men are based in Kenya but

travel frequently to Sudan to obtain arms, medical supplies, generators and money. Major-General Bizimungu has also travelled to Sudan.

### **Creating a Network of Civilian Supporters**

To implement their political and military programme, the insurgents have created structures amongst the civilians. They have established a network of organisers and informants known as "*résistants*" and "*partisans*" as spelt out by PALIR<sup>44</sup> in its documents. "*Partisans*" are, for the most part, educated people, such as teachers or councillors, who liaise between the insurgents and the population, and whose responsibility is to influence the people in favour of the insurgency and to collect funds. "*Résistants*" are usually young men who are given rudimentary military training, a replay of the training of young people to fight against the RPA which had been such a feature of camp life in Zaire. Often referred to as "fearless young men", they often fight along the soldiers, and carry out more practical tasks which sometimes overlap with those of *partisans*. Apart from their military activities, the essence of their work is to encourage civil disobedience, telling the population not to take part in patrol duty, not to attend meetings with government representatives etc...

Sub-Lt. François-Xavier Nayigiziki, 31, alias "Yona Ibrahim", enrolled in FAR in 1991 and served as an insurgent from 3 December 1997 to 4 August 1998. He started out as a deputy company commander and then became commander of a company named Pigeon. A native of Mukingo, Ruhengeri, he carried out operations in Ruhengeri, in the communes of Kinigi, Ndsu, Gatonde, Nyarutovu and Nyamutera. He talked about the training given to new recruits in Rwanda

Whilst the northwest region has been in crisis, the infiltrators have continued to train their officers at the military school. When they returned to Rwanda, they organised a six month training course for the 37th group in a primary school in Cyanika sector, Nyamutera. To be admitted, it was necessary to have finished secondary school and to be a *resistant* or

<sup>44</sup> PALIR was established in the refugees in Zaire in 1995; PALIR first came to public notice in 1996 when it issued public threats against American citizens in Rwanda, offering a reward of \$1,000 for the assassination of every American and \$1,500 for the murder of the American ambassador.

*partisan*. The graduates were considered to be 'officer cadets'. This group finished their training and the 38th group began in June 1998.<sup>45</sup>

Emmanuel Ntezimana, 26, a teacher at Kampanga primary school also became a *partisan*. He joined in February 1998 and remained in their service until 7 June 1998. He lived in cellule Cyanturo, sector Musanze in Kinigi. He became vice-president of the PALIR committee in Musanze, whose president, Jean de Dieu Munyantambara, was a tailor. The treasurer, Mahano, was also a teacher. There were also three "councillors". There was also a "PALIR bourgmestre" at the level of the commune. Emmanuel explained that each PALIR sectoral committee was organised along similar lines. He summarised the responsibilities of the *partisans* in the PALIR committee:

- Teaching the population about the infiltrators' ideology, that is hatred of the government, so that the local people will house and feed the infiltrators, and make a financial contribution to the cause, 100 francs from poor families. This was a one-time contribution.
- Recruiting young people, known as *résistants*, and then organising them into their own committees. These *résistants* were in charge of transporting the food cooked by the population for the infiltrators. They also carried out daytime patrols in order to track the movements of the RPA, so that they could inform the infiltrators and the people if they needed to flee. The *résistants* conducted these patrols from the higher hills which they referred to in military terminology as observations posts.<sup>46</sup>

Eraste Musekura, 50, is a Pentecostal pastor in Karago, Gisenyi. He became a *partisan* in March 1998 and fled with them to the volcanic region of Rugano, Kinigi.

I knew the infiltrators before I joined up with them again because I had given them food supplies. They told us that it would not be long before they controlled the whole country. I was first trained in what the infiltrators wanted me to put into practice. I had to make the people understand the infiltrators' goals and explain that each person's contribution was indispensable. I had to encourage them to go to the front and to explain that we had been oppressed for a long time and therefore must fight for liberty. I had to teach all this to the people in the same way

<sup>45</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 10 August 1998.

<sup>46</sup> Interviewed in Kinigi, Ruhengeri, 18 July 1998.

that I taught the Gospel to Christians. I had to first teach those who were with me in the forest, before going into the villages. I gave some lessons in commune Kanama. Some people refused to pay attention to us.

*Résistants* operate amongst people who know them—their relatives, friends and neighbours. Emmanuel Nzabarinda, twenty, became a *résistant* in February 1998. He comes from sector Gahondogo in commune Kigombe, Ruhengeri. In his sector, he knew of a teacher and a former *responsable* who had both resigned from their posts to become *partisans*. Emmanuel did not share their enthusiasm for the cause, but was prompted to join by a threatening visit.

On 20 February 1998, I was recruited as a *résistant* by Muhigirwa, a *partisan*. He came to see me at my home at around 5:00 p.m. along with two other infiltrators and he said: 'We want you to work with us by obtaining goods for us, using your own finances and by collecting from your neighbours. You must also tell us who are all the people collaborating with the *Inyenzi* and tell us when the *Inyenzi* are coming so that we can flee'. He added something terrifying, saying that if I refused to fulfil the mission, I would find myself dead, just like my mother. My mother and sister, Nyirabasirimu, were killed on 18 January 1998 by infiltrators. My mother had publicly accused the infiltrators of taking money and goods during a meeting held a few days before by Major Gashayija of the RPA. We found out afterwards that my mother had been betrayed by a neighbour.

Emmanuel continued to live with his four brothers and sisters, at the same time carrying out the tasks he had been set: gathering information about the RPA, providing food and helping infiltrators to loot.

When I found out that the RPA soldiers were near a place called Yaounde, I would hurry to tell them so that they could escape with the people to sector Bisate. I also prepared food for the infiltrators. If I had problems finding food from our fields, I asked other neighbours to cook in my house and send the food to the infiltrators. I had a lot of beans, but I had to ask the locals for bananas to make with the beans. Other locals who collaborated along with me were Bageni, Seruhira, Kabagema, Rugenera and Ndolimana. I delivered them food three times a week.

I also went along when the infiltrators went out to loot. There were fourteen of us: seven *résistants*, including Twagirayezu and Nsengiyumva from my cellule; three *partisans*—Muhigirwa, Higiroya and Mbarushimana—and four infiltrators, Paulin, Ruzibiza's son, Sendegeya

and Mbonigaba from Kinigi. We took ten cows from the inhabitants in sector Nyange in Kinigi, who had stayed there rather than fleeing with the infiltrators. We were in charge of taking the cows to Rwimpyisi where other *résistants* had been assigned to take them somewhere; I don't know exactly where. We were given one of the cows to slaughter; forty *résistants* and *partisans* shared the cooked meat.

He described another incident of theft, this time in sector Kabwende, Kinigi.

We stole fifty kilos of beans and 25,000 francs from a teacher who had just received his salary. He was first beaten up so that he agreed to give us the money. There were four armed infiltrators with us. One of them was our neighbour, Mugemanyi, Nkinze hiki's son; there were also five *résistants*. We took the beans and 5,000 francs to the *résistants* and *partisans* of Rwimpyisi.

One of Emmanuel's most important tasks was to note and report the identities of civilians regarded as "collaborators" of the government.

Our leader was called Karongi, Mvukiyeho's son; he lived near the primary school of Gahondogo. He was the one who held meeting in Rwimpyisi where he assured us that the infiltrators were taking over the different regions of Gisenyi and Gitarama. When we received the lists of collaborators of the current regime, we gave them to Karongi who in turn gave them to the infiltrators. I personally gave a list of three people.<sup>47</sup>

On 6 April 1998, RPA soldiers who were not aware of Emmanuel's involvement with the infiltrators, asked him to help them locate the hiding places of infiltrators. He pointed out a young man who had also served as a *résistant* who in turn told the soldiers of Emmanuel's role, leading to his arrest.

Bangayiki, 25, began his training as a *résistant* in March 1998, together with many other young men from his commune of Ramba in Gisenyi, and others in Kibuye.

We were trained for four days in sector Sovu, Ramba, in the forest. The training began at 2:00 p.m. and finished at 4:00 p.m. and involved physical exercises and the handling of guns—Kalachnikovs and R5s. Our

<sup>47</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 30 April 1998.

contingent consisted of 100 candidates from the communes of Ramba and from Rutsiro and Kivumu in Kibuye.

At the end of their training session, the young men returned to their respective cellules. Taking part in night patrols, known as "listening posts" (*postes d'écoute*) helped them to pinpoint the whereabouts of RPA soldiers.

We stayed together in groups of about ten to fifteen people, armed with traditional arms and a single whistle per team. When we saw the *Inkotanyi* arrive, we blew whistles and cried out: 'The *Inyenzi* have come!' in order to ask the population and the infiltrators to flee the place.

The teams of *résistants* were given other tasks.

We collected food in buckets, with the support of the *responsables* of the cellules who had abandoned the service of the state, including someone called Muhashyi.

The *résistants* were also expected to take part in direct military combat. Bangayiki's contribution to the attack against the commune office of Bulinga in Gitarama, which led to his capture, is described below.<sup>48</sup>

Another recruit who became a fighter is a former student, Fidèle Ndaziboneye, 26, from Nyarugina in Kinigi. He mentioned a number of battles where he fought alongside ex-FAR and civilian colleagues.

I took part in the attack in Mukingo commune which took place sometime in 1997; we also attacked an RPA military position in the Bisate area, near Muhabura volcano, and we took ten of their guns. I participated in the assault on the Kivuruga centre in Cyabingo; we killed our opponents and looted a great deal, especially food and clothes. I went along on the attack in Ngororero, on the education centre, because I knew the area. We killed a lot of people there and looted food supplies which were meant for the students. We also took a lot of medicines.<sup>49</sup>

When six infiltrators approached Jonas Nshimiyimana, it didn't take them long to convince him. Jonas, twenty, is a farmer from Kagano in Kinigi. He had lived in Kahindo camp between July 1994 and November when he came back with the other refugees.

<sup>48</sup> Interviewed on 28 May 1998.

<sup>49</sup> Interviewed in Kinigi, Ruhengeri, 18 July 1998.

We agreed immediately, not only because we were frightened of being killed if we refused, but also because we believed what they told us: 'We are strong, we have enough arms, we have already conquered Gisenyi, there is only your area left...' The climate of violence, which hindered the free movement of people, meant that we didn't know the true situation.

Jonas said he remained with them for six months, during which time he helped with a number of military operations.

I was in CRAP battalion. I transported goods for them and sometimes I was given a gun to use when an infiltrator was sick. I operated in Nyange, Kabwende and Bisate sectors in Kinigi. CRAP organised a number of operations while I was with them, including the destruction of a water tank at Ruhengeri by eight infiltrators with Kalachnikovs and two rounds of ammunition. Corporal Nzahiginshuti and Staff Sergeant Nzirorera were amongst them. They returned to Kinigi with two cases of Primus beer and three radios which they had looted.

For the last three months (April-July) the infiltrators have not been able to move freely in the sectors where there are RPA military bases such as Kagano, Tero and Bisate. They stay in the sectors where there is no regular military presence. Only the *résistants* are sent into the sectors which are regularly patrolled by the RPA; they report back to the infiltrators who sometimes, on the basis of these reports, attack a military position.<sup>50</sup>

Ncogoza, eighteen, is another young farmer-turned-*résistant*. Between January and May 1998, he facilitated the insurgents' activities in his home in Gihora, Kinigi.

As president of the *résistants* for the cellule, I decided which fighters would accompany the infiltrators on an attack and I took charge of cooking the food when it was the turn of my cellule to do so. For example, when asked by Munyankusi, the current president of our sector's *partisans*, I sent ten *résistants* from my cellule to take part in the first attack against Kinigi commune office, at the request of Munyankusi, the president of our sector's *partisans*. On another occasion, I was told to ask all the people from my cellule to go to Musanze sector, equipped with levers and *amapiki*, an instrument used for digging. When we arrived, we were taken to the Kansoro bridge—situated on the Ruhengeri-Kinigi

road—which we were to destroy. We tried in vain, from 7:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., to destroy the bridge.<sup>51</sup>

Even children are being recruited as *résistants*. In May 1998, Kubwimana, aged eight, was imprisoned in Kayenzi, Gitarama, for helping the insurgents of that commune. He himself is from sector Mahembe in Nyabikenke, also in Gitarama. He explained that he became involved with a group of infiltrators who were staying with his family who had come from Bushara in Kayenzi.

A big group, about twenty infiltrators, lived in our house, but they spent the day elsewhere, often coming back at night and then leaving very early in the morning. Sometimes they ate with us. I don't know their names; maybe my father knows. They told my dad that they had come back from Zaire, with the intention of reconquering power. When they failed to take the commune office of Kayenzi, they told us that they had failed because their guide had misled them, and that they themselves did not know this region. They were hoping to get re-organised so they could attack this commune office another time.

Six days after their arrival, the infiltrators staying in our house chose me and four other children of my age to undertake two missions: to check whether there were RPA soldiers on Bakokwe bridge and to specify the location, weapons and number, if possible, of the soldiers at Kayenzi commune office and its surroundings. We were to come back and report back to them. The other children were Kagina, son of Kalisa; Hakorimana, son of Musine; Cyamanyi, son of Ndayambaje and Ntezimana, son of Valens.

Whether from fear or enthusiasm, there was no protest from Kubwimana's father, Uwihoreye, who simply told him to carry out his tasks quickly. The five children set out and followed the infiltrators' instructions to the letter. When he reached the bridge, Kubwimana did not find any soldiers. He said he then went to the home of someone called Ignace, in sector Marenga, and asked to be hired to look after his two cows. This work lasted for a week, a period during which, he said: "I reflected on how I could best continue my mission". Ignace was unaware of the reasons for his stay in the area. Kubwimana eventually arrived in the vicinity of Kayenzi's commune office and by mistake he went in through the entrance reserved for soldiers, arousing suspicion. After questioning, he acknowledged that he

<sup>50</sup> Interviewed in Kinigi, Ruhengeri, 14 July 1998.

<sup>51</sup> Interviewed in Kinigi, Ruhengeri, 14 July 1998.



had been sent by the insurgents and was imprisoned in the women's wing of Kayenzi's detention centre. Worried about the lack of contact with his family, he was also anxious about the future, including the prospect of being employed again by the insurgents.

I would like to leave the prison. I promise that if I am contacted again by the infiltrators to help them, I will pretend to accept the mission and will then hurry over to let the soldiers know. I couldn't do that last time because I was afraid. If the soldiers would accept me, I prefer to live with them once I was freed, instead of going home. This is because the infiltrators might use me again, but also because the food the soldiers eat is better than what we eat at my father's house.<sup>52</sup>

A few weeks later, he was released and returned to his parents in Nyabikenke.

The tasks of civilian recruits often includes the distribution of propaganda. Emmanuel Ndarwamunga, chosen as a *résistant* in Kinigi in late 1997, was appointed as an intermediary between the insurgents and the councillor of his sector.

My main task was to sensitise the population to the infiltrators' ideology. I was set this mission by 'Figaro', on the suggestion of Sebigeri, the councillor for the sector serving the infiltrators. I took messages which were entrusted to me by either of these men. I covered the cellules of Kiryamo, Kibingo and Nyarubyi in my sector, Nyange.

The important message, which often featured in the propaganda campaign, was to tell the people to 'flee from the government soldiers and to refuse to participate in the meetings organised by the authorities of the commune'. Not all the inhabitants of this area fled to the volcanic forest. It was enough to move to another sector or another cellule when the soldiers came, and then to return once they had left. Only the inhabitants of the sectors of Kabwende, Bisata and Nyabitsinde fled to the bamboo forest. When the soldiers remained in an administrative area for a long time, the displaced inhabitants were welcomed by those native to the area where they went, or if not, they went to the mountains. There were *résistants*, usually stationed at the top of hills, to track the movements of the soldiers and report back to the people so they could know if the soldiers had left an area and they should return.

<sup>52</sup> Interviewed in Kayenzi, Gitarama, 27 May 1998.

Jean Marie-Vianney Cyizere described the activities carried out by *partisans* in his home commune of Kinigi, Ruhengeri.

The sensitisation programme supporting the ideology of the infiltrators was carried out by educated people and interahamwe. These propagandists included Félicien from cellule Gisaba who had just begun his secondary schooling. He identified collaborators of the regime and decided whether people were to live or die. Munyampeta, a former teacher and warehouseman for Musanze school, from sector Kabwende, co-ordinated the campaign calling on the population to shelter and feed the infiltrators.

Munyakazi, a twenty-year-old miller from sector Mudende in Mutura was on a visit to his aunt, Asterie Ukwimanigize in sector Rwanzekuma, Rwerere commune, when he was asked by two neighbours, Biniga and Cyuma, to join them in assisting the insurgents. "I accepted their demand, as I was afraid they would kill me." The men were responsible for collecting food from the peasants to give to infiltrators who were hiding from the army in banana plantations. They also had another role.

Biniga and Cyuma were also members of the *Abakada*, the political propagandists of the infiltrators. They let me join after a few days. The *Abakada's* mission was to inform themselves about RPA positions and any other information, to sensitise the population so that they would hate the present regime and its army, and to accuse them of wanting to kill all the Hutu. We told the people to flee whenever the army came to the region. To be honest, the population of this sector welcomed us and respected our mission. They helped us by warning us when the soldiers were arriving, so we could escape. While I was there we fled three times, accompanied by the population, when the soldiers came to the sector. The first time we were warned by a peasant who was working in his field; we went to Kinyanzovu sector with the whole population. The second time, we went to cellule Cyanzarwe, sector Rwanzekuma. The third time, we went to Bikoro market. Each time we were accompanied by armed infiltrators.

It is clear from the account of Denis Mashukane, a resident of Rwerere, that the work of the *résistants* is not in vain.

The infiltrators and the *résistants* began their sensitisation campaign in July or August 1997. They told us to run away from the soldiers, and often cited specific examples of murders which they said had been committed by the army. So, on several occasions we ran away from confrontations or

when soldiers came. We went to safe places which were shown to us by the allies of the infiltrators. At first, I was surprised to see that amongst the people who were running away, there were those in civilian clothes, but with arms.

### *Manipulating Minds: The Propaganda Campaign*

Both the work of the *partisans* and *résistants* and the support of the wider population is closely linked to an intense propaganda campaign which began before the insurgency itself and continues today. Since 1995, military officers and politicians have been preparing the population living in the northwest for their return. They have been distributing tracts warning Hutus of the need to protect themselves from the current regime, and trying to convince them of the legitimacy and strength of the insurgents' cause.

One of the most renowned infiltrators in the country was in charge of propaganda for commune Giciye in Gisenyi from 1995 to 1996. He is Lt. Kazungu, whose real name is Innocent Ndamyumugabe, a much admired figure among his fellow-insurgents. According to Fabien Niyonsenga, "Kazungu had an established reputation as an excellent military operator. When he was an infiltrator, he escaped the RPA many times." Kazungu is an ex-FAR soldier from sector Gihira in Giciye who joined the RPA after the genocide, but deserted to become an infiltrator before he had completed the required re-training programme for soldiers of the former army. To help him, he recruited an old acquaintance, who was also from sector Gihira—Dieudonné Musabyimana, aged 27 and currently re-integrated in the RPA. In April 1995, while at his parents' home, three young men visited Dieudonné, bringing a message from Kazungu about the war which was to come. Dieudonné was taken to the cellule of Gahungeri, where he met up with Kazungu and was invited to take part in a meeting the following Saturday.

When the day arrived, I took part in this meeting that Kazungu himself was chairing. It took place at 6:00 p.m. for more than fifty infiltrators and candidates, fifteen of whom had themselves benefited from military training. The resolutions of the meeting called on us to make the population aware, particularly the ex-FAR, of this idea of freeing the country.

Between 1995 and 1996, Lt. Kazungu was the leader of the awareness campaigns. He was assisted in other regions by other ex-FAR, including Sub-Lt. Cyrille from Nyakinama in Ruhengeri; Sub-Lt. Makofe who was in charge in Gaseke and Rynayo in Nkuli; Sub-Lt. Cyaka who

worked in commune Karago; Sub-Lt. Mabuye and Major Haguma. We continued to stay in our homes and spent the days doing the awareness campaign for the benefit of the population.

Dieudonné's links with the FAR were strong. He joined up when he left school in July 1991. After the army was defeated in July 1994, he left Rwanda for Goma, but returned to Gisenyi after two weeks. Passing himself off as a civilian, he worked for UNHCR for a month and was then employed by the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) as an escort for their vehicles. It was around this time that Dieudonné began working with the infiltrators. Several other IOM staff members also joined the ranks of the infiltrators.

Five drivers of IOM lorries in turn also became infiltrators. I met them gradually during our travels with Kazungu. I met one of them, nicknamed 'Isake', in Kamiranzovu, Giciye. He was from Kigali and he was amongst the infiltrators who were led at the time by Sub-Lt. Mabuye.

He named several other infiltrators from his sector.

Corporal Sindambiwe and Corporal Kagurube are from my cellule; Corporal Ruzitatira, Corporal Barendayabo and his brother come from the Gahungeri cellule; Lt. Kazungu, Sergeant Senzira, Corporal Uburiyemuye and a civilian called Byivumbu are all natives of Muremure cellule.

Dieudonné believes that the sustained propaganda campaign in which he was involved has magnified the current problems.

Now, we experience a lot of problems from the infiltrators due to their awareness campaign that went on for two years. Practically the whole of the commune of Giciye knows the infiltrators.

François Mbonaruzza explained that his battalion of infiltrators could only carry out military operations in areas where there had been a propaganda initiative. This underlines how central "awareness raising" is to the infiltrators' strategy.

All four of our companies operated in the communes of Rwerere, Kanama and Rubavu [the urban commune of Gisenyi]. But we were not allowed to cross the main road into Nyamyumba, Kayove, etc., since the sensitisation of the population, a necessary prelude to operations, was not yet effective.

Hutus employed in government service as teachers or local government officials are persuaded by arguments that they should not serve a "Tutsi" regime. Emmanuel Ntezimana, the primary school teacher who became a *partisan*, was discouraged from serving "the enemy."

There was talk of isolated cases of infiltrators being seen in different communes. But it was from November 1997 onwards that I began to see them myself. It was during this month that staff sergeant Ndizihiwe, an infiltrator from our cellule, came and tried to convince me. He said that although I was a state employee 'for the Tutsis', I would eventually be killed by these same officials. He told me that a large number of ex-FARs, like himself, were in the forest of volcanoes and were waiting to start the war of liberation for the Rwandese. It was at this time that they began to secretly kill their opponents and to steal goods from the local people. In January 1998, he came back to see me and told me that they wanted me to become a member of the sector committee in charge of informing the population about the infiltrators' ideology. I explained, and he could see for himself, the dilemma which I faced. Some time later, he sent Célestin Hakorimana, a teacher at Kampanga who had been recruited before me, to talk to me. He explained the advantages to me, saying: 'What will happen to you when we have won the battle without any help from you at all?'

Eraste Musekura, the Pentecostal pastor cited above, remained at home in Karago, Gisenyi in July 1994, when so many other Hutus left. He described security in Karago as "good" until November 1996, when the situation changed.

Some of the refugees went into the forests, most of them ex-FAR and the most important militiamen. But we noticed that there was close collaboration between those who had gone to their homes and those who entered the rebellion. The rebels looked for ways of teaching the population civil disobedience and to hate the current authorities. They explained to them that the government belonged to the Tutsis, that the army consisted entirely of foreigners and did not include any Rwandese. We were made to understand that we should help them by giving them money to buy arms and supplies. A lot of people responded to their appeal. I myself gave them food. They told us that it would not be long before they took over the whole country. In our cellule (Gasesero, sector Gakarara), the infiltrators who taught us were former soldiers. Lt. Murego was responsible for contacts between civilians and soldiers and 'Flambo' and Arcide and were responsible for collecting contributions. However, there were also those who were not really convinced but who rallied

around for fear of being killed by the infiltrators. Some were strongly opposed to the teachings of the infiltrators. These were killed, for example Mujanga; Sibomana, the *responsable* of a cellule and Safari.

In late March 1998, thousands of people left their homes after intense fighting between the insurgents and the RPA. Eraste and his family followed the insurgents into the volcanoes of Rugano in Kinigi.

When we reached Buvumo, the infiltrators calmed us down by telling us that they had pushed the RPA back. They told us that the current government was a government of Tutsis and that their ambition was to exterminate all the Hutus. They made us understand that they had already confiscated a lot of arms from the RPA and that they already controlled a substantial part of the country, namely a large part of Kibuye and Gitarama. They said that it would take no time to occupy Gisenyi and Ruhengeri; as for Kigali, they told us that they had their people there so that the take-over would not take a lot of time.<sup>53</sup>

Examples of the tracts distributed by the infiltrators in the northwest demonstrate that they are building upon the lessons of hatred and fear taught by the government and the media before and during the genocide. Written in Kinyarwanda,<sup>54</sup> numerous tracts have been distributed in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri and subsequently in Kigali. They are addressed either to the Hutu population in general, or to specific audiences—to Hutus in government service, individual officials, survivors of the genocide or the Tutsi community.

The tracts recall the chilling words used by Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) and Radio Rwanda at the height of the genocide and of *Kangura* before the genocide. They use many of the same arguments to justify the insurgency. Calling upon Hutus to take up arms in the interests of self-preservation, they stress the importance of forging Hutu unity and emphasise their rights as the "majority". They describe Hutus who oppose the insurgency as "selfish traitors" who deserve to die a merciless death. They use offensive cartoons, language and caricatures to denigrate Tutsis, described as "foreign invaders" who must be sent "home" to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia.

It is, in general, difficult to establish the identity of the individual authors of the tracts. But one man who is known is Stanislas Simbizi who,

<sup>53</sup> Interviewed in Kinigi, Ruhengeri, 15 July 1998.

<sup>54</sup> Certain spellings in the Kinyarwanda suggest a Kirundi influence from Burundi.

before the genocide, was one of the four national leaders of the extremist party, the Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR); he often acted as one of their spokesmen. Jean Marie-Vianney Cyizere met him in Kinigi.

Stanislas Simbizi, who used to be a key figure in the CDR, was in charge of obtaining arms. He is from sector Kabwende, in our commune of Kinigi. He was also in charge of political activity for the infiltrators, overseeing the content and dissemination of tracts. I don't know if he is the only one in charge of such matters. One day in Bisate, Kinigi, when he was there, I saw him typing a tract whose purpose was to make the Hutu population hate the government soldiers, whom he called assassins. He was making it up as he typed. After having read this tract, which was produced in duplicate, he handed it over to a boy, whose name escapes me, who was in charge of copying and disseminating it.

Jonas Nshimiyimana also remembered Simbizi's visits to Kinigi

I met certain infiltrators such as Stanislas Simbizi from Kabwende sector, Kinigi commune. He is escorted by at least six armed men and is an important figure amongst the infiltrators because he collaborates directly with their high command. It was probably May 1998 when I saw him in Bisate sector. An RPA aeroplane attacked us; he escaped unhurt.

The most detailed exposé of the insurgents' political aims and ideology is contained in a 45-page document entitled *Let us Liberate Our Country: The Basic Principles of Our Victory* which was issued when the refugees were still in Zaire and Tanzania. It served as the basis for political mobilisation in the camps and sets the broad context in which the tracts disseminated in the northwest in 1997/8 must be seen. Describing the government as a Tutsi clique established in Kigali, the authors have set out to convince the Hutu population of the necessity for unity and for a revolt against the government. It describes Rwanda's pre-colonial history as characterised by the conquest and domination of Rwanda by the Tutsis and its recent history marked by the invasion of the RPF in 1990 and by the introduction of multipartyism. It provides an analysis of the current situation, arguing that the RPF is incapable of managing the country's affairs and ensuring security. Concluding that a war waged by the military and strongly supported by a popular uprising is imperative, it ends with a definition of the principles which must guide "the revolution" and the roles which should be played by every member of the community, from the priest to the journalist.

The tracts which began to appear in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi from mid-1997 are more crude attempts at propaganda, but they have remained faithful to the political intent of this important document. The following extract comes from a tract found in Muramba, Gisenyi; its source was PALIR.

You Hutu fools, who keep giving money which is used to buy weapons to kill your fellows. You say you are studying. Don't you know where those who studied are? How many studies did Kagame undertake, he to who you give your money, who leads all these massacres? Wouldn't it be better to give this money to PALIR as a contribution towards freeing ourselves? PALIR has an armed wing called ALIR.

And you Tutsi, you have stretched your noses and necks (i.e. become overconfident) because you think you have protectors! And you support your *Inyenzi* fellows in their extermination of the Hutu, instead of fighting ALIR. We will kill you until you are no longer contemptuous, and understand that you must cohabit with others.

Another tract is more revealing about the strategies of the infiltrators. It aims to convince the population that they are fighting a liberation war which has national popular support and significance.

The path of a sustained war is led and supported by the majority of the population. This is the path of a lasting war led by the militants associated with the majority of the population. It is a war whose objective is a change in the lives of all the people, especially the oppressed, the common people, officials and women.

Drawing parallels with the experiences of the National Resistance Army in Uganda in 1981-1986 and the 15-year liberation war in Mozambique, it claims that the insurgents are following an established and successful method of warfare. It describes the insurgency as "a struggle against the enemy of the nation" which will pass through three phases.

In the first phase, small groups of ill-trained militants fight independently, and are always on the move. Among the goals, the tract lists:

- To kill and obstruct those people used by the state in its fight against the majority people;
- To cohabit with the people, be close and polite to the people.

It notes the importance of recruitment and of unity while creating “divisions in the enemy”s ranks.” It suggests that the aim of the war is the liberation of the country and the establishment of democracy.

The people reject feudalism and colonialism and there is no longer any contempt for others. They too participated in the war to liberate all from oppression and were effective together. And those who were wrong take the opportunity to change their minds, to become human again, to abandon the animal spirit. This happens because of the lessons they are given by the militants. The militants, together with the people, alter certain behaviour, social relations and elaborate new rules and regulations acceptable to all.

Portraying the RPA as a divided spent force is integral to the war of nerves. A tract dated 2 September 1997 from ALIR claims that “elements of the RPF have surrendered to ALIR”.

- The reason they surrendered was because they couldn't see where their fight was leading, because of divisions within the RPF. The source of these divisions is the desire for Batutsi hegemony, as led by Kagame...
- The disappearances of Hutu ex-soldiers who had been integrated into the RPA. More than 46 have vanished without trace.
- They hadn't been paid for four months. This is the reason they sometimes attack the population and loot. They told us they had been outraged by Kagame's speech in Mukamira, showing how he didn't care about their hunger when his belly was full. But more than anything, their anger is due to the way the defence budget has taken the road to Eritrea. Kagame has built factories and garages there and plans to take refuge there in the next few days. Many amongst them wished him a good journey.
- The other main reason for their anger is the lie according to which they will be rewarded at the end of the war. They cannot wait any longer. They are especially angry when they are told there is no war in the country, when they constantly record large losses at the front. The chiefs arrange things so that the survivors of this fighting do not meet other soldiers. That way the soldiers always go to the front without knowing what awaits them. And many die there. They told us that over 3,000 soldiers were already buried at Pasteur Bizimungu's house in Murambi, Giciye.

The tract includes a list of the dead, naming senior officers who are, in fact, alive.

RTLTM's strategy—a cocktail of bravado, fabrication and optimism—is the hallmark of today's insurgents. According to a tract dated 19 June and marked Kigali, the choices facing RPA soldiers are defeat, surrender or suicide.

Did you know that more than 324 *Inyenzi* surrendered to the *Inzirabwoba* during the fighting at Gisenyi between 10 and 17 June 1997? And they came with their weapons.

More than 126 were killed. We were able to open the doors of Gisenyi prison, freeing 1809 innocent Hutu who had been imprisoned there. Two RPF majors were captured.<sup>35</sup>

Seeing this, 84 *Inyenzi* fled to Goma, while others threw themselves into Lake Kivu. (We counted sixteen bodies).

While the fighting went on in Gisenyi, the commander of the *Inzirabwoba* in commune Giciye took 81 *Inyenzi-Inkotanyi* and their weapons.

Sowing mistrust between the RPA and FAR soldiers integrated into the RPA is a crucial aspect of the insurgents' psychological tactics. The former FAR in the army are portrayed as a fifth column for the insurgents; this particular document refers to a senior officer in the RPA.

According to the news we receive from Ruhengeri, Lt Col. Munyakazi, the commander of operations in Ruhengeri, is looking for other units which want to hand themselves over to the forces of ALIR before it is too late.

Following the footsteps of RTLTM and *Kangura*, the new tracts seek to galvanise Hutus by appealing to their pride, accusing them of being too cowardly, lazy, materialistic or ill-informed to “take on the *Inyenzi*.” They also emphasise that the war in the northwest presents the greatest chance to avenge the defeat of the former regime in 1994, and to redress the historical injustices suffered by the Hutu. One tract which contains many of these elements is entitled *Muhutu, Rise Up Before You Die Like An Ant*. It was circulating in Kigali in December.

You Muhutu, have you noticed that Hutus die like ants while the Tutsis get together to avenge the death of any one of them?

<sup>35</sup> The insurgents have freed prisoners from detention centres attached to commune offices, but not, contrary to this claim, from main prisons. See below for details.

You Muhutu, did you know that the Hutus wanted to co-habit with the Tutsis who refused, preferring to plunge you into interminable wars?

You Muhutu, are you aware that the Tutsis have power at their finger tips, and that when they have seized it, they will kill the Hutus little by little, in order not to let go of this power?

You Muhutu, do you realise that a huge number of Tutsis currently possess guns and grenades?

You Muhutu, are you aware that these guns and grenades are only aimed at you and that many Hutus know this, discuss about it, but take no action?

If you know it:

Are you not intelligent? Don't you have any strength? Don't you have any money? Don't you have any courage? If not, await the moment when the *Inyenzi* will kill you without even using bullets.

If you have it, starting today look for ways to defend yourself together with your friendly neighbours. Organise yourselves. Don't wait for someone else to come to tell you what you should do.

The tract ends with the request that it be "diffused as widely as possible."

The insurgents also use the history of Rwanda—or their version of it—to make Hutus draw historical parallels between the current government and the former Tutsi monarchy. A tract marked Gatovu, commune Nkuli in Ruhengeri argued that the oppressive labour practices suffered by the Hutus during colonialism had been reinstated by the government.

Don't you know that the regime of *ubuhake*<sup>56</sup> and colonialism has been abolished? Yet since the Tutsi regime has been restored, *ubuhake*, forced labour and portage are once again the orders of the day. This is all because the Bahutu have no memory, cannot recognise or point out their enemies to others. Who today can deny that *ubuhake* has returned? And there are big-bellied Hutu who spend their time working hard to please their overlords. And forced labour, isn't that what you are doing every morning when you respond to the calls of those who send you to draw water or pull up your crops from the field? You forget that they will not help you when a famine is declared, even if they have nothing themselves?

<sup>56</sup> *Ubuha* allowed a patron, generally rich cattle chiefs, to give a cow to his client. This system was open to serious exploitation because the patron had the power to demand "repayment" of all his client's cattle, not only the one single cow loaned to the client. As cattle chiefs were all Tutsi, *ubuhake* came to be associated with the discriminatory labour practices suffered by the Hutu under the monarchy. It was abolished in 1954 by King Rudahigwa.

Some of the tracts are pointedly addressed to survivors of the 1994 genocide, either to specific individuals or to a group living together. The aim is twofold; to make the northwest unsafe for them, and thereby ensure that the génocidaires who have returned to the region are left undisturbed. Survivors say that such tracts are slid under their doors or left on the streets.

In addition to the tracts, the insurgents also have newspapers; although publication is both irregular and limited, a number of issues have appeared. From January-July 1998, André Kanyamihigo, 35, helped the insurgents bring out two of these newspapers. He was the secretary at the Catholic Parish of Rambura before he settled in Katale camp in July 1994. He was repatriated by UNHCR in September 1996 and settled in his home in cellule Murama, sector Muhungwe in Karago. Parish activities were suspended after the priest was ambushed and evacuated abroad for medical treatment. André turned to farming; in January 1998, he received visitors.

The infiltrators asked me to help them in connection with the typing of their newspaper. I was contacted at my home by Major Hakizimana who used the pseudonym 'Poète.' He asked me to train their typist, Francine, the daughter of Mparirwa from Guriro cellule, Bumba sector in Karago. She was in the fourth year of secondary school in Ruhengeri. I trained her for a month using a machine which she brought herself and which belonged to the infiltrators. I didn't start working for them myself until March 1998.

The infiltrators had a total of six newspapers.

*Umucunguzi* ('The Liberator') covers the operational sector Echo;

*Ibohre* ('Break Free') works for the ALIR commanders;

*Ijwi Rya Rubanda* ('Voice of the People') covers the operational sector Charlie;

*Dushikame* ('Let's Consolidate') is also produced for the sector Charlie;

*Bazumvanyari* ('When Will They Understand?') covers Ruhengeri and Greater Kigali;

*Intashyo* ('Greetings') is independent but associated with the infiltrators;

André worked on two newspapers, using different pseudonyms.

I called myself Quêsteur in *Dushikame* and Paulin Cyuzuzu in *Intashyo*. My work consisted of typing up two issues (numbers 18 and 19) of *Dushikame* and issue No. 6 of *Intashyo*. The chief editor of *Dushikame* was Sub-Lt. Alain (a pseudonym). This journal was based in Cyarwa

sector, Giciye. The chief editor of *Intashyo* was a man who went by the name of Ciceron. He was the former assistant bourgmestre of Nkuli.

The management committee for each newspaper was organised as follows: the chief editor, the deputy chief editor; the secretary; the deputy secretary; the typist; the journalists; the treasurer or cashier and the technical advisors.

Often, the typewriters had been looted, but some new Olympia models were bought new. The paper was also looted. The maximum amount charged for the paper is 200 francs. Everyone pays except the officials of PALIR and ALIR.

André disputed the claim that these journals were published in Kigali.

I had to write that the journal was edited in Kigali, when in fact it was written in our banana plantations and reeds.<sup>57</sup>

### *Spreading the Message Beyond the Northwest*

Both direct and indirect support for the goals of the insurgency in the northwest has been expressed by groups and individuals outside the region. For those in opposition to the current government, inside the country and abroad, the insurgency in the northwest has provided an opening, acting as a focal point for anti-government discontent. They have represented the conflict as the possible foundation for a nation-wide revolt with the potential to exacerbate anti-Tutsi sentiment in other parts of Rwanda and in certain regions of neighbouring countries.

There are tracts circulating in Kigali and possibly even outside Rwanda, which echo a similar intent to that of the insurgents. Some have tried to portray the insurgents as a movement with a democratic agenda, perhaps with an international audience in mind. This is particularly apparent in the documents published by the group "Rassemblement pour la Democratie." The identities of those involved in the group are not revealed. The only name that appears on their literature, that of the group's "spokesman" Paul Rubandibirora, appears to be a pseudonym.<sup>58</sup> However, the tone and content suggest a link to former Rwandese politicians, now living abroad, and to groups associated with the former refugees in Zaire.

<sup>57</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 6 August 1998.

<sup>58</sup> In Kinyarwanda, *Rubandibirora* means "no matter what happens, the people see everything."

The following tract entitled "Fighting the murderous government" is distinct from the kind of crude<sup>59</sup> material written in Kinyarwanda and circulating in the northwest. Rather than demonising the Tutsis as a group, the documents of the Rassemblement identify the main threat as coming from the RPF, in particular, the Vice-President and Minister of Defence, Major-General Paul Kagame. The nature of the relationship between the Rassemblement and the insurgents in Rwanda and Kivu have not been publicly stated by either side, but it is evident that, at the very least, the group is stoking the fires of anger and ethnic sentiment which the violence has resurrected.

Addressed to Rwandese "friends of democracy", the tract accuses Kagame of many atrocities. Describing him as a "notorious criminal", it says he is surrounding himself with supporters from his own region in the style of Habyarimana, and looting on the scale of Mobutu. It alleges that those who oppose Kagame "disappear" or become the victims of death squads he has established. It warns that he is arming Tutsis as young as seven, "under the pretext that there has been a genocide." It urges Hutus to fight back.

How do you expect the Bahutu to react when they see the head of the army giving guns to the Batutsi, when 98% of the army is Batutsi? What can they do but try to run away when they see them coming to their cellule? They are frightened of being shot at for being interahamwe infiltrators. Does being a Hutu today mean being an interahamwe? Why don't they have the courage to say clearly that they do not want to live with the Bahutu, instead of continuing to abuse them? A criminal is a criminal, whether Hutu or Tutsi. Get up and let us fight them; they are the ones who are ruining this country. Kagame should stop deceiving himself that he can remain in power by lying; his mother is not the only one who can give birth to a boy.

We urgently need to hold a national conference. All those who know they are innocent, and there are many, should come and sit down with others and participate in the debate on the way the country should be governed. Otherwise it is obvious that the warmongers who govern us will lead us nowhere.

In a later issue, President Pasteur Bizimungu was also a target.

<sup>59</sup> Some of the tracts in Kinyarwanda are so vulgar that they are unprintable.

We ask for the resignation of Bizimungu because he violated the constitution and international law. A government which opposes the institutions and allows people who have been invited to meetings to be massacred doesn't deserve anything other than resignation and trial before the appropriate authorities. And they must repay the billions they stole from the state. It isn't from a thief or a criminal that the people will learn how to live honestly and at peace with their neighbours. The fact that one happens to be Kagame's brother-in-law, the master criminal, must not be an excuse.

We invite all friends of democracy to rally to our fight against the criminals and those who perpetuate injustice, to demand that they be excluded from the national conference because we, for our part, have no wish to spill any blood.

During the genocide, the claim that the RPF had killed, or planned to kill, all Hutus in its ranks, as well as all leading Hutu politicians, was a tactic to harness pan-Hutu sentiment. It has also become the insurgents' principal strategy of political mobilisation. But the Rassemblement has cast the net wider, claiming that in addition, clergymen, journalists, members of human rights organisations, civil servants, ex-FAR integrated into the army and amongst others, magistrates, will meet a violent death at the hands of the RPA. Echoing the "warnings" of RTLM, they describe the "preparatory measures" that have been taken to ensure the elimination of educated Hutus—cabinet ministers and clergymen, amongst others.

The lists have been drawn up, the mass graves dug, the weapons distributed and the young trained for ethnic segregation. We have proof that certain ministers, parliamentarians, bourgmestres, members of human rights organisations, Catholic priests and nuns, ex-FAR integrated into the RPA, senior civil servants, journalists and magistrates will be murdered because of their ethnicity, and that these murders will be attributed to unidentified infiltrators. They will be killed because they are Hutu and therefore threaten the akazi of Kagame...

This practice of refusing to issue identity documents<sup>60</sup> to those who are returning to their country is a way of making you disappear without trace. Later they can disclaim all responsibility for you, and say that you died of hunger, cholera, or at the hands of the interahamwe who had taken you hostage in the camps in Zaire or Tanzania.

The Rassemblement invites you to rally to those fighting for democracy, so that we may get rid of the assassins and the army who only fights for the Tutsi ethnic group, and put in place a government which suits all Rwandese.

The argument that the RPF's primary goal is the extermination of the Hutu population is also taken up by the Rassemblement in a leaflet entitled "The RPF's objectives are now known."

Since 1990 the RPF has waged a war under the pretext of bringing democracy to Rwanda. Yet the people now have problems worse than those before 1959... According to our analysis their objectives are:  
To kill the educated or rich Bahutu wherever they may be...

To spend ten years talking about the crimes of 1994 and five years burying the remains of the genocide victims, the aim being to deepen the hate between Bahutu and Batutsi;

To terrorise the Bahutu and enforce their submission, and to place some in commune administrations, to use them to control the people and those they call infiltrators;

To integrate the Bahutu into the army, but place them in positions with no money and not to let them near any secrets, so they don't behave like Col. Lizinde who was killed for revealing their agenda;

To get rid of the Hutu widows in one month, September 1997, and not attract the attention of the UN;

To infiltrate the government of Congo, the Central African Republic, Cameroon and Kenya.

To use their daughters as spies in Brussels, Washington and all the countries of America and Europe, so as to obtain aid;<sup>61</sup>

To recruit soldiers and help President Buyoya of Burundi as agreed during a secret meeting held at Mbarara in Uganda between Museveni, Dusaidi [late advisor to the Vice-President] and Buyoya.

Disparaging Hutu members of the government has been a key feature of many tracts. Since there can only be two "camps", mutually hostile, each committed to the elimination of the other, they are referred to as "traitors" motivated by self-interest and personal ambitions.

Echoing some of the propaganda of the interim government, the Rassemblement claims the RPF is being manipulated by President Yoweri

<sup>60</sup> The refugees who returned to the country were not denied identity cards but were required, in common with the rest of the population, to go to their communes of origin to obtain the new cards issued since 1995.

<sup>61</sup> The claim that the RPF uses Tutsi women to further its political and diplomatic interests was a constant theme of the extremists' propaganda in the early 1990s.



Museveni of Uganda and is following an example of ethnic division set by Burundi.

Rwanda is neither Uganda nor Burundi. In all the cellules the teaching is the same: we should follow the example of Uganda. But if it is true that Uganda really is a country respectful of human rights, why did these Batutsi who lived there, and even took part in government, not choose to stay? We must think like Rwandese. Museveni might have been able to deceive the Ugandans, but we will not allow Kagame to do the same to the Rwandese. The proof is the way he unleashed a war which plunged the Rwandese into misery from which they will never escape. We can state that before the war, Rwandese lived on good terms with each other.

On 15 January 1998, ALIR issued a document, marked Kigali, in response to the visit of President Museveni to Rwanda a few days earlier, on 10 and 11 January.

[Museveni's] recent trip also reminded us of his visit in 1995, when he came to see how his colony was doing exterminating the Hutu population. Then, he told the Batutsi not to have pity on the babies when they killed. He gave the example of a lump which has to be removed when young, leaving nothing in the body. If it is taken out too late, you have to cut into the skin with a razor blade. That was when they planned the attacks on the refugee camps. You know the rest. They have now done it again, saying that all Hutu should be hanged, or rather crucified! There is no greater cruelty. Let all Hutu be on their guard; defend yourselves or you will be exterminated.

The creation of a new anti-government political group and its military wing—the “Rassemblement des Rwandais démocrates” and “Les Forces armées populaires” respectively—was announced in July 1998. Its first lengthy press release is dated 1 July and marked Kigali; intended as a detailed analysis of what it considers to be the shortcomings, mistakes and violations committed by the government since it took power, it refers to the insurgents as “opponents” and exploits the insurgency to underpin its critique.

To be a native of Ruhengeri is a sin, especially when it comes to a young adult who has the characteristics of what is called an *igipinga* [an opponent]—

Even if there are people who have been killed in Ruhengeri, Gisenyi, Kibuye and Gitarama by the opponents, and there are those killed

by unknown troublemakers, one cannot doubt that most of the victims in these préfectures and in other regions of the country and even Rwandese who were in Congo were massacred by government supporters... Under the current regime, the enemy is “the Rwandese” who is called “an infiltrator”, “an opponent” or someone else that the group in power believes is opposed to its interests.

These tracts are more subtle in the way they deliver their message, but they have the same effect as so many circulating in the northwest. The atmosphere of fear which now exists in the northwest, and which has kept the insurgency alive, is being spread much further afield by such claims.

Moreover the insurgents themselves have been spreading their message of hatred outside the northwest. A tract dated 23 June 1997 is addressed specifically to the “population of the sous-préfecture of Rushashi” in Greater Kigali. It claims that the insurgents will soon attack Kigali and seeks support from local people.

The armed wing of PALIR has sworn to free the country, which the remaining Tutsis and the foreign Tutsi threaten to destroy. Take courage, so that we may finally drive out the enemy, the descendants of the Tutsi... We congratulate the population of sectors Rukara, Buheta, Rushashi, Nganzo and others, who continue to give us considerable support. The moment to harvest the fruits of our efforts is near. Turn your eyes towards it.

A “message to all Rwandese”, dated 2 September 1997 and marked Kigali, is even more blunt.

We remind you that our fight is a Hutu/Tutsi one. Stay vigilant, let us drive the Tutsi far away. The fight is in its critical stage. We now have positions in the whole of Bumbogo region [northern Kigali and a south western part of Byumba]... We are in all of Kigali, including the town. We have been as far as Mutara, Kibungo and even Byumba. The *Inyenzi* saw us and fled into the natural park. Take courage, we are on the point of liberating our motherland. We will manage it soon. The *Inyenzi* leaders are about to disappear, starting with Sam Kaka, who was the head of the armed forces.

Many of the tracts take up the refrain of the genocide propaganda, that Tutsis are “foreigners” who must leave Rwanda. They are reminders of the speech delivered by Léon Mugesera, a key extremist ideologue, in Kabaya, Gisenyi, in 1992 when he suggested that Tutsis be sent “home” to

Ethiopia via the Nyabarongo river.<sup>62</sup> Tutsis who do not leave of their own accord will, PALIR states, be forced out by violence. Many of the 1959 Tutsi refugees who have returned to the country, particularly cattle herders from Uganda, have been settled in a new préfecture in the east, Mutara, made up of communes which had previously been part of Byumba or Kibungo. With the aim of inciting local Hutus to violence, the insurgents describe this as "stolen" land. The following tract, bearing a pseudonym, Paul Ntaniyonka<sup>63</sup>, uses the example of the fighting in the northwest to warn Tutsis to leave Rwanda.

... in the coming hours, make sure we don't find you in our towns. Go back to where you came from. We can no longer bear seeing you kill innocent Bahutu. Know that we know where you live. Don't think you are safe in Mutara préfecture. It is now surrounded by the forces of the *Inzirabwoba*, gathered together as PALIR. Know that Mutara is part of the Rwanda of the Bahutu... Wait, we will strike. Now.

## The Pivotal Role of Local Authorities

Among lower level officials in the northwest, there are many who have a decidedly hostile attitude to the present government. *Nyanbakumis*, who are responsible for units of ten households and *responsables*, in charge of cellules, are most often accused of facilitating the infiltrators' work. Even more serious are the cases where councillors, in charge of sectors, and bourgmestres in charge of communes, have thrown their considerable weight behind the infiltrators. Some officials help the insurgents while keeping up the pretence of helping the government to combat the problem.

In a country where, as recently as 1994, tens of thousands of people murdered their neighbours and even their relatives at the behest of local government officials, it is not difficult to imagine the consequences when the population perceives local officials as sympathetic to the infiltrators. The speed with which the insurgents appoint "bourgmestres", "councillors" and "responsables" amongst the populations that flee with them underscores the importance of Rwanda's influential and authoritarian local government structure in this war. However there is no doubt that the

pressures upon local officials to collaborate are acute. Their actions are closely watched and those deemed hostile to the insurgents' campaign become immediate targets. In every commune, they are the first to die at the hands of the insurgents; many have been killed, often with their families, as documented elsewhere in this book.

At every level of local government, there are officials known to have facilitated the mission of the insurgents; some of them have been preparing the ground since 1995. This assistance is often practical, arranging food and shelter for the insurgents and providing information about RPA movements. Officials can also provide insurgents with much sought after passes, allowing them to travel elsewhere in the country.

According to many infiltrators and local officials, the enthusiasm of bourgmestres, councillors and other officials to advance the insurgents' cause and the existence of widespread local support for them is usually linked to the presence of a large concentration of repatriated senior ex-FAR. One infiltrator who spoke of a "warm welcome from the population", added: "I can't see how a bourgmestre can ignore the presence of a colonel or a lieutenant-colonel among the infiltrators in his commune". Marie Mukarubega, the councillor for sector Ruhanya, commune Mbogo, described the challenge certain ex-FAR have presented to her authority.

Some ex-FAR members who have registered themselves are nasty; they are also hostile to the government's instructions. My cellule has four ex-FAR members, of which two are hostile. Their fight against the regime is welcomed by the peasants who are unhappy at their relatives' detention. One day I found these ex-FAR trying to convince the population to abandon and refuse patrol duty. Since then the population no longer participates fully in night patrols. I am now undermined by these people who issue instructions contrary to mine.<sup>64</sup>

Epaphrodite Bagaragaza, 27, is the councillor of sector Kabere II, commune Nyakinama, Ruhengeri. In July 1994 he fled to Zaire, but came back two weeks later. He said that he had been aware of the presence of infiltrators in his sector since 1995, but that the numbers involved have greatly increased since July 1997. One one occasion, he saw four infiltrators in a bar. He was aware that had been in his sector for a week, but was too terrified to act.

<sup>62</sup> During the genocide, thousands of Tutsis were drowned in the Nyabarongo river and it was renamed "Ethiopian Airlines".

<sup>63</sup> Ntaniyonka is not a name but means "no calf can produce milk".

<sup>64</sup> Interviewed in Mbogo, Greater Kigali, 3 July 1997.

I was scared of informing the civilian and military authorities of their presence because I was worried that they might kill me if I did.

In the meantime, they gained the trust of the *nyumbakumis* who started doing things for them. Among the *nyumbakumis* was a man called Ezéchiél Sebagenzi who came from one of the cellules which makes up my sector. In a meeting, he had publicly admitted that he had collaborated with the infiltrators by taking them supplies to a hillock called Ruganda, Rusanze sector, where these infiltrators were living.

Another *nyumbakumi* who admitted having worked with the infiltrators is a man called Emmanuel Nziyomaze who also took them supplies. These infiltrators even managed to recruit young people to assist them, including a person called Kanyabikore.

On 15 August, together with the local population, the soldiers carried out an operation aimed at exposing these infiltrators; seven of the infiltrators died, including a man called Barata.<sup>65</sup>

One of the *nyumbakumi* who admitted having helped the infiltrators was Aminadab Bakora, 32, from sector Kabere I, also in Nyakinama. He was appointed a *nyumbakumi* on 28 May 1997, to replace a man by the name of Raban Rusigariye. He explained how one evening, three days after his appointment, he was visited by five infiltrators and two civilians.

The two civilians were new recruits. They were Callixte, Niyomero's son from Busura cellule, Kabere I sector, and Ntabwandu, Kagarama's son who also came from Busura cellule.

After I had opened the door to them we had a conversation. They said: 'You have just replaced your predecessor. You must serve us as he did'. They were more precise and said that through his influence among the local population, he had supplied them with cooked food. I then gave them the portion of beans and potatoes that my wife had saved for me.

Holding a bucket, the two civilians came with me to the neighbours' houses to take supplies. We started off with my mother, Kanyange, who gave them cooked beans and bananas. Then Nyirantagorama gave them corn cooked with beans. Mbonyinshuti gave them a portion of potatoes, beans and cabbage and finally, Sibomana, Barogasha's son, gave them cooked bananas with beans. They then returned to mount Ruganda with these two civilians who were in charge of transporting the food.

They returned two days later. This time there were two of them. They were armed with guns. They had the two civilians with them to transport things. This time, I took them to Barogasha's house and he gave

them some beans. I then took them to Nkurikiyigoma's house who gave them bananas. I also took them to the homes of other peasants.

At a meeting called by an RPA captain, Aminadab was one of twelve people who admitted he had helped the infiltrators.

I was surprised to see that only twelve people accept responsibility, knowing that everybody who had been contacted by the infiltrators, simple peasants and figures of authority alike, had given them supplies. In all truth, the infiltrators had already conquered the sectors of Kabere I, Kabere II, Kabere III and Kitabura.<sup>66</sup>

Until his arrest on 17 July 1997, Faustin Munyabarambe was the councillor of sector Shaki in Nyakabanda, Gitarama. He lived in cellule Mubuga. He admits that he housed 24 infiltrators in mid-July 1997, but argues that he had little choice, and that he was afraid of informing the army of their presence. Shortly beforehand, on 5 July, sixteen people had been murdered; at the time, it was not clear if the killings had been committed by the army or the insurgents.

The infiltrators that I am accused of supporting arrived at my house on 13 July, at 8:30 p.m. They were brought by the *responsable* of the cellule, Munyensanga, and the *nyumbakumi*, Fidèle Maniraguha. I was at home with my children. My wife was not there. The *responsable* knocked at the door and called me. I opened the door and saw many armed people there wearing military uniform. Their leader asked me questions to find out if I was the councillor and about the state of security in the sector. I replied to all the questions he asked. They asked me who killed the sixteen people who died on 5 July. I replied that I didn't know. They said that their mission was to identify the authors of the killing, saying that the army was being accused. 'We are soldiers from over there, Gisenyi. We didn't want to spend the nights in the bush. Tonight we want to sleep as the other locals do. We will then carry on towards Nyabikenke and Rutobwe', they added.

Faustin and the other officials suggested the infiltrators spend the night with a neighbour who lived alone.

Before leaving, they said to us: 'At the moment there are 24 of us, but you will have to find us other houses where we can stay. We will come back in

<sup>65</sup> Interviewed in Nyakinama, Ruhengeri, 1 September 1997.

<sup>66</sup> Interviewed in Nyakinama, Ruhengeri, 1 September 1997.

two weeks with 180 colleagues so that we can fight the injustices which are being committed against you'.

We stayed at my house. There were neighbours there, including Frédéric Subukino (the agricultural monitor); Josué Havugimana, a repatriated ex-FAR; the *responsable*; the *nyumbakumi* and his son, called Hakizimana, a teacher who had recently been repatriated from Zaire.

The men were aware of the risks and discussed their options.

It was suggested that we immediately inform the soldiers, but the *responsable* and *nyumbakumi* prevented us from doing this, saying that a similar situation in sector Musagara, Satinsyi, had had negative consequences for the population when they had told the soldiers where the infiltrators were hiding. When infiltrators were killed by the army, other infiltrators subsequently came and killed large numbers of the people. They therefore stopped us from doing this. We decided to inform the soldiers after the arrival of the other 180 who we were supposed to put up in a local primary school.<sup>67</sup>

The infiltrators told them that they would return in a fortnight, but the following day Faustin was arrested.

Contacts between officials and the insurgents did not, of course, begin with the insurgency. Many had become convinced long before the camps closed. Dieudonné Musabyimana participated in an attack to loot supplies at Vunga market in Giciye; he said the raid was made possible by a local councillor. François Mbonaruzza gave a detailed account of the role of a bourgmestre in preparing the way for the infiltrators.

In August 1995, two Interahamwe who hadn't left the country but sometimes travelled to Zaire, came and asked me to help them: 'Sensitise the population to make them hate the current regime.' These two were Senogo, son of Théoneste Mpariye, Gahama cellule, Muramba sector, Cyabingo commune, and Habyarimana, who lived below the commune offices. My mission was to contact prominent local people, including civilian officials, educated people and an ex-FAR called Valens Musabyimana, son of Gaetan, the former commune police chief. This ex-FAR is now an infiltrator.

During my mission I put them in contact with Désiré Musoni, who was later the assistant bourgmestre. He is the son of Sébastien Rusimbukande, Musebeya cellule, Muramba sector. He was very useful,

and played an important role for them during the sensitisation of the population. While assistant bourgmestre in Cyabingo, he was once arrested for issuing passes to the infiltrators to facilitate their journeys through the country. I myself know that he gave passes to Corporal Habiakare, Kayove commune, and Corporal Elie Gakwandi from Bushoka sector.

Musoni was discovered, but this did not prevent him from returning to his position in local government.

Musoni was imprisoned for six months in Ruhengeri and then released after the préfet, Ignace Karuhije, a friend of his father's, intervened. The same préfet found him a job as assistant bourgmestre in Nyarutovu. I found out that he then returned to his old job in Cyabingo.

A commune that has been particularly marked by the intimate ties between local officials and infiltrators is Nkuli in Ruhengeri. In three sectors—Ryinyo, Kintobo and Rukoma—the councillors have joined the ranks of the infiltrators, taking the population with them to commune Nyamutera whenever they see the RPA. The councillors also left with the administrative seal of their sectors and the receipts for the payment of taxes. These sectors have a large number of ex-FAR among the infiltrators. The cumulative impact has been to render these sectors no-go areas. African Rights was warned not to visit them by a local government official.

Towards the end of 1997, infiltrators became so confident of support in sector Kintobo that they took their campaign beyond the manipulation of the existing local administration to the creation of their own system. Vénant Munyakazi, councillor of sector Gatovu in Nkuli, came up against the new "authorities" in the commune when he tried to organise a meeting about security at the request of an RPA captain. Vénant wrote to various councillors of the commune asking them and their *responsables* and *nyumbakumis*, to attend a meeting with the captain at Gatovu's secondary school on 30 November. On his way there, Vénant fell into an ambush. He was then brought before a "court" established by the infiltrators. It consisted of three men identified as the "authorities of commune Nkuli". The charges against him were placed by the councillors of the three sectors mentioned above who had aligned themselves with the infiltrators.

These three told me: 'You have been summoned by the justice of the bourgmestre following a complaint lodged by your colleagues, the

<sup>67</sup> Interviewed in Nyakabanda, Gitarama, 14 August 1997.

councillors of Kintobo, Ryinyo and Rukoma, who say that you have betrayed them. They are late even though they are the plaintiffs. We are going to punish them, before coming to you. Nevertheless, before they arrive, we are going to let you know a part of the offence of which you are accused. They accuse you of having written letters to them inviting them to participate in a meeting due to be held today by the *Inyenzi*, with the intention of having them arrested, because you know very well that they have become infiltrators'. I replied that I didn't know they had joined the infiltrators, adding that I had written these letters on behalf of the captain who wanted to meet together with the officials of nine sectors, including those of Nkuli, Nyamutera and Nyakinama.

The "plaintiffs" arrived an hour later, at 9:30 a.m.

They were Etienne Hanyurwimfara, councillor of Ryinyo; Jonathan Ndorimana, councillor of Rukoma and Jean-Bosco Munyankusi, councillor of Kintobo, all former colleagues. When they arrived, the three 'authorities' let them know of the fines imposed on account of their late arrival; each one was condemned to pay a fine of 1000 francs. Then, they told them of the manner in which I had defended myself regarding their accusations.

As for me, the 'authorities' recommended that I should no longer undertake such work as falls upon the officials of the *Inyenzi*. 'This captain and the bourgmestre are there to do it. In case of obligation, you will write a letter at the end of which you will note the name of the authority in charge. Underneath his name, you will put P.O. followed by your name. In this way, the recipient will know that you have done that in someone else's name and will make up his mind if he should respond to the invitation. I said no when they asked me if I was going to betray them. They released me, saying: 'Go back quickly in order not to miss this *Inyenzi* meeting. You risk being considered, by the *Inyenzi*, like these three councillors.'

Once Vénant had been called to account and the judgement delivered, the others left for sector Ryinyo and Vénant headed towards the meeting, where the success of the three councillors was apparent.

I noticed that no officials—neither the *responsables* nor the *nyumbakumis*—from Ryinyo and Rukoma had responded to the invitation. As for Kintobo, only one *responsable* from the cellule of Hungiro and his *nyumbakumi*, had come.

The decision taken by the three councillors was by then public knowledge and two of them, according to Vénant, had abandoned their

homes.<sup>68</sup> Sadly, Vénant was killed on 26 January 1998 during a confrontation between the army and the infiltrators.

One of the most important services rendered by local officials for insurgents is the use of their administrative seal to provide them with documents that facilitate their travels. On 3 November, the bourgmestre of Nkuli, Joseph Murindahabi, wrote to the préfet and bourgmestres of Ruhengeri, as well as military officers, to alert them to the defection of the councillor of Rukoma referred to above. He was particularly concerned about the disappearance of the sector's seal.

I regret to inform you of the disappearance of Jonathan Ndorimana. He no longer comes to work at the commune office, and we haven't heard from him since 25 September 1997.

Worse, he is still in possession of commune property destined for sector councillors, and is using his sector seal to stamp documents which allow the infiltrators to travel anywhere they wish.

I have used all sorts of invitations to encourage him to come and explain his problems, but he didn't come. The population in his sector say they no longer see him.

Thus I ask you to alert the security services and all bourgmestres in Ruhengeri préfecture to help identify any documents bearing the Rukoma seal issued since 25 September 1997.

Jonathan Ndorimana is dismissed from all duties as councillor for Rukoma sector.

I also wish to use this occasion to announce that since the day Jean-Baptiste Sebungane, the councillor for sector Musumba, was assassinated by infiltrators his official sector seal has disappeared. Therefore, as in the previous case, documents bearing the seal of this sector are worthless since 11 September 1997, since the late councillor died on 10 September 1997 at about 7:00 p.m. We don't know where the sector seal went.

"Alternative" administrative structures have been established elsewhere as well, for example in Mutura, Rwerere and Rubavu where the insurgents have named both bourgmestres and councillors, renamed "chairmen of sector committees." Their tasks are to convey orders from the insurgents' leadership, oversee the smooth implementation of their military and political aims, discourage dissent and to collect financial contributions from the residents and "taxes" on bars and restaurants. In Rwerere, Jean de

<sup>68</sup> Interviewed in Nkuli, Ruhengeri, 10 December 1997.

Dieu Sebahutu, the president of PALIR in that commune, acts as the bourgmestre; his equivalent in Rubavu is Joseph Safari.

### Divided Loyalties: "Moles" in the RPA?

Integration of ex-FAR soldiers into the RPA is a political necessity, but it has not been without risks and problems, as interviews with the insurgents reveal. A number of ex-FAR joined the RPA which they subsequently deserted in favour of the infiltrators. Their example, and the possibility of clandestine contacts between the insurgents and their former colleagues in the RPA, raises questions about their access to weapons, uniforms and military intelligence, issues that the army is obviously reluctant to discuss in a public fashion, given the insurgents' aim of heightening tension and mistrust within the RPA and because of the broader political and social implications.

The insurgents themselves are in no doubt as to the existence of such "moles". But in reality, it is difficult to judge the extent of the problem because the leaders of course recognise the propaganda value of making the rank and file believe in the widespread existence of spies within the RPA. Diogène Niyonsenga commented:

There were, without doubt, accomplices within the military camp of Ngororero in Gisenyi who gave information to our superiors.

Fabien Niyonsenga also believed they had sympathisers in Ngororero camp which the insurgents attacked in February 1998.

It is not possible to attack a camp like this without supporters, at least so as to obtain information about various things.

He also mentioned a colleague who used to be in the RPA.

There was an ex-FAR who had lived with the RPA and then defected to join us. He was promoted to captain and we know him by the name of Kibonumwe. He is from Satinsyi and he used to be in the RPA camp Ngororero. He is currently commanding the unit in Rushashi, Greater Kigali.

### Local People: The Backbone of the Insurgency

Without the widespread support of people living in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, the infiltrators' situation would have been untenable. Not all the support is given willingly, but in many sectors it is guaranteed. The combination of potent propaganda and the threat and use of violence which the génocidaires used to bring about genocide in 1994, and then to control the refugee camps, has been similarly effective in the northwest. The presence of a network of *partisans* and *résistants* living among the people has contributed to the atmosphere of fear and prevented people from taking a stand against the infiltrators' constant demands for food and shelter.

Although many have been intimidated into collaborating, the welcome the insurgents have received in the northwest also relies on their pre-existing bonds with local people. Those who had spent time in refugee camps had already been exposed to the "sensitisation" programmes of the infiltrators. The experience of exile was bound to produce a sense of bitterness. Many families were separated in the flight both from and back to Rwanda, and much suffering endured throughout. Many others have close relatives or friends among the insurgents. The campaign to win the sympathy of people in the area has also been able to exploit resentment about the loss of political power for the northwest region which the defeat of July 1994 represented. Hutu extremism has always found ready acceptance in this region, which is overwhelmingly Hutu.

The infiltrators have persuaded local people—relatives, friends, acquaintances as well as complete strangers—to support them. Often this means practical help, paying donations to the infiltrators, providing food and shelter, and gathering information, including intelligence regarding RPA positions. In some instances, civilians have participated in the insurgents' operations, temporarily swelling their ranks for a particular attack, and then returning to their homes; others have fled with them, sometimes across the border into the DRC. There are some civilians whose commitment to the cause is permanent and strong; they may either continue to work for the infiltrators within the community or join them for good.

The insurgents are frank about their dependency upon local people. According to Fabien Niyonsenga, arrested as recently as April 1998:

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**“Our war strategy is that used by all guerrillas—the support of the people”.**

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Sub-Lt. Consolée was captured in June 1998 in Nyamutera, Ruhengeri. On 4 July, she addressed a public gathering in Ruhengeri.

As I said at the stadium, without the people, the infiltrators wouldn't be here.

Dieudonné Musabyimana said gaining support was easier in Gisenyi because the local people, comparatively untouched by war from 1990-1994, had little idea of the suffering that conflict would bring.

The war had no impact on our region. We had all fled to Zaire when the RPA arrived here.

Another reason, he said, was because “the population included quite a high number of ex-FAR who supported us”. He recalled one incident where people assisted an insurgent.

The population really began to help us. One day the RPA soldiers carried out some operations in Gihira and Rubaya; they identified Staff Sergeant Munyampeta, tied his hands behind his back and dragged him to Rubaya to expose him to the population. Someone took advantage of the fact that the soldiers were not paying attention and cut the strings tying Munyampeta's hands; he escaped.

Sylvestre Nzabonariba said former refugees were particularly sympathetic, but everyone in Rugogwe cellule, where he and ten other infiltrators were based, was helpful.

In Karago [Gisenyi], the local population did its best to help us, by providing food and telling us the position of the RPA soldiers. A few times we also spent the night at the homes of local people. The *nyumbakumi* and the people responsible for the cellule knew we were there, but they didn't denounce us. I really didn't have any problems.

Diogène Niyonsenga described the continuing dependence on financial contributions from civilians, as late as April 1998.

The dues are still demanded and provided. No sum of money is fixed but some inhabitants give fifty francs. It is above all the traders who pay more.

Emmanuel Musabyeyezu entered Rwanda on 28 June 1997. He and his group were fed by local people as they travelled through Nkuli and Nyamutera communes. On 14 July 1997, the infiltrators were discovered and defeated by the RPA in battle. Three of them were wounded, including Emmanuel who was captured. He believes that the support from civilians has prolonged the insurgency.

There really is no contest between the army and ourselves, due especially to our lack of military equipment. There is the risk of total defeat in the future. Yet this may take a long time due to perseverance, the guerrilla type of campaign and the support of the population. These local people no longer need to be won over to our cause, as many of them had left the country and were sensitised in the camps. Those who did not flee were made aware by the first infiltrators who were already operating in Rwanda before the destruction of the camps.

In truth, if the whole population refused to co-operate with the infiltrators, they would be completely defeated.

Munyakazi was recruited to help around 100 local infiltrators commanded by Sub-Lt. Boniface Ahishakiye in sector Rwanzekuma, Rwerere commune. Despite the presence of the army, he found that local people were sympathetic to their needs.

Apart from the sector councillor, who had moved out after the infiltrators' threats, the other local officials, like the *nyumbakumi* and the cellule leaders, helped us.

To tell you the truth, virtually all the people of sectors Kinyanzovu and Rwanzekuma were in favour of the infiltrators at the time. I saw for myself that these peasants were themselves infiltrators when it came to the government.<sup>69</sup>

Léonard Ndacyayisenga, 18, became a *résistant* in Ndusu, Ruhengeri and left of his own volition in mid-July 1998.

The people worked with the infiltrators; some gave money or material goods. For example, Nizeyimana gave a type-writer and Bakokora, a

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<sup>69</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 11 December 1997.

distributor of Primus beer, used to visit our chiefs often and gave money to [our chief] Kazungu.

When the population saw RPA soldiers, they all used to cry out, saying *Imurura iraguye*, that is 'It is going to rain', or *Murariye ibyo*, meaning 'the meal you have just eaten is your last one'.

The infiltrators cannot be sure of their popularity everywhere. The attitudes of the residents of two neighbouring sectors may vary dramatically. Often this depends on the extent of the ties between local families and the infiltrators. Fidèle Mitsindo, the bourgmestre of Giciye in Gisenyi, described the contrasts within his commune.

Certain sectors in Giciye—Shaki, Gasasa and Muhungwe—are not dangerous because the people there have hardly any relatives amongst the infiltrators. Other sectors like Birembo, Gihira, Nyamugeyo and Rubare are dangerous because the population supports the infiltrators. In some of these sectors, the infiltrators invite the population to prepare banana beer for them, especially on the 15th day of the month, and the population responds accordingly.<sup>70</sup>

Many ex-FAR soldiers noted the differences between the reactions of residents of the northwest and people living in Gitarama. Fabien Niyonsenga said:

The people from Gitarama support us, but they have doubts about our effectiveness. Nevertheless, we are influencing the people now, although with difficulty, as Kagame and other officials who were born in Gitarama are around now.

None of the officials and civilians interviewed in Gitarama had any doubt that the violence in their region was orchestrated and carried out by natives of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. They added that they are assisted by ex-FAR from Gitarama and the detainees who were freed from detention centres in Gitarama by the insurgents and who subsequently fled with them.

The commune of Bulinga has been one of the hardest-hit in Gitarama. Its bourgmestre, Straton Butera, spoke of the identity of the infiltrators operating in Gitarama.

<sup>70</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 6 December 1997.

The infiltrators are, for the most part, people from Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, but they include some ex-FAR from communes in Gitarama, as well as young civilian men who received military training in 1994 in the battalion known as 'Ndiza battalion'. These young men did not have the time to take part in the war between the FAR and the RPA in 1994 because the end of their training coincided with the exodus to Zaire.

A councillor in Bulinga who requested anonymity echoed the bourgmestre's views.

We are normally attacked by residents of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. However, they are supported by the detainees freed on 3 December who did not come back, as well as by some peasants. There is also no doubt that the ex-FAR from this commune, who are not here, have enrolled with the infiltrators. They kill anyone who works with the government and anyone who denounces them to the authorities. That's how the following people died: Musoni, the *responsable* of cellule Kirigi; Ntugaruka from Kirigi and Jean Mariburira, who used to condemn the infiltrators, and his wife.<sup>71</sup>

Before he was suspended on 1 August 1997, François-Xavier Niyitegeka was the bourgmestre of Nyakabanda, which borders the troubled communes of Satinsyi and Kibilira in Gisenyi and Ndusu in Ruhengeri. He explained how he managed to arrest infiltrators in his area with the help of local people.

The population arrested six infiltrators in Kibimba thanks to a *responsable*. The *responsable* had agreed to board them and afterwards he alerted the population so that they could catch the criminals. The seventh infiltrator escaped.

In all, we arrested thirty infiltrators. One very famous infiltrator, from Nyabikenke, known as Rambo, was killed as he was leading a group of eight infiltrators who attacked a family in cellule Rorero, sector Rusuri. Rambo looted and injured the head of the family, and was then himself killed by a child of sixteen. The infiltrators again attacked the health centre of Gasovu and looted the medicines. When the population tried to intervene, the criminals threw a grenade at them, but there were no victims.

A woman from cellule Tarama, sector Kibangu, welcomed and boarded an infiltrator for two weeks or so. Her husband is imprisoned in

<sup>71</sup> Interviewed in Bulinga, Gitarama, 16 April 1998.



Gisenyi. When the people found out about this, they surrounded this woman's house. The infiltrator set off a grenade so that he could escape; this injured four people including this woman's child.<sup>72</sup>

Three sectors in Taba, Gitarama were attacked in mid-May by insurgents who had come from the neighbouring commune of Kayenzi. Ephraim Karangwa is the bourgmestre of Taba. He praised people's attitudes there too.

As for the population, it was their own cry for help which alone obliged the infiltrators to stop the killings [on 12 May, see below] and to flee back to Kayenzi. There weren't any soldiers in the sector or in the surrounding area. The murders in May took place at 9:00 p.m. and the population didn't reach the commune office to tell the soldiers about it until 11:45 p.m. It was therefore too late. If the population hadn't been protecting each other, there would have been many more victims.<sup>73</sup>

Despite the risks some civilians have helped the army in capturing insurgents, but more often, the insurgents spoke of the assistance they were given. Eugène Micombero was captured on 2 December in Ruhengeri. He and twenty-four others were in a unit commanded by an officer known as 'Cobra'; this unit had failed in an effort to destroy the commune office of Cyabingo.

The day after we were integrated into the unit we moved to commune Ndusu. In this commune we were supplied with food by the population, who gave us shelter when it rained. We used no coercion on them; they helped voluntarily. I remember spending nights at Kalisa's house in Mwumba sector. We didn't kill any peasants in Ndusu.

Sylvere Twahirwa decided to leave the ranks of the infiltrators shortly after he arrived in Rwanda in May 1997. While based in Ruhengeri, he was sent to Masisi to fetch supplies; the mission provided him and a companion, Raphaël, with the cover to slip away and return to their home communes. Ironically, even when they were on their way to surrender, they identified themselves as insurgents in order to ensure that they had the confidence and practical support of civilians they met along the way.

<sup>72</sup> Interviewed in Nyakabanda, Gitarama, 4 August 1997.

<sup>73</sup> Interviewed in Taba, Gitarama, 25 May 1998.

We entered via Mutura commune in Gisenyi, left the large bamboo forest at 10:30 a.m. and were welcomed by a farmer who gave us potatoes mixed with cooked corn. He housed us for the night and the next day showed us the path to Nkuli commune. We had no problem in Nkuli since the farmers gave us food and showed us the safe paths where we would not meet soldiers or Tutsis. Among these farmers, who did not know us and who we did not know, was the father of a boy called Rukara. This father was called Bishakashaka; I remember him well. I don't remember the sector. He gave us mixed potatoes and peas.

From Nkuli we went to Nyamutera where we were a little worried by a farmer who told us to be careful because 'it would be dangerous for you if a *nyumbakumi* saw you'. We often did not even have to wait until nightfall to travel. We walked during the day in Nkuli.

When we left Nyamutera we went to Cyabingo, Raphaël's native commune. He stayed with his parents and the next day, I continued my journey towards my commune, Mbogo [Greater Kigali]. I left Cyabingo and entered Nyarutovu commune where a farmer advised me to avoid asking many questions of the farmers, some of whom could expose me to danger. The same farmer described to me the long path which brought me to Gakenke, which I knew well. From here I wouldn't have problems getting lost.

Aimé-Dieudonné Twambazimana described himself as a member of the "military police" of the insurgents. He gave a comprehensive picture of the infiltrators' operation in Nkuli and the neighbouring commune of Nyamutera.

Usually, Nkuli and Nyamutera communes are covered by a battalion commanded by Captain Kamanzi. There is also Lt. Kaceri, and also Lt. Martin Nzitonda from cellule Hungiro in Cyintobo sector. They are fed by the families who put them up. In Cyintobo sector, they cannot live in Nyanshondura cellule because the government has a military outpost there. Recently, they have been in Cyintobo cellule in the same sector and three infiltrators have been living with each family.

Saturday 4 October, I went to see them and found the leaders in Kageri sector in Nyamutera, where they were lodging with the peasants. Yesterday, meanwhile, there were some military operations in the sector, so I think they will have moved on by now.

A similar situation prevails in the préfectures beyond Ruhengeri and Gisenyi where infiltrators have been active. The commune of Rutsiro in Kibuye borders Gisenyi. Insurgents hiding in the nearby natural forest of

Gishwati and the forest of Mukura in Gisenyi have struck repeatedly in Rutsiro. Thomas Murenzi, an assistant bourgmestre, made the point that without the help of local people, the forests alone could not sustain the insurgents.

These forests cannot support them, and would be useless but for the help of the population who give the food and to who provide refuge for them in case of a military operation in the forests. Those peasants who support them are those whose family members are in prison, or those who are coerced by the returnees. The population of five sectors are influenced by the opponents of the regime in communes Ramba and Gaseke. Most of the people of these sectors seem to be convinced that the infiltrators could take power, because of promises which they have made, backed up by some successful missions, such as the freeing of prisoners.

He argued that the attitude of ordinary people was likely to be swayed in areas where local officials were known to work in favour of the insurgents. But citing regular discussions with residents and increased military activity, he said that the situation had, at the time, begun to improve.

Certain assailants have been arrested by the population, and certain prisoners freed by the infiltrators have returned voluntarily. The population of sector Rusebeya arrested 21 infiltrators in May 1997. Other peasants arrested 18 infiltrators in June 1997, and the infiltrator called Jean Mageza was also arrested and handed over to the military the population in July 1997.<sup>74</sup>

The army is aware of the extent of civilian support. Brigadier-General Kayumba Nyamwasa was RPA military commander of the northwest at the time of the interview and is now chief of staff.

When they arrived back in Rwanda, the infiltrators didn't have any problems with the population who had been sensitised by previous infiltrators. The repatriated refugees included RDR<sup>75</sup> and interahamwe representatives. The infiltrators were therefore welcomed.

<sup>74</sup> Interviewed in Rutsiro, Kibuye 23 July 1997.

<sup>75</sup> RDR is the Rally for the Return of the Refugees and Democracy which in 1994-1996 presented itself as the "political" wing of exiles. In reality, however, it worked closely with the ex-FAR.

They influence people in a very negative way by telling the local population of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi that the former regime was made up solely of people from their area. It is certainly true that many of the highest figures of authority—civilian and military—originated from there. The local population therefore thinks that it is fighting for their parents and their relatives who made up the previous regime.<sup>76</sup>

Innocent Kalinganire, a former soldier, returned to Rwanda from Kisangani in early 1997. He went back to live in sector Raba, commune Rushashi.

The infiltrators are assisted by the people. In sector Raba, all the people have been told to help them. There are a lot of infiltrators in Rushashi because our commune is next to Ndusu and Nyarutovu in Ruhengeri, and Nyabikenke commune in Gitarama. There are a large number of infiltrators in these three communes.

On 14 July 1998, he and other men were forcibly taken from Rushashi to Ndusu.

The population of Ndusu also give the infiltrators a lot of support. As we went from Rushashi to Ndusu, I saw groups of old people or children who kept a lookout for RPA soldiers so that they could warn us. In each district there were people acting as informants for the infiltrators.<sup>77</sup>

Corporal Pierre-Célestin Ngendahimana was asked to contact local people in Kinigi on behalf of the insurgents.

The population live alongside the infiltrators and act as their eyes, particularly when the 'enemy' arrives. Also, they give them food.

Without the people, said Théoneste Hakizimana, until recently a PALIR treasurer, "the infiltrators won't be able to carry on because a fish can't live out of water". His view is echoed by Edmond Ngaboyisonga, a student who suffered serious injuries when infiltrators ambushed a bus in Kibuye on 22 June 1998.

It is very hard to fight these killers because they are sheltered by the civilian population who live in this region. They refuse to show RPA

<sup>76</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 4 September 1997.

<sup>77</sup> Interviewed in Rushashi, Greater Kigali, 22 July 1998.

soldiers which way the infiltrators have gone. Some of them even refuse to admit having heard the infiltrators' gunfire when it was nearby. If the people ever separated from the infiltrators, the problems which they are creating in this country would not last for much longer. But up until now the civilian population have openly supported and given shelter to the criminals. How can anyone believe that not one of the inhabitants from the place where we were attacked heard the infiltrators' gunfire or saw which way they went? It is very surprising.

Officials are sometimes forced to acknowledge, in public meetings, that armed insurgents pose a threat to the lives of civilians in the northwest, and that they cannot protect every civilian against the menace they represent. According to Clarisse Mukamugema from Kibilira, this dilemma is sometimes exploited by civilians to disguise their sympathy and the support given willingly to the insurgents. She recalled a meeting in which the bourgmestre of Kibilira addressed local residents.

We were gathered near Karebe forest to discuss security in the region. People were worried that the state would punish them for providing the infiltrators with food, so someone asked the bourgmestre how people could refuse the infiltrators food when they were armed.

The bourgmestre said he understood the problem, and that he couldn't condemn people, but he advised us to simply tell the infiltrators there was no food left. Afterwards the people felt better, and continued to welcome the infiltrators as if that was their duty. I attended this meeting, sometime before December 1997.

Clarisse said that thieves in the area had turned the situation to their advantage.

Thieves could see that the population obeyed the infiltrators, so they disguised themselves as infiltrators to steal. Instead of complaining to the authorities, the people went to complain to the infiltrators. For instance, Rudomoro, a well-known thief in our area, went from family to family, lying and saying he was an infiltrator. He even came to steal from my house. The *nyumbakumi* and the *responsables* of the cellules accused him in front of the infiltrators. They came to arrest him and took him to commune Ramba so they could check on him every day, as there are many infiltrators in Ramba.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 30 January 1998.

### *Financial Incentives*

In yet another powerful echo of the genocide<sup>79</sup>, a key factor in mobilising civilians and binding them to the insurgents' cause is the prospect of material reward. The dead and the injured have been stripped of their money and belongings; as in 1994, women have been prominent in the crowds who have gone along on killing expeditions with a view to looting schools, shops, commune offices and people's homes in the northwest.

Diogène Niyonsenga spoke of how many civilians lost their lives during an attack upon the military camp of Ngororero in commune Satinsyi, Gisenyi in February 1998. Having accompanied the insurgents in order to steal, they were killed when the RPA fought back in armoured personnel carriers.

[They were] hoping to loot from people who would probably be found in the place of attack. Fifty inhabitants died, including Rukundakuvuga from Shaka cellule, sector Mikingo. This man died when he had just taken a sack of beans from the boutique of a man named Emmanuel who came from Ramba.

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**“These fifty inhabitants died out of nearly 500 civilians who came with us with the intention of looting”.**

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Amongst these farmers were at least thirty from my sector of origin [Mikingo in Kibilira] who, in order to reach Ngororero, had travelled by foot.

Civilians intent on looting also died in Cyabingo when the RPA responded to a threat from the insurgents, according to Boniface Rucagu, the préfet of Ruhengeri.

During the attack on the commune office of Cyabingo on 13/14 June 1997, the civilian population came behind the assailants, carrying sacks with the intention of looting. Many were killed.

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<sup>79</sup> For details about the use of economic incentives during the genocide, see *Death, Despair and Defiance*, pp.1002-1009.

César Mbarushimana, 27, used to live in Masisi. He moved to Gisenyi in August 1996 after he and his Tutsi wife were repeatedly threatened for refusing to support the local militia. He opened a pharmacy in Mahoko, commune Kanama, where he had relatives. On 8 August 1997, he was in the marketplace at 10:00 a.m. when he saw a group of insurgents arrive.

They came from the direction of the co-operative, Kiaka, shouting and whistling. They were very animated. Among them were young men wearing military clothing. There were also fifteen women armed with *massues*; one woman was carrying a snake. There were also young boys.

Only a small number of them were armed with firearms. Some of them had put chalk on their faces, probably to avoid being recognised.

The gunfire left César with no option but to lie down on the ground, or risk being killed. He discovered that the infiltrators were among the people at the market. Many civilians, including women, had come to steal from shops and homes.

We were lying there as the infiltrators were coming nearer and shooting into the air. Then someone lying next to me suddenly got up and said: 'Where is an *Inyenzi*?' He then joined the group of infiltrators who had started to steal clothes. I saw one of the women infiltrators take two items of clothing and put them on there and then, on top of what she was wearing. In the marketplace they mostly stole clothing.

A few minutes later, the infiltrators left the marketplace for the Kanama commune offices. I took advantage of this to get up and run to my pharmacy. In front of the pharmacy door, I found the bodies of two people who had been killed by the infiltrators. When I entered the pharmacy, I found it empty. All the medicine had been stolen. I thought that my wife would have been killed but she was hiding.

I think that these infiltrators whose faces were disguised with chalk were peasants from here, Mahoko, who had rallied to the infiltrators.<sup>80</sup>

Jean-Bosco Mugabo was injured in the massacre of 1959 refugees in Kayove, Gisenyi in June 1998.

<sup>80</sup> Interviewed in Kanama, Gisenyi, 2 September 1997.

All our belongings were looted. Before running away from the killers, I saw about five women, our neighbours, who had entered our house, most likely to steal.

Jonas Nshimiyimana, a *résistant*, spoke of the looting sprees carried out jointly by insurgents and civilians in Kinigi.

I participated in an operation to get potatoes from the stores and the fields belonging to the PNAP co-operative [of potato producers], not far from the commune office. I was armed with an M26 grenade. On the first occasion, we were accompanied by several peasants who came to steal the potatoes with us and then cook them for all of us. We returned a week later, but we were discovered by the soldiers and forced to leave the area. The looting was always carried out at night.

Looting is often a *rite de passage* for new recruits. Diogène Uhawenimana, 24, was arrested shortly after his initial baptism. He comes from cellule Gihonga, sector Ruhanya in Mbogo, Greater Kigali.

After the mass repatriation of refugees from Zaire, some young people came to see me and asked me to work with them. Ngendahayo was known as an infiltrator. He often came to see me and tried to persuade me to work for the infiltrators. He said that he wanted to recruit young Hutus and arm them. He asked me to help him look for them. The aim was to kill the Tutsis and generally to upset security. Ngendahayo visited me at my house on 20 August 1997. I was with my friend Fayida. He asked us to go with him on a raid. We went to the Kibaya centre at night and looted the shops belonging to Cyriaque Bantegeye and to Bizimana. The next day, we shared the stolen goods. Each of us sold our share. Christophe Uhawenimana was arrested a few days later because the investigation had discovered that he was in possession of goods which had been stolen from the shopkeepers. Christophe said that he had bought them from me. I was arrested on 27 August 1997. Ngendahayo is also under arrest.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 16 July 1998.

### *When Civilians Do the Killing*

On some occasions, the support of local residents is brutally direct. The widespread and enthusiastic participation of women and children in a massacre in Kayove, Gisenyi, on 8 June is etched on the memory of survivors. Jean-Bosco Mugabo, thirteen, lost his brother that day, and his father was also injured.

I recognised our teacher called Bisorome. I understood that it did not involve people coming from afar, but our close neighbours.

The massacre was directed at 1959 refugees who had returned to the country. But Janvier Mundere, who is himself Hutu, was sought after by infiltrators in Kanama, and settled in Kayove where he and his family enjoyed good relations with their Tutsi neighbours. On 8 June they shared their fate. Separated in the panic flight from his wife and younger baby, he hid with his daughter of two and a half years. When he stopped and looked around, the place was deserted.

When I got there, there was no one in this area which is normally inhabited almost totally by Hutus. Perhaps some had fled, but others had gone to swell the ranks of the assassins because I was personally able to identify, amongst the killers, certain faces of people who I was used to see as local residents. I recognised Bisorome, a teacher in our site. He has now been arrested in Kayove.

Janvier also saw women blowing whistles and chanting. He has called on the government to adopt far-reaching measures to tackle the problem.

Without the support of the population, the infiltrators could not exist because they are fed, lodged and hidden, according to need, by the population. These infiltrators could not hold out if they were confronted with the army. In addition, it seems that no attack has been launched without the insurgents being accompanied by the population, as was the case in Kayove where we were.

Espérance Mukasafari also discovered, to her cost, just how far some civilians are prepared to go along with the insurgents. Espérance 27, began working at Janja health centre, commune Ndusu, Ruhengeri, in 1992.

After some months in Zaire in 1994, she returned to her old job and said there were no problems until the return of the refugees in late 1996.

On the night of 16 November 1997, at 7:00 p.m., the interahamwe attacked my father-in-law's house and told him: 'You can't deny that you work for the *Inkotanyi*'. He told them that he worked for no-one but the country.

Then the interahamwe summoned the population of the whole area and asked them to accuse him. The people confirmed that my father-in-law worked for the *Inkotanyi*, offering as proof the accusations that he hid Tutsis in 1994 and accused other Hutu.

After the accusations the infiltrators told the people to kill him with machetes, and they did. We buried him two days later. We were alone, just his family. The neighbours didn't come to help—they threw stones at us during the burial. The civil authorities didn't come to help us either, neither the councillor nor the *responsable*. They collaborate with the killers. There were no soldiers either.

Shortly afterwards, Espérance left Ruhengeri for Kigali. But a week later her mother-in-law, Catherine, was attacked with a machete.

She dare not return home because the interahamwe have written her letters, telling her they will kill her where she is now.

Amongst the infiltrators, there are those who come from other areas of the country and who are hiding with certain families, and others who are from the local sector and even work there, but support and participate in the infiltrators' operations. They don't want anyone to follow government directives, and want all Tutsi killed.<sup>32</sup>

Nyiragakera, 24, left Masisi in 1995 because of the violence directed in that region against residents of Tutsi origin. But she found people with a similar intent in Rwanda. She described what happened when 35 Tutsis, 1959 returnees, were murdered on 18 December 1997 in Gatagara, Mutura, next to Bigogwe military camp where they had been living since June 1997.

Many Tutsis were killed. Infiltrators came to our village and others attacked the neighbouring military camp. Some infiltrators in our village shot at the military camp. The soldiers returned fire, and we were caught in the crossfire. We could see bullets coming from both sides passing by the front of our house.

<sup>32</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 26 January 1998.

Civilians, including women and children, helped the insurgents carry out the murders.

We were attacked by the local people as well as the infiltrators. Even the women and children participated in the attacks. The women especially used *massues* and hoes. Whilst the men are fighting, the women come into the houses and kill the children and other women. It is hard to fight the infiltrators because they are supported by the population.

When they launch an operation they begin by blocking the road. They put stones and tree trunks down to prevent the armoured cars from intervening. When the soldiers finally arrive, it is usually too late; the infiltrators have killed and fled. They don't like to fight the army openly, they prefer to target Tutsi civilians or local officials. 35 people were killed in Gatagara on that Wednesday night. We thought we would be safe, being next door to an army base, but the infiltrators are numerous, and are supported by the local people. So we decided to leave that place and came here to Kigali.<sup>83</sup>

Even when civilians do not kill with their own hands, the fighters find it helpful to take along hundreds of civilians when they launch operations. As Corporal Laurent Nkurunziza noted, their presence has an impact, through sheer force of numbers.

On 17 December 1997, two days after I had joined them, we attacked the home of President Pasteur Bizimungu in Murambi sector, Giciye. There was a large number of RPA soldiers based there. There were around 200 of us, accompanied by some 300 civilians who were there to make up our numbers and help intimidate the opponent. We did manage to threaten the RPA position but their reinforcements arrived quickly and we were forced to flee. I suffered head injuries from a grenade. Later we attacked the soldiers based at mount Cananke, in Kageri sector, Nyamutera. We acquired four guns and some ammunition.

Those who help the insurgents are often acting out of fear. Civilians in the northwest are all living in fear, none more so than the Tutsis—survivors, 1959 exiles and Congolese refugees alike.

<sup>83</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 27 January 1998.

## Former Insurgents



Théoneste Hakizimana, a *partisan*



From Left: Corporal Pierre-Célestin Ngendahimana; with two *résistants*, both farmers - Ncogoza and Jonas Nshimiyimana



Warrant Officer Célestin Mutabaruka

Photographs: African Rights



Sub-Lt. Emmanuel Musabyeyezu



Sub-Lt. Sylvestre Nzabonariba

Photographs: African Rights



Sub-Lt. Consolée Mutikangavije



Emmanuel Ntezimana, a *peritisan*

Photographs: African Rights

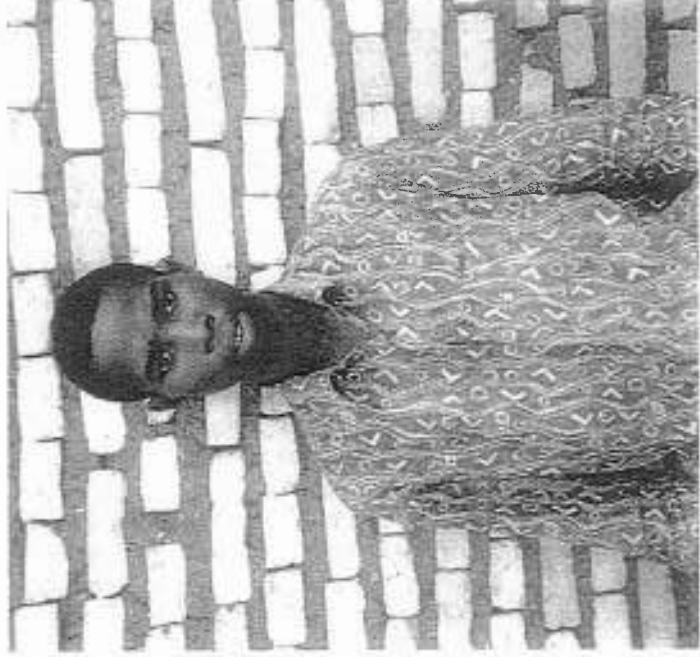


Marc Nyirimpunga



Dieudonné Musabyimana, currently integrated into the RPA

Photographs: African Rights



Fabien Niyonsenga, ex-FAR



## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### COMPLETING THE GENOCIDE

Since the end of the genocide, survivors have found few sources of comfort and many have lived in perpetual fear. We have been documenting attacks on survivors since 1994<sup>81</sup> and the attacks continue. In Gisenyi and Ruhengeri survivors feel more vulnerable now than at any other time since the genocide. According to our findings, their fears are justified: there has been a significant increase in both the frequency and the brutality of attacks upon Tutsis.

Tutsis who recently returned to Rwanda, after years of exile in neighbouring countries, are also targets. The "repatriated people", some of whom left Rwanda in 1959, came back in the hope of making a new life in their home country. Other Tutsis came as refugees, looking for sanctuary following attacks by interahamwe and ex-FAR in eastern DRC. All of the Tutsis now living in the northwest, and in some of the surrounding communes, are at risk from the infiltrators' campaign to complete the genocide.

There was always an expectation among Tutsis that the return of refugees from camps in Zaire would bring renewed dangers. In an open letter to the government, one group of survivors warned:

Not all of these hundreds or thousands of refugees who are returning are innocent. Among them there are very notorious génocidaires...

...every young boy of more than fifteen years old has, either voluntarily or by force, benefited from military training intended for attacking Rwanda so as to complete the plan of genocide and to satisfy the génocidaires' political aims... The massive return of the refugees did not allow for the necessary systematic search for weapons... So there is an imbalance of strength between them and the remaining civilian population, including the vulnerable group of the survivors of the genocide...

The League for the Defence of the Rights of the Survivors of the Genocide (LIDR), *Ligue pour la défense des droits des rescapés du génocide*, based in Gisenyi, expressed similar concerns in a letter to the then préfet of Gisenyi, Epimaque Ndagijimana, asking him to take action to prevent the extermination of survivors of the genocide: "especially with the knowledge that Gisenyi is one of the main préfectures which had a large number of destructive leaders and killers from Rwanda."<sup>85</sup>

There has been no nationwide campaign of violence against Tutsis, as feared, and large numbers of returnees have been peacefully reintegrated into their communities. However, warnings could not prevent an upsurge in attacks upon Tutsis in the northwest. Tutsis are now threatened not only by insurgents, determined to eliminate them from the region, but also by some returnees, whose crimes they witnessed during the genocide. Often they work closely together, with civilians identifying Tutsis to be killed and gangs of insurgents assisting them. Sometimes Tutsis are attacked by the same person who killed their families, friends or neighbours in 1994.

In many incidents it is clear which local people have instigated the attack directly, either because Tutsis are testifying against them for crimes committed during the genocide, or because they are occupying their former homes. Other attacks are purely genocidal, including the massacre of large numbers of Tutsi refugees and 1959 returnees in camps. Jean Marie-Vianney Cyizere, a former insurgent, explained why killing Tutsis was part of the insurgent's policy.

The killing of Tutsis is seen as part of the fight against the 'Tutsi regime'. The Hutu officials of the current regime are seen as having no say; as the servants of the Tutsis. So not even Tutsi babies or foetuses should be spared. The attacks against the Tutsis aim to exterminate them, or if that is impossible, to force them to flee the region. Such actions are intended to force the regime to negotiate with the infiltrators and accept power-

<sup>85</sup> The survivors' fears are borne out by the number of well-known génocidaires who returned to the country in late 1996 or early 1997 as "refugees" who are currently imprisoned in Rwanda. Those from Ruhengeri include Noël Hitimana, a journalist with RTL; Phocas Habimana, ex-financial director of RTL; Basile Habumugisha, préfet of Ruhengeri during the genocide; François Hatangimana, bourgmestre of Nyakinama; Jean Baptiste Nsabimana, bourgmestre of Ruhondo; Dominique Gatsimbanyi, bourgmestre of Nkuli; Augustin Mwitabangoma, bourgmestre of Nyamutera; Jean-Sauveur Bigirimana, bourgmestre of Nduku. Those from Gisenyi include Jean-Baptiste Nteziryayo, bourgmestre of Kibilira and Marc Mpozembizi, bourgmestre of Rubavu.

<sup>81</sup> See African Rights, *Killing the Evidence: Murder, Attacks, Arrests and Intimidation of Survivors and Witnesses*, April 1996, and *The Genocide Continues*, July 1996.

sharing. I heard this point of view in conversations between Sub-Lieutenant Sankara and Professor Emmanuel, alias 'Figaro'.

Threats directed at Tutsis have been central to the insurgents' propaganda offensives. The heart of the message is that Tutsis are "foreigners" who should leave Rwanda "before it is too late." Their "choice" was summed up by the words left behind after a horrific massacre in December 1997: "Tutsis, go back to your place of origin or accept to die," read a message scrawled in blue chalk on a wall close to Mudende camp.<sup>85</sup> Tracts have been disseminated in transit camps and sites where Tutsi refugees and returnees, and those displaced by the violence have gathered, or they have been left at their homes. To heighten the general climate of fear, the places to be attacked, and the dates, are often spelt out. And it often happens that massacres do take place on the dates specified, but somewhere other than the places which have been mentioned. One tract, entitled "Communiqué for the Batutsi of this town", Ruhengeri, offered a stark choice to the people for whom it was intended.

You Batutsi, we have always told you to leave this town, because it isn't yours. We have already warned you three times. This is the last warning. From now on there will be no more. If you have nowhere to go, take a rope and hang yourselves.

Below we give details of some of the massacres directed specifically against Tutsis as the insurgency became more deeply entrenched, with better arms and a more extensive network of local informants and supporters. But of course many Tutsis had already been killed in the northwest by May/June 1997, showing that the return of numerous génocidaires and militiamen did not signify an end to their ambitions. Some of the earliest incidents were attempts to continue the genocide by tringe, murdering Tutsi passengers in public buses. On 8 February 1997, thirteen people, most of them members of an evangelical church choir of Kimisigara in Kigali, were killed in Taro, Greater Kigali. They were on their way back from prayer meetings to their sister churches in Ruhengeri when their buses were stopped and the Tutsis among the passengers shot. On 21 March 1997, a bus was ambushed in Kibilira, Gisenyi; the five Tutsi passengers were lined up and shot. Two died on the

spot, one suffered hideous injuries and two escaped. They also died elsewhere, under different circumstances. On 15 February 1997, a group of Bagogwe Tutsis, all survivors of the genocide, were murdered in cellule Sasangabo, sector Musumba in Nkuli, Ruhengeri. They had accused many of their neighbours of complicity in the genocide. With time, the terrible reality of the insurgents' determination to take the genocide to its logical conclusion became apparent.

### *The Murder of Fifteen Survivors in Mutara Commune, Gisenyi, 18 August 1997*

It is increasingly obvious that civilians are harnessing the ruthlessness of the infiltrators to resolve local disputes. On 18 August 1997 survivors living at the centre of Gahenerezo, in commune Mutara, Gisenyi, were attacked by a group of armed infiltrators; fifteen people were killed. They had been living in the homes which belonged to returnees. Survivors are convinced that neighbours informed the killers of their identities in order to "eliminate awkward witnesses". Their belief is supported by a statement from François Mbonaruza, a former infiltrator.

Infiltrators from that locality, drawn from various companies, got together to carry out this attack, in collaboration with several peasants from Gahenerezo, whose houses had been occupied by Tutsis. These survivors were killed because they had occupied the houses of the parents, friends and acquaintances of the infiltrators in the region, and for having accused the génocidaires among them. Yet during this attack they killed two Hutus, including Sub-Lt. Bahati, who had co-operated with the Tutsis to accuse the génocidaires. This news was brought to us by certain infiltrators who took part in the attack: Cyaka Byiringiro, a militiaman and the son of a shopkeeper who owned a car in Gahenerezo; Ruveve, a new recruit from Gahenerezo; and Baganizi, a famed interahamwe.

Then, in the weeks before the attack, tension in the area increased. Survivors heard a rumour from Hutu friends that they were to be attacked. Vicious tracts were circulating. The commune tax collector, Faustin Ndagijimina, was singled out for particular attention, receiving a death threat and a warning from a local resident. He no longer slept at home which he shared with his wife, Annonciata Nyiramashuri aged 29. They lived in sector Nyaruteme in Mutara. One of the tracts they received was quite explicit. It said: "We will kill all you *Inyenzi*, especially you,

<sup>85</sup> Amelia French, "Militias Raid Camps as New Offensive Starts in the Killing Fields," *The Independent*, 16 December 1997.

Ndagijimana, we will cut you into pieces". They immediately took all their children to stay with an aunt in Kabali and Ndagijimana no longer slept at home.

The family had once occupied the home of Marthe Nganyirende, who was in the refugee camps in Zaire. As genocide survivors they had lost everything, including most of their family, and they had taken in eight orphan children, but they were managing well until the return of Marthe's children, who had joined the infiltrators.

Realising their lives were at risk for as long as they lived at Marthe's, they built their own home. This was not enough, as they found out on 18 August. Annonciata had just given birth to her latest child and the other children had returned home to celebrate. That evening she was listening to the news with her children and a visiting RPA soldier, Innocent Musebyimana, when the house was surrounded. Ndagijimana had just left for Kigali, but the soldier went out with his gun trying to protect the household. He was shot dead and others were killed by grenades. Altogether fifteen people died there, including the soldier, two of Annonciata's children, an orphan, three of the children of Tutsi neighbours, and two Hutu servants. Annonciata was not hit by the fragments from the grenades, but was shot and badly injured. She spoke of the cruelty of the assault and said she recognised the perpetrators.

The children were screaming for me to save them but I couldn't. The neighbouring Hutu women were busy stealing our clothes and food from the house. The other attackers, who saw that I was still alive, asked me for money, and I gave them what we had. Among the group asking me for money I managed to see Niyonzima, son of Marembo, Karengera, son of Ruyumbu, Dusenge, son of Marthe Nganyirende and Byiringiro, son of Ruyumbu. They are all neighbours. I asked them why they were killing us when we had never refused them anything; we had shared beer with them during the day, laughing. They replied that we must share everything during the day, but at night they had to kill us because we were *Inyenzi*. After saying that they shot me repeatedly in the legs and thighs and hit my head with a hammer. I was really almost dead.

After four months in hospital, Annonciata and her husband decided to go to Kigali. They have found life in Kigali very difficult, particularly because Annonciata has been handicapped by the injuries she received that

night. They are short of food and can no longer afford to pay for the children's schooling.<sup>87</sup>

Denis Murashi, alias "Gapitene" aged 42, had lost his wife, Nyirangufiri, in the genocide, but escaped with his four children to Zaire. When he returned, he found his home had been destroyed and that almost everyone from his immediate and extended family had been killed. He felt he had no alternative but to move into the centre of Gahenerezo to join other Tutsis, mostly repatriated 1959 refugees. He had hoped he would find security there.

On 18 August, just after he had gone to bed, Denis realised something was wrong when he heard the sound of whistling in the yard. But it was too late to act. The infiltrators broke the door down and entered.

Denis managed to hide in the ceiling of his house, but his second wife, Nyirabasirimu and his children were quickly discovered by the infiltrators.

Once the killers had got inside, they went to the children's bedroom and killed them straight away. Then they went into the room where my wife was and killed her too. Two of my children managed to escape. One of them had to be hospitalised as he was wounded by bullets in the right foot, right arm and in the head. The little baby, one year and seven months old, fell under the bed.

The killers left, believing they had killed everybody. When Denis came down from the ceiling he found only two survivors—his baby and Musebyimana, his ten-year-old son. He then fled into the bush.

Around midnight, soldiers arrived and took the wounded to hospital. Denis came out of hiding to find that his was not the only family to have suffered that night. In all fifteen people fell victim to this attack, including:

- Musabyimana, Karasimbuka's son;
- Maurice, Ndagije's son;
- Ndagije's servants;
- Samuel Ngagi, a farmer;
- Sub-Lt. Bahati;
- Two of Bahati's children and his wife Jeanne.

<sup>87</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 11 February 1998.

The only Hutu family targeted that night was that of Lt. Bahati. Denis explained that although Bahati was once a soldier in the FAR he had turned his back on the extremists and was well-liked among the survivors; this may have been the motive behind his murder. Denis recognised local residents among the killers.

Neighbours, including both women and men, had joined up with the infiltrators. We identified Zigira, Bazamana's son who was from Kabere cellule. He was recently repatriated and he played a prominent part in the genocide. There was also Vianney, Semarembo's son, who was from my cellule. We had already accused Vianney and Zigira of involvement in the genocide, but nothing had been done about it. Some of us had seen them with our own eyes, whilst others recognised them by their voices. I personally heard Dusenge's voice when he said: 'Destroy this house where Ndagije lives. It belongs to my father. We can build another one'. He thought that Ndagije was inside, but he had actually spent the night somewhere else. It was true that Ndagije was living in Dusenge's father's house.

Denis also named two militiamen suspected of involvement: Niyonzima, Sebirayi's son and Karengera, Ruyumbu's son. Denis pointed out that the killings were not random attacks upon Tutsis, but aimed at certain individuals. The houses of surrounding repatriated Tutsis were left untouched. He concluded:

The infiltrators obviously have accomplices in our centre who provide them with information. These people are the relatives of infiltrators whose houses we are living in, and those we are accusing of genocide.<sup>88</sup>

Marthe Nyirakageme, aged forty, lost her husband and was herself shot in the head. She had already suffered immeasurable loss during the genocide when three of her children were killed. On 9 April, she, her husband and their two surviving children had escaped to Zaire; when they returned to Rwanda in July 1994 they had settled in Gahanerezo. Their own home had been destroyed and their possessions looted so they moved into a house belonging to Eliezer, father of the ex-FAR Sub-Lt. Bahati.

Only Marthe and her husband were at home at the time. One of her two children spent the night at Bahati's house and was wounded by a bullet in the eye; the other was away at a farm. Marthe said the killers arrived around 8:00 p.m.

They were shouting loudly in an animated way and blowing whistles. They broke down the door and killed my husband in the sitting room. They found me in the bedroom and shot me in the head. They left thinking that we were dead. We were taken to hospital during the night by soldiers.<sup>89</sup>

### *The Bloody Onslaught in Mudende, 21 August 1997*

Only a few days later, the same commune of Mutara in Gisenyi suffered another massacre, this time directed at the refugee camp of Mudende. This was one of the worst atrocities in the region to date, with 148 refugees and 17 assailants killed. The targets were Congolese refugees of Tutsi origin who had sought refuge in Rwanda following attacks by what one refugee called "the fighters"—the militia from North Kivu. Some of them had lived in Rwanda for over a year and had been moved to Mudende from their original camp of Umubano, on the border between Rwanda and DRC, for greater security. Others had been placed in Kibuye, but, because of the poor economic and social conditions there, and the climate which they found too hot, had decided to go to Mudende.

The refugees were living in the classrooms and courtyard of the Adventist University of Central Africa, some of them in tents. There were also several Hutus from Masisi who had come to the camp along with their Tutsi wives. Lazarre Mutaraga Bayungu was one of them. He described what happened around midnight on 21 August 1997.

At about 1:00 a.m. we heard the sound of explosions coming from the site where the soldiers in charge of our security were staying. We got up; suddenly we heard the killers arriving. They were not far away from us. They killed Kanyamugenga, his wife and child. We fled and then returned when calm had been restored.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 3 September 1997.

<sup>90</sup> Interviewed in Mudende, Gisenyi, 29 August 1997.

<sup>88</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 3 September 1997.

Faustin Mutuyeyezu came to Mudende from Bashari, zone Masisi, in the DRC. He lost friends in the attack of 21 August and spoke of the brutal mutilation of their bodies by the killers.

Only two out of twelve members of the family escaped, Damien Sebageni and a girl called Mapendo, about seventeen. She had spent the night with another family. Amongst the victims were: Ruhuzeho, the head of the family; his wife and eight children, including Shan giriyeni, a girl of eighteen; Ndayabase, a boy of fifteen; Tumayini, a boy of twelve and Nkecuru, a girl of six. They killed them using *massues*. Some parts had been removed from the male bodies, such as their sexual organs and the tips of their tongues.

Faustin also noted the presence of women among the attackers.

I personally could see women amongst the killers, due to the light which lit up the courtyard. One of the women was saying: 'Kill the *Inyenzi*, Kagome<sup>91</sup> has fooled them in promising them security'.<sup>92</sup>

Nyiramaajyambere is a widow from zone Rutchuru in DRC. Several members of her family were injured; she is now struggling to care for two surviving children.

Rusunikwa Kayonde, my paternal uncle, and his family were injured. Nyiraboshya, his wife, and Ngabe, his child, died just as they arrived at Gisenyi hospital. Kayonde and his child, Kazungu, were seriously wounded.<sup>93</sup>

Sebashyitsi Kamana's daughter, the oldest of his three children, was killed in the attack. Sebashyitsi was wounded and was in hospital in Gisenyi at the time of the interview. He is from Gihondo, Rutchuru, and had arrived in Mudende camp on 24 February 1996. In addition to his wife and children, there were other people who Sebashyitsi had allowed to stay in their tent. Together they listened to the gunfire outside. Sebashyitsi told them not to move, remembering the instructions of the soldiers in charge of security at the camp. But soon caution gave way to fear.

<sup>91</sup> Kagome is an insult for Kagame. In Kinyarwanda, Kagome means 'the little evil one'.

<sup>92</sup> Interviewed in Mudende, Gisenyi, 29 August 1997.

<sup>93</sup> Interviewed in Mudende, Gisenyi, 29 August 1997.

But as I grew more and more scared, I made my family members leave. At the main door to the tent, I saw the killers, carrying torches and whistles. Some of them were women. I went back into the tent. One of the infiltrators had seen me and suddenly shot into the tent. Three bullets hit my back and other bullets hit my daughter of seven, Bora Uwimana, who died on the spot. Other bullets killed an old woman called Bujeni and wounded a child. When they had finished shooting at us, they lit a fire to burn the tent. The situation was a catastrophe, so we came out the back [of the tent] without the killers knowing. My wife, two of the children and I got out, but our young girl, Bora, who had been killed, was burned.<sup>94</sup>

The soldiers were new to the area and had only just taken over from a more experienced contingent. But they fought against the attackers and, within the hour, they had driven them off. 148 refugees were killed that night, thirty of them burned to death in their makeshift dwellings, and seventeen of the attackers were also killed.

There were also many wounded, who were finally taken to hospital the following morning, around 8:00 a.m. Even with all the nurses mobilised to treat the wounded, the local hospital was unable to cope with the demand, and the more seriously injured had to be transferred to Kigali. Three bullets were removed from Sebashyitsi's back.

A doctor in charge of the hospital administration said that following the attack at Mudende they had admitted 97 wounded people—three of them died almost immediately and thirteen were sent to Kigali. The Rwandese Red Cross and Caritas stepped in to help pay the medical bills. But the hospital also had to treat many refugee children who were malnourished and suffering from Kwashiorkor.

Boniface Ngarambe has accused the two NGOs operating in the camp—the Italian NGO, Coopi, which was responsible for feeding the residents of the camp, and the Adventist Relief Association (ADRA) which ran the dispensary—of failing to meet their responsibilities. According to him, not only were the refugees left short of food, but staff of the two NGOs were implicated in the massacre.

African Rights first interviewed Boniface Ngarambe Muhirwa in February 1997 when he was living in Nyamishaba camp in Kibuye. He subsequently moved to Mudende, attracted by rumours that living conditions there were much better than in Kibuye. He is a native of Bwito,

<sup>94</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 3 September 1997.

zone Rutchuru, and was head of the management committee for the refugees in the camp.

The killers were divided into three teams. One team went to the military position which was responsible for our security. The second team attacked the dispensary, to take the medicines. The third team directly attacked the refugees from the direction of Gahenerezo. It was this third team which killed lots of people and burned a large number of *sheetings* where the refugees lived.

Claude, the dispensary assistant working for ADRA, was among the dead.

The infiltrators' attack at Gahenerezo which took place on 18 August 1997, was aimed at the survivors of the genocide. The day after the attack, the Hutu neighbours were frightened, believing that the army would take reprisals. For two days, therefore, Claude gave refuge in the dispensary to the Hutus who came from the same place as him. We were attacked at midnight on 21 August. Claude must certainly have been aware of the plan because he sent home all the Hutu patients from outside the camp who were hospitalised in the dispensary.

Claude used to spend his nights in the dispensary. There were refugees who lived next to the dispensary where Claude lived. They told me that when the killers arrived to loot the medicines, they knocked on the door and said to Claude: 'Nurse, it's us, we've come.' Claude replied 'enter' and opened the door for them. It is certainly true that the dispensary door shows no signs of having been broken. It is obvious that he opened the door for them. The padlock on the door to the pharmacy bedroom was broken. It seems that he damaged the padlock himself to pretend that he had been under threat.

Claude was apparently killed during the night, with other attackers, during the firefight with the soldiers. The day after the attack, Boniface himself identified two of the dead attackers as Coopi employees, dressed in military attire. He said: "These two people were ex-FAR and had come with the groups of killers". This was confirmation of the refugees' earlier suspicions about these hygiene workers employed by Coopi. Boniface told of how they had confronted NGO staff only a week before the attack.

We had our doubts about these workers and their past. Rumours existed that they had taken part in the 1994 genocide. We found out that some of these workers who spent their time taking the rubbish away were ex-FAR.

One day, we, the representatives of the refugees, identified two dubious people who we believed to be infiltrators. We were about to take them to the soldiers when one of the drivers of the Coopi vehicles who came from Rwerere intervened and stated that they were citizens who he had brought himself, and asked for work for them.

We found out that these two men were indeed ex-FAR, and that the driver himself had recently returned from the Congo.

Boniface said that although the stockroom was full of supplies, Coopi had not distributed any food since 14 August, and the refugees were starving. He saw a World Food Programme (WFP) lorry arriving with further supplies, but no one from Coopi came to meet it, so it left. Boniface was told that the Coopi staff had been ordered to stay away from the camp "because of the 'insecure' situation" although at that time, Boniface argues, there was little sign of this "insecurity."

Boniface's criticisms were echoed by another member of the refugees' committee, Gapyisi Munyamartembo.

Many things facilitated this attack. I believe that Coopi, which helped us, had certain workers who played a role in this attack because, several days beforehand, Coopi stopped its work in the camps. We didn't receive any more food.

The medical assistant, Claude, who worked for ADRA, sent away all the Hutus who were hospitalised on the evening of the 21st, and we were attacked the same night. They had come from outside the camp; the population living nearby also came to the camp for medical assistance. Among the twelve dead killers, we were surprised to see two men who used to work in the grinding mills which were about ten metres from our camp. That's where we used to grind the maize grains that we received.

Reaching a point of desperation, the management committee decided to approach the *bourgmestre*, and when this failed, they wrote to the *préfet*, sending copies of the letter to UNHCR and Coopi. They listed several complaints against Coopi, but their questions remained unanswered. In the aftermath of the attack, the refugees asked that Coopi be replaced by another NGO. The refugees' allegations about the behaviour of the two NGOs at Mudende are of a serious nature, but getting a response from either ADRA or Coopi proved difficult at the time. ADRA was no longer

operational in Gisenyi, and the former Coopi representative for Gisenyi resigned from his job. The new representative—who was not, in any case, there on the day of the attack—was unable to respond to the allegations directly due to a directive from HCR, with which Coopi are operational partners. However, an HCR employee challenged several of the refugees' claims and pointed to the problem of insecurity in the area as a central issue affecting the work of all NGOs. He argues that criticism of the NGOs' response to the attack is misplaced.

We aren't in charge of security in the camp. There are soldiers there, but we don't know how many. If there were not enough of them there, why didn't they request reinforcements by radio until so many refugees had died? Neither Coopi nor UNHCR were informed in time about these events. I received a phone call at about 1:00 a.m. on 22 August 1997 from someone at ADRA who was working in the camp, with the message: 'Send us an escort, it isn't safe'. Though he didn't specify what the problem was I called the Gisenyi gendarmerie and was told: 'The person in charge isn't here, and even if he was, it isn't possible at this hour.' The next morning I went to the police station to request this escort. They agreed at 9:00 a.m. When they arrived in Mudende, the military representative told the delegation: 'There was an infiltrator attack last night, in which refugees were injured and killed. Bring vehicles to take the wounded to hospital'.

He also cast doubt upon the number of casualties reported. He said that when he visited the camp on 23 August, he only saw the bodies of four refugees, and those of only three of the aggressors, although he had been informed that: "the death-toll was 128 refugees killed, and 17 attackers dead." He was unable to confirm whether any employees from Coopi were involved.

We were not shown the bodies of any assailants employed by Coopi, so that we could officially identify them. If we had been told that such and such a body was that of an employee of Coopi, we could have answered yes or no.

He explained the NGO recruitment process, which has no safeguards against the employment of infiltrators.

Among the staff employed at the camp there is someone in charge of emptying the latrines. You can see how this is a dishonourable job. This

man was well-known as one of the Coopi staff. However, he in turn, was authorised to employ people to help him with this work. These people were not officially known by Coopi although they were paid by the NGO.

Although the refugees have complained that it would have been safer to employ them to do this work themselves, the HCR official explained that at the time the NGOs had no legal authority to do so.

We refused to give this work to refugees because we did not have authorisation from the Rwandese authorities. Work in the camps was carried out by the staff who had been recruited from among the local population. Now, after the terrible event which has taken place, the prefectural authorities have authorised us in writing, to employ refugees.

But, for UNHCR, the incident raised not only issues of refugee protection, but an awareness of the prospect of further violence. A Reuters report of 26 August quotes UNHCR spokeswoman, Pamela O'Toole as saying: "We need a concerted effort from all parties concerned to calm down the potentially explosive situation and to prevent outbreaks of revenge attacks." Her warning was accurate, but the impact of the massacre at Mudende had already been felt in Mutara commune. Reprisal attacks by local Tutsis took place the following day and are documented below.

Thousands of refugees are said to have fled the camp following the attack, but, according to a UNHCR spokesman, many returned at the beginning of September and on the 9th there were an estimated 7,350 refugees at the camp.

In a letter published on 3 September 1997, the Bishop of Nyundo in Gisenyi, Mgr. Alexis Habiya Mbere, made the link between the genocide and the events in Mudende.

We had hoped that the machetes and little hoes of 1994 were not going to reappear anymore. But the events of Mudende have proved the contrary.

The threat of further violence continued to hang over the camp, reinforced by the appearance of menacing tracts. In a letter addressed to the acting bourgmestre of Mutara, a group calling itself the "leadership of PALIR in commune Mutara." The letter, dated 25 August 1997, blames the RPA for the killings.

We have just learned the sad news concerning the killings which took place in the Mudende camp for Tutsi refugees. We want you to know that we share this pain. We would like you to let the survivors and their families know of our sorrow; May the devil welcome their brothers in the darkness, for God no longer thinks about them, seeing that the *Inyenzi-Inkotanyi* killed God with a bullet in Mutara, it is said. The imbeciles have been abandoned by God.

We deny the rumours that you have been circulating, according to which the authors are the *Inzirabwoba*. Look elsewhere for those who are responsible. We've had enough of the lies of your government, and apart from you who is greedy<sup>95</sup>, no-one is pleased with this regime of the bloodthirsty Kagame.

Mr bourgmestre, we want to remind you that the critical situation which you are going through has been created by you. And if you are not careful, you will succumb and it's your business; don't say that I didn't warn you. We have learned that the clever Tutsis have gone back to where they came from. Nevertheless, to those who go to Kigali or to Mutara, remind them that those places are also part of the Rwanda of Twas and Hutus. To those who have gone home for good, tell them bon voyage. Until next time.

As events in Mudende itself were to show a few months later, the letter was not written in vain.

Kamari Mpanyabigwi from Minove in zone Kalehe arrived at the camp after the August massacre. When African Rights interviewed him in Mudende in October, he was uncannily prophetic.

We can't do anything else but wait for a similar incident to take place again.<sup>96</sup>

However, Gaetan Kayitsinga, who was widowed in the attack at Mudende, pointed out that the lessons of the attack were not heeded by the authorities.

After this attack the surrounding population was no longer allowed into the camp. We demanded additional security, but this wasn't provided.

<sup>95</sup> The acting bourgmestre of Mutara at the time was Hutu. It is common for infiltrators to describe Hutus in government service as "greedy", motivated by self-interest.

<sup>96</sup> Interviewed in Mudende, Gisenyi, 5 October 1997.

### *Killings in Rugerero, Gisenyi, 30 September 1997*

Whole communities of survivors have been forced into fleeing their homes and have gathered together in public buildings and churches for protection, in another echo of the events of April 1994.

Infiltrators killed a group of Tutsis in Rugerero centre, near the Ruhengeri-Gisenyi road, in Rubavu commune, Gisenyi, on 30 September. By 4 October, when an African Rights researcher visited the centre, it was deserted apart from two gendarmes. Apparently, most of the Tutsi survivors had fled to the commune office in Rubavu, while many Hutus had gone to stay with people living on the hills. The infiltrators remained at large and, that same morning, they had fought with gendarmes in Rugerero centre.

Jeanne Murekatete's family had sought sanctuary in Zaire many years ago, but last year they returned to Rwanda, this time to escape the conflict engendered by the ex-FAR and militiamen in North Kivu. Jeanne, 19, had not been in Rugerero long when the massacre of 30 September occurred. She describes this latest attack as evidence that: "The ex-FAR still pursue us because we are Tutsis. In the Great Lakes region, we are considered to be like original sin".

The infiltrators arrived in Rugerero around 11:00 a.m. Jeanne heard someone shouting that they were coming and told her younger brothers to run away. Then she saw a large group of people coming along the road towards her house.

[They were] singing: 'We, the Lord's flock, are coming.' There were women and small boys in this group. Some were holding axes and sticks. Only the men were carrying guns. I got under the bed. I don't know if the neighbouring population had anything to do with it because I didn't see any faces. However, two weeks earlier, two ex-FAR who were residents in the centre had left for an unknown destination. We presumed that they had joined the infiltrators.

From her hiding place under the bed, Jeanne could hear gunshots and the sounds of houses being broken into. This lasted for around thirty minutes, until the army arrived. There was a short battle, then the insurgents escaped. When she was certain that the centre was safe, Jeanne came out of her house.

I noticed two of the infiltrators' bodies. They were wearing normal clothes, but dirty, and one of them was wearing a military hat. The other



was wearing three pairs of trousers on top of each other, but no military clothes. I took out an identity card from this one's trouser pocket and saw that his first name was Jean-Berchmas. His commune of origin was Karambo.

Not only Tutsis were targeted in the attack, but also some Hutus working with the government. *Two nyumbakumis*<sup>97</sup> were killed as well as André, the *responsable* for Rambura cellule in Rugerero.

Tensions within the community had increased significantly in the months before the attack. Jeanne spoke of how the relationship between the refugees and the local people changed after the mass repatriation last year.

The people who were recently repatriated hated us. They also convinced those we got on well with to disassociate themselves from us and to form a single ethnic group.<sup>98</sup>

Jeanne said she would like to leave Rugerero and hoped that the government's promise of new housing in Kanembwe would benefit the homeless like her. At the time of the interview she was living in the commune office in Rubavu with around forty other displaced Tutsi families.

André Muberuka and his family were also at the commune office. They had come from Masisi in DRC and had arrived in Rwanda at the end of 1994. They had moved into empty houses belonging to refugees in Zaire. When the owners of the houses returned, they continued to live there, alongside the owners, although, André acknowledges: "they were not completely happy with this situation".

In the weeks preceding the events of 30 September, André said, there was an atmosphere of increasing tension and several Tutsis disappeared or were abducted. Some were found on the road or in the fields.

Among these people were Ruzindana, an old man who came from Masisi and Kabayiza, the son of Mutazimira who was also from Masisi. Both of these two went to visit friends in Rwerere commune but did not return.

André was in Mutura commune on 30 September, and only learned of the attack from a young boy the following day. He immediately came back to find out how his wife and children were.

I found my wife and small child at the office commune. She informed me that she had sent the other children to people she knew in Gisenyi town. Some of the victims of this attack were:

- Marie, François Muhire's wife who came to Masisi from Bibwe;
- Nyinawumuntu, who was killed in his field when the infiltrators passed by there;
- Marie, daughter of a widow from Goma called Murekatete.<sup>99</sup>

### *Giciye, Gisenyi, 13 November 1997*

The commune of Giciye has been singled out by the insurgents, again and again. The bourgmestre of Giciye, Fidèle Mitsindo, spoke of the day insurgents arrived in his commune with the express purpose of murdering Tutsis.

On Thursday, 13 November, at about 4:00 a.m., infiltrators attacked the trading centre of Gasiza with the main goal of killing the Tutsis. They killed eighteen Tutsis on the spot and abducted others. They killed these eighteen people, then ordered the remaining population to leave with them. Out of this population, they continued to pick out Tutsis and their Hutu 'accomplices'. Fortunately, the rapid intervention of helicopters dispersed the troublemakers and enabled certain Tutsi peasants to escape. That's how the daughter of the Tutsi head teacher in Rambura got away came back. These infiltrators were commanded by Captain Haguma.<sup>100</sup>

### *Nkuli, Ruhengeri, 24 November 1997*

The murder of 28 Tutsi in Mukamira, Nkuli on 24 November 1997 was preceded by the appearance of menacing tracts on successive days. The tracts specified the names of survivors who were to die. The survivors, living together near a military base, made light of the tracts because, in the words of Aline Mukashyaka, fourteen, "we thought these infiltrators were not in a position to attack this centre, which was close to the Mukamira

<sup>97</sup> This means "a head of ten houses" and is a local government official.

<sup>98</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 4 October 1997.

<sup>99</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 4 October 1997.

<sup>100</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 6 December 1997.

military camp". One of the people mentioned in the tracts was Aline's brother, Nsabiyaemye. On Monday 24 November, Aline and her companions discovered were well-prepared.

They arrived at the centre at around 7:00 p.m. and shot in the air, probably to see if the soldiers were around. We thought the shot was fired by the soldiers. The killing began at about 9:00 p.m. They used knives so that the soldiers wouldn't know. Only one person, Banini, was killed by gunfire as she tried to resist.

Aline's brother, Nsabiyaemye, was wounded near his left eye by grenade fragments.

He told us that he recognised the voice of one of the infiltrators, Baganwa, a civilian who was a génocidaire, son of Rudiri. These infiltrators fled when an armoured car arrived, just after they had shot at my brother's metal door, breaking it down. The victims included:

- o Nyirakanyanda, wife of Rutekeri, and her three children. Rutekeri was wounded;
- o Banini, killed with two of her children. Her daughter Jacqueline was wounded;
- o Kibibi, his wife and their child;
- o Nyirakanyange and her child;
- o Busetza;
- o Two of Rubangura's children;
- o Nyirabitama, her four brothers, and their father, who was decapitated;
- o Gashema and her child, Ngirikiringo.

All the victims were Tutsi, including genocide survivors and 1959 returnees from ex-Zaire.<sup>101</sup>

Muraza Nsanabandi lost her husband and one of her children. Muraza, 27, lived in cellule Rugeshi.

At 9:00 p.m. I heard people forcing the door to our house, using machetes. They came in. I was inside with my husband, Gashema, and our two children. Girikiringo, a boy of three, was killed with his father. As my husband was getting up, they were already at the bedside, and killed him with machete blows to the head and body. They did the same to

Girikiringo. My little girl and I were sleeping in another room, and the killers were saying: 'Do it quickly, it's time'. They didn't have a chance to look around the whole house. These infiltrators knew the houses of their victims well because Baganwa had been our neighbour until he joined the infiltrators a few days before the attack. They targeted all Tutsis, without distinctions.<sup>102</sup>

### *Mutura, Gisenyi, 30 November 1997*

Francine Umutesi and her family lived in cellule Bihungwe, sector Mugongo in Mutura. They didn't understand why their Hutu neighbours abandoned their homes on Saturday, 29 November. The following day, Francine's father, who was the councillor for their sector of Mugongo, asked the *responsables* to encourage the residents to return home. A few hours later, the surviving members of Francine's family understood why they had left. Francine, 19, described what took place.

On 30 November, at 6:30 p.m., almost all my family, all survivors of the genocide, were killed by infiltrators led by a former FAR soldier who had integrated into the RPA. A few minutes before that unforgettable moment, I was with my father, Boniface Bujamari, councillor of sector Mugongo, my mother, Esther Gwenjeri, and four children. I had gone to the toilet next to the house. I heard a whistle blow; then many people approached our house. Two of them began calling my father. He came outside and they asked him for money. I was still in the toilet, and I heard them taking my father back inside, where the others were. Then they killed them all, using traditional weapons, not guns. Apparently the others died immediately, but I could still hear my mother agonising.

Before leaving, the infiltrators used petrol to set fire to the house and burn the bodies inside. While this group killed my parents, another was killing the family of Gasasita, a soldier, and the son of my paternal uncle. His wife was there, newly married, and six children, five of them Gasasita's brothers and sister. Gasasita himself wasn't there. These people were also killed with traditional weapons. There were ten deaths in the two households:

We lived together with five other genocide survivor families, and five Hutu families. These killings happened on a Sunday, and these Hutu began leaving on Saturday to an area near the Kalisimbi volcano. Many others left that Sunday morning. We didn't know why they were leaving, and we didn't see them go. We only knew because we were surprised to

<sup>101</sup> Interviewed in Mukamira, Nkuli, 5 December 1997.

<sup>102</sup> Interviewed in Mukamira, Nkuli, 5 December 1997.

see houses locked up. Our sector had not experienced any insecurity for several weeks and we were surprised. They had definitely learned that we were going to die, and left well before so that they would not be the targets of revenge attacks.

The voice of one of the killers was familiar to Francine.

I recognised that of a gendarme, Jean-Damascène Hitimana, ex-FAR from Bunyove in Mugongo, integrated into the RPA.

Francine suspects that Hitimana may have been involved in the murder of her relatives in 1994.

He showed us the places where their bodies had been thrown. I had seen him earlier that Sunday, at 8:30 am. At that time he was at Mabumba's house, with another ex-FAR called Bazindutse, from our home cellule and sector. He had returned in November 1996 during the mass repatriations. It was me he was looking for because he asked his infiltrator colleagues: 'Where is that big girl? If I find her I will kill her myself'. The infiltrators spoke Lingala, a Congolese language. Hitimana is currently under arrest at the gendarmerie in Ruhengeri.<sup>103</sup>

### *A Massacre Foretold: The Murder of Congolese Refugees in Mudende, Gisenyi, 10 December 1997*

A former governor of North Kivu, Christophe Moto Mupende, used to refer to Zairians of Tutsi origin as "bats", saying that like bats, who were neither birds nor mammals, they were neither Rwandese nor Zairian. This analogy has become even more apparent in the last four years, as these residents of North Kivu have become casualties, both in Zaire and in Rwanda, of the politics of the 1994 genocide.

On 10 December, Congolese refugees in Mudende were massacred in a carefully prepared and co-ordinated raid. By then, the refugees at the camp numbered 17,000. Many of them knew they were in danger. They had heard of the rumours and threatening tracts which were circulating, but they had nowhere to go and were helpless to defend themselves.

The killing began at about 11:00 p.m., with the sound of gunfire, and lasted for about four hours. The assailants came in a huge crowd and included women. Although a few had guns and grenades, most of the

<sup>103</sup> Interviewed in Ruhengeri, 6 December 1997.

attackers were armed with machetes, axes and clubs. At about 2:30 a.m., the shooting ceased, but people may have continued to be killed with other weapons until about 4:00 a.m.

As morning came, the remaining refugees came out of their hiding places. What they found was a gruesome scene, corpses that had been horrifically mutilated. Some people had been burnt alive in their tents. They searched for the bodies of their loved ones, gave them a hasty burial, then many of them fled from the area.

There has been sharp disagreement about the number of victims; the refugees insist that 1643 people were killed. They say that they buried many of their relatives immediately, before the official count of the bodies. Government officials and UNHCR representatives put the death toll at about 300. The army was at the camp early on the morning of 11 December, organising the transfer of the wounded to Gisenyi hospital. In subsequent interviews, military and civilian officials and UNHCR staff who were at Mudende on 11 December maintain the death toll at just over 300. An African Rights researcher visited Mudende during the day on 13 December by which time there were only a few refugees left at the camp, in search of transport to take them to Nkamira. Overwhelmed by grief and anger, the few who were approached refused to talk.

Most of the wounded, including children, suffered hideous injuries. They were taken to Gisenyi hospital. Nearly a dozen tents had to be set up to accommodate them. One of the survivors, Immaculée Ingabire, described the scene at Gisenyi hospital as "a human abattoir", adding: "People were so badly injured that it was hard to know where to start treating them". Journalists who visited the hospital a few days later described the overwhelming needs of the patients.

The wounded lie in rows on the ground, bloody rags covering the gashes and gunshot wounds. Children, many maimed with gunshot wounds, scream in pain as the handful of nurses and doctors try to dress their wounds. The survivors told of horrific scenes of carnage.<sup>104</sup>

Although the number of dead remains in dispute, there is no question that the assault was brutal and well-organised. Firstly, Hutu refugees from Congo who had arrived at the camp three days before the massacre were identified and evacuated by the attackers. The insurgents

<sup>104</sup> James McKinnley Jr, "Again, Hutu Genocide Against Tutsi Tears at Rwanda", *International Herald Tribune*, 16 December 1997.

simultaneously attacked the commune detention centre of Mutura in order to distract the army. They also blocked the four roads leading out of the camp and piled up stones at the entrance as a makeshift roadblock, to hinder the passage of military vehicles.

More than any other massacre in the northwest, the events of 10 December sent shock waves throughout Rwanda. The apparent ease with which the insurgents carried out such a horrific massacre created a psychosis of fear amongst survivors and 1959 refugees. The genocidal intentions of the insurgents were already well-known; but it was the strongest sign to date of their organisational capacity and the depth of local support. In late December, we interviewed a number of the survivors who had been moved to a camp in Byumba, in a joint operation by the government and UNHCR.

Kabayiza Mitterand, 23, lost her parents and two younger brothers in the massacre. The family, from Matanda in Masisi, had been forced out of their home and arrived in Rwanda in May 1997. Unwilling to live in a camp, Kabayiza went to Gishwati, where she found a job making cheese. Her family remained at the camp, and she visited them often. Her uncle, Munyakazi, and a young female cousin were killed in the massacre at Mudende on 21 August. Kabayiza had gone to visit her family at Mudende on 9 December. When the killings began, she ran until she arrived in sector Kanzenze where she hid in the forest. The following day, she returned to Mudende.

I saw many corpses, wounded people who were in agony, the blood flowing like water in a stream. I saw the bodies of my friends. As I couldn't see my parents, I began to search the corpses. I found the body of my father, Modeste Muhire, and of my two younger brothers, Tuyishimir and Tuyisenge. All three had been killed with machetes. I asked the survivors to help me bury them. We dug small graves and buried them straightaway, without awaiting the arrival of the authorities. We arranged the burial very quickly in order to be able to flee.

Kabayiza explained the refugees' actions.

On 21 August, the authorities and HCR came, counted the number of victims and afterwards they did nothing to assure our security. Therefore, it was useless to wait for them on this day.

Kabayiza continued to look for her mother, Ranguide Mukande. She found her a few hours later.

She was on the verge of death; her head had been crushed. As she was still breathing, the survivors helped me to take her to hospital.

Ranguide reached hospital too late. She died the following day and was buried in Gisenyi. At the age of 23, Kabayiza has become a mother and a father to her two younger sisters and a younger brother.<sup>105</sup>

Catherine Nyirahabimana, fifty, found her husband, Jean Rwitabira, when he was close to death. The family scattered during the night; the following morning, she discovered Jean.

He was badly wounded. He had a deep machete cut on his neck, and had been shot many times in the legs. He was still alive, and spoke to me. I stayed with him, but I couldn't do anything to get him to the hospital quickly. It was only on the 11th that the wounded were taken to the hospital in Gisenyi. He died as soon as we reached the hospital.

Catherine survived with her five children.<sup>106</sup> Berchimas Mvunabandi, aged 42, is a shopkeeper from Gisimba in Walikale. His wife was killed on 10 December and he now has sole responsibility for seven children.

I was in bed and I heard gunfire. The refugees were screaming because they were already being killed, and their sheetings burned.

When the assailants attacked our block, a boy who was with us threw a grenade at them. I don't know where he got it from, but the attackers, speaking Swahili, backed away. Then they went and killed people in other blocks.

Disoriented by fear, Berchimas' wife had insisted on looking for another place to hide.

She was killed immediately. After they left, we began to bury the corpses which were lying around. There were more bodies in the forests. I buried my wife, who had been cut to pieces.

<sup>105</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

<sup>106</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

Gakufi Bahizi can never forget the state in which he found his brother. Gakufi, forty, a teacher from *groupement* Ufamando II in Masisi, gave a graphic account of the carnage.

They came silently, surrounded the camp, and then began to shoot at us. They threw grenades and then came into the housing blocks to kill the refugees there with machetes. I hid in the ceiling with two children; my wife went to hide in the toilets with other children. They killed all the people without any trouble; I don't know where the soldiers who guarded us were. My older brother, Alphonse Gasine, a teacher, and his wife, Colette, and their grandchild, Olive, were savagely killed, though they lived close to the soldiers' quarters.

They killed people by cutting off their heads, cutting out their kidneys etc... My brother Alphonse no longer had a tongue. Many of the corpses and wounded people lay on the ground. The soldiers came to help us in the morning, after the infiltrators had left. The survivors of this massacre were in shock, each was looking for their loved one, to bury them. I was lucky enough to see my wife and children, still alive. After having buried my brother and his wife, I went to Nkamira with other survivors. The children couldn't keep going, as they were so tired and scared.

After dashing out of his tent, Mordicaille Kavaruganda tried to make a run for the houses occupied by soldiers. But he then realised that shots were coming from the direction in which he was heading. He hid in a nearby bush of nettles. From there, he overheard a conversation which suggested that women had come to lend a hand in the slaughter; many other survivors have confirmed that this was so.

Women were well and truly part of the attack. I heard one of the killers say 'Nyirarukundo, bring me a grenade if there are any left.' The name Nyirarukundo is the name given to a woman or a girl.<sup>107</sup>

Gaëtan Kayitsinga, a farmer and cattle herder from *groupement* Bashali-Kayembe, lost his wife and one of his three children on 10 December. He said that the second massacre was more ferocious than the one in August.

The attackers came from all sides—from the clinic, the storage area and the teachers' campsite. They used metal bars, machetes, spears, hammers,

axes, etc... Some were dressed in military uniforms, others were women and children. Many tents were burned.

I was in the clinic and crawled out into a field of beans on my stomach. My wife and child were in the clinic and were killed there. There was no counter-attack; they killed until 4:30 a.m. without problems. Then the soldiers came from Rwerere and drove them off.

In the morning you could faint when you saw how they had tortured people before killing them: cutting off heads, legs, arms, genitals, breasts, etc... Some women had sticks in their vaginas.

Like many of his fellow-survivors, Gaëtan spoke of the Hutus among the refugees who suffered.

In our camp there are Hutus who wouldn't accept hurting us, because they couldn't see any reason to. They followed us into exile because they refused to kill the Hunde and the Tutsi and therefore risked death, even though they were Hutu. They suffered like us, losing their loved ones in the attack on Mudende, and from hunger and illness in the camps.<sup>108</sup>

Muneza Uwimana, twelve, grew up in Nyamitabo in Masisi. His mother and four younger sisters were killed; he was wounded. Muneza and his cousin, ten-year-old Kazungu Nishimwe, spent the evenings in their parent's tents, but slept in the tent of their grandmother to keep her company. They were just heading for their grandmother's tent when the insurgents made their presence known.

I heard gunfire close by. I didn't realise that I had been injured, nor did my cousin, who was also hit. We ran away and hid at the foot of a nearby container. That was when we realised that we had been hit, Nishimwe on his middle finger, and I in my right leg.

Using their flashlights, the infiltrators discovered our hiding place, where we were lying in the midst of other bleeding bodies. They looked at us, all blood-stained, and said: 'Let's go. These ones are dead'. We stayed amongst the corpses until the end of the attack. Then people came to pick us up.

<sup>108</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

<sup>107</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

The next day Muneza discovered the fate of his family.

A grenade was thrown into my parents' tent, killing my mother and my four sisters—Feza, aged 10, Toyota, aged 8, Pacifique aged 6, and the youngest one, Uwizeye. They all died on the spot except Pacifique, whose spine and buttocks were burnt, and who died on arrival at Gisenyi hospital. I am now alone with my father, Amiel Munyamboneza.

Our killers said they killed us because we were *Inyenzi-Batutsi*. That's what they called us. These killers are *combattants* and *interahamwe*.<sup>109</sup>

Gapasi Munyamartembo was a member of the committee established by the refugees. He comes from Rutchuru. His wife and two children died from illness in refugee camps, but he and his seven remaining children survived both the attack on 21 August and the one on 10 December. He and his children hid in a bush as the slaughter continued.

The assailants killed at leisure for several hours. There was no counter-attack. The commander who was there did nothing to save us. It was the soldiers stationed in the commune of Rwerere who came to our rescue at about 4:30 a.m. The commander who had come from Rwerere called the one who should have been in Mudende and told him 'I am in Mudende, careful, don't fire on us.' I had hidden in a bush with my children.

Between them, the refugees had two grenades. As Gapasi explained, the two grenades saved many lives on 10 December.

One of the people who had a grenade was in the church when the attack took place. When the killers were in front of the church, the grenade was lobbed. The killers went running back. The second grenade saved a whole block; those who were there were spared. After the grenade was thrown, two of the killers died. Others were able to save themselves by using these two corpses, saying that they should not approach the block because there was an RPA soldier.

Damascène Gashabuka, 51, comes from *groupement* Itara, *collectivité* Batangi in zone Rubero, located on the border between North Kivu and the region of Haut Zaire. He arrived in Rwanda towards the end of 1995, together with his wife and five children. The family was not hurt

in August, but they lost a number of close relatives. On 10 December, Damascène lost his wife.

I was asleep when the infiltrators arrived on the 10th. Woken up by the gunfire, I came out running. Infiltrators who were far from my tent shot several bullets at me, but they didn't hit me.

But his wife was not so fortunate.

They killed my wife, Gasusa Nyirakamana, by machetes. It was on the following day that I saw her body. The children managed to escape.<sup>110</sup>

Some of the victims were burnt in their tents. Ruzigana Munyakinani's tent was set on fire, but he survived. Ruzigana had already experienced much hardship. He was originally from Rwanda, but had emigrated to Masisi in Zaire, taking one of his two wives, Mathilde, with him, and leaving the other, Marie, in Kayove, Gisenyi. Marie was killed during the genocide, with her four children, along with eight of Ruzigana's nine brothers and their families.

In September 1997, Mathilde and two of her children, were killed by the *Combattants* in *groupement* Ngungu. Shortly afterwards, Ruzigana returned to Rwanda. Unable, at the age of eighty, to care for his two children on his own, he entrusted them to his remaining brother in Kayove, and then settled in Mudende. When the insurgents arrived on 10 December, Ruzigana was awake and able to think quickly.

I heard the assassins when they came close to my tent. Realising the risk of death if I left my tent, I stayed inside and covered myself with the leaves and earth which I used as a bed. The killers knew that the owner of the tent had not come out; so they burnt it. I poured the water that remained in the pot on the parts of my body which might burn. The assassins left, convinced that I had died in the fire.<sup>111</sup>

The refugees were, understandably, bitter about the absence of the army. This is discussed below, in the chapter on the RPA. The anger about the army's lack of protection was compounded by insensitive comments from the Minister of Information, Jean-Népomuscène Nayinzira, and the

<sup>110</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

<sup>111</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

<sup>109</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

then préfet of Gisenyi. Gakufi Bahizi commented, in a voice choked with anger:

We saw the way in which the soldiers abandoned us on 10 December. And then we heard the Minister tell us that we are clearly a burden on Rwanda. It is a pity that our own country hasn't done anything to help us return. The génocidaires took advantage of the confusion to kill us.

The conduct of the former préfet of Gisenyi, Epimaque Ndagijimana, has also been criticized by the survivors of Mudende. Gapyisi Munyamartembo asked a question that was on the mind of many refugees.

Nor do I understand why the préfet of Gisenyi did not come by the day after the attack. Did he have to await the visit of senior officials from Kigali?

According to Gapyisi—and many other refugees—they had repeatedly conveyed their anxiety about security to the authorities.

After the attack of August, we warned the préfet and all the important civilian and military authorities that it was high time to take serious measures about our security. We also requested that the number of soldiers in charge of our security be increased, or that we be transferred elsewhere. But because the climate suited us, we insisted above all that the number of soldiers be augmented. But the number of soldiers remained the same until the second attack of 10 December. Our security was assured by seventeen soldiers. We complained for a long time that seventeen soldiers could not protect us. We wrote twice to the préfet, Epimaque Ndagijimana. Communal policemen arrived the day before [the attack] and walked around the neighbourhood of the camp.

The survivors of the attack were particularly wounded by comments attributed to the préfet. He is said to have told journalists that the attack had been prompted by the "greed" of the refugees. A few days prior to 10 December, aid intended for the local population had been mistakenly delivered to the camp. By the time the error had been registered, the refugees had helped themselves to the goods, to the fury of the préfet. Pérousse Nyirazibanje said she had some questions to put to Ndagijimana.

A few days before the attack, the préfet of Gisenyi became angry with the refugees because of some story about beans which I didn't really follow.

But he said he would 'show the refugees his anger' in front of them at the camp. Prior to this, he had held several meetings with us and the refugees always asked for more security. He promised to do something, but didn't.

After this second attack, the préfet told journalists that it happened because the refugees had taken beans from the population of Mutura. I would like to ask the préfet of Gisenyi which beans had been stolen during the deaths in Zaire and Rwanda in 1994, and during the first attack we endured?<sup>112</sup>

Nyilingoboka Serubungo, 50, a farmer and cattle herder from Masisi, counted several close relatives among the dead.

I lost Vita, my brother, his wife, Nyiragatete; and their children; my two grandchildren and Nabineza Mbonabinama, my uncle.

The préfet told foreign journalists that we had been killed because we stole some beans. We received these beans as aid. A few days later, the préfet came to our camp to tell us that they had been destined for the population of Mutura commune. The attack occurred three days after the préfet's visit. I wonder if it was him who stirred up the population against us.

The people around Mudende camp didn't like us, and they displayed tracts everywhere, with the exact date of planned attacks. On those dates they would attack other places and kill the Tutsis there. In this way Kabali, Barirete, Giciye, Arusha, Mukamira and Bwiza were attacked. We were frightened, and complained to the civil authorities, notably to the préfet of Gisenyi.

After the August attack there were a few changes in the camp, like less visits from the local people. But it wasn't enough because the number of soldiers guarding the camp was not increased, although the préfet of Gisenyi had promised that they would be during a meeting. This led to a second attack being carried out on 10 December.<sup>113</sup>

Among the survivors of the massacre interviewed in Byumba, the feeling that they belonged nowhere was never far from the surface. Catherine Nyirahabimana, whose husband died, spoke for many others.

In 1994, when the interahamwe arrived in Zaire, I fled to Rwanda to escape their threats. When I arrived, in Rwanda, I loved it and I decided to

<sup>112</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997. The préfet of Gisenyi was relieved of his duties on 12 December.

<sup>113</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

live my life in Rwanda, the land of my ancestors. But then they wanted to kill me. They wanted me to go 'home to Zaire'. Where is home supposed to be?

I was born and raised in Zaire. I didn't refuse to live there, but it wasn't safe. Forced to come to Rwanda, my ancestral home, I am driven away by the Rwandese. That is how my husband died.

Kabayiza Mitterand blames both the government of Rwanda and that of the Democratic Republic of Congo for their predicament.

The Rwandese state did nothing to protect us on the day of the massacre. Nor has Kabila's government done anything to take care of us. We really belong nowhere. Rwandese infiltrators, as well as rebels against Kabila, chase us. We have become objects of commerce—for the Governments of Rwanda and Congo, for the countries that manufacture guns, for the agencies like HCR, WFP and the Red Cross who employ a lot of Rwandese who work in our camps. So what is our future? I have gained nothing by coming to Rwanda. And I will go back to Congo empty-handed.

Berchimas Mvunabandi says he will not return to Congo, although the knows he has nothing in Rwanda.

In Rwanda I am not safe, and I have no land on which to build a house. I wonder where my children will stay; we are hunted everywhere because of politics.<sup>114</sup>

Gasana Sengabo, a 46-year-old teacher from Bashali-Kayembe in Masisi, reflected grimly on their fate and their future.

We have crossed almost the whole country, running away. What have we done to be punished like this? How long will we have to be on the run? Our government has done nothing to help us return to our country.<sup>115</sup>

The majority of the refugees had fled violence at the hands of the *Combattant* militia and ex-FAZ. They are convinced that Mudende was attacked at the behest of those who had chased them out of Congo and who wanted to make sure that they did not come back alive. This group of refugees has survived a series of ordeals; each one has left its mark. Almost

<sup>114</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

<sup>115</sup> Interviewed in Kibari, Byumba, 30 December 1997.

every individual we interviewed in Byumba, where most of the Mudende survivors were settled, was deeply pessimistic about the future. They believe that sooner or later, in Rwanda or Kivu, they will be killed by either ex-FAR, ex-FAZ, interahamwe or *Combattants*.

### *Nyamabuye, Gitarama, 11 April 1998*

Ancille Mukanyonga and her older sister, Vénantie Usabamariya, survived the genocide by taking refuge at the bishopric of Kabgayi. Exactly four years later, on Saturday 11 April, they were again pursued by men driven by the same ideology and ambition. This time, Vénantie almost didn't make it. The sisters lived in Bwiza cellule, Takwe sector, in Nyamabuye, Gitarama. Ancille, 46, was at the time looking after her sister at Kabgayi hospital.

We had heard shots from Kivumu at about 8:00 p.m. when a vehicle was set on fire. This stopped me from sleeping, and so I heard when the criminals arrived at 11:00 p.m. First, I heard our neighbour, Aloys Nzaramba, and his thirteen-year-old child, shouting. This young girl died this morning, and her wounded father, is still in hospital. I immediately got up and I fled to the banana plantation. I left Vénantie and a young girl, Alice Ingabire, in the house.

I returned very early the next morning and found my older sister had serious machete wounds to the head, as did Nzaramba. Marie-Jeanne Muragijeyezu, another neighbour, also had head injuries. Only one person died at the time, a boy called Ephraim Niyonteze, who was in fifth year of primary school. We didn't recognise these criminals.<sup>116</sup>

### *Kayenzi, Gitarama, 22 April 1998*

Often, the threat to survivors' lives comes from the same individuals who killed their loved ones in 1994. In Kayenzi, Gitarama, on 22 April 1998, seventeen-year-old Evariste Sibomana watched as a group of infiltrators murdered his mother and brother. He discovered that Sergeant Kagame, the man who killed his father, Charles Habarurema, in April 1994, was among them. Evariste, his mother and siblings lived in cellule Gaji, sector Nyamirembe.

<sup>116</sup> Interviewed in Kabgayi, Gitarama, 14 April 1998.



I heard someone knocking on the door and asking us to open it for him. My mother wanted to know who it was, but this person preferred to say a 'visitor' rather than specifying his name. The criminals broke the door down and about ten of them came into the house. When my mother couldn't find the money they asked of her, I gave them 1,500 francs. Thanks to the bright light from their torches, I was able to see that some of them were armed and others were not.

While Evariste looked for the money, the men dealt with his mother and brothers.

My mother was killed by swords and small hoes. They also killed my younger brother, Narcisse Munyabugingo, nine years old. They also seriously wounded my younger brother, Bernard Habiya Kare, thirteen.

Next, it was the turn of Evariste.

After I gave them the money, they beat me on the head with a small hoe and left me for dead when I fell to the ground.

They proceeded to kill and wound other survivors, including close relatives of Evariste's family.

They went to the home of Jean Ntivuguruzwa, our paternal uncle, and killed his wife, Rosette Mukandahiro. Then they attacked my Tutsi grandmother, who was seriously wounded and who later died in Kigali. They also wounded her child, Kingabiye.

There would have been more victims if the neighbours had not called for assistance.

The neighbouring population cried out for help and forced the infiltrators to abandon their dirty work. Among the infiltrators, the neighbours identified Sergeant Kagame, the son of Karekezi. Since the return of the refugees, he was hiding at the home of his uncle in commune Nyabikenke.<sup>117</sup>

### *Taba, Gitarama, 12 May 1998*

Marie Mukamusoni, a farmer in Taba, Gitarama, lost her husband and eight of her ten children during the genocide. Marie, 45, lived in Rwezamenyo, sector Ngamba, with her two remaining children. When tracts threatening to kill survivors were found in their sector, Marie and other neighbours went to stay with friends living the sector office. Some weeks later, the *responsables* and *nyumbakumis* urged them to return home, promising to guarantee their security.

After we had spent a peaceful month back home, the infiltrators came at around 11:00 p.m. on 12 May. While we were sleeping, they attacked the home of a survivor, Oscar Nsengiyumva, who was also a *nyumbakumi*. They killed him and his wife, Poska Dusingizemariya. They killed them with an axe; at the end, they fired a single shot, to intimidate the patrol.

I was woken by the gunshot and I hid in a bean field with my two children. They went to the home of Bandaho, my husband's younger brother, and killed him with a hoe. They also killed his eldest daughter, Jeanne Uwiduhaye. They injured David, who is now hospitalised in Kigali, and a girl called Nyiramabwa. They went off towards Kirwa sector, Kayenzi. These killings, which were carried out in our sector during the night, were aimed entirely at genocide survivors.

The tracts spelt out the reasons why the survivors of the genocide were to be eliminated.

According to the tracts, we were targeted because we had accused *génocidaires* in order for them to be arrested. Indeed, Nsengiyumva had once planned to have a *génocidaire*, Martin Niwencuti, arrested at the home of his father, Isaac Ngerageze. He went into hiding and wasn't found at his father's, but was found a few days later. From then onwards, Isaac, Martin's father, has been a fierce opponent of Nsengiyumva. He used to say that Nsengiyumva would not be safe as long as he was alive. We told the bourgmestre about this. He arrested Isaac for a few days and then released him.

We also think that certain *génocidaires* from our sector, whose current addresses we don't know, are playing some kind of part in these killings, even if they are not themselves the perpetrators. There is, for example, Cléophas Kavaruganda, the former *responsable* of Rwezamenyo cellule during the genocide; and his brother, Kayinamura. The latter fled to Zaire, and Cléophas fled soon after, when he became

<sup>117</sup> Interviewed in Kayenzi, Gitarama, 27 May 1998.

frightened of being imprisoned. The role of these two would be to bring the armed infiltrators here, where their family members, our neighbours, take them in and give them information concerning where their target is staying and/or the place where he will be at a precise time.

In my view, the solution to the serious security problem for the genocide survivors, would be to have them housed near the commune office where there is always a soldier present.<sup>118</sup>

### *Kayove, Gisenyi, 8 June 1998*

When the insurgents arrived in commune Kayove, Gisenyi, on 8 June, they selected a site housing 1959 Tutsi refugees who had returned from Zaire. The site was located in cellule Kinihira; 33 people were killed on the spot and 17 others were badly wounded. The injured were first taken to a hospital in Murunda, in Rutsiro, Kibuye, and then evacuated to Kibuye hospital. Four of the wounded subsequently died. In late June, African Rights interviewed four of the survivors who were either recovering or looking after relatives in Kibuye hospital.

The massacre unfolded as it has done on so many occasions in the northwest. The main difference was the timing. Most massacres have taken place at night. But in Kayove, the insurgents, taking advantage of a torrential downpour, struck in the early afternoon. Most people had left their homes to attend a meeting called by the bourgmestre.

Ladislav Majoro, eighty, was born in Kayove and grew up there. He left for Zaire in 1959, together with his family, but they returned in 1994. Even though all his relatives in Kayove had been killed in 1994, he decided to settle there, in cellule Kinihira. Ladislav was not at the meeting. Instead, he had gone to look after his cows. Because of the heavy rainfall, he went home at about 2:00 p.m. and lit a fire to warm himself. Shortly afterwards, there was an interruption.

I heard people screaming and whistles blowing, but I didn't understand what was happening. I thought it was a noise due to the rain falling on the rooftop. But it was the screams of people who were being massacred. I kept on hearing the screams. I went outside and saw people fleeing while others were chasing them in order to kill them. I also wanted to run away. But as soon as I thought of doing this, a crowd of people armed with *massues*, machetes and guns took me by surprise. They were all wearing civilian clothes. These people asked me to give them money. I told them

<sup>118</sup> Interviewed in Taba, Gitarama, 25 May 1998.

that I didn't have any. One of those carrying a gun hit me on the shoulders and I fell on the ground. He searched me, but didn't find anything as I didn't have money on me. Afterwards, they undressed me and took away all my clothes. I didn't recognise any of the faces because I was terrified to an extreme degree. After they had stripped me and failed to find money, the assassins hit me with machetes on the head and neck. Finally, they put a sword in my stomach. I immediately lost consciousness.

When Ladislav regained consciousness in the evening, he was in a hospital in Murunda. He learned that his younger brother, Kajangwe, and his wife, Olive, were among the dead. His children had escaped. After a day, during which four of the wounded died, the most severely injured, including Ladislav, were taken to Kibuye hospital for better medical treatment. Although he expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and care they received in Kibuye, Ladislav was in a state of profound depression.

Nothing is right. I feel as if part of my body is paralysed. I am old and therefore have doubts about my ability to recover. Now, those who remained in Kayove are leaving to look for somewhere to live, because of this problem of insecurity. Once we have recovered, where are we going to live? Will we go back to Kayove? Will we stay in this hospital? This is a question we find very difficult to answer. If my colleagues want to do so, we will go home. Maybe peace will return.

The sheer brutality of the infiltrators left Ladislav lost for words. He spoke of "cruelty mingled with savagery". Overwhelmed by the determination of the insurgents—and their civilian supporters—to carry the genocide to its logical conclusion, Ladislav echoed a view that has become widespread among 1959 refugees in the northwest.

They refuse to lay down their arms. Rather, they want to exterminate the Tutsis. Even if I am too old, I would like to ask the state to give the young the means of defending themselves. It is better to be taken by surprise while you have the means of defending yourself, than to be killed like ants which are crushed on the ground. In that case, I think that the number of people killed will diminish considerably, compared to what is happening today. If the state continues to ignore this necessity, we will all end up by being killed.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Interviewed in Gitesi, Kibuye, 20 June 1998.

When he left Zaire in mid-1994, Jean-Bosco Mugabo was only nine, but said he was "glad to say goodbye to the life of being a refugee". His father wanted to set up home in Bisizi, commune Rubavu where his family originated. But worried about insecurity there, they moved to Kinyihira.

Since the end of February 1998, there was a rumour saying that we were going to be attacked, because of the refugees from Kanama who had come to live in our village. We were afraid. Later, we began to pick up tracts on the road which announced the dates when we were going to be attacked, even specifying the hours. But this did not happen, which made us think that it had been done to upset us.

On 8 June, Jean-Bosco found out that it was not an empty threat. He had just returned from school and was eating his lunch when he was startled by the sound of gunshot.

I went outside and saw RPA soldiers fighting with a huge group of people. There were very few soldiers and they escaped. I understood that they were infiltrators. They advanced towards our village. They were divided into three groups in order to surround us. Some were near the health centre, others were coming from the south side of our village and the third party was coming from the Gishwati forest. We were already surrounded.

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**"The largest group of attackers consisted of children, women and young girls. They had *massues* and machetes. There were few men. Only the men in some kind of military uniform had guns".**

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They yelled, blew whistles and beat drums, saying 'the army of Jesus is coming'.

Jean-Bosco was alone at home with his sister, Rubayiza Mukamwiza, who was ill. Their mother, Gaudence Mukamakuza, had gone to look for beans in the neighbouring forest. Their father, Joseph Nzabonimpa, had also gone out. As most people had gone to attend the meeting, the only adults in their vicinity were two neighbours, Nyirasafari and Nshizirungu. The two children hid under a bed.

We heard the blows of the machetes and the screams of people. One of the assailants saw us through a window. He asked us for money in order to

spare us. Nyirasafari gave him 2000 francs. He must have told the others about our existence, because they immediately rushed to our house. They wanted to open the door. We reinforced the door with our hands. They brought axes, broke the wooden door in half and came in. We had just gone back under the bed. They made me come out by force, but they didn't see my sister.

Jean-Bosco was astonished to see his teacher, Bisorome, among the killers.

They had hacked Nshizirungu. They told me that they were going to do the same thing to me. A man I did not recognise hit me on the head with a *massue*. I ran.

Next, it was the turn of children to inflict cruelties.

Before long, I ran into some children. A child of my age hit me with a machete on the neck. I fell on the ground and I received a lot of blows from machetes and *massues*, especially on the head. I was like a dead person. I couldn't hear anything any more. I stayed in this place, I had lost a lot of blood.

When he regained consciousness, he was in hospital in Muranda with his father and brother by his bedside. His father, who had been slashed on the nose, told him that his older brother, Laurent, had died. Kibuye hospital had sent a vehicle to transport the wounded; by the time it arrived, Jean-Bosco said he was "desperate". Jean-Bosco was also grateful for the practical and moral support they received at Kibuye hospital and from local officials. After two weeks, he was able to walk on his own. But his mind was on the uncertainties that lay ahead.

I don't know if we are going to continue to live in the same region, or if we are going to be transferred elsewhere. I will follow whatever my father decides. But if I had a choice, I would like us to live somewhere else. I saw that in Kayove, we were living in the midst of ferocious beings whom we had mistaken for people.

As for the infiltrators, we see very well that they are determined to exterminate us totally.

Jean-Bosco made a plea to the government.

I am asking, or rather begging, the government to put an end to this problem of infiltrators. In the meantime, it must reinforce our protection or train us so that we can protect ourselves. If not, there will be no one left; we will all be killed.<sup>120</sup>

Like Jean-Bosco, Eline Nyirarushago had not taken the tracts seriously. Eline, 46, had also left Zaire for Rwanda in mid-1994, together with her family. After she and her husband divorced, she settled in Kinihira with her young children, cultivating a plot near the forest. She and the new arrivals had enjoyed "good neighbourly relations" with the Hutu population in the area, "sharing the good and the bad". The situation deteriorated gradually, especially after the August 1997 massacre of Congolese refugees in Mudende and the circulation of tracts in their village. Their neighbours began to keep their distance.

We became panic-stricken because we could see that an attack might take us by surprise. Night patrols began again.

The surprise came on 8 June, at a time when the patrol teams were not on duty.

It happened on 8 June, a Monday, at 1:00 p.m. I had just come from the field and it was raining. I sheltered at the village primary school and then went home. My child, Tuyisenge, was there. I had a young son, Habimana, who liked to spend the whole day with the soldiers, coming home in the evening. He came running in the downpour and told us that the infiltrators had come. We ran, without taking anything from the house. We saw that the whole village was surrounded. We had nowhere to slip through.

A first group of assailants, armed with a gun and wearing military uniform, went past the military post. A second group, consisting mainly of women and children—with a few men—came from the direction of the hospital and Gishwati forest. They wore normal clothes and were armed with machetes, swords and *massues*. They had drums and whistles and were shouting that 'the army of Jesus is coming'!

The first group advanced towards us. I dashed off, without thinking. I found myself at the Nyakigezi river. Behind me, I heard gunfire and the cries of people who were being hit with machetes. I crossed the

river, but there was no one in the area. I couldn't even see a child. I thought that they must be amongst those attacking us.

Eline was discovered, together with others who had also tried to hide.

They killed or wounded some people with their machetes. Among the killers, I recognised Bisorome, a teacher at the primary school of our village. He was holding a machete in his hand, covered with blood. I saw several other faces that I recognised, including a man called Martin. I continued to run, up to a place called Nkola, very close to Lake Kivu. I had decided to drown myself if the infiltrators caught me, because I couldn't bear to be killed with machetes. I remained in hiding for three hours. Then I came out and looked everywhere. The killers had left. I saw a plane which was circulating and armoured cars in our village.

She returned to the site.

The wounded were screaming. There was no one in my house and all our belongings had been looted. I walked around, looking at the corpses in search of my children. Finally, I fell upon a heap of bodies of small children; there were some who had survived with wounds. Among the wounded, I saw my son, Habimana. He had been hit on the head with an axe and a *massue* and his head had become deformed. He was vomiting and couldn't speak. He was like a dead person. I took him to the road where the other wounded people were being taken so that they could be evacuated to hospital.

Eline then returned home, in search of her other son. This time, she was in luck. "We ran into each other and he was well". They accompanied Habimana to hospital, first to Murunda and then Kibuye. The physical scars had healed. But the experience had left Habimana deaf and dumb and his head was still deformed.

When we were still living in Zaire, we heard that the Tutsis in Rwanda had been killed. But we didn't know what had happened. We thought that only the men had been killed. We understood what took place in Rwanda when we ourselves were attacked. Personally, what I saw is beyond me. A baby is hit with a *massue*, an old man who cannot even fight against them is hacked with a machete. I have never seen people like that, without any pity in their hearts.

<sup>120</sup> Interviewed in Gitesi, Kibuye, 21 June 1998.

The participation of their neighbours made it even harder for her to make sense of the senseless violence.

The infiltrators did not come from Zaire or somewhere else. They were our closest neighbours, such as the teacher, Bisorome. Any civilian who is caught in the act of killing should be punished in an exemplary fashion in front of the population, to discourage them.<sup>121</sup>

As far as the insurgents were concerned, Janvier Mundere deserved to die. The reasons for their hostility, he said, were the fact that "he had not gone into exile in 1994, enjoyed good relations with the soldiers in their area and with his Tutsi neighbours and had a Tutsi mother." Their determined campaign to kill him is described elsewhere in this book. Afraid for his life, he and his family abandoned their home in commune Kanama and moved to Ngabo, near the 1959 refugees. The bourgmestre gave them a house and a plot to cultivate. He got on well with his neighbours who were aware of the suffering he had endured at the hand of the infiltrators. Saying that he felt welcomed in this milieu, he added that "he had begun to forget commune Kanama". This tranquillity was shattered two months later, on 8 June.

I was at home when I heard the sound of people running in front of my house. Curious, I asked Boniface, son of Kabeja, what was happening. He told me that some interahamwe had attacked our site. When I went to the side of my house, I saw a large number of interahamwe singing, dancing and whistling. These people made me think that it was well and truly the infiltrators that I knew in Kanama.

The infiltrators were well-prepared.

They had us surrounded so well that some of them, armed with guns, proceeded to the nearby military position. Another group came down to the site while a third group arrived, coming from the direction of the natural Gishwati forest. On the whole, they wore long khaki jackets and carried small hoes, clubs and machetes. They kept saying: 'the army of Jesus Christ is coming!'

Janvier ran back to his house to warn his wife and mother.

I grabbed our older daughter, Abayisaba, my wife took the small baby and we fled. As these infiltrators who were chasing were using their machetes to cut up whoever they caught and the explosions were very powerful, after some metres, my wife and the baby hid in the home of a neighbour, Nzabonima.

He continued running until he felt that he was safely out of their reach.

After about an hour and a half, we saw the arrival of helicopters and armoured personnel carriers which immediately forced the assassins to stop their dirty work and to take flight.

Taking advantage of the army's intervention, Janvier returned home to take stock of the situation.

Most of our houses had been destroyed, after their contents had been looted. There were corpses and the wounded lying around. I looked to see if I could identify my family. When I got to my mother's house, I saw the body of my sister, Mpanoyimana, with the head missing. Her baby of two weeks had also been killed with a sword and the body placed next to his mother. In the other room was the body of my mother, also without the head.

Janvier searched for his wife and daughter at the local health centre. He did not find them, but he saw the corpses of patients and two nurses he knew, Ingabire and Marie, and realised that the medicines had been stolen. He then ran into someone he knew.

Appaulinaire Gasana told me that he had seen the body of a woman carrying a baby behind the house of Pancras. When I got there, my doubts turned into reality: I saw that my wife had been killed after being hit with a machete on the neck and shot in the chest. The baby, Placidie Karugendo, had been hit with *massues* on the head but was still alive.

The child was taken to the hospital in Muranda. Janvier's younger brother, Simon Kabanda, who had also been on the insurgents' wanted list and forced to leave Kanama, had dodged the bullets and the machetes.<sup>122</sup>

Some of those escaped were later transferred to a camp in Nkamira, Mutura. Less than two weeks later, there was a massacre at Nkamira.

<sup>121</sup> Interviewed in Gitesi, Kibuye, 20 June 1998.

<sup>122</sup> Interviewed in Gitesi, Kibuye, 21 June 1998.

*No Let Up: Nkamira Camp, Gisenyi, 17 June 1998*

From July 1994, Tutsi refugees who were forced to leave Rwanda in 1959 and the early sixties, and their descendants, have returned to the country in huge numbers. But they have not been spared the wrath of those determined to complete "the job" they began in April 1994. Thousands returned from North Kivu where the defeated FAR and interahamwe vented their rage on Tutsis living in the area. Because of the shortage of land and housing—particularly after the mass return of the refugees—many of these returnees have been grouped together in transit camps, while they await permanent resettlement. The concentration of thousands of Tutsis in one place has, inevitably, attracted the genocidal attentions of the insurgents. Since mid-1997, massacres of returnees in transit camps have been a prominent feature of the insurgency. Some camps, particularly Nkamira<sup>123</sup> in sector Kanzenze, commune Mutura, Gisenyi, have suffered multiple attacks, despite its proximity to the military camp of Bigogwe. Worse still, those who have survived one massacre have then been attacked in other camps where they were moved. For example, on 14 October 1997, 37 returnees from the DRC, housed in a transit camp named Arusha, were murdered and fourteen were seriously wounded. Their tents were also burned down and their belongings stolen. The camp was located in sector Cyambara in Mutura. They had been awaiting the construction of new houses; many of them had had to vacate the homes of the refugees who returned from exile in November 1996. Subsequently, some of the survivors were transferred to camp Nkamira where another massacre took place in mid-December.

The survivors of the 10 December massacre in Mudende were also transferred to Nkamira camp. A few days later, insurgents launched a simultaneous attack against the camp and the Bigogwe military barracks. This time, however, the military were on the spot in sufficient numbers and retaliated. Panic-stricken, the refugees tried to run, but were calmed down by the soldiers and stayed put. Shots were exchanged between the insurgents and the army for about half an hour, but no one among the survivors of Mudende was injured. But in the village of Gatagara, 35 residents of a camp for 1959 refugees died.

But the most concerted attack against camp Nkamira occurred at 1:00 a.m. on 17 June 1998 when 58 people were burned to death or

murdered with a macabre brutality that recalled the events of 10 December in Mudende. As with Mudende, the insurgents killed at their leisure; they quickly overwhelmed the small RPA contingent of only eight men and members of a local defence force. They were assisted by civilians carrying traditional arms. As their comments above show, the survivors of previous massacres had placed enormous confidence in the creation of local defence groups. Sadly, Nkamira shows the limitations of civilian defence teams faced with large groups of experienced, determined fighters bent on eliminating those they consider "enemies."

Colin Nzabakurikira, 40, was a camp councillor at Nkamira. After the massacre of 10 December in Mudende, many of those who escaped were first brought to Nkamira, and were then transferred to Byumba. But Colin, who survived Mudende, opted to remain at Nkamira, together with some other 1959 refugees. With time, more people arrived at Nkamira, most of them survivors of other massacres directed at Tutsis, such as the residents of Gahenerezo in Mutura and of Kihira in Kayove. Others came from Giciye and Karago in Gisenyi; Rutsiro in Kibuye and Kinigi in Ruhengeri. By mid-June, there were about 5,800 residents. Because of the influx, the number of soldiers guarding the site increased. But the residents continued to be unsettled.

The surrounding area was not peaceful. In Rwerere, Karago and Giciye communes there was continuous fighting between the RPA and the infiltrators. Tutsis were hunted and killed. We were still afraid of the infiltrators.

The level of fear rose when the insurgents made their presence felt.

They launched an attack on us. The soldiers, along with ourselves, chased them away. They didn't kill anyone, but they looted our belongings. It became necessary to train the young people in self-defence. It was called "local defence". They were even given guns so that if the infiltrators attacked the camp they would be able to defend us.

One of the RPA force at the camp was an ex-FAR. He did his best to frighten and demoralise the camp residents.

There was an ex-FAR integrated into the RPA, Shyaka. He spent his days complaining about our presence. He tried to rape the women on several occasions. He counted our houses and told us that even if we were lucky enough to survive the day, we would be killed at night. He said that noses

<sup>123</sup> Nkamira was also used as a transit camp in November 1996 when the refugees came back *en masse* from Zaire.

like ours were only found in Burundi and Kigali, and that they weren't needed in Ruhengeri. Once he told us that we deserved to be burnt in the *sheetings*. We were upset and we told his colleagues, the other soldiers, what he was saying. They said they would make enquiries about him. When some of them were posted elsewhere, he went with them. He was in the 101 battalion. I don't know where he is now.

At the beginning of June, the number of soldiers was reduced.

We were left with eight soldiers, plus the local defence. There were around 5,800 refugees in the camp. We were afraid, especially because it was rumoured that we were going to be attacked. We received tracts which announced an attack on the camp. The soldiers didn't take them seriously. No-one felt safe in the camp anymore. The soldiers tried to reassure us that nothing bad would happen.

But the people did not feel reassured. Within a few days, it became apparent that their apprehensions were well-founded.

We were always waiting for what was to happen. We didn't have to wait long. The infiltrators attacked us at 1:00 a.m. on 17 June. The eight soldiers and the local defence group repelled them. We all came out because we had heard the shooting. They left; when they had not returned a short while later, we all went back to bed.

The residents had barely gone back to sleep when they sensed danger.

Half an hour later, a large number of infiltrators came. They surrounded the camp. There was a group of them near Habimana's surgery. They looted the medicines and killed the sick people who were there. They attacked the local defence. All those who were protecting us ran away. The eight soldiers tried to resist but they were outnumbered. They killed one of the soldiers and the others fled. Once they had chased the soldiers and the local defence away, the infiltrators came into the camp. They positioned a machine gun at the exit, another at the back of the camp and a third one below. They fired all of them at the same time, without a break.

The massacre was carried out with ease and efficiency; this was due, in part, to insider information.

When the infiltrators came into the camp, they were led by Shyaka who knew the layout. They killed several people with a machete. They threw a grenade into a house and killed eighteen people. Seven children survived but were killed with machetes afterwards. They burned down the tents and killed the people who tried to escape the fire. There was shouting and blood everywhere. Whilst some of them killed, the others looted. Amongst the killers, we only recognised Shyaka. It was dark and difficult to get a good look at their faces.

Colin and other refugees who were in an upstairs building were saved by sheer chance; an RPA soldier on leave with his wife was staying there and used grenades to keep the killers at bay.

I was upstairs. At the front of the camp they cut up a man called Sedede Niyonzima into pieces. It was Shyaka who cut him up. I saw him. While I was watching what they were doing to Sedede, they fired at me, but luckily I wasn't hit. The killers wanted to come upstairs. A young RPA soldier was with me. He threw a grenade at the infiltrators; some were killed and the others left. Some time later, they tried to come upstairs again. He threw another grenade. He had also managed to get a gun from the infiltrators. He started to shoot and he saved us. None of the infiltrators came upstairs. They continued to kill the people in the toilets until morning when they left. They were pleased with their work.

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**“They asked where the Tutsis' God had gone. They meant the armoured personnel carrier”.**

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They killed until the morning without any hindrance. No soldiers came to save us.

When they had not heard the insurgents' voices for an hour, the refugees came out of their hideouts.

The survivors assembled outside; we were desperate. When it became light, we separated the dead from the injured. We took the wounded to the road in order to find a way of driving them to Gisenyi hospital. Around 58 people had died. Others are still in hospital at Gisenyi or Kigali.

The insurgents also left their victims destitute.

Our herds were looted by the infiltrators. We don't have anything left.

Soldiers arrived at about 8:30 a.m. They helped to bury the dead and drove the injured to hospital. But there was little they could do to console the refugees; it was, Colin said, "a day of extreme grief". But the insurgents had not finished with them.

The infiltrators wanted to attack us again, from Nyamirambo hill which was opposite. They came singing that they were going to wipe us out completely. This time the soldiers were with us. They waited on the road for them, and killed a large number of them.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister visited to reassure us. We told him what had happened. He asked us to be patient. He promised that we would have more protection and aid. So far, we have received the food but we are still waiting for the pans, the plates and the blankets. Before cooking we have to wait for a neighbour to finish so that we can use their pan. If we could find land we would grow food to sell and earn money to buy the things we need.

Since the Rwandese government have taken responsibility for our protection, we would ask them to train us in self-defence, even the older ones amongst us. Then we could return to our homes in the villages and be sure of enough to eat. Even now, we are afraid of the infiltrators attacking and killing us.<sup>124</sup>

When Sebiraza Senyabahungu, sixty, and his family returned to Rwanda, they were first resettled in Nasho in Kibungo. But used to a much cooler climate, they found the heat and the malaria unbearable. In addition, their cattle began to die. Eventually, the family relocated to Mutura where Sebiraza's family originated. They lived in cellule Gasizi in sector Nyamirambo. Their health recovered, they found land for farming and grazing and their livestock prospered. But their fortune did not last; they were attacked by insurgents at the beginning of the year. Seven people were killed and Sebiraza's cows and possessions were stolen. As a safety measure, Sebiraza sent his children to Kigali. He and his wife were transferred to Nkamira because "we were being wiped out".

There were a lot of people in Nkamira camp from all parts of Gisenyi who were fleeing from the infiltrators.

The initial feeling of safety soon gave way to anxiety.

There was fighting between the RPA and the infiltrators not far from where we were. We were at risk of being attacked by the infiltrators. Kayove was attacked in June. The survivors joined us at Nkamira. In June, the number of soldiers protecting us was reduced. Only eight soldiers remained with us. There were more than 5,000 refugees. We thought that we could be attacked at any time. Prior to 15 June, we heard talk that our camp would be burnt down at all costs. These rumours came from the surrounding population. Sometimes, they sent us tracts announcing the dates of the attack. We showed these papers to the soldiers.

In the meantime, Sebiraza's son, Nitimana, had come from Kigali to visit his parents. On 17 June, the family was in bed when they became aware of a commotion.

At around 1:00 a.m. we heard shots. It was the infiltrators and the soldiers were trying to force them back. But the soldiers, now reduced in number, were not as strong as the infiltrators. The infiltrators came into the camp where we were. They positioned three guns, one in front of the camp, one below and one behind. They fired at us. Meanwhile, the population, who didn't have guns, had entered the camp and were killing with machetes and grenades.

I decided to leave the camp. Nitimana had a bad attack of malaria and couldn't stand up. He stayed inside. I saw the infiltrators coming. I told my son to try and run away, but he was unable to. The infiltrators came in and they put him on a bench to make their job easier. They hit him on the neck with a machete and he fell to the ground. Then they hit him on the head with a *massue*. They left thinking that he was dead. They took everything they could find from the house. They left without finding me. But when they were killing my son, I saw it all with my own eyes. I didn't recognise any of the killers. They were all in military uniform.

Next, they attacked Albert's home. They hit him with a machete and said that he was an *Inyenzi*. He died on the spot. The killers went into another house where there was a woman called Mukobwajana. They hit her on the head with small hoes. She died. Her child cried and an infiltrator said to the child: 'Be quiet, your *kagome* will comfort you'. I remained hidden. The killers were asking each other: "Where has the Tutsis' God gone?" They called the armoured car the Tutsis' God. They were asking why the soldiers hadn't come to help us. They continued killing and looting. The infiltrators looted all the medicines from the house of a man called Habimana. They killed his brother and set fire to a car which was there. They also killed sick people who were in the hospital. When daylight came, they left, congratulating themselves.

<sup>124</sup> interviewed in Mutura, Gisenyi, 17 July 1998.



Sebiraza joined the other survivors searching for the dead and the wounded,

The camp was full of dead and injured. I hurried to see if my son was dead. My son was still alive, but he had lost a lot of blood. My wife had also survived. We carried our son to the side of the road. When the vehicle came, my wife went with my son in order to look after him.

The infiltrators killed us without hindrance. No-one came to help us. We saw the soldiers at 8:00 a.m. when they came to see what had happened and to help us bury the dead. My son's wounds have healed, but he has become mentally handicapped. Part of his body is paralysed. For the time being, he had been transferred to Kigali hospital.

Now, when you are sick, there is nowhere to go to get treatment. You have to go to Gisenyi, but we don't have any money. I used to sell cows or milk to get money, but now I don't have any cows, they were all stolen. We had food growing in fields in Gishwati. But the killers and those supporting them have harvested our food. We have not only lost our loved ones; we also have nothing left.

We often hear radio messages saying that people should live in villages to ensure their safety. But there are 5,768 people here and we do not have enough protection. As far as it is possible, we need to be given greater protection so that the infiltrators cannot continue killing us. It would be good to train us to defend ourselves, instead of being killed like lambs to the slaughter. We don't want that to start again.

Emphasising the link between peace and economic independence, Sebiraza held out little hope for the near future. He explained why.

Our greatest wish is to see peace established so that we can return home to cultivate the fields, and so that those who still have some cows can take care of them, instead of begging in vain. Personally, I can see that this isn't going to happen soon.

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**"The infiltrators say that they can't live with the Tutsis. When they attacked us, they said repeatedly that all Tutsis were their enemies".**

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I don't know when they will stop thinking like this.<sup>125</sup>

Inmaculée Ingabire is a twenty-year-old farmer born and brought up in DRC. She arrived in Rwanda in 1994, along with her parents, and was settled in Mudende. She made ends meet by selling beer. She was in Mudende when hundreds lost their lives there on 10 December 1997. Like the other residents, she was taken first to Nkamira, as a prelude to resettlement in Byumba. She initially remained behind in Nkamira to collect debts, and then decided to stay on there, together with her child.

We were totally safe at Nkamira to begin with. The government had sent soldiers to protect us. There were even people from other parts of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri who had been attacked by infiltrators and who sought shelter at Nkamira. There were over 5,000 people. When the interahamwe tried to attack us, the men and the soldiers joined forces to repel them. We thought that they wouldn't be able to beat us. The soldiers protecting us were later switched with some from the 101st battalion. A man called Shyaka was amongst them. He was an ex-FAR who had been integrated into the RPA.

Inmaculée also recalled the threats and insults from Shyaka.

At first he told us that he had been born in Uganda, but we found out later that he was from Kibuye. He gradually showed himself for what he really was. In particular, he tried to take women by force and he hit people unjustly. We told his superiors and they promised that they would look into it. Shyaka often used to come to my place because I sold beer. He came one day, had a drink and then went to leave without paying. I got up and firmly insisted that he pay. He immediately paid because he realised that I could make trouble for him. After he paid me, he said: 'I am going to tell you a secret. Whatever happens, we are living together in this country called Rwanda. Your type of face comes from Burundi. Beware. For you, we will increase what we did at Mudende threefold.' He meant that he would come back and kill us all. He picked up his gun and threatened to shoot us with it. He didn't shoot and he quickly left. I went to tell his commander what had just happened. He told me that they were going to follow Shyaka's behaviour very closely. His superiors didn't take any action because that same evening Shyaka came back to carry out the patrol. During his patrol he hit people on the pretext that they sleeping when it was only 8:00 p.m. No-one was supposed to be asleep at that time. This had been going on for several days. This group of soldiers were then replaced by others.

<sup>125</sup> Interviewed Mutura, Gisenyi, 17 July 1998.

Shyaka's surprise visit to the camp after his transfer, on what appeared to be a reconnaissance mission, alarmed the residents.

A week after he left, Shyaka came to our camp. We were surprised to see him because he didn't have any friends here. Inside the camp, he began to count up the number of tents which we were living in. He then toured the camp and went to the part where the Hutus from Rwerere were. He walked around the people from Rwerere and then left in a temper. Again, we told the soldiers who had replaced him so that they could keep a close watch on him. They also promised us that they would watch him.

The visit from Shyaka coincided with the dissemination of menacing tracts and a reduction in the number of soldiers.

The next day we found tracts which said that we would be attacked and that not one of us would be spared. This reinforced the rumours which were spreading here and there. We weren't frightened by all of this because we had the soldiers to protect us. Not much later, these soldiers left. We were left with just eight. We were desperate when they left as we had received these tracts. The infiltrators wrote to us saying they would attack on 15 June 1998. This tract was shown to the soldiers in the hope that it would bring reinforcements. When they saw it, the soldiers said that it was nothing. They said that the infiltrators were only trying to frighten us. The patrols had intensified during this period. They didn't attack on 15 June. They attacked on 17 June at 1:00 a.m.

Immaculée gave a detailed account of the massacre.

The infiltrators began by sending over a small number of people to assess the situation, for example where we were located. Those who were on patrol saw these people before they could reach us and they fired at them. No-one was hit but the infiltrators ran off. The men carrying out the patrol went to tell the military commanders what had just happened. Meanwhile, we all thought that we were being attacked and we left our tents to escape. The soldiers complained that the patrol had upset the camp security. They said that they would be punished the next day for having wasted ammunition. Half an hour later, the camp was calm again and we were all back in our tents. Another half hour later, between 1:30 and 2:00 a.m., as people were falling asleep, the infiltrators flooded back *en masse*. They fired everywhere and killed a lot of people. When I heard the shooting I thought that the camp was surrounded. Shouts were mixed with the sound of gunfire. It was horrible. We didn't hear the soldiers who were

protecting us. It is possible that they were frightened and ran away. We all tried to escape but it wasn't easy because the attackers were everywhere.

Near her tent, Immaculée heard a voice which sounded familiar.

I heard one of the infiltrators say: 'Kill them all and don't spare anyone. This is an *Inyenzi* home. I know this house well because I often bought beer here'. I had already recognised this infiltrator's voice. It was Shyaka. I was overcome with panic when I heard his words. I tore our tent, I took my child and left to hide behind the tent. I saw Shyaka outside. He had covered his head with a cloth to hide his identity. He had another piece of cloth on his arm. He walked ahead of the infiltrators and showed them where they should start. Luckily there was a hole near me which had been dug by the soldiers during the war. I got into the hole without delay.

But some other relatives were not so fortunate.

All of a sudden I heard my father cry out. He had been shot twice in the thigh. The others were killed with machetes. I thought that everyone in my home had been killed. My mother had also hidden. I stayed in the hole. The infiltrators wanted to attack the part of the camp next to us. Shyaka wouldn't allow it because he knew there were Hutus from Rwerere commune who had also fled from the infiltrators living there. If Shyaka hadn't been with them, these Hutus would have been killed along with the Tutsis.

A little while later, the killing diminished and the infiltrators began looting. They took everything from our tents. Once again, they took my cases of drink and all my money. Shyaka did not take part in the looting because he had to rejoin the RPA soldiers. Before he left, Shyaka said: 'But there is someone that I haven't seen'. He was probably referring to me. He then retraced his route with the infiltrators in order to find me. Near our tent, he started looking through the dead bodies but he couldn't find me. It was nearly dawn and so they stopped searching for me and ran off. The infiltrators started dancing when they got to the road. They sang about how brave they were because they had been successful. I heard them say: 'Where has the Tutsis' God gone?' They were referring to the RPA soldiers' armoured cars. The killing lasted for about two hours and no-one came to our rescue. The infiltrators did what they liked and then left. I came out of the hole when they had gone. I went to see if anyone was still alive and discovered that my father was dead. My mother had been hiding under the bed. She was lucky enough not to be found. By first light, we had already counted over forty corpses. During the morning we found many more as well as those who had been injured. The latter were taken

straight to Gisenyi hospital. Meanwhile we began to bury the dead. If I am correct, the total number who died comes to around sixty because there were some who died later in hospital. The RPA soldiers arrived later and found us burying our dead.

The killers, Immaculée said, left them bereaved as well as impoverished.

They left us with nothing. After killing our relatives, the infiltrators looted all our belongings. The food supplies were the first to be stolen. Those who don't die from bullet wounds will die from hunger. None of us are growing food and the aid which we have been told about doesn't get here anymore. How are we going to live? We need all the help we can get.

She has no doubts about the central role played by Shyaka in the massacre.

It was Shyaka the soldier who betrayed us. He is the cause of all this harm.

Immaculée put forward some solutions for the future.

We hope that a large number of soldiers will be brought here to protect us like before. Even if some of us have been killed, there are still over 5,000 of us in the camp. A limited number of soldiers won't do because the infiltrators attack in large numbers. Another suggestion I would make would be to give military training to the young people and all of those who are capable of doing it. Then, when attacked by the infiltrators, we would try to defend ourselves whilst waiting for our soldiers or their reinforcements.<sup>126</sup>

This chapter has dealt with some of the cases where the Tutsi community has been specifically targeted. But others have also been killed in indiscriminate attacks, some of which are detailed below. The death of numerous soldiers during clashes with insurgents is in particular a major blow to survivors. Soldiers are often the only males left in families of survivors; many young men left Rwanda to join the RPF in the early 1990s, to avoid reprisals from the Habyarimana regime which regarded all Tutsis, especially males, as a fifth column for the RPF.

<sup>126</sup> Interviewed in Mutura, Gisenyi, 17 July 1998.

## INDISCRIMINATE KILLINGS

### FORCING HUTUS TO "MAKE A CHOICE"

Since the beginning of 1998, indiscriminate killings have become a prominent feature of the insurgents' campaign. On several occasions, they have crept up on villages and murdered dozens of people, as well as inflicting serious injuries on dozens more. This usually happens late at night, making it difficult for neighbours to intervene, with the result that the wounded sometimes die for lack of timely medical assistance. In addition, vehicles have been set on fire, and the passengers burned to death. There was no effort, as in early 1997, to separate Hutus and Tutsis. In early January, nine vehicles were set ablaze in Rugerero, commune Rubavu in Gisenyi. Seventy people died.

#### *Nkuli, Ruhengeri, 4 February 1998*

34 people were killed in Jenda, commune Nkuli in Ruhengeri on the night of 4 February 1998. The death toll rose to 43 when nine others died of their wounds. One of the people who was meant to die was the councillor of Jenda, Silas Gashunguru, himself a Hutu.

On 4 February 1998, at 6:30 p.m., the people told me that a peasant had been kidnapped by the infiltrators. Accompanied by a few men, I was heading in the direction they had indicated, when we were suddenly fired upon. No-one died. We ran to speak to the military commander of the few soldiers who patrol the area. They promised to take care of it. I hurried home, but I couldn't sleep.

At 10:00 p.m. the infiltrators began shooting and killing people in the houses they had targeted. They finished after thirty minutes and left, after they had attacked my house which they found empty, as I had evacuated my family. The soldiers there seemed to have done nothing, and the military reinforcements arrived at 12:40 a.m. They arrested the local military commander, who did nothing to help those in danger.

The death toll was 34; 27 were wounded, of whom nine died later. Nine of the victims were Hutu; the others were Tutsis. But they had apparently made a mistake with a Hutu family, because a peasant told me that he heard them lamenting themselves: 'The guide misled us, and now we have also killed our own'. Among the Hutus who died, there were Mashukane and his four children and Semajeri and his two children, all

from cellule Kabatezi. The Tutsis who died included Rucamakamba; Munyanshongore, his wife and four children, from cellule Nyamutukura; Rwema and his three children from cellule Nyamutukura and Rwagasore and his grandson, also from the same cellule.

Silas commented on why he thought the infiltrators believed his sector must suffer.

My sector is now targeted by the infiltrators, for two reasons: the solidarity between Tutsi and Hutu, and the general hostility towards the infiltrators. The night patrols carried out by the population, including both ethnic groups, allowed us to capture eight infiltrators; their two guns were also seized. This hostility angered the infiltrators, who soon began killing some of the Hutu amongst us, to force the Hutu to collaborate with them. Tracts were left near the bodies, announcing that the collaborators of the *Iyenzi* regime would be treated this way.

It has been difficult, but I have managed to maintain the solidarity between ethnic groups, and encouraged them in their refusal to collaborate with the infiltrators. That is why our sector came first in a ranking of security in Nkuli during a meeting held by préfet Rucagu on 17 January 1998. He promised me a bicycle as a reward. The news went out on the radio, and I don't think the infiltrators appreciated it.<sup>127</sup>

The military commander was arrested for failing to assist people in danger.

#### *Rubavu, Gisenyi, 6 February 1998*

Shortly afterwards, a similar drama unfolded in sector Byahi, commune Rubavu in Gisenyi. On the night of 6-7 February, insurgents killed 58 people, and wounded 63, in the cellule of Ngugo, near the border with the DRC. The victims included both Hutus and Tutsis.

Two days later, an African Rights researcher visited Gisenyi hospital where the wounded were being treated. The medical staff, overwhelmed and sickened by the constant flow of people suffering hideous wounds, refused to be interviewed or to provide any details about the attack. However, Agnès Karaboneye, who lost her husband and daughter, and was herself wounded, along with her other children, provided the following account.

The infiltrators arrived at 10:00 p.m., as the rain began to fall. They broke down the doors to get to those they wanted to kill. They managed to get into our house, and killed my husband, Baragizi, and Mukandayisenga, my twelve-year-old daughter. I was badly wounded by a machete which cut off my index finger and damaged the other fingers of my right hand. I was also hit three times in the head with a machete; they left me for dead. They also wounded Ndimubanzi, my fifteen-year-old son, and Ishimwe, my 6 month-old baby.

Agnès recalled her husband's efforts to defend himself.

Before he died, my husband resisted; he managed to injure some attackers with his spear. I heard the killers shouting to their colleagues for help when they were fighting my husband. His spear was next to his body when it was all over.

Help was slow to arrive.

A heavy rain was falling, and we shouted for help in vain. It must have taken a whole hour for an armoured car to arrive and force the assailants to flee.

The assailants were also determined to cripple the economic lifeline of their victims.

Before leaving they hurt our fifteen cows with machete blows to their backs, legs etc... They didn't steal any of our cattle, but preferred to injure them.<sup>128</sup>

#### *Nyakabanda, Gitarama, 9 April 1998*

Seven young men living together in Gitata were attacked on 9 April. The nearest soldiers are based at the commune office, a fair distance away. One of those wounded is Patrice Muzindutsi, 18, a peasant who, at the time of the interview, was recovering at Kabgayi hospital.

I was woken up at about 10:00 p.m. by the sound of people demanding that we open the door for them. 'You will not have to worry if you open

<sup>127</sup> Interviewed in Nkuli, Ruhengeri, 13 February 1998.

<sup>128</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 9 February 1998.

up, but we will force the door down and kill you if you do not'. We opened the door and four people came inside, leaving others outside. Some wore long black coats and others wore ordinary clothes of different colours. Two had guns and two had *massues*. They tied our hands behind our backs, except for the two small children. They beat us, demanding money, 'a contribution for the purchase of arms'. They looked for this money themselves, taking 400 francs from me, and money from my companions. Then they took all our clothes.

Before they left, they used their machetes to kill three of the young men in the room, namely Fabien Twagirayezu, a 20-year-old farmer; Théogène Karemera, Patrice's older brother, twenty, and his cousin, Epimaque Munyankumburwa. Patrice and another boy, Esdras Ndayishimiye, were wounded but saved when neighbours, alerted by their pleas for help, called for assistance.

They left, shooting a lot of bullets into the air in order to terrorise the population yelling for help. They thought we were dead. We lay stretched out on the ground until 6:00 a.m. when the neighbours had the courage to approach our house. The soldiers did not hear the shots because they are based at the commune office which is very far from us.

There were other victims that night.

Other houses were targeted by the infiltrators, such as the *nyumbakumi* Cyprien Habimana who died on the spot.

Like so many Rwandese, Patrice has come to a radical solution.

The only possible solution is to kill these troublemakers who are well and truly infiltrators.<sup>129</sup>

### *A Deadly Ambush in Kibuye, 22 June 1998*

On 22 June 1998, a bus travelling from Kigali to Kibuye was ambushed at the border between the communes of Kivumu and Mabanza. About forty passengers were killed and many others were badly wounded with gunshot and grenades. A number of the victims were students who were returning to Kibuye as their half-term break, from 18-22 June, had come to an end. One

of them was Edmond Ngaboyisonga, nineteen, in his fourth year at the *Ecole Technique Officiel* (ETO) in Gitesi, Kibuye. He had just spent a week in Kigali; he comes from commune Kicukiro in Kigali.

The bus left Kigali at 10:00 a.m., stopping en route to pick up passengers and to let others off, and slowed down by the numerous roadblocks along the way. By 1:30 p.m., the bus was packed, "so full that we could hardly breathe", in the words of Edmond.

We weren't worried about anything happening because we were used to travelling along this road. At a place called Ku Irambura, on the border between the commune of Mabanza and Kivumu, both in Kibuye, we saw around twenty soldiers—all armed with guns and grenades. They were all in RPA uniform. These uniforms were brand new. We thought that they were RPA soldiers who had come to tell us that it wasn't safe further on where we were going. When they saw our bus, 'the soldiers'—or rather the infiltrators—ran towards us. The driver started to slow down to find out what was going on. We, the passengers, had already begun to feel afraid as we thought that it might be infiltrators. Some passengers told the driver to stop immediately so that they could run off. In the meantime, we saw the corpse of a soldier lying beside the road, just ten metres ahead. He had been killed by these infiltrators.

Edmond later found out the trap this soldier had fallen into.

This soldier had asked Arcène, the sous-préfet for Kibuye, and the bourgmestre of commune Mabanza for a lift. When they reached this spot, they met the infiltrators and talked with them briefly. The infiltrators pretended to be RPA soldiers and they told these people that they were taking care of security. The soldier who had asked for the lift then said: 'I'll stay here with my colleagues'. He got out and the others continued on their way. The soldier was executed as soon as the sous-préfet and the bourgmestre were out of sight. The préfet and the bourgmestre left Kibuye and set off in the direction of Kigali.

This corpse frightened us although we still didn't know what was happening. Suddenly, the infiltrators began to fire numerous bullets through the windscreen and into the bus. Some of them surrounded the bus whilst others stood at the door to stop the passengers from getting out. The bus conductor quickly opened the door and ran off, after throwing a bag of money to the infiltrators. The infiltrators collected this money up. No-one else was able to get out of the bus.

The infiltrators then entered the bus.

<sup>129</sup> Interviewed in Kabgayi, Gitarama, 14 April 1998.

They fired their guns and threw grenades. The ones who were behind the bus were waiting for anyone who managed to escape. Many people were killed and many others were injured by shrapnel from the grenades. Even those who had taken cover under their seats were hit. I didn't have a seat and I was sitting on the metal bar of a seat. I fell down from there when I was hit by three bullets in my legs. There were a lot of dead and injured people underneath me. I mixed in with them and pretended to be dead. They continued to shoot a large number of bullets until they saw that there was no-one left standing. They then threw several grenades into the bus in order to kill anyone who was not already dead. The infiltrators searched through the pockets of the dead people to find money. Finally, they took our luggage and left. They took the road leading to Nyange, in the direction of Kigali. But they didn't continue along the road. They went into the bush. Their operation lasted for around twenty minutes. It was only when we could no longer hear the voices of the infiltrators or the sound of their guns, that those of us who were not dead or seriously injured got up and helped those who were still breathing. We were still frightened because we thought that these infiltrators might come back.

RPA soldiers and civilians arrived half an hour later.

They began to take the people who had been seriously wounded off the bus. This included me because I couldn't walk. The bullets which hit me had broken the bones in my legs and I was bleeding profusely. Some of them got the wounded out whilst others took out the corpses. Outside, I realised that colleagues from the same school as me had been killed. There was also Delphin, the judicial police inspector from Gishyita commune. Around forty people were killed. We weren't able to identify the infiltrators who attacked us. We were so frightened that we couldn't look at them properly.

The remote location made it difficult to get the injured to hospital quickly. After an hour, a private vehicle was stopped and unloaded to take the most serious cases, including Edmond, to Kibuye hospital. Some of the wounded died after they reached the hospital. After a month, Edmond was transferred to Kigali's main public hospital, CHK, where doctors removed bullets from his legs. He was still in hospital at the time of the interview, in mid-August.

I am still unable to stand up because my legs have been totally shot up. I am starting to hope that I will get well. Even if I do recover, it will take a

long time before I can walk because my bones are broken. I am very worried about it because I don't know when I will go back to school.

But he does not wish to continue his studies in Kibuye.

Even if I get better, I won't go back to Kibuye. I feel awful about it. I would look elsewhere, and if there was nothing, then I would stay at home. The Kibuye region is very dangerous because there are a lot of infiltrators there and they don't want to fight the RPA soldiers. Instead they attack the innocent civilian population who are not able to defend themselves. They attack passengers in vehicles and the secondary school students, then they disappear into the forests. I will go back to this zone when there are no more infiltrators anywhere in this country.<sup>130</sup>

Emmanuel Dushimimana, eighteen, is also a fourth-year-student at ETO; he is a native of Musange in Gikongoro. He had come to visit his father in Kigali during his break.

The bus was full of students and other people, including a nun who was going to Kibuye. When we reached the border between Kivumu and Mabanza, near a place called Ku Irambura in Kivumu, I saw people running. They were civilians. The driver continued slowly. I then saw about fifteen people in military uniform. They had guns and radios. These soldiers stopped the bus. The driver wanted to accelerate because he saw that something strange was taking place. They fired straight at the driver. We were frightened because we could see that they were infiltrators.

I quickly tried to get out, but the infiltrators had already surrounded the bus. The conductor gave them all the money that he had taken and the infiltrators started to shoot at the people in the bus. The passengers cried for forgiveness and begged God for help, but not one of the infiltrators took pity on us. Some people died there and then, others were seriously injured. I wasn't hit by a bullet because I was covered by dead bodies. The operation didn't take long—about fifteen minutes in all. Before leaving they threw a grenade into the bus.

When the infiltrators had left, me and some others who had survived got out of the bus. Although we felt weak and were shaking with fear, we tried to run and hide on other hills. Some, who had been wounded fell and died, because they had lost too much blood. I ran to a place called Rugabano and found a car which took me to Kibuye. When I went to visit the injured at Kibuye hospital, I saw the nun. She was in a lot of pain and had a bullet lodged near her heart.

<sup>130</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 13 August 1998.

Three students from ETO, all in the third year, were killed. They are Alain Kubwimana from Greater Kigali, Emmanuel Bahizi from Cyangugu and Gérard Karangwa from Rutsiro in Kibuye.

There were also old people and young boys and girls who died in the bus.<sup>131</sup>

The nun mentioned by Emmanuel is Sr. Agnès, normally resident in Kamembe, Cyangugu, where she looks after orphans of the genocide. She was travelling to Kibuye to visit relatives. Sr. Agnès is someone we have come to know well over the years. We visited her at CHK in July on several occasions, but the state of her health made an interview impossible. In mid-July she was evacuated to Belgium for medical treatment.

These few examples do not do justice to the frequency of these types of attacks. One of the most horrific massacres took place in Rubavu, Gisenyi on 19 January 1998. A bus taking employees of the brewery company, BRALIRWA, to work was set on fire and the bodies burnt beyond recognition. Altogether 39 people died, 34 of whom were employees of BRALIRWA.<sup>132</sup>

Killing Hutus in an indiscriminate fashion, so as to heighten the sense of insecurity and encourage them to throw their weight behind the insurgency, became noticeable in 1998. But Hutus who manifested their hostility, were the first people to be condemned to death, from the outset. Regarded as an obstacle to the insurgents' control of the northwest, these officials—and their families—live in the shadow of fear.

## ELIMINATING THE PEACEMAKERS

### THE WAR AGAINST HUTU "TRAITORS"

The Hutus who saved the lives of their Tutsi relatives, friends and neighbours in defiance of propaganda and threats in 1994 live in the shadow of fear. Some have denounced the perpetrators of genocide, giving witness even against their own relatives or former friends and placing themselves at great risk. Now the risk has increased. The re-introduction into the equation of large numbers of former militiamen and soldiers has tipped the balance against the voices of reason. In certain regions whole communities are being intimidated into silence, or forced into co-operating with the infiltrators. In particular, punishments are being meted out to Hutus appointed as local government officials who arrest insurgents and discourage the population from supporting them, or who imprison genocide suspects and insist upon the right of survivors to claim property and belongings stolen during the genocide. Others who have refused to accept the renewed doctrine of ethnic hatred, and who have been involved in trying to reconstruct the country in a spirit of peace and reconciliation, have also been singled out. Hutus who appear to have good relations with RPA soldiers are likely to be a special target.

A hand-written tract distributed in December in Nkuli, Ruhengeri, and entitled *No Rwandese is More Rwandese Than Others*, spelt out the fate of Hutus who "betray the Hutu cause."

Normally we had only one enemy. It was the Mututsi. But it is clear that the number of greedy Hutus, who collaborate with the enemy in assassinating, or who are accomplices in the assassination, of our brothers, is increasing progressively. This is the reason that we consider it necessary to inform you of the following resolutions that we are determined to put into practice as quickly as possible:

1. To decapitate every Hutu who is an accomplice or collaborator of the enemy;
2. To burn the house of every Hutu who refuses to shelter or to feed his counterpart who comes to his house;
3. To beat with 200 sticks, on average, every Hutu who shows fear or lack of will in participating in the military activities intended to liberate our country.

<sup>131</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 19 July 1998

<sup>132</sup> One of the most shocking recent massacres took place in Tare, Greater Kigali, on 12 July when people watching the final of the World Cup at a motel were burnt alive. African Rights has visited Tare, but the lack of direct witnesses has made it difficult to build up a picture. We intend to continue our inquiry.

To instil fear in the reader, the tract went further:

One of these punishments will be meted out to anyone who tears up this communiqué before others have read it. It's not a question of hating the Hutu. Rather, it is a matter of eliminating a rotten potato so that it does not contaminate the good ones.

Disparaging Hutu members of the government has been a key feature of many tracts; they are referred to as powerless "traitors" motivated by self-interest and personal ambition. These tracts argue that the inclusion of Hutus in the government is a Tutsi strategy to divide the Hutu population.

### The Price of Dissent by Local Government Officials: A Policy of Murder

There is intense pressure upon people in positions of authority to assist the infiltrators. During the infiltration raids which began in the camps in Zaire in 1995, there was a clear policy to inflict suffering upon Hutu officials who had refused to sign up to their agenda.<sup>133</sup> Many bourgmestres, councillors, *responsables*, *nyumbakumis* and other officials were murdered, often along with their families. This campaign was intensified after the return of the refugees in November 1996, and has been pursued with a single-minded determination ever since the organised insurgency began. When a significant number of infiltrators arrive in a commune, they always make their presence known by immediately assassinating councillors, *responsables*, communal policemen, tax collectors and *nyumbakumis* who refuse to lend them a hand. Some of them have also been kidnapped. Often families are attacked several times over a period of months. Physical violence is accompanied by a relentless war of nerves. Leaflets threatening the life of anyone who works with the government, including participants in the local security patrols, are commonly found in the northwest.

Since May 1997, a large number of civilian administrators in the northwest have been murdered for turning their backs on the insurgents, for giving information that led to their arrest or because their sons have joined

the army.<sup>134</sup> Civilians interviewed for this book repeatedly mentioned the names of officials who had been killed in their areas. Clarisse Mukamugema had been living in Kibilira before she was forced to move to Kigali.

In December, the infiltrators moved freely between the communes of Ramba and Kibilira [in Gisenyi] and Bulinga in Gitarama. They moved around during the day, wearing military uniforms, and killed all Hutu who collaborated with the Tutsi. They killed the *responsable* of cellule Nyabikenke, sector Ngurungunzu, called Célestin Munyentwali, accusing him of collaborating with the Tutsi.

These Hutu officials had been condemned to death because, said Clarisse, they stood in the way of the insurgents' principal objective.

The infiltrators are determined to win at any cost, and to exterminate the Tutsis.

Jean Bihincyuro, whose own son, Mathieu Hakizimana, became an infiltrator in mid-May, described the fate of their *responsable* in cellule Gatare, sector Kajwi in Nyarutovu, Ruhengeri.

On 23 May 1998, the *responsable* of our cellule, Elias Ntahontuye, was kidnapped by the infiltrators after he refused to work with them.<sup>135</sup>

Throughout the northwest, officials who fight against the insurgents' ideology fear that their days are numbered. Infiltrators arrived in sector Musanzu, Nkumba commune in Ruhengeri at the end of May 1997. On 16 June, Adrien Nzamuye, the councillor, escaped an assassination attempt.

<sup>134</sup> The local officials murdered in the commune of Rubavu, Gisenyi, include the councillor of sector Burinda; the councillor of sector Basa; seven *responsables* of different cellules in these two sectors; the councillor of Murara and the *responsable* of Gisa in sector Gisa. In commune Rwerere, the councillors of Busumba; a *responsable* in sector Ryabizige and a *responsable* in sector Rushura, as well as a *nyumbakumi* in sector Mukingo have died. Many of them were killed along with their families.

<sup>135</sup> Interviewed in Nyarutovu, Ruhengeri, 4 June 1998.

<sup>133</sup> For details see African Rights, *Killing the Evidence*, pp.81-96.



I was just leaving to go on patrol when someone hiding next to the fence shot at me with a gun. The bullet missed me and I fell to the ground. People started shouting, thinking that the assailants had come to kill me.

The murder of their colleagues and the threats to their own lives and their families has forced many officials to abandon their homes and to incur additional expenses by renting houses in the main towns of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, a necessity they can ill-afford. Others have sent their families to stay with relatives or have sought accommodation in buildings that belong to the commune office. They work in their offices during the day but spend the night in their new temporary homes. But this choice is open, for the most part, only to bourgeois. Low-ranking officials, such as councillors, *responsables* and *nyumbakumis*, are themselves peasant farmers and cannot afford to move away; their land is their source of livelihood. They do not have transport and cannot afford alternative accommodation for their families. In addition, they live mostly in the remote rural areas where the insurgents' grip on the local population is strong and where they face pressure from relatives and friends, who have sons, husbands and fathers among the insurgents.

In the words of Daniel Twagirimana, an ex-FAR in Rushashi where countless officials and their families have been shot and macheted to death: "When the infiltrators have the support of the local *responsables*, the whole population accepts their ideas. Those who refuse to comply with their ideology are eliminated if they can't escape". The insurgents are aware of their predicament and have exploited their proximity to the population to exact a terrible price: collaborate or bear the consequences. Insurgents are quite open about their aim to make it impossible for Hutus to work in government service, as expressed by Diogène Niyonsenga:

We qualify the regime as monoethnic. The Hutus who have responsibilities in the current regime are at the service of the Tutsi who control them.

The insurgents recognise the critical value of winning over local officials to their cause. Because of their key role in rallying the people behind the insurgents, as described above, dissent on their part is discouraged through a policy of murder. Jean Marie-Vianney Cyizere said the presence of infiltrators, whose ranks he was to join in September, became pronounced in Ruhengeri in April/May 1997, particularly in the

communes of Nyamutera and Nkuli. They immediately set out to eradicate all opposition, starting with civilian administrators.

Infiltrators have been in Kinigi since July 1997. Their first action was to assassinate local officials and anyone else supporting the present regime. The councillor of sector Tero and the *responsable* of cellule Rushubi in sector Kanyamiheto were killed. Similar acts were perpetrated in the neighbouring commune Mukingo. The population became afraid to go to the commune offices or talk to any soldiers, for fear that the infiltrators would kill them.

Another insurgent who comes from Kinigi, Daniel Munyabikari, mentioned other officials who had been killed for opposing the insurgents' plans and demands.

Infiltrators arrived in our commune in July 1997. To ensure that the population would not betray them, they committed terrorist acts, killing local officials and all Hutus collaborating with the regime. That is how the councillors for sectors Rwankuba and Nyange died. The assassinations were accompanied by the dissemination of tracts attacking the 'Tutsi' regime and telling the population they had a duty to assist the infiltrators.

Emmanuel Nduwamunga, a young *résistant* from Kinigi, confirmed Daniel's account.

From September 1997 onwards, the infiltrators were clearly identifiable in our area. Their first acts were the murders of local sector and cellule officials, and of their opponents in general. It was during this period that Bigaruka, councillor for Nyange sector, was killed along with Sentabire, a primary school teacher.

Jonas Nshimiymana spent six months with the CRAP battalion as a *résistant* in Kagano, Kinigi.

The CRAP battalion is mainly made up of paracommandos whose mission it is to attack passengers in vehicles, kill opponents and stay at the front during the attacks. In the past year, the infiltrators have killed people accused of collaborating with the soldiers.

An "opponent" became anyone involved in implementing the government's policies, including those who took part in night patrols.

Rupara, in charge of patrols in our sector, was killed by the infiltrator known as 'Mugoyi' from Gisenyi. Gahinuza Kadula, the Tutsi councillor for Kagano, was also killed at the beginning of this year by infiltrators who belonged to CRAP, such as Sergeant Kagoma; Mortier and Corporal Mani. These were their code names.

Sub-Lt. Consolée Mukangwije returned to Rwanda from Zaire in April 1997. She said that infiltrators began to appear in their sector, Muko in commune Nyakinama, in September 1997.

Local officials were amongst the first people to be killed, including the councillor of our sector. The murders often took place at night.

A few months later, Consolée herself became an infiltrator.

Elisaphan Kwigira was one of those branded "a rotten potato." He refused to cooperate with the infiltrators for which he was labelled a "collaborator," attacked, and forced out of his home. Not long after, Elisaphan was appointed *responsable* for cellule Rwamikeri in sector Gitwa, and became increasingly vulnerable. Then, on 7 September 1997, he was killed.

In an interview in May 1997, Elisaphan spoke about the presence of infiltrators in Nkuli and about his fear that they would kill him. He said the first attack upon his family came on 3 August 1996, before he became a *responsable*. They had just finished eating when three men dressed in long coats and armed with guns came to the door. Elisaphan and his two wives were forced to lie down. He was punched and they were tortured.

~~They hit me badly with a club and said: 'Why are you collaborating with the Tutsis, you idiot? Who gave you permission to collaborate with them? You spend your time making accusations about us to them. You're going to die for this'. As they were hitting me on my left arm, one of the blows from the club knocked me unconscious. The blow was struck to the base of the fractured bones in my left arm. Another of the blows broke two of my ribs on the left side and a bone in my left thigh. When they felt satisfied they left; I don't know where they went. In the meantime, they had already freed my wives who were still alive.~~

Elisaphan spent four months in hospital—at a cost of 26,000 Rwandese francs—on account of his broken arm and ribs. At the time of the interview, he was still unable to help his wives to cultivate, his only source

of income. Out of fear, the family had abandoned their home. They were living in rented accommodation and were behind with the payments. One of Elisaphan's eight children had already been forced to leave school.

Although Elisaphan did not see the faces of his attackers because he was forced to lie face down on the ground, a neighbour informed him that infiltrators had been brought in by a soldier in the ex-FAR, named Mberabagabo. He suspected local residents of assisting infiltrators.

In my opinion, one which I share with my colleagues, the cause of our current problems comes from the parents of the infiltrators and other people who are intent on spreading an ethnic ideology which makes the dirty work of the militiamen and the ex-FAR infiltrators easier. We know a large number of the infiltrators from our sector well. We also know their neighbours. They are the people who are lodging and feeding these people.

He knew of several ex-FAR repatriated soldiers living within his local community.

They also play an important role with regards to the actions of the infiltrators. They don't do anything at home and spend their time going around the region looking here and there. They look like people on a reconnaissance mission of the area. I saw a group of them one day at about 10:00 a.m. They were very clean. They were coming and going from our sector. I therefore thought that they were carrying out a study of the area, the results of which they were going to communicate to the infiltrators living in the bushes and volcanic bamboo forests.

I also found out that the man called Emmanuel Ndikubwimana, Sebageni's son, brought some infiltrators from the volcanic bamboo forest and showed them the way, as a number of the infiltrators didn't know the region. In fact, some of the infiltrators are natives of Gisenyi and other préfectures.

He noted that the infiltrators were armed.

We noticed the arrival of a large number of firearms and infiltrators with the massive repatriation of refugees in November 1996, when they were welcomed [to enter the country] without being searched.

Elisaphan pointed out that many of the ex-FAR had registered themselves as civilians and had been allowed to go "freely" back to their native hills. He believed there would be no peace until this fact is addressed.

In order for us, the people who wish to collaborate with the regime in power, to establish peace, the large number of repatriated ex-FAR must be distanced from the civilian population.

Elisaphan knew that as a *responsable* the risk to his life was immediate.

Since last year, we have had problems caused by the infiltrators. The first person to be murdered was the councillor of Ryinyo sector, the sector which borders our own. This man was a Hutu called Straton Ntamuhezi. He was murdered by the infiltrators in July 1996. He had first of all been the communal policeman and had then been nominated to the position of sector councillor when his predecessor, Elisaphan, was arrested for collaborating with the infiltrators.<sup>136</sup>

Less than four months after this interview, Elisaphan was murdered. Eugénie Nyirasafari, his wife, said she and her husband had returned to the hill where they used to live on Sunday 7 September. Early that morning, they had attended the meeting of a local co-operative which Elisaphan had been involved in setting up. They then went to their former home to gather potatoes and medicinal herbs. She was in the field when she saw two people approaching.

One of them was carrying a gun and was dressed in military uniform, the other was in civilian clothing and didn't seem to have a weapon. I immediately ran off below the enclosure of our houses. When I got there, I heard gunfire which made me flee further. As I was doing this I heard gunfire again coming from our home. I went to an old woman's house, called Nyirabigori, to hide. Ten minutes later, her daughter-in-law, called Léonille, told me that: 'I think that the criminals will have gone. I will go and see if he's all right'. She went off and then ran back saying: 'He's still breathing! Come on, we'll get some people to take him to hospital'. We left together and I found him still breathing. He could not speak but he pointed to his mouth and when I looked I realised that his teeth had been knocked out. Then, with a motion of his hand we bid me farewell. I realised that he was about to die.

I began to hit the drum to alert the people around to intervene and help take him to hospital, but no-one came. A few minutes later, we saw some RPA soldiers coming up. They helped us look for people and a

stretcher for the sick but the locals fled instead of helping out. After a time, two people came up. They were Eliab Gatuku and Habumugisha. The stretcher arrived just as Kwigira gave his soul up. I put the body in one of our houses for it to be buried the next day.<sup>137</sup>

Although Eugénie saw the two assassins, she said she would not be able to recognise them and she has not been able to return to the hill because she is afraid for her own life. At the time, she had plans to move to another commune, to the home of relatives; her two older children had already been sent away to stay with relatives.

Elisaphan's nephew, Aimé Dieudonné Twambazimana, alias 'Uwimana', is originally from sector Cyintobo in Nkuli and was a soldier in the ex-FAR. On the Monday after his uncle's murder, in conversation with two teachers from the primary school in Nanga—Téléphore Kanyurabaryi and Théophile Niyonzima—he learned the identity of Elisaphan's killers.

We talked about various things that had happened and then started talking about Kwigira's death when we arrived at Hungiro. One of the teachers, Théophile, did not know that I was related to Kwigira, and proudly told us about his role in this unhappy event: 'When I learnt that Kwigira was taking part in their association's meeting, I sent someone urgently to keep an eye on his whereabouts. When Kwigira hurried home at the end of the meeting, the man watching him told me about it and I myself rushed to tell Corporal Kanyeshyamba about it. Kanyeshyamba was with the first sergeant of the commune, the son of Sebageni'.

Aimé Dieudonné explained that he had the confidence of Théophile because he himself worked closely with the infiltrators, as a member of their "military police," under the command of Lt. Baraka from Kinigi, Ruhengeri. Aimé Dieudonné was responsible for ensuring discipline among the infiltrators and reporting robbery, rape or other violations.

Even if Théophile had known that Kwigira and I were related, he did not consider it to be a problem, given that ex-FAR like us are liked by the infiltrators. Besides, Théophile, whom I had often met in the company of the infiltrators, knew full well that I was a member of the military police of the infiltrators in our region. Théophile has gone underground now, and has joined the ranks of the infiltrators. Before we said goodbye that day, he had asked me to buy him a drink. If I had had the money to buy him

<sup>136</sup> Interviewed in Nkuli, Ruhengeri, 26 May 1997.

<sup>137</sup> Interviewed in Nkuli, Ruhengeri, 25 September 1997.

something to drink, he would have given me details about certain things including the name of his accomplice in my uncle's murder.

Elisaphan's murder was one of several attacks which Aimé Dieudonné knew of in the area. In his role as a "military policeman" he is aware that not all of the infiltrators are acting under orders; he reported one of them to his commander in the knowledge that he would be killed.

I had recently planned the death of an infiltrator called Gahini after he had stolen some of Karimunda's (Kwigira's younger brother) belongings and raped a girl from the area. In addition, Gahini, along with Kanyeshyamba and Emmanuel, had killed two *nyumbakumi* recently, including a man called Mpozembizi, alias 'Mbizi' from Rwamikeli cellule. When Lieutenant Baraka had been told about this first charge, he had immediately ordered Gahini's death.

Wherever the insurgents have carried their message of hatred, local officials have been the first to suffer. The sector of Nyarutovu, commune Bulinga in Gitarama, is separated from Kibilira, Gisenyi, by the Nyabarongo river, making it vulnerable to the violence in that region. In July 1997, at about 10:00 p.m., the families of local government officials were attacked. The victims included Ferini Kayiranga, *responsable* of cellule Rugerero, killed together with his daughter, Vestine, his granddaughter, Ingabire, and a man who had come to their assistance, Siméon.

Mabanza in Kibuye, which shares a range of forests with Gisenyi, has also suffered at the hands of the insurgents. The bourgmestre, Mathias Habimana, recalled the murder, on 14 May 1997, of the councillor of sector Ngoma, Vénant Munyakazi:

This councillor had been very hostile towards the infiltrators.

He was killed with eleven other people who had assembled at his house to prepare for patrol duty. They were not the only ones to die in Mabanza.

On 21 May, the councillor of sector Rukaragata, Protais Bimenyimana, was shot by the infiltrators. He was also troublesome for them as he was instrumental in the assassination of five infiltrators and the seizure of three rifles.

There was no ambiguity about the reason for the murders.

The wrongdoers rely, amongst other things, on the ethnic factor. Since they are ideologues, advocating ethnic segregation, they tell the people that the current regime is for the Tutsi and will never allow the progress of the Hutu. This is apparent from the tracts which the infiltrators and their supporters leave behind. A tract of this sort was left near the bodies when the infiltrators killed the twelve people, including the councillor for Ngoma sector. It said: 'These Hutu who collaborate with the Tutsi are greedy and only fight for their own interests, Hutus like these, who do not see reason, are liable for the sentence reserved for traitors'.

Little has changed since the insurgency began in May 1997. A year later, when insurgents attacked the commune of Taba in Gitarama, on 12 May 1998, they divided into several teams. While one team went to kill survivors of the genocide in sector Karangara and Ngamba, another team set off for sector Gishyeshye to murder Damascène Twagiramungu, a *responsable*, his wife and three children. Rushashi, a commune in Greater Kigali which borders Nyarutovu and Ndusu in Ruhengeri, has experienced considerable violence in recent months. Daniel Twagirimana, cited above, is a former soldier. He has resisted the insurgents' persistent efforts to recruit him and spoke of the men whose lives have been continuously under threat in his commune of Rushashi.

In general, the *responsables* agree to collaborate because they are afraid of being killed if they refuse. Even when they send an administrative report to their superiors, the councillors and bourgmestres, they say that everything is fine; they don't dare reveal the presence of infiltrators. The infiltrators in Rushashi have come from Nyarutovu and Ndusu in Ruhengeri. They told the people that they intended to liberate the Hutus so that they would still have a say. Those who resisted were eliminated.

On the night of 24/25 December 1997, more than fifty people were massacred in Rushashi<sup>138</sup>; a number of the victims were local government officials regarded as "recalcitrants" by the insurgents, and their wives and children. As Daniel points out, the choices which these officials face is stark.

<sup>138</sup> This massacre is discussed in the chapter "Sounding a Note of Caution."

Amongst the local responsables, there are those who collaborate with the infiltrators and those who refuse. Those who refuse have to move away to avoid being killed. They normally go to stay at the commune office, where they have nothing to eat.

A policeman from this sector (Raba) who works in Gisenyi, was not able to spend his last holiday here. He would have been killed.

Policemen have not been spared the insurgents' wrath. In mid-April 1998, Janvier Usabyamahoro, 23, was hospitalised in Kabgayi, with head wounds which he had suffered in his native Nyabikenke, Gitarama. He had worked as a policeman in Nyabikenke before he began to work with the RPA. He was living in Murehe, sector Kavumu. The day before he was wounded, he had received a visit from a neighbour telling him to be "careful when he walked through the local market" because infiltrators, who had learnt of his work with the RPA, were looking for him.

A man named Mbindabigwi, who owned a bar in the market invited me for a drink and something to eat on Tuesday. As I considered him as a friend, I went to see him on Tuesday at about 8:00 a.m. As he had a lot of customers to serve, he showed me to a seat so that I could wait until it was less busy. I was at the bar with one of my friends, Niyongira, when a man dressed in soldier's uniform came over and introduced himself to us. He asked if he could have a word in private with me and I agreed as I thought being a government soldier he wanted to ask a few questions about me. After walking a little way with him I began to sense fear. The dirty uniform and its pungent smell and the fact that although we had walked a fair distance he had still not asked me anything, made me mistrust him. Convinced by this time that I risked danger I began to run. He ran after me and I was caught by a group who were waiting in the direction in which I had been running. I was surrounded. There were five attackers, they forced me to the ground near a house. One of them took a small hammer from his trousers and with all his strength hit me on the head four times. It was then that I lost consciousness. They dragged me to a banana tree nearby and left me for dead.

Out of all of them, I recognised the one with the hammer as being Corporal Tugkimana, (ex-FAR) from Murehe cellule, the son of Emmanuel Sayinzoga. He hadn't been seen since his exile in 1994 although there had always been rumours that he had come back and was in hiding at his father's home. I was found under the banana tree at about 4:00 p.m. and hospitalised.

I don't know how a solution will ever be found to this situation whereby the infiltrators kill anyone whom they take a dislike to, so as to obtain the collaboration of the people.<sup>139</sup>

If the recent experiences of Emmanuel Mugerangabo are an indication, a solution is not yet at hand. Emmanuel, 32, has been the *responsable* of cellule Rutabu, sector Gasasa in Giciye since May 1996. He sought refuge and protection at the commune office on 5 August 1998. The insurgents have stepped up their campaign to eliminate hostile officials to avenge the death, on 23 July 1998, of their leader, Lt.Coi. Léonard Nkundiye and many other prominent insurgents, and to stem the exodus of supporters leaving their ranks.

Since the death of Nkundiye and the decision by most of the *résistants* to abandon their evil missions, the infiltrators are taking their revenge on collaborators or presumed collaborators of the current regime.

It was probably towards the end of 1997 that the infiltrators began forcing us to feed and house them. Along with the other local people, I agreed to collaborate closely with the infiltrators out of fear of being killed by them. The militiaman Kanyarubanza, the son of Vugazigabe, who comes from my cellule, was one of the infiltrators. At the same time there was a programme to educate people with their ideology of hatred towards the current regime. The majority of the people agreed to collaborate at first. However, when this turned our area into a battlefield and resulted in the deaths of several people, there came a point when the locals had had enough. Some of the people turned against the infiltrators and came here to the commune office. The situation remained like this until we, the local officials, were called to the commune office for training. I attended the training and then we all returned to our respective cellules. The infiltrators began to threaten us. They said that we were *Inyenzi* because we had accepted the training from the *Inyenzi*. Some of us were killed including Semasaka, the Rukwi cellule *responsable*, Shaki sector. These threats have become worse since the death of Nkundiye. At 8:30 p.m. on 4 August 1998 the infiltrators targeted certain people. One of them was Jean Marie-Vianney Sebaganda, the Nyabugusa *responsable*, but they didn't find him at home. The infiltrators then went to the home of the teacher, Sylvain Nzabagirente, in Rutabu sector. They killed him and burnt him in his house. They also went to the homes of Pasteur Ndererimana and Sezibera but again they didn't find them. Finally, they came to my house. They

<sup>139</sup> Interviewed in Kabgayi, Gitarama, 14 April 1998.

broke the door down but we were already hiding in the bush. Yesterday, 5 August 1998, I decided to come here to the commune office.<sup>140</sup>

For Ephraim Karangwa, the bourgmestre of Taba, there is a broader message behind the murder of Hutus in positions of authority.

The infiltrators' methods are certainly aimed at obliging the population, by force, to collaborate with them.

However, he said that the numerous assassinations had not deterred people from taking up official positions.

People are not afraid of taking up low-level positions of authority. Following the death of the councillor of Karangara, the other cellule officials met to appoint a replacement from amongst themselves. He is now working well.

<sup>140</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 6 August 1998.

## SHATTERING SOCIAL ORDER

### THE ASSAULT ON PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICES

Without dismantling the institutions which structure society, the infiltrators can only continue to function as guerrillas. Schools, health centres, roads, bridges, and, most importantly commune offices and detention centres, remain in government hands and the local population continue to be dependant on the state for these services. Attacks upon schools, health centres and commune offices are a raw display to show that the insurgents present a significant challenge to the authorities. Following attacks upon people in their homes, many people, both Tutsi and Hutu—including local government officials who have been threatened—have fled to commune offices. By laying siege to public institutions, the infiltrators send a message to the people of the northwest that the army and the government cannot protect them; for Hutus there is the lesson that the only way to safeguard their security is to side with the insurgents.

#### A Soft Target: Commune Offices and Commune Detention Centres

Attacks upon commune offices are a regular feature of the infiltrators' campaign, and one of its most visible aspects. They are a constant reminder of the military capacity of the insurgents and of their determination to challenge the state. These buildings are at the heart of government administration. From here, bourgmestres and their staff run the day-to-day business of the commune. As the principal intermediaries between the central government and the population, they are responsible for explaining and implementing the government's policies, the registration of marriages, births and deaths, and the delivery of identity cards and other necessary documents. They also manage local security through a small force of communal policemen under their command. In addition, some ministries have representatives who work out of commune offices, such as judicial police inspectors who are employees of the Ministry of Justice. Because of

their central role in communal life, businesses take advantage of the regular flow of visitors to the commune offices to locate shops, bars and restaurants in the vicinity. There is usually also a health centre nearby and a bank.

Attached to commune offices are detention centres known as *cachots*, where genocide suspects and people arrested for common crimes are held before being transferred to the main prisons. There are 154 *cachots* in the country, and with overcrowding in prisons, detainees may remain in the *cachots* for several months. The files containing the accusations against them are normally stored at the commune office, in the office of the judicial police inspector, until they are taken to the office of the public prosecutor. Insurgents aim to release the detainees, to loot and burn down the offices, to confiscate the weapons of the soldiers guarding the offices and to set vehicles belonging to the commune on fire. Storming detention centres is a way of gaining new recruits and of delivering a blow to the state administration. "Commune offices are burned down to thwart the government's activities", according to Diogène Niyonsenga, a *résistant* from Gisenyi. It is a strategy likely to be particularly approved of by those members of the local community whose relatives have been arrested in connection with the genocide. Mathias Abimana, the bourgmestre of Mabanza, Kibuye, commented that "the justice system gives the infiltrators leverage with some people whose relatives are in prison". Because they raid the commune's coffers and property, and steal from the nearby shops and health centre, it is also a way of acquiring money, medicines and other goods.

From a military viewpoint, commune offices are relatively soft targets. Although communal policemen are based nearby, the offices are usually only guarded by a handful of RPA soldiers. Often the insurgents mobilise large numbers of civilians—including women and children; together they may number several hundred, up to 1000, and can overpower the small number of soldiers. The number increases in the aftermath of an attack. However, it is impossible to provide permanent protection for every commune office in the affected prefectures, sufficient to ward off large-scale armed attacks led by large numbers of people. To cause maximum confusion, the insurgents sometimes storm two neighbouring commune offices simultaneously, making it difficult for the military to respond effectively and to co-ordinate the despatch of reinforcements. They have had several successes, including the release of prisoners from the *cachots* in

Gaseke, Kanama and Rwerere in Gisenyi; Nyamutera, Ndusu and Gatonde in Ruhengeri; Bulinga in Gitarama and Rutsiro in Kibuye.

Freed prisoners can become a valuable asset to the insurgency. Their release is a sure way of winning support among people who insist friends or relatives were unfairly arrested. Moreover, the prisoners are a source of new recruits. Some of them have fought on the side of the insurgents immediately they were released. Often they will act as guides to the commune pointing out targets, as they did in Bulinga where they identified the survivors who had accused genocide suspects. However, in the hail of bullets exchanged between insurgents and soldiers, many prisoners have been killed. This too can work in the insurgents favour, since the RPA are usually blamed.

Information given by soldiers and former infiltrators shows that the assaults are usually co-ordinated by several companies. Increasingly, however, the RPA has responded swiftly and large numbers of insurgents have been killed. Some of the captured infiltrators have given the RPA intelligence about planned attacks which has enabled them to foil these attempts. The pattern of attacks upon commune offices gives a good indication of the strength of the infiltrators in a particular region at any one time. Some of the earliest incidents were in Ruhengeri, but the focus of the operation then shifted and the later assaults concentrated on Gitarama.

The raids appear to follow an established pattern in terms of organisation. The assailants are generally divided into four groups:

- Those who fight and have firearms, usually ex-FAR;
- Those who set up roadblocks to prevent escape and the intervention of the RPA, who evacuate their wounded colleagues; these are often the young civilian men who have been given military training and are known as *résistants*;
- Those who loot and carry off the booty, mainly civilians;
- Those who beat drums and tins, sing and shout insults and political slogans to terrorise the soldiers and encourage the insurgents, principally civilians;

#### *Nyamutera, Ruhengeri, 12 June 1997*

Marc Nyirimpunga, a former infiltrator, participated in an attack upon the commune office of Nyamutera. His testimony provides insights into how the operation was planned and carried out, the support of local residents and its intentions. Shortly before they set out, Marc said, his battalion was

called to a meeting and addressed by their leader, Major Célestin Bahemba. He told them:

'We are now going to attack the office of the commune of Nyamutera. We must loot the medicines from the health centre there, and kill or capture the soldiers who are guarding the commune. Then we can take any military goods and free the prisoners in the commune prison'.

According to Marc, around 500 ex-FAR soldiers walked all night to reach the commune office about 5:30 a.m. They were then divided into groups and allocated tasks.

Some were ordered to guard the main road which led to the commune office so that any intervention could be fought off. The others were positioned on the top of a hill, carrying machine guns, as back-up in case RPA soldiers were there.

When we arrived, we found RPA soldiers were there. Some of them were still in bed and others were just waking up. The first one who saw us fled and another shot at us, hitting one of us. Our people started to attack the small house, where they were, with grenades. I didn't check to see whether there were any dead amongst the RPA soldiers. Some of us freed the prisoners; some of them joined us and others probably went home. There were some who took a machine gun, a mortar 82 and cartridges.

After stealing some medicines, the FAR soldiers were ordered to retreat to the hills of Gatonde. But they encountered more RPA soldiers at the commune office in Gatonde.

We fought against the soldiers there for at least twenty minutes and we won. We looted two of their Kalachikov guns and a generator. We fled quickly from an armoured vehicle and two lorries full of RPA soldiers, who hurried towards us. We reached a steep hill called Gisizi, after we had destroyed two bridges which would have given them access to our hill. We went past the people there, but they didn't cause us any trouble. The RPA soldiers who intervened began to shoot at us, but we carried on the march up to Nyarutovu forest where we rested for the whole day. The people there also gave us food.

When night fell, Marc and the other insurgents made their way to Mount Nyonirima in Cyabingo. Almost immediately, they were ordered to launch another offensive, this time upon the commune office of Cyabingo.

### *Cyabingo, Ruhengeri, 13 June 1997*

The second attack which Marc described followed a similar pattern to the first. The insurgents left Mount Nyonirima at midnight and arrived at Cyabingo commune office at 5:40 a.m. The mission had three aims: "to look for weapons, to free the prisoners and to search for medicines at the health centre of Muramba". But this time it proved to be more difficult than anticipated and the infiltrators lost some of their leading fighters.

The RPA soldiers, who were numerous there, saw us and shot at us with heavy weapons. We attempted to use our machine guns but were shocked to find out that they did not work any more. I fought by using the Kalachnikov. We were seriously shot at, so much so that we regretted having taken part in this mortal attack. My superior, Major Bahemba, died on the spot. We ran back a few metres. Captain Shumbusho forced us forward by hitting us. We went back to attack the soldiers who were bombarding us again until Captain Shumbusho's head was hit by a bomb. He died immediately.<sup>141</sup> We fled to Mount Nyonirima.

This setback prompted Marc to abandon the ranks of the infiltrators.

### *Kanama, Gisenyi, 8 and 16 August 1997*

The commune office of Kanama, Gisenyi, is located near Mahoko, the second commercial centre in the préfecture. The infiltrators' attack was two-pronged; one group began looting the marketplace around 10:00 a.m., attracting a swift and heavy army response. Fighting there was intense, and the army defeated the insurgents, but was also responsible for civilian deaths as described elsewhere in this book. A second contingent went to the commune office, defended by a few soldiers. As the RPA political officer of Kanama explained, the insurgents achieved their aims at the commune office.

This group freed the prisoners; 150 of them escaped with the infiltrators. 26 others who had apparently refused to follow them were killed.

<sup>141</sup> There are conflicting accounts about the fate of Captain Shumbusho; according to some recent reports, he was not killed but was badly wounded and evacuated to Masisi.



The attack at the market inflicted widespread damage, and most of the shops were emptied by looters. Civilians were killed in the exchange of gunfire. Moreover, the political officer noted, the soldiers returned later to cause further problems.

An hour and a half later, the fighting at the market came to an end as the infiltrators withdrew. That afternoon, some of the soldiers, in collaboration with certain civilians, looted money and beer. The fighting came to a complete stop at around 5:00 p.m.

François Mbonaruzza, a former insurgent, identified the soldiers who undertook the assignment at Mahoko.

Mahoko was the work of Pentagon company, based in sector Bisizi, commune Rwerere and commanded by Lt. David Mugizwenimana from Rwerere. They lost many people, including Lt. Akeye. This news was brought to us by two of them who came to see us in Basa sector the evening after the event. One of them was Byiringiro of Rwerere. According to them, the infiltrators who had been looting in Mahoko died because of the rapid intervention of the RPA.

Just over a week later, the infiltrators returned, in the early hours of the morning. This time there were 600 of them, and once again the commune office was on their hit-list. César Mbarushimana left Mahoko for a few days, but he was back by the time the infiltrators launched their second attack, on 16 August, when they managed to burn the commune lorry. This time, the political officer was involved in trying to defend the commune offices, along with 29 other soldiers.

We managed, with difficulty, to resist this mass of people, both men and women. They managed to set fire to the commune vehicle, a van, and they destroyed the soldiers' tents. However, they were not able to loot the Banque Populaire, even though they shot at it to force their way in.

We gained the upper hand thanks to the intervention of an armoured car. They fled towards commune Nyamyumba, and we followed them. When we reached the Parish of Kivumu, we found that they had just set fire to two minibus taxis, which had been on their way from Kibuye to Gisenyi. Then they disappeared into Nyamyumba.

After his ordeal in the marketplace, César fled in the direction of the Kiaka cooperative, where he ran into soldiers who were on their way to

intervene. They engaged the infiltrators who remained in the marketplace, and a two hour gunfight ensued. After a brief period of calm the infiltrators in the marketplace joined up with the group which had been attacking the commune offices. Shortly afterwards an armoured car arrived and drove them into the banana plantation. The next day, Sunday 17 August, the infiltrators were seen passing by the Noël orphanage, on their way to Bishizi sector and Mutura commune.

By attacking on several fronts simultaneously, the infiltrators hope to distract the RPA and weaken their response. Major John Gashayija was the commander of the 21st battalion, operating in parts of Gisenyi. At the time of the interview, he was among those awaiting trial in connection with the death of civilians at Mahoko. Between 7-8 August, he found himself pulled in several directions.

We had learned, during the night of 7/8 August, that there were infiltrators in sector Nyarushyamba, Rwerere commune. I informed my superior, Lt.Col. Nzaramba. The next day, I gathered all the forces which were supposed to attack the infiltrators' positions. I left with the troops at 7:00 a.m., and we began the fight, which we lost, because of the large numbers of infiltrators.

At 10:00 a.m. Sub-Lt. Makaka, the commander in Kanama, informed me that he was himself under attack in Mahoko. I despatched an armoured car to strengthen his forces. The arrival of the armoured car allowed the Mahoko forces to defeat them quickly. I went to Kanama, where I found a large number of infiltrators who had killed a pastor and set fire to three vehicles which were on their way from Ruhengeri. After our soldiers, who had been left at Nyarushyamba in Rwerere, intervened, we overcame the infiltrators around 5:30 p.m.

The same day, Major Gashayija was called to help other colleagues under fire, this time in Rubavu.

### *Rubavu, Gisenyi, 8 August 1997*

While one company of infiltrators carried out their first assault upon Kanama, engaging RPA forces in battle, another company took advantage of the moment to surround the commune office in Rubavu and to free some of the prisoners there. François Mbonaruzza gave details of those involved.

It was the Manhattan company, stationed not far from us which took advantage of the events in Mahoko to attack the commune offices in Rubavu. They freed the prisoners there, though with some difficulty.

Major John Gashayija was in Mahoko at the time; he left to help the RPA defend the commune office in Rubavu.

At around 1:00 p.m., Sub-Lt. Clément Kayihura, commander in Rubavu, informed me that he too was under attack, and asked for assistance. I quickly made my way to Rubavu, to give assistance to the tiny contingent of soldiers there, and found that the infiltrators had occupied the commune offices. Our troops had withdrawn from this large infiltrator force, which was mixing with the local population, towards the surfaced road. After a few minutes' fighting we gained the upper hand on these rebels.

Whilst still in Rubavu, between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m., we found out that the infiltrators, defeated at 1:00 p.m., were attacking Kanama again.

#### *Ndusu and Gatonde, Ruhengeri, 17 October 1997*

On 17 October, there was another co-ordinated offensive; this time, the insurgents set out for the commune offices of Gatonde and Ndusu, communes in Ruhengeri. Lt. Kabalisa was the military commander for the commune of Nyarutovu. He happened to be in sector Nyundo, commune Cyabingo, when he heard the attack upon Gatonde and was called upon to send reinforcements. By the time he and forty of his soldiers arrived in Gatonde, considerable damage had already been done.

I found many infiltrators already present, most of them peasants. The few soldiers who had been guarding the commune offices had retreated to a hill, along with the bourgmestre. The infiltrators had already surrounded the commune offices and had begun burning the part near the main door.

Using heavy weapons, including the machine-gun which I used myself, we forced them to flee. They went towards Ndusu, to meet up with those who were attacking the commune offices there. They evaded us, going in the direction of the Janja secondary school.

The infiltrators had arrived at about 4:30 a.m., and killed the communal police chief and his younger brother who was visiting. They reached the bourgmestre's house, but he had already left with the soldiers. I counted four infiltrators dead at the commune offices. We did not lose soldiers that day. All the infiltrators had come from Giciye commune.

Meanwhile at Ndusu, the bourgmestre was wounded and offices burned down. Eugène Micombero, an ex-FAR, remembers the incident well since members of his company were responsible. He was in Ndusu at the time, but was a member of a unit which did not take part.

We were supposed to participate in the operation which burned down the commune offices of Ndusu, but our commander, Cobra, refused to take part as the messengers who brought the instructions arrived late, at 11:00 p.m. The attack happened very early the next morning; the infiltrators captured a radio, typewriters and medicines, although they were forced to abandon this material in Mu Butare as they were pursued by soldiers.

The commune office of Ndusu was burned by the company which came from Nyamutera, led by Lt. Darius. They were reinforced by two platoons from our company; the two platoons were led by Sergeant Sibomana of Gatonde and Staff Sergeant Dusabe of Gisenyi.

#### *Giciye, Gisenyi, 17 November 1997*

Some of the most intense fighting between insurgents and the army took place in early October in the commune of Giciye in Gisenyi. Undeterred, the insurgents' initiative persisted into November; on 17 November, they released 94 prisoners from the *cachot* at the commune office. The assailants numbered between 300-400; once again, the crowd is said to have included many women and children.

The bourgmestre of Giciye, Fidèle Mitsindo, described how the infiltrators, grouped into four teams, launched their raid at around 5:30 a.m. The RPA soldiers fought back, and an armoured personnel carrier was sent from nearby camp Mukamira. Nonetheless, the infiltrators were able to carry out at least part of their mission.

They released the prisoners and burned down the homes of the communal policemen. They also burned down the office of the schools inspector.<sup>142</sup> But the resistance put up by the soldiers guarding it did not allow them to burn down the main commune office.

The prisoners left with the infiltrators, climbing a nearby hill in their efforts to escape.

<sup>142</sup> Initial press reports mistakenly identified the courtroom as the building that was burned down.

Sheria Muyango is the school inspector whose office was razed to the ground. He and his family were lucky to escape with their lives. He prepared a detailed report on the incident.

At about 5:20 a.m., the commune office of Giciye was attacked by an armed band estimated at about 400 men, women and children, all mixed up. As I was one of the main targets, the door of my house was forced open with bullets, a hammer and axes. Fortunately, my two children and I were able to escape through the window. Shots were exchanged between the assailants and the military position nearby until about 8:00 a.m. Their aim was to kill certain specific people, burn down certain public buildings, such as the office of school inspection, the houses of communal policemen and the commune office itself, and to release the detainees.

One of the men freed by the insurgents is Corporal Laurent Nkurunziza, a former soldier. He was suspected of helping the insurgents and imprisoned three times. He insists that the accusations were unfair. He comes from Tubuye, sector Muhungwe in commune Karago, Gisenyi. The operation was, he said, led by Captain Gelase Harelimana, known as "Kaceri", commander of the operational sector Charlie, renamed Quebec.

On the third occasion, I was suspected of being an accomplice to the infiltrators' murder of Sekimonyo, the *responsable* of Tubuye cellule. I was held in Giciye detention centre for two months. In November 1997, I was freed by the infiltrators, along with the other detainees. They also set fire to some areas of the commune.

Captain Kaceri led the attack which was carried out by between 300 to 400 infiltrators. They told us they had reached the commune office at 2:00 a.m. They waited there until 5:00 a.m. before opening fire. I quickly went to the door of the detention centre and I heard the voice of a former ex-FAR colleague calling my name. It was Corporal Habyarimana from Rurembo sector. They broke down the door and we came out when we were certain that it was the infiltrators. They showed us the way to go—up Mount Shyorezo. There were 94 detainees in all including five women. Not one of us was killed either by the planes or by the armoured car. Perhaps it was people held in another centre who were killed. Because of all the gunfire, the infiltrators who were leading the way could not continue their mission. They allowed us to go back to our own homes where they would find us later.

Laurent returned to his home, but immediately started to receive visits from leading insurgents who pressured him to join them. A month

later he relented and on 15 December, he left with Sub-Lt. Joseph Bararugaragaje, alias "Jaguar" for Cyintarure sector in Giciye. Until he surrendered on 9 July, he operated in Karago, Giciye, Nyamutera and Nkuli.

### *Rwerere, Gisenyi, 2 December 1997 and 8 January 1998*

Security problems in the commune of Rwerere had forced the family of Ramadhan Barengayabo, bourgmestre since 29 September 1995, to move into Gisenyi town. Having worked in Rwerere during the day, as was his habit, he was staying with his family the night before his offices were attacked.

On 2 December I was about to go to work when a policeman told me the sad news. When I reached Mudende at 7:45 a.m. I found out that the genocide survivors, who lived next door to the commune offices, had taken refuge there. They stopped me and warned me not to continue my journey, then they told me what had happened.

From what the bourgmestre discovered the following morning, he was able to establish the sequence of events. It was clear that this attack was highly organised, and that large numbers of insurgents, accompanied by Congolese supporters, were involved.

Before beginning their ignoble acts, the infiltrators set up four guarded roadblocks, cutting off all possible escape routes. The roadblock on the main road was located about 600m from the communal offices. They split into four groups. One group attacked the prison for common criminals, but were driven off by the soldiers there. The three other groups intimidated the few soldiers by shouting loudly and firing at them from different directions. The soldiers retreated. The infiltrators numbered about 600 men; about 150 were armed with guns. Others had traditional weapons and were given various missions: evacuating wounded infiltrators, looting and shouting.

At one of the roadblocks, there were a number of Lingala-speakers, who the local people identified as Congolese, possibly ex-FAZ.

These Congolese were to man the roadblock in the market of Gasiza in Busasamana, to fend off any military interference. The genocide survivors lived right by this centre, but only one, Jeanine, was killed. She was killed

by infiltrators of Rwandese origin who were setting up the roadblock which was then handed over to the Congolese. Had this checkpoint been manned by Rwandese infiltrators, the Gasiza survivors would have been assassinated. The Congolese infiltrators looted the contents of shops, including cases of Primus beer and clothing.

Those targeted by the insurgents included people close to the bourgmestre.

My younger brother, Abdou Nsabimana, was wanted by the Rwandese infiltrators; he managed to slip through the roadblock manned by the Congolese. But my Hutu servant, who tried to escape in another direction, was killed by the Rwandese infiltrators. He was killed by Byabo, a génocidaire who had escaped from jail in sector Rwanzakuma a few days earlier and had joined the infiltrators. He recognised my servant, and fired at him.

There were also political scores to settle.

They also killed Fidèle Mbonnyuburyo, the commune treasurer who was Hutu. They broke down the door of his house and forced him to open the communal coffers, which only had 10,000 francs in at the time. The fact that he had left his home sector of Kinyanzovu in July 1997, to escape the infiltrators, seems to have been the reason for his death. He died from a bullet to the heart at the health centre of Busasamana.

At the commune office, the insurgents managed to destroy documents and to release common criminals, genocide suspects and people accused of collaborating with the infiltrators.

197 prisoners, 84 of them genocide suspects, were freed. Only one prisoner accused of genocide, Gapori from sector Mubona, came back voluntarily to face justice.

They also engaged in a looting spree.

They stole all the typewriters, staplers and some paper. Some documents and records were either burned or torn up. They stole all the medicine from the health centre, and the solar-powered microscope. They either stole or damaged all the contents of my house. They also stole the national flag and a small Honda generator. The operation lasted a whole hour and a half, as the soldiers from Mudende were delayed by the Congolese at the

roadblock in Gasiza. When the soldiers arrived, the infiltrators had finished their work, and the soldiers chased them, even bringing back some of the cows and goats. There were 36 cows belonging to the genocide survivors Gatuku and Semagoki, and 25 goats. To retrieve these animals, the soldiers had to go as far as *groupement* Buhumba, *collectivité* Bwishya in Congo.

We think that some of the freed detainees may have gone home rather than following the infiltrators to Congo. One of them was Alphonse Butsingiri, 65, who was bourgmestre of Rwerere from 1971 until 1994. He is ill and asthmatic, receiving medical treatment regularly, and would not be able to endure the wild existence of the infiltrators. This extra-judicial liberation is therefore disadvantageous to him.

On 8 January 1998, the insurgents revisited Rwerere, destroying the commune office. They then proceeded to the Parish of Busasamana where they killed a group of nuns and three people who had taken refuge there, as well as looting property. (See below for details). The bourgmestre said the insurgents were from sector Mugongo, commune Mutura, and arrived around 10:00 a.m., when the RPA soldiers who usually guarded the commune office were taking part in military operations elsewhere. There were only two communal policemen present.

Taking advantage of the absence of the military, the insurgents used petrol to burn down the office entirely, the bourgmestre's residence and that of Alexander Gakesha, a shopkeeper.

Saying that "at the present time no document can be found at the commune office", the bourgmestre has had to move to temporary locations in the préfectoral building. Ramadhan said that he was not surprised that his commune had suffered repeatedly at the hands of the insurgents.

The commune of Rwerere cannot expect to be spared since two of the infiltrators' commanders—Captain Alfred Hakizimana, alias 'Rusigi' and Lt. Daniel Harelimana—come from Rwerere.

### *Ramba, Gisenyi, 9 December 1997*

On 4 December 1997, insurgents murdered the bourgmestre of Ramba in Gisenyi, Pascal Uwimana, along with a communal policeman; five days later, his office was ransacked. Diogène Niyonsenga explained how

members of the Delta battalion, and civilian recruits of the Charlie battalion, like himself, managed to free prisoners and to loot arms.

We met up the day before, at about 6:00 p.m., at a place called Ku Kaganu in Ramba commune. We arrived near the commune office at about 4:30 p.m. and took up our positions in accordance with the mission that each person had been given. At 5:30 a.m., we began our operations following our usual pattern. One 'moralising bullet' was fired, followed by lining up in two rows so the backs of one set of men were turned against the backs of those in the other line, and finally a bullet, comparable to a blast, was fired. Then we went into action.

The "action" was accompanied by moral support from civilians.

We could hear chants to boost our morale, and other positive words such as: 'We've arrived, Jesus's army', as well as insults intended to demoralise the enemy. All these events, characteristic of the start of operations, took place in quick succession. We freed 180 prisoners, set fire to the commune office with petrol, and took some cartridges and 25 Kalachnikov rifles.

He explained the rationale that lies behind the physical destruction of commune offices and their property.

The commune office was burned down to hinder the Tutsis' activities. Our leaders promised that its reconstruction, after the take over of power, would not be difficult.

### *Bulinga, Gitarama, 3 December 1997, 28 February and 8 April 1998*

The infiltrators first came to Bulinga, Gitarama, on 3 December 1997; they killed at least six people. Although the detainees were released, most of them chose to return home and surrender to the authorities rather than join the ranks of the insurgents.<sup>143</sup> This blow provoked the anger of the insurgents; from then on, the commune of Bulinga was affected by their campaign. They began disseminating tracts threatening their impending return. The detainees who had remained with them helped the insurgents to identify targets; the detainees had scores to settle with the genocide

<sup>143</sup> A number of detainees who returned to their homes instead were subsequently killed by RPA soldiers; see below for details.

survivors and other neighbours whose accusations had led to their imprisonment.<sup>144</sup> There was a further attempt on the commune office, on 28 February 1998, to coincide with an assault in Nyakabanda (see below), but the RPA had been forewarned and they were forced to retreat. Nevertheless, many residents left their homes, moving closer to the soldiers and commune authorities for protection, at the centre of Kabadaha. On 8 April 1998, the insurgents returned to the commune office; this time they destroyed it and killed more than twenty people.

On 3 December, at dawn, about 300 people stormed the *cachot* in Bulinga, releasing around 670 detainees. They then set fire to the commune office, the *cachot*, and the home of the bourgmestre, Straton Butera. Six people were killed, including a woman and two children, and others injured. The insurgents withdrew into the forests of Ramba commune in Gisenyi and Kivumu in Kibuye, with the army giving chase. About a hundred of the detainees fled with them; some were killed in the crossfire between the RPA and the insurgents. The majority of them returned to their homes and 573 detainees then gave themselves up, most of them the following day, after an appeal by the bourgmestre.

Ferdinand Gashiramanga from cellule Kasemakende, sector Musenyi, described the events of 3 December.

At about 5:15 a.m. I noticed a lot of people who were firing guns at the Kabadaha centre. I went back into my house and suddenly heard a lot of explosions at the commune office. It seemed to me that they were, at that moment, freeing the detainees and burning down the building of the commune office. Some were singing and others were yelling. One of them shouted: 'Get out, the armoured personnel carrier is coming!' They immediately left; the whole thing had lasted for about thirty minutes.<sup>145</sup>

The RPA retaliated, and according to Diogène Niyonsenga, many of the attackers were killed as they tried to get back to their base. Some of the detainees also died; others went as far as sector Kirengo in Kibilira, Gisenyi, with the insurgents, then managed to separate themselves, and return home. As noted above, Diogène had taken part in the operation in Ramba, Gisenyi, as a member of the Charlie battalion. Once again, the

<sup>144</sup> Fourteen prisoners from sector Nyarutovu in Bulinga remained with the infiltrators to act as their guides, including Sylvain Nzabalinda from cellule Kazenga; Faustin Nzeyimana, also from Kazenga, and Télésphore Mundere from cellule Rugerero.

<sup>145</sup> Interviewed in Bulinga, Gitarama, 16 April 1998.

Charlie battalion teamed up with the Delta battalion to free the detainees in Bulinga; Diogène was with the infiltrators in his native commune of Kibilira when the events of 3 December took place.

The prisoners freed during the first attack returned to their communes without reaching us at Gisenyi, except 25 prisoners who joined us in Ntaganzwa in Kibilira. Those who carried out this attack, members of Delta and Charlie, were really put to the test as the *Inyenzi* used their planes. Some of them drowned in the Nyabarongo river. Only the survivors who were with the 25 freed prisoners joined us in Ntaganzwa. This significant loss of life was compounded by the death of those who failed to heed the recommendations of the spirit mediums. They had told them to stay in Gitarama and not to return to Gisenyi, even in the case of failure. These men took the risk and drowned in the Nyabarongo river.

The infiltrators made a second attempt to lay siege to the commune office, on 28 February 1998, which was to end in defeat and loss of life, with the RPA fighting off the insurgents close to the Nyabarongo river. The surviving infiltrators dispersed, heading for different communes in Gitarama—Nyabikenke, Rutobwe and Kayenzi. One of the men who took part in the aborted operation is an ex-FAR, Fabien Niyonsenga.

We reached Gitarama the day before the second attempt upon Bulinga. There were two battalions: Lt. Kaceri's Charlie and ours, Delta. The plan was that Charlie would occupy the area of Gitarama near Kibuye whilst we would stay in the communes of Gitarama close to Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. However, during important operations, the two units worked side by side.

We came from Ramba via Kibilira. From there we went to Bulinga at night and crossed the river Nyabarongo. The level of water was not too high, so we crossed by walking. We reached Bulinga at about 2:30 a.m. The people who had been freed and who had not gone back to Bulinga helped us. They took us to local people's houses to stay. A boatman took our leaders across. I came with an R4 gun and 400 cartridges.

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**"We intended to position ourselves in Gitarama and do what we had done in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri".**

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The next morning, we tried to attack Bulinga. This was in vain as the RPA had already been informed. The soldiers took us by surprise, just as we

were preparing the operation. Others had gone to take the commune office of Nyakabanda and succeeded. We were scattered around; we spent the whole day in difficult areas of Mount Ndiza. I was with all our troops, led by Lt. Mucyo. We were threatened in Ndiza, so we went to Rutobwe, following the soldier, Murwanashyaka, who came from Nyabikenke. We spent the night in a place called Ku Cyubi; we forced the local people to let us stay there. The next day we were under siege and fled to Ndiza.

After two to three weeks, they were discovered by the RPA in a surprise raid at about 6:30 a.m. at the foot of Mount Ndiza in Bulinga. Niyonsenga was injured by a bullet to his foot when he tried to make a getaway. He reached Nyakabanda, then continued on to Nyabikenke and eventually to Mount Cyubi in commune Rutobwe where he participated in a clash between the insurgents and the army on Mount Cyubi. He was arrested shortly afterwards.

Throughout the month of March, tracts appeared in Bulinga announcing the insurgents' imminent arrival. They returned on 8 April; they left the commune office in ruins, freed all the detainees and left 26 people dead; 22 Tutsi survivors of the genocide and four Hutu residents. Many others were beaten indiscriminately. At the time of the interviews, in mid-April, none of the freed detainees had returned to Bulinga.

Their ferocity redoubled, this time the infiltrators were determined to leave all the houses belonging to the local administration in ruins. Fifteen houses were burned down, including those belonging to the communal policemen, and the one which the bourgmestre had occupied since his own was destroyed in the previous attack. They also burned down commercial buildings in the nearby centre of Kabadaha and looted all the shops there. It was at the centre that they killed the civilians. Since the events of 28 February, many of those who knew they would be targets had gathered at this centre, located near the commune office, in the hope of receiving protection from the authorities. The insurgents were accompanied by civilians, including some of the detainees they had freed on 3 December, and peasants from sector Kabuye in Nyabikenke, sector Kirwa in Nyakabanda, and Kibilira.

Ferdinand Gashiramanga was, once again, lucky to escape with his life when the infiltrators struck on 8 April.

The second attack, launched at about 5:45 a.m. on 8 April was more bloody. I had only just returned from taking part in the night patrol when I heard explosions in sector Gasave. I had no doubt that they were

infiltrators who had come back because, a few days before, terrorist tracts talking of their eventual return had been found. I was asking myself what I could do when I heard people near the main door of my house who said: 'There is certainly someone in this house'. I got out through the door on the opposite side and ran into a banana plantation. They shot at me, but none of the bullets touched me. After about a kilometre, I fell into a steep ditch and my right leg was injured. I could no longer run, but fortunately they were no longer chasing me. I stayed there, following the explosions which lasted almost an hour.

He spoke of the lives cut short that day.

They killed many people without making any ethnic distinction. More than twenty died, including Cosma Dusabirema, who is Hutu and was the councillor of sector Buramba, and his wife, Tamar, a survivor of the genocide. They were guided by the detainees who had been freed the first time in Bulinga and who had remained with them. The infiltrators killed everyone at this commercial centre, especially those pointed out by the detainees.

One of the men they were looking for is Moïse Kagamo who lived in cellule Kasemakende. Moïse, 19, was listening to the 5:30 a.m. Swahili news bulletin when he heard the sound of people crying for help mingled with sound of whistles and gunfire. He and his housemate heard a voice shouting out an order: "Open up or we will burn down the house". They did as they were told and came face to face with their visitors.

We were beaten and interrogated. They asked us if we had fled there thinking that they could not reach us. By there, they were referring to the peasants who had abandoned their sectors on account of the insecurity caused by the infiltrators and who had assembled at the centre of Kabadaha, near the commune office. These infiltrators were furious with these people who, instead of remaining in their homes and helping them, had preferred to flee towards the authorities.

The ones doing the beating didn't have guns; the ones who had guns were fighting the soldiers. I was hit on my back with a stick. I decided to run, at least so that I could be killed with a bullet. The young man running after me alerted the ones who had guns and begged them to shoot me. They tried, in vain, to gun me down and then told him: 'You bring him here unless you want to run the risk of seeing yourself killed'.

They spoke the Kinyarwanda dialect of the northwest. They were wearing old military boots, long and dirty coats and had red eyes.<sup>146</sup>

Jacquéline Yankulije was one of the peasants who had angered them by going to live near the commune office.

We heard the sound of gunfire, whistles and screams. Some people escaped; those who remained in their houses were killed and their houses burned down. I hid in a banana plantation and watched what was happening. The assailants were divided into three groups; the ones who had guns killed, the second group shouted and the third group looted. The victims included Vérédianne; a survivor of the genocide; the wife of Valens and her son, also survivors; Yamuragiye, a Hutu businesswoman and Mukarugwiza, a woman who worked at the commune office. I know of two families where those who survived the genocide were completely wiped out.

Jacquéline herself was spared in 1994 on account of being Hutu, but had watched as three of her four children were drowned in the Nyabarongo river. As she had pointed out many genocide suspects, she was afraid that some of the freed detainees would exact revenge and left Bulinga.<sup>147</sup>

Diogène Niyonsenga commented on the impulse behind the events of 8 April.

After hearing that the freed prisoners had once again been taken back to the office of the commune to be re-arrested, my colleagues were furious and were determined to kill those responsible in the future. I learned after my arrest that the same commune had been attacked and that the same prisoners were set free once again.

He did not know what had happened to the freed detainees, but made a comment that sheds light on the insurgents' attitude to these detainees.

<sup>146</sup> Interviewed in Bulinga, Gitarama, 16 April 1998.

<sup>147</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 14 July 1998.

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**“We consider the freed prisoners as *Abakarodayo*, meaning that they are Satan’s partisans—like RPA soldiers, the Tutsis and the Hutus who collaborated with this regime”.**

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One of the insurgents who freed the detainees is Jean Marie-Vianney Nsanzimana, a *résistant* from Ramba who had been given a crash course in military training in March, and was then attached to the Delta battalion which masterminded the operation.

We met in a forest in Kibilira at about 6:30 p.m. At about 8:00 p.m., we left to go to the Nyabarongo river which we crossed on foot, forming a chain, hand in hand. When we got to Bulinga, we continued walking in order to arrive at Mont Ndiza at about 4:00 a.m.

The first step was to secure a meal. Jean Marie-Vianney and two others were sent to fetch food from local peasants. They then began their preparations.

The 180 members of my company, commanded by Sub-Lt. Pasteur, met up at the church in Gasave. From there, we went to the commune office at about 2:00 a.m. We stopped and awaited the signal we had agreed upon, a shot to be fired by another group.

The signal came at around 5:00 a.m.

We immediately began to advance, silently, towards the courtyard of the commune office while the RPA soldiers were paying attention to the direction of this shot. When we got there, we easily took control of the buildings and the courtyard. We also shot several bullets to intimidate our opponents.

Jean-Marie and some other unarmed civilians evacuated the dead and the wounded. There were losses on both sides.

I personally identified three infiltrators who had died, including a warrant officer, and four who were wounded. I also saw an RPA soldier who had been killed and who was subsequently undressed by our men.

Another group was charged with burning down the commune office.

The team which burned down the commune office and other buildings was led by Corporal Kanyabugande.

A third team was intent on freeing the detainees. Jean Marie-Vianney confirmed the reports that a peasant, a man he identified as Ndahayo from sector Nyarutovu, who had been set free on 3 December, acted as a guide.

In order to recognise the building which served as a detention centre, the team which had been given this mission was guided by a detainee who had been freed the first time called Ndahayo, from sector Nyarutovu in Bulinga.

Once the *cachot* had been opened up, the freed detainees and wounded insurgents were taken to Kibilira to be taken care of in Ramba and Gaseke.

The infiltrators who accompanied them included a nurse, a soldier called Bagaragaza.

Frightened of the helicopters and other reinforcements which had come to the aid of the RPA, the men went their separate ways.

I was in a group of about thirty people who passed through sector Nyarutovu where we hid in a forest. The RPA went after some of our people who had left for commune Mushubati. We awaited nightfall in order to go and get food by force. Then we went to Mount Ndiza.

But they did not remain there for long.

The next day, we were dislodged by some soldiers who ran after us throughout Ndiza, Cyubi and Nyarutovu.

They headed for the Nyabarongo river, hoping to escape to Kibilira. At the river bank, they formed a chain.

The first four in the chain, including Staff Sergeant Ndayisenga from Runda in Gitarama, drowned together with their weapons. We went down the length of the river looking for a place where we could cross, near the Gitarama/Kibuye border. When we got there, we learned that there was a bridge there that we could cross. While we were looking for it, some



soldiers shot at us, after which a helicopter bombarded us. My companions fled while two others and I hid in a nearby banana plantation. Towards 5:00 p.m., we were surrounded by soldiers; my two colleagues ran, but I preferred to put up my hands with an R5 gun which I got just after the attack in Bulinga.

Bangayiki, 25, is another *résistant* from Ramba who reinforced the contingent in Bulinga in April. He too was recruited in March 1998, given military training and then assigned to the Delta battalion.

During the period of preparations for this operation, I was placed in the company nicknamed 'Aigle', commanded by someone nicknamed 'Steven' and in the platoon headed by Sergeant Jaguar. Our battalion, Delta, was under the command of Lt. Bigaruka who remained behind in sector Gitarama in Kibilira, our meeting place and point of departure. We were about 400 people, probably 200 of them unarmed, who left the meeting place, at about 7:00 p.m. We arrived at the Nyabarongo river, guided by residents of Bulinga. We crossed the river on foot and reached a forest in Mount Ndiza, below the tarmac road, at about 3:30 a.m. We stayed there until 6:30 p.m., when we left to look for food from the homes of peasants, with the agreement that we would all meet in this place towards 2:00 a.m. When we came back, we were placed in different platoons. My platoon and another were given the responsibility of ambushing any possible intervention by the RPA, coming from their position on Mount Ndiza.

The opening shot was fired at about 5:30 a.m. The RPA intervened at about 8:00 a.m., at the end of the operation. Two of us were wounded. We fled towards Musange, the meeting place we had agreed upon, where we met up with those coming back from the commune office. I identified ten prisoners who had been freed. We stayed on Mount Musange, near a school, waiting for darkness. Accompanied by three other infiltrators, I went to the home of an old woman so that she could give us something to eat. The freed prisoners were sent to Kibilira.

Bangayiki and his colleagues spent the day at the home of the peasants; in the evening, they returned to Mount Ndiza.

The next morning, the *Inkotanyi* discovered us and forced us to run to Cyubi. The following day, we arrived in Buramba in Bulinga where planes bombarded us. I was with someone called Désiré who had a Kalachnikov with five cartridges. Faced with a serious threat, we decided to hide this gun so as to be taken for simple peasants.

But it was too late for such a disguise.

The population began to yell against us, followed by soldiers in pursuit of us. When my companion refused to stop so that we could surrender to the soldiers, I did so on my own. When I was captured, I showed them where we had hidden the gun.

Even if I am set free, I will not go home to Gisenyi because I am likely to be killed if the infiltrators find out that I gave their gun to the RPA.

None of the officials and civilians interviewed in Gitarama had any doubt that the violence in their region was orchestrated and carried out by natives of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. But they also believed that the intensity of the campaign against Bulinga in December and early 1998 was due to the number detainees freed on 3 December who chose to remain with the insurgents. A councillor who requested anonymity commented:

We are normally attacked by residents of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri. However, they are supported by the detainees freed on 3 December who did not come back, as well as by some peasants. There is also no doubt that the ex-FAR from this commune, who are not here, have enrolled with the infiltrators. Together, they kill anyone who works with the government and anyone who denounces them to the authorities. That's how the following people died: Musoni, the *responsable* of cellule Kirigi; Ntiburuka from Kirigi and Jean Mariburira, who used to condemn the infiltrators, and his wife.<sup>148</sup>

#### *Nyakabanda, Gitarama, 28 February 1998*

According to Alfred Gasana, the bourgmestre of Nyakabanda commune, security problems began in his commune towards the end of October 1997. Since then, infiltrators have been targeting local officials and have murdered several, including three councillors, one with his wife and six children, and seven *nyumbakumi*. All the local trading centres have been attacked, except for one in Kibange, and one night in November, a total of 36 people were killed by insurgents in two separate attacks. There have also been two attempts to destroy the commune office. The first of these was a failure, the bourgmestre said.

<sup>148</sup> Interviewed in Bulinga, Gitarama, 16 April 1998.

On 2 December 1997, the infiltrators came, some from Ndusu in Ruhengeri and the rest from Satinsyi in Gisenyi. They entered via Ngaru and Nyabinoni sectors. The soldiers set out to meet them at Ndiza. The confrontations, which took place near the Rusuri sector office, ended in failure for the infiltrators, who fled.

The infiltrators returned at 5:00 a.m. on 28 February 1998, mounting a large-scale assault upon the commune office, the health centre and the local shops; they also killed the assistant bourgmestre and injured patients at the health centre. Once again, it was the Charlie and Delta battalions who carried out these deeds. The bourgmestre recollected the devastation they inflicted on his commune.

They surrounded every side of the commune office. They weren't able to set fire to the office, which was their main objective, or to free the people held for genocide. However, they injured sick people at Gitaga health centre, burned down the maternity centre and stole the medicines. They looted the shops at Mboneka centre and set them on fire. They destroyed and took some of the equipment that belonged to COFORWA [a development NGO]. They set fire to a dormitory of the state secondary school which the children had already abandoned. They burned two vehicles that belonged to a trader, Musabyimana Murokore; they killed the assistant bourgmestre, Gaston Hakizimana and set fire to two houses belonging to communal policemen. They also killed the guard at the courthouse. They freed the sixteen women and sixty men held for common crimes. They tried to free the people held for genocide, but they were unsuccessful. All the escapees returned voluntarily; only two stayed with the infiltrators.

The bourgmestre estimates that the insurgents numbered around 1000. Forced to disperse by the RPA, they hid near the Nyabarongo river, and many of them were later discovered there.

Many of them came from Gisenyi. We learned their meeting points were the trade centres in Ntanganwa, Kibiwa, and Nyamisa, all in Gisenyi. Undoubtedly, there were also some natives of our commune amongst them, mainly recruited from the young so-called *Rugara*, who had been given military training by the ex-FAR, two months before they fled in 1994.

Diogène Niyonsenga participated in the operation.

We arrived in Bulinga in the middle of the night, 27/28 February 1998. I immediately continued my journey with the members of the Charlie team, leaving most of the Delta team behind near the Nyabarongo river. We arrived at Mount Ndiza very early in the morning, intent on attacking the office of Nyakabanda commune. We sat in Ndiza forest and formed teams, each assigned with specific tasks.

I was placed in a team of two sections, approximately fifty people, entrusted with laying an ambush against a probable intervention by the RPA coming from Nyabikenke. Out of the fifty, fifteen did not have rifles. I was carrying cartridges. No RPA intervention came from Nyabikenke.

Both Hutus and Tutsis were murdered. The bourgmestre spoke of the legacy of fear.

They didn't kill along ethnic lines, although their songs were all on this subject. Our commune in fact has very few Tutsis, and they are scattered around.

Some of those who were threatened have now left their hills; I have taken in around 100 here in the neighbourhood of the commune office. The ICRC and the Rwandese Red Cross are trying to help us.

But the insurgents' tactics have not cowed local people; according to the bourgmestre, they continue to denounce the insurgents.

Despite all this, life goes on and we receive at least two infiltrators each day, brought in or pointed out to us by the population.<sup>149</sup>

Emmanuel Kanyarutoki, aged 34 and from sector Kivumu, was among those freed by the infiltrators, who decided to return home and give himself up.

After freeing the women, they came to our cells and broke down the door with an axe. We were led away by eight infiltrators. When we reached the place where tiles are made, they returned to fight and told us to continue on towards Kibilira in Gisenyi saying: 'Carry on, we will join you there tomorrow'. We split up and I returned home. The gunfire stopped at

<sup>149</sup> Interviewed in Nyakabanda, Gitarama, 17 April 1998.

around 11:00 a.m. Two days later, I met up with four colleagues and we decided to turn ourselves over to the commune authorities.

Emmanuel had been arrested on 29 July 1997 for having purposely refused to give information concerning the whereabouts of a genocide suspect. He explained why he preferred to remain in detention, rather than live with the infiltrators.

The life they lead is very harsh; they often die. I'm not charged with anything serious and couldn't be sentenced to death. I could be released at any time. One detainee, Barlyanga from Kibimba, stayed with the infiltrators for a while. He couldn't stand the way of life and he returned home. The inhabitants brought him back here. His physical health had deteriorated during the month he spent with the infiltrators. We are frightened that they will kill us if they return.<sup>150</sup>

Marie Nyiraneza, aged nineteen, from sector Gitumba, had been arrested on suspicion of collaborating with the infiltrators, when the commune office was attacked. She believes that she would have been released if the judicial police inspector had not fled the area. She described how the infiltrators freed the women at the *cachot*.

The soldiers' bullets stopped them from approaching the detention centre, where we were held, and from opening the door. We were all women accused of breaking the common law, except for one who was held for genocide. The infiltrators created an exit for us in the back wall and told us: 'Get out quickly and escape!'. Seventeen women came out, one by one. The bullets forced us to split up; I ran off with two girls. Together, we went to their home in Kagoga sector. The next day, we turned ourselves over to the commune authorities.

Only one woman, whose husband was an insurgent, failed to return. The infiltrators did not insist that the women accompany them, but Marie still fears that they will punish them for returning.

We are now afraid of being brutally killed by the infiltrators if they manage to return; they went to the trouble of freeing us and then we returned voluntarily. They didn't force us to go with them. Perhaps the men were obliged or were asked to go with them.

The fate of those who had spent time with the insurgents influenced Marie's decision.

I have seen some people who spent time with the infiltrators and who later turned themselves in at the detention centre. They were very dirty, weak and some of them were suffering from amoebic dysentery or tuberculosis.<sup>151</sup>

Commune offices elsewhere in the country have also been affected by the insurgents' campaign. On 16 July 1997, 113 prisoners detained in Rutsiro, Kibuye were freed. According to the assistant bourgmestre, Thomas Murenzi, about 200 infiltrators arrived at 5:30 a.m.; they killed five of the twelve soldiers present and also looted local shops. 105 of the detainees returned while eight chose to remain with the insurgents.

Not all the attacks have been successful. The commune offices in Kinigi were attacked on 24 January 1998 and 3 February 1998, but both times the RPA had been told of the insurgents' intentions by former infiltrators and their plans were foiled. Determined to succeed, they returned a third time, initially concentrating on the nearby military base which housed the soldiers in charge of the commune office. They freed twenty detainees but did not damage the commune office. Elsewhere too, attempts have been foiled, for example on 13 March 1998 against the commune office of Kayenzi in Gitarama.

<sup>150</sup> Interviewed in Nyakabanda, Gitarama, 17 April 1998.

<sup>151</sup> Interviewed in Nyakabanda, Gitarama, 17 April 1998.

## Killing the Seeds of Hope: Violence Against Schools

A prominent feature of the insurgency, and one of the most devastating aspects, has been violence against schools and schoolchildren, both primary and secondary. The insurgents aim to create an atmosphere of terror so that parents are afraid to send their children to school, teachers are too fearful to report for work and schools are forced to close down. This strategy is part of the overall objective of preventing the government from functioning in the region by paralysing state institutions, spreading panic and causing loss of confidence in the state. But interviews with former insurgents also reveal that attacks on schools are part of the insurgents' policy of killing Tutsis. In many cases, the attackers demanded that the students separate into Hutus and Tutsis and were met by courageous solidarity. Hutu children who had the opportunity to save themselves were then killed alongside their Tutsi friends and classmates. The deaths of these children were tragic in themselves and for the country; by killing them the insurgents aimed to deliberately crush the seeds of hope for future unity and peace in Rwanda.

Aimé Haba Barihuta has been the principal of the *Ecole Normale Primaire* in Nyange, Kivumu commune, Kibuye since July 1995. It is a secondary school which had a student body of 308. On 18 March 1997, insurgents killed six students and a security guard, and injured twenty others.<sup>152</sup> Two days later, African Rights visited the school and Kabgayi hospital where the wounded students were being cared for by their classmates who had survived the attack.

The school was attacked at 8:15 p.m. by men in uniforms. The uniforms were identical to those worn by the RPA. They first attacked the sixth year, then the fifth year and finally the fourth.

<sup>152</sup> The killings at Nyange secondary school were also investigated by UNHCR and their findings were similar to our own. However, in a report entitled *Rwanda, Ending the Silence*, issued on 25 September 1997, Amnesty International has reported a belief by "local sources" that the attack "was carried out by RPA soldiers." We have found no evidence of this; for a discussion of this point and others relating to the AI report of September 1997 and some of its other publications on Rwanda, see below.

Both the timing of the attack and the confidence with which the killers moved around the school indicated that they had some inside knowledge.

I would say that the criminals had a thorough knowledge of the school. They arrived just at the right time when everyone was together studying. They must have had guides.

Amongst the criminals was someone from this area. According to the students in the fifth year, who were attacked, one of the killers said to his victim Séraphine Mukarutwaza 'You are Tutsi. I have seen you accompanying your cousin during the day. Prepare yourself for I will kill you'. In the same class, a criminal recognised Marie-Hélène Benimana, and said to her 'I know you. Prepare yourself for I am going to kill you'. He didn't want to be denounced by this girl. She was from Kivumu.

The headmaster pointed out that assailants were able to wander around the school initially without arousing suspicion.

We were used to seeing the RPA soldiers inside the building. Apart from those who guard the school, there are others who guard the prison and who often come to visit our school for various reasons. We were the only ones in the whole region who had a generator and many soldiers came to recharge their batteries. The soldiers move about a lot and they often change.

Pierre-Célestin Ndagijimana, a sixth-year student, first noticed the group of men as he returned from the refectory.

At about 7:00 p.m., we saw three soldiers opposite the path which led to the teachers' residence. I didn't really pay much attention to them because I thought that they were RPF soldiers. They were all carrying guns; one of them had a grenade on his gun.

We were accustomed to seeing RPF soldiers in the building since three of them guarded our school. The commune prison where genocide suspects are held and which is guarded by soldiers, is less than 150 metres away. We often came across the soldiers. They even used to come to our school to recharge their batteries for their radio as we were the only ones with a generator.

Around 8:20 p.m. the 26 students of the sixth-year were still in the classrooms for evening studies. He was revising notes he had taken in class when Pierre heard the first gunshots and grenade explosions.

We started to panic because the shots seemed to be coming from where the three soldiers had been. Our classroom was just next to this place. The courtyard was the only thing which separated us from these buildings.

Pierre was seated next to the window and wanted to see what was happening outside.

I had barely raised my head when the men shot into every corner of the classroom. One of them broke the window next to me; bits of glass fell on my head. They insulted us, saying: 'You idiots'.

One of the assailants threw a grenade through a crack in the window.

The grenade immediately killed Marie-Chantal Mujwamahoro and Béatrice Mukambaraga. Many were wounded. When the window had been smashed, the students ducked under the desks. The second man broke the other window and threw another grenade. Phanuël Sindayiheba and Emmanuel Urimubenshi were injured.

Two other men came in through the open door.

Both had guns and one of them had a small red bag. They shot around the classroom and at the windows. There was one in front of the other and he said in French 'Do you know me? You will see!' He shot Sylvestre Bizimana who was sitting just in front of me. He was seriously wounded and died this morning [20 March]. Dalva Mukanyangezi, who was behind me, was hit by a bullet and was seriously injured. She quietly cried, saying 'Yesu we ndafaye, nyakira' [Jesus, I am dying, take me]. They left after about ten minutes.

The killers attempted to make certain they had completed their task.

Before they left, one of them said: 'All the Tutsis, get up and follow me.' Nobody moved and the criminals left. We remained on the ground. No one said a word. There were the dead, and many were hurt. The room was covered in blood. It was really terrible. The gunfire came to an end after about twenty minutes.

The experiences of the fifth year students were equally horrific. Ananias Sibomana, nineteen at the time, also noticed the gunmen before the attack.

I noticed that they were new. I didn't recognize them at all. I thought that perhaps the old soldiers had been replaced by new ones.

He was studying when he heard the noise of gunfire.

There were 35 students in our class and we all ducked down under the desks. After a few minutes, we realised that the sixth year had been attacked, as well as the three RPA soldiers who lived at the school, opposite the school shop.

Ananias was soon made aware of the motives behind the attack.

After about ten minutes, a man dressed in a military uniform, hurried towards us with a red bag on his back. He was carrying a gun. He said 'You boys, you made us come back from Masisi, but now we are in Rwanda and you will see us'. I suddenly realised that they were the ex-FAR.

Again the assailants attempted to divide the pupils.

In our class, we were seated in three rows and in pairs. The ex-FAR soldier stood at the blackboard and said: 'All the Tutsis must go to one side and the Hutus to another. Nobody moved. We remained where we were, on the ground under the desks, just looking at the criminal.'

His colleague suddenly entered the classroom. He was dressed in a military uniform and was carrying a gun. He said 'I want to save the Tutsis outside and kill the Hutus!' Nobody moved. The first soldier then spoke and said: 'I am looking for Hutus'. We didn't respond. Then he added 'In that case I will go ahead and do my own selection'.

In the face of solidarity, the attackers became indiscriminate.

He looked to the back of the class at Séraphine Mukarutwa. He said to her: 'You, today I saw you wandering around Ku Ishusho (the commercial centre near the school). Death is running through you. Prepare yourself. I am going to kill you. You are a Tutsi'. He went over to her and made her lower her head. He shot her twice in the head and Séraphine's brain started to pour out. She had been reading the Bible and died instantly. Next to her

was Prisca Uwamahoro who was Hutu. The soldier looked at her face and shot her. This time he didn't succeed; the bullets hit her shoulder.

He went up to the first table, in the middle row. He told Marie-Hélène Benimana: 'I've seen you and I know you. Get ready because I want to kill you'. She said to him: 'Are you really going to kill me if you know me?' He tried to shoot her, but he had no more bullets in his cartridge clip. He went outside to load his gun. We took advantage of this to scramble out of the classroom. Just as we reached the exit, he came back with a fully-loaded gun. We tried to go outside. He grabbed Marie-Hélène and made her come back into the classroom. He shot her; she died.

Those students who were still able to run away. Ananias was one of those at the front.

He shot at us, but we scattered around. The two men threw grenades into the crowd of students who were running. Some of the students were hit, such as Valens Ndemeye, who died straight away. As I ran past the pigsty, the criminal shot at me, but missed.

Many young lives were brought to an end that day, but as Pierre and Ananias both testified, the students did not allow the gunmen to destroy their solidarity. The headmaster commended the pupils for their response.

The students from each class were truly courageous. Even though they were faced with such terror, and had seen their colleagues savagely beaten in front of them, none of the students obeyed the criminals who wanted to divide them into Hutus and Tutsis. A good atmosphere had been established in our school. A good relationship had been built up between the students, the teachers and the students and teachers.

In 1996-1997, we did not have any problems regarding security. The students all worked together and were united. There was a great solidarity between the Hutus and the Tutsis, even to the point of sacrificing their own lives as shown the day before yesterday.

This resistance to the demands of the attackers extended throughout the school. Although the eldest pupils were the focus of the attack, the assassins also came to the fourth year classroom. Césalie Abimana, sixteen at the time, described a man dressed in military uniform, with a green and yellow cloth around his neck and carrying a gun and grenade, with a long sword hanging from his belt.

He stood in the doorway and asked where the Tutsis were. The student nearest the door said that there were no Tutsis in our class. He was lying. We heard the soldier's colleague calling him: 'Come and get the ones who are escaping'! He quickly ran to the fifth year classroom and we remained in our class. There were thirty of us and no-one was hit.

The students were not the only ones to suffer in the attack of 18 March. Jean-Paul Uwitonze, eighteen, is from Ngobagoba sector in Kivumu and worked as a cook at the school. By night he worked there as a security guard for the kitchen and refectory. That Tuesday evening, at around 7:15 p.m., he saw five men in military uniform as he went to lock up the refectory.

I just presumed that they were RPF soldiers. Just as I was going back to the kitchen to light the fire, they stopped me and asked me 'How many students are you preparing the meal for?' I replied that I didn't know the exact number. One of them was smoking a cigarette and he asked me if I was the one who served the meal. I told him that I put the food in bowls and big pans and the students served themselves. The one who was smoking insulted me and said: 'Go away! I don't want to see you again'. He was carrying a red bag.

Jean-Paul watched the soldiers going towards the school, then left to have a beer with other guards from the school building site. He then returned to the kitchen to check the food he was cooking there. Around 8:00 p.m. he heard gunfire and became aware of the danger.

Fifteen minutes later, I saw a student called Ananias Sibomana running. I was afraid and I started running after him. I went to Gazwandi's home, the father of Uwitonze. He was living below the school.

A few minutes later, Uwitonze, who was also a guard at the school, arrived. He had witnessed some of the killings.

He told me that the school had been attacked and that even the guard, Zibera, had been killed by the infiltrators with bayonets. He had cried out for help.<sup>153</sup>

The headmaster also spoke of the brutal attack upon the guard.

<sup>153</sup> Interviewed in Nyange, Kibuye, 20 March 1997.

Jean Zibera, from Nyange, shouted out for help. The criminals killed him in an atrocious way. He was still alive when they cut him into two with a bayonet. He was then disemboweled.

The apparently senseless brutality of the killings at the school was, in reality, a gratuitous element of a coordinated military assault. The assailants went from the school to a nearby hill from where they could wipe out the nearest source of assistance for the students: the RPA soldiers at the commune detention centre. Ildephonse Majyambere, fourteen, and his classmates had fled their first-year classroom when they heard the sound of gunfire. They scattered in different directions and Ildephonse hid near the pigsty in a furrow on the hill overlooking the prison. From there he saw the gunmen launching their second attack.

Men in military uniform set up a large gun on a stand on the hill just above us. The gun had something cylindrical on top of it. They also had a normal looking gun. One of the men used the large gun, the other the small one. They bombarded the commune prison. They didn't see us. They fired three shells at the prison.

They did, however, notice a crowd of female students as they tried to escape. They interrupted their task to shoot at them, hitting one of them in the foot.

They put down their guns and went down the hill. They went past us, but didn't see us. One of them asked the other if they would be able to find the right way. His colleague told him that they would come to a big road. This proved to me that he knew the area well.<sup>154</sup>

Ananias was also hiding near this hill and saw the five men, as well as their civilian supporters.

There was a gun there and two men were standing next to it. They bombarded the prison with bullets, possibly to stop the soldiers there from intervening. I saw five infiltrators. I also saw a crowd of civilians who were applauding the criminals and who were shouting: 'Hunt down the enemy, hunt down the enemy'. There is no doubt that they were supporting the infiltrators. They had come to loot. They were carrying swords and machetes.

The attackers achieved their desired impact. Not only were some students killed, but, in the ensuing chaos created by the assault upon the prison, the injured lost a lot of blood as they awaited help. The isolated location, lack of transport and lack of a telephone compounded the problem. The RPA intervened after an hour.

The effect of this attack upon the consciousness of the nation cannot be underestimated. Nyange school was one of the fragile seedlings of hope in post-genocide Rwanda. Hutus and Tutsis had set aside the painful emotions and conflicts provoked by the events of 1994 in order to work together for their futures. In the immediate aftermath, security was, of course, at the forefront of the students' minds. Césalie commented:

I want security to be tightened by, for example, increasing the number of RPF soldiers who guard the school.<sup>155</sup>

Ananias expressed similar concerns.

We are afraid. Security measures need to be reinforced.<sup>156</sup>

The involvement of civilians came as an additional shock to the children and heightened their fears, as Pierre explained.

I am very frightened. If I could find another school, I would leave Nyange. I have no doubt that some locals who live near the school know exactly who the criminals are. I'm sure they help them carry out their tasks by giving them information and concealing their identity.<sup>157</sup>

Despite their apprehensions, the Nyange students eventually returned to their school. But the following month, a school in Satinsyi commune, Gisenyi, suffered a similar fate. Around 1:00 a.m. on 28 April 1997, infiltrators killed seventeen students and wounded thirteen others at Muramba secondary school. They also murdered a Belgian nun, Griet Bosmans, the headmistress of the primary school. Ex-FAR soldiers and local civilians proceeded from a base at Ku Idome, in sector Mwendo, commune Gaseke. The primary goal of the attack was to kill all the Tutsis at the school.

<sup>155</sup> Interviewed in Kabgayi, Gitarama, 20 March 1997.

<sup>156</sup> Interviewed in Kabgayi, Gitarama, 20 March 1997.

<sup>157</sup> Interviewed in Kabgayi, Gitarama, 20 March 1997.

<sup>154</sup> Interviewed in Nyange, Kibuye, 20 March 1997.

Sister Marie de l'Annonciation Kakuze is the headmistress of the school of economics, commerce and accounting in Muramba.<sup>158</sup>

I was woken up by gunfire at around 1:00 a.m. Bullets were being shot into the corrugated iron sheets of the roof of the nuns' building. Then I heard the metal door to the nuns' quarters being forced open. They reached my bedroom; I hid under the bed. I heard them come in, saying: 'I wonder if anyone is in here?'. One of them poked a cane under the bed to see if anyone was there, and discovered me.

Their priorities quickly became apparent.

Their first demand was for money. I told them that the money was in the bank, because of the insecurity.

The men then asked Sr. Marie to take them to the storeroom, but some of their colleagues were already looting it. Increasingly frustrated, they took her to the director's office, and demanded to know where the money was kept. Finding nothing but office equipment to steal, they then dragged Marie to Muramba primary school, located next door, where they found the Belgian headmistress, Griet Bosmans. Again they demanded money, and she reluctantly gave them the key to the safe. Satisfied with the money they had found, they told Marie that they would spare her life.

One of them came back and said: 'We have taken large sums of money, because of this we don't need to carry out "the other thing".' Suddenly, another man arrived from the direction of the infirmary and told everyone: 'The others have finished'. They left, leaving the nun and I alone.

After they left, Sr. Marie and her companions discovered that Griet Bosmans had been shot and was badly wounded. The shooting continued around the school, but seemed to be moving further and further away. Unable to call for help for lack of a telephone, the nuns awaited the arrival of the soldiers from the nearby military post at Muramba. They finally arrived at around 3:00 a.m., but at about 5:00 a.m. Griet Bosmans died. Convinced that the infiltrators had gone, Sister Marie then returned to her own school to see what had happened. She ran into a group of tearful girls

<sup>158</sup> The testimonies about this attack are based on transcripts from interviews broadcast by Radio Rwanda.

who told her how some of their classmates had died. Later, Marie discovered the sequence of events.

I found out that they had asked the students to divide up along ethnic lines, the Hutu on one side, the Tutsi on the other. The students refused, saying they didn't know what ethnic group they were, except for the fact that they were Rwandese. After that, they shot at the whole group.

Sister Marie's testimony is backed up by Providence Muhorakeye, a student in the fourth year of the economics and commerce course.

I was woken up by the sound of shots and the light of torches. I wanted to close the dormitory door but they had already come inside. They forced us to come outside, and began to beat us, telling us to split into two Hutu and Tutsi. We refused. They beat us badly and took one of us off to show them the nuns' convent. Those who were still there said in French: 'Kill them all'. Suddenly, they shot many bullets in our midst. I fell to the ground, without being injured, and the bodies of my peers fell on me. Then they went off and banged on the doors of the other dormitories, wanting to shoot the students there. The children refused to open the door.

Providence described the men, only part of the total force which arrived in Muramba that night.

In addition to guns, these assassins carried several machetes, *massues* and spears. Some were in military uniform; others wore clothes of different colours. There were many of them. I can only estimate the group which attacked our dormitory, about sixty men.

It is clear that the children's rejection of the ethnic ideology of their assailants made them very angry. It is also the one positive factor which emerged from the tragedy.

Germaine Kamanyana, a sixteen-year-old student in her second year, was one of those in the dormitories which came under fire. Luckily, they had locked the door to their room.

I was asleep when I heard my peers shouting. I woke up saw a group of people in military uniform shining a torch through our window into our room. They knocked loudly on the door, saying: 'Open up or we will break it down'. We decided not to open the door, and I shouted for help. My shouting convinced them to stop knocking on the door. I heard them



move on to the next room. Then they came back and banged on our door, more than three times before a whistle blew to signal their departure.

Machrine Furaha was in the room next door to number seventeen, which the infiltrators found unlocked, and heard what happened before Providence and her roommates were gunned down.

They tried to open the door to our room, but ran into difficulties and moved on to the next room, number seventeen, which they found open. I didn't hear a question, but I heard the reply of one of the students: 'We only know each other as students. We heard several shots, and a few minutes later they were again banging on our door, which we still refused to open.

Eventually the killers decided to leave, as time was running out, and they were low on ammunition.

The insurgents' campaign of violence against schools continued into 1998. On the night of 24/25 March 1998, a year after Nyange, infiltrators launched a bloody attack on the *Ecole de Lettres*, a secondary school in Gatovu, commune Nkuli in Ruhengeri. Five students were killed and seven were wounded; three of them suffered serious injuries. The killings followed the dissemination of various tracts addressed to both the teachers and pupils, in which they were urged to leave the school. The students were no strangers to violence. On 9-11 May 1997, when certain sectors of Nkuli turned into a battlefield between the army and infiltrators, the school was closed for two weeks.

The tracts listed the "crimes" which the students had committed by remaining at school, and by helping the soldiers repair a nearby bridge which the insurgents had damaged.

We have warned you verbally to leave the school and stop lending your support to the enemy, but you have refused to listen. You will be responsible for the consequences. We have asked you several times to liberate this establishment, which we ourselves built, opening the way for an open confrontation between our forces and that of the criminal *Ruyenzi*, but you have refused to take our warnings seriously. Our impression is that you have become great *Inyenzi* yourselves. In a few days from now, few enough to count on the fingers of one hand, we will settle scores with any student or employee who is still in this establishment.

Stop trying to deceive us by saying you are there to learn. In reality you give strength to the enemy! Your job is to carry the bodies of

those who die by our bullets, to rebuild the bridges and tear up the crops... Yet all that does them no good. The *Inyenzi* you work for are about to disappear. We destroyed the bridges and you built them again. The peasant sowed his field, and you ripped up his crops, and many other *Ruyenzi* deeds.

If you haven't yet discovered the *Inyenzi's* cruelty we cannot run the risk of letting you put all Bahutu in danger. That is why we order you to return to your homes immediately, because your presence in this place is of no use. We repeat: there is no shortage of educated people. Many more will be born after you, and there will still be time to study. You are enemies of life! It is true that you share the blood of the Bahutu with the *Inyenzi*. We hope you know the punishment which we reserve for professionals! It will be twice as bad for those who do not return home.

The warning was repeated in another tract.

We demand that all students stay home, or return to their parents' house. When we meet someone contravening this order, they shouldn't try to explain themselves. We know what they are being taught in these schools. There is no advantage to be gained from pleasing the *Inyenzi*.

A curse on the student whom we see taking their bag to go to school. A curse on the student who, having read this communiqué, doesn't leave school before the fire bursts above them.

He who refuses to listen cannot refuse to see. Let he who has ears listen.

The fire burst on the night of 24 March when two armed men walked into the school, occupying separate classrooms. Innocent Maniragaba, a teacher and the prefect of the school, described the events that led up to the murders.

The distribution of menacing tracts multiplied because the pupils used to help the soldiers, positioned in Gatovu, by taking them wood to burn and water. In the eyes of the infiltrators, we were collaborators of their enemy, that is the army. Fortunately, the school year ended without any further incidents.

A letter arrived from the infiltrators in February 1998, advising the students to go back home because 'our school fees were being used by Kagame to buy weapons to kill our brothers'. This is what the infiltrators said in the letter. Once they realised that the letter was not having the required effect, they came one day into the school, at about 7.30 p.m., and said to the third year pupils: 'Why are you still here when we told you it

was not allowed, you fools!' They beat the students whilst saying this. Then they shot into the air and left.

They returned again, secretly, on 7 February.

It was about 9.30 p.m. They tied up the two watchmen with rope and went inside the school. There they took the storekeeper's own money and then forced him to open the shop. They took bags of rice, a bag of beans and nine twenty-litre cans of oil. Then they went to the where the bursar, Emmanuel Hagumimana, was living and beat up his wife and children and took all their clothes. The bursar was with me at the time and he didn't know that the infiltrators were there. As we were coming from the students' dormitories back to our residences, we bumped into the criminals. They stopped us and asked us who we were. We lied to try and escape death. I said I was a teacher and that the bursar was a pupil. They hit us lightly and said: 'We've been telling you to leave for a long time; what are you waiting for?'

The school reported these incidents to the army which increased the night patrols around the school. After patrolling for some hours, they would return to their positions located in the same sector, but a bit further away from the school.

The infiltrators continued to send us threatening letters, beat students and stripped them of their possessions when they went to school or came out of school. They also stole the school fees from some of the students on their way to school and they showed them the lists of students who were apparently collaborating with the soldiers.

The pressure increased on both the teachers and students.

On the night of 21/22 March 1998, the infiltrators attacked the families of three teachers and killed some of their members, including the wife and children of Etienne Tubanambazi, alias 'Chicago'. The same thing happened to the wife and niece of the teacher Karaha as well as the father, mother and sister of the teacher Jean-Baptist Nizeyimana. Despite their fear, the teachers carried on. Amongst the students there were some who were traumatised and others who began to despair.

A few days later, on the night of 24/25 March, the school discovered that the tracts were not mere threats.

24/25 March 1998 is an unforgettable date. At 8.30 p.m., when the students were busy doing their homework, the infiltrators suddenly appeared in front of the supervisors Vincent Ntezimana and Sophie Mategeko. They made them go into the classrooms for the sixth year B students' section of the primary school. They shot into these students, as well as the students in sixth year A in the same section. Two students, one from each class, died. The students from the sixth form and other classes, ran out. These students who ran past the fourth year section ran into another group of infiltrators who shot at them and killed three students and seriously injured others. The whole thing did not last longer than ten minutes.

When the men had left, Innocent and the headmaster, Emmanuel Senzira, arrived at the scene. The headmaster, accompanied by some students, went to alert the soldiers at the military post in Gatovu.

Before they could introduce themselves to the soldiers, the soldiers shot at them as they thought they were infiltrators. They quickly returned to the school, having failed in their mission. We had no chance of taking the injured to hospital until early the next day. The soldiers arrived at 5:40 a.m.

The insurgents had guides familiar with the school.

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**"There were, of course, some of our former students from the school amongst the infiltrators, such as Théogène Bazimaziki, alias 'Kingamba' from sector Rusanze in commune Nyakinama".**

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He finished his arts studies in 1992 at our school. He beat up some of the students and took the fees from others on their way to school. He also prevented some of the pupils from his own sector from carrying on their studies, such as Espérance Tuzakuzwanimana in the third year.

Unlike Nyange and Muramba, these insurgents did not ask the students to regroup along ethnic lines. Innocent saw other motives behind their action.

There was no question of ethnic segregation, although there are some Tutsi pupils in the predominately Hutu crowd. I think the infiltrators were aiming to do two things through this attack: to disturb the government by stopping all activities, such as schooling, and to fight against the collaborators of their enemy. As I said before, we used to sometimes help the soldiers by taking them water and wood for heating and the students also took an active part in rebuilding the Nanga bridge which had been destroyed by the infiltrators. The pretext that the children's school fees are being used by Kagame to buy weapons is without foundation. None of the money is taken by the Ministry of Education or any other institution. That money is used for the school.<sup>159</sup>

Vincent Ntezimana was a supervisor at the school. He and his colleague, Sophie Mategeko, were monitoring evening studies on the night of the 24th. Vincent was out of the room momentarily and left Sophie in charge of the economics students in the fifth year.

I was just coming out of the fifth year arts room when some people sprung on me and said: 'Put your hands up!' and then: 'Come here!'. I went towards them. I was wearing clothes which resembled school uniform, so they took me for a student and said: 'What are you still doing here?' They made all of us go into the sixth year B classroom in the 'Normale Primaire' section, along with one student who was coming back from the toilet. There were two men, wearing long khaki jackets. They wore small hats and each had a gun. They were dirty and used odd language.

We were forced into the sixth year B classroom. One of them immediately started to speak to the students in French, asking: 'What are you still doing here?' The students were afraid and the criminal shot several successive bullets at them. The students ducked under the desks whilst others tried to climb into the ceiling. We couldn't turn the electric light on because one of the gunmen was near the switch.

Once he had shot at the students, he went out and went towards the sixth year A classroom where his colleague had also just shot at the students and killed one boy and injured two girls. The other students of the other classes ran out and scattered. Those who went via the fourth year classrooms ran into other infiltrators who shot at them. Two students from

the sixth year Normale Primaire B class died on the spot and another one died thirty minutes later.

Théophile Ntamugabumwe, twenty, spoke of the students' refusal to follow the insurgents' ultimatums. He was head of his class in the Normale Primaire B section of the sixth form and comes from Gataraga in Mukingo.

We were certainly warned, but we didn't close the school. We didn't take the letters that seriously as we doubted that anything would happen. It was just seen as a form of terrorism.

The outcome of our rejection of the infiltrators' demands came to a head at around 8.30 p.m. on 24 March. I suddenly saw the two supervisors and a third year student coming into the classroom, looking scared. One or two seconds later, someone else followed them, armed with a gun and wearing a long khaki jacket and a hat. He immediately asked what we were doing here when they had been telling us to go home for a long time. He spoke in French. He immediately shot several times and then went out. One of the bullets had hit the electric light which was off. I think he left because of the darkness. We wanted to go out after him, but one of the students said: 'He's coming back'. I hid on the floor, next to the body of Pierre-Célestin Nzabakinira, and then I climbed into the ceiling. A few minutes later, I learned that they had gone and I came down. I went with the others to pick up the injured; we took them to the school shop. We spent the night in the bush, as we were afraid that the criminals would return.<sup>160</sup>

In hindsight, both students and teachers of course regret their failure to act upon the tracts. But many considerations had held them back, not least, according to them, the advice from civilian and military authorities that they should not give in to the infiltrators' blackmail by abandoning their school. The fact that their sector, unlike the neighbouring sectors of Ryinyo, Kintobo and Rukoma, was not known for having many civilians who supported the infiltrators, gave them an added measure of security. But most important of all perhaps, as Théophile said, was the apparent lack of alternatives.

The insecurity is regional; wherever we fled, the situation would be the same except that we wouldn't have a job [in the end]. There was less of a

<sup>159</sup> interviewed in Mukingo, Ruhengeri, 28 April 1998.

<sup>160</sup> interviewed in Mukingo, Ruhengeri, 28 April 1998.

risk of death at the school than at home. The rural areas in our préfecture are very dangerous.<sup>161</sup>

Corporal Laurent Nkurunziza, who became an infiltrator on 15 December 1997, was at the school on 24/25 March, manning an anti-aircraft machine gun position on a nearby hill. His testimony reveals considerable military preparations and the material motives that underlie attacks against schools. The insurgents were led by Captain Alfred Rusigi from Rwerere in Gisenyi, one of the best-known insurgents who was, at the time, commander of the operational sector known as Echo, now renamed Bethlehem.

Alfred Rusigi from sector Echo led the attack. He was with some of his men, including Lt. Murokore from Rwerere. There were five companies involved, including ours, which were there to reinforce the ranks from Echo. Four companies arrived at the school at 2:00 a.m. and began the operation at 5:30 a.m.

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“Commander Kaceri told us: ‘All the people that you find here, whether a student, a woman or a watchman, is an *Inyenzi*’. This was enough to make the infiltrators understand that there should be no pity”.

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The essential aims of the mission were: to get the students food supplies and any military equipment belonging to the soldiers protecting the school; and to take medicines from the school's sickroom. A large quantity of food, particularly rice, was found. It was the inhabitants loyal to us who seized it. Some students were killed, but I don't know how many because I stayed on the mountain with the anti-aircraft machine gun.

These motives have also led to the deaths of students elsewhere in the northwest. Fortunately, some operations have been foiled, based on intelligence provided by former insurgents. Dieudonné Musabyimana used to be an escort to Lt. Kazungu, one of the best-known insurgents in the northwest. He said that the attacks on schools are part of the insurgents' policy of killing Tutsis. He spoke of their plans for a co-ordinated strike against a series of schools in Rambura, Karago in Gisenyi.

When I left these infiltrators, Kazungu had already adopted the negative view that all Tutsis were the enemy and had to die. He prepared an attack of 200 people against the four secondary institutions situated in Rambura. They were the School Group Rambura for girls; Rambura for boys; the Normal Primary School of Kibihékane and the Agricultural Veterinary School of Kibisabo. Our intention was to isolate and kill the Tutsis, and if the RPA intervened, we were to retreat to Nyamutera to join our colleagues there.<sup>162</sup>

This plan was pre-empted by Dieudonné himself. He left the infiltrators and informed the RPA about it; they were then able to prevent its execution.

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<sup>161</sup> Interviewed in Mukingo, Ruhengeri, 28 April 1998.

<sup>162</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 26 September 1997.

## BEYOND SELF-DEFENCE

### ARMY ABUSES

Countless insurgents have been killed by RPA soldiers, and many RPA soldiers have met their deaths at the hands of the insurgents. We have not attempted to document the numbers of fighters dead on either side of what is, in essence, a war, even if it abides by none of the conventions. However, civilians have also been killed by the RPA. These incidents demand investigation and corrective action to put an end to needless suffering and to eradicate impunity from Rwanda's political system. The scale of the problem is difficult to estimate. Not all reports of army abuses are accurate about the numbers involved or circumstances in which killings have occurred—some have failed to acknowledge that infiltrators were among those killed or that some civilians died in the crossfire or due to misidentification. Many examples of killings in these situations are discussed in the following chapter. Although there is nothing to suggest that it is RPA policy to target civilians, some elements within the RPA appear to believe that terror can only be countered with terror—that if the infiltrators can threaten and kill those who refuse to cooperate, then so should the government forces.

At issue for the army is the problem of maintaining control over a force which has undergone a dramatic expansion and significant changes since the defeat of the interim government in July 1994. During the genocide and its aftermath the RPA is estimated to have almost doubled in size, from 20,000 to 35,000 in a matter of weeks as new recruits, mostly genocide survivors, poured into its ranks. Many of today's RPA soldiers have seen their families massacred and the few survivors reduced to poverty. A substantial number of former FAR soldiers and former insurgents have also been integrated into the army, making the overall figure closer to 55,000. Although this has been a relatively successful policy, there have been instances of ex-FAR soldiers deserting to join the infiltrators and other questions about divided loyalties. All those within the RPA are operating under difficult material and psychological conditions, with relatively low pay and high standards of behaviour expected of them by the government. The fact that many of the local people support the members of the deposed regime, and have relatives among the ex-FAR and Interahamwe, is a source of considerable tension.

However, killings by RPA soldiers in the northwest constitute a serious problem for the administration, beyond what could have been anticipated. They have heightened ethnic tensions in the region and beyond. These incidents alongside a more general failure of the RPA to prevent the deaths of civilians during search operations has caused some to join the infiltrators' and many more to support their cause, prolonging the conflict. The army has made efforts to increase discipline within its ranks, trying soldiers accused of massacres or for failing to come to the assistance of populations in danger, and even imprisoning senior officers. The army's decision to punish wrongdoers has not been universally popular, but it demonstrates commitment to preventing the recurrence of RPA killings and this is to be welcomed and encouraged.

### Search Operations: From Tracking Down Infiltrators to Killing Civilians

Following an attack by the insurgents, it is common for the RPA to launch search operations of the local area. The most serious human rights violations by RPA soldiers in the northwest have taken place where search operations intended to identify infiltrators have descended into indiscriminate attacks against civilians living in their homes or gathered together in groups. Residents in the region acknowledge that the army cannot distinguish insurgents from civilians during open battles because of the insurgents' strategy of hiding amongst civilians. But they see no justification for the harsh tactics which have been used in many of the search operations.

#### *Kigombe Commune, 2-3 March 1997*

In Kigombe commune a search operation led to the loss of 152 lives. The killings by soldiers of the 5th battalion followed an incident the previous day, on 2 March 1997, when infiltrators shot at four vehicles near Musanze secondary school in Ruhengeri, killing some of the passengers. The vehicles were driving along the Gisenyi-Ruhengeri road at about 6:15 p.m. Déo Mutabaruka Nyirigira is the representative of the Rwandese Office of Information (ORINFOR) in Ruhengeri. He was in town when the events took place.

On 2 March 1997 at about 6:15 p.m., the infiltrators moved into position, wearing clothes which were similar to those worn by the communal policemen. They divided into three groups next to the Ruhengeri-Gisenyi road, at Musanze near the Musanze School of Sciences. Their objective was to fire at all the vehicles which passed along this road.

The first vehicle to pass along had come from Gisenyi. It was a white Toyota belonging to the Ministry of Finance carrying a tax inspector called Edouard and his driver. They were shot several times and died in Ruhengeri hospital. The next vehicle had the name 'Mitrig' on it and belonged to the BRALIRWA brewery. The passengers included the commercial director of BRALIRWA, the wife of the military commander of Ruhengeri police station and others. Three people were wounded; the driver managed to remain conscious and keep going despite the bullets. The third vehicle to pass was a blue Daihatsu van belonging to a shopkeeper. This one was transporting crates of beer and carrying two people, who did not get hit by the bullets. The fourth and final vehicle targeted by the infiltrators was a yellow Toyota transporting potatoes. The person inside was killed. After thirty minutes, the soldiers came to find the culprits, but they had already disappeared amongst the local population.

The next morning, the army were still looking for the infiltrators responsible.

[The search was] carried out by the fifth battalion under the command of Major Claver Rugambwa. During this operation, locals from Kabaya sector in Kigombe commune were killed.<sup>163</sup>

At the time of the interview, Major Claver Rugambwa was under detention by the military police in camp Kanombe, Kigali. He was imprisoned the day after the operation in Kigombe, on 4 March 1997, but said he does not know how the civilians were killed. He spoke of the events leading up to his arrest.

On 2 March 1997, at about 6:45 p.m., infiltrators shot at vehicles on the Gisenyi-Ruhengeri road, at a place called Musanze. After we had heard these shots we sent soldiers to the area, where they arrived after the infiltrators had left. One group of soldiers pursued them, whilst another took care of the wounded, taking them to hospital in several vehicles, including my own.

<sup>163</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 4 September 1997.

It was getting dark so Major Rugambwa decided to postpone the search operation for the infiltrators until the following day, but he left soldiers to patrol Musanze. At around 4:00 a.m., Major Rugambwa was informed that five of the soldiers on patrol had been shot at and one had been killed. He cleared a search operation with his superior, Lt. Col. Nzaramba, and it began the following day in the sectors of Kabaya and Musanze.

I told those of Kabere I and Kabere II to stay on their guard and watch out for any infiltrators escaping from the operations in Kabaya and Musanze. I went to Kabere myself, and was informed by radio by Lt. Jean-Bosco Rutikanga, in charge of the Kabaya operation, that they had identified a group of infiltrators, who had wounded one of his men. I encouraged him to continue the pursuit, and told him I would send a vehicle to pick up the wounded man. I had asked the soldiers to round up the civilians in Musanze at the school there, where I found many of them on my return from Kabere.

The operation in Musanze sector did not lead to the identification of any infiltrators, and this allowed the peasants to be gathered together at the Musanze school.

He said the search for infiltrators ended around 3:00 p.m. when he called a meeting at Musanze secondary school.

I explained that collaborating with the infiltrators was a crime. Then préfet Ignace Karuhije arrived and spoke to them. After he had left I carried on with the meeting, until one of my subordinates arrived and told me of reports that civilian bodies had been seen in Kabaya. Having heard this news of civilian casualties I gave Lt. Kagarura and Sub-Lt. Kabango, both in intelligence, the task of investigating the events. As it was night, they promised me that they would begin their inquiries the next morning.

The following day, Lt. Col. Nzaramba summoned Major Rugambwa to Mukamira.

He questioned me about the operation, which according to him had led to the deaths of a large number of civilians. I explained what I knew of the situation, without knowing any details, since my two investigators had yet to report back to me. I was put in detention at 8:00 a.m. that morning.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 5 November 1997.

Dominique Bakunzibake lost his sons in the killings at Kigombe. He is a 65-year-old nurse from cellule Bushozi, sector Kabaya. On the morning of the search operation he was at home with his family as part of a week of mourning for his wife who had recently died. Around 7:30 a.m. two RPA soldiers came to his house looking for someone suspected of being an infiltrator who had just fled there.

It was true that Laurent Komayombi's son had just arrived at my house, fleeing from these soldiers. I brought him to them and they made him sit down in the sitting room with some members of my family.

- Léon Munyanza, my son, head of personnel at ICRC;
- Jacques Emmanuel Nambaje, my son and a student;
- Jean de Dieu Nteziyaremye, alias 'Mupewa', related to our family by marriage.

After some time the two soldiers made the four of them stand up and ushered them outside. I thought that they were looking for infiltrators, and had to seize all strangers in the local area. I told them: 'These three children are mine. They are mourning the death of their mother!' One of these soldiers was furious and replied: 'Old man, go back into your house.'

They drove them a little way from the house to a banana plantation where they killed them, some with *massues* and some with bullets. The sad news was confirmed to me at 2:00 p.m. I went to collect their bodies. I identified the body of my nephew, Marcel Munderere, as well. He had been repatriated in November 1996. The soldiers had taken him from his mother's house.

Two of the army commanders attended the burial of Dominique's sons.

We collected all the bodies at about 4:00 p.m. and buried them the following day at 3:00 p.m. in the presence of Col. Kanyarengwe [chairman of the RPF until February 1998] and Lt. Col. Nzaramba and Lt. Col. Munyakazi. These two colonels were responsible for this region and said that the killings had been carried out without their knowledge.

Some time later, I heard that the commander of the battalion who was responsible for the massacres had been imprisoned. As for the inquiry,

I was contacted by some military people carrying out the inquiry, as well as an employee of the public prosecutor's office.<sup>165</sup>

The killings also affected other cellules of sector Kabaya. Floride Nyirahabimana is the *responsable* of cellule Rukereza, sector Kabaya in Kigombe. She also witnessed the army operation on 3 March.

The bloody military operation, conducted by the army in certain cellules of our sector, was preceded by an attack by infiltrators near the Musanze school. The next morning, at about 7:30 a.m., soldiers arrived and spread out throughout the sector, mainly to the right of the road linking the town to Nyakinama. The sector as a whole was not the target. The soldiers entered some houses, looking especially for men. Gunfire lasted from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. There were 137 victims, more or less; all but three of them men.

Among the victims were four members of the family of Dominique Bakunzibake, an employee of Ruhengeri hospital. Dominique himself was spared. He had been the bourgmestre of Kigombe in the past, and his wife, Berthe Nyiraruhengeri, was the older sister of Aquiline, the first wife of Col. Alexis Kanyarengwe, the chairman of the RPF. Berthe Nyiraruhengeri had died four days previously, and the four people killed were there for the week of mourning following this mother's death.

The names of other victims I can remember are:

- Kibogo, the son of Bamazeyo from Bushozi cellule who was mentally ill;
- Cassien, son of Komayombi from cellule Bushozi;
- Théogène, Cassien's brother;
- Faustin Mvukiyehe, son of Rugiracyane from cellule Kaboro;
- Modeste, son of François Mutwe from cellule Bushozi;
- Belancille Mukasine, wife of Gapfuyekubaho from cellule Bushozi. She was killed with her son, Hakiza;
- Mukamajoro from cellule Bushozi;
- Bicumupaka, son of Munyakabere from cellule Burera;
- Bazamanza, son of Girukwayo, a cook with the ICRC;
- Athanase and his brother, sons of Paul, from cellule Bushozi;
- Sendegeya, son of Kabiigi from cellule Bushozi;
- Gaspard Sebannyi from cellule Kaboro;
- Bazirake, son of Mpanye from cellule Kaboro;
- Bebeyi, son of Alphonse Mijago from cellule Rukereza.

<sup>165</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 4 September 1997.

After these murders we came and collected the bodies which were scattered around and returned them to their relatives. I personally participated in the funerals of twelve of the victims. Colonel Kanyarengwe intervened quickly that day. He led a meeting at the office of the prefecture to condemn this ignoble and cowardly act committed by the soldiers. Apparently they acknowledged their responsibility and asked forgiveness. They say their commander has been arrested.<sup>166</sup>

Major Claver Rugambwa recognised that there are situations in which the actions of soldiers are unacceptable.

I cannot deny that there are soldiers who would intentionally kill an unarmed civilian, without any proof that they were an infiltrator. This is regrettable, and fortunately there is a process of judicial enquiry, should there be any tangible proof of guilt. But I don't know if this was the case during the Kabaya operation, since I was arrested before finding out. I do know that some soldiers were arrested following the Kabaya operation, and I hope that justice will be done if such events did indeed occur.

As for those who died during actual fighting, they were either killed by our bullets, or by those of the infiltrators.<sup>167</sup>

Five officers, including Major Rugambwa, and a soldier were arrested. The other officers included a lieutenant and three sub-lieutenants. On 1 December 1997, they were sentenced by a military court. Major Rugambwa was sent to prison for three and a half years and his co-detainees each received a five year prison sentence. In a subsequent interview, Dominique expressed his disappointment in the sentences, saying that "ordinarily, the sentence for a killer is death". Whilst the legacy of the genocide remains an open wound, this is one more indication of the potential of the insurgency to exacerbate an existing political and social cauldron.

### *Mayhem in Kanama, Gisenyi 8-11 August 1997*

Soldiers have been accused of deliberately killing civilians thought to be collaborating with the infiltrators. They have also been accused of stealing money; or looting extensively from residents following an attack. At Mahoko in commune Kanama, there is considerable evidence that the

soldiers were involved in all of these criminal activities. Indeed the events at Mahoko prompted a personal visit to the area by the Minister of Defence, Major-General Paul Kagame. About a dozen army officers, including one lieutenant-colonel, have also been arrested.

As described above, insurgents arrived in Kanama on 8 August to free detainees; one of the teams also raided the marketplace of Mahoko, second only to the main town as a commercial centre in Gisenyi. The violence started at 10:00 a.m. and was contained after the RPA intervened. César Mbarushimana, a local shopkeeper, described the behaviour of some of the soldiers who returned to loot in the afternoon, together with civilians and a communal policeman.

At about 4:30 p.m. the hostilities came to an end and the looting started. It was mostly carried out by civilians intermingled with a few soldiers. I don't really blame them for having killed some peasants, because their deaths were caused by the presence of the infiltrators who were amongst them at the marketplace. What's more, the infiltrators weren't wearing clothes which distinguished them from the civilians. Some peasants, including one called Jaz, were sympathisers. I saw him myself, going up to the infiltrators empty-handed when they were near his house.

Others were also targeted by the soldiers, including Etienne Cabaretier. He was accused of collaborating with the infiltrators over a long period of time, so the soldiers took him out of our group and killed him. Mathias Nahimana was killed by the soldiers as well. Mathias was definitely an accomplice of the infiltrators because when they arrived in the marketplace, one of them went into Nahimana's warehouse with him. As he went back up near his door, Nahimana was watching the infiltrators in the marketplace and lifted his hand to make a signal. I don't know the significance of the signal. When I came out of hiding at 4:30 p.m. I found his body spread out in front of his house, along with other bodies whose faces I didn't recognise. I thought that they were the infiltrators' bodies as one of them was wearing a dirty jacket. An old man called Gisaza was another victim.<sup>168</sup>

César said that there was a well-known body of support for the infiltrators in Mahoko where, he added, shopkeepers have been keeping MRND flags ready to raise in case of victory by the infiltrators.

<sup>166</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 31 August 1997.

<sup>167</sup> Interviewed in Kanombe, Greater Kigali, 5 November 1997.

<sup>168</sup> Interviewed in Kanama, Gisenyi, 2 September 1997.



Alphonsine Nyiratabaro of cellule Mahoko was Mathias Nahimana's wife. She acknowledged that her husband had long been suspected of collaborating with infiltrators. She said he had been arrested on five occasions, and interrogated. She said that on the day of the attack in Mahoko, he had hidden with four others in the storeroom. As the fighting came to an end, Alphonsine heard the soldiers arriving and telling her husband to open up.

I heard my husband's voice saying: 'This is my home'. The person who was addressing him, said: 'Sit down'. I couldn't see them. I heard a lot of gunfire near the door of our house, and afterwards I heard people dying. I thought that my husband and his companions had been killed, so I told a woman to draw back the curtains of the window so that I could try and see. There were five bodies on the ground:

- o My husband, Mathias Nahimana, a shopkeeper;
- o Munyazikwiye, a butcher;
- o Emmanuel, from Rwerere;
- o Charles Kubwimana, Kambogo's son;
- o Athanasie, Maburakindi's daughter.

The killings did not end there. Marie Nyirandakize also lives in cellule Mahoko. She is the mother of Mathias Nahimana and Jonathan Gisaza, his brother who was also killed on 8 August at the hands of the soldiers.

After the soldiers had killed Nahimana, they killed his brother Gisaza right next to the door of the house. Gisaza had been repatriated in November 1996 and he was not really against the regime. However, I know that his elder son had been amongst the major genocidal criminals of Mahoko. He had a gun, and when his father tried to stop him, he threatened to kill him.

Following the killings, the army returned; this time the army soldiers were intent on only one thing. Alphonsine spoke of their visit to her home.

A group of soldiers questioned us, to find out the owner of the house. I introduced myself and they told my companions to go and join the others at the roundabout. I was told to stay, and the soldiers asked me where the money was. 'There is none', I replied. They were furious and frightened me. I showed them the bag I was carrying. Inside, there was some money I didn't know was there.

One of them kept threatening me, and said: 'Show us where the money you keep in the house is.' I replied that there was none and that the money had been in my husband's pockets. When they asked me where he was, I showed them the body, lying not far from us. 'Does he really have money lying there?' the soldier asked, I said he did.

They sent me to join the other civilians gathered at the roundabout. Eventually they told us to go back home. When I got back, my husband's pockets looked as though they had been searched. There was 400,000 francs missing, which had been kept in the house, and new clothes had been stolen.

Civilians, including women from the area, joined in the looting that had been started and sanctioned by the soldiers.

During the whole of Saturday, soldiers and civilians looted shops. On Sunday, at around 7:00 a.m., the remaining contents of my house were stolen, including sofas, a table from the sitting room, a double mattress, three drums of palm oil and bags of sorghum. The looters were two women I knew. The palm oil was worth 210,000 francs. I was left totally destitute.<sup>169</sup>

Marie also suffered from the looting.

They took us to the roundabout so that they could loot without us seeing them. Twenty-two bags of sorghum and ten bags of corn were stolen from Gisaza's house. Our house was also looted. There is no mattress on the bed and the radios have been stolen. On Saturday 9 August, the soldiers stole beer.<sup>170</sup>

The violence in Mahoko continued for several days. Two days after the first battle between army and infiltrators, Védaste, the driver for Col. Stanislas Biseruka, was killed by soldiers in what appears to be a murder motivated only by money. Suleiman Dieudonné Iyamuremye, Védaste's brother is a businessman from cellule Gitebe, sector Muhira, commune Rubavu in Gisenyi. He explained that Védaste was on good terms with many of the local soldiers, and indeed that one of them had stepped in to save his life when Védaste was threatened by the communal police chief, who was involved in the looting. Suleiman recounted the events of 10 August 1997.

<sup>169</sup> Interviewed in Kanama, Gisenyi, 2 September 1997.

<sup>170</sup> Interviewed in Kanama, Gisenyi, 2 September 1997.

At 8:00 p.m., a soldier called came to my house to ask for a Fanta. My cousin, Jacqueline, gave him three bottles of Fanta. Two minutes later, two soldiers came and told my little brother, Félicien Gatabazi, that they needed Védaste. Gatabazi asked Janvière, Védaste's daughter, to go and speak to her father. Védaste's wife appeared and asked why these soldiers were looking for her husband. They replied: 'We want him to take us somewhere in his van'.

Védaste came out, and the soldiers told him what they wanted. Védaste replied that not only was it night-time, but that his vehicle had problems as well. The soldier was furious and said: 'If you refuse to do it, give us some money instead'. Védaste asked him: 'To pay for the taxi?' But the soldier replied: 'Give us all your possessions'.

Another of Védaste's younger brothers, Frédéric Karangwa, was in the kitchen. The two soldiers hadn't seen him and he followed all their movements and the discussion with Védaste.

Védaste made it clear that he was not going to give them any money, and the soldier forced him and his wife to sit down. Védaste's wife, Emérite Kampunda, was overcome by fear and gave the soldier the sum of about 300,000 francs. Védaste told him that he could do what he wanted but that he 'wouldn't get any more money'. The soldier immediately shot Védaste and his wife and they died on the spot. The other soldier, who had stayed inside the house, shot the following people:

- o Jacqueline, our cousin;
- o Janvière N'yanawase, Védaste's only daughter, aged four;
- o Shumbusho, our younger;
- o Our younger brother, Félicien Gatabazi, attempted to run away and received bullet wounds in the legs.

Two minutes later, I left the house to see why there was shooting, and I realised what had happened. The next morning, we found some soldiers at the house who were placed there by Captain Eugène Kasavubu. He had found out about Védaste's death during the night through my brother, Gatabazi. Gatabazi had met other soldiers at the Pfunda tea factory when he escaped. Védaste was the captain's friend. He took Gatabazi to the dispensary at the orphanage, after he spoke to him about what the killers had done.

According to Gatabazi, one of the soldiers was known by the name of 'TZ' [a common nickname for people who had lived in Tanzania]. The captain, Eugène, began searching for the killers, and had already arrested them by morning. According to him, the two who killed my brother were accompanied by another four, who had stayed outside the fence.

Personally, I think that these low-ranking soldiers killed my brother for his possessions. Védaste had been the driver for Col. Stanislas Biseruka since the end of the war. I would never have imagined that Védaste would be killed by an RPA soldier, in light of the fact that he was so friendly with members of the army. I would have expected the opposite—that he would be killed by infiltrators.<sup>171</sup>

Suleiman himself was kidnapped on 18 January by three young civilians and is presumed to have died; see below for details.

Violence committed by individual soldiers, especially from amongst the lower ranks, is fairly commonplace and the army takes steps to deal with it. More surprising, and encouraging, is the army's willingness to imprison higher ranking officers who have been implicated in massacres, or responsible for operations leading to civilian casualties. Several Majors and two Colonels are in military prison in Kigali, awaiting trial for the massacre of civilians, as well as many other RPA soldiers. Major John Gashayija was the commander of the 21st battalion, operating in parts of Gisenyi préfecture.

On 15 August I was arrested along with two officers, Captain Eugène Kasavubu and Sub-Lt. Makaka, five soldiers suspected of looting in the centre of Mahoko and two who had killed the family of Védaste, Col. Biseruka's old driver. They all belonged to the 21st battalion, which I commanded. Two other officers from 15th battalion, who were supporting us in Mahoko, were also arrested.

I am innocent, but I believe I have been arrested because of the bad behaviour of the soldiers for whom I am responsible. That is military law. I have been interrogated twice by the office of the Military Prosecutor; I am waiting to hear when I will be court-martialed. In the meantime, I am living the hard life of a prisoner, but I hope this situation will soon end.

I don't think there were deliberate killings in Mahoko. As I have said, those who died in Mahoko did so in the crossfire across the marketplace. But I do unreservedly condemn the intentional massacre of Védaste's family, who was Col. Biseruka's old driver. Luckily, the two soldiers responsible have been arrested, and must answer for their actions. I think their intent was theft.

Then there was the case of the looting carried out by soldiers collaborating with the civilian population and the head of the communal

<sup>171</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 3 September 1997.

police force, for which five soldiers have been arrested. In conclusion I recognise two things:

- The killing of Védaste and certain members of his family on Sunday 10 August.
- The looting carried out by certain soldiers collaborating with civilians in Mahoko market.<sup>172</sup>

Major John Gashayija has been arrested, along with Captain Eugène Kasavubu, two lieutenants, three second lieutenants, a sergeant, three soldiers, the communal police chief and two civilians. Their cases are still pending.

#### *Rwerere, Gisenyi, November 1997*

Enias Mvuyekure, 48, a farmer from Nyarushyamba in Rwerere, Gisenyi, is one of the many civilians who left his home and followed the infiltrators, returning in April 1998. His testimony is a graphic account of the complex and impossible situation faced by the people of the northwest, confronted with a multitude of contradictory pressures.

It all started with the large influx of returning refugees, because it was a few months after this that we began to see armed men in civilian clothes. In February-March 1997, we heard that they were in Busumba and Cyanzarwe. We started to see them in our sector in May and June of that year.

I didn't flee in 1994. It is only in my present situation that I have started to move around. The Tutsis' retaliation in August 1997, following the infiltrators' attack at Mudende [see above], forced me to leave home and flee to the hill of Kivumu for several days. When we returned, we lived in unbearable fear; whenever there was an incident which harmed Tutsis, we were afraid that they would seek revenge on us again.

The situation got worse in November 1997 when a soldier was beheaded by the insurgents. I returned from the commune office at around 5:00 p.m. When I arrived at the centre called Ku Igora, I heard a lot of explosions. A few minutes later, I saw the infiltrators coming towards the hill, singing. They mixed in amongst the population, including women and young children, who were from the Ubugoyi region. They made their way to Ruvuzananga, Nyarushyamba. This incident stopped me from going home and I stayed with Rukundo from the Gora centre. I went back home the next morning. At around 9:00 a.m., the soldiers who were very angry,

came to separate out and kill all the men from Bazirete, I was able to run quickly and get back to the Gora centre.

Two days later we returned to see the damage and we discovered that seventeen people had been killed by the soldiers. Amongst the victims were Martin Ntibariganira, my younger brother; Karitejuru, my neighbour; Demokarasi, my neighbour; Chrisostome Sembagari, Nzacibinda; Sangira and Uwimana, the son of Sebusura. First they beat them up, then they shot them dead and threw them into the toilet belonging to Tubanambazi, the son of Ntibanyendera. They didn't kill any women. They also killed the goats which were there, but didn't take them away. When I returned they allowed us to eat the dead goats. It was clear to me that the killings of my brother and my friends were carried out as a result of the soldier being murdered by infiltrators in this area.

I returned to the GORA centre in Rwerere when I heard more explosions a few days later. Since then, whenever soldiers come to GORA, we all run away with the infiltrators, one of which is called Amos, the son of Joël Rwerekana. When moving around, we stayed in the sectors around GORA; we never went as far as the Congo.

Unable to endure life with the insurgents, Enias returned home in April, but in the process has become separated from his wife and child who have remained behind. He is afraid to go back and look for them, certain that he will be killed as a punishment for having abandoned the infiltrators.

#### *Bulinga, Gitarama, December 1997*

As discussed above, insurgents launched a major offensive to loot and destroy the commune office of Bulinga, Gitarama on 3 December and to release the detainees held at the local detention centre, including genocide suspects. They freed 670 detainees, of which 573 returned to the commune office. One of the men who was freed is Thomas Ngendahimana, who served as a sector councillor in 1994 and had been arrested on charges of involvement in the genocide. His wife, Dative Kakuze and one of his sons, Anaclet Kayitana, also detained in connection with the genocide, were also freed. Thomas' daughter, Emérithe Nizeyimana lives about ten kilometres from the commune office and described the raid on the commune office which led to her father's freedom and the aftermath.

These infiltrators wanted to set fire to the commune office, free the prisoners from the detention centre and loot anything they could from the

<sup>172</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 5 November 1997.

commune buildings. They wanted to take some inhabitants hostage to help them in their activities. They also intended to kill their opponents.

When they reached the commune office, they exchanged gunfire with the RPA soldiers there. There was a large number of infiltrators and that was how they managed to achieve some of their objectives. They freed the prisoners, some of whom immediately began to fight alongside the infiltrators against the RPA soldiers, to loot and even to kill those who didn't agree with the infiltrators' ideology. The RPA soldiers received reinforcements from Gitarama. The infiltrators were forced to retreat in the company of some of the prisoners who had assisted them in their activities. These prisoners carried the goods which had been looted. Whilst retreating, the infiltrators and the freed prisoners continued to kill certain targeted people. Some of the prisoners didn't want to go with the infiltrators. They went back to their homes.

Those who returned to their houses included Emérithe's parents and her brother.

They stayed at home. They didn't think about returning to the commune office and turning themselves over to the officials.

In the following days, the RPA went in search of the infiltrators who had organised the operation. They were also looking for the prisoners who had failed to give themselves up, including Emérithe's relatives.

When the infiltrators had been forced to retreat, the RPA soldiers combed the area to find any infiltrators who were hiding amongst the population. They were also looking for prisoners who had been freed during the attack. They turned up at our home. They found my father, my mother and my brother and took them away somewhere. I was very frightened because the soldiers were extremely angry. When they reached a wood not far from our home, I heard gunshots and I thought that the soldiers had killed them. I was right. I went to see and I found their bodies. We weren't able to find out the names of the soldiers who killed them, but we had seen them, even before the infiltrators attacked. These soldiers were with a policeman called John.<sup>173</sup>

We were not able, during our last visit to Bulinga, to establish the precise number of people who might have been killed under similar circumstances, or to interview others who lost relatives freed from the *cachot*. But it is clearly an issue that requires further investigation.

### *Ruhondo, Ruhengeri, 1 April 1998*

The 21st battalion have also been accused of atrocities in Ruhengeri. Christophe Bagaragaza is councillor for the sector of Ntarama in commune Ruhondo. He said that his area had hardly been affected by the insurgency until 1 April 1998, when soldiers were responsible for the deaths of 134 people.

The incident began with confrontations between soldiers and armed insurgents from commune Cyeru. The insurgents escaped, chased by one group of soldiers, but the local community was then devastated by the activities of a second contingent of soldiers who had just come from Mugamba sector in Cyeru, where they had also caused death and destruction. The sector of Karingorera in Cyeru was also affected. Altogether, about 300 are estimated to have died.

In Ntarama, the killings were apparently indiscriminate and began around 2:30 p.m., and affected the cellules of Nyabahondo, Kavumu and Buganji. The councillor believes that if he had not hidden, he too would have been killed.

134 people were killed in my sector, Ntarama; 75 were citizens of my sector and 59 came from the sectors of Ryandinze and Rusayo of Ruhondo commune, Mugamba and Kiringorero of Cyeru commune and other sectors in Gatonde commune. I also heard that the same soldiers had killed 90 people in Mugamba earlier that same day. They had also raided the contents of the boutiques in the centre of Kaguriro.

The attack by soldiers came as a shock to Christophe who is used to working closely with the army to identify infiltrators.

I have worked with the soldiers and our bourgmestre and have organised the arrest of at least 100 infiltrators who tried to come into our sector. These infiltrators included people carrying guns and grenades whom I had spotted within our community. There has never been a confrontation in my sector.

<sup>173</sup> Interviewed in Bulinga, Gitarama, 21 July 1998.

Inevitably the confidence of local people in the army and in the government has been severely damaged. Christophe said the soldiers were publicly beaten in an attempt to restore some of their faith.

On 6 April, a meeting was held in sector Mugamba where these soldiers were beaten severely with sticks. We were told that some died because of the beatings. Certainly one man looked close to death after he was beaten. The major in charge of the Ruhengeri military brigade and the préfet promised that legal proceedings would be taken against these soldiers.

Despite the punishments, it will take a long time to rebuild trust.

As the councillor, I continue to try to make them understand, especially the men, that what happened was purely the misconduct of these soldiers. I also tell them that this incident was never the wish of either the civilian or military authorities. I hope that in time they will understand me and will be able to maintain their desire to fight against the infiltrators.<sup>174</sup>

Those civilians who are struggling to come to terms with the grief caused by these soldiers include 16-year-old Evariste Munyaneza; he lost four close relatives. He was at home with his family on 1 April when he first heard gunfire coming from commune Cyeru. An hour later the army chased the infiltrators through Ntarama. The family stayed inside, but were not afraid at first, even when further troops arrived. However, it was not long before Evariste realised the threat.

Towards 1:00 p.m., government soldiers came flooding down the hills of Cyeru commune and into our sector of Ntarama. Since we thought they were chasing the infiltrators who had escaped among the farmers of Cyeru, and who were now heading in our direction, we stayed inside, assuming it did not concern us.

I took fright when I saw a soldier shoot a Cyeru farmer who was hiding in a prickly bush. I hid in the shower of my neighbour, Alfred Kazubwenge, and was joined by some women. The soldiers smashed the doors to search for the fugitives. We were discovered and ordered to come out.

One of the soldiers saw their fear as an opportunity for self-enrichment.

I had 2,000 francs in my pocket, I hid 1,700 francs. After I sat down, one of the soldiers asked for money. I handed over 300 francs, one woman handed over 500 francs and the others also gave until 2,500 francs had been collected. He threatened to kill us unless we gave him more money.

His superior arrived just in time and restrained the soldier.

This soldier, who was ready to shoot, was stopped by his superior, who carried a Motorola. This man urged us to go into the house while telling his soldiers to follow him.

But Evariste was too frightened to remain indoors.

As loud explosions could still be heard here and there, I left. A soldier saw me leave and run. He wanted to shoot me, but I was too far off. When these soldiers had left I returned home to check on my family. The door had been smashed. I noticed that everything inside had been broken. My father, Casimir Maganya, had been killed by a bullet to the head. My grandmother, Josephine Nyirambazande, and her grandsons, Macanire and Nikuze, both just five, were also dead. I also saw the bodies of Aloysie Nyirarufungo and her child of one year and a half. A family friend told me that Hingabugabo and nine members of his family were dead. Realising that all my family and my friends were dead, I regretted still being alive. I survived along with my mother Bernadette Nyiramusekura and two other children.

The soldiers came back by way of Kivuruga around 4:00 p.m. The next morning, the bourgmestre of our commune arrived. We fled because we thought that the criminal soldiers had come back. But when we realised that it was our bourgmestre, we returned to carry out the task of burying the dead.

Evariste spoke of the impact of the public punishments of soldiers.

On 6 April 1998, the commanding officer at Ruhengeri accompanied other officers and the préfet to a meeting about the incident concerning us. The main objective being to seek a pardon from us for the suffering of our families. Halfway through the meeting, around 11:00 a.m., we saw military truck bearing the legend TATA arrive carrying soldiers. We cried out that it was the very same soldiers who had made us suffer previously. The truck was followed by a smaller one full of large sticks. The authorities told us that these soldiers were to be punished in front of us, and then afterwards they would also be judged by a military tribunal. They were made to sit down on the ground, bare-chested and shoeless. They

<sup>174</sup> Interviewed in Ruhondo, Ruhengeri, 4 May 1998.

were beaten in a serious manner until all the sticks from the lorry had been worn out. Some of us took pity on these criminals to the point where we asked that those like the soldier with the Motorola, who had saved me, should be treated less harshly. But our requests were in vain. They were beaten for an hour and at the end, one of them was on the verge of death. We learned that he died when they arrived at Kivuruga, before they reached town. I don't think any of the killers escaped a beating. The meeting ended around 1:00 p.m.

We regained our trust in the state, but we will only be completely happy when those condemned to death by the judiciary are publicly executed. We certainly will not forget our dead, but we hope that those that survived will not be killed in the same way by the military.

Baptisto Sinaruhamagaye, aged seventeen, described the public lashing as "a gesture of appeasement", but did not see the punishments as any kind of retribution for the loss of his family.

This punishment doesn't mean that I will see the dead members of my family again. But, if I had any power, I would demand that all the killers be killed, in order to get rid of this culture. We have also been promised that these killers will be brought to justice.

Baptisto was in the centre of Kajevuba, selling bread, when he saw the soldiers shooting on a nearby hill. He immediately went home. He found that his mother had already left the house; only his father and brothers were at home. None of them anticipated trouble directly from the soldiers, and they sat outside.

A moment later, we heard the voices of soldiers not far from our house. They were calling after the people who were running away: 'Come back. We are on your side'. Two boys from Cyeru, who had been running away, came back to the soldiers, who asked them for money. At the same time, I heard shouts from some people from Cyeru who had taken refuge here. They were being killed with small hoes, which can be easily carried around.

Baptisto realised the danger the family were in, and went to hide in a nearby field. From there he witnessed the horrific murders of his loved ones.

Suddenly, at least five soldiers entered our property and demanded milk from my father. Not satisfied with the milk my father gave them, one of

them took a pot to get more milk from the cow. When the cow proved hostile, it was beaten. Some of them asked my father for wood to grill meat which they had taken from somewhere. After he gave it to them, my father rejoined the rest of the family. A soldier demanded money from my father. I think he gave them 19,000 francs. The soldiers continued to demand money; when my father said that he didn't have any more, he and other members of the family were beaten up by the soldiers. I witnessed this. First, they killed my sister, Dancille Zaninka, twenty, and then the others, using hoes. The soldiers collected the bodies and put them in the reception room of our house. Then, they collected dry grass with which they burnt them. At the end, a soldier came into the banana plantation where I was. I tried to hide myself adequately. Thinking that they were edible bananas, he cut three bunches. Finding them inedible, he went back. They stole our radio and then left.<sup>175</sup>

He survived along with his mother and two children but other members of Baptisto's family who died are his father, Semucyo and his four brothers, Ntakabura Gashakwa, eighteen; Mbonigaba, nine; Nkinamubanza, five, and Ndagije, two.

The officers and soldiers charged with the killings in Ruhondo and Cyeru have been tried and sentenced. Captain John Turatsinze was given a five-year sentence for "failing to control his troops"; Warrant Officer Dismas Bishoka got a 25-year sentence and Second Sergeant twenty years. Three officers were given the death penalty, one soldier got a life sentence and two soldiers got five-year sentences. One corporal and ten soldiers were each sentenced to one year in prison.

There are examples from other parts of the country. Gasasira, 41, is from cellule Gasura, sector Gihira, commune Giciye. He acknowledged that the infiltrators have killed many people, but complained about the tactics of the soldiers in their efforts to track down infiltrators. One of the victims was his own son.

A number of killings that have taken place in our sector have been carried out by soldiers. They sometimes kill people when they are carrying out search operations to hunt down the infiltrators. However, they have also killed even when the infiltrators have not carried out any terrible acts. That said, it is true that the infiltrators also kill innocent civilians.

<sup>175</sup> Interviewed in Ruhondo Ruhengeri, 4 May 1998.

On 9 June, the RPA killed fifty people in the cellules of Gihira and Gasura in our sector. My sixteen-year-old child, Ntihabakubyara, was amongst the victims.<sup>176</sup>

An RPA mission to search for and capture infiltrators led to deaths in commune Mbogo, Greater Kigali, according to Marie Mukarubega, the councillor for her sector of Ruhanya. She described how two young boys died during an RPA search and spoke of the events leading up to the incident.

Three infiltrators were discovered at the house of Kagaba. They were all armed and came from Tare commune; they were close relatives of Kagaba's wife, a native of Tare. Their mission was to sensitise the local population for the ex-FAR who were preparing an attack.

The soldiers found out about the mission. To seize the infiltrators in Kagaba's house, they waited for the day of the legal marriage of Kagaba and his wife. On Saturday, the day of the wedding, at 2:00 p.m, the soldiers arrived and found the three infiltrators there. Two fled; one was killed on the spot, along with Kagaba and his wife. The three children were spared by the soldiers.

The following day, soldiers mounted a search to discover if there were any more infiltrators in the sector. They ordered the residents to assemble in Shyorongi commune, while they combed the sector for infiltrators. Those who had not complied with the order were mistaken for infiltrators. The result was tragic.

The soldiers then began a search of the sector. They found two boys, Jean Mduwamungu from Bukoro cellule, Ruhanya sector and Harelimana from Ruhanya cellule, Ruhanya sector. The boys were scared and tried to hide. The soldiers suspected them of being infiltrators, but they were innocent. They stayed in the sector probably because they were afraid of the soldiers.

A visitor, who may have been unaware of the search operation underway, also lost his life.

Another peasant from Tumba in Byumba, who was on his way from the home of his grandfather, Gervais Rugirababiri, died. Because he had not

<sup>176</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 18 June 1997.

joined the other peasants at the meeting point, he was suspected of being an infiltrator. Nevertheless he wasn't one.

Moreover, those who have conspired with or housed infiltrators have been punished for their actions with death.

A few days later, the same Rugirababiri, the old man, was also killed by the soldiers who had found out that **two infiltrators, Haragirimana, alias 'Haragi', from Tare commune and Rugomwa from my sector had been regularly warmly welcomed at this old man's house. I witnessed this myself, but it was mainly Marthe, the wife of old Rugirababiri, who collaborated with these wrongdoers.**<sup>177</sup>

Denis Mashukane lived and farmed in Kabilizi, sector Rwanzekuma in Rwerere. When infiltrators initially arrived in their area, in February 1997, there were no RPA soldiers. "People were not killed in large numbers because the infiltrators singled out only the families of their Hutu opponents". Gradually, the army became aware of their presence.

The combing operations started and were sometimes characterised by an exchange of fire, as happened one day at Rusuri, Muhanda. From the time that the soldiers began their operations, there were three types of killings. There were the infiltrators murdering their opponents; the murders, during exchanges of fire, caused by one side or the other; and the murders, committed by the soldiers, of people suspected of collaborating with the infiltrators.

Denis recalled an incident when local residents died at the hands of the RPA after they had refused to point out the identity of infiltrators in their midst.

It happened in **Mukurizo, near the sectors of Nyarushyamba and Mukingo. Infiltrators were identified there. One day, the soldiers circled the area and told the people to point out the infiltrators. When they had not received any reply, the soldiers fired into the crowd. A large number of people died.**

It may be that some, or **even all, of the people concerned** approved of the **insurgents'** agenda. But **the soldiers should have been aware** that they were placing these people in an impossible situation. If they had followed their instructions in such a public manner, they would undoubtedly have

<sup>177</sup> Interviewed in Mbogo, Greater Kigali, 28 July 1997.

invited reprisals from the insurgents. This hard-line approach led to many mistakes, particularly in 1997. Since early 1998, the RPA has considerably softened its approach to civilians who acknowledge, or are known, to have assisted the infiltrators or even those who have fought for them. It has adopted a less militaristic approach, and put more emphasis on the need to win people over politically. This is, to a large extent, responsible for encouraging thousands of ex-FAR and civilians to abandon the insurgents during the last few months.

Throughout the research for this book, it became apparent that the residents of the northwest have had two distinct experiences at the hands of the RPA. They value the protection offered by soldiers posted close to their homes, schools and commune offices. They may even be on friendly terms with them. But they fear those soldiers who come to their areas exclusively to carry out military operations in search of insurgents. Théophile Ntamugabumwe is a student in a boarding school in Gatovu, Ruhengeri, where insurgents killed five students in March 1998 (see above). His father was killed on 19 February 1998 at his home in Mukingo, Ruhengeri, during a search operation by the RPA. This has left him understandably bitter, yet he still spoke warmly of the soldiers who guarded them at school.

Every time there are attacks between the army and infiltrators in a region or area, the people are the first to be the victims. Also, when the infiltrators arrive on a hill that the army knows about, the soldiers carrying out search operations and locals always die.

The prime example is my father's death, Claver Segakuru. He died on 19 February 1998 at 12.30 p.m. We were eating at home with my father and brothers when we heard that soldiers were coming from the sectors of Muhingo and Rwinzovu to attack the infiltrators. We quickly went out of the house and fled with the people. My father fled in one direction on his own and he was caught by soldiers without my knowing. About ten minutes later, we heard shots from quite a close distance. He had been shot in the head.

At home, one will be killed by the soldiers or by the infiltrators if one refuses to collaborate with them. At school, however, the soldiers cannot kill us; they are more like friends. A political officer at the Sinai post near our school was more like a brother. He used to give me soap when I needed it, as well as other things. The only ones who can kill us at the school are infiltrators. If I go home, I can be killed by either. To solve this crisis, the government should create safe places for decent people so that the real infiltrators can be identified.

### *Abuse of Authority for Personal Advantage*

Some killings have also been attributed to soldiers who abuse their positions of authority to steal or to settle, by violent means, personal disputes or those of relatives or friends. These abuses have nothing to do with the conduct of the war, or with the army's agenda, but are simply criminal acts. In the following case, there is no substantial evidence that soldiers were involved. However it highlights the perception among local people that members of the army could be involved in the murders of civilians.

Juvéna Bizimana, 21, is from cellule Bugarama, Gisenyi. His two older brothers, who had returned from Zaire in November 1996, were killed on the night of 1 July. Before they left Rwanda in the exodus of July 1994, Charles Sibomana had been headmaster of Bukinanyana school, and Joseph Habimana was an administrator in the Ministry of Public Works. While they were away a Tutsi, Kamanzi Muyango, and his family came back to Rwanda, having fled to Zaire in 1959, and moved into their houses. When Charles and Joseph returned from Zaire, they found their home occupied and were forced to move in with their parents. After some time, Kamanzi invited the brothers to come back and share the house, which they did. They lived there from May 1997 until 1 July 1997, the night on which they died. Juvéna explained why he attributes his brothers' murder to soldiers acting in concert with civilians.

The night in question, unknown assassins came to kill my brothers, amongst all the people living at the house, without even disturbing the Tutsi family, including Kamanzi who was there. The killers didn't break in because no door was forced. We believe that the killers, who were probably soldiers, were let in. Our own house is not far away, but we didn't find out at the time since no firearms were used. From the evidence of the injuries, they were killed by swords and hammers. We found out when the *nyumbakumi* and this Kamanzi came to our house around 5:00 a.m. to tell us the news. The day after this happened the Tutsi family left voluntarily, with no encouragement from us, and moved to live in the town of Gisenyi. They left with the keys to the house. I think that my brothers were killed for their house.<sup>178</sup>

<sup>178</sup> Interviewed in Karago, Gisenyi, 27 September 1997.



The most commonly cited abuses by low-ranking soldiers almost always involve theft. On 17 January 1998, Sergeant Gaspard Mutabazi was publicly executed at the Ruhengeri stadium for the murder of Noël Twagirayezu, the veterinarian and agronomist for commune Kigombe, the previous day. He had stolen his motorbike. Noël was born in Zaire, but his parents were natives of sector Kabaya, commune Kigombe in Ruhengeri. He had studied veterinary science and agriculture. He had worked as a vet in Kigombe. But since December 1997 he had been put in charge of all agricultural services in Kigombe and had been given the motorbike to facilitate his work as an agronomist. Christine Mukampungu, an employee of the NGO Concern in Ruhengeri, is Noël's widow.

I arrived home from work at 5:15 p.m., and saw an armed soldier a few yards inside the enclosure. He turned his face away from me so as to hide his face. Not particularly concerned, I went inside. A few minutes later I heard the noise of my husband's motorbike, a Yamaha G100. I quickly went outside to clear the parking space of the jerrycans which had been left there. I went back inside, and heard several shots. I thought my husband must have been shot, and I went to the window to see where this had happened. I couldn't see anything but I heard my husband cry out: 'Oh Jesus, I am dying!'. I thought he might just be wounded, then I heard the sound of the motorbike departing. Then our neighbour, Rukera, a magistrate, knocked on the door and called to me: 'Your husband has been shot, he's dead'. I went to the scene of the crime with him, to check that he was dead, when an army Land Cruiser arrived. The soldiers asked what had happened. When they found out that the crime had been committed by a soldier who escaped on Noël's motorbike, they recalled having seen this bike on their way over, and left in pursuit.

The next day, at 7:30 a.m., a soldier called Turatsinze, who sympathised with our situation, came to tell us that the criminal had been arrested. Other soldiers came to commiserate, and confirmed that he would be publicly punished. At 10:00 a.m., whilst we were preparing for my husband's burial, the bourgmestre and the other officials invited the people to gather at the stadium. We delayed the funeral, and went along to the stadium. One after another, the préfet and military commanders spoke.

Shortly afterwards, Sgt. Mutabazi, who commanded a group of soldiers on Mount Nyamagumba, was executed. The senseless death, which was premeditated and carefully planned, appears to have been motivated by greed alone. Christine gave her opinion about the public accusation.

Personally, I didn't want him killed, because it wasn't going to bring my husband back. I would rather I had the chance to ask him a few questions, to see if he really had any reason to kill my husband. He should have just taken the motorbike, instead of killing my husband, especially as he apparently told his fellow-soldiers afterwards that his only aim was to steal the bike. I learned that this criminal had spent the morning looking for my husband at the abattoir and the market, before coming to the house to wait for him. The neighbours said that he had waited some time.

I am now alone with two orphans we adopted, and a woman who stays with me every night, so that I am not on my own.<sup>179</sup>

Corporal Romuald Kabiligi, aged 39, joined the RPA in 1991. He was accused of theft in commune Kanama, Ruhengeri, on 16 April 1998, while a member of the 101 battalion. He was arrested two days later. His battalion was active in Gaseke, Satinsyi and Kanama communes, Ruhengeri. He was in Mahoko, Kanama at the time of the incident. He gave his version of events.

Two days before my arrest, at around 11:00 a.m., Innocent, a soldier and my colleague from the 101 battalion, came to visit me at home (my wife's house) in Gashangiro sector, Kigombe. I was only at home because I was unwell. We stayed together until 3:00 p.m. Then, Innocent, in his military uniform and with his gun, and myself, in civilian clothes, went for a walk around the village. At about 200 metres from my home, still in Gashangiro sector, we heard people running away as if they were fleeing from us. We went to investigate the noise and we saw an old woman standing outside her house. She didn't reply when we asked her who had just run from there. When we approached the house, we saw two bags of beans, which must have weighed around sixty kilos. We thought that the people running away must have been infiltrators who had come to take the beans. We decided to take the beans with us rather than leave them for the infiltrators. We assigned two children to carry them for us and we carried on until we reached a spot where I left Innocent in charge of the children. I went home to get cigarettes and then to meet up with Innocent at Nduwamungu's, who owned a bar. On the way back from home, I met Innocent who told me that he had just sold the beans for 10,000 francs; he gave me half of the money. The next day, two soldiers arrested me. I was questioned by a judicial police officer in the afternoon. I admitted to the 10,000 francs and agreed to pay them back. They weren't able to find Innocent.<sup>180</sup>

<sup>179</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 7 February 1998.

<sup>180</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 29 April 1998.

Officer Stany is one of the soldiers who ordered Kabiligi's arrest. He explained why.

Corporal Kabiligi was publicly accused by the old lady whose beans were taken by extortion. This accusation was made during a meeting held by Lt. Gasana, in charge of the security of the town and the surrounding area. The old lady said that Kabiligi (whose name she didn't know), had beaten her first, and that he had also taken 7,000 francs from another local, and drink from another. Kabiligi's name was given as that of the soldier who stole, by other locals. When we got this information, Kabiligi was already under arrest on my orders. I had already been informed about the extortion committed by Kabiligi, who according to other information, was in the habit of stealing goods from the population.<sup>181</sup>

### *A Failure of Duty: Abandoning Civilians Under Threat*

A number of officers and soldiers have also been arrested for "failing to assist those in danger." There are several massacres documented in this book including the murder of Congolese refugees in Mudende in December 1997, where the victims have justifiably condemned the absence of soldiers. The reasons vary; sometimes the small contingents of soldiers have taken fright when faced with crowds numbering up to a 1000 people—armed insurgents, accompanied by civilians carrying machetes and swords. Other times, people have been left unprotected because soldiers left to respond to simultaneous attacks against other targets nearby.

There is no doubt that the military in the northwest is under intense pressure; the demand for protection is so widespread that it is certainly not possible for the army to deploy soldiers on a permanent basis at every transit camp, commune office, school, hospital, convent and the residences of government officials. Given the nature of a guerrilla campaign, and the local support enjoyed by the insurgents in the northwest, the army cannot be expected either to predict or to intervene swiftly in every assault. However, this does not explain or excuse the conduct of the soldiers on several occasions, and particularly in at Mudende in December 1997 and at Nkamim camp in June 1998.

Both Staff Sergeant James Musasizi, the Mudende commander, and Major Andrew Kagame, the battalion commanding officer, have been arrested for failure to provide security. In their defence, it has been argued

that the soldiers had gone to respond to an ambush. This nevertheless raises disturbing questions. There were 17,000 people at the camp, they were surrounded by a largely hostile local population, they had repeatedly complained about the small contingent guarding them and asked for greater protection. Most important of all, they had suffered a massacre only months before. The decision to leave them without any protection, for almost the whole night, is difficult to comprehend and shows, at the very least, poor judgement. The absence of any soldier from Mudende for more than four hours, and the eventual intervention of the commander from Rwerere, has led the refugees to draw their own conclusions. Only a careful and thorough investigation will reveal whether their analysis is correct.

Berchimas Mvundabandi is one of the many saved by the few grenades the refugees had kept. But his wife was killed when she dashed out of the tent. His anger is directed at the military in charge of the camp.

The soldiers who were guarding the camp did nothing to protect us. I say they betrayed us, because we were saved by a boy with one grenade, whereas the soldiers had many weapons. The attackers killed until morning. What were they waiting for to help us?

Pérouse Nyirazibanje, 38, is a farmer from *groupement* Gisigali in Rutchuru. Her six-year-old nephew was killed and two other close relatives were wounded.

The attackers came from all sides and began killing and burning the tents. They killed without opposition until morning, when soldiers from Rwerere commune came to help us. The commander did nothing to save us.

James Musasizi visited the camp on 11 December during the burial of some of the victims. Some refugees insulted him, but others wanted to do more than to insult him, according to Damascène Gashabuka, whose wife was among the victims.

We wanted to capture him; the other soldiers stopped us.

Soldiers have also been accused of abandoning civilians in Jenda, Nkuli on 4 February 1998 when 34 people were murdered on the spot; nine others later died of their wounds. The overall commander, Major Jean-Bosco Kananga, Lt. Stephen Kayigumire, the in charge of the company

<sup>181</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 4 May 1998.

deployed in the area and a platoon commander, Sgt. Alexis Ndahiriwe, are in detention.

## BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

### THE DILEMMA FOR CIVILIANS

The people of the northwest are living in the midst of a guerrilla war, with no defined front lines behind which shelter may be found, and a constant and bloody battle for their support. The insurgents are determined to gain control over the local population—the educated and the peasants alike—in the knowledge that their loyalty is essential to success. They are content to use civilians as a shield, to mingle and hide with them during attacks, often wearing no military uniform. This leaves RPA soldiers with the perception that the same peasant they saw carrying a hoe one day, may be carrying a gun the next, and presents the army with difficult military choices which have had tragic consequences.

The government cannot defeat the insurgents without using force; on some occasions this has resulted in the tragic killing of civilians. Civilians who fail to remain inside during search operations, or give shelter to infiltrators, run the risk of being killed. As long as the army is unable to distinguish and separate civilians from infiltrators, it stands to reap the inevitable harvest of discontent, and support for the infiltrators will increase.

The governments of Malaysia and Vietnam sought to contain insurgencies of a similar kind with a policy of physically removing the civilian population from the war zone, depriving guerrillas of their supporters and supplies. This is perhaps the only sure way to avoid civilian casualties, but conditions in Rwanda make it impossible. The country is minute but densely populated and the government is already over-stretched in terms of resources.

African Rights interviewed Brigadier-General Kayumba Nyamwasa, at the time military commander in the northwest and now Chief of Staff, and asked him if he was aware of the difficult position many local people find themselves in. He explained the way he sees the population's situation.

Some peasants do collaborate with the infiltrators because of this dilemma. Along with the civilian authorities, we ask the local population to make the best choice possible when faced with such a situation. We recommend that, should infiltrators come to their region, the people should come to the

military positions. That way, when the military intervened, they wouldn't have any difficulty knowing who were infiltrators and who were innocent civilians.

However, this is far easier said than done. With family members and friends in the insurgency, economic pressures, lethal propaganda, fear of RPA reprisals and the ease with which the insurgents resort to violence to "deal" with their opponents and their families, civilians have found themselves in a trap. The situation has changed over time, and thousands of fighters and civilians have now sought protection at army bases and commune offices. But it has been a long and hard road.

### When Insurgents Flee with the People and Hide Amongst Them: The Prelude to Disaster

The insurgents have shown a poor grasp of the political philosophy and military rationale of a guerrilla movement: a reciprocal relationship with the civilian population. Civilians will not take risks and make enormous sacrifices, over a long period of time, without tangible benefits. People in the northwest have provided the insurgents with fighters, a network of civilian supporters, intelligence, food and shelter. In exchange, they expect them to deliver on their military and political promises, and at a minimum, to offer them adequate protection. Instead, the insurgents have followed strategies that are designed to expose civilians to the firepower of an adversary with infinitely superior arms. Their habit of encouraging—and often forcing—the population to flee with them, and of hiding amongst crowds of men, women and children, is responsible for the highest number of casualties in this war. It has also been a disaster for the insurgents' political fortunes. What an ex-FAR called their "bad strategy" was consistently cited by former military insurgents, *partisans*, *résistants* and civilians as the principal reason why they decided to dissociate themselves from the insurgency in recent months. This, coming on top of the infiltrators' habit of killing everyone they regard as hostile, and their constant demands for food, proved the proverbial last straw for many residents of the northwest. Emmanuel Ntezimana, a teacher, began to serve as a *partisan* in his home commune of Kinigi, Ruhengeri in February 1998. When he tried to abandon the insurgents on 10 May, he was recaptured and given a beating. He was more successful on 7 June.

I realised that even if we were to beat the state army and to take power, I would be the only one in my family to benefit from this victory. My father, Nyirinkino, died a long-time ago, but my mother, Nyirarwimo and my older brother, Ndamage, have died as a result of this situation. They were all shot by RPA soldiers when they were running away in response to a call from the infiltrators to flee with them. My mother died in March 1998 and my brother in June 1998.

The infiltrators will only succeed in killing their brothers and sisters. They claim to be fighting in order to free the Hutus, but they are exposing them to the wrath of their opponents, the soldiers. Besides, they themselves are killing the people they want to liberate. They don't only attack the soldiers, but also Hutus accused of collaborating with the regime, who they kill mercilessly.

Many ex-FAR-turned-insurgents spoke of their tactic of mingling with the people. Sub-Lt. Emmanuel Musabyeyezu entered the country in June 1997. He was wounded, then captured when the army attacked their hideout in July 1997.

This war only leads to civilian casualties, as I saw during the fighting at Nyamutera.

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**"About 100 people were running with us but we were all targets of *Inkotanyi* fire. Some of them died. There are also infiltrators who open fire on soldiers from amongst the peasants' houses. The return fire is then deadly".**

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Corporal Pierre-Célestin Ngendahimana had spent seventeen years with FAR before the period of exile. He became an insurgent in February 1998 and lived in the volcanic forest in Kinigi.

The infiltrators hope to escape death by mixing in with the people. This is because the army will sometimes avoid firing into a crowd of old people, women and children. But that isn't always the case, so the fighting leads to the loss of life amongst the civilians, caused by the infiltrators' bad strategy.

Corporal Laurent Nkurunziza was one of the many who resorted to this "bad strategy."

Sometimes, when I was running away from the soldiers, I would find myself with my gun in the middle of a group of children, or women and of other infiltrators.

Théophile Munyandekwe has seen the conflict from all sides. An ex-FAR, he became an insurgent; after he was captured, he joined the RPA. Defeats are, as Théophile's testimony shows, explained away in order to maintain the faith of civilians.

During my time with the infiltrators, there were more than three army operations during which they fled with the population, hiding their guns under long coats. When they run away like this they try to provide a motive for their failure, so that the population doesn't lose confidence. They say: 'It is Sunday (or Saturday) and God will not allow us to fight on these two days'. If it isn't a weekend, they say: 'We were faced by a large number of *Inkotanyi*, supported by soldiers from Uganda'. These are the two main excuses for their defeats.

Théophile participated, as an RPA soldier, in several operations to net his former companions in which civilians also died.

The combat tactics used by the infiltrators expose the civilian population to death. Very early in the morning in December 1997, soldiers surrounded a house in sector Kabwende, Kinigi, in which an armed infiltrator had been identified. The infiltrator shot at the soldiers instead of putting his hands in the air and surrendering peacefully. The soldiers returned fire and everyone in the house died.

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**"When two elephants are fighting, it is the grass that dies. The infiltrators are prepared to die if necessary, and the army is determined to win. The population suffers".**

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Daniel Munyabikari was one of 85 ex-FAR from Kinigi who were drafted in December to prepare themselves for a campaign to destabilise Gitarama. They received their instructions from a major known by the nickname of "Kambari." He told them that they would be sheltered by the local population until they received his new orders. Daniel described the relations with, and dependence on, the civilian population during the period of preparation.

Ten companions and I stayed with a peasant called Ndaba in cellule Nyarusizi, sector Bisate, for about two weeks.

This peasant, like so many others, was not only expected to provide hospitality, but was drawn into the conflict by the presence of the infiltrators.

While we were there, the army and the infiltrators clashed three or four times. Each time we fled with the locals into the forest of volcanoes, and came back with them after the fighting. The infiltrators didn't hold out for long in the face of the army, and also fled into the forest.

The young *résistants* who fight in the insurgents' battles, and educated supporters, the *partisans*, have all joined the exodus to the volcanic forests, together with their families. Ncogoza, 18, worked as a *résistant* between January and May 1998; until then, he made his living as a farmer in sector Gihora in Kinigi.

I thought that the insurgents could beat the army because that's what they said. Gradually, I realised that they were achieving nothing by their actions, except perhaps the deaths of the people.

Ncogoza lost his parents during a battle in cellule Gaseke in his sector. He explained why he held the insurgents responsible for their death.

The army launched an operation in this area which was sheltering infiltrators. The infiltrators, instead of removing themselves from the people and fighting the soldiers, ran in amongst the people. The army opened fire on the group, which included the infiltrator Sergeant Kamere. Eight peasants were killed. Amongst them was my father, Bernard Ndekezi; my mother, Alivère Tereriyo and someone called Magenyura. When I asked where I could take the orphans, that is my younger brothers, I was advised to take them to Bisate. I found that the situation there was the same.

Instead, he made arrangements for his brothers to leave for the commune office. Three days later, he made his getaway, when the insurgents asked him to fetch water.

I avoided the places where they were based in case they killed me. I turned myself in at the military base at Gashangiro.

Like many other supporters, Fidèle Ndaziboneye, a 26-year-old student, believed the insurgents' propaganda that "they would conquer Gisenyi and Ruhengeri before the end of 1997". He became disheartened but felt cornered. The feeling of being under siege intensified as the RPA made a determined effort to flush out the insurgents hiding in the caves and forests of Kinigi. The caves in question served as a base for the insurgents, but also sheltered civilians.

1997 ended without us having conquered a single commune, except perhaps the forests and the caves where we hid. In Mukingo commune, in a place called Nyiragihima, there is a large cave. That is where our superiors stayed. That's where the injured were taken care of and the arms and ammunition were kept.

When I realised that we hadn't achieved any of our objectives, I wanted to turn myself in to the government. But I couldn't find a way of doing it. I thought that if I stayed I would be killed. No-one else wanted to turn themselves in. I thought that the fighting wasn't getting us anywhere and that it would fail in the end. As for the RPA, they had intensified their searches.

We were surprised by a big attack on 1 April 1998. We were surrounded and we couldn't escape. The RPA had surrounded us with armoured personnel carriers and a large number of soldiers. They shot at us. Those who tried to get away were mowed down by the armoured cars. At the same time, a helicopter flying overhead also fired at us. This operation started at 5:00 a.m. and finished at 12:00 p.m. The people who escaped were those who ducked inside the cave. I was one of them. Over 200 people were killed. My older brother, Mathias Manyobya, died that day, along with his wife, Nyiramugisha, and their children, Hakizimana, Ingabire and Gahinga. There were a large number of dead bodies.

From this time onwards, the population began to lose hope. They realised that the infiltrators' plans were failing and that they were simply being killed. Some people thought of turning themselves over to the soldiers but they were discouraged by their colleagues who said that they would be killed wherever they were. They meant that even those who turned themselves over to the RPA would be killed. The RPA soldiers cut off all our routes to get food. We were hungry and we were being shot at. The malnutrition and lack of food was visible in some of us from our cheeks and stomachs and the skin which was scaling off.

But severing ties with the insurgents was not a straightforward matter. Responsibility for children, the old and the infirm held people back.

Fear also made it difficult for families to reach a consensus as Fidèle discovered.

I stayed with my older brother, Joseph. He advised that we should go over to the RPA, but we didn't know how to get to them. Also, we didn't want to leave our mother.

While Fidèle and his brother agonised about what to do, the RPA launched another massive assault.

The RPA hit us again on 25 April. It was another big attack. As during the first time, many infiltrators were killed. The survivors realised that they were going to be wiped out. They decided to give themselves up to the RPA. There weren't many of us left. On 26 April, Joseph said that it was our turn to give ourselves up. We would have preferred to be killed by the RPA than to stay in the bush. However, my mother refused and I didn't want to abandon her.

Unwilling to risk death, Joseph left. Fidèle continued to try and convince his mother.

We found out that Joseph had gone to the commune office and that nothing had happened to him. I therefore begged my mother, telling her that the others had gone back and that they were still alive. I wanted us to leave next. I told her that we would all die otherwise. In the end, my mother understood.

But the insurgents were not so understanding.

The infiltrators came during the night to organise meetings. They told us that they would go and bring back those who had left for the commune. However, when we considered their strength, we realised that it wasn't possible. We decided to leave the forest at 4:00 a.m. on 16 June. We went through the bush so that we wouldn't be seen by the infiltrators. They could have killed us. We reached the commune office at 7:00 a.m.<sup>182</sup>

The state must, Fidèle said "encourage the separation of the population from the infiltrators". To accelerate this process, the government should "strengthen the military post near the forest of volcanoes which the infiltrators use as a retreat".

<sup>182</sup> Interviewed in Kinigi, Ruhengeri, 18 July 1998.

When I compare the infiltrators' forces with those of the RPA, I know that this war could quickly be finished. The infiltrators inside the country could easily be beaten, as could those in Kivu if Congo responds positively. The obstacle to a rapid end is the volcanic forest where they can hide.

Eraste Musekura, a Pentecostal pastor and a *partisan*, took his family to live with the insurgents in the volcanic forests of Rugano in Kinigi. His son, Nsengiyumva, also worked for the insurgents. They left their home in Karago, cellule Gasesero in sector Gakarara, after a fierce battle between the insurgents and the RPA on 29 March 1998. The RPA used armoured vehicles to secure a victory.

As I was with the infiltrators, I had to leave with them for their homes in Rugano, in the volcano region. All those who were with the infiltrators were taken along with them. We decided to follow them because we were afraid of the RPA who had seen us supporting the infiltrators. There were around 50,000 civilians taken along with the infiltrators. The RPA followed us. Some people died along the way. We carried on, but some people who didn't know the way ended up in Zaire. Later, people from other communes—Rwerere, Mutura and Nkuli—joined us. There were also others who found us there. There were so many of us that I thought there could not be anyone left behind in these communes.

But there was no safety in numbers.

Some joined the infiltrators, whilst others were killed either in fights or because they refused to support the infiltrators.

The civilians were encouraged to take initiatives which could only endanger their safety.

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**"The infiltrators told us that they had very few weapons. They told us that whenever we saw a soldier, we should try to get his gun".**

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We were sent to steal cows from wherever we could find them. These cows were sent to Zaire and exchanged for guns and ammunition. They forced us to look for food during the night.

They were also advised to hide in caves, along with fighters, despite the evident danger from the RPA.

When we got to the forests of Rugano, the infiltrators showed us how to hide when we saw the RPA. They told us to lie down when we were hiding. We were also taken to the Ubuvumo region. There were a lot of caves there in which to hide. The young boys were given military training. They were trained so that they could help the infiltrators during confrontations and carry the things which were looted.

Everyday, the RPA carried out searches. Some of us hid in holes, others in the bush, but many more died. After three days at Ubuvumo, my skin started to peel off because it was so cold there. This was in addition to the hunger which was a permanent threat.

Things came to a head when the RPA pinpointed their hideout.

A helicopter discovered our hiding place. Those who tried to run were shot down and the ones who managed to get away from the helicopter were caught by the RPA who had surrounded the area. This hunt for the infiltrators lasted for about ten days without a break.

When the situation reached a critical stage, the insurgents left the civilians to their own devices.

The FAR and militiamen left us and ran off. We didn't know what to do. Some of the people went as far as Zaire. Following these operations, the war stopped for a while. We suffered greatly from hunger because no-one could go and look for food. We were surrounded by government soldiers. We realised that the soldiers were much stronger than the infiltrators, that the latter had abandoned us, and that we were dying of hunger.

Fortunately for Eraste, no-one from his family had been killed. But, he said "there were over 200 dead bodies where we were". Faced with this crisis, Eraste decided to leave the infiltrators on 4 May.

I left with my family during the night without the infiltrators knowing. They thought that we had gone to look for food. The next morning we approached Bigogwe military camp.

The insurgents' indifference to the safety of civilians in their midst was also cited by Théoneste Hakizimana as the reason he left them on 15 July 1998. Théoneste, 38, is an architect who became treasurer of PALIR's

committee in his sector of Kantwari, Rwerere. His decision, he said, was mainly prompted by "the death and suffering which hounded us daily". His exile in Zaire was brief; he returned home, with his family, after only thirteen days. He worked first as a teacher at the secondary school in Busasamana, and was then employed by MSF/Belgium, first in Kigali and later in Butare. He returned to his home in cellule Bunyogwe after MSF left Rwanda and was appointed as the principal building contractor for the commune office.

The insecurity linked to the infiltrators began at the time of the refugees' return *en masse*. There were sporadic acts of violence. We began to hear about the infiltrators in Muhanda sector in September/October 1997. They killed local officials there, including the councillor Aimable Rukera. In January 1998, I saw six infiltrators for the first time with my own eyes. They came to vandalise the water taps, including the one situated in Bunyogwe which supplied us. Their tactics were to murder their opponents and the local officials. This forced some peasants to agree to work with them and the others, who were very few, to flee from their homes. I escaped to my mother-in-law's home in Gasiza, near the commune office. When the office was attacked, I went to Gacurabwenge and the others left for Gisenyi town.

When Théoneste returned home, he realised that the balance of power had changed and he began to work in favour of the insurgents.

I discovered that the local people were under the infiltrators' control. I myself agreed to stay there and to serve them, supplying food, accommodation etc...

Despite their political and psychological stranglehold over the population, the insurgents lacked the military capacity to withstand the onslaught from the RPA, leaving civilians in a vulnerable position.

Unfortunately, when the government soldiers arrived, the fighting cost the lives of peasants and the infiltrators were not able to hold out. I decided to go to Kibumba in the Congo. I stayed there for two months until the Congolese soldiers forced us to return home in April 1998.

The return home offered few solutions.

There was a very large number of infiltrators in Mutura and Rwerere communes. There were almost no local government officials left because

those who were there were working for the infiltrators. With the exception of the government soldiers, these communes were a no go area for the state institutions. I, like the peasants, started to work for the infiltrators: providing food, accommodation and taking part in night patrols three times a week. Boys between the ages of fifteen and twenty kept watch during the day. They observed the soldiers' movements and reported back to the infiltrators. When the RPA soldiers arrived, we ran off with Sebahutu, the bourgmestre<sup>183</sup>, and the infiltrators.

Théoneste described an occasion when he looked to an insurgent for protection.

In May 1998, I heard RPA gunfire and I warned an armed infiltrator, Gisiribongo from Gikongoro. I asked him: 'Where can we go.' He replied: 'If you don't organise your own escape that's your problem!' My wife, seven children and myself ran along behind this infiltrator. He ran for about two kilometres from Bunyogwe to Ryabizige. When he got there, he chased us away, saying: 'Don't follow me any further, go your own way'. He abandoned us like this and joined the other infiltrators. This was one of the incidents which proved to me that the infiltrators, who we were serving, had no pity for us.

Denis Mashukane became a soldier in 1983, reaching the rank of corporal. He said he was dismissed in 1989 because of his refusal, as a Seventh Day Adventist, to work on the Sabbath. Denis comes from sector Rwanzekuma in Rwerere. After leaving the army, he became a farmer and sold bibles for his church. He lived in Kibumba camp from July 1994 until his return home in November 1996. He too has first-hand experience of the pressures felt by civilians living in the war zone.

This new round of suffering started for us in February 1997. EX-FAR members began to infiltrate our region and even our sector, little by little. Amongst the first to arrive was Corporal Byiringiro, the son of Ruyumbo, from sector Kanzenze in Mutura. As he knew the region well, he accompanied other infiltrators who didn't know it. He put them up at his mother-in-law's house which was in our sector. They started the terrorist phase in March 1997 by killing their opponents. They killed Biriko Habyarimana, an employee of the commune, who came from my cellule, and who refused to collaborate with them. They also killed Matoto Nsengiyumva and others. Anyway, they killed a lot of people, my cousin

<sup>183</sup> This is the man appointed as a "bourgmestre" by the insurgents.



Teritabi amongst them. It wasn't difficult for us to find out if the perpetrator was an infiltrator or a soldier. These kind of murders took place at a time when no soldier had been identified in the area. In addition, the day following the murders, some of the infiltrators' friends said that the individual had been killed because of their habit of denouncing the infiltrators to the authorities.

Gradually, the RPA became aware of the presence of infiltrators in the area and posted soldiers there. The resulting clashes cost the lives of local residents. Civilians were also killed when RPA soldiers sought to avenge the murder of a colleague by the insurgents.

One day when the infiltrators, including the ex-FAR Kabengera from Kanzenze, who belonged to a group called *Samurai*, ambushed soldiers at a place known as Ku Gakoro, located in the same sector. The ambush, which killed several soldiers, was immediately followed by a reprisal attack against the infiltrators who hid amongst the people. There was a great loss of civilian lives.

In our sector, Rwanzekuma, the population began to move to other sectors, such as Muhanda, from September 1997 onwards. Not only did we risk being killed by the soldiers, who thought we were collaborating with the infiltrators. But whenever a soldier was sighted, these young *résistants* or supporters of the infiltrators told us to hide with them. At one point the people were asked to signal the arrival of soldiers so that they could get away. However, I didn't usually stay very long at the hideouts; when the soldiers had gone I went back to my home. Only the people from the hill of Burgege spent a while there before going home, due to the lengthy presence of soldiers.

To minimise the loss of human life, the army and the civilian authorities have tried to deter collaboration with the infiltrators through regular visits and meetings with local residents. They are up against an entrenched ethnic ideology and terror tactics which together profoundly affect the local peasants. The infiltrators threaten and kill those who cooperate with the state, and coerce local people into helping them.

## The Penalty for Not Collaborating with the Insurgents: Death and Displacement

Marc Nyirimpunga, aged 25, spoke of the penalty imposed on those people who refused to lend a hand to the insurgents. Marc returned to his home in Cyabingo, Ruhengeri, in June 1997 after he gave himself up to the authorities. He joined the ex-FAR in April 1994 and took part in the fighting in Rwanda and later, in October 1996, in Zaire. He returned to Rwanda on 5 May 1997 with 150 other soldiers who were on their way to destabilise Kibuye. He was serving as escort to Major Célestin Bahemba, whose mission was to ensure "the political co-ordination of the different operational teams in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri". He accompanied him to sector Butaka, commune Mutura, Gisenyi, where they met up with other infiltrators who gave them their assessment of the situation.

They told us that RPA soldiers were positioned in the office of the sector where the councillor was a Tutsi. We were also told that the people had already been influenced to collaborate. They pointed out that we had to kill 'all people who were against the mission'.

Marc found that local people had been terrorised into supporting the infiltrators' cause. Their situation was near to impossible. If they collaborated with the infiltrators they risked death at the hands of the army, and if they did not, the infiltrators themselves threatened them.

They promised their support, and in particular food supplies 'on the condition that you go further away because the *Inkotanyi* will kill us if they discover you amongst us or close to us'.<sup>184</sup>

François Mbonaruzza was one of the insurgents captured during an RPA operation in Basa sector in mid-September. The soldiers immediately gathered the people of Basa together and told François to pick out those who had helped the infiltrators. He identified five of them and was then imprisoned. His testimony reveals how the violence they inflict upon civilians is part of a strategy to draw civilians into the conflict and to encourage them to side with the infiltrators. He cited the assault which took place on 28 April 1997 in Satinsyi commune, Gisenyi, on the Ecole

<sup>184</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 20 June 1998.

d'Economie of Muramba and the Ecole Normale Primaire in which seventeen students and the director of the primary school, a Belgian nun, were killed (see below for details). The RPA military position nearby and a number of other locations in Gitwa sector were included in the offensive and four other people also died. François explained the attitude to locals who refused to support the insurgents' cause.

Apart from Ndorwa sector, the population of the rest of Karago commune supported us, after the intense sensitisation programme. To solve the problem of Ndorwa sector, Lt. Kazungu sent some ex-FAR from his team to kill any prominent locals who were hostile to our mission. I found out that the infiltrators who went to kill the Tutsi and the Belgian headmistress of Muramba school were from Giciye.

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**"As the population in this area was hostile to our ideology, the mission to Muramba was simply to terrorise the population and was intended to show them our strength".**

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The strategy worked.

The whole population of Rwerere is favourable to us and housed us. At first, we stayed in the Ku Igora centre, where each peasant looked after three infiltrators. I stayed with a man called Senzoga, a farmer who lived next to the new Ku Igora primary school. They housed us and fed us with what they had. The women amongst the infiltrator ranks are those who decided to join after the sensitisation programme. There are also young boys, who began by bringing us food and water, and sometimes liked us so much that they joined in during the attacks. The cellule leader lived a little below the centre and I remember that he was housing three infiltrators himself. During the day we often went out to wander around and drink in the bars, since the locals liked us.

Théophile Munyandekwe described the infiltrators' tactics to make sure the peasants understood they had no choice.

The first activities by infiltrators occurred in our commune in July or August 1997. They started by stealing potatoes from our fields, and foodstuffs from houses. The population would call for help, and the soldiers intervened. To put an end to the population's hostility, the infiltrators proceeded by killing local officials and any peasant who called

for help after spotting an infiltrator. Rubyiruko, of cellule Ninda, sector Kagano, was wounded in the knee by several bullets. A tract was left at the scene, stating: 'This is what will happen to anyone who is hostile to us, who shouts or reports for night patrols'. Rubyiruko's leg was amputated in hospital.

When I think of the heavy weapons which the army has, I think that this guerrilla war would have ended if the infiltrators didn't rely on the support of the population.

The conviction that anyone who stands in their way must be physically eliminated still prevails amongst the infiltrators. In May 1998, we interviewed Fabien Niyonsenga in Gitarama, a few weeks after his arrest. He is confident that they will succeed.

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**"The people will eventually understand us through education and through terrorism because we kill everyone who is against us."**

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Dieudonné Musabyimana worked for the infiltrators and helped to identify the people who opposed their plans; their fate was predetermined.

All of the people of Giciye supported us because anyone who refused to collaborate with us was killed. The victims include Ntondwe from Gahungeri cellule and Nsenga, from Nyamugeyo sector, killed by Corporal Kagurube.

Aaron Kambari, a forty-year-old farmer from cellule Hungiro, sector Cyintobo in Nkuli commune. On 15 September 1996, infiltrators shot him in the stomach; leaving him for dead, they then murdered his first wife, Floride Ngororabanga. Then they went to the home of Aaron's brother whom they killed along with his wife and child. They left Aaron with seven children to look after alone. He believes he was condemned for two reasons: "They had asked me to collaborate with them and I had refused" and "because I managed to have some of them arrested." When he had recovered, he took his children to live at the office of the commune for security reasons. Too afraid to return to farm his fields, he survived thanks to donations from UNHCR, but when these stopped he made an arrangement with a friend, Denis Rwabyuma, to cultivate the land on his behalf. In a second interview, Aaron spoke about how this arrangement came to an end, during the corn harvest in April 1997.

The infiltrators came to his house and they realised that he was working for me. When they were presented with our certificate of sale, they weren't convinced and told him to gather the corn that was ready in April and then not to return to the fields. The infiltrators, who threatened to kill him, were:

- o Sergeant Amos Kazanenda, Mpatswe's son, from Hungiro cellule, Cyintobo sector;
- o First Sergeant Mukesha, Ntawizigura's son;
- o Lieutenant Martin Nzitonda, the son of my older brother, Denis Nzitonda.

Despite the warning, Marie, Aaron's second wife, continued to go to the hill to gather food. On 21 August 1997, at 6:00 a.m., she went there with Aaron's eldest son, fourteen-year-old Anastase, intending to collect the remaining corn from Rwabyuma's house. Aaron has not seen them since.

At about 9:00 a.m., I found out that my wife and child had been taken away as they were weeding the garden around the house. They have not been traced to this day.

The news reached me the day after it happened when peasants from the area were fleeing to Rwankeri. They were saying that they were fleeing because of the possibility that a search may follow the 'abduction of Kambari's wife.' That was how I found out.

Aaron has also lost other members of his family to the infiltrators, leaving him desolate.

In July 1997, my mother, Athalie Ntawukazi, and my older brother, Eliphaz Kariwabo, and his three children, were killed one night by the same infiltrators.

In the face of all these problems, I now feel as if I'm losing my head. I have become an orphan and have been widowed twice. I wonder whether God is not treating me unfairly. It is now clear to me that I dare not go to the hill, even though my children and I have to live from the land. I must be a victim because I have worked with the current government.<sup>185</sup>

Noël Hitimana was formerly a journalist for the radio station *Radio Télévision Mille Collines (RTL)*, which broadcast speeches inciting

<sup>185</sup> Interviewed in Nkuli, Ruhengeri, 26 May and 27 August 1997.

genocide in 1994. He returned from Zaire in November 1996, but managed to hide with his in-laws in the northwest until his arrest. He spoke of the problems affecting his in-laws' in Kimonyi sector, Mukingo commune, Ruhengeri,

Since the beginning of the fighting between the army and the infiltrators there have been fifteen people killed for refusing to collaborate with the infiltrators. And civilians die during the fighting, including Murwanya, my brother-in-law. More than fifty people have died in this cellule alone.<sup>186</sup>

In December 1997, Clarisse Mukamugema's father, Léopold Kabiligi, discovered the harsh penalties inflicted on civilians who do not meet the insurgents' demands. Clarisse described her father as a "very extremist Hutu", but this did not save him from the wrath of fellow-extremists. Clarisse, twenty, got married and became a mother while a refugee in the camps. Deserted by her husband, she settled with her father and stepmother in cellule Nyabikenke, sector Ngurungunzu in commune Kibilira, Gisenyi.

When I arrived in Kibilira I could see that the civilian population was collaborating extensively with the infiltrators. The people of Kibilira helped the infiltrators a lot and respected them as their authorities. There was a law, probably decreed by the infiltrators, saying that every Hutu should have food ready at night so as to feed any infiltrators who arrived at their houses. When the whole family had eaten, the infiltrators' food was still being prepared. They would go and eat with whichever family they wanted.

But again, it is clear that the peasants have little choice, as Clarisse's family discovered.

If they found no food, they would punish the family immediately. In August 1997, for instance, the infiltrators arrived at our house demanding food, but we had just finished eating everything. They were angry, and asked my father for money. He told them he didn't have any on him, and they shot him in the arm before leaving, warning us to have food available in future.

They returned in December, at about at 8:00 p.m.

<sup>186</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 21 June 1997.

They knocked on the door and my father said: 'Who is it?' They replied: 'We are your children, back from Zaire' meaning that they were infiltrators. My father asked them what they wanted; they said they wanted food. My father had spent all day in a bar at the Rusumo trade centre and was drunk. Instead of opening the door, he told the infiltrators off. They became very angry, and forced the door open. My father hit one of them in the head with an axe.

The infiltrators shot him several times. I grabbed my child and hid in the stable, where my father's wife was hiding too. They came to get us and beat me and my child badly. The infiltrators had surrounded our house and prevented the population from coming to our assistance. They left; in the morning our neighbours came to see us, and took my father to Muhororo hospital.

Worried that the man her father wounded would return to harm them, Clarisse moved to Kigali on 10 January. The following day, her son died from the beating.

One man who has been continually displaced, in his efforts to escape the insurgents, is Janvier Mundere, a farmer normally resident in cellule Rutovu, sector Nyabirasi in commune Kanama, Gisenyi. Janvier, 30, was born in Rwerere but his family moved to Kanama in search of more fertile land when he was seven. During the mass exodus in July 1994, he opted to remain in Rwanda. Towards the end of 1997, the presence of infiltrators in their sector became a reality.

Introducing themselves slowly but surely in our sector, the infiltrators showed that they had two principal objectives, namely to track down people who worked with the government, and to kill any such person. Since I was put into this category of people, I became the target of searches by the insurgents. They did not only consider me an 'accomplice of the Tutsis' for my mother, Floride Beninka, was a Tutsi, but also a collaborator and friend of the government soldiers. They used to say that 'he has never fled the country and has remained with them during all this time'. Since there were, at the end of the genocide, hardly any Tutsis left, my mother and I were the only people who were targeted. We slept in the bush.

In early February 1998, Janvier learnt that some individuals had been asked to locate their hideouts. Soon afterwards, he moved his mother, wife and two children to Kayove; they lived at the commune office. His father remained behind and by late June, Janvier had not had news of him.

However, as the commune office could not feed them, he was obliged to return home in search of food; he would leave in the middle of the night, leaving again before dawn. The insurgents discovered his movements.

It was certainly the neighbours of my house who informed the insurgents about this. From then on, the insurgents ordered my friend, Serugendo, to keep an eye on my eventual return home and to let them know about it so that they could kill me.

When Janvier went back to restock on food, Serugendo told him of the mission he had been given by the insurgents and advised him not to set foot in Kanama. He immediately hid, in a bush about fifty metres from his house, awaiting nightfall to make his escape.

The insurgents arrived at about 8:00 p.m. They surrounded the house and found Serugendo there; he spent every night in my house in order to carry out the orders he had been given. When they asked him if he had found me, Serugendo replied that he had heard the door of our house creak, as if I was inside. Then they asked him to go outside and to call out my name. They told him: 'As he considers you his friend, he will open for you'. Serugendo did this, but nothing happened. Furious, they beat him and, despite his denials, accused him of having warned me about the affair. They tied his hands behind his back and took him to their chief to 'explain himself'.

As they were leaving, they passed close to the bush where Janvier was crouching, giving him a chance to recognise some of the men.

Thanks to the moonlight, I was able to estimate the number at about thirty people, including two ex-FAR, Staff Sergeant Jean-Damascène Kavutse and Corporal Ahoabangeze, both in military uniform and armed with guns. They were accompanied by others armed with traditional weapons—small hoes, machetes. These were my former neighbours before they fled to Zaire and became infiltrators.

After their departure, Janvier returned to Kayove. Worried about Serugendo, he returned to Kanama three days later. He found him at home and learned that he had been released after questioning. But there was still a price on Janvier's head.

They told him to keep looking for me relentlessly. Serugendo told me that their chief 'has asked them to take you alive and, in case you attempt to

escape, to shoot you in a fashion that will detach your head and to bring the head to him'. I spent the night with him and at about 3:00 a.m. he accompanied me, pointing out the most dangerous places that I should avoid. Before we separated, he told me frankly that neither I nor my younger brother, Simon Kabanda, who sometimes went instead of me, should come back to the place.

Janvier had little choice but to remain at Kayove commune office. After a week, the bourgmestre transferred them to a site in Kinihira which had been set up for 1959 refugees. Two months later, on 8 June 1998, they were caught up in a massacre in Kinihira, described above, where his wife, mother and sister were decapitated. At the time of the interview, Janvier was in Kibuye hospital, looking after his other child who was also wounded on 8 June. Janvier now feels like a stranger in his own country.

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"I have become someone without a place to call home or a residence in his own country".

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Capturing infiltrators living within the community is best achieved through the co-operation of local people, but the price of assisting the RPA is high. Denis Hitimana, the councillor of sector Bisizi, commune Kanama in Gisenyi risked everything to expose infiltrators in his sector; a week later he and his family suffered the consequences. On 3 April 1997, a neighbour alerted Denis to the presence of six militiamen in his sector. He accompanied her to the field where the men were talking to a resident, Emmanuel Ruvuna Bizimungu. Ruvuna did not tell them that Denis was the councillor of the sector, and the militiamen assumed that he was sympathetic to their cause.

There were six infiltrators and only one had a rifle; the others were carrying *massues*. They were coming from the Gishwati forest; they were looking for the way to Zaire. Only three of them wore full military uniforms, very worn, even torn. The others wore civilian clothes. To inquiries about their places of birth one said he came from Butare and all the others from Kibuye. They told us that there were already a large number of ex-FAR troops and militiamen in the Gishwati forest (a dense natural forest covering some of the communes of Gisenyi and Kibuye) and other locations as part of the plan to regain power. Led by high-ranking ex-FAR officers, they planned to attack the RPA in May 1997. As for us,

the population, our role would be to hide them if necessary, feed them and provide them with information about military positions.

They asked Denis to show them the path to Zaire, which passes through the communes of Rwerere and Mutura. According to Denis it is a route which is commonly used by infiltrators. Denis agreed to show them the way, but in a tactic intended to ensure their capture, he invited them for food and drink first.

They accepted and I took the opportunity to give a sign to my colleague that he should warn the police, three kilometres away. I led them to my bar, near my house, gave them two crates of Primus beer and we started drinking.

Several RPA soldiers arrived and Denis went outside to consult with them.

Whispering, they asked me how many of the infiltrators had firearms. 'Only one', I replied. They asked me to try to make the armed one come out so they could eliminate him first. So I went into the bar to suggest that they teach me to use firearms at my house. They agreed without a problem. The one with the gun left with me to teach me to use the gun in my house, situated 15m away. As we left the bar he saw the RPA soldiers.

The militiaman shot at the soldiers, killing one of them. The rest of the group came out of the bar and five of them were shot dead by the RPA soldiers. The sixth was wounded and escaped. Denis believes it was this man who instigated an attack upon his home just over a week later, on 11 April. Denis was the intended target of the attack, but he had spent the night with an acquaintance in Mahoko that night. His two wives—Verdianne Bizimungu and Suzanne Nyirahabimana—were at home with his children. It was not until the following morning that Denis learned what had happened to them.

The sad news reached me at 6:00 a.m. from soldiers who had been informed by the population of the death of my two wives, who lived in neighbouring houses, and also that a child had been seriously wounded and had already been taken to hospital.

Denis' three-year-old son was the victim of a *massue* blow to the head. Since the attack he has lost his sense of balance and he no longer

speaks. Marie-Gorette Ndinkabandi is Denis Hitimana's oldest daughter, aged fourteen. She was in the house when her mother, Verdianne, was killed along with Suzanne. She gave details of the attack.

At around 6:30 p.m., we heard somebody saying hello. My mother went to open the door. She saw people armed with guns and they immediately came in with my mother. They asked her where the councillor was, meaning my father. They looked everywhere but did not find him, so they came back to torture my mother to force her to confess where my father was.

Meanwhile, the other killers went to fetch my father's second wife, Suzanne. They brought her after a while to our house so that the two women would admit where my father was. Suzanne, who was quite courageous and strong, tried to climb into the ceiling because she was undergoing unbearable torture.<sup>187</sup>

Marie-Gorette heard them ask for money. After Verdianne gave them the 800 francs she had, they killed her. She had been carrying one of the children, Hakizimana, and the militiamen attacked him with a *massue*. Suzanne was also murdered. The other children managed to escape to the home of a neighbour. The killers waited until around 8:00 p.m. for Denis to return. Before they left, they looted, taking clothes, food, a radio, the administrative seal of the sector, and 100,000 francs.

Denis is aware that several suspects have been identified and arrested.

I found out that there were twelve attackers, all military, except for Mbazuruvugo, originally from my cellule. The other suspects were Habineza, an ex-soldier from sector Nyarushyamba, Rwerere commune and Azalias Habiaremye, from sector Mukingo, Rwerere commune. Inquiries led to the arrest of certain people accused of being implicated in this affair:

- o Nzabanita, a former soldier from sector Bisizi.
- o Timbati, a former soldier from sector Bisizi.
- o Mbazuruvugo, a civilian from sector Bisizi.
- o Nziraguseswa, a former lieutenant in the FAR from sector Nyarushyamba, Rwerere commune.
- o Semazindu, a civilian from sector Nyarushyamba, Rwerere commune.

He is certain that the killings were the infiltrators' revenge for his involvement in the death of five of their number the week before. Now a widower with eight children to look after, his life has been devastated by the attack. He has been forced to move out of his home to another location, near an RPA base. He returns home only to fulfil his responsibilities as councillor, and no longer farms his fields because he fears this would expose him to attack. He explained the impossible dilemma confronting local people.

The population wonders what to do when the infiltrators arrive, demanding their collaboration. If a peasant agrees to collaborate with the infiltrators he will be apprehended after investigations and punished, or even killed. If he refuses to collaborate with the wrongdoers they will kill him themselves.

Denis knows that he is one of many who have been punished for taking a stand against the infiltrators.

I learned on 15 May that a shopkeeper from sector Nyarushyamba, commune Rwerere was assassinated after having refused to give his contribution to the infiltrators. His body was found yesterday, 22 May, in Bisizi sector, cellule Kibuye, commune Kanama.<sup>188</sup>

### *The Ultimate Predicament: Parents Whose Children Have Joined the Insurgents*

The insurgency is also tearing families apart, pitting close relatives against each other and confronting parents with impossible choices. At the age of 65, Jean Bihincyuro found himself faced with a situation that he could never have imagined. Jean, a farmer, lives in commune Nyarutovu, Ruhengeri. His son, Mathieu Hakizimana, had joined the insurgents in mid-May 1998. Two weeks later, Mathieu returned home to cellule Gatara in sector Kajwi, looking for his older brother so he could kill him. Jean recounted his family's ordeal.

On Monday, 1 June 1998, at about 8:00 a.m., six infiltrators, including my son, Mathieu Hakizimana, who had never been in the army, arrived at my house. Three of them were carrying swords; the others were not armed. It

<sup>188</sup> Interviewed in Kanama, Gisenyi, 23 May 1997

<sup>187</sup> Interviewed in Kanama, Gisenyi, 23 May 1997

was two weeks after my son, aged 26, had become an infiltrator. Mathieu asked me where his older brother, Harelimana, was. I said I didn't know. All six of them went to Harelimana's home where his wife, Aloysie Dusabimana, gave them the same response. It was clear that they had come to harm him. They continued to look for him everywhere on the hill, but he had fled. Mathieu was the first to see him running away and said to me: 'If we don't catch him, you will suffer the consequences in his place'. As they had seen him near my house, they must have thought I had warned him. They weren't able to find Harelimana who ran all the way to Gakenke where he was saved by soldiers. For this reason, Bujori, the son of Sebasaza from cellule Nyabitekero, hit me on the right leg with the flat part of the machete.

These infiltrators were pursuing Harelimana because he had refused to join them and because he had declined to give them his favourite boots which resembled those worn by soldiers.

Certain that his son and this group would return, Jean moved his wife, brother-in-law and sister-in-law to quarters near the commune office of Nyarutovu. Another son, Innocent Nsengimana, previously in the ex-FAR but integrated into the RPA, helped them to find a tent and to get accustomed to their new life. Jean explained why his family had attracted the wrath of the infiltrators.

I have two sons in the former army who are now in the RPA, Innocent and Janvier Ntiringanya. In addition, we had refused to shelter and feed these infiltrators when our *nyumbakumi*, Dusabimana, had asked us to do so. Dusabimana had been given the order by the insurgents, including my son, Mathieu; Bujori; Nkurunziza, son of Banziriyiki and Kibamba, son of Rwasiziki. But in the whole of our sector, only our cellule denied help to the insurgents.

Jean-Baptiste Ntirigurirwa, alias "Karumuhinzi" has had the courage to denounce his own son as an infiltrator to the authorities. Even though his son's activities were a menace to the local community, his action has only served to isolate him from his neighbours. The family live in cellule Bunyunjo, sector Kivumu in Nyamyumba, Gisenyi. Jean-Baptiste, 43, is a *nyumbakumi* and the father of eight children.

On 5 January 1998 my eldest son, Nyonzima, aged 22, disappeared. But before he went off, he had begun stealing the population's property, including a radio which belonged to Ildephonse of sector Mwufe, whom I had to reimburse, and a blanket, spoons and oil from Nsengiyumva of

sector Kivumu. Well before this time, he used to go away for a few days, and wouldn't tell me anything when he returned.

I reported his disappearance to the sector councillor. Two weeks later, the population of sector Nyagahinika in Kayove commune arrested him, beat him, and brought him home. He arrived at my house at 3:00 p.m. I took him to the *responsable* of the cellule, who warned him not to leave my house again. A few hours later, during the night, he left. Two days later he was identified and arrested by the tea pickers, who took him to the soldiers. He was in possession of someone else's identity card. I explained to the soldiers that I could not be responsible for the actions of this child who no longer respected me. I told them to do what they wanted with him.

The soldiers brought Nyonzima back home and told Jean-Baptiste "to watch him closely".

That was a Thursday. On the Saturday, there was a meeting held by the Minister of the Interior at the commune office. There was a debate about my son. It was decided that he should be arrested, following his identification as an infiltrator. That Sunday, 25 January 1998, I handed him over to the communal police, at 6:30 a.m. I am myself convinced that he was an infiltrator, because I couldn't think where else he could be during all the time he was away, without being discovered by the military patrols. However, I have no idea what his mission was.

I think that any good citizen who has such a child should hand them over to the authorities, to spare them the consequences of being caught by the authorities or the surrounding population. Though he is my child, he who shelters an evildoer must himself be considered an evildoer, unless there is a lack of proof to back up the accusations.

But his actions have cost Jean-Baptiste dear.

Yet I am threatened morally by the surrounding population, who tell me: 'You have swapped your child for a bicycle'. This is because the Minister of the Interior rewarded my courage in testifying against my son with the gift of a bike. Many of my neighbours and acquaintances have criticised me and called me a fool 'who has harmed his child in order to get a bicycle'. I am frightened, not only because of the disapproval of the population, but also by the presence of infiltrators who are difficult to identify. I cannot spend the night at home; my death is not far off.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>189</sup> Interviewed in Nyamyumba, Gisenyi, 9 February 1998.

Not everyone has shown the resolve displayed in Nyamyumba by Jean-Baptiste or heeded the advice given during the public meeting of 25 January by the Minister of the Interior, asking people to distance themselves from the infiltrators. In an interview on 11 February, the bourgmestre, Oscar Kabayiza, said that shortly afterwards, an ex-FAR infiltrator, Lazarre Ndahimana, had been found hiding in the home of his father, Elie Mbonabucya, a Pentecostal pastor, who had previously denied that his son was there.

### Violence Begets Violence: Bloody Reprisals by Tutsi Civilians

Fear and anger have overwhelmed many communities creating divisions in line with the infiltrators' intentions. A number of the massacres carried out by the insurgents have been followed by bloody reprisals against local Hutus on the part of Tutsi civilians—survivors of the genocide and 1959 refugees, which sometimes include RPA soldiers. The belief that the infiltrators are invariably supported by the local Hutu population—and often living among them—is undoubtedly what prompted the reprisals, but there can be no justification whatsoever for such a response. Not only do innocent people pay for the crimes committed by the insurgents and their civilian allies, but these actions facilitate their aim of dividing Rwandese society along ethnic lines.

*Mutura, Gisenyi, 22 August 1997*

The killings of refugees at Mudende camp in August provoked reprisals which reveal just how volatile the situation in the northwest has become. The day after the massacre at Mudende camp, the camps' survivors, together with some repatriated Tutsi 1959 refugees, launched a violent attack upon Hutus in Mutura commune. Taking the law into their own hands, they exacted revenge with indiscriminate punishment killings.

Nyirabuhinja from sector Nyamirango is the mother of five children. She heard loud gunfire near her home on the morning of 22 August, at about 5:00 a.m. She described what she saw.

We saw the Tutsis from Kabari who were furious. We learned that, the previous night, the infiltrators had killed many refugees in the camp of

Mudende. They were armed with various knives as well as machetes and *massues* and they blocked the Ruhengeri-Gisenyi road in the centre of Kabari, about ten metres from my house.

With other women and children, Nyirabuhinja watched the actions of the attackers.

We saw them stopping all the vehicles and dividing up the passengers to pick out the ones to be killed. They also killed the refugees who had recently been repatriated after having sought refuge in 1994. They were in the 'solidarity camp' of Nkamira.

One of the repatriated refugees from the camp at Nkamira, Ndagije, passed the women on the road and they advised him not to go towards Kabari, but he ignored them saying: "He knew the Tutsis from Kabari well". Soon afterwards, Nyirabuhinja witnessed him being beaten to death with *massues*.

At the same time I saw a crowd of Tutsis running towards Ndagije, an employee of the school centre in commune Kayove. These people immediately killed him near the road. If you go there, you'll see his skeleton.

Nyirabuhinja and her family were then warned by a Tutsi neighbour, Mukangunda, that they too would be targets and they fled, only returning in the evening, when they went to stay with a friend in a nearby sector of Kanzenze.

There were no soldiers involved in the attack, although Nyirabuhinja had heard that soldiers were implicated in an incident in Nyamirango. On Monday 25 August, the family returned home, having been assured by soldiers that they would be secure. However, they remained aware of the potential threat at the time of the interview in September.

Although the Tutsis from Kabari were not killing any more, they were still so enraged that, despite the improved situation, one of them did break out and injured a woman who was going to the market. At the time there were security meetings in each cellule.



Nyirabuhinja, a former refugee, had only recently returned to Rwanda.<sup>190</sup>

The violence continued into the afternoon. Joram Mbonabaryi's family was one of the worst affected. He is the father of four children; two of them were killed dead. Around 2:30 p.m. he watched from a nearby hill of Bukunama from where he saw a group of armed people coming from Murambi; he could hear gunfire. He hurried home to see his family.

Before reaching my house, I heard more gunfire. Suddenly a boy, Simon, ran past me and said: 'We are going to die!' I saw a group of women, children and men who were fleeing and I followed them. We went to a place called Ruhinamavi.

From his hiding place, Joram could hear what was going on in his own house.

I heard my son's voice whose name was Innocent Dusabe, saying: 'If you want to kill me, you'll have to start with my mother and wife and finish with me afterwards'. In reply, the soldier called Eucalyptus, who was Sebushari's son, immediately shot Dusabe. This boy joined the RPA after he had managed to escape the genocide. Mugemane, Bujanda's son, was also among the assassins. They did not do anything to my wife, Niyibizi, or to Dusabe's wife, whose name is Mukamunana.

But the loss of his son was not the only sorrow that Joram would suffer that afternoon.

I stayed in my hiding place and later I heard the attackers hitting someone in my house. I found out that they were hitting Dusabe's younger brother, Emmanuel Uwimana. They killed him on the spot. A few minutes later, I saw that Mupanda's house, who was an ex-FAR, was on fire. At around 9:00 p.m., I went back to my house and I heard Uwimana dying. No soldiers were part of the second group of attackers who killed Emmanuel Uwimana.

Joram's house was also looted. He has reported the murders to the local councillor, but at the time of the interview in September, there had been no arrests.

No-one was punished despite the fact that we reported it to the councillor. I think the main reason why no-one was arrested was that the criminals disappeared the very next day after the incident took place. What's more, is that the Tutsis who were living in houses belonging to Hutus, moved out the day the incident took place without any form of pressure from the Hutus. A typical example of this is Ncuye, who was living in my own house. I do not know where he went.<sup>191</sup>

Joseph Ngurinzira is Joram's neighbour and the *responsable* of cellule Rubara. He was on his way to a meeting at the commune office that morning with Col. Biseruka of the RPA when he found out that the Tutsis of Kabari were searching for Hutus. He returned home and later that day he heard the shot which killed Joram's son, Dusabe.

Around 2:00 p.m., I heard gunfire here in Nyamirango so I stayed completely still. A few minutes later, there was a shot at my neighbour, Mbonabaryi's, house. I went outside to look and saw that his son, Dusabe, had just been shot dead.

He also overheard a group of people planning their next attack.

Then a group of genocide survivors and some 1959 returnees launched an attack against the house of an ex-FAR Corporal called Théogène Mupanda, son of Sebinyenzi. As he was at home, and everyone thought he had a grenade, the Tutsi aggressors first of all talked about the best way of reaching their target, without running any risk. Some of them suggested setting fire to the house so that the ex-FAR member would be forced to come out. Having done this, Mupanda ran outside and was captured and killed with machetes and clubs.

Some of the attackers, he suggested, were not simply exacting revenge for the killings at Mudende, but some may also have been using the anger stirred up by the incident to resolve long-standing feuds and as an opportunity to loot.

I think that he was the victim of an on-going argument with a 1959 returnee called Michel, son of Seyoyo. I do not think that he had been suspected of being an accomplice of the infiltrators. There was a lawsuit between him and Michel concerning land.

<sup>190</sup> Interviewed in Mutura, Gisenyi, 27 September 1997.

<sup>191</sup> Interviewed in Mutura, Gisenyi, 4 October 1997.

They left when they had buried him, and went towards my younger brother, Bazamanza's, shop. He was not there, but they took a case of Mutzig beer and one of banana beer. They began to drink, then went home in the evening. My younger brother would have been targeted for the simple reason that he was rich and had refused them credit. These events only lasted one day here in Nyamirango and targeted certain men. I think that there were ten victims, including Cusabe and his brother Emmanuel Uwimana; Nyirantarure, wife of Ntakavuro with her two children, Mupanda, etc...<sup>192</sup>

Debula Nyiraburije from Kanzenze sector in Mutura was also displaced by the attack on Friday 22 August. On her way to the river to draw water, she met a group of people who were fleeing.

A few minutes later, my husband sent over the children to me and he removed some of our possessions from the house, such as the radios, some clothes and raw foods. Then he joined us at the bottom of the hill called Rushashu, where all the other displaced people were. From the plain, we could see all the places where the attackers might come from. There were about fifty displaced people on the plain.

Following the soldiers' assurances that peace had been restored, Debula and her family returned home on Monday morning, but they found several of their possessions had gone.

The contents of our house had been looted: food, an implement used for stonebuilding, four machetes and four hoes that my husband used for tree nursing for the UNDP/Ministry of Agriculture project in commune Mutura.<sup>193</sup>

The violence of Friday 22 August touched many families in the commune, leaving several in mourning. Marie Nyiraruvugo's husband, André Bidogo, was killed in Marero cellule in Nyamirango sector, at the home of his second wife; witnesses say he was first attacked by soldiers.

Marie is from Kanzenze sector and along with other residents, she heard that Bagogwe Tutsis "armed with sharpened sticks" were approaching. She escaped with her four children to Rushashu hill. It was two days later that she learned of her husband's death.

According to the displaced people from Nyamirango who witnessed my husband's death, he was attacked at home by one or more of the Tutsi soldiers who were looking for his son, an ex-FAR member called Sergeant Kajugujugu. When they arrived at his house around 10:00 a.m., they killed this ex-FAR soldier and his mistress, Nyanganya, while my husband was wounded by a bullet in his arm. A few minutes later, my husband was carried to the dispensary. He then climbed into a vehicle going to Gisenyi and been pulled out of it by the Tutsis at Kabari. This civilian group of Tutsis in Kabari clubbed him to death and threw him to one side. We found his body there on Sunday the 24th.

At the time, she was waiting for her husband's killers to be identified and brought to justice. She spoke of her own anxiety and that of many of her neighbours. Despite the fact that soldiers had attacked her husband, Marie pointed out that she was dependant upon the protection of the soldiers.

My husband was a *responsable* of the cellule. We don't know anyone who has been prosecuted in connection with his death. We are afraid of walking around places that are inhabited mainly by Tutsis, without at least one soldier as an escort. We are not afraid of the soldiers because if they had not intervened, we would not be here anymore. In actual fact, this situation of revenge has been defused by the intervention of the military commander of Bigogwe camp. He has expressed his regret. He has said: 'While we are all worried about our mutual enemy, the infiltrators, you peasants are turning against each other and killing one another, the people you are killing, who would have taken part in the attack against the refugees of Mudende? Are any of the people you are killing those who took part in the attack against the refugees of Mudende? If you know anyone who participated, bring him to justice.' Since then, these Tutsi civilians have begun to be afraid of being punished. We are, nevertheless, still afraid, especially at night.<sup>194</sup>

<sup>192</sup> Interviewed in Mutura, Gisenyi, 4 October 1997.

<sup>193</sup> Interviewed in Mutura, Gisenyi, 27 September 1997.

<sup>194</sup> Interviewed in Mutura, Gisenyi, 27 September 1997.

### *Mukamira, Ruhengeri, 25 November 1997*

A few months later, there were further reprisals by Tutsi civilians, this time in Mukamira, commune Nkuli in Ruhengeri. The killings took place on 25 November 1997, the day after 24 Tutsis were murdered in Mukamira (see above). Marc<sup>195</sup>, who had suffered serious injuries when he was macheted by infiltrators, was on his way to visit the family of a friend who had been killed by an insurgent. He escaped on the 25th, but his brother died.

On Monday 24 November 1997 the infiltrators killed about 24 Tutsis. The next day, at 7:00 a.m., the Tutsi set up a roadblock on the Ruhengeri-Gisenyi road at Mukamira, and divided the passengers who were in the passing vehicles. They took aside those who they thought looked Hutu and killed them. They killed some of their Hutu neighbours, amongst others. I could have been killed myself, as I was on my way there to assist the family of my friend 'Edouard', killed by an infiltrator. I was told of the situation by a man called 'Bizimana' when I reached the place called Nyegaza: 'Go back home if you don't want to die', he told me. It was later on that I learned of the death of 'Antoine', my elder brother. Yet he was an informant for the authorities about the activities of the infiltrators. The victims included:

- Gashyekero, son of Kabangara, from sector Mukamira;
- Nyiranteguye, Gashyekero's mother;
- Rwamirera, son of Nkenyero, and his wives;

The killings were largely indiscriminate, but according to Marc, a few of the victims had been singled out, such as the Nkenyero family.

One of Nkenyero's sons had been among the infiltrators who killed the Tutsis in Mukamira. He had a receipt, signed by the ex-councillor of sector Rukoma, Ndorimana. [This former councillor had become an insurgent]. This receipt was found at the scene of the attack.

There were also less lethal forms of retaliation employed against local Hutus, which eventually got out of hand.

<sup>195</sup> The name of the witness and all the names in inverted commas are pseudonyms as the witness asked for anonymity.

In this same vengeful way, some Tutsis led their cows into the fields of the Hutu during the day, to eat their crops. The corn field which belongs to Nyirabuseruka, cellule Kanyove, sector Musumba, and that of Debula, wife of Sebudende, were grazed by cattle, who were being herded by their Tutsi shepherds. The bourgmestre of Nkuli, Joseph Murindahabi, found the situation intolerable, and arrested about fifteen Tutsis, including Rwamucyo and Munyamariza.

The killings have left Marc with responsibilities he can ill afford.

My economic situation has deteriorated even further since this act of vengeance. I am now having problems looking after my brother's children.<sup>196</sup>

### *Nkamira, Gisenyi, 17 June 1998*

The massacre which took place on the night of 16/17 June 1998 at a transit camp for 1959 refugees in Nkamira, Mutura, was followed by further killings. Given the force of the attackers, the camp's local defence team fled. Later, they set up a roadblock and killed anyone who was not immediately recognised by members of their team. They killed Hutus, but also Tutsi genocide survivors. Anastase Ndagijimana is the councillor for Kantwari sector. He was recruited into the RPA after the genocide, and demobilised in September 1997. On 17 June, he and his wife hid in a cornfield while the insurgents carried out the massacre; he also witnessed the revenge which followed it. He returned to Gisenyi town in February 1998, but unable to make a living there, he and his wife moved into Nkamira camp.

The day of 17 June remained relatively calm at Nkamira. At around 3:00 p.m., we heard gunfire coming from the direction of Nyamirango. The local defence began to retaliate in this direction. We thought that it was the infiltrators who were attacking again and some of the refugees attempted to flee to Bigogwe military camp.

I stayed in Nkamira camp. The people who tried to go to the Bigogwe camp came up against a roadblock which had been set up by members of the local defence team and some peasants armed with *massues*, all Tutsis from Mutura. When the people arrived at the roadblock, some of them were separated and taken aside to be killed.

<sup>196</sup> Interviewed in Nkuli, Ruhengeri, 6 December 1997.

Before taking someone aside, they asked if anyone knew the person. If no one knew them, then the person was taken aside and killed. This is how some Tutsis were killed there. The victims included:

- Mgwije, a genocide survivor from Mubona sector, Rwerere;
  - Nkuze—whose father, Carisius, died during the genocide—was killed with his mother and his wife;
  - Nyiragasage, a Hutu and a widow of the genocide from Mubona sector, Rwerere;
- The sixth person was a child whose name I don't know.<sup>197</sup>

## The Reality of the Insurgency: Death and Displacement



The camp established in Kibari, Byumba for the Congolese refugees who survived the massacre in Mudende in December 1997



<sup>197</sup> Interviewed in Mutura, Gisenyi, 17 July 1998

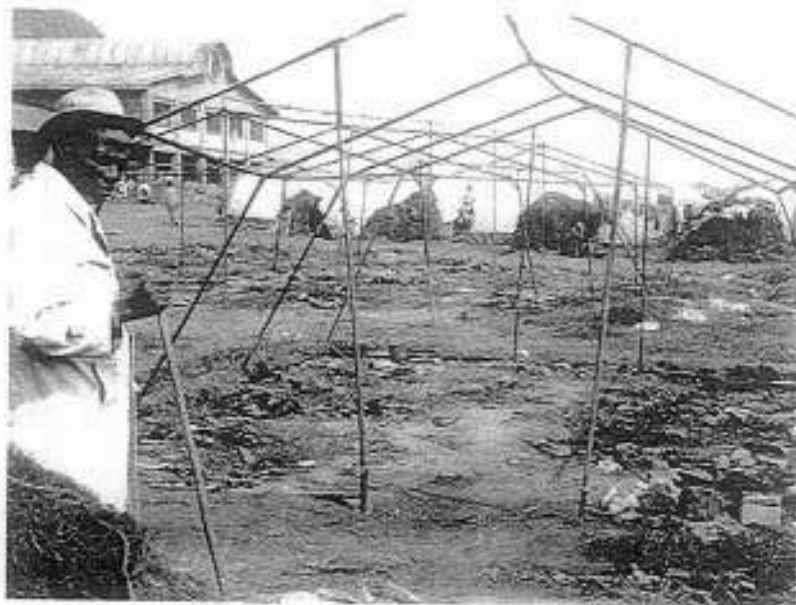


Manirihó Gahinjari was in Mudende in December



Ruzigana Munyakinani survived the Mudende massacre in December despite efforts to burn down the tent he occupied

Photographs: African Rights



People were burned in their tents in Mudende during the attack in August 1997



Nyiramajyambere is holding her young cousin whose father was killed in Mudende in August

Photographs: African Rights



Denis Murashi and his son in Gisenyi hospital after the massacre at Gahenerezo, August 1997



Mathias Tabaro was punished for his refusal to help the infiltrators



Marthe Nyirakage me and her daughter at Gisenyi hospital, also injured during the massacre at Gahenerezo



One of the children being cared for in Gisenyi hospital after the infiltrators' attack at Byahi, Gisenyi in February 1998

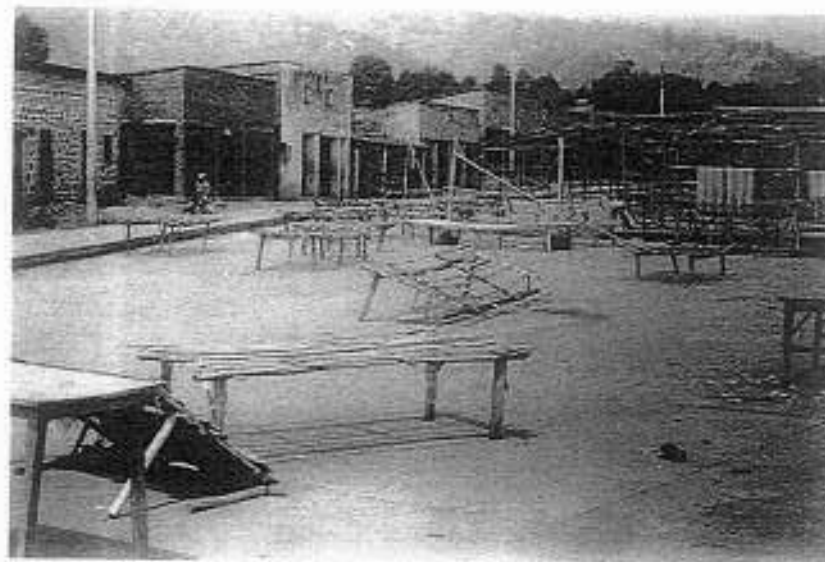
Photographs: African Rights



Bulinga commune office, in Gitarama, attacked three times and set on fire by the infiltrators, along with some houses in the area



A vehicle belonging to Kanama commune, Gisenyi, was burned when the commune offices were targeted by the insurgents in August 1997



The market in Mahoko, Gisenyi was deserted after RPA soldiers killed civilians and looted shops, together with local residents, following an attack by the insurgents on the nearby Kanama commune office in August 1997



The coffins of Dominique Bakunzibake's family members, killed by the 5th battalion of the RPA; in Kigombe, Ruhengeri



A home destroyed in the revenge attack by Tutsi civilians at Nyamirango, Mutura in August 1997



Aron Kambaki's two wives were murdered in Nkuli, Ruhengeri because of his hostility to the infiltrators. His mother, older brother and three nephews have also died at the hands of the insurgents.

## CASTING A LONG SHADOW

### THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE

The northwestern préfectures of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri used to be the breadbasket of Rwanda. After almost eight years of disruption, many people cannot even feed themselves. Farming has always been the most significant economic activity in the region, and most people have no other skills or resources to rely upon. Now large numbers of peasant farmers have been forced off their land by fear. The result is severe economic hardship; the price of some foodstuffs has increased fourfold. People are finding it difficult to pay for basic necessities, including medicine. Some children no longer attend school, either because their parents cannot afford the fees, or because they are worried about security.

1997 should have been the beginning of economic recovery for the region. More refugees returned to the northwest from the camps than to any other part of Rwanda. This caused both economic and social upheaval initially, but in early 1997 there was evidence of progress. Then, in mid-1997, infiltrator activity increased. Since then the local economy has been steadily beaten into exhaustion. The core of the problem is that in many communes the clashes between state and rebel forces are too frequent and intense to allow ordinary people to get on with the business of day-to-day life.

For most people of the northwest, normality has been suspended. Many have been displaced within the region or they have gone elsewhere. They are forced to provide food for the infiltrators when they have little for themselves. The widespread phenomenon of cattle rustling has added to the economic misery; as noted above, the insurgents have resorted to stealing cattle to purchase guns and ammunition in Masisi. As in 1994, and whenever there has been widespread or localised violence, the insurgents are destroying people's homes, in addition to killing them. Survivors whose houses were demolished or damaged during the genocide, and who have struggled to repair them or to build new houses, once again find themselves homeless.

The persistent insecurity has isolated the region of the northwest from the rest of Rwanda. Trade is badly affected by the cost of transport,



sometimes prohibitive because of the risks involved. Businesspeople complain of the lack of custom from outside the northwest. The repeated vandalism and looting of commercial centres is destroying the local economies and discouraging new investment. Shops, pharmacies and buses used for commercial transport are common targets. There is also a cost to the nation as a whole when administrative buildings and infrastructure are destroyed. Commune offices and buildings located nearby, including health centres, have been burned; bridges have been blown up and roads damaged. The economic and social costs of the insurgency have affected the entire population of the northwest and are likely to have a lasting impact. For the country as a whole, the food shortages in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri could not have come at a worse time for they coincided with poor harvests in Gikongoro and some of the southern communes of Butare.

In a letter dated 3 September 1997, the Bishop of the Diocese of Nyundo in Gisenyi, Mgr Alexis Habiyaambere, spoke of the wide-ranging consequences of violence in the region, noticeable so early on in the insurgency.

We need peace. In certain areas, people are no longer living at home for fear of being killed. The population no longer has the opportunity for agricultural activities because of the fighting. If we are not careful, there is a risk that hunger will descend on our region. Parents are afraid of sending their children to secondary schools located in the préfectures which make up our diocese (Gisenyi and Kibuye) when they take stock of the events that took place in Nyange and Muramba.<sup>198</sup> Civil servants and teachers are afraid of working in certain communes. Religious people are afraid of going to the health centres of Biruyi, Crete-Congo-Nil, Mubuga, Kibingo, Birambo and the maternity hospital of Nyundo.

As the insurgency continued, the danger of economic collapse and widespread hunger, compounded by many other difficulties, became a real possibility. Boniface Rucagu, the préfet of Ruhengeri, spoke in December of the possibility of the steady downward slope of the economy.

The economy of Ruhengeri is primarily founded on agriculture. We usually have a very good production of potatoes, cabbages, sorghum, beans, corn and onions. But our productivity has suffered a sharp decline during this crisis period.

<sup>198</sup> This is a reference to the killing of students in Nyange and Muramba in March and April 1997 respectively, detailed above.

The war of October 1990 until 1994, followed by the large-scale flight of the population to Zaire, has shaken an economic system based primarily on agriculture. In 1995 the population which remained in the country started to work in the fields again, and we returned to normal economic levels. But since about June 1996, the infiltrators, whose main mission was sensitising the people, took up some of the population's work time, so that production declined slightly.

The mass return of the refugees towards the end of 1996 led to a situation with more consumers than producers. These returnees didn't delay returning to work on the land, but we were unlucky and had strong sun, for a long time. During this time the prices of agricultural produce increased, to a point where a kilo of potatoes was between 30 and 40 francs. The worst blow to agriculture began in June 1997, when the infiltrators began their attacks. Since then the population hardly farms at all. Yet our soil remains fertile.

As for the commercial sector, a number of markets in our area remain operational, but they face the problem of a lack of produce. Taxes from this trade have therefore dropped a great deal. Livestock is not economically significant in Ruhengeri.

I would say that we are, more or less, in the stage between shortage and famine. The latter will undoubtedly happen if the situation persists, and will affect other regions of Rwanda. You know that potatoes have already become too expensive in Kigali.<sup>199</sup>

Since this interview was recorded, in December 1997, the situation has continued to deteriorate. The negative consequences of the insurgents' campaigns are not unfortunate side-effects; they are using fear and economic disruption as an integral part of their strategy. The deliberate creation of suffering is regarded as an end in itself, and as a means of creating political consciousness. One of the tracts distributed in the region early on in the conflict spelt out what the insurgents expect the "drawbacks" of their war to be, but claims that the sacrifices are necessary in the interests of "peace."

- It causes sorrow, exile, hunger and makes the whole country unsafe;
- The war leads to a large number of deaths amongst the people, their cattle etc...;
- The war only ends after many people are wounded, many houses destroyed and many orphans created;
- War leads to mental illness, including madness.

<sup>199</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 8 December 1997.

## *Economic Crisis*

It did not take long before these tactics placed severe economic strains on a troubled region, in an already poor country. The knock-on effects of this crisis began to be felt within a few months. The situation was already bleak by December. Rukara, a cook working with the Presbyterian Church in Gisenyi, described the hardships caused by the rise in prices, which occurred just when his family was least able to afford them.

There is a lack of foodstuffs, and everything is very expensive. One kilo of potatoes, usually no more than fifteen francs, is now eighty francs here in Gisenyi town. A plate of raw beans, usually never more than 150 francs, is now 280 francs.

The price of a cabbage, fifty francs before this problem with the infiltrators, is now 200 francs. Livestock has also suffered, with many cattle stolen. Last week, my father-in-law, living in sector Basa of our commune, was robbed of his seventeen cows, looted by the infiltrators. When the Mudende refugees were attacked for the second time [10 December], 200 cows grazing near the border between Rubavu and Rwerere were stolen.

The extent to which the present economic crisis has been engendered by the fighting is evident from the price of meat. Unlike agricultural produce, the price of livestock has fallen. This has nothing to do with the usual economic mechanisms, but has happened as a direct result of the security situation. The combination of widespread looting and cattle theft, together with an exodus of Tutsi refugees who need immediate funds, has flooded the market. People feel that it is safer to sell their animals at a loss than to wait around and risk them being stolen or being killed themselves. Rukara commented:

Meat is cheaper than it used to be because the population has to sell at any price, considering the scale of cattle theft. In the market, a goat which used to cost 9000 francs is now 3000 francs. Yesterday I saw refugees from Mudende at the market, survivors of the recent attack, selling their goats at very low prices.<sup>200</sup>

<sup>200</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 13 December 1997.

Fidèle Mitsindo, bourgmestre of commune Giciye, described some of the consequences for his commune.

- Gasiza and Vunga, the only markets in our commune, are no longer functioning;
- The vehicle of the commune was burned by the infiltrators in Gasiza on 13 November and the motorcycle used by the policemen was burnt during the attack of 17 November;
- The coffers of the commune are almost empty because we don't receive, and cannot ask for, taxes under such conditions.<sup>201</sup>

## *Farming and Food Production*

Farmers are worst affected by the insecurity and their plight has been exacerbated by poor rainfall and disappointing harvests. However, most of the blame for the dramatic decline in agricultural production in the region must be shouldered by the infiltrators. In early December 1997, Fidèle Mitsindo outlined the effects which the developments of the past six months had had on Giciye.

The consequences are multiple, and relate in particular to the economy. We are experiencing a period of food shortages, given the fact that the population does not feel safe enough to cultivate the fields. And yet, Giciye used to be the most fertile area; it even happened that a kilo of potatoes would cost one franc. Now, not only are potatoes expensive, but they are even difficult to find.

I have been able to shelter more than 400 people, both Hutu and Tutsi, who have abandoned their sectors because of the infiltrators. Living here, near the commune office, they can't go to their homes to work the land. They run the risk of dying of hunger.

The family of Rukara, cited above, are farmers from sector Murara in commune Rubavu, and own fields and a house there. But they have joined the exodus from the rural areas and came to live with Rukara in Gisenyi town. He explained the dilemma facing those living in the worst affected areas. Conflict and ideological hatred have replaced farming as a way of life.

<sup>201</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 6 December 1997.

The population cannot concentrate on agriculture as the situation is unstable. For one thing, all the bad actions conducted by the infiltrators create fear amongst the people. Such fear does not allow peaceful farming. In addition, the activities of infiltrators, or merely their presence in the area, leads the army to conduct search operations. Subsequently, there are confrontations and the population runs away in panic. After the fighting, there are two or three days of search operations by the army, to find the infiltrators or their accomplices. Farming is impossible during this time. It is a time of fear and panic.

The search operations are followed by the slow return of the population to their homes. Two or three days are then spent discussing the difficult period they have just lived through. Again, work in the fields is put on hold. Sometimes, as in sector Murara, the infiltrators slowly return, without the army knowing. The same scenario takes place again, once the army becomes aware of their presence.

This kind of repeated conflict eventually leads to population displacement towards other regions with a greater level of security. This was the case for my wife and children, who fled Murara to join me here at the centre.

Rukara said there was little point in trying to farm his fields, "as even those who are still in Murara do not farm because of the regular security problems".

Under these already difficult conditions, many peasants must bear the added burden of demands from the infiltrators. Until early January 1998, Clarisse Mukamugema lived in sector Ngurungunzu in commune Kibilira, Gisenyi. In a long interview, she detailed the incessant demands of the insurgents for food, given both voluntarily and from fear.

The population of Kibilira will get poorer because everyone works to feed the infiltrators and doesn't take produce to market.

Another negative economic consequence of the fighting, which is described in more detail in the following chapter, is the RPA's decision to clear the land of vegetation along the major roads in the northwest. The thick banana plantations became ideal cover as insurgents fired on vehicles, killing many passengers. But it has also been a blow to the farmers who depend on them for their livelihood.

### *Local Shops and Businesses*

Shops and businesses are not only affected by the lack of produce to sell and the absence of customers, but have been looted and have had their premises broken or burned down by infiltrators. As most commercial centres are located close to commune offices, they have not been spared when commune offices come under attack. The civilians who accompany the insurgents on such occasions have also been active in cleaning out local shops. In addition, they have been subjected to "taxes" levied by the insurgents.

The shops and bars in Mahoko, Gisenyi suffered extensive financial damage in August 1997 when insurgents launched two offensives in quick succession. Civilians and some soldiers also joined in the looting. César Mbarushimana lost 350,000 francs of stock and all the shopkeepers at the centre reported enormous losses.

Some of them, like me, didn't have any money in the bank. I really can't see what my future will be. For the shopkeepers who do have money in the bank, fear prevents them from trading in this centre. The government should intervene rapidly, both financially and psychologically.

The effect of these rapid price changes has brought chaos to many other businesses, which depend on agriculture indirectly. Maman Paul Kaneza<sup>202</sup> owns a restaurant in the town of Ruhengeri. At the end of 1997, she spoke of the impact of the price fluctuations on her business.

The situation has changed since June or July 1997, but the lack of produce and the poverty of my customers has mainly manifested itself since August.

One kilo of potatoes, which cost 35 francs some time after the mass return of the refugees, is now 70 francs, a kilo of beans used to be 120 francs at most, and is now 250 francs. One kilo of corn cost 70 francs, and is now 120 francs, a kilo of peas has gone from 60-100 francs to 280 francs. A bag of rice which used to cost 7,500 francs, is now 12,500 francs.

Maman Paul said there had been a sharp fall in the number of customers frequenting her restaurant in the second half of 1997.

<sup>202</sup> Many women in Rwanda are called by the name of their eldest child.

The prices in my restaurant should increase proportionally, but we are then faced with a lack of customers. The price of a dish of these cooked ingredients has increased from 400 to 700 francs for lunch or dinner. The drop in custom at the restaurant is explained by the following two factors:

- The lack of money, due to the cessation or slowdown of some economic activity in the region, such as agriculture and livestock. This is due to the insecurity we are experiencing.
- Visitors from Kigali coming to Ruhengeri and Gisenyi used to bolster our clientele. Now that fear has discouraged visitors from Kigali, our revenues have declined.

The unexpected fall in meat prices has been of some help to people like Maman Paul, but people are selling livestock cheaply out of tragic necessity, so it is bound to be temporary. The detrimental effects which the infiltrators have on trade include a rise in transport costs, an important consideration in a region which must now import a significant proportion of its food.

Transport has suffered too, increasing in price because of the risk of attacks and the vehicle being set on fire by the infiltrators. Transporting a bag of rice from Kigali to Ruhengeri used to cost 100-150 francs, but is now 300 francs.<sup>203</sup>

### *A Region Deserted: October 1997-1998*

In October 1997, the destructive impact which the conflict had upon the northwest was already evident. All along the road from Matoko in Kanama to the town of Gisenyi itself, located in Rubavu, there were empty dwellings. Here, as elsewhere in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, the inhabitants had abandoned their homes to escape the frequent and deadly confrontations between the RPA and the insurgents. Some people had gone to live with relatives deeper in the countryside or had sent their families to Kigali; others had moved closer to commune offices and military bases, while others fled with the insurgents. Some of the young men had joined the ranks of the infiltrators.

Since much of the population had been displaced, the area became progressively more dangerous. After the attack on Mahoko, the infiltrators

<sup>203</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 3 December 1997.

also set up roadblocks near the Pfunda tea factory, which led to an intervention by the army. The Rugerero centre, near the Gisenyi-Ruhengeri road, was attacked by infiltrators on 30 September and 4 October, resulting in a large number of victims. A bomb exploded at the Inyemerahigigo primary school, claiming the lives of two pupils. Infiltrators also launched a major attack in sector Muhira of commune Rubavu, near Nyundo, which was fought off by government troops.

On Thursday 2 October at 5:00 a.m., an unusually large group of infiltrators tried to attack Nyundo again, this time from the direction of cellule Kasonga. Again the army drove them off. This period in early October saw an intense but unsuccessful operation conducted by the infiltrators. The aim was the capture of the airport at Gisenyi, and possibly the town itself. There was heavy fighting. Some residents tried to hold out for as long as possible, reluctant to abandon their homes and livelihoods. Antoine Ntibiringirwa, a civil servant in charge of social affairs in Gisenyi, remained in his house in Nyundo until October.

The many confrontations did not intimidate me enough to leave like other people had done. However, Thursday's attack by the infiltrators in our sector, Muhira, convinced me that I should leave with all my family to come and live in Gisenyi town. My blind perseverance could lead to my being killed by the infiltrators or, on the other hand, the soldiers might suspect me of collaborating with the infiltrators. This is why I told myself I should do what the others had done.<sup>204</sup>

Many other people came to a similar decision. An African Rights researcher visited a number of communes in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi between 24 September and 7 October. He had last visited the area in August and was immediately struck by the stark contrast.

Displacement is the reason for the misery and the despair that can be seen on the faces of the people that one meets. The lack of activity might well lead to famine. One can see people either standing or sitting in meeting places all day long, in many communes in the two prefectures. The interim bourgmestre of Kinigi said that the farmers were unable to go to the fields because almost every day there was the sound of gunfire.

The consequences are becoming clear. In August, a kilo of potatoes cost 34 francs; now it costs 57 francs even though this is the main potato-producing area.

<sup>204</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 7 October 1997.

The people displaced by the violence have led a makeshift existence, half-lives conditioned by fear.

Janvier Mundere's life has been ruined. He and his brother were slated to be killed, denounced by the insurgents for failing to oppose the government. They left their home and land in Kanama and migrated to Kayove. On 8 June, his mother, sister and wife died in the massacre in sector Ngabo detailed above. With the death of the women in his family, he must look after his two young daughters on his own. But he dare not return home and support himself the only way he knows how—by living off the land. There are few alternatives on the horizon. At the end of June, he was in Kibuye hospital, looking after his younger daughter who had been wounded in the massacre and reflecting on what the future held for him.

My future is not at all promising. I now have these two children, both under the age of two. All the members of my life are dead, except for my younger brother. To survive, I will certainly have to look around for work. But since I have neither a wife nor a mother, who can I ask to look after these small children when I go to work?

The problems would have been less serious if I had been at home in commune Kanama where I could leave the children at the house, or with friends while I worked the fields situated next to my house. But I can't go back, unless I intend it as a form of suicide. As for Kayove, I don't have a house there. In addition, those with whom I shared misfortune and who survived the massacre are getting ready to leave this place. I have become someone who has neither a base nor a residence in his own country. For the moment, I can only think of one solution to my problems, that is to look for an orphanage which can take my children so that I can try to rebuild my life economically, bit by bit. After I have recovered economically, and my children are a bit older, I will bring take them back.

At the age of 65, Jean Bihincyuro was also forced to desert his home in Kajwi, Nyarutovu. In early June 1998, he, his wife and other relatives were threatened by his own son who had become an insurgent and who wanted to kill one of his brothers. Home has become a tent close to Nyarutovu commune office. Food is in short supply, and so are their options.

We dare not return to our homes to harvest *colocasses*, sweet potatoes etc... which are now ripe.

They have good reasons for holding back.

An old man called Ruboneza, who was also displaced here, recently sent his daughter-in-law to bring food, but she did not return.

Alphonse Habumugisha, 22, is also living close to Nyarutovu commune office. On 1 June 1998, he was led away from his home and beaten by insurgents, including Jean Bihincyuro's son, and escaped as he was being led to his death.

My family has remained on the hill. I am now living with someone else in his tent. The key problem for us here is the lack of tents and the total lack of food. I cannot return to the hill unless I am accompanied by soldiers.

Forced to abandon his home in sector Musumba in Nkuli, Cléophas Murekezi, 75, was unable to find a house in Mukamira where he sought refuge. He and his family were staying in a friend's kitchen at the time of the interview. Nor was he able to harvest food from his fields until soldiers arrived in the area.

I could no longer go back to my cellule to gather fruit from the fields because this cellule adjoins the volcanic forest where the infiltrators in the region were living. I only started going there a few days ago with the installation of a military position there.

The insurgency has generated an atmosphere of fear even among those who have not been personally victimised. Espérance Nikuze and her husband, Jean-Bosco Ntamuhanga, lost four of their eight children to disease and hunger in the effort to save their family. In October 1997, they decided to vacate their house in cellule Kizi, sector Muhira in Rubavu, Gisenyi. At the time, Rubavu was rocked by the violence which followed the insurgents' attempt to take control of the airport.

There was an invasion by the insurgents followed by clashes with the soldiers. We lived with a friend on Mount Ngame in commune Nyamyumba. We were exhausted by being continuously on the run. Hunger, illnesses and the lack of medical treatment led to the death of four of my children—Nsengiyumva, a boy of fifteen; Sinzabakira, a boy of thirteen and twin girls, Nyirahabineza and Nyiranzahabwanayo. They all died from untreated malaria, complicated by insufficient food of poor quality. We had to use traditional medicines. I have remained with my

husband and four other children who themselves run the risk of dying, as you can see for yourself.

We lived in peace before the insurgents began their activities. They have caused us all these problems, exposing us to the fury of the army.

In April, they came back to Rubavu, but uncertain about security in Kizi, they moved into a small commercial centre in Rugerero.<sup>205</sup>

Innocent Kalinganire, a farmer in sector Raba, commune Rushashi, was taken by infiltrators to Ndusu, Ruhengeri to work with them. He returned to Rushashi on 16 July 1998 and the next day made his way to the commune office.

I have a lot of problems. I am not farming my fields and my wife is no longer staying at the house. This means that all our belongings will be stolen. I have told my wife to sell the cattle because there is no-one to take care of them. The people of Raba think that I am an *Inyenzi*.

Fear of reprisals from the insurgents has cut relatives and friends off from those who have left them.

No-one can come here to visit me or to bring me food. Days go by when I don't have anything to eat.

### *Forced Out: The Displaced in Kigali*

Insecurity and economic hardship have separated families and forced them to make difficult choices. For some this has meant moving to Kigali, even though the majority of them are farmers and have no access to land there. But because of its size and anonymity, it has become a city of asylum, the first port of refuge for hundreds of people from the northwest.

Three of Jacqueline Yankulije's four children were drowned in front of her in Bulinga, Gitarama during the genocide; she was spared because she is Hutu. A daughter who had been hidden by her uncle, and Jacqueline's husband, survived. After successive incursions by the insurgents, Jacqueline went to shelter at the commune office which was raided for the third time on 8 April 1998. She left for Kigali where her husband had already emigrated.

After the genocide, my husband and I began to organise ourselves, and this happens to us again. I wonder how long we are going to live in this uncertainty? When I was in Bulinga, I was afraid because I had accused many génocidaires whom the insurgents set free. I was afraid they would kill me. After my arrival in Kigali, the infiltrators attacked my parents during the night; they combed everywhere, searching for me.

We cannot go back to Bulinga. Life is expensive in Kigali. My husband earns very little money. However, I prefer to die of hunger rather than being killed with a machete. Before the genocide, my husband and I cultivated our plot. Today, our fields are left untended in Bulinga while we die of hunger in Kigali. We don't have any plans for the future of our children.

Like other Bagogwe Tutsis in the northwest, Louise Mujawimana, 22, and her family, have led unsettled lives since war first erupted in October 1990 and they were accused of being a fifth column for the RPF. They left their native commune of Mukingo, Ruhengeri, in August 1993 after many Bagogwe men were killed and their homes burned down. They found safety in Masisi, but in 1994 they became frightened when ex-FAR and interahamwe arrived in the area. Louise moved back to Rwanda; before long she was married. She set up home in Ruhengeri, in Mukamira, Nkuli. But the continued killings and the distribution of menacing tracts finally obliged Louise and her sister-in-law to move to Kigali.

We were afraid to stay in Ruhengeri. On 28 December, we came to take refuge in Kigali. I was with Uwimana, the wife of my brother-in-law, and their children. We rented a small house. As we don't work, and one cannot farm in Kigali, we don't have food.

The lack of food has forced Louise's husband and her brother-in-law to return to Ruhengeri to cultivate, despite the evident danger in Ruhengeri and along the way.

Sometimes they come to see us. We are very worried about their security in Ruhengeri. We know that they could be killed any day. We have been obliged to live apart from our husbands. However, the state doesn't do anything to help us. There are very few people who think we have suffered or that we continue to suffer up to today.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 2 May 1998.

<sup>206</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 23 January 1998.

Nyiragakera only arrived in Rwanda in 1995, displaced by fighting in Masisi. She and her family settled in sector Rwankuba, commune Mutura in Gisenyi. They vacated the houses they had occupied after the owners returned from exile. In June 1997, the government moved Nyiragakera and other Tutsis from Zaire to a transit centre in Gatagara, located near the Bigogwe military camp in Mutura. Infiltrators attacked the centre in mid-December. A few days later, Nyiragakera, a 24-year-old housewife, and her husband, Kongomani, decided to move to Kigali, together with their child and a child related to them. Making ends meet in Kigali, where the cost of living has become increasingly prohibitive, is not easy.

We manage with the little money we have, but life in Kigali is hard. Our housing has been free until now, but food is too expensive. In Gisenyi, we had our corn and potato fields, which we didn't manage to harvest. Here we don't even have anywhere to grow vegetables. The cellule which welcomed us, Kamukima, sector Kimihurura, hasn't helped us at all, although other sectors of the city have provided aid to refugees. We have told them this, and we are waiting.

If security returned we would like to go back to Gisenyi because we are farmers and have land there.<sup>207</sup>

Thomas Bihigimondo, 73, has led a life punctuated by personal tragedy and hardship. And there seems to be no end in sight. Thomas, a Bagogwe, and five of his sons were imprisoned in October 1990 as "accomplices" of the RPF. His five sons were killed. His home in Kinigi, Ruhengeri, was destroyed. Thomas and his remaining family moved to Kigali, where they were looked after by his son, Félix Rubibi. Félix was murdered during the genocide. With no one to assist them in Kigali, the family returned to Ruhengeri. Thomas began to farm and his two remaining children went back to school in Kinigi. In July 1997, infiltrators came to their house; RPA soldiers intervened in time, but the incident, in which a soldier died, clinched a decision to leave Ruhengeri for Kigali.

My two children, Emile Karangwa and Médiatrice Nyironsabimana, have left school. I am with them, but we have no-one to help us. To earn a living, we sell soap, rice etc... at the market. I feel really discouraged; I don't know how we are going to live.<sup>208</sup>

Maria Cekili's parents are from Mutura, Gisenyi, but she was born in Masisi and grew up there. She and her family came to Mutura after the genocide, and settled in Kanzenze. She is 24. She married a soldier in 1996 and had a baby boy. But from November 1996, she was no longer at ease.

The attacks on individuals continued, as did the theft of cows. All the Tutsis were afraid; there were tracts put up everywhere telling the Tutsis they would be killed unless they left. When someone went to till their field, they didn't come back. We were afraid to go to our fields. I couldn't sleep any more.

She eventually joined her husband who was stationed in Kigali.

Life in Kigali is expensive, and we will not be able to hang on here. We don't know where to go. In Mutura I farmed the fields and we had enough to eat. I had a good harvest and even sold some of it to make some money. There are many other Tutsi from my region who have become refugees, scattered all over Kigali and elsewhere. But the majority have already returned to Mutura, unable to afford life in Kigali, short of money or ill. I am going too, as I think I would rather die at home in Mutura. The solution I see is for the government to find us another place to live, where we can have fields to till, because we are farmers.

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**"We are not suited for the hot areas of southern and eastern Rwanda. But I would rather die from malaria than from a machete".**

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Here in Kigali no-one has helped us in any way.<sup>209</sup>

Afraid for their lives, Clémentine Mukasekuru, 21, her brother and sister exchanged their native commune of Mutura for Kigali in 1991. Their brother, who looked after them, was killed in Kigali during the genocide, obliging Clémentine and her sister to return to Mutura. But they were too afraid to go home to Rushashu, sector Kanzenze; instead, they went to live at the Kabali trading centre, together with other survivors and 1959 refugees. In 1997, they felt increasingly insecure.

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<sup>209</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 9 February 1998.

<sup>207</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 27 January 1998.

<sup>208</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 26 January 1998.

We were threatened, our crops were harvested and there were tracts telling us that we would be killed. We couldn't sleep; we were always waiting to be killed. I had just got married, and I came to Kigali with my mother-in-law. My husband is a soldier.

But starting from scratch in Kigali is no easy matter.

We have no belongings, and food is expensive. We wonder how we are going to live. The state gives us nothing, whereas they helped the 1994 refugees when they returned. I can see that we were created to suffer, and we await our fate.<sup>210</sup>

Rachel Mukamugema, a refugee from Masisi, arrived in the northwest at the end of 1994. The family set up home in Mutura. The two massacres in Mudende left them anxious; the men often slept outside and the women and children stayed with neighbours, changing homes frequently. They left made their way to Kigali on 20 December.

A few days later my husband went back to Gisenyi to fetch some supplies of food, as we had corn and potato fields. He was killed on 5 January 1998 in a taxi which was stopped and burned by the infiltrators.

With no one to call upon in Kigali, the family faced a dire situation.

I am now alone, responsible for seven people, including my six children and my younger sister. I have no job or other means of income, and I don't even have a field to farm. I do not know what will become of us. In the past my husband, Claude Birimbo, provided for the family.

I am particularly afraid that the children will become ill, as I have no way of caring for them. Until now people have given us what they have, but that won't last long. I want to see the responsible and the councillor of sector Kimihurura to explain our situation and ask for assistance. We are still waiting. Here in Kigali we are safe, but life is hard. If it was safe in Gisenyi we would go back, because life is much easier there than in Kigali. There I can farm, but here that is impossible.<sup>211</sup>

When eight of his brothers were killed in Rwerere, Gisenyi, in 1992, Faustin Ndagijimana, 32, moved his wife and children to Kigali. His wife, Annonciata Nyiramashuri, suffered greatly during the genocide. They

were also left with a lot of orphans to care for; they could not afford life in Kigali and moved back to Gisenyi, to Mutura. Faustin became the commune tax collector, Annonciata set up a shop and they began to rebuild their lives. But they did not enjoy peace of mind for long. They lost two of their children in the massacre on 18 August 1997 at Gahenerezo detailed above; Annonciata herself was shot and is now disabled.

I drove my wife to hospital in Ruhengeri. I had to rent a house in Ruhengeri so that I could take care of her. It was hard for me to find the medicine and the money to pay the hospital. I had no-one to help me.

When Annonciata recovered, Faustin brought his family back to Kigali.

In Kigali, I rented two houses: one for my family and one for the family of my older brother, Rukara, who had been killed in 1992. I had no job in Kigali and was forced to return to Mutura in order to work and get the money to feed them. But this region was too insecure.

After the killings of 17 June 1998, directed at Tutsis at the Nkamira transit camp, Faustin decided it was too unsafe to remain in Mutura and is now living with his family in Kigali.

I returned to Kigali because of the violence. Now, I wonder how I am going to feed my family. The infiltrators have destroyed my house and stolen my cows. I haven't done any studies to help me get a job and my wife can't do anything to help me. Last month, Hélène Nyirakadiri, Rukara's widow, died of malaria. She couldn't get any medicine. She left four children and I must now take care of them. These children have left school because they can't find the school fees. We are just waiting to die. Everyone has abandoned us.<sup>212</sup>

His wife added:

We found a house, but we have no belongings except cooking pots. It is very difficult for us to find enough to eat. Only my husband works. Our cows in Gisenyi were stolen, so we have nothing.

<sup>210</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 11 February 1998.

<sup>211</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 27 January 1998.

<sup>212</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 15 July 1998.



### *Living With the Infiltrators: A Problem of Hunger and Sickness*

Thousands of civilians have accompanied the insurgents to the caves and forested areas they have chosen as their hideouts. This has led to severe food shortages, exacerbated by the insurgents' dependence on civilians for supplies. Hunger is one of the most important reasons why so many of their civilian supporters have parted company with the insurgents.

Denis Mashukane, a soldier between 1983 and 1989, sneaked out in April 1998 with two of his children, under the cover of darkness.

The problem of hunger emerged at the beginning of this year and slowly got worse. The instability caused by continually having to run and hide prevented us from working the land. We also had to share the small amount of food we received with the infiltrators. These were the main reasons for the increasing levels of hunger. At one point, there was a clash between us and the infiltrators over this lack of food and the fact that the infiltrators continued to demand provisions by force. As a solution, the infiltrators suggested that we cook certain wild plants such as nettles. Eating such plants wasn't a problem. However, the cooked nettle leaves were eaten on their own, without even salt, and this was made worse by the fact that they had to be shared with the infiltrators. The infiltrators didn't demand a specific quantity of food, but each family had to make a contribution.

Compulsory financial contributions were an additional drain.

From September 1997, a contribution of 100 francs was demanded from each individual. This demand for a monetary contribution ended when the looting and the exchange of cows for arms began. The cows often belonged to Tutsis, such as those stolen from the Tutsis in Bigogwe.

Medicine, as well as food, was in short supply.

There was also a shortage of medicines when people were ill, except when the infiltrators had looted them from somewhere. But again, a small amount of money was demanded in exchange. No medicine was given free, despite our daily food contribution. Those in authority had been chosen by the infiltrators.

Denis said he was glad to have left behind a life of "eating nettle leaves and the leaves from the *umunyanya* plant". But he has other worries.

The biggest problem is to persuade my wife to come here with the youngest child. I can't go to see her because the infiltrators have undoubtedly heard that I have joined their enemies, and they would kill me.<sup>213</sup>

Enias Mvuyekure, a 48-year-old farmer from sector Nyarushyamba in Rwerere, was interviewed in Bazirete three weeks after his decision to leave the area where civilians were living together with insurgents. After repeated clashes between the infiltrators and the army, he and other residents left with the infiltrators, staying in the sectors around Gora, where the insurgents named a new councillor for Nyarushyamba, Jean Ntibanganira.

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**"We had to act like thieves in order to get food to eat".**

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I usually went at night to collect food from my field and then returned either to Gora or Kivumu. As we were threatened with starvation, I would have returned much earlier if the infiltrators and their supporters hadn't told us that there was no longer anyone at all back home. I was told that the soldiers had killed people who I had discovered were actually still alive. Amongst them was my former neighbour, Jean Gakuba. When I got back on 20 April 1998, I found him at home.

It wasn't until I heard that a meeting had been held at Kanama, to persuade the population to return home, that I decided to come back here. I had had enough of this extremely difficult life, characterised mainly by a hunger which had sometimes caused me to faint.

I am sure that the infiltrators aren't happy about us coming here; they were always telling us never to collaborate with state employees. It is obvious that my presence and suffering are advantageous to the infiltrators, who only think about their military and political interests. I am now convinced that as an elderly farmer, I would not gain anything in particular from their victory. I would remain a farmer. This is why I have had enough.

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<sup>213</sup> Interviewed in Rwerere, Gisenyi, 1 May 1998.

Enias's next comment holds out the challenge that the army and the government must meet if the decision to leave the insurgents is to be the first step towards a return to normality.

I am determined to stay on the side of those who guarantee my stability. If no soldier comes to bother me, I will remain on the side of the state institutions.<sup>214</sup>

Emmanuel Nduwamunga, a *résistant* in Kinigi who surrendered in April 1998, commented on the nomadic existence which created hunger.

The important message, which often featured in the propaganda campaign, was to tell the people to flee from the government soldiers and to refuse to participate in the meetings organised by the authorities of the commune. Not all the inhabitants of this area went to the volcanic forest. It was enough to move to another sector or another cellule when the soldiers came, and then to return once they had left. Only the inhabitants of the sectors of Kabwende, Bisate and Nyabitsinde fled to the bamboo forest. When the soldiers remained in an administrative area for a long time, the displaced inhabitants were welcomed by those native to the area, or if not, they went to the mountains.

These population movements resulted in a food shortage in these sectors. The infiltrators also went hungry since they generally depended on the local people. This situation forced the infiltrators to move into areas where there was still food. Alternatively, those affected had to walk long distances in order to bring back food supplies. There is no food left in the north of sector Nyange. The solution has been to get food from the cellules of Nyarubuye and Kibingo to the south.

According to Théophile Munyandekwe, a former infiltrator, the search for food cuts across communes, and even préfectures.

When one area is short of food, they move to another. That was the case in Giciye, especially in Nturo centre, where I was. Our cooked food was brought over from commune Ndusu.

Théoneste Hakizimana, an architect who became PALIR's treasurer in sector Kantwari, Rwerere, lived with the insurgents, accompanied by his wife and seven children. He came back on 15 July; his testimony shows that the situation has become progressively worse for the civilians who remain.

<sup>214</sup> Interviewed in Rwerere, Gisenyi, 1 May 1998.

There was unbearable hunger because the peasants who had disassociated themselves from the infiltrators came to harvest their food, accompanied by soldiers. When we asked the infiltrators to protect these food supplies, they told us that it was difficult. As far as hunger was concerned, they told us that it was always like this during guerrilla warfare. However, they were always asking us for food.

### *Holding Back the Future: The Impact on Education*

Both the generalised insecurity and the violence directed specifically against schools have demoralised students, teachers and their parents. Not only have schoolchildren and teachers been killed and wounded, and schools turned into killing grounds, but many teachers and students have also joined the insurgents. Many of the educated *partisans* are teachers. Others have become displaced, along with other sectors of the population. Many students have also lost one or both of their parents, killed either by the insurgents, the RPA or during military confrontations, raising questions about who will pay for their education. The schools which have been attacked have also been looted. As a result, some schools have been forced to close for extended periods.

Emmanuel Dushimimana, eighteen, survived the massacre that followed the ambush of a bus from Kigali to Kibuye on 22 June 1998. His testimony is included above. Three students from his school, the *Ecole Technique Officiel* in Kibuye, were among the victims.

The deaths of these three students has affected us greatly. All of them, Gérard, Alain and Emmanuel, were model students. They were good at sport and intelligent. Gérard was all alone; his family were killed during the genocide. We no longer have the will to study because we know that at any time we could die like them. Some students have started to leave our school, saying that it is in a dangerous area. It is awful at school now. We feel traumatised. The slightest noise sends the students into hiding because we think it is the infiltrators attacking. When we are in the classroom, we hide under the desks. If a student makes a noise getting up during the night to go to the toilet, all the other students get up and hide under their beds.

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“We are young. We need to live and to build our country. We’ve had enough of war”.

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Therefore, I ask the foreigners who publish lies about our country, with the aim of supporting the infiltrators and of sowing hatred between Rwandese, to stop. We need help to build our country, not to destroy it.

Some schools also find themselves short of basic necessities. Innocent Maniragaba is a teacher at the *Ecole de Lettres* in Gatovu, Nkuli which the insurgents had sought to close down through a campaign of intimidation. On 24 March 1998, they murdered five students and wounded seven, three of them seriously. The school was eventually forced to close its doors “due to a lack of provisions to feed the students”. But they were determined to make it possible for the final year students to sit their exams. At the time of the interview, the teachers and students were squatting in temporary premises in commune Mukingo.

As you can see, the conditions in which they work are terrible. There are 130 students instead of the 200 who were supposed to be here. Out of the seventy who are not here, there are some who are carrying on their studies somewhere else, but those from Kinigi and Nyamutera were prevented from coming by the infiltrators. There are eight classes; we have ten desks and five benches which everyone must share. The students have to take their exams outside, in the gardens, so that they don’t have to sit on the floor in the classrooms. When it rains we stop. Some of the students spend the night on mattresses that they have brought from home.

Innocent made a plea to the government to take these special circumstances into account.

The government considers the students from the northwest in the same light as the students from areas of safety. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the students from the northwest who are doing their studies, do so in almost impossible conditions which do not help them to succeed.

Théophrasie Ntamugabumwe, a student at the school, agreed with Innocent’s assessment and commented on the infiltrators’ attitude to schools.

Of course it is not easy to study in such an environment. None of us have any hope of obtaining our diploma. The state should not consider us in the same way as the finalists of other schools who are in safe areas.

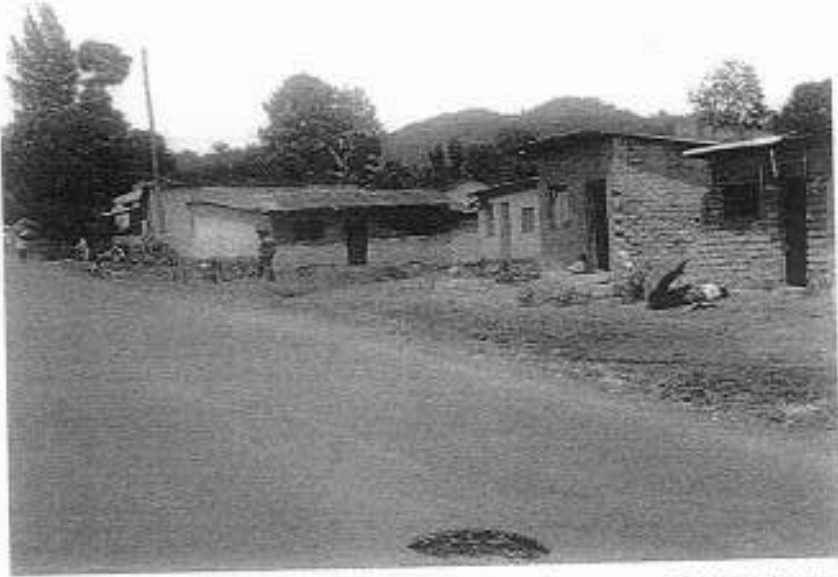
The infiltrators who want to stop us from studying are not doing it for our good. They are only concerned with their own interests which are to upset the present state and to use us when we have abandoned school.

Annonciata Nyiramashuri is married to Faustin Ndagijimana cited above. She has been unable to find a school for her children in Kigali.

When we were in Mutura, they were in primary school. But in Kigali we were told that there is no more room at the primary school and they were forced to give up their studies. No-one will help us; they say that they cannot help people who are still in their country.

The impact on education is one of the most disturbing features of the insurgency, for it is invariably also an attack on the future, not only of the individual students involved, but on the future of the country itself.

## Economic and Social Consequences of the Insurgency



Rugerero, located near the main town of Gisenyi, commune Rubavu, became progressively deserted after intense confrontations between the RPA and the insurgents, and after the insurgents ambushed and burnt many vehicles along the main road.



People who have left the infiltrators receive food supplies



Espérance Nikuze and her husband, Jean-Bosco Niamuhanga lost four of their eight children to disease and hunger when clashes between the infiltrators and the RPA forced them to leave their home in Rubavu, Gisenyi in October 1997

Photographs: African Rights

## REBUILDING FROM THE ASHES

### IN SEARCH OF NORMALITY

Since April 1998, thousands of people—professionals, peasants and fighters—have abandoned the volcanic forests and other hideouts where they had gone with the insurgents, either voluntarily, out of fear or because of force. To minimise the risk of being captured by the insurgents, they leave as individuals or in small groups of families, in the middle of the night, and present themselves at commune offices or military barracks. For the most part, they are not able to return to their own homes; the situation in much of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi remains too volatile. The majority have been housed in tents near commune offices where they can be protected by soldiers. Some of the settlements are so large that they look like camps, and are referred to as such. The needs of this population have overwhelmed officials, as commune offices had already become a safety net for hundreds of displaced people. In April, African Rights interviewed the first wave of people who had dissociated themselves from the insurgents. They were clearly exhausted; many were visibly malnourished or ill, suffering in particular from skin disease.

Despite the economic and practical problems, their return marks the most important sign that significant numbers of people in the northwest, who have come to know the insurgents from personal experience, have turned their backs on them. In an interview in mid-July, Boniface Rucagu, the préfet of Ruhengeri, gave further details.

The current situation is promising, even if it is not 100% certain. We have around 200,000 people who have parted from the infiltrators, particularly in the communes of Kinigi, Nyamutera, Nyarutovu, Nkusu, Gatonde, Nyamugali, Nkuli and Mukingo. In these different communes, the people who have abandoned the infiltrators stay in places, mainly at the commune offices, which offer the best protection by the army. However, in Nkuli and Mukingo, 65,000 people who left the infiltrators have gone back to their own sectors. These people, thanks to the peaceful climate, have been able to start farming again and there is now no difficulty buying a kilo of potatoes for fifty francs and a kilo of beans for 130 francs.

These camps are inevitable given that the population, who are being killed when the fighting takes place in their home areas, have been

asked by us, the local officials, to leave the areas of fighting and to go to places where security can be guaranteed. A large number of the population have responded to this request which they believe will provide greater safety for them. If there are people or organisations who criticise these camps, then they should suggest alternatives which take into account the characteristics of the current situation in the northwest. People cannot just criticise. This measure allows us to place the civilian population away from the war. We are aware that hunger is rife in these camps. Organisations like the World Food Programme and Concern have promised to intervene shortly.<sup>215</sup>

The return of this population has also inspired hope among some of the Tutsis living in the northwest. Colin Nzabakurikira survived the massacre which took place on 17 June at a transit camp for 1959 refugees in Nkamira.

There is one thing which gives me hope. It is that the fact that the population is beginning to separate from the infiltrators. But the infiltrators are very evil and they even kill Hutus who abandon them. However, I think that we will join these Hutu people, who have left the infiltrators and who are being killed by them. In this way we can neutralise the infiltrators. The Hutu population have already begun to do this. They are the ones showing the soldiers where the infiltrators are hiding. They have found a large number of them. It is easy for them because these people lived with the infiltrators.

One can hope that the infiltrators' war will be over with soon. Then we can live at home in peace. Rather than moving to safe regions we want to actively take part in re-establishing peace in our region.

Corporal Pierre-Célestin Ngendahimana, a former infiltrator, lives in a camp in Kinigi and said he is not prepared to return to his home unless the situation changes.

When we were under the control of the infiltrators, there was always the loss of human life during battles. We realised that this wasn't going to change and that the infiltrators offered no promise of peace. We decided to run away, against their wishes. We have escaped the daily risk of death.

He spoke of the major drawback of life in the camps, and put forward his own suggestions.

<sup>215</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 6 August 1998.

We just have the problem of hunger. A week ago we received a kilo of beans and a kilo of sorghum per family from the army. The solution would be to give the people hoes and show them land they can use which is situated in the zone of the commune office, and which is inaccessible to the infiltrators. Meanwhile, before the harvest, the state would be responsible for feeding the population.

He dismissed criticisms of the camps.

Such camps are inevitable. Anyone who is against them shows that they don't know anything about this situation.

Like his companions, Pierre-Célestin cautioned the government against sending people back to their homes without adequate military protection.

If we dared to return to our home sectors, the infiltrators would kill us as a punishment, or force us to collaborate with them again, which would produce the same situation which we have just escaped from. Worse still, a part of the population would certainly be killed by the infiltrators. That is, the *résistants* who have been helping the soldiers in their operations and enabling them to recuperate a lot of the infiltrators' equipment and also to kill a good number of them.

Also, if the state decided to make the population return to their sectors, without permanent military positions, that would show that they didn't like the people. If such a decision was taken, I would refuse to leave under any circumstances.

Ncogoza, a young *résistant* from sector Gihora, Kinigi, worked with the infiltrators between January and May 1998. He is simply glad to be settled.

The separation of the people from the infiltrators in Kinigi, dates back to April 1998. It was encouraged by the RPA soldiers during one of their operations in Kabwende sector. When the people who had stayed with the infiltrators heard that the first group, who had gone to the office had not been killed by the army, they gradually left the infiltrators to come here.

The shadow of the insurgents still hangs over the camps.

No-one can go home unless they are escorted by soldiers because the infiltrators would kill them. It is only in the sectors where there are military bases that people can live without the need to collaborate with the infiltrators. Although we are hungry, we are at least safe.

The people who went to live with the insurgents are not the only ones who have come back. Many others who had gone to live with relatives have returned, some to their own homes, others to the tents that are dotted around commune offices. Léonie Nyiramboni, forty, abandoned Rubavu in October in favour of Mount Ngama. She returned home after three days, but did not stay for long.

Again, I fled with my two children, to my parents' home, close to the BRALIRWA factory, in January 1998, after the infiltrators again attacked our centre and burned a white vehicle. Worried that we might be killed when the army intervened to fight the insurgents, we left.

Léonie came back to Rubavu in mid-April, in response to numerous appeals from the local authorities in Nyamyumba. But she was not willing to take chances and left her children with her parents. Picking up the pieces of her life is a daunting prospect, but at least she has something she can call a life.

When I came here, there were less than ten people. But little by little, they are beginning to come back. I found my house empty, without even a simple chair. I have to begin my life again from zero. I have started to farm, thanks to a 1000 francs which someone gave me. I am selling these fish that you see.

Most important of all, there is a semblance of peace.

Since we came back, no one has bothered us. There have been no confrontations here; sometimes we hear explosions coming from Basa [Rubavu]. We have heard that the authorities will give us food, but we are still waiting.<sup>216</sup>

The needs of this population are huge and wide-ranging, as Lt. Col. Karenzi Karake, a brigade commander in Ruhengeri, pointed out.

<sup>216</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 2 May 1998.

Placing them in a safe area where their security can be guaranteed, often near commune offices, does not only demand that we ensure their protection, by providing soldiers who might otherwise be on other missions. It also demands that we meet their various needs: food; medicines; and education for the children.<sup>217</sup>

He is aware that the government's policy is not universally popular.

We have been reproached on many occasions for welcoming *résistants* who people say have killed or caused the killing of members of their families. Our policy sometimes brings us into conflict with other groups of the population who are normally targeted by the infiltrators.

Predictably, the insurgents have sought to make political capital out of the issue, an opportunity to frighten Hutus into supporting their cause. They have been quick to describe them as "concentration camps". In one of their recent tracts, PALIR argued that there was a far more sinister motive for the creation of these camps.

They say that Hutus are only going to survive if they go and live in camps, because of the insecurity and hunger which is widespread in the country. They hope that the concentration of Hutus in the same areas will enable them to carry out their macabre plan.

But this concern for their welfare has not prevented the insurgents from attacking these camps. Ramadhan Barendayabo, the bourgmestre of Rwerere commune, described their attempts to sow insecurity in the camp in his commune.

The current situation is promising, especially since the people have been abandoning the infiltrators. They came to us little by little from April 1998 onwards. We placed them at Busasamana on 11 May 1998. A few days after they had settled there, they themselves captured an infiltrator who was armed with a gun. He was called Maniriho, from sector Mudende. The infiltrators attacked the camp where these people were living in on 27 May, at about 5:00 a.m. They killed 87 people and wounded 137 others. Three infiltrators died there. The Busasamana camp was only being guarded by 25 soldiers because the others had gone to Kanama commune where there were more important military operations.

The residents were transferred the following day to Kanzenze, commune Mutura.

Once there, and with their security more or less guaranteed, these people continued to help the soldiers with their missions. This close collaboration between the army and the peasants resulted in the identification and death of a large number of infiltrators who also lost over fifty guns.

But the insurgents were not ready to give up easily.

The infiltrators showed their displeasure on the night of 24/25 June when they again tried to attack these people at Kanzenze. They failed because there was adequate military presence. Eight infiltrators were killed including a woman, Sub-Lt. Nylramajyandere from Nkuil commune. As the situation became more secure, we judged it necessary to move these people to Rwerere commune office. This was done on 1 August. So far, there hasn't been any problem. Before they were attacked at Busasamana on 27 May, there were 6006 peasants who had abandoned the infiltrators. This number increased each day.<sup>218</sup>

The situation in the northwest appears to be improving, but it remains fragile. This movement by the people away from the infiltrators and into camps and safe areas represents an important step in their return home. If they are to complete their journey successfully, the policies and actions of those who can influence the outcome must contribute to the constructive development of Rwandese society.

<sup>217</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 14 July 1998.

<sup>218</sup> Interviewed in Rwerere, Gisenyi, 16 July 1998.

## Rebuilding from the Ashes



A camp in Kinigi, Ruhengeri accommodating people who have abandoned the infiltrators since April 1998



The carpenters at the camp in Kinigi have formed an association and are trying to earn a living

## SOUNDING A NOTE OF CAUTION

### HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING ON THE INSURGENCY

Throughout the research for this book we have been very aware of the problems of reporting on the human rights situation in the northwest. Not only is the area very dangerous but, as we have tried to show, there is every reason to believe that many of the ordinary peasants have been drawn into the conflict, willingly or out of fear. Fear and propaganda can obscure the truth.

African Rights is a small organisation, with only one researcher in our Rwanda office working full-time on the northwest; we have been unable to investigate all of the many human rights violations which have taken place there in the past year. We have only given details of incidents which we have investigated thoroughly. Although we aim to cover every aspect of the violence, there are significant differences between some of our findings and conclusions and those of some other human rights organisations, in particular Amnesty International and the US-based Physicians for Human Rights.

### Amnesty International: Relying Upon Rumours?

Amnesty has been deeply critical of the Rwandese government's actions in the northwest and has also accused it of human rights abuses on a wide scale in the rest of the country. In a press release issued on 7 August 1997, it said that "During May, June and July, more than 2,300 unarmed civilians are estimated to have been killed" adding, "Contrary to what the government sometimes claims, these victims are not killed accidentally in cross-fire. Whole families - including many children - have been hunted down in their homes." In a report issued in September 1997, *Ending the Silence*, it equated the tactics of the army with those of the infiltrators stating that both groups are "deliberately targeting unarmed men, women



and young children"<sup>219</sup> It said that testimonies from the northwest "consistently affirm that the majority of the killings of unarmed civilians in recent months have been carried out by the RPA."<sup>220</sup> Amnesty suggests that the main target for attacks are "returnees", claiming that the RPA is "using the legitimate need to combat the insurgents as a pretext for massacring unarmed civilians."<sup>221</sup>

In June 1998, Amnesty published another report, *Rwanda, The hidden violence: "disappearances" and killings continue*. Much of the report is concerned with "disappearances". In its analysis of the situation in the northwest, Amnesty recognises that civilians are "trapped by the conflict". However, attacks upon civilians by "armed opposition groups", as it describes the insurgents, are summarised in only three pages. In addition, Amnesty claims that "the leaders and structures of these armed groups remain unidentified."<sup>222</sup> There is far more discussion of abuses by RPA soldiers, reflecting the organisation's conviction that "a greater number of unarmed civilians have been killed by members of the Rwandese security forces than by armed opposition groups."

We have documented killings by the RPA, but have found no evidence to support Amnesty's broad accusations. Like Amnesty, we acknowledge the particular difficulties of investigating accusations against the RPA. Yet no one we have interviewed—not infiltrators, local people, returned refugees, not even victims of attacks by RPA soldiers—has suggested that the RPA is pursuing policies of this kind, although there have been many accounts of abuses by groups of soldiers and by individuals. Further investigation into some of the cases Amnesty cites to support its claims has given us reason to question the credibility of the organisation's sources. We have written to them raising several points of concern, but their response was not reassuring. In a previous report<sup>223</sup> African Rights was critical of Amnesty's *Urgent Action* campaign

<sup>219</sup> See Amnesty International report *Rwanda: Ending the Silence*, 25 September 1997 (AI Index: AFR 47/32/97), summary.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid, p3.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, p4.

<sup>222</sup> *Ending the Silence*, p.15. Nonetheless, in *The Hidden Violence* (p.3) AI called on foreign governments and NGOs to "impress upon the Rwandese authorities and leaders of armed opposition groups that the deliberate targeting of the civilian population will never succeed in bringing peace and reconciliation to the country."

<sup>223</sup> *Joseph Ruyenzi: Prisoner Without a Conscience*, African Rights, January 1997, *Witness to Genocide*, Issue No.5.

regarding the imprisonment of Joseph Ruyenzi, who was accused of rape and mutilation during the 1994 genocide. We received a written response in which Amnesty stood by its action, but noted that "there is a lot of scope for honest debate on the many difficult issues raised by the human rights situation in Rwanda". This book on the insurgency has convinced us of the need for further debate. There is potential for their errors to distort outside understanding of the situation in the northwest which is why we are making public the testimonies of local people who have taken issue with AI's representation of certain incidents. We believe Amnesty should re-examine its evidence in specific cases, and its assessment of the situation in the northwest in general.

### *1997 Killings at Nyange Secondary School*

On 18 March 1997, six students and a guard were killed and twenty others injured in Nyange, commune Kivumu in Kibuye. They were murdered at a secondary school known as the *Ecole Normale Primaire (ENP)*, in the section for students who are training to be future teachers. On 20 March, we visited both the school and Kabgayi hospital where the wounded had been evacuated. Survivors and staff at the school told African Rights that the killings were carried out by infiltrators (see above for their account of the incident). We were, therefore, surprised to read the following report in *Ending the Silence*.

The attack has been officially attributed to ex-FAR or *interahamwe*. However, some local sources believe it was carried out by RPA soldiers, following an incident about two weeks earlier, in which a group of six or seven RPA soldiers had tried to take students away from the school, allegedly to rape or kill them. Staff at the school had managed to prevent the soldiers from entering the school. It is alleged that the soldiers then returned on 18 March in a revenge attack against the pupils and staff. Survivors of the attack on 18 March reportedly claimed that some of the assailants were RPA soldiers. Subsequently, four teachers - two men and two women - were reported to have been imprisoned. There are unconfirmed reports that one male teacher died as a result of ill-treatment. A woman who claimed to have identified some of the assailants was reportedly shot dead the day after the attack.

Zilpa Mukabarinda, a 25-year-old teacher at a primary school in Nyange, was violently assaulted and raped after being taken away from her home in *Bwakira commune*, Kibuye *préfecture*, on 23 March 1997. She was reportedly detained for two months then released at the end of

May 1997 but has been unable to resume work because of her poor physical condition resulting from her ill-treatment. Her arrest and ill-treatment occurred just five days after the attack on Nyange school.<sup>224</sup>

In March 1998, a researcher from African Rights returned to Nyange to verify our information. We could not find a single survivor or witness who would attribute the killings to the RPA, although we questioned them specifically about the claims made in AI's report. Testimonies taken, both immediately after the attack and a year later, consistently affirm that infiltrators were responsible.

Ananias Sibomana, 20, was sitting in the first row when the men walked into the fifth-year classroom, giving him a good opportunity to look at them. He comes from cellule Rukore, sector Mwogo, commune Kanzenze in Greater Kigali. He is now in his sixth year at ENP.

Two of the assassins came into the classroom; two others followed and stayed by the door. I was sitting in the first row, and could see them clearly. I actually began to hush when one of them said: 'pray for the last time'. I thought they were just being silly. They asked us to spilt up into groups according to our ethnicity, then began shooting at us. I hid behind the desks and then ran for the door with the others. When they saw us pour out of the classroom, one of the killers threw a grenade amongst us. I wasn't hit as I was right at the front. I spent the next day at school, and that evening I went to Kabgayi hospital to help my injured fellow students there.

Ananias has since been asked to try to identify the culprits from an identity parade. The first parade took place at the commune detention centre close to the school.

I recognised one of the assailants who had come into our classroom. He had worn a pair of army trousers, and an ordinary dirty jacket. He claimed that he had never seen me before, and that he had nothing against me. I recognised his face. I had been sitting right at the front and had a chance to memorise their faces. I later learned that the man I had picked out was an ex-FAR from commune Kivumu.

About two weeks later, Ananias was taken to police headquarters in Gitarama.

<sup>224</sup> *Ending the Silence*, p.18, pp.27-28.

I picked out the same man out of about ten others; he denied he had been in Nyange on the day of the killings. I remember him wearing a long sword and holding a gun. He wasn't the one who asked us to divide up along ethnic lines. This investigation was very serious and hard on me, because the face to face identification was preceded by identifying photos of prisoners, which were brought to us in Kabgayi. So I first picked him out from his photo, and was then presented with the same person I had seen in the photo at the identity parade.

A week later, he was asked to try again. This time, there were twenty detainees.

The man I had picked out previously wasn't there, but I saw another man, young, tall and pale, whom I had also seen come into our classroom. He had been dressed in full military uniform and was the one who told us to pray for the last time and prepare for death. When I gave details, after having pointed him out, he didn't deny it.

Ananias was puzzled by Amnesty's report.

Someone who blames the army for these killings cannot exist; you cannot be serious. On what would they base their arguments? I myself did not believe they were killers when they came into the classroom, but when they brought up the issue of ethnicity, in addition to the fact that some were armed but were wearing dirty civilian clothing, I became convinced that they were infiltrators, and not government soldiers.

Ananias knows he could have saved himself; he explained why he did not even try to do so.

My determination not to separate myself from the others was a conscious one. As I was convinced that these were infiltrators, I could have gone to stand over in the place they told Hutus to go. But I know very well where ethnic problems have gotten us, and I was determined to die with the others. I now think that any Rwandese who attaches importance to their ethnicity is an idiot.<sup>225</sup>

Wounded in the arm, Joseph Nyagasaza, 23, spent a month at Kabgayi hospital. He too was seated in the front row of the classroom for

<sup>225</sup> Interviewed in Nyange, Kibuye, 14 March 1998.

fifth-year students. He is from Ngugu, sector Rugura in commune Mwendo, Kibuye.

We heard gunfire in the courtyard and behind the classrooms during our personal study time in the evening. We were afraid and hid under the desks. Three minutes later, two criminals came into our classroom. 'Anyone Tutsi, come forward' one of them said. Since no-one moved, he said: 'Any Hutu, get up and stand aside'. No-one moved. The one who had spoken had covered his head, trying to conceal his face with a piece of cloth. He was furious, and shot at Marie-Chantal Mujawamahoro and I, who were in the first row. She died on the spot. I was badly injured here, in my left arm. Obeying the first assassin's signal, his companion, who was standing at the back of the room, also began shooting at the students.

I managed to get out through a window, without even consciously thinking about it, and came out behind the classroom. I started running, and sat in a banana plantation all night.

Concerning the possible identity of the killers, Joseph commented:

I had no idea who these two attackers might be when they came into the classroom. When I first heard the sound of gunfire, I thought that it might be soldiers who were attacking our prefect for discipline, with whom they had had a disagreement a few days previously. But I changed my mind completely when they came into the classroom and asked us about our ethnicity. It was not until they asked us to divide along ethnic lines that I realised they were infiltrators. The one who had covered his face wore ordinary clothes and a long coat, whereas his companion was in uniform.

He refuted the claim that soldiers had tried to rape some of the girls.

There were no attempts made by the soldiers to rape any girls at our school.

Joseph could also have saved himself.

Our refusal to divide into ethnic groups was mainly due to our regular peaceful inter-ethnic collaboration, which the school preached. I can see no rational reasons for these divisions anyway. I am told that I am Hutu,

but I see no difference between myself and those who are defined as Tutsi.<sup>226</sup>

The injuries he sustained obliged Noël Bayisenge to spend three months at Kabgayi hospital. A year on, he is still in constant pain and finds it difficult to stand upright. He has a bullet lodged in his left thigh, and grenade fragments in his head and near his heart which doctors have found difficult to operate upon. He is 21 and a native of cellule Rupango, sector Macuba, commune Gatare in Cyangugu.

When we returned to the classrooms, we arrived at the same time as the three soldiers in charge of the school's safety. They were charging up their Motorola radio in the second year classroom. A few minutes later, it was time for individual study.

At about 8:15, we heard a few shots from the direction of the school. Two minutes later, when we thought the matter was over, we heard more gunfire, from all directions—from the sixth year classroom, from the prison on the hill opposite and from the direction of the commune offices. Bullets came through the windows; we hid under the desks.

Four criminals came into our classroom, forcing the door, which wasn't closed properly. Two of them were wearing RPA uniforms, but very worn ones, and the other two were wearing jeans, and had cloth wrapped around them. One said: 'Hey you! You've made us suffer by forcing us to flee all the way to Tingi Tingi. Well, we're back to take you on. Tutsi in front, Hutu at the back. Quickly!' No-one said anything. He changed tack, and said: 'All Hutu, get up and leave the classroom'. As no-one left, the one in front cocked his gun, and another one stood behind us, whilst the other two stood at the entrance, presumably to guard against any interference. The one at the front picked up a girl called Hélène Benimana and kicked her in the stomach, saying: 'I know this one, she's Tutsi!' Suddenly the two attackers left the classroom, coming back a minute later. Perhaps they thought that it was time to go. When they came back in, the dangerous one asked us again if we refused to separate, and this time suggested that the Tutsis go outside, but in vain. Both he and the one behind us began shooting. I was sitting in the third row, and was hit in the left thigh. I heard other children getting up to escape, and we all charged out of the classroom, pushing the two by the door out of our way. One of them threw a grenade amongst us, which killed my neighbour, Valens Ndemeye. The shrapnel hit me in the head, back and almost everywhere on my body. I fell down where I was, unconscious. I awoke the next morning, in pain, and noticed that I was on a drip at Kabgayi hospital.

<sup>226</sup> Interviewed in Nyange, Kibuye, 14 March 1998.

He too questioned the account given by Amnesty.

I sincerely believe that a sane person cannot attribute this massacre to the RPA. Had they been government soldiers, they would not have fought with the three who were there to ensure the school's safety, who ran away after having killed one of the attackers. One of my fellow students, Ananias Sibomana, managed to identify one of the assailants, an ex-FAR.

Their clothes were too dirty to be those of government soldiers, I also think that RPA soldiers wouldn't steal clothes from their victims, which could lead to them being identified. Yet my jeans jacket was stolen, as was that of my fellow student, Clément Musoni, who also had his shoes stolen. They also took Emmanuel Nizeyimana's jacket by force. I think they were infiltrators, who have problems getting clothing, unlike the RPA.

He acknowledged the disagreement between the soldiers and the prefect for discipline, but said it had no relevance to what took place on 18 March.

There had indeed been a misunderstanding between the soldiers and our prefect for discipline a few days previously. But no such animosity existed between us students and the soldiers. If it had been the soldiers who attacked, they would just have gone to the house of the prefect for discipline, instead of attacking the students. The soldiers who patrolled our school liked us and admired our discipline and peaceful cohabitation. I personally reaffirm that I think the attackers were infiltrators.<sup>227</sup>

According to AI, four teachers were apprehended in connection with the killings. In fact, only one teacher was arrested in the context of this case and she was released shortly afterwards. Two other teachers from ENP were arrested a few weeks later, but this had nothing to do with the 18 March murders at ENP. One of them is Gaëtan Harerimana. AI did not speak with him, and clearly nor had their sources. In a recorded interview with African Rights in Nyange, Gaëtan denied that there was any relation between his arrest and the killings in Nyange. Gaëtan, 39, lives in cellule Cyabihogo in sector Nyange, near the commune office, some distance from the school.

<sup>227</sup> Interviewed in Nyange, Kibuye, 14 March 1998.

I was arrested in April 1997, the same day as Jean-Baptiste Kayitare, a teacher at ENP. We were accused of owning a gun obtained in an illegal manner, which I had never possessed.

Gaëtan was at home when he heard gunfire on the evening of 18 March. He reached the school the following morning, just before the wounded were transported to Kabgayi. He disputed AI's belief that his arrest and the murder of the students were linked.

The only teacher at ENP who was arrested and accused of being an accomplice of the assailants is Zilpa [Mukabarinda]. Other ENP teachers who have been arrested are Kayitare and myself, but we have never been accused of having played a role in this attack. We were accused in connection with the gun.

Gaëtan also challenged AI's analysis and conclusions.

I started teaching again at ENP as soon as activities began after the genocide. The school didn't have any problems with the civilian or military authorities except that a few days prior to the attack, the prefect of discipline, [Léonard] Gakote, had had a problem with the soldiers. It was students who were killed, not those who had problems with the soldiers attached to the school. Therefore, there is no connection between the affair concerning the prefect and the soldiers. The students and the teachers, including myself, had never had any problems with these soldiers.<sup>228</sup>

The prefect in charge of discipline, Léonard Gakote,<sup>229</sup> is also a teacher. He lives less than twenty metres from the school. He was at home when the killings at the school occurred and was on the scene within an hour.

The claims made by Amnesty International on page 18 of their report of 25 September 1997 have no basis in fact. To begin with, the school which was attacked was not the Nyange primary school, as AI claims. There is a primary school in Nyange, but it was the secondary school which was attacked. It is ridiculous to claim to be standing up for the victims of barbarity when they don't even know where the attack took place.

<sup>228</sup> Interviewed in Nyange, Kibuye, 27 February 1998.

<sup>229</sup> Sadly, Léonard Gakote was killed by insurgents on 4 September 1998 when they launched an attack in Nyange, killing two other teachers and freeing detainees from the cachot.

He described the nature of the misunderstanding that had arisen between him and the RPA soldiers at the school.

On 6 March 1997, as the teacher in charge of discipline, I asked the three soldiers who were on guard to stay a little further away from the school buildings when they were patrolling the grounds. This was because their presence was distracting the students, and encouraged them to waste their personal study time. Unfortunately, the three soldiers misunderstood me, and got angry. The next day they reported me to their commander. We, the teachers, had to go and explain the matter to the commander.

The difficulty had been solved, he said, by the time the killings took place.

That group of soldiers was transferred around that time anyway, and were replaced by a group from Gitarama, with whom we collaborated perfectly happily until the attack took place. The problems between the teachers and the soldiers were therefore over by the time the killings occurred. Had the assailants been the RPA soldiers with whom we had disagreed, or their friends, they would have targeted the management of the school, the teachers, and especially me personally, instead of children who had nothing to do with the matter. They knew where I and the other teachers lived. Amnesty is also not telling the truth when they claim that the soldiers we had fallen out with were '6 or 7', whereas there were exactly three. There were no attempts by these soldiers to rape or kill any female students. You can go and ask the surviving students yourself.

He called other aspects of Amnesty's account into question.

Four teachers were not arrested in connection with this attack. Only Zilippa Mukabarinda was arrested. An investigation revealed that she did not sleep at home that night, but she was released a few days later, when her innocence was confirmed. She now lives some way from here, in Ruganda, sector Murundi, with her parents. The two other teachers who were arrested, Gaëtan and Kayitare, were not accused of involvement in this attack. You can speak to Gaëtan himself at the *cachoz*. Kayitare died in prison, but Gaëtan is still there. Olive Mukamajoro, suspected of sheltering infiltrators before the attack, was never arrested. Soldiers went to arrest her at her parents' house, where she had fled. We heard she tried to run away, and they shot her dead, but you yourselves can go and check the story.

Léonard was never interviewed by Amnesty; he wonders why.

It is quite clear that Amnesty didn't conduct its own investigation. Instead, they gathered rumours. The question that must be asked is this: why is Amnesty International taking the risk of publishing such hearsay about such a serious incident, when they know full well that the survivors of the attack, who actually lived through it, are still here and can be contacted?<sup>230</sup>

Although the attack itself was quite clearly the work of infiltrators, the deaths of Jean-Baptiste Kayitare, the teacher arrested together with Gaëtan in April, and that of Olive Mukamajoro, are legitimate reasons to question the conduct of the RPA. African Rights has raised the death of Jean-Baptiste Kayitare with the government along with other cases where people have died in custody. Amnesty's report was published a full six months after Kayitare's death, but it simply cited "unconfirmed reports that one male teacher died as a result of ill-treatment."<sup>231</sup>

We wrote to AI in February to propose a meeting to discuss their findings. We said that we had interviewed several of the children, as well as staff of the school, who had all expressed their belief that infiltrators were behind the murders. We asked if it had conducted its own independent investigation, visited Kivumu or spoken with the students. We received a response dated 2 July.

Indeed, your findings concerning this incident differ from our own, in what could be described as a typical situation where there are contradictory assertions - including from witnesses - as to the identity of the perpetrators of killings in Rwanda. Amnesty International collected information from several different sources about this and other cases mentioned in our reports. We did indeed receive contradictory versions of the events at Kivumu, as we indicated clearly in the report: "*The attack has been officially attributed to ex-FAR or interahamwe. However, some local sources believe it was carried out by RPA soldiers.*"

As you will know from your own experience, it is usual in the course of investigations into human rights abuses in Rwanda - especially during investigations into killings - to receive conflicting interpretations of the same events. We believe that in cases such as these where we have not been able to ascertain a clear indication of the identity of the perpetrators, but where several credible sources have offered an account which differs from the official account, it is our duty to present the different versions of

<sup>230</sup> Interviewed in Nyange, Kibuye, 14 March 1998.

<sup>231</sup> *Ending the Silence*, p.18.

the events and to be honest about the complexity of investigating such cases. Should further investigations reveal more detailed or different information provided by credible sources which might validate or invalidate our initial account of these events, we would present such information in a subsequent report.

We can only assure you once again that in its work on Rwanda - as on all other countries around the world - Amnesty International only publishes information after making every effort to carefully cross-check and verify the details, with as many different sources as possible... [G]iven the current security situation in Rwanda, and commonly contradictory testimonies, it can be difficult to establish beyond doubt the identity of those responsible for particular cases of human rights abuses. This uncertainty is reflected explicitly in our reports and we do not pretend to know the truth about every case...

Amnesty also referred to its "duty towards the victims" and of the responsibility "to investigate the facts behind and beyond the propaganda by the different sides."

We found this response inadequate to the inaccuracies of its report. Amnesty has made no further investigation of the incident, despite having visited Rwanda in February after we had raised the matter with them. It says it publishes information only "after making every effort to carefully cross-check and verify the details, with as many different sources as possible", but in the case of Nyange it did not interview the very people affected by the attack. In presenting this unlikely version of the events, it was not challenging only the "official account" as the letter suggests, but the words of the survivors of the attack.

The United Nations Human Rights Field Operation for Rwanda (HRFOR) investigated the incident at Nyange and also concluded that the perpetrators were ex-FAR or former militiamen.<sup>232</sup> AI has described the work of HRFOR as "crucial", adding that its reports "form an essential part of the overall analysis of the human rights situation in Rwanda for the international community..."<sup>233</sup> Yet it was apparently as unconcerned by the contradictory account published by HRFOR, as it was with our own. In fact, the only source we have found which corresponds with that of Amnesty is a report issued on 3 May 1997 by the "Resistance Forces for Democracy", the Brussels-based political opposition party founded by the former prime minister, Faustin Twagiramungu, and the late Seth Sendashonga.

The Resistance Forces for Democracy have been reliably informed that following the 18 March 1997 massacre at Nyange Secondary School a lady teacher was killed as soon as she had informed investigators that she had seen soldiers partaking (sic) in the assault on that school and that she was ready to testify that the attackers were RPA soldiers who are well known in the area... and that she could even identify them if a parade was conducted. After eliminating this eyewitness, the army went on to abduct another lady by the name of Zilipa Mukabalinda who was also teaching at the same school and who, during the night of the incident, was staying at her parents' in the Bwakira neighbouring commune. She was taken to a secret place, raped, tortured, canned (sic) and ill-treated in many other ways before she became paralysed and taken in the communal cells of Nyange.<sup>234</sup>

Unfortunately, Nyange is not the only case where we believe Amnesty has published unreliable or false information.

#### *Kayenzi, Gitarama, 13 March 1998*

Amnesty's report, *The Hidden Violence*, contained an account of killings in Kayenzi, Gitarama, which are alleged to have taken place on 13 March 1998.

RPA soldiers reportedly rounded up a number of local residents and accused them of assisting the armed opposition. At least seven people - two women and five men - were reportedly shot dead by soldiers in Kayenzi *secteur*, in Kayenzi *commune*.

African Rights visited sector Kayenzi on 21 July, and learned that no one had been killed there at any time for supporting the insurgents. Pascal Ndimanyi has been the councillor of the sector since February 1995. He remembered the events of 13 March because of the major intrusion which the insurgents had made into his sector on that day.

Infiltrators arrived at about 5:00 a.m. and divided into four groups. They attacked the nuns' convent, Kayenzi's commercial centre, the commune office and the residence of the bourgmestre. At the commercial centre, they set vehicles on fire, one of which belonged to Malachie Kanani. They

<sup>232</sup> *Status report as at 7 May 1997*, HRFOR.

<sup>233</sup> *The Hidden Violence*, p.43.

<sup>234</sup> *Press Release No. 031/97*, published in English.

were not able to loot the shops, thanks to the energetic intervention of the soldiers. They failed to storm the commune office, but killed the wife and child of a communal policeman, Martin Karasira. Nor were they able to carry out their attacks on the convent or the bourgmestre's residence.

By contrast, twelve infiltrators were killed behind the shops at Kayenzi centre when they were running away. I personally saw their corpses, some dressed in military outfit, some in civilian clothes. Amongst these infiltrators, we identified the body of a doctor who was still carrying a small bag of medicines. There were no natives of Kayenzi amongst these twelve bodies.

The bourgmestre of Kayenzi, Pierre-Damien Nkurikiyinka, also spoke of the insurgent's arrival in Kayenzi on 13 March and their aborted mission.

They had three teams: the first team tried to attack the convent of the Spanish nuns, located a few metres from the commune office; the second team went for the commune office, while the third targeted the shops of the commercial centre and my own house. I was at home at the time. When I put my radio on, I heard screams followed by an explosion. As I was getting ready to escape, I realised that the soldiers were well-prepared to contain this attack. Despite the impressive number of infiltrators present in the marketplace, the soldiers chased them away, unfortunately after they had set two vehicles alight. They also killed the wife and child of a communal policeman, Martin Karasira, a native of Kibungo. He escaped.<sup>235</sup>

Amnesty failed to mention the attack or the murder of the wife and child of the communal policeman by the insurgents. Instead, it wrote about "clashes between RPA soldiers and members of an armed opposition group during which several people described as "infiltrators" were reportedly killed." According to Pascal, there was an investigation by the authorities, but it established that no one from sector Kayenzi had been involved in the attack.

No one from my sector has been arrested following these events, since these troublemakers were not lodged or fed by a single peasant from my sector. A significant number of citizens of other sectors, especially Marenga, were arrested. Little by little, they were freed, but some are still in detention.

<sup>235</sup> Interviewed in Kayenzi, Gitarama, 27 May 1998.

Pascal said the family of Stanislas Uwamungu, a former soldier, had been arrested at the beginning of the year for suspected ties with the insurgents, but that they had already been freed by 13 March.

In short, my sector has not lost anyone because of their connections to infiltrators. You can ask any peasant you want.<sup>236</sup>

### *Bulinga, Gitarama*

*The Hidden Violence* discusses a number of killings which took place in sector Nyarutovu, commune Bulinga in Gitarama, which Amnesty attributes to the RPA. Some of the victims were named: Jean Gashumba, Eulade Ntawirinda, Virginie, Ruberakurora and Nsabimana. "This appeared to be a reprisal operation by the RPA following an attack on 10 December attributed to an armed opposition group."<sup>237</sup> African Rights visited Nyarutovu on 21 July and spoke to both the councillor and local residents. One of the men described as dead is Eulade Ntawirinda. We discovered that Eulade is alive and working as a local government official. He was not at home in cellule Nyarutovu at the time, but we spoke to his neighbour, Jean Munyakayanza, a 53-year-old peasant.

Eulade Ntawirinda is alive; he is my neighbour. Furthermore, he is the *nyumbakumi* on our hill. Whoever said he is dead is lying.<sup>238</sup>

The councillor, Alphonse Mukezafura, confirmed that Eulade is alive.

Eulade Ntawirinda is alive and is a *nyumbakumi* in his cellule.

The councillor challenged aspects of Amnesty's report about his sector.

Concerning the death of Virginie, she was, without any doubt, killed by the infiltrators. They had chased her from her home. She went to live near the commune office. The infiltrators tried to find out where she was living.

<sup>236</sup> Interviewed in Kayenzi, Gitarama, 21 July 1998.

<sup>237</sup> *The Hidden Violence*, p.27.

<sup>238</sup> Interviewed in Bulinga, Gitarama, 21 July 1998.

They wrote tracts saying that Virginie was a Tutsi accomplice because she had refused to take part in the infiltrators' operations, even though she was Hutu. They said that they were going to kill her. The day the commune was attacked [by the insurgents, 4 December], the infiltrators called for her by name. They knew perfectly well where she was staying and they killed her straightaway. Whoever said that Virginie had been killed by the RPA was lying.

He did not dispute that civilians had died in early December, but said they had been killed in the course of armed confrontations, not a reprisal operation by the army.

As Amnesty International reported, those people from Nyarutovu sector are dead, but they weren't killed in their homes or on the streets by the RPA.

During December 1997, there was fighting between the infiltrators and the RPA soldiers. When the former attacked Bulinga and tried to set fire to the commune office and to free the prisoners from the detention centre (see above for details). When the RPA forced them back, they disappeared into homes in our sector, even though we had told the population that when infiltrators came, they should remain apart from them so that we can distinguish between them. Most of the infiltrators were in civilian clothes, not uniforms. Some of the population did as we had advised; the others stayed with the infiltrators. They sheltered them in their homes and gave them food. They accompanied them when they attacked the soldiers. They assisted the infiltrators by shouting and looting during their operations. Most of them died with the infiltrators.

Jean Gashumba and Eulade Gashirabake, cited by Amnesty, died in this manner. They were suspected of working for the infiltrators prior to their death. This suspicion was confirmed in December 1997 when they left with the infiltrators and took part in their operations. The RPA discovered armed infiltrators on Nyarucyamo hill. There was fighting and several people were killed. After the fighting, we went to Nyarucyamo hill where we found the bodies of Jean Gashumba and Eulade Gashirabake. We buried them. We were surprised that they had taken part in the fighting.

Eulade Gashirabake is the older brother of Eulade Ntawirinda. Ntawirinda also says that his older brother is responsible for his own death. The bullets weren't going to miss them when they were with the infiltrators, simply because they were civilians. Amnesty didn't go and interview witnesses to find out what really happened.

A man called Alphonse left with the infiltrators when they attacked the commune. The RPA surprised them when they were trying to

cross the Nyabarongo river and go into Kibitira commune. Alphonse was killed during this fighting and that is where his body was found.

The councillor also commented on the deaths of Nsabimana and Ruberakurora.

During this period there was fighting in various parts of Bulinga. On mount Nyarubuye, the RPA found the infiltrators in the forest. Amongst the dead bodies which were discovered there, I saw Nsabimana and Ruberakurora; both of them were from my sector. They hadn't been seen in the region for a long while. They were said to be living in Kigali. Another version was that they were living with the infiltrators in Gisenyi in a place called Kabaya, near Satinsyi. When we saw their bodies, we understood that they had been living with the infiltrators. If they were killed by the RPA, it was because they found them together with the infiltrators during their operations. The soldiers didn't know them; they simply found them with the group of infiltrators.

The councillor summed up his opinion of the account given by Amnesty.

I think that these people who publish lies would do better to come and ask the local inhabitants and the local officials what really happened. Since all this happened we haven't seen anyone come here to investigate. But we hear false statements and we don't know where people are getting them from. Those who wish to inform others must try to find out the truth themselves.<sup>239</sup>

### *Nkuli, Ruhengeri*

Amnesty is right to say that commune Nkuli, Ruhengeri, has suffered enormously from the conflict, making it particularly important to provide careful documentation of what has taken place there. In *Ending the Silence*, AI claimed that "Rurandamba, his two children and his daughter-in-law - were killed" in Jenda on 17 July 1997. In the case of sector Jenda, the councillor, Silas Gashunguru, cast doubt on the veracity of Amnesty's account of the events that unfolded in his area.

<sup>239</sup> Interviewed in Nyamabuye, Gitarama, 21 July 1998.



These allegations made by Amnesty International are really without foundation. Rurandemba wasn't killed: his children were. And they died at home in sector Gakarara, commune Karago, not in sector Jenda of Nkuli. Only his sister-in-law and her three children died in cellule Kabatezi of my sector.

Not only was Rurandemba alive when AI was announcing his murder at the hands of the RPA, but he had, according to the councillor, joined the infiltrators.

Rurandemba was here recently, and left with the infiltrators who attacked us during the night of 4/5 February. [34 people were killed; see above for details].

Ngirababo was killed on the same night as Rurandemba's sister-in-law. He died with his wife and two children, not four children as Amnesty says. Moreover, it was impossible for us to identify Ngirababo's killers since there were no survivors to help in our enquiries. Not even the neighbours saw any of the assassins.

It is clear that Amnesty International doesn't conduct investigations because their information is sometimes wrong, and sometimes correct, but vague or exaggerated. If they had conducted an investigation they wouldn't claim someone is dead when he is alive.

AI cited other killings, but the councillor said there were no such murders in his sector.

As for the murder of 21 November 1997, that didn't take place in my sector. I learned during November that such events occurred in cellule Kajebeshi of sector Gakarara, commune Karago, Gisenyi. This sector may be next to ours, but it isn't ours.

The killings by the RPA in sector Gakarara were discussed at a meeting held at Nkuli commune office, attended by Silas.

During a meeting led by the Minister of the Interior and the secretary-general of the ministry, held at Nkuli commune office, someone called Semaremba asked: 'When are the 75 people killed by the army in sector Gakarara going to be buried?' I don't remember the reply, but such an event apparently did take place, though I don't know anything about it, as it didn't happen in my sector.

You can see that Amnesty International's figure of 539 dead is different from that put forward by Semaremba, who is supposed to have witnessed it.

Silas also wondered how Amnesty, which has no researchers based in Nkuli, was in a position to identify the perpetrators when local officials had not found a single survivor to interview.

With regard to certain assassinations, it would appear that Amnesty determines the identity of the perpetrators according to their employee's imagination. When we do not have a single eye-witness or piece of written evidence upon which to base our enquiries, they guess who the perpetrators are and dare to mention them by name in their publications.<sup>240</sup>

### *The Murders of Wenceslas Rwemera and Boniface Twagiramungu in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 8 September 1997*

*The Hidden Violence* also mentioned the murder of two brothers in sector Muhira, commune Rubavu. Their deaths are described as taking place on 11 January 1998 in Rubavu, in the context of large-scale massacres of civilians by the RPA. "Among those killed in their homes were Wenceslas... and his brother Joseph Twagiramungu... who were reportedly ordered to kneel and were shot dead on the spot."

Once again, the account is factually incorrect. It was not Joseph Twagiramungu who was killed, but Boniface Twagiramungu. The two brothers were not killed at the same time in January, but on separate occasions in September 1997; both dates differ from those given by AI. Boniface was killed on 8 September 1997, not at his home but at a bar. Wenceslas was killed at his house on the night of 15/16 September 1997.

Alexis Mujyanama is a cousin of the dead men. Alexis, 47, is the veterinarian for Kanama commune. He was in contact with both men shortly before they died and helped to bury Boniface. According to Alexis, it is unclear who was behind Boniface's assassination. Boniface worked at the Pfunda factory as a driver.

Boniface Twagiramungu died on 8 September 1997 in Kasonga cellule, Muhira sector. When he finished work, he went to a bar called 'Le menage cabaret' which belonged to someone called Tharcisse. [Tharcisse was his relative]. At around 7:30 p.m. some strangers in civilian clothes came into the bar and took Twagiramungu outside on his own. Once outside, they shot him. At 8:00 p.m. we heard the sad news from Tharcisse, amongst

<sup>240</sup> Interviewed in Nkuli, Ruhengeri, 13 February 1998.

others. We buried him the following day. The same day, we found his identity papers, his shoes and his jacket which the criminals had left on the path. They had taken his trousers and the salary he had received on the day of his death.

Alexis explained that Tharcisse and other locals held infiltrators responsible, but on slender evidence.

Tharcisse and the people who were there when Twagiramungu was taken away presumed he had been killed by infiltrators. But they didn't have any proof. They thought this because the killers were wearing civilian clothes and because Twagiramungu had been the councillor for Muhira sector under the current government, before he was employed at the Pfunda factory.

Alexis did not have any such doubts about the murder of Wenceslas, the veterinarian for commune Rubavu and the father of four children.

Wenceslas Rwemera died during the night of 15 /16 September 1997 at around 8:00 p.m. He had met us for a drink at a bar at 6:30 p.m. There was Frédéric Kampayana, Wenceslas, his brother, Joseph, and myself. Afterwards, we split up to go to our own homes.

Wenceslas had not been home for long when he was killed. Alexis learned what happened from one of Wenceslas' children.

From what I heard from his son, Wenceslas had taken a shower when he got home while the children prepared the food in the kitchen. A few minutes after he came out of the shower, a large number of people, some of them in military uniform and others in civilian clothes, came in with guns and traditional weapons. They made him lie down on the ground and killed him with one stab of a knife to the right side of his head. Then they looted various things from the house. Before leaving, they told one of Wenceslas' sons, (a student at a secondary school in Gitarama who lives with his uncle in Kabgayi): 'We have killed your father because he worked for the *Inkotanyi*, and the same thing will happen to you when you dare to collaborate with them'. It was the boy who told us this.

Wenceslas was not the only victim that night.

From there, the killers went to murder Karemera, the *responsable* for Kasonga cellule, and his wife. They killed another woman who lived not far from Karemera; the assistant *responsable* for the cellule; and the wife of Gihangara, the man in charge of security in the cellule. Altogether, they killed seven people in the same night and in the same cellule. Also, wherever they went, they looted. They took goats and beans from Gihangara's.

The people and the authorities believed Wenceslas to be an honest man. That is why they made him councillor for Muhira sector; his brother, Boniface, took up this position when Wenceslas became the vet in Rubavu.

Alexis said that he himself felt frightened after Wenceslas' death.

The murder of Wenceslas led me to flee the very next day to Mahoko, near the area secured by the army.

He summed up the deaths of his two cousins in the following manner,

There are uncertainties surrounding the perpetrators of Boniface's murder. But there can be no doubt about who killed Wenceslas. It was clearly the infiltrators.<sup>241</sup>

Two other people who are alleged to have died in commune Rubavu at around the same time are Emmanuel Mirasano and Suleiman Dieudonné Iyamuremye. African Rights had interviewed Dieudonné in September in connection with the killings and looting spree by RPA soldiers at Mahoko market where his brother, Védaste, lost his life (see above). Amnesty gave the following description of their deaths.

In the morning of 12 January, RPA soldiers surrounded Rugerero secteur and went from house to house, reportedly shooting at any person who happened to be in the area and killing more than 30 people. Among the victims were Emmanuel Mirasano, aged 57, former *bourgmestre* (local government official) of Rubavu, and around 20 people who had sought refuge in his home, including Blandine Nyiragire, her husband and four children (the youngest only six months old), Théogène, aged 14, and five other children who had been orphaned after their parents were killed during military operations in August 1997. Emmanuel Mirasano's cousin,

<sup>241</sup> Interviewed in Kanama, Gisenyi, 16 July 1998.

Dieudonné Iyamuremye... visited the scene of the massacre in Rugerero on 13 January. He was killed at his home in Gisenyi three days later, on 16 January, along with his brother Janvier Kwisanga, aged 22. Dieudonné Iyamuremye may have been specifically targeted because he had witnessed the immediate aftermath of the massacre and had disclosed some of the information.<sup>242</sup>

On 17 July, African Rights visited Dieudonné's home in Rubavu. In his mother's absence, we spoke with Alphonse Kayibanda, Emmanuel Mirasano's younger brother and cousin to Dieudonné. Alphonse confirmed that Emmanuel was killed by RPA soldiers on 12 January. Nothing else in Amnesty's account appears to be true.

Emmanuel was killed on 12 January 1998 at around 3:00 p.m., along with a woman called Blandine, the wife of Barambeshya. Mirasano was alone with this woman in his house because his own wife, Marie-Gorette Nyirakimenyo, had fled the violence and had gone to live in town. Mirasano was killed by soldiers based on accusations made by armed civilians who were mainly genocide survivors led by the councillor for Rugerero. We heard the sad news on the morning of Monday 13 January. Dieudonné and his companions went there at 1:00 p.m. and I joined them at 2:00 p.m. We buried Mirasano very quickly—in about twenty minutes—at his home, because we were afraid of the violence.

Contrary to Amnesty's account, Dieudonné's death had nothing to do with Emmanuel's murder. Amnesty's account of his death appears to be entirely fictitious. He was, moreover, alive on January 16, the supposed date of his death.

Dieudonné disappeared on 18 January. He left his house at 11:00 a.m. and had not returned by night-time. His wife, a newly wed, heard that he had been taken away by three young people. She searched for him everywhere—at the police station and at the military camp—thinking that he might have been arrested. A few days later, we heard that he had been kidnapped by three young people; one of them was Babayabo. They were arrested and imprisoned for just three days. Some time later, during a meeting at Umuganda stadium in Gisenyi, the Minister for the Interior, who had heard what had happened, ordered that these three civilian boys be re-arrested and locked up. Babayabo was re-arrested. According to rumours, he admitted having killed Dieudonné but didn't give any details

<sup>242</sup> *The Hidden Violence*, pp.26-27.

concerning his accomplices or the whereabouts of the body. So, we still don't have Dieudonné's body even today.

Therefore Dieudonné was not killed at home and Mirasano did not die at home along with 20 other people because he was alone with Blandine.<sup>243</sup>

### *The Murder of Six Sisters of the Resurrection in Rwerere, Gisenyi, 8-9 January 1998*

The clergy have not been spared in the violence in the northwest. Rwandese and foreign priests and nuns have been kidnapped, murdered or wounded. Convents have been attacked and looted. In January 1998, the convent of the Sisters of the Resurrection in Rwerere, Gisenyi, was the scene of carnage. Amnesty spoke of the incident in *The Hidden Violence*.

Some attacks have been publicly and officially attributed to armed opposition groups, but reliable sources have indicated that RPA soldiers may have been responsible. One such case was an attack on a convent at Busasamana, in Mutara commune... in which six nuns were killed... Three other people - a guard who worked at the convent and the wife and brother of the parish catechist - were also killed. One possible explanation for why they were targeted may be that they had reportedly provided lodging at the convent to people whose houses had been burned by RPA soldiers.

The killings did not take place in commune Mutara, as Amnesty claims, but in commune Rwerere where the convent of Busasamana is located. The attack took place at midnight on 8-9 January 1998, not 7-8 January.

The convent is located about 200 metres from the parish. The parish catechist mentioned by Amnesty is Valens Dusabemungu, 31, president of the parish committee. He comes from Mashinga in sector Kantwari in Rwerere. He said that insecurity in the area had obliged him, along with about nineteen other people, including peasants and domestic staff working for the priests, to take refuge at the parish. For the same reason, his wife had gone to live at the convent. He described the events of 8 January.

<sup>243</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 17 July 1998.

I was not yet asleep and I heard Maurice Ntibanyendera, the parish watchman, asking me to come outside and listen to what was happening nearby. I went outside. I heard knocking at the doors of the nuns' houses. Maurice suggested that we cry out for help while throwing stones to terrorise these troublemakers that we couldn't see. When we got outside our enclosure, and before we threw the first stones, several bullets were shot in our direction. I quickly went back inside the house to tell my companions to save themselves as best as they could. I fled to hide in a nearby plantation. I heard gunfire coming from the convent.

Valens spent the night in his hideout; the following morning, he was the first to arrive at the convent, which he reached at 6:10 a.m.

When I arrived in the corridor, I saw the corpse of my wife, Providence Uzamukunda. I then entered a room with five corpses, four nuns and that of my older brother, Ignace Byukusenge, the parish baker. [Later, I discovered that] Sr. Devota was not yet dead. In another room, there was the body of Sr. Félicitée, a nurse at Busasamana. When I got to the nuns' chapel, I discovered Sr. Berthilde and in another room, Sr. Georgine who was still alive but was seriously wounded—with a bullet in the leg and machete cuts on the head.

I couldn't find anyone else I could go to who could at least help the wounded. I didn't know what to do. An hour later, two girls arrived and we remained together, next to the victims, without being able to do anything for them. We were only able to send a young girl, Clémence, to the bishopric in Nyundo. We spent the day of the 9th and that of the 10th without help from any quarter. It was only on the 11th that some soldiers arrived, as well as Fr. Fabien Rwakareke who had been alerted by Clémence. The soldiers told us that they hadn't heard anything. Fr. Fabien transported the wounded to hospital.

Valens initially thought the RPA was to blame for the murders.

On 9 January, I thought that RPA soldiers were responsible for the killings. One of the wounded nuns who survived, Sr. Georgine, also thought that the perpetrators, who were armed and in military uniform, were government soldiers.

A few days later, he changed his mind.

On the 13th, at about 11:00 a.m., an infiltrator named Harera arrived at the parish. I was with three girls, including Christine Hitimana, and three domestic staff. He asked us a question to intimidate us: 'Tell me who

killed the nuns and explain the reports that you are always supplying to the *Inyenzi*? We all remained silent. He asked me for money. I told him that it was my wife who had the money and that she was one of the dead victims. He returned to the house of someone who had given him lodgings not far from the parish. I learned that other infiltrators were living in the homes of local peasants.

Valens set out to learn as much as he could about the circumstances in which his wife and brother had died.

The following day, I approached this infiltrator. I bought him beer until he had provided me with information about the perpetrators. According to him, the perpetrators were the insurgents, including him, who had spent three days at the homes of people who live near the parish, before carrying out the crime. When I asked him the question about who was responsible, at first he laughed, saying: 'Why didn't you ask this question to ... at whose home we were staying when we were preparing this act? They are well aware of the answer because they knew about our mission. Amongst the peasants who were accomplices are certain people currently living in the camps in Kanzenze [Mutura]; some of them are related to me. I am reluctant to mention their names because I want to say this in front of a court of law. According to this infiltrator, the nuns were selected because of their communications with soldiers and because of their belongings; the convent was thoroughly looted.

After my discussion with this infiltrator, and other inquiries I've carried out, I became convinced that the perpetrators were the insurgents. I went to tell this to the Bishop of Nyundo [Mgr. Alexis Habiyaambere], and Fr. Straton. I pointed out to them that an employee of the commune was among the accomplices of the infiltrators. The Bishop told me to wait for a while, and to report this new information a bit later to the competent authorities. So I am waiting for the judiciary to ask me to submit everything that I have gathered from this infiltrator and to indicate the witnesses who will be needed.<sup>244</sup>

Ramadhan Barendayabo is the bourgmestre of Rwerere, one of the communes in Gisenyi that has experienced considerable violence. On the day that the nuns were murdered, insurgents demolished the commune office of Rwerere, the second time they had attacked it (see above). According to Ramadhan, the same insurgents, who had come from sector Mugongo in Mutura, then continued on to Busasamana.

<sup>244</sup> Interviewed in Mutura, Gisenyi, 17 July 1998.

Before they returned to Mugongo, the infiltrators killed five nuns and seriously wounded two other nuns from the Congregation of the Sisters of the Resurrection at Busasamana, still in the commune of Rwerere. One of the wounded died on 3 February 1998 at CHK hospital [in Kigali]. The infiltrators also looted the belongings of the nuns. None were spared although they belonged to different ethnic groups.

Mgr. Alexis Habyambere, the Bishop of Nyundo, confirmed that Valens had come to see him and had expressed his belief that insurgents had committed the murders.

The convent was attacked during the night. Valens, whose wife was one of the victims, alerted us through a girl acting as intermediary. We then contacted the soldiers so they could accompany some of our colleagues to the place. They evacuated two wounded nuns to hospital in Kigali. One of them died there and the another one, Georgine, was transferred to Belgium. We therefore had no idea about the identity of the criminals.

A few days after the event, Valens, who was concerned with identifying the criminals who had killed his wife, came to see me. He said that the perpetrators were infiltrators who had accomplices amongst the local people. I did not refuse to help him to provide this information to the police. Rather, I suggested that he look carefully for sufficient evidence to give to the police. I told him to come back when he had carried out more enquiries, so that we could either take the case to the relevant authorities, or give the information to the nuns' Mother Superior so that she could start legal proceedings herself.

The Bishop said he thought Valens was an important witness.

I am sure that Valens can provide real information concerning this event. Not only did he lose his wife, but he was also the first person to arrive at the scene of the crime. Apart from Sr. Georgine, who has left, Valens is in the best position to say what happened.<sup>245</sup>

It is difficult to see what interest Valens, who lost his wife and brother, would have in twisting the facts to protect the army. However, we recognise the need for additional testimonies and further information.

In the immediate aftermath of every killing, rumours abound about who is responsible. It is impossible to build up even a preliminary picture

<sup>245</sup> Interviewed in Nyundo, 6 August 1998.

without visiting the site and talking to those who lived through the drama. Even then, it is not always possible to know, from the outset, exactly what happened and who is responsible. There is no doubt that Amnesty is aware of these standard facts of reporting on human rights abuses in a conflict situation, yet it does not appear to have addressed them in its recent work on Rwanda.

### *The Alleged Massacre at Nyakimana Cave in Kanama, Gisenyi*

By far the most serious accusation made by Amnesty International about the insurgency in the northwest is that the RPA massacred, between 23-28 October, "thousands of unarmed civilians" in a cave in Nyakimana, commune Kanama in Gisenyi. Once again, unnamed "local sources" are said to have reported the massacre of "5000 to 8000" people.

It seems that a large number of the people who died were unarmed civilians, amongst them women and children. The majority of the victims would have been displaced people fleeing the battles raging in Kanama, their commune of origin.<sup>246</sup>

The alleged cave massacre was also given wide publicity by the media and Rwandese politicians and individuals based abroad. In an effort to establish what had taken place, foreign journalists and diplomats visited the site. To date, no one has been able to confirm the accusations because of continuing insecurity in the area. In a report about his visit to the Nyakimana cave, David J. Scheffer, the US Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues, said that he did not think that "the RPA could have, or would have desired, to enter the caves in order to commit such large-scale killings." Amnesty was dismissive of his assessment, pointing out that he was accompanied by a military escort, even though the remote location of the caves and the intense battles which characterised the area at the time made this essential.

Like others who were escorted to the site by RPA soldiers, he was not able to carry out any in-depth investigation...

Scheffer's report also urged American diplomats in Rwanda "to monitor the RPA presence at the cave openings, as well as the number of

<sup>246</sup> *Urgent Action*, 5 December 1997, translated from the French.

civilians returning to the area around the cave, and stand prepared to examine human remains in the caves when security permits." Amnesty pointed out that this recommendation has not been followed up. This is an unfair criticism given the continuing insecurity in the area. More importantly, the organisation itself has not been able to offer any real evidence about the numbers killed or the circumstances of their death. Despite citing the death of "thousands", it has not named a single victim, or given any other details. In the *Hidden Violence* it states: "the total number of victims remains unknown as the bodies have not been recovered; neither has it been possible to ascertain how many were directly killed by RPA soldiers and how many may have died of starvation, thirst or other causes." In other words, there is no real evidence to substantiate the figure it has given of 5,000-8,000 dead. It happens to be the same figure that was widely-publicised at the time by Joseph Matata of the Brussels-based "Centre de Lutte Contre L'Impunité et L'Injustice au Rwanda" and repeated by some journalists without independent verification. Matata is well known as a leading revisionist of the genocide and political opponent of the Rwandese government and as such cannot be considered a credible source.

We are concerned that by presenting such strong allegations without any real foundation, Amnesty may only have hardened the government's position over the issue, hampering further investigation. Our own attempts to discover what happened at Nyakimana have produced little information, but during a visit to the cave in December, an African Rights researcher concluded that there was no doubt that people had died there; the smell of death surrounded the cave. We found the visit highly unsatisfactory. As the area was deserted of inhabitants, it was not possible to establish either the death toll or the causes of death. When journalists questioned the RPA military commander in charge of the area, he argued that the inhabitants had fled because of fighting between the army and the insurgents, but, in response to journalists' questions, failed to give specific locations where they were known to have gone. Based on what we know of the nature of the conflict in the northwest, there are several possible explanations.

- That all the civilians in the area had gone, on their own initiative and unaccompanied by insurgents, to hide in the caves to escape military clashes and they had then been massacred by the army. This might explain the vague answers given by the commander.

- That some of the civilians had in fact already left the area, in small groups or individually, again because of the fighting, making it difficult for the army to pinpoint the precise location where they might all have gone over a period of time.
- That the insurgents had used the cave as a military base from which to attack the army and as a hideout, making it a legitimate target of war. And that in addition, they had encouraged or forced the population to go with them, making it difficult for the army to distinguish between the armed insurgents and unarmed civilians living together in the caves.

We continue to look for local people who may have witnessed the killings, but the area remains deserted. We believe that the case merits an in-depth investigation, not merely to arrive at the truth, but to ensure that if sufficient evidence emerges of massacres, that military commanders and soldiers are duly punished. In the meantime, we think it was highly irresponsible of AI to publish information about an episode about which it can only speculate. Amnesty itself confirms the flimsy basis on which it had reached such a far-reaching conclusion.

... neither the Rwandese authorities, nor any foreign government, nor local or international organizations have carried out an investigation into the deaths which occurred inside.

We support Amnesty's call for an independent investigation into the case, and also urge the Government of Rwanda to facilitate the inquiry to the full extent possible. We also hope that Amnesty will produce some clarification of its report on the incident, revealing the basis for its conclusions.

### *Killed in the Crossfire?*

The killing of "unarmed civilians"<sup>247</sup> is a serious crime and one that can never lose its capacity to shock. Because of its emotive impact, it is particularly important to be careful and precise when using it. AI ignores

<sup>247</sup> When the military head of the insurgents, Lt.Col. Léonard Nkundiye, was killed in combat on 23 July 1998, the photos showed him wearing ordinary clothes, and immediately provoked comments that human rights organisations would describe him as "an unarmed civilian."

the overwhelming evidence that thousands of peasants in the northwest have helped the insurgents, either willingly or by force. There is no reference to this critical factor which underpins the enduring nature of the insurgency and which helps to explain its complexity. In fact the section about the killings of civilians begins with an anonymous testimony which establishes civilians as innocent victims: "foreigners cannot know that it is the peasants who are dying even though they have nothing to do with the militia and don't even know what their goals are."<sup>248</sup> AI had made the same point in *Ending the Silence*: "The authorities have repeatedly warned the population not to shelter or assist the "infiltrators" in any way. However, there is no evidence that the unarmed civilians who have been extrajudicially executed were involved in supporting armed groups."<sup>249</sup>

The extent to which the insurgency has in fact been sustained by the support of the civilian population has already been described. In addition, every single insurgent, civilian and local government official interviewed for this book acknowledged that mingling with the population during battles and encouraging the population to flee with them was the cornerstone of the insurgents' strategy. *Partisans* and *résistants* repeatedly said that persuading the population to accompany the insurgents into their hideouts was one of their principal tasks. They spoke of the predicaments that face civilians—and the army—in the context of this disastrous policy.<sup>250</sup> Many civilians have died during clashes between the RPA and insurgents and it is genuinely difficult to establish who killed them. All too often Amnesty has represented these in a simplistic fashion, as cold-blood massacres by the RPA.

### *Where the Perpetrators are "Unknown"*

In some of the cases we have investigated victims and witnesses are certain that insurgents are responsible for attacks or murders, yet Amnesty has claimed that the perpetrators are unknown or that "there are conflicting claims and interpretations whether RPA soldiers or members of armed opposition groups were responsible." Sometimes it is clear that Amnesty has made no attempt to discover who was responsible—it has not

<sup>248</sup> *The Hidden Violence*, p. 13.

<sup>249</sup> *Ending the Silence*, p. 5.

<sup>250</sup> See chapter entitled "Between A Rock and A Hard Place."

interviewed the survivors, intended victims or direct witnesses. Other times, it has spoken to them, but ignored the evidence they have given.

Fr. Jean Marie-Vianney Nsengumuremyi, a Catholic priest working at the Parish of Nyundo in Gisenyi, suffered serious injuries on 2 January 1998 when his car was fired upon in Rugerero, commune Rubavu, a period which saw a large number of vehicles ambushed or set on fire in Rugerero. (see above) Amnesty delegates visited him in hospital and published his photo in *The Hidden Violence*. According to the report, "The attack was carried out by about 10 unidentified armed men. It is not clear whether Jean Marie-Vianney Nsengumuremyi was specifically targeted and if so, why."<sup>251</sup> African Rights interviewed Fr. Nsengumuremyi in Gisenyi in July.

I was attacked on 2 January 1998 at around 5:20 p.m. I was on my way back from Nyundo. I had passed through Rugerero ten minutes earlier. On the way back, alone in my small Hilux van, twenty metres from the criminals' hiding place (before the real centre of Rugerero), I saw eight people appear from the right-hand side of the road. I couldn't see those who were on the left of the road. One of the eight had a gun. None of them were in military uniform. Some were wearing black clothes, others were in jackets and some were even bare chested. They fired several bullets at me, hitting my legs, my bottom, near my spine, my right side and my right arm. Six bullets hit me all together, but eight were fired at the car.

I decided not to stop. 300 metres further on, at Gihira, I felt weak and unable to drive, so I stopped. Immediately, a military truck came along from the opposite direction. The two soldiers in it came to my aid.

I had no doubts about who the perpetrators were. I am certain that they were infiltrators for four reasons:

1. They were very dirty and they were not in military uniform. This indicates that they were people living in very bad conditions. They could not be government soldiers.
2. Many other vehicles and passengers have been targeted in this area of Rugerero. Two days earlier a taxi-minibus was attacked; the day before the assault on me, the Rubavu commune truck was set on fire in this area, and a few days later, other vehicles were targeted. Government soldiers do not carry out actions in this manner.
3. I have an unconfirmed report that a small boy told them: "he's coming", when he saw my vehicle. This implies that they knew the local population well.

<sup>251</sup> *The Hidden Violence*, p. 36.

4. On the left-hand side of the road, I had just seen local people who were not worried. Even though this was during the period when the population ran away at the sight of RPA soldiers.

These infiltrators hid in the plantations so that people couldn't see them from a distance. When the soldiers arrived on the scene, they just missed catching the criminals who had disappeared back into their hideout in the banana and bean plantation.

I remember that I was visited at the hospital by two white women, probably English, who photographed me. I was in room number 5 in the clinic and I saw them come in. They asked me what had happened. When they asked me who the perpetrators might have been, I replied that they were armed.

Fr. Nsengumuremyi was asked a question he had not expected.

They asked if I had testified against anyone in court who would want to eliminate me. I replied no. I was surprised by this question. I said that the same thing had happened to other vehicles travelling along the road and that this wasn't always, or never had been, the reason for the attack. The women left. I think that they were the people from Amnesty International. They didn't say which organisation they were working for.<sup>252</sup>

It is not clear what connections Amnesty had hoped to establish between the assassination attempt and such a testimony if Fr. Nsengumuremyi had replied positively. In reality, there need not be a link, though Amnesty's reports contain many such speculations. Asking people leading questions of this nature, particularly under the circumstances prevalent in the northwest, is dangerous and misleading. A less educated and alert person may well have fallen into the trap.

In April, an attempt to ambush the vehicle of the préfet of Gitarama, Désiré Nyandwi, cost the life of his driver, Ibrahim Karekezi. Two other vehicles, also travelling on the Gitarama-Kigali road, were shot at the same time. When African Rights interviewed the préfet in his office on 21 July, he said he had not seen Amnesty's report, but had been told that they had written about the incident and concluded that the perpetrators were unknown.

I myself have no doubts about who shot at my car. I know very well that it was the infiltrators. It would have been easy for the RPA to kill me if they

<sup>252</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 17 July 1998.

wanted. I don't therefore see why they should have proceeded by trial and error, by firing at three vehicles at the same time, including mine. Since December, the infiltrators have wanted to enter our préfecture in large numbers.

I don't know Amnesty International. But I know you human rights people have your ways of interpreting events like that one. However, it would have been better to contact me if they had wanted to know my opinion. When a publication is based on information gathered by telephone, what chance is there that the truth will emerge?

The incident took place in commune Nyamabuye where the town of Gitarama is located. The bourgmestre of Nyamabuye, Innocent Kayibanda, gave further details and his own assessment.

The infiltrators attacked our commune during the night of 11-12 April 1998. During the same night, there were incidents in Takwe, Munyinya and Kivumu sectors. The incidents in Munyinya and Kivumu took place at around 9:00 p.m. and were targeted at vehicles and their passengers on the tarmac road. Three vehicles were attacked:

- A small lorry belonging to the Ministry of Public Works which was on its way to Kigali. There were six passengers and three were killed. Two of them were girls from Ntongwe, both called Claudine. The surname of one of them was Mukankusi. The third person was the driver, Fidèle. They were burned to death.
- A car belonging to Patrick from Rutobwe, which had two passengers. Patrick was killed and his companion, Eugène, was slightly injured.
- The third vehicle belonged to the préfet of Gitarama. The préfet was in the vehicle along with his driver and military escort, a few soldiers. Only the driver died. One soldier was wounded.

It was not an isolated attack.

Genocide survivors living in two different cellules of Takwe sector were also targeted. Four people were killed in Gicuri-Cyungwe cellule. One person was killed on the spot in Bwiza cellule and another died the next day in hospital in Kabgayi. Five people from this cellule were hospitalised due to their injuries.

The bourgmestre said that he believed the different attacks were carried out by the same people. He had not found it difficult to establish the identity of the authors.



During the meeting which I held yesterday at a place called Kagarama, in the presence of the préfet, a local man from Bwiza cellule, Védaste Barakagenda, told us how he had been forced by infiltrators to transport the belongings which they had looted from the survivors' homes. He went as far as Mount Ndiza in Nyabikenke, with them. When they got there, they beat him and let him go.<sup>253</sup>

Amnesty's report does not mention the killing of the genocide survivors. It also seems unlikely that the RPA would choose to kill the préfet when he was in a vehicle with his RPA escorts.

The commune of Rushashi in Greater Kigali has seen the loss of many lives since the insurgency began. At midnight on 24 December, more than fifty people were decapitated, shot or hacked to death. Amnesty spoke of the incident in *The Hidden Violence*.

On 25 December 1997, a few days after clashes between RPA soldiers and armed groups, more than 50 people were reportedly killed in several different locations in Raba *secteur*, Rushashi *commune*, in Rural Kigali... The victims included... the wife of the *responsable de cellule* of Bikonde and her four children. The identity of the perpetrators has not been confirmed.<sup>254</sup>

The *responsable* of Bikonde is Emmanuel Kavakure, 40. He lost his wife and two of his children, not four. He himself was wounded. He has not found it difficult to "confirm the identity of the perpetrators." During a long interview, he spoke of the death of his wife, Godelieve Mukakabibi, and his seven-year-old son, Habiyaemye, on 24 December. He said that in July 1994, Vincent Munyandamutsa, the bourgmestre of Rushashi before and after the genocide and a member of MDR, encouraged him and many other members of MDR, to stay in Rwanda instead of leaving for exile in Zaire. Emmanuel stayed and was named as *responsable* of his cellule; many other members of MDR were appointed to local government positions. He said the situation changed in Rushashi after the return of the refugees.

They threatened the people who had stayed in the country. They came back poor; their fields had become part of the bush, they had nothing to

<sup>253</sup> Interviewed in Nyamabuye, Gitarama, 21 July 1998.

<sup>254</sup> *The Hidden Violence*, p.35.

eat. We had everything we needed to live and the refugees were jealous. They began to accuse us of having collaborated with the *Inyenzi* government. Instead of working, some of the refugees went into the forest and they began to recruit others. Their aim was to create a climate of insecurity in the country. The people who didn't want to support them were killed. These killers are called infiltrators. These infiltrators liked to attack during the night.

Emmanuel said that he and other *responsables* looked for ways to counter the threat to their lives.

The sectors within Rushashi where there are a lot of infiltrators are Minazi, Shyombwe, Gihinga and Raba. Along with other cellule *responsables*, we decided to organise patrols with the population to try and beat the infiltrators. The people who wanted to collaborate with them were very angry with us because they couldn't find a way to help them. That is why the infiltrators attacked us on 24 December 1997.

Five cellules—Bukonde; Degamire; Gaharo; Mutara and Murambi—were selected.

In the middle of the night, some people knocked on my door. They told me to come outside to help them with a patrol. I refused to speak to them and asked my wife, Godelieve Mukakabibi, to talk to them. They told her that they wanted to speak to me and no-one else. When I heard this, I asked them why they had come to fetch me at night. They replied that they needed my help to carry out a patrol because the next day a search for infiltrators hiding in our sector was to take place. I got up and opened the door. I saw around eleven people in military uniform. They came into my house and threatened me. They asked me how many children I had. I said that I had five. They told us all to stand together, along with my wife, and to show our identity cards.

They took our cards and some of them began to loot our money and clothes. Someone, who appeared to be their leader, said: 'Lets get on with the job'. One of the killers took my two daughters, Alphonsine Uwimana, seventeen, and Bynkousenge, fifteen, into another room. The killers who remained behind took the small hoes and machetes which they had brought with them and they began to kill my wife and my only son, Habiyaemye, seven years old. My daughters were crying in the other room. As I was very frightened, I tried to run away. But there was someone blocking the door which was firmly closed. I fought with him and managed to open the door. I got outside and the killers who were there shot me. I was hit in the right shoulder and they thought that I was dead.

Two of his daughters also suffered serious injuries.

My daughter, Byukusenge, escaped but she received a lot of machete blows and lost her fingers. Two other daughters also got away, including twelve year old Manirarora, who was hit on the head with a machete. When they had finished killing and looting, they left.

The following day, neighbours took the family to Nemba hospital. Emmanuel was hospitalised for a month and his daughters for two months. He spoke of the criteria which determined the choice of victims.

The infiltrators attacked nearly all the people who were not collaborating with them, particularly the cellule *responsables*, including:

- Damascène Ntahomvukiye, the Gaharo cellule *responsable*, Raba sector, killed with his wife and son;
- Diogène Ntihakose, the Mutara cellule *responsable*;
- Mathieu Bizimana, the Mutara cellule *responsable* prior to Ntihakose, killed with his wife and child;
- Albert Mivumbi, a teacher who was in charge of Karebero primary school, killed together with his children; his wife escaped;
- The wife and children of Rucyera, a trader from Ndegamire cellule assassinated by the infiltrators in July 1997;
- Munyembabazi, a farmer from Ndegamire cellule, killed with his wife and children;
- Gasiga from Ndegamire cellule, and his children were killed. His wife is still alive.

Many of those who died had their heads cut off. Around 52 people or more were killed.

With their opponents out of the way, the insurgents took up residence in Raba sector.

They had left the officials who were collaborating with them, such as Damascène Rwajukundi, the *responsable* of Ndegamire cellule and Elias Ukotwiboneye, the councillor.

It appears that some of the infiltrators who attacked us were living in Ndusu and Nyarutovu communes, Ruhengeri. There are a lot of infiltrators there and it is very near our commune; there is only the Base stream which separates us. In our sector, the infiltrators have many accomplices who give them information, supplies and shelter.

When I saw these killers on 24 December, I looked closely to see if they were our soldiers since they were in military uniform. However, I had never seen any of them before although I knew almost all the RPA soldiers living in Rushashi at that time. Also, the RPA soldiers did not normally visit us at night; they would only come to see us during the day.

When I had recovered, I went to the commune office because the infiltrators could kill me at home. I was given a house near the commune office and a job, as an orderly, so that I can feed my daughters.

But the insurgents have not finished with Emmanuel.

I left everything I own on the hill—the fields and the banana plantation. No-one from my family can come to visit me because the infiltrators have written tracts telling people that they will be killed if they visit me. Even my father, Gakuru, can't come to see me. The infiltrators say that I have become an *Inyenzi*.

The events of December have left Emmanuel with little to hold on to,

On my salary of 8,000 francs, I don't know how I am going to feed my daughters. Food is expensive, and so are medicines. My two daughters are now handicapped. They can't do anything. I don't have anything in the house, we sit on the floor and often we have nothing to eat. I am really very sad. I didn't bury my wife and my two other children, I was in hospital. I can't sleep at night.

These infiltrators say that they want to free the Hutus. But I am also a Hutu, so who exactly are they going to free? I live like a prisoner because of them. No member of my family can come near me because of fear of them. I can't go back to my hill and my right shoulder still hurts. I can't farm any longer.

More people died in subsequent confrontations between the RPA and the insurgents.

After the attack, the RPA soldiers hunted for the infiltrators. There was a fight between the soldiers and the infiltrators. The bullets hit people as they tried to get away and some were killed, for example Bendantunguka, an old man from Gahara cellule, Raba. He reached Nemba hospital but died soon afterwards.<sup>255</sup>

<sup>255</sup> Interviewed in Rushashi, Greater Kigali, 22 July 1998.

## *The Phenomenon of "Disappearances"*

"Disappearances" have been a particular focus of Amnesty's recent reports on Rwanda. Disappearances have a specific history and a precise meaning, beginning with a policy by military regimes in Chile and Argentina in the 1970s to kill their opponents, leaving no trace which could implicate the State. A source of immense anguish to family and friends, it is a serious accusation that should be made after careful consideration of the facts. In the upheaval generated by the situation in the northwest, it is extremely difficult to assess whether "disappearances" are taking place.

Amnesty detailed the largest number of cases in its most recent report, *The Hidden Violence*.

...an estimated several thousand people - sometimes whole communities - have gone missing following armed clashes between RPA soldiers and armed opposition groups, or attacks by either side. A number of villages in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri have been left uninhabited. Many of these people may have been displaced by the armed conflict, which is causing thousands to flee from their homes. Some flee in anticipation of likely attacks on their village; others escape in the midst of attacks or fighting. Some have probably "disappeared".

This was published at a time when our own book was close to completion. Because of the time-consuming nature of following up cases of disappearances, it is not possible for us to comment on the individual cases cited by Amnesty. But Amnesty's description of population displacements in the northwest as possible "disappearances" is certainly not appropriate. Amnesty itself acknowledges that this is nothing more than a possibility which it cannot confirm.

... it is virtually impossible to ascertain whether and which of the inhabitants have been "disappeared", killed - and if so, by whom - arrested, or are in hiding. Others may have been taken hostage by armed groups.<sup>256</sup>

<sup>256</sup> *The Hidden Violence*, p.4.

## *Cutting Down Banana Plantations in Rugerero, Gisenyi: State Vandalism or a Legitimate Effort to Contain Terrorism?*

Amnesty must recognise that in a war situation, counter-insurgency measures cannot always be presented as human rights abuses. Efforts to improve security are important to the lives of all the people of the northwest. The felling of banana plantations in parts of Gisenyi is detrimental to the economic well-being people of the area; this is not a matter of dispute. But it is also a legitimate attempt to drive out the insurgents and to save lives. In *The Hidden Violence* AI criticised the measure.

The population is also suffering from increasing shortages of food as a direct result of the armed conflict... RPA soldiers have forced the population to cut down banana plantations, claiming that the insurgents use them as a hiding place (emphasis added). They have ordered the population in certain areas not to pick their crops. Peasants who have attempted to do so in defiance of these orders have been directly threatened; some have been killed by government forces.<sup>257</sup>

To our knowledge, the banana plantations in question concern principally parts of certain communes in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri along the tarmac road that connects this region with Kigali. The affected communes are Rubavu and Kanama in Gisenyi and Kigombe, Nyakinama and Nyarutovu in Ruhengeri. It is not, contrary to the impression in AI's report, a development widespread throughout the northwest. The plantations were felled in January 1998, at a time when many civilian cars had been ambushed along this road and dozens of people had been shot, burnt alive or wounded, including the attempted assassination of Fr. Nsengumuremyi cited above and the particularly shocking murder of more than forty employees of the national brewery company, BRALIRWA. African Rights visited the region at the time; it was apparent that the insurgents responsible for these operations used the nearby thick banana plantations as a cover. The banana plantations are also essential to the economic livelihood of the

<sup>257</sup> *The Hidden Violence*, p.15. The insurgents have also criticised this measure in their tracts. In a tract entitled *Impuzamva*, PALIR wrote: "As for hunger, everyone knows that it is the Inyenzi who are the cause when they lay crops to waste under the pretext that they are widening the roads.. [and] prevent the Hutus from cultivating.

local population. The problem confronted the residents of Rubavu, and the civilian and military authorities, with painful choices.

Ananias Bagirubwira, 51, is a farmer from cellule Nterimbere in Rugerero. He said he has lived in Rugerero "since my birth." He returned home after four months of exile in Zaire in 1994 and was appointed a *nyumbakumi*. He said that the security situation began to deteriorate after the refugees returned home *en masse*.

People were being killed everyday. We alerted the soldiers but they couldn't find out who was doing the killing. Sometimes, infiltrators attacked military positions to take guns and uniforms. It became a war. They would spend whole days fighting the RPA. The RPA hunted them; weeks passed without an attack, and then they would come back. They killed those who don't support them and stole cows.

They started to attack public transport. They killed the passengers and set fire to the vehicles. At least one vehicle was set on fire each week. The infiltrators became cleverer; when they attacked, they wore military uniforms similar to those of the RPA. We thought that they were RPA soldiers. They quickly disappear when the RPA soldiers arrive.

There are banana plantations here in our region which are even more impenetrable than the forests. The infiltrators hide there and prepare their food. It is from there that they launched their attacks on vehicles and military positions, and from there that they would come to loot or to persuade the population to support them and not to trust the government.

We didn't know what to do. Even the soldiers had trouble finding the infiltrators.

Ananias attended the public meeting held at Rubavu commune office to discuss possible solutions.

The meeting was between the people and local officials. I participated. Even the people from the neighbouring commune of Kanama came. The officials told us to separate from the infiltrators and to denounce them.

In practice, things were not so clear-cut.

We tried but we didn't know where they are. Meanwhile, they continued to kill and loot from us. There were even times when they put up roadblocks where they stopped people and killed them. You can meet someone and think that it is an ordinary person, but when you pass him, he shoots at you or attacks you with a machete. Afterwards, he goes back into the banana plantation.

There was another public meeting to discuss options.

The infiltrators attacked Inyemeramihigo secondary school. One student was killed and there were many wounded. The *préfet* held a meeting with the population at Umuganda stadium. He asked what could be done to stop the criminal activities of the infiltrators. The people suggested cutting down the banana plantation which would enable us to see the infiltrators from a distance when they attacked. The officials thought it was a good idea and we agreed to put it into practice. Now, when someone comes, we can see them from 100 metres because the plantation has been cut back 200 metres. We won't be taken by surprise anymore.

He commented on the impact of the decision.

Since we cut down the banana plantation, there hasn't been a single vehicle set fire on the road. It is possible to sleep peacefully for a whole week at a time.

Ananias also spoke of its drawbacks.

However, everything has its advantages and disadvantages. It was thanks to the banana plantation that we made our living. Now we are hungry. We ask the Rwandan government to help us, because even if we now have peace, there is a food crisis.

He came to the following conclusion.

Despite the hunger, we don't regret it because there wasn't any alternative. We were at risk of being killed.<sup>258</sup>

As described above, the men who left Fr. Jean Marie-Vianney Nsengumuremyi with multiple gunshot wounds in Rugerero made their escape through the plantation bordering the road.

The clearing of this banana plantation became necessary. It has certainly put an end to this type of occurrence at Rugerero.

When African Rights approached a group of about ten people, mainly women, in Rugerero, it became clear that they had mixed feelings

<sup>258</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 16 July 1998.

about the decision. Appolonie, who didn't want to give her surname, expressed her views.

There was a month during which many vehicles, including the priests', were targeted by criminals who were hiding in the banana plantations here at Rugerero. A meeting was held at the commune office by the bourgemestre of Rubavu, in the presence of the préfet of Gisenyi. At the meeting, the officials questioned what could be done about the banana trees, the corn and the runner beans. A few days later, we fled from this area due to the violence and we went to Muhira sector where we spent two months. In the meantime, news reached us that our banana trees had been cut down.

To offset the loss of the banana plantations, the affected residents were encouraged to grow sweet potatoes or vegetables.

We were given permission to grow low plants in the place of the banana trees, such as sweet potatoes. Vegetables, like sweet potatoes and cabbages, are also profitable in our region.

But as Appolonie explained, this is not a satisfactory alternative.

The vegetables are not only stolen from the fields, but their usefulness is far less than that of bananas. Bananas are very profitable. The juice can be made into a drink which is partly consumed by the producer and partly sold to bring in some money. Bananas are eaten either ripe or cooked when unripe; amongst the banana trees we also plant runner beans which are also profitable and don't require a separate field. If only the authorities would at least let us plant the runner beans to combat hunger.

Though they regret its necessity, and wonder if alternative measures, such as increasing the number of soldiers, could not have been identified, there was no doubt in the minds of these locals that the measure has deterred the ambush of vehicles and prevented the loss of lives.

This measure exposes us to poverty. But certainly we realise that the vehicles travelling along the Gisenyi-Ruhengeri road have stopped being targeted, at least here in Rugerero, since the banana plantation along the side of the road have been cut down. There has only been one unsuccessful attempt near the former courthouse.<sup>259</sup>

<sup>259</sup> Interviewed in Rubavu, Gisenyi, 16 July 1998.

An architect by profession, Théoneste Hakizimana was, until 15 July 1998, PALIR's treasurer in sector Kantwari, commune Rwerere. He spoke from his own experience about the insurgents' use of these plantations.

When I came back the day before yesterday, I left the commanders of Echo operational sector surrounded by at least 3,000 infiltrators, in a banana plantation between Mount Rwashungwe, in Kinyanzovu sector, and Muti in Muhanda sector. The high command of the sector named Bivac live in a banana plantation called Cananke. When they are threatened by the army, they run away to other banana plantations, such as the one situated at the bottom of Burere hill, in Ryabizige cellule; or the one in Gisiza, Rushuri cellule in Muhanda; the one in Bushanga, Kibaya cellule, in Kinyanzovu, or Kasenkore, in Bulinda sector, Rubavu commune. I think this is why the government has decided to cut down the banana plantations which were sheltering the infiltrators.

A similar account was given by Daniel Munyabikari, an ex-FAR and a former insurgent, now integrated into the RPA.

Whenever the army intervened, the infiltrators would escape into the vast forest of volcanoes. Their activities intensified, especially during the growing seasons, taking advantage of the plentiful hiding places provided by fields of runner beans, sorghum and corn. When such cover was not available, their operations were few. I think that this is the reason that the authorities have recommended that the ground be cleared of all vegetation for a distance of 200m from major roads, which has served as cover for the infiltrators to shoot at passing vehicles.

The infiltrators have, predictably, sought to exploit this measure. In a tract dated 3 January 1998, they wrote:

In communes Kigombe and Nkumba the banana plantations, sorghum, corn, beans and other plants are cut down. The objective is to create a famine in the region, which is usually the breadbasket of Rwanda. As foreign aid is reserved only for the Batutsi, what does the government think the population will eat?

It is certainly easier to criticise than to suggest workable solutions. But Amnesty must realise that this is not always the best means of improving the situation for local residents.

## *Investigations, Not Speculations*

During our research in the northwest, many people mentioned the absence of both local and national human rights organisations. There are good reasons for their reluctance to visit parts of the northwest, given the insecurity and the history of attacks upon foreigners. However, there is little doubt that the inability to conduct independent investigations of the insurgency has compromised the accuracy of their reports and has damaged the credibility of human rights groups in general.

Amnesty consistently describes the northwest as a virtual no-go area. It acknowledges the "Difficulties of gathering, compiling and verifying information" and criticises "the Rwandese Government's tight control on the dissemination of information relating to the human rights situation". Amnesty implies that, despite these constraints, it has been able to discover the "full picture" which "rarely reaches the outside world."<sup>260</sup>

Yet Amnesty International's sole journey to the northwest consisted of a brief journey to the main town of Gisenyi in February 1998. It has never visited Ruhengeri, and the communes of Kibuye, Gitarama and Greater Kigali affected by the insurgency. Quite how investigators managed to "gather detailed testimonies on killings, "disappearances" and other human rights abuses, from victims, relatives of victims, witnesses and other sources" in such a short space of time is not explained.

The need to protect sources, and the selective use of pseudonyms, is understandable. But Amnesty's blanket reference to "local sources" makes it next to impossible to measure their reliability. The assumption is that they are credible and independent, but the number of errors contained in some recent reports suggest otherwise. As we have shown, some people who Amnesty said had been "killed by the RPA" are still alive; again and again, it has given the wrong places, names and dates for incidents; and it has consistently failed to base its reports on testimonies of survivors and direct witnesses, leading to superficial judgements about the nature of the violence. The result, in some places, is little more than hearsay. At the heart of these errors is a flaw in Amnesty's approach. Since the return of the refugees from Zaire, it has on many occasions highlighted their plight. What it fails to take account of is the fact that many of those described as "unarmed civilians" or "returnees" were in fact working closely with the insurgents or themselves may be guilty of abuses. Most importantly the

<sup>260</sup> *The Hidden Violence*, p.2.

insurgents are overwhelmingly former "refugees" and also former génocidaires; Amnesty refers to them as "armed opposition groups." All killings are to be condemned and regretted, but categorising them as "human rights abuses" depends upon at least some understanding of the context in which they have occurred.<sup>261</sup>

As our own book shows, the fact that human rights abuses have been committed by RPA soldiers is not a matter of dispute. The extent of these violations, the circumstances in which some of the incidents have taken place, and whether they reflect a *policy* on the part of the RPA, has yet to be proven. Unfortunately, Amnesty has made numerous claims with scant or false evidence to back them. This is no basis on which to criticise the evident shortcomings of the army and to make a genuine contribution to the protection of human rights in Rwanda. Inaccuracies feed into political and social insecurity in the volatile situation of the northwest and influence outside perceptions of the conflict. By placing unsubstantiated and misleading allegations at the forefront of its human rights campaign, Amnesty has ensured that those with the power to act on its recommendations will dismiss them.

## **Physicians for Human Rights: A Conspicuous Absence from the Field**

Amnesty International is not alone in publishing reports based upon brief visits. In July 1997, Physicians for Human Rights, a US-based organisation, issued an 18-page report entitled *Investigations in Eastern Congo and Western Rwanda*. The report, released for a hearing organised by the House International Relations Committee of the US Congress, received extensive coverage both in the US and in Europe.

The discussion on Rwanda merits careful attention.<sup>262</sup> The very title of the report suggests that it contains material based on investigations in

<sup>261</sup> In addition, insurgents frequently wear RPA uniforms during their operations, as their own testimonies and those of residents of the northwest show. Amnesty's reports fail to take this important factor into account.

<sup>262</sup> This is particularly important because the consultant who accompanied the two doctors from PHR, Kathy Austin, is the author of numerous reports for other US-based human rights and research organisations working on the Great Lakes, and a frequent contributor to debates about developments in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC.

western Rwanda. This is reinforced by the section on "Introduction and Methods" which says that for two weeks, a delegation of three people "worked in the Great Lakes region of Africa compiling testimony and data regarding the existence of human rights abuses committed by governments or warring parties against civilian and refugee populations." It specifies that the team met "with witnesses and victims with direct experience of events in Eastern Congo." It does not say that it met with witnesses and victims "with direct experience of events" in Western Rwanda. The limitations of the investigation in western Rwanda soon become apparent.

The PHR team traversed this region by UNDP convoy, escorted by three trucks of armed Rwandan military -- one day after another convoy had been ambushed, allegedly by Interahamwe. The atmosphere was tense, radio communication taut, and the pace as rapid as the switchbacks would tolerate.

This journey, and a visit to a transit camp for returned refugees and a detention centre for genocide suspects in Gitarama appear to be the extent of the team's field trips outside Kigali. Gitarama is not in western Rwanda and was not, at the time, affected at all by the insurgency.

Information regarding the conduct of the war, the fate of local villagers, the numbers and kinds of casualties has thus been difficult to obtain.

The report does not contain information about any incidents anywhere in western Rwanda, nor interviews with victims of abuses, their relatives, local residents, returned refugees, insurgents, civilian officials, army officers, local NGOs, or any other Rwandese citizens or Congolese refugees living in the northwest. There is no discussion about the nature of the war. However, these drawbacks did not deter PHR from claiming that "2,000 to 3,000 civilians have been killed in Western Rwanda in the past three months." The figure, it said, had come from "the ICRC<sup>263</sup> Information Officer in Kigali." The figure may be correct, too conservative or exaggerated; the point is that PHR itself was in no position to put forward any figure, and to do so in a report that purports to be an independent inquiry, is misleading in the extreme. It is all the more open to question in light of the sentence that then explains the constraints on the foreign ICRC staff person.

<sup>263</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross.

The entire area of northwestern Rwanda is considered completely unstable; travel for expatriate staff is considered very unsafe, as such personnel appear to be directly targeted. Estimates of numbers being killed are inexact, based on both information from trusted local people who dare to furnish information to the ICRC and whatever hospital-based data the ICRC can acquire. When pressed for other means of verifying current estimates, the ICRC official said that data from funeral announcements were too fragmentary. In addition, the official stated the area could not be visited to ascertain the number of new graves, and no formal registries of deaths were being kept in local areas. It is the plan of the ICRC, once hostilities in the area abate, to try to reconcile the current estimates by interviewing families in the area who claim to have lost members through death or disappearance. The official concluded his interview with us by observing that the region is just two hours distant from Kigali, and "completely horrible."

Having described the situation facing refugees in Zaire as life-threatening, the report went on:

These refugees are now returning to a wholly insecure environment, where in many instances, they become immediate targets for the retribution from the Rwandan government forces

Elsewhere in the report, PHR insist, in emphatic terms that the region is beyond reach, "the countryside off limits for civilian travel" as a result of which "the security situation makes access to vulnerable populations and access to information extremely difficult and dangerous to obtain." This conclusion is based on a single journey to Gisenyi while riding in a UN convoy heavily-guarded by the military.

...an unreported civil war in the countryside and a government intolerant of dissent or disclosure establishes an intrusive and chilling presence on all aspects of civic communication and discussion.

Nor did it hesitate to make more general comments about "widespread insecurity and fear", saying that "atrocities and human rights abuses of many kinds are ongoing throughout the region."

The report claims that "No one from the international press has travelled to this area [Ruhengeri and Gisenyi] in the recent past". This is wrong.

PHR also claims that "discussions with refugees in transit camps are strongly discouraged as well." We have no reason to doubt the veracity of the account given by PHR when their team visited Runda, but to draw a broad conclusion from that one experience is disingenuous. From the time the refugees began to arrive in transit camps, hundreds of foreign journalists have visited the camps, including many TV crews from all over the world. This book contains dozens of interviews with refugees and returnees in transit camps in the northwest.

PHR's comments about western Rwanda are an appendage to a longer discussion about eastern Zaire. The insurgency in the northwest is a precise threat which calls for precise analysis. It was borne out of the events in eastern Zaire, but if it is to be understood properly, it cannot be treated as a footnote to developments in DRC. It is also worrying that an organisation whose mandate calls for facts, detail and precision should claim to have "investigated" the war in western Rwanda when it had done no such thing at any time.

According to PHR, the conflict is between the "Rwandan government and organised Interahamwe and ex-FAR." But the report does not contain a single reference to any atrocities committed by the insurgents, nor any interviews with victims of their campaigns in the northwest. There were many well-publicised incidents by then, including attacks on buses where people had been shot or macheted to death. Instead, it immediately adds that "this clandestine war... has rendered the countryside off limits for civilian travel and subjected the local (predominantly Hutu) population to risks of direct attack and killing by the Rwandan military." We can only conclude that the report was written for a domestic constituency; it is certainly unlikely to make any contribution to improving the human rights situation in Rwanda.

### Encouraging Change: But Who is the Audience?

In the year that this book was being researched, we rarely came across any official in the northwest, civilian or military, who had ever received a copy, or seen, these human rights reports about the northwest, or Rwanda in general. They had only heard radio broadcasts on foreign stations. These reports are not available in Rwanda because the organisations concerned do not have local offices and they are not sold in bookstores. The people who

have copies are Western diplomats and foreign organisations. The few senior government people who have copies have usually received them after the reports had been made public and have obtained them through their own embassies. This raises fundamental questions about the audience these reports are written for, and their ultimate purpose.

PHR's report contains seventeen recommendations, of which only one is directed specifically at the Government of Rwanda, and that concerns the rights of detainees and prisoners. Three other recommendations are addressed to the governments of both Rwanda and DRC; they deal with the need for a human rights mission to investigate human rights abuses in eastern Zaire, guaranteeing the protection of individuals who wish to testify and free access for humanitarian workers and international human rights monitors. The other fourteen points call on the international community or the Government of the United States to take various initiatives. However, given the report's description of western Rwanda as characterised by "insecurity, violence, and atrocity", in which "both sides are indiscriminately attacking and abusing civilian populations in their bid for military advantage", it is extraordinary that PHR did not see it fit to address the needs of the victims of this war.

The ultimate objective of human rights is to improve the quality of life of people whose ability to manage their day to day existence is determined, to a very large extent, by the governmental and civic structures in their areas. They may have minimal or even no contact with central government, let alone with "the international community." Addressing concerns about their human rights to foreign countries and institutions, or to the central government alone without even seeking the views, perspectives and inputs of local people and officials is not only rude but is short-sighted; it shows lack of concern for making sure that the necessary changes take place where they matter, *at the local level*. But throughout our visits to the northwest in the past year, we never met a local official who had been visited by Amnesty or PHR.

Boniface Rucagu, the préfet of Ruhengeri since April 1997, said he had never been contacted by AI or PHR.

I have neither seen nor heard from anyone from Amnesty International. I have not had the opportunity to see any of their publications. Since I have been préfet of Ruhengeri, no representative of a foreign organisation or CLADHO has come before me for any reason. I am also unaware of any councillor or bourgmestre contacted by these people.



Even if they publish reports about what is going on in our préfecture, Amnesty International and Physicians for Human Rights are not known here. I have never been contacted by either of these two. Nor have I been contacted by the UN High Commission for Human Rights since their office closed in Ruhengeri in early 1997. I think that these organisations are only reporting information supplied by their informants. I agree with them that the civilian population is being killed in our region. But they should explain the circumstances in which the people are dying because it is impossible to avoid deaths in a region which is experiencing fighting between two belligerent groups.<sup>264</sup>

Giciye is a commune which has been hard hit by the conflict. Again the bourgmestre, Fidèle Mitsindo, was critical of reporting about the events there.

I have never seen anyone from CLADHO, Amnesty International or the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights in Giciye since the start of this situation. Nevertheless, I am told that they write reports about the security situation in Giciye. I hear about such reports on the radio.

These officials feel that they are undermining the government's position, and hold it in such low esteem that they do not even ask for the local official's input. But as Fidèle points out, there is more than personal pride at stake.

Recently, some days after the events of 17 November [attack against Giciye's commune office and freeing of genocide suspects], I was personally struck by a foreign radio, I don't remember which station, which said the following: 'One can no longer find a peasant in Giciye; and at the commune office, one can only find corpses along the route'. I was more than surprised by this misleading information which has an impact on the population. A significant number of our people are educated and follow these foreign radios which disseminate such misleading accounts.

These organisations and radios accuse us of killing civilians during reprisals by the army. That is false because I cannot allow our population to be killed in such a manner. If that was the case, the population of sector Gihira who, for the most part, collaborate with the infiltrators, would no longer exist. However, this sector still remains the most populated by comparison with others. It consists of 7,200 people.

<sup>264</sup> Interviewed in Kigombe, Ruhengeri, 8 December 1997 and 6 August 1998.

Instead of killing them, we regularly give them advice to discourage them from supporting the infiltrators, even though they are their children.<sup>265</sup>

Captain Jean-Baptiste Muhirwa has been préfet of Gisenyi since mid-December 1997 and was interviewed by African Rights in April. Amnesty's visit to Gisenyi took place in February, but the préfet said he was unaware of such a visit.

A report by an organisation called Amnesty International appeared on 12 March 1998 and it accused the army of forcing the people to destroy the banana crops which were close to the main road. However, I neither saw nor heard the investigators of this organisation come to Gisenyi, even though I am the préfet.

When we wrote to Amnesty in February, we noted the comments of local officials that AI had not sought to meet with them. In their response in July, AI replied that: "On several occasions during their visit in February 1998, Amnesty International delegates sought to meet local officials, such as *préfets* and *bourgmestres* in various localities, but these officials were unfortunately unavailable at that particular time."

If international human rights organisations are to help improve the lives of people in the northwest, they must concern themselves less with making an impression internationally, and more with having an impact locally. The *préfets*, *bourgmestres*, *councillors* and military commanders who run the day-to-day affairs of the northwest are those who know most about the situation in the area; more importantly, they are the ones in a position to make changes, however small. If human rights organisations neglect this constituency, they may find that human rights concerns will be considered of no relevance.

But human rights organisations have more than a duty "not to ignore" these men and women. They also have a responsibility to help them, wherever that is appropriate. People have grown weary of human rights work which consists of unforgiving scrutiny. They also want a helping hand based on an understanding of their situation. Decisions about who, when and where it is appropriate to help, and the best means of delivering that assistance is, of course, a matter of judgement for each institution. But the first step is gaining knowledge: such decisions are best made by having a thorough grasp of the local situation, in all its

<sup>265</sup> Interviewed in Giciye, Gisenyi, 6 December 1997.

complexity. Civilian and military officials in the northwest confront extreme situations—on a daily basis—which test them personally, professionally and politically. The threats, pressures and dilemmas which Hutu bourgmestres, councillors and other government officials face are, in particular, acute and need to be understood in order to be addressed. Without their close involvement, it is difficult to see the way forward in the northwest. They are critical to mapping out and implementing a confidence-building strategy, and therefore to the prospects of peace and stability. If human rights organisations want to make a contribution, they need to be seen engaging these forces, through direct contacts, informed criticism and practical help.

Accusations, sometimes based on rumour, followed by recommendations couched in haughty imperatives, cannot lead to a meaningful dialogue. In *The Hidden Violence*, Amnesty noted that it had met with the Military Prosecutor in Kigali, but complained that it had not received any information about the actions taken by the military to discipline soldiers found guilty of human rights violation. It asked foreign governments to urge the Government of Rwanda to make this information available. This information exists, and making it widely available to human rights organisations would certainly be in the government's public relations interest. And yet, by Amnesty's own admission, the army does not consider it sufficiently important to disclose the information. This evident lack of interest in their good opinion, despite the relentless criticism, must raise questions about the effectiveness of the methods used by international human rights groups.

### *Conclusion*

Amnesty International is the most influential international human rights organisation; its reports are taken as the barometer of the human rights situation in a given country. The reports and the lobbying activities of these immensely powerful organisations have political and economic consequences for poor countries. They can also have profound consequences for the lives of individuals. For example, in February 1997, Amnesty International, some local human rights organisations and the opposition political party, FRD, said that a teacher, "a demobilised RPA soldier" had killed Guy Pinard, a Canadian priest murdered in Kinigi, Ruhengeri. They have never produced a shred of evidence to substantiate

such a serious accusation.<sup>204</sup> For the teacher in question, Dieudonné Mwiyeretse, the accusations, which were given extensive publicity both within Rwanda and abroad, were the beginning of a personal nightmare. A month after the accusations were aired, five close relatives were killed and three were abducted by insurgents.

Worries about the damaging role of human rights organisations in Central Africa are coming from many quarters. Roger Winter, the executive director of the US Committee for Refugees who has spent more time following developments in Rwanda than any other foreign observer, recently expressed his concerns in an article in *The Washington Post*. We hope that Amnesty will review its own work in the light of his words.

Nowhere are human rights more at risk than in Central Africa, where the past four years have brought genocide, civil wars, assassinations, massive refugee flows and periods of bloody anarchy... It is a corner of the globe that desperately needs wise human rights advocacy.

But, I am sorry to say, it is a region where human rights activists are playing a potentially damaging role. We in the human rights community are so busy issuing strongly worded reports and ostracizing imperfect new governments that we risk inviting more instability and bloodshed, not less...

Governments all over the world should permit legitimate independent efforts to monitor how they treat their citizens, and human rights workers should continue to document abuses. But perfect leadership and capable governing systems cannot spring forth spontaneously in troubled nations that have only known misrule. Our edicts fall on deaf ears unless we shape our message constructively...

The human rights community mistakenly assumes that it alone has the best interests of the population at heart. Some leaders despise their own citizens. But sometimes governments are more inexperienced than evil. Central Africa's new leaders have the enormous task of reassembling nations that are among the poorest on earth, ethnically divided, riven with corruption and saturated with arms and shadowy groups willing to use those arms to gain power. National armies are usually untrained and unrepresentative, national treasuries are virtually bare and the political systems have limited experience with democracy...

<sup>204</sup> See for example Amnesty's account in *Ending the Silence*, p.21. This is a complicated case which has still not been resolved. African Rights has been following it for more than a year; we have interviewed a large number of people, and we plan to publish the results in due course.

Human rights failures by governments are not always deliberate... In northwest Rwanda, reports suggest that government troops have killed thousands of people during counterinsurgency operations. What is less clear is the extent to which the killings are intentional massacres, or whether genocidaire insurgents are again using civilian populations as human shields in combat zones..

Seemingly "neutral" human rights reports can have powerful political implications in a politically fragile region...[W]e should be alarmed that Central African leaders have come to see human rights organizations as a threat... they have come to perceive us as political enemies -- not because we seem impatient with anything less than our ideal of human rights perfection and instant political pluralism.

Central Africa is a place of particularly fragile societies with haunted memories. It is time that we did more than catalogue the region's human rights abuses. There is a time to shout and a time to help. If we want our message to be heard, the time to help is now.<sup>267</sup>

## LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

### SOME SUGGESTIONS

The insurgency in the northwest is a political problem that affects all Rwandese, not a distant military conflict between the RPA and the insurgents, of concern solely to residents of the affected regions. There can be no solutions unless and until it is treated as an urgent issue of *national* importance that touches upon the security and well-being of all Rwandese. Every sector of society has a contribution to make in the search for solutions, including Rwandese living abroad. As the current turmoil and suffering in the DRC show, the insurgency is also a problem with profound regional implications, and not only for Rwanda's immediate neighbours.

Battered by their experiences and anxious about the future, the people of the northwest need moral support, in addition to protection and practical assistance. It is critically important, for the nation as a whole, to lessen their sense of isolation and to counter the pernicious propaganda with which they have been bombarded for several years. We realise, of course, that this raises sensitive political and social questions and recognise that the grief, anger, fears and needs of other sectors of society must also be taken into account. Approaching the issues in Rwanda in a compartmentalised fashion has in fact made the problems appear intractable and should be avoided. We are, in particular, aware that survivors of the genocide would find it extremely difficult to make the sacrifices that are being asked of them, especially when the insurgency in the northwest, and recent developments in the region, have sharpened their fears. But it is in the interests of all Rwandese, including the survivors, to help people of goodwill in the northwest bring about the political defeat of the insurgents and their genocidal plans. The recent decision by thousands of fighters and civilians to dissociate themselves from the insurgents offers a window of opportunity. That opportunity might not last, but it can if it is built upon, to the lasting benefit of all the people of Rwanda and their neighbours in the region. Below we make a few suggestions that we hope will make a contribution to a fuller national and regional discussion and plan of action.

<sup>267</sup> Roger Winter, "How Human Rights Groups Miss the Opportunity to Do Good", *The Washington Post*, 22 February 1998.

- The first step towards normality is to comprehend the pressures and predicaments that the people of the northwest face, and the dilemmas which the nature of the insurgency has created for the government and army. If their choices look simple to other Rwandese, the reality on the ground is far more complex. To gain a deeper understanding of the situation, it is necessary to ease the isolation of the northwest and to combat the lethal propaganda disseminated before, during and after the genocide. The dangers of working and travelling in the northwest are self-evident. But within the realm of the possible, local and international human rights organisations, Radio Rwanda and Rwandese and foreign journalists should, in addition to reportage about specific incidents, cover the human, social and economic impact of the conflict. Parliamentarians, the clergy and non-governmental organisations also have a role to play in making the insurgency a political matter of national concern and to stimulate public debate about the roots of the problem and possible courses of action.
- While many local government officials in the northwest have been part of the problem, there are others who have been exemplary in their courage and commitment to their work, despite the enormous risks. They have a critical role to play in allaying people's fears, promoting mutual understanding and confidence between different communities and between the civilian population and the army. What the government can do to help them will depend on the needs and developments in each commune, but on a general level, the government should do everything in its power to safeguard their security and to offer them moral encouragement and practical assistance on an on-going basis.
- The Government of Rwanda should give serious consideration, in the long-term, to dismantling the deeply-entrenched, hierarchical and authoritarian system of local government administration without which the genocide could never have been implemented so quickly and which is doing so much to facilitate the insurgency in the northwest. The insurgents have immediately appointed "bourgmestres" and "councillors" amongst the population which has fled with them. This highlights the extent to which they recognise the value of these structures in making the population more obedient. In general, this system, which has existed for decades, gives préfets, bourgmestres and councillors far too much power, a dangerous development in a country

where there has traditionally been little questioning of authority. It has also stifled initiative and made local government excessively bureaucratic. Changing such a system is a huge undertaking that cannot be thought through overnight. But the establishment of a new, more loosely-structured alternative, which allows citizens genuine representation, a more active role and which facilitates a mindset and capacity to challenge and question the actions of officials would contribute enormously to the political health of the country.

- This issue also highlights the need for thorough reform of the educational system. Serious thought needs to be given to the creation and implementation of a national education programme for schools and the university which deals, in an appropriate manner, with the country's recent history. In particular it should address the issues of truth, justice and reconciliation. Its principal aims should include encouraging debate and a culture of responsibility; building understanding and trust; combating both guilt and ethnic polarisation.
- The Ministry of Education should give special dispensation for schoolchildren in the northwest when it comes to exams. The high rate of failure which schools in the area have registered only serves to demoralise students, parents and teachers alike. Serious consideration also needs to be given to the educational prospects of children in the affected areas, as well as special measures to assist the families who cannot afford to pay even the minimal fees, as they can no longer farm or engage in small-scale trade.
- We recognise that the army cannot protect, on a standing basis, every public place where people work, live or congregate. Nevertheless, 1959 returnees and Congolese refugees living in resettlement camps, housing large numbers of people, have suffered numerous massacres and need additional protection. The soldiers guarding them have been increased in the wake of each massacre. But there is a need to maintain a permanent, adequate, visible and well-armed military force to deter would-be-insurgents. These considerations also apply to the camps which have been set up for the residents who have abandoned the insurgents.

- The demand for military training and local defence teams from communities who have suffered repeated massacres is easy to understand, but needs to be looked at very carefully. Firstly, as the massacre at Nkamira in June 1998 shows, local defence groups cannot offer adequate protection to thousands of people under attack from armed insurgents accompanied by huge crowds of civilians carrying machetes and axes. Secondly, given the current situation in the northwest, it is easy for these teams to act as dangerous vigilantes, as happened after the June massacre in Nkamira. In the long-term, only a situation in which all communities have confidence in the army and police force will discourage specific groups from feeling helpless or taking the law into their own hands.

- At the moment, there is no alternative to the camps which have been created to house the population which has abandoned the insurgents. Since soldiers cannot guard each individual family on a permanent basis, it is difficult to see how else their security can be protected. It is, nevertheless, important to keep in mind the dangers of allowing huge camps to exist for long periods of time. While the paramount consideration must be the safety of the people in question, every alternative to the existence of large-scale camps should be considered and kept constantly under review.

- Many former insurgents have been integrated into the RPA, but it is clearly not possible to accommodate thousands of the young fighters, the *résistants*, who have left the insurgents in recent months. Most of them are farmers, but cannot return home and cultivate their fields until peace returns to the northwest. Small-scale initiatives are necessary to ensure that they do not become a pool of the unemployed and frustrated. It will certainly appear unjust to many Rwandese to see projects aimed at young men who only yesterday were murdering their fellow-citizens. But enabling them to integrate peacefully into Rwandese society, and giving them a stake in a stable Rwanda, is not only for their benefit, but an investment in the country's future.

- Rwanda needs international assistance to provide the people of the northwest with adequate food, tents, medicines etc. The approach of international NGOs who get involved in relief must be sensitive and informed about the local political context, the broader implications of

their actions and the probable long-term consequences, showing that the lessons of the camps in eastern Zaire have been learned.

- Trials of soldiers accused of human rights violations and disciplinary action taken by the Ministry of Defence should be widely publicised as an example to other soldiers and to the wider public, but also as a form of encouragement to those bereaved by their actions. The army appears reluctant to do this mainly, it would appear, because it does not want to give the impression that its primary motivation is to win international approval. Whatever the politics of the international reaction, such action should be undertaken in the interests of improving the army's relationship with the Rwandese people themselves.

The war in the DRC makes it difficult to make feasible recommendations on the questions that affect neighbouring countries, particularly the North Kivu region of DRC which is the insurgents' most vital rear base. But whatever the eventual outcome of the war, there are a number of pertinent issues that must be addressed by the governments of the region—Rwanda, DRC, Uganda and Burundi.

- It is extremely difficult to police the length of the border which Gisenyi and Ruhengeri share with Masisi in eastern DRC which is covered with forests and volcanoes. However, since the security of people on *both* sides of the border is at stake, a co-ordinated approach that seeks to reign in the activities of freelance soldiers and militiamen is necessary. This cannot be done unless much more is done to patrol this border.

- Petty corruption in the Congolese army, whereby soldiers sell their guns and ammunition to Rwandese insurgents, has fuelled the conflict. Civilians in Masisi have also joined in this trade. Tighter controls, exposure and severe punishment of soldiers found guilty of this practice would help deprive the insurgents of arms and ammunition.

- The future of the *bona fide* Rwandese refugees who are still in the Kivu region needs to be secured. There are, undoubtedly, many who would not wish to return. But our interviews with insurgents also shows that Rwandese refugees are regarded as cheap labour in Masisi and have been discouraged from returning home. Those who might wish to return home should be given the information and help they need to make informed decisions and the opportunity to return to Rwanda if they wish

to do so. Working together with UNHCR, the Governments of Rwanda and of DRC should do everything they can to facilitate this process.

- Despite the massacres they have suffered in Rwanda at the hands of the insurgents, Congolese refugees of Tutsi origin have been afraid of returning to their homes in North Kivu because of the presence of the ex-FAR and interahamwe and the rise in anti-Tutsi sentiment in the region. These apprehensions will only have deepened in light of recent events in the DRC. It is important not to lose sight of their presence in Rwanda and their concerns.
- Whatever the political outcome of the war in the DRC, the question of nationality for Congolese of Tutsi origin must be tackled in a serious and definitive manner. The failure to close this chapter of Congolese history is one of the missed opportunities of the past year. The killing of Tutsis in Kinshasa and elsewhere, and the propaganda encouraging genocide of Tutsis, only serves to highlight the importance of dealing with the question of nationality in a calm and sober fashion, in the interests of justice and for the sake of stability.
- The insurgency is a reminder of the urgent need for reform of the international conventions governing refugees. Without exception, the insurgency is led by men who were, until recently, treated as "refugees" by UNHCR and many international agencies working in the camps in Zaire and Tanzania. It was in these camps that the military alliances, re-organisation and training took place and where the political strategies and propaganda that underpin the insurgency were nurtured. Some of the key military, political and financial sponsors of the insurgents and of the génocidaires are, even today, "refugees" elsewhere in Africa, including Kenya, Congo-Brazzaville and the Central African Republic, and in Europe. Training of new recruits continues to take place in camps for Rwandese refugees, for example in camps in Congo-Brazzaville.

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