

CHARGE SHEET SERIES NO 8

# OSWALD RURANGWA IN THE US Turning Gisozi Into A Mass Grave



Oswald Rurangwa (above right) and one of the 14 mass graves at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre.

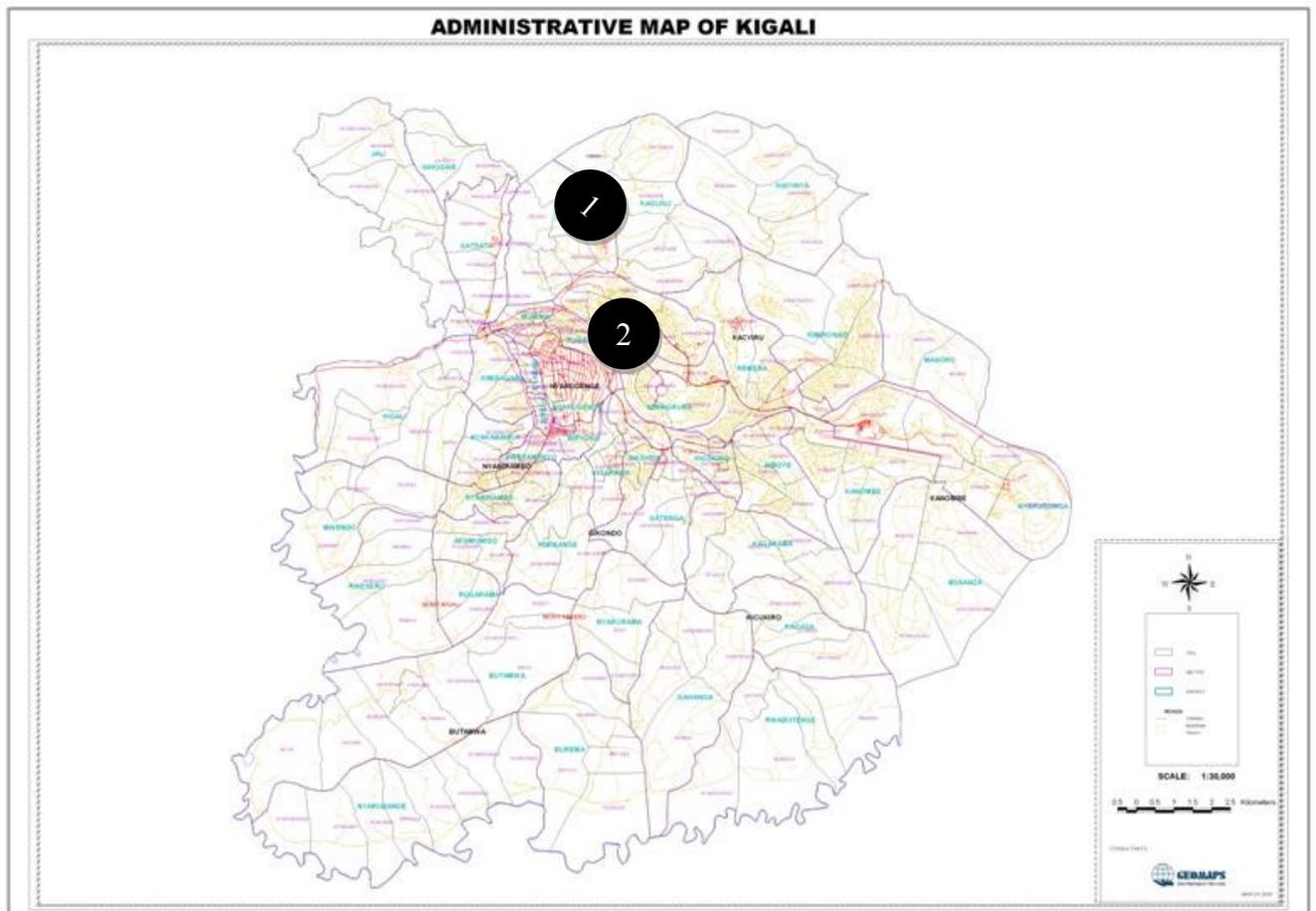
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1. GISOZI
2. KINAMBA

A

**SATELLITE VIEW OF GISOZI HILL**

4



**CAPTION**

**A. Gisozi sector**

1. Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre
2. Gisozi Swamp
3. Kinamba
4. UTEXRWA (Textile factory)
5. New Market of Gisozi
6. Road Gisozi-Nyarutarama
7. Road Gisozi-Kacyiru

**B. Kacyiru**

*“If Oswald has changed his name and is now calling himself Rukemuye, it can only be because he knows what he did during the genocide.”*

*“I would like the US to send Oswald back to Rwanda so that he can stand trial and be accountable for what he did here in Gisozi.”*

## ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

CDR	Coalition for the Defence of the Republic
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAR	Rwandese Armed Forces
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
JDR	Democratic Republican Youth
JOC	Young Catholic Workers
PL	Liberal Party
PSD	Social Democratic Party
MDR	Democratic Republican Movement
MRND	National Revolutionary Movement for Development (1975-91) and National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (1991-4)
RPA	Rwandese Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandese Patriotic Front
RTL	Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines

### Terms for Administrative Units and Their Corresponding Administrators

Rwanda's local administrative structure was changed between 2001-2006. However, in this book we have used the geographical locations, the names of administrative units and their corresponding administrators as they existed in 1994.

Préfet (Governor), the head of a préfecture;

Deputy-préfet (Sous-préfet). A deputy-préfet was either in charge of certain responsibilities within the office of the préfecture, or was the head of a group of communes grouped together in a sous-préfecture;

Bourgmestre (Mayor), the head of a commune;

Councillor, the head of a sector;

*Responsable*, in charge of a cellule.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The remains of 258,000 victims of the 1994 genocide of Tutsis in Rwanda, killed in Kigali and on the outskirts of the nation's capital, have been exhumed and reburied in 14 mass graves on the grounds of the National Memorial Centre in Gisozi, Kigali. The first burials in Gisozi were organized in 2001, and the most recent burials took place on 7 April 2008.

These men, women and children whose bones have been reclaimed from the hills, mass graves, toilets, bushes and abandoned buildings where they were thrown between April and July 1994, lived in the different communes of Kigali city, including commune Kacyiru where Gisozi was then located.<sup>1</sup> They were hunted, tortured and then massacred by soldiers, policemen, militiamen, politicians, local government officials, businessmen, teachers and ordinary people from all walks of life. They were murdered by strangers, but also by their neighbours, friends, colleagues, teachers and classmates.

Some of the victims now buried in Gisozi suffered and died at the hands of a militia force that Oswald Rurangwa created, armed, incited and supervised. Rurangwa's actions and those of the men under his lead are linked to the deaths of Tutsis from Gisozi and Kinamba in sector Kacyiru, as well as the Tutsis sheltering at the Parish of Sainte Famille and at Saint Paul's Centre in central Kigali.

When the genocide ended in July 1994, Rurangwa fled Rwanda to live in exile in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), initially in Kibumba refugee camp and later in camp Kayindo. In 1996, he made his way to the United States. But in Rwanda, his participation in the genocide has not been forgotten. The local gacaca jurisdiction, courts set up specifically to try genocide suspects, have sentenced him to 30 years in prison in absentia, for the crimes he is accused of committing in Gisozi.

In his new life in the US, Rurangwa is known as Oswald Rukemuye. In Rwandese families, each family member carries his or her own unique surname as well as first name. The fact that Rurangwa adopted the surname of his father, François Rukemuye, is recognized by residents of Gisozi, who refer to him only as Rurangwa or Oswald, as a move to obscure his past and a legacy of which they are all well aware. Witnesses who lived in Gisozi knew him and his name well; many had known him when they were children, and older witnesses recalled Rurangwa himself, as a child growing up in Gisozi.

Rurangwa served as director of a primary school in Gisozi. During the years leading up to the genocide, although he continued in his position at the school, he became much better known for his role as head of the Gisozi branch of the ruling party, the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND), and as the overall supervisor of the interahamwe militia in Gisozi. Isaïe Ntirushwa led the interahamwe in Gisozi on a day to day basis, but he took his orders from Rurangwa in his capacity as president of the local MRND.

A few days after the genocide started, Rurangwa was named councillor of sector Gisozi to replace Servilien Rwabusasu, a Hutu of moderate political views. This appointment reflects the trust which senior officials had in Rurangwa, and in his commitment to the policy of genocide.

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<sup>1</sup> The names used for administrative structures reflect the system that existed in Rwanda in 1994.

Gisozi, on top of a hill, was immediately affected by the war which began the same day as the genocide. A peace agreement signed in August 1993 in Arusha, Tanzania, had brought an end to the war between government forces, the Rwandese Armed Forces (FAR) and the rebel Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) which began in October 1990 after the RPF invaded from Uganda. As part of the peace deal, an RPF battalion arrived in Kigali in December 1993. This battalion re-engaged the army on 7 April 1994 and the fighting continued until Kigali fell to the RPF on 4 July 1994. By 11 April, the population of Gisozi had fled *en masse* to Kinamba which is located at the bottom of a valley and was considered more secure. Also on the 11<sup>th</sup>, Ntirushwa, who had served as councillor of Gisozi since 7 April, was killed in Gisenyi. The *préfet* (governor), Col. Tharcisse Renzaho<sup>2</sup>, visited Kinamba and named Rurangwa as the councillor of Gisozi and as the head of the interahamwe militia of Gisozi, as well as putting him in charge of the Gisozi population in Kinamba. He also gave him a car to facilitate his movements; Rurangwa used the car to visit Renzaho regularly throughout the genocide.

Research carried out by *African Rights* over the past 18 months indicates there are at least several dozen Rwandese genocide suspects in the US, both men and women. They include men who worked alongside Rurangwa and whose names appear in this report, for example Samuel Benda. Some are also fugitives from justice who made their way to the US to escape the judgement of *gacaca* courts. Some have entered the US under their own name, but many use false names. These men and women frequently represent themselves as victims of the genocide they helped to plan, unleash, co-ordinate and implement. A number of them have become US citizens or have obtained permanent residence, while others are asylum seekers. Dayton, Ohio, where Rurangwa lives and studies, and where there is a large Rwandese community, is particularly well-known for the significant number of genocide suspects who live there.

This report is based on the testimonies of 20 eyewitnesses, among them militiamen who acknowledge their own role in the massacres, and who say they took their orders, and received their weapons, from Rurangwa. *Turning Gisozi into a Mass Grave* is by no means exhaustive. We are dedicating this issue of our *Charge Sheet Series* to Oswald Rurangwa to encourage the US government to investigate the allegations levelled against him so as to determine the gravity of the charges and the appropriate course of action. More broadly, we call on the US government to examine the implications that countless Rwandese genocide suspects, responsible for the massacres of tens of thousands of people, are living on its soil.

## **A Summary of the Accusations Against Oswald Rurangwa**

- Recruiting young men to form a militia force in Gisozi prior to the genocide, sending them for military training in the military camp of Gabiro, providing them with weapons and involving them in violence against Tutsis in different parts of Rwanda;
- Mobilizing the same militia, as well as civilians, from 7 April 1994 onwards and inciting them to track down and murder Tutsis throughout Gisozi, to loot, demolish and burn down their homes and shops;

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<sup>2</sup> Col. Tharcisse Renzaho was arrested in the DRC on 29 September 2002 at the request of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). For details about his role in the genocide, see *Col. Tharcisse Renzaho: A Soldier in the DR?* October 2001, African Rights, *Charge Sheet* No.6, 23 pages.

- Distributing guns and grenades to the militia during the genocide for the purpose of killing Tutsis;
- Establishing a formidable network of roadblocks in Kinamba which were used to identify Tutsis, confiscate their possessions and to kill them;
- Issuing a special system of laissez-passer documents in Kinamba as a way of showing that the holder was not a Tutsi;
- Ordering militiamen to lay landmines in Gisozi during the genocide;
- Helping the militia at the roadblock close to the Pan Africa Hotel in sector Rugenge to check identity cards and handing Tutsis over to the assembled interahamwe. He also provided them with drinks as an additional incentive. This roadblock, used to vet Tutsis seeking refuge at the nearby Catholic Parish of Sainte Famille, was notorious in Kigali during the genocide as a killing site.
- Distributing guns to the militia at Sainte Famille which were used in several massacres which took place there;
- Taking supplies of food and drinks from the stocks at Sainte Famille for the militia in Kinamba in order to sustain their commitment to the genocide;
- Encouraging the militia to abduct certain Tutsi refugees at Sainte Famille who subsequently perished;
- Working closely with the interahamwe militiamen who attacked Tutsis hiding at Saint Paul's Pastoral Centre, also in Rugenge;
- Involving untrained civilians in military action, as back up to the soldiers fighting the RPA, thereby exposing them to danger.

# 1

## 1992-1994 AT THE HELM OF THE LOCAL INTERAHAMWE

After completing Ntora primary school in Gisozi, Oswald Rurangwa went to Rwamagana, Kibungo, for his secondary education which he completed in Shyogwe, Gitarama, where he trained as a teacher. He then became a primary school teacher in Gisozi, after which he became the director of this school.

Like so many of the men and women who were at the forefront of the killings in 1994, neighbours say that Rurangwa did not show signs of political extremism before 1990. After multipartyism became official policy in October 1991, Habyarimana's ruling party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development changed its name to the National Republican Movement for Development and Democracy. It sought new recruits to expand its political base and maintain its influence by keeping the new parties in check. Among those selected from Gisozi to represent the new MRND was Oswald Rurangwa. He became president of the MRND for sector Gisozi in the early part of 1992. He was chosen to replace Modeste Munyangabo who had resigned from the MRND to become president of the Republican Democratic Movement (MDR) in Gisozi.

### Recruiting, Training and Arming a Militia Force

Apart from the army, the most important weapon of genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was the interahamwe militia, a paramilitary force composed of civilians, which first came to national prominence during a massacre in Bugesera in March 1992.<sup>3</sup> These "professional interahamwe", as distinguished from the mass of people who wielded machetes and clubs in 1994, received training and wore uniforms.

One of the most consistent accusations against Rurangwa during this period is that he recruited militiamen, arranged for them to be sent to Gabiro for military training and then provided them with weapons, some of which were stored in Rurangwa's home. The military camp in Gabiro, in the préfecture of Umutara, specialized in training. Witness after witness spoke about Rurangwa's campaign to find young men to serve as future interahamwe, and sending them to Gabiro for training. They cited the same names and commented on the meetings which Rurangwa and Ntirushwa held with their militia either at Ntirushwa's home or in a bar, how they were used by these two men to further the interests of the MRND and muzzle the political opposition, and also to take part in violence in different parts of the country.

Ephrem<sup>4</sup> says that he became an interahamwe at Rurangwa's suggestion and was sent to Gabiro. Sentenced to life imprisonment, he is also condemned to remain blind for the rest of his life due to an accident with a landmine. He blames Rurangwa and Ntirushwa for the accident, saying they had despatched him and other militiamen to plant landmines in Gisozi on the roads which had been deserted by the interahamwe (see below).

<sup>3</sup> See *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, African Rights, August 1995, and *Nyamata and Ntarama, Memorials to Genocide and Forced Exile*, African Rights, April 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Pseudonyms have been used throughout this report to protect witnesses.

I have known Oswald since I was a child. But I got to know him as one of the leaders of the MRND and of the interahamwe when he began to mobilize militiamen and to provide them with training in Gabiro. I became a militiaman in 1992 when Oswald and Isaïe were looking for people to go to Gabiro. I went there with:

- Noël Rukundo, who has died;
- Emmanuel Hategekimana;
- Simba;
- Kamanayo;
- Gérald Hitimana;
- Cyriaque Nsengiyumva;
- Makamba, who has also died.

Gabiro had become a meeting point for all interahamwe throughout Rwanda. There, we learned how to use weapons, especially guns and grenades and how to fight the enemy without using modern weapons. Most training sessions lasted a week.

After the training, the men were given further instructions.

We were told to support the leaders of the MRND in all sectors and to eliminate any opposition, or to force them to join the MRND party.

Back in Gisozi, Ephrem said he and his colleagues worked “according to a plan drawn up by Isaïe and Oswald.”

These two men gave us our weapons. Oswald gave them to Isaïe who was responsible for our daily activities.

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**“Our agenda was to intimidate people who weren’t followers of the MRND and to destabilize other political parties. We did this throughout Kigali, and sometimes even outside the capital.”<sup>5</sup>**

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Claver describes himself as “an influential member of the JDR in Gisozi”, the Democratic Republican Youth, a wing of the MDR. He said he followed the actions of the interahamwe in Gisozi as a concerned member of an opposition party.

Oswald was hugely influential within the Gisozi interahamwe. He and Isaïe enlisted the people who went to Gabiro for military training. They became some of the most dangerous men in Kigali during the genocide in April. If you go to the *gacaca* courts in their districts, you will undoubtedly find their names, for example:

- Callixte Kanzeguhera;
- Rusine, Callixte’s older brother;
- Théogène Nyirigira;
- Idrissa;
- Zigiri;
- Rukundo;
- Mvuyekure;
- Gasagure.

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<sup>5</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 6 July 2007.

On their return from Gabiro, Claver said they were constantly in Rurangwa's company.

They met up with Oswald at the Gakaraza bar. No one dared to venture there in their presence, unless the person was a die-hard interahamwe. I saw Oswald talking to this group of men there many times. They already had grenades which they' used to frighten people.<sup>6</sup>

Wellars, who has been sentenced to life imprisonment by gacaca, emphasized the power and sway of Rurangwa's militia in Gisozi, and the impunity they enjoyed.

Oswald, working closely with Isaïe, used his interahamwe militia to bully anyone who didn't support the MRND and the CDR (Committee for the Defence of the Republic).<sup>7</sup> The men he had sent to Gabiro always got together at Isaïe's place. Ruhango cellule. Some of them became well known in Gisozi, men like Callixte Kanzahe; Emmanuel Kalisa; Rutabagisha, who's in the DRC, and Kubwimana, who has died. But there were so many others. Oswald and Isaïe used these men to force people who didn't support the MRND to convert.

Oswald and Isaïe gave their interahamwe the right to do whatever they liked in Gisozi. They acted with no holds barred and they were never punished. One day, I saw them thrashing a Tutsi in a café in Ruhango.<sup>8</sup>

Bonaventure, a former student at Rurangwa's school, was a member of the Liberal Party (PL). He recalled the struggle of the opposition parties to make their mark in Gisozi, confronted with the power of Rurangwa's militia.

The MRND in Gisozi was intolerant of other parties. All four parties—MRND, PL, MDR and PSD (Social Democratic Party) had all planted their flags in the same spot. But on at least three occasions, our flag, and that of the PSD, were removed by MRND loyalists. Their president, Oswald, did nothing about it, and we concluded that he was in favour of these anti-democratic acts.<sup>9</sup>

Gervais confirmed the role Rurangwa played in the establishment of a militia force in Gisozi, and said he was "relentless" in his efforts to find volunteers and to set up a well-organized structure. In addition to Ntirushwa, he mentioned Samuel Benda, a businessman and MRND stalwart, as someone who worked alongside Rurangwa in the creation of the Gisozi militia.

Just before the genocide, Oswald and Benda liked to go to Isaïe's house to talk with the interahamwe. It was also around this time that the militia showed signs of what was in store for the Tutsis. Every time they came out of these gatherings, they would make terrible comments about Tutsis, saying that putting an end to their arrogance was just a matter of time.<sup>10</sup>

Philbert also mentioned the meetings that Rurangwa attended at Ntirushwa's home, and spoke of the attitude of the men who were regular participants.

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<sup>6</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 10 July 2007.

<sup>7</sup> The Committee for the Defence of the Republic was the most extremist political organization in Rwanda, and its propaganda contributed enormously to the success of the genocide.

<sup>8</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 6 June 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 25 February 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 5 May 2007.

They used to say that time was running out for Tutsi arrogance. Oswald and Isaïe worked hard to find them vehicles to transport the militia to different corners of the country and to instigate violence.<sup>11</sup>

“By the time the genocide was launched in April 1994”, commented Analet, who had been taught by Rurangwa, “Oswald was much more of a politician than a teacher.” Analet also pointed the finger at Samuel Benda.

In organizing the killings in Gisozi, Oswald relied very much on Samuel Benda, who also lives in the United States. Benda is very implicated in establishing the interahamwe militia in Gisozi.<sup>12</sup>

The role of Benda was also underlined by Didace.

Rurangwa’s career as a teacher was less important than the fact that he occupied an important position in the MRND, and was head of the interahamwe in Gisozi. One of his main allies was Samuel Benda who, like Rurangwa, lives in the United States.<sup>13</sup>

Béata said her family and Rurangwa’s family had been close friends for a long time. But the relationship changed, she said, after he became president of the MRND in their sector.

His position in the MRND meant that he was one of the main patrons of the interahamwe in Gisozi. He surrounded himself with a group of people to help him spread the politics of ethnic hatred. This same entourage was at the forefront of planning the genocide in sector Gisozi. Rurangwa’s principal collaborators were :

- Samuel Benda;
- Isaïe Ntirushwa, who managed the interahamwe militia in Gisozi. He was also the spokesman for Rurangwa and Samuel Benda;
- François Sehundwa who has died. He was extremely virulent during the genocide;
- Augustin Munyaneza, a member of MDR-Power.
- Cyprien Nyabibona.

Shortly before the genocide began, they met on a very regular basis at Oswald’s home to lay out the programme to be followed by the militia. The interahamwe themselves got together at Isaïe’s home to receive their orders.

She pointed out that they did not limit their activities to Gisozi.

Whenever there were demonstrations by the interahamwe, those in Gisozi got to know about it from their chiefs, that is Oswald, Samuel and Isaïe. These three men would then go to town to look for cars to drive their militia to these places. The cars would come directly to Isaïe’s home or to the house of someone called Stany.<sup>14</sup>

Valérie Bemeriki shed light on the powers and privileges of being a sector leader of the MRND, particularly in Kigali. Bemeriki, who used to work for *Umurwanashyaka*, a newspaper published by the MRND and later moved to Radio Télévision Mille Collines (RTLM), became one of the best known, and most effective, advocates for the genocide while working at RTLM, a radio dedicated to promoting and justifying the genocide. She was also,

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<sup>11</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 17 April 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 17 May 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 13 May 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 15 May 2007.

for a two month period, the secretary of Robert Kajuga, the president of the interahamwe militia, before she joined *Umurwanashyaka*. She said she continued to frequent the office of the interahamwe as a journalist with *Umurwanashyaka*, where she met Rurangwa, even when she was no longer Kajuga's secretary.

Like all the other sector level leaders of the MRND within Kigali, Oswald would regularly come to meetings in the Techno Serve building, which belonged to Védaste Rubagura. The very fact that he came to all of these interahamwe meetings directly implies his involvement in the violence that was taking place within Kigali and elsewhere.

She outlined the structure of the interahamwe to better explain the power of a person in the position of Rurangwa.

The interahamwe had a national committee, with Robert Kajuga as president. There were representatives right down to the cellule. Militia at each level of the administration had to get authorization from the leader of the MRND at the level above them before they could take part in demonstrations or other activities. This structure was quite clear during the genocide. The person responsible for all activities conducted by the interahamwe was the MRND leader in each operational zone.

Kigali, said Bemeriki, had a unique place in the MRND structure.

Most of the militia in Kigali received special training and then formed a mobile group which went with MRND officials to awareness raising meetings all over the country.

The Kigali militiamen who accompanied the leaders of the MRND included those from Gisozi, according to Bemeriki. And, she added, they also took part in massacres which the MRND was orchestrating at the time.

These militiamen were fully armed and wore uniform. Oswald, together with Isaïe, participated in several acts of violence against Tutsis. They were in the group that went north to wipe out the Bagogwe. I also saw them in the team that travelled to Kibilira to help the militia there to kill Tutsis. I recognized them easily, and was one of the first journalists that went on record with this news.

Towards the end of 1993, Bemeriki said she met Rurangwa in the office of Turatsinze, one of the leaders of the interahamwe in Kigali.

Oswald had brought a list of militiamen who were going to receive guns and grenades. Turatsinze was the person with the authority to hand out weapons to the interahamwe who had been trained in Gabiro. In order to obtain these weapons, each leader at the sector level had to first get the green light from the headquarters of the interahamwe to receive an authorization to show to Turatsinze. Without this authorization, Turatsinze didn't have the right to hand out any weapons. So clearly the leaders of MRND in the sectors of Kigali had a significant role to play.

Oswald was one of Turatsinze's favourites. He was very influential in the recruitment of the militia who would kill the Tutsis, so Turatsinze saw Oswald as his special friend. He had a lot of confidence in Oswald.<sup>15</sup>

It was a confidence which Oswald Rurangwa would repay in the months of April-July 1994. When President Juvénal Habyarimana's plane crashed at about 8:30 p.m. on 6 April, just

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<sup>15</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 12 July 2007.

before it was due to land at Kigali airport, it acted as an immediate trigger for violence directed at Tutsis and prominent Hutu politicians associated with opposition parties. The speed at which events unfolded in Gisozi, within hours of Habyarimana's death, under Rurangwa's instructions and guidance, is a testament to how well he had built up and trained the militia in Gisozi.



Samuel Benda, one of Rurangwa's closest allies during the genocide.

2

## APRIL 1994 CLEARING GISOZI OF TUTSIS

Concern that Gisozi might be overrun by the RPF dictated the pace of events there. Rurangwa, Benda and Ntirushwa did not want to lose momentum or waste time, and infused the militia with a sense of urgency.

The logic of genocide, and the pressure of time, focused minds with the result that the priority at the outset was the demise of Tutsi males, as Gervais highlighted.

As soon as the genocide began, the militiamen who had been signed up and prepared by Oswald and Benda began getting rid of Tutsis. Since Gisozi was not far from the area pinpointed by the RPF, they executed Tutsis for fear that they would otherwise be rescued. They first went after the men who would have the greatest chance of running towards the zone under the control of the RPF.

Rurangwa did not want to rely exclusively on his militia force, and sought the help of soldiers. Frodouald said he met Rurangwa on the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup>, at the home of Cyprien Nyabibona who worked at the presidency.

Rurangwa asked Cyprien to mobilize the soldiers for the planned extermination of Tutsis in Gisozi. He was afraid that the *inkotanyi*<sup>16</sup> [RPF] would arrive in Gisozi before, rather than after, Tutsis had been eliminated. Cyprien went immediately to Kigali camp and returned with a group of soldiers. These soldiers are responsible for killing certain victims, for example:

- Egide Musafiri;
- The brother-in-law of Munyabugingo.

These soldiers also shot at the doors of Samuel's house, thinking there were Tutsis there.

Arms, as well as men, were important. Frodouald mentioned some of the men who were given guns by Rurangwa.

Oswald organized the distribution of guns and grenades to the interahamwe and other Hutus in order to kill Tutsis. I know three people who received guns directly from Oswald:

- Nsoro;
- Byikwaso from Gacuriro<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Inkotanyi*, meaning "fierce fighter", was used to refer to the RPF.

<sup>17</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 6 July 2007.

## **Getting the Militia Ready and Obtaining Weapons**

Vénuste, who owned a bar, was at Ntirushwa's home when he learned about the fate of Habyarimana's plane on the night of 6 April. He recalled Isaïe's immediate reaction.

Isaïe used to speak about the misfortunes which would fall on the heads of Tutsis if they tried to kill Habyarimana.

He said he went home soon afterwards because Ntirushwa "wanted to go to Oswald's home to find out what he could about the accident." Vénuste was woken up at 2:00 a.m.

An old man, Xavéri, who has since died, came to tell me about Habyarimana's death. He was spreading a message which Isaïe and Oswald had given him: to tell the militia to get ready to attack Tutsis. I went to find my brother-in-law to let him know about the instructions from Oswald and Isaïe. We went to my bar to have a beer.

The following morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>, Vénuste reported for duty at Ntirushwa's house. He was not the only one who had made his way there at that early hour.

About a dozen interahamwe were already there. The ones I can remember are:

- Cyriaque Nsengiyumva;
- Callixte Kanzahehera;
- Eric Kayitare, alias Kabunduguru;
- Isaac Gafungayire;
- John Nyirigira.

All these men had been given a solid training by Oswald and Isaïe in how to destroy anyone they considered an enemy of the Hutus.

They had a question for Ntirushwa.

We asked Isaïe if we should start to hunt Tutsis straight away. He asked us to be patient for a while, saying that he first had to consult with Oswald and the other leaders of the MRND.

By the afternoon, he said, they were ready to go into action.

A man called Kagenza arrived. He was surprised to see that we weren't doing anything even though Oswald had given the authorization to begin the work, starting with the death of a certain Gatarayiha, alias Rukara.

Kagenza's words had an immediate effect.

We left straightaway for cellule Musezero.

They were also armed, and used their weapons against the first Tutsi they ran into..

We had been given guns and grenades by Isaïe. On the way, we met a Tutsi by the name of Gakaraza. We killed him with a grenade.

As it was getting dark, Vénuste said that Ntirushwa suggested they "come back to work" in

the morning.<sup>18</sup>

According to Ephrem, one of the men who had benefited from a stint in Gabiro, “our group was especially active after the death of President Habyarimana.”

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**“The day after Habyarimana died, Oswald sent us a message through Isaïe that we must get ready to look everywhere for the Tutsi enemy.”**

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On the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>, Philbert learned that the préfet, Renzaho, had organized a meeting of all the sector councillors at the office of the préfecture. He said all the other councillors, 19 of them, took part, except the councillor of Gisozi, Servelien Rwabusasu. Rwabusasu’s absence brought Renzaho himself to Gisozi on the afternoon of the 7<sup>th</sup>, he added.

Renzaho had come to look for Oswald and Isaïe. He spoke to the two of them and gave the order to prepare the militia to start tracking down Tutsis. Renzaho also dismissed Rwabusasu from his functions and named Isaïe to the post of councillor.

The two men then left for Renzaho’s office. They came back “in a blue Daihatsu filled with guns and grenades.”

Renzaho had made these weapons available to exterminate Tutsis and to comb Gisozi looking for them. Some of the weapons were stocked in Oswald’s home. The car was used to ferry the interahamwe around.

Philbert, a member of MDR-Power, claims that he joined the militia because of the pressure Rurangwa and Ntirushwa exerted on the opposition parties and because of “fear of the harsh punishment which would otherwise be meted out.”

From the start of the genocide, the interahamwe pursued Tutsis on the orders given by Isaïe and Oswald. Everyone was made aware of their message: all Hutus must go on the offensive against Tutsis.

Elias Murenzi, who’s also known as Kavimiri, formed a group of Hutus to go and search everywhere for Tutsis, saying that he had been given instructions by Isaïe and Oswald. I was in that group, along with:

- Jean Bosco Nkusi;
- Safari;
- Kubwimana;
- Twahirwa;
- Emmanuel Kalisa;
- Manassé Twagiramungu.

Starting from the 7<sup>th</sup>, Rurangwa decided to increase his forces beyond the trained interahamwe, and sent emissaries to tell civilians that he needed them as a backup to the militia. Régis said he was approached on behalf of Oswald on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> by Augustin Munyaneza.

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<sup>18</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 17 April 2008.

Munyaneza told me that Oswald wanted us to collaborate with the interahamwe in looking for the enemy.<sup>19</sup>

The militia understood the enemy to include any and every Tutsi, as had been defined for them by Rurangwa and Ntirushwa prior to the genocide. However, they learned on 7 April that Rurangwa could, and would, exclude certain individuals as he saw fit. Régis explained what happened when they went after Rurangwa's in-laws.

We noticed that some Tutsi families had been spared because they were related to Oswald's Tutsi wife. So we decided to go and search for Tutsis in the home of Martin Kayiranga, a Hutu who was married to Mukandengo, a Tutsi and a relative of Oswald's wife.

When they reached Mukandengo's home, they were forced to await Rurangwa.

She was absolutely certain that Oswald would protect them. She stopped us from entering her house. She asked us to be patient, to see if Oswald would allow them to invade her house. None of us would dare to do something Oswald had not expressly authorized, for fear of being severely punished by the terrible militiamen who belonged to him and Isaïe.

When Oswald arrived, they had no choice but to retreat.

He told us there were no Tutsis in the family. We turned back. We had no choice since the great patron of the interahamwe had stopped us from going inside their home.

But there were in fact a number of other Tutsis hiding in Mukandengo's house, including Cyprien.

The decision not to ransack the house was taken by Oswald. When he turned up, the militia were forced to turn back because Oswald had told them, in a loud voice, that it was not yet time to invade that house. They obeyed, without argument, because he was their chief. This showed me that Oswald was a man much respected by the interahamwe rank and file. If he had not been on the side of the killers, he could have saved the lives of Tutsis in his sector.<sup>20</sup>

## **Searching for Tutsis Everywhere**

On 8 April, the hunt for Tutsis began in earnest in Gisozi. Vénuste, who had already offered his services on the 7<sup>th</sup>, said he rejoined the interahamwe on the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup>, and lent his support to a crowd throwing grenades at the house of a man called Alfred Rutaysire.

The gendarmes, who had been alerted by Oswald, were helping the militia as Alfred had put up stiff resistance. After his death, we cleaned out his house, and took everything to Isaïe's home. That's where a lot of looted property ended up.

While we were at Alfred's, Isaïe was urging us to work fast, saying we had to give a helping hand to the men who were carrying out operations in the cellules of Musezero and Gasharu, under Oswald's directions.

Vénuste himself was anxious to return to his bar, where he expected to make a windfall.

I was expecting to make a lot of money from the militia involved in killing Tutsis.

<sup>19</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 17 May 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 17 April 2007.

Ephrem was invited to meet Ntirushwa at his home in cellule Ruhango.

There were a lot of us. The faces I remember are:

- Karera, Malachie's son,
- Harelimana, a motorcyclist;
- Cyriaque Nsengiyumva;
- Gérald Hitimana;
- Emmanuel Hategekimana;
- Noël Rukundo.

There were so many others there that their names escape me.

The men were told to wait until a message arrived from Rurangwa.

After we had been there a few minutes, Kagenza, Oswald's neighbour, came to join us. He transmitted a message from Oswald to Isaïe. Immediately afterwards, Isaïe ordered us to go and look for Tutsis.

They caught their first victim near the Gisozi slaughterhouse.

We beat a guy called Gatarayhia, nicknamed Rukara, with traditional weapons until he lost consciousness. We left him there, sure that he was dead. We accused him of slashing the photo of President Habyarimana, which was not true at all.

We then turned towards Ntura. After about 100 metres we had already found about three Tutsis. We trapped Epimaque Gakaraza. I killed him by crushing his skull with a large rock. We went on to Mugabowingwe's house. We killed him and then burnt down his house.

They then linked up with the men who had been sent by Rurangwa and Ntirushwa to murder Alfred Rutaysire, but who had failed to carry out their mission.

These men included Amon Rurangwa and Sylvan Barayagwiza. We went back to Zuzi's place. We killed three people there and burnt that house.

By the time they finished at about 5:00 p.m., they were driven home by Kagenza.

Ildephonse said he was summoned to Ntirushwa's home on the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup>. Having been a supporter of the Liberal Party, his loyalty was in doubt.

He wanted to be sure that I was ready to collaborate with his militia to destroy the Tutsis. I went to his place at about 8:00 a.m.

Shortly afterwards, they were joined by Rurangwa.

A few minutes later, Oswald arrived, armed with a pistol.

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**“I found out that Oswald had an entire programme for genocide.”**

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He fixed his eyes on mine and said: “I hope that you really have come over to our camp. You must now confirm that you are no longer working with those who oppose our plans to seek out our enemy.” I assured him that I was on his side, otherwise I’d be dead.

He waited outside while Rurangwa and Ntirushwa conferred together inside the house.

Many interahamwe flowed past me into the house, including:

- Callixte Kanzahehera;
- Cyriaque Nsengiyumva;
- Harelimana.

After about 30 minutes, Ntirushwa and Rurangwa emerged, and addressed the men assembled in front of the house.

They told us about the plan that had just been arranged. Oswald said: “I don’t want to waste time explaining why we are here. There are enemies to go and find. You are all sufficiently well-equipped to be able to wipe out those who hope their brothers, the *inyenzi*<sup>21</sup>, will overrun the country.” From Oswald I discovered that the interahamwe had already begun to pursue the Tutsis, starting with Alfred’s family. Oswald thought he was an important target to start with, and had sent a crowd of militia to kill him. They hadn’t succeeded though; he’d defended himself heroically.

At about 6:00 p.m. they were sent out to capture Tutsis.

Our first task was to make sure that Alfred and all the members of his family were dead. Rurangwa told us this in no uncertain terms:

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**“We can’t feel safe unless we kill the leaders of the Tutsis in Gisozi.”**

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Their leader is Alfred, and I’ve asked the police to support us in this mission.”

Accompanied by four policemen, they reached Alfred’s home at about 7:00 p.m.

Many of the militiamen with us had been there for the first assault. I can’t say how many people died in that house. We just encircled it and destroyed it with gun fire and grenades. When we left, we were convinced that no human could be alive under that rubble.

They returned to Ntirushwa’s house “to receive our new orders.”

Oswald was about to leave. Isaïe showed us a guy called Musonera who’d been caught in Kigarama. We first tortured him, using traditional weapons, to make him give us the secrets of the *inkotanyi*. These were the instructions given by Oswald and Isaïe.

It was a turning point for Ildephonse.

By taking part that day, I had become a witness, with my own eyes, to what Oswald and his accomplices had done. And I had also become an interahamwe.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Inyenzi*, meaning “cockroach”, was a term of insult for the RPF. But during the genocide, it was widely used to mean all Tutsis.

<sup>22</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 10 July 2007.

Ephrem was asked to return to Ntirushwa's home at 6:00 p.m. When he arrived, the four policemen who had been sent, at Rurangwa's request, to help demolish Alfred Rutaysire's home and to kill him and his family were already on site.

Oswald had just left. Isaïe gave us an update about the failed attempt on Alfred's place. Urged by Isaïe and the policemen, we surrounded Alfred Rutaysire's house. About five of his relatives were inside. Once we were sure that Alfred was also there, we destroyed the house with guns and grenades, until everyone inside was buried under the rubble.

Régis admits that he helped look for Tutsis in houses close to Rurangwa's home.

A lot of other militiamen were involved in this incident, for example:

- Augustin Munyaneza, who was the leader;
- Murenzi, alias Kavimviri;
- Emile Kayinamura;
- Justin Rutabagisha;
- Jean de la Croix Safari;
- Nkusi.

We were all members of MDR Power.<sup>23</sup>

On the lookout for Tutsis, Wellars walked towards the slaughterhouse when he heard noises.

It was the cries of people who had just gotten hold of an *inyenzi*. I went closer to see what was happening. I was surprised to see that the person they were calling an *inyenzi* was in fact a boy I knew, Kayuru from Gisozi. After a few minutes, his brother ran out from Antoine's house. A crowd of people watched, including

- Thomas Nyaminani;
- Harelimana Haraka;
- Bizimana, alias Majigo.

The group was led by two militiamen. According to what people there were saying, they had been sent by Oswald to help the population locate Tutsis. The two young boys were shot and then finished off in the field.

The two young men mentioned by Wellars are Nestor Uciyimihigo, known as Kayuru, and his brother, Viateur Uwizeyimana, whose photos appear below. Rurangwa offered refuge to their sister, Béata, after their death. Béata's family was warned by a child, who had just witnessed the murder of another neighbour, that her husband was on the militia's wanted list, and they should abandon their home. Béata and her children hid with an acquaintance. Her husband, who was trying to run towards another cellule, was caught. When she was told that there were plans afoot to flush them out of their hideout, Béata and the children went to another home. It was here that she ran into Rurangwa.

He told me that my husband was responsible for his own death, saying that he was well aware my husband used to go to CND<sup>24</sup> to visit the *inkotanyi*. He also told me about the death of my two brothers in the following terms: "The bodies of your brothers are lying around in cellule Gasave. We know that they too were in contact with the *inkotanyi*."

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<sup>23</sup> Most of the political parties split into factions, and the more hard-line wing of each party was known as Power.

<sup>24</sup> The CND was the headquarters of the RPF battalion based in Kigali.

After this speech, Rurangwa offered her refuge in his home. She explained what she thought prompted this decision.

The time had not yet come to kill women and children.

Béata and her children were given a room close to the sitting room which gave her opportunities to watch the flow of visitors.

I saw the comings and goings of the militiamen who came to give reports about the killings to Oswald. They also came to get ammunition and grenades. I saw, amongst others:

- Jean-Bosco Nsoro;
- Rwagihanga, who used to drive Isaïe around ;
- Kabunduguru;
- Kanzeguhera.

She blames these four men for the murder of her husband.

I say so categorically because Nsoro, after mentioning my husband's name, asked Oswald for the keys to our house with this comment: "We have killed him, but some of the interahamwe are denying us our share of what belonged to the victim. We want the key to his house so that we can get our reward." They mentioned Cyimana, Kagenza and Janvier Hitimana as among those who had refused to give them their share.

The men were not aware of Béata's presence in the house. She spoke of Rurangwa's response to their request.

Oswald gave them the keys so they could loot our house. A short time later, Rurangwa's wife told me they had emptied out the house except for an axe they left in the courtyard.

The attacks against Tutsis continued. Ephrem took part in an expedition on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Our leader was Kagenza. He had just met Oswald and Isaïe. Amongst the people we killed, I remember Ntazinda and Matabaro. They were hiding near Zimurinda's place. Kagenza ordered Emmanuel, known as Tembo, to get rid of them. Emmanuel said no, that he couldn't kill people who had offered him beer. So it was up to us to deal with them, and we did so using traditional weapons.

I blame Oswald for the killing of Tutsis in Gisozi. All the orders came from him. As to why he was so committed to the elimination of Tutsis, I have no idea.

On 11 April, there was a mass exodus from Gisozi, as the residents feared that it was about to fall into the hands of the RPF. Most of them settled in nearby Kinamba, and others took shelter at the Catholic Parish of Sainte Famille in sector Rugenge, at the heart of Kigali. But from Kinamba, the Gisozi interahamwe continued to make forays into Gisozi to finish off any Tutsis who remained in Gisozi, as well as to fight the RPF.

After his home in another part of Kigali came under siege on Saturday, 9 April, Faustin returned to his parents' home in Gisozi. He found only his parents at home as everyone else in the family had already left.

On 12 April, the interahamwe who had been sent to fight the *inkotanyi* passed through Gisozi on their way back, killing everyone they suspected of being a Tutsi.<sup>25</sup>

It was in Kinamba where Rurangwa would come into his own as a genocide leader well-known in Kigali.

*Three of the victims who lived in Gisozi and who are now buried on the grounds of the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Gisozi.*



John Rwemera



Nestor Uciyimihigo



Viateur Uwizeyimana

*Nestor Uciyimihigo and Viateur Uwizeyimana were brothers.*

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<sup>25</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 25 February 2008.

### 3

## TAKING CHARGE IN KINAMBA

Oswald Rurangwa became councillor of Kinamba on the very day that the population of Gisozi arrived *en masse* in Kinamba. He shuttled between Kinamba and Gisozi during the day. He continued to visit Gisozi for two reasons: to take interahamwe there to help the army keep the RPF at bay, and to ambush any Tutsis who might still be in hiding in Gisozi.

Philbert remembered the visit of the préfet, Renzaho, to Kinamba on the evening of the 11<sup>th</sup> of April.

Renzaho came to see Oswald. He named Oswald councillor of Gisozi in order to continue the work that Isaïe had been doing.

He spoke of Rurangwa's priorities as councillor.

Oswald immediately began to put up roadblocks in Kinamba. He also hand-picked the militiamen to take with him to Gisozi to fight the *inkotanyi*.

Gervais underlined the opportunities which Kinamba opened up for Rurangwa.

It was in Kinamba that Oswald showed himself to be a true leader of the interahamwe, and of the Hutu population living there.

The system of "laissez-passer" documents that he instituted reinforced his hold on local residents.

No one could leave Kinamba to go anywhere else without having a document signed by Oswald. The purpose of this paper was to show that the holder was not a Tutsi.

He tried to sum up the importance of the laissez-passer.

The documents which Oswald gave out were more significant than the government's identity cards.

As councillor, Rurangwa regularly attended meetings at the office of the préfecture, Renzaho's office. These gatherings, known as security meetings, was where the details of the genocide were debated and decided.

Renzaho provided Rurangwa with a car which he used to drive to the office of the préfecture. But it also served many other purposes, as pointed out by Anaclet.

The car made it easier for him to supervise the militiamen who were on the look-out for Tutsis in Kinamba. But its most significant use was to supply the interahamwe with weapons and food.

As the fighting between the RPA and the FAR intensified, alongside the genocide, men like Rurangwa, who himself wore military uniform, sought to bolster the army by asking young men to enlist for the front. He would subsequently take the lists to Renzaho's office to collect weapons. In Kigali, the creation of what was called "a civil defence" was agreed upon at the meetings in Renzaho's office, and the bourgmestres and councillors were urged to find volunteers. Faustin spoke about an appeal from Rurangwa's superior.

The bourgmestre of Kacyiru called for young men to contribute to the war effort as fighters. Oswald organized a meeting to ask people to come and defend the country.

As a shield against being considered “enemies of the nation”, Faustin and his brother stood with the other men who were waiting to have their names included on the list. But Rurangwa, who had studied with Faustin at Ntora primary school in Gisozi, turned him away.

Oswald, who was making the selection, approached us and, citing our father’s name, told us: “Go, this doesn’t concern you.” It was a way of telling us that as Tutsis, we did not belong in that line.

Bonaventure said the meeting took place at Kinamba market, where there is now a Kobil petrol station, had a similar experience.

Bakina, the *responsable* of a cellule, was helping Oswald. When he saw me, Oswald shouted my name out loud, saying “You, how dare you stand there with the others? You want a gun to exterminate us?”

The outburst made Bonaventure more vulnerable.

I became really nervous, but I was counting on the protection of an interahamwe there who was much feared by the others. He was a close family friend. So I quietly slipped out. Oswald then took the list to the office of the préfecture, accompanied by Bakina and a woman called Marie-Thérèse Nyirasafari, who worked there.

When Ildephonse met up with Rurangwa in Kinamba, he found him in a fighting mood.

He’d just come from Gisozi and was resolute about continuing to find Tutsis. He told me that I was lucky to have eluded the *inyenzi* and should therefore go out of my way to tell the population it must track down their accomplices ensure that no Tutsi escaped our vigilance.

Ildephonse, a civilian, was asked by Rurangwa to accompany the militia who were to lay landmines around Gisozi. He agreed, for which he would pay a heavy price.

The only one other person in our team I knew was Jean-Bosco Maniraguha. Another man and I accidentally stepped on an area that we had just mined and landed right on top of a landmine. I had to have my leg amputated.

Ephrem, who had just arrived in Kinamba, was the other man who was injured by the same landmine. He lost both his eyes.

What witnesses remember about Kinamba in 1994, above all else, are the myriad roadblocks set up on Rurangwa’s instructions which were so critical to the success of the genocide.

4

## **MAKING ESCAPE IMPOSSIBLE**

### **A Network of Roadblocks**

A formidable network of roadblocks, the most effective way to close off escape routes to Tutsis, dominated the landscape during the genocide. They were used to identify Tutsis and to monitor their movement and were a central feature of the genocide throughout the country. Every passer-by had to show his or her ID card at roadblocks. As IDs in 1994 made specific mention of ethnicity, handing over a Tutsi ID card could only lead to death. The failure to show an ID card was no protection either, for it was assumed that the person was a fearful Tutsi. Anyone who was thought to resemble a Tutsi was taken aside. The militiamen who manned them were frequently drunk. Thousands were murdered at roadblocks, or abducted from there and killed elsewhere. Women were raped nearby, families were separated, and money and valuables were confiscated.

An added concern for Rurangwa in Kinamba, where the majority of the population were Hutus displaced from their homes in Gisozi, was to ensure that Tutsis, pretending to be displaced Hutus, did not elude the militia's attention. This had prompted Rurangwa's decision to introduce the system of *laissez-passer* mentioned earlier.

Damien had been living in Gisozi for about a month when the genocide started. In Kinamba, he settled between two roadblocks.

They were set up on Oswald's orders. The first one was on the main road, close to where it meets up with the roads leading to Gisozi and UTEXRWA [a textile factory]. According to the men who guarded them, their principal mission was to capture Tutsis who trying to pass themselves off as displaced Hutus. A lot of people were dispossessed of their belongs at this roadblock.

The second one, which was very dangerous, was close to Ndanguza's home. It was impossible to get through this roadblock. Even some Hutus were afraid to approach it, for fear of what would happen to them if they were taken for Tutsis. It was always littered with corpses.

Damien named some of the men who were in charge of this checkpoint.

Some very well-known and terrible militiamen helped Oswald to control the zone and to distribute weapons, for example Claude Nshimiye and Muhutu. They were the leaders of the CDR militia in cellule Kanserege.<sup>26</sup>

Valérie Bemeriki said she came through Kinamba about five days into the genocide, when she agreed to help a woman she knew look for her husband who was thought to be in hiding in Kacyiru.<sup>27</sup>

As we reached the road to Gisozi, we were stopped by Oswald and his militia. They all had grenades. Some, including Oswald, also wore military uniform.

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<sup>26</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 10 July 2007.

<sup>27</sup> It was not unusual to find that even those who were most committed the genocide would sometimes help individual Tutsis they knew or who were their relatives.

Before he'd let me pass the roadblock, Oswald wanted to know if I had any *inyenzi* with me. I said no.

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**“He warned me that this wasn't a joke, saying that he didn't expect the sister of any interahamwe to give a Tutsi the chance to live.”**

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Before raising the barrier, he told me to spread the word about the good things they were doing. The militia waved their weapons in the air to me.

She met him again, on her return from Kacyiru.

Again, Oswald was there. They were looking through the IDs of passers-by.

When Régis passed through Kinamba, he caught a glimpse of Rurangwa.

I saw Oswald at the roadblock opposite the building where the Office Rwandais des Recettes [revenue office] had premises. He had a gun and a lot of soldiers and interahamwe were milling around the place. The interahamwe were checking ID cards.

Anaclet also referred to this roadblock, amongst others.

A lot of people died at these roadblocks, since you didn't have a chance of getting through unless you had a special paper signed by Oswald.

Vestine said she remembers lifting Rurangwa from his cradle as a baby at Christmas, either in 1962 or 63. She was a close friend of his parents, as well as their neighbour. From the time he was in primary school, she commented, “Oswald didn't go home without first passing through my house. He liked to play with my children who were the same age.” They continued to be friends after he got married since Rurangwa's wife was also related to Vestine by marriage. The ties of friendship, going back 30 years, between Vestine and Rurangwa's family proved insignificant in the face of genocide. Although she acknowledges that Béata, her daughter cited above, hid in his home for a few days, she blames Rurangwa for the death of her two sons, Nestor Uciyimihigo and Viateur Uwizeyimana and the murder of her son-in-law (see above), whose home was also looted. Her two sons sought refuge in cellule Gasave, but did not find safety there.

They were killed at a roadblock. Since Oswald's militia criss-crossed the whole of Gisozi, my boys could not elude them. They were beaten with machetes when Oswald himself was not far from there.

Distraught after the death of her sons, Vestine, decided to seek death at the hands of Rurangwa.

As I knew that Oswald never strayed far from the roadblocks, I went to look for him there. But of course I knew the men would first need to get permission from him. I saw him coming from one roadblock and approaching the one where I was. As I wanted to die in front of him, I insulted him and became very aggressive. But he just looked at me with contempt, and told me that killing my children was as good as killing me.

She subsequently made her way to the Parish of Sainte Famille where she linked up with another son who was badly wounded.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 14 May 2007.

Jean-Bosco Nkusi does not hide the fact that he worked at the roadblocks constructed, he said, on Rurangwa's insistence.

The day after Habyarimana died, a person called Elie Murenzi went back and forth across our cellule getting people to put up roadblocks. He was able to get a group of people together – most of whom were supporters of the MDR. I was one of them. Some of the others were

- Manassé Twagiramungu;
- Augustin Munyaneza;
- Emmanuel Kalisa;
- Safari;
- Rutabagisha;
- Kubwimana;
- Kayinamura;
- Jean Rwibasira.

Elie told us that it wasn't necessary now to think of ourselves as any different from the interahamwe militia. He suggested, instead, that we forge a common front to annihilate the enemy force and everyone associated with them. Elie had received this message from talking to Oswald.

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**“Oswald had given the order to put up roadblocks in our area as a way of getting us involved in the massacres.”**

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This one was underneath Michel Mika's house, opposite Murundi's place.

Vénuste said he left Gisozi for Kinamba on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and shortly afterwards proceeded to Gitarama. He returned to Kinamba two weeks later and was immediately entrusted with a mission by Rurangwa.

The very day I arrived, I saw Oswald talking to Renzaho. As he knew me, he called me over and told me to make a list of men to infiltrate Gisozi and kill all the Tutsis who remained there. I submitted the names to him. The operation was not a success because some of the men were killed in Gisozi which was a war zone.

Rurangwa gave him a second task to accomplish.

He asked me to work with the soldiers who were at the first roadblock in Kinamba, on the road to Gisozi and to point out anyone who might be a Tutsi. This included anyone who was not from Gisozi and who might have falsified his or her identity card.

Some of the men at the roadblock were armed.

Damascène Ntayitinya, Simba, Habiyaemye and André Bushishi had all received guns from Oswald. He pushed others to join the army, for example Kamanayo, Bavugirije, Karala and Ndayisaba, alias Buduri.

Vénuste said he remained at the roadblock for a week before returning to Gitarama.

## **THE CHIEF OF THE MILITIA**

### **The Parish of Sainte Famille**

The Catholic Parish of Sainte Famille, located at heart of Kigali in sector Rugenge, overlooks the city. Set on extensive grounds, it is one of the largest churches in the capital. Surrounded by a high wall, the Tutsis whose lives were at risk looked upon it as an ideal sanctuary, and when the violence broke out on 7 April, many of those living in the surrounding areas fled to the church immediately.

The early arrivals also included several hundred Hutus from Gisozi who preferred to take shelter at the church instead of remaining in Kinamba, including members of the interahamwe from Gisozi. Kinamba, which lies at the intersection of sectors Kacyiru and Rugenge, is not far from Sainte Famille. The resident of Gisozi were housed in the primary school of the church, and some were taken to the building which were used by the organization of Young Catholic Workers (JOC). Militiamen from Gisozi also helped to guard a well-known roadblock close to the parish, located near the Pan Africa Hotel, where Tutsis hoping to find a sanctuary at Sainte Famille had to pass through.

Rurangwa was a regular visitor to this roadblock, as well as to the parish. He is accused of helping the interahamwe to pick out Tutsis at the checkpoint who were subsequently murdered, of bringing in guns to the parish which were used in massacring the refugees, and of taking food and drinks from the stock of the church for the benefit of his militia based in Kinamba. Most of the witnesses who implicated Rurangwa were themselves militiamen.

Straton is one of the most prominent militiamen associated with the massacres at Sainte Famille, a charge he acknowledges. He said he got to know Rurangwa when he, Rurangwa, began to visit the church during the genocide.

I had previously heard of him as president of the MRND in Gisozi and as patron of the interahamwe there, but I only got to meet him in 194.

From the time that Hutus from Gisozi were installed at the primary school, until the very end, Oswald was always coming to contact the militia who served as his antenna in all the massacres which took place at Sainte Famille and in the neighbourhood of the church. He was never without his pistol and grenades. He used to meet the interahamwe from Gisozi in a bar which belonged to a certain Muhutu, who was himself involved in selecting which Tutsis were allowed to enter the parish.

He named some of the interahamwe at Sainte Famille who worked closely with Rurangwa.

These men included:

- Byikwaso, who was given a gun by Oswald;
- Manassé Twagiramungu; he became a devoted friend of Oswald's from the moment that Oswald began to bring guns and grenades for the militia from Gisozi;
- Rutabana, Munyeshyaka's<sup>29</sup> right-hand man.
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Rurangwa's friendship with Rutabana, he said, was particularly helpful to him.

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<sup>29</sup> Father Wenceslas Munyeshyaka was the priest in charge of Sainte Famille during the genocide, and has been accused of supporting the genocide himself.

Because of the confidence Munyeshyaka had in Rutabana, he put him in charge of the food stocks meant for the Hutu refugees at Sainte Famille and at JOC. Thanks to these stocks, Oswald got food to take to his militia based in Kinamba. The men in Kinamba had a reputation for being dangerous.

Straton mentioned refugees who were abducted from the church and murdered at Rurangwa's behest.

Oswald brought lists of Tutsis who were to be taken away among the refugees at Sainte Famille. One time, he transmitted a list of three people who were known to his collaborators, the people I mentioned earlier. They took them out of the church and put them in the hands of the militia who were always milling in the area around Sainte Famille.

Oswald was also frequently at the terrible roadblock at the Pan Africa Hotel. He passed through there to encourage the different militiamen to continue picking out Tutsis from Saint Famille. There were interahamwe from Gisozi at this roadblock.

In addition to Sainte Famille, he said, Rurangwa also encouraged his militia to pursue the Tutsi refugees at the nearby Catholic Saint Paul's Pastoral Centre.

Like all the other chiefs of the militia, Oswald brought drinks for the interahamwe from his sector. One day the préfet, Renzaho, came by and congratulated the militia of Gisozi. That showed me that Rurangwa was involved in planning the massacres which took place at Sainte Famille and at Saint Paul's. On the contrary, Oswald was one of the interahamwe leaders who went to the primary school to mobilize the interahamwe to go to Saint Paul's. Since he was shuttling between Kinamba and Sainte Famille, Oswald selected some militiamen to keep him informed about the movement of Tutsis from Gisozi who were pretending to be Hutus as a form of escape. I learned this from a young man from Gisozi who was one of Oswald's informers. He worked with Habineza and Sungura, an employee of Munyeshyaka's. Oswald's informers were forever pointing out Tutsis to be killed to the militiamen who ravaged the areas close to Sainte Famille.<sup>30</sup>

Frodouald confirmed Straton's account of Rurangwa's visits to Sainte Famille.

On many occasions, Oswald came to the primary school at Saint Famille where the population of Gisozi were holed up after fleeing the fighting. Oswald met with two people in charge of the camp: Rutabana and Manassé. He brought guns to them to be distributed to young men.

Stanislas gave a similar account, emphasizing the extent to which Rurangwa "showed himself to be a strong man who was very familiar with the officials who came to Sainte Famille and Saint Paul's. One time I saw him talking with Col. Tharcisse Renzaho."

One time I saw him talking with Col. Renzaho. Oswald continued to be the chief of all the militiamen who had come from Gisozi. He also came to fetch food and drinks for the interahamwe.

In common with other witnesses who mentioned the roadblock at the Pan Africa Hotel, Stanislas described it as "frightening."

Oswald went there often with drinks to motivate the militiamen so they would go on killing Tutsis. This roadblock dealt mainly with Tutsis who hoped to make it to Sainte Famille. I

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<sup>30</sup>30 Interviewed in Kigali, 10 July 2007.

myself saw Oswald asking some young women who wanted to pass the roadblock for their ID cards. He left them to the mercy of the militia.<sup>31</sup>

Claver also made his way from Gisozi to Sainte Famille. What he recalled of Rurangwa's visits to Sainte Famille, above all, is the distribution of guns.

I can testify that Oswald was a regular visitor to this church. He went there to distribute guns. I also spoke to some people who had received guns from Oswald's own hands, for example:

- Rutabagisha;
- Jean Bakina;
- Jean Pierre Munyantwali.

Claver's own father, he said, was considered for a gun.

Oswald also wanted to give a gun to my father, but he wasn't judged fit enough to use it because of his age. That's what my father says anyway.

Valérie Bemeriki said she last caught sight of Rurangwa when he was on his way to St. Paul's.

Oswald and his Gisozi militia were off to attack the Tutsis hiding at St. Paul's. I had the impression they wanted to kidnap some of them.

According to Stanislas, Rurangwa also used Sainte Famille as a recruitment centre.

Rurangwa looked for interahamwe to go to Gisozi and Kinamba to fight the RPF. He drove around in his car to many places close to Sainte Famille as he tried to find volunteers.

He said he last saw Rurangwa as Hutus fled Sainte Famille towards Gitarama.

Oswald was asking everyone to make sure that the *inyenzi* did not sneak in among the Hutus.

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<sup>31</sup> Interviewed in Kigali, 6 July 2007 and 15 April 2008.