

# Rebels advance as Kigali slaughter goes on

FROM CATHERINE BOND  
IN KIGALI

REBEL troops were on the verge of taking Kigali, the Rwandan capital, last night but a rebel victory is unlikely to bring an end to the killing.

There was no slackening in the acts of brutality in the city yesterday. Rwandan soldiers bayoneted to death two patients at Kigali's central hospital on Monday amid the dying. The attack took place in full view of hospital staff and people waiting for treatment. At the back of the hospital compound about 40 bodies were piled high, rotting in the drizzle. A young naked woman lay on the top of the fly-covered pile, her limbs stiff. Most of the dead were men but there were also several children — boys and girls with knife wounds.

Returning to the airport in a convoy of Belgian evacuees, we witnessed a scene of a type that has become horrifyingly normal. French paratroopers halted the convoy to wait for gangs carrying kitchen knives, machetes, hammers and clubs to finish killing a number of adults on the road ahead. We waited for perhaps ten minutes.

On our departure from the airport an hour earlier, we had seen the bleeding corpses of two people — a man and a woman — the woman with her legs cut off, a mutilation witnessed in massacres 30 years ago and sometimes described as a Hutu form of contempt for the taller Tutsi tribe. On our return, four more women had been butchered just ahead of our convoy

in the same place outside a mud hut. Four men had also been killed with machetes and their bodies were lying in grassy ditches by the road.

The event produced in me a mixture of nausea and tears. Seemingly unmoved, however, the French paratroopers I was travelling with turned up the volume of the disco music on their car cassette. The attackers lined the road, cheering the French troops and heckling the Belgians.

Nick Hughes, a British cameraman for World Television News, filmed a similar scene from the French school. Half a mile away, men were beating women to death. "They brought women, old or middle-aged women, out of the houses and on to the street and made them sit in a pile of bodies, wounded and dying people," he said. "For about 20 minutes the women pleaded for their lives with a group of men who walked up and down the street chatting. They clubbed one woman to death, then the other. It was the most horrific thing I have ever seen."

Soldiers of the Rwandan army passed the school in lorries looking as if they were heading to prepare a mass grave with the help of a road digger. Rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, who are mainly from the minority Tutsi tribe, claimed that resistance from government forces was crumbling. The rebels regard as their main enemy, the 2,000-strong presidential guard, which they blame for most of the killing in Kigali since the death of President Habyarimana's Hutu in a plane crash last Wednesday

Yesterday two European officers serving with the United Nations said 89 Tutsis who sought sanctuary in a church near the UN compound were killed on Thursday by Hutu civilians brought to the church by government soldiers. They died in the presence of the UN officers.

Other religious institutions, for decades considered a refuge for educated Tutsis, have become a target for members of the presidential guard, soldiers and Hutu youths. A Spanish nun, Sister Mary Helene Adot, told a Belgian reporter that 17 people, whom she described as mostly Tutsi and including eight nuns, had been killed in their compound in the heart of the capital by the presidential guard. The killings take place casually, under the noses of UN, French and Belgian troops, within the range of television cameras, and just yards from expatriates being evacuated. Although it is impossible for outsiders to identify who is murdering who, most of the killing is probably not random but carried out along ethnic and political lines. The victims are likely to be Tutsi as well as Hutu, who made the now-fatal mistake of openly supporting opposition parties. The rebels are probably mindful of the fact that a 48-hour ceasefire may help the evacuation of foreigners. But it is possible that by stalling a rebel advance, the killing has been prolonged.

The military rebel leader, Paul Kagame, has announced that two battalions are advancing to reinforce a 600-strong battalion in the city. However, for most of the day the ceasefire seemed irrelevant. Gunfire could be heard, apparently by government troops at rebel positions.