

Central Intelligence Agency

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Massacres in Rwanda

1. In our view, politicians and military commanders representing extremist ethnic Hutus from northern Rwanda unleashed the fighting that erupted on 6 April. Northern Hutus have dominated the country since the late President Habyarimana overthrew his predecessor in 1973, and they were opposed to a peace accord and sharing power with the rebels of the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

— Eyewitness accounts of the downing of Habyarimana's aircraft and the systematic murder of Tutsi and independent Hutu politicians immediately afterward suggest that the President's death was the first step in a hardline Hutu coup attempt. [REDACTED]

2. The violence, however, quickly got out of control. Available evidence indicates that militias from two ethnic Hutu chauvinist parties rather than the military have done most of the killing. Mobs of youths armed with grenades, firearms, and machetes have cut down ethnic Tutsis, as well as Hutus suspected of being pro-Tutsi or pro-RPF.

— [REDACTED] at least 2,000 militiamen were trained and armed—probably by the security forces—as early as January. [REDACTED]

3. The government's 25,000-man security forces also are implicated in the killings. Members of the Presidential Guard Battalion reportedly murdered Prime Minister Uwilingiyimana and 10 Belgian peacekeepers, and the UN says government mortars targeted a stadium sheltering thousands of displaced persons.

— The Army's ability to withstand the RPF assault on Kigali suggests it remains under centralized control, and we have seen no [REDACTED] supply or morale problems in the capital. [REDACTED]

This memorandum was prepared by [REDACTED] the Office of African and Latin American Analysis. [REDACTED]

4. Government troops are armed with assault rifles, mortars, and heavy machineguns, but maintenance problems appear to have prevented use of their attack helicopters and light armored vehicles. Major weapons suppliers have been France, Egypt, and South Africa. [REDACTED]

5. The 20,000-man RPF army is better disciplined and enjoys better command than government forces. It has been cooperative with humanitarian relief efforts, and aid agencies still in Rwanda say RPF units have committed few—if any—atrocities.

— The rebel radio, however, has called for the punishment of progovernment militias, and this could lead to revenge killings. [REDACTED]