

The former Rwandan Armed Forces' central role in preparation of 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi

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Juvenal Habyarimana former president of Rwanda meets Rwandan Armed Forces (ex-FAR) before the genocide. File

The former Rwandan Armed Forces played a central role in the preparation and execution of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

This genocidal process began in October 1990 and continued through the defeat of the former Rwandan army in July 1994 and subsequent operations attempted during its exile in the then Zaïre, currently the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo).

After fleeing to eastern DR Congo, the genocidal army and militia kept on changing names to shed off its past. Now known as

FDLR, it continues to commit various crimes in the Great Lakes region.

During the night of October 4 to 5, 1990, the Rwandan army staged a fake attack by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in the capital, Kigali. The genocidal army fired automatic weapons throughout the night at the nearby Rwandan military camp to create a pretext for mass arrests, which targeted over 10,000 Tutsi across the country. Most of the Tutsi were taken to military and gendarmerie camps where they endured torture and inhumane, degrading treatment designed to force them to confess to crimes they did not commit.

In Kigali, most of these interrogations occurred in Kanombe, Kigali, and Kacyiru military camps. They also happened under the leadership of French military personnel, including Major Michel Robardey and his subordinates, who trained the Rwandan gendarmerie in the 'service' called the Central File, commonly known as Criminology.

Although Rwandan law prohibited military personnel from participating in political activities, the mobilization to commit the geno-

cide was prevalent within the Rwandan army. The genocide was designed by a clique of extremist military personnel from Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, including senior officers such as: Colonels Théoneste Bagosora, Anatole Nsenigiyumva, Elie Sagatwa, Aloys Ntiwiragabo, and Tharcisse Renzaho. Others are Lt Col Dr. Laurent Baransalitse and Nubaha Laurent; Majors Aloys Ntabakuze and Protais Mpiranya, and Lt Col Léonard Nkundiye, among others.

This clique of extremist officers spread the ideology of genocide among the military, warning them against having relations with the Tutsi. Without any distinction, the officers attributed all of Rwanda's problems to the Tutsi; thereby persecuting them and depriving them of their fundamental rights.

This policy of hatred is explained in a lengthy note written on September 21, 1992, by Col Déogratias Nsabimana, Chief of Staff of the Rwandan army. Addressed to all military commanders in the country, as well as the gendarmerie, this document begins by stating that the army's general staff held a meeting on December 4, 1991, chaired by President Juvénal Habyarimana himself at the Military Academy in Kigali. During this meeting, important decisions were made, including establishing a commission of 10 senior officers tasked with developing strategies to defeat the enemy through the military, media, and politics.

In the September 21, 1992 note, Col Nsabimana stated that the commission had completed its mission and provided recommendations for implementation throughout the country. It stated that the enemy was no

longer only in Uganda but was also present inside Rwanda, and its strength was increasing. Nsabimana requested that this document be disseminated in all military camps, especially the paragraphs defining the enemy, the strategies to identify them, the places where they recruit, and those with whom they operate.

Nsabimana described two types of enemies: the main enemy and supporters of the enemy. He specified that the main enemy was the Tutsi, who remained inside the country or abroad and did not recognize the revolution of 1959. The second enemy was described as anyone who assisted the Tutsi.

Nsabimana then listed the categories of enemies, including:

- Tutsi refugees;
- The Ugandan army;
- The Tutsi inside the country;
- Foreigners married to Tutsi women;
- Hutu hostile to the regime;
- Unemployed people inside the country and abroad;
- Foreigners with the exact origins as the Tutsi and,
- Criminals who fled the country.

The document insisted that the internal enemy must be fought and provided the names of certain businessmen, predominantly Tutsi, identified as enemies:

- Valens Kajeguhakwa and his establishments; ERP, Corwaco, Sodevi, and Bacar;
- Assinapol Rwigara and his establishments;
- Silas Majyambere and his establishments; Sorecarerwa, Sogetti, Danimo, Sofat, and others;

- Evariste Sisi and his establishments;
- Antoine Sebera;
- Bertin Makuza and his establishments;

Rwanda Foam and Amegerwa; and

- Mutangana and his establishments; Volta Super, Tolirwa, Hydrobat, and others.

Nsabimana asserted that the instructions in this document would help the military understand that they should not support the existing peace agreements between the Rwandan government and the RPF. He demanded that military commanders regularly inform him about how the military had interpreted the message contained in the document.

After the Rwandan army disseminated this document that identified the Tutsi as enemies of Rwanda, the acceleration of genocide preparations in the military became more overt.

On January 9, 1993, Col Theoneste Bagosora, the then Chief of Staff at the Ministry of Defense, left Arusha, Tanzania, after the signing of the third protocol of the Agreement on the merger of the armies, promising, "I am going back, I will prepare the Apocalypse for them."

On January 20, 1993, a group of military officers led by Bagosora secretly established an association called "Amasasu". Bagosora, who called himself "Commander Mike Tango," was its supreme advisor. This association sent a letter to President Habyarimana informing him about its creation. Its mission was to continue the war against the RPF, exclude the Tutsi, and prepare for ethnically based massacres. The association particularly assigned itself the duty of "identifying and, if necessary, killing cunning politi-

cians who, under the guise of war, do everything possible to stay in their positions or resort to other tricks to access leadership positions in the administration".

On the same day, Amasasu published a list of people to be killed as they met the definition of the "enemy" according to the document from September 1992 made public by Col Déogratias Nsabimana.

Amasasu implemented the content of another confidential note dated July 27, 1992, addressed to the army's chief of staff. Drafted by Col Anatole Nsengiyumva, head of military intelligence, this note aimed to identify those who did not support the implementation of the Arusha Accords protocol related to the merger of the armies. Nsengiyumva indicated that if this protocol were to be implemented, the Rwandan army would be ready to "exterminate the Tutsi... and other authorities who had a role in these problems... It will take revenge against senior officers who made concessions to civilians to implement what they want without discouraging them."

In this note, Nsengiyumva emphasized that, for the military, Prime Minister Dismas Nsengiyaremye, Foreign Minister Boniface Ngulinzira, and the President himself had deceived them. In straightforward terms, Nsengiyumva warned Habyarimana about what could happen to him: "If this president does not defend his citizens, if he does not retract quickly, ... he will find himself alone... If the Head of State does not assume his responsibilities to defend the country, he should resign. Otherwise, others will do it for him."

This note made clear the ideology of the Genocide and that it was considered to be

the solution to Rwanda's political problems. Senior army officers clung to this genocidal logic.

Starting in 1991, the government began distributing weapons among the populations in several communes, especially in the northern prefectures of Byumba, Ruhengeri, and Gisenyi. The distribution of weapons was preceded by military training given to the population in camps such as Mukamira, Gabiro, Bigogwe, and other locations like the communal office of Muvumba, now part of Nyagatare District. The distributed weapons were used in various massacres including in Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, and Murambi.

Reports from the Central Intelligence Service from 1991 to 1992 provide information on the preparation and conduct of these activities. Other documents reveal that in November 1991, President Habyarimana gave instructions regarding creating a "civil defense committee". Indeed, on September 26, 1991, the head of the Central Intelligence Service in Byumba prefecture, Vincent Rwirahira, circulated a memorandum reporting on a security meeting held in Ngarama sub-prefecture. The meeting examined the "self-defense of the population." Rwirahira reported that all of the meeting's participants supported selecting individuals from the population to undergo military training and be given weapons to assist the armed forces in facing the enemy. The meeting recommended that this proposal be transmitted to the security meeting scheduled for the next day in Byumba prefecture for final approval.

Another seven-page memorandum drafted on February 7, 1992, addressed to the Direc-

tor General of the Central Intelligence Service, Vincent Rwirahira elaborated on implementing the population's self-defense. He recounted that on this date, a security meeting in Byumba prefecture was held in Muvumba to assess the functioning of civil self-defense, and the decision was made to improve it by distributing additional weapons and continuing military training for civilians. Rwirahira recalled that the Ministry of Defense was willing to provide 300 weapons to be distributed to civilians, starting with the residents of Byumba and Ruhengeri border areas.

Rwirahira explained that the meeting resulted in the distribution of 180 weapons to the inhabitants of Byumba prefecture and the rest to those of Ruhengeri. In Byumba, the weapons were distributed as follows:

- Muvumba Commune: 76;
- Kiyombe Commune: 40;
- Kivuye Commune: 40;
- Cyumba Commune: 24.

It was also decided that 250 young men would be secretly recruited and placed under the supervision of the mayors and their commune's security councils. These recruits were to be sent to the Gabiro military camp to receive military training from January 20 to February 5, 1992.

The meeting confirmed that Kiyombe Commune (which, at the time, was part of Byumba prefecture and is currently in Gicumbi District) had recruited 120 young men who were to receive similar training in Mulindi. Seventy-two of them would be from

Cyumba Commune, and those from Kivuye would be divided into two platoons of 60 young men. All of them would be trained near their communal offices. Rwirahira said that Byumba prefecture security meeting members praised this initiative, which was intended to discourage the enemy and strengthen trust between the population and the army.

Rwirahira specified that the meeting established that the youth would be divided into three teams that would take turns in military operations every three days. Each team would be supervised by at least two military personnel. The report added that the recruits' mission was to support the armed forces in the fight against the enemy, chase them on the hills, and hand them over to the military once identified.

The security meeting decided that recruits would be individuals, recognized as patriots, aged between 18 and 45. Rwirahira emphasized that those who were not recruited would continue to be mobilized to support the operation and learn how to handle bladed weapons. The meeting concluded with instructions for daily monitoring of the operation's progress.

In the subsequent report, Rwirahira informed the Director General of the Central Intelligence Service that the Ministry of Defense (MINADEF) had granted the 300 requested weapons to the Ministry of Interior (MININTER), and this donation was appreciated. However, he noted disapproval of MINADEF's delay in sending the weapons despite President Habyarimana having personally recommended it. For Rwirahira, this in-

dicated that there were enemy collaborators within MINADEF.

On January 20, 1992, the Minister of Interior, Faustin Munyazesa, sent a letter to the prefects of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, recommending that they cooperate with their military commanders and consult with them on the procedure for distributing weapons and providing military training to the population. He asked them to report back to him on the operation by means of fax. The prefects were instructed to communicate the recruitment procedure and the progress of the recruits' training. The Minister advised that they take appropriate measures to prevent weapons from being diverted.

At the Ministry of Defense, a commission called the "civil self-defense" was established to monitor the operation's execution. The commission comprised:

- Lt Col Ephrem Rwabalinda;
- Maj Paul Rwarakabije;
- Maj Alphonse Nteriryayo; and
- Ruth Kankwanzi, an accountant at the Ministry of Defense.

Available information proves that President Habyarimana himself directed the distribution of weapons to the population. For example, the minutes from a July 9, 1991, meeting held at the army headquarters and chaired by the Minister of Internal Security, General Augustin Ndindiriyimana, presented evidence. The meeting brought together officials from the military intelligence service and the office of the President. Participants included:

- Lt Col Laurent Rutayisire, G2 (intelligence service) in the national gendarmerie;

- Lt Col, Ephrem Rwabalinda, G3 in the Rwandan army;
- Gendarmerie Commander Pierre-Claver Karangwa, head of the general intelligence service in the gendarmerie;
- Justin Munyaneza, agent of the Central Intelligence Service (CIS);
- Ephrem Ndangamira, agent of the CIS; and
- Lt Eng Grégoire Rutakamize, rapporteur of the meeting.

The minutes of this meeting indicate that the agenda was to assess the rapid implementation of the President's proposal regarding national security. The President had declared: "The population must receive adequate and sufficient tools to protect national security so that no one will dare to attack the country in the future."

The meeting confirmed that the genocidal mission could be implemented. The meeting's recommendations to mobilize young people, who made up the majority of the population, contributed to establishing the structure called 'Interhamwe.'

An officer from the Belgian contingent of MINUAR, Lieutenant Nees, was tasked with daily monitoring events in Rwanda and reporting to his superiors.

The 1997 report of the Belgian Senate on Belgium's responsibility in the genocide against the Tutsi revealed that Nees had sent a total of 29 reports to the Belgian Army Headquarters covering the period from January 19 to March 11, 1994, before being replaced by Lt De Cuyper.

The Belgian Senate, after reading and analyzing the daily reports drafted by Nees, as-

serted that he provided daily evidence of the Rwandan state's planning for the extermination of the Tutsi. Nees explained that the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) were against the Arusha peace negotiations, and he became aware of a letter addressed to FAR officers confirming this mindset. These pieces of information were confirmed by Col Walter Balis, one of the officers of the Belgian MINUAR contingent, during his hearing in 1997 before the Belgian Senate. He reiterated the same statements when he was interviewed in 2007 by the Mucyo Commission.

On March 29, 1993, Gen Deogratias Nsabimana, Chief of Staff of the Rwandan Armed Forces, chaired a secret meeting to streamline the operations of 'civil self-defense' to incite the Hutu population to kill the Tutsi and provide them with the necessary tools to do so. Additional weapons to carry out the genocide were distributed during the meeting, which brought together the leaders of the city of Kigali, the main military chiefs, and the leaders of political parties in the Hutu-Power faction, Impuzamugambi, and Interahamwe.

This meeting was reported in the 1998 report of the French deputies led by Paul Quiles, where they explained, based on secret documents from the French Ministry of Defense and French government minutes, that the meeting was held in the utmost secrecy. This report recalled that the operation to distribute weapons to the Interahamwe militias had already been reported on January 22, 1992, in a telegram sent by Col Bernard Cussac, who was a senior official at the French Embassy in Kigali in charge of military cooperation between Rwanda and France.

In the telegram, Cussac indicated that the distribution of weapons was directed by the Rwandan Minister of Interior and Communal Development and carried out in the northern prefectures of the country; Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, and Byumba. The weapons were distributed to selected men by the authorities, while the Rwandan armed forces trained those who received weapons. Cussac confirmed that Government authorities, military leaders, and Interahamwe were collaborating; he concluded that Interahamwe would undoubtedly use the weapons to kill people.

Later, the document dated September 21, 1992, designating the Tutsi as enemies of their own country, would finally inspire the creation of 'kill lists,' which would guide the killers during the genocide. Jean Birara, the former governor of the National Bank of Rwanda, provided an enlightening testimony on these lists that he had: 'The list of people to eliminate,' he said, 'counted 60 names by the end of 1992, 500 in April 1993. On February 20, 1994, at noon, my cousin General Nsabimana, chief of the Rwandan army staff, showed me a list of 1500 names just for Kigali.

From 1993 onward, the Amasasu Association established branches in all military camps, starting with:

- The strongest units, such as the paracommando battalion commanded by Maj Aloys Ntabakuze, from the commune of Karago (Gisenyi);
- The anti-aircraft combat battalion commanded by Lt Col Stanislas Hakizimana from Ruhengeri;
- The reconnaissance battalion com-

manded by Maj François-Xavier Nzuwonemeye from the commune of Musasa (Kigali-rural), assisted by Capt Innocent Sagahutu (Cyangugu);

- The presidential guard battalion commanded by Maj Protais Mpiranya (Gisenyi);
- The field artillery battalion commanded by Maj Aloys Mutabera; and
- The military police battalion commanded by Maj Joël Bararwerekana from the commune of Mukingo (Ruhengeri), and others.

Similar lectures were given in the national gendarmerie groupings, starting with those housing a large number of gendarmes, such as:

- Kacyiru group commanded by Lt Col Jean-Marie Vianney Nzapfakumunsi;
- Mobile group commanded by Lt Col Laurent Munyakazi;
- Intervention group commanded by Maj Juvénal Murangira;
- Inspection and intelligence group commanded by Maj Damien Burakari;
- National Gendarmerie School (Egena) commanded by Maj Augustin Budura;
- Ruhengeri group commanded by Maj Emmanuel Munyawera;
- Gisenyi group commanded by Maj Apollinaire Biganiro;
- Kibuye group commanded by Maj Jean-Baptiste Jabo;
- Butare group commanded by Maj Cyriaque Habyarabatuma;
- Rwamagana group commanded by Maj Havugiyaremye;
- Gikongoro group commanded by Maj Christophe Bizimungu, seriously ill with AIDS, whose authority was actually exercised

by Capt Sebhura Faustin, a high-level extremist who actively participated in the genocide, and

- Cyangugu group commanded by Maj Vincent Munyarugerero.

These lectures taught military personnel and gendarmes how to prepare for the final assault to eliminate the Tutsi and any politician supporting the merger of the two armies.

Another letter proving the intention to commit genocide was dated December 2, 1994. It was written by the chief of Belgian security and reported that members of the Amasasu association had warned President Habyarimana that 'The signing of the Arusha Accords will be considered a sign of weakness on his part and will cost him his life.'

The Rwandan military was sensitized to oppose the merger of the armies after the sporadic elimination of a few rare Tutsi military members within the army. Some were poisoned, while others went missing. At Kanombe camp, one of Maj Ntabakuze's deputies, Lt Sylvestre Nzabonariba, shot his Tutsi companion in the presence of other military personnel. The death of this military member was mentioned on April 6, 2004, during the trial of Maj Ntabakuze, Col Bagosora, and Col Nsengiyumva. Nzabonariba confessed to this crime and is currently held in Mulindi prison.

In the northern prefectures of the country, particularly Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, several massacres targeting the Tutsi were committed between 1990 and 1993 by military and gendarme personnel with complete impunity. Tutsi individuals were also arrested and massacred in military camps such as Mukamira,

Bigogwe, and the Gisenyi gendarmerie camp.

In 1993, Tutsi students were murdered at Mudende University, as well as some Hutu individuals who were trying to defend the Tutsi and were not affiliated with extremist Hutu Power parties. Bagogwe, who had fled their hills before finding refuge on the university grounds, were also killed. Following these criminal acts, the university management temporarily closed the university on February 10, 1993, and instructed students to return home. On their way home, some students were denounced by their peers on the grounds of being accomplices of the RPF. They were arrested at a roadblock manned by military personnel, forcibly removed from the vehicles, and taken to Mukamira camp, where they were tortured. Some lost their lives.

In the testimonies provided by survivors of these attacks, some claim that students were killed in this camp in the presence of French military personnel who were in Rwanda at that time. The report of the Rwandan Association for the Defense of Human Rights and Public Liberties (ADL), published in March 1993, specifies that these killings began as early as March 1991 under the supervision of the mayor of the Mutura commune where the university was located. He collaborated with the military from Bigogwe camp. At that time, six students were killed, and others were seriously injured. It is also noted that even in October 1990, some students were unfairly detained, including Célestin Parimehutu from the Bagogwe clan, originally from Mutura commune.

Some surviving students from the 1993

massacres made testimonies, including Jérôme Nyagatare, originally from the Murama commune (Gitarama). His written testimony, on March 9, 1993, as he emerged from his cell in Mukamira military camp, is available. He had been arrested by the military and forcibly extracted from the vehicle transporting him with other students when leaving Mudende to go to Kigali.

Here are excerpts from his testimony:

"After the genocide committed against the Bagogwe in 1991, the authorities of the Mutura commune did not cease the massacres. They continued to sow hatred and divisions within the population to mobilize it. These massacres mainly targeted the Bagogwe of this commune, who were the poorest because they had been neglected. They also targeted other Rwandans affiliated with political parties other than MRND and CDR. On the night of January 6, 1993, atrocities were committed against the Tutsi. They were planned and carried out in this commune. Many women and children sought refuge at Mudende University. Several houses were destroyed. Cattle were looted and devoured.

The origin of these massacres is the resumption of hostilities in the Ruhengeri region. Since they began, innocent populations have again been targeted and killed without distinction between adults and infants, under the responsibility of communal authorities. Those who escaped the killings on the hills went to seek refuge at Mudende University. Most of them were seriously injured and needed care.

This is why I urgently appeal to human rights defense associations operating in

Rwanda, all organizations caring for the vulnerable, and the government-appointed commission tasked with investigating the massacres committed against the population in the prefectures of Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, and Byumba. It is necessary to hasten to help families whose members have been killed or are missing because they are currently living in deplorable conditions.

There is a need to quickly launch an investigation into Mayor Bakiye and prosecute him for his responsibility in these massacres."

"On February 10, 1993, a week before the holidays, the university rector gathered us and said, 'Our embassies have advised us to temporarily close the university due to the insecurity and war prevailing in the region. I urge you to quickly gather your belongings because vehicles will come to pick you up today, this afternoon, or tomorrow morning.' There were so many students that it took two days to transport them. Not everyone was pleased with this decision, especially the MRND-CDR students who publicly stated that it aimed to protect the Tutsi and facilitate their exile. I inform you that these extremist students from MRND and CDR had compiled a list of 42 students who were to be killed.

I left the university on February 12, 1993, in an Onatracom bus that transported students to Kigali. Another minibus transported those going to Gitarama, Butare, and elsewhere. When we arrived at Mukamira, the bus I was on—since I was going to Kigali—stopped where the military barrier was. One of them entered, saying, 'Jérôme Nyagatare, let him come out with his suitcase!' I got

goosebumps. I immediately remembered the atrocities committed against a woman named Fatuma, who was killed before my eyes on this same road and by these same military personnel. The soldier was furious. He walked around the vehicle, saying, 'Who is Nyagatare? Who is Nyagatare?' The fear that haunted me faded quickly, and I identified myself. This soldier had a small club in his hands; he struck me on the head and forcibly pulled me out of the bus.

Right after that, the minibus behind us arrived and stopped. It was driven by the director of Adra Saws, named Wilkens. Wilkens was horrified by the blood flowing profusely on my forehead, where the soldier had injured me. He decided to follow the two soldiers who were taking me in their vehicle to the Mukamira camp. We traveled for 15 minutes to get there. Upon arrival, I was received by a lieutenant who wore black glasses. He then read the alleged accusations against me: 'The mayor of the Mutura commune accuses Jérôme Nyagatare of complicity with the rebels of the RPF for:

- Gathering groups of people inside and outside the university who are plotting to overthrow the current government;

- Collecting, using a radio transmitter in his possession, information from all over the country to transmit to the RPF leaders and Knowing where the weapons and ammunition are hidden in Ruhengeri.'

The lieutenant did not even give me a moment to say anything. He directly ordered them to take me to the special cell. I felt overcome by great fear because, in front of the cell, angry soldiers were beating another

person accused of being an RPF accomplice. At that moment, and before my eyes, the person died. I trembled, sensing my imminent death. They placed me in the cell. The whole night was like a Stations of the Cross for me. Soldiers took turns kicking, hitting me with rifle butts and clubs, and terrorizing me by saying they would come back to kill me.

On February 13, 1993, around 9 a.m., a major called me to his office. It was an opportunity to explain to him the false accusations against me. Upon leaving his office, I was no longer terrorized on February 13 and 14. I learned that it was because my problem had become known at the highest levels in Kigali. They were aware of my arbitrary arrest and had started calling the military authorities of the Mukamira camp, asking them not to harm me. Horrors were committed in this cell, nicknamed 'the special cell.'

On February 15, 1993, the lieutenant I mentioned, who wore black glasses, came. He took me out of the cell to put me in a military vehicle that brought me back to Mudende University.

On the date of my arrest, February 12, 1993, when the vehicle I was in was stopped at the Mukamira barrier, the soldiers had a list on which they read the names of those who had to get off the bus. Among the people arrested were those who were originally from the Mutura commune. They were told that there was no reason to go to Kigali. Those who were taken out of the bus returned to Mudende University. Their names are as follows:

- Alphonse Nkunuzurwanda, from the Faculty of Management (second after the bache-

lor's degree);

- Célestin Parimehutu, from the Faculty of Education Sciences (first year after the bachelor's degree);

- Ézéchiel, from the Faculty of Management (first year after the bachelor's degree);

- Emmanuel, from the Faculty of Management (first year after the bachelor's degree); and

- Ézéchiel's younger brother.

Here is the translation:

"On February 13, 1993, at 6 p.m., eight soldiers went to the university. They wanted to force their way in, but the guards refused. They terrorized them by threatening to shoot. The guards were afraid and opened the gate. The mission of these soldiers was not only to arrest the students; they were also looking for a pastor of the Adventist Church who was the vice-rector in charge of student services, André Mujujarugamba, originally from Gitarama (Mutura commune). The pastor was not at home. They went to look for him at the church where he officiated wedding ceremonies. They entered the crowded church and did not dare to arrest him. They preferred to apprehend three students: Alphonse Nkuzurwanda, Célestin Parimehutu, and Emmanuel. Two other students managed to escape by slipping between the institution's buildings. All these students were Bagogwe, originally from the Mutura commune. They were unmarried, except for Parimehutu, who was married and had a child. In 1991, he was accused of being an accomplice of the FPR and was detained for six months with others (their number exceeded 8,000 detainees for the same charge). As I

write this testimony, neither the university authorities nor the families of these students know their fate. No one knows where they were killed, and their bodies are missing. In short, they have disappeared."

This testimony illustrates the hatred and genocidal ideology deeply rooted in the Habyarimana regime and its military.

On February 21, 1994, Col Bagosora noted in his personal agenda (discovered in his archives in Kigali in July 1994) the urgency of "making a list of military reservists" to strengthen the war and genocide efforts.

At that time, UNAMIR reports indicated the intention of a group of criminals close to the government to exterminate the Tutsi and kill the most influential members of the opposition. Massacres of Tutsi happened at the time in several regions of the country. Soldiers, Interahamwe militias of the MRND, and Impuzamugambi militias of the CDR carried them out.

On March 30, 1994, CLADHO issued a press release denouncing attacks by soldiers, including those of the Presidential Guard and the Interahamwe. This statement demanded, in vain, that disciplinary measures be taken against the implicated soldiers and that the militias should be disarmed. The Habyarimana regime ignored CLADHO's appeal and continued preparations for the total extermination of the Tutsi.

On April 4, 1994, in a ceremony held at the Hôtel Méridien in Kigali, Col Bagosora publicly declared that he was against the peace agreements signed in Arusha and against the president's visit to Dar-es-Salaam to sign their implementation. He added that Pres-

ident Habyarimana would be shot, and the genocide against the Tutsi would follow his death. This information was provided by Major Gen Laurent Munyakazi during his trial before the Military Court and is mentioned in the copy of his judgment as follows:

”On September 11, 2006, the Court began the trial by asking Major General Laurent Munyakazi to explain his remarks when he stated that the behaviors of Colonel Bagosora and Lieutenant Colonel Renzaho resembled those of the Interahamwe. Major General Munyakazi explained that on April 4, 1994, Colonel Bagosora, who was the Chief of Staff to the Minister of Defense, while they were at a reception held at the Hôtel Méridien, uttered profound words proving that he was preparing the extermination of the Tutsi. Bagosora said he was against the Arusha Accords and did not understand their purpose, although they were signed by the President of the Republic and the RPF. He said he did not want the President of the Republic to go to Tanzania and his plane would be shot down.

After hearing the words spoken by

Bagosora, Major General Munyakazi, a high-ranking officer, decided to write a confidential report, which he handed to the Gendarmerie Chief of Staff, informing him that massacres against the Tutsi and an attack on the President’s plane were being prepared. Major General Munyakazi revealed to the Court that this report was also given to Sagatwa, who called him on the phone to invite him to explain himself at the presidency. Upon arrival, Major General Munyakazi told President Habyarimana about the words spoken by Colonel Bagosora that he had heard in public. President Habyarimana asked him if there was another senior officer who had heard them. Major General Munyakazi replied that Lieutenant Colonel Nzabanita, nicknamed ‘Dictionary,’ had heard them and could testify. President Habyarimana told him that he was aware of this information but asked him not to reveal it to anyone, whether an officer in the army or the gendarmerie”.

The author is the Minister of National Unity and Civic Engagement.