

# In the Upheaval in Rwanda, Few Answers Yet

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The New York Times, May 5, 1994

One month after a plane crash killed the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi and unleashed weeks of massacres, the cause of the crash and the precise origin of the violence are still unknown. The Rwanda military, which put together a new Government three days after the crash, refuses to allow United Nations experts near the site to find out how it happened. The massacres, Government officials say, were a "popular uprising" against the country's Tutsi ethnic minority, whose rebel group was singled out as being behind the crash. But Western diplomats, human rights groups and Rwandan refugees describe a methodical, organized violence carried out by the Rwandan military, which is dominated by members of the Hutu ethnic group. Hutus, Too, Are Targets They say the President, Juvenal Habyarimana, was probably killed by hard-liners in his own Government worried that he was yielding to international pressure to carry out an accord bringing Tutsis into the Government. Both Presidents were returning from Tanzania, where they had attended a conference with other African leaders on ethnic violence in Rwanda and Burundi. Some of the violence was aimed at those Hutus, described as moderates, who favored reaching agreement with the Tutsis to form a new government. One of the first targets was the interim Prime Minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, a symbol of the moderate Hutu opposition, who was killed by soldiers of the presidential guard along with 10 Belgian United Nations peacekeepers guarding her. A pile of crumpled, charred metal in a green field near the eastern edge of the airstrip of the capital, Kigali, is all that remains of President Habyarimana's plane, which was downed on April 6 either as a result of being fired upon or by an explosion. Besides barring crash investigators from the site, the Rwandan military has turned down an American offer for technical aid in the investigation. Officials say they have found the plane's black box but are too busy fighting a civil war to conduct their own investigation. Few doubt that the target was Mr. Habyarimana, a member of the Hutu ethnic majority in Rwanda who has long been accused by moderates and human rights officials of manipulating ethnic tensions and delaying a peace agreement. 100,000 Believed Killed Tensions between the Hutus and the Tutsis have periodically exploded in violence, especially since Rwanda gained independence in 1962. The Tutsis were favored by the Belgians, who administered the country as a colonial protectorate. Relief officials estimate that

since Mr. Habyarimana's death more than 100,000 people have been killed, mainly Tutsis. Heavy fighting continues between the Tutsi rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front and the Hutu-dominated Rwandan Army. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled the country. The hastily created new Hutu Government insists that only the Tutsi rebels could have benefited from the President's death and that most of the massacres have been by the Tutsi-dominated Patriotic Front. Rockets Reported Fired But Tutsi rebels say it was Hutu extremists in the President's party who killed their leader as part of a plot to undermine recent peace agreements. They say their forces are fighting to end the chaos and bloodshed. There are also minor theories, widely circulated in Rwanda, about who downed the plane, including allegations on the Government radio that Belgian troops at the airport fired at it. Witnesses say that on the day the plane crashed they saw a huge explosion and fireball at about 8:30 P.M. Belgian officers have told British journalists that they saw two rockets fired from the vicinity of a camp belonging to the Rwandan presidential guard and army commandos. Within hours of the crash, soldiers from the hard-line Hutu presidential guard began killing all moderate members of the interim Government, both Hutu and Tutsis, virtually eliminating all opposition. The political atmosphere before the crash and the violence afterward reflect a country torn apart by political turmoil and ethnic hatred. Although a peace agreement signed with the rebels in August called for an ethnically integrated interim government and military, little progress had been made toward political sta-

bility. "There was very, very intensive competition for political power," said David Rawson, the United States Ambassador to Rwanda, who was evacuated along with all other Americans last month. "The ethnic dilemma was used by different sides as a shield behind which the play for power was being done," he added. "Quite clearly there was a real system to the political assassinations. There must be some system to the mass killings as well. It's not just mayhem." Leaders Seek Recognition Representatives of the new Hutu Government are touring European and African capitals calling for peace and diplomatic recognition. This Government does not include any Tutsis. "We did not see any Tutsis to put in the Government," said Matthew Ngirumpatse, the chairman of the governing party. He said that the killing of Tutsis was carried out by "popular anger" and added, "It is a civic duty for people to join themselves to the army when their country is attacked." Even though Tutsis and Hutus share the same language and culture, Rwandan history has been marked by ethnic massacres, most of them against Tutsis, who fled Rwanda by the tens of thousands. In 1973, after increasing anti-Tutsi attacks probably organized by the military, Mr. Habyarimana, who was Minister of Defense at the time, took over in a military coup. Ethnic Violence Continues Originally hailed as a popular and honest leader, Mr. Habyarimana lost support after years of increasingly repressive rule and economic stagnation. An invasion by 10,000 Tutsi guerrillas of the Rwanda Patriotic Front in 1990 and pressure from international donors served as a catalyst for an agreement aimed at trans-

forming a one-party dictatorship into a multi-party system. Despite a fragile cease-fire and the signing of the peace accord in August, ethnic violence, in particular against the Tutsis, continued as the governing party felt its exclusive control threatened. The human rights groups Amnesty International and Africa Watch have said Mr. Habyarimana bore special responsibility for the violence in recent years. His party, the Republican Movement for Democracy and Development, armed its supporters, especially the party youth militia, to kill known rebel sympathizers. "In the early 1980's Habyarimana's popularity started to slip and he felt threatened," said Alison DesForges of Africa Watch. "He became bitterly anti-Tutsi after 1990. It was a scapegoat kind of mentality to focus all your hatred on these people." Tensions Grow in Burundi Tensions within the Hutu-dominated Government in-

creased significantly after a failed coup last October in neighboring Burundi, a country that shares the same ethnic division. The Tutsi-dominated Burundi Army killed the first democratically elected Hutu President, Melchior Ndadaye. More than 80,000 people were killed in two months of massacres and hundreds of thousands of Hutus fled to Rwanda. In Rwanda, the military stepped up the arming of Hutu militias and Mr. Habyarimana consolidated his Hutu support. By December, political infighting had divided the opposition Hutu parties into moderates and hard-liners. "Habyarimana used Burundi to persuade his people that the Tutsi threat was real," Ms. DesForges said. "It was a pretext for the hard-line Hutus in Rwanda. There was plenty of paranoia and fear. This is not a tribal conflict but a coldblooded, ruthless, cynical plot."