

## INTRODUCTION

From April to June 1994, Lt. Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi was in charge of operations by the Rwandese Armed Forces (FAR) in the préfectures of Butare and Gikongoro, in the south of Rwanda. He had the authority to determine the fate of civilians in these regions. In the emergency situation which faced the country following the death of President Juvénal Habyarimana, Muvunyi was given the final say in decisions about security. He chose to throw his weight behind a national programme of genocide, and more than 100,000 people were murdered in Butare alone as a direct consequence. Mass graves uncovered in Butare have revealed tens of thousands of corpses—at one massacre site alone, there were 65,000. The bodies of other victims have yet to be found. This massive death toll alone is proof that Lt. Col. Muvunyi did nothing to protect people, but he is accused of much worse than negligence. Muvunyi had at his disposal a loyal, well-trained fighting force who implemented his orders and communicated them to others. He was known to the local people as the commander of the genocide in Butare.

Butare was the only region of Rwanda which remained calm in the second week of April, while elsewhere members of the Tutsi ethnic group were being hunted down and murdered. The people of the south were traditionally political moderates who had been marginalised under the former regime of President Habyarimana. Anti-Tutsi sentiment was less easy to whip up here and for this reason the implementation of the genocide in Butare depended upon the involvement of the military. The main army base was at the Junior Officers' School<sup>1</sup> (ESO), in Ngoma, the urban commune of Butare. Muvunyi took control of the institution in early April 1994, when the previous commander was promoted to the position of acting chief of staff.<sup>2</sup> Almost all the regular FAR soldiers were at the frontline fighting a war with the rebel Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) so, although ESO was a training school for soldiers and gendarmes, they were the most important force in Butare at the time. Classes were suspended and the ESO officers and cadets took on active duties. Soldiers and gendarmes from Camp Ngoma, a nearby military camp, which also came under Muvunyi's supervision, were sent into action. To boost the strength of his troops, Muvunyi arranged for reinforcements to be brought to the region before the killing began. Then he despatched soldiers to strategic points around the town of Butare and outside it.

Above all, the soldiers fought to implement the genocide. With guns and grenades, they were able to kill thousands of Tutsis in a brief period. From 20 April soldiers came out in strength onto the streets to lead the slaughter. They set up roadblocks, stopping all passers-by to confirm their ethnic identity, then killing the Tutsis among them. At the University of Butare, they assisted groups of extremist students to find and murder Tutsis. A group of soldiers were sent to the hospital in Butare to guard it, but their mission was not to protect the sick and wounded, or the refugees who gathered there. By night the soldiers killed both patients and medical staff who were identified as Tutsis.

In the rural areas, the task of the soldiers was different. Here they helped to mobilise and organise local people and to supply them with arms and ammunition as well as leading them into massacres. When they realised they had become targets, Tutsis had gathered in large numbers on hills, in churches, commune offices, stadiums and schools. In some of these places the refugees were able to fight off their attackers for a few days, but their only weapons were stones and they were no match for the skilled, armed soldiers who were sent in to defeat them. Until early July 1994, terror ruled Butare; massacre after massacre was committed by the army in collaboration with the interahamwe, the police, local government administrators, civilians and Burundian refugees. In the space of a few days, the heaps of corpses all over the region of Butare matched those already piled up elsewhere in the country. The strict chain of command which operates in the military makes it certain that each time soldiers under

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<sup>1</sup> L'Ecole des Sous Officiers.

<sup>2</sup> Former ESO commander, Colonel Marcel Gatsinzi, became chief of staff after the plane which was carrying former President Juvénal Habyarimana crashed, killing all on board, including the previous chief of staff, Major-General Déogratias Nsabimana. This illustrates just how high up the military and political hierarchy the commander of ESO was. Col. Gatsinzi later returned to Butare after he had been replaced by Major-General Augustin Bizimungu, but Muvunyi continued as the commander of ESO.

Muvunyi's control killed, they did so either on his direct orders or with his knowledge. As the most senior military representative in Butare, Muvunyi must be held accountable for these atrocities.

This issue of *Witness to Genocide* is based upon over 150 interviews with some of those who took part in massacres and other killings in Butare, as well as with witnesses and survivors. We have confined our investigation to Butare, but we are also aware that numerous crimes were committed by soldiers under Muvunyi's orders in Gikongoro and hope that others will document them. The research gathered in the course of more than a year, all over the préfecture of Butare and elsewhere in the country, provides evidence of countless murders. As well as deploying soldiers and arms to carry out the mass killings, there are also cases in which Muvunyi is said to have singled out certain Tutsis to be killed; some were taken to ESO and subsequently murdered. Muvunyi is also accused of sanctioning the distribution of arms and ammunition from ESO to known génocidaires and to the communes which had a sufficient number of gendarmes and army reservists to carry out the killings on their own. And, when RPA gains looked set to bring down the genocidal interim government, Muvunyi incited residents of Butare to "take their revenge on the Tutsis," and met with local officials throughout Butare to ensure support for his message.

Muvunyi collaborated with leading civilian and military authorities during the genocide. A number of them are currently in the custody of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which was established by the United Nations to bring the most important genocide suspects to justice. Other individuals who worked with Muvunyi are in prison in Rwanda; a few of them have been convicted of genocide and sentenced to death or given life imprisonment and others await trial. In this report, certain of Muvunyi's soldiers are repeatedly accused of being at the forefront of the killings. One of the most feared was Muvunyi's deputy, Captain Ildephonse Nizeyimana, who was in charge of intelligence and operations. Other ESO soldiers whose names are often recalled are Lt. Gakwerere; Sub-Lt. Modeste Gatsinzi; Lt. Ildephonse Hategekimana, alias "Bikomagu", the commander of Camp Ngoma; Lt. Fabien Niyonteze and Corporal Anastase Rutanhubwoba.

*African Rights* has heard individual stories of suffering told by the Tutsi residents of Butare and Hutu women married to Tutsis, as well as confessions of genocide from soldiers, former militiamen and civilians. In their testimonies, they reveal details which magnify the horror of the episode and increase our knowledge of Lt. Col. Muvunyi's actions and attitudes. But this is by no means the first time that the broad sweep of the charges against Muvunyi have been publicly stated. The survivors of Butare have long been ready to testify against the army commander. *African Rights* first became aware of Muvunyi's conduct during the genocide itself in 1994 and named him in a report about the genocide and its perpetrators.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, like many other prominent genocide suspects, Muvunyi found exile outside Rwanda and has been evading justice for nearly six years. He came to Britain in March 1998 and he and his family have been living in London as refugees.

Since Muvunyi's arrival in Britain, there have been a series of revelations about his past in the British media, based upon interviews with Rwandese genocide survivors and perpetrators who say he led the genocide in Butare. Muvunyi's background and whereabouts were first exposed by *The Sunday Times* in December 1998.<sup>4</sup> It has taken a long time for the relevant judicial authorities to act, but finally Muvunyi is facing extradition proceedings to the ICTR which is based in Arusha, Tanzania. Lt. Col. Muvunyi has now been formally charged with genocide and crimes against humanity. It seems that justice may finally have caught up with him.

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<sup>3</sup> See African Rights, *Death, Despair and Defiance*, Revised Edition, 1995, p. 114 and p. 337.

<sup>4</sup> Jon Swain, "On the trail of the child killers", *The Sunday Times*, 6 December 1998.

## Background: The 1994 Genocide

The slaughter of up to a million Tutsis in Rwanda in only 100 days was one of the worst episodes of violence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It happened when, on 6 April 1994, the plane carrying Rwanda's leader, President Juvénal Habyarimana, was shot down killing all on board. The country was at the time embroiled in negotiations to resolve a protracted war between the government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), a force of mainly exiled Tutsi Rwandese refugees. Power had been concentrated exclusively in the hands of a Hutu elite since independence. Its members were prepared to go to any lengths to maintain their privileges, which were coming under threat from the multiparty system established in 1990, as well as from the war against the RPF and the terms of the emerging peace deal.

The death of the President provided the pretext for these extremists to unleash a campaign of murder, intended to wipe out all Tutsis in Rwanda. The genocide threw off mounting challenges to the old order at one stroke. By killing Tutsis it diminished the main support base of the RPF, while bringing opposition parties into an anti-Tutsi alliance. Leading Hutu politicians seen as too moderate were among the first to be assassinated. By inciting or forcing enormous numbers of ordinary Hutus to take part, the architects of the genocide intended to forge a new Hutu unity, which would be indelible; stained in blood. The campaign was founded on decades of discrimination and abuses against Tutsis and fear of the RPF, which had been largely manufactured by the government and its media. It found overwhelming support all over the country. Every sector of society participated directly in huge numbers. Bodies were piled in tower-like heaps by the roadside or thrown into mass graves and rivers. The country was transformed into a vision of hell.

The leaders of the genocide included not only politicians, soldiers, policemen and local government officials, but doctors, teachers, priests and university professors. Women, the old and even children took an active part; the educated as well as the peasantry were enthusiastic supporters. People were killed in the most horrific ways imaginable, often by their closest neighbours or even relatives using traditional weapons. But the largest numbers died in well-organised massacres in churches, hospitals, schools, commune offices and stadiums. These were strictly military operations, carried out by soldiers, gendarmes and militiamen, often under the orders of commanders of the former FAR—men like Lt. Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi.<sup>5</sup>

## The Accusations Against Lt. Col. Muvunyi: A Summary

- Before the killings began in Butare, Muvunyi requested men and arms from Kigali as reinforcements. On the evening of 19 April, he sent local officials to welcome a planeload of around 800 soldiers. The plane made two flights and also brought weapons, equipment and ammunition. Muvunyi is also said to have gone to the neighbouring commune of Gikongoro to bring back militiamen.
- On 20 April, Muvunyi held a “security” meeting at ESO, making clear his belief that the people of Butare had been “soft on Tutsis” and that they should join in the genocide that was taking place elsewhere in the country. From that day on, soldiers began killing in Butare town, rounding up Tutsis at roadblocks and seeking out well-known Tutsi intellectuals and businessmen. The town became a battlezone, with soldiers using guns and grenades to kill anyone they identified as Tutsi.
- ESO was swiftly established as a command centre for the genocide. Muvunyi authorised the distribution of arms and ammunition to local government officials who were having difficulty in eliminating the Tutsi population in their areas and sent in his soldiers to lead the slaughter. He also received requests for assistance from officials seeking to protect Tutsis, but these were turned down. A number of people were brought to the army base and detained there or at Ngoma police station; most of them were murdered, but some survived and have given accounts of their experiences. In the words of one man who was arrested by soldiers and taken to ESO, and witnessed Muvunyi's influence at close hand: “Muvunyi had the power of life and death over the Tutsis. He gave the orders.”

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<sup>5</sup> One of the widespread misconceptions about the genocide is that the killings were carried out mainly with machetes by interahamwe thugs and civilians.

- The Tutsi students at the National University of Rwanda in Butare were immediately targeted. Any who were on the university campus from 19 April were in grave danger—ESO soldiers had sealed it off with roadblocks. Extremist students helped the soldiers to search for Tutsis and to beat and torture them. Then soldiers took them to the forest below the university, near the ESO barracks, and shot them.
- Muvunyi sent a contingent of soldiers to “guard” the University Hospital. Their real purpose in being there was apparent to all. They kept a close watch on all the patients, many of them wounded Tutsis, and the refugees who came hoping to find safety at the hospital. By night, they selected Tutsi staff and patients to be killed. When there were only a handful of Tutsis left, they declared the hospital would only treat wounded soldiers of the FAR.
- In Matyazo sector, Ngoma commune, Tutsis gathered at the health centre and primary school and the local councillor tried to protect them. But on the evening of 20 April, an ESO corporal brought orders from Muvunyi. The councillor recalls the letter he was given, signed by Muvunyi. It said: “that I must hand over all the Tutsis to be killed, and if I resisted, they would kill me with the Tutsis.” The soldiers kept up a barrage of gunfire all that night and they continued the killings for three days until “no Tutsi was left alive” in Matyazo.
- On 20 April, Muvunyi instructed the Tutsis of Tumba sector in Ngoma to go to Kabakobwa hill. There were around 8,000 of them there when, on 22 April about 30 heavily-armed gendarmes launched an attack with interahamwe, civilians and communal policemen. They shot and threw grenades at the refugees for hours. Most of them were killed that day, but in the days that followed Muvunyi made sure there would be no survivors. A communal policeman who was serving as a bodyguard to the bourgmestre, a key accomplice of Muvunyi’s, was there when Muvunyi visited Kabakobwa. He claims that when they came across some women and children who had survived the massacre, Muvunyi called the interahamwe to separate the boys from the girls and women, then said: “All the boys must die, then you can each take a woman or a young girl to rape. We will kill them afterwards.”
- Muvunyi made a particular effort to ensure that certain Tutsis did not survive. He singled out the novices at the Benedictine monastery at Gihindamuyaga in commune Mbazi. On 22 April he went to the commune with three of his own soldiers and enlisted the help of an interahamwe leader, Warrant Officer Emmanuel Rekeraho. Rekeraho admits he took two Tutsi clergymen from the monastery by force, on Muvunyi’s orders. They were killed the same day. Rekeraho also tells how Muvunyi patrolled around Sovu in Huye commune while interahamwe, soldiers and civilians massacred Tutsis who had sought refuge at the health centre of Sovu convent. The arms and ammunition for the killings were also provided by ESO.
- Soldiers from ESO and Camp Ngoma were sent out to rural areas in army vehicles to begin massacring Tutsis who had gathered in their thousands in public buildings, on hills and in churches. On 19 April, ESO soldiers arrived in a minibus to take part in the slaughter of Tutsis at the commune office and school in Kigembe commune. In Ntyazo commune, there were so many Tutsis that the local killers had to ask Muvunyi for help. According to a confessed leader of the massacre, Mathieu Ndahimana, they received a rapid response: “Lt. Col. Muvunyi, sent some gendarmes in a blue van, as well as all the ammunition we needed. More than 6,000 Tutsis died that day.”
- In Runyinya commune, on 21 April, soldiers from Camp Ngoma exhausted their ammunition upon a “sea of people.” The massacre, which took place at the Catholic Parish of Karama, claimed the lives of more than 65,000 people, as the corpses which were discovered later prove. Muvunyi made no effort to stop the killing in Karama. Nor did he give any support to the Tutsis in commune Ndora—26,000 bodies were found on the hills there after the genocide. These included the victims of a massacre on 24 April. ESO soldiers again participated in the killing. Yet, the day before the

massacre, when the bourgmestre of Ndora had gone to ESO to ask Muvunyi to send troops to keep the peace, he was told: "I can't spare you a single soldier."

- The bourgmestre of Mbazi commune claims he too tried to get Muvunyi to provide security for the Tutsis who were sheltering in a stadium, but that he was ignored. What is certain is that Warrant Officer Gatwaza from Camp Ngoma was at the forefront of the killers on 25 April. Soldiers also took the lead in a massacre on 27 April in Muyaga commune and 28 April in Mugusa commune. Clearly Muvunyi made no effort to prevent the violence on any of these occasions and the strict command structure of the military makes it certain that at a minimum he condoned their actions.
- There were some 1300 refugees at the Groupe Scolaire, a Catholic secondary school in Butare town. First the interahamwe and civilians sought to abduct about 100 refugees, but were dissuaded by bribery. Then an ESO soldier, Sub-Lt. Modeste Gatsinzi, accused Brother Célestin Ngendahimana, the headmaster, of harbouring RPF rebels. Ngendahimana telephoned Muvunyi to ask for protection and was promised help. The next day, 29 April, ESO soldiers arrived, but they came to carry out a massacre, led by Gatsinzi.
- On 30 April soldiers from Camp Ngoma massacred refugees at the Parish of Ngoma; again Muvunyi offered no assistance to the victims. But that same day he did intervene to ensure the deaths of the children who were being looked after by the nuns at the Benebikira convent in Buye. Soldiers came to the convent with a search warrant which the nuns say was signed by Muvunyi. They loaded the Tutsis, including the children, on lorries and drove them away to be killed.
- In May and June, Muvunyi called upon civilians to complete the genocide and to join the fight against the RPA rebels, which the FAR was losing. His speech given at the end of May in Nyaruhengeri was typical. A local councillor recalled that Muvunyi called upon people to: "exterminate all the accomplices, and all the Tutsi women and children who had been hidden." He also warned that "any Hutu who hides a Tutsi will be killed with his entire family." Muvunyi visited a number of the rural communes of Butare to encourage civilians to search for and kill all remaining Tutsis. He set up programmes to give civilians military training and handed out guns and grenades, which were used against ordinary Tutsis, as well as against the rebels, until the FAR was defeated in early July 1994.

## The Lessons of the Muvunyi Case

Muvunyi was arrested in his home in London on 5 February 2000 on a warrant issued by the ICTR for genocide and crimes against humanity. He was living in Lewisham, south-east London, as a refugee, supported by substantial state benefits.<sup>6</sup> His wife, Esther Murekatete and three children arrived in Britain before him, and somehow managed to claim refugee status. This despite the reality that the relatives of most leading génocidaires continue to live undisturbed in Rwanda. Muvunyi was accepted into the country on the basis that he is the spouse of a refugee. Refugees are entitled to family reunion and neither spouses nor dependent children are subject to an independent assessment. Muvunyi and his family were granted temporary political asylum until 2002. Muvunyi does not appear to have changed his name or to have falsified his application in other ways in order to obtain entry into Britain.

Rwandese genocide suspects have sometimes benefited from political protection in African and European countries,<sup>7</sup> but there has never been any suggestion that Muvunyi has done so in Britain. If anything, his stay here seems to have been facilitated by an initial error in accepting his asylum claim, followed by an inexplicable degree of caution and hesitancy on the part of the Home Office. It is understandable that, having funded and supported the ICTR, Britain preferred to hand Muvunyi over to the UN body, as is now likely to happen, than to deal with the matter itself. However, the ICTR has been labouring under a large caseload and has only recently begun to overcome a poor start to its work. It took more than a year after Muvunyi's presence in Britain became public knowledge for the ICTR to present a case against him. Although there are now good grounds for hope that Lt. Col. Muvunyi will be brought before the ICTR, there was never any guarantee that this would be the case. In this time the British government apparently did little or nothing to advance the course of justice, and Muvunyi has continued to draw upon state funds for financial support. This indifferent attitude to the news that a suspected mass murderer was being treated as a refugee does not fit with government promises to clamp down on war criminals.<sup>8</sup>

The fact that a former military commander from a country known to have recently experienced a genocide could slip so easily through the immigration net underscores the need for much greater attentiveness to the problem of Rwandese suspects living in exile. Despite the long period since the end of the 1994 genocide, there is still insufficient international co-operation on the issue; known génocidaires continue to live outside Rwanda without facing prosecution. Although Lt. Col. Muvunyi clearly does, not all genocide suspects living abroad fit within the judicial strategy of the ICTR, which prioritises the prosecution of the "big fish"—the architects and leaders of the genocide. There are some less prominent individuals accused of horrific crimes who are living in freedom in Europe and whose cases the ICTR might never be able to get to because of its workload.<sup>9</sup>

The governments of a number of countries have apparently been waiting to see whether the ICTR will act, rather than investigating allegations themselves. A desire to pass the buck where Rwandese genocide suspects and other human rights abusers are concerned will not further justice on a global level. In the case of Rwanda, the huge number of people who took part in murdering up to a million people in only 100 days represent an unprecedented burden for justice. This makes it necessary for all avenues to be explored. There is every need to respond decisively as well as with care in situations like the one the Muvunyi case has presented. Britain has an obligation to ensure that those who arrive on its shores with a history of committing serious human rights abuses are brought to justice. In some cases, this will require that such persons are deported to their home countries, although the existence of the death penalty in Rwanda means that extradition there is not an option. But there is no reason, for instance, why those accused of major human rights abuses in other countries should not be tried in the countries where they are arrested. Britain demonstrated its acceptance of this principle by

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<sup>6</sup> When he appeared before a magistrates' court on 7 February, his lawyer explained that Muvunyi was receiving four different kinds of benefits; income support, housing, incapacity and disability.

<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, General Augusto Pinochet has enjoyed such support from certain politicians and newspapers in Britain.

<sup>8</sup> In a lengthy discussion of the Muvunyi case, journalist Ann Treneman notes that Prime Minister Tony Blair "said in an interview in April that 'there is no hiding place' for war criminals, *The Times*, 16 November 1999.

<sup>9</sup> African Rights has in particular investigated the cases of several churchpeople who are accused of genocide, but who have so far managed, through the network of the church, to evade prosecution in Europe. See Charge Sheet No. 2, *Father Anastase Seromba, A Parish Priest in Florence, Italy*, November 1999; Witness to Genocide Issue 11, *Obstruction to Justice, The Nuns of Sovu in Belgium*, February 2000 and Witness to Genocide Issue 9, *Father Wenceslas Munyeshyaka: In the Eyes of the Survivors of Sainte Famille*, April 1999.

bringing General Augusto Pinochet to court, even if the results were ultimately disappointing. The recent example set by Switzerland shows the speed and efficacy by which justice can be achieved where the political will exists. When the judicial authorities there discovered the presence in the country of Fulgence Niyonteze, a Rwandese bourgmestre (mayor) accused of organising the genocide in commune Mushubati, Gitarama, they promptly prosecuted him, sentencing him to life imprisonment in April 1999.<sup>10</sup>

In Britain, the Home Office, policymakers and organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers ought to be able to learn from the mistakes made in the Muvunyi case—exactly how these occurred is not yet clear. It would, however, be wrong to generalise from this example or to use it to argue for stricter controls on immigration. Thousands of people have fled persecution everywhere in the world and found a welcome, a safe haven and practical support in Britain and it is essential that they should continue to be able to do so. Moreover, the necessary legislation to prevent human rights violators from being considered as refugees already exists. In the first place, Britain has obligations, under the Geneva Convention of 1957, to take action against war crimes suspects. Secondly, under the 1951 Refugee Convention, to which the United Kingdom is a signatory, a person is excluded from the protection of the convention if they have committed very serious offences<sup>11</sup>. There is no requirement that the person should have been convicted of the offences. Genocide suspects are clearly one class of offenders the framers of the convention wished to exclude. Although there is no clear precedent dealing specifically with the spouses or dependants of refugees, it is logical that the restriction should apply equally to them.

In the light of this and other similar cases<sup>12</sup>, it would seem appropriate to give more thought to how the Refugee Convention may best be enforced and to draft clear guidelines, taking into consideration related international human rights legislation, as well as allowing for the constraints which might affect the nationals of some countries.<sup>13</sup> There was no immediate effort by Britain to observe the basic principles of international human rights law when the accusations against Lt. Col. Muvunyi were made public. In this respect the ICTR decision to bring charges against the army commander appears to have helped the British government out of an awkward position, when criticism in the media of its paralysis was mounting. This is a reprieve for Britain, but it is hardly the end of the matter. It is important that the government prepare for the likelihood that other genocide suspects or war criminals, will at one time or another, seek asylum in Britain. Even more urgent is the need to tackle the cases of other known human rights abusers already in the country. Rooting out these few known criminals can and must be achieved without prejudicing the cases of the many genuine asylum seekers who so desperately need support.

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<sup>10</sup> In a contrary example, the French government pursued a case against parish priest, Father Wenceslas Munyeshyaka, with reluctance. There have been long delays and he has benefited from the wholehearted support of the Catholic Church in France. But a recent decision has opened the way for a trial in France which has not yet begun.

<sup>11</sup> See Article 1 (F).

<sup>12</sup> A similar issue was raised by African Rights in a previous report, *John Yusufu Munyakazi: The Killer Behind the Refugee*, Witness to Genocide, Issue 6, June 1997.

<sup>13</sup> For instance were the accused able to show that they might suffer torture or inhuman and degrading treatment, in contravention of the European Convention for Human Rights, it may require the host country to investigate and bring a prosecution.

## A Profile of the Commander

Lt. Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi was born in Byumba on 19 August 1953. His father's name is Simon Sekabwa and his mother's name is Anastasie Kantarama. He joined the army in August 1973 after he had completed his secondary education at St. André College in Kigali. He was promoted from major to lieutenant colonel in late 1993. Initially, he was in charge of Instructions and Operations at ESO, but he was appointed commander in April 1994 and remained in post until the genocide was over. In early July, with the defeat of the FAR by the RPA, Muvunyi fled the country and made his way to Cameroon. From there he travelled to Belgium and then to Britain.

Former colleagues and other individuals who knew Muvunyi well have made damning statements about his role in the genocide. Survivors and witnesses have added their views. They claim that in April 1994 Muvunyi was in complete control, commanding the slaughter in Butare with confidence. *African Rights* interviewed several soldiers who served under Muvunyi at ESO during the genocide. They all blame him for ordering and sanctioning their actions and none of them could recall a single initiative or even a word from him to condemn or discourage, let alone stop the killings. Warrant Officer Pierre-Claver Nayigiziki argued that Muvunyi had a pivotal role in the genocide.

Muvunyi must bear the responsibility for all the killings perpetrated by soldiers in Butare and Gikongoro. He should also answer for the killings committed by the gendarmes, as anything to do with the maintenance of law and order had to be authorised by the préfet and the local commander. The commander also had the right to order the gendarmes out to restore law and order.<sup>14</sup>

Sub-Lt. Modeste Gatsinzi is accused of carrying out massacres under Muvunyi's orders.

Muvunyi was the army commander for the whole of Butare and Gikongoro. Nothing was done without his knowledge. He took part in the meetings where the killings were organised. He was the one who authorised the issue of firearms. He has a lot of explaining to do about what happened in the region.<sup>15</sup>

Sub-Lt. Pierre Bizimana was given orders by Muvunyi to report to him directly on 20 April. Many of his colleagues singled Bizimana out as a soldier who played a particularly active role in the genocide. Bizimana told the BBC:

He cannot deny he knew what was happening. Muvunyi was a well-respected commander. I do not know of a single time when soldiers disobeyed orders given by his officers... Army rules and regulations were observed. Soldiers received orders via the chain of command which was functioning normally.<sup>16</sup>

In a subsequent interview with *African Rights*, Bizimana said:

Muvunyi should also be held responsible for any crimes his soldiers may have committed while on duty, because he had the power to authorise the departure of any vehicles on army operations.<sup>17</sup>

Clément Ntamakemwa was a cadet sergeant aged 21 in 1994.

It was the ordinary soldiers, older than us, who used to leave ESO to kill the Tutsis, helped by the militia. They certainly received their orders from Muvunyi. Muvunyi was the commanding officer but did nothing to discourage the massacre of the Tutsis. He did not hold even one meeting to condemn what was going on. He must have been in favour of it.<sup>18</sup>

Méthode Kirezi, a medical assistant at ESO, confirmed that "there was not a single meeting to discourage the soldiers from killing."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Interviewed 11 June 1999.

<sup>15</sup> Interviewed 17 November 1999.

<sup>16</sup> Newsnight, "Children of Benebikira", April 1999.

<sup>17</sup> Interviewed 17 November 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Interviewed 9 February 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Interviewed 17 February 2000.



Warrant Officer Ambroise Biseruka acknowledged that some senior and powerful soldiers, in particular Captain Nizeyimana, took initiatives independently of Muvunyi, but Muvunyi did nothing to register disapproval of their actions.

The whole country had been brainwashed. People did not necessarily ask Muvunyi to authorise everything they did. But it is true that as commander of the military zone of Butare-Gikongoro, all the orders came from him. But some soldiers, such as Captain Nizeyimana, could take the initiative and act independently of Muvunyi.

Muvunyi used to tour all the communes holding meetings with the bourgmestres about training young people in civil defence. But we know that those young people did more than defend their communities; they killed people as well. I was in charge of finding accommodation for people displaced by the war, especially soldiers' families who had fled the RPF advance. I noticed that Col. Muvunyi was always driving around the area.

The interahamwe may have killed the most people in other areas, but in Butare it was mainly the soldiers who did the killing, especially those called "new formula ESO."<sup>20</sup>

Warrant Officer Faustin Ndagijimana normally lived in a military camp in Byumba. But as he was on leave in his native region of Butare on 6 April, he came under the command of Camp Ngoma during the genocide.

As Muvunyi was the commander of Butare during the genocide, he must be held responsible for all the massacres committed by the soldiers who reported to him.<sup>21</sup>

Warrant Officer Emmanuel Rekeraho was dismissed from the army in 1976 and was a driver in 1994. But he immediately joined the "civil defence" and became the undisputed leader of the forces of genocide in commune Huye in Butare. Rekeraho acknowledges the crimes he has committed<sup>22</sup> and in several interviews with *African Rights* and journalists, he has been consistent in his denunciation of Muvunyi. As detailed later in this report, Rekeraho had many encounters with Muvunyi during the genocide. He knew Muvunyi quite well and said: "even if he was in a group of a 1000 people at night, I could recognise him." In a long televised interview with the BBC in November 1999<sup>23</sup>, he spelt out Muvunyi's role in 1994.

I knew him before [the genocide]. I began close contact with Muvunyi in April; that's when we began talking and exchanging views. Later, when I joined the civil defence I worked with him in different capacities, like meetings or through the orders he gave me. In fact I was under his command. I considered him as my superior because he was the one who gave me orders. We were together in places where roadblocks were set up. We attended meetings in the office of the préfet every morning. We were also together when we visited communes to train the young people. We went together to communes to address public meetings, together with Lt. Col. Alphonse Nteziryayo. There is no way that Muvunyi can deny that I know him. If he says that he doesn't know me, I can get over 20 witnesses who can prove that we know each other.

It was Muvunyi who gave me the order and three soldiers in civilian dress, armed with pistols, to go to Gihindamuyaga monastery to look for Tutsis. Muvunyi was in charge of the security of the people of Butare and Gikongoro and their properties. He was in Butare when people were killed. In some instances he was physically present. For example, when the Sovu health centre was attacked with bullets and grenades, Muvunyi was patrolling there in a jeep full of soldiers. Couldn't he see what was happening? He was patrolling with soldiers when civilians were being killed. It seemed he was supervising. [Muvunyi and the soldiers] were armed with guns and grenades. If they wished, they could have even fired in the air in order to stop the killings.

Muvunyi was aware of what was happening in Butare. Otherwise people would not have died to such an extent. As the operational commander of Butare and Gikongoro, why didn't he give the army and the gendarmerie the order to defend civilians? Soldiers and gendarmes were killing the people they were meant to protect; that is when I noticed his cruelty.

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<sup>20</sup> Interviewed 29 November 1999.

<sup>21</sup> Interviewed 27 May 1999.

<sup>22</sup> See *Witness to Genocide*, Issue 11, op.cit. Rekeraho's trial in Rwanda ended in August 1999 and he was given the death penalty.

<sup>23</sup> Part of the interview was shown on the 9 O'Clock News, BBC 1, 23 December 1999.

The BBC journalist pointed out that Muvunyi might try to argue that “the people and soldiers who participated in the massacres were beyond his control.” Rekeraho gave the following response.

That would be a lie. There was no way soldiers could be beyond the control of someone who was the operational commander, with a rank of lieutenant colonel, and go on a killing spree in all 20 communes of Butare. Not even two or three of them were arrested. That cannot be explained away. Even I, who killed people, he could have shot me in the leg or arm and put me in prison.

Asked if he had a message for the British government about Muvunyi, Rekeraho commented:

What I am telling, not only the British but rather the whole world, is that in 1994 Muvunyi was responsible for the lives of the people of Butare. He has to account for what happened in Butare from the death of Habyarimana to the time we fled in July.

Asked if he had a message for Muvunyi himself, Rekeraho said:

Tell Muvunyi that an old man, Rekeraho, a warrant officer, says that you know about the killings in Butare because you were the commander of security in Butare and the operational commander of Butare and Gikongoro. You were not ill; you had a jeep and soldiers who escorted you. If it was not you who prepared the killings in Butare, why don't you come and explain the situation to the Rwandese?

When the journalist warned Rekeraho that Muvunyi could accuse him of “vengeance or say that you just want someone else to suffer the same way you are suffering”, Rekeraho replied:

What I am saying against Muvunyi I am saying with confidence and strong belief because it happened in broad daylight. It happened in a préfecture with educated people. Butare is the biggest préfecture in Rwanda. In Gihindamuyaga, the white priests are still there. Among the eleven students [at the monastery], nine survived. What I am saying can be substantiated by these people. In addition, Muvunyi was the operational commander of Butare even before Habyarimana's death. He was in Butare until July 1994 when we fled. If Muvunyi can show that he was not in Butare during that period, then I will accept the crimes.

Rekeraho was also interviewed by Ann Treneman of *The Times*.

Muvunyi was a leader, a commander. The people were armed with machetes and traditional weapons. He had soldiers with grenades, ammunition and guns. He could have stopped the killings. Why did he do not do this? Muvunyi took an oath to protect the people. If he saw people being killed, why didn't he stop this?

The soldiers were part of the killers involved in the killing at Sovu health centre. They had been given direct orders from Muvunyi as the commander. As the head of operations, nothing could be done without his knowing. Muvunyi was supervising the killings in the whole préfecture. He cannot deny that he was involved in the killings in the whole préfecture. The reason that I say he was giving orders to kill is that he never gave orders not to kill.

If Muvunyi did not punish his soldiers for killing Tutsis, it was not because of an aversion to discipline. Sergeant Josée Kabatesi recalled an incident when he noticed that some of his soldiers had got their priorities wrong.

During one roll call, Muvunyi told off the ESO soldiers for looting property. He discharged John and Corporal Nyandwi Mazimpaka; they were said to have looted some TV sets.<sup>24</sup>

Describing Muvunyi as “crafty” Antoine Sibomana, the former bourgmestre of Mbazi, commented:

Muvunyi asked all the bourgmestres to come and ask for soldiers to make their communes more secure. But the soldiers he sent had one specific mission: to kill all the Tutsis.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Interviewed 24 January 2000.

<sup>25</sup> Interviewed 1 June 1999.

Sibomana himself worked closely with Muvunyi's soldiers to carry out a highly successful genocide of Tutsis in Mbazi.

Muvunyi did not lack the authority, the men or the arms to protect lives. In the overwhelming majority of cases, it is clear that he simply chose not to. A few exceptions were made either because the then Bishop of Butare, Mgr Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, paid Muvunyi off or because of family connections. Privat Ngenzi, a businessman, was first detained at ESO and then at the police station where he was beaten regularly by soldiers. He was among a handful of people who were spared by Muvunyi, at the request of Bishop Gahamanyi.

Why didn't they kill me? Colonel Muvunyi gave orders that I should not be killed, because Bishop Gahamanyi had intervened on my behalf with Muvunyi. The public prosecutor and Colonel Muvunyi phoned Butare police station and ordered my release.

During his stay at the police station, Privat came to realise the power Muvunyi held.

I saw for myself that Col. Muvunyi had the power of life and death over the Tutsis. He gave the orders.

Some of the Tutsis who survived in Save, commune Shyanda, also owe their lives to Muvunyi's intervention. Sr. Félicien, the bursar at a convent in Save, knew Muvunyi and appealed to him for protection. He asked her to draw up a list of people to be spared and came personally to verify the list and to sign it. Aline Ingabire, 23, now working as a secretary, was fortunate to escape death as a result.

The soldiers kept coming to check whether anyone else's name had been added to the list. I myself was not on it, but I did my best to get my name included. The interahamwe arrived on 1 June. They asked Sr. Félicien to make everyone leave the building. When everyone was outside, they began reading the list out. They killed about 15 people who were not on the list. Someone had the same name as me. They read the name twice; the second time I answered to the name. That's how I escaped being killed.<sup>26</sup>

Close to the convent is the Catholic Parish of Save. A group of Tutsi priests there did their best to assist the refugees. One of the priests spoke of Muvunyi's visit to Save the day he came to check and sign the list at the convent.

Muvunyi ran into Fr. Justin Furaha of our parish. Fr. Furaha told him that we too had refugees. Muvunyi asked us to draw up a list and to get it signed by the bourgmestre. Whenever the interahamwe came, we used to show them the list and they would leave.<sup>27</sup>

A few other people were allowed to live because of their friendship with Muvunyi's family. Anastasie Mukeshimana's husband, Félix Kubwimana, was godfather to Muvunyi's daughter, Raissa. When her son became seriously ill on 20 April, Anastasie rushed him to the University Hospital where she stayed until 2 May. ESO soldiers conducted a search of the hospital on that day and by 3 May most of the Tutsis at the hospital had been killed.

On 2 May, Muvunyi's daughter, Raissa, brought me a message not to spend that night there. So Muvunyi was aware of the fate awaiting the Tutsis at the University Hospital. Muvunyi warned me in his message to leave the hospital by 4:00 p.m. at the very latest. He even provided me with transport, an army jeep. My son, Robert, had not yet recovered; Muvunyi's wife, Esther, urged me to let him continue his treatment at ESO where she was staying. Robert stayed at ESO until June.<sup>28</sup>

Muvunyi believes evidence that he saved some Tutsis will absolve him, as he made clear when he spoke with Jon Swain of *The Sunday Times*.

The colonel protests that he did not co-operate in the genocide. He insists that he sought to prevent or halt the killing, protecting and saving the lives of a number of Tutsis who would otherwise now be dead.

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<sup>26</sup> Interviewed 21 October 1999.

<sup>27</sup> Interviewed 22 April 1999.

<sup>28</sup> Interviewed 20 October 1999.

He provided military escorts, he says, to take Monseigneur Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, the retired Bishop of Butare, and several of his priests through the machete-wielding roadblocks where a lot of the killing was being done.

But as Swain pointed out, this line of argument is neither novel nor convincing.

Virtually everyone involved – even the small, inner circle of Hutu extremists who instigated the killings – saved some Tutsi lives at one point or another and are now using that fact to excuse the horrors of the rest of what happened.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> “On the trail of the child killers” *op. cit.*

## A SOLDIER'S GENOCIDE THE SLAUGHTER IN BUTARE TOWN

The killing of Tutsis and the burning of their homes had begun in some of the rural communes of Butare on 7 April—especially those on the border with Gikongoro. But there were efforts to contain the violence and to punish the culprits and, for the most part, the region stood apart from the rest of Rwanda as a zone of tolerance. Butare was one of the most heavily populated préfectures in Rwanda, with a high percentage of Tutsis, who mixed and married freely with their Hutu neighbours. The former President, Juvénal Habyarimana, a native of Gisenyi, gave economic and political privileges to fellow northerners and regarded the people of Butare with suspicion. Butare was known as the most politically liberal préfecture, and extremist groups like the Committee for the Defence of the Republic (CDR) found few supporters there. One resident of the area, Jean Bimenyimana, a plumber from Ndora, commented:

We used to be on good terms with the Tutsis. So it took quite a long time after the President's death for any problems to start, even though the genocide was already in full swing in other préfectures. If soldiers had not been involved in the killings, there would have been no genocide here in Butare. The soldiers' crimes were encouraged by the political parties and the civilian authorities.<sup>30</sup>

After Habyarimana's death, the préfet of Butare, Jean-Baptiste Habyarimana—the only Tutsi one in the country at the time—took an energetic lead in promoting security. He did all he could to prevent the violence from seeping across the borders with neighbouring regions and he was successful for a time. He managed to defuse tension, reassure the frightened and to encourage peaceful co-existence. Despite the imposition of a nation-wide curfew, he set aside specific days when people could visit markets for provisions. People were aware of what was happening in the rest of the country, as refugees arrived in large numbers from elsewhere. But the residents of Butare remained confident that they would avoid the fate of the rest of the country, as they had done during bouts of ethnic violence in the past. The relative tranquillity in Butare and the measures taken by the préfet made it a magnet for those who felt insecure. Tens of thousands of Tutsis fleeing the genocide in Kigali, Greater Kigali, Gikongoro and Gitarama assembled in Butare. Apart from the belief that they would be safe in Butare, the proximity of Burundi was a reassuring factor.

Lt. Col. Muvunyi initially did nothing to disturb the peace; in fact he apparently worked with the préfet to maintain it. As the former bourgmestre of Kigembe, Symphorien Karekezi recalled, Muvunyi was present at a meeting held on 10 April by the préfet at the Butare headquarters of the MRND.

Colonel Muvunyi told us at that meeting that if anyone had any trouble in their commune, they only had to tell him, and they could count on his support.

At a similar meeting on 11 April, for all the bourgmestres and senior administrators of Butare préfecture, he gave the same assurance.

Muvunyi, however, was simply biding his time. On 19 April, Dr Théodore Sindikubwabo, the president of the interim government, visited the region. He met with military and civilian officials in private. But he also addressed a number of public meetings, in the town of Butare and in the countryside, for example in Gishamvu and his home commune of Ndora. He did not mince his words; he demanded that the residents of Butare take part in the genocide, which was by now well underway in the rest of the country. He openly chastised the people of Butare for behaving as if they were "unconcerned" ("*ntibindeba*") about the situation elsewhere in the country. Radio Rwanda announced the dismissal of the préfet the evening of Sindikubwabo's visit to Butare on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Muvunyi immediately began his genocidal campaign. Almost overnight, the préfecture was convulsed by the slaughter. There is unanimity amongst the residents of Butare—survivors, perpetrators and bystanders

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<sup>30</sup> Interviewed 18 October 1999.

—about what caused the change. According to them, Sindikubwabo incited the genocide in Butare, and the soldiers under Muvunyi’s command launched it.

Sindikubwabo was himself a native of Butare, and it is difficult to exaggerate the significance of his intervention. In the words of Angélique Mukeshimana, a student at the university, “it acted as the ultimatum and a starting point for the implementation of the genocide.” Claudine Mukakibibi, also a student at the university, summed up the view of survivors: “From the time of this speech, it was finished for us. Butare was no longer protected from what was happening elsewhere.” Genocide suspects imprisoned in Rwanda agree. Scholastique Mukabandora, a nurse at the University Hospital, commented: “Sindikubwabo’s speeches here in Butare were nothing but a call to commit genocide.”<sup>31</sup> Simon Nahayo, a blacksmith from one of the communes Sindikubwabo visited, Gishamvu, spoke of the impact on local officials in his area.

On their return, the cellule *responsables* and sector councillors told us that not a single Tutsi was to be spared. Our councillor, Cyuma Kubwimana, found us manning a roadblock and told us: “Not one Tutsi must survive; they killed the president. Anyone who hides them will suffer the consequences.” They said Sindikubwabo had given those orders at the meeting with them. That same evening, the councillor gave boxes of matches to the *responsables*, who then gave them out to us. The next morning, we set the Tutsis’ houses on fire.

The town of Butare is located in Ngoma commune, not far from the ESO camp and the military barracks of Camp Ngoma. Not only was it relatively easy for the military to overwhelm the town in a short space of time, but it was vital to the aims of the genocide. Butare is the largest town in Rwanda, after the capital, Kigali, and it is the country’s academic centre. Educated Tutsis were among the first targets of the killers in 1994. Butare is home to the National University of Rwanda, and the country’s main teaching hospital, the University Hospital of Butare. It is also the seat of many of the country’s oldest and most prestigious schools. In addition to its cathedral, Butare also has an exceptionally large number of Catholic parishes and convents.

Muvunyi led the military campaign to rid Butare town of its Tutsi population. The two military bases, ESO and Camp Ngoma, served as the nerve centre of the genocide operations in Butare. When he heard of the death of President Habyarimana, Muvunyi had established roadblocks all over the town, manned by officer cadets. Then on 20 April, he set his soldiers loose on the people of Butare and they began threatening, beating and killing Tutsis at roadblocks. Alliances were formed with local people who were persuaded by the show of military strength to join in the killings. Meanwhile those people who realised their lives were in danger immediately fled to the hospital, churches and centres of learning in the town. One by one, these places became massacre sites, with ESO soldiers at the forefront of the slaughter, and Muvunyi an ominous presence directing the operation.

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<sup>31</sup> Interviewed 13 July 1999.

## Muvunyi Prepares and Launches the Genocide

*“Muvunyi told us it was not right that people everywhere else were killing Tutsis, while here in Butare we were being so soft on them.”*

Within 48 hours of Sindikubwabo’s visit, tens of thousands of Tutsis had been killed; many of the massacres and assassinations detailed below took place on 20 and 21 April. To facilitate the genocide, one of the first measures was to prevent Tutsis from crossing the border into Burundi. Local government officials co-operated and turned back residents, forcing them to return to their own communes or to assemble in places designated by these officials, making the génocidaires’ task easier.

The men in charge of organising and implementing the genocide in Butare were Lt. Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi; the new préfet, Sylvain Nsabimana his replacement, Col. Alphonse Nteziryayo and the bourgmestre of the urban commune of Ngoma, Joseph Kanyabashi.<sup>32</sup>

### *19 April: Muvunyi Brings in Reinforcements*

Following President Sindikubwabo’s speech, Lt. Col. Muvunyi set out to ensure that the préfecture had the necessary manpower, arms and ammunition to implement a successful genocide without further delay. In a matter of an evening, he was able to organise the transportation of hundreds of soldiers and interahamwe from Kigali and Gikongoro. These actions decided the nature and extent of the killings in Butare. Without them, it is certain that the massacres which followed would neither have been as swift, nor as comprehensive. The intimidating presence of these outsiders, bent on genocide, also helped convince local people to take part.

Aboubacar Ndahimana was a communal policeman in Ngoma and often acted as a bodyguard to the bourgmestre. He witnessed the arrival of the reinforcements and was in no doubt about their importance.

If Muvunyi and his allies had not been in Butare, there would have been no talk of genocide here. The worst thing was that he brought interahamwe from other regions to aid the few we had in Butare in order to exterminate a large number of Tutsis.

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**“It was Muvunyi who incited, organised, commanded and manipulated the local people into committing crimes.”**

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The city was completely calm on 19 April. At about 6:00 p.m., while I was at the commune office, I heard an aeroplane with a strange sounding engine, a kind which had never before landed at Butare airport. It made two trips, bringing over 800 soldiers and interahamwe. They went to ESO to receive their orders on how to carry out their task of extermination. From that time, until the end of the genocide, the commander-in-chief of Butare was Lt. Col. Muvunyi, head of ESO.<sup>33</sup>

Victor Gaparasi, 47, a former soldier, was also a communal policeman in Ngoma. He comes from sector Matyazo in Ngoma. He described what he saw that day.

On 19 April, I went to the commune office and found Col. Muvunyi there with my bourgmestre, Kanyabashi. They said they were waiting for a plane from Kigali. I went down to the airport. The plane arrived, full of soldiers and interahamwe. That plane made two flights. The soldiers and the interahamwe spent the whole day driving around the city identifying all the key places.<sup>34</sup>

François Bwanacyeye, 73, the councillor of sector Tumba in Ngoma, was at the airport in Butare that night, along with other local officials. He said they had been told to wait there by Muvunyi, who said he had requested men and arms from Kigali as backup.

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<sup>32</sup> Nsabimana and Nteziryayo were extradited respectively by Kenya and Burkina Faso to the detention facilities of the ICTR in Arusha. Joseph Kanyabashi, extradited by Belgium, is also in Arusha. There have also been strong and consistent accusations by survivors against Major Cyriaque Habyarabatuma, head of the gendarmerie at the time, and currently an RPA officer.

<sup>33</sup> Interviewed 6 January 1999.

<sup>34</sup> Interviewed 19 February 1999.

Muvunyi asked Kigali for reinforcements, because the people of Butare were reluctant to start killing as he had intended. The Kigali reinforcements of men and equipment came in by plane, which did not stay at our airport for long, but made another round trip. The colonel made us go to the airport to welcome the reinforcements. I myself counted at least 800 men, all of them armed.

The arrival of the plane did not go unnoticed in Butare. Janvier Ntasoni, a self-confessed killer, said he initially thought the plane belonged to the RPF.

On 19 April, a Hercules type plane landed twice at Ngoma airport at around 5:00 p.m. I had not heard the sound of such a plane before. That, and the fact that it landed at the little-used Ngoma airport, made us think that it was bringing in the *Inkotanyi* to attack Butare. We heard later that the plane had brought in some soldiers who had gone into Camp Ngoma.<sup>35</sup>

Muvunyi did not consider the reinforcements from Kigali sufficient, as Bwanacyeye noted.

Muvunyi also went to Gikongoro in search of arms. He came back with some interahamwe experienced in their profession of murder, and some Burundians who had fled to Gikongoro.

Muvunyi drove around every part of Butare in his jeep to encourage the criminals and to supply arms to anyone who needed them.<sup>36</sup>

Victor Gaparasi also spoke of the arrival of the interahamwe from Gikongoro.

Very early on the morning of 20 April we saw a lot of buses coming in from Gikongoro and bringing more interahamwe. It was at that point that they began setting up roadblocks all around the city. At about 10:00 a.m., they began the work of killing, starting with Tutsi government officials, university students and the Tutsis who had taken refuge in various places.

According to Janvier Ntasoni, the number of soldiers in Butare town had been increasing since 7 April. He commented:

The murderous Corporal Rutanihubwoba was one of the new soldiers. I got to know him through my friendship with Lt. Niyonteze. We don't know where the new soldiers came from. The local people called these new soldiers the PGs (Presidential Guard).

Local residents also referred to the new arrivals as "the new formula" soldiers.

Anaclet, a young builder who requested anonymity, admits playing an active role in the genocide, and is now detained in his home commune of Huye. He was in Kigali when the killing started and reached Butare on the morning of 19 April. He said he found people frightened by the huge number of refugees pouring in from Butare's rural communes and Gikongoro.

On 20 April, the whole city was taken over by the interahamwe and discontented civilians, together with soldiers from Camp Ngoma and ESO. They went around the city carrying guns, grenades and heavy clubs. I had a friend in the city called Evariste Hategekimana. He said they were going to start killing all the Tutsis in Butare without distinction, beginning with the refugees who had gathered in hospitals, the university, in schools and churches. After cleansing the city of Tutsis, they would decide whether to go into the mountains. Evariste said that was why guns and grenades were being distributed to civilians.<sup>37</sup>

### *20 April: Muvunyi Gives the Order to Kill*

On the afternoon of 20 April, Lt. Col. Muvunyi organised a meeting at ESO to give instructions to the soldiers under his command. By then, the killings had already started; his objective was to ensure that the soldiers were acting under instructions. Sub-Lt. Modeste Gatsinzi provided details.

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<sup>35</sup> Interviewed 20 October 1999.

<sup>36</sup> Interviewed 7 February 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Interviewed 10 February 1999.



Muvunyi invited all the officers and those junior officers responsible for various services. The meeting was held in premises known as “T5.” Muvunyi said that we must get organised and ensure security. Some soldiers would make sure the camp was secure, and the others would be deployed at the roadblocks, on night patrols and as bodyguards for the civilian authorities. He added that Captain Nizeyimana would give us the details, as he was in charge of these operations. Before leaving, Muvunyi told the meeting that Sub-Lt. Pierre Bizimana was to report to him personally. In the army, anyone in this position can be summoned by the commander at any time and given a special mission, usually armed intervention of some kind, after which they report back to him.

After Muvunyi left, the soldiers were addressed by Captain Nizeyimana.

Nizeyimana said the roadblocks were to be manned by ESO students under the command of Sub-Lt. Gakwerere from Shyorongi. Soldiers under Chief Warrant Officer Ntibiramira were to be in charge of security at the camp. Captain Nizeyimana remained in charge of the night patrols, and had the authority to select different soldiers from them on a daily basis. I myself was in charge of suppressing looting.

The “details” Muvunyi alluded to included a warning from Captain Nizeyimana.

He condemned and issued a warning to any soldiers who had been wandering around the town, ordering them all to stay in the camp unless they were sent on specific missions. He was afraid that the soldiers’ freedom of movement might allow them to save their Tutsi friends. As a result of the captain’s inflammatory speech, those soldiers who intended to save Tutsis no longer felt able to do so.

Warrant Officer Ambroise Biseruka noted the similarities between the speech in which President Sindikubwabo incited the people of Butare to genocide and a later speech given by Muvunyi.

Muvunyi’s speech was almost a copy of Sindikubwabo’s. He told us it was not right that people everywhere else were killing Tutsis, while here in Butare we were being so soft on them. He told us to act on Théodore Sindikubwabo’s advice as quickly as possible. But I can’t say what Muvunyi’s real intentions were. Was it just to obey the president? Was it due to his own personal views? I don’t know at all.

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### **“But the truth remains that Lt. Col. Muvunyi himself told us to kill the Tutsis.”**

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What can I add to that?

Muvunyi’s words encouraged Nizeyimana, according to Biseruka.

After that meeting, Captain Nizeyimana began forming some units composed mainly of northerners, like himself. That captain was very actively involved in the genocide. He orchestrated the guidelines that came from Muvunyi and Sindikubwabo. These ESO units killed Tutsis at the following places; the University Hospital; the University; the Groupe Scolaire; Buye; Cyahinda in commune Nyakizu; the business district of Ngoma; Huye; Nyakibanda etc...

Sergeant Josée Kabatesi, 26, a cadet at ESO at the time and now student nurse, also attended the meeting.

Lt. Col. Muvunyi gave us these orders: “Be observant. Pay attention. Check the I.D. cards properly. Don’t kill anyone who doesn’t deserve it.”

Everyone at the meeting knew who the commander had in mind when he talked of those “who deserved to be killed.” She said that “not all ESO soldiers killed people”, but believes that ESO soldiers are responsible for the genocide in Ngoma and the surrounding area.

Without the soldiers of ESO, the Tutsis in Butare and the neighbouring communes would not have been killed. They killed Tutsis at the University, in the Arab quarter, at Electrogaz in Kabakobwa, and at the University Hospital. They set up roadblocks everywhere to trap and kill the Tutsis.

Pascasie Uwimana, 23, was also a cadet at ESO. Below she gives a detailed report about the campaign of murder by ESO soldiers at the University Hospital, but she added that “they also killed people all over Butare.”

They killed in the town at Groupe Scolaire; at Electrogaz and at the university. I heard screams and groans. It was the soldiers from the ESO who massacred the Tutsis in these places.

These accounts from ESO cadets and soldiers provide solid evidence that, from the outset, the orders to take part in the genocide came directly from Muvunyi. Killings which soldiers committed were sanctioned by their commander and made possible by the reinforcements and arms which he had brought in. Muvunyi launched the genocide in Butare.

## The Military Offensive Begins

*“On 20 and 21 April the whole town echoed to the sound of gunfire and grenades.”*

Roadblocks were set up all over Rwanda from 7 April, and Butare was no exception. In most places, they were manned by militiamen who were armed with machetes, nail-studded clubs (*massues*) and spears, and were frequently drunk. In the town of Butare, however, as soon as he heard the news of President Habyarimana’s death, Muvunyi ordered the officer cadets to establish roadblocks as the accounts of ESO soldiers cited above show. “There was a roadblock every 100 metres”, commented Warrant Officer Faustin Ndagijimana, saying that “soldiers from Camp Ngoma and ESO controlled the roadblocks at the entrance to the town of Butare.” The two camps carved up the city between them to ensure that the militarily strategic places, like the entrance to the town from the direction of Kigali in the north and Gikongoro in the south, were covered. He said that the roadblock at Ngoma and at Muyogoro were manned by soldiers from Camp Ngoma, while cadets from ESO were in charge of those at Magerwa; near Rwasave; Cyarabu; outside the Loiret building on the way to Rwabuye; the intersection between the road to Gikongoro and the road to Butare; the entrance to the university; near the match factory, SORWAL and in front of Hotel Faucon. Roadblocks were set up close to all the main buildings which were potential places of refuge.

At first the roadblocks appeared to be not much more than a security measure. But on 20 April, after Sindikubwabo’s speech, they became critical to the preparations for the genocide. Many of the first Tutsis to die in Butare were killed by soldiers at these roadblocks. One of the most important roadblocks was positioned in front of the Hotel Faucon, located in the centre of town. Vénuste Rudasingwa, 40, was living and working at the Hotel Faucon. Rudasingwa said “he knew Muvunyi very well because he was very friendly with my boss.” He added: “As Muvunyi’s wife was a businesswoman, Muvunyi had stored some goods in one of our hotel bedrooms.” He explained the progression of events.

On 9 April the soldiers set up roadblocks almost everywhere: at the Ibis Hotel, at Mubirigi Mahenga’s place, at the Chic-Choc Restaurant, at the Hotel Faucon etc... The main roadblock was outside our hotel. Sergeant Jean-Baptiste and Corporal Hakiza from Mabanza commune, Kibuye, were in charge of that roadblock. Hakiza did a lot to protect me because I come from Kibuye like him.

On 19 April, Théodore Sindikubwabo met with the Butare local authorities. Immediately after that meeting, the soldiers began the genocide of the Tutsis. When anyone came to a roadblock, the soldiers would ask for their identity card. If they found a Tutsi, he was told to sit down. Once they found a large number of Tutsis, they would drive them off and kill them somewhere far away from the roadblock. I saw that happen at the roadblock outside our hotel. The first people to be killed in Butare were the former queen, Rosalie Gicanda and professor Claver Karenzi. A lot of Tutsis were killed behind the university bookshop, opposite the Hotel Faucon. Kanyabashi, the bourgmestre of Ngoma drove all over the place with loud-speakers on his car telling the local people to do their utmost to drive out the *Inyenzi*. Intellectuals and rich businessmen were the first to be killed. As I was outside the hotel all the time, I often saw Lt. Col. Muvunyi driving around in his army jeep visiting the roadblocks. Muvunyi was in charge of it all.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Interviewed 1 June 1995 and 8 February 1999.

Sub-Lt Bizimana went past the body of the university lecturer Karenzi as it lay on the ground near the roadblock.

Claver Karenzi was killed at the roadblock at Hotel Faucon staffed by ESO soldiers. I saw his body when I went past there. As far as people killed at roadblocks manned by ESO soldiers are concerned, these soldiers and those who gave them their orders—the leading officers at ESO—should be held responsible.

Sub-Lt. Gatsinzi also confirmed the murder of Karenzi at the hands of Muvunyi's men.

I know that professor Claver Karenzi was killed by our soldiers manning the roadblock outside the Hotel Faucon.

Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, 47, was head of the communal police force in Ngoma and is a former soldier.

Soldiers carried out the genocide in Butare. I often saw Muvunyi and Col. Alphonse Nteziryayo going around the town giving orders to the soldiers at the roadblocks. They are the ones who co-ordinated the genocide in Butare. They are responsible for the deaths of the Tutsis in Butare.

Gahamanyi also spoke of the murder of Karenzi and explained why he thought his body was left on the road.

Karenzi was killed at the roadblock manned by soldiers at the Hotel Faucon. Those soldiers let his body lie there for two days, I think to show the people of Butare that the genocide had begun and they should no longer be afraid. But the Tutsis were afraid.<sup>39</sup>

Mathias Nsanzabahire, 46, a former soldier, worked at ESO from 1983-87. During the genocide he was employed by the bourgmestre of Ngoma commune as a communal policeman and driver.

Soldiers carried out the genocide in Butare. The residents of Butare were frightened because soldiers from ESO had set up roadblocks at the Hotel Faucon, the Groupe Scolaire, the university library at Mukoni, in front of Camp Ngoma and elsewhere. When I was passing the roadblock at the Groupe Scolaire, I saw them torturing a businessman called Pierre Nsonera. I heard later that he had died. Another time, at the Hotel Faucon roadblock, the soldiers told me that they were driving out the Tutsis because they were *Inyenzi*. They advised me not to accompany people without first finding out whether they were Tutsis.<sup>40</sup>

Eliezer Akataraza, 35, was a soldier stationed at ESO during the genocide; he had been there since July 1993. He had begun his career in the army in 1982, becoming a corporal and an agricultural instructor. He was arrested after his repatriation from Zaire in May 1997, but was later released. He comes from Nyaruhengeri in Butare.

Students from ESO set-up roadblocks in the town of Butare immediately after Habyarimana's death. They were in charge of security. The instructors remained in place at ESO. Many Tutsis were killed at the roadblocks maintained by cadets from ESO. Col. Muvunyi toured Butare's communes, holding public meetings. He supervised the genocide in Butare. I used to see Muvunyi going around on his tours.<sup>41</sup>

Roadblocks were maintained until the end of the genocide. Jules Kayibanda was a student at the University of Butare who has been imprisoned for his role in the killings at the university, which he acknowledges. He gave details about the roadblock outside the house of Amandin Rugira, which has been mentioned in many of the testimonies. Jules said that Rugira's son, Pacis, was his friend and gave him a grenade.

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<sup>39</sup> Interviewed 5 January 1999.

<sup>40</sup> Interviewed 6 January 1999.

<sup>41</sup> Interviewed 29 December 1998.

Soldiers from ESO guarded a roadblock outside the entrance to Amandin Rugira's house. I went through that roadblock with Pacis on 12 or 13 May and saw about eight dead bodies there. There were at least 20 ESO soldiers manning that roadblock at the time, so there is no doubt that they executed those people. Pacis used to go around with a gun, and he told me he was not afraid of the soldiers from ESO because "we've paid them a million francs to protect my Tutsi mother."<sup>42</sup>

In the words of the policeman Aboubacar Ndahimana, "everything changed in Butare on the night of 19 April after Sindikubwabo's visit." He explained the nature and speed of the changes, and Muvunyi's role in advancing the genocide.

The town was under occupation by the soldiers, the interahamwe and policemen. Cadets from ESO, under orders from Muvunyi, manned all the roadblocks. The soldiers and interahamwe began to fan out into all the places where many Tutsis had gathered, including churches, schools, the hospital and the university. The killing began openly at round 10:00 a.m. on 20 April. As commanding officer, Muvunyi gave the orders to the soldiers, interahamwe and peasants to kill all Tutsis without distinction; they were to hunt them down wherever they were and murder them. They implemented his orders; they went on killing for nearly two weeks. Muvunyi used to go around all the roadblocks to make sure that his orders were being carried out. One day he came to the commune office and asked the bourgmestre, Kanyabashi, whether they had finished the "work," meaning exterminating the Tutsis. Kanyabashi replied "not yet" and added that he needed more bullets, grenades and soldiers to speed things up. Muvunyi agreed to provide this, and left with Kanyabashi to give him the ammunition he had asked for. I acted as Kanyabashi's bodyguard that day.

Ndahimana's colleague, Victor Gaparasi, described the pace and intensity of the changes in the town of Butare and the response of the population to the soldiers' appeal.

On 20 and 21 April, the whole town echoed to the sound of gunfire and grenades. There were a lot of bodies lying along the main roads and beside the minor roads in the residential districts, and more bodies in the educational institutions and churches. The victims included Thomas Kanyengoga and his family; Jonathan Ndutiye and his family and Bonaventure Rwaburindi.

By the end of those two days, most Hutus in Butare had taken an active part in the genocide; they had been encouraged to do so by the soldiers. The major operations were conducted by the soldiers from ESO, including Corporal Rutanihubwoba. Muvunyi supplied all the arms the interahamwe needed.

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**"Muvunyi, the préfet and the bourgmestre went wherever the interahamwe were massacring people and praised them."**

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The dead bodies were left lying around the roadblocks and beside the roads for nearly two weeks before anyone took the initiative to bury them. Muvunyi went round the communes of Butare, encouraging the Hutus to kill the Tutsis without mercy. Nearly all the communes carried out Muvunyi's orders, because he said at one meeting: "The first enemy is the Tutsi in Rwanda, and the second enemy is the RPF."

Rosalie Gicanda was the queen of Rwanda until the abolition of the monarchy in September 1961. It is believed that she was the first person killed in the town of Butare once the genocide received official blessing. Victor Gaparasi, the communal policeman cited above, said that he saw her in Muvunyi's jeep on the 20<sup>th</sup>, accompanied by ESO soldiers, "although I can't confirm that she was murdered at ESO." Sub-Lt. Pierre Bizimana, alias "Rwatsi", 34, a lecturer at ESO, is the man Muvunyi ordered to report to him directly at the meeting at ESO on 20 April. He has been sentenced to death, in part for the murders of the former queen and several members of her household. He claims that he was sent to the home of Rosalie Gicanda to search for military equipment, and was then ordered by Captain Nizeyimana to bring her and her companions to ESO for questioning. He said that he left the car in the ESO car park "with the prisoners still inside, guarded by the soldiers", and that he subsequently heard about their death when he was already in Mata, Gikongoro.

Sub-Lt. Modeste Gatsinzi dismissed Bizimana's denials of complicity in the death of the former queen.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Interviewed 4 June 1999.

<sup>43</sup> The body of Rosalie Gicanda was found in March 1995.

I was at ESO the day Gicanda was arrested. Sub-Lt. Pierre Bizimana left with a party of soldiers to arrest the queen at her house. She was not brought into the camp, because I was there and would have known about it. Instead, they killed her first, and then returned to the camp. I heard about her death at about 8:00 p.m. that evening, when I was in the officers' mess, at the bar with Captain Nizeyimana, Sub-Lt. Bizimana, Ntibiramira and Ntamuhanga. Bizimana himself told us: "We've already killed that queen Gicanda. We stood her and her companions against a wall formed by a mountain gully, and shot them there." I think they chose the place to muffle the sound of the gunfire. If Bizimana has told you he took her to the camp and heard about her death on the radio when he was in Gikongoro, he has lied to you. Bizimana and I left for Gikongoro with our men after the queen had been killed.

The assassination of the former queen was a symbolic gesture, an attempt to kill history and to show the population that it was open season on Tutsis. It was followed by systematic killings throughout the town. The policeman Mathias Nsanzabahire commented:

On 21 April we heard firing in the residential districts. It was soldiers killing the Tutsis.

One of the first residential districts targeted by the soldiers was Buye, home to many university professors. Dr Emmanuel Twagirayezu, a lecturer in the faculty of medicine, lived there and heard the gunfire; he also recognised an officer from ESO whose name crops up again and again in this report.

Most of the Tutsis who died in Buye were killed at night by soldiers. The killings began on 20 April. That evening they killed Sentama; Jérôme Ngarambe; Daniel Nzigiye and Frédéric Nkomeje. The soldiers shot them. Matabaro's family and the former sous-préfet's family were killed outside my house in Buye by soldiers from ESO. I recognised Captain Nizeyimana, but not the others.<sup>44</sup>

Chantal Gasangwa, a university student, had moved to a house in Rango, together with her family.

On 21 April, well before the peasants started killing, the soldiers began shooting the Tutsis in Cyarwa. We could hear the sound of guns that no civilians had access to.<sup>45</sup>

Tharcisse Mirimbo, 31, also blames soldiers from ESO for the genocide in Butare. Mirimbo, a policeman, was in charge of security for Tumba sector, but he claims there was nothing he could do to prevent the violence.

A soldier came and threatened us, asking us to leave so that the genocide could start. There were some criminal elements who were in cohorts with the soldiers during the killings, with the aim of enriching themselves. As the soldiers were stronger than the police, we were forced to leave; the soldiers had a lot of arms. After we left, they immediately killed Déo, a businessman.

He watched as soldiers set about implementing the genocide in his home area in Ngoma.

The genocide of the Tutsis began in my sector after the arrival of the soldiers. Around 8:00 a.m. one morning I saw a white taxi, a Hiace from LABOPHAR [Pharmaceutical Laboratory] driven by Rutagenwa, husband of the former parliamentarian, Phébronie. The taxi was full of armed soldiers. They went for the houses of Tutsis. That day they killed Anthene, son of Karabaye; Rukorera, a driver, and Rugema, a doctor. They killed many other Tutsis whose names I don't know. When the soldiers had finished killing, they urged the Hutu population to loot the Tutsis' belongings.

The people in my sector who collaborated with the soldiers are Rushwankomo, in Rwandex prison; Nzabalinda, son of Mjabo and Bagwiza, son of Barabeshya.<sup>46</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, cited above, confirmed that soldiers carried out the killings in Tumba. He said that he and other police officers had gone to supervise security at Rango market in Tumba on 21 April when he received a message.

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<sup>44</sup> Interviewed 20 October 1999.

<sup>45</sup> Interviewed 15 December 1999.

<sup>46</sup> Interviewed 6 January 1999.

Someone called Ngabonziza came and told me that the soldiers were committing genocide in the town. They had just killed Rida, a trader; Mudenge's wife and François Karanganwa. The Tutsis who heard that fled to a place called Kabakobwa.<sup>47</sup> Immediately after that, I saw a van full of soldiers and some civilians driving around Tumba. Whenever this group came to a Tutsi house, they destroyed it and told the Hutus to loot its contents. I saw them destroying the home of someone called Gacinya who worked at the co-operative shop. I went and informed the bourgmestre, Kanyabashi.

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**“The bourgmestre told us: ‘Leave the killing to the soldiers; *they* know where the orders come from.’”**

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I often saw ESO soldiers, including Birasa, arresting and killing Tutsis. The Tutsi refugees who had not gone home or to Kabakobwa were killed by the soldiers at the Protestant church primary school. The soldiers also killed the councillor of sector Ngoma, Saïdi; they accused him of holding *Inyenzi* meetings. He was killed together with Assouman Mabuye who had a car repair shop. The soldiers put them in a vehicle and killed them at Matyazo.

ESO soldiers came to the home of the Tumba councillor, François Bwanacyeye, with a specific mission.

On 21 April some ESO soldiers came to see me, saying Col. Muvunyi had given them permission to look for RPF accomplices who had been at my place. They dragged out Froduald Seromba's family; the family of François Karanganwa; the family of Nyagahakwa; Kamana and his brother Pascal and killed them outside my house.

Nicodème Hategekimana, 55, became the councillor of Cyarwa-Sumo in Ngoma in 1990. He described the atmosphere after Habyarimana's death and the aims and actions of the ESO soldiers once the genocide had begun.

The insecurity began. Everyone was afraid. No one could travel because the ESO soldiers had set up roadblocks everywhere in the town of Butare. During the night of 21 April, the soldiers went all over Butare killing Tutsis. They wanted to give an example, as the local people had refused to kill them. The soldiers had already identified the homes of Tutsis. The soldiers killed the following people in my sector:

- François Seromba, a nurse;
- Isaïe Kanyamuhanda, an old pensioner;
- Thomas Rukorera, a driver;
- Augustin Rugema, a retired nurse.

A businessman called Gatorano from Cyarwa cy' imana sector was also killed. Some passers-by and I buried them at Gateme, beside the road. The genocide began then because the soldiers had set an example. The Tutsis were killed, their houses were destroyed and their property was looted.<sup>48</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Ntakirutimana gave a precise time and date for the beginning of the killings in his native sector Ngoma. “The actual genocide began at 8:00 a.m. on 21 April here and in Matyazo.” Ntakirutimana, who was living close to Camp Ngoma, is a businessman aged 34 who is usually known as “Johnny.”

First the soldiers surrounded the whole sector, firing shots to stop us leaving our houses. Then they stationed a soldier at every 100 metres all around us. We clambered out of the windows while they were still firing in the air.

Unknown to us, lists of Tutsis had already been drawn up. They killed people on 21, 22, and 23 April. Then in May, they killed the few survivors they found hiding in ceilings and out in the fields.

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<sup>47</sup> See below for details about the massacre at Kabakobwa.

<sup>48</sup> Interviewed 7 January 1999.

Saying that it was the job of the councillors, *responsables* and *nyumbakumbis* to “supervise the killings in the areas under their authority”, under the control of the bourgmestre, Ntakirutimana added: “It was a whole machine being set in motion, from the head of state to the most junior official.”

I left my family on 21 April and spent three weeks in the bush, near the parish.<sup>49</sup>

Eugène Rutayisire, 20, is a mechanic from sector Ngoma.

We were attacked here in Ngoma at around 5:30 p.m. one Thursday, [the 21<sup>st</sup>]. Everyone was at home. We saw some houses being set on fire over in Mpare, and then we heard gunfire down at the dispensary and at the Bigega home. People surrounded Bagora’s house, which was not far from ours. That was when we fled in panic; my mother, my brothers and sisters and I. I spent the night in the convent field. I got separated from my family. Things had calmed down again next morning, and I went back home. There was no-one on the road.

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**“When I reached the dispensary, all I could see was bodies lying around like clothes put out to dry.”**

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When I got home, I found part of our house had already been demolished. Our Hutu neighbour, Paul, was amazed to see me coming back. He told me to leave and pick some guavas at Mubembe’s place to stem my hunger. I found children and old people hiding there. He gave me some porridge. That was at around 11:00 a.m., and at 12:00 p.m. a large mob of interahamwe arrived. Mubembe tried to hide us in his house and among his guava trees. I climbed into a leafy mango tree along with Bakora’s son, Eric. The interahamwe killed the Tutsis there. They went by underneath us, but didn’t see us. They went on killing until 4:00 p.m. As his punishment, Mubembe was made to bury all the bodies himself. Then they left. When Mubembe saw us, he advised us to go somewhere else because they had said they would be back.<sup>50</sup>

The intense gunfire, the continuous explosion of grenades and the mounting number of dead Tutsis on 20-21 April set the tone for the genocide in Butare. For the next crucial weeks, local government officials, militiamen and civilians maintained a punishing schedule in the service of genocide—encouraged, armed and supported by the soldiers which Muvunyi put at their disposal.

## **ESO: A Nerve Centre for Genocide Operations**

*“ESO was the headquarters for the murder of Tutsis.”*

While soldiers roamed the town and its suburbs carrying out the killings, the training camp at ESO remained their base and they frequently returned to get orders or ammunition. Sometimes they brought Tutsis back and detained them there, before taking them elsewhere to be murdered. The arms and ammunition necessary for the success of the genocide were stockpiled at ESO. This was one reason why local government officials and members of the interahamwe visited the camp; they also came to consult with Muvunyi. Pascasie Uwimana, a cadet, said that one of the most important génocidaires on a national level was a regular visitor to ESO.

Kajuga, the head of the interahamwe, came often to eat at the ESO mess.<sup>51</sup>

Warrant Officer Ambroise Biseruka remembered the visit of the bourgmestre of commune Nyakizu to ESO.

I saw Ladislas [Ntaganzwa], the bourgmestre of Nyakizu, coming to ask Muvunyi for reinforcements. Muvunyi referred him to Nizeyimana, who sent some soldiers led by Warrant Officer Kanyeshyamba.

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<sup>49</sup> Interviewed 27 November 1999.

<sup>50</sup> Interviewed 27 November 1999.

<sup>51</sup> Interviewed 16 December 1999.

They went and killed the Tutsis in Cyahinda church.<sup>52</sup> On his return, Kanyeshyamba himself told me how they had thrown hand grenades into the church to kill the Tutsis.

The account given by Emile Ntagugura, who was a communal policeman in Gishamvu, is typical of how the system worked. Killers from all over Butare would come to the base at ESO to get reinforcements, arms and ammunition when their task proved difficult. Ntagugura, aged 52, has pleaded guilty to “killing 500 Tutsis”, although he admits “that’s only a rough estimate.” He spoke at length about a killing spree in Gishamvu which lasted two days, 20-21 April. Massacres were carried out at the Grand Seminary in Nyakibanda and at the Parish of Nyumba. The men at the forefront of the killings were the commune’s policemen who had all been given guns by the commune authorities; one of them was even equipped with a machine gun. But the Tutsis fought back on the 20<sup>th</sup>, using stones, so a local government official went to ESO to seek help with the massacres.

I led my group to Nyumba, where we began killing at 9:00 a.m. or thereabouts and stopped at around 2:00 p.m., not just for a rest, but because we had run out of ammunition. I had already used up my 20 cartridges. My colleague, Mugaragaza, who had remained at the commune office, sent us a message telling us not to go home but wait there, because the sous-préfet had gone to get more ammunition from the area commander at ESO. We went to the commune office at 5:00 p.m., and were joined by the bourgmestre. He made me spend the night on duty there with Mugaragaza.

Despite pouring rain, civilians arrived from commune Kigembe to support the killers of Gishamvu on the 21<sup>st</sup>. But far more important was the ammunition that arrived from ESO.

The killing started at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday and went on until 6:00 p.m. We had enough ammunition brought over the day before from ESO by either the sous-préfet or the bourgmestre. I know that the bourgmestre also went off somewhere that Wednesday afternoon. One of them went to ESO and got the ammunition, while the other went to Kigembe to ask for reinforcements.

I had 50 cartridges for my gun, a Renfield rifle. The other type of gun used that day was a semi-automatic, not forgetting the machine-gun. We had ammunition for all three types that Thursday. The ammunition they fetched that Wednesday afternoon was enough to last us all day on Thursday without running out at all. Wednesday had been a failure, because we only killed about five people in Nyumba. Most of the Tutsis in Nyumba were killed on Thursday. At about 6:00 p.m., the civilian killers set the school office on fire to make the people who had hidden in the ceiling come out. The civilians used a few hand grenades there. We finished work in Nyumba by nightfall.

I have pleaded guilty to killing 500 Tutsis, but that’s only a rough estimate. I killed two people on Wednesday. To kill the rest of them, I needed more ammunition, which came from ESO in Butare.

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**“The bourgmestre and the sous-préfet give us orders to kill, but the army officer in charge of ESO, who sent us the ammunition, has a lot of explaining to do.”**

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Many Tutsis would have survived if we had not received more ammunition from ESO after our failure on Wednesday afternoon.

Simon Nahayo, 43, a blacksmith from sector Gishamvu, also admits that he joined the killers in his commune and confirmed Ntagugura’s account that the ammunition from ESO made the death of the Tutsis a foregone conclusion.

On Wednesday afternoon, the sous-préfet of Busoro went to Butare to get some more ammunition when it ran out, and came back with some.

The next day, we began killing again at around 9.00 a.m., this time with the aid of a policeman from Kigembe, and by using guns and hand grenades. We went home after killing a lot of people. The killing took place simultaneously in Nyumba and in Nyakibanda.

On the second day of killings at the Parish of Nyumba, an army reservist called Jean, Joseph Ruvure’s son who had served at ESO, went back to that camp to bring back other soldiers as

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<sup>52</sup> For details about the massacres at the Parish of Cyahinda, see African Rights, *Damien Biniga: A Genocide Without Borders*, Witness to Genocide, Issue 10, June 1999.



reinforcements. He came back in a red Toyota van with about eight soldiers. They found us at the parish, busy killing.<sup>53</sup>

The same soldiers pursued Tutsis to nearby Mt. Gashiru, where there was another group of Tutsi refugees, but they arrived to find that the refugees had already gone to Burundi.<sup>54</sup>

ESO was mainly a command centre for the genocide, but several Tutsis were brought to the camp itself. Some were killed soon afterwards. People whose ethnic identity was uncertain presented a particular problem for men like Emile Ntagurura, the policeman from Gishamvu. Muvunyi's directive to his soldiers—to scrutinise identity cards—was followed to the letter by communal policemen in their districts and by militiamen at roadblocks. The importance of ID cards automatically cast doubt upon those caught without one; it was assumed they were Tutsis fearful of showing the documents that condemned them to death. Ntagugura described what happened when he drove two suspected Tutsis to ESO.

About three days after the President's death, a woman was arrested by local people near Mukuge sector. They brought her to me in the commune office. She said she lived in Ngoma and that she had left her identity document behind. The bourgmestre allocated a Suzuki jeep, a driver called Gatabazi and myself and we drove the woman to ESO. Once inside, I told a soldier I was looking for the area commander. The commander came out and took her into his office. I left while he was questioning her.

About two days later, a man aged about 30 was also arrested by local residents. The bourgmestre handed him over to me, with the same jeep and driver. I handcuffed him and took him to ESO. I asked the guards whether the area commander was there. They said he was, and I went to his office and found him there. When he asked me why I had come, I replied that I had brought him a man with no identity card whom the bourgmestre had handed over to me. He let me take him into his office. Before doing so, I took off his handcuffs. The area commander's office was opposite the guardroom. I don't know what the commander did with those two prisoners.<sup>55</sup>

Sub-Lt. Modeste Gatsinzi confirmed that people arrested at roadblocks were sometimes brought to ESO and killed. He spoke of one case which he said took place after Sindikubwabo's visit.

Our soldiers arrested some people at a roadblock and brought them in. When they arrived at ESO, Lt. Ndibwami, who himself came from Butare, recognised them and spoke up for them. The prisoners spent the night there, under guard in their vehicle. They were taken away during the night without Ndibwami's knowledge and massacred. I heard about their deaths the following day, when I heard Ndibwami complaining about it. I don't know who ordered their death. We thought it was probably Captain Nizeyimana. But they were certainly killed by ESO students.

Other victims, he said, were "killed outside somewhere, even if they had been detained at ESO for some time."

The family of a Butare wholesaler, Faustin Munyeshyaka, also known as "Ruhutinyanya", was brought to ESO soon after the killings began. Ruhutinyanya was a friend of the head of the gendarmerie, Major Cyriaque Habyarabatura, and he begged him to evacuate his family to Burundi. Major Habyarabatura told a gendarme, Corporal Jean-Baptiste Nzisabira, to escort Ruhutinyanya and his family and some other Tutsis to the border.<sup>56</sup> Nzisabira took two other gendarmes with him, but it was a difficult journey. Nzisabira said the only way to navigate the numerous roadblocks supervised by ESO soldiers was through bribery. At Nkomero, close to the Burundi border, they came upon a roadblock guarded by interahamwe "in a frenzy." They also met a sergeant from ESO who was there to help a European cross the river. Nzisabira said that the sergeant was "wound up by the interahamwe" and refused to assist them. In a panic, Ruhutinyanya turned his car around and left at top speed. But his family was taken back to ESO. Maria Gafaziri, who worked at the University Hospital, was on her way from the hospital to her home on the 19<sup>th</sup> when she spotted Ruhutinyanya's family, whom she knew.

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<sup>53</sup> Interviewed 28 May 1999.

<sup>54</sup> Augustin Rucamihigo was among the refugees who eluded the soldiers. He said that a large crowd left at 5:00 a.m. on the 21<sup>st</sup>. He was later told by Hutus from Bitare: "You'd all be dead if you hadn't left that day." Interviewed 1 June 1999.

<sup>55</sup> Interviewed 20 October 1999.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Major Habyarabatura, 2 June 1999.

I passed a car in which Ruhutinyanya's family was travelling. There was a van full of soldiers behind the taxi. They directed it into the ESO military camp.<sup>57</sup>

Corporal Nzisabira explained what happened when they reached ESO.

The sergeant should have left us at Tumba, but he drove on to ESO. He reported us to Captain Nizeyimana who was with Lt. Gakwerere. When I saw how dangerous the situation had become, I advised the Ruhutinyanya family that if any of them had even a razor blade, they should throw it away, and told them to lock the car windows in case the ESO soldiers threw something in, claiming they were *Inkotanyi*.<sup>58</sup>

Nzisabira was temporarily detained at ESO and only allowed to leave at around 3:00 a.m. He was later told that the Ruhutinyanya family were "murdered by ESO soldiers." As soon as he was released from ESO, Nzisabira woke up Major Habyarabatuma to report the matter. Habyarabatuma says that he confronted Muvunyi the following day at ESO.

I addressed Muvunyi, who was sitting there with Captain Nizeyimana. I asked him why one of my gendarmes, Nzisabira, had been arrested that day and detained at ESO. He replied angrily: "You've no right to ask!" When I saw he had nothing more to add, I went back home feeling very frustrated.

Although Habyarabatuma was concerned about Nzisabira, he was not willing to make any further efforts on behalf of his friend Ruhutinyanya. Jean-Baptiste Gahenda, a student at the university at the time, was in Ruhutinyanya's car when the businessman drove back to Butare, along with Ruhutinyanya's son, Olivier, and another young man, Denys. Gahenda telephoned Major Habyarabatuma to plead with him to save Ruhutinyanya, his wife and children. The major only suggested that Ruhutinyanya himself should call him, which he did on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Gahenda was present at the time.

Habyarabatuma told him: "Your children are at ESO. Do whatever you can to save them." It was too late. Ruhutinyanya was afraid to go to ESO.<sup>59</sup>

Ruhutinyanya was subsequently murdered.

Another Tutsi, Laurent Masabo, was also captured by the soldiers from ESO and is believed to have been killed at the camp. Knowing that he would be a target, Masabo left the district of Rango on 21 April, with the help of a soldier who was a friend of the family. The soldier had already managed to take two of Masabo's daughters, Chantal Gasangwa and her younger sister, Assumpta Ingabire, to the hospital. The car Masabo was travelling in, his own Peugeot 504, was stopped by soldiers. They identified Masabo and said they had orders from Muvunyi to detain him. Also in the car were three of Masabo's relatives, Olivier Habineza, Eric, and his daughter. Both Olivier and Eric managed to jump out of the car and run away, but Laurent Masabo and his daughter were taken to ESO, according to the soldier who had tried to save them. They were never seen again. At the end of the genocide, the Peugeot 504 was found at ESO and returned to Chantal.<sup>60</sup>

Throughout the genocide, Tutsis continued to be taken to ESO. Soldiers from ESO visited the home of Dr Emmanuel Twagirayezu and took away a number of people, including relatives. Twagirayezu, a lecturer at the university, lived in Buye, the residential district of Ngoma where many of the university staff lived. He said he spent the evenings at home "because I was afraid that my Tutsi wife might be killed when I was not there as soldiers from ESO were killing Tutsis at night in Buye." Later, they came to his house in broad daylight.

Bénôit Mujeje from Nyanza in Nyabisindu hid in my house. He arrived at my place at 5.00 p.m. on 21 May. At 4:00 p.m. on 21 June, around 20 soldiers came to my house. They came from ESO in a red

<sup>57</sup> Interviewed 5 February 1999.

<sup>58</sup> Interviewed 1 February 2000.

<sup>59</sup> Interviewed 20 October 1999. Gahenda also criticised the attitude of Habyarabatuma and the conduct of Nzisabira and the other two gendarmes at the border, saying that "Habyarabatuma's gendarmes failed to stand up to civilians armed only with hoes and machetes. They did not even protest and try to save us. What use were their guns? What kind of orders had the major given them? What did Habyarabatuma do to save us afterwards?"

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Chantal Gasangwa, 15 December 1999.

van. There was a sub-lieutenant and a chief warrant officer. I don't know their names. They told me to hand Mujejende over. As I had no choice, I got him out of the bedroom where I had hidden him.

The soldiers came upon other Tutsis at Twagirayezu's house.

They forced their way into the bedroom, and took out my brother-in-law's children who had been hiding there—Narcisse Samuna, a student at the university and Adolphe Munyangabe, in the fifth form at secondary school. They put them in the van and drove them to ESO. They must have been killed there by those soldiers. Or perhaps other soldiers killed them, but I know they were the ones who took them to ESO.

### *Individual Encounters*

There are a few people who survived despite being captured and taken to ESO. Their stories are immensely revealing about the attitude of Lt. Col. Muvunyi towards Tutsis and the extent of his influence over their fate. The individuals cited below were all rounded up during a search for the Tutsi priest, Father Modeste Mungwarareba. Soldiers had been ordered by Muvunyi to find the priest who was in hiding and they killed many Tutsis during this operation. Fr. Modeste, however, eluded them.

Dalie Gacenderi was taken to ESO after being discovered by soldiers at Butare cathedral. Dalie, 28, is from Gikongoro, and lost her parents and other members of her family in the genocide in this region. She had first gone to the cathedral on 17 April to look for Fr. Modeste, who was a family friend, but she did not see him. She was still there when soldiers came to look for Fr. Modeste. When the soldiers failed to find him at the cathedral, they took 20 other Tutsis in his place. Dalie was among them and she described what happened next.

They checked our identity cards and saw that we were all Tutsis. They took us to Rwasave forest to be killed. I was with Jeanne; Béata; Rusatsi, the sous-préfet of Gikongoro; an accountant from Gikongoro and his family and Gikongoro's inspector of commerce.

When we reached Rwasave, they told us to lie face down and then they began shooting. The first one to be killed was the Gikongoro accountant, then his family followed by Rusatsi. They kept bringing more people to be shot and made them lie on top of the bodies. The soldiers thought I was dead as my body was covered in blood.<sup>61</sup>

On this occasion, Dalie managed to escape to the hospital, but later she returned to the cathedral again in search of Fr. Modeste who had, in the meantime, left. However, the soldiers had not stopped looking for the priest. Dalie hid inside the church, but was found by soldiers on 17 May. This time she was beaten and then taken to ESO camp. There she got to know the survivors of other attacks by soldiers as they continued their search for Fr. Modeste.

On the afternoon of 17 May, soldiers descended on the bursary of the Catholic Diocese of Butare. One of the people hiding there was the businessman, Privat Ngenzi.

We were attacked by about 15 soldiers, including Lt. Gakwerere and Sub-Lt. Anselme. The public prosecutor was there too. A soldier entered the room I was in, searched me and robbed me of everything I had. The soldier and Lt. Gakwerere took me to Sub-Lt. Anselme and to the public prosecutor. They accused me of listening to songs by Cécile Kayirebwa, a Rwandese musician exiled in Belgium. They called me an *Inkotanyi* and said that I had a hand-gun. They ordered a soldier to kill me. He hit me and I ran away. He tried to shoot me and I stopped. Then they drove me in a little white Hilux van to ESO. The army chaplain, Kabalira<sup>62</sup>, was in the van too.

The soldiers then proceeded to the neighbouring convent of the Petites Soeurs de Jésus. Again, Lt. Gakwerere from ESO led the killers. An employee of the bursary, Gilbert, who had tried to escape

<sup>61</sup> Marguerite Musabyimana, a teacher from Cyanika in Gikongoro was also hiding there when the soldiers came looking for Fr. Modeste. She confirmed that when they failed to find him: "In his place, they abducted at least 20 people who they took to Kabutare."

<sup>62</sup> Fr. Kabalira is now living in France.

by jumping over the wall into the convent, was the first to die. A nun who spoke on condition of anonymity gave details.

There were 14 nuns there, and some people who were hiding, including Fr. Modeste Mungwarareba; Brother Cyriaque; Eugène, a businessman; René Kayijamehe; Alfred; several young girls and children. The soldiers fired at Cyriaque; René; Jeanne Uwingeri and her younger sister; Christine; Gilbert; Philomène and Henriette's daughter, Dianne. The young people tried to get away, and the soldiers fired on them. A soldier and an interahamwe found Gilbert. Three soldiers—Lt. Gakwerere, Ruhashya and Kazungu—killed Gilbert right there. They came into our convent in pursuit of him. The young girls were stoned to death. The soldiers made the excuse that someone had fired a shot from the convent, and told us to go and explain to ESO where we had obtained the bullets from. The Hutu nuns went there.

They killed six people that day, and then made the rest of the young girls lie on the ground, and lined the nuns along the wall. They said that they would come back the next day.<sup>63</sup>

Before leaving, the soldiers searched the convent for Fr. Modeste Mungwarareba, but failed to locate him.

Christine Mukakabayiza was one of the Hutu nuns who were taken to ESO.

Lt. Gakwerere explained to the prosecutor: "We went to look for Modeste, but instead we found the *Inyenzi* shooting at us. The same thing happened at the convent of Bizeramariya." The prosecutor asked: "Did they use the same sort of rifles? I said: "Should you believe in the rumours you have heard? You have killed some people and the rest of us are with the soldiers. Why don't you collect those rifles you accuse us of having?" Gakwerere looked at me maliciously and straightaway, he put us in the truck with Dalie, Privat, Callixte, and another young man called Alfred, two soldiers and the driver who was also a soldier named Anselme Twagiramugabe. We were taken to ESO by the soldiers. Gakwerere was one of the soldiers who took us. There was also the prosecutor.

At ESO, Christine was with Privat, Dalie Gacenderi who had been brought over from the cathedral and Callixte, a cook at the cathedral. They were all picked up the same day.

Callixte had taken a beating and had been brought along to reveal the whereabouts of Fr. Modeste. On our arrival at ESO, there were two coaches full of soldiers for the front that moved off immediately. But, before the coaches left, Lt. Gakwerere accused us in front of three soldiers. They started beating up Privat. One of the three soldiers said: "To prevent them escaping from our clutches, why don't you leave them here with us so we can kill them at our ease?" With that, they stopped beating Privat. Afterwards, Fr. Martin Kabalira introduced himself. He was the military chaplain. Privat whispered something to him and the other replied: "Things have got to this stage, I'm afraid nothing can be done about it."

Around 3:00 p.m., Lt. Gakwerere put us back in the car and told us our situation would be examined the next day. They took us to the police station. The driver, Anselme Twagiramugabe, told us: "You were mistreated because of the business with Fr. Modeste. Try not to be argumentative."

Gakwerere took the nuns back to the convent, but once again he did not find Fr. Modeste.

Lt. Gakwerere declared: "We're not going to waste our energies on this matter, it's already late. Let's go, we'll come back tomorrow. Should anyone be missing, watch out!" One of the soldiers was Ruhashya. They left immediately.

Christine commented:

A military chief like Muvunyi, who was so supportive of genocide, should be in Rwanda explaining to the Rwandese the strategy for genocide, and then be severely punished, except that I can't conceive of a punishment suitable enough for him.<sup>64</sup>

Dalie Gacenderi listened as the soldiers gave their report to Muvunyi.

What amazed us was that Muvunyi was only interested in the nuns. He asked them why they were barefoot and why they had let people stay with them without authorisation? He gave orders for the

<sup>63</sup> Interviewed 19 April 1999.

<sup>64</sup> Interviewed 1 June 1999.

nuns to be taken to the convent. We were taken to the police station on the pretext that they were going to interrogate us.

The following day, 18 May, the convent was again attacked, this time by interahamwe. The nun who telephoned Muvunyi for assistance described his response.

Muvunyi replied angrily that we were hiding *Inyenzi*. He added that he would come back and wipe us out, because he was well aware that we were hiding Fr. Modeste in our convent. Nevertheless, he sent two soldiers, and Fr. Guillaume sent us one soldier from the bishopric, and the three of them got rid of the interahamwe. The soldiers then went back to ESO.

Convinced that Fr. Modeste was inside the convent, the soldiers returned the following Sunday. They explored virtually everywhere, but failed to find the priest who was hiding in the ceiling.

## **A Genocide Detention Centre: Ngoma Police Station**

Many people were taken to the police station on Muvunyi's orders, only to be tortured or abducted and murdered. No one was killed at the police station itself, but ESO soldiers beat the detainees there, and took them elsewhere to be killed. Dalie was taken to the police station from ESO. There she met the Tutsi préfet of Butare, Jean-Baptiste Habyarimana, who had been dismissed, then arrested.<sup>65</sup> Dalie spoke of his courage.

The soldiers brought in Jean-Baptiste Habyarimana, the préfet of Butare. When the soldiers saw him, they shouted: "The head of the *Inyenzi* has arrived!" Each soldier came and mocked and tortured him, asking rudely: "What's your name?" He was like their plaything.

The préfet tried to give us courage and told us to accept death, persuading us that not all of us would die. We asked him why he had not fled, and he replied that he had been working closely with soldiers like Muvunyi and other civilian authorities and had not known that one day they would turn against him. None of his colleagues came to visit him; he was most surprised at that. He told us that he had tried to go and hide at the bishopric. However, because of the tense atmosphere, he had to go back home and that was where the soldiers had found him.

Although the préfet had improved our morale, he himself was in despair. He could hardly eat the meals that his wife used to bring him regularly. One week after his arrest, the soldiers came and told him to collect all his belongings, and then they took him away. He took a bottle of water and said good-bye to us. We cried as the soldiers drove him away. The soldiers killed some other people such as Athanase Kayitakire, who had also been detained at the police station.<sup>66</sup>

Shortly afterwards, Dalie was released and returned to the cathedral. She left for the home of a friend in sector Tumba, later making her way to Murambi in Gikongoro.

Clarisse, a student who was also detained briefly at the police station, described the situation there.

There were a lot of soldiers at the police station, most of them wounded. We saw several young Tutsi men being given a brutal beating by these soldiers.

Clarisse herself suffered at the hands of the same soldiers.

They took off all our clothes. Then the wounded soldiers beat us again and again. When they got tired, they ordered us to get dressed. Then two soldiers dragged us outside, saying: "We're going to give you to the students so that they'll finish you off."

The extent to which Lt. Col. Muvunyi had a hand in the violence which occurred at the police station is apparent from the testimony of the businessman Privat Ngenzi. Privat, hid first in the bursary of the Catholic diocese of Butare and was then taken to ESO in the same van as Dalie.

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<sup>65</sup> The former préfet had managed to evade the soldiers for sometime after his dismissal; from Butare, he was taken to Gitarama where he was imprisoned before he was eventually assassinated.

<sup>66</sup> Interviewed 20 February 1999.

When we arrived at ESO, the soldiers who had brought us in talked to a major first and then to Col. Muvunyi. Muvunyi ordered that we should be taken to Butare police station. The station was guarded by gendarmes, and many other Tutsis were being held there.

They used to phone Col. Muvunyi who gave orders for people to be taken to the slaughterhouse. I could hear these telephone conversations from where I was being detained.

Why didn't they kill me? Colonel Muvunyi gave orders that I should not be killed, because the Bishop of Butare, Mgr. Gahamanyi, had intervened on my behalf with Muvunyi. The public prosecutor and Col. Muvunyi phoned Butare police station and ordered my release.<sup>67</sup>

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**“I saw for myself that Col. Muvunyi had the power of life and death over the Tutsis. He gave the orders.”**

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Released from the police station, Privat Ngenzi returned to the bursary. A week later, soldiers returned to the office of the bursary; once again, Privat's life was in the hands of Muvunyi.

Around the end of May, Fr. Martin Kabera<sup>68</sup> drew up a list of all the people hiding in the bursary. He called us out, using the excuse that he was concerned about our safety. About five soldiers and their bodyguards then arrived. As they got ready to take us to the office of the préfecture, the Bishop again persuaded Muvunyi not to take various people. They were: Marie-Michelle, who works at the co-operative store; Fr. Lucien; Didace, who was killed later, and myself. All the others were taken to the office of the préfecture, apart from Mambo and Bosco who were killed on the way. Mbanda, a lecturer at Karubanda Pétit Séminaire, was taken to Karubanda prison and killed later. Some people were taken to the office of the préfecture and later kidnapped and murdered.

Tutsis were also detained and tortured at Karubanda, Butare's central prison, from where dozens of people were kidnapped and subsequently murdered. It soon became almost impossible for Tutsis to hide from the soldiers. One of the most dangerous places in Butare town was the university. The Tutsis there were surrounded by ESO soldiers and could not leave. Soldiers controlled the entrance to the campus and worked with some of the students inside to ensure that there were only a handful of survivors.

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<sup>67</sup> Interviewed 5 March 1999.

<sup>68</sup> Fr. Martin Kabera, a priest accused of active participation in the genocide, was the chaplain of the Groupe Scolaire. During the genocide, he was given responsibility for part of the diocese of Butare. For details see *Death, Despair and Defiance*, p.914.

## The University: Sealed off by Soldiers

*“Cries of alarm, grief, pain and extreme fear for the students.”*

The university was one of the first places to be affected by the genocide. On Muvunyi’s orders, soldiers from ESO set up and controlled roadblocks at the entrance to the campus. Warrant Officer Innocent Rwabuhiri, who was at ESO at the time said that on 7 April, “sergeants, corporals and soldiers descended on the university.”<sup>69</sup> From 20 April, they directed the killings and raped many female students. The soldiers worked together with extremist students. Some soldiers from ESO ranked among the student body and had built up strong ties with students who shared their prejudices and their political outlook, particularly members of the students’ union, AGEUNR. Lists of Tutsis were drawn up and many of them were rounded up their colleagues, taken to a forest on the campus and shot by soldiers. Sub-Lt. Modeste Gatsinzi said that the killings by ESO soldiers at the university were a topic of conversation at the army base.

I heard that some of our soldiers were taking away and killing university students. I heard about it in the officers’ mess.

Pascalie Uwimana, another soldier, told of what she witnessed.

ESO soldiers killed people at the university and at IRST.<sup>70</sup> I saw Innocent Sibomana, a sergeant-major who was also a medical student, loading some students into a Daihatsu. He drove them to Rwasave and killed them there.

Although it was the Easter holidays at the time, there were hundreds of students still on campus. Some had remained there to revise for forthcoming exams. They were joined, between 9-19 April, by other students who had their own lodgings but thought they would be safer on campus, and by students from the campus of Mburabuturo in Kigali and Nyakinama in Ruhengeri who were transferred to Butare for their own security.

Tension began to mount from the middle of the month, with students increasingly separating along ethnic lines. The Tutsi students expressed their fears openly at a meeting organised by the vice-rector, Jean-Berchmas Nshimyumuremyi. They were given reassurances by the vice-rector. But the effect of Sindikubwabo’s visit was devastating.

Samuel Gakwerere, 30, a second year law student from Rutongo in Greater Kigali, came to Butare to escape the violence near the faculty of Mburabuturo in Kigali. He reached Butare on the 15<sup>th</sup> and said that “everyone who managed to reach Butare felt as though they had cheated death.” He was not initially troubled by the soldiers’ roadblock at the entrance to the university, but noted the change in their attitude after Sindikubwabo’s fateful visit.

On 19 April, anyone presenting a Tutsi identity card at the roadblock outside the university was in grave danger; they needed good luck to get through. The soldiers enjoyed taunting the Tutsi students at the university. They told them that their *Inyenzi* préfet had been ousted and the soldiers who used to defend them had been posted elsewhere, and so they were going to have a hard time.

He said the soldiers were from ESO and that they had “rifles and a lot of ammunition, and were very aggressive.”<sup>71</sup> Because he had an ID card which said Hutu, Samuel was allowed to leave the university before the killings began. But for the Tutsis at the university panic set in on Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup> and they sought hiding places around the campus, which was surrounded by soldiers. Two young men, Robert and Maurice, nicknamed “Zozo” were shot dead at the soldiers’ roadblock after the soldiers saw that they had Tutsi ID cards.

On Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, ESO soldiers invaded the main campus, known as Ruhande, and dragged between 30-40 students away. They were assisted by certain students, in particular the leaders of the students’ union which had set up a commission “in charge of security” to patrol the campus, and a number of soldiers who were studying at the university. They were operating from lists to identify their

<sup>69</sup> Interviewed 9 February 2000.

<sup>70</sup> The Institute of Scientific and Technological Research.

<sup>71</sup> Interviewed 9 June 1997.

targets. They took students with Tutsi ID cards; students who were identified as Tutsis based on their appearance; and students whose ethnic origin was not known. The first group of students were taken away at about 3:00 p.m. as people were leaving the canteen. They were killed at IRST, about a kilometre from Ruhande, below the University Hospital and the faculty of medicine.

Claudine Mukakibibi described the terror experienced by Tutsis living on the campus.

On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 12:00 p.m., gathering the Tutsis together became official policy. A group of students were working with the soldiers. They took advantage of the fact that it was lunchtime to arrest some Tutsi students at the door of the canteen. Others were arrested in front of the girls' hostel and the block called Aba.

Angélique Mukeshimana, 29, from Kanzenze in Greater Kigali, was studying accounting.

22 April was a day of trouble—cries of alarm, grief, pain and extreme fear for the students. At around 3.00 p.m. soldiers from ESO carried out a raid on Ruhande inside the university. They had lists of students' names and the numbers of their rooms. Their priority was to check identity cards. They captured a lot of Tutsi students and assembled them on the road outside the entrance to the university. From there, they were driven in Toyota vehicles to IRST. They were severely beaten and tortured before they were taken to IRST.

The soldiers, she said, were assisted by students who turned on their classmates.

The people most involved in these activities were ESO soldiers, followed by members of AGEUNR. The students who became militiamen, helped by some of the cooks, spent that whole day hunting down and capturing their Tutsi colleagues and taking them to the soldiers who were waiting for them at the roadblock at the entrance to the campus.<sup>72</sup>

Théopiste Nyiransabimana, 28, shared a room with Angélique and was also studying accounting. She was alone in their room when six soldiers knocked on the door and told her to join the students whom they had gathered together.

They took between 30-40 students and said that they were taking us to our brothers at CND.<sup>73</sup> They beat us and searched our pockets, taking our money.

Just before the students were driven off, a soldier she knew arrived and persuaded his colleagues to allow her to leave the vehicle. She returned to her room and spent the rest of the night hearing “the cries of people who had been captured, the footsteps of people running and the slamming of doors.”<sup>74</sup> The soldiers and their helpers returned late in the evening. Determined to cow the remaining students by a show of force, they broke down doors and shattered windows.

Jules Kayibanda, 27, from Rutsiro in Kibuye was a student at the Kigali branch of the university. He arrived in Butare on 20 April.

On 22 April soldiers from ESO and some terrible university students came to the campus in an operation to identify and take away the Tutsis. There were a lot of soldiers on campus.

It began at around 8.30 p.m. and ended at around 3.00 a.m. The students killed on the campus during the genocide died in that operation, including Robert Mwizerwa. He was taken away by the soldiers, helped by some students, namely Parfait Munyangabe; Dominique, alias “Doctor” from Butare, and others. Parfait knew Robert's family in Kigali very well which made it hard for Robert to lie about his ethnic group.

That night Claudine Mukakibibi was hiding in a room with five other students when, around 10:00 p.m., she was discovered. She was taken to be killed at IRST with the other Tutsis. A student hit her with a metal bar, then asked the soldiers to shoot her. The bullet wounded her in her right arm, but

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<sup>72</sup> Interviewed 17 June 1997.

<sup>73</sup> The Conseil National de Développement was the headquarters for the RPF battalion sent to Kigali in December 1993 under the Arusha Accords. Throughout the genocide, the perpetrators named many of the places where Tutsi refugees had congregated as “CND” to suggest that there was no difference between the RPF and Tutsi civilians.

<sup>74</sup> Interviewed 17 June 1997.



because she didn't move they believed she was dead, and left. Claudine fled to the University Hospital of Butare, accompanied by a cousin, Clarisse, who was also a student.

Clarisse, who asked for anonymity, is 28 and a native of Kigali. She spoke of the fear, noise and panic that reigned at the university on the night of the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Although she managed to hide on this occasion, at about 3:00 a.m. the following morning some students broke into her room. They beat her severely and took her and another Tutsi student, Aimable, to a roadblock in town supervised by soldiers. There they were subjected to intense torture.

The soldiers hit us fiercely, using their belts and their guns. We were swollen all over and our skin was turning green with dried blood. They ordered Aimable and me to have sex on the road. Aimable told them that we would rather die than do that. One of the soldiers kicked me in the ribs. I lost my head and began screaming: "I'm a Hutu! You're in danger of wiping out your own people."

Three soldiers took us to IRST, which they called CND. They said they were taking us to CND where the other *Inyenzi* were. Two of the soldiers walked closely behind us, while the third followed at some distance. When we reached IRST, it was late at night and we found a lot of dead bodies. One of the soldiers asked us: "If I let you live, what would you do?" Aimable replied: "We would spend the night in the bush." The soldier said, "You really are Tutsis, people who play at living." He suddenly fired into the air and told us: "Run quickly!" It was impossible for us to run because, when they beat us, they had also hit the soles of our feet. The third soldier was approaching, and shone his torch. The one who had fired said: "Run away, if he sees you, he'll kill you."

We just sat down in the road, not far away. A young man dressed very strangely came up to us. He was a Tutsi in disguise. He would not let us sit in the road, and took us on a little further. The three of us hid there, and covered our legs with a small, very dirty cloth that the youth had been wearing. In the morning we went to the University Hospital.<sup>75</sup>

Emma Mukangoga was sitting in her room with two friends when two soldiers, armed with guns, and about ten students, carrying swords, clubs and *massues* threatened to smash down the door at 9:00 p.m. After a thorough search, they destroyed various items and then scrutinised their cards. When they saw that the cards were marked Hutu, they ordered them to follow them "and to help the others." She said they followed them the whole night as they identified the rooms of Tutsis.

The soldiers and the militia students raped girls. They forced girls to follow them to their homes.<sup>76</sup>

Christophe Mpozayo remembers the evening of 22 April as "a night filled with cries for help, screams of pain and despair." Christophe, 31, comes from Rutare in Byumba. Warned by a CDR member for whom he had once done a favour, he hid in a drain pipe close to the department of pharmacy. Later, an employee of the library kept him out of sight by locking him in a storeroom.

The girls especially cried bitter tears on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. After inflicting every possible atrocity on them, they took some of the students to IRST and killed them. The university slang to kill someone included "creating" someone and "going to the CND." They had lists with the names of students to be targeted. They were still searching for Tutsis on 23 April; by then, people were dying in ones and twos.<sup>77</sup>

Raymond Muganga, 29, studying pharmacy, was saved because he had obtained a Hutu identity card and because a Hutu friend protected him. He likened the hunt for Tutsi students in the evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup> to "dogs in pursuit of prey."

The cries of the girls who had been caught could be heard throughout the campus.<sup>78</sup>

The soldiers returned to the university on Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup>; Jules Kayibanda admits that he took part in their hunt for Tutsis on the campus.

At around 8.00 a.m. on Saturday 23 April, about 300 soldiers from ESO camp came to the university. They gathered us all together. They told us: "We're going to search the whole place and find the Tutsi

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<sup>75</sup> Interviewed 8 May 1999.

<sup>76</sup> Interviewed 17 June 1997.

<sup>77</sup> Interviewed 18 June 1997.

<sup>78</sup> Interviewed 10 June 1997 and 26 April 1999.

students wherever they're hiding. All the boys will search the woods with some of the soldiers. The rest of the soldiers will search the dormitories accompanied by the girls."

I was in a group of 10-15 students aided by one soldier. We found an old man hiding in the arboretum<sup>79</sup> below the Groupe Scolaire. He was shot dead by the soldier leading us. The search ended at about 11.00 a.m. I heard that the other search parties had been successful.

Also "successful" was the genocide taking place at the University Hospital, Rwanda's teaching hospital, where many of the doctors were also lecturers at the university.

## **The University Hospital: "The Operating Theatre"**

*"The people who died at the hospital were killed by soldiers under Muvunyi's command."*

People wounded in the first attacks flocked to Butare University Hospital. With them came many other Tutsis who thought the institution could offer them some protection. A few Tutsis, particularly close relatives of the staff, hid in different rooms throughout the hospital, sometimes disguised as bed-ridden patients. As the number of Tutsi refugees increased, they were housed in tents outside the main buildings. The hospital is within a short walking distance of ESO and a contingent of soldiers were sent from the army base to guard it. To some of the refugees it seemed that the proximity of ESO would be an advantage. But the soldiers stationed at the hospital throughout the period of the genocide by Lt. Col. Muvunyi turned it into a slaughterhouse; they were responsible for butchering patients, refugees and staff, and raping women. Afterwards, prisoners were brought in to dispose of the bodies. Some refugees were taken to ESO or elsewhere and murdered. One of the killing sites was located between ESO and the Electrogaz sub-station and was named "Kinihira", a reference to a place where Habyarimana and the RPF signed a peace treaty.

The commander of the soldiers at the hospital was Lt. Rwanyonga, a medical student. The team included army nurses. An elderly corporal, Sekimonyo, was one of the regulars. Senior officers who worked closely with Muvunyi—Captain Ildephonse Nizeyimana and Sub-Lt. Pierre Bizimana—oversaw the killings and visited the hospital on a regular basis. The soldiers persuaded many doctors and nurses<sup>80</sup> to help them to identify and kill Tutsis. Even some of the patients conspired to rid the hospital of Tutsis—FAR soldiers who had been wounded at the front were a particular source of danger for the Tutsis at the hospital.

Although there was no roadblock between the hospital and ESO, the staff felt increasingly insecure, forcing Raphaël Kamanzi, the nursing services manager, to send ambulances to pick up the nurses and making it necessary for the hospital to provide accommodation for single nurses. Another danger, Raphaël said, was the presence of Burundian refugees living in tents near the operating theatre. "Sub-Lt. Bizimana from ESO used to come and teach the Burundians how to assemble and dismantle guns." A complaint was lodged with ESO, but he said the response was that "soldiers could not be punished in war time."

Raphaël Kamanzi's home was located only 200 metres from the hospital and ESO. He continued to work until the 19<sup>th</sup>.

They set up a military committee of 18 soldiers "to ensure security at the hospital." Lt. Rwanyonga was in charge of this committee. They put an army security guard in the ambulance, and set up their own accident and emergency service, which was to select patients according to their ethnic group. The military committee was supposed to co-operate with the doctors' and paramedics' crisis committee. The ESO soldiers I remember included Rwanyonga, Sekimonyo, Muzungu, Niyonzima, and some others I knew well as I lived near them. Sub-Lt. Bizimana used to come and supervise their activities, but I think he got his orders from Captain Nizeyimana.

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<sup>79</sup> The arboretum is a forest created by the university's institute of agricultural research.

<sup>80</sup> For details about the role of doctors and nurses at Butare University Hospital in the genocide, see African Rights, *Death, Despair and Defiance*, pp.938-945 and *Rwanda: Not So Innocent, When Women Become Killers*, pp.215-228.

Worried about his own security, Raphaël left the hospital on 19 April and hid in his own house. “Watched over by my Pentecostal friends”, including a corporal for whom he had done a favour and other soldiers he knew, he eluded death.<sup>81</sup>

Dr Joffre Gatera was the head of surgery at the hospital and a lecturer at the university. Accused of involvement in the killings at the hospital, he has been sentenced to death; he denies the accusations. Instead, he blames soldiers from ESO. During an interview in October 1999 with Ann Treneman of *The Times*, he said:

They brought 18 soldiers to guard the hospital. They were commanded by Lt. Rwanyonga. They were sent by Col. Muvunyi as the head of the army here in Butare. Soldiers were killing people in the hospital at night. The bodies were removed the same night. I saw soldiers who were at the hospital and who killed people. That I can confirm.

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**“Everybody who died at the hospital was killed by soldiers under Muvunyi’s command.”**

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When we returned to work in the morning, we found that the people we had treated the night before had been killed. They had a group of interahamwe militia doing the job of removing the bodies. That was the situation from 21 April up until 6 June. Even doctors with the Red Cross left on 24 April because they were scared about the killings by the soldiers.

The dead? There were so many I cannot know exactly how many. They were in the surgery section, everywhere.

Muvunyi should explain what the soldiers were doing at the hospital. During my trial, I requested that Muvunyi be asked about what the soldiers were doing at the hospital. We should ask those soldiers about their commanders. Muvunyi might have saved some people, but there is the issue of responsibility for those soldiers deployed there. Who brought them here? Let him explain. Soldiers carry out their missions, they follow orders from their superiors.

Asked if Muvunyi “was responsible for what the soldiers did”, he replied:

If he agreed to deploy them there. Ask him what was their mission? What did they come for? They were there and people were killed. Muvunyi may not have killed them, but he agreed with the deployment of the soldiers.

In an interview in July 1999 with *African Rights*, Dr Gatera said that he came to know of massacres at the hospital “because of the nocturnal disappearances of the Tutsi patients.” In addition to the soldiers from ESO, he said that the wounded soldiers from the battlefield “abducted people to massacre them.”<sup>82</sup>

According to Pascasie Uwimana, a cadet from ESO who spent the entire period of the genocide at the hospital, what “the soldiers were doing at the hospital” was killing Tutsis. After Habyarimana’s death, Pascasie and another cadet, Claire Mukeshimana, were asked to look after wounded soldiers at the hospital. She remained at the hospital until early July.

I knew Lt. Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi. He was a calm, serious officer who had little to say.

She knew the ESO soldiers who had been despatched to the hospital. Because she is half Tutsi, she said she had to take measures to protect herself from her own colleagues.

Because I look like a Tutsi, I always wore army uniform and carried a gun. Otherwise the soldiers at the hospital might easily have killed me.

The authorities at ESO sent a unit of soldiers to take care of security at the University Hospital. They included Corporal Niyibizi from Giti. He was a nurse, but he killed most of the Tutsi refugees at the hospital. There was also Lazare Bizimana, who is said to have died after the genocide. They went from room to room looking for Tutsis. First they would turn off the lights; then they would put the Tutsis on stretchers and take them to Electrogaz, the electricity sub-station, to be executed. One day, Niyibizi showed me the bodies of six people he had just killed, including a man called Bosco.

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<sup>81</sup> Interviewed 26 November 1999.

<sup>82</sup> Interviewed 12 July 1999.

I used to count the bodies every morning, often 20 or more of them. One day I asked him why he was so keen to kill innocent people. He replied it was abnormal to feel any pity for the *Inyenzi*.

There were tents [vacated by the Burundian refugees] outside which were used by the Tutsi refugees. Those Tutsis were all massacred by the soldiers from ESO. Captain Ildephonse Nizeyimana often came over and held discussions with Corporal Niyibizi and his unit, including Corporal Gatete. All the bodies of women and girls I saw at the hospital were naked; I think the soldiers raped them before killing them. Niyibizi requisitioned prisoners to bury the bodies.

Scholastique Mukabandora, 47, was a nurse at the hospital and is now imprisoned, charged with complicity in the killings at the hospital, amongst other accusations. She denies involvement and said that “it is soldiers who should shoulder the greater part of the responsibility for the deaths of the Tutsis in the University Hospital of Butare.”

There were many dead in the hospital, killed at night. Some of the hospital personnel died because they were Tutsi. Claude, a medical assistant, fearing for his safety outside the hospital, preferred to stay in the hospital looking after the sick. He was murdered one night by the soldiers in the intensive care unit. Hawa, a nurse who worked in the clinic, was abducted by soldiers.<sup>83</sup>

Rose Kayirangwa, 28, a nurse, worked at the hospital and lived in sector Mamba, very close to the hospital and near one of the two entrances of ESO. She went to work on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and stayed at the hospital for a week. She described how the pressures upon the staff increased, especially after 20 April. As more and more wounded arrived, the hospital came under Muvunyi’s control, and the killings began.

The hospital manager brought us papers signed by Col. Muvunyi authorising us to go on working at the hospital. He even warned us never to take off our white coats. Everyone at the hospital received health workers’ papers signed by the manager himself.

Soldiers from ESO stationed themselves in the hospital, claiming they were there to ensure the doctors’ safety. A vehicle came regularly to take the Tutsi refugees from the tents to the office of the préfecture. They were killed during the daytime once a large number had been assembled. When the vehicle came for them at night, those taken away would be killed immediately. The soldiers from ESO and the army medical assistants looking after wounded soldiers used to take them away.

Rose gave details of some of the other victims, among them members of staff she knew well, and members of her own family.

Dogo, who worked in intensive care, was killed by ESO soldiers right there in the intensive care room. They deceived him, telling him that an officer’s wife had just given birth, and they wanted his help. He suspected that they wanted to kidnap him, as he never dealt with maternity cases. Other victims included:

- Eight members of Daniel Nzigiyiye family;
- Seven members of Jérôme Ngarambe’s family;
- Four members of Frédéric Nkomeje’s family.

These three families tried to flee to Burundi together, but were intercepted on the way. They went to Jérôme’s place in Buye. Soldiers from ESO took them away, and stabbed them to death with bayonets. Some did not die immediately. Dr Twagirayezu went and found them and brought them to the hospital for treatment. He first phoned Col. Muvunyi, who gave him a soldier to act as a bodyguard, so that he could get through the roadblocks without any problems. They reached the hospital safely, but later some of the wounded—the Nzigiyiye family—were killed by ESO soldiers in a second attack.

Epiphanie, nicknamed Fany, was killed by soldiers from ESO. They took her first to IRST where they stabbed her with a bayonet. They left her there for dead. We collected her and did what we could to revive her. We put her in intensive care.

Lt. Rwanyonga, the head of the ESO soldiers posted to the hospital, is accused of co-ordinating the killings but helped care for Fany.

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<sup>83</sup> Interviewed 13 July 1999.

Lt. Rwanyonga, an army medical student who helped us treat her, advised us to hide her, as she was more vulnerable now she was wounded. One of the soldiers from ESO—an old man—found her. They took her away, beating her, and finished her off.

Another victim was a man who arrived at the hospital soaking wet from the rain. He was a mechanic. The soldiers immediately kicked him to death.

Yvonne Uwamahoro, my cousin Jeanne Nzigiyé's younger sister, was wounded in the attack at Jérôme's house. She was brought to the hospital and we amputated one of her legs. The soldiers killed her when they killed Jérôme's wife. Trifine, who worked at the hospital pharmacy, was another victim.<sup>84</sup>

Dr Marthe Mukaminega confirmed Rose's account of the killing of Fany. Marthe, 34, comes from Gitarama and was a medical student in 1994. She lent Fany a white coat, hoping that the attempt to disguise her as a doctor would keep the killers at bay.

A soldier, Lt. Rwanyonga went to see Fany, instead of us, and took her food from time to time. One day the hospital's water supply was cut off; Fany said she knew where we could get water, and went to fetch some. She came across some soldiers, who raped her and beat her. We heard the sad news. Rose Kayirangwa and I sent Lt. Rwanyonga to bring Fany to us.

He brought her after a long delay. Her neck was cut and her clothes were torn, but she was still breathing. We tried to stop the bleeding; Rwanyonga helped us. This army student usually went back to ESO every evening. That day, he went back at midnight. Fany had already come round and began talking. After Rwanyonga left, the soldiers returned and lectured us about not treating *Inyenzi*. We begged them for mercy, but they refused and took her away. They went through the clinic, and I think that they took her to ESO to kill her, because they did not go in the direction of IRST.

Dr Marthe spoke of some of the medical personnel who were killed by soldiers.

- Hawa, a nurse, and her two children. They were taken to ESO and did not come back.
- Jean-Claude Karekezi; he was killed by some soldiers while working in the intensive care unit. These soldiers had been wounded in the fighting in Kibungo and had come to the hospital to receive treatment.

Dr Marthe left the University Hospital with Rose on 6 May.<sup>85</sup>

Dr Emmanuel Twagirayezu, a 49-year-old lecturer in the faculty of medicine, described the killings carried out by ESO soldiers at the hospital.

From 15 April onwards, the soldiers from ESO were in charge of security at Butare University Hospital. They were there every day, night and day. The killing in Butare began on 20 April, but became widespread on and after 21 April. The ESO soldiers at the University Hospital did some terrible things. They used to kill the patients at night. At the end of May and in mid-June, they killed some nurses who worked at the hospital—Hawa, Trifine and Alice, as well as Claude Karekezi, who also worked at the hospital.

Twagirayezu explained how he came to hear of the plight of a group of Tutsis who were shot by ESO soldiers at the home of Jérôme Ngarambe. On the night of 20 April, Caritas, the wife of Daniel Nzigiyé, telephoned to tell the doctor that members of her husband's family as well as the relatives of Jérôme Ngarambe and Frédéric Nkomeje were wounded and had been abandoned in the "Elena Guera" forest.<sup>86</sup> On the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup>, he sought help from the director of the hospital and from the ICRC<sup>87</sup> to transport them to the hospital, but was unsuccessful. He was only able to bring them to the hospital because he received authorisation from Muvunyi.

The last resort was Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi, as he was in command of all the soldiers from Butare to Gikongoro. We didn't know each other, but I had the courage to phone him at ESO. I asked him for permission to go and collect those people so that they could be treated at the hospital. He said I could

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<sup>84</sup> Interviewed 22 May 1999.

<sup>85</sup> Interviewed 14 May 1999.

<sup>86</sup> Elena Guera, an Italian nun, had built a primary school opposite the Groupe Scolaire. The forest close to the school has been named after her.

<sup>87</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross.

do so. Dr Viateur Nsengiyumva went with me to collect them. We found Daniel's daughter, Yvonne, Jérôme's wife, Vénantie and his sons, Omer and Dominique. The others had already died. We took them to the hospital and I treated them.

Ultimately, however, Twagirayezu was not able to save them. Although Muvunyi allowed them the chance to recover in hospital, his soldiers made sure they did not live for long.

After a month in hospital, I sent them home, and the soldiers found them there and killed them.

Some Tutsis at the hospital were both refugees and patients. Spéciose Mukakibibi, 37, is a peasant from commune Runyinya. She was pregnant when the killings started. On 17 April, the priest in charge of their parish, Fr. François Ngomirakiza, drove pregnant women and the wounded to the hospital. Spéciose was accompanied by her five-year-old daughter, Alphonsine Mukamabano.

On 22 April, two days before my delivery, killings were raging at the hospital. Nurses accompanied FAR soldiers to abduct Tutsi nurses and patients.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, soldiers and peasants entered the maternity ward. Spéciose was badly injured and could only watch as her daughter was killed in front of her.

I was overcome by panic and I wanted to leave my room. The killers caught me and cut me with a machete on the left part of my face, on the head and on my left foot. My little girl was killed the same day. Imagine, I was still pregnant. I was bleeding a lot. The people from the Red Cross tried to take care of me. But the fact that the killers were finishing off even the sick discouraged them too much. The following day, I gave birth to a little girl.

Sometimes, the leading génocidaires came to the hospital to look for citizens of their communes. I saw the bourgmestre of Runyinya, Déo Hategekimana, come to take away the residents of Runyinya. He abducted at least 20 people who were murdered.

Spéciose remained at the hospital until shortly before the fall of Butare, then she joined the crowds of people fleeing on foot to Gikongoro. Her four children and her brother, who had escaped to Burundi, survived, but her husband was killed.

Also at the hospital were refugees who thought that they might have a chance of survival there. Clarisse, the university student cited earlier, sought refuge at the hospital and treatment for her wounds. But after being threatened by a soldier, she and her companion, Aimable, moved to shelter at the welfare office of the Catholic Church, Caritas. After three days without food and medical care, Aimable took Clarisse back to the hospital; he left and was subsequently killed. Clarisse went to hide in a linen room along with a young boy. Several days later, some soldiers learned of their presence and came to the door. When Clarisse did not open the door, they asked the hospital manager for permission to break it down. While they were gone she and the youth escaped and split up to look for safety elsewhere. Clarisse met another student, Claudine Mukakibibi, who was in a wheelchair; Claudine's testimony also appears in this report. Clarisse shared her room for a week, then they received a threat from the students. They hid in a tent reserved for refugees at the hospital.

We spent nearly three days there. The ESO soldiers kept coming and taking away all the men and youths to be killed. We found a student of law from Kigali called Fany. She was killed by soldiers. The next day the hospital manager announced that they did not want any more refugees in the hospital.

Clarisse and other refugees were driven to the office of the préfecture. Again, she had an encounter with soldiers. They took her and Claudine to the police station and beat her, then handed her over to some students to be killed. However, the students let her them go. Clarisse escaped to the home of a Hutu cousin, staying there until the end of the genocide; Claudine went to stay with the family of a Hutu classmate where she remained until early July.

Mélanie Mukarubibi, 35, is a native of Mubuga in Gikongoro. Mélanie and her family at first took refuge at the Parish of Kibeho in Mubuga. A series of massacres there left her with bullet wounds in the head and wounds all over her body. She made her way to Runyinya and, like Spéciose, was driven to the hospital by Fr. Ngomirakiza.

About three or four days after our arrival at the hospital, ESO soldiers started coming and taking away hundreds of people and killing them. They started with the rich people, generally the men. After two weeks, the only ones left at the hospital were women and boys too young to be distinguished from girls. Then the soldiers threw us out of the hospital and told us to go to the office of the préfeture; they said the hospital was only for soldiers wounded at the front.<sup>88</sup>

Chantal Gasangwa might have escaped to Burundi in time, but her father refused to leave until all his children were together. Chantal, 29, a university student at the time, lived in Buye in Ngoma. On 21 April, a soldier stationed at the hospital, visited the family in Rango where they had gathered. A former classmate of Chantal's brother, he had come to visit his friend. He agreed to drive Chantal and her younger sister, Assumpta Ingabire, a medical student who was doing her training at the hospital, to the hospital.

They found the hospital under the control of soldiers. They had barely arrived when two nurses advised them to hide, saying that soldiers were looking for them in the reception. They spent their first night hiding in a cellar under the maternity wing. The following day, Rose Kayirangwa transferred them to room 15 in the maternity ward.

There were ESO soldiers based at the hospital. They were supposedly there for our security, but they were the ones who actually massacred all the Tutsis who died there. I never saw any militiamen there.

Anxious to stay out of the sight of soldiers, they left for the dermatology department where Assumpta had done her training. But the patients ordered them to leave, threatening to call in the soldiers to force them out if they refused.

We went to see the hospital manager, Dr Jonathan Nshimyumukiza, a friend of the family. He told us there was nothing he could do to help us, because he lived near Colonel Gatsinzi who had a lot of soldiers stationed at his house. He also told us that Lt. Rwanyonga, who was now in charge, might kill us. We suggested he hide us in his stockroom, but he said no, saying we were asking too much. Then he told us to follow him to the shower attached to the old operating theatre, where we found three nurses, including one called Rose. They had sugar and water. That was on Friday, 22 April. We could hear gunfire all around.

As happened so often during the genocide, preserving buildings was considered more important than saving lives, giving Muvunyi's soldiers a free hand.

Next morning, the doctor returned and told us he had asked Lt. Col. Muvunyi not to wreck the hospital, but told him he could remove anyone he wanted from it. He would give the soldiers access to all the rooms in the hospital that night, except for the old operating theatre where we were hiding. That night they did indeed come and kill people at the hospital, but failed to get into our room. We stayed there from Sunday [the 24<sup>th</sup>] until Tuesday [the 26<sup>th</sup>].

From the 26<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of May, survival was a cat and mouse game with the soldiers.

On the 26<sup>th</sup>, the doctor came and told us the nurses were going to start treating wounded soldiers, and all the other patients were being sent home. He advised the three nurses to go on wearing their uniforms, but said Assumpta and I should go to room No. 1 in the surgical wing where Jérôme Ngarambe's family was hiding. He told us the ESO soldiers had asked for a list of the patients and nursing staff. He suggested calling us the Ngarambe family's nurses. Then one of his brothers-in-law, a Tutsi, came and slipped a note under the door, asking us to open it. He came in and hid there with us for four days. There were some Tutsis from Gikongoro in the next room. The ESO soldiers came into our room on 2 May, accompanied by Dr Jonathan. They demanded to see our nursing qualifications and we showed them to them.

That evening, a soldier named Fulgence knocked at the door, saying he knew we were *Inyenzi*. If we opened the door and let him in, he would kill us quickly, but if we refused, he would torture us slowly. We refused to open the door, knowing the soldiers had been ordered not to damage the hospital. He stayed there for two hours, then left, but came back later. We still refused to open the door and he got fed up.

Another soldier, Sekimonyo, came and offered to hide a Tutsi woman, Emile's wife, in Mpare if she paid him. She gave him some money but he killed her not far from the hospital. I heard about it

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<sup>88</sup> Interviewed 8 February 1999.

from the family's maid, who witnessed the murder. She managed to save the baby and took it home with her.

Fulgence returned and told us that we too would have to come out, as everyone else was dead. It was about 10:00 a.m. on 3 May when the hospital manager came to our room, accompanied by Rwanyonga. He told us to come out, because everyone knew we were there. He said he had hidden us for two weeks and was tired of it.

From the reception, Chantal telephoned different friends in the hope that one of them could offer them a hiding place. Lt. Rwanyonga was asked to take them to the office of the préfecture.

When we got to the door, we ran into the soldier, Fulgence, who asked me to show him some photos of the *Inkotanyi*. Rwanyonga ordered him to leave us alone, because we were being taken away to be killed. They found us a driver, and two soldiers to guard us, one of whom was called Saidi. They made us sit in the gutter and trampled on us. Dr Jotham came over, accompanied by Sekimonyo and a driver who knew us well. He got us through a roadblock manned by ESO soldiers. The soldiers outside the Hotel Faucon wanted to kill us, but we refused to get out of the vehicle. The soldier, Sekimonyo, begged them to let us go. When we reached the Commercial Bank of Rwanda, I told him to let us out at Dr Mbarutso's house and paid him 5,000 francs. We went there on 3 May, and stayed there until 3 July.

Although they spared Chantal, the ESO soldiers made sure that the hospital and the area closest to their camp was cleared of Tutsis, killing most of them. Meanwhile, the soldiers at Camp Ngoma concentrated on the slaughter of those Tutsis who remained in their backyard.

## **Matyazo: Killing in the Dark, 20-22 April**

*“There would have been no massacres of Tutsis in Matyazo if the soldiers hadn't sparked them off and incited them.”*

Matyazo sector is close to Camp Ngoma, making it a convenient target for Lt. Col. Muvunyi and his soldiers. The number of refugees had been building up in Matyazo since the second week of the genocide. Many of them came from the communes of Nshili and Rwamiko in Gikongoro and from rural communes in Butare, including Maraba and Runyinya. They were housed in the Matyazo primary school and at the local health centre. Athanase Nshimiyimana, 43, was the local councillor at the time. It was Nshimiyimana's idea to take them all to the health centre, because of concerns about their safety. His fears, he said, were realised on 20 April when they were attacked by residents from commune Huye. They drove out the troublemakers. Then, the councillor said, he appealed to the bourgmestre for help. The bourgmestre sent him three policemen, but they were of no consequence when compared with the forces under Muvunyi's command. On 20 April, the refugees were joined in large numbers by the Tutsi residents of Matyazo.

On the evening of 20 April, Nshimiyimana came face to face with the soldiers from ESO, some of whom he knew.

That same evening we were attacked by a large force led by soldiers from ESO. They were Janvier Nsengiyumva; Rutanihubwoba and Jean-Pierre.

Corporal Rutanihubwoba, whose name is frequently mentioned in this report, conveyed an order from Muvunyi to the councillor.



Rutanihubwoba gave me a letter signed by Col. Muvunyi saying that I must hand over all the Tutsis to be killed, and if I resisted, they would kill me with the Tutsis.

The exchange over the letter was followed by the murder of the refugees.

They immediately got everyone out of the health centre and other places, and began killing them in a very brutal way. They spent three days in my sector. No Tutsi was left alive, except those who managed to hide with Hutu neighbours.

Muvunyi came to Matyazo regularly to make sure that indeed “no Tutsi was left alive.”

Muvunyi and his bodyguards would come through the sector almost twice a day to make sure his orders were being carried out. Each Saturday, all the city councillors were supposed to attend a meeting at ESO. The aim of these meetings was the continuing hunt for the Tutsis who remained in the bush, in the forest and in the hills. As this problem had been solved in my sector, I never had to go and inform my people about it.

After the killing, they went on an extensive looting spree and wrecked the Tutsis' houses. All the best quality looted items—especially the vehicles, television sets and certain items of furniture—were taken to Muvunyi's place. Some of the ESO soldiers moved into the nice houses whose owners they just had killed, such as Janvier Nsengiyumva, who moved into Mr Médard's house after killing him and his entire family.<sup>89</sup>

Janvier Ntasoni provided more details about the massacres that unfolded in Matyazo and mentioned some of the same soldiers. He is a teacher, aged 30. He gave himself up on 23 May 1997, the day after he returned from exile in Zaire, and has pleaded guilty to taking part in the genocide in Matyazo. A native of Mbazi in Butare, he taught at CEFOTEC College in Butare, and worked during the holidays with Médecins sans Frontières. He lived in cellule Rurenda in Matyazo. Like the councillor, Ntasoni said that the violence at Matyazo was, from start to finish, orchestrated by soldiers.

The violence in Matyazo was sparked off on 20 April, at around 4:00-5:00 p.m. by the arrival of a lorry load of soldiers. The soldiers had a list of Matyazo Tutsis. They took away some of those on the list, including the businessman, Ngarambe, and the driver, Zambi. Some of the Tutsis taken away, including Ngarambe, came back the same evening. That operation caused panic among the Tutsis.

At about 8.00 a.m. the following morning, Thursday 21 April, the same vehicle came back, together with a white Mazda van. I saw them; they were full of soldiers. When they reached the centre of Matyazo, they drew up outside a bar called Mt Huye and fired a few shots into the air. Then they re-arrested the Tutsis who had been taken away and had escaped death the previous day and added about ten more. This intimidation of the Tutsis made them all flee their homes, accompanied by some Hutus who had close ties with them. Most of them went to the primary school and the health centre, while a very small number went to stay with Hutu friends.

A few hours later, an officer Ntasoni knew came on the scene.

Lt. Fabien Niyonteze arrived at around 4:00-5:00 p.m. that same day from Camp Ngoma. He came originally from Gisenyi and I knew him from the time I was studying at Nyundo College in Gisenyi, where he had been learning to play football. He was in a green Toyota van which belonged to the Ministry of Public Works. There were other soldiers as well. He saw us at the roadblock outside the bar at Mt Huye, and greeted me as an old friend. He told us: “We've come to look for *Inkotanyi* infiltrators among these displaced Tutsis. From the way the RPF is advancing, they could well be here already. You're going to come with me to help me carry out this operation.”

Whatever ties Hutus may have shared with the Tutsis they had accompanied to the primary school, soldiers were there to make sure they did not die alongside them.

A large group of us were driven to the primary school, leaving a few behind to man the roadblock. When we reached the school where the Tutsis were staying, we began checking their identity cards. But we noticed that the soldiers were only singling out those with Hutu identity cards and urging them to go home. So it really had nothing to do with *Inkotanyi* infiltrators. Towards the end of this procedure, Lt. Niyonteze, who was in charge, shouted that anyone who had nothing to hide should go

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<sup>89</sup> Interviewed 7 January and 1 June 1999.

home. But the Tutsis who had fled intimidation and killings outside the school could not leave and go anywhere else, so they stayed put.

After this ultimatum, the lieutenant told all of us Hutus to surround the school, saying: “Surround them properly! If anyone escapes, you’ll pay for it in their place.”

There were about 15 soldiers there, two or three of whom wore the red berets of gendarmes. They opened fire on the displaced people. They went on firing and exploding grenades all night, and we stayed until they had finished.

When the soldiers came upon a group of Tutsi men barricaded in a house, they decided to set them on fire. Ntasoni took part in the operation.

At around midnight, they sent two of us, Linguyenzeza and Jean-Pierre Muronda’s brother, Mbiriki, to go and siphon some petrol from two vehicles left behind by Niyonteze and which belonged to two dead Tutsis, Dogori and Rwaburindi. They needed it to set fire to a building where some young Tutsi men were still holding out. It was set on fire. Those burned to death include Ukobizaba’s son, Patrice.

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**“The soldiers kept firing at the building while the men inside burned.”**

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Having killed the Tutsis at the primary school, the soldiers made a note of the Hutus who had failed to lend their support.

The operation ended at about 4:30 a.m. We were tired out from being on our feet all night. We were then made to assemble while they checked to see which Hutus had failed to join us, looking out especially for well-known people. Some names were identified and written down by the soldiers, including the names of the councillor, Athanase Nshimiyimana and the driver-mechanic, Joseph Rutangitwa. The soldier in charge after Niyonteze’s departure was Corporal Anastase Rutanihubwoba from Byumba. He wrote down those names.

Next, it was the turn of the health centre.

Instead of going in search of these “bad” Hutus, we were told to hurry down to the health centre before the Tutsis had a chance to escape. On the way there, we passed the houses of two Tutsis, Mironko and Ukobizaba, and found about 70 dead bodies in them. These people had been killed by some other soldiers with the help of some civilians, including a man called Fabien Pagani.

Despite the late hour, the soldiers did not let the dark get in the way of their assignment.

Corporal Rutanihubwoba had often visited my house. When it got dark, he remembered seeing a torch there, and asked me to go home and fetch it. I brought it to the school.

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**“The soldiers asked me to shine the torch wherever they were shooting, so they could shoot more effectively.”**

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The killings continued the following day, Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, again supervised by Lt. Niyonteze.

We arrived at the health centre between 7:00 and 7.30 a.m. Firstly, they separated out the Hutus. This took until 10:00 a.m. when more soldiers arrived. They told us to stand aside and opened fire on the crowd of displaced Tutsis.

Firearms alone were used until midday, when the civilians were allowed in to finish off the dying and plunder the dead. That was the time I left the site along with Lt. Niyonteze, after he had arrived to supervise his soldiers. We went to see my father-in-law and to have a beer together.

In the course of casual conversation, Lt. Niyonteze spelt out the soldiers’ aims.

As we chatted, Niyonteze told us they aimed “to finish off anyone who might help the RPF if they captured Butare.” That was on 22 April.

The soldiers took measures to ensure that no one got out alive. They returned to Matyazo two days later.

At 9.00 a.m. on 24 April, we were told to carry out a general search throughout Matyazo sector, particularly in the pine forest between Electrogaz and Karubanda. The search operation was carried out jointly by soldiers, gendarmes and civilians. Those of us who searched the pine forest found no one.

After that, there was a general phase of sporadic killings due to betrayals by informers, or individual Hutus hunting for Tutsis in their own areas. The soldiers were still there, but only went on patrols.

There would have been no massacres of Tutsis in Matyazo if the soldiers hadn't sparked them off and incited them. Matyazo had been particularly well-known for the good relations between Hutus and Tutsis, with a lot of mixed marriages and a high proportion of Tutsis, who were some of the wealthiest people in Matyazo.

Jeanne Nyabumondo was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in South Kivu. In 1981 she married Innocent Sharangabo, a chemist who had fled Rwanda in 1973. The family returned to Rwanda in 1988 after her husband had been offered a job to work on an energy research project at the university in Butare. Jeanne herself worked in the project, responsible for petty cash. They settled in Rurenda, Matyazo, living next door to councillor Nshimiyimana. Today, she works for a research centre in Butare. At 8:00 a.m. on 21 April, Innocent left for the university, never to come back. Jeanne remained at home; at 5:00 p.m. the councillor urged her to take refuge at the primary school, adding "otherwise you'll be brutally killed." She herself was frightened when she saw the home of a Tutsi neighbour under siege. Jeanne gave a graphic description of what her family endured at the primary school.

The attackers arrived at 9.00 p.m. and opened fire on us immediately after a routine exchange of slogans, in which one man called out "Butare!" and all the rest shouted back "Butaro!". They exploded one grenade among us as a signal to begin, and then came hundreds of others, and repeated gunfire. They used every kind of weapon, especially a large number of hand grenades and bullets. I was sitting outside the school workshop holding my child when I was wounded in the shoulders by shrapnel from the grenades. I was hit on my right leg with a *massue*, and stabbed in the upper back with a spear. I lost consciousness from the pain, the sound of the explosions and the noise of the screams.

One of the people burnt alive was Jeanne's son.

Then petrol was used to burn the school buildings; there were some Tutsis still alive inside. My eldest son, Elois Ndori, was burned to death in the school. They searched the dead victims' clothing before burning their bodies in the yard.

She recognised a Zairian she knew amongst the assailants; he hid her in his father's home together with her four remaining children for several weeks. After the genocide, Jeanne learned that her husband had been left for dead at the university, but had managed to reach his native commune of Huye where Jeanne found his corpse.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Interviewed 17 October 1999.

## Kabakobwa: Co-ordinated Shelling, 21 April

*“Muvunyi’s soldiers incited the Hutus; without them, they would have had no guarantee of success, because the Tutsis were there in considerable strength.”*

Sector Sahera felt the full force of the genocide as soon as it became official policy on 20 April. Until then, joint patrols helped to maintain order, and the councillor, Pascal Habyarimana, had encouraged the residents to remain united. But on 20 April, soldiers arrived in the area to divide the community. Hyacinthe Rurangirwa, 43, was a member of the committee in charge of cellule Akaniga.

We were on patrol at Kabuga, which separates the sectors of Nkubi and Sahera, when a jeep full of soldiers arrived. There were about 20 soldiers. They asked us what we were doing. We said we were on patrol so we could pursue any enemy that might attack us. The soldiers were very angry with us, saying that the enemy was amongst us. They asked us if we knew about the *Inkotanyi*. We told them that they were people who had no identity cards. The soldiers laughed and told us: “You Hutus, you must know that your enemies are the Tutsis who are amongst you. We’re going to Nyaruteja, a place near Sahera, and we’ll be back in a few minutes. If we still find any Tutsis around when we come back, we will kill the lot of you! You must start killing your enemies.”

The Tutsis were afraid of the soldiers and left at once. The soldiers went around Sahera displaying corpses along the road to show that the genocide had begun, and inciting Hutus to begin killing. All the Sahera Tutsis fled to Kabakobwa, between Sahera and Nkubi sectors which has never been inhabited. Other Tutsis from Gikongoro and from Nyaruhengeri and Gishamvu communes also took refuge there.<sup>91</sup>

About 8,000 Tutsis gathered on Kabakobwa hill. Many refugees—from Gishamvu, Runyinya, Huye and other communes in Butare—and even from Kigali, had arrived there from mid-April. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, unaware that the genocide had reached Ngoma, many Tutsis left the communes of Kansi, Nyakizu, Kibayi and Kigembe in Butare, and Muganza in Gikongoro, and arrived in Kabakobwa. They were concentrated on the grounds of the Kabuga primary school. They were encouraged to assemble there by Muvunyi and by the bourgmestre, Joseph Kanyabashi. When ESO soldiers went to kill them on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, they were alarmed by the huge number of Tutsis and decided to call for assistance from the gendarmes.

Joseph Nzabirinda, imprisoned on charges of genocide, says that he saw Muvunyi in sector Tumba urging that Tutsis be sent to Kabakobwa. Nzabirinda was a driver at the Anglican church in Ngoma.

On 20 April, the bourgmestre, Kanyabashi, arrived. He was accompanied by gendarmes from Butare, including a lieutenant. They ordered the refugees to go up to Kakanyamanza, Tumba. That day I met Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi in Rango’s commercial centre. He had five other soldiers with him. He called Cyiza over. Cyiza was a prominent interahamwe in Butare. Muvunyi told him: “Go and tell the refugees to get out of the primary school, and gather in Kabakobwa.” So all the Tutsis gathered on that hill. He told the Hutus there: “You must keep away from the Tutsis.”

All the Tutsis left at once for Kabakobwa, and Muvunyi went straight to Nyaruteja in Kigembe commune. Half an hour later, Martin Ngamiye, the former cellule *responsable*, called us together. The president of the interahamwe in Nkubi sector addressed us, saying: “Not one Tutsi is allowed to go home. They must all go to Kabakobwa.”

He spoke of the mission by Muvunyi’s soldiers.

ESO soldiers arrived very early on the morning of 22 April. They left their vehicles at the primary school, and went the rest of the way on foot. There were about 50 of them. One of them called two Tutsis over and they talked.

The soldiers left, perhaps because they believed that the refugees, there in such large numbers, were capable of fighting back. Mathias Nsanzabahire, a communal policeman, said he was on his way home on the 22<sup>nd</sup> when he stopped in Nkubi to talk to Augustin Kankwabahizi, the councillor of Nkubi. While they were talking, “a van full of heavily-armed gendarmes drove up.”

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<sup>91</sup> Interviewed 5 January 1999.

There were about 8,000 Tutsis. The gendarme, Major Rusigariye, got out of the van and said he wanted to see the councillor of Nkubi, claiming that he had heard about insecurity in the sector because of the arrival of Tutsi refugees. He asked the councillor to show him Kabakobwa. The councillor said he did not have time and asked me to go instead.

At first, Nsanzabahire refused, but later he agreed to accompany the major and his men to Kabakobwa. He denies that he himself murdered anyone at Kabakobwa, but survivors and prisoners alike say that he helped the gendarmes kill the refugees.

The gendarmes with me had every kind of weapon. I showed them where the Tutsis were, and then the major organised the first lot of shelling. They split up into four teams to kill more efficiently. The first team went to Gasharu near the property of Antoine Rwabirinda, alias “Kizenga.” The second team set up at the home of Damien Ngirubuhe, alias “Gasurira.” The third team went below Uwihanganye’s place, and the fourth team went to Rwinuma, near the homes of Nzarubara and Matabaro.

They had the Tutsis surrounded and began co-ordinated shelling. No one could escape. They went on shelling until the evening. Then they went to look for anyone still alive and finished them off with bayonets. About 8,000 Tutsis were killed that day.

Nzabirinda described how they died.

At around 3.00 p.m., about 30 gendarmes and a communal policeman, Mathias Nsanzabahire came up from the commune of Ngoma. They stationed themselves in various different places all around. They threw in four hand grenades. I was there, watching them closely. They began shooting the people with machine-guns and other firearms. Nsanzabahire killed ten Tutsis himself, including Mutwa’s son, Munyankindi, who lived in Rwinuma, and Majosi’s son, Védaste, who came from Sahera.

The interahamwe and other civilians from Nkubi, Sahera and Nyaruhengeri came in and killed a large number of Tutsis—men, women, children, the old and babies. It was terrible. Those who escaped the gunfire were immediately struck down and killed with machetes or *massues*.

I knew Muvunyi before the genocide. I saw him, with my own eyes, send the Tutsis to Kabakobwa. His soldiers incited the Hutus; without them they would have had no guarantee of success, because the Tutsis were there in considerable strength.

The survivors fled to sector Gikore in Nyaruhengeri. Nzabirinda followed them. He said many of them were thrown into a stream called Cyamwakizi. Those who tried to swim were pursued by fishermen.<sup>92</sup>

Aboubacar Ndahimana, a communal policeman, accompanied Muvunyi and Kanyabashi when they visited Kabakobwa to make sure that all the refugees had died.

Muvunyi and Kanyabashi went to Kabakobwa where a lot of Tutsis had been murdered, to see if there were any survivors. That day I was the bourgmestre’s bodyguard. We found some women and children. Muvunyi brought in the interahamwe to separate the boys from the girls, and the young girls from the women.

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**“Muvunyi said: ‘All the boys must die, then you can each take a woman or a young girl to rape. We will kill them afterwards.’”**

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The soldiers and interahamwe carried out his orders.

Anne-Marie Mukankusi, 40, was one of the residents that the refugees looked to for directions.

Every single Tutsi went to Kabakobwa, without exception. Kanyabashi and a military commander who I didn’t know told them to go to Kabakobwa. Even those who had come from Butare town asked us to show them where the Kabakobwa hill was. They told us that the leaders had assured them that they would be protected there.

Anne-Marie is a Hutu, but she had a Tutsi husband. She thought that by moving to the home of her parents she could protect him and her three children. But her husband, Justin, was afraid of his brothers-in-law and insisted that they join the refugees at Kabakobwa.

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<sup>92</sup> Interviewed 18 October 1999.

We spent two days there, Thursday and Friday morning. On the afternoon of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, around 3.00 p.m., the soldiers came from Butare in a van. They confiscated the Tutsis' weapons, saying they would take care of their security themselves. I think the soldiers were frightened at the number of Tutsis who were there. There were so many that they wouldn't have had a problem resisting attacks. My husband advised me to take the children to my mother's house which was very close to Kabakobwa. He himself didn't want to leave the others.

Two hours later, at around 5:00 p.m., they shot everyone. The Tutsis couldn't possibly escape since they were totally surrounded by people armed with machetes and clubs. I watched everything from 300 metres away. I recognised one of the militiamen. The militiamen who finished them off came from Nyaruhengeri, Gishamvu and Butare town. They killed many Tutsis at Kabakobwa; I've no idea how many. Those who escaped carried on up the road towards Nyaruhengeri.

Later, the soldiers returned to dispose of the corpses.

On the Monday of the following week, the soldiers came to bury the dead. They buried them on Kabakobwa hill.<sup>93</sup>

Thérèse Kabega, 41, had fled to Kabakobwa from Gishamvu. She gave an account of the attack on the hill.

Some of the soldiers took up positions at Sahera, others at Gasharu. There were so many of them that they surrounded Kabakobwa. They began firing at us and went on for hours, until they ran out of ammunition.

The survivors fled, panicking, in all directions; some people went home, and were killed by their neighbours.

Thérèse returned to her home but found it had been demolished. She was fortunate enough to be taken in by a friend. She later lost her husband and three of her eight children.<sup>94</sup>

After the massacre by the soldiers, the civilian population did indeed understand that "the genocide had begun." Hyacinthe spoke of the fate of survivors from Sahera.

The survivors of the onslaught tried to go home to Sahera but they were killed immediately by the people who had looted their belongings. Another onslaught came from Gishamvu commune, led by a certain Onésphore, Rugerinyange's son from Buvumo sector, who was the secretary of Butare préfecture. Many Tutsis in our sector died in the attack.

Nzabirinda also identified an officer from Camp Ngoma who killed Tutsis in Kabakobwa, and who encouraged Hutus to follow suit.

Corporal Gatwaza had been sent over from the Ngoma army base. This corporal always drove a four-wheel-drive Toyota van. It was a blue van driven by Déo Nsekanabanga. Wherever he went, Corporal Gatwaza used to tell people: "Anyone who doesn't kill a Tutsi is a traitor. We must kill them." He had a gun, and shot dead any Tutsis he came across on the road.

## **Soldiers Attack a Secondary School, 29 April**

*"Muvunyi did not want to intervene when I appealed to him for help."*

The Groupe Scolaire, a secondary school close to Butare cathedral, was run by a Catholic order, the Frères de la Charité. There were over 1300 refugees at the school in April—many of them were orphans and employees of Kacyiru Red Cross in Kigali who had been evacuated to Butare in mid-April. Also taking refuge at the school were displaced people from Butare and Gikongoro; employees of the Ministry of Youth and staff of the OCIR, the parastatal in charge of tea and coffee, who had been visiting Butare for an exhibition. Several teachers at the school had joined the militia and were known as the "mobile group". They pointed out Tutsis to the soldiers and a number of students, Red Cross

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<sup>93</sup> Interviewed 20 October 1999.

<sup>94</sup> Interviewed 20 October 1999.

workers and orphans did the same. On 29 April, about 100 Tutsis were murdered by soldiers from ESO and Camp Ngoma. The victims included nearly 50 Red Cross orphans and employees.

Brother Célestin Ngendahimana, 32, was the headmaster of the school. He said that on the 24<sup>th</sup>, teachers from the school came, accompanied by interahamwe, and armed with machetes, clubs and *massues*. They picked out about 100 Tutsis, identifying them from their ID cards. Ngendahimana then persuaded them to leave by bribing them with 200,000 Rwandese francs. Then, on 28 April, a soldier in a white Land Cruiser entered the compound. He spoke with Ngendahimana.

I recognised a lieutenant by the name of Gatsinzi. I asked him the reason for his visit. He didn't respond and continued to forge ahead. Before leaving, he told me that I was harbouring *Inkotanyi*. All the entrance doors of the school were guarded by soldiers; they opened for anyone who wanted to come in, but no one could leave.

Ngendahimana telephoned ESO for assistance.

The person who answered the telephone told me his name was Col. Muvunyi. He reassured me that he was getting ready to come to our aid. But we waited the whole night in vain, even though I telephoned at least twice.

The following day, a large number of soldiers surrounded the school and the massacre began.

In the morning I was told that Lt. Gatsinzi wanted to see me. He showed me a piece of paper on which was typed "*mandat de perquisition*" (search warrant), signed and stamped. He wouldn't let me read or keep the paper. He made me open all the doors. When we came to the doors where people were hiding, I lied and said that I didn't have the keys.

These soldiers made everyone come out. They made them lie down in the courtyard, near the main offices and beat them. I was standing outside my office. Some probably died on the spot. Then they put them in two cars; one of the cars made two tours. They killed them near Caraes [psychiatric hospital] in Kabutare. This all started at about 8:00 a.m. and continued until about 3:00 p.m. More than 100 people were killed at the hands of about 50 soldiers and about 20 civilians. The soldiers were armed with guns and grenades; the civilians had grenades.

Lt. Gatsinzi returned to the school shortly after the killings had taken place.

About 5:30 p.m., Lt. Gatsinzi, accompanied by a warrant officer, came back. He asked me if I had money; I gave him 40,000 francs. He demanded that I give the same amount to his companion; again, I gave 40,000 francs.

Ngendahimana interpreted Muvunyi's failure to respond as an indication of his support for the policy of massacres.

Muvunyi did not want to intervene when I appealed to him for help. If Muvunyi had wanted to, he could have stopped the genocide in Butare.<sup>95</sup>

Sub-Lt. Modeste Gatsinzi, 31, is the soldier Ngendahimana blames for the massacre. He joined the army in 1989 and was transferred to ESO in May 1993 and became an instructor, giving a course in military tactics. After a month in Bukavu, Zaire, he returned to Rwanda and was reintegrated into the RPA where he joined the gendarmerie. He was arrested in June 1998 for taking part in the killings at the Groupe Scolaire and for giving military training to the interahamwe in Mata, Gikongoro; he was awaiting trial at the time of the interview in November 1999.

Gatsinzi says that he is "pleading not guilty on the grounds that I only went to the scene of the massacre to save people." He argues that he went to the school to save Jonathan Bicunda and his family who came from his native commune of Muhazi in Kibungo.

I went there with a party of 20-30 soldiers from ESO. We found a lot of interahamwe from Kigali under the command of Sub-Lt. Mugabarigira, and about ten soldiers from Camp Ngoma. Mugabarigira ordered everyone to assemble on the volleyball court. Then the Hutus were separated from the Tutsis. When I tried to save Bicunda and his family by taking them out of the group who

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<sup>95</sup> Interviewed 13 April 1999.

were to be killed, the interahamwe insisted that they knew him well as a Kigali Tutsi. I had to take him aside and have him protected by my bodyguard. I managed to get them into the Red Cross vehicle that was to take away those who were not to be killed.

Shifting the blame elsewhere, he said that two of the most senior soldiers in Butare, Muvunyi's deputy at ESO and the head of Camp Ngoma, arrived just before the killings got underway.

The ethnic sorting that preceded the massacres had nearly finished when Captain Nizeyimana and Lt. Hategekimana, alias "Bikomagu" from Camp Ngoma, arrived on the scene. Each was in a Land Cruiser requisitioned from UNAMIR. As soon as they arrived, they gave the signal for the killing to start. Nizeyimana, actually gave the signal, then both of those evil men left. The massacre then began, and was carried out only by the interahamwe, although soldiers were present. I managed to save four Brothers [of Frères de la Charité], Bicunda's family and some Red Cross children. About 60 people were killed, including the orphans and other refugees. Bicunda was apparently killed later in Cyangu, but the rest of his family survived.

But other witnesses dispute Gatsinzi's version and confirm the testimony of Célestin Ngendahimana. A Red Cross employee who narrowly escaped death spoke on condition of anonymity.

On 29 April the Groupe Scolaire was surrounded by soldiers from ESO, from Camp Ngoma, and by interahamwe militia from Kigali and Butare. They came right inside the complex, and Damien Nzabakira, together with some Red Cross orphans, made us leave our dormitories. They made us sit down in the courtyard and observed to each other that a lot of the children there were Red Cross orphans. As a lot of children had no cards because they were under 16, they called out the deputy director, Vincent Rutabayiro. As he was a Tutsi, they led him in front of the children, beat him up and killed him. He had been handed over by Jean Marie-Vianney Niyonzima, who said that he was an *Inkotanyi*. The soldiers were led by Modeste Gatsinzi and another dark-skinned man.

The children were handed over by their fellow pupils and their staff, including Emmanuel Nkundumukiza alias "Kanyamafente"; Joseph Kanyamibwa, an instructor, and the assistant manager, Emmanuel. These three picked up the children and gave them to their executioners.

The children, their teachers and the employees of the Ministry of Youth died a horrible death. They were beaten with *massues* and small hoes and stabbed with knives. The bodies were taken away in the Red Cross Mazda. 27 Red Cross children died. Seven had come to see their friends. 22 Red Cross workers died, including two members of the Kayibaze family; Mrs Chrysostome and Gakwandi.

Pierre-Damien Nzabakira, mentioned above, has been charged with involvement in the killings. An employee of the Red Cross in Kacyiru, he said that he "knew Muvunyi well" and that he had met him at ESO on the 13<sup>th</sup>, the day after their evacuation to Butare, to ask Muvunyi for authorisation for their car. He described Muvunyi as an "organiser" of the genocide.

Very early on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup>, the school was surrounded by soldiers. We saw soldiers coming right inside the school. I agreed with Brother Célestin Ngendahimana that he would telephone ESO to ask for help, saying that there were soldiers, about 40 of them, among the people attacking us. There were also some teachers, including Faustin Niyonzima. When Col. Muvunyi told Ngendahimana that he didn't know the people threatening us, we concluded that he did not want to assist us. He never came. More than 100 people were killed, about 30 of them Red Cross orphans. Some were killed at Rwasave, taken there in two white Mazda vans confiscated from the Red Cross office in Butare. The victims included:

- Vincent Rutabayiro, deputy director of the Red Cross;
- Jean Rutaysire, prefect of studies at the Belgian Red Cross;
- Ten trainers, including Athanase Ndahumba; Julienne Niyonsaba; Victoire Kayibaze; Jacqueline and Béatrice;
- Judith Gatesi, a secretary.<sup>96</sup>

Bénôit Nyabusimba, 50, is prefect of studies at the Groupe Scolaire and was there when the refugees fell into the hands of soldiers.

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<sup>96</sup> Interviewed 8 April 1999.



Two cars carrying soldiers arrived. The teachers from the mobile group helped the soldiers to select the refugees who should be killed. Some were killed at the school, the others at Rwasave. Some were brought out from the room used as a cinema and murdered.<sup>97</sup>

At the beginning of June, the International Committee of the Red Cross negotiated with Terre des Hommes and the Italian consulate to evacuate the Red Cross children and other Butare orphans to Burundi. The first group left on 4 June.

## **Working Hand in Hand: Soldiers and the Militia at the Parish of Ngoma, 30 April**

*“The soldiers took the Tutsis out of the church and the interahamwe killed them.”*

About 480 Tutsi refugees, including children, had taken shelter at the Catholic Parish of Ngoma, in sector Ngoma. They had come there from Matyazo and Mpare in Butare and Kibeho in Gikongoro, as well as from Ngoma itself. Almost all of them were killed when soldiers from Camp Ngoma, which was nearby, mounted a joint operation with the interahamwe on the morning of Saturday, 30 April.

There were two priests serving the parish, Fr. Eulade Rudahunga and Fr. Jérôme Masinzo. Fr. Masinzo was warned by one of the soldiers, Mpakaniye, to stay out of sight before the selection process began. Mpakaniye arrived before his colleagues to make sure that the priest was in a safe place. He told the two clergymen that Lt. Hategekimana, the commander of Camp Ngoma, had summoned him and other soldiers and told them: “Go to the parish and kill everyone you find there, except Fr. Jérôme. I’ll come and get him myself.” Fr. Rudahunga gave the following account of the massacre in his church.

Mpakaniye hid Fr. Jérôme in the ceiling of his bedroom and left the door open. Then he came straight over to our building, arriving at the same time as the commander and the other soldiers.

The commander of Camp Ngoma, Lt. Ildephonse Hategekimana, arrived with six other soldiers, including Corporal Nkurunziza, between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. on 30 April. We opened the gates for them. The soldiers with Hategekimana split into two groups: two of them stayed with him, and the others stood guard at the gates. The interahamwe militia stayed outside the walls. Hategekimana asked me where our parish priest was, referring to Fr. Jérôme Masinzo. I told him I didn’t know. I looked in his bedroom and told the commander I hadn’t seen him since the night before. The commander left at once. Two soldiers and a lot of interahamwe went into the church. They forced everyone outside. Then the militiamen rushed to attack them. The refugees scattered. I asked the soldiers to let them go back into the church. We went back in and prayed together on our knees. I gave them general absolution. We waited for them to come and shoot us.

A soldier stopped right in front of us and said: “Don’t be afraid. I don’t want to kill you. We’re going to bring some buses to take you over to the camp, so that we can protect you.” We thought he was telling the truth, and began celebrating. He began calling the refugees out one by one; those still in the church had no idea what was happening outside. We realised later that he was handing each person over to the interahamwe, who killed them.

Mpakaniye saved the lives of the two priests, and a few others, but there was a price to pay.

Mpakaniye made me come out to give them the keys of the house and the car. I gave them to him, and he also confiscated my watch. I went back into the church and sat down. He came in and advised me to sit apart from the others. He also called over Fr. Pierre Ngoga<sup>98</sup> from Kibeho, and two young girls who had no identity cards, and were claiming to be Hutus. He also added Gérard Safari, who had taken refuge at the parish. All the others went out one by one, including children as young as three. Some of these young children were orphans who had come from Matyazo after their parents were killed.

This nightmare lasted from 9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. Then Mpakaniye called me out to lock our main gate. He asked the militiamen: “Is there anything else to be done? Have you checked everywhere?” They said they had. He told me: “Keep your gate shut, and don’t let anyone in.” He added that they would be back around 5.00 p.m.

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<sup>97</sup> Interviewed 21 April 1999.

<sup>98</sup> Fr. Pierre Ngoga worked at the Catholic Parish of Kibeho in Gikongoro where thousands of Tutsis were killed, most of them on 15 April. See African Rights, *Witness to Genocide*, Issue 10, June 1999. He took refuge at the Parish of Ngoma in Butare, but was found, imprisoned in Karubanda prison and then murdered.

He did indeed come back, accompanied by Corporal Nkurunziza. Apparently, the other soldiers had asked him why he had not killed me, and he had replied that the commander had ordered him not to. The only ones who were left were four young girls, Gérard, Fr. Ngoga and myself.

They asked us for money, saying otherwise they would kill us. We raised 500,000 francs. Fr. Ngoga gave them a cheque, but the banks weren't operating. We realised that we would have to give them all the money we had on us, thinking that the situation might be better elsewhere in the country. They left, but kept coming back twice a week to claim what we owed them. It was mainly Mpakaniye or Nkurunziza.

Fr. Jérôme stayed in his bedroom ceiling. I would say he was dead if anyone asked me about him. He hid until 3 July, when the French evacuated us to Gikongoro. A large number of people died at the Parish of Ngoma, including Cyprien, a retired medical assistant; Cyprien's wife and Samson from the Centre for Theological Activities. All those who died were handed over to the interahamwe by the soldiers on duty there.<sup>99</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Ntakirutimana, known as "Johnny", said that "our parents had advised us to hide in the church because they had hidden there every time since 1959, and didn't know that things would change." He left his family immediately the killings began in his neighbourhood on the 21<sup>st</sup>. He spent three weeks in the bush, near the parish. He concealed himself in the cypress trees that surrounded the nearby Electrogaz sub-station. From there, he said, "I was able to follow everything that happened."

Some soldiers arrived, followed by interahamwe, and encircled the church and the priests' rooms. Everyone screamed when they entered the courtyard; some people ran into the church. A Christian reservist named Callixte refused to kill the people in the church. The soldiers went into the church and told anyone with money, valuables or a watch that they had to hand them over.

I saw Tutsis being taken out five at a time by the soldiers and handed over to the interahamwe. The soldiers told the Tutsis they were going to make a list of their names before taking them to "Kinihira." But there were hordes of interahamwe outside the main gate, just waiting to strangle them or cut their throats. They had carefully closed the gate so that the people inside would not hear their cries. They began with the strongest men, and threw their bodies into the bush. They first took people in groups of five, then in groups of eight, then ten at a time. Their colleagues inside the church were saying: "Get on with it!" The soldiers replied: "We have to check peoples' identity carefully."

They emptied the church, right down to the youngest children. I recognised a lot of young people from Ngoma and Matyazo among the killers. They came after us into the cypress grove, so I jumped over and ran to a Hutu household.

The soldiers and the militia divided the tasks.

The soldiers took the Tutsis out of the church and the interahamwe killed them. They did not use any hand grenades. They had so many people to kill that they got tired. That is why they took a long time to come and search the cypress grove.

Johnny stayed with a Hutu friend for three weeks. When his friend decided to leave for Cyangugu, he made arrangements with Fr. Eulade so that Johnny could return to the parish. They left for the parish at night.

I was disguised in a long shirt and hat, and carried a machete and a *massue*. When I went through the roadblock, they greeted me with the slogan "Power!" and I replied "Power!" That was their password. I dug myself in a hole in the parish grounds and would leave it only at 7:00 a.m. We stayed there until 3 July, when the Operation Turquoise troops arrived and the interahamwe fled in panic.

Johnny believes they spared Fr. Rudahunga "so that he could say mass for them and hear their confessions."

Aged 15, Eugène Rutayisire was too small to climb over the wall into the parish. As he and some other youngsters searched for ways to reach the church, they saw that soldiers had just killed a Tutsi man at the gate of the parish and were on their way back to base at Camp Ngoma. "We had to use the dead body to stand on and climb over into the priests' compound. We tumbled down inside, and found a lot of other Tutsis in there." But Eugène's relatives were not there; his mother and brother had been killed

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<sup>99</sup> Interviewed 19 April 1999.

in the massacre at Matyazo health centre. He had been at the parish for six days when the soldiers came.

They knocked at the main gate, and soldiers from Camp Ngoma marched in. They left the interahamwe outside. They called in the interahamwe after hiding Fr. Jérôme. There were four soldiers, and a lot more interahamwe, but only a few of them came in at first, leaving the rest outside.

They robbed us of all our possessions, and ordered us into the church, where they went on stealing. Fr. Eulade and Fr. Ngoga were in there, and they ordered Fr. Eulade to tell us to pray. Then the soldiers selected the most important men amongst us. They took them out into the courtyard in groups of five. Then they were killed, but we heard no gunfire, because the soldiers handed them over to the interahamwe, who killed them with traditional weapons.

After the men, it was the turn of the children, including Eugène himself.

I was in the fifth group. They took us outside, behind the presbytery [priests' rooms], where I saw a large number of bodies. I nearly lost my mind. I just couldn't understand what was happening to us. I couldn't face the people who were going to kill us, so I turned my back on them. Then I lay face down on the ground. Two minutes later, they hit me on the head with a *massue*, and I passed out.

I came round at about 6:00 p.m. It was very windy. My legs were uninjured, but I had been wounded in the head and right arm. They were still there, busy finishing off anyone who moved. When they thought they had completed their dirty work, they left. I got up carefully and made my way to the presbytery. I crouched down and knocked at the door. Fr. Eulade, Fr. Ngoga and some of the girls, including Viviane, had not been killed by the interahamwe. They opened the door, and were amazed to see I was still alive. They took me to the sacristy, and gave me a mattress to sleep on.

The following day, a Sunday, I still couldn't eat anything. The rain was pouring down on the bodies of our people as they lay in the courtyard and out in the bush. The prisoners from Karubanda came on Monday to bury them. They brought a lorry and a Caterpillar bulldozer, and threw them into a mass grave. One of the prisoners, named Kazungu, found me in the sacristy and told me to follow him. I followed him in the hope that he would finish me off for good, as I was desperate and miserable. He stared at me, and made me take off my clothes. Then he left me there, saying: "You'll die without any help from me." The Caterpillar levelled off the mass grave to remove all traces of it.

I was still there on Tuesday, unable to eat anything. I didn't see Johnny, Vénuste, Rushenyi and any other survivors from the presbytery until Wednesday.

In the days that followed, the interahamwe kept coming in, shouting and screaming, and stealing rice before they left. We were hiding in the ceiling, in the toilets and in the church. They were sure that everyone had been killed, apart from the priests and the girls they saw there. We stayed there for three months, until the French arrived. There were about 50 of us.

Within hours of the massacre at the Parish of Ngoma, Lt. Ildephonse Hategekimana organised another series of murders at another Catholic centre in Ngoma.

## **Muvunyi's Signature: Authorising Murder at the Benebikira Convent, 30 April**

*"If Muvunyi had wanted to save people, no soldier or interahamwe would have taken the initiative to kill the Tutsis."*

The Benebikira convent is in Buye, a pleasant and leafy district with spacious houses lined with jacaranda trees, located near the commercial centre of Ngoma. The convent seems like a haven of peace; set in large grounds, it is covered with rose bushes. Buye was home to many academics targeted by the killers and on 20 April, a busload of interahamwe arrived in the area. The nuns could hear the constant sound of gunfire in their neighbourhood. A steady stream of local people, including many children, arrived at the convent, in fear of their lives. The nuns also opened their doors to a large number of people from Kigali and Gitarama, as well as fellow-nuns from the commune of Save in Butare. For a while the convent gave the refugees some protection, but then Lt. Col. Muvunyi intervened.

Sister Spéciose Mukarubayiza was interviewed by Fergal Keane of the BBC for a documentary broadcast on Newsnight in April 1999, "Children of Benebikira." She spoke of the 25 children who had sought shelter at the convent; 22 were under 18. Many of them, she said, had witnessed the murder of their parents and siblings. Some, including the very young, had themselves escaped massacres. "When

they arrived, they were naked, so we clothed them. We gave them food, we gave them water, we found a place for them to sleep. Then we kept them talking because we wanted them to forget what they had seen.”

They asked us so many times: “Sister, are we going to die? I said: “No, God will protect us.” And because many of them were so young, and because I said it and I was a nun, they believed me.

But on 30 April, at 11:30 a.m., soldiers and civilians,<sup>100</sup> surrounded the convent. Lt. Ildephonse Hategekimana, in charge of Camp Ngoma, came with written authorisation from Muvunyi to search for “suspicious” elements in Buye. The soldiers began to shoot. Everyone was frightened by the sound of shattering windows, the shouts of civilians and the stampede; the children, hiding in different parts of the convent, became panic-stricken. Some of them ran out and the soldiers ran after them. All the people in the convent were taken outside, except the nuns. The soldiers asked for identity cards. In addition, certain people were told to stand aside, identified as Tutsis according to their physical appearance. They picked out 26 people, 24 Tutsis and two Hutus who were mistaken for Tutsis: they were taken away in a vehicle. Afterwards, the soldiers looted the community and drank beer they found in the convent. Sr. Spéciose said that Hategekimana used the paper signed by Muvunyi to justify their actions.

The commanding officer, Ildephonse Hategekimana, came from Ngoma barracks. He waved a paper in the air and asked to see our Mother Superior. He then said that the paper had been given to him by Col. Muvunyi who had given an order to come and take people who are hiding there.

A nun, interviewed by Jon Swain of *The Sunday Times* in late 1998, saw the paper that authorised the murders and has a clear memory of the contents.

[It was] a single sheet of paper typed in French. Sister Marie Juvénal Mukamurama still recalls precisely what it said: “*Perquisition de toutes personnes et objets suspects* [seizure of all people and suspicious objects].” It was signed “Colonel Muvunyi.”<sup>101</sup>

When questioned by the journalist about this paper, Lt. Col. Muvunyi claimed: “I am not aware of giving orders to search the Benebikira convent,” he said. I tried to protect the religious centres.”<sup>102</sup>

The victims of the massacre at the convent included Solange, Malik and Mulinga Karenzi, the children of Claver Karenzi, a lecturer at the university and one of the first people killed in Butare. Thierry 13, and Emery, 11, the children of Fidèle Kanyabugoyi, the head of Kanyarwanda, a human rights organisation, also died. Fidèle and his wife, Spéciose Mukayiraba, were friends of the Karenzi family and had sent their sons to stay with them, thinking that Butare would be safer than Kigali. Several employees of the convent also died; Damascène who looked after the convent’s farm; Félicien, a cook and Tatien, a watchman. Having promised the children protection, Sr. Spéciose is haunted by their death.

We hoped they would kill us before finding the children, but they found every single one. We went out in front hoping they would kill us first. But they said they wanted to kill us later. They said we had a lot of cockroaches and they wanted to find them first.

It took them two hours, but the soldiers found Solange Karenzi; they found her brothers, Malik and Mulinga; they also found Thierry and Emery Kanyabugoyi and 20 others. The children came out silently. They did not cry or beg for their lives. The soldiers and militiamen assembled them in the garden.

The last image of the children, which I can’t forget, is that we looked into each other’s eyes and they were so sad. I didn’t show any emotion and neither did they. They left and I had to stay.

One of the nuns, who asked for anonymity, spoke with *African Rights* about the events that have left a profound mark on the Benebikira nuns in Buye.

Soldiers came to our convent and took people out and killed them. But they did not harm the nuns. They only took away lay people.

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<sup>100</sup> The civilians included Raymond Mugabo, now a student in Belgium.

<sup>101</sup> Jon Swain, “On the trail of the child killers”, *The Sunday Times*, 6 December 1998.

<sup>102</sup> Jon Swain, “On the trail of the child killers.”

On 30 April, a captain from Ngoma camp called Ildephonse Hategekimana, a native of Gitarama, came to our convent with some soldiers and interahamwe. The captain came right into the premises. We thought it was our last day. The captain gave us a letter which he called an arrest warrant. He separated us from the refugees, and asked for our identity cards. We gave them to him. After checking them, he said all the Tutsis were to die. He said that “Col. Muvunyi gave us these orders.” He tried to show us the signature and the stamp of ESO on the warrant.

He immediately ordered out all the remaining Tutsis and put them in the waiting lorries. They were driven away somewhere—I don’t know where—and killed. He told us that next time, it would be the turn of the Tutsi nuns in our community and of the others who had taken refuge with us.

They were also determined to ensure that the convent could no longer be regarded as a safe haven.

They set up a roadblock outside our gate to stop anyone else getting in. They set up another roadblock to stop anyone getting out.

A few days later, the officer returned to the convent.

On 2 May, our community was visited by another delegation, again led by Lt. Hategekimana. The lieutenant said that Col. Muvunyi had said that he would personally kill anyone who killed the nuns from Save Sisters. That shows that if Muvunyi had wanted to save people, no soldier or interahamwe would have taken the initiative to kill the Tutsis. They did so under Muvunyi’s complete protection. The other Sisters of our community and I spent the entire period of the genocide in our convent, expecting death at any minute.<sup>103</sup>

Time has done little to soften the memories for the nuns or to exorcise the bloodletting in the convent. Jon Swain visited the convent at the end of 1998.

Today there is an awful loneliness about Benebikira convent. The bullet holes where the soldiers came in shooting four and a half years ago have been plastered over, but the long, low building looks desolate. The garden where the children huddled beneath the soldiers’ guns is overgrown with weeds. The nuns still seem to be concentrating all the horrors of that day in themselves. Sister Spéciose said: “The rest of our lives will pass through grief over the children we were unable to protect.”

The anguish of Sr. Spéciose is all too apparent from the Newsnight documentary.

We couldn’t save a single child’s life, yet we survived. People who weren’t there think we gave up the children. I will never forget what I saw for my whole life. Never, never, never. It haunts me; the image will never leave me.

The killing of the children at the Benebikira convent was a tragic episode, but compared with the massacres which took place in the rural areas of Butare, it was on a small scale. Although they were further away from the army base, the Tutsis in the countryside were even less likely to survive the military efforts to wipe them out. A comprehensive genocide took place there. It was clearly planned with military precision and detail, and implemented with efficiency and speed.

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<sup>103</sup> Interviewed 4 February 1999.

## MASS GRAVE UPON MASS GRAVE THE RURAL COMMUNES OF BUTARE

For Lt. Col. Muvunyi, the countryside of Butare was a “battlefield.” He sent armed soldiers from ESO and from Camp Ngoma all over Butare, and liaised with interahamwe leaders and local officials to ensure that their task was made easier. In addition to providing manpower, weapons and ammunition, these soldiers used both persuasion and the threat of force to convince the population that it was their duty to exterminate Tutsis. The result was that in every commune of the préfecture of Butare there were killings, and in 19 of them there were massacres on a scale which is beyond imagination. In some of the rural communes, there had been killings even before President Sindikubwabo’s inflammatory speeches of 19 April. Once Muvunyi’s soldiers entered the fray, however, the situation deteriorated rapidly. In one example, Muvunyi came to deliver his instructions personally. On another occasion, he criss-crossed the area in a jeep while the slaughter, led by his soldiers, was underway. But in most cases his authority was simply accepted from a distance. All the massacres detailed below took place between 21-30 April, highlighting the extraordinary speed with which the genocide was implemented in Butare.

The rural massacres investigated by *African Rights* represent only a fraction of the organised large-scale killings carried out by Muvunyi’s soldiers in the préfecture of Butare, without adding the tens of thousands who died in Gikongoro at the behest of the soldiers under his command. After the genocide, some of the victims were found in the mass graves where their bodies had been dumped. There were so many bodies on the roads and hills that in May and June 1994, local officials brought in Caterpillar bulldozers or used prisoners to collect them. Sometimes they even made the disposal of bodies a “communal project”, part of the self-help schemes that have long been a feature of life in Rwanda. Since the end of the genocide, many of these bodies have been exhumed and given a decent burial. But thousands of others—washed down rivers, eaten by dogs and crows or burned alive—remain, for the outside world, a statistic of the genocide. With time, more and more of the men who killed them are coming forward to say how they died and who gave the orders.

### **Kigembe: “Heaps of Bodies”, 19 April**

*“The use of guns and grenades by soldiers made us panic and undermined our will to resist.”*

One of the first communes to experience the full impact of the genocide was Kigembe. Most of the Tutsis in this commune were murdered within hours of Sindikubwabo’s appeal for genocide. One of the reasons for this was that the Tutsis were already gathered in one place when the genocide was launched, making them easy targets for the military. As early as the 15<sup>th</sup> there had been “infiltration raids” by people from the commune of Nyakizu targeting Tutsis. They had left their homes and joined refugees from Gikongoro and from Runyinya and Nyakizu in Butare, at the commune office and at a nearby school, CERAI, in sector Nyaruteja. The bourgmestre, Symphorien Karekezi, 57, was aware of the danger they faced. He said he intervened to stop the first attacks and that he hid several Tutsi families at his home—including his wife and in-laws—but when some were taken by force to the commune office he decided to send the rest there. Then, Bonaventure Nkundabakura, the local representative of the extremist wing of the opposition political party, the MDR<sup>104</sup>, drove around with a loudspeaker telling people that the commune was at risk from the *Inkotanyi*. Karekezi realised that the killers were preparing an onslaught, and that the Tutsis would need protection. He looked to Muvunyi for assistance, but he found that the commander’s men were already on their way.

I went to ask Col. Muvunyi for reinforcements. Halfway there, I met a red van carrying about 12 soldiers. They told me they had already been alerted and were on their way for that very reason. The soldiers had come from ESO and wore black berets. I had borrowed the Red Cross Daihatsu, but returned with the soldiers. As we were approaching my house, they told me: “You’ve told us you’re incapable of restoring law and order, so stay home and let us get on with it.” They dropped me at my house, and headed for the commune office.

<sup>104</sup> The Republican Democratic Movement.

Soon after the soldiers left Karekezi's home, there was an attack upon the commune office and the school, CERAI. It was clear that the soldiers had been sent not to defend the refugees, but to kill them.

Shortly afterwards, I heard the sound of guns and grenades coming from the commune office. That is how the genocide began in Kigembe commune office and spread throughout the whole commune. There were a lot of people, because some had come from Mubuga in Gikongoro. Most of them died there, and others died at home with their families.

The genocide in Kigembe, Karekezi said, was supervised by an officer from ESO.

The genocide continued until 22 April. Warrant Officer Paul Kanyeshyamba came to the commune every day between 19 and 23 April, at the very time the Tutsi refugees were being killed. What did he come to do? That officer normally lived at ESO. Kanyeshyamba was a Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese who was then living in Nyamihatsi cellule in sector Nyanza of our commune. On 20 April, Kanyeshyamba came to my house with a dozen soldiers from ESO to search for Tutsis there. They found no-one because I had hidden them in the banana grove. They came back on 21 and 23 April for the same reason, but didn't find anyone.<sup>105</sup>

Augustin Butoyi, imprisoned in Butare, admits that he "witnessed and took part in the killing." He was arrested in 1996 and said that he "immediately pleaded guilty to having shot people in the massacre of the refugees packed into CERAI at Nyaruteja." He is a former soldier who has known Muvunyi since 1987. After leaving the army Butoyi had worked as a communal policeman for three years. On 16 April, the bourgmestre asked him to resume his duties as a communal policeman because of the security problems. Butoyi was at the commune office on 19 April and confirmed Karekezi's statement that the bourgmestre was dropped off at home by soldiers who then came to the office. It was immediately clear why the soldiers had come.

About seven of the soldiers came up to me in the office. One of them said: "We've come to help you fight the *Inkotanyi*. This is the only place where there's still a problem."

They asked me where CERAI was, showing me a map which indicated the two places where the displaced Tutsis were staying: in the commune office and at CERAI. I took my gun and went to CERAI with the soldiers.

The soldiers were reinforced by some of the most feared killers, including Burundian refugees from a local camp.

First of all there was a stone-throwing between us and the Tutsis inside.

The presence of Muvunyi's men weighed the balance of strength in favour of the attackers.

Then the soldiers threw in two grenades which must have killed a lot of people. Once the soldiers forced open the inside gate, they kept firing until the Burundian refugees went in with their *massues*. Meanwhile, some of the soldiers and I shot dead three people who had tried to jump over the wall. Before they died, the Tutsis fought back, throwing stones and other things. They wounded me on the left side of my head, with a piece of broken glass. I was bleeding so badly that I had to abandon the battlefield and go to the dispensary in Kigembe health centre, leaving the soldiers and the Burundian refugees to get on with it. Before I left, the soldiers had also decided to pull back and go to reinforce Ntyazo commune where they said "there were some problems." This was about 3.30 p.m.; the killing had gone on for an hour and a half.<sup>106</sup>

Burundian refugees surrounded the building and spent the night there to make sure no survivor could escape. The next day, the 20<sup>th</sup>, civilians finished off survivors at the commune office and at CERAI. They used the grenades left behind by the soldiers. Butoyi was present and helped to kill around 30 survivors he found in the ceiling. When *African Rights* visited the commune office in May 1999, the ceiling still bore the marks of bloodstains.

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<sup>105</sup> Interviewed 20 October and 18 March 1999.

<sup>106</sup> Interviewed 28 May 1999.

Butoyi said that there were no interahamwe in the commune and that the bourgmestre opposed the killing. He added:

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**“The success of the genocide at CERAI and the commune office was due entirely to the soldiers and the Burundian refugees.”**

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Martin Ntamishimiro, 41, a communal policeman from sector Nyaruteja, described a mob of civilians and Burundian refugees who arrived at the commune office on the morning of the 19th and said that the Tutsis managed to fight back against them. Later the soldiers arrived and the slaughter began in earnest. One of the soldiers, he said, was a local man.

One of the soldiers was Warrant Officer Nsanzabazungu from Nyanza sector in our commune. The bourgmestre went home, while the soldiers fired at the crowd of displaced people instead of restoring order. Calm didn't return until 4.00 p.m. when the soldiers left. There were heaps of bodies piled up on the grass outside the commune office.

Ntamishimiro said he “knew Muvunyi very well” and he holds him responsible for the genocide in his commune.

Muvunyi was the army leader at that time. If those soldiers had not come to reinforce the killers, the Tutsis would not have died in such large numbers. They were defending themselves quite effectively before the soldiers arrived.<sup>107</sup>

Straton Iyamuremye, 59, had left the military in 1965, but was recalled for military service in April 1994. He acknowledges that he lent a hand in the massacre of 19 April, throwing grenades. “Many soldiers came from Butare in a minibus. They killed the refugees in collaboration with the interahamwe. The grenades I lobbed were given to me by a soldier.”<sup>108</sup>

Boniface Mushakamba, 50, a former member of the committee responsible for cellule Nyabunazi in sector Nyaruteja, also admits that he took part in the killings in his sector, which he blamed mainly on soldiers.

On 19 April, the soldiers who came from Butare killed a lot of the Tutsis who had sought refuge at the commune office. They started shooting as soon as they arrived. There were a lot of victims.<sup>109</sup>

Bonaventure Nkundabakura, a businessman who was the head of MDR in the commune, refutes the bourgmestre's claim that he tried to incite people. He claims that his crime was to give two grenades, which he obtained from the ESO soldier, Warrant Officer Kanyeshyamba, to the gendarmes. He too singled out the soldiers as the authors of the genocide in Kigembe. “The soldiers killed the Tutsis at CERAI, most of them from Gikongoro. Civilians helped the soldiers kill the Tutsis.” After the genocide, he said that the bodies “were thrown into the Akanyaru river, in the ditch near my house and into some latrines used by Burundian refugees.”<sup>110</sup>

One of the survivors from the commune office is Jean-Damascène Nshutininka, 42, from cellule Mbuyi, sector Kivuru. He suffered shrapnel wounds in both shoulders from a grenade. He had only been at the commune office for a few hours when the soldiers made their presence known.

A red vehicle, a Hilux if I'm not mistaken, arrived bringing soldiers. None of them were known in our commune except Nsanzabazungu whose parents lived in Nyanza sector. Two soldiers came up and told us to leave the premises. We came out very slowly and reluctantly. The first two Tutsis who came out were killed with machetes; we dashed back inside. The next moment, we heard whistles being blown all around the commune office. We collected some bricks and used them to fight back. Then we heard shooting over at CERAI. Then they began firing at us at the commune office and threw in hand grenades.

A lot of people died at the commune office, including Charles Karekezi, a teacher from Kivuru sector; Augustin Ndayisenga, a farmer from Kivuru sector; Modeste Munyankindi, a

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<sup>107</sup> Interviewed 28 May 1999.

<sup>108</sup> Interviewed 28 May 1999.

<sup>109</sup> Interviewed 28 May 1999.

<sup>110</sup> Interviewed 20 March 1999.



businessman from Nyanza sector, who was also killed by a grenade and Hitimana, also killed by a grenade.

Most of them, he said, died at the hands of soldiers.

A lot of people died during the shooting and the explosion of the hand grenades. If we had only been attacked by civilians with traditional weapons, we would have been able to defend ourselves. If things had got worse, most of us would have managed to flee to Burundi, fighting off the civilians as best as we could. But the heavy firing at CERAI, the use of guns and hand grenades by soldiers here at the commune office, made us panic and undermined our will to resist.<sup>111</sup>

Another survivor who had been at the commune office is Charles Kayumba, now working as a councillor. “The leaders of the interahamwe”, he said, “received critical support from the soldiers who came from Butare.”

These soldiers from Butare came in military vehicles. I know they came from Butare because one of the soldiers is someone I knew very well, Nsanabazungu, who lived in a camp in Butare. They mingled with the interahamwe and made a huge contribution to all the terrible things that happened in my commune. If the soldiers had not come, people would not have been killed. They were capable of defending themselves, or taking refuge in Burundi.

They opened fire as soon as they got here, even before they had surrounded us. They shot and shot. The victims were very many. To save my life, I lay down among the corpses. They thought I was already dead. After they left, we remained surrounded by the militia; we waited for divine mercy in order to be saved. At midnight, I decided to leave for Burundi; it was a matter of life and death.

Charles said he did not want to end his testimony without making a comment about Muvunyi.

I condemn, publicly and in the strongest terms, the commander of the soldiers who attacked us. He gave them orders which were not worthy of a military commander. He’s an assassin and should be brought to justice.<sup>112</sup>

As in Kigembe, in most of the parishes, schools and hilltops where they assembled, the Tutsis fought back against their tormentors, usually with nothing more lethal than stones, spears and willpower. One of their most important successes was in commune Ntyazo. The victory turned into prolonged grief after soldiers from ESO turned their guns on the resisters.

## **Ntyazo: Crushing Resistance**

*“If the soldiers had not become involved in the killings, no plan to exterminate the Tutsis would have succeeded in our region.”*

As elsewhere in Butare, the soldiers from ESO intervened to encourage and assist local residents and officials to carry out the genocide in their commune. Before 20 April, many Tutsis from Gikongoro, from the communes of Ntongwe, Tambwe and Kigoma in Gitarama and from other communes in Butare—Muyira, Rusatira and Nyabisindu—had congregated in Ntyazo in search of safety. They settled on hilltops in Nyamure, Karama and Rwezamenyo. When militiamen and civilians from Muyira and Bugesera, armed with traditional weapons, launched an offensive, they forced them to withdraw.

In April 1994, Ntyazo had a Tutsi bourgmestre, Narcisse Nyagasaza<sup>113</sup>; but he was soon replaced, first by a councillor, Nicodème Bizimana, then, on 22 May, by Mathieu Ndahimana who was

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<sup>111</sup> Interviewed 29 May 1999.

<sup>112</sup> Interviewed 29 May 1999.

<sup>113</sup> Narcisse Nyagasaza was arrested by gendarmes from Nyanza and subsequently murdered.

formerly acting manager of the health centre in Nyamure. Ndahimana returned from exile in Zaire on 27 July 1997 and gave himself up voluntarily to the commune authorities, admitting his role in the genocide. Two years later, he gave a frank and detailed account of the massacres in his commune to *African Rights*.

Ndahimana explained that initially the large number of Tutsi refugees presented a problem for those intent upon committing genocide. There were some gendarmes in the area who had been there to guard Burundian refugees housed in sector Bugari, but they proved no match for the refugees. He said that the bourgmestre of Muyira, Adalbert Muhutu, asked him to seek reinforcements from the gendarmerie in order to crush the resistance of the Tutsis. Ndahimana took the health centre ambulance to the gendarmerie post in Nyanza, commune Nyabisindu, headed by Captain Birikunzira.

I held a discussion with Captain Birikunzira; he gave me three gendarmes, a corporal and two soldiers. The three gendarmes spent the night at the health centre in Nyamure. Some young people joined us; there were about 30 of us.

The first attack, against the refugees in Rwezamenyo, took place the following morning.

I was armed with a knife and the others had traditional weapons. The gendarmes had guns. It was early in the morning and the refugees were cooking food. The gendarmes fired on them and they scattered. The civilians then finished them off with their spears. I stabbed a young girl to death with my knife.

The survivors of the attack fled to a hilltop in Karama. Ndahimana, accompanied by the gendarmes and the councillor of sector Gatonde, Isaïe Murindahabi, returned to Nyanza to obtain additional support.

The corporal told the captain that there were so many Tutsis that we would need more reinforcements. Captain Birikunzira arranged to meet us the following day. I was given nine gendarmes, including corporals and soldiers. The councillor who had replaced the Tutsi bourgmestre also brought along three gendarmes, Viateur Munyaneza, Martin Nyamuremye and Daniel Ngirabatware.

When the men returned to Ntyazo, they set off to retaliate against the refugees in Karama. Despite their superior armaments, they suffered another defeat; the refugees killed the son of a former bourgmestre of Ntyazo and burned one of their cars. According to Ndahimana, "there were nearly 10,000 refugees." He said they killed "between 30-50 of them and then we ran out of ammunition." The gendarmes, the policeman Munyaneza and other members of the team returned to Nyanza to seek reinforcements. They gave a report to Captain Birikunzira who immediately telephoned ESO to request help to quell the fierce resistance of the Tutsis. There was a rapid response from ESO.

The commander of ESO, Lt. Col. Muvunyi, sent some gendarmes in a blue van, as well as all the ammunition we needed. Captain Birikunzira sent 15-20 gendarmes from Nyanza. All these soldiers and gendarmes met at Karama between 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. and surrounded it. The attackers included some Burundian refugees who had been trained by the interahamwe militia, as well as the militia themselves. More than 6,000 Tutsis died that day.

Those who were still alive managed to reach Nyamure. But Muvunyi's men soon caught up with them, according to Ndahimana.

Two days later, the soldiers and gendarmes attacked Nyamure, using heavy weapons. They left in two vans, one red and the other blue, both driven by soldiers. After the assault on Nyamure, the genocide was practically over in the area.<sup>114</sup>

The councillor of Gatonde, Isaïe Murindahabi, who accompanied Ndahimana in the search for reinforcements, also spoke of the critical difference that the soldiers and gendarmes made.

Before the arrival of the soldiers, the Tutsis had fought back determinedly, and killed Joseph Muganza, the son of the former bourgmestre. This boy's death encouraged the militia to call in the soldiers, because it showed them how strong the Tutsis were. The Tutsis in Karama had been

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<sup>114</sup> Interviewed 23 May 1999.

surrounded by the interahamwe and other civilians, including Burundian refugees, in order to kill anyone who tried to escape from the carnage. Still, some of them left to join the others in Nyamure. The killings in Nyamure went on for three days. They killed almost every single Tutsi. My friends, Oscar Rutaganda and Ramangwa, and Ruhumuliza's children, all lost their lives in Nyamure. Most of the killing there was done by the security forces.<sup>115</sup>

Viateur Munyaneza, 52, had been a communal policeman in Ntyazo since 1967. He was arrested in 1997; two years later, he confessed and pleaded guilty to the charge of "working closely with the gendarmes in the attack on the Tutsis of Karama."

The Tutsis of Karama would not have been killed if it were not for the ESO soldiers. Until they arrived, they had defended themselves against the gendarmes from Nyanza, the Hutus from Bugesera and the Burundian refugees.<sup>116</sup>

Simon-Pierre Ntegeyabatwa, councillor of sector Cyimvuzo from 1980 to 1994, said that "if the soldiers had not become involved in the killings, no plan to exterminate the Tutsis would have succeeded in our region."

The death of the judicial police inspector, Joseph Muganza, showed up the attackers' incompetence, so they were forced to call in a large number of soldiers.

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**"One major, all-day long offensive by the soldiers was all it took for the soldiers to wipe out the Tutsis and scatter the survivors."**

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If the soldiers had not become involved in the killings, no plan to exterminate the Tutsis would have succeeded in our region. In my sector, for example, there were almost equal numbers of Tutsis and Hutus. No, the Hutu civilians, communal policemen and army reservists would not have been strong enough to defeat those Tutsis who were frighteningly skilled in the use of traditional weapons.<sup>117</sup>

Martin Iyamuremye, 52, named by Ndahimana as one of the communal policemen who helped to organise the reprisals against the refugees in Karama, puts the blame on soldiers but has denied taking part himself. He is currently in detention.

The interahamwe had traditional weapons. The communal policemen, Viateur Munyaneza, Daniel, Ngirabatware and others gave out weapons. They were told that the Tutsis in Nyamure had fought back. We heard some grenades going off. The Karama massacre had just begun. There was also machine-gun fire by the soldiers who had come from Butare. They are the ones who killed all the people.<sup>118</sup>

For the survivors, pride in their resistance is remembered along with the horrors and losses they endured. Appolinaria Gakuru from cellule Kankima in Karama was 16 at the time. She went to Karama hill with her mother, brother and four sisters. She spoke of their confidence the day the judicial police inspector was killed.

They approached from the direction of the local Adventist chapel. We saw them coming down the hill opposite, burning Tutsi homes as they advanced. Our men went to confront them, armed with stones, bows and arrows used to great effect by the old men, including our great warrior Rwasha who was killed later. The battle ended in total defeat for them; they fled when their "commander" for the occasion was severely wounded by one of our arrows and finished off by our men. They robbed him of his gun, but chopped it up with machetes when they realised none of us knew how to use it. Another man, Festus from Karama, was also killed.

They returned at 8:00 a.m. the following day. This time they were in a white vehicle which they parked at the Adventist chapel. Our men went to face them down there, to stop them getting near the women and children. I joined our men on the battlefield, and kept them supplied with stones to

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<sup>115</sup> Interviewed 21 October 1999.

<sup>116</sup> Interviewed 28 May 1999.

<sup>117</sup> Interviewed 21 October 1999.

<sup>118</sup> Interviewed 21 October 1999.

throw. They were again defeated and withdrew, abandoning their white Daihatsu which our men immediately set on fire.

Rose Mukandamage, 37, is from Kankima in Karama. She lost three children in the genocide. She described the success of the refugees at Karama to hold their ground against the interahamwe, and said that the arrival of more soldiers put an end to their resistance.

We were completely surrounded by soldiers. The interahamwe were behind them, waiting to finish off anyone who survived the bullets. Many Tutsis died. I hid in a stream with my younger sister, Nyiraminani. There was a swamp there called Nganzo, with pits where the Twa used to make pottery. There were many more Tutsis than interahamwe. The militia wouldn't have been able to exterminate us without the help of the large numbers of soldiers who had been brought in.

After the massacre, Gakuru's men, an interahamwe leader, announced that calm had returned. I left my children in the swamp and went home to cook. Gakuru came into the house and asked: "Why are your children still alive?" He hit me with a *massue* and I fell down unconscious. He killed my children. I didn't regain consciousness until early the next morning. When I came round, I went to Nyarugunga, although I could only walk with difficulty.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Interviewed 19 October 1999.

## Runyinya: “The Massacre to End All Massacres”, 21 April

*“We could have fought back successfully against traditional weapons, but not against firearms.”*

More people were killed at the Catholic Parish of Karama, situated in sector Karama, commune of Runyinya, and in the commune office of Runyinya, than in any other massacre which *African Rights* has investigated since April 1994. According to the bourgmestre<sup>120</sup>, the corpses of 65,000 victims of the massacre were discovered and given a decent burial in 1995. The slaughter, which one survivor described as “the massacre to end all massacres”, took place on 21 April and was strictly a military affair carried out by soldiers from Camp Ngoma. Well-armed soldiers shot and threw grenades non-stop from 10:00 a.m. until about 3:30 p.m. when they returned to Butare to seek additional ammunition. Their departure allowed the survivors to escape, moving in the direction of Burundi.

Thousands of Tutsi refugees converged on Runyinya from 7 April onwards. They came mostly from Gikongoro, the neighbouring region where the genocide began immediately after the death of President Habyarimana. They came in particular from the communes of Rwamiko, Kivu and Mubuga<sup>121</sup>, and Mudaramura and Musebeya. Word had spread in Gikongoro that the Tutsi préfet of Butare, Jean-Baptiste Habyarimana, was anxious to maintain peace in his region and that under his instructions, the bourgmestre of Runyinya, Déo Hategekimana, had provided security and food for the refugees. But there were also the Tutsis of Runyinya itself and the communes of Huye, Nyakizu and Maraba in Butare.

The bourgmestre drove around Runyinya, urging Tutsis to assemble at the commune office. Many of the refugees had suffered hideous injuries after huge massacres had taken place at the Parish of Kibeho on 15 April and the Parish of Cyahinda on 18 April. They continued to pour into Runyinya until the 19<sup>th</sup>, hoping that the préfet, who was a native of Runyinya, would continue to limit the genocide in Butare. The refugees also knew that they could count on practical and moral support from the local priest, Fr. François Ngomirakiza, himself a Tutsi. There were so many refugees, more than 70,000—and their belongings and cattle—that they were spread between the parish, the office of the commune and the post-primary school of CERAI. Emile Karuranga, a trader in Runyinya, is one of the people who registered the refugees. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, he said their figure was 75,405, and added that “of course people kept coming that evening and night, so the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, the final figure was higher.” Fearful of losing sight of their relatives in this “sea of people”, the refugees organised themselves sector by sector.

From 13 April, interahamwe from Gikongoro led attacks on the sectors of Ramba and Mbasa. But they were thwarted by the 11 gendarmes the préfet sent from the gendarmerie base in Tumba, and by the joint patrols set up by Hutus and Tutsis in a number of places. The préfet visited the refugees on the 17<sup>th</sup>, asking them to remain calm and promising them that the gendarmes from Tumba would protect them.

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, the refugees realised that the genocide was, in the words of a teacher, “a national objective” when they heard Sindikubwabo’s speech on the radio and learned that Jean-Baptiste Habyarimana had been dismissed. Some tried to make it to Burundi in time, but returned when they found their route barred by the interahamwe. As their anguish increased, they understood that the bourgmestre had looked after them because of pressure from the préfet, and, François Semushi said, “because he wanted to make sure that no-one would get away.” The refugees’ situation deteriorated sharply; food supplies began to dwindle and the water supply to the parish and the commune office was cut off. As a precautionary measure, Fr. Ngomirakiza drove pregnant women and the wounded to the University Hospital. The gendarmes, who had come to protect the refugees, stopped any Tutsis leaving the parish or the commune office, and began teaching local Hutus how to use firearms. Séraphine Mukabyusa described the mood of the refugees.

We were surrounded, so much so that we could not even go to draw water. Those who tried were beaten and threatened. We became more and more afraid, but the bourgmestre kept assuring us not to worry, saying that nothing would happen to us.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Interviewed in November 1995.

<sup>121</sup> For details of this exodus, see *Witness to Genocide* Issue 10, June 1999.

<sup>122</sup> Interviewed 30 November 1995.

The final showdown took place on the morning of Thursday 21 April when soldiers from Camp Ngoma took up positions around the parish, the commune office and CERAI. Antoine Segatwa, 70, a farmer, noticed their black berets and said that “soldiers in particular, and communal policemen, are the main people responsible for the killings.” The communal policemen he named include the head of the communal police force, Athanase Niyonsaba and Gatibiya. Joseph Ndorereho, a farmer detained in Runyinya, agrees.

The kick-off for the killings was given by soldiers who came from Butare. When the soldiers arrived here, they fired into the refugees at the commune office, the parish, and the health centre. There were a lot of victims. They were helped in the massacres by some communal policemen.<sup>123</sup>

Damien Rusagara, 53, the councillor of sector Karama, was one of the refugees at Karama at the time.

On 21 April, soldiers from Butare surrounded our commune. Then they fired on us. The soldiers were supported by Runyinya’s communal policemen and local residents armed with traditional weapons. The soldiers were armed with guns and hand grenades, while the police had guns. Many thousands of people died in that attack, which began at 10:00 a.m. and lasted until 3.30 p.m. when the soldiers realised they had run out of ammunition. Their commander ordered them to stop firing and return quickly to Butare to get more ammunition. I could hear what he said, and that is why I can confirm that those soldiers came from Butare. Before returning to the city, the soldiers ordered the interahamwe to kill those who had escaped the bullets, and finish off the wounded. The responsibility for what happened in my commune lies with the soldiers from Butare.<sup>124</sup>

François Semushi became separated from his wife when fear made him leave his home in Kinazi on the 13<sup>th</sup>, taking his oldest two children. A teacher, he was appointed bourgmestre after the genocide.

Unknown to us, we had already been surrounded. We knew we were going to die, but we tried to die valiantly. Some killed while others set the buildings on fire at the same time. We were running through a hail of bullets. The women and children were crying and the wounded were groaning. It was really horrific. No-one knew where their relatives were, because of the general panic. I managed to hide in a bush for one and a half hours. I had no idea what had happened to my family. They went on shooting until they ran out of ammunition at about 3:30 p.m when they went back to Butare for more. Some of us seized the chance to flee to Burundi.

François reached the border at about 8:00 p.m. and was lucky to find his family, but could no longer speak.

We didn’t even say hello to one another. I was just too scared to say anything.<sup>125</sup>

His wife, Bernadette Mukantabuye, had reached the commune office on the 14<sup>th</sup>, with their three youngest children. Bernadette, the director of schools in Karama, is a native of Mpanda in Runyinya.

On Thursday, 21 April, an army vehicle came here twice, bringing in soldiers from Butare. There were a large number of them; people thought there were around 60, including the three gendarmes who had remained here at the commune office.

By midday, the interahamwe and other civilians had surrounded us at a radius of 200 metres. The soldiers opened fire on us and kept on firing. I was in the nutritional centre classroom with my youngest children. There were a lot of women teachers in there with me. My husband was outside with the other two children. The attack went on all day. Anyone who tried to escape the gunfire was killed by the interahamwe who were all around the building and in the sorghum fields.

The soldiers had run out of ammunition by the afternoon. That gave us a chance to get out of there. We left for Burundi that night.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Interviewed 27 May 1999.

<sup>124</sup> interviewed 27 May 1999.

<sup>125</sup> Interviewed 15 October 1999.

<sup>126</sup> Interviewed 15 October 1999.

The passage of time has done nothing to distance Straton Munyankindi from the memory of what took place in Runyinya on 21 April 1994. In late 1999, he said that “he remained shocked and bewildered by what happened.” Aged 59 and the parish secretary, he comes from Umuyange in sector Karama.

We heard an explosion in the marketplace, and another at the commune. People dressed in banana leaves suddenly rushed up and surrounded us. I saw the communal policeman, Athanase Niyonsaba, with his gun, and six gendarmes from Butare. I recognised one of them as Minan’s son who came from our area and had recently got married at the Parish of Karama. They threw hand grenades at us and fired their guns, while those who tried to escape were killed by the interahamwe. They spared no-one, not even the babies. They plundered as well as killing. There were other civilians lurking in the bush. I got out at about 4:00 p.m., together with François Semushi; Déo Kayitana; Emmanuel Mungaturite and my three sisters; Annonciata, Concessa and her husband, Frédéric Biraboneye, and Félicitée and her husband, Pascal.

My own family had headed for Nyakibanda while my companions and I were still fighting off the attacks. My wife died there with five of our children, as they were trying to get to Burundi.<sup>127</sup>

Vénantie Mutegaraba, 47, had a husband and eight children, but she now lives alone. Unable to convey her desolation, she simply said that she was “in a difficult situation.” She is a Hutu, but was married to a Tutsi farmer, Viateur Ndikunkigo. The family first hid in the Gishurati forest where they had their first encounter with soldiers from Butare.

There was a landing place for army helicopters in that forest, and a helicopter landed there three times in two days, bringing in soldiers from Butare. I saw them from 100 metres away. There were a lot of them, and they were armed to the teeth. They drove us out of the forest.

Vénantie and her family went to Karama, but she left their corpses there.

We suffered a concerted attack from several directions simultaneously. The civilians surrounded the Tutsis, while the soldiers from Butare opened fire on the refugees. There were women and girls among the civilians.

My husband and children died. I had stayed in a room full of bodies, and an interahamwe killed my little boy, but left me alive. I spent the whole night in that room among all those dead bodies.

The next day, a woman I didn’t know, made me go to Buhoro. I didn’t want to go there, not only because shrapnel wounds in my legs made it hard to walk, but because all I wanted to do was die. She took me to a man called Jean and he protected me until June.<sup>128</sup>

“What happened in Karama was the massacre to end all massacres”, was how Emile Karuranga summed up the enormity of the tragedy that unfolded in Runyinya.

It started at 10:30 a.m. on 21 April. The parish had been completely sealed off by communal policemen, gendarmes and military reservists. All of them were directly involved in the attack. In the meantime, interahamwe from Rwamiko, Nyakizu, Mubuga and from Maraba were waiting outside to machete whoever escaped.

Emile then described the massacre itself, unable to find words to describe the extent of the slaughter.

We tried to defend ourselves with stones. The bourgmestre himself was shooting into the refugees. They shot bullet after bullet. The parish rocked with the deafening explosions of grenades. They shot from 10:30 a.m. until they had run out of bullets. For hours and hours, there was an endless hail of bullets. Of course we had run out of stones long before they had run out of bullets.<sup>129</sup>

Fortunata Ngirabatware, 33, mother of two, lost her husband and father in massacres in Kibeho and then left for Runyinya where she found a parish “crammed with human beings.”

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<sup>127</sup> Interviewed 15 October 1999.

<sup>128</sup> Interviewed 15 October 1999.

<sup>129</sup> Interviewed 9 June 1994.

There were people everywhere—inside the church, the school and the compound. There was a sea of people.

The soldiers, she said, emptied their ammunition on this “sea of people.”

The soldiers took so long to shoot that they exhausted their ammunition. They returned to their barracks to fetch more ammunition. By that time, tens of thousands had been killed in all parts of the parish. It was a horrifying scene. Thousands of bodies lay in every twisted position you could imagine. There was just too much blood flowing. The dead were already dead, but the groans of the wounded, their howls of pain. Ah, that is just too terrible to think of. We left shortly after they went to see about more weapons.

Marie-Christine Libagiza, 28, and her sister, Marie-Louise Umwizerwa, 26, were among the refugees from Gikongoro who received a warm welcome in Runyinya when they arrived in Mbasa on the 9<sup>th</sup>. They transferred to the parish a week later. Both were secondary school students. Like all survivors from Runyinya, Marie-Christine and Marie-Louise were overwhelmed by the number of refugees they found in Runyinya.

Everywhere you looked, there were people, people and more people. In every room, in all corners of the church, in the compound. There were tens and tens of thousands of people.

As usual, the men had placed women and children in what they hoped would be a protected zone—inside the church. But the church, they said, became “full of gun smoke and the smell of blood.”

Powerful grenades and guns were used. It was the bourgmestre himself who started the shooting. The interahamwe of Rwamiko were ready with their machetes, accompanied by the bourgmestre of Rwamiko and the director of the tea plantation. The interahamwe of Gishamvu and Butare were all there. The attackers were very, very many.

We entered the church; others fled into the classrooms. It was mainly women and children who were put in the protected rooms. The men tried to fight back. But the only weapons they had were stones. They fought back until 2:00 p.m. The attackers left for a short while. While they were gone, the survivors fled in the direction of Burundi. But by then tens of thousands of people were already dead and thousands more could not move because they were wounded. Our family was extremely lucky. There were ten of us in the parish and we all survived. Only our maid was wounded.<sup>130</sup>

Even when the killing started in earnest, the bourgmestre was still trying to lull the refugees into a false sense of security, as Séraphine Mukabyusa explained.

The bourgmestre encouraged the women and children to stay in the school and inside the church. He asked the men to stay in the courtyard, so they would continue to be visible. The various councillors asked us, the women, to sit sector by sector. Our own councillor, Fabien Ruhigangoga, from sector Buhoro, was one of those separating us sector by sector. Then they locked the rooms. Those who were outside—the men, young men and even some young women—were then massacred. They tried to defend themselves with stones. Sometimes, the peasant killers fled.

But the support of the soldiers gave the peasants the courage to return.

Then one of the soldiers would shoot in the direction of the Tutsis defending themselves. The killers would then return to finish them off if they were not already dead.

When they had almost finished off everyone outside, some people managed to break the locks and we ran out of the rooms. The soldiers, who had been reinforced, were still there. Hategekimana told us women to calm down, saying the killings were now finished and we had nothing to fear. We refused to stay and started walking towards Burundi.

Mungwakuzwe, also inside the church, was left stripped naked and her finger bones broken. Two of her sons were killed.

The church was full of people. The men put up a fight with stones. But later they came back with guns and shot many people. They also used explosives. There were too, too many who died. I lost two sons

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<sup>130</sup> Interviewed together, 3 June 1994.



there. I covered them with grass and left. There were many dead bodies and people were trying to rescue some babies who were alive but lying among dead bodies. I wouldn't try to guess a number. There were too many.<sup>131</sup>

The pace of the killing was just as intense at the commune office. François Ntegano said that his extended family of 215 people occupied a hill; all of them were killed in the massacre, including his wife, son and grand-daughter. François, 78, a retired teacher from sector Kaburemera, had only been at the commune office for four hours when he heard the sound of the soldiers' vehicles. He and his family had lived in the forest from 15-21 April.

There was a large number of soldiers who collaborated with the interahamwe, and who had grenades. We threw stones at our aggressors and they shot into us, until they had exhausted their bullets at around 3:30 p.m. We immediately fled. Some people were burned alive in a house that belonged to the parish; from the skulls we gathered, about 50 people. They used petrol because even the roof tiles were burned.

The military chiefs who sent the reinforcement deserve serious punishment.<sup>132</sup>

Paul Rutaysire, a farmer who is from the same sector, also reached Karama a few hours before the massacre. He had tried to hide in a forest in Bisi bya Rukara but was forced out on 20 April by soldiers. He said that the gendarmes had been walking around to ensure that the refugees were not armed when "we realised that we were surrounded by a large number of soldiers."

They shot into us. The gunfire ceased between 3:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. We escaped when we saw that they had no more ammunition. If the soldiers had not intervened, the interahamwe could not have defeated us.

Rutaysire fled, but he left behind the corpses of his in-laws and many other relatives.<sup>133</sup>

Another man who lost almost his entire family at Karama is Martin Murindibigwi, 34, a peasant from the sector of Rusasa, commune Nyamugabe, Gikongoro. His wife and seven of his eight children were killed; only he and a 17-year-old son, a secondary school student in Cyahinda, survived.

When the soldiers returned to Butare to replenish their ammunition, the survivors who could walk immediately left for Burundi or for the forest. But the killers continued to pursue them, using dogs to track the people hiding in the forest. Some of those heading for Burundi were killed or injured by gendarmes and interahamwe despatched by the bourgmestre at Gatobwe, about nine kilometres from Runyinya. Emile Karuranga, who reached Gatobwe after they had accomplished their task, said he found "the place littered with dead bodies and hundreds of abandoned children crying over the bodies of their parents."

In subsequent days, soldiers and militiamen returned to Runyinya itself. After escaping the massacre of the 21<sup>st</sup>, Jean-Bosco Sangwa, 27, hid in a banana grove and then in his home in cellule Kaburemera. As a trader in Butare, Jean-Bosco was used to seeing soldiers buying provisions in the market. He was familiar with some of the soldiers who returned to Runyinya.

I remained in hiding in my cellule until the day I was severely beaten by some soldiers from ESO who had just killed old Ladislas Rukara. I recognised four of them, as men I used to see in Butare market. They wounded me in the left ear and in the ribcage and left me in a coma.<sup>134</sup>

When the soldiers returned from Butare, they did not find enough survivors to begin the massacre afresh. Instead, they had a drink to celebrate their work. They were served by Antoine Segatwa who sold sorghum and banana beer in sector Karama.

There were soldiers who were natives of this commune, including Jean Mbasange. He boasted that he had thrown a grenade which blew up 70 people at the parish. Many of them were boasting. There was also Vianney, son of Serugendo.

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<sup>131</sup> Interviewed 11 June 1994.

<sup>132</sup> Interviewed 25 May 1999.

<sup>133</sup> Interviewed 27 May 1999.

<sup>134</sup> Interviewed 15 October 1999.

The following day, Friday 22 April, Muvunyi took matters into his own hands in commune Mbazi.

## **Direct Orders from Muvunyi: The Killing of Clergymen at Gihindamuyaga Monastery, 22 April**

*“Muvunyi asked me to look for the students.”*

Perhaps it was the thought that clergymen might have a greater chance of survival which prompted Lt. Col. Muvunyi to intervene to ensure the deaths of novices at the Benedictine monastery at Gihindamuyaga in commune Mbazi. Rather than leave it to the local militia, on 22 April he went to the commune with three of his own soldiers and enlisted the help of the leader of the local interahamwe, Warrant Officer Emmanuel Rekeraho. Rekeraho described Muvunyi’s role in the murder of two clergymen.

At about 9:00 a.m. Lt. Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi came to see me at home. He arrived in a jeep in army camouflage, with six soldiers. He turned his jeep around outside the AFOJAR technical school, and called out to me. He took me aside, grasping me by the arm. He showed me three young men who had come with him. They were in civilian dress and were carrying handguns. Muvunyi asked me if I knew the monastery in Gihindamuyaga. He said that he wanted to go there with the three young men and get the Tutsi novices. We walked there straight away, passing Dr. Alexandre Rucyahana’s house. A lot of civilians had followed us, hoping it was an expedition. The doctor came to the monastery with us.

When they reached the monastery, they met one of the staff, Joseph Habyarimana and a man called Jean Ngarubiyuo. They asked to see the head of the monastery.

The priest came out; he was called either Baudoin or Stanislas. I told him that Lt. Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi wanted the novices. The priest refused to hand them over at first and begged me not to take them, even offering me some money as a ransom. I told him that I couldn’t go against Muvunyi’s orders. Seeing that I was not giving way, the priest went and called the novice’s leader, and he called his colleagues; there were 11 of them altogether.

The novices left the monastery with Rekeraho and then the militiaman made the group stop so that he could check their identity cards. Only two of them were Tutsi, according to their cards, and Rekeraho separated them from the others. Another two were believed to be Tutsi, but as there was no proof, Rekeraho decided to send them back to the monastery. Rekeraho handed the two Tutsi novices over to the three soldiers who had come with Muvunyi. He said:

Muvunyi killed them, although I don’t know how because I had accomplished my mission.<sup>135</sup>

Rekeraho repeated his accusations against Muvunyi when he gave a televised interview to the BBC in November 1999.

It was Muvunyi who gave me the order and three soldiers who were in civilian dress and armed with pistols. He told me to go to Gihindamuyaga monastery to look for Tutsis. When I arrived I asked a Belgian priest who is still there if there were Tutsi students. He replied that there were students, but he didn’t know if they were Tutsis. After telling him that there was a senior army officer who wanted them, the priest brought 11 students and I chose two among them who were Tutsis. I took them and the soldiers said that they were taking them to Muvunyi. I didn’t see Muvunyi [killing them], but he gave me people to go to arrest them.

Augustin Nsabimana 33, from Nyamagabe in Gikongoro was a novice. He was present during the selection process described by Rekeraho, and remembers the warrant officer well. He saw the bodies of his two colleagues the day after they were murdered.

We all came out. About 250 metres from our monastery, they stopped us and asked for our identity cards. Afterwards, they told us to leave, but kept back two in our group: Antoine Rutagwenda, known

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<sup>135</sup> Interviewed 24 May 1999.

as “Innocent” from Ngoma, and Gaëtan Gatera, aged 29 and from Kagano in Cyangugu. I asked them why they were holding the two men. Rekeraho’s companions told me that “they are *Inyenzi*.” They were carrying pistols under their belts. We all went back to the monastery and later we learned that our two colleagues had been killed. The following day, the 23rd, we went to collect their bodies from our former youth camp. They had been killed with traditional weapons. We buried them inside our compound.<sup>136</sup>

Within hours, Rekeraho saw Muvunyi again, this time in the neighbouring commune of Huye.

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<sup>136</sup> Interviewed 30 May 1999.

## Huye: Mass Murder at the Monastery, 22 April

*“A lot of Lt. Col. Muvunyi’s soldiers and gendarmes took part in the killing, together with the interahamwe. Their support was critical.”*

In sector Sovu, Huye, Tutsis sought shelter at a monastery that belonged to nuns of the Benedictine order. The Mother Superior, Sr. Gertrude Mukangango, refused to allow them inside the monastery and directed them to the nearby health centre which the Benedictine nuns administered. Most of the refugees, who numbered between 5,000-6,000, were killed in a carefully-planned assault led by soldiers from ESO on Friday, 22 April. Perhaps because of the proximity of Huye to ESO, Muvunyi personally went to follow the progress of the massacre at the monastery. Not a single male Tutsi of any age is known to have survived. The man who took charge of the killings in Sovu is Warrant Officer Emmanuel Rekeraho. Both before his trial, and since, Rekeraho has spoken of the role of ESO soldiers and of the contribution of Sr. Mukangango and another Benedictine nun, Sr. Julienne Kizito, in the genocide in Sovu.<sup>137</sup>

The Tutsis gathered at the health centre; among them were refugees from Maraba. Determined to safeguard their own security, the men stockpiled rocks and stones and fought off the militia and civilians who threatened them. They forced a group led by Rekeraho, and reinforced by several FAR soldiers from the area and militiamen from Maraba, to withdraw on the 18<sup>th</sup>. On Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup>, soldiers guarding the radio station in Huye led a massacre of the Tutsi refugees at the nearby Catholic Parish of Rugango and later in the afternoon, they killed refugees at a camp for young people in Rugango.

On Friday 22 April, it was the turn of the health centre in Sovu. At about 8:00 a.m., the monastery was surrounded by soldiers from ESO, soldiers on duty in Huye, retired soldiers, reservists, communal policemen and local civilians. The gendarmes who had been sent to protect the monastery joined them, leaving the refugees with no defences. Rekeraho described the horror of the massacre which he said owed its success to the soldiers from ESO.

I killed children, old men and women. We had become like animals, myself included. I took pity on no-one, not even my friends. What we did is beyond belief. They had already begun killing by the time I reached the health centre; they were smashing their way in, throwing in hand-grenades. Even the policeman, François-Xavier Munyeshyaka, who was supposed to protect the nuns, was killing people. A lot of Lt. Col. Muvunyi’s soldiers and gendarmes took part in the killing, together with the interahamwe. The poor Tutsis were throwing bricks at us. But what use were bricks and stones against fire arms? Women and children were groaning and screaming. I find it hard to recall such horrors. We really did behave like animals. I feel entirely responsible for what I did. I will never deny my participation in the genocide of the Tutsis.

Many of us threw hand-grenades from behind the wall. When we got inside, it was horrible to see how we used machetes to execute our neighbours, people with whom we had shared everything, even our blood. There were defenceless, weak people there, and we could not look them in the eye.

According to Rekeraho, Muvunyi drove by while the massacre was taking place.

I saw him in a jeep. He seemed to be supervising. He was patrolling with soldiers when civilians were being killed. They were armed with guns and grenades. If they wished they could have even fired into the air in order to stop the killings.

Five soldiers and two gendarmes in uniform came to Sovu [to take part in the killings]. They found me at the home of a woman called Cécile at Configi. They came from Butare and when they saw me, they asked me how far the operation had gone. It means they knew of the operation. They came from Butare and returned to Butare which was under the command of Muvunyi.

Rekeraho recalls how the refugees tried to defend themselves, but the support of the soldiers from ESO and gendarmes quashed their efforts at self-defence.

Without the help of the soldiers and gendarmes, it would have been impossible for us to kill everyone all by ourselves. Their support was critical. There were so many Tutsis and they were quite good at

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<sup>137</sup> For details about the participation of the two nuns in the massacre, see *Obstruction of Justice; The Nuns of Sovu in Belgium*, Witness to Genocide, Issue 11, February 2000.

defending themselves despite their lack of means. First Sergeant Nsabimana, together with a dozen soldiers and two gendarmes, entered the health centre to give encouragement to the interahamwe who were unable to crush the resistance of the Tutsis.

Another man who admits that he took part in the slaughter is Emmanuel Nyaminani, 29, a farmer from Gako. He described a huge number of attackers from Maraba, Mbazi and Huye and their reliance on men and arms from ESO.

Others definitely came from ESO. I know they came from ESO because at around 11.00 a.m., in the middle of killing a Tutsi from Sovu, a soldier next to me asked Rekeraho to lend him his moped to get cartridges from ESO as he had run out. Rekeraho replied: "Instead of taking the moped take the minibus, then you can bring back lots of cartridges for everyone else." He gave him the minibus<sup>138</sup> which was at the time being used for carrying the injured to Sovu health centre. This vehicle later became the private property of Rekeraho, who basically became the region's leader. Whilst they were talking, I was next to them, on the track that went from the health centre to the convent, opposite the kitchen for malnourished children.

A few minutes later I left, before the minibus came back. That soldier definitely brought lots of cartridges back because when I left, the soldiers had almost run out of ammunition, but I heard them firing all day.

That morning we surrounded the targeted area. I myself was near the forest beyond Configi, the jam factory. In my group there were more or less nine soldiers. One of them, Phocas, was from the group who guarded the aerial for the radio. The other eight were probably from ESO because the guy I already spoke about was among them. We started by throwing grenades in amongst the unarmed Tutsis.

At about 1.00 p.m. I went home, as did the other civilians. However, some of the soldiers stayed to make sure none of the survivors escaped.

If the soldiers hadn't taken part in the massacres of Tutsis in Sovu, we wouldn't have killed as many people as we did. If we hadn't had plenty of grenades and cartridges from ESO, we wouldn't have succeeded in that attack on Friday 22 April.<sup>139</sup>

The presence of soldiers also looms large in the memory of survivors. Although she was married to a Hutu and had six children, Marie-Goretti Mbateye left her family at home and hid at the health centre.

There were not only militiamen; there were also soldiers, gendarmes and communal policemen. Some people managed to hide in the garage, others in the outlying buildings, some inside the health centre and others in the bush.

They were killing with machetes, grenades and *massues*, but also with bullets. The men tried to put up a fight with their stones. We heard the explosion of a grenade which made us lie down. There was such panic! Before we got up, there was another explosion which reinforced our fear.

Consolée Mukeshimana, who worked at the health centre and lived nearby, recognised soldiers she knew.

The communal policemen included Joseph Murwanashyaka; Cassien Uwizeyimana; Xavier Nsababera; Joseph Bizimana and Munyankindi. The soldiers included Pascal Karekezi and Kamanayo. The massacre started at about 9:00 a.m. The killing continued until 5:00 p.m. At about 2:00 p.m., the house I was in was set on fire by petrol and I left it. When I got outside, I was shot at. I was not wounded. But I felt dizzy and I fell to the ground. I lay in the middle of the victims who were on the ground. I stayed stretched out but I could hear everything. The courtyard of the centre was strewn with corpses. You couldn't find anywhere to put your feet.

The killing continued on Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup>, at the same time as some of the bodies were being thrown into mass graves. Since most of the refugees had died the previous day, it was not necessary to resort to ESO; but other soldiers lent Rekeraho a hand. Again, Emmanuel Nyaminani joined the expedition.

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<sup>138</sup> This minibus, a beige-coloured Hiace, had been given to Rekeraho by Sr. Gertrude.

<sup>139</sup> Interviewed 20 October 1999.

On Saturday 23 April we met up again at about 9.00 a.m. in Karambo to start work. We lined up in the forest with the people from Mbazi. Rekeraho and Corporal Jean-Baptiste Kamanayo, a soldier on holiday in Huye, left us there and went into the building to force out the Tutsis so that we could kill them. Rekeraho and Kamanayo tricked the Tutsis into coming out by saying they were going to evacuate them. The van they said they were using was parked not far from the convent at Gaspard Rusanganwa's house. They brought out a group of Tutsis and led them towards where the van was parked. The interahamwe jumped on them and killed them there in the forest. I took part in the murder of about 20 Tutsis; we killed them using clubs and machetes behind Rusanganwa's house. It took us about 12 hours. That Saturday there were fewer soldiers and none from ESO, only soldiers from, guarding the radio station and some reservists.

Jean-Baptiste Muvunyi, the councillor of Sovu, spoke of the killings by soldiers while he and other civilians were disposing of the bodies.

On 23 April, when Rekeraho brought me over to bury the Tutsis, two jeeps full of soldiers arrived, six soldiers per jeep. The soldiers went and killed anyone who was still alive at the monastery. These soldiers included some high-ranking officers.

There were perhaps over 4,000 corpses. Rekeraho came and supervised the burials, along with some of the officers who arrived in two jeeps at about 11.00 a.m. When the officers arrived, they joined Rekeraho inside the convent and began shooting, while we got on with the burials. We went on burying the bodies until 6.00 p.m.<sup>140</sup>

The commune of Ndora was too far for Muvunyi to visit; but his soldiers did not let him down. Fear had driven thousands of Tutsis to the summit of hills and the instinct for survival made them prepare for a long battle. But they were no match for the soldiers from ESO.

## **Ndora: Dying on a Hilltop, 24 April**

*"We saw the soldiers arriving with many vehicles whose lights lit us up. They looked like a contingent going to the battlefield. But there was no such thing. They had come to attack the weak and defenceless whose only crime was that they were Tutsis."*

Thousands of Tutsi refugees gathered on a range of hills in commune Ndora, particularly on Mt. Kabuye. They were encouraged to gather there by the bourgmestres of Ndora and commune Muganza<sup>141</sup> and the deputy préfet of Gisagara, Dominique Ntawukuriryayo. Using stones and their sheer numbers, the refugees held out against armed gendarmes supported by militiamen. But the arrival of soldiers from ESO put an end to their bravery and left most of them dead. 26,000 bodies, found on Mt. Kabuye and the vicinity, were given a decent burial after the genocide.

Despite the insecurity that prevailed in some neighbouring communes, Ndora did not experience the genocide at the outset; joint patrols of Hutu and Tutsi men were set up to keep out trouble-makers and to maintain order. On 19 April, Tutsis from commune Muganza in Butare, whose homes had been burned in their commune, made their way to Ndora. Although Tutsis were particularly numerous in Muganza, they had, in the words of one survivor, "no effective response" when soldiers intervened in support of Burundian refugees and militiamen who had come from several communes. The soldiers disarmed the Tutsi men and they dispersed, together with their families. Many hoped to make it to Burundi via commune Muyaga, but failed (see below). When they reached Ndora, the local authorities housed them in Gisagara marketplace. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, the head of the interim government, Théodore Sindikubwabo, himself a native of Ndora, held a meeting in the sous-préfecture of Gisagara. According to Vincent Twiringiyimana, Sindikubwabo called on the residents "to rise up and do what we did in 1959." The meeting had barely ended when local officials began to respond to his call. On the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup>, Tutsis were barred from taking part in the night patrols.

Vincent, 40, said he knew Muvunyi "very well." He is a former soldier who was head of the communal police force in Ndora during the genocide. He said the first sign of trouble became apparent after Sindikubwabo left. Warned that the Tutsis on Mt. Kabuye were about to be killed, Vincent said that he, an officer by the name of Munyankindi and the councillor went straight there. They discovered that houses belonging to Tutsis had been set on fire and that some of their livestock had been

<sup>140</sup> Interviewed 11 May 1999.

<sup>141</sup> The bourgmestre of Muganza, Elie Ndayambaje is in the custody of the ICTR.

slaughtered by their neighbours. The guilty men were arrested and detained in the commune's detention centre. On the 21<sup>st</sup>, a group of soldiers arrived in their commune.

At about 9:00 a.m., a soldier with the rank of sub-lieutenant came into the commune office at the head of ten cadets from ESO. Those cadets wore insignia showing they were from ESO; yellow bars on yellow epaulettes for future corporals, and red bars on yellow epaulettes for future sergeants. The sub-lieutenant told us he was a lecturer at ESO. He first visited the detention centre. He asked the bourgmestre why the people in there had been arrested. The bourgmestre replied that they had set some houses on fire. The officer ordered their immediate release, and then told them "to go home and get on with the work."

The ESO soldiers had another assignment.

The officer also took away the Tutsis who had been arrested by our local patrols and locked up with the aim of sending them back to their home commune of Ngoma later. He put them in his vehicle and handed them over to some of his soldiers who were to take them to Butare. He and the rest of the soldiers stayed in our commune, looking for some more Tutsis. He rounded up the Munyarukiko family from Gisagara sector, including a teacher, Bénédict Sezisoni and a few others. They were put in the commune vehicle driven by Charles Twagirayezu. The sub-lieutenant left in his own vehicle which had come back, while the people who were to die were driven away in our vehicle, which I escorted. We left at about 4:30 p.m.

Vincent described the fate of the Tutsis who had been rounded up.

We reached Rwasave swamp. We saw the soldiers' vehicle, which was leading the convoy, stop. The sub-lieutenant got out of the vehicle and told the Tutsis, about 20 altogether, to get out of the vehicle and sit down. He asked for their identity cards. Finally, he told his soldiers to open fire on those people. That was how those Tutsis died. After the carnage, he told the driver and I to return to Ndora, with orders never to reveal this secret. I don't know what they did with the victims' bodies.

The officer continued to visit Ndora.

The same sub-lieutenant came to our commune two days in succession and took part in meetings organised by the sous-préfet of Gisagara, Dominique Ntawukurirayo.

Célestin Rwankubito, 50, was the bourgmestre of Ndora and lived in cellule Nduba, sector Muzenga. He was arrested on 25 July 1996 on his return from exile in Burundi. He is accused of involvement in the massacre at the Parish of Gisagara and on Mt. Kabuye, the two places in Ndora commune where organised killings took place.

The bourgmestre said that he was hoping to discuss the plight of the displaced Tutsis from Muganza with the bourgmestre of Muganza when Sindikubwabo delivered what he described as an "incendiary" speech on the 20th that bore fruit almost instantaneously. A Tutsi was killed immediately, and Rwankubito locked up the men responsible. He also advised the refugees from Muganza to seek refuge on Mt. Kabuye which he said he thought "would be a better place for them." They left for Mt. Kabuye on the 21<sup>st</sup> and were gradually joined by Tutsis from Ndora, Kibayi, Nyaruhengeri, Nyakizu, Runyinya, Mugusa, Ngoma, and even Kigali, who were also hoping to cross the Akanyaru river into Burundi. Rwankubito confirmed Vincent's account of the visit from the ESO soldiers.

On 21 April, at about 9:00 a.m., as I was preparing to organise a meeting for the councillors, an army officer, a lieutenant, arrived in a Mazda with about five other armed soldiers in it. He told me he came from ESO. He visited the detainees, and then came and said to me: "Bourgmestres like you are a nuisance; why did you put those people in prison?" He was talking about the people I had locked up for killing Boshyuwenda. He released them from the lock-up himself. He also showed me a list of people he was looking for in my commune. I read it; it was a list of about eight Tutsis, including the most wanted man, the volley-ball trainer, Alphonse Rutsindura. "These people have a lot of contacts with the *Inkotanyi*. You're going to help me find them," he added.

The bourgmestre accompanied the lieutenant as he searched for the Tutsis on his list.

We started with François Munyarukiko's family, as their son's name was on it. When he didn't find the man he was looking for, the lieutenant took the other members of the family he found there, about five people including François. We resumed our search. Whenever the person we wanted was missing, we took the members of their family instead. He managed to round up a lot of people. The first group was put in the Mazda and driven off towards Butare by another driver. Then the lieutenant put the second group into the communal vehicle with my driver and communal policeman, Vincent Twiringiyimana, to guard them.

According to my driver and the policeman Vincent, the people taken away in our vehicle were shot when they reached Rwasave swamp, before getting to Butare city. The driver and Vincent brought the vehicle back. We don't know what happened to the people taken away in the Mazda.

When the bourgmestre returned home to Muzenga sector on the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup>, he learned that the officer from ESO had incited further killings.

I heard that Hutus had started killing Tutsis after the officer in question gave the signal. They had already killed Sylvestre Muhiza, Gatera and his father, all from Muzenga sector. 21 April saw the outbreak of killings in our commune.

The abductions spread fear and panic among Tutsis. Alphonsine Mukamana, a young farmer who saw the vehicle pass on the road, commented: "Some people said they were only after the VIPs, but we were so terrified that we spent the night in the sorghum fields." That night, the first homes in the area were set on fire.

On the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the bourgmestre went to ESO "with the intention of seeing the local commander, Muvunyi, whom I had met in préfecture meetings on security."

I was going to ask him for some troops to maintain law and order. But he was not at all pleased to see me. He said brusquely: "I can't spare you a single soldier. I've sent them all to Huye commune. Go and sort something out with your communal police force."

Rwankubito left ESO for Camp Ngoma, but said he was refused entry. He eventually obtained five gendarmes from the gendarmerie base at Tumba.

It was 3.00 a.m. by then, although we had arrived at 4.00 p.m.

The killing of Tutsis on Mt. Kabuye had already begun.

It was then I heard that massacres of Tutsis had started on Mt. Kabuye and that a raid on Dr. Cleti Gashonga's family home had killed about 20 people. The same report said that the killings on Mt. Kabuye had been committed by gendarmes from Muganza commune, together with the interahamwe. My gendarmes went around the whole district to find out what was going on, and went back to Butare the same day.

Early on the morning of Sunday 24 April, the sous-préfet sent me some militiamen who called themselves "PG"(Presidential Guards), including Isidore, whose father is Burundian; Cyprien's son, Indépendance from Cyamukuza sector and some other young men. They were driven by Bernard Kaje, and had taken a Hitachi minibus from a murdered Tutsi called Kongote. They told me: "The sous-préfet wants you to go to Butare with us and get some petrol." I left immediately with these young men in the minibus, and left them outside the Hotel Faucon with instructions to wait for me there. Accompanied by the bourgmestre of Nyaruhengeri, I went to see the sous-préfet Hakizamungu, who was in charge of administration and the judiciary and had authority to give us petrol rations. I didn't want to go there with all those youths. When I returned from seeing the sous-préfet, I found that both the minibus and the youths had gone.

I got a lift back to Ndora and when I got there, I heard that after they saw me leave, these youths nicknamed "PG" drove the minibus to ESO and picked up some soldiers with the aim of killing off any survivors at Mt. Kabuye.

The ESO soldiers had, it seems, made a significant contribution to the killings at Mt. Kabuye which continued for several days.

My police brought me the news of the killings involving those soldiers in the minibus. When I asked the boys why they had left me behind, they said they thought I would take a long time at the sous-



préfet's office, and so they returned with the soldiers from ESO. All those boys are dead; only Bernard Kaje is still alive.

That same day, the Tutsis at the Parish of Gisagara were killed, mainly by civilians from a place called Kirarambogo.

Vincent Twiringiyimana commented:

The Tutsis on Mt. Kabuye were killed by the local people, backed by the gendarmes from Muganza commune office and soldiers from ESO who had been called in by the sous-préfet. If the soldiers had not taken part in the massacre in Ndora, it would not have been as extensive as it turned out to be.<sup>142</sup>

The bourgmestre helped to organise the burial of the victims.

Many Tutsis died on Mt. Kabuye; virtually no-one survived the final attack of the 24<sup>th</sup>. There were an estimated 5,000 victims. I realised how many there were when we buried them. We would never have managed it without the aid of a Caterpillar bulldozer.

He put the blame for the "severity" of the genocide on Muvunyi and his soldiers.

If the lieutenant from ESO Camp had not come and given the signal for murder in my commune, by kidnapping people and releasing the criminals I had detained, and if Col. Muvunyi had not refused to send me some troops to keep the peace, we would not have experienced the genocide so severely.<sup>143</sup>

Bernard Kaje, mentioned by the bourgmestre, a 31-year-old driver, has been imprisoned on charges of involvement in the killings in Ndora, which he denies. However, he recounted an incident which reinforces the bourgmestre's version of events in the commune.

Our sous-préfet, Dominique Ntawukurirayo, arrived at the Hotel Faucon and asked us to accompany him to the ESO army camp. I was in the vehicle with them; it was driven by Vincent Kamenyero. We arrived at the entrance to ESO at about 11:00 a.m. The sous-préfet had a discussion with one of the army officers there; a man of medium build, neither light nor very dark skinned. After the discussion, about five soldiers reported for duty, and we drove them to Ndora in the same vehicle. The sous-préfet stayed there after ordering us to transport the soldiers. He joined us later in Ndora, and had brought some gendarmes in his own vehicle. The soldiers went on to Kabuye for the massacre.

So many Tutsis would not have died in our commune if the gendarmes and the ESO soldiers had not been involved.<sup>144</sup>

Jean Bimenyimana was one of the men who admits that he helped to "get the job done" at Mt. Kabuye. A plumber from Nyamigango in sector Gisagara, he was working in commune Kibayi at the time.

On Saturday 23 April, a Gisagara businessman named Gaëtan Uwinhoreye, (now deceased), arrived at around 10:30 a.m. in a blue Hilux vehicle. He was armed with a Kalashnikov. He found us in the centre of Kirarambogo, and told us: "You must intervene in Kabuye! The Tutsis there are killing Hutus. If you don't come, you'll suffer the consequences." There were a lot of Tutsis from Ndora, Muganza, Kibayi, Nyaruhengeri and elsewhere on Kabuye hill. We got into his vehicle. I was very concerned because Kabuye hill is in my commune of Ndora.

He dropped us at a place called Ndatemwa, where we saw a lot of other Hutus awaiting reinforcements. I also saw the sous-préfet, Dominique Ntawukurirayo, supervising the general mobilisation. Some leaders emerged, who set about forming teams, each consisting of about 400 people. My team was led by the communal police sergeant from Ndora, named Vincent. We went down to Kabuye. When we saw the Tutsis, Vincent, the police sergeant, opened fire with his gun, and the Tutsis responded by throwing stones at us. After this confrontation had gone on for a while, the police sergeant told us his gun was jammed. We all then ran away.

A rendezvous was agreed upon before the men dispersed.

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<sup>142</sup> Interviewed in 31 May 1999.

<sup>143</sup> Interviewed in 31 May 1999.

<sup>144</sup> Interviewed in 31 May 1999.

The plan was for us to meet again at 9:00 a.m. the next day, a Sunday. We found the sous-préfet there. We went to the centre of Gisagara where we found a large number of soldiers with a white Hiace minibus as their means of transport. I heard people there saying that the sous-préfet had brought the soldiers in from Butare. I joined the team that was to be stationed on Nyakibungo hill in Cyamukuza sector.

Despite the presence of the civilians, the moment belonged to the soldiers from Butare.

I arrived there with other civilians to find that soldiers who had been brought over in the Hiace minibus had already taken up position. They scattered the Kabuye Tutsis by firing at them. When we returned to Gisagara at about 6:00 p.m., we could still hear gunfire over in Kabuye. I managed to loot three cows from Nyakibungo that Sunday.

We stayed at the IGA<sup>145</sup> premises next to Ndora's commune office, because they didn't want us to go home until we had done the job. The sous-préfet had ordered some people to provide food for everyone staying at IGA. The soldiers did not stay there overnight.

The survivors have no doubts that it was the soldiers who led them to defeat and death. Christophe Sebaforoma's wife, Epiphanie Niyonsaba, and two of his children were thrown into the toilet in their home in cellule Gitwa, sector Dahwe, before Christophe, a cattle breeder aged 57, arrived in Kabuye. His mother had also died in his house. He said that some of the refugees were injured and others killed by militiamen on the road to Mt. Kabuye, "but there were so many of us that they hadn't been able to overwhelm us." On Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup>, the first group of killers appeared on Kinyinya hill, opposite Kabuye. The refugees at Kabuye could see them as they killed their victims with machetes. The refugees at Kabuye stockpiled stones and slaughtered their cows to have provisions. "We felt confident and ready for anything", said Christophe.

The police had joined forces with the interahamwe and started to shoot at the crowd. They hit some people. But thanks to the sheer number of refugees, we managed to push them back. Eventually they fled, leaving their gun cartridges behind. Unfortunately, we didn't have a single gun between us, otherwise we would have chased them to Zaire.

After three days of fighting they realised that they weren't going to defeat us. So they went and brought the soldiers from Butare as reinforcements. That was on 24 April.

One of the gendarmes who took an active part in the killings is Félicitée Semakuba<sup>146</sup>, even though she was pregnant at the time. Armed with a gun and grenades, she shot into the refugees and shouted out orders to the team she commanded.

Alphonsine Mukamana was aged 15 at the time, but she too fought back against the attackers. She helped to replenish the men's supply of stones and to boost their morale. She had arrived in Kabuye on Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup> to join her father, Déogratias Nzabandora, who had been transported there in the commune vehicle, leaving her mother and siblings at home.

We were attacked continually all day on Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup>. First they surrounded us. Some attackers without firearms came from Gahondo. Others with firearms, led by Bikomagu, came from Dahwi. Those who came from a place called Jaguar had firearms too. The people from Ndora were led by the interahamwe, Bizuru, son of Martin and they had two guns: their leader, Bizuru, had one, and the other belonged to the gendarme reservist, Félicitée. She was Semakuba's wife, and was pregnant at the time. The last group from Karama had no firearms.

As there were so many of us up there, our men walked all round the hilltop to see where our enemies were coming from. They took up different positions to repel each assault with stones. We women and girls stationed ourselves behind each group of men to keep them supplied with stones. I didn't go far from my father. He was with the men resisting Félicitée and Bizuru. I was with the women, giving them stones and shouting. None of the attackers managed to get up our hill, despite the fact that they were eating well, while we were suffering badly from hunger and fatigue.

The arrival of soldiers in the afternoon of Sunday 24 April destroyed the confidence the refugees had gained from defeating the gendarmes and militiamen for three successive days. The

<sup>145</sup> IGA is a centre for adult literacy.

<sup>146</sup> For more details about the role of Félicitée Semakuba in the genocide, see *Not So Innocent, When Women Become Killers*, pp.34-37.

soldiers asked the Hutus who had accompanied their families to leave before they launched their attack. Géneviève Mukarutesi from sector Ndora is a Hutu who was married to Viateur Ndamage, a Tutsi employee of the university in Butare. She was forced to leave him at Kabuye, where he died.

Félicitée Semakuba went and asked for a reinforcement of soldiers from Butare after realising that the three attacks she had just directed against us had not achieved a great deal. When the Butare soldiers arrived, they told the Hutus to separate from the Tutsis, which is how I came to leave the crowd with my four children. I don't know how my husband died. What I do know is that he was killed there, at Kabuye, in the genocide because he was Tutsi.<sup>147</sup>

Christophe Sebaforoma was not given a choice; as a Tutsi male, killing him was the soldiers' main objective.

In the late afternoon, we had seen the arrival of military trucks, filled to breaking point. We saw the soldiers arriving with many vehicles whose lights lit us up. They looked like a contingent going to the battlefield. But there was no such thing. They had come to attack the weak and defenceless whose only crime was that they were Tutsis. The soldiers should have been fighting the RPF, not peaceful refugees.

The soldiers encircled us. They took up positions in the hills around: at Dahwi and Gahondo; others were stationed on the hill which overlooked Kabuye. We were totally surrounded. It was raining and we had just started eating. They started firing at us from one side, forcing us to run to the other side, where we were showered with bullets. We had nowhere else to run and our defence was totally ineffective in the face of their machine guns. They shot at us all night. Those who weren't hit directly were squashed under the weight of the cows that fell on us. They shot at us as I could never have imagined. It's a miracle that I escaped. I can't explain it; it was like a lottery. To escape after a whole night of gunfire without having a single gun on our side, isn't that a miracle?

At about 5.00 a.m. I dragged myself out from amongst the bodies. I saw a little girl, Uwimana, who was crying next to the body of her mother and her father, Joseph Barakagira. She was desperately trying to get a response from her mother's limp body. That night was horrific.

On that horrendous night, no child cried. Or perhaps it was that I wasn't capable of hearing their cries. It was as if the children also understood that their tears wouldn't change our tragic destiny. I don't like to remember it. I probably won't sleep tonight.

Christophe broke down in tears, lamenting "the lack of justice" which, he said, "makes me go completely mad." While in the bush, he said he lived "in the wild and just ate anything that kept me alive." By the time he crossed the border into Burundi, he had lost track of time and felt barely human. "I looked like an animal—my clothes covered with blood and dirt, my body riddled with cuts, scars and lice. I didn't know what date it was." After the genocide, he learned of the death of his three children who had been staying with his brother in Kigali.<sup>148</sup>

Marguerite Mujawamirya, 40, made the journey from Muganza to Mt. Kabuye on the 20<sup>th</sup>, accompanied by her husband and five children. She said they chose Mt. Kabuye "because we heard a lot of Tutsis were gathering there, where it would be easy to resist attack." She is a farmer and lived in Nyagahinga, sector Dahwi.

On 24 April, soldiers arrived from Butare. They drove up in a van and a white taxi, and began taking up strategic positions. One group of soldiers went to Gahondo, one to Dahwi and another to Kabuye. They had heavy weapons, machine guns and so on. At about 4.00 p.m. they began shelling the Tutsis on Mt. Kabuye. I was there with my husband and five children. A lot of Tutsis lost their lives on Mt. Kabuye that day.

She recognised some of the ESO soldiers who were taking part in the massacre.

I knew some of the soldiers who were killing the Tutsis on Mt. Kabuye. They included Munyaneza, who came from ESO in Butare and Ntigura from Dahwi, who was also at ESO.

Marguerite and her family left Kabuye during the night for Nyaruhengeri. But militiamen discovered them when they reached a stream called Kabagobogo; her husband was shot dead, four of the children were hacked with machetes and the one-year-old, strapped to her back, was thrown into the

<sup>147</sup>Interviewed 19 July 1995.

<sup>148</sup> Interviewed 16 October 1999.

stream. She herself was hit on the forehead with a club and, believed to be dead, thrown into a bush by the stream. The soldiers returned to the scene the following day.

Early the next morning, an army vehicle stopped near me. It had been forced to stop before crossing the bridge because of all the dead bodies. The soldiers had no idea I was still alive. They told the local Hutus there. "Kill all the Tutsis without exception. Even the women and girls."

After regaining some strength in the bush, she decided to go to Burundi. But ill and weak, and unsure of the direction, she returned home. The rest of her testimony appears below.<sup>149</sup>

Spéciose Mukagakwaya, 37, is also a native of sector Dahwi in Muganza. On 16 April, Spéciose, her husband, a farmer named Augustin Nshimiyimana and their four sons left for Mt. Kabuye, taking their nine cows and luggage. She said that "a sense of doom" took hold of the refugees when they listened to Sindikubwabo's speech on the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> on the radio. She remained in an Adventist chapel near Mt. Kabuye during the day while the men used their stones "to stop the killers in their tracks." But on the 24<sup>th</sup>, the stones proved no defence against gunfire. The victims included relatives and neighbours.

The killing started late in the afternoon and went on until it poured with rain. Nearly 5,000 people died that day, including Félicien Ndayisaba, my brother who was 18; Sekamana, a ten-year-old boy from Dahwi; Domina, the wife of a man called Gakwaya from Dahwi; Vincent, Thacien's son, from Dahwi. They were all shot death; Domina was shot in the stomach, and Vincent was shot in both legs. We had to leave Vincent there to die, as he couldn't walk.

Spéciose, her husband and children had not been hurt. Taking advantage of what she called a "cease-fire", meaning a torrential downpour, they set out to walk to Burundi. Some of their companions were killed in Gikore, Nyaruhengeri and at Kabogobogo stream. In the crowd and darkness, she got separated from her husband and three oldest boys. Carrying her one-year-old on her back, she spent the night in the bush in Nyaruhengeri. The next morning, militiamen found her. They stripped her naked and let her go when she told them she was Hutu, but they drowned the baby in the river. She returned to Dahwi and was protected by fellow-Adventists.

When the genocide was over, we collected and buried nearly 26,000 bodies, from Mt. Kabuye and the surrounding area.

If the soldiers had not come to kill us, the civilians would never have had the nerve to attack us, as we were putting up an effective resistance. As we can't identify every individual soldier who took part in the killing, the local commander at the time, in charge of those soldiers, should answer for their actions.<sup>150</sup>

Alphonsine Mukamana watched the approach of the vehicle that brought the soldiers.

We saw the van from the commune of Ndora dropping some people off at Dahwi in the Karama forest, before it went on to Ndora hill. The people who were dropped off got busy at once, camouflaging their heads with greenery. They wore army uniforms and hard hats shaped like round plates.

Our men were still in their defence positions, but had no idea how they were going to stand up to the soldiers. The soldiers delayed the attack until 4:00 p.m. The men with us finally decided not to fight back. They came and told us: "We're finished, God has turned against us."

The soldiers' bullets, she said, "came raining down on us."

We saw people, cattle, goats and sheep being blown apart. Then a Hutu called Alfred, a former communal policeman who had accompanied his Tutsi wife, taught us how to lie flat. But there were so many of us, it was impossible. We would have been lying on top of one another. We lay there until nearly midnight. Then the soldiers threw tear gas at us. As we were choking, someone said: "Let's get out of here! If we're attacked, don't give way!" It was now pouring with rain.

Like many other survivors, Alphonsine headed towards the stream known as Kabogobogo where they were ambushed by soldiers.

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<sup>149</sup> Interviewed 16 October 1999.

<sup>150</sup> Interviewed 2 June 1999.

The soldiers we found there fired at us, but we did not turn back. They let us through. But they fired at us from both sides. We lost a lot of our people at that stream.

They reached another stream, at Cyanwakizi; this time, their tormentors were civilians. Alphonsine's father was killed in front of her by repeated blows to the temple. More of the survivors were killed in Gikore, Nyaruhengeri. When they finally reached their destination, the Burundi border, they were forced to retrace their steps, as the militia had "lit up the whole marsh like the streets of Kigali in order to trap people." One ordeal followed another until the end of the genocide. But Alphonsine has no doubt about where the blame lies for the tragedy in Kabuye.

There can't be more than ten Tutsis left in the whole of my sector. What I do know for certain is that there are no male survivors from the Kabuye massacre out of all the Tutsis in our sector. If those soldiers had not come in with firearms, none of the attacks on Kabuye would have succeeded. We saw the soldiers coming to kill us. We didn't know which camp they came from. I didn't recognise any of the soldiers, but the army commander in Butare must have sent them out on that operation.<sup>151</sup>

Saying it was "impossible to estimate how many Tutsis were killed in Kabuye", Alphonsine said that prisoners, communal work parties and Caterpillar bulldozers were organised to bury the bodies before the mass exodus to Zaire. But many bodies were found scattered in the area in July.

## **Mbazi: "Gusafisha", Cleaning Up Carefully in a Football Stadium, 25 April**

*"The soldiers helped the militia to kill us."*

Between 5,000 and 7,000 people had assembled at Mutunda stadium in commune Mbazi by Monday 25 April. In that one afternoon, most of them were massacred. When the bodies of the victims were exhumed from mass graves after the genocide for a burial ceremony, 3194 corpses were exhumed from one pit, 13 metres deep, which was normally used to deposit the waste of Mutunda's slaughterhouse. 504 corpses were found in another and 376 in a third pit. Another 176 corpses were exhumed in a field next to the slaughterhouse. The majority of the refugees were from Mbazi, but there were also some from other communes, including Maraba, Huye and Ruhashya.

On 25 April, the residents of Mutunda sector in Mbazi woke to the sound of gunfire and grenades as soldiers from Camp Ngoma massacred thousands of Tutsis in the football stadium. Warrant Officer Gatwaza<sup>152</sup>, a soldier who lived in Gahenerezo in the neighbouring commune of Huye, led soldiers and communal policemen, supported by militiamen and civilians. The massacre began around 5:30 a.m. So enthusiastic and consistent was the soldiers' attack, that by the afternoon they had run out of ammunition and went to call for reinforcements from the surrounding civilian population. According to François Nyangezi, one of the men who were sent to the stadium to kill the wounded, "they used the word 'gusafisha' which means to clean up carefully."<sup>153</sup>

The refugees had little chance of escape. The bourgmestre, Antoine Sibomana, lived close to the stadium. Anticipating the flight of Tutsis, he placed a communal policeman, armed with a gun, between his house and the stadium in order to cripple the refugees' chances of survival. The policeman shot at the refugees who tried to flee the massacre. The few who did survive were shielded by the corpses which fell on top of them, and protected by the heavy rainfall which discouraged the killers from returning.

Survivors accuse Sibomana of fetching soldiers to massacre the refugees. To expedite the killings, he invented a pretext to ensure they would all be in the place designated for the slaughter, at the appropriate time. He told them that the préfet, Sylvain Nsabimana, planned to address them on 25

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<sup>151</sup> Interviewed 19 October 1999.

<sup>152</sup> According to a number of former refugees in Zaire interviewed by *African Rights*, Gatwaza settled in camp Kashusha in Zaire where he became known as "Papa Tuyishime."

<sup>153</sup> Interviewed in Mbazi, 16 July 1996.

April, at 3:00 p.m. Despite the strength of evidence against him<sup>154</sup>, Sibomana refutes the charges; instead, he blames soldiers. He says that he was “overwhelmed by the situation.” As a result, he went to ESO on 25 April to ask Muvunyi for help, since Muvunyi had told all bourgmestres in early April, during a security meeting, to ask for soldiers to ensure security in their communes. Muvunyi, he claims, was too busy to see him and sent him home “empty-handed.” The refugees were, he said, murdered in his absence.

When I arrived in Mbazi, I found out that Warrant Officer Gatwaza from Camp Ngoma and his team had come with their guns and had massacred all the innocent people who had taken refuge at the stadium in Mutunda. I couldn't do anything about it; I was in Butare when they were slaughtered. There were between 800-1200 victims.

Given the number of corpses discovered near the stadium, Sibomana's estimate is unlikely, as is his account of the massacre.

François Sinzabakwira was the secretary of the commune and confirmed the role of the soldiers in Mbazi's genocide.

The refugees were killed by soldiers under the command of Gatwaza. The soldiers lived in Camp Ngoma. Gatwaza came with a lot of soldiers from Nyanza in Huye.<sup>155</sup>

Apollonia Mukankusi was one of those who came expecting to hear the préfet's speech.

At the hour that he had indicated to us, a vehicle of soldiers arrived. The soldiers helped the militia to kill us.

There was the sound of gunfire and the explosion of grenades. I ran to the bottom of the stadium. I fell over a mound. I fell down at the bottom of [the school] CERAI in Mutunda. That's where I broke my teeth. From there, I fell into a pit where I stayed until the moment that the sound of arms ceased. I saw how people and cows dispersed under a torrent of bullets. Among those shooting, I saw a certain Gatwaza who was a soldier and who lived in Nyanza, commune Huye. He fired upon a woman called Mutete who was a widow and a trader. I saw with my own eyes how he pursued her and fired upon her.

While the assassins were killing us, the others were killing our cows and looting our belongings. The bullets were exhausted and it rained heavily. I took advantage of this to sneak into the bush.

Apollonia hid in the bush until 12 May, and then walked hundreds of kilometres, at night-time, seeking refuge in different regions of the country.

Francine Mukansanga lost many close family members.

At about 5:30 a.m., the soldiers invaded us and shot at us. When the cartridges had been exhausted, they left and returned in the afternoon with a lot of civilians.

The killers of the afternoon were made up of some people from Maraba, Mbazi and other places. I recognised the soldier who was notorious in the slaughters, Gatwaza from Gahenerezo in Huye, as well as Innocent from Kibabara. The killers returned at nightfall, believing me to be dead after several blows with a *massue* to my head and back. My mother, one of my brothers, my two younger sisters and my child were killed at the stadium.

As a Hutu, Patricie Nakabonye could have remained at home. But she refused to abandon her husband and nine children, all of whom died on 25 April.

All my children were killed at Mutunda stadium. Early in the morning on 25 April, we were woken up by gunshots and grenades which killed lots of people. At about 7:00 a.m. the bullets and grenades ran out. A big crowd, armed to the teeth with traditional weapons and covered with green banana leaves, surrounded us. They looted all our property, especially cows and goats. A grenade hit me on my left hand. I fell to the ground with my baby on my back. Everyone was shouting. I had still not lost consciousness; I could see how the invaders were killing us. The killers began to finish us off with

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<sup>154</sup> For more details, see African Rights, *Burying the Truth in the Name of "Human Rights"*; Antoine Sibomana and His Supporters, Witness to Genocide, Issue 7, September 1997.

<sup>155</sup> Interviewed 21 June 1999.

*massue* blows or little hoes. My turn came. They began with my baby who was on my back. I was also hit with *massue* blows on my head and I fainted.

Around midnight, I was able to get up again. I left the stadium all alone, leaving the bodies of all my nine children there. The baby had been crushed against my back.<sup>156</sup>

Belancilla Mukamazimpaka also accompanied her Tutsi children to the stadium where she lost a child on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

The soldiers and communal policemen shot at us. At about 10:00 a.m., the bullets had run out. There was a sort of calm and the bourgmestre arrived to ask if there were any Hutus amongst us. He spoke to certain Hutu women and told them to leave. Some of the women refused to leave their husbands and their Tutsi children and preferred to die with them.<sup>157</sup>

Apollonie Mukantwali described the scene she confronted at the stadium “as a horror never seen before.”<sup>158</sup>

The assassins hit me with a *massue* on the head. I was practically dead; I lost consciousness. They undressed me. I remained there, buried in thousands and thousands of bodies which had not been finished off, who were crying for help and asking for water to drink. There were babies who were strapped to the backs of their mothers who had died, and there were also some who were crying and suckling the corpses.

Patricie Tumusabimana suffered a serious injury to the leg on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

Our executioners arrived on 25 April. After a whole week of hunger and thirst we had become very weak. They shot at us, killed us with machetes and *massues*. It was horrible. I received a *massue* blow to my head and a machete blow to the lower part of my right leg. I collapsed on the ground and pretended to be dead.

Afterwards, it rained heavily. After the rain, the bourgmestre came to Mutunda stadium where thousands and thousands of bodies were on the ground. It was about 4:00 p.m. they were in the middle of counting the bodies of the victims. While they were counting, they realised that there were a lot of Tutsis who were not quite dead and had to be finished off. They did this a few minutes later. They killed those who were still crying out.

Far from Mbazi, Muyaga lies on the border with Burundi, a fact that increased the ferocity of the genocide in that commune.

## **Muyaga: A Lethal Mix of Soldiers, Gendarmes and Burundian Refugees, 27 April**

*“If the soldiers had not dragged civilians into the war and the genocide, such a tragedy would not have happened.”*

Insecurity spilled over from the neighbouring commune of Muganza into the sectors of Nyeranzi, Ruduha and Gakoma in Muyaga early on. About 13 peasants from Mamba and Gakoma were accused of killing Tutsis, looting and burning their homes or stealing their cattle. They were arrested and detained in the communal detention centre and their weapons were piled up in the hall. However, the decision of the bourgmestre, Fidèle Nzamwita, to punish these troublemakers gave Tutsis in Muyaga a false sense of security. It turned out to be critical to the success of the genocide in Muyaga because it encouraged Tutsis to believe that the bourgmestre would ensure their protection.

Tutsis gathered at the commune office from Saturday 23 April onwards. The influx to the commune office continued throughout Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup> and Monday the 25<sup>th</sup> with the arrival of Tutsis from sectors Mamba and Mbogo. Instead of crossing the nearby Akanyaru river to safety in Burundi, they gathered in their thousands and put their fate in the hands of the authorities. They arrived there together with their cattle, goats and household belongings. Other Tutsis—from Rusatira, Kibayi,

<sup>156</sup> Interviewed 31 July 1996.

<sup>157</sup> Interviewed 17 July 1996.

<sup>158</sup> Interviewed 20 June 1996.

Mugusa, Ntyazo, Ntongwe and Nyaruhengeri—passed through Muyaga on their way to Burundi, but found their route barred. Reassured by the bourgmestre, they headed for the commune office. In the meantime, he quietly instructed the Hutu community to turn them back from the border. Calling the bourgmestre “crafty”, Béatrice Izabiriza, a teacher, commented:

The bourgmestre and his assistant, Alexis, ordered the police and other Hutus not to let any Tutsis cross the Akanyaru. The bourgmestre even went around all over the place persuading the Tutsis to come to Muyaga commune office “to be protected.”<sup>159</sup>

Like many communes in southern Butare, Muyaga hosted United Nations’ camps for Burundian refugees. About 40,000 Burundian refugees lived in a camp in Kagina, sector Mamba. Many Burundian refugees had sympathy with the aims of the genocide and killed mercilessly.<sup>160</sup> The politics of the Burundian refugees added a lethal element to an already tense political and social atmosphere in Rwanda by the time Habyarimana died. Many of the refugees had received military training from the militia, making them even more deadly. Ten gendarmes were responsible for guarding the Burundians.

The first attack upon the Tutsis at the commune office came from civilians on Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup>; they were swiftly repulsed. On the afternoon of Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup>, the rumour spread that young Tutsi men who had escaped to Burundi had crossed back into Muyaga, with the help of Burundian soldiers, had terrorised people, wrecked their canoes and stolen their cattle. Two residents of Muyaga, Rudasingwa and Gasasira, were accused of creating havoc in sector Kivomo. It was a lie, but it legitimised the decision of the bourgmestre to release the men he had detained and hand back their weapons to them. Soon afterwards, the gendarmes who guarded the Burundian refugees opened fire on the Tutsis at the commune office, assisted by the interahamwe and Burundians. A lot of Tutsis were killed, but the gendarmes had exhausted their ammunition between 4:00-5:00 p.m.

The bourgmestre left for Butare immediately after the ammunition ran out. According to Boniface Nkurikiyimfura, the councillor of sector Mamba, “the bourgmestre went to Butare to get the army to intervene against the *Inkotanyi* aggression.”<sup>161</sup> While he was gone, the refugees counted their losses. Béatrice described the scene as “a real hell on earth.” Dead bodies and badly wounded people were lying all around. We were unable to do anything to relieve the pain of the wounded.”

The bourgmestre achieved his objective; he returned to Muyaga with three vehicles full of soldiers. Vincent Karekezi was in a bar in his native sector, Kivomo, when the soldiers approached them.

The soldiers threatened us, especially one soldier who had a star on his epaulettes, a sub-lieutenant. He insulted us, saying: “There they are, just boozing! They haven’t shed a single tear for our Father. You’ve got to kill the Tutsis, because they’re *Inyenzi*. But don’t get distracted by their cattle; you can eat them after killing their owners!”<sup>162</sup>

Some of the soldiers returned to Butare, but a contingent remained at the commune office. These soldiers did not waste time. They walked around the refugees in the dark, guided by an inspector, Augustin Nsabimana. They robbed from the dead and the survivors, killing some individuals. But they reserved their guns and grenades for the next day.

Local residents woke up to the sound of gunfire and the explosion of grenades at about 6:00 a.m. on Wednesday 27 April. It lasted for several hours. The soldiers and gendarmes then set the commune office on fire. When he saw the commune office burning, Télésphore Ntabomenyeteye, the assistant bourgmestre in charge of economic and technical affairs, said he rushed there to save money he had left in his office.

There was no-one left; just countless bodies lying all over the courtyard, between 2,000 and 2,500. The commune office was still burning. My Tutsi colleague, Isidore Karema, assistant bourgmestre in charge of administrative and political affairs, was burnt to death inside the commune office.

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<sup>159</sup> Interviewed 19 October 1999.

<sup>160</sup> Apart from Butare, Burundian refugees played a prominent role in the genocide in Bugesera, Gitarama, Cyangugu, Gikongoro and Kibuye. For details see the following publications by African Rights: *Witness to Genocide*, Issue 6 and Issue 10.

<sup>161</sup> Interviewed 19 October 1999.

<sup>162</sup> Interviewed 18 October 1999.



The soldiers played a leading role in the Muyaga massacres. The fire at the commune office and the massacre of the Tutsis there on 27 April was a joint effort by the soldiers from Butare, some locally based gendarmes and some Burundian refugees.<sup>163</sup>

Boniface Nkurikiyimfura, the councillor of sector Mamba, said he was visiting a neighbour when he heard gunfire.

That was when the Tutsis of our commune died, as most of them had taken refuge at the commune office. The killing was led by those soldiers, helped by the gendarmes who were there to protect the Burundians. The Burundian refugees, including the fearsome Charles Byatsi, joined in. The firing and explosions died down after 12.00 p.m.

Pascal Mbonimana, clerk of the commune, went to the site at about 5:00 p.m.

We found bodies all over the place, and some Burundian refugees busy robbing the dead. I really believe that we would not have had genocide in our commune if the soldiers had not been involved.<sup>164</sup>

“Good things hardly ever last”, said Béatrice, 45, who lost a husband she said she loved very much. As a Hutu, Béatrice could have avoided the violence altogether. Instead, she chose to stay with her husband and two children and so she experienced the full horror of the massacre. She was the head of a primary school in Muyaga and is now the director of a post-primary school. Béatrice and her family arrived at the commune office on Sunday the 24th. She had become separated from her husband and one of their children during the killing of the 26<sup>th</sup>. She survived to give a moving account of her family’s ordeal.

A lot of soldiers and police appeared on the 27th and rounded us up. They told us to hold onto one another. Then the soldiers opened fire. I fell down and nearly passed out. When I regained some strength, I dragged myself into a room. My first child cried out, wanting to go where he thought his father was. He left me alone there. Some time later, the child returned with some girls, including my sister-in-law. She told me that her brother, my husband, had had his throat cut by the interahamwe. I was lucky though, as my sister-in-law brought back to me the child who had been with his father.

The soldiers and police were still killing people, while the militiamen, and the Burundians especially, were finishing off the poor victims who had survived the bullets. The Tutsis had tried to defend themselves with bricks and stones, and some got away to Burundi despite everything. That made the killers even more fanatical.

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**“The genocide would not have occurred on such an enormous scale in Muyaga without the involvement of soldiers the bourgmestre called in from Butare. A lot more people would have escaped.”**

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They killed people until evening fell. And they had also killed on the 26<sup>th</sup> and the night of the 26<sup>th</sup>. That gives you an indication of how many Tutsis there were. It would be hard for me to give you the exact figure, but there was a very large number of them.

We hid in a small room which contained machinery. I barricaded the door. They were going everywhere, breaking down doors, led by the notorious inspector Augustin Nsabimana. When they reached the little room we were in, the inspector told them: “Do not destroy the machines in here, because they belong to us and to our children.” We were shaking with fear inside; myself, the children, the girls and my sister-in-law.

Meanwhile, those Tutsis who were able were still putting up a resistance inside the building. Then we heard a loud explosion. The commune had just been burnt down. Some Burundian refugees were busy digging ditches and mass graves, and the bodies were thrown into them and into the latrines. At about 6:00 p.m. I came out. I heard someone say: “Let’s go and help the Muyaga sectors.” The soldiers and interahamwe left. Some police and Rwandese and Burundian militiamen stayed behind. I ran into a policeman called Martin. I begged him to kill us. He said my husband was dead and he could not kill me nor my children. He called a youth over, and told him to take me to the woman police inspector, near the market. He gave the youth 500 francs. In the market they shouted:

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<sup>163</sup> Interviewed 19 October 1999.

<sup>164</sup> Interviewed 19 October 1999.

“There’s the horrible traitor!” But I got through. When we found the inspector, she told me: “ We can accept you, but not your children.” Yet, she offered the children some tea.

At that very moment, the mass-murderer Janvier turned up. He told me: “Go to my house, and we’ll sort out the problem of your children later.” I thought all the soldiers had gone, but I was wrong. There were still some in the area. Perhaps they had come back again. One of them came to Janvier’s house with his rifle butt, saying: “Did you agree to become a snake?” He added: “Give me the message from the RPF”. He told me: “You’ve become a Tutsi yourself! You see how secretive you’ve become?” I spent that night in fear and pain. I had just lost the person I loved the most, and had just witnessed horrors I would never have dreamt of. I had also had a narrow escape from death myself. I kept asking myself so many questions. I got little sleep, and when I did sleep, I had nightmares.

The soldiers had not finished with Muyaga.

The next morning the soldiers came back and said: “We’ve heard you left some other people behind where you were hiding.” I denied it. They forced me to take them there, broke down the door and found them inside. They asked me why they were there. There was one kind soldier among them. He told the others that they had exterminated the Tutsis, and so there was no point in killing young girls, when they could marry them or employ them as maids. He persuaded the others to find someone who might take them in. One of the girls had a Hutu identity card. They told her to go to Mbago ahead of the others, and someone would hide them well there. There was nothing I could do, not even for my sister-in-law. I saw them leave with tears in my eyes, feeling absolutely wretched.

Saying that “the memory of all this is very painful for me,” Béatrice was unable to continue the interview and asked “to cry for a while.” She wept for a long time. Later she added:

They were to die a few days later, although I don’t know how.

Warned by the policeman Martin that the militiamen were drinking themselves into a frenzy to kill her son, Moïse, she left Ramba secretly and went to the home of a friend. Béatrice finds it impossible to comprehend the genocide she lived through. “In no time at all, the long years of co-existence with the Tutsis was forgotten. All the ties were broken.”

Despite the early start to the massacre, the soldiers first demanded Hutus who might have accompanied Tutsi relatives to leave. Enoch Bungurubwenge, then aged 18 and a farmer from Ramba, offered money to a young man whose job it was to escort the Hutus out. He was caught and beaten by neighbours; a friend of his father’s rescued him. He ran to the home of a Protestant minister where he found his mother and two younger brothers; they too had sneaked out of the commune office. From there, they listened to the sounds of the massacre which claimed many close relatives.

Back at the commune office, the attack had begun and they were killing people with guns and grenades. I could hear people screaming desperately for mercy. My father, two older brothers, four sisters and my three aunts and uncles were killed by the soldiers at the commune office. Soldiers and the Burundian refugees played a leading role in the genocide of the Tutsis at the commune office. There were so many Tutsis that the Hutus of Muyaga couldn’t have exterminated them without army backup. They provided the weapons for them to wipe out the Tutsis.<sup>165</sup>

Married to a Hutu who was willing and able to protect her, Léocadie Mukankusi, 50, stayed at home, close to the commune office.

The Tutsis were killed by communal policemen, gendarmes and interahamwe. The Burundian refugees played a major role in the killings. The most important killers were the soldiers the bourgmestre had brought in from Butare. They drove past my house in two Toyota vans.

She found it impossible to block out the sounds of killing and dying.

I heard prolonged shooting, together with crying, screaming, groaning and a whistle being blown. It must have been a horrible experience. I hid in my house and cried. It went on for two days. From what

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<sup>165</sup> Interviewed 19 October 1999.

I could hear, the soldiers were firing into the crowd at random, and anyone who tried to escape was killed by the interahamwe and the Burundians.<sup>166</sup>

Véronique Ubonabaseka was hiding nearby when her husband and two of her sons were murdered. Although a Hutu herself, she felt the need to stay out of sight after six of her children were killed. She went to the home of a relative, Jean Kayijamane, who she said “spent the whole night attacking Tutsis.”

On Wednesday 27 April, Kayijamane informed me they had killed nearly all the Tutsis who had been at the commune office. I had in fact heard a loud explosion when they set the office on fire. That day too, I saw from my window some very agitated soldiers coming and going all over the place.<sup>167</sup>

Councillor Nkurikiyimfura visited the commune office on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

The roof had caved in after being set on fire to burn the Tutsis inside. There were still burnt bodies in there, and the Burundian refugees were removing and burying them in exchange for food supplies that the UNHCR had left for them.

Vianney Barihuba, a communal policeman, said he went to the commune office on Friday the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Some Burundian refugees had already removed all the bodies from the courtyard, leaving only the burnt bodies inside the building.

The commune office was the site of the principal massacre which took place in Muyaga. About 100 patients and refugees were also killed in the hospital in sector Mamba, located in a place called Kidage. Florence Nyiraminani, aged 14 then, was looking after her older sister in the hospital. She was anxious to rejoin her family in Rugunga, Mamba, but her sister, too ill to move and, convinced that “they couldn’t kill people who are so sick as to be in hospital,” insisted they stay. The gendarmes, accompanied by an employee of the health centre and an interahamwe, came on scouting missions, checking ID cards and forcing Hutus to leave.

The third visit was different. They came armed to the hilt and without mercy. The senior doctor, Bénédict, had told us to close all the windows. They banged hard on the door. Jean, who was in the first room, opened the main door and they immediately cut him on head with a machete. The women and children started to cry. The gendarmes then went into Bénédict’s room; they shot Bénédict more than four times. His wife, who had been staying with him, was forced outside.

The gendarmes then forced everyone out and lined them up outside. I was still crying loudly. I thought, in my naiveté, that they would take pity on a child who was sobbing. Instead, one of them kicked me and I fell to the ground. They had become wild; I thought I would be killed immediately.

The men were assembled and killed by the interahamwe behind the houses. The children were lined up two by two in the courtyard towards the mass grave in which the dead were thrown. The gendarmes supervised the interahamwe as they killed everyone. They called two people and killed them, throwing them in the grave. Bénédict’s wife, Laurence, was too large to fit into the grave properly, so they cut her up with machetes until she did fit. Her two children, a boy and a girl, were put in the grave together.

When there were only six people left, an interahamwe called Minani called me over. He asked the gendarmes to spare me, saying I was staying with his grandmother. I escaped death in exchange for hard labour.

Florence said she led “a life of slavery” which made her “grow up very quickly.” While fleeing to Burundi with the family she worked for, she passed her old home, which had been demolished.

There was nothing left. But I met my dog, who recognised me. I didn’t hold back. I cried.<sup>168</sup>

There would be “nothing left” either of thousands of refugees in the commune of Mugusa.

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<sup>166</sup> Interviewed 19 October 1999.

<sup>167</sup> Interviewed 19 October 1999.

<sup>168</sup> Interviewed 19 October 1999.

## Mugusa: “Your Fate is Sealed”, 28 April

*“Everywhere there was a hail of bullets, bullets, bullets.”*

More than 8,000 Tutsis gathered at the Institut supérieur Agronomique du Rwanda (ISAR), an agricultural research station that has a number of branches. In Songa, commune Mugusa, ISAR maintained a ranch that carried out research on livestock. Many of the earliest arrivals, from Gikongoro, reached ISAR between 10-12 April. But they also came from Gitarama and other communes of Butare. There was a large influx from commune Rusatira between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Subjected to relentless attacks by the interahamwe from Monday 25 April, the refugees organised their defence and forced them to retreat. But on Thursday the 28<sup>th</sup>, gendarmes came to massacre them; about 5,000 are thought to have died that day, and the majority of the others as they tried to make a getaway to Burundi.

Justin Semanyenzi, 40, was working at ISAR in 1994 as an agricultural expert. He is himself a native of Mugusa, sector Matyazo. When he went to hide his children at a friend’s home, he met the former bourgmestre of Ruhashya, Martin Rudakubana, who told him: “Your fate is sealed, so just accept it.” But Justin hid his children with friends and advised some of the Tutsis to leave for Rubona, the headquarters of ISAR, thinking it would be safer “as there were a lot more educated people there.” Munyabagisha, the manager of ISAR, took them to Rubona on 26 April. Justin then returned to Songa, by which time, he said, “a vehicle had been sent to Butare to fetch gendarmes. They came, accompanied by the interahamwe from Maraba.” On the 27<sup>th</sup>, gendarmes “went by on reconnaissance, to find the best positions to shoot from.” On the 28<sup>th</sup>, the gendarmes took up the positions they had identified.

They began shooting us on 28 April. That day, they shot both people and cattle, and there were many casualties. They kept firing at us all day until 6:00 p.m. We could see some Burundian refugees among them. Those who survived that shooting headed for Burundi via Mbogo sector in commune Muyaga. I didn’t feel safe there either, so I returned to Songa. It took me all night, walking there and back. I came across two young Tutsis, one from Burundi and the other from Gitarama, and we walked to Songa together.

The next day, 29 April and 30 April, they came back to finish off any survivors who were too weak or too badly wounded to flee to Burundi. We hid in the bush nearby. I know Songa well.

Justin hid in a pit near the ISAR office in Songa until mid-May. His experiences after that are detailed below.<sup>169</sup>

Josephine Mukandori, a peasant and the mother of five, left her home in Ntongwe, Gitarama, for Butare on 16 April which was still considered safe. But they were soon caught up in killings in Muyira and Ntyazo. Worried about the prominence of soldiers in the massacres in Ntyazo (see above), the councillor of Ruyenzi in Ntyazo escorted about 500 people to ISAR, where he knew many Tutsis had sought shelter. Josephine described the 28<sup>th</sup> as “a calamity.”

As soon as they arrived, they started shooting. They shot and shot. Everywhere there was a hail of bullets, bullets, bullets. People started dropping dead. The cows fled. We had been advised to lie down, far from each other if we were shot at. So that’s what we did. Some of the men bravely continued to fight back with bows and arrows. But once the soldiers arrived, we did not have a chance. After a while, the defence collapsed. How could men and boys armed with stones fight their bullets and grenades?

Then the interahamwe came and started macheting and spearing. Whatever the advice about lying down, you just could not sit there waiting to be killed. Some of us tried to run away while all around us people were dying and falling down.

I left my children and husband behind. All you could think of was surviving. In fact you did not think. You just went with your fear and your legs. As you ran, you had to step over the bodies that were falling all over the place. Hundreds and hundreds of bodies lay scattered everywhere, lying in every twisted position you could imagine. All around, there were cries for help, and sometimes only whispers because people were so hurt. But there was no question of stopping.

“It was”, said Josephine, “a question of personal survival.” With about 50 others, she crouched in the bush until 11:00 p.m. and were in sight of the border with Burundi at 4:30 a.m. when they fell

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<sup>169</sup> Interviewed 17 October 1999

upon an interahamwe roadblock. When they began to kill her companions with machetes, she jumped into the river “to die by drowning.” Out of their group, Josephine, two women and two children were rescued from the river by Burundian soldiers.<sup>170</sup>

As her commune of Kinyamakara in Gikongoro borders Butare, Marie-Grace Mukamazimpaka, 25, a farmer, left for Butare, first to Ruhashya, then Rusatira and finally to ISAR.

We stayed there for four days. The interahamwe came regularly to attack us. We defended ourselves and they were forced to leave. When the interahamwe realised that they could not win this battle on their own, two lorries full of gendarmes were brought in.

They started shooting straightaway and people started falling down dead straightaway. Some of the people who were shot somersaulted in the air and fell to the ground. I need not add that our defence melted away when the gendarmes arrived. Our men had told us to lie down flat if we were attacked, so even those of us who were not yet touched by the bullet threw themselves to the ground. But after a few minutes many of us found it impossible to lie still with people dropping dead all around you. So we just took off and the cows the refugees had brought also took off. Gendarmes and interahamwe continued to kill those at the back. But other killers were awaiting us in the direction to which we were fleeing, killing those at the front. In particular, children and old people were mowed down because they could not run fast enough.

The group I was with jumped over a mass of dead bodies. We ran into fields, heading towards the Akanyaru river and the border with Burundi. We ran away at about 3:00 p.m. We reached the border some hours later.

Marie-Grace threw herself into the river and swam across. She said: “everybody did what it took to survive.”<sup>171</sup>

Joseph Rutagarama lived in commune Nyabisindu, Butare. He left his home in sector Rwesero after his wife, five children, mother, two sisters and five nephews were murdered there. He thought of Burundi as his only salvation, but found his way blocked in the communes of Rusatira, Muyira and Ntyazo by gendarmes, militiamen and roadblocks. Shortly after he reached ISAR, he heard the sound of a helicopter. He spoke of the massacre which followed this reconnaissance mission.

By the time we were many thousands, we were encircled by gendarmes. They shot and shot at us. We tried to resist but we could not sustain our resistance because they were armed and we were not. People were being shot and dying everywhere, sending explosions of blood all around. There was complete chaos. All you heard were gunshots, screams and the footsteps of people fleeing.

At about 4:30 p.m. we ran. We just ran and ran. Each time we arrived at a roadblock, we found interahamwe, gendarmes, bullets and the desire to finish us off. More people got killed. People get killed on the road. Those whose day to die had not yet come, continued. When night came, we had no physical strength left in us. We rested a bit and later, at a time when we thought it might be a safer time, we went towards the Akanyaru river, hoping to cross into Burundi.

On arriving at the river, at about 3:00 a.m., we had a shock. We saw people being beheaded and then thrown into the river. Eight of us had banded together into a little group. Somehow, and I can only call it luck, we survived and we crossed.

About 500 of the survivors made it to Mbazi, where they faced further anguish in another massacre at the beginning of May, as described later in this report.

The genocide was close to completion in Butare by the end of April. In the space of three weeks, tens of thousands of Tutsis had been murdered. There were mass graves, destroyed houses, burnt out buildings and the stench of rotting bodies all over the region. But the killing did not end there. The aim, as the génocidaires used to say openly, was to ensure that future generations would ask “what a Tutsi used to look like.” In areas like Butare, where the FAR held back the advance of the RPF throughout May and June, those months were devoted to searching for any survivors.

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<sup>170</sup> Interviewed 1 June 1994.

<sup>171</sup> Interviewed 2 June 1994.

## THE FINAL ONSLAUGHT MAY-JUNE 1994

By the end of April, the churches, schools, hospitals, hilltops and stadiums where fearful Tutsis had gathered were silent and strewn with corpses. The campaign of organised massacres was almost completed,<sup>172</sup> but there were still small numbers of survivors who had managed to evade the killers, usually with the help of sympathetic Hutus. Increasingly, the government and army had cause for concern as it became apparent that they were losing the war against the RPF. The military and civilian authorities of Butare, including Lt. Col. Muvunyi, began a concerted propaganda campaign, organising “pacification meetings” which were, in the words of a resident of Ngoma, “a strategy to force the Tutsis out of their hiding places.” They threatened to kill Hutus who did not hand over Tutsi relatives, neighbours and friends. They warned that if Tutsis were allowed to live they would help the RPA to win its war against the FAR and that the consequences would be disastrous for all Hutus. They also appealed to people’s economic self-interest, promising them the land belonging to Tutsis.

In May and June soldiers, interahamwe and civilians began combing operations, hunting for survivors in the bush, forests and in private homes. They searched thick forests with the help of dogs or people from the Twa ethnic group who were specialists in hunting. Soldiers continued to check ID cards at roadblocks. Having led the massacres in April, May and June the FAR worked hard to draw civilians into the genocide, giving them military training so that soldiers could concentrate on halting the advance of the RPF. The killings continued on a smaller scale, but with equal fervour. Muvunyi took the lead in encouraging people to keep up the momentum. But because television stations the world over had shown graphic pictures of the genocide, Muvunyi called on the population to kill with discretion and to dispose of the evidence. Aoubacar Ndahimana recalled his words.

Towards the end of April, Col. Muvunyi held a conference at the commune offices for all the officials from the communes and office of the préfecture, both civilians and army officers, and all the militia leaders. The aim of the conference was how to speed up the massacres. When people were killed, they had to be thrown into the ditches in case international satellites managed to take photographs of our activities. He said that people had permission to hunt down their enemies but that bodies should not be left in the road or in any other place where there were a lot of people.

### Muvunyi’s Propaganda Tours

*“Muvunyi asked us to exterminate all the accomplices, and all the Tutsi women and children who had been hidden.”*

To forestall the prospect of defeat, the leaders of the genocide sought to sustain the enthusiasm for killings through personal visits to towns and villages. In May, Lt. Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi held a number of public meetings for the residents of various communes in Butare with the express purpose of strengthening the forces of genocide. A central theme in his speeches was that the extermination of Tutsis was integral to the military demise of the RPF. But he did not rely on persuasion alone; he made it clear that Hutus who refused to co-operate would suffer. Frequently, Muvunyi’s visits were followed by systematic searches for the few Tutsis who remained alive, hiding in Hutu homes or in the bush. They were killed on the spot.

*Nyaruhengeri: “Search Everywhere for the Enemy”*

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<sup>172</sup> The main exception is the region of Bisesero in Kibuye where highly organised massacres in which tens of thousands of people died took place throughout May 1994. For details, see African Rights, *Resisting Genocide: Bisesero, April-June 1994*, Witness to Genocide, Issue 8, April 1998.

The bourgmestre of Nyaruhengeri, Charles Kabeza, tried to keep the peace in early April. Massacres began early in neighbouring communes, such as Kibaye and Kigembe and threatened to spill over into Nyaruhengeri, but joint action by Hutus and Tutsis prevented it. Solidarity began to wane as determined individuals from Kigembe slipped into Nyaruhengeri to encourage local residents to reject the bourgmestre's advice. Saying that the Tutsis had killed Habyarimana, they claimed that the bourgmestre, who had a Tutsi wife, merely wanted to support his in-laws. Towards the end of April, their propaganda had borne fruit and the Tutsis of Nyaruhengeri were killed.

Confident that their commune would be spared, few of the Tutsis of Gikore sector had left their homes. Many of them were killed in the valley between Kigembe and Nyaruhengeri. Some tried to flee to Burundi, but when they reached the banks of the Akanyaru river, they were met by soldiers, interahamwe and their Burundian supporters. They were killed on the spot.

Towards the end of May, Muvunyi, the préfet, Col. Alphonse Nteziryayo and Dominique Ntawukuriryayo, the deputy préfet in charge of the sous-préfecture of Gisagara, arrived in Nyaruhengeri to ensure that the policy of genocide would be fully implemented there. They were on their way back from a similar meeting in Kibayi. The meeting began at about 1:30 p.m. in the courtyard of the Gikore sector office; Muvunyi was chairman. Narcisse Gakwaya, 63, the councillor of Gikore from 1984 to June 1994, was at the meeting.

Lt. Col. Muvunyi spoke. He was in military uniform. He spoke for hours and hours. He told us that the war between the FAR and the *Inkotanyi* was terrible and that it was easy for the *Inkotanyi* to advance because the Tutsis were their accomplices. He asked us to exterminate all the accomplices, and all the Tutsi women and children who had been hidden. He also asked the boys who had married Tutsis during the genocide to throw them out. He said that we should destroy all the Tutsis' houses and farm the land on which they had been built, in order to obliterate every trace that could reveal that genocide had taken place.

At the end of his speech, he terrified us by saying that "any Hutu who hides a Tutsi will be killed with his entire family." He closed the meeting at around 5:00 p.m. People did not ask many questions.

It did not take long for Muvunyi's words to have an impact in Gikore.

The day after that meeting, they began searching Hutu households, especially where they suspected that there were some Tutsis. They immediately killed three grandchildren of Pierre Gatwa who were staying at his place in Rwimbogo cellule. Gatwa's daughter had married a Tutsi. The Tutsis' houses were completely destroyed. They searched every hill in Nyaruhengeri and killed a lot of Tutsis. I accuse Lt. Col. Muvunyi of the death of all the people killed in May 1994 in Gikore.<sup>173</sup>

Jean de Dieu Twajamahoro was one of many people whose home was searched to reveal the "enemy." Aged 35 and a native of Gatovu in sector Bimba, Twajamahoro was an assistant to the bourgmestre during the genocide. He also attended the meeting in Gikore.

The army commander, Muvunyi, was in uniform. He had just come back from a tour of Kibayi commune and stopped in Gikore on the way back. Muvunyi said: "Search everywhere for the enemy and completely destroy these ruined houses you've left standing."

He links Muvunyi's speech to the murder of the Tutsi family he had long been hiding.

I'm convinced that that speech by Muvunyi was the cause of what happened to me the next day. I had so far managed to hide Denis Mukunzi, his wife and their five children in my house without any problems. But the day after the visit by those two authorities, a gang of interahamwe led by a man called Ndamage arrived at my house at 9.00 a.m. They dragged out Mukunzi and his family, and killed them at a place called Gitwa. They said they were acting on the orders of the two authorities who had addressed the previous day's meeting in Gikore.

Stanislas Uwizeyeyezu, 47, inspector of the commune's primary schools, spelt out Muvunyi's objectives.

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<sup>173</sup> Interviewed 29 December 1998.

Muvunyi chaired the meeting. The aim was to recruit young people to enlist in the army for a counter-offensive against the RPF. The second aim was to continue the hunt for RPF accomplices, in other words Tutsis, so that they could be killed well before the arrival of the RPF. Then, if they did arrive, no Tutsis would get the chance to welcome them. The third aim was to urge all the Hutus who had hidden Tutsis to get rid of them as soon as possible. Anyone who refused to do so, and who was found to be harbouring Tutsis, would be killed alongside them. The fourth aim was to safeguard security. Similar conferences were held in the communes of Kigembe, Huye and Kibaye.

### *Muyaga: “You Must Kill All the Tutsis”*

At the beginning of June, Muvunyi met the residents of commune Muyaga at a meeting outside the sector office of Mamba, near Gakoma commercial centre. He was accompanied by Col. Alphonse Nteziryayo, the sous-préfet responsible for administrative and judicial matters in Butare and Ruzindaza, a judge from Butare district court. The men arrived at about 11:00 a.m. and the bourgmestre, Fidèle Nzamwita, introduced Muvunyi to the participants; Muvunyi did most of the talking. The councillor of sector Mamba, Boniface Nkurikiyimfura, described the aim of Muvunyi’s intervention. As elsewhere, Muvunyi’s words inspired the hunt for Tutsis who had managed to elude death until then.

Muvunyi’s speech was mainly on military matters, minimising the *Inkotanyi*’s military capacity.

Muvunyi told his audience to learn to recognise the sound of “*Inkotanyi* gunfire” so that civilians could help the army by resisting and undermining the RPF. To underscore the RPF’s military weaknesses, Muvunyi told them that RPF soldiers were incapable of sustained firing. Instead, he said they fired one shot after another, or fired simultaneously from different directions to disguise their paltry numbers and to cause maximum fear among the civilians, taking advantage of the confusion to mingle with the civilians and to flee with them. Béatrice Izabiriza spoke of the army commander’s second objective in giving his speech.

Muvunyi came to make people aware that although things had calmed down, there were still Tutsis hiding in the bush, or in houses. He also thanked those who had “worked” hard and denounced those who had not.

To illustrate Muvunyi’s argument, the soldiers with him opened fire simultaneously, causing panic as people scrambled to avoid the shots.

Muvunyi and his soldiers calmed us down. I think Muvunyi wanted us to get to know what this simultaneous *Inkotanyi* firing sounded like. He urged all the residents not to flee, because the *Inkotanyi* took advantage of even the most unlikely instances of mass flight to move from place to place amid the refugees. He added: “Instead of running away, take up arms and liberate the country.”

Their departure was followed by the murder of the few remaining Tutsis according to Nkurikiyimfura.

After that meeting, most of the Tutsis who had been hidden by Hutus were killed, except for those ten or so members of my wife’s family I had in my house. That very evening in Gakoma, the grandsons of a Hutu called Sebushishi were killed.

Téléphore Ntabomenyeteye, an assistant bourgmestre, was also at the meeting.

Muvunyi urged the residents not to run away without knowing who they were running away from and what weapons they had.

He spoke of Muvunyi’s reaction to the commotion that followed the shots.

Muvunyi criticised us for not following the orders he had just given us about what to do whenever we heard gunshots.

A few days later, I heard that some Tutsi women and girls, who had survived until then in Gakoma sector, were killed after that meeting.



Jeanne d'Arc Uwizeyimana had special reasons to be afraid as she listened to Muvunyi's speech. Although a Hutu, her husband was Tutsi. They lived in Masheke cellule, Mabya sector. Jeanne, 36, now works in Butare as a primary school teacher.

I remember Muvunyi said: "The *Inkotanyi* have failed. They are no longer strong enough to continue the war. If you want to help us, go on driving out the enemy, who are the Tutsis. You should not even be afraid of killing pregnant women; you must kill all the Tutsis, even new-born babies. I've now heard that the *Inkotanyi* have run out of food and they're now eating Hutu women and children. You should take your own revenge on the Tutsis."

Muvunyi's instructions were carried out.

After his meeting, searches were carried out in the bush and of peoples' households to kill the Tutsis.<sup>174</sup>

Muvunyi told the peasants that it was their patriotic duty to help the army crush the women and children allied with the enemy. Vincent Karekezi is one the farmers he hoped to persuade.

Muvunyi said that "we the soldiers have fought for the sovereignty of this country without any help from you. If you don't want to change your attitude and make a contribution now, we are also going to lay down our arms and let the country fall into the hands of the enemy." He also said we should get rid of all the accomplices of the enemy, without sparing even the women and children.

Some of the women and children were killed within hours.

That very evening they killed the two children of a Tutsi called Munyeshongore who were being looked after by a Hutu from my sector, called Rwarika. The same thing happened to a Tutsi child hiding at the house of Patrice Maniraho. A woman called Nyiraburakeye, who was hiding with a man called Bushishi, was also killed that evening.

Véronique Ubonabaseka listened to Muvunyi's speech after her husband and six of her eight children died in Muyaga. She had no doubt what he intended when he sought to reassure the remaining Tutsis.

He urged all those in hiding to come out, I think, so that not one Tutsi would survive.

Léocadie Mukankusi agreed with Véronique.

The meeting was chaired by an officer from Butare called Muvunyi. He said that all those who had survived the massacre of 27 April should come out of hiding, because peace had been restored and the real enemy was the RPF. He said that everyone, including women, should take up arms and fight the enemy.

A few days later, the poor survivors still in hiding here and there were killed, including Concessa Mukahigito and Félicitée, a Tutsi who married a Hutu who died in Gatare.

Muvunyi also visited other communes, including Kigembe, Kibayi and Muganza. In Nyaruteja, Kigembe, his aim was to encourage residents to recognise the sound of the RPF's guns. His message in Nyabitare market in Muganza was more direct, according to Jean Bimenyimana.

In their speeches, both Alphonse Nteziryayo and Muvunyi said: "We have only one enemy; the *Inkotanyi*. You have worked well."

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**"Muvunyi added that in the struggle against the *Inkotanyi* and their accomplices, the civilians should hand over captured women and girls for rape."**

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Muvunyi and Colonel Nteziryayo added: "If you refuse to die for your country, you'll die pointlessly and be thrown to the dogs." They said that to encourage the young people to join the army.

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<sup>174</sup> Interviewed 7 January 1999.

Women died as a result of their visit.

Tutsi women and girls who had been hidden, either to be raped, or out of friendship, were killed, including one girl who had been taken in by a woman called Odette. These leaders toured the whole préfecture calling for the extermination of Tutsi survivors and recruiting young men for the army.

The propaganda tours in May and early June encouraged people to betray and murder their friends and neighbours and helped to reduce dramatically the number of survivors.

## The Combing Operations

*“Muvunyi made it clear that the civilians should also take part in the struggle against the enemy, using massues and traditional weapons and sounding the alarm.”*

### *Butare Town*

Jeanne Nyabumondo's testimony highlights the impact of the threats directed at Hutus who had hidden Tutsis. On 5 May, the Zairian family which had given shelter to Jeanne and her four children in Matyazo, Ngoma, asked them to leave. They spent some days in the bush, but on 8 May they were discovered by a soldier on patrol. Jeanne said she knew the soldier, nicknamed “CDR”, as he was based at Camp Ngoma, close to Jeanne's home. The soldier and a group of militiamen took Jeanne and some other women to Niyogoro in commune Runyinya.

As it was dark when we got there, they had to wait until daybreak to ask the locals to dig a mass grave for our bodies. When we came to the grave, we had to wait for the gravediggers to finish before we could be killed. Then at 11.00 a.m. on 9 May, we were lined up and the first woman was killed and thrown into the grave and so on.

Before my turn came, the Runyinya bourgmestre drove up on his motorbike. He wanted to know why people from Matyazo had brought people into his commune and were killing them there. He added that, in any case, the orders now were not to kill women and children. I didn't take in what “CDR” replied, because waiting for death like that had affected my mind. When the bourgmestre saw me, he exclaimed “But you're Zairian! What are you doing here?” Once he knew I was Zairian, “CDR” let me go. The bourgmestre got a militiaman to take me to an elderly Hutu woman, Athanasie. I went there with my children and the girl called Angélique. Although that bourgmestre murdered people during the genocide, he took pity on me because he knew my husband.

The bourgmestre brought Jeanne her Zairian identity card which enabled her to move about freely. On 13 May, she boarded a bus which had been sent from Kigali to collect foreign residents and she left for Zaire.

In the town of Butare, “life began to return to normal at the beginning of May”, according to Samuel Gakwerere, a student at the university who survived because he had a Hutu ID card. “Markets re-opened and people could move about as before; they even went to mass.” But the genocide continued, as Gakwerere noted.

Small numbers of people were still being killed, because I saw their bodies lying by the road. On Sunday, 10 June, I attended a mass held in the cathedral by Bishop Gahamanyi and Fr. Aloys Guillaume. They had soldiers as bodyguards and there were a lot of bodies lying in a gully near the cathedral.

It was in June that the Tutsi employees of the Hotel Faucon were killed. Their colleague, Vénuste Rudasingwa, blames their deaths on Muvunyi. He said that the manager of the hotel, Agnès Umutangana, had given a list of the hotel's Tutsis employees to Muvunyi before she left on 12 April “in the hope that he would protect them.”

Muvunyi could have done so because he was the local commander.

Instead, Vénuste believes that Muvunyi exposed them to danger.

The Tutsis who worked with me had hidden in the hotel cellar. One day, Muvunyi came to get some vegetables and green bananas from our kitchen garden and he asked me if my work colleagues were still hiding in the cellar. I said they were. Instead of taking those Tutsis and hiding them somewhere else, knowing very well that soldiers who might kill them frequented the Hotel Faucon, or leaving his vegetables to save the Tutsis, Muvunyi told me that the Tutsis should stay there. A few days later, in June, the soldiers searched the cellar, found those in hiding and killed them immediately. Those killed were Charles from Gishamvu commune; Bosco Bizumutima from Gishamvu; Gilbert from Huye commune; Karekezi from Huye; Safari and Védaste from Cyangugu.

I accuse Col. Muvunyi of the murder of my work colleagues.

Pascalie Uwimana, a cadet from ESO, named Corporal Niyibizi as an officer who killed many people at the University Hospital. She saw him commit other crimes towards the end of June.

I saw Corporal Niyibizi, Ntamuhanga and the RSM driving Tutsis to the Arab quarter to be killed. That was on the Wednesday of the week we fled. The Tutsis were in a Hilux van. They were emaciated and smelled horribly. The women's hair was falling out. They had been discovered in hiding.

Some of the Tutsis who cheated death in April had changed their ID cards or had convinced someone, through friendship or bribery, to issue them with a Hutu ID card. At roadblocks, soldiers kept a keen eye for new cards. In May, Janvier Ntasoni, the teacher who confessed to taking part in the killings in Matyazo, met Muvunyi checking ID cards himself.

I knew Lt. Col. Muvunyi to some extent, as he sometimes used to drive around Matyazo. He drove a white Mitsubishi four-wheel drive vehicle which had apparently belonged to the World Bank. That was the vehicle he used to drive during the genocide, at least, whenever I saw him. It wasn't until 14 May that I got a good look at him. I was driving to my mother-in-law's house in Kibuye, accompanied by some of my sisters-in-law and my father-in-law. When we reached a roadblock opposite the Loiret building, not far from the National Museum, we were stopped by some soldiers, who wanted to check our identity cards. Muvunyi was there, taking an active part in what was going on, and seeming very agitated. "This is just the kind of vehicle we're going to ban! These are the ones our enemies use!" he exclaimed. He immediately stopped his soldiers checking our cards, and said he would do it himself. He took our travel pass, which had all our names written on it, and called everyone out to show him their identity cards. None of us had a Tutsi ID card. I had lost my card well before Habyarimana's death. Seeing how angry he was about my lack of ID, the only way I could think of to get out of his clutches, was claiming to be the security guard for the minibus. People found without ID cards risked being killed. When he had finished checking us, he let us go on our way.

The suspicion about new cards led to the death of a group of Hutus staying at the home of Ntasoni in Matyazo.

In June, I took in some displaced Hutus from Bugesera, at the request of a warrant officer I knew. One day they were stopped at a roadblock in Matyazo and detained at the sector office. I went there and asked why they had been arrested. I was told they were under suspicion because "their identity cards are all new ones." While I was looking for someone who could get them released, I heard they had just been killed on the orders of a sergeant based at ESO. I don't know this officer's name, but I did see him. When I complained to Lt Niyonteze, he found out that the criminal was indeed at ESO. He informed the ESO authorities about it and when he came back, told me the sergeant had been demoted as a punishment.

Survivors of the massacre at Kabakobwa on 21 April, Thérèse Kabega's husband and three of her children believed the lies of the militia that "things had calmed down." They returned home and her husband was immediately killed in front of their house with a *massue*.

Then they got three of the children and hacked them to death.

Thérèse was saved by the fact that she had a Hutu ID card.

The soldiers returned to Butare and the militia went on attacking the survivors. The militia rounded up all the women and girls at the sector, and then took them to Déo's field in Nyacyamu, where they were massacred a few hours later. Most of them were thrown into the gully. That was not the end of it though, because they went on hunting down survivors until the RPF won the war.

One of the places where there was a high-level call for “pacification” was the University Hospital. The educated people of Butare—especially academics and doctors—were keen to show their loyalty to the interim government. They were also worried that they might have missed some of their Tutsi colleagues. They invited the prime minister, Jean Kambanda,<sup>175</sup> a native of Butare, to a meeting in town as a show of support for the policy of genocide. Kambanda proclaimed the return of “peace” and urged patients to return to the hospital for treatment. Pascasie Uwimana, the cadet from ESO who spent the genocide looking after soldiers at the hospital, saw Kambanda there.

I don’t know what he had come to the hospital for, when there were all those massacres going on. His visit did not change the fate of the Tutsis at the hospital.

### *Rural Communes*

Muvunyi visited a number of the rural communes of Butare to encourage civilians to finish the task of killing. Combing operations took place with renewed emphasis as the RPA troops approached. Although the “genocide was practically over” by the end of April in commune Ntyazo, according to Mathieu Ndahimana the former bourgmestre, a meeting was called in mid-May to order people to search for survivors. It was attended by all the councillors, and all the heads of administration in the commune, clergymen and the local leaders of the political parties.

A message from the government was read out to us at this meeting. It said that we should hunt down the Tutsis everywhere, rather than stop the genocide.

In Muyaga, “hunting” Tutsis was also used by the army to transform civilians into a proxy fighting force. Vianney Barihuba, a policeman in Muyaga, said “he saw Muvunyi many times in various places.”

I met him one day when the local people were excitedly claiming to have found some *Inkotanyi*. The sous-préfet and I went to Mbogo hill in Mbogo sector, Muyaga, opposite Ntyazo, to investigate. There we found Muvunyi, doubtfully asking the local people whether they had really found *Inkotanyi*. Muvunyi promised to organise an attack and return some other day. Muvunyi made it clear that the civilians should also take part in the struggle against the enemy, using *massues* and traditional weapons and sounding the alarm, as the people of other regions were doing, sometimes managing to capture the *Inkotanyi*.

I told myself that Muvunyi was saying that to get those civilians killed, involving them in the war when they certainly were not involved.

The day to capture the supposed *Inkotanyi* arrived.

When the day came, in June, I left Gisagara with a party of peasants; each peasant wore a bracelet made of banana fibre on one arm as a badge of identity. Instead of going through our area, Muvunyi went to the site via the commune of Shyanda. When we reached a place called Rwintare in Muyaga, we saw the people ahead of us come running back from the front. They told us that many civilians, especially the residents of Kibayi commune, who were very patriotic, had died in the battle being fought in the Cyiti rice plantation. Two days later, we heard a rumour that the Gikonko rice fields had fallen to the *Inkotanyi*. I fled my home on 16 June, and went through several communes before arriving in Burundi on 6 July.

Justin Semanyenzi, of ISAR in Songa, had eluded death during the massacre of 28 April. He said that the newly appointed minister of agriculture visited Songa at the beginning of May in a delegation that included Muvunyi. He and two young men were nearby when they heard their words of assurance. Using loudspeakers, they said they had come to “calm down those who had survived and to convince those who were still in hiding to leave their hideouts.” Those who believed them, including Semanyenzi’s companions, died shortly afterwards. Semanyenzi had remained sceptical, but said he “lost his nerve” on 18 May and fled to Mucyiri, to the home of a friend, another agricultural expert,

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<sup>175</sup> Jean Kambanda has been sentenced to life imprisonment by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda for his role in leading the genocide. He pleaded guilty.

Emmanuel Karekezi. When he arrived, he discovered that the genocide had turned his friend “into a dangerous enemy.” Angered that his Burundian wife had found him a secure hideaway, Karekezi brought the councillor and militiamen to the house.

They tied me up and took me to the roadblock, where I was to be publicly executed the next day, to set an example to the peasants. But at 1:00 a.m., when the interahamwe were too tired to keep watch, Karekezi’s wife came and freed me. I fled back to Songa.

In June, he had an encounter with soldiers.

All the inhabitants of Songa ran away on 1 June, leaving only the soldiers and the interahamwe. They found me hiding in a house. I begged them to shoot me. An interahamwe took me to the place where they had executed the Tutsi wives of Hutus. He intended to shoot me, but his gun jammed. I ran for it.

Not long afterwards, he walked to Ntyazo where he found the RPF.

Some of the other survivors from the massacre at ISAR, about 500 men, women and children, decided to go to the town of Butare “to ask the administration what we had done to deserve such punishment”, in the words of Paul Karemera, an employee of the commune office of Mbazi. Or, according to Prudence Mukambaraga, “to die down there, in the hands of the authorities.” It was a brave act borne of desperation. Some of the refugees were badly wounded; all were soaked wet from heavy rainfall and were hungry and cold. On the way, at the craft shop in Karama, Mbazi, they came across Antoine Sibomana, the bourgmestre of Mbazi. Sibomana advised them to remain where they were, saying that he was going to make the inquiry on their behalf. The bourgmestre had barely made a half-turn when the refugees found themselves facing well-armed soldiers, said Paul.

Two vans full of soldiers turned up. They were transporting about 100 soldiers who had guns and grenades. They spat on us, insulting us in a harsh manner. They made us go back to ISAR and told us to await assistance.

Prudence Mukambaraga, 58, a farmer from Mbazi, said that “the soldiers obliged us to return to ISAR, by beating us as if we were cattle being driven to the watering place.” Some of the soldiers left, but they left behind a team who forced the refugees to stay in the valley of Rubona, situated near the steep hill of Gafumba in Mugusa. Sibomana told them that the soldiers would guard and assist them. Instead, the soldiers went to mobilise the peasants of Gafumba. Paul, who had worn leaves to disguise himself, attended the meeting at which the soldiers gave the peasants their instructions.

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**“The soldiers told the peasants: ‘We don’t want to waste our bullets. Come and kill the Tutsis at ISAR with your machetes. We are going to prevent them from escaping by shooting in the air. And you, you’ll kill them without any problems.’”**

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It was 2 May if I am not mistaken.

Paul sneaked out of the meeting to warn some of his neighbours. In Gafumba, the refugees led a life of misery and fear before they were wiped out. Prudence lost her husband and four of her children at Rubona.

We were always out in the open, without any supplies, despite [the existence of] the small shopping centre which was located on the same hill of Gafumba. When the refugees tried to go in search of supplies, they were murdered.

The number of soldiers who were stationed at ISAR was increased, prior to the major assault that killed most of the 500 refugees.

The soldiers who were supposed to be guarding us had taken up positions at ISAR, at the place called Ku Biraro By’Inka [the cows’ stables]. They attacked us. Our crowd dispersed. Behind us were killers of all ages—men and women, girls and boys—armed with *massues*, machetes, clubs, spears and small

hoes. They killed the refugees rapidly. Those who managed to take refuge near where the soldiers were shot by them.

With no strength left to move, Prudence asked a favour of a soldier.

I approached a soldier to beg him to shoot me, rather than be killed by a machete or a *massue*. He refused.

Prudence concealed herself in the bush, with her youngest child, Uwanyirigira, on her back.

The killers passed nearby, searching systematically for survivors. I used to see the bodies of my colleagues, on the ground on the hill, naked and macheted. All day long, I saw a truck transporting corpses and taking them to the summit of the hill of Rubona, where the mass graves had been prepared before we had been massacred.<sup>176</sup>

Immaculée Mukakalisa remembers how Sibomana promised that they would “be assisted and protected by the soldiers” and how “these soldiers collaborated with the killers of the region of Rubona to wipe us out.”<sup>177</sup>

Military and civilian leaders, including Muvunyi himself (see above) encouraged the interahamwe to regard Tutsi women as the spoils of the genocide. Some were allowed to live, only to be raped or taken as “wives” by the militiamen. Marguerite Mujawamariya’s husband and five children were killed as the family headed for Nyaruhengeri, trying to escape the killings on Mt. Kabuye in Ndora. She was left for dead by the side of a stream and made her way back to her home in commune Muganza. Together with some other women and girls, she spent a month at Gahondo primary school.

I was fortunate to avoid being raped because I was so seriously ill, otherwise, it would have been impossible to avoid it.

At the end of the month, the women were nearly all killed when the interahamwe from Ndora carried out a raid. Again Marguerite returned home, but was forced out two days later when the militiamen came to demolish it, beating her on the head with a club. After two days in a banana grove, she reached Gisagara health centre run by the Abizeramariya nuns. After she had been there a few days, militiamen killed the children and mother-in-law of the current bourgmestre of Ndora near the health centre. Immediately they left, an army vehicle stopped outside the centre.

Four soldiers came, accompanied by Pauline Nyiramusuhuko’s son, Chalôme. They took away four of Bihara’s children. I don’t know how these children managed to escape.

There were others who did not escape the soldiers.

I spent the whole of May at the Gisagara health centre. The soldiers would come and select patients to kill. I was there, but the wound in my head was so serious and badly infected that it made them think I would be dead in a few days time.

On 26 June, when the *Inkotanyi* had reached Muyaga and were only a few days away from Ndora, the soldiers came from Butare in a green lorry. I thought they were coming to exterminate the rest of us. A woman called Costasie Dusabe accompanied me to the nuns’ houses. But the soldiers had orders to bury the dead on Mt. Kabuye and resist the RPF advance. So I stayed with the nuns until the *Inkotanyi* arrived.

Caritas (a pseudonym) had also seen many close relatives die on Mt. Kabuye in Ndora on 24 April. Stopped at a roadblock in Nyaruhengeri, she was taken to the leader of the local interahamwe. Despite her young age, she was given away as a wife.

He took me to a house where they had collected some Tutsi women for rape. My godmother was one of them, but she was killed in mid-May along with her four sons. The following day, some killers took us to a grave. The grave was in our cellule. When we were lined up waiting to be killed, a man turned up

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<sup>176</sup>Interviewed 13 September 1996.

<sup>177</sup>Interviewed 13 September 1996.

and said he knew me. He then took me to his house. He wanted to rape me, but I resisted him, so he beat me with a *massue*, but eventually he had to give up.

Another man came around later and paid him 1,500 Rwandese francs and a radio in exchange for me. I lived with him and his mother as his wife until we fled the *Inkotanyi*. I thank God that only *one* man raped me. What happened to other women is beyond belief. Some of them were gang-raped. We had to douse them with water to bring them round and they needed our help to stand up. Some of the women and girls were raped in the sorghum fields. When the youths who raped them had gone, we heard them crying, and went to see what we could do. The younger ones couldn't walk, and so those murderers came back and killed them.

A few Tutsi survivors, in particular women, were being kept as a trophy for 5 July, when Habyarimana's body was due to be buried in Amahoro stadium in Kigali. The génocidaires boasted openly that this would be a sign of their victory. But this day would never come—a possibility which Muvunyi and his fellow army officers began to recognise and to do to everything they could to prevent.

## **Training Civilians for Genocide: The Creation of Defence Forces and the Distribution of Weapons**

*“Muvunyi asked all the bourgmestres to find young people from each sector to receive training in the use of guns and grenades.”*

By the end of May, the RPF occupied the east and south-east of the country. Gitarama, which borders Butare, fell to the RPF on 2 June. Because soldiers were needed at the front to contain the military threat from the RPF, senior army officers in Butare decided on another strategy: to give military training and arms to civilians to form “a people's defence force.” The training, which began on or around 25 May, was provided by instructors at ESO and communal policemen who had been former soldiers. The training sessions were held at ESO, at Kamena football stadium in Butare town and in a football stadium in commune Huye. The arms given to new recruits were stockpiled at ESO. The recruits included university students, local government officials and other civilians.

On occasion Muvunyi himself visited the trainees. Warrant Officer Emmanuel Rekeraho accompanied him when he went to one of the rural communes.

I went with Muvunyi to Kibayi commune to train the youths. We taught them military tactics and distributed guns and grenades. During that time I was with Muvunyi, but now all the blame has been put on me.

Officers from ESO also organised training sessions in Mata, Gikongoro, for recruits from both Gikongoro and Butare. One of the instructors was Sub-Lt. Modeste Gatsinzi who denies that the recruits were taught to kill Tutsis.

At the beginning of May 1994, Mata was chosen as the training area for the entire Butare-Gikongoro military zone. Captain Nizeyimana took over responsibility for it, with me as his assistant, together with two other officers, Sub-Lt. Pierre Bizimana and Sub-Lt. Alphonse Ndayambaje, and some other, lower-ranking soldiers. The aim of the training exercise was to equip the young recruits to fight at the front with the FAR. Young recruits were sent to us from every commune for military training at the Mata tea factory.

Some Burundian refugees, who were key allies, also took advantage of the sessions.

There were also some Burundian refugees, including four former students from the Burundian military academy. They were all sent over by the Burundian ambassador, with the aim of preparing to attack their own country.

Sub-Lt. Pierre Bizimana, who also denied that they trained interahamwe, gave additional details.

Captain Nizeyimana, Sub-Lt. Gatsinzi, some ordinary soldiers and I were posted to Mata in Gikongoro to train the young recruits. Some of them had to come to ESO, and the others were brought to us in Mata by the bourgmestres.

I took about 300 trained recruits to the front about a month later, and they formed the 97th battalion of the FAR. There were still around 200 being trained in Mata when we were defeated. Some Burundian refugees also joined us there for military training.

But the emphasis on military training did not disguise the broad meaning of the “front.” Testimonies from the men who provided the training in Butare and who distributed the weapons highlight the extent to which the completion of the genocide of the Tutsis was seen as integral to the military defeat of the RPF. Aboubacar Ndahimana, a communal policeman in Ngoma, spoke of the division of labour.

Muvunyi asked all the bourgmestres to find young people from each sector to receive training in the use of guns and grenades. The training took place at ESO and at the stadium in Huye. After lessons in theory and practice, some of them received guns and grenades and set off at once to stop the RPF offensive. The others were allotted one gun and five grenades per sector, and were sent to mop up any remaining Tutsis.

Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, 46, a former soldier who became a policeman, was one of the instructors.

In May, Lt. Col. Muvunyi told the bourgmestres to recruit young people to undergo training for self-defence. I was one of the instructors. They received military training; we then gave them arms which had been reserved for them at ESO. They did their training in the stadiums of Huye and Kamena.

Mathias Nsanzabahire is another former soldier who worked as a communal policeman. He helped Gahamanyi and gave a hand in the distribution of the weapons stocked at ESO.

After the training, bourgmestre Kanyabashi sent me to ESO to get arms for the trainees. I went with Gahamanyi and the ESO soldiers filled the car with guns. We brought them to the stadium and gave them out in the presence of Muvunyi; Kanyabashi; Col. Alphonse Nteziryayo and Callixte Karemanzira, an employee of the Ministry of Interior who was from Butare.

There were additional supplies of guns available at ESO.

They were distributed to local people at Ngoma commune office. People had gathered on the volleyball court. Lt. Col. Muvunyi, the préfet and Karemanzira were there.

And the use of these guns, he said, were not linked to the war effort.

The guns were used to kill people at the roadblocks.

Mathieu Ndahimana became bourgmestre of commune Ntyazo in late May.

We spent the whole of June training young men for the front. They were trained by Ruzindaza, presiding judge of the court of first instance in a camp in Ngoma. The instructors included soldiers from ESO sent by Col. Muvunyi. The young people were recruited by their bourgmestres in the camps



in Kinkanga, Gafumba and Rubona. Every bourgmestre had to visit all the camps in the hope of finding young people from their commune. I recruited nearly 100 of them at Ntyazo.<sup>178</sup>

The bourgmestre, Kanyabashi, called the councillors of commune Ngoma to a meeting to seek their assistance in mobilising and organising the civilians who were to make up the defence force. One of the men who participated at the meeting and who received training is Nicodème Hategekimana, the councillor of Cyarwa-Sumo.

We did a week's training in Kamena stadium. Our instructors included Warrant Officer Ntirigira and some other soldiers and police officers. We used to start early in the morning; we didn't get home until the evening.

After the training, our bourgmestre and the army officers, including the préfet, Col. Alphonse Nteziryayo, brought us some guns. They gave out three guns per sector because there were so many of us. I received a gun myself. These guns were no use to us because the RPF had made a major advance, and we had to flee the country, guns and all.

Another councillor who obtained guns is François Bwanacyeye of sector Tumba.

By the end of May, the RPF offensive seemed to pose a real threat. Col. Muvunyi held a meeting about this together with Alphonse Nteziryayo. He gave guns and grenades to all the bourgmestres who attended to be distributed amongst the councillors so that everyone would be able to hunt down the enemy energetically. I myself received two guns and some grenades.

There was, according to François, another objective.

The aim was to put pressure on the clergy to hand over the people they were sheltering in the convents so that they could be killed and the RPF would not, therefore, find any Tutsi alive when it arrived.

Councillors were not only expected to take part themselves, but to recruit others who served in the local government structure in their sectors, such as *responsables* and *nyumbakumbis*. Hyacinthe Rurangirwa, a member of Akaniga cellule in sector Sahera, Ngoma, was encouraged to join by his councillor, along with other members of his cellule.

We were given military training at Kamena stadium. All the sectors of Ngoma commune were represented: Ngoma, Tumba, Cyarwacy'imana, Cyarwa-Sumo, Sahera, Nkubi, Matyazo and Butare Urban.

Warrant Officer Ntirigira and Corporal Gahamanyi were in charge of the training. Lt. Col. Muvunyi and Alphonse Nteziryayo often came to check up on us. We trained together with students from the university. After ten days' training, Lt. Col. Muvunyi and Alphonse Nteziryayo gave us guns. People left with these guns to go and serve at the roadblocks in their areas. Around the end of June the soldiers came to take their arms. We left them with the councillor.

Athanase Nshimiyimana was the councillor of sector Matyazo in Ngoma. The recruits from Matyazo were trained in the gardens of the commune office of Ngoma.

At the end of May, Muvunyi asked every sector to send him at least ten young people for military training, so that they could go to the regions of Muyira and Matyazo and stop the *Inkotanyi*. We did as he wished and we councillors also had military training. The training took place at ESO; some went to the stadiums of Huye and Kamena. We learned how to use guns and hand grenades on crowds. After the training, we went to ESO to get the grenades and guns. The younger trainees were sent straight to the front, and the others stayed to ensure security and continue the hunt for Tutsis in school ceilings and wherever else they might be surviving.

Civilians participated in large numbers in the simultaneous campaign to boost the FAR and to advance the genocide. Anaclet, cited earlier, was one of the men selected by the commune of Huye to take part in the training.

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<sup>178</sup> Interviewed 16 March 1999.

My commune had selected me to go there, and that is how I took part in training to kill again. Our instructors came from ESO. After we were trained, everyone got a gun and at least five hand grenades. Some of us were sent to the front line straight away.

As defeat stared the FAR in the face, participation in civil defence took on a new meaning. In commune Muyaga, civilians were taken by force, according to Téléspore Ntabomenyeteye, an assistant bourgmestre, and used as a shield by the soldiers.

I saw some soldiers—not gendarmes—in June when they caught me in the bush, not far from my house. They forced me to go to the front and fight the *Inkotanyi*, who had attacked this region. When we reached a place called Bukorata, we stopped, and I witnessed a lot of deaths, as many peasants either died in the Bukorata swamps, or were taken off to the front to fight the *Inkotanyi*. The *Inkotanyi* were on a hill overlooking Bukorata, and the soldiers took cover in a nearby wood. The civilians recruited for the front by the soldiers were killed in the crossfire. The councillor from Nyeranzi sector returned home from that day's fighting with a bullet wound in his arm.

According to Vénuste Rudasingwa who worked at the Hotel Faucon in the centre of Butare town, the hotel was also used to facilitate the training exercise.

During the genocide, a university employee called Félix and the Ngoma sector school inspector set up an office for civil defence training in the Hotel Faucon. They used the manager's office. Whenever a bourgmestre or councillor had problems, they would come and consult the people in that office. The ESO soldiers had brought some guns to that office, so if anyone wanted a gun they would go there and get one.

No matter how well-organised or co-ordinated the campaigns to train civilians, to distribute weapons and to instil hatred and fear of the RPF, nothing could alter the fact that FAR faced imminent defeat at the end of June 1994. The mass exodus to Zaire had already begun before Kigali fell on 4 July. Like many high-ranking military officers, Muvunyi had already taken measures to evacuate his wife and three children to Burundi in mid-June. Then he too left, at the beginning of July. This was the start of a journey of exile which would bring Muvunyi to London in March 1998.

## THE PROSECUTION OF LT. COL. THARCISSE MUVUNYI A QUESTION OF JUSTICE

Many of the soldiers, policemen, local government officials, interahamwe and civilians who committed genocide in Butare under Muvunyi's command are in prison in Rwanda today. Some of them have been sentenced to death or to life imprisonment. A number of Muvunyi's prominent collaborators are in Arusha in the custody of the ICTR. The two men who served as préfets of Butare between 20 April and 4 July, Sylvain Nsabimana and Col. Alphonse Nteziryayo, and the bourgmestre of Ngoma commune, Joseph Kanyabashi, are awaiting trial at the ICTR. They have been charged jointly as the Butare group, which also includes the former minister for the family and women's affairs, Pauline Nyiramasuhuko and her son, Chalôme Ntahobari<sup>179</sup>, who played leading roles in the genocide.

The detainees in Rwanda—who were interviewed by *African Rights* before Muvunyi was arrested—were, understandably, bitter. They pointed out that they are being punished for the crimes he organised and encouraged, while he has remained at liberty for so long, together with his family, enjoying asylum abroad. Now there is a good chance that Muvunyi too will be brought to justice. However, he continues to deny his part in the genocide. Responding to the charges laid against Muvunyi by the ICTR of genocide and crimes against humanity, Muvunyi's lawyer, Michael Fisher, told journalists on 7 February that Muvunyi “never took part in these acts. He did not instigate them, he did not incite others to commit them. As a professional soldier he was as shocked and appalled at the genocide as any other right-minded person.”<sup>180</sup> That opinion is not shared by the men who collaborated with Muvunyi and those who suffered at the hands of Muvunyi and his soldiers.

Tharcisse Mirimbo served as a policeman in Ngoma.

I am very sad that I'm going to spend the rest of my life in prison while the main génocidaires—like Muvunyi and others—who planned and supervised the genocide are having a good time, either abroad or in Rwanda. The soldiers who were in Butare during the genocide should be the first to be punished because they are the ones who incited genocide in this region.

Aboubacar Ndahimana was also a communal policeman in Ngoma.

We're suffering the consequences while he is nowhere to be found, like some of the other organisers.

His colleague, Victor Gaparasi, expressed similar views.

The major génocidaires, such as Muvunyi, have not been arrested. They can go anywhere they like, all over the world, unlike poor peasants they involved in wrong doing, who have all been arrested and even sentenced to death or life imprisonment.

If Muvunyi had not been in Butare during the genocide, there would not have been 100 victims, let alone the hundreds of thousands actual victims. Muvunyi was in command of the génocidaires. He took part in their activities and actively encouraged them to eliminate the Tutsis, even Tutsi women married to Hutus.

Communal policemen who worked in Butare's rural communes also blame Muvunyi for the carnage in their communes. Vianney Barihuba served in Muyaga.

If the soldiers had not been involved in the genocide in general, and dragged civilians into both the war and the genocide, such a tragedy would not have happened. So this Muvunyi has to answer for the crimes the peasants and I are accusing him of.

Soldiers who served in Butare under Muvunyi's command feel strongly that Muvunyi should answer for his deeds. Emmanuel Rekeraho, sentenced to death, found it difficult to contain his anger.

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<sup>179</sup> Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, a native of Butare, and her son, Chalôme Ntahobari, a university student, were the principal actors in the systematic murder of the refugees at the office of the préfecture. See *Not So Innocent*, pp.91-107. Nyiramasuhuko and her son were arrested in Nairobi in July 1997.

<sup>180</sup> “Rwanda war suspect denies genocide”, Richard Duce, *The Times*, 8 February 2000.

I think the Government of Rwanda is just after the little people, but those in power are not touched. Otherwise there is no way Rekeraho could be in prison after being sentenced to death, while Muvunyi is in England, enjoying life and other privileges. He is free, he is getting an education and he has a good life. Why didn't they bring him to justice before me? We should share the punishment.

Eliezer Akataraza is another soldier who believes that "Muvunyi should certainly be prosecuted."

Muvunyi did nothing to save the Tutsis. He had soldiers who could have guarded them. What were the soldiers doing at the roadblocks if not to kill?

The key organisers of the genocide, like Muvunyi, relied, to a very great extent, on the local government structure to implement the genocide. Bourgmestres, councillors and *responsables* were critical to ensuring mass mobilisation, spreading the propaganda of the genocide, discouraging resistance and distributing weapons. These officials carried out Muvunyi's orders with enthusiasm and loyalty. They have now been condemned to death or are awaiting harsh sentences.

François Bwanacyeye was the councillor of Tumba sector in Ngoma.

I have spent nearly five years in prison. But the organisers of the genocide, like Muvunyi, are travelling around the world. Only a few of them have been prosecuted; not enough of them in my opinion. Muvunyi is responsible for the deaths of all those Tutsis who died in the Butare genocide. If he won't accept the fact, he will have to answer to divine justice. He could have saved the Tutsi population of Butare if he had wanted to because everyone was afraid of him. No one could do anything without contacting him. Unfortunately, he did nothing to save them.

Athanase Nshimiyimana served as the councillor of sector Matyazo in Ngoma.

The important *génocidaires* like Muvunyi; the bourgmestre, Kanyabashi; Col. Alphonse Nteziryayo and the others, should be prosecuted. If they had not been in Butare, the genocide would not have reached the extent we now know it did.

Narcisse Gakwaya, arrested in 1996, was the councillor of Gikore in Nyaruhengeri.

We are suffering in prison while the main organisers of the genocide are free. The country which has accepted Muvunyi should send investigators to Rwanda to find out what he really did in Butare during the genocide.

Ntyazo is a commune where Tutsis put up a fierce resistance, not only against the combined force of interahamwe, Burundian refugees, communal policemen and the gendarmes in charge of the refugees, but also against the gendarmes sent as reinforcements. It was only when soldiers from ESO arrived that their defence crumbled. Isaïe Murindahabi was the councillor of Gatonde in Ntyazo.

Soldiers and gendarmes devastated our region from the time the Tutsis tried to defend themselves. They gave crucial support during the massacres at Karama and Nyamure. Yet, they are now free to travel all over the world. I can't understand why the international community doesn't arrest them. Instead, we are the ones suffering on account of the fact that we held positions of authority. It's an intolerable injustice.

Simon-Pierre Ntegeyabatwa was also a councillor in Ntyazo, sector Cyimvuzo.

We feel bitter when we hear that these former authorities, especially an army leader like Muvunyi, are free men living abroad. Even when they are arrested, they are detained and tried in Arusha, where they are well-treated and there is no capital punishment. I'm convinced that the army high command are more responsible for the genocide than the civilian authorities like Jean Kambanda [prime minister of the interim government]. The military authorities were the ones who were really in charge of the situation.

Boniface Nkurikiyimfura, councillor of sector Mamba in Muyaga, said he had a question for Muvunyi.

We are not the ones primarily responsible for the events of 1994. Which peasants in our commune had guns? None of them. Yet it was firearms that plunged our commune into grief, and these were weapons used by soldiers and gendarmes. So I believe the army commander for the préfecture of Butare and Gikongoro has some explaining to do.

Even more bitter are those former officials who believe that Muvunyi scuppered their efforts to maintain order in their communes. Célestin Rwankubito was bourgmestre of Ndora during the genocide and is currently in detention.

Two months ago, I heard on Voice of America that Muvunyi is now in England. It is unjust that we have been locked up and yet he is a free man. When he was in charge of security for our préfecture, he made no response to our appeal for help. But my arrest did not surprise me, because as an official of a commune which lost some residents at the time, I should be arrested and made to explain what happened. Now we're paying the price for what happened, whereas I myself did my utmost to maintain law and order until the soldiers came and ruined my efforts.

Civilians with minimal or no education, particularly the peasantry, constituted the critical mass that explains the comprehensive nature of the genocide, the depth and breadth of popular participation and the lightning speed with which the slaughter took place. They joined in huge numbers under the encouragement and propaganda of senior military and civilian authorities. Today, they make up the majority of the prison population in Rwanda, a fact that has raised many questions in their minds. Hyacinthe Rurangirwa, a peasant, was a member of a cellule committee in Ngoma. He has been sentenced to death.

Ordinary peasants are being punished while the organisers of the genocide go free. I am very sad that I am going to be killed. Why should I be killed and Lt. Col. Muvunyi be left alone, when he is the one who distributed arms to us? No peasant killed a Tutsi in Butare without help from a soldier. Lt.Col. Muvunyi should explain the death of the préfet, Jean-Baptiste Habyarimana. The country which is sheltering Muvunyi should send him here to us in Rwanda, to explain what he did during the genocide.

Jean Bimenyimana is a plumber from Ndora who accepts that he took part in the massacres on Mt. Kabuye.

I really condemn the policy of keeping us ordinary citizens in prison without first arresting the ideologues and the organisers of the genocide--the préfets, sous-préfets and army commanders. We would like this Colonel Muvunyi and the various préfets who were active during the genocide to be brought before us and made to admit that they were the ones who gave us arms and incited us to kill. *Abagabo baraya imbwa zikishyura* [the well-off eat and the poor pay the price].

Vincent Karekezi, a farmer from Muyaga, attended a meeting in his commune where Muvunyi openly called for the murder of Tutsi civilians.

We heard on the BBC, here in prison, that Muvunyi is now in England, and apparently refused to answer journalists' questions. They ended up filming his back when he cleared off after refusing an interview.<sup>181</sup> I didn't know Muvunyi, nor his two companions at that meeting. They introduced themselves, and each one said what his position was. What can I say? Just that those people abandoned us in the storm. We are in prison, while they are free and living in comfort in Europe, but the genocide was on their orders, as government authorities.

Joseph Nzabirinda was a driver for the Anglican Church in Ngoma.

We're unjustly imprisoned, while people with major responsibility for the genocide go free. Where is Muvunyi? He started the fire. But because he's rich and powerful, he can go wherever he likes. He sealed the Tutsis' fate by telling the Hutus to keep away from them.

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<sup>181</sup> This is a reference to the Newsnight documentary of April 1999.

Educated civilians—such as teachers and medical assistants—are just as critical. Janvier Ntasoni, a teacher who acknowledges that he helped Muvunyi's soldiers carry out a series of massacres in Matyazo, commented:

We have heard, here in prison, that Muvunyi is in England; the BBC and the Voice of America reported it. We're bitter that we have to stay in prison while leaders like Muvunyi, who provided the firearms used in the carnage, are still free abroad. Before the soldiers started the massacres in Matyazo, we and the Tutsis together had twice driven off attacks by killers from Huye commune around 15 April.

Concerning the significance of Muvunyi's role in the genocide, the survivors echo the sentiments—and virtually the words—of the men who collaborated with him in 1994. Margarite Mukabazanira, who lost her husband and four children in Ngoma, had this to say.

Everyone in Butare especially the town of Butare—knows that if Col. Muvunyi and the bourgmestre, Kanyabashi, had not visited Butare during the genocide, no-one would be talking today about the genocide in Butare; they would only be talking about a massacre or something on a smaller scale. People in the city did not support the kind of ideology that leads to the crime of genocide.

Marguerite Mujawamariya's husband and five children were killed in front of her in Ndora.

Now the genocide has become part of our everyday lives. I had five children, but now I'm like a tree that has lost its branches. I'm alone in the house, as though I never had a husband and children.

I'm disappointed by the current strategy for combating genocide. What guarantees do we have that the genocide won't happen again? Although I'm capable of having more children, I don't dare. I can't be sure that we will not be exterminated again. What most concerns me is seeing these génocidaires going around as free men, not only in Rwanda, but all over the world, despite the international community's claim to respect human rights.

Enoch Bungurubwenge's father, two brothers, four sisters, uncles and aunts perished at the commune office of Muyaga.

Soldiers and Burundian refugees played a leading role in Muyaga. There were so many Tutsis that they couldn't have been exterminated without army backup. These soldiers and Burundians are circulating freely all over the world. They are not being prosecuted. We can't even testify against them as individuals because they weren't known locally. We urge the world to find out about them and to arrest them, so that justice can be done.

The arrest of Lt. Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi in London on 5 February 2000 is an encouraging development. It has been welcomed by survivors, fellow genocide suspects and by all who recognise the need to bring the major criminals of the genocide, without exception, to justice. Men and women who are responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people in Rwanda are still living in freedom in different parts of the world. They must now be pursued with greater vigour. As this report has shown there is no shortage of people prepared to testify against Muvunyi, and he has been accused of many crimes. Some of these accusations first became public in Britain 14 months ago, giving Muvunyi ample time to go into hiding elsewhere. Fortunately he chose to continue to live openly in London. In writing this report, *African Rights* hopes that the full extent of what the people of Butare suffered under the command of Lt. Col. Tharcisse Muvunyi, will be neither underestimated nor sidelined. Justice may have been delayed in this case, but surely it can no longer be denied.