

RWANDA

DEATH, DESPAIR AND DEFIANCE



African Rights

Revised 1995 Edition

Nyabarongo river" (see Chapter 2). He left Rwanda before 6 April for Canada. When journalists investigating his role in the killings approached him, he denied having made the speech. When a tape of the speech was produced, he argued that the tape had been "doctored." Notwithstanding his denials, he was arrested by the Canadian authorities on the 27 January 1995, and is shortly due to stand trial in Canada;

* Théoneste Nahimana, vice-president of CDR, an extremist among extremists;

* Donat Murego, national secretary of MDR-Power, is well-known as a hardline extremist. A lawyer by training, he was a magistrate for a long time and also worked in the office of the President. Previously, he was known as an opponent of the regime and was imprisoned by Habyarimana for a number of years. Habyarimana, who saw him as a political threat, tried to keep him out of the political limelight by proposing him as an assistant secretary-general of the OAU. He refused the offer. Part of Murego's clout came from the fact that he used to be the head of the football club that had the greatest number of fans in Rwanda. He comes from Ruhengeri and is living in Zaire;

* Stanislas Mbonampeka, formerly minister of justice and second vice-president of the Liberal Party, is directly implicated in the killings at Ndera, Greater Kigali. He also spoke repeatedly on the radio before and after 6 April, saying that Tutsis would be killed until the RPF ceased its attacks. In one broadcast on Radio Rwanda, he said he had a message for the RPF; "Stop fighting this war if you do not want your supporters living inside Rwanda to be exterminated." He is living in Zaire;

* Laurent Semanza, former bourgmestre of Bicumbi, president of the MRND in Greater Kigali and nominated as a member of the proposed transitional parliament, is accused of having played a major part in preparing the massacres at Bicumbi, Greater Kigali. In addition, he is accused of having worked closely with the bourgmestre of Gikoro, Paul Bisengimana, to prepare the massacre at the Parish of Musha.

MILITARY OFFICERS

According to many Rwandese political observers, the interim government was essentially a front for the activities of hard-line army commanders who worked hand-in-hand with extremist politicians while at the same time mobilizing the militias. Extremists in the army were certainly some of the main powers behind the slaughter. Most of the extremist military officers are from Gisenyi and were members of the President's entourage.

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children went to the office of the sector and I went to the bushes. Later I heard that the children were killed at the office.

Françoise hid alone in the bushes for four days. She was discovered on the fourth day. She denied that she was Tutsi. Having grown up in Nyanza, she counted on the fact that the local people did not know her. She was taken to the office of the sector for "verification." Shortly afterwards, the interahamwe and soldiers learned that the RPF was nearby. They fled to Rubirizi near Kicukiro, taking hostages like Françoise. At Rubirizi, they learned that the RPF was coming from Kanombe, after which they decided to go to Gitarama. Françoise managed to escape her captors and went to stay with an old Tutsi woman married to a Hutu, hoping this would provide her with a measure of protection. Unfortunately, an acquaintance, a young man, turned up.

I did not know he had turned interahamwe. He insisted that I go with him. The old lady refused to hand me over. He threatened to kill her unless I went with him. I agreed to go when I realized he was serious. At the roadblock he handed me to the interahamwe. They imprisoned me in a room, with fourteen other women. I learned that men had also been imprisoned there, but had already been killed. They finally let me go, saying, 'In any case, you will be killed by others.' I went back to the old lady and later went to the St. Famille church in Kigali.

Françoise, the first-born in her family, has lost her parents, her four brothers and her sister. She is currently living with an aunt in Kigali.¹⁴

Small Seminary of Ndera

Another massacre in Greater Kigali was at the small seminary at Ndera. The number of people who died is not known. African Rights obtained two testimonies about this massacre.

Jeanne Kanyana, a nurse by profession, had a private dispensary in Remera, Kigali, St Mary's Infirmary. She lived in Ndera with her husband and two children.

We became nervous when we heard the news on Thursday morning on the radio. Because of the curfew we had no choice but to remain at home. At 2:00 p.m. we heard the sound of guns. Three soldiers attacked a neighbour.

¹⁴ Interviewed in Gahanga, Greater Kigali, 9 January 1995.

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They did not succeed in killing him. He managed to flee to the psychiatric hospital in Caraes together with his wife and children. We became afraid and ran to the small seminary; other neighbours ran to Caraes or to the parish. We spent the night at the seminary. There were a lot of people, both Tutsis and Hutus.

In the morning, a politician, a member of the Liberal Party, Stanislas Mbonampeka, came to the seminary and told the rector to chase us out. He said we had run away for nothing. The rector refused. Mbonampeka then came back and told the rector that the Hutus should be made to leave and the Tutsis to stay. The rector refused and told us to defend ourselves. But with what? We spent the night of Friday in a state of fear and helplessness. How can unarmed men, women and children defend themselves against soldiers and militias with all their weapons?

On Saturday morning, at 10:00 a.m., soldiers with guns came. They demanded that the priests open the doors which they had to. They asked for the keys to the rooms. The bursar, Father Ananias Rugasira, refused. He was shot dead. Then they shot the rector, André Havugimana. But he did not die. He was taken to Kanombe Hospital; we heard that he died there but I am not absolutely sure.

After that the soldiers started shooting in the air. We ran to hide in the dormitories. Then the interahamwe arrived and the soldiers left. The Hutu refugees were then ordered to leave. The interahamwe were looking at everyone's ID card. There was a huge crowd of Hutus. Because my husband is Hutu, I was able to slip into the Hutu group. The interahamwe then began to kill the Tutsis with their machetes and *masus*.

My husband, children and I went home. Other Hutus and some Tutsis who had also sneaked out with the Hutu group came to our home because we lived near the seminary. But we had not even been there an hour when we heard the window shatter. We all rushed out and hid in the bush. We scattered all over the place, with no idea of where we were heading. Some of the people fleeing were killed at the roadblocks which had been set up. My husband, two children and our maid managed to stick together as a group. We spent Saturday night in the bush.

Saturday and Sunday were the days of killing at the parish and seminary. The interahamwe went wild with their traditional weapons, even dragging people out from under the beds of the priests and killing them outside.

On Sunday, we stayed in the bush. In the evening, we went back to the seminary because we were very hungry. We spent the night there. A lot of other refugees who had fled the seminary returned because of hunger. There were dead bodies everywhere; we had to keep jumping over the dead bodies to get anywhere. We stayed together in one room and prayed together.

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On Monday morning, the interahamwe came back. A few people who had money on them, paid them. We paid and they released our family. Before they led us out, they told the refugees who could not pay to lie on the ground in the compound outside. There were few men; it was mostly women and children. We left. A short while later, our Hutu maid who heard of the massacre, went there to see if I was among the dead. She recognized most of the people because they were neighbours. She told us that they must have been told to form lines as families because each family's corpses were together. They had all been killed with traditional weapons.

We went back to our house and found that it had been completely looted. There was nothing left of anything we had ever owned. We left straightaway and went to hide in the home of Hutu friends. We had barely walked into the house when a group of interahamwe came and asked my husband and I to come out. When we said we had two children, they replied, 'Leave them alone and come out.' They took us to the road. The two who took me asked me for money. I gave them what I had and they allowed me to return home. My husband had been taken by other interahamwe. I have had no news of him.

I went to hide with another Hutu neighbour. The following day, militiamen came to look for me. My friend opened all the other rooms; she told them she did not have a key to the room where she had put me. They left, saying that they planned to ask the owner of the house for the key. I had no choice but to leave. The rest of Monday [11th] and Tuesday, I stayed in the bush without food or water. On Wednesday, I decided to go to the home of another friend who lived about two kilometres away. I left in the middle of the night. When I arrived, I spent the night outside my friend's house because I did not want to disturb them at such an hour. They let me in in the morning. They thought it was safer if I stayed in a part of the house which was under construction. They brought me food at night. I stayed like that—without washing—from 13 April to 6 May when the RPF took the area. After that, I was taken to Ndera, then Gikomero and then Byumba.

I have no idea where my husband or children are. I am sure that the Hutu friend we left the children with ran away from the RPF advance. I worry night and day about the children.

According to Jeanne, many of the killers included people displaced from Ruhengeri in 1990.¹⁵

Jean Berchmans Munyambo was a primary school teacher. He lost his wife, Rose Uwampayizina, a teacher at the primary school of Munini,

¹⁵ Interviewed in Byumba, 25 May 1994.

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and four children in the massacre at the Small Seminary. He survived by hiding in the bushes and with various Hutu neighbours. He and his family lived in commune Rubungo.

After the death of Habyarimana, the situation became very tense in our region. Throughout the night of the 6th, we could hear gunfire coming from the area of Kanombe which is quite nearby. It was the same thing in other parts of the city, particularly Remera. On Thursday the 7th, huge numbers of refugees were coming towards Greater Kigali. Many of them chose to go to the Small Seminary of St. Vincent at Ndera. There were about five thousand refugees who came from all the surrounding cellules and sectors. My family and I went to the Small Seminary. We knew that there were also refugees at CARAES and at the Parish of Ndera. At the beginning, the Hutus also fled because they were afraid of the gunfire.

At the Small seminary, the rector, Father André Havugimana, welcomed us without making any distinctions. He was assisted by his colleague, Father Ananie Rugasira. On Friday the 8th, Stanislas Mbonampeka, the first vice-president of Power wing of the Liberal Party came to see us at the Small Seminary. He told the two priests to chase us out so that we could go back to our homes. It was a way to delivering us into the hands of death. But the two men refused. This refusal was not at all appreciated by Mbonampeka. He retaliated quickly by sending two people to ask the Hutu refugees to leave the place and go back to their homes.

On Saturday the 9th, the number of refugees had grown so much that it was not only the buildings of the Small Seminary which were saturated. The interior courtyard was also overflowing with refugees. At about 8:00 a.m., Mbonampeka came back to the Small Seminary. Perhaps it was to assess our number. He said publicly that he could not understand what the Hutu refugees had fled from. After these words, many Hutus dissociated themselves from our group and went back to their houses.

After some minutes, Mbonampeka left. At about 10:00 a.m., we saw the arrival of an officer, a colonel, accompanied by four soldiers. He negotiated with the two priests. He promised them that he would send us protection. Around 11:00 a.m., many soldiers and militia, who were mixed up, came to kill us. They were armed to the teeth—with guns, grenades, *masus*, machetes and spears. They stopped in front of the entrance gate of the seminary and asked the rector to open the door so that they could see where the refugees were. He refused and they forced the door open. When they came inside the seminary, they forced the rector to show them around so they could see the refugees. In the meantime, Father Rugasira was being guarded by a soldier. Suddenly, we heard the sound of gun shots. It was the assassin of Father Rugasira. They had also fired upon Father

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Havugimana. Fortunately, he did not die. He was evacuated to Europe by an Italian colleague, Father Don Tito. These Hutu priests were menaced because they did not want to hand over the refugees to Mbonampeka and his militias.

The violence against the priests terrorized the refugees and made their own fate clear to them.

After these shots, believe me, where we were, hearts were beating very fast. The soldiers and militias forced us to leave the buildings. They made us come out group by group. They called out certain refugees in each group. Those who were called out suffered a brutal death, killed by sharp instruments. Those who tried to escape were shot by the soldiers. The first to be killed that day were residents of Remera and Kanombe.

I had not been called that day, obviously. But I knew that I would not escape the next day. That is why I decided to leave the Small Seminary and to go to the Parish of Ndera which was next door. My family stayed at the seminary.

Jean Berchmans reached the parish at midday. An hour after his arrival, a small group of militia came to launch an attack. But the two priests at the parish, Father Jean-Baptiste Rugengamanzi and Father Jean-Baptiste Murengeranka pleaded with them to leave the refugees alone. They gave them sacs of rice and flour to encourage them to leave. The bribe worked and they left. Fearful for his safety, Jean Berchmans decided to hide in the nearby bushes.

I used to hear the cries for help from the refugees at the Small Seminary and CARAES as they were progressively eliminated. On Sunday the 10th, the refugees I had left behind at the parish were killed by soldiers and interahamwe. I stayed in the bushes with seven other people who had escaped. On the 11th, at about 2:00 a.m., I left the bush and went to my cellule of origin where I had a very good Hutu friend. I asked him to hide me. He hid me in the bush next to his house. His son was violent and did not want his father to keep me in their house. But the son gave me permission to come at night to drink water and to eat. Afterwards, I had to go back to the bush.

After some days, on the 16th, the young man made me leave the bush, after he stole all my possessions—my watch, glasses and some money I had on me. He showed me a grenade and forced me to go home. We had to pass by the primary school of Munini so that I could ask forgiveness from the militias who had set up a roadblock there. It was the

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headquarters of the militias of the region. Refugees were taken there before they were massacred.

Jean Berchman's family friend turned tormentor then agreed to wait until night-time for him to leave.

During the night, I went to another hill where there was an old Hutu widow. I spent five days at her home. Then on the 21st, the woman's behaviour changed completely. She could no longer stomach me. She told the militia that I was hiding in her home. It was her shepherd who told me of these plots. On the 22nd, I started walking towards Remera. I wanted to change districts to see if, by chance, I could arrive in an area where the militia would not easily recognize me. I found a friend of mine at Remera, an old Hutu man. He was surprised to see me alive. He hid me. In the meantime, the RPF was winning the war against Habyarimana's soldiers and the interahamwe militia had become too scared to go on night patrols.

On the 29th, I was once more obliged to leave my place of refuge because there were rumours circulating around that the old man was hiding an *icyitso*. I moved to another quartier in Remera. A part of this hill fell into the hands of the RPF on 2 May. On 4 May, I saw a soldier walking with a girl who had survived. The two of them were looking for refugees to save. It was towards the evening. They came to the place where a woman, two children and I were hiding. The soldier drove us to Bumbogo in the commune of Gikomero, Greater Kigali. We were then transferred to Byumba. I came back in August.

Jean Berchmans said he did not want to end his testimony without paying a tribute to Father Don Tito for his "good conduct during the genocide" in saving the three priests mentioned above.

He named some of the people who died in this massacre. They are:

- * Antoine Murangira, a teacher at the primary school of Munini;
- * Gaspard Gakwandi, a teacher at the primary school of Munini;
- * Léocadie Mugorewindekwe, a teacher at the primary school of Munini;
- * Immaculée Uwanyiligira, a teacher at the primary school of Munini, was killed together with her family;
- * Ephrem Nkundanyirazo, a medical assistant at CARAES;
- * Didas Nkundabashi, a technician;
- * Rukanika, a nurse, was killed with his family;
- * Thérèse Mukasafari, director of the primary school of Ndera;
- * Fidèle Mutaganira.

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Jean Berchmans and other residents of Ndera have identified some of the key perpetrators of the genocide in their area. They include:

- * Stanislas Mbonampeka, a leading member of PL-Power and a former minister of justice. He lives in Zaire;
- * Charles Rutazihana, a manager of the Banque Populaire in Ndera. He lives in Zaire;
- * Jean Népomscène Musabimana, an accountant at CARAES;
- * Karera, chief of the interahamwe in the cellule of Kibenga;
- * Antoine Muhitira, a driver in a project called 'Kigali East';
- * Jean Berchmans Rutaganira, a driver in the ministry of agriculture. He has been arrested and is currently imprisoned in Kigali;
- * Agnès Bakamirintasi, head of the interahamwe in the cellule of Kibenga.¹⁶

Parish of Musha

"Sometimes on the radio I hear some individuals denying that people have been killed in Rwanda. I am here to say that hundreds and hundreds of people were killed in front of my own eyes. They were killed. I was there and I want my testimony to show this truth."

There were massacres throughout Greater Kigali préfecture. This section concludes with a testimony from the survivor of a massacre in the eastern part of the préfecture, close to the internal boundaries with Kibungo and Byumba.

Vestine Mukarubayiza, a seamstress from the Mununu, a sector in the commune of Gikoro, is one of just five people who survived the assault against the Parish of Musha in which between eight hundred and one thousand people lost their lives. She is in her early twenties. She had a huge scar on her left temple and her left hand was bandaged when African Rights interviewed her at Rwamagana Hospital. She had been at the parish since 4 April for a religious retreat. She thought the attack was on Wednesday 13 April.

On Thursday, the day after the President died, people fleeing massacres began to arrive in the parish. I was due to leave the retreat on the Monday [11th] but of course I could not leave because of the insecurity. On

¹⁶ Interviewed in Ndera, Greater Kigali, 27 March 1995.

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attackers to come back. She panicked and ran away. I heard that she was killed in Kibungo.²⁶

Caraes Psychiatric Hospital, Greater Kigali

When African Rights visited the Caraes Psychiatric Hospital in Ndera, Greater Kigali on 17 June, the outside of the hospital was bullet-ridden and many of the windows were shattered. It was attacked in mid-April. When the RPF took the area, the only remaining patients, from two hundred and fifty who had been resident there before the genocide, were a Zairian woman and a Burundian woman. Local residents said they counted about a hundred and twenty decomposing bodies that had been picked up in and around the hospital.

In July, Physicians for Human Rights (UK) visited Caraes and found that twenty more of the psychiatric patients had returned. But, although the pharmacy still contained drugs, there were no trained staff to administer them to the patients who, as a result, were suffering from the return of their symptoms. The patients were anxiously asking for their medication, fearing that their symptoms would get worse. They were also in dire need of food, water and nursing care. Dr. Andrew Carney, the psychiatrist on the PHR delegation, was able to administer the required drugs on his visit, but the long-term needs of the patients remain unmet. The delegation also found widespread grenade damage to the buildings. Lying nearby were the remains of a woman and child, and of a baby in a sewer.

The psychiatric hospital is spacious, and from 7 April onwards, considerable numbers of frightened people converged there, hoping that it would be a safe refuge. It was not.

The interahamwe initially wanted to attack the hospital, but the priests from the adjacent parish refused to let them in. But the militia remained active and aggressive around the hospital. Between 13-15 April, one of the refugees in the hospital grounds had taken one or two shots at the interahamwe. The interahamwe had then called on the Presidential Guards from their base near the airport, and attacked the hospital.

The precise date of the massacre is not clear. Some other details are also unclear. A secondary-school student whose family was killed in Kabuga fled to Caraes shortly after the killing started. She said by the time she arrived at Caraes, on 9 April, the Tutsi patients had been killed. She

²⁶ Interviewed in Nyamata, Bugesera, 31 May 1994.

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was told that they sorted out the Hutus and Tutsis, killed the priest that looked after the patients, put the Tutsis in a room and burned them alive. Some witnesses have reported that Tutsi and Hutu patients had been separated; Tutsi were killed and the Hutus fled. Several Tutsi Sisters looking after the patients were also killed. Others have said that the principal target was the refugees. What is indisputable, however, is that Tutsi psychiatric patients were murdered. Meanwhile, all the surviving staff and all but two of the patients ran away. Many of those who managed to flee were caught at the checkpoints and killed.

Gitarama Health Facilities

An African missionary who was in Gitarama between 14-17 April said he saw men and women wounded in surrounding villages being taken out of the hospital and put on trucks. "On some of those days, I saw the patients being collected during two consecutive hours. I cannot say exactly where they took them, but my guess is to their death."²⁷

About thirty thousand refugees, mainly Tutsis, fled to Kabgayi where the ICRC established a hospital. In addition, there was a parish health centre. Refugees interviewed by African Rights reported that many patients were taken out of the health centre to be killed. Other sick refugees who lived in one of the other camps in Kabgayi were killed when they were on their way to or coming from the centre. One case that was cited by many survivors was Kalisa Cyriaque, director of a primary school in Buye, in the commune of Butamwa, Greater Kigali. He had been shot in the foot at Musambira in Gitarama. He went into hiding after soldiers began to look for him in Kabgayi. He was killed when he went for treatment.

Jean Damascène Ntivuguruzwa, a twenty-five-year-old farmer who worked in the kitchen of the health centre-turned-refugee camp in Kabgayi testified that many patients were taken out of their beds and killed. This of course also discouraged patients from seeking necessary medical attention. He cited the case of his own cousin, Ildephonse Mbabajende, a trader from Kigali who had been wounded by soldiers who found him on the road while he was fleeing. He was taken out from his hospital bed when he was recovering. He was never seen again. He also cited the name of Marcel Rutagarama, a student from the commune of Mugina in Gitarama. He was

²⁷ Interviewed in Nairobi, 30 April 1994.