

# The Failings Of The Genocide Inquiry

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The United Nations secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, yesterday named the three jurists who will head UN investigations into genocide and grave human rights violations in Rwanda.

But conducting the investigations will prove an uphill struggle. In personnel, funds and equipment, the UN operation is hopelessly under-resourced.

The commission will have four months to produce a report on individual responsibility for "crimes against humanity". It will be headed by a former foreign minister of Togo, Atsu-Koffi Amega, a member of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights.

The other jurists are Habi Dieng, the attorney-general of Guinea, and Salifou Fomba, a Malian professor of international law and a UN employee.

The commission is similar to that set up in 1992 to collect evidence of human rights violations in former Yugoslavia. A war crimes tribunal was then established in The Hague, but no indictments have yet been issued.

The UN has only one lawyer on the ground investigating the murders of what are estimated to be between 500,000 and 1 million people. The lawyer appears to have no office equipment or personal transport.

This is more than two months after

the UN Commission for Human Rights held an emergency session to secure an urgent investigation into the massacres, most of which took place in April.

The UN also appears to have made no attempt to investigate the causes of the plane crash on April 6 which killed President Juvenal Habyarimana and precipitated the carnage.

The crash has been attributed to a rocket attack, but there is no firm evidence of this. Evidence does suggest, however, that the crash was the signal for the genocide to begin.

The inadequacy of this type of investigation in Rwanda, where every town and village seems to have suffered its own holocaust, is starkly apparent.

In the village of Nyamata, about 40 miles south-east of Kigali, a large mound at the back of the church hides the corpses of hundreds, if not thousands, of victims. Stop a passer-by in the street and stories pour out of almost unbelievable horror.

Obed Mbarushimana, aged 14, lost his mother, saw his father hacked to pieces, took refuge in a local convent and survived a full-scale massacre there because he threw himself on the floor and within minutes found himself hidden under a mound of corpses. "I dream of it," he says.

The UN does not even appear to

have the resources to discover how many prisoners are held by the new government - despite the administration's having given it carte blanche to visit the prisons.

Its failure would leave the Hutu population bearing collective guilt. Yet this is far from proven. Not only are there many accounts of Hutus who risked and even lost their lives by hiding Tutsis, but the UN has discovered at least two instances of Hutus who

committed suicide rather than murder their fellow citizens.

- Refugees returning from cholera- and dysentery-plagued camps in Zaire could cause a health disaster in Rwanda, doctors said yesterday.

In Goma, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, said she would tell Rwanda's refugees to go home only when the new government showed it could deliver on its promises to protect them.