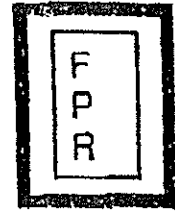


FRONT PATRIOTIQUE RWANDAIS **RWANDESE PATRIOTIC FRONT**



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Statement by Patrick Mazimhaka,
Vice-Chairman of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF)
at the United Nations
Wednesday, 25 May, 1994

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for coming to this Press Conference on Rwanda. My name is Patrick Mazimhaka, and I am the Vice-Chairman of the Rwandese Patriotic Front.

I would like to express my great appreciation for your interest in the human tragedy which has been unfolding in Rwanda since April 6, 1994.

The Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front concluded a peace agreement, in Arusha, Tanzania, on August 4, 1993, the implementation of which was scheduled to begin at the end of December 1993, after the full deployment of the UN Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR). This was not to be. For three months the President of Rwanda and his party blocked all efforts, both national and international, to put transitional institutions of government in place. It was obvious that they had a hidden agenda and the RPF drew the attention of the international community, including all western countries represented in Kigali, to the disturbing development. The UN mission investigated and found evidence to support our claims that militia were being trained, armed and deployed across the country contrary to the letter and spirit of the Arusha Peace Agreement.

On April 6, 1994 a classical coup d'etat took place in which the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi died together with close aides. The same evening, after a meeting of military leaders chaired by Colo. Bagosora, the Rwandese Army, the presidential guard and MRND-CDR militias erected barricades, attacked and killed leaders of political parties and other prominent personalities who were perceived not to share the same political views as the coup makers. The following day they announced a new government consisting of Hutu extremists from dissident factions of some parties - people who were no longer acceptable in their professed parties.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it soon became clear that parallel to political killings there was an elaborate, country-wide plan to exterminate the Tutsis. Tutsi homes were attacked and whole families killed in the most brutal manner. Thanks to international television you have seen the macabre pictures coming out of Rwanda. Most non-governmental organizations in Rwanda estimate that 500,000 Tutsis have been killed. Let me point out that even this conservative figure represents 40 % of the Tutsi population in Rwanda.

Ladies and Gentlemen, civilised society is shocked by the sight of dead children, mutilated babies; bodies of children, men and women floating down river Kagera and wonder how our society could reach such a level of barbarism. There is an answer. After 34 years of political military dictatorship, the Rwandan typically obeys authority. What you see is a response to incessant exhortations to the people to kill the so-called enemies of the state. These calls are made by people in power and they are repeated over and over again through the MRND-CDR radio station RTLM and the national radio. The typical content of such hate messages runs like this:

- "kill Tutsis, cut them up, and throw them in River Nyabarongo as the quickest means of getting them back to Ethiopia where they [supposedly] came from".
- "this time let us (Hutus) avoid the mistakes of 1959. Don't spare even the children. That way they will not come back"

We contend that if the authorities wished to put an end to the genocide they would do so merely by sending messages to that effect over the same radio stations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, premeditated extermination of a people is nothing but GENOCIDE and that is what the present Rwandese Army, Government and MRND-CDR are doing to the Tutsis. The Rwandese Patriotic Front and governments which were witnesses to the Rwanda peace process bear responsibility for failing to prevent the genocide but let us not be guilty of failing to punish the perpetrators. Your governments are signatory to the Geneva convention on Genocide and we beg you to urge your governments to assume their leadership role in this regard.

When the forces opposed to the Arusha Peace Agreement threw our country into chaos, the initial reaction of RPF was to find ways of restoring law and order without resorting to military confrontation. The commander of RPF forces, Maj. Gen. Paul Kagame, sent a message to the Rwandan Army High Command, through the UNAMIR force commander, requesting the Government army to refrain from and to attempt to stop the militias from killing innocent civilians. They responded rather by attacking our single battalion stationed in Kigali. The RPF battalion commander had to request permission to defend his troops and the RPF officials in Kigali. The UNAMIR force commander after consultation with the U.N. Security Council granted the permission. On April 10, 1994 our forces started a general military campaign with the following objectives;

1. To reinforce our battalion in Kigali,
2. To rescue the Rwandese population which was by then under general attack,
3. To contribute to restoration of law and order.

Through our operations law and order has been re-established in half of the country and we have been able to rescue and give security to hundreds of thousands of people most of whom would have died.

I must re-iterate that the RPF is committed to the democratization process and the principles of rule of law and power-sharing as enshrined in the Arusha Peace Agreement. Our priorities therefore are:

1. To restore law and order,
2. To put in place a broad-based transitional government,
3. To seek urgent assistance for the displaced persons,
4. To initiate a program of rehabilitation and reconstruction of our devastated country.

The broad-based transitional institutions, however, shall not include political parties, organizations and individuals who have participated in or instigated the genocide and other political killings.

We have asked the UN Secretary General to deploy a force in the shortest time possible to protect innocent civilians and assist in the distribution of humanitarian aid. We have assured him of our cooperation.

The envoy of the Secretary General who is currently in Rwanda should concentrate on discussing the modalities of such a deployment with military leaders of the RPF and RGF.

Mr Riza should prevail on the Rwanda government forces to take concrete measures to stop killing innocent people, disarm the Militia and immediately stop Radio broadcasts inciting people to kill their fellow citizens, as a prelude to the deployment of the humanitarian force.

Talks with the so-called interim government will not contribute to obtaining a ceasefire and subsequently a peaceful solution. That bunch of murderers are puppets of the Rwanda Army which holds the actual power. The UN should endeavor to promote a dialogue between the RPF and RGF in order to end this tragedy.