

INTER OFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: FC

From: CHO

Date: 17 May 1994

CASE NO. ICIR-98-41-1
EXHIBIT NO. DB.291
DATE ADMITTED 23-11-2005
TENDERED BY D. E. F. H. C.
NAME OF WITNESS MacNeil

Subject: MEETING BETWEEN HAC- OPERATIONS OFFICER OF THE RGF -
CHEF DU CABINET WITH PRESENCE OF RWANDAN MEDIA.

1. The above mentioned impromptu meeting was held between 1030 hrs and 1200 hrs 17 May, 1994 at the Diplomat Hotel in Kigali. In attendance were the following persons:

- a. Colonel Yaache, CHO;
- b. Colonel Bagosora, le Chef du Cabinet;
- c. Colonel Gasake , Acting G3 RGF ;
- d. Media representatives of Radio Rwanda and the Ministry of Defence;
- e. Major Pajik, and
- f. Major MacNeil.

AIM

2. The aim of the meeting was to explain to the Chef du Cabinet why the planned evacuation of the orphans of Gisimba and Gitega did not take place as planned at 0900 hrs 17 May, 1994.

DISCUSSION

3. Colonel Yaache introduced himself to the Chef du Cabinet and to the acting G3 of the RGF and reviewed action on the operation to date. He explained that there had been three meetings and he emphasized that at the last meeting with the youth leaders of the INTERAHAMWE and the militia, it was evident from the concerns they had raised that the evacuation had to be postponed for the safety of the children.

4. It was necessary for Colonel Yaache to explain the concerns of the leadership elements present during the meeting the previous day, as it was evident that the Chef du Cabinet was not aware of them.

5. Colonel Yaache explained that the concerns raised by the INTERAHAMWE and the youth leaders of the militia included the following:

- a. They insisted that there was a necessity for them to move through RPF lines and make physical contact with their elements in the area of the airport to ensure the safe passage of the orphans.

- b. They were concerned that the RPF would take advantage of the occasion to launch an offensive.
- c. They were skeptical about the reasons for the selection of these two orphanages when there were others that were overlooked.
- d. They felt that there was a concerted effort to empty the RGF controlled area of Kigali of Tutsis thereby allowing the RPF to lay siege on the city.

6. With these concerns raised by the leadership elements during the previous meeting, Colonel Yaache explained that there was more than enough controversy over the operation to conclude that it could be successfully executed and consequently it was agreed to keep the plan " on the shelf" until negotiations could be completed with the RPF. He stressed that getting the RPF to agree to allow INTERAHAMWE leadership elements into areas under their control would not be negotiation that could easily be concluded.

7. The Chef du Cabinet was in agreement with Colonel Yaache on the reasons as to why the decision to cancel the operation was taken but stressed that in his opinion, he could not understand why the two parties could not agree on the conduct of the exercise. He went on to add that race had nothing to do with this operation as these children were orphans.

8. The Chef du Cabinet agreed with the point raised by the youth leaders concerning the requirement for them to make physical contact with elements near the airport. He indicated that safety would not be possible without this requirement being met. As to the concern of the choice of these two orphanages, he indicated that the government chose them as they were the only two in the Kigali area. He went on to say that the issue of displaced persons in Rwanda was a priority and that this evacuation was the first phase in preparation for the transfer of the displaced from places of hiding and from larger displaced camps in areas under the control of both opposing forces.

9. The Chef du Cabinet went on to stress the point that the Rwandan Government wished for this evacuation to take place and that if it didn't it would be the fault of the RPF and not the Rwandese Government.

10. Colonel Yaache asked whether the demand of the youth leadership for a ceasefire was still binding. The Chef du Cabinet replied that a ceasefire was an obvious requirement as they could not move orphans through a firefight.

11. The Chef du Cabinet offered some suggestions to facilitate the passage of the youth leaders. He indicated that the leaders of the RPF were known to them and that before the hostilities they had dined together. He therefore suggested that the RPF be invited to participate in the movement through the RPF held area at the same time as the leadership of the militias and UNAMIR so as to represent a joint effort for the operation. He went on to

add that there would only be three or four representatives of the youth groups to move through the RPF held areas.

12. The Chef du Cabinet ended his portion of the discussion indicating that the Rwandese Government was committed to allowing freedom of movement to its citizens. He indicated that he understood that negotiation was necessary with the RPF and that it was UNAMIR's responsibility to do this. He also indicated that the media should be present during the operation. He closed by saying that they were ready to conduct the operation and that should agreement be reached then a notice of 24 hours would be all that would be required.

13. Colonel Yaache agreed to pursue discussions with the FC and with the RPF and indicated that once agreement was reached then a further meeting with the leadership elements of the INTERAHAMWE and militia would be required. The Chef du Cabinet replied that there was no need for any further meetings.

14. The Rwandese media as well as the media of the Ministry of Defence then put forward a question to Colonel Yaache as to why the Rwandese media should not be invited to cover this type of event. Colonel Yaache indicated that in his view he saw no problem with the media being present but it was not within his authority to grant such a request.

15. Upon leaving the Rwandese media asked if it was possible for them to interview Dr Kabia. HAC told them their request would be passed on to UNAMIR HQ.

D.J. MacNeil

Maj
CHO

for