

The genocide video shot by Nick Hughes on April 11, 1994

Jacques Morel

September 14, 2023, v1.1

Abstract

The massacre scene filmed by Nick Hughes became emblematic of the genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994. It shows in particular a man on his knees among the other corpses, begging the killers to spare his life and one of them comes and hit him with a machete or a club. He collapses. The author says that he filmed from the top of the French school in the presence of Belgians soldiers. His footage was broadcasted on television on Monday evening April 11, 1994. On this date at the French school, they were still French paratroopers, equipped with precision rifles and anti-tank missiles. So they observed the killings for hours without doing anything against it. The french army chief of staff, Admiral Lanxade, wrote: "we did not have, then, any information on the beginning of massacres ". This April 11, the French ambassador transmits to Paris a request for military support to the Interim Rwandan Government which organizes the genocide...

During the Tutsi's genocide, there are pictures of rotting bodies, but no images of the killing itself, with one exception. British cameraman Nick Hughes filmed a massacre scene a few days after April 6, 1994 in Kigali. It was named the genocide video. These terrible images are very often featured in films and television shows about this genocide. For example, "*The Bloody tricolors*" from BBC¹ or "*The Dead are Alive*".² A picture extracted from this last film is shown in figure 1 page 2. This footage of Nick Hughes can be seen on <https://vimeo.com/126760724>.

April 11, 1994 evening at french television

Excerpts from this crime scene appears on French television channels in the evening of April 11, 1994.

¹Stephen Bradshaw, *The Bloody Tricolor*, BBC, 20 août 1995 (26:47). <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/RwandaPanoramaBloodyTricolour.mp4>

²Anna Van der Wee, *The Dead are Alive*, Wild Heart Productions, 1996. Italian version at 10:02 in <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4vrzf>



Figure 1: Extract of Nick Hughes footage from “The Dead are Alive”

France 3 broadcasts images of this massacre at 7:30 p.m. in a report focused on the evacuation of Europeans where the presenter evokes “*massacres between the two tribes*”:

[Marc Autheman :] Almost all French people have left now Kigali. The French paratroopers should withdraw from the city quite quickly. Rwanda plunges into civil war and nothing has allowed for the moment to stop the massacres between the two tribes of the country. Jean-Paul Gérourard.

[Jean-Paul Gérourard :] They are already wounded but one finish them off by big blows with sticks. Street scene in Kigali [some images of Nick Hughes briefly scroll on the screen with an overlay “Kigali (Rwanda), today” ; we hear a soldier speaking into a radio then a voice comments on the scene of the massacre by saying:“Oh, la, la, la, la this other is beating him”].

Hate, anarchy and death reign supreme in the city for four days. Corpses lie everywhere in the streets. The massacres of Tutsi by

Hutu civilians and by soldiers of the regular army have already caused several thousand deaths [we see several corpses lying in the streets of Kigali].³

We therefore learn that these massacre images were filmed on April 11 in Kigali. The presenter's comment "*massacres between the two tribes*", is intended to deceive. However, the victims, the Tutsi, and the killers, Hutu civilians and soldiers of the regular army, are clearly designated by Jean-Paul Gérouard.

These images are shown again on the 11 p.m. news on France 3 with the comment: "*The massacres are increasing in Kigali and the corpses litter the streets of the Rwandan capital [...] For four days, violent fighting has opposed the minority Tutsi to governmental troops in majority Hutu..*"⁴ This comment totally disagrees with the images that show massacres and not fighting.

In the 8 p.m. news on France 2, an extract from this scene opens the report by Patrice Romedenne who comments: "*Cruelty, brutality, terror reigns in Rwanda. In Kigali, one even persist on the corpses*".⁵

Likewise, TF1 broadcasts in its 8 p.m. news a sample even more reduced of these images. Gauthier Rybinski, special correspondent, comments on them: "*Here is the current face of Kigali, the capital of Rwanda: bodies lying in the streets. Most often this are civilians who massacred their own people with machetes neighbors, only guilty of not being of the same tribe*".⁶

From these images, we only learn that this massacre took place on the 11th April in Kigali. They are used by French television to maintain confusion in the minds of viewers.

The Duclert's report notes that the massacres of Tutsi of genocidal nature "acquire an unprecedented visibility in french public opinion this same April 11 thanks to the television news of 8 p.m. from the two major national french channels."⁷ But it is limited to observe: "*Each of these two television news programs opens its first filmed report by image montages, almost similar, showing a machete killing, and corpses of civilians lying on the roadsides of the Rwandan capital.*"

³Marc Autheman, Jean-Paul Gérouard, France 3, 11 avril 1994, 19 h 30. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/1994-04-11-19-30fr3.mp4> <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/ScriptFrance3JournalDe19Heures3011041994.pdf>

⁴Christine Ockrent, Éric Thibault, France 3, 11 avril 1994, 23 h. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/1994-04-11-23fr3.mp4> <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/ScriptFrance3JournalDe23Heures11041994.pdf>

⁵Bruno Masure, Patrice Romedenne, France 2, April 11, 1994, 8 p.m. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/1994-04-11-20.mp4>

⁶Dominique Bromberger, Gauthier Rybinski, TF1, April 11, 1994, 8 p.m. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/1994-04-11-20tf1.mp4> <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/ScriptTF1JournalDe20Heures11041994.pdf>

⁷Vincent Duclert [1, p. 388]. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/RapportCommissionDuclert26032021.pdf>.

April 12, 1994, in english newspapers

Catherine Bond, The Times

Catherine Bond of the *Times*, present in Kigali, is the first journalist to report on April 12, 1994 the testimony of his compatriot Nick Hughes on this massacre. After having described one massacre, she continues :

Nick Hughes, a British cameraman for World Television News, filmed a similar scene from the French school. Half a mile away, men were beating women to death. "They brought women, old or middle-age women, out of the houses and on to the street and made them sit in a pile of bodies, wounded and dying people", he said. "For about 20 minutes, the women pleaded for their lives with a group of men who walked up and down the street chatting. They clubbed one woman to death then the other. It was the most horrific thing I have ever seen."⁸

Thanks this article, we know that it was Nick Hughes who filmed this massacre from the French school.

Mark Huband, The Guardian

Mark Huband, also present in Kigali, describes the same scene which it seems having witnessed from the French school:

At Antoine de Saint-Exupéry school, French troops lay on the roof with guns trained on the deserted road outside as the names of evacuees were read out in the courtyard below.

From the roof traffic lights could be seen changing from red to amber to green. A mud road led up a hill less than a mile away. The road was littered with up to 20 bodies.

Halfway up the hill lay a pile of corpses. From nearby houses women, old and young, were casually led to the pile and forced to sit down on it. Men with clubs then beat the dead and dying bodies which surrounded the women as they sat, screaming, pleading for their lives.

Suddenly the men turned on the women. They beat them until they no longer moved, then went to find more people to kill, within view of the school where the evacuees packed their children, pet dogs, teddy bears and suitcases into trucks.⁹

⁸Catherine Bond, *Rebels advance as Kigali slaughter goes on*, The Times (London), 12 April 1994. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/CatherineBondTheTimes12April1994.pdf>

⁹Mark Huband, *UN troops stand by and watch carnage. French and Belgian forces are evacuating expatriates but leaving*, The Guardian, Tuesday April 12, 1994. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/UnTroopsWatchCarnageGuardian12April1994.pdf>

This testimony from Huband describes the same scene that Nick Hughes filmed. They observe this scene from the French school. Huband specifies that the school is under the protection of French soldiers who are lying on the roof with their weapons aimed towards the opposite hill.

Sending the footage

According to Allan Thompson, Reuters cameraman Mohammed Shaffi told Nick Hughes at the French school that from above, he could see killers slaughtering people on the other side of the valley. Nick Hughes handed over his tape at the airport to a foreigner who was heading to Nairobi again this April 11. Using his satellite phone, he asked his producer in Nairobi to pick up this tape at the airport. Its content has been transmitted to WTN London¹⁰ which distributed it on exchange networks between television channels such as Eurovision.¹¹

A lot of film producers will use these images to maintain confusion in the mind of spectators. Hughes will be disgusted: “*you know, my video of killing during the Genocide and archive I saved from Kigali at the time, was used by the cruel filmmakers not to educate but to obfuscate the crime the pictures graphically depict*”.¹²

Belgian soldiers ?

Presenting these images of Nick Hughes at the symposium *The Media and the Rwanda genocide* at Ottawa on March 13, 2004, Allan Thompson reads the testimony of Nick Hugues (who is not present¹³) about the circumstances in which he filmed this scene. Hughes states that it was Belgian soldiers who guarded the French school this April 11, 1994.¹⁴

Exhibit 467

In 1998, Nick Hughes was called by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court for Rwanda (ICTR) to testify during the trial of Georges Rutaganda, second vice-president of Interahamwe, to explain the circumstances in which he had filmed this scene which had been tendered as exhibit number 467. He testified on May 25, 26 and 27, 1998. While we were able to download from the ICTR website the transcripts of the three hearings of Nick Hughes, the MICT registry asked us at the end of 2019 to remove these documents from our web site

¹⁰WTN: Worldwide Television News, agency now defunct.

¹¹Allan Thompson, *The father and daughter we let down*, Toronto Star, April 11, 2009. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/TheFatherAndDaughterWeLetDown11April2009.pdf>

¹²Nick Hughes, mail on a discussion list, December 8, 2015.

¹³Mail from Nick Hughes to the author, December 8, 2015.

¹⁴Nick Hughes, *Exhibit 467: Genocide Through a Camera Lens*, 13 mars 2004. Cf. Allan Thompson, *The Media and the Rwanda genocide*, Pluto Press 2007. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/NickHughesAllanThompsonP231.pdf>.

<https://francegenocidetutsi.org/> with this only explanation “Confidential Transcripts”.

The transcript of the first hearing is truncated. Especially the date of arrival of the witness in Kigali is not indicated and it is not possible to reconstruct the chronology and to know the date when these images were filmed. Questioned by prosecutor James Stewart, Nick Hughes specifies under which circumstances he took these images:

What I saw, I was in the French school, there were Belgian [Belgian] power [para] troopers there. They had a rocket launcher on the top – in the top room of the French school. The French school goes up the side of the valley and over looks another road going up the other side of the valley. Through their sight they could see people being killed on the other side of the road. I became aware of this, I went down up there, I looked, it was true, yes, there were bodies on the other side of the road. I went into the room next door, I set my camera. At this point I was a bit short of batteries a bit short of tapes. [...]

So I set up my camera. I wanted to be careful of what I was filming but I was looking across from the French school which is exactly here. On the map it is marked Lasibukunga [Lycée de Rugunga]. And I was looking across on the road which is marked avenue Labutuba [Mburabuturo]. Now on that, that road goes the side of the opposite valley over the centre disportive [centre sportif] to Kigali. I could see groups of people walking up and down that road and I could see piles of bodies. In between filming the first time and the second time, I think about two or three men had been bought [brought] out and killed. You can see that on the footage. You can see them still being beaten. I think the interesting is they weren't being killed. They were being slowly beaten to death. The final blow wasn't being delivered. So if you like they were being tortured. On the second time as I was watching, two women were brought out and sat down in the pile of bodies. There must have been maybe eight bodies by then. There is a group of men on the other side of the road. And they were investigating something. May be they were instead bothered about these two women sitting in the pile of bodies. One was kneeling, one was sitting down. And the one who was kneeling was begging for her life. This went on for twenty minutes. Finally quite nonchalantly, they would come across and beat the men who were dying in front of them and go away. And finally they came and killed the two women with severe blows.¹⁵

He specifies on a map that between this school and the scene of the massacre there is a river. The scene takes place beyond the Sports Circle. He also

¹⁵Haruna Farage, *The Prosecutor v/ George Rutaganda*, Kearing's transcript ICTR, May 25, 1998, pp. 39-42.

shows “faculty Detroit” i.e. the Faculty of Law which sits on top of Mburabuturo Hill. A soldier he says Belgian makes him look through the lense which equips his “rocket launcher”. He cannot distinguish whether the killers hit with sticks or machetes. He says that the area where the massacre took place was controlled by the Rwandan government. He sees pick-ups carrying Rwandan soldiers. Sometimes they stop and talk to the killers on the barriers.

Hughes was traveling in a convoy with Belgian soldiers who were running more risks at the barriers than the French soldiers. The militiamen applaud the French, insult and threaten the Belgians. He remembers Catherine Bond saying : “*there won’t be any Tutsi left by the time this war is over*”.¹⁶

Weak memory

It is difficult for the cameraman to remember after years the exact sequence of events that he experienced, especially among these corpses which lined the roads in Kigali those days. He has been himself the target of fire. It turns out that in his testimony before the ICTR, he mixes up several killings he witnessed from the French school. Showing the images he took to rwandan witnesses that he found later, they recognize in the personage who extends his hands in a position of supplication or prayer a man while Hughes speaks of a woman at ICTR. He circulated in Kigali by following both French and Belgian military convoys. He believes remember that the first time he went to French school, it was occupied by Belgian soldiers then later by French soldiers.¹⁷ In fact, it is exactly the opposite that happened. These confusions are human and it would be completely unfair and inappropriate for us to reproach him for it. These images of killing that he transmitted to us are of inestimable value.

April 10, 1994, killings in front of the French school

AFP journalist Annie Thomas interviews Sunday April 10 1994 captain Éric Millet who manages the evacuation operations from the French school:

We don’t really know where the approximately 4,000 additional RPF soldiers are, who were supposed to arrive in the city Sunday. “We don’t know what front they reached,” admits captain Eric Millet who, with a team of 80 paratroopers, directs the French evacuation operations from the school French. [...]

Sitting in front of a small table, on a lawn of the French school, the captain dominates the side of the hill opposite. Shootings. He takes his binoculars. “You see, over there, on the road, the shape white, elongated. He was just killed.”

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 64.

¹⁷ Mail from Nick Hughes to the author, December 10, 2015.

He returns to his lists, to his calculations, to the French sent to good port, that is to say, for him, at the airport. “The airport is controlled by us”, he explains, “there is no issue”.¹⁸

We note that captain Millet observes a massacre on the road on the side of the opposite hill on Sunday April 10. It continues at the same place on Monday the 11th when Nick Hughes films.

Captain Éric Millet commands the 4th company “d'éclairage et d'appui” (lighting and support) of the 3rd RPIMa. RPIMa is an acronym for Régiment parachutiste d'infanterie de marine, the old colonial troops.

The place of the massacre

On figure 2, the French school Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is marked by a red dot. The road ahead makes a turning into a hairpin. We can spot the Cercle Sportif (Sports Circle) at the bottom of the valley and the Mburabuturo hill where stood the “Faculty of Right” now “UR College of Business and Economics”. The scene filmed by Nick Hughes took place on this road KK31, then a dirt road that goes up to the hills of Gikondo and Mburabuturo. As we see trees and houses in the images of Hughes, the scene must have taken place in front of the Sports Club.

Using GoogleEarth we measure 436 meters between the French school (next to the hairpin road) and these houses along the path that goes up to Gikondo. Rugunga High School is next to the French school.

On April 11, 1994, french soldiers stood at french school

It seems impossible that Belgian soldiers could have been stationed at the French school on April 11 and place a rocket launcher on the roof. The French soldiers have not finished their evacuation operation. The French embassy closes the next day, April 12. We also know that relations between French soldiers and Belgians are not very good. In addition to Marc Huband's article, cited above, we have other proofs that the military in the French school on April 11 were French:

A anti-tank missile-launcher Milan

Jean-Marie Milleliri, a military doctor in Kigali assigned to the cooperation on a AIDS project, lives in the “French Village” on the Kiyovu hill. Since April 7, 1994, he sees on the Gikondo hill in front, corpses lined up on the track

¹⁸Annie Thomas, *Kigali, la mort et la fuite par l'envoyée spéciale de l'AFP, Annie Thomas, AFP, 10 avril 1994.* <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/AnnieThomasKigaliMortFuiteAFP10avril1994.pdf>



Figure 2: The french school (red point) and the wooden hill MburaButoro. The massacre takes place on road KK31 which heads along this hill. (GoogleEarth 2015)

which goes up to summit.¹⁹ The massacres continue on this same track on the 8th April.²⁰ Sunday April 10, he is gathered together with all the other French people at the Antoine de Saint-Exupéry school. They are protected by paratroopers from the 3rd RPIMa :

Milan batteries²¹ have been installed. Snipers with their precision rifles keep watch over an ever-present threat, and ensure maximum protection of the site. Mburabuturo hill, opposite the school, is closely monitored through binoculars. There is for some time, the

¹⁹Jean-Marie Milleliri [3, p. 22].

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

²¹The Milan is an anti-tank missile made by the french firm Matra, now MBDA. It is equipped with a sighting system very accurate.

students of the Faculty of Law in went down to reach the avenue behind the Sports Center.

The army doctor of the 3rd RPIMA to whom I present myself in order to know how I can be useful to him, has arranged his position as advanced aid in the school library.²²

The Faculty of Law (on Mburabuturo Hill) and the sports circle are mentioned by Hughes to clarify before the ICTR the location of the massacre. The French soldiers present would be members of the 3rd RPIMA.

A french sniper lying on the roof of the french school

Photojournalist Scott Peterson shows a paratrooper with a rifle precision lying on the roof of the French school on April 11, 1994. See figure 3. The red beret indicates that he is part of the RPIMA. His uniform is a solid khaki color.

Liz Gilbert, photojournalist from the Sygma agency, takes the photo of this same French sniper from another angle this April 11. The picture in figure 4 is taken on the terrace of the French school in Kigali. We notice the scope on the rifle which is supported on a bead.

On April 12 in the 7:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. news, France 2 broadcasts images arrived during the night and commented on by Benoît Mousset. We see figure 5 and 6 a French paratrooper which appears to occupy the same position on the roof of the French school. But his weapon appears to be a sniper rifle with a scope of type FR-F1 or FR-F2 equipped with a bipod and having a maximum range of 800 meter.

It seems that the photo of Scott Peterson shown figure 7 is also taken from the terrace of the French school but it is dated April 13 and the soldiers are Belgians, recognizable by their camouflaged outfit. He believes they are Belgians from the UNAMIR. Error, they are Belgians from Silver back. One has a Browning M2 machine gun from FN Herstal.

Simal asked to put away his camera

The Belgian Jacques Simal, deputy general director of the Banque commerciale du Rwanda (BCR)²³, was evacuated by the French military through the French school. Asked about his colleague Ephrem Nkezabera, also an Interahamwe leader, he tells that he witnessed a scene like this one filmed by Nick Hughes and confirms that the French soldiers occupied the French school this April 11:

When I was at the French school, waiting the evacuation to the airport, I attended like all the expatriates and French soldiers, to a scene which took place in the distance on a track. This scene filmed by journalists was broadcasted on all televisions. We see a person on

²²Jean-Marie Milleliri, *ibidem*, pp. 66-68. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/MilleliriUnSouvenirDuRwanda68-69.pdf>

²³BCR is a subsidiary of the Banque Bruxelles Lambert (BBL).

the left of the track, decapitated with a machete. Before this scene, others people had been killed in the same place, by firearms or cold steel. I filmed this first part on video. At a certain moment, the French soldiers asked me to put away my camera. So I didn't film the scene that went around the world, but what happened before, on this track. This scene took place on April 11, 1994 after noon.²⁴

French soldiers at the French school on April 11, 1994

In the 8 p.m. France 2 news on April 11, Philippe Boisserie is joined by phone. The evacuation of the French ended at 6 p.m. He accompanied Belgian soldiers who, for the first time, entered into Kigali.²⁵ In the midnight news, France 2 broadcasts a video report by Philippe Boisserie and Marcel Martin on site in Kigali which proves that the French soldiers are still at the French school on April 11:

[Philippe Boisserie :] This morning 500 meters from the airport, eight bodies lie in their blood. Four men and four women of the Tutsi minority have just been massacred with machetes, under the eyes of evacuated foreigners [close-ups on bodies lying on the ground in their blood]. French soldiers in arms, who provided convoy safety, did not move. Their mission specifies clearly that they should not take sides for any of the belligerent [a vehicle of the French army with a soldier armed with a submachine gun crisscross a road from Rwanda; the scene is filmed from the interior of the vehicle].

[A para with red beret speaks in his transmitter post: "we are in front the French school. There are shots directed towards us".]

It is in a city left to fights that the French soldiers perform the last evacuations. Machine guns but also grenades, mortars sometimes punctuate the call of those who can finally leave [we see white civilians grouped under the courtyard of the french school of Kigali].²⁶

The journalist reveals here that orders of non-intervention against the massacres were given to the French soldiers.

Belgian soldiers replace the French on April 12, 1994

The commander (CO) of the Belgian operation Silver Back, the colonel Jean-Pierre Roman, orders an evacuation mission at the French school on April 11 at 1:45 p.m. On April 12, the 17th Cie of the Belgian Brigade para-commandos replaces the French at the French school called below "French high school" :

²⁴Pascal Remy, *Audition de Jacques Simal*, Police fédérale belge, 5 août 2004, p. 6. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/SimalJacques5aout2004.pdf#page=7>

²⁵Bruno Masure, *Journal de 20 h*, France 2, 11 avril 1994, 00:03:47. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/1994-04-11-20.mp4>

²⁶Catherine Ceylac, *Journal de minuit*, France 2, 11 avril 1994, 00:00:28. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/1994-04-11-24fr2.mp4>

9. Monday Apr 11, 94 [...] 1:45 p.m.: CO gives Mission to the Comd 3 para to make a force recognition towards the French School, in order to proceed to a Belgian force demonstration. This mission is carried out with escort (FR) and brings back 100 to 150 expatriates.
[...]

11. Tuesday Apr 12, 94 [...]

CO announces that UNAMIR will proceed to the EVACs. The 17 Cie returns to town and replaces them (FR) in the French high school and evacuates expats to the air field. The other Cies remain on the aircraft. Cie (FR) replaced from high French school leaves Kigali the same evening.²⁷

Identification of victims

Nick Hughes returned in 2002 to the scene. With help of a Rwandan filmmaker, Éric Kabera, he found a woman who witnessed the facts.

Canadian journalist Allan Thompson investigated later these massacres.²⁸ On the indications of Nick Hughes, he found in 2007 two women witnesses of the facts that identified the two victims that we see on the images of Hughes, Gabriel Kabaga, the praying man (so not a woman), and his daughter Justine Mukangango. He found Rosalie Uzamukunda, wife of Kabaga and mother of Justine. He situates the events filmed by Hughes on April 11, 1994 around 10 a.m. He comes back to the scene and tells the story on Youtube.²⁹

Hughes identified Tatiana, the woman with the baby on the back that was killed just before Justine and her father. He adopted two of her surviving children. He found one of the killers, Alexandre Usabyeyezu. This one was condemned to perpetuity in particular because of the evidence provided by these images. With Éric Kabera, Hughes made a film of this story. He added there extracts of video he recovered on Rwandan television in July 1994, notably the meeting where Prime Minister Jean Kambanda brandishes his pistol.³⁰

On April 11...

Ngulinzira, negotiator of Arusha, abandoned to killers

This April 11, 1994, French soldiers come to the “Ecole Technique Officielle” (ETO) a school in Kicukiro (Kigali) in order to identify people to evacuate. Boniface Ngulinzira, former minister of Foreign affairs, asks the French officer

²⁷ Opération Silver Back. Compte rendu, Armée belge, 15 avril 1994. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/SilverbackCompteRendu.pdf>

²⁸ Allan Thompson, *The father and daughter we let down*, Toronto Star, April 11, 2009. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/TheFatherAndDaughterWeLetDown11April2009.pdf>. See also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg0o1aiaC0w>

²⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg0o1aiaC0w>.

³⁰ Juan Reina, Éric Kabera, Nick Hughes, *ISETA - Behind the Roadblock*, 2008. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/IsetaBehindTheRoadblock540p.mp4>.

to be evacuated. Ngulinzira is the main negotiator in Arusha for the Rwandan government. He is hated by Bagosora and his clique of MRND (Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement), former single party created by Habyarimana.³¹ He is well known to the French authorities. But when the French military return to ETO, they ignore it. ³² Carlson's report of United nations states that :

On 11 April, after the expatriates in ETO had been evacuated by French troops, the Belgian contingent at ETO left the school, leaving behind men, women and children, many of whom were massacred by the waiting soldiers and militia.

Mr Ngulinzira asked the French troops to evacuate him from ETO but was refused. In massacres in the aftermath of the departure of the UNAMIR troops, he was killed.³³

In Paris, Alain Juppé invokes the Arusha Accords

In Paris, Minister of Cooperation Michel Roussin underlines that “*it is not our goal, for France, to intervene militarily in Rwanda*” and he adds that “*it is clear that our mission is only of a humanitarian nature aimed at repatriating our nationals*”. For him, France's mission is now to “*try to put all our weight on the factions present to convince them to finally find the path to the reason*”³⁴

On the airwaves of Europe 1, Alain Juppé, Minister of Foreign Affairs, says he is horrified by the images coming from Rwanda and calls for a return to the Arusha agreements while in Kigali, the French abandon the main negotiator of these agreements to the killers :

Q - Let's move on to Rwanda, precisely, where the Americans are a little absent, it must be said, and from where reach us terrible stories of ethnic massacres. All over the country, the Hutus hunt the Tutsis and vice versa...

A - You just need to see the images to realize, here again, that horror has no limits. France, as you know, has done a lot in Rwanda for months and months to try to return to a peaceful situation...

Q - ... without much result...

³¹Mathieu Ngirumpatse, *Communiqué de presse*, MRND, December 22, 1992, <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/Ngirumpatse22decembre1992.pdf> ; Théoneste Bagosora, *Monsieur le ministre des Affaires étrangères et de la Coopération, Chef de la délégation du gouvernement rwandais. Objet : Stratégie de la négociation*, June 1st, 1993. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/BagosoraBonifaceNgulinzira1erjuin1993.pdf>

³²Circonstances de la mort de Boniface Ngurinzira. Rapport de la mission effectuée au Rwanda de M. Philippe Mahoux. Commission d'enquête parlementaire du Sénat belge, Annexe 1 [5, 1-611/9, section 3.6.5.2, p. 12] <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/SenatBelgique-r1-611-9.pdf#page=12>

³³Ingvar Carlsson, *Letter dated 15 December 1999 from the Secretary-general addressed to the President of the Security Council*, United nations, S/1999/1257, December 16, 1999. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/Carlsson-en.pdf>.

³⁴*Interview de Michel Roussin*, Information, April 11, 1994. Cf. Vincent Duclert [1, p. 391].

A - Yes, we had obtained results since the agreements of Arusha had been signed, since the French soldiers had been on the ground to facilitate reconciliation and things were progressing. Unfortunately, it is the attack against the plane carrying the two presidents of Rwanda and Burundi who provoked the resumption of fighting. At that time we decided, with much speed, a lot of composure and a lot of efficiency to set up a system at Kigali airport to evacuate our nationals and it is now 90% done like you know. [...]

Q - When we see what is happening, do you believe that France must ensure a continued presence in Rwanda and Burundi?

A - We cannot first lose interest in our nationals and, then I believe that it is our duty to restart the dialogue process. It seems impossible when we see what is happening, when we see the degree of hatred between the Hutu and the Tutsi, but the Arusha agreements are there and the role of France is doing everything, with all the countries in the area, with the OAU, with the UN to try to make reason prevail over madness which is being unleashed. This is our role.³⁵

On *Radio Africa*, Alain Juppé justifies his refusal to send soldiers to “restore order” in Rwanda while they are already there, in Rwanda, watching the massacres:

Q: Last question, the current situation in Rwanda and Burundi greatly worries Africans. A lot informed observers believe that the latest measures taken by France constitutes a disengagement of France in this area. Don’t you fear that these measures will leave the free field for the adversaries of democracy?

A: We have to get along well. The situation in Rwanda is a tragedy which touches us deeply. France has made considerable efforts for months and months to facilitate the return of stability within the framework of the Arusha Accords. We have taken very recently the measures intended to protect our nationals. But, again, excuse me for a certain frankness: the role of France is not to restore order by its soldiers throughout the African continent. We cannot replace the responsibility of African actors themselves. We call on them today to pull themselves together to come back to the logic of the Arusha agreements and find the path to a national harmony.

This may seem paradoxical as the battles rage a little everywhere, but that is our role, rather than transforming ourselves again into an interventionist power which would send its soldiers everywhere. This is not the role of France.³⁶

³⁵ Interview du ministre des Affaires étrangères, M. Alain Juppé, Europe 1, April 11, 1994. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/Europe1Juppe11avril1994.pdf>

³⁶ Interview du ministre des Affaires étrangères, M. Alain Juppé, Africa n° 1, April 11, 1994. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/RadioAfrica1Juppe11avril1994.pdf> Cf. Vincent Duclert [1, p. 391].

At a press conference in Bordeaux, still this April 11, Juppé reiterates its refusal to intervene against the massacres: “*It is naturally not our duty to carry out an operation of military character in Rwanda. It's up to organizations international organizations, the UN, the OAU to take their responsibilities in this area*”.³⁷

French authorities are well informed about the genocide

On April 8, 1994, France decided to intervene in Rwanda to evacuate its nationals. The order of operation Amaryllis, which is a set instructions given to soldiers sent to Rwanda, reveals that the genocide of the Tutsi has begun. Indeed, we read at the beginning of this text, declassified for the Quiles Parliamentary Mission of Information and published by this one, that “*to avenge the death of the president [...] members of the presidential guard carried out from 07 morning reprisal actions in Kigali*” including “*the arrest and elimination of opponents and Tutsi*”.³⁸ What does it mean “elimination of the Tutsi”? It is in truth destroying the Tutsi group as such. This group is defined according to an ethnic or racial criterion. We are well within the definition of genocide as adopted by the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of crime of genocide adopted by the United Nations in Paris on December 9, 1948. On April 8, 1994, the authors of this operation order thus recognize that the genocide of the Tutsi has begun. Faced with this genocide, the operation order prescribes an attitude of neutrality. Indeed, we read on page 3: “*The French detachment will adopt a discreet attitude and neutral behavior towards of the different Rwandan factions*”.³⁹ However, France, having signed the Convention for Prevention and Repression of the crime of genocide, is committed to prevent and punish it or less to take it to the United Nations.

This April 11, a note of the DGSE (Direction générale de la sûreté extérieure, French intelligence and action agency), which dismisses the responsibility of the RPF in the attack against the plane of the president, informs the French government about the ongoing genocide:

Furthermore, guided by CDR activists, provided with pre-established lists, the soldiers of the presidential guard undertook to massacre all the Tutsi, as well as the Hutus originating from the south or supporting opposition parties. Most often, these liquidations spare neither women nor children.

³⁷ Intervention devant la presse du ministre des Affaires étrangères M. Alain Juppé à l'occasion de l'inauguration du centre de commerce international de Bordeaux, 11 avril 1994, Politique étrangère de la France - Textes et documents - La Documentation française, mars-avril 1994, pp. 152-153. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/Europe1Juppe11avril1994.pdf>

³⁸ Ordre d'opération Amaryllis, 8 avril 1994, déclassifié. Cf. *Enquête sur la tragédie rwandaise 1990-1994* [4, Annexes, p. 344]. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/OrdreOpAmaryllis.pdf> ; Ordre d'opération Amaryllis, NMR/00901-MSG/DEF/EMA/C0.TER, 8 avril 1994. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/OrdreOperationAmaryllis8avril1994.pdf>

³⁹ *Ibidem*

(1) The CDR is a Hutu extremist organization, led by MM. Jean Barahinyura and Ferdinand Nahimana. Already, in October 93, "Radio mille collines" had called for the massacre of the Tutsi populations to avenge the death of President Ndadaye.⁴⁰

Massacre of all Tutsi, including women and children, we are right there in the definition of genocide.

On April 12, a note from the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DRM) insists on the responsibility of the Rwandan army in the massacre of Tutsi:

After the death of the Rwandan heads of state, Mr. Habyarimana, and Burundian Mr. Ntaryamira (both Hutu), occurred on the 6th Kigali in the fall of their plane the situation is critical in Rwanda, where ethnic clashes continue. Forces Rwandan armies (FAR), after having murdered numerous leaders of the Hutu opposition, attacked without discrimination and with the help of young Hutus the Tutsi part of the population and attacked the Popular Forces battalion (RPF) stationed between the capital and the airport.⁴¹

The expression "*ethnic clashes*" is more than ambiguous. However, the rest of the text explicitly states that the Rwandan armed forces, that is to say the government army, attacks "*without discrimination*" "*the Tutsi part of the population*". This identification of the perpetrators of the massacres is important. It's not about uncontrolled elements taking advantage of the chaos provoked by the attack against the president of Rwanda. It is the Rwandan government army, dependent on the Interim Rwandan Government that France recognizes and with which it collaborates.

Refusal to intervene against the genocide

From April 9 to 11, 1994, French soldiers attended from the French school to the massacre filmed on the 11th by Nick Hughes without opposing it. They are not, like others, simple helpless spectators, simple "bystanders". They are not paralyzed by a restrictive mandate of the UN.

The French authorities know that a genocide has been launched on the 8th April 1994 as indicated in the Amaryllis operation order already cited above and confirmed by other French sources such as the DGSE and DRM. Observing a genocide and deciding not to oppose it is being in breach of the Convention about prevention and repression of the crime of genocide of which France is a signatory. This is all the more serious as France had troops on place who could join the UN peacekeepers to stop the genocide.

⁴⁰Fiche particulière n° 18502/N - Rwanda : Précisions sur la mort des Présidents rwandais et burundais, DGSE, April 11, 1994. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/DGSE18502N11avril1994.pdf> Cf. Vincent Duclert [1, p. 390]

⁴¹Éléments de situation du 12 avril 1994, DRM, Note n° 1202 DEF/DRM/SDE/SITU du 12 avril 1994. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/NoteN1202CRM12avril1994.pdf> Cf. Vincent Duclert [1, p. 389]

To camouflage this refusal to intervene against the massacres and avoid a scandal, we will hide the reality from our fellow citizens. Colonel Poncet, commander of the French troops arrived on April 9, 1994 as part of operation "Amaryllis", writes blandly :

The media were present from the second day of the operation. The COMOPS made their work easier by giving them two press briefings daily and helping them in their travels but with a permanent concern not to show French soldiers limiting access to regroupment centers only for foreigners on the territory of Rwanda (Directive No. 008/DEF/EMA of April 10, 1994) or not intervening to stop the massacres which they were nearby witnesses.⁴²

In order to justify not having intervened to stop the massacres which took place in front of the French soldiers during Operation Amaryllis, Admiral Lanxade, Chief of Staff of the French Armed Forces, will write: "*nous n'avions pas, alors, d'information sur un début des massacres* (we did not have, then, information on a start of massacres).⁴³

This is of course a lie, because on April 13, 1994 in the Conseil restreint, when François Mitterrand asks him if the massacres will spread, Admiral Lanxade replies: "*Ils sont déjà considérables. Mais maintenant ce sont les Tutsis qui massaceront les Hutus dans Kigali* (They are already considerable. But now it is the Tutsis who will massacre the Hutus in Kigali).⁴⁴ Both the Admiral and the President of the Republic were well informed of the massacres.

Assistance to the perpetrators of the genocide?

This non-action is clearly a matter of non-assistance to people in danger. This offense is prescribed after nine years in French law. But this is not just about failure to assist people in danger. On April 8, French Ambassador Jean-Michel Marlaud announced in Paris the composition of the Interim Government, saying that "ces décisions sont les plus conformes possibles aux Accords d'Arusha" (these decisions are the most consistent possible under the Arusha Accords).⁴⁵ These peace agreements of Arusha provided that the RPF would have five ministerial portfolios. Not only is the RPF excluded from this government but the most extremist members of the other parties are sitting, the most moderate being assassinated or hiding.

⁴²Henri Poncet, *Le colonel commandant l'opération Amaryllis à Monsieur l'Amiral Chef d'état-major des Armées. Objet : Compte rendu de l'opération Amaryllis, N° 018/3° RPIMA/EM/CD, 27 avril 1994, p. 6.* <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/PoncetCrAmaryllis3eRpima27avril1994.pdf>

⁴³Jacques Lanxade [2, p. 174]. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/LanxadeQuandLeMonde174.pdf>

⁴⁴Conseil restreint, April 13, 1994. Secretariat: Colonel Bentégeat. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/ConseilRestreint13avril1994.pdf>

⁴⁵Jean-Michel Marlaud, *TD Kigali 326 - Objet : Situation politique, 8 avril 1994.* <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/TdKigali326Marlaud8avril1994.pdf>.

This April 11, the French ambassador receives Jérôme Bicamumpaka, Minister of Foreign Affairs in this Interim Government. Jean-Michel Marlaud reports in Paris: “*Les FAR souhaitent pouvoir envoyer des effectifs complémentaires au combat et, dans ce but, nous sollicitent pour les aider à assurer la sécurité à Kigali. Selon mon interlocuteur, la Gendarmerie est déjà parvenue à réduire significativement le niveau des massacres et des pillages*” (The FAR wish to be able to send additional troops into combat and, for this purpose, are asking us to help them ensure the security in Kigali. According to my interlocutor, the Gendarmerie is already succeeded in significantly reducing the level of massacres and looting). No one would have informed the French ambassador of the massacre in progress in front of the French school ? Finally, the minister “*évoque un problème d’approvisionnement en munitions et indique que le Gouvernement pourrait être amené à nous présenter une requête*” (mentions a problem of ammunition supply and indicates that the Government could be required to present to us a query).⁴⁶

The content of the remarks exchanged between Ambassador Marlaud and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Interim Government is far away from indifference or neutrality. While the massacres beat in full swing on April 11, 1994, it was discussed between the two men of military assistance to the forces which organize the massacres and to provide them with ammunition.⁴⁷

Is this a matter of non-assistance to people in danger or rather assistance to people committing genocide?

References

- [1] COMMISSION DE RECHERCHE SUR LES ARCHIVES FRANÇAISES RELATIVES AU RWANDA ET AU GÉNOCIDE DES TUTSI : *La France, le Rwanda et le génocide des Tutsi (1990-1994)*. Armand Colin, 2021. Rapport remis au président de la République le 26 mars 2021.
- [2] Jacques LANXADE : *Quand le monde a basculé*. Nil éditions, 2001.
- [3] Jean-Marie MILLELIRI : *Un souvenir du Rwanda*. L'Harmattan, 1997.
- [4] Paul QUILÈS : *Enquête sur la tragédie rwandaise 1990-1994*. Assemblée nationale, rapport n° 1271, <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dossiers/rwanda.asp>, 15 décembre 1998. Mission d'information de la commission de la Défense nationale et des Forces armées et de la commission

⁴⁶Jean-Michel Marlaud, *TD Kigali 363 - Objet : Entretien avec le ministre des Affaires étrangères*, 11 avril 1994, 14 h 04. <http://francegenocidetutsi.org/19940411EmaTDKigali363.pdf>.

⁴⁷The Duclert report cites extracts from this TD 363 of Marlaud, commenting: “*L’ambassadeur de France, lui, semble toujours pris dans des négociations et des combinaisons politiques hasardeuses*” (The ambassador of France, for his part, always seems caught up in negotiations and risky political combinations). He notes that the assertion on the significant reduction in the level of massacres is not commented on by the ambassador while it is contradicted by all testimonies. Cf. Vincent Duclert [1, p. 373].

des Affaires étrangères, sur les opérations militaires menées par la France, d'autres pays et l'ONU au Rwanda entre 1990 et 1994.

- [5] SÉNAT DE BELGIQUE - COMMISSION DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES : *Commission d'enquête parlementaire concernant les événements du Rwanda 1-611/(7-15) 1997/1998*. Sénat belge, 6 décembre 1997.

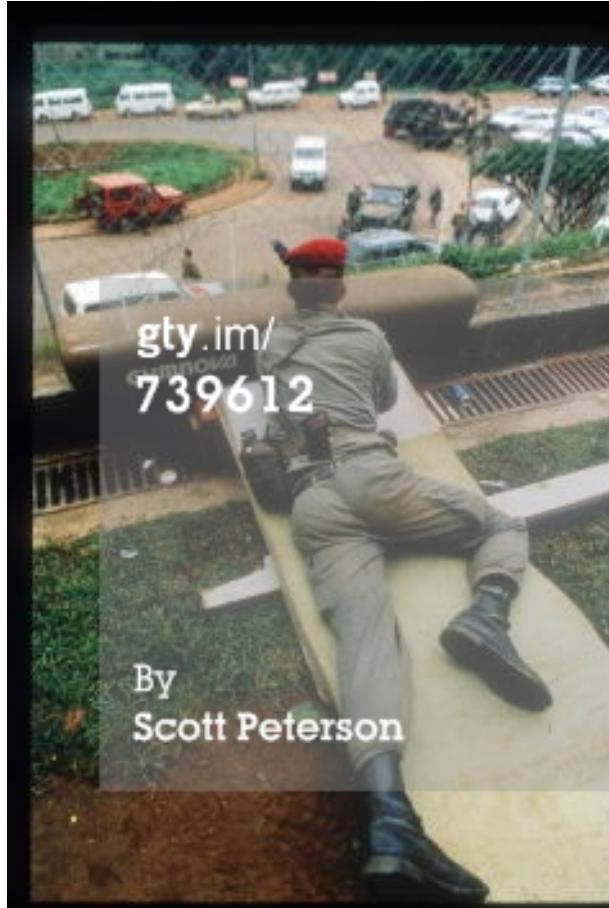


Figure 3: A sniper protects a French school as it is evacuated April 11, 1994 in Kigali, Rwanda (Scott Peterson - Getty)

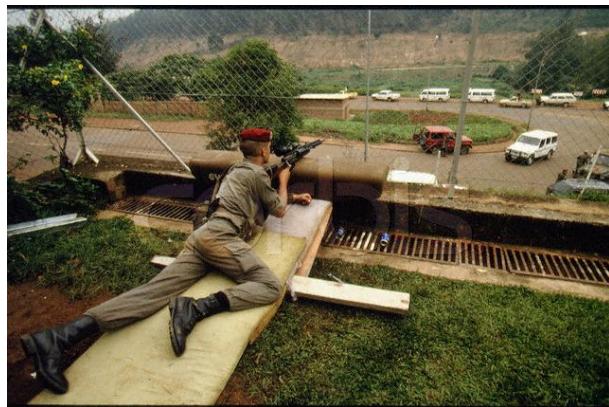


Figure 4: Liz Gilbert, Civil war in Rwanda: atmosphere in Kigali, 11 April 1994, Corbis.



Figure 5: France 2, April 12, 1994, 7:30 a.m.



Figure 6: France 2, April 12, 1994, 7:30 a.m.



Figure 7: United Nations soldiers maintain security during evacuations April 13, 1994 in Kigali, Rwanda. Following the apparent assassination of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, a massive wave of Hutu-inflicted revenge killings has rocked the African nation, leaving thousands of Tutsi civilians dead and renewing the civil war between the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front and the Hutu-backed government. (Photo by Scott Peterson/Liaison)