

**AFRICAN RIGHTS**

*Working for Justice*

**CHARGE SHEET SERIES NO 9**

# **VINCENT NZIGIYIMFURA IN MALAWI**

## ***A PILLAR OF THE 1994 GENOCIDE***



**Vincent Nzigiyimfura's shop in Lilongwe.**

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**“To talk of the genocide of Tutsis in sector Kavumu, without mentioning the role of Vincent Nzigiyimfura, would be tantamount to denying the genocide itself. Without the incitement and the orders given by him, I’m sure that all the Tutsis of Kavumu would be alive today. And to describe genocide as a crime against humanity on an international scale, without other countries joining in the effort to track down the perpetrators, is to dismiss the importance of what happened here.”**

~ Tatien, a former prisoner from Kavumu in Kigoma

**“If Nzigiyimfura hadn’t been there, Tutsis would not have been killed on such a scale. He was the one who trained people to kill during the genocide. He always walked around with a stick. He used that stick to punish people for not killing Tutsis.**

~ Lucien, a local government official in Kavumu in 1994 who acknowledges that he helped Nzigiyimfura plan and implement the genocide in Kigoma

**“The fact that so many of the people who incited the genocide in Nyanza have not been brought to justice is a real problem. These leaders were the educated people and businessmen. They are the ones who should have protected the region. Their absence has had a huge impact on gacaca because the peasants here don’t feel as if they are responsible for what happened. They argue that the blame should not be placed on their shoulders while those who incited them have yet to be punished.”**

~ André, who worked in a restaurant in Nyanza in 1994

**“Everyone says that Vincent is in Malawi. We hear that he is doing business there and that he is a rich man. He has taken many members of his family, wanted for genocide, away from here. If he can evacuate these relatives, it shows his ability to influence the justice system in Rwanda, and it means that he is comfortable and in a good position.”**

~ Valentine, a genocide survivor in Kavumu



*Genocide Memorial Site at Nyanza Stadium, 2008.*

## INTRODUCTION

Vincent Nzigiyimfura is president of the association of “Rwandans Living in Malawi.” He lives in Lilongwe, where he is also known as Vincent Nzigiyiye, and has a store in the old business centre of Lilongwe, Area 2, as shown on the cover photograph. He appears to be living in Malawi as a refugee with a Rwandese passport. He used the passport to obtain his Business Resident Permit and is now believed to be in the process of obtaining Malawian nationality.

In Rwanda, Nzigiyimfura is remembered for the genocide he helped to initiate and bring to a successful conclusion in the town of Nyanza and in commune Kigoma, Gitarama. Nzigiyimfura’s business was located in Nyanza, commune Nyabisindu in Butare<sup>1</sup>, and he lived in the nearby cellule of Gihisi in Kigoma. He worked alongside the military officers, politicians, local government officials, businessmen and civilians who orchestrated and executed the genocide in Nyanza, the sectors of Remera and Kavumu<sup>2</sup> in Kigoma and in many other locations in Nyabisindu and Kigoma. In Lilongwe, he has been active in setting up networks to help his close relatives, imprisoned as genocide suspects, escape justice and find refuge in Malawi.

Vincent Nzigiyimfura lived in cellule Gihisi in sector Remera, but worked in Nyanza as a prosperous trader.<sup>3</sup> Because Gihisi straddles the sectors of Remera and Kavumu, he left his mark on both places. He owned many businesses in Nyanza, including a large shop and a grocery store with a small bar inside. With his brothers he co-owned a butcher’s shop, and his family were known as *abatazi*, meaning “the butchers.”<sup>4</sup>

Nzigiyimfura, the owner of a number of vehicles, including a Toyota Stout, a Nissan truck and a Datsun van, was considered an important figure in Nyanza. In addition to his economic base, his influence and social standing were due, to a large extent, to the close ties he had forged with the leading military and civilian officials in Nyanza, most of them natives of the northern and politically powerful region. Prior to 1994, they had entrenched the Committee for the Defence of the Republic (CDR) in Nyanza, Remera and Kavumu. The CDR was the party which best embodied the most radical aspects of the political creed known as Hutu extremism, whose aims came to fruition in 1994. Nzigiyimfura himself was an enthusiastic supporter of MDR-Power, the extremist wing of the Republican Democratic Party (MDR).

Malawi has joined Zambia and Mozambique in Southern Africa as a country where a sizeable number of prominent Rwandese genocide suspects have settled and have become successful as businessmen and professionals. Furthermore, Malawi, like Zambia and Mozambique, has become an increasingly important political base for the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the military and political organization whose leadership and membership

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<sup>1</sup> The administrative system in Rwanda was restructured between 2001-2006. However, given the fact that this report addresses events prior to the genocide, and during 1994, it refers to the system that was in use at the time.

<sup>2</sup> Although the sectors of Kavumu and Remera were geographically part of commune Kigoma, their residents were more closely connected to Nyanza than to Kigoma. Kavumu and Remera were in fact regarded more as neighbourhoods of Nyanza town.

<sup>3</sup> Cellule Gihisi was divided into two parts; one section was in sector Remera and another was in sector Kavumu. The two lay on different sides of the football field in Gihisi.

<sup>4</sup> Although the common word for butcher in Kinyarwanda is *ababazi*, in Nyanza Nzigiyimfura’s family was known as *abatazi*. They were also known as *imbaragasa* which means fleas. It is thought they were given this name because the family was so large.

includes officers and civilian officials who were directly involved in the massacres of 1994. The FDLR, based in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), has been a major source of instability and conflict in the Great Lakes region for many years, and has been accused of serious and widespread human rights abuses against the Congolese people living in North and South Kivu in eastern DRC.<sup>5</sup> The genocide suspects living in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique travel regularly, and at ease, between the three countries, as well as to and from the DRC.

Apart from his own relatives who were imprisoned in Rwanda as genocide suspects, and who Nzigiyimfura is accused of evacuating to Malawi, a number of men who joined forces with him in 1994 are also currently living in Malawi. They include Chrisostom Nsabimana, alias Kinshasa, a businessman, who shuttles between Malawi and Zambia; Eugène Kayisire, the owner of a pharmacy in Nyanza; Dominico Karake and a certain Kennedy.

At the end of 2008, there were about 4400 Rwandese asylum-seekers and refugees in Malawi, out of which the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) recognized about half as refugees. There is one refugee camp in Malawi, in Dowa, about an hour north of Lilongwe. However, many of the Rwandese in Malawi are not living in the camp, but in cities and towns like Blantyre, Zomba and Lilongwe. These refugees and asylum seekers include a significant number of prominent genocide suspects, including Vincent Nzigiyimfura.

### **Summary of the Charges Against Vincent Nzigiyimfura**

- Instructing militiamen to establish roadblocks which were used to vet the ID cards of Tutsis, and then used as convenient killing centres;
- Supervising roadblocks and encouraging the militia who manned them to seek out, detain and kill Tutsis;
- Ordering the militia to kill Tutsis in his presence at the roadblocks;
- Making his vehicles available to transport Tutsis to Nyanza stadium where hundreds were massacred and the corpses of those killed elsewhere dumped;
- Requiring Hutus to register the location of Tutsis in hiding, a strategy for identifying who was still alive. Afterwards, Nzigiyimfura led the militia to their hideouts and had them killed;
- Distributing weapons to the militia;
  - Encouraging the destruction and looting of the houses and property of Tutsis.

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<sup>5</sup> For more details about the political evolution and leadership of the FDLR, see African Rights, *A Welcome Expression of Intent: The Nairobi Communiqué and the Ex-FAR/Interahamwe*, December 2007, 88 pages, and *Opportunities and Constraints for the Disarmament and Repatriation of the Foreign Armed Groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Cases of the FDLR, FNL and ADF/NALU*, by Hans Romkema, April 2007, commissioned and published by the Secretariat of the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme.

# 1

## UNLEASHING THE GENOCIDE IN NYANZA AND KIGOMA The Men in Charge

The genocide in Nyanza, Kavumu and Remera, as elsewhere in Rwanda, was instigated and led by servants of the State, working hand in hand with business leaders and well-educated members of the community. The genocide was facilitated, to a great extent, by the close ties which had been knit, particularly in the early 1990s, between military officers, local government officials, the leaders of political parties close to the government, the heads of para-statal agencies, businessmen and professionals, especially teachers and the clergy.

In Nyanza and Kavumu, Vincent Nzigiyimfura collaborated, both before and during the genocide, with a range of individuals, many of them supporters of the CDR, including:

- Captain François-Xavier Birikunzira, head of the gendarmerie post in Nyanza. This post covered the sub-préfecture of Nyabisindu, made up of the communes of Nyabisindu, Muyira, Mugusa, Ntyazo and Rusatira in Butare. In 1994, he was also given responsibility over the communes of Tambwe, Ntongwe, Kigoma and Murama in Gitarama. Birikunzira, who rose to the rank of colonel in the FDLR, was most recently active in the FDLR cell in Congo-Brazzaville, but is now thought to have left Congo-Brazzaville for Bénin in west Africa;<sup>6</sup>
- Gaëtan Kayitana, deputy-préfet for the sub-préfecture of Nyabisindu. Kayitana, who comes from Karengera in Cyangugu, was a member of the CDR as well as the MRND. He remains in exile;<sup>7</sup>
- Célestin Ugirashebuja, bourgmestre of commune Kigoma. Ugirashebuja was arrested in the UK in December 2006, along with three other Rwandese, on charges related to the genocide after the Government of Rwanda requested his extradition. In June 2008, the court approved the extradition request. The decision was reversed on appeal on 8 April 2009 by the High Court.<sup>8</sup>
- Jean-Damascène Mugenzi, secretary at the office of the sub-préfecture of Nyabisindu. He remains in exile;
- Pierre Ndimumakuba, advisor to the Court of Appeal in Nyanza. He comes from Ruhengeri;
- Appolinaire Barihuta, alias Tubirimo, a long-time director of the iron foundry in Nyanza. He had retired by 1994, but still maintained considerable influence over the foundry. Barihuta, who comes from Ruhengeri, has died;

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<sup>6</sup> See African Rights, *A Welcome Expression of Intent*.

<sup>7</sup> Information concerning imprisonment or other details relevant to an individual's whereabouts is presented as it was given to us at the time of the interview.

<sup>8</sup> On 8 April 2009, the High Court judges, who found that the suspects had a case to answer given the evidence that was presented, ruled against extradition on the basis that the suspects would not get a fair trial in Rwanda. Ugirashebuja was released along with Vincent Bajinya, a medical doctor, and two men who had been bourgmestres in the préfecture of Gikongoro, namely Emmanuel Nteziryayo and Charles Munyaneza.

- Faustin Mbereye, director of the Electrogaz station in Nyanza. Mbereye, who came to Nyanza in 1980, comes from Kinigi in Ruhengeri. He was detained in Nyanza prison<sup>9</sup> in January 2006;
- Dr. Callixte Mirasano, a veterinarian, was the director of the government-owned dairy in Nyabisindu. He was one of the founders of the CDR in Nyanza. He has been living in Zambia since the end of the genocide and works in a milk factory in Livingstone. He comes from Ruhengeri. Mirasano is on Interpol's November 2007 list of wanted Rwandese genocide suspects;
- Dr. Célestin Higiho, from Butare, was the director of Nyanza hospital. He was head of the CDR in Nyanza. He was first imprisoned in Nyanza and later transferred to Mpanga prison;
- Fr. Hormisdas Nsengimana, a Catholic priest, was the rector of Christ Roi secondary school. He was arrested in Cameroon on 21 March 2002 at the request of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and transferred to the ICTR's detention facilities in Arusha on 16 April 2002. The ICTR has charged Nsengimana with "genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, and crimes against humanity for murder and extermination." His trial is on-going;<sup>10</sup>
- Anaclet Nkundimfura; he worked in the Court of Appeal in Nyanza;
- Pierre Karake, a businessman. He died outside Rwanda;
- Zacharie Nshimyumuremyi, a businessman, in prison in Mpanga;
- Jean-Damascène Kanyamibwa, in prison in Mpanga;
- Ephron Nshimyumuremyi, a businessman in Nyanza. He comes from Murama in Gitarama. He is currently living in Belgium but maintains business interests in Africa;
- Maburanturo, manager of the Commercial Bank of Rwanda (BCR) in Nyanza;
- Chrisostom Nsabimana, known as Kinshasa, a businessman. He travels between Malawi and Zambia;
- Frédéric Rwagasore, the director of the Louis de Monfort Secondary School of Sciences, in prison in Mpanga;
- Minani, the director of the Technical School for Girls (ETF) in Nyanza;
- Augustin Nyamulinda, director of a teacher training school;
- Eugène Kayisire, a medical assistant who had his own pharmacy in Nyanza. He lives in Malawi;

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<sup>9</sup> There is no longer a prison in Nyanza, and most of the prisoners there have been transferred to Mpanga prison.

<sup>10</sup> For details about the role of Fr. Hormisdas Nsengimana in the genocide, see *Fr. Hormisdas Nsengimana: Accused of Genocide, Sheltered by the Church*, African Rights, *Witness to Genocide*, Issue 14, November 2001, 43 pages.

- Athanase Harindintwali, a businessman;
- Emmanuel Rumonge; he worked in one of the courts in Nyanza;
- Augustin Twagirimana, alias “Terrible”, a teacher at Christ Roi secondary school. He comes from Murama in Gitarama and is said to have died in the DRC;
- Gervais Nyilinkwaya, president of the Court of First Instance in Nyanza. He has died.

Dieudonné<sup>11</sup>, a mechanic who lived in cellule Kavumu in sector Kavumu, said he regularly saw Nzigiyimfura in the company of several of the men whose names appear above, including the powerful bourgmestre of Kigoma, Célestin Ugirashebuja.

Vincent was my neighbour and my garage was in the town of Nyanza, not far from Vincent’s shop. During the period of multi-partyism, I always saw people like Birikunzira, Mirasano, Ugirashebuja, Rwandekwe, Tubirimo and other people known as extremists in Nyanza meeting at Vincent’s bar. Several times I saw them entering his house in Gihisi. When Ugirashebuja came, they always met at Vincent’s house. They didn’t seem to like to meet in a bar.

Charles, a driver from Kavumu, underlined the importance of “the collaboration between Nzigiyimfura and other prominent génocidaires in Nyanza,” notably Captain François-Xavier Birikunzira, commander of the gendarmes who killed thousands of Tutsis across Butare and Gitarama. He spoke about the political fault lines in Nyanza prior to the genocide, and about some of the men who were politically active.

The team known as ‘Power’ often met up over a beer in Vincent’s bar. Vincent was part of this group, made up largely of people from the north called *Abakiga*. Four of them behaved as if they were the leaders. That is Nzigiyimfura; Mirasano, the director of Nyanza dairy; Appolinaire Barihuta, the ex-director of the government-owned iron foundry in Kavumu and Pierre Ndimumakuba, an advisor to the Court of Appeal. The other members included:

- Faustin Mbereye, manager of the Electrogaz station in Nyanza;
- Emmanuel Rumonge, he worked at the district court in Nyanza;
- Anaclet Nkundimfura;
- Gaëtan Kayitana, the deputy-préfet;
- Gervais Nyilinkwaya, president of the court in Nyanza, who has died.

No one could gain entrance and become one of them. And as no one, except Vincent, was a native of Nyanza, people couldn’t accept their influence in the region and complained about their decisions. But in spite of protests by the residents of Nyanza, the last word regarding the destiny of Nyanza fell to this group.

Well before the genocide, Nzigiyimfura, Dr Callixte Mirasano, Fr. Hormisdas Nsengimana, Gaëtan Kayitana and Appolinaire Barihuta, alias Tubirimo, amongst others, established a militia composed of men who came from the north, most of them employees of institutions under their control, for example the dairy, the foundry and Christ Roi, or those controlled by their political allies, like Electrogaz. This militia, which became known as the Dragons (*Les Dragons*) included the sons of many of the influential men in Nyanza who were associated with Nzigiyimfura’s political circle. They included, for example:

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<sup>11</sup> Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of witnesses, with a few exceptions.

- Louis de Gonzague Uwimana and his brother, Bosco; their father Nyamulinda, was the headmaster of a school in Nyanza. Uwimana is now a captain in the FDLR;
- Jean de Dieu Munyaneza, alias Jean Muitzig, whose father, Marc Munyaneza, was a businessman. Jean de Dieu Munyaneza lives in The Netherlands;
- Gasore and Mugabo, Tubirimo's sons;
- Zéphyrin, the son of Dr Célestin Higiho.

The Dragons, who were created, supported, encouraged and given directives by the men who established this militia force, appeared to be aimed explicitly against Tutsis and political opponents of the CDR.

Nzigiyimfura and his allies also relied upon soldiers from the Senior Military Academy (ESM) in Kigali. They had accompanied the interim government when it left Kigali on 12 April, because of the fighting between the Rwandese Armed Forces (FAR) and the rebel movement, the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), and settled in Gitarama. Some of the soldiers were housed at Christ Roi.

Nyanza was known for having a large concentration of Tutsi residents. The move to exterminate them therefore required accurate planning, extensive resources and significant motivation. In April 1994, Nzigiyimfura and like-minded men in Nyanza drew on their position and authority, and the financial, material and human resources available to them, to put in place all the necessary elements for a highly successful genocide not only in Nyanza, but more broadly in Nyabisindu and in Kigoma.

### **The Build Up of Tension: 7-20 April 1994**

The leaders of the genocide in Nyabisindu came up against two major hurdles from the outset. The first obstacle was Jean-Baptiste Habyarimana, the préfet (governor) of Butare, the only Tutsi préfet in the country, and a man who was determined to keep the genocide out of his préfecture. He visited Nyanza and spoke to residents on the grounds of ESPANYA, a secondary school, to reassure them and also to urge them to remain united in the interests of peace. His success explains why, for nearly two weeks, Butare remained largely calm. The interim government, however, sought to undermine his achievements and finally dismissed him on 19 April. Systematic killings began in Butare town, and in many of the rural communes, the following day.

The second impediment was the bourgmestre (mayor) of Nyabisindu, Jean Marie-Vianney Gisagara, whose principled stand against the genocide cost him his life, and the lives of 11 members of his family.<sup>12</sup> Gisagara cautioned the Hutu population against turning on their Tutsi neighbours, and made an example of those who refused to heed his words by arresting and detaining them. He boosted the morale of Tutsis in Nyabisindu by his actions and his words.

Compared to many other regions, large-scale massacres also started relatively late in most of the communes in the préfecture of Gitarama.

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<sup>12</sup> For more information about Jean Marie-Vianney Gisagara, and his efforts to save lives during the genocide, see *Tribute to Courage* published by *African Rights*, December 2002, 299 pages.

News of the plane crash which killed President Juvénal Habyarimana on the night of 6 April 1994, and the fact that Tutsis were immediately blamed for his assassination, created fear and suspicion in Nyanza and Kigoma, as it did throughout the country. According to both survivors and prisoners, the radio broadcasts about Habyarimana's death initially brought about panic and confusion among all residents. Lucien, a member of the administrative committee responsible for the cellule of Gihisi in Kavumu, and a man who would later make a significant contribution to the genocide in Kavumu, summed up this mood of uncertainty.

Many people in this area didn't know what was going to happen. We were all apprehensive. Sometimes we would follow the Tutsis and spend the night in the forest with them because we thought the Hutus from the north, the *Abakiga*, would kill us together. Around the 18<sup>th</sup> of April, we heard the sound of gunfire coming from the town of Nyanza. Although it didn't last long, some Tutsis started to leave their houses.

Paul, who also lived in Gihisi, said everyone was influenced by the news that filtered in as the genocide gathered momentum.

Tutsis were not sleeping in their houses because they heard that other Tutsis were being killed in other parts of the country. Instead, they slept in the bushes and forest and some stayed in the houses of their Hutu friends.

Marcel, a student, was home in Nyanza for the Easter holidays.<sup>13</sup>

For a couple of weeks, nothing happened. There were just meetings and people said that a genocide was being prepared. Things were very quiet in Nyanza and businesses were only open on Mondays and Thursdays.

The sense of unease persuaded Marcel's parents to leave their home each day before it got dark.

Because my family and I were afraid, between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup>, we spent the nights in banana plantations or in the homes of Hutu friends.

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, Marcel's father, worried about the deteriorating security situation, sent his son to stay with Hutu friends in another commune, where he stayed out of sight until the end.

Julienne explained why she chose to abandon her home in Gihisi, and to disperse her children among Hutu friends.

There was tension because Tutsis were blamed for Habyarimana's death. We could see that something wasn't going well in the country. I slept in the bush with the baby on my back and I took my other children to the homes of different Hutu friends, thinking that if some died, others would survive. We knew a little about what was happening elsewhere from listening to the radio. When we called friends in Kigali, sometimes someone would pick up and we could hear the house being demolished in the background.

She spoke about the joint security patrols, which she said in Gihisi were set up following Nzigiyimfura's instructions.

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<sup>13</sup> The genocide coincided with the school holidays for Easter.

All the men in the area, both Hutu and Tutsi, were asked to join night patrols and circulate around the neighbourhood. The purpose, they said, was to monitor developments in the area, ensure security, and to stop the RPF from entering the country. It was Vincent who gave the directives for these patrols. He came to our house to order my husband to participate.

But on the 20<sup>th</sup>, her husband returned home half an hour after he had been on patrol duty.

He said he couldn't continue participating because Vincent had told them: 'We now know who will die. It is the Tutsis who will die, not the Hutus.'

I asked my husband how Nzigiyimfura knew this. He said there had been a meeting in Kigoma at the office of the bourgmestre, Ugirashebuja, where Nzigiyimfura had been told this.

During the first two weeks of the genocide, Nzigiyimfura and his powerful network worked hard to prepare the Hutu population of Nyanza and Kigoma to catch up with the pace of killings in the rest of the country. Mobilizing forces in Kigoma would not be difficult, as they could count on the full support of Ugirashebuja. Rather, the challenge for them was in Nyabisindu, where they deemed it necessary to thwart Gisagara's campaign for peace and security. Gisagara had rallied the population to maintain their solidarity and vigilance, and urged them to work together to push back attackers from Gikongoro.

However, Gisagara's call for resistance was ultimately fruitless. Within a few days militiamen could be seen breaking into Tutsi shops in Nyanza, in full view of Birikunzira and the gendarmes under his control. Planning meetings took place at Christ Roi, under the stewardship of Father Hormisdas Nsengimana.<sup>14</sup> After the meetings, witnesses say that many of the same men would then share a beer in Nzigiyimfura's bar in Nyanza town.

Meetings also took place in Nzigiyimfura's house in Gihisi, according to his former neighbour, Dieudonné.

Between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, I saw people gathering at Vincent's house on three occasions. Those who came included:

- Célestin Ugirashebuja, the bourgmestre of Kigoma;
- Narcisse Simuhuga, the councillor of sector Kavumu;
- Birikunzira, head of the gendarmerie of Nyanza;
- Mirasano, director of the Nyabisindu dairy;
- Tubirimo;
- Rwandekwe, a retired soldier;
- Emmanuel, alias Mbangambanga, an agronomist at the German project called PAP in Gihisi, as well as many others.

On 21 April, the purpose of those meetings became clear.

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<sup>14</sup> See *Fr. Hormisdas Nsengimana: Accused of Genocide, Sheltered by the Church*.

## **A Turning Point: Thursday, 21 April 1994**

The bourgmestre of Nyabisindu, Gisagara, worked tirelessly to prevent the killings in his commune. He took on the interahamwe with the support of his communal police force, called on sector councillors to refuse the demands of those in favour of genocide while all the time appealing for non-violence and unity. His determination to hold the genocide at bay angered Birikunzira, Nzigiyimfura and, amongst others, Mirasano, and the threats against Gisagara's life increased. Forced to go into hiding several days before, Gisagara was discovered on Thursday 21 April. He and 11 members of his family were murdered, including his parents, wife and siblings. Before he was killed, Gisagara's body, watched over by soldiers, was tied to the back of a truck and driven through the town, as a punishment for his stand and as a warning to other Hutus who opposed the genocide.

With Gisagara now out of the way on the 21<sup>st</sup>, and with the dismissal of the préfet on 19 April and his replacement by an army officer fully committed to the genocide, the killings began in earnest on Friday, 22 April.

Julienne's husband had returned from patrol duty on the 20<sup>th</sup> convinced that Tutsis were going to die. She heard the first warning signs on the evening of the 21<sup>st</sup>.

On the 21<sup>st</sup>, we stayed here at home. We couldn't do anything or go anywhere. In the evening, when I went to sleep outside, I heard gunshots.

She later found out that the victims were two men named Joseph Rusima and Amon Rutayisire.

Camille, a student at the University of Butare, was spending the holidays at home in Nyanza. He had slept the night of Wednesday the 20<sup>th</sup> in the bush. What he saw when he returned home the following day led to the decision which ensured his survival.

On Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup>, I went into Nyanza town with my mother and two friends to take stock of the situation there. As we approached the town, we immediately caught sight of many clusters of soldiers brandishing guns. I counted more than ten groups.

The following day, Camille and his friends crossed the border into Burundi. But countless others were not so fortunate. It became increasingly difficult to escape as the militia infiltrated the area after Gisagara's death, and set up roadblocks to ambush Tutsis trying to reach safety.

## 2

### **ROADBLOCKS EVERYWHERE “To Stop Tutsis and to Kill Them”**

Checkpoints, set up in many parts of the country within hours of Habyarimana’s death, were used to identify Tutsis, to monitor their movements and to deny them escape routes. The fact that everyone over 18 had an ID card with a mention of their ethnic group made the task of those who manned roadblocks much easier. Anyone who failed to produce an ID card was assumed to be a Tutsi who was afraid. Others were judged to be a Tutsi by their looks and were dealt with accordingly. In Butare, as everywhere in Rwanda, countless Tutsis had their lives cut short at roadblocks, or were led away and killed elsewhere. Women were taken into the bushes and raped and families became separated. In Nyanza and Kigoma, as in other parts of the country, checkpoints would prove to be key to a successful genocide.

Immediately on the heels of Gisagara’s death, Nzigiyimfura set out to establish a formidable series of roadblocks in sectors Kavumu and Remera. He made the purpose of the roadblocks clear to the men he ordered to construct and guard them: kill all Tutsis.

One of the men who obeyed these instructions is Jules, who was given a prison sentence of 22 years in 1996 for his contribution to the genocide. He has since confessed his participation in the killings.

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**“Vincent was quite clear that the purpose of roadblocks was to  
stop Tutsis and to kill them.”**

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He repeatedly emphasized that Tutsis were the enemies of the Hutus. Therefore, he said, we shouldn’t save any of them.

#### **Friday, 22 April: Setting Up the Checkpoints**

As the testimonies below highlight, Nzigiyimfura played a crucial role in the construction of roadblocks. One of them was placed in front of his own house so that he could easily supervise progress. Others were set up at convenient crossroads where many Tutsis were forced to pass as they deserted their homes in search of safety. To speed up the pace, he lent his vehicles to facilitate the transport of militiamen, as well as weapons, stones and other components needed to create and operate an efficient roadblock. He travelled between all the stops, presiding over the killings and punishing the militiamen who failed to show up for duty and those who were reluctant participants.

According to both prisoners and survivors, Nzigiyimfura built and oversaw multiple roadblocks. The different roadblocks they mentioned were set up in the following locations:

- In cellule Kavumu, opposite the home of Bosco Biziyaremye;
- In cellule Gihisi, opposite the home of François Ndaruruhira;

- In Gihisi, opposite the home of Léonard Gakiga;
- In Gihisi, in front of Nzigiyimfura's own house;
- In Gihisi, opposite the home of a woman called Olive;
- Near the Protestant Parish of Hanika.

Nzigiyimfura, said Valentine, who lived in Gihisi, did not waste time. She said she saw him enter their cellule on the morning of Friday 22 April.

Nzigiyimfura came in a Toyota truck loaded with stones. The stones were used for the roadblock near the Parish of Hanika. I was at home and could hear him saying, 'Come, come to the roadblocks!'

Paul, a farmer in Gihisi, said he has known Nzigiyimfura since he, Paul, was a child. He underlined the strategic placement of the roadblocks in Gihisi, chosen in order to maximise their effectiveness as a trap for Tutsis leaving their homes.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> we saw Vincent's blue Toyota carrying soldiers<sup>15</sup> and big rocks used for roadblocks. He created the first roadblock at Hanika, near the Protestant parish, the second was in front of his house and the third one at the home of a woman called Nyampundu. This one was well placed because it was a meeting point for three roads, that is the road from Nyanza, the one from Hanika and the one from Kinamba. The last roadblock he put up in our cellule was on the football grounds.

Jules acknowledges that he helped to oversee a roadblock in Gihisi, where he lived, but added that it was built at the behest of Nzigiyimfura and a group of gendarmes sent by Birikunzira.

In our sector, it was Vincent and some gendarmes who told us to create roadblocks. That was the first time Hutus were encouraged to rise as one against Tutsis.

In Gihisi, he said, two men in particular "helped to mobilize the population", naming Joseph Niyoyita and Lucien.

About 30 others also met with Vincent to receive orders, including Enock Sinenge, who is in prison, and Rudakubana and Alphonse, who are in hiding.

Lucien, whose name was mentioned by all witnesses from sector Kavumu, does not deny that he served as one of Nzigiyimfura's principal right-hand men. He said he has known Nzigiyimfura all his life because they grew up in the same area in Gihisi.

On 22 April, we heard the sound of gunfire all morning. We didn't know they had started killing Tutsis in Nyanza. In the afternoon, the *responsable* of the cellule came to my house and asked me to come to a meeting.

When he reached the place where they normally held the meetings of the cellule, Lucien said he encountered Nzigiyimfura.

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<sup>15</sup> Soldiers and gendarmes are used interchangeably by witnesses.

Vincent was using large stones to put a roadblock in place. He had brought the stones in his blue Toyota Stout. There were many soldiers in his car.

Lucien spoke about the meeting.

Vincent himself and Jean-Damascène Gatunzi, the *responsable* of the cellule, led it. They told us we had to start hunting the *inyenzi*.<sup>16</sup> Vincent told us to stay at the roadblock. If anyone tried to pass, we should stop him, he said. And if we found out that he was an enemy of Rwanda, we should kill him. And the enemies of Rwanda, he said, were the Tutsis. Afterwards, he continued on his way, leaving two soldiers with us.

Gaspard has spent many years in Nyanza prison. It took him six years before he decided to confess the crimes he now acknowledges. He lived in cellule Nyagatovu in sector Remera. He went to hear Nzigiyimfura speak at the football field in Nyagatovu on the 22<sup>nd</sup> where, he said, “Vincent announced that Tutsis should be killed.”

Vincent’s first action, in planning the death of Tutsis in Nyanza, and in sectors Remera and Kavumu in Kigoma, was to build roadblocks. Vincent and some policemen came to our area and made us put up a roadblock to stop Tutsis. It was quite usual for people from Nyagatovu cellule to gather on the football field.

Vincent drove a blue Toyota Stout. He was with some policemen, but they came in their vehicle, also a Toyota. Vincent told us to put up a roadblock in the centre of Nyagatovu to better capture Tutsis. He was very clear that the Tutsis were the enemies of the country, and that we, therefore, had to kill them. The policeman who seemed to be in charge of the others told us not to be afraid, since those responsible for security were, he assured us, on the side of the Hutus. To prove this, he left us two policemen with two guns.

Around 8:00 p.m. approximately ten of us were told to go to where the roadblock would be. Of those in the group, I remember:

- Emmanuel Kamanzi, who is now free and can be found at Nyagatovu;
- Uzzia Nsabimana, who is dead;
- Ntamwete, also dead;
- Michel Ngango, Vincent’s older brother. He’s in prison but has refused to confess.

Dieudonné, the mechanic who lived near Nzigiyimfura in Gihisi, was another person who obeyed Nzigiyimfura’s orders to stand guard at roadblocks. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Dieudonné said, he too witnessed Nzigiyimfura’s blue Toyota carrying stones and soldiers for the construction of roadblocks. Shortly afterwards, he was summoned to a meeting where Nzigiyimfura gave further instructions.

The *responsable* of the cellule sent the members of his committee to all the houses to ask people to come to a meeting. When we got there, Vincent took the floor. He said: ‘We just want to tell you that you have to stay at those roadblocks and stop all the *inyenzi*. You have to come with your weapons, especially *ntampongano y’umwanzi*.’ This was the name given to the clubs they used to kill Tutsis. That was my first time to hear this term used.

Dieudonné was stationed at the roadblock near the house which was once owned by a woman named Nyampundu. The stop became well known for its strategic location.

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<sup>16</sup> *Inyenzi*, meaning cockroach, had previously been used in reference to the RPF. However, during the genocide, it meant all Tutsis.

This roadblock was at a crossroads, so the Tutsis who fled Nyanza, Hanika and Remera all came to our roadblock. The soldiers Vincent left with us asked the people who passed there for their identity cards. When they came upon Tutsis, or people who didn't have their IDs on them, they asked them to sit down. Then they shot them.

Nzigiyimfura was often present at the roadblocks to supervise their actions, according to Dieudonné.

We kept stopping Tutsis and Vincent continued to circulate everywhere, checking that everything was going according to plan at his roadblocks.

To make sure that everything was "going according to plan", Dieudonné said they were given lessons in how to take the lives of Tutsis.

In the evening, the soldiers wanted to show us how we should eliminate Tutsis. One soldier took a club and struck down a man. Then our colleagues picked up their machetes and clubs and did likewise to other Tutsis. The following day, the soldiers left because they saw that we were able to kill Tutsis ourselves.

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**"Vincent was the one who controlled and led everything. We always gave him reports about everything we did. He then gave us new instructions, and the killings continued."**

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Tatien also spent several years in prison denying the crimes he had committed in 1994. But when he eventually confessed, he shed light on what happened in Kigoma and the imprint of men like Nzigiyimfura on those events. Tatien lived in cellule Kavumu, sector Kavumu.

He said he was startled when Nzigiyimfura visited him on Friday the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

He came on foot, as he didn't live far from me. I was very surprised. He lived a life of privilege such that he didn't really talk to poor people. He told me: 'I'm visiting all the homes of Hutus in Kavumu. You must all now put into action the plans we made in Nyanza. All Hutus must erect roadblocks.' He was carrying a large stick that he was going to use against anyone who opposed his orders. As he wanted the killing to begin immediately, he made us block the road with large rocks. The roadblock was established opposite the home of Bosco Biziyaremye and it was done so under the watchful eye of Vincent.

Tatien responded positively, but asked about the purpose of the roadblocks.

Vincent was astonished. He said it was stupid if Hutus didn't know they had to kill Tutsis without consideration of their sex or age. He added that they were snakes in the grass and that the bourgmestre, Gisagara, deserved what he got. This was the day after Gisagara died.

Tatien cited the names of some of the other men at his roadblock.

- Kabalisa, at liberty;
- Wellars Kabanda, at liberty;
- Cyubahiro;
- Emmanuel Ntawuhiganayo from Byumba;
- Iyumve, originally from Gikongoro;
- Mapengu, also from Gikongoro;
- Rukuturi, deceased;
- Nkurunziza;

- Ruvunderi;
- Elias Munyange, at liberty in Kavumu;
- And many others.

Nzigiyimfura, he commented, also left them with clear instructions.

Before he left to go and put up roadblocks elsewhere, Vincent asked us to present each Tutsi we captured to him, before we killed them. About two hours after he left, we seized Munyakaragwe and his wife. We sent them to Vincent's house. He registered their names on a list and then gave the authorization to have them murdered at Hanika school.

But Nzigiyimfura, added Tatien, was not satisfied.

A few minutes after their execution, Vincent rejoined us at the roadblock and told us;

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**“You haven’t yet fully understood the message I gave you. You have to be on the look out. It’s not enough to just kill the adults and spare the children. Send me all of Munyakaragwe’s children.”**

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The children were rounded up in no time.

There were eight children. We got hold of them pretty quickly, whilst Vincent was still at the roadblock. We handed them over to him. They should, he said, be subjected to the same fate as their parents.

A roadblock was raised near Valentine's house in Gihisi late at night on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. As she watched the stones pile up, she went inside, feeling afraid.

At about 2:00 a.m., a group of militiamen came. I recognized some of them, for example:

- Nyaritwa;
- Yotam Sempabuka;
- Karingene;
- Nzabandora, in prison;
- And many others.

They forced us to walk with them to the roadblock. I was with two children, my grandmother and my uncle. When we got there, we saw two soldiers and many other people. The soldiers had guns and the others were armed with traditional weapons such as machetes. Vincent wasn't there. The men spat at us and then told us to go back home. Since we consisted mainly of women and children, they said we wouldn't be able to do any harm and therefore weren't a threat. We were allowed to return home.

But the militiamen had the last word.

They said they would come and get us later.

And they kept their word, coming back the very next day, as detailed in a later section.

Charles, the driver from sector Kavumu who often drove soldiers and officials, accepts that he was Nzigiyimfura's accomplice at the roadblocks. He recalled a particular incident on 22 April.

The day after Gisagara's death, Captain Birikunzira arrived in a vehicle with Vincent, who was accompanied by his escorts. After speaking with Vincent, Birikunzira and his subordinates started to hound people who passed by Vincent's house. They focussed primarily on anyone who physically resembled a Tutsi. I saw all of this with my own eyes because I didn't live far from Vincent's home. They went to the house of a man called Amon, who was a teacher at Hanika school, and a Tutsi. They gathered everyone who was in the house and killed Amon.

In the haste to begin the genocide, Hutus were also arrested. They complained, said Charles, and Birikunzira turned to Nzigiyimfura for help in separating the Hutus from the Tutsis.

The Hutus, including a girl whose surname was Ndeyi, were released. The Tutsis were taken in the vehicle and executed.

Julienne, who had taken to sleeping outside since 7 April, returned home at about 9:00 a.m. on 22 April. She too was frightened as she watched roadblocks go up.

From my house, I saw Vincent Nzigiyimfura arrive in a truck which belonged to the German Agro-Pastoral Project which had an office down the road. The truck was filled with militiamen and soldiers. I don't know how Nzigiyimfura got this truck, but no one could refuse to give it to him because he was so powerful. Under his command, the militiamen erected a roadblock at the intersection, near the Parish of Hanika. After seeing what they were doing, I went out the back door with my child to go where I usually passed the night. My husband wasn't at home.

Together with her aunt, her children and friends of her children who were staying with them for the holidays, Julienne sought shelter in a house under construction.

I spent three days there. The owner wasn't present. On the third day, Vincent insisted that the house be burned down because its owner hadn't showed up for duty at the roadblocks.

Two boys came to the house shouting that they knew we were there. They said they were going to come and burn the house that night since that's what Nzigiyimfura wanted. They asked if they could help me move somewhere else. They were kind to us. They came back that evening. I gave them money to escort us to the Parish of Hanika. I thought that if I reached the parish, I would be safe and could be protected by the pastors there.

But there was no security in that church either because Nzigiyimfura had placed a roadblock nearby. Julienne slipped out of Hanika unseen by the interahamwe, and stayed with Hutu friends until the end of the genocide.

## **Saturday, 23 April: Killing at the Roadblocks**

The primary purpose of roadblocks, as a central feature of the infrastructure of the genocide, was to kill Tutsis, a programme that started within 24 hours of the assembly of the first roadblocks. Some were caught as they tried to go into hiding; others were arrested in their homes and brought to the roadblocks.

Jules said Nzigiyimfura returned to Gihisi on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, driving a Toyota and accompanied by two policemen. Nzigiyimfura had come to deliver guns to the men at the roadblocks.

There were about a dozen guns in the back of his car. There wasn't much of a distance between three of the roadblocks, so Vincent gave a gun to Célestin Sekimonyo, which was meant for all of us to use.

But the gun was intended as a weapon of last resort for Tutsis who tried to run away.

Vincent told Sekimonyo that he shouldn't waste cartridges. Traditional weapons were sufficient, he said, to massacre all the *inyenzi*. The gun was only to be used when a Tutsi tried to escape.

He spoke about the people they killed.

We didn't know most of them. They had been brought from Nyanza by Vincent and the gendarmes. Most of them were half-dead already, as they had been beaten by the militia who had arrested them.

He mentioned the names of some of the people they murdered in Nzigiyimfura's presence.

- Olive;
- Lambert Mudahunga;
- Bucyana and his four children;
- Innocent, his wife and three children.

Gaspard also killed at the roadblocks, and says he did so under Nzigiyimfura's orders.

Vincent had taken it upon himself to tell everyone about the need to wipe out Tutsis. At every roadblock he made it clear that no Hutu was allowed to taken in Tutsis, and anyone who did would be killed alongside the Tutsi he was hiding.

He gave an example of an incident where, he said, "Vincent's threats scared people into exposing the Tutsis they were hiding."

Uzzia Nsabimana, who is now dead, worked at the roadblock with us. But he hadn't told us that he was protecting a woman named Vénantie and her children. Three days after the roadblocks went up, Vincent came to our roadblock, absolutely furious. He told us it was not enough to guard the roadblock; we had to kill Tutsis as well. He said he knew there were Hutus who didn't want to reveal that enemies lived in their homes. He warned us, again, of what would happen if an enemy was found in the home of a Hutu.

Nzigiyimfura's words had the desired effect.

Uzzia became nervous and he told Vincent that Vénantie and her children were in his house. Vincent sent him to get them. His house wasn't far from the roadblock. She and her two

children were brought to the roadblock. Vincent instructed us to kill them whilst he was there. We did. There were about fifteen of us there. Those who played a direct role in this murder, were myself, Birimbu, who is now dead, and Gérard Munyandinda, who helped me deal with the three children. We used clubs. Evariste Ndindabahizi took a spear and struck the mother. It was Vincent who told him to use a spear.

The death of the mother and children seemed to please Nzigiyimfura, according to Gaspard.

After we had done this awful thing, Vincent smiled at us and encouraged us to keep going. Before he left, he told us to take turns at the roadblock. After that day I didn't go to the roadblock as much. I was terrified of the curse of those children. Vincent, however, continued to turn up with his militia. They would bring Tutsis from Nyanza who were tied up. They handed them over to people who would kill them.

Bernard lived in Nyagatovu, and though he is a Tutsi, he started working at a roadblock, not knowing at first that all Tutsis were targeted for death. After the genocide, Bernard was imprisoned for killing fellow Tutsis. Bernard recalled that around 23 April, local civilians were called to help with roadblocks.

At Vincent's insistence, every man had to come to the roadblock. I helped to set one up on some land that belonged to my family. It was just in front of the one by the football field. Vincent had told us to erect it, saying that the local population would then use it to monitor the movements of the *inkotanyi* and their accomplices. He was with four policemen when he said this. I didn't know whom he meant when he talked of accomplices, but I felt obliged to go with everyone else to the roadblock. Even though I was Tutsi, I didn't think it was the Tutsis who would be seen as the enemy. I guarded that roadblock with:

- Kanyemera, at liberty;
- Eugène; he has died;
- Gérard, at liberty;
- Abdulkarim Cocoli, in prison in Mpanga;
- Athanase's brother, whose case is currently under review in the gacaca court in his sector;
- Nzaramba, in prison;
- Adrien Nyangezi, at liberty.

There were a lot of others, though many have since died.

The next day Nzigiyimfura returned to check the progress at the roadblock.

He was accompanied by two policemen. They were in Vincent's car. They asked us if we had begun searching for the enemy. We weren't sure who the enemy was supposed to be, so we asked for guidance. Vincent went mad. He asked us if we were blind. He told us there was no difference between *inkotanyi* and Tutsis, or between *inyenzi* and accomplices. He said that being in either category meant death because Tutsis were, by their identity, the enemy of the Hutus. My blood ran cold with fear, but I kept this hidden to avoid being killed immediately.

Before Vincent and his men left, my colleagues searched for Tutsis. We came across some people. Vincent and the policemen made everyone show their identity cards; they were Tutsis. Vincent ordered us to kill them right there. I did this just to try and keep my real identity under wraps.

Bernard continued to participate in the killings, which were spurred on by Nzigiyimfura's zeal.

Vincent left our roadblock satisfied, but still shouting at us to increase the tempo and to seek out more Tutsis. The following day, my colleagues made me kill a small child from Ruganda. That was when they began to have suspicions about me. It was at about 11:00 a.m.

The next day, Vincent came back around midday. We had just caught five of Annonciata Mukanzaramba's children and we were using traditional weapons, mostly clubs and spears. Vincent was pleased with what we were doing. He then told us to look for Tutsis in all the houses in that *quartier*. We were told to use ID cards to find out people's ethnic group.

Bernard realized the danger that now awaited him.

I couldn't escape now, nor could my family. One of my colleagues was Célestin Nkaka. He told me that his nephew, Augustine Mundanikure, had told him that I was a Tutsi. I ran. They tried to catch me, but failed. I hid with a family friend.

Valentine, who, as noted earlier, had been woken up by militiamen on Friday night, is related to one of the victims murdered at Nzigiyimfura's roadblocks, Lambert Mudahunga.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the same militiamen as before came to our home and took us all back to the same roadblock. This time, a man called Nyumvira was also there. One of the men said: 'Let's just leave them.' But they took my uncle, Mudahunga, aside. Mudahunga begged them to not kill him cruelly. We returned back home.

But the interahamwe came back the next night. When they entered the house, Valentine stood behind a door while they marched inside. She then snuck out quietly and hid in a sorghum field. But the men did not leave empty-handed.

They took my grandmother and she was later assassinated.

Elphaz, the leader of the roadblock, kept saying that Nzigiyimfura was their leader and that they were going to report back to him about their activities.

Having made sure that his message had been understood and acted upon during the first two days of the genocide in Nyanza and Kigoma, Nzigiyimfura also made sure that there was no let up. Roadblocks continued to serve their purpose well into May.

### 3

## THE GENOCIDE CONTINUES UNABATED

Throughout the period of the genocide, Nzigiyimfura kept a careful eye on the men he had selected to stand guard at roadblocks. According to these men, it was Nzigiyimfura who gave them directions, to whom they reported back and who threatened them if they did not participate in the violence.

Before taking leave of Lucien and his companions at their checkpoint in Gihisi, Nzigiyimfura, commented Lucien, left them with two soldiers.

The soldiers showed us what to do by shooting three Tutsis who were seated on the ground nearby. They did this as an example to the others.

The question of who was an *inyenzi* was then settled.

We didn't realize that when they said *inyenzi*, they meant all Tutsis. We went into the nearby bushes and told them we didn't find *inyenzi* there. The soldiers explained that we have to track down all Tutsis and kill them.

The soldiers then proceeded to check the background of the local residents who were there at the time.

They asked for our ID cards. There were two Tutsis. One of them was an old man called Bucyana, and the other was a young man, Kabanyana's son. The soldiers became very aggressive towards us, and insisted that we had to tell them where Tutsis were hiding. A young man by the name of Assouman said he knew a place where we could find Tutsis.

According to Lucien, Assouman, Jean Damascène Gatunzi, the *responsable* of cellule Gihisi, a soldier and a group of civilians went to the home of a man by the name of Gakiga where they discovered more than five Tutsis.

Jean-Baptiste Habimana mentioned another place where we could find other Tutsis. They went there too and brought back some people. They said they were not going to waste their bullets and so were leaving them to us. Some of the men grabbed their machetes and clubs and went ahead. Afterwards, we were given permission to eat the cows of the Tutsis and to loot their goods.

A failure to follow his instructions to the letter was interpreted by Nzigiyimfura as an act of provocation, said Lucien.

One day our colleague, Patrice, indicated a place where a woman called Pétronille Gahongayire, the wife of Cyprien Kananura, and her two children were in hiding. They brought them to the roadblock. When I got there, I found them sitting down on the ground. I asked my colleagues to forgive them and let them go. They accepted and we forgave them.

Nzigiyimfura, however, did not appreciate this gesture of "forgiveness."

Vincent arrived in his car and saw them. He became very angry at us and wanted to know why they were still alive? 'Don't you know that her husband is a great *inkotanyi*?' he asked

us. 'I'm going to the football field of Gihisi, and I want to find them dead when I come back in a few minutes!' So we killed them. After a few minutes he came back and demanded to see their bodies. We produced the bodies, and he was satisfied.

Nzigiyimfura visited each roadblock frequently to exhort the militia, to reinforce the central message of the genocide and also to spell out the price of disobedience, as Lucien reported.

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**“Vincent collaborated with officials in Nyanza to create  
a killing machine for the Tutsis.”**

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This became apparent to me when he came to our roadblock with Captain Birikunzira, two days after the start of the massacres in our sector. The two of them told us that anyone who led Hutus astray would be killed, just like the bourgmestre, Gisagara, had been killed.

Charles was stationed at one of the roadblocks in Kavumu. He said Nzigiyimfura kept in close contact with Captain Birikunzira.

Birikunzira visited Vincent at least every two days. It was Vincent who showed him a list of the Tutsis who had perished and those who were still unaccounted for. It was Vincent who named Assiel as our boss at that roadblock. My other companions there were:

- Ntagozera; I don't know his whereabouts;
- Rutwika;
- Rusebeya, Rutwika's younger brother;
- Fidèle, a businessman in Nyamata;
- Ryamugema.; he died after he was repatriated from the Congo;
- There were many others.

Nzigiyimfura and his companions, he argued, worked hard to keep the morale high among the militiamen at the roadblocks, and demanded regular reports on the pace of the genocide.

Birikunzira, Vincent and Tubirimo often passed by our roadblock to get an update about Tutsis. Whenever we told them that we had killed more than three, they were very happy, at the same time urging us to sustain our work. We killed more than ten people there, but I only remember the faces of three victims, all from Aloys Gakumba's family.

In case the renewed war with the RPF created doubts and fears, Charles said Nzigiyimfura offered them assurances that the interim government would protect them.

Vincent carried a gun which was given to him by Birikunzira. Each time he came by our roadblock, he told us not to be afraid of the *inkotanyi*. He said the *Abatabazi* government had sufficient weapons with which to expel the *inyenzi*.

Jules also mentioned Nzigiyimfura's willingness to take action against Hutus who gave sanctuary to Tutsis. Phéneas, he said, had to kill the children who had been staying in his home. Jules admits that he was one of the men who cut short these children's lives while Nzigiyimfura watched.

We killed two children from Gikongoro about two days before Nyanza fell to the RPF. They were staying with their brother in law, Phéneas. Vincent had been harassing Phéneas, telling him he knew that he was hiding *inyenzi* from his wife's family. We also pressured him, to

make him scared of what Vincent might do. I helped in the murder of these children. Vincent was present while we killed them. Others who took part included:

- Phéneas;
- Enock Misago;
- Mbiri, Phéneas's son;
- Kamanayo;
- Nyumvira.

Léonidas, imprisoned in connection with the genocide, said he knew Nzigiyimfura well. A farmer in Nyagatovu, sector Remera, he too believes that Nzigiyimfura was one of the architects of the genocide in that region.

Vincent played a highly visible role in the genocide of Tutsis in the sectors of Kavumu and Remera. He was central to the preparation and planning. Many meetings were held in Nyanza where the organisers of the genocide met up with businessmen and those responsible for security, especially the gendarmes led by Birikunzira.

Nzigiyimfura was constantly present at the roadblocks, which Léonidas said existed in every cellule.

Vincent made sure that each roadblock was guarded every day. He divided people into two groups, and they would alternate. I was in the second group at the roadblock near the football field. Vincent's older brother, Michel, was also there. He's in prison, but has pleaded not guilty despite the crimes he perpetrated while his brother was present. Aside from Michel, Innocent Kanyamibwa and Déo Twagirayezu were also at the roadblock with me. Most of the crimes I committed, I did so together with these three other men and under the influence of Vincent.

He spoke of incentives from Nzigiyimfura for killing Tutsis, and threats for giving them sanctuary.

The aim of Vincent and the gendarmes was the elimination of all the Tutsis in our area, without sparing their houses and property. They patrolled our sector every day, supervising the killings and encouraging people to loot their goods. They warned us that if a Hutu tried to save a Tutsi by offering them a place to hide or finding a way for them to escape, that Hutu would also be killed.

Léonidas also blames Nzigiyimfura for transporting some of the victims to their death.

Many of the victims were driven to the places where they were tortured and died in Vincent Nzigiyimfura's vehicles. He and the gendarmes were responsible for this operation. Our team killed more than ten of the Tutsis who came in Vincent's vehicles. Most of the Tutsis were brought to Nyanza. We didn't know most of them personally because they came from Kavumu or Remera.

Léonidas mentioned the name of one victim that he did know, a man by the name of Fungaroho.

I'm one of the people who killed him, with spears and clubs, because Vincent and his policemen told us to do just that. Three others helped me: Adrien Nyangezi, who is free; Gasituri, who has died and Ntaganda, who's in hiding.

Afterwards, Vincent put Fungaroho's corpse in his car. I know others who died at our roadblock, but I didn't take part in their murders. These victims included :

- Humure's wife;
- Perpétue, a nurse.

The responsibility for their deaths, commented Léonidas, lies with Nzigiyimfura and Birikunzira's gendarmes.

All these people were caught because Vincent, supported by the gendarmes, laid down the law. They relied on well-known militiamen who had worked with them since they started the killings in Nyanza. They collected the bodies and brought them to Nyanza.

These events took place after the roadblocks were put up, from around 23 April, and continued until the fall of Nyanza.

One of the places where Tutsis "were tortured and died" is Nyanza stadium. People captured in different locations in Nyabisindu and Kigoma were brought to the stadium where they were executed. But it also served as a mass grave. The bodies of those killed in the vicinity, and from the surrounding areas, were dumped at the stadium. The vehicles which were used included those of the dairy in Nyabisindu; Nzigiyimfura also made his cars available.



*Nyanza Stadium, 2008.*

The restaurant where André worked was not far from the stadium, which gave him many opportunities to follow the activities around the stadium.

The cars would bring bodies from massacre sites and roadblocks all around the area. Some people were taken captive at the roadblock at the stadium itself, and then taken inside the stadium to be killed.

The sites from where the bodies of victims were collected were:

- Nyamagana lake;
- The roadblock in Mugonzi cellule;
- The roadblock at the hospital;
- Gihisi cellule, in Kavumu sector;
- And many other places around Nyanza town.

Most of the victims were thrown in bushes behind the stadium, where the memorial site has now been built.

Nzigiyimfura gave a truck to transport the dead to the stadium. And his truck would often also go to dump bodies in Kibaga.

The fact that he drove Birikunzira's gendarmes "while they supervised the checkpoints and encouraged Hutus to hunt down Tutsis" enabled him, said Charles, "to know more about the collaboration between Vincent and the leaders of the genocide in Nyanza, men like Birikunzira and Mirasano."

Vincent put his truck at the disposal of the interahamwe to transport the bodies of Tutsis to Nyanza stadium. Some Tutsis were driven there alive and were executed there. Many vehicles were used to do this dirty work, including those of the dairy. Tubirimo's son drove the vehicle of the iron foundry for the same purpose.

Paul, working at the checkpoint near Nyampundu's house, recalled Nzigiyimfura's attitude to those who did not fulfil their duties at roadblocks.

Vincent always came to find out what was happening. When someone didn't show up for work, even on just two occasions, the person in charge reported it to Vincent so the culprit could be disciplined.

He referred to a specific case.

One day, they told Vincent that a certain Straton Habineza wasn't turning up on a regular basis. Vincent made him lie flat on the ground and gave him a severe beating with his stick. Vincent did the same thing at all the roadblocks, even in Remera, because he controlled everything there as well.

## **Called Out of Hiding**

The knowledge that some Hutus were prepared to give shelter to Tutsis—usually relatives, friends and neighbours, and sometimes strangers—posed a challenge for men like Nzigiyimfura. One of the responses to this predicament was to reassure Hutus that the massacres had been brought to an end and, therefore, there was no longer a need for Tutsis to

remain out of sight. An alternative strategy was intimidation: if Hutus insisted on hiding Tutsis, they must bear the consequences for themselves and their families.

Many witnesses spoke of meetings where Nzigiyimfura, Ugirashebuja and a number of local officials told the militia and the local population to spread the word that the killings had stopped, and if the Tutsis who were still alive were reported, they would be spared.

Lucien said he first heard this announcement at the commune office.

On 25 April I attended a meeting at the commune office led by Célestin Ugirashebuja, the bourgmestre of Kigoma. He told us about the war situation. He added that the *inkotanyi* were going to be defeated very soon if we continued to be vigilant by going to the roadblocks on a regular basis and hunting the *inyenzi*.

The bourgmestre, said Lucien, then emphasized the need to calm the fears of Tutsis.

He said the killings were going to be halted. We should therefore publicize this and urge those protecting Tutsis to identify them and inform the authorities.

“But this was a ruse”, said Lucien, as those at the commune office that day saw for themselves.

As Ugirashebuja spoke, the commune car arrived. It was full of Tutsis and they were killed while we were in the meeting. Célestin added: ‘If we find someone who is hiding Tutsis they have not revealed to us, we will kill him and the Tutsis.’

The following day, Lucien was at home in cellule Gihisi, sector Kavumu, and listened to Nzigiyimfura as he spread the bourgmestre’s message among the militiamen guarding various roadblocks.

Vincent and Gatunzi, head of the cellule, called us together. It was Vincent who gave the instructions because he was more authoritative than Gatunzi, the *responsable*, or the councillor of sector Kavumu, Narcisse Simuhuga. There were many of us there because we had come from all four roadblocks of Gihisi. The *responsable* asked me to stand up and read aloud the report of Ugirashebuja’s meeting. I read it, and Vincent then took the floor. He said: ‘I think everything is clear. You heard what will happen to both of them if we find a Hutu with a Tutsi he has failed to report.’

Nzigiyimfura’s words frightened people to such an extent, according to Lucien, that they started naming the Tutsis they had concealed in their homes then and there.

My uncle, for example, identified five Tutsi children who were at his house. Emmanuel Gakwaya spoke about Elvanie, the wife of Daniel Munyankindi, and her five children. Many others exposed the people in their homes. After this, Vincent and Gatunzi had a list of all the remaining Tutsis and knew their whereabouts.

Dieudonné, who heard the same speech in Gihisi, initially believed what he was told.

One day, Vincent and Gatunzi, the *responsable* of cellule Gihisi, told us the killings were going to stop. They told people to provide information about any Tutsis they knew about, saying that a Tutsi who had been registered would not be killed. But if they found a Hutu hiding a Tutsi secretly, they would be killed together. This was just a trap, but at the time we didn’t know that. So many people started to report the Tutsis in their houses or who they

knew to be somewhere else. Soon the identity of all the Tutsis who were still alive was known.

Tatien, like many other witnesses in this report, said he continued to kill on Nzigiyimfura's instructions.

My group was always in touch with Vincent, because all Tutsis at the roadblock had to first be presented to him. I cannot count all the victims I helped to murder, but I remember certain cases.

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**“Between 22 April and 6 May, we executed many Tutsis under Vincent’s command.  
We could not pass a day without killing a Tutsi.”**

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We killed Baziga after we had shown him to Vincent. Emmanuel Ntawuhiganayo, Mapengu and Iyumve got rid of him during the night. They didn't want to wait for daytime for fear that Vincent would punish them if they allowed him to survive the night. They buried him not far from our roadblock. They used a hoe that I had borrowed from Nyangezi.

Tatien referred to two women who were taken to Nzigiyimfura so he could decide their fate.

The militiamen from Nyanza gave us two girls to take to Vincent. They were the sisters-in-law of Bosco. Vincent was extremely happy when he was given these two girls. He told us to kill them at Hanika school. The site had become a huge cemetery for many Tutsis from Kavumu and the surrounding area, mostly the Tutsis who had tried to leave Nyanza via the tarmac road. We later exhumed many bones there.

The hunt for Tutsis intensified in early May in Nyanza, added Tatien.

From the beginning of May, Vincent never left the militiamen who were circulating throughout Nyanza scouring the town for Tutsis. A vehicle from the iron foundry owned by the government, and given to them by Tubirimo, transported some of these militiamen. Captain Birikunzira drove another group in a vehicle he had seized. It had been owned by Germans who worked for a project called PAP, whose offices and homes were not far from Vincent's house.

The purpose of making the Tutsis who were still alive, and their Hutu protectors, believe that calm had been restored, of recording their names and identifying their precise whereabouts became clear on 7 May.

### **Saturday, 7 May: A Systematic Massacre**

Nzigiyimfura's neighbours in Gihisi speak of the arrival of a truck, full of militiamen, which pulled up in the early hours of the morning of 7 May at Nzigiyimfura's house.

At the time, Dieudonné said he was working at the roadblock in front of Nzigiyimfura's residence.

A big group of killers, in camouflage, stopped at Vincent's house. They had come in the red car of the Kavumu foundry. As Vincent knew where all the remaining Tutsis were, he went ahead of the group as they entered each house. They found many Tutsis and they killed them.

Dieudonné cited the names of the victims he could remember.

Elvanie and her five children were found at Emmanuel Gakwaya's house; the wife of Gisuguri was discovered at the home of Niyonteze and Christine at Sekimonyo's house. Many other Tutsis died that day.

He attributed the high number of casualties to what, in retrospect, was a well-laid plan.

The meeting on 26 April had been a trick and cost the lives of many Tutsis because they felt safe. Also, the fact that there were not as many killings as before made them believe they had been forgiven. They didn't know what Nzigiyimfura was planning for 7 May.

Since the primary target of the genocide was men, most of the Tutsis left to kill were women and children.

Lucien also spoke of the visit to Nzigiyimfura's house.

On 7 May, very early in the morning, a huge number of militiamen, wearing camouflage, came from the direction of Nyanza town. They first stopped at Vincent's house. He went ahead of the group and they started to kill Tutsis.

He mentioned the names of some of the victims, including the family that Lucien's uncle had mentioned at the public meeting on 26 April.

Elvanie, the wife of Daniel Munyankindi, and her 5 children died, as well as Julienne Mukangarambe, married to François Mukurarinda. That day is considered a disaster in our sector, and it was the outcome of plans put in place by Célestin Ugirashebuja and executed by Vincent Nzigiyimfura.

Paul has little doubt where the blame lies.

The events of 7 May are regarded as the most terrible killings this region, and it was Vincent who led them.

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**"I accept we did very bad things to Tutsis. But if Vincent wasn't there, or if he had acted like a good man, the massacres wouldn't have happened as they did."**

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Those who lost their loved ones on 7 May agree with Paul's conclusion. It is a day Julienne will never forget. In her front yard are buried her husband, who she said "was considered an important Tutsi", one of her daughters and her aunt. After the mass return of refugees from the DRC in late 1996, Julienne said she asked former neighbours where her husband had been killed, how and at whose hands.

One man showed me where he had buried my husband. People told me that Nzigiyimfura ordered the militia to search for my husband. I also learned that three pastors were present when Nzigiyimfura gave the green light to the militiamen to deal with my husband. He was shot. Emmanuel Nkurunziza, nicknamed Gafoni because he used a small hoe to kill people, murdered my husband.

One of her daughters had already given Julienne an idea of how he had met his death.

One of my daughters was in the area where my husband was killed and heard the militia discussing how they had killed him. They were bragging, happy and proud of what they had done. They even came to tell her that they had killed him.

But it was the returnees from exile who led her to his corpse and who provided her with the background to his death.

One of them also told her about how he had taken her daughter's life.

My oldest daughter was in sector Remera. I had entrusted her to a Hutu friend. I found out that a militiaman directed by Nzigiyimfura and Kayisire killed her on 7 May.

Marcel also blames Nzigiyimfura for the loss of his mother and sisters on 7 May. The family lived in Nyanza town, but had gone to the home of a relative in Kavumu.

I discovered, during the testimonies given at gacaca, that Nzigiyimfura was behind the death of my mother and sister. I even found out that they were buried close to Nzigiyimfura's house.

Tatien had earlier spoken of the increased activity on the part of two groups of militiamen at the beginning of May, and the fact that Nzigiyimfura never left their side. He understood the significance of this on 7 May.

After co-ordination between Birikunzira and Vincent, using the mobile group composed largely of militiamen from the north, the two men murdered nearly all the Tutsis that the residents of Kavumu had not wanted to hand over. It was this same group who killed Bosco and his wife Jeanne Kamagaju, as well as their six children, on Vincent's orders, as well as Julienne, Mukurarinda's wife.

### **“Maybe They Will Find Nothing Showing That Tutsis Used to Exist”**

By mid-May, most Tutsis in Nyanza and Kigoma had been eliminated, as in the rest of the country. The focus shifted to hiding the evidence and getting rid of all traces that spoke of the existence of Tutsis in Rwanda.

Dieudonné said Nzigiyimfura summoned him and his neighbours to a meeting a few days after the 7 May massacre.

Vincent said he was satisfied, and that only one problem remained. He asked us: 'Why are you looting the goods of Tutsis and not destroying their houses? I want to see all the houses of Tutsis demolished. Maybe if the satellites take pictures, they will find nothing showing that Tutsis used to exist.' We started to knock down all the remaining houses of Tutsis.

Special attention was paid to the stadium in Nyanza, which had served as a large receptacle for the corpses of Tutsis killed across the region. There were many foreign journalists in Rwanda at the time asking awkward questions.

André was working in a restaurant near the stadium. He said the guards there did not want foreigners to know what was happening behind the stadium walls.

The génocidaires had erected a roadblock just outside the entrance to the stadium. The purpose of the roadblock was to stop outsiders from entering the area and seeing the reality for themselves. Educated people stood guard so they could act as translators for any foreigner who attempted to get too near.

The desire to ensure that satellites “would find nothing” was closely linked to the major challenge that Nzigiyimfura, Birikunzira and their allies faced by mid-May, namely the impending fall of Nyanza to the RPF. What he noticed most after the 7 May massacre, said Charles, was Nzigiyimfura’s involvement in the large-scale distribution of arms to the militia in Nyanza.

Towards 15 May, Birikunzira, Gaëtan, Vincent, Tubirimo and their colleagues received two trucks full of arms to distribute among the militiamen who had come for military training. The trucks off-loaded their cargo at the gendarmerie. I was there. I was driving the gendarmes in one of the vehicles which Birikunzira had confiscated from the Germans who worked with PAP.

The purpose of these weapons, said Charles, was to fight the RPF.

At that moment, Nyanza was swarming with young militiamen who had come for military training so they could be part of a civil defence force against the *inkotanyi*. They were going to fight in what we called the ‘operational zone of Nyanza.’ All the militiamen who were part of the Dragons were incorporated into the heart of this force which would confront the *inkotanyi*.

The fighting began on Friday 20 May and lasted until Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup>, when Nyanza was taken by the RPF. Over the next few days, military and civilian officials in Gikongoro, which borders Nyanza, made preparations to retake Nyanza, using a large number of militiamen who had been given hasty training. They failed, and in the process most of them were killed in battle.

## 4

### EVACUATED TO MALAWI BY VINCENT NZIGIYIMFURA

Like many other key genocide leaders, commonly referred to as “big fish”, Vincent Nzigiyimfura has used his residence abroad, and his contacts in Malawi and in Rwanda, to help close relatives, imprisoned as genocide suspects in Rwanda, to evade justice and escape to Malawi.<sup>17</sup> Gacaca officials and survivors identified a niece of Nzigiyimfura, living in Kigali, as the go-between who makes the necessary arrangements.

According to many, one of the first people Nzigiyimfura helped is his younger brother, Gabriel Rusatsi. Due to the fact that Rusatsi was a category one prisoner, local people, including gacaca officials, were surprised by his release. Anaclet, a gacaca official, spoke for many of his colleagues when he commented, “We couldn’t understand how someone like Rusatsi could be free.”

All the information we had pointed to the serious crimes he had committed. So we decided to call him to gacaca, and that’s when he ran away. Many people went to the parquet [prosecutor’s office] and to other justice institutions to complain about the dubious circumstances in which he had been released, which everyone attributed to corruption. So we made a special session of gacaca for the whole district about that case. Then we held another meeting for the population of Nyanza on Rusatsi. We got a lot of information from different people saying that Rusatsi was already in Malawi with his brother, Vincent. They also told us that he was helped by a woman who lives in Kigali. Shortly afterwards, Rusatsi’s wife and children followed him to Malawi, in 2005.

Anaclet’s colleague, Christophe, described Rusatsi as “a planner and executor of the genocide in Gihisi.” He said he had asked questions about how Rusatsi could have been released from prison during a session of gacaca at Nyanza stadium. He was told that the matter would be discussed “during the next gacaca”, by which time Rusatsi was no longer in Rwanda.

Fabien, also of gacaca, saw a link between the visit to Rwanda of Nzigiyimfura’s son, Bosco, and Rusatsi’s departure from prison.

A few days before Rusatsi got out of prison, Bosco, Vincent’s son, came to Rwanda to resolve some conflict over properties in their family. He also got an ID card and passport and then he went back. Shortly afterwards, Rusatsi left prison and also left the country, with the assistance, we are sure, of Nzigiyimfura’s niece who spent some days at Rusatsi’s house just after he came out of prison.

The second member of Nzigiyimfura’s family to make it to Malawi was Célestin Munyangabe, his nephew. He left prison in 2006. It is difficult to comprehend how his name appeared on the list of people who had confessed and were subsequently released. Munyangabe was not eligible for the confession process because he was in the first category, accused, among other serious charges, of rape.

When prisoners are released, local officials ask their neighbours to help them integrate into the community by welcoming them. It was in that context, said Basile who works in gacaca,

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<sup>17</sup> See report published in December 2008 by *African Rights & REDRESS, Survivors and Post-Genocide Justice in Rwanda, Their Experiences, Perspectives and Hopes.*

that he talked to Munyangabe one day when he was cutting trees in a forest that had belonged to Nzigiyimfura. Basile's warning against cutting down trees without official permission provoked an angry response, and made Munyangabe's intentions clear.

Célestin threatened to kill me with the machete in his hand, saying I didn't have the right to try to stop him. He added that if his family had another forest, he would cut it all down to get money for a trip. He said he had spent years in jail and he was sure that if he stayed, gacaca was likely to give him 30 years which is why he didn't intend to stay.

Basile said he immediately went to alert other officials, at the same time gathering intelligence that Munyangabe's sister was working hard to find papers for him which would enable him to leave Rwanda. One of the first people Basile contacted is Anaclet.

We were certain Célestin would go if he was freed. So when I heard he was in the solidarity camp, I spoke with the representative of gacaca in the district, and also pointed out that his release was illegal. He passed this on to the police. When I saw that the police weren't doing anything, I myself went to the police station, and they promised to follow up the matter. But nothing was done.

Gacaca then took the matter into its own hands, commented Basile.

We decided to put him on trial ourselves and scheduled it for 27 December 2006. But when I took the convocation to his house, he wasn't there anymore.

His disappearance led gacaca to make inquiries. Basile gave details of what he and other gacaca officials learned.

We found out that a niece of Nzigiyimfura's had made all the arrangements. She's the link between Vincent Nzigiyimfura and his relatives. She has been to Malawi herself several times and then returns to Kigali from where she visits Nyanza. We are certain that she's the one who does everything. We believe that she first takes his relatives to Uganda where Nzigiyimfura's sister lives. From Uganda they go to Malawi. But of course she has some people who are helping her to get all the necessary documents in Nyanza and passports in Kigali. There's another man we suspect as her ally, a brother-in-law of Nzigiyimfura's. He's always searching everywhere for news to send to those men in Malawi.

Christophe was determined not to be thwarted a second time.

Because we had so much information that he would definitely leave if they let him out of prison, we spread the news everywhere, in gacaca, at the prosecutor's and at the police station, but to no avail.

The day after Célestin Munyangabe walked out of prison, Fabien found out that Nzigiyimfura's niece, Munyangabe's sister, had spent the night in Nyanza. He subsequently learned that she had returned to Nyanza, this time "accompanied by others." Local residents told him they were meeting at night at Munyangabe's house and that they believed the purpose was to help Munyangabe escape.

I informed the people of our local gacaca, who alerted the representative of gacaca in the district, who in turn told the police.

He is critical of police inaction.

The police did not act on our warnings. The inspector of police told us that he needed more evidence that Célestin was planning to escape, and that rumours alone were not sufficient.

Aware of her visits to Malawi, and of her constant presence in Nyanza, Christophe also pointed the finger at Nzigiyimfura's niece.

She's always in Nyanza when one of Nzigiyimfura's relatives is preparing to leave the country.

He also believes that a nephew of Nzigiyimfura, a businessman, is involved in procuring fake documents and in corrupting relevant officials.

Given the freedom they enjoyed while still in prison, Fabien said he was not surprised that "Vincent's relatives got away."

We used to see them quite often coming to their home to visit their wives and children. It was pretty obvious to everyone that they must have paid people off to be allowed out so much.

Like all the other interviewees, he could not understand how Nzigiyimfura's relatives gained their freedom since they were category one prisoners.

All I can say is that the whole thing was illegal.

Gacaca officials are not the only people who are looking for answers from Vincent Nzigiyimfura.

## 5

### SEEKING JUSTICE AS WELL AS ANSWERS

It is now fifteen years since the events detailed in this report took place. Vincent Nzigiyimfura has never been called to account for his actions which cost hundreds of lives and left many more wounded, widowed, orphaned, troubled and impoverished. He is not only living a tranquil life as a free man in Malawi. He is a prosperous trader who is using his resources to undermine justice in Rwanda by helping his relatives escape the country.

Justice, in post-genocide Rwanda, has been, and continues to be, a complex and difficult process, and for survivors in particular, a source of anguish, incomprehension and anger. A major contributing factor to their evident distress is the fact that the overwhelming majority of the architects and planners, as well as the men and women who incited, encouraged and led the killings at the level of the communes, left Rwanda *en masse* in 1994. Beyond the small fraction who have been arrested at the request of the ICTR, and the handful who have been detained or prosecuted in a number of European countries, the US, Canada and New Zealand, these genocide leaders have enjoyed, and continue to enjoy, impunity.

Their absence has had a profound impact on the struggle for justice in Rwanda. Because they themselves have not been held accountable for their substantial contribution to the genocide, the peasants they armed, intimidated and rewarded for killing their neighbours feel free to deny responsibility by blaming those who are abroad. As a result, the genocide has become what one survivor called “a genocide without anyone to blame.”

Prisoners who have been convicted of genocide and who have spent years in jail, on the other hand, are understandably bitter that they have been punished when those who galvanized them into action are living privileged lives in foreign countries.

Survivors like Julienne, who lost her husband and daughter, are seeking justice, as well as answers.

I'm not happy with the fact that Nzigiyimfura is outside the country. Justice needs to be done. He needs to say what he did and be punished.

It is disturbing for us to see the simple participants punished, while those who orchestrated the genocide, like Nzigiyimfura, have left the country.

Marcel, whose mother and sisters died during the massacre of 7 May in Kavumu “wants Nzigiyimfura to come and explain what happened in Nyanza and Kavumu during the genocide.”

His presence here for me would represent justice since he was the leader of the militia, the one who was directing everything. During the sessions of gacaca, we don't discuss people who aren't here. And yet they are the ones who planned it all, even if they didn't take up arms themselves. They are the ones who should compensate us because they are wealthy. In the centre of Nyanza, 80% of the homes belong to those who have fled the country.

Valentine lamented the fact that there are so few survivors in Nyanza and in her home sector of Kavumu, and spoke at length about the harassment they are subjected to if they pursue justice. There are other obstacles, she added.

The knowledge that the most important perpetrators are outside the country makes it difficult to know the truth that so many of us want to know. It would be really helpful if Vincent came and talked about what happened here because all the militiamen took their directions from him. I can't express what I feel, knowing that he is free. I want so much for him to come back to Rwanda and to tell us how the genocide was planned and carried out.

In addition to her own personal experiences during the genocide, Valentine has since learned more about Nzigiyimfura's involvement in the genocide from her neighbours.

The residents of our sector don't talk about what they saw or what they did with their own hands. But all of them testify that Vincent and his collaborators planned the genocide here. I hope that Vincent and his companions will appear before the ordinary courts or gacaca to explain their motive in killing Tutsis.

Camille agrees with Valentine that as long as the "big fish", as they are known, remain unperturbed outside the country, justice for survivors will remain a faint and distant hope.

During gacaca, people who are accused don't tell the truth. They hide things. Survivors in Nyanza are disappointed by the progress of gacaca there. The fact that many of the principle conductors of the genocide are abroad has an effect on gacaca because often times, the defendants talk about people who are not present. They do this to shift the guilt to others and to cover up their own tracks.

The absence of adults among the survivors of Nyanza, Remera and Kavumu is striking and is a powerful testament to the success of the genocide. Most of the survivors were children in 1994 and have had to grow up without the love and support of their parents and, for the most part, of the grandparents, uncles and aunts they knew. What happened in Kavumu on 7 May changed the life of Brigitte Kankindi forever.

It is the day that my mother, Elvanie Mukayiranga, my four sisters and my younger brother, who was only two years old, died in a massacre organized and put into action by Vincent Nzigiyimfura. He has caused so many people a lot of grief and pain. I find it impossible to believe, and even more impossible to accept, that someone like Nzigiyimfura is living freely and doing business in a country that should respect human rights. Because of him, we are no longer a family of nine people, but a family of two, just me and my brother.

The murder of Brigitte's mother and siblings is mentioned in several places in this report.

The death of Julienne Mukangarambe on 7 May is also referred to throughout the report. Her youngest son, Gustave Mukunde Mukurarinda, described Nzigiyimfura and his brothers as "the brains behind the genocide in Kavumu."

They were also deeply involved in the killings in Nyanza. He and Ugirashebuja, the bourgmestre of Kigoma, were responsible for the massacre of 7 May 1994 in which my mother, Julienne Mukangarambe, and my aunt, Annonciata, died. It's sad and difficult for us to hear that he is a big businessman in Malawi. How can he be a free man when he was one of the most important perpetrators in Nyabisindu and in Kigoma? We don't, in fact, understand why he wasn't indicted by the ICTR.

The fact that he was not from the area and “did not look Tutsi”, said André, saved his life. It also gave him opportunities to witness the genocide first-hand, and to offer his testimony at gacaca. He expressed disappointment with gacaca.

The fact that so many of the people who incited the genocide in Nyanza have not been brought to justice is a real problem. These leaders were the educated people and businessmen.

Their absence has had a huge impact on gacaca because the peasants here don’t feel as if they are responsible for what happened. They argue that the blame should not be placed on their shoulders while those who incited them have yet to be punished.

“If Vincent hadn’t been here, Tutsis would not have been killed on such a scale”, commented Lucien. He and many other peasants believed Nzigiyimfura’s explanations and carried out his instructions. He does not understand why it is he and his neighbours who have been left to face the consequences.

He was the one who trained people to kill during the genocide. He always walked around with a stick. He used that stick to punish people for not killing Tutsis.

Dieudonné blames Nzigiyimfura for his own participation in murdering Tutsis and looting their property.

Vincent trained us to do terrible things that we regret very much. If Vincent and his brothers weren’t there, a lot of those crimes wouldn’t have taken place.

Tatien said it took him many years in prison “to feel personally culpable for the crimes of genocide I committed against my Tutsi neighbours.”

Until then, I told myself that justice should only go after those who forced us to kill the Tutsis and who convinced us they were our enemies. I asked myself why it was the simple peasants from my sector who were in prison, when everyone was giving testimonies about the responsibility of Vincent Nzigiyimfura in the death of the Tutsis of Kavumu. This is why I resolved to speak about the role of Vincent ever since I left prison.

Saying he “regrets the recent decision in the UK to release Ugirashebuja, Nzigiyimfura’s close collaborator”, Gustave made this appeal to Malawi, and more broadly to African countries.

I would like to see African countries take the lead in arresting and prosecuting important genocide suspects.