

The Hidden Story Behind Rwanda's Tragedy

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Rwanda before 1990 was considered the Switzerland of Africa, a model of social development.

The result of the 1959 social revolution that deposed the Tutsi monarchy and aristocracy and freed the majority Hutu population from serfdom and a lifetime of humiliation was the establishment of a collective society in which both Hutus, and Tutsis, as well as Twas, lived together in relative harmony.

Tutsis were members of the government, its administration, present in large numbers in the education system, the judiciary, and controlled most of the large private commercial companies in Rwanda.

The Rwandan army was a multiethnic army composed of both Hutus and Tutsis, and it stayed a multiethnic force even when the Rwandan Army was forced by the invaders from Uganda to retreat into the Congo forests in July 1994 because it ran out of ammunition due to the Western embargo on arms and supplies.

Rwanda descended into chaos in 1990 when the self-described Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) forces launched a surprise attack on October 1, 1990, from Uganda. In fact, every one of the enlisted men and officers of that invasion force were members of the Ugandan national Army.

It was an invasion by Uganda disguised as an independent force of “liberation”. Liberation from what, has never been stated. Initially the justification put out by the RPF was that of attaining the return of Tutsi “refugees” from Uganda to Rwanda. However, that problem had been resolved by an agreement between the RPF, Uganda, Rwanda, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the OAU, a few weeks earlier. The Rwandan government had agreed to the return of all those Tutsis in Uganda who wanted to return to Rwanda.

That accord required that Tutsi representatives of the refugees travel to Kigali for a meeting to determine the mechanics of that population-movement, and how to accommodate all those people in a small country. They were expected at the end of September 1990. They never arrived. Instead of civilians returning in peace, Rwanda was viciously attacked on October 1, 1990, by a force that unleashed unbridled savagery. During that invasion the RPF forces of the Ugandan Army slaughtered everyone in their path, Hutu or Tutsi. Tens of thousands of innocent civilians, the majority Hutu, were butchered. These crimes have never been accounted for. The RPF’s favorite method was the bayonet or knife with which they disembowelled men and women, or to tie their hands behind their backs and smashed their skulls with hoes, the farm tool iconic of the Hutu peasantry.

After several weeks of intense fighting, the RPF forces were destroyed by the small Rwandan Army and the remnants fled, on US instructions, back into Uganda to regroup and reorganize.

The RPF still never justified this aggression and the needless slaughter of civilians in a peaceful country. Individual Tutsis had always been allowed to return to Rwanda from the early 1960s and several times the Rwandan government invited them all to return. However the Tutsi aristocracy, jealous of its lost power and viewing the Hutus as merely subhuman, refused to return unless their absolute power was restored. This the people of Rwanda, even the Tutsis who remained in the country, refused.

In the 1960s and early 1970s various Tutsi groups in Uganda and elsewhere had organized terrorist raids into Rwanda in which they murdered without pity anyone they caught. These raids were repelled by Rwanda's tiny armed forces. The years that followed were a period of development and peace for Rwandans. Even though one of the smallest and poorest countries in the world, it had the best roads, healthcare, and education systems in Africa. Until the late 1980s, it prospered and received help from both the socialist countries, like the USSR, North Korea and China, and West Germany, France, Israel and others.

Some Tutsis in Uganda became involved in the civil wars there between the socialist Milton Obote and the US- and UK-puppet, Yoweri K. Museveni, who was supported by the West to get rid of socialism in Uganda. By 1990 Tutsis composed a large section of the Ugandan Army and all the senior officers of the RPF were high officers in the Ugandan NRA (the National Resistance Army). Paul Kagame, himself, was one of the highest-ranking officers in the intelligence services of the Ugandan army and was notorious for his enjoyment of torturing prisoners. Rwanda until 1990 was a one-party socialist state. The ruling party, the National Movement For Revolutionary Development (MRND), was not considered a party as such, but rather a social movement in which everyone in the society took part through local elections and the mechanism of consensus, much like the system in Cuba.

The fall of the Soviet Union led to pressure from the West, notably the United States and France to dismantle the one-party state system and permit multiparty democracy. The President, Juvenal Habyarimana, instead of resisting, agreed to a change in the constitution, and, in 1991, Rwanda became a multiparty democracy. The fact the Rwandan government did this in the middle of a war is more than remarkable. It was also an offer of peace. The RPF, since its abject failure in 1990, had changed its strategy from a frontal assault to the tactics of terrorism.

The RPF likes to refer to this phase as 'the guerrilla'. However, it was not the guerrilla of a liberation struggle like the FLMN in Vietnam or the FARC in Colombia. It was, instead, a mirror image of the Contras campaign of terrorism conducted against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Its purpose was not to make revolution. Its purpose was to overthrow the 1959 revolution.

And, like the contras, the RPF was supported by the United States. This was clear from the beginning of the war.

When the RPF launched their attack, President Juvenal Habyarimana was in Washington, lured out of the way, by the US State Department. The evidence that the US was aware of and supported the October surprise attack was the US Administration's offer to Habyarimana of asylum in the United States if he surrendered power to the RPF. Habyarimana refused and immediately flew back home. There was no condemnation of the Ugandan-RPF aggression by the United States--a matter France raised at the United Nations--or any of its allies despite the big noise they made at the same time about the advance of Iraqi forces into Kuwait. Further, the Rwanda am-

bassador to the UN, then on the Security Council, filed a protest with the UNSC, but the US had it taken off the agenda. In fact the US and its allies supported the aggression against Rwanda from its onset, and US Special Forces operated with the RPF from the beginning. Recently, while former president Bill Clinton was in Toronto, he denied any involvement in Rwanda--this is one of the Big Lies of the century. Clinton and George W. Bush are up to their necks in the blood of the Rwandan and Congolese people.

With the arrival of multiparty democracy in 1991, the RPF took full advantage and created several front parties to take away support from the popular MRND. These parties, though claiming to represent different political views, were, in fact, the main front parties for the RPF.

The press was expanded and many of the new papers were financed by and acted as mouthpieces for the RPF. At the same time as these parties sprang up, criticizing the government, the RPF continued its terror campaign: planting mines on roads that killed Hutu and Tutsi alike; assassinating politicians and officials; and blaming it, with the help of various western intelligence agency-funded NGOs, on the government.

In 1992, a coalition government was formed with the RPF, with its front parties seizing control of key ministries and appointing the prime minister. Through these agents they also controlled the civilian intelligence services that they then began to dismantle. The RPF engaged in a “talk and fight” strategy. Always agreeing to a ceasefire, pressing for more power, then launching new attacks on civilians. The most egregious of these ceasefire violations was their major offensive in February 1993 in which they seized the major town of Ruhengeri, while murdering 40,000 civilians, most of them Hutu, in the process.

The Rwandan Army, even though hamstrung by the civilian ministries controlled by the RPF, managed to drive the RPF back. Finally, in August 1993, under pressure from the United States and its allies, Rwanda signed the Arusha Accords, giving the RPF major concessions in return for the formation of a broad-based transition government, which was to be followed by general elections.

However, the RPF knew they could not win such elections, as they were not only unpopular with the majority Hutu population, but it did not even enjoy the support of many internal Tutsis whose lives and businesses had been destroyed by this war that they did not see a need for.

Instead of preparing for elections, the RPF prepared for their final offensive. As far back as December 1993, UN reports document the massive build-up of men and weapons coming in from Uganda. A UN force was deployed supposedly to ensure a peaceful transition; in fact, it was a cover for the US and its allies to assist in this build up.

General Roméo Dallaire, the Canadian general in charge of the UN force, hid this build up from the Rwandan army and the President. The build up was accompanied by death threats against the president. According to an account of Habyarimana’s last conversation with Mobutu Sese Seko, president of what was then Zaire, just two days before the Rwandan president was murdered, Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen had, in October 1993, told Habyarimana that unless he ceded all power to the RPF they were going to kill him and drag his body through the streets.

These threats were punctuated by the murder by Tutsi officers in October 1993 of the first democratically-elected Hutu president of neighboring Burundi, Melchior Ndadaye, a terrorist act in which Kagame and the RPF also had a hand; the officers who committed the murder, including Lieutenant Paul Kamana, later fled to Uganda.

Ndadaye was in office a mere four months, having won the country's first free elections. In the aftermath of that murder, 250,000 Hutus weremassacred by the Tutsi army of Burundi and hundreds of thousands of Hutus fled to Rwanda.

The result of the 1993 offensive was that one million Hutus fled the RPF terror in northern Rwanda towards the capital, Kigali, so that by April 1994, over a million refugees were encamped close to the capital and hundreds of thousands more in camps in the south, all having fled RPF terror. The RPF did all it could in 1994 to paralyze the functioning of the government, to exacerbate racial tensions, and to prepare for war.

Then on April 6, 1994, they launched their final surprise attack by shooting down the Rwandan presidential plane returning from a meeting in Tanzania that had been arranged by Uganda's president Museveni. In fact, it is known that Museveni's half-brother, General Salim Saleh, was at the final meeting in which the date for the shoot-down was fixed.

The missile attack killed Habyarimana, as well as Burundi's new Hutu president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, and Rwanda's military chief of staff, and everyone else on board. This was the first massacre of 1994, and it was a massacre of Hutus by the RPF.

The RPF then immediately launched attacks across Kigali and the north of the country. In the sector of Kigali known as Remera, they killed everyone on the night of the 6th and the 7th, wiped out the Gendarme camp there, wiped out the military police camp at Kami and launched a major attack against Camp Kanombe, Camp Kigali and the main gendarme camp at Kacyriu.

The Rwandan government and army called for a ceasefire the same night and the next day. The RPF rejected the call. The Rwandan government asked for more UN help to control the situation. Instead, the US arranged for the main UN force to be pulled out while flying in men and supplies to the RPF in C130 Hercules aircraft.

The Rwandan Army, short on ammunition and unable to contain the RPF's advances, even offered to surrender unconditionally on April 12th. The RPF rejected even this offer, and, instead, shelled the Nyacyonga refugee camp where one million Hutu refugees were located, provoking their flight into the capital.

The effect of one million people flooding into a small city that itself was under bombardment cannot be described. The RPF used this flood of people to infiltrate its men behind Rwandan army lines. This created panic among the Hutu population, which began killing anyone they did not recognize. It was clear that the RPF was not interested in saving lives, even Tutsi lives, but only in seizing total power and did not want to negotiate at all.

The late Dr. Alison Des Forges, the American who was considered a noted scholar on Rwanda, in her testimony in the Military II trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 2006, testified that the RPF's claim that they attacked to stop a "genocide" was a myth; just

propaganda to justify their attempt to seize power by force of arms. She also testified that the Rwandan government did not plan and execute genocide. This accords with the testimony of General Dallaire, who also confirmed an earlier statement that there was no genocide planned by the government, as well as that of the deputy head of Belgian Army intelligence, Col. Vincent, who also testified at the ICTR that the idea of a genocide was a fantasy.

The fighting in Kigali was intense. UN officers—confirming what has been said by Rwandan and RPF officers who have testified—state that the RPF was launching hundreds of Katyusha rockets every hour, round the clock, while the Rwandan Army ran out of hand grenades in the first few days and was reduced to fighting the RPF with hand made explosives.

The vaunted RPF could not take Kigali. The siege of Kigali lasted three months and only ended when the Rwandan Army literally ran out of ammunition and ordered a general retreat into the Congo forest.

RPF officers have stated that the RPF killed up to two million Hutus in those 12 weeks in a deliberate campaign to eliminate the Hutu population. The Akagera River, the full-length of which was under RPF control throughout, ran red with the blood of the Hutus massacred on its banks.

The RPF claimed these were Tutsis, but there were no Tutsis in that area and only the RPF had access to it. Robert Gersony, of the USAID, in an October 1994 report to the UNHCR filed as an exhibit at the ICTR, stated that the RPF carried out a systematic and planned massacre of the Hutu population. Please see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Gersony As the Rwandan Army, including Tutsi officers within that army and its enlisted men, retreated into the Congo forest, the Hutu population, in fear for their lives, fled in the millions along with them. In local villages, Hutu neighbors attacked Tutsis in revenge for the murder of Hutus or fearing death at their hands. Tutsis also attacked Hutus. It was total war just as the RPF had wished. The RPF later pursued the Hutus through the Congo forest between 1996 to 1998 and killed hundreds of thousands and possibly millions. They were shelled, machine gunned, raped, cut to pieces with knives. Accounts of that trek are difficult to bear.

The RPF was assisted in its offensive by the United States. The UN Rwanda Emergency Office in Nairobi, in fact, was manned by US Army officers, and acted as the operational headquarters for the RPF, giving them intelligence on Rwandan Army movements, on actions and directions. Prudence Bushnell, the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, telephoned the Rwandan Army chief of staff in May 1994 and told him that unless he surrendered he must know that he was fighting the United States of America and would be defeated. US Special Forces fought with the RPF. There is also evidence that Belgian forces of the UN were involved, as an intercepted radio message from Kagame to his forces in the field refers to the help they had received from the Belgians.

There is also evidence that Canadian forces were likewise involved, and Antoine Nyetera, a Tutsi prince, who was in Kigali in that period, testified for the defense in the Military II trial and stated that not only were there no massacres committed against Tutsis by the Rwandan Army, but that it was the RPF that began the massacres after they took Kigali and began killing Hutus.

Nyetera testified that despite the claim by the RPF of being a Tutsi liberation group, when he saw their long columns enter the capital, he saw that most of them were Sudanese, Eritreans, Ethiopians, Tanzanians and others speaking Swahili or Sudanese languages, in other words, mercenaries.

Several RPF officers have testified at the ICTR that they fled the Kagame regime because they had been promised that they were fighting for liberation of the Tutsis. However, when they wanted to take over the streets of Kigali to stop reprisals against Tutsis by Hutu civilians the junior officers were forbidden to do so, putting the lie to Kagame's claim that he attacked to save Tutsis.

These officers testified that Kagame wanted deaths to justify his war. The RPF could have controlled large parts of Kigali as they had at least 15,000 men in or near the capital opposed to 5,000 Rwandan Army forces. Instead, Kagame used his men to ethnically cleanse the rest of the country of the Hutu population.

The Rwanda War was a total war. All means were used to destroy that country and the Hutu people. The ultimate objective was the resources of the Congo. The US agreed to support the RPF in return for the RPF's acting as a US proxy force to invade the Congo and seize its resources.

The US now has several military bases in Rwanda, and the country is nothing more than a colony of the US and UK, run by thugs who control the majority of the people through intimidation, murder and disinformation.

None of this could have happened if those in the UN like Kofi Anan, then in charge of the Department of peacekeeping operations, had done their jobs. None of this could have happened without the connivance of the NATO countries and Uganda, from where the invasion was launched.

Ultimately, the prime responsibility rests with the United States of America and, in particular, with the regimes of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush--and now with President Barack Obama. As **Boutros Boutros-Ghali**, then UN **Secretary General, stated to Canadian historian Robin Philpot in 2004: "The United States is one hundred percent responsible for what happened in Rwanda."**

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