



## SIREPUBLIC OF RWANDA

*National Commission for the Fight against Genocide  
Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Génocide  
Komisiyo y'Igihugu yo Kurwanya Jenoside*



-CNLG-

### **GENOCIDE PLANNING : HIGHLIGHTS FROM 16 TO 22 FEBRUARY DURING THE YEARS 1991-1994**

The National Commission for the fight against Genocide continues to highlight certain events carried out in the planning and implementation of the Genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi. Below are the events from 16 to 22 February during the years 1991-1994.

#### **1) The Rwandan Government planned the Genocide while the Arusha peace negotiations were in progress**

Even though the Arusha negotiations seemed to be going well, the Rwandan government was preparing for war. It was in this context that on February 19, 1992, President Habyarimana went to Egypt to request that Rwanda be able to buy weapons there and received a positive response to his request. Thus, in March 1992, the Ministry of Defense bought weapons in Egypt worth six million US dollars. Among these weapons were rifles, rockets and grenades which were distributed to the population.

This shows that Habyarimana participated in the Arusha peace negotiations while unwilling to abide by its terms, and that he was preparing for war as well as genocide. This is what he confirmed during the meeting of November 17, 1992 in Ruhengeri, during which he declared to the partisans of the MRND that he did not accept the results of the peace negotiations, which he called "rags". , adding that peace could not depend on rags.

#### **2) CDR spread false news, which invent imaginary crimes attributed to the RPF, as part of their mobilization to commit the Genocide**

On February 19, 1993, the CDR published a false statement which gave the alleged number of Hutu massacred, 800 in the town of Ruhengeri, 200 in the Commune Kidaho, 600 in the Commune Nkumba, 500 in the Commune Kinigi and 800 in the Commune Nyarutovu. The CDR added another lie that in Kinyami Commune, Byumba Prefecture, there were 800 others



who had been massacred. After having listed these completely false figures, the CDR concluded by urging all Hutus to defend themselves, which meant killing the Tutsi. This shows that the CDR, with these figures fabricated from scratch, had the objective of inciting the population hatred of the RPF and the Tutsi, as well as inciting the Hutu to commit genocide.

On February 20, 1993, the CDR continued its mobilization to commit the genocide by publishing another press release warning the Hutu from Cyangugu and Kibuye that the RPF would also attack these regions, asking them to defend themselves, which meant killing the Tutsi. These CDR press releases were followed by massacres of Tutsi in these regions.

### **3) The Rwandan army places its military in Genocide alert**

On 17 February 1994, a document bearing the number 17 issued by the Belgian intelligence services provides information according to which the Chief of Staff of the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), General Deogratias Nsabimana, had put on alert all Rwandan army units, including the gendarmerie, to prepare for a major event. General Nsabimana also asked that soldiers and gendarmes who left on leave return to their barracks as quickly as possible. He also ordered an audit of the stocks of FAR weapons, ammunition and war material. Finally, he demanded that the army recruit new soldiers to strengthen the FAR.

It is clear that all these measures taken two months before the genocide were aimed at setting up the murderous machine so that it was ready once the order to start the genocide was launched.

### **4) President Habyarimana announces Genocide to the Rwandan Gendarmery officers**

On February 17, 1994, President Habyarimana chaired a meeting of senior officers of the national gendarmerie commanded by General Augustin Ndindiriyimana. He talked to them, among other things, about the ongoing blockage of the establishment of transitional institutions and the possibility of resumption of the war. Habyarimana alerted them in these terms: « If the RPF starts the war, we have plans to deal with their accomplices ». In these remarks, the genocide is announced in very clear terms, killing the Tutsi had become a state affair, which enabled the gendarmes normally responsible for providing security, to massacre the Tutsi as soon as the authorities gave them order to start doing it.

### **5) The chief of Rwandan army showed to his cousin Jean Birara the list of people to be eliminated**

With preparations for genocide well under way, the chief of staff of the Rwandan army, general Déogratias Nsabimana, presented to his cousin, Jean Berchmas BIRARA, former governor of the National Bank of Rwanda, a list of 15000 people marked out for murder. In an interview with Belgian Newspaper, La Libre Belgique, on 24th May 1994, BIRARA testifies that he gave the information to a number of western diplomats seated in Kigali, including the Belgian Embassy. In questioning before the Belgian senate in 1997, the Belgian ambassador to Rwanda at the time, Johann SWINNEN confirmed that he did receive such information.





## **6) An Agenda of Colonel Bagosora dated in 1994 stated the planning of the Genocide**

In a diary of 21st February 1994, (found in his archives in Kigali), Bagosora noted the need to begin "identification of reservists" who would be reintegrated into the army; a clear indication that he was preparing for war. At the same time, UNAMIR reports show evidence of an organized network of death squads for the extermination of Tutsi and senior members of the political opposition.

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On February 19, 1993, soldiers killed 5 people in Tumba. Between 20 and 22 February, serious acts of violence were committed in Kigali by Interahamwe and members of the CDR, while other assassinations were carried out in Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, Kibuye and Byumba.

It was in this context that on February 21, 1994, the president of the PSD, Gatabazi Félicien, was assassinated by members of the presidential guard. The next day, 22 February 1994, CDR president Martin Bucyana was assassinated by the people of Mbazi who accused him of having assassinated Gatabazi.

## **7) French soldiers sent to « Operation CHIMERE » received special powers including identity verification**

To help the Rwandan regime cope with the military superiority of the RPF which had manifested itself in early February 1993 with the arrival of the RPF on the outskirts of Kigali, France decided to launch an operation to support the FAR . It was the operation called Chimère which lasted a month, from February 20 to March 20, 1993.

On February 20, 1993, France sent two paratrooper companies to Rwanda, and the next day a heavy artillery section in support of the Rwandan government in the war. This shows all the support that France has given to the Rwandan government to continue the war and plan the genocide. France claimed to be in favor of the negotiations, but its actions indicated that in reality France wanted the war to continue.

The report of the French Parliamentary Information Mission published in 1998 rightly criticized this operation, noting that this "French military presence in Rwanda has reached a milestone that it should not have exceeded". The report states that "the new missions" of French soldiers involved in this operation have been greatly expanded to include "patrols, area checks around the capital and identity checks at access points. "



In short, the various military operations launched by France in Rwanda (Noroit, DAMI, Chimère, etc.) aimed at the same objective of supporting the Rwandan government and its army thus contributing to its intransigence vis-à-vis the RPF and the opposition democratic. The seeds of the genocide are found in this policy of a state that knew it was supported in all circumstances by a great power like France.

#### **8) French Intelligence services recognized the killing of 300 civilians by the Rwandan Army**

On February 18, 1994, the Directorate General of External Security of the French Intelligence Services (DGSE) established a secret note reporting real ethnic massacres that had claimed the lives of more than 300 dead in the previous weeks. In this note, the DGSE announces that these massacres are part of a plan aiming at the total extermination of Tutsi: *"It would be an element of a vast program of ethnic purification directed against Tutsis"*.

The next day, February 19, 1994, General Christian Quesnot, Chief of Private Staff of President Mitterrand as well as Dominique Pin who is number two in the Africa Department of the French Presidency (Elysée), present two main options to President Mitterrand concerning the Rwanda. The first consists in evacuating French nationals and withdrawing the military equipment from Operation Noroit, but at the same time Quesnot and Pin reject it, advising President Mitterrand not to consider it: *"It is the failure of our presence and our politics in Rwanda. Our credibility on the continent would suffer."*

The second option is that in which Dominique Pin thinks of the capture of Kigali by the RPF; immediately he assures that in such cases, the ethnic massacres will increase and that consequently France must increase the effort to support the regime more than ever so that the RPF does not take Kigali.

Clearly, the French authorities knew that President Habyarimana's regime was considering genocide, but persisted in their desire to unconditionally support it.

#### **CONCLUSION**

During February 1991-1994, there were many actions which demonstrated that the Rwandan government, fortified by French military support, planned the extermination of Tutsi. This support for the Rwandan government comforted the government, which continued to massacre Tutsi civilians and to refine the planning for their extermination.

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