



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



-CNLG-

JUNE 17, 1994: THE CABINET MEETING OF KAMBANDA GOVERNMENT LIED ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF *INYENZI* IN BISESERO AND DECIDED TO EXTERMINATE THE REMAINING TUTSI OF BISESERO

The bravery of the Tutsi in Bisesero has become known throughout the history of the Genocide against the Tutsi. In 1994, the Basesero resisted the Interahamwe attacks for more than two months until the KAMBANDA Government meeting listed the issue on the agenda of the **June 17, 1994** cabinet meeting. It was decided to send troops and large number of the Interahamwe to kill the Basesero who were still resisting using traditional weapons.

It was also on **June 17, 1994**, that the Tutsi who had taken refuge at the *Centre National de Pastorale Saint Paul* were liberated by the RPF Inkotanyi Forces and the Interahamwe and government soldiers had vented their anger on the Tutsi who had taken refuge in the *Sainte Famille* Church. At around 10:00 am, a major attack on the Church of *Sainte Famille* killed nearly all Tutsi who had taken refuge there for days.

1. THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO DESTROY THE TUTSI IN BISESERO WAS TAKEN ON JUNE 17, 1994

The diaries of Ministers Pauline NYIRAMASUHUKO, Augustin NGIRABATWARE and Edouard KAREMERA speaks about the June 17, 1994 Government meeting and the issues discussed, including the massacre of Tutsi in Bisesero. It is clear from the diaries of these Ministers that the issue of Tutsi presence in Bisesero was the main issue. NYIRAMASUHUKO wrote that "*there were Inyenzi in Gishyita Commune, Bisesero Sector.*"

The KAREMERA diary shows the decision taken for the Tutsi of Bisesero whom they called *Inyenzi*. KAREMERA wrote in French that the Government had decided that a special attack should be sent to Bisesero, with the help of soldiers from Gisenyi, no later than June 20, 1994. In French he wrote: "*Le Gouvernement décide qu'une intervention muselée soit faite à Bisesero, au besoin avec l'appui de Gisenyi et ce, au plus tard, le 20 juin 1994.*"

The Cabinet meeting also decided that in order to achieve this goal, additional weapons would have to be provided to the Interahamwe through "*auto-defense civile*" in order to carry out the killings.



According to the NYIRAMASUHUKEO diary, the Basesero people are well-known in the history of Rwanda as warriors since the time of the monarchy (former feudal warrior agents), and some of their descendants had joined the RPF including Denis POLISI. NYIRAMASUHUKEO also wrote that BISERUKA, a former RPF senior officer was in the HABYARIMANA's government army, was the one who selected Bisesero as the site for the liberation of Gisenyi struggle. NYIRAMASUHUKEO said that it indicated that the RPF would attack Gisenyi through Bisesero and Kabuhanga, which is why there was an urgent need for a special operation (muscular operation) in Bisesero.

The plan to attack Bisesero is also reflected in the NGIRABATWARE diary where he wrote that it has been decided to put more effort into the war and to do it everywhere.

It was also decided at the meeting that in order to protect the infrastructures in Bisesero District against the attack by the government soldiers and interahamwe, it was necessary to send gendarmes and veterans to protect them. The infrastructures which were mentioned were electricity, Gisovu Tea Factory, Karongi TV and Radio Tower and Crete Zaire Nile Project activities.

This was a strong indication of the Genocide plot, where infrastructures were considered more valuable than the lives of civilian population only because they were Tutsi. Authorities involved in the massacre of Tutsi in Bisesero included: Ministers from Kibuye Edouard KAREMERA, Eliezer NIYITEGEKA, Emmanuel NDINDABAHIZI, Prefect Clement KAYISHEMA, Alfred MUSEMA the director of the Gisovu tea factory.

They were all convicted of genocide crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and sentenced to life imprisonment. NIYITEGEKA and KAYISHEMA died in prison.

Others involved were: Bourgmestre of Gisovu Aloys NDIMBATI and Bourgmestre Charles SIKUBWABO of Gishyita. Both are wanted by the International Justice. There were also Yussuf MUNYAKAZI and Obed RUZINDANA sentenced to 25 years in prison by the ICTR.

2. THE CABINET MEETING ACCUSED COLONEL Innocent BAVUGAMENSHI FOR NOT ACCEPTING THE GENOCIDE PLAN

Another issue found in the diary of NYIRAMASUHUKEO which was on the agenda at the June 17, 1994 Government meeting was the conduct of Colonel Innocent BAVUGAMENSHI who was the commander of the Gendarmery in Cyangugu Prefecture. NYIRAMASUHUKEO wrote that Lieutenant Colonel Claudien SINGIRANKABO was in charge of the so-called "*auto-defense civile*" activities in Cyangugu, and that he had said that those actions were obstructed by the behaviour of Colonel BAVUGAMENSHI who did not want to kill. The two senior officers were from Cyangugu.

Colonel BAVUGAMENSHI was appointed in Cyangugu on April 20, 1994 to replace Major Innocent MUNYARUGERERO from Ruhengeri who played a key role in the massacre of Tutsi in Cyangugu in collaboration with Lieutenant Samuel IMANISHIMWE, Prefect BAGAMBIKI and sous prefects Emmanuel KAMONYO, Theodore MUNYANGABE, Gerard TERUBURA and others.



On his arrival in Cyangugu, Colonel Innocent BAVUGAMENSHI refused to commit Genocide, doing all he could to fight for the Tutsi. He was the one who put trusted gendarms around the Nyarushishi Tutsi camp to guard them. He had instructed them to protect the Tutsi and told them to use weapons in case interahamwe would come near the camp to pick Tutsi to kill.

The government was also pleased that the "*auto-defense civile*" killing program which was becoming more and more involving with the contribution of about Rwf22 million from the population for the continuation of the Genocide.

3. THE GOVERNMENT REPLACED SOME OF THE BURGMESTERS AND OTHER AUTHORITIES TO ACCELERATE THE GENOCIDE

As the RPF-INKOTANYI forces defeated the killers and stopped the Genocide, some bourgmestres and other government officials fled for fear of being arrested and held accountable for their killings. The government replaced many of them during the June 17, 1994 meeting. The following authorities were appointed and they were all extremists who supported the Genocide plot.

In the Ministry of Finance, the following were appointed:

The Director of Cabinet: NTIRIGIRUMWE Gervais; Political and Legal Adviser: VAINQUEUR Alphonse; The Director General: NTAHONDI Felicien; the Governor of the National Bank: DIRUGIRIMBABAZI Denis; the Director General of the Rwanda Development Bank (BRD): GASAMUNYIGA Froduald.

The following fifteen (15) bourgmestres have also been appointed:

- In Ruhengeri Prefecture, Kinigi Commune: HAGUMIMANA Etienne, Mukingo: KAJELIJELI Juvénal;
- In Butare Prefecture, the Prefect: Lieutenant Colonel Alphonse NTEZIRYAYO; Nyabisindu Commune: NGIRUWONSANGA Vincent, Rusatira: KANDAGAYE Jean Marie Vianney, Muganza: NDAYAMBAJE Elie, Ndora: UWIZEYE Fidèle;
- In Gitarama Prefecture, Masango Commune: MWANAFUNZI Anthere, Nyabikenke: MUSABYIMANA Vedaste, Nyakabanda: NSABIMANA Camille, Musambira: KARANI Dominique;
- In Gisenyi, Nyamyumba Commune: NZITABAKUZE Henri;
- Kigali City and Kigali Ngali, Kicukiro Commune: KARANGANWA Gerard, Kanombe: NDUWAYEZU Jean, Tare: RUKIMBIRA Leodomir, Butamwa: MUHIZINA Sebastien.



4. THE DOWNFALL OF KAMBANDA GOVERNMENT AND ITS ARMY WAS VISIBLE IN THE GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

According to Edouard KAREMERA's diary, the Cabinet meeting of **June 17, 1994**, also highlighted the argument between the government and its military. He noted that the military criticised the government that the ministers and other officials flee the areas which had problems, seeking refuge, especially in areas close to borders with foreign countries, rather than joining the military on the battlefield.

KAREMERA wrote that one of the highlights of the issue was the low attendance of ministers at government meetings as only nine (9) ministers were present on the date.

Another indication of the frustration of the KAMBANDA criminal government was the fact that senior officials, including ministers, were interested in taking their families abroad. It showed that the cooperation was limited.

CONCLUSION

The government's actions of attacking Tutsi civilians who were not yet killed in Bisesero, the continued supply of weapons and training to the Interahamwe in "*auto-defense civile*" program are some of the worst indications that the Genocide against the Tutsi was part of a government's plan to exterminate the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Done at Kigali on June 17, 2020

Dr BIZIMANA Jean Damascène
Executive Secretary
National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG)

