



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



-CNLG-

**MAY 07, 1994: MASSACRE OF TUTSI STUDENTS AT GROUPE SCOLAIRE
MARIE MERCI, KIBEHO**

On May 7, 1994, the criminal government continued to implement their plan to exterminate Tutsi throughout the country. This document details how Tutsi students from Groupe Scolaire Marie Merci – Kibeho were killed.

1. Groupe scolaire Marie Merci students in Kibeho were first protected by gendarmes

As the Tutsi population started to flee to Kibeho church on April 8, 1994, students of Groupe Scolaire Marie Merci started to wonder what had happened. They only got informed from April 10, 11 and 14, 1994 when Tutsi who had taken refuge at Kibeho church got killed. Since then, authorities sent gendarmes at the school to protect them. However, the Principal, Father Uwayezu Emmanuel has been meeting with teachers living outside the school including Fatikaramu Holomisidasi, Kayigamba and some Hutu students who had left the campus at night to meet the Bourgmestre Nyiridandi Charles to plot for the killing of Tutsi students.

During the night of April 30, 1994, Hutu students started to speculate that Tutsi were about to be killed. On May 1, 1994, ten Tutsi students (9 boys and one girl) discovered the plan and decided to flee to Burundi that night. When the news broke that they had gone, gendarmes surrounded the school so that no one could escape.

2. Tutsi students tried to flee to Burundi but were banned

On May 2, 1994, Father Uwayezu Emmanuel held a meeting and told the students that fleeing was useless and that the Tutsi who fled at night were killed at Akavuguto River and that their bodies were being used to block roads. From then, none of the remaining Tutsi tried to flee again.

With the aim of stirring up students' minds and spreading hatred among the students, on May 4, Tutsi were falsely accused of poisoning porridge to kill Hutu. Hutu students organised riots



and used whistles and refused to eat porridge saying that it was poisoned by Tutsi and that they were leaving the school for the latter.

Hutu students immediately rushed to another school on the opposite side of theirs, - Collège des Lettres (currently Mère du Verbe), hence, their long time plan was fulfilled because, Tutsi were left alone at Groupe Scolaire Marie Merci, while Hutu had left.

Father Uwayezu and some gendarmes followed Hutu students to persuade them to return to Marie Merci school because their belongings were still there. Hutu students agreed that they would return if there was no Tutsi student left at Groupe Scolaire Marie Merci. Tutsi students were taken to Ecole des Lettres, while Hutu returned to Groupe Scolaire Marie Merci. When Tutsi students arrived at the Collège des Lettres, the nun who was running the school Pierre de Vérone, refused to give them dormitories and put them in refectory where they slept on the floor without food or beddings.

3. School authorities betrayed Tutsi students

That situation could have caused Tutsi to flee and considering the information they had from outside. However, on May 4, 1994 the principal of the school, Father Uwayezu Emmanuel, the person in charge of education in Gikongoro and gendarmes used a so-called consolation meeting to comfort them but in fact it was to blindfold them so that no one would think of escaping.

Also present at the meeting were the former Prefect of Gikongoro Prefecture, Bucyibaruta Laurent, the sous prefet of the Munini sous prefecture, Biniga Damiyani, Bishop Misago Augustin of Gikongoro Diocese, the Bourgmestre of Rwamiko Commune Silas Munyurangabo, the Bourgmestre of Mubuga commune Nyiridandi Charles, the Commander-in-Chief of Mubuga gendarmery, S/Lt Hitimana Anaclet, and other officials from the prefecture, Mubuga and Rwamiko communes.

The prefect asked the student representative to express their problems, and explained that apart from fearing to be killed as they were always told, they were concerned by the fact that they are far from their families and they were not even sure that their relatives were still alive. The student representative added that if leaders chose for them to live they would live, and if they chose to let them die they would die.

According to survivors from the school, Bishop Misago and Prefect Bucyibaruta told Tutsi students that the reason why Hutus chose to separate from them was that they no longer trusted Tutsi because the latter spent nights listening to Inkotanyi songs on Radio Muhabura, and that they could poison them.



4. Interahamwe militias from different parts of the country killed Tutsi students

On May 7, 1994, between 11 am and 12, Interahamwe from various parts of the country including Rwamiko, Mubuga, Ndago and elsewhere attacked the students with various weapons and started killing them. Those who managed escape were hunted by dogs and they discovered some of them who were seen by the students of Marie Merci while hiding.

Interahamwe wore dried and green banana leaves while all Hutu students from the Groupe Scolaire Marie Merci wore red scarves so that anyone who might mix with them could easily be identified as a Tutsi and killed. Students themselves had weapons and used them to kill some of their classmates and tortured them. They first asked those who were about to be killed to kill each other and the one who kills others would not be killed.

They first took off clothes of those whom they wanted to kill. They looted and hunted down fellow students who had been hiding in different places. They discovered some Tutsi who had taken refuge in the ceiling including Elias and Fidèle Castro from Ruhango. The latter was tortured to death by burying him alive and living his head outside the hole and killing him later. The victims of Ecole des Lettres were thrown into a pit behind the chapel.

5. Officials who were directly or indirectly involved in the killings

Father Uwayezu Emmanuel who was the Director of Groupe Scolaire Marie Merci lives in Italy and he changed his name to Emmanuel Mihigo Wayezu. The Prefect of Gikongoro Bucyibaruta Laurent, fled to France and he was initially prosecuted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and his case file was transferred to France, but he has not yet been brought to justice. There was also Biniga Damien, Munini sous prefet, Hitimana Anacllet, in charge of Gendarmery in Mubuga, Bakundukize Innocent, who was the plantation manager in Mata tea factory and Nyilidandi Charles, the Bourgmestre of Mubuga commune.

Additionally, there were Ndabalinze Juvenal, the director of Mata tea factory, Mutazihana Nathanael, the director of Kibeho Health Center, Kayigamba Francois, the director of studies, Karekezi Fabien alias Sagazi, who was the Prefect of Discipline, Fatikaramu Holomisidasi, Geography teacher, Seraphine who was the English teacher and Kimbo who worked in the kitchen.

6. Students who were involved in the killings

Murindangabo Aimable, Byilingiro Theoneste alias Kofi, Harolimana Alexis alias Gifu who was the student representative (doyen), Hakizimana Jean de Dieu alias Rukokoma, Jean-



Damascene Nsengiyumva, Misago Venuste, Nakabonye Alexis, Aaron Mundanikure, Michel Mutabazi and Hakizimana J. Damascene alias Gahinda.

Uwamahoro Clement (son of Mutazihana Nathanael), Casimir Bizimungu, Butera Christophe, Esperance Nyiranziza, Joseline Byukusenge, Lucien (young brother of the Prefect of Discipline), Nsabimana Sylvestre, Balinda Janvier, Serushema Jean Bosco, Barayagamba Eduard were also involved.

Lastly, there were Uwimana Emanuel, Gaudence Uwamahoro, Solange Uwamahoro (daughter of Rubanda), Bimenyimana J. Damascene, Niyirora Melanie, Habinshuti François Xavier, Twahirwa Gerard, Harelimana Gerege, Karerangabo Viateur, Munyarukiko François, Vuguziga Egide, Ndayambaje Eraste and others.

Conclusion

The massacre of Tutsi students in Kibeho occurred after a month since the extreme genocide in Kibeho took place on April 14, 1994. It shows that these students had suffered deeply as they waited for almost a month to be tortured and finally killed.

Done at Kigali on May 7, 2020

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