

The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda



Venue: Westminster Presbyterian
Church

Date: January 10 and 17, 2020

Time: 9:15-10:15

Speaker: Dr. Ephrard Rulinda

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A higher degree. A higher purpose.

Introduction

- Dr Ephrard Rulinda is a genocide survivor. The genocide against Tutsi was organized by the Hutu political elites. An estimated 1.074.017 Tutsi (as well as some moderate Hutu) were killed by their Hutu countrymen.
- Ephrard Rulinda lived through the genocide against the Tutsi and lost everything but most importantly the precious life of his more than one hundred family members including his beloved parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunties, and cousins.
- After the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, Ephrard Rulinda, at young age, raised his siblings and cousins, all orphans of the 1994 genocide.

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Rwanda on African Map



Definition: Genocide

According to Polish lawyer Raphaël Lemkin in 1944, The term genocide consists:

- of the Greek prefix *genos*, meaning **race** or tribe,
- and the Latin suffix *cide*, meaning **killing**.
- Lemkin developed the term partly in response to the Nazi policies of systematic murder of Jewish people during the Holocaust, but also in response to previous instances in history of targeted **actions aimed at the destruction of particular groups of people.**

Definition: Genocide

According to UN:

- *the genocide is defined as an act committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:*
- *Killing members of the group;*
- *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
- *Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*
- *Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*
- *Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.*

Was what happened to Tutsi a genocide?

What happened to Tutsi was a genocide as it was an *act committed by a government with intent to destroy (Tutsi), not in part but in whole, an ethnical, racial group.*

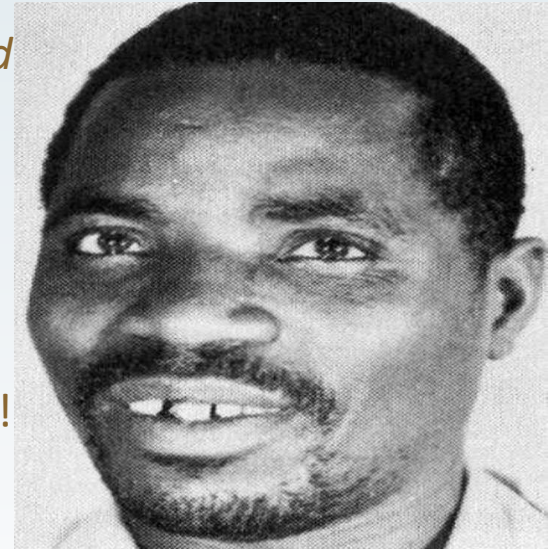
Some proofs:

On February 15th 1959, Joseph Habyarimana Gitera, a founder of the “Association for the Social Promotion of the Masses” (APROSOMA)

“Dear brothers present here, I can’t say all what I have in my heart! Get rid of the enemy “

Who was the enemy? *“Stand up so that we kill the Inkotanyi/TUTSI and exterminate them; look at the person’s height and his physical appearance. Just look at his small nose and then break it.”*

On November 22nd 1992, Léon Mugesera, the Vice-Chairman of the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND) said, *“I inform you (Tutsi) that your home is Ethiopia, and we shall throw you in Nyabarongo(river), the shortcut to get back home quickly.”* Therefore, if I request you (Hutu) to stand up, we have to stand up effectively to combat the enemy” (Mugesera v. Canada, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, 2005, par. 90).



Background of Rwanda

Who were Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa (The 3 so-called ethnicities in Rwanda)?

The myths related to the origin of Rwandans made Hutu, Tutsi and Twa sons of the same ancestral father, called “Kanyarwanda”, the ancestral father of all Rwandans. Rwandans who lived there raised cattle. Soon, the people who owned the most cattle were called “Tutsi,” and everyone else was called “Hutu.” There was a third group whose job was to work the clay. They were called “Batwa” or pigme in other countries.

At this time, a person could easily change categories through marriage or cattle acquisition. Both Hutu and Tutsi enjoyed their rights and lived peacefully, working together, marrying one another and having children together.

It wasn't until Europeans came to colonize the area that the terms ["Tutsi"](#) and ["Hutu"](#) took on a racial role. When the Germans lost their colonies following [World War I](#), the [Belgians](#) took control of Rwanda.




Background of Rwanda

When the Belgian colonists arrived in 1916, they found the monarchy system in the place. The Belgians gave the Tutsi all the leadership positions to facilitate their job. By doing that, they upset the Hutu. When the monarchy started resisting the colonization, Belgians applied “the divide and govern rule or principle”.

At that time, they made Hutu and Tutsi ethnicities. In 1933, the Belgians solidified the categories of "Tutsi" and "Hutu" by mandating that every person was to have an identity card that labeled them either Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa ([Jennifer Rosenberg, May, 2019](#))

Mod. 3



Amazina y'abana n'igihe bavukiye
Noms, prénoms et date de naissance des enfants

Amazina Noms et Prénoms	Yavutse kuwa Né le	Igitsina Sexe
.....
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.....

Ubwoko (Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, Naturalisé)
Ethnie *Tutsi*

Aho yavukiye *Gikondo*
Lieu de Naissance

Italiki yavutseho *1965*
Date de Naissance

Umwuga *Nzi*
Profession

Aho atuye *Gikondo*
Lieu de domicile

Amazina y'uwu bashakanye
Noms du Conjoint *C*

N° C.I.

Umukono cyangwa igikumwe cya nyirayo
Signature ou l'empreinte du titulaire

REPUBLICA RWANDAISE
MINISTRE DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES
ET DE LA FAMILLE

Background of Rwanda:

Relationship between Hutu and Tutsi before Colonization

- During the pre-colonial era, Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were commonly known as Rwandans. They were all living together on the same territory, had the same culture, same religion, and used the same language: “Ikinyarwanda”. Those ties were an important element of social cohesion (Nikuze,2014). Hutu and Tutsi were not ethnicities. They were instead social groups.

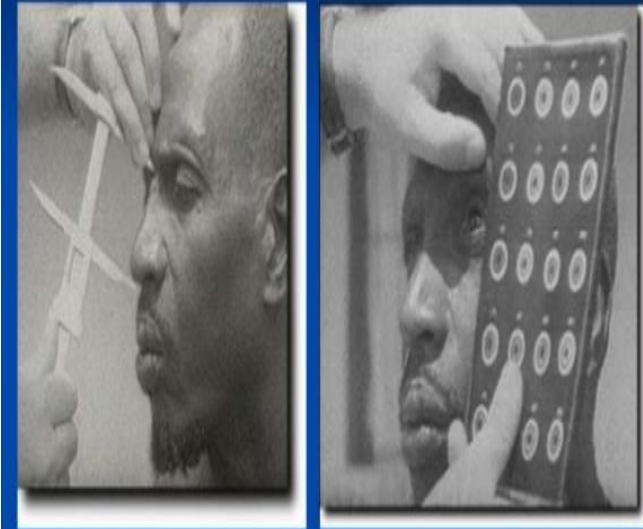


Contributory causes of the Genocide against the Tutsi

- **Colonial power**

- The colonial power polarized the groups by classifying Rwandans into ethnic groups and making it obligatory for them to carry ethnic identity cards classifying people according to their ethnicity.
- The Belgians deemed the Tutsi to be superior to the Hutu and thus Tutsi were favoured in administrative positions, education and jobs in the modern sector (Newbury, 1995).
- At the independence time, When the Tutsi in power started claiming the country's independence, Belgians turned their attention to Hutu by convincing them that the problem has been Tutsi.

Belgian colonialists believed Tutsis were a naturally superior nobility, descended from the Israelite tribe of Ham. The Rwandan royalty was Tutsi.



Belgians distinguished between Hutus and Tutsis by nose size, height & eye type. Another indicator to distinguish Hutu farmers from Tutsi pastoralists was the number of cattle owned.

Contributory causes of the Genocide against the Tutsi

- **The denial of the right of the Tutsi refugees to return to their homeland**

Fearful of the violence they would face in Rwanda, a great number of Tutsi fled the country in 1959 to neighboring lands such as Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. When those refugees requested to return home peacefully, the ruling regime turned a deaf ear insisting that Rwanda was already too crowded and had too little land and food for them.

In response, a group of young refugees grouped into the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF/INKOTANYI) decided to come back by force. Supported by moderate Hutus, they launched a protracted liberation war on October 1st, 1990. As a result, all the Tutsi inside and outside the country were considered to be enemies of the ruling regime and, ipso facto, the enemy of all Hutu.



Contributory causes of the Genocide against the Tutsi

- **Wrestling to maintain power by the Hutu extremist government**

Seeing that RPF force its way into the country, President Habyarimana chose to bring dissidents Hutu back to his side by trying to convince them that the main problem was Tutsi who wanted to steal them the power . Wage, David and Lois Haigh (2004) affirm that “Habyarimana sought to deflect the growing dissatisfaction with his government and bring Hutu back into his camp by espousing nationalistic Hutu ideology”.

To that end, Habyarimana(the then president) and his supporters Hutu extremists propagated hatred ideology that the Tutsi intended to re-enslave and exterminate them and that a preemptive attack was the only way to save their own lives. Consequently, pre-meditated by the ruling Hutu-led government, the genocide was deliberately perpetrated in an attempt to maintain power.

Events that have facilitated and led to the 1994 genocide against Tutsi

1) Hutu's Ten Commandments (Kangura, No. 6 (December 1990))

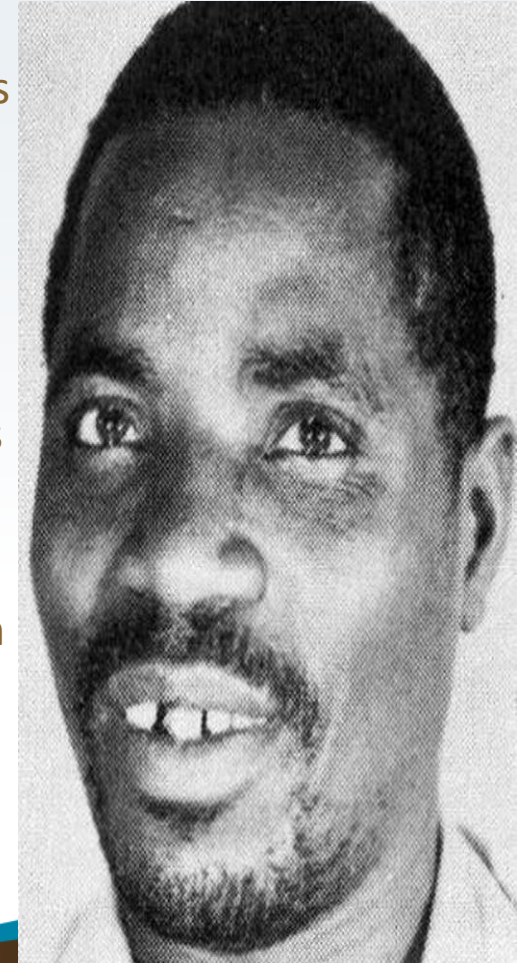
Every Hutu must know that the Tutsi woman, wherever she may be, is working for the Tutsi ethnic cause. In consequence, any Hutu is a traitor who acquires a Tutsi wife, acquires a Tutsi concubine or acquires a Tutsi secretary or protégée.

Every Hutu must know that our Hutu daughters are more worthy and more conscientious as women, as wives and as mothers. Aren't they lovely, excellent secretaries, and more honest!

Hutu women, be vigilant and make sure that your husbands, brothers and sons see reason.

All Hutu must know that all Tutsi are dishonest in business. Their only goal is ethnic superiority. We have learned this from experience. In consequence, any Hutu is a traitor who forms a business alliance with a Tutsi, invests his own funds or public funds in a Tutsi enterprise, borrows money from or loans money to a Tutsi or grants favors to Tutsis (import licenses, bank loans, land for construction, public markets...).

Strategic positions such as politics, administration, economics, the military and security must be restricted to the Hutu



Events that have facilitated and led to the 1994 genocide against Tutsi

- A Hutu majority must prevail throughout the educational system (pupils, scholars and teachers).
- The Rwandan Army must be exclusively Hutu. The war of October 1990 has taught us that. No soldier may marry a Tutsi woman.
- Hutu must stop taking pity on the Tutsi.
- Hutu wherever they are must stand united, in solidarity, and concerned with the fate of their Hutu brothers. Hutu within and without Rwanda must constantly search for friends and allies to the Hutu Cause, beginning with their Bantu brothers. Hutu must constantly counter Tutsi propaganda. Hutu must stand firm and vigilant against their common enemy: the Tutsi.
- The Social Revolution of 1959, the Referendum of 1961 and the Hutu Ideology must be taught to Hutu of every age. Every Hutu must spread the word wherever he goes. Any Hutu who persecutes his brother Hutu for spreading and teaching this ideology is a traitor.

Events that have facilitated and led to the 1994 genocide against Tutsi

b) Discrimination

After independence, Tutsi were discriminated in all sectors of life.

- For instance, a policy of regional and ethnic quotas was instituted. It stipulated that, as Tutsis officially constituted 9% of the population, there could be no more than 9% Tutsi students in schools, 9% Tutsi clerks in the civil service, or 9% Tutsis in any sector of employment. Under the Second Hutu Republic, Tutsi students were discriminated.
- In 1982–83, figures show that only 28 of 424 students (6.6%) at the National University of Rwanda (NUR) in Butare were Tutsi (Hilker,2011).

Events that have facilitated and led to the 1994 genocide against Tutsi

c) Bias Teaching Curriculum

- The version of history taught emphasized the separate geographical and racial origins of Rwanda's "ethnic" groups, portraying the Tutsi as outsiders who conquered the Hutu and Twa and imposed feudal rule, exploiting and oppressing the Hutu peasantry (Hilker, 2011).

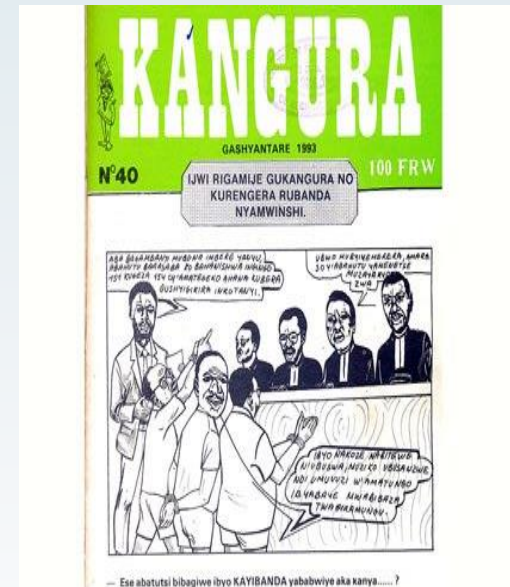
Events that have facilitated and led to the 1994 genocide against Tutsi

d) Hate propaganda through Rwandan Media

Hate propaganda was a political tool mainly used to mobilize Hutu for massive killings. In order to engage massive population in planned massive killings and genocide, former Rwandan leaders regularly persuaded the Hutu population to kill Tutsi as a way of keeping them from being slaves of Tutsi. The Hutu population was mobilized through the deployment of the idea that the problems they had wouldn't be resolved unless Tutsi were exterminated

- Hate propaganda through Kangura Newspaper

This newspaper founded by Hassan Ngeze was a pro-government newspaper. In November 1991, he asked, “Which arms should we use to vanquish **Inyenzi/Tutsi forever**? Late on, he added ““You Rwandans, do you accept that the Rwandan Armed Forces continue to wait for enemy who will come from Uganda while they left enemies in Kigali and in others towns? The Inkotanyi and “virgile” (accomplices) must know that they don’t bleed milk, because now we are angry for the Rwandans (citizens and soldiers) who are being killed by Inkotanyi”(Kangura, No 26 November 1991, p. 15).



Events that have facilitated and led to the 1994 genocide against Tutsi

- Hate propaganda through Radio Television Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM)

This was a radio station created by political actors associated with hardliners within the then ruling regime and who are largely seen as responsible for organizing and implementing the genocide. Among those political actors were the former then president Juvenal HABYARIMANA.



Events that have facilitated and led to the 1994 genocide against Tutsi

Hate messages broadcast before and during the genocide referred to Tutsis as “cockroaches” (inyenzi) and issued instructions to kill them.

For example, in an RTLM broadcast on June 4th 1994, Kantano described Tutsi in the following ways: *Stand up so that we kill the Inkotanyi and exterminate them; look at the person’s height and his physical appearance. Just look at his small nose and then break it.*



Genocide Trials from 1959-1994

- **THE 1959 GENOCIDE IN RWANDA**

When the Hutu rebelled against the Belgians and Tutsi elites (in 1959) that has resulted in the death of about 20,000 Tutsi killed and over 300,000 forced into exile.

This rebellion was named the “Hutu Peasant Revolution” which ended the Tutsi domination and by far sharpened the ethnic divide that would later manifest itself in the 1994 genocide.



1963 Genocide Trial

- “In December 1963, a small group of Rwandans who had been driven out of the country in 1959 attempted to return to their home in Bugesera (Southern Province).
- Their attack was used as a pretext to persecute Tutsis across the country
- More than 21,000 Tutsi were killed on Christmas Day

Stages of 1994 genocide against Tutsi

- **CLASSIFICATION:** All cultures have categories to distinguish people into "us and them" by ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality: German and Jew, Hutu and Tutsi. If societies are too segregated (divided) they are most likely to have genocide.
- **SYMBOLIZATION:** Genocide planners give names or other symbols to the classifications of ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality. Rwandans were divided into Hutu, Tutsi and Twa.
- **DISCRIMINATION:** A dominant group (Hutu) used law, custom, and political power to deny the rights of other groups. Tutsi were denied full civil rights such as education,...
- **DEHUMANIZATION:** Dehumanization is when one group treats another group as second-class citizens. Names such as snake, cockroach were used to describe Tutsi. They were compared with animals, parasites, insects or diseases.
- **ORGANIZATION:** Special army units or militias called INTERAHAMWE were trained and armed. Plans were made for genocidal killings.
- **POLARIZATION:** Extremists drove the groups apart. Hate propaganda through Rwandan Media (National Radio, RTRM, and pro-government newspapers were used to broadcast propaganda to reinforce prejudice and hate. Intermarriage or social interaction between Hutu and Tutsi were forbidden.



Stages of 1994 genocide against Tutsi

PREPARATION: National or perpetrator group leaders built armies, bought weapons and trained their troops and militias. They indoctrinated the populace with fear of the victim group. Leaders taught the rest of the population, "If we don't kill them, they will kill us."

PERSECUTION: Tutsi were identified and separated out because of their ethnic identity. Death lists were drawn up.

EXTERMINATION: On April 6, the extermination began." It is "extermination" to the killers because they do not believe their victims to be fully human (see dehumanization). When it is sponsored by the government, the armed forces often work with private armies(Interahamwe) to do the killing. An estimated of 10,000 Tutsi were killed every minutes.



Stages of 1994 genocide against Tutsi

DENIAL: The perpetrators of genocide dug up the mass graves, burnt the bodies, tried to cover up the evidence and intimidate the witnesses. Even today, they are wandering across the globe denying that they committed any crimes. They are claiming that that there was a double genocide; that they acted in self defense... and often blame what happened on the victims.



Inside the 1994 genocide against Tutsi: Personal testimony

- When the genocide hit, I was 21. My dad sent me to a Hutu family friend.
- My dad was ready to die from day 1 as he had survived many other different genocide trials.
- Last word: 3 things to expect: My death; your mom death; death of both of us. The message: “If You Survive, Take Care of your Siblings” (A title of my book).
- My parents’ death: They were taken to the Nyabarongo river to be slaughtered and thrown into the river. Before they got killed with machetes, my dad asked for a moment to sing, preach the world of God and to say his last prayer. They were more than 200 people.
- Even though my dad was about to die, he managed to save a life. He talked to the killers and lied about one kid. He told them that the kid he was referring to was a Hutu, which was not true, and belonged to a Hutu family. As killers feared for the revenge from that Hutu family, they spared his life and the kid is now a mother of three.
- I saw the enemy at the work, but I also saw God at work. As I hid for 100 days, I cannot say everything about my life during those days. But to take you inside the genocide, I would share with you these.



Inside the 1994 genocide against Tutsi: Personal testimony

- As I was hiding in a Hutu family friend, genociders came to kill me. God used one of them to come early to warn us. As I just left, they came and searched everywhere. As I was hiding in another family close, they also came there while I was hiding in the house ceiling. A miracle happened: When I got to that family, I was about to hide under the bed. But a voice told me to go to the ceiling. At their arrival, they used a knife and machetes to find me under the bed. Fortunately God blinded them. No one raised eyes to look up to the ceiling That is how I survived on that day.

Inside the 1994 genocide against Tutsi: Personal testimony

➤ On a different day , in the night, I was hiding in the bush. Given that I went to that bush in a night, I did not know someone from outside could see inside. Around 4:00 in the morning, I heard and saw killers surrounding the bush. As the morning was getting clearer, I was able to see them. But their eyes were blinded. They did not see me. I finally heard from them that they were gathering to kill a family that was in the house next to my bush. As one of them resisted to the killing of that family, they feared that they would be divided over that family, which could cause them to kill each other. Thus they decided to go kill other people in a different place to come back and kill that family later.

Before leaving, they left some people to watch the house. Around 6: 00 am, I could see them from the bush. But they never turned their eyes to see me. As I was wondering what could happen any time, I heard guns noise and saw killers running for their lives as the RPF, which was the army fighting against killers, was already in the area. Everyone was running away, including those left to watch over the house and who at the same time were surrounding my bush. I stayed in the bush for a while before I got out and joined the RPF side. That is how God saved my life from the lions' teeth. That is how GOD SAVED MY LIFE.

Inside the 1994 genocide against Tutsi: Personal testimony

- As the genocide was ended, I found myself with this:
- As my dad's prophecy about my survival had just come true, as God had just saved my life, I had to face a tough life for myself and for my family. A big question was: At age of 21, how to take care of myself while making sure my genocide survivor siblings and cousins younger than me were also taken care of? With nothing left, I had to keep my hope alive and help others grow up and live.



Types of weapons used to kill Tutsi

The following are the arms used to kill Tutsi in the former Kibuye prefecture.

- Machete 31,117
- Club 9,779
- Gun, rifle 8,706 14.7 4,575 17.8 (pay for gun)
- Grenade 1,058
- Drowned 847
- Hoe, hack 444
- Buried alive 442
- Latrines 437
- Spear 421
- Burnt alive 401
- Pick-axe 337 0.6 192 0.7
- Stoned 131
- Hanged 100
- Sword 79
- Starvation 23
- Tractor 12
- Other 636
- Unknown or missing 4,020
- Sticks with large nailed bottom (Impiri)



Types of weapons used to kill Tutsi

- **Rape and HIV transmission**
 - During the genocide, Hutu militia raped Tutsi women "in a deliberate plan to use AIDS as a weapon that could go on killing long after they had murdered their other victims," according to *Reuters/Star-Ledger* (Green, *Reuters/Newark Star-Ledger*, 4/6).
 - According to the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), an estimated 500,000 Rwandan women were raped during the 1994 genocide.
 - [AVEGA-AGAHOZO](#), a Rwandan organization also known as Widows of the Genocide, last year polled and tested 1,200 of its 25,000 members and found that 80% had been raped and 66% were HIV-positive (Nelson, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 4/5).
 - The UN initially estimated that 5,000 children were born of rape in the 1994 genocide, but the Survivors' Fund – a British charity working in Rwanda – believes the number might be nearer 20,000. (Verwimp, 2006).



Short and Long term impact of genocide against Tutsi (national and international level)

- The Genocide against the Tutsi has done a lot of harm to Rwandan society. It was a dramatic historical event that opened a new dark page for Rwanda
 - In a three months period, more than one million Tutsi were killed with families completely decimated (15,593 families made up of 68,871 peoples), their homes and communities destroyed.
 - Hundreds of thousands of survivors became orphaned, wounded, disabled, widowed, aids victims, and/or were forced to live without shelter
 - the genocide caused practical and psychological consequences as a result of the horrors of the macabre acts to which genocide survivors were subjected throughout the genocide
 - This genocide damaged and destroyed the social cohesion and make up of Rwandan society



Short and Long term impact of genocide against Tutsi (both for the national and international community)

- It destroyed the mutual trust and the unity that Rwandans had developed and relied upon for centuries. The genocide against the Tutsi led people to separate from one another based off of fear, suspicion, mistrust, hatred and misperception reinforced (Burgess, 2003).
- After the genocide ended, the country was on the brink of economic collapse. All the farms and agriculture of the country were destroyed, and most of the state infrastructure including schools, hospitals and clinics, roads, homes, business centers and more were almost completely destroyed.
- Many Rwandans became refugees or internally displaced persons (Up to 2 million people fled the country, including many of the Hutu ethnic group perpetrators)
- Furthermore, this genocide generated a large number of prisoners, which created a heavy burden on the Rwandan Government, as it had a duty to feed them.
- Inshike
- Genocide ideology across the globe by genocide perpetrator.
- **Key Question: Who has benefited from the genocide?**



How a country destroyed by an unprecedented genocide was healed? (Post genocide era)

After the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the main challenge was: Was Rwanda going to remain a unitary state, or a state divided into 'Hutuland' and 'Tutsiland'? To heal the country, the new regime was engaged in different initiatives including:



How a country destroyed by an unprecedented genocide was healed? (Post genocide era)

Jurisdiction system

➤ International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

In combating impunity while unifying Rwandans, the international community responded by establishing the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to try those who planned the genocide and its instigators.

However, with this justice system, it would have taken up to 150 years to judge as many genocide suspect as possible, which would have happened when both victims and perpetrators would not be alive.

➤ Gacaca courts

To this end, the government of Rwanda came up with another attempt to impart justice. The Rwandan Government developed the modern Gacaca courts system, based on the traditional Gacaca process to try suspected genocide perpetrators, while unifying Rwandans.



How a country destroyed by an unprecedented genocide was healed? (Post genocide era)

The Gacaca courts allowed the following advantages:

- swift trials with popular participation.
- They reduced prison overpopulation.
- Facilitated a better understanding of what happened during the genocide.
- In addition, Gacaca courts contributed in locating and identifying bodies of the victims, and reducing the ethnic tensions between genocide survivors, perpetrators and their respective families.



How a country destroyed by an unprecedented genocide was healed? (Post genocide era)

- The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission

Despite the consequences of the magnitude of the genocide, the new government has been working hard to eradicate discrimination with the introduction of the philosophy of national unity and reconciliation to bind Rwandans together.

- The commission was created in accordance with the law N°03/99 of March 12th, 1999
- The ultimate aim of this commission was to re-build a culture of national citizenship as opposed to one of ethnic identity.



How a country destroyed by an unprecedented genocide was healed? (Post genocide era)

- A number of local mechanisms that foster reconciliation, including Itorero, Ingando, Ubudehe, Girinka and a unity and reconciliation week, were enacted. Building upon this, the 'Ndi Umunyarwanda' (I am Rwandan) program was initiated to create core values that can bind Rwandans together.
- The Ndi Umunyarwanda program encourages Rwandans to have a continual dialogue in the framework of sharing their history and, from bad experiences, building an optimistic future. The outputs of these home grown solutions are observable.
- Today, survivors of genocide live side by side with genocide perpetrators.
- Despite past efforts in unit and reconciliation, and reconstruction in post-genocide Rwanda, the country is still suffering from the wounds of the genocide. The survivors of the genocide must confront their own traumatic experiences on a daily basis.



Could the genocide against Tutsi have been prevented?

What did the world's most powerful nation know about the Rwandan genocide and how did they react?

➤ US government

When James Woods, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs reported about the genocide against Tutsi, he received orders from higher authorities telling him “if something happens to Rwanda-Burundi, we don't care, take it off the list. US national interest is not involved...just make it go away.” (Grünfeld & Huijboom,2007).

➤ UN

On the 11th of January 1994, Dallaire (the former commander of UN military forces in Rwanda) sent a telegram to the UN headquarters about mass murders of Tutsis being planned from a reliable source. As a response, Kofi Annan, the leader of UN peacekeeping told Dallaire to report this new found information to President Habyarimana who was playing a role in the Interhamwe. After the 1994, the UN made this statement:

“We must all acknowledge our responsibility for not having done more to prevent or stop the genocide. All who were playing any part in World affairs at that time should ask, what more could I have done? How would I react next time—and what am I doing now to make it less likely there will be a next time”(Grünfeld & Huijboom,2007).



What Rwanda looks like today?



alamy stock photo

BFRG
www.alamy.com

What lesson for Christians?

All countries have failed to save the lives of Tutsi. What about Christians? Where were Christians' voices when God's kids were suffering? In Rwanda, killers would stop killing to go to pray. Others would use God's words and songs to get on victim's nerves. Christians' voice should be the loudest one to be heard in the middle of God's children's suffering.

- Genesis 5:9

And the Lord said unto Cain, "Where is Abel your brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? Today, God is asking me, where is my brother? Where is my neighbor? Where is that Tutsi that God had put under my protection to take of. Should a Christian say: I am not my brother's keeper? Does a Christian have any business to do with his or her brother's suffering?"

1 John 4:20

"²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen."



What lesson for Christians?

In Rwanda, Tutsi were killed by their countrymen but most importantly their brothers and sisters in Christ or their spiritual leaders who were using the word of God to justify the destruction of Tutsi.

In an RTLM broadcast on July 2nd 1994, Habimana exulted in the extermination of the Tutsi. He stated: “Let us sing: “Come, let us rejoice: the Inkotanyi/Tutsi have been exterminated! Come dear friends, let us rejoice, the Good Lord is just.” The Good Lord is really just, these evildoers, these terrorists, these people with suicidal tendencies will end up being exterminated”

(Prosecutor v. Nahimana et al, 2003,



Conclusion

After the holocaust, the world was more committed than ever before to preventing and fighting against the genocide. However, 80 years later, here we are again talking about the genocide against Tutsi. The world has failed and there is no guaranty that the same world will not fail again in future. But where are Christians when their brothers and sisters are suffering?

Isaiah 58:6 “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?”

It is our responsibility to use our voices and prayers to save and rescue the weak and give voice to voiceless.

God bless.



References

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Q&A