

Involvement of Rwandan Government Officials in The Massacres of Tutsi in Gisenyi Former Prefecture Prior 1994

Mafeza Faustin

Research and Documentation Center on Genocide National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) Republic of Rwanda

faustin.mafeza@cnl.gov.rw or mafezaf@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper explores the role of Rwandan government officials in the massacres of Tutsi prior 1994. It focuses on the massacres of Tutsi in different communes in the former prefecture of Gisenyi during the Habyarimana regime, and specifically examines the events between October 1990 and August 1993. Since October 1990, Rwandan government officials were either directly involved in the massacres of Tutsi, by encouraging, planning, directing or participating in the violence; or indirectly involved through their negligence or deliberate inaction. Local government officials (prefects, sub-prefects, mayors, assistant mayors, sector leaders, cell leaders), and security forces (gendarmes, police communal, Forces Armées Rwandaises) played a crucial role in the massacres of Tutsi in the commune of Kibilira, Satinsyi, Ramba, Gaseke, Giciye, Karago, Mutura, Kanama and Kayove. This paper thus shows that the intent of killing Tutsi as an ethnic group did not begin in 1994. Rather, the Genocide against the Tutsi that occurred in April 1994 was the culmination of events that had been initiated in the years preceding.

Keywords: Involvement, Government Official, Massacres of Tutsi, Gisenyi former Prefecture

Introduction

Gisenyi was one of the ten prefectures of Rwanda in 1994, situated in the north-west of the country. The prefecture had twelve communes: Rubavu, Rwerere, Kanama, Mutura, Nyamyumba, Kayove, Karago, Giciye, Gaseke, Satinsyi, Ramba and Kibilira. After the administrative entities reform in 2006, Gisenyi prefecture was divided into four districts: Ngororero, Rubavu, Nyabihu and Rut Siro (Government of Rwanda, 2005).

The massacres of Tutsi in the former prefecture of Gisenyi started in November 1959 and was reinforced under the regime of Presidents Grégoire Kayibanda (1962- 1973) and Juvénal Habyarimana (1973-1994). Although there had been a series of massacres of Tutsi during these two regimes, this paper focuses on the massacres of Tutsi between 1st October 1990- the beginning of the liberation war by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF-Inkotanyi),¹ and 4th August 1993- the date the Arusha Peace Agreement was signed by the RPF-Inkotanyi and the Government of Rwanda, calling for the creation of a transitional government for Rwanda.

In the former prefecture of Gisenyi, the massacres of the Tutsi which began on October 1990, were preceded by meetings aimed at encouraging the Hutu population to slaughter the Tutsi. These meetings were organized by the advisers of the sectors - mayors, assistant mayors, sub-prefects and politicians of President Habyarimana's regime. These government officials, as well as the security forces such as the police and military, whose primary aim was to protect their citizens, were instead instrumental in the continued massacres of Tutsi, not merely by allowing it, but by actively participating in it.

¹ The **Rwandan Patriotic Front** (French: *Front Patriotique Rwandais*, RPF) is the ruling political party in Rwanda that stopped the genocide against Tutsi in 1994.

Massacres of Tutsi in Kibilira Commune

In Kibilira commune, the massacres of Tutsi that started on the 11th October 1990 were made possible by the active involvement of its mayor, Jean Baptiste Nteziryayo, who organized a meeting three days before the massacres occurred. The purpose of that meeting was to plan the massacres of Tutsi in this commune. Among the high-level authorities who attended the meeting were: Léon Mugera, the vice-president of the MRND in the former Gisenyi prefecture; Teganya Innocent, the president of the MRND in Kibilira commune; and Bernard Niyitegeka, the sub-prefect of Ngororero. The purpose of this meeting was to plan the massacres of Tutsi in this commune. The following day, Jean Baptiste Nteziryayo summoned all sector counsellors to another meeting and gave them orders to arrest the Tutsi in their respective sectors. Tutsi were then arbitrarily arrested, tortured and killed in the following days of 11-13th of October 1990.

In order to encourage the Hutu population to get involved in the massacres of Tutsi, sector counsellors created rumors saying that the Inyenzi- a pejorative term for the Tutsi, had infiltrated their sectors and had a plan to kill all Hutu. The rumors specifically included that a senior military officer, Colonel Uwihoreye, was killed on the frontline by Inyenzi.

Similarly, in the Gatumba sector, the cell leaders Emmanuel Ngendahimana and cell member Protais Hajabakiga spread false rumors asserting that Colonel Serubuga, an important regional authority, had been killed. This incited Hutu residents in this cell to attack and kill their Tutsi neighbors.

When the massacres were in progress, the sub-prefect Niyitegeka Bernard, convened a meeting on 11th October 1990 to determine the extent the orders given to advisors were to be executed. Each sector counsellor gave account on how Tutsi were being killed, except Thadée Ngirabatware- the counsellor of Rongi sector who opposed the plan to kill the Tutsi in his sector. The massacres were halted on 13th October 1990 by the prefect of Gisenyi, Nshunguyinka François, who had intervened with six gendarmes. Tutsi were massacred in all sectors, except those of the Rongi sector who were protected by their sector counsellor, Thadée Ngirabatware.

The massacres of Tutsi in Kibilira commune is confirmed by the 1993 report of the International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda. According to this report, 348 Tutsi were killed, 550 houses were burned and destroyed, with cows and property looted.

In addition, the report completed by the prefect of Gisenyi in December 1990 indicated that 2,385 Tutsi from the commune of Kibilira took refuge at Muhororo Parish and 701 Tutsi went to MRND Palace in Ngororero (Gisenyi prefecture, 1990).

The involvement of government officials in the massacres of Tutsi is also confirmed by the report of the International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda. The report states that local authorities, including the mayor, sectors leaders, cell members and state employees such as teachers, and communal policemen directed the attacks in most sectors. Among the most important government officials cited in the report are: the Mayor Jean Baptiste Nteziryayo, Pierre Tegera who was the director of PNAP² at Ruhengeri, Thomas Ushizimpumu, commune secretary and Teganya Innocent, the president of MRND in Kibilira commune (Report of International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violation in Rwanda, Since October 1990, January 7-21, 1993).

In his letter n^o. 749/04.17.02, dated on 18th October 1990, the Mayor of the Buringa commune, Nyaminani Félicien, wrote that Tutsi in Kibilira commune were killed and thrown into Nyabarongo River. He asserted that authorities had participated in the massacres of the Tutsi in the aforementioned commune.

²PNAP: Programme National pour l'Amélioration de la *Pomme de Terre*

Tutsi in Kibilira commune were also killed in February 1992 and January 1993. On 8th February 1992, MRND³ supporters in Kibilira commune launched an attack in Buringa commune of the Gitarama prefecture. The Buringa commune was predominantly inhabited by the supporters of the MDR⁴. The aim of MRND partisans in attacking the Buringa commune was to forcefully convince MDR members to become adherents of MRND or "Kubohaza". However, the attack was not successful as authorities from Buringa commune were aware of the attack, and a counter-offensive of security forces were assembled at Bourget Bridge. This defeat caused the supporters of the MRND in Kibilira commune to return with anger, and they rushed to kill Tutsi in Nyamisa sector. Tutsi survivors of the massacre took refuge at Muhororo parish. Again, in January 1993, Tutsi of Kibilira commune were killed during demonstration of MRND supporters. Those demonstrators were backed by local authorities such as sectors counsellors and Mayor of the commune.

Massacres of Tutsi in Satinsyi Commune

Similarly, local authorities in the Satinsyi commune organized and led massacres on 6th October 1990. Before being killed, Tutsi were arrested and imprisoned under the pretext that they were accomplices of the Inkotanyi.

The massacres of Tutsi in this commune is mentioned in the letter n° 0080/04.09.01/ by the Mayor Nsanzimihigo Cyrille. In his letter, dated 18th October 1990, the latter informed the prefect of Gisenyi that 11 people were killed, 9 people were thrown in Nyabarongo river, 102 houses had been burned, and 745 people took refuge at MRND palace. Among those killed and mentioned in the letter are Mukamurigo, Twagirayezu Charles, Ikibera Beata, Mukanzigiye Vestine, Mukangoga, Ntabashwa, Sebukayire and his two children.

Tutsi in Satinsyi commune were again killed in February 1992. The defeat of MRND partisans at Nyabarongo river by the militants of the MDR of Nyakabanda commune, Gitarama prefecture, led to renewed violence against the Tutsi. In his letter n°. 011/04.09.01/4 dated on 20th February 1992, the sub-prefect of Ngororero, Rukabukira Ideophones informed the prefect of Gisenyi that clashes had occurred between militants of the MRND in Satinsyi commune and supporters of the MDR in Nyakabanda commune. He stated that after being defeated, MRND militants killed 8 Tutsi who were at MRND palace at Ngororero Sub-Prefecture.

Again in January 1993, during the demonstrations of MRND and CDR partisans, Tutsi in Satinsyi commune were killed. MRND and CDR activists conducted demonstrations from 21st to 23rd January 1993 with authorization from the Prefect of Gisenyi, Habiyambere Joseph. During these demonstrations, more than 30 Tutsi from the sectors of Gitwa, Gash Onyi, Matyazo and Munini were killed by demonstrators.

The killing of Tutsi during the demonstration is confirmed by the report of the *Commission politico-administrative sur les troubles dans les prefectures of Gisenyi, Ruhengeri and Kabure*. According to the report, 28 Tutsi from Gash Onyi and Matyazo sectors were killed. Furthermore, as mentioned in the report, the Prefect of Gisenyi was criticized for failing to inform local level security forces so that they may prevent and control the acts of barbarity and killings committed by the demonstrators at the demonstration.

The journal "*Le Flambeau*" of 17th February 1993 provides further clarification on the disturbances that took place in Gisenyi Prefecture. According to the journal, several Tutsi were massacred in different municipalities in the month of January 1993. During their visit to the Ngororero sub-prefecture on 26th January 1993, the prefect of Gisenyi, Habiyambere Joseph and the Deputy Chief of Staff of the National Gendarmerie, Augustin Ndindiriyimana were indifferent to the complaints of the Tutsi refugees at the MRND palace in Ngororero. There was a lack of reaction from these high dignitaries in relation to Tutsi accusations against Kabalira Télésphore who has killed the family of Nsonera Alexis and six other Tutsi from the center of Ngororero. This apathy towards

³MRND: Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement National was a ruling political party the président Habyarimana Juvenal

⁴MDR: Movement démocratique republication translated in English as The **Republican Democratic Movement** was a political party in Rwanda. The party was established in 1991. It was renewed from former MDR Parmehutu created since 1959 to MDR only .

the complaints of Tutsi depicts the level of complicity of government officials under the Habyarimana regime regarding the massacres of Tutsi. It is important to note that in several sectors, communal police assisted the perpetrators in case of Tutsi resistance.

Different people are responsible for the massacres of Tutsi in Satinsyi commune. The report of the *Commission politico-administrative sur les troubles dans les prefectures de Gisenyi, Ruhengeri and Kibuye* points out various key authorities such as the prefect of Gisenyi, Habiyambere Joseph; the sub-prefect of Ngororero, Rukabukira Ideophones; and different Mayors. According to this report, Tutsi who were refugees in Muramba parish were killed under the order of Habiyambere Joseph. Other persons responsible for these massacres include Mbarushimana Bonaventure, the former President of the MRND in Mucano sector; Mukaruziga Eugenie, wife of Kabalira Telesphore and vice-president of the CDR in Satinsyi commune; and Ntungura Jean Berchmans, the ex-President of the interahamwe in Kageyo sector. All these individuals played a crucial role in the massacres of Tutsi in Satinsyi commune. Without the inaction of Habiyambere Joseph, violence against the Tutsi may have been taken seriously with punishments enforced and thus further violence prevented.

Massacres of Tutsi in Ramba commune

After the attack of the RPF-Inkotanyi in October 1990, Tutsi in Ramba commune were similarly threatened and arrested under the pretext of being accomplices of Inkotanyi. In this commune, Tutsi were killed from 11th October 1990. The survivors of the massacres took refuge at Muhororo parish in Kibilira commune while others went to MRND palace at Ngororero sub- prefecture.

Regarding the massacres of the Tutsi in Ramba Commune in October 1990, the letter n^o. 435/04.09.01/4 dated on 14th November 1990 by the sub-prefect of Ngororero, Rukabukira Idephonse, provides a summary of people killed. According to the letter, 11 people were killed, 915 took refuge and 9 persons were killed and thrown in Nyabarongo river. The killing of Tutsi was further confirmed by the letter n^o 167/04.18 dated on 28th October 1990 by the Mayor of Ramba commune, Nzabanita Theogony, who said that the Tutsi who took refuge at MRND palace were mainly from the Kageyo and Suit sectors of Ramba commune.

Three years after these massacres, Tutsi in the Ramba commune were killed again during the demonstration by MRND members on the 23rd January 1993. During the demonstration, interahamwe and CDR members attacked Tutsi and killed some. The report of *Commission Politico-Administrative sur les Troubles dans les Prefectures de Kibuye, Gisenyi et Ruhengeri* confirms the killing of Tutsi during the demonstrations that took place at Birembo. According to the report, interahamwe killed a Tutsi called Mbendegezi.

Several Tutsi in this commune were killed on 25th January 1993, two days after a meeting chaired by Léon Mugesera at Birembo Stadium in the Mabyuye sector of Ramba commune. In his speech, Mugesera incited the Hutu population, specifically MRND partisans to kill Tutsi. The family of Gasana Dionise was the first to be attacked and killed by members of the interahamwe. On the same day, her daughter, Uwoundunda Annonciata who was headmaster of CERAI (Centre d'Enseignement Rural et Artisanal Intégré) was also killed. Other Tutsi killed were Mukobwajana Anastasie, Kayitare Alphonse, Nyirankumi Madeleine, Uwamuranga Yudita, Mukampamo Bernadette, Mugemangango Musafiri, Joseph Ruhumuriza, his wife Mukabutera and their children. More than 23 Tutsi from Kageyo sectors were killed on 25th January 1993.

In Suti sector, several Tutsi were killed. Among the victims were the Kabirigi family, Mukagihana Beatrice, Uwamariya Judith, Uhoraningoga Canisius, Mukagakwaya and others whose names have not been identified.

According to witnesses, the massacres of Tutsi in Ramba commune were supervised by higher authorities, including the sub-prefect of Ngororero, Rukabukira Idephonse. The President of MRND, Serugendo Pierre also played a crucial role, for he had given orders to kill Tutsi he had identified and whose names he added on a list. On 23rd January 1993, the Mayor of Ramba commune, Nzabanita Théogène, was tied up and beaten by the Interahamwe. He was accused of not having supported the idea of killing Tutsi in his commune, and of

collaborating with Tutsi, especially in their protection during the attacks. After a few months he was replaced by Karasira Léonard, who is currently in prison for his role during the Genocide.

Massacres of Tutsi in Gaseke commune

In Gaseke commune, Tutsi were massacred in February 1991, February 1992 and January 1993. On 2nd February 1991, Tutsi were killed under the pretext of being the accomplices of the Inkotanyi who had released prisoners from Ruhengeri prison on 23rd January 1991. Tutsi in this commune were attacked by the local population led by sector counsellors. Several Tutsi were killed, their houses destroyed and their property looted. Survivors of these massacres took refuge at Gaseke commune office. After their arrival, the Mayor deployed gendarmes at the commune. Unfortunately, after a few days, assailants came and attacked them in the presence of security forces. Having noticed the complicity of the Mayor, the survivors of these massacres left the commune and went to Kesho hill, situated in the Muhanda sector of Gaseke commune. Tutsi from Gaseke commune and others from neighboring municipalities built shelter at Kesho hill in order to launch a counteroffensive against assailants led by local authorities. They remained in Kesho hill until April 9, 1994, when they were attacked and killed by the presidential guards of President Habyarimana, under the command of Colonel Laurent Serubuga and several accompanying dignitaries, including Protais Zigiranyirazo and Captain Pascal Simbikangwa.

Again, on February 1992, Tutsi in Gaseke commune were attacked by assailants led by sector counsellors and advisors such as Nzibukira Eliphase- the advisor of Kabuye sector. Among the Tutsi killed were Ndegeya, Gahaga and Sekabende Gatirisi. Further, the advisor of Rwiri sector, Ntirugiribambe Zacharie also led a group of assailants who attacked Tutsi in Kesho hill in January 1993.

Massacres of Tutsi in Giciye Commune

Tutsi in Giciye commune were killed at different periods spanning three years, between October 1990 and 1993. A large scale of massacres of Tutsi took place on the 29th January 1991 resulting from an official order.

In a letter n^o. 003504.09.01/4 dated on 26th January 1991, the Mayor of Giciye commune, Bangamwabo Charles, had given an order to all sectors counsellors to gather the Hutu population in communal work (*umuganda*), to "clean" Gishwati forest and prevent the infiltration of enemies. Pursuant to the latter's instructions, all sector counsellors brought together the Hutu in their sectors in preparation for the communal work planned for the 29th January 1991. "Cleaning" in this context referred to killing, therefore, the plan to "clean Gishwati Forest" meant the plan to kill the Tutsi that lived near Gishwati Forest. Although all sector counsellors were supposed to clearly understand the meaning of cleaning the bush "*gutema ibihuru*", the counsellor of Nyamugeyo sector, Bazera Abraham, was unaware of the true meaning of the instructions given. Therefore, he gathered both Hutu and Tutsi, and went to clean bushes. When they were cleaning, the assistant Mayor of Giciye Commune, Kuradusenge Thomas, came and found Hutu and Tutsi together in *umuganda*. Without asking why they were all together, Thomas slapped Abraham in the face and beat him, for he did not follow the instruction given. Immediately, Thomas gave orders to kill Tutsi, commencing with those who were in *umuganda*. More than 70 Tutsi were killed on that day, from the sectors of Rubare, Birembo, Gihira and Nyamugeyo.

Again in February 1992, Tutsi in Giciye commune were killed, though only male Tutsi were targeted this time. According to witnesses, Tutsi women were spared as it was said that once they were married to Hutu, the children who would be born out of these mixed marriages would become Hutu. According to eyewitnesses, assistant Mayor Kuradusenge Thomas coordinated the assailants, while sector counsellors led and accompanied soldiers from Mukamira military camp. Among the victims were Rwisumbura, Barata, Rushyamira, Kanyarwunga, Kumwami, Gashabuka, Njori and others.

On 21st January 1993 during the demonstrations of MRND and CDR partisans, Tutsi from Shyira sector were threatened and killed. According to eyewitnesses, more than 27 Tutsi were killed. The group of attackers was led by the president of the interahamwe, Mvunabandi and were backed by the police of the Giciye commune. When the killings were in progress, the Mayor of the Giciye commune, Bangamwabo Charles, came to Shyira

sector and rebuked the interahamwe who had looted the cows of the Tutsi. He remarked: "*Why have you looted Tutsi's cows without exterminat[ing] the owners of these cows?*" This remark provides insight on how Bangamwabo was much driven by the killing of Tutsi than looting their cows.

Massacres and killings of Tutsi in Giciye commune during the demonstration of CDR and MRND members is further confirmed by the report of *Commission Politico-Administrative sur les Troubles dans les Prefectures de Kibuye, Gisenyi et Ruhengeri*. According to the report, CDR carried out a demonstration in Giciye commune on 21st January 1992. CDR partisans attacked Tutsi who had taken refuge in Shyira Parish and Tutsi were consequently killed during the event.

As stated by witnesses, the Mayor of Giciye commune, Bangamwabo Charles and his assistant Kuradusenge Thomas coordinated the massacres of the Tutsi in this commune. Survivors of these massacres took refuge at Shyira Parish and remained there until April 1994, while the Genocide took place. Most of them were killed during that period. Further, in various attacks, Tutsi appealed to the Mayor Bangamwabo, but he did nothing. The inaction of Bangamwabo Charles in the massacres of Tutsi is mentioned in the report of *Commission Politico-Administratives sur les Troubles dans les Prefectures de Kibuye, Gisenyi et Ruhengeri*. According to this report, though the Mayor knew of the eventuality of the attacks, no action was taken.

Government officials denied the massacres of Tutsi in their various report. They reported that the events occurring were instead an ethnic war between Hutu and Tutsi. This narrative is not confined to lower level government officials; it extended to higher-ranking authorities within the Habyarimana regime, including Habyarimana himself.

Massacres of Tutsi in Karago Commune

In Karago commune, the massacre of the Tutsi started in October 1990 and continued at different intervals in the following years. On 4th February, 1991, Tutsi in this commune were arrested and killed, like those in neighboring communes- under the pretext of being accomplices of Inkotanyi. They were killed by extremist Hutu from this commune and those from Nkuli. In fact, on the night of 4th February 1991, there was gunfire in Bigogwe military camp under the pretext of being attacked by Inkotanyi from volcanoes. In the morning, Tutsi in different sectors surrounding Bigogwe military camp were arrested and killed, including those from Karago commune. Tutsi in Nanga Sector were killed, with their houses burned and properties looted.

In his letter n^o 065/04.09.01/4 dated on 6th February 1991, the Mayor of the Karago commune, Twagirayezu Louis, confirmed that 12 Tutsi from the sector of Nanga were killed by a group of attackers who came from Nkuli commune. According to this letter, the names of the Tutsi killed by the attackers were Kanyove, Karemera and his son, Kayishema, Nyiramategeko, Ruzindana, Nyirashyamba, Kagiraneza, Barere, Samuel, Uwanyiligira Donatien and Makuza.

In this commune, Tutsi were killed again in February 1992. Once again, Tutsi males were the main target. A survivor of the massacres testified: "On 2nd February 1992, we were attacked by several groups of assailants coming from different sectors of Karago and Nkuli commune. Every Tutsi male was arrested and killed even babies. Women and girls were spared, for assailant Hutu said that Tutsi women would become their wife. A child born from Tutsi women and Hutu father, is a Hutu according the Rwandan culture, that is why Tutsi female were spared".

Tutsi arrested were taken by soldiers from the Mukamira military camp and killed at Nyaruhonga cavern in the Nkuli commune. The corpses of the Tutsi were thrown into a cave in Nyaruhonga. Those responsible for these massacres were local authorities, including sector counsellors, assistant Mayors Sebatashyi and Gasigwa, the Mayor Twagirayezu Louis, FAR soldiers and their commanders. According to the eyewitnesses, it is the Captain Pascal Simbikangwa who coordinated the massacres of Tutsis in this commune, thus making him directly involved in the massacres of Tutsi prior to 1994.

Massacres of Tutsi in Mutura, Rwerere and Kanama communes

In these communes Tutsi were arrested and imprisoned from October 1, 1990. Several Tutsi were killed in the morning of 4th February 1991. The night before- on Sunday 3rd February 1991, there was gunfire at Bigogwe military camp. This was in response to the false attack of Inkotanyi, which the 'counterattack' was attributed to. Tutsi in this region were accused of being accomplices of Inkotanyi, and should therefore be killed. Armed with this reasoning, Tutsi were arrested and killed. As stated in the report by the Mayor of Mutura commune, Ndabarinze Faustin, the massacres began on the night of 3rd February and ended on 6th February 1991. Various actions had been undertaken to stop these massacres. In his letter dated 21st February 1991, he had informed the prefect of Gisenyi that the troubles occurring in his commune were halted by various authorities including Munyazeza Faustin, the Minister of Security and Communal Development.

Though Minister Munyazesa intervened and stopped the massacres of Tutsi, he did nothing to arrest and punish perpetrators. On the contrary, eyewitnesses reported that on the 6th February 1991, Minister Munyazesa summoned a meeting. There, he gathered the local population of Mutura commune and gave them instructions to stop the killing, but also a warning to be vigilant for the time will come, for further instructions to be given and to once again, to carry out their job. Hundreds of Tutsi were killed. Among them were Muhikira, Mabuye, Sebuntu, Kalisa Camille, Semutaga, Nkenzingabo Phocas, Kabirizi, Gapasi, Tegeri Aloys, Karema, Biboga Gerard, Bizimungu and others.

The Tutsi from Kabatwa sector were killed by the assailants from the Shyogwe sector. Among the victims were Nkera Daniel and his family, Nyagacukuzo, Kazendebe, and Murefu. Tutsi who were arrested were first escorted to Ntamaherezo, the president of MRND in Mutura commune. It was Ntamaherezo who made the final decision regarding victims. Some Tutsi were to be killed immediately, while others were directed to Bigogwe military camp to be executed. Some Tutsi were arrested and directed to Gisenyi prison, to demonstrate to the public, the fate of Tutsi who were deemed to be hidden by, and accomplices of the Inkotanyi attack on the Bigogwe military camp.

In Kanama commune, a woman who survived the massacres testified that Tutsi in this commune were hunted and arrested by gendarmes and soldier from Bigogwe military camp. Her testimony related to the events surrounding her husband Mudahindwa Francis, and his son, being killed by the FAR. She testified that her husband was arrested under the pretext of being an accomplice of the Inkotanyi and then killed. His eldest son was arrested, tied up, and executed on the spot. According to the woman, several Tutsi were killed in the days that followed the simulated attack on 3rd to 4th February 1991. Other Tutsi arrested were directed to and imprisoned in Gisenyi prison. The majority of Tutsi were released on 1st and 2nd April 1991, after six months in imprisonment. However, others died while they were in prison. Detainees were held in a horrible situation and they suffered from daily beatings and torture.

The massacres of Tutsi in the communes of Mutura, Rwerere and Kanama were planned and supervised by government officials. One exception was the Mayor of Mutura commune, Ndabarinze Faustin, who did not agree to the plan of killing Tutsi. He was accused by Hutu extremists of collaborating with Inkotanyi and was consequently replaced by Bakiye Jean Berkimass, a Hutu extremist who played a crucial role during the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi.

In the following years, Tutsi were killed again. In Kanama commune, they were killed in February 1992. The survivors of these massacres took refuge at Nyundo Diocese. Their houses were burned and their property looted.

In February 1993, Tutsi university students from Mudende University were killed. Four Tutsi were killed on 13th February 1993 under the order of the Mayor of Mutura commune, Bakiye Jean Berkimans. This has been testified to by a witness- a former police officer of Mutura commune. According to the latter, Berkimans ordered two policemen, Rutazarira and Nsenga, to arrest and kill Tutsi students from Mudende University, who had been arrested at Mukamira and brought back to Mutura commune. While the Tutsi students were still held in

commune custody, two policeman came and put them into the van (vehicle) of the Mayor and directed them to ISAR- Tamira. After killing them, the corpses were buried in common graves in Gishwati forest. The students killed were Nkunuzwanda Alphonse, Parmehutu Celestin alias PARI, Hakizimana Emmanuel and Uwizeye Nasson. During the event, Tutsi who lived near Mudende University were also killed.

Massacres of Tutsi in Kayove commune

The massacres of the Tutsi in Kayove commune started in October 1990. Between the 6th and 16th October 1990, several Tutsi were arrested and killed by assailants headed by sector counsellors. Their properties and cows were looted, and houses burned. Victims were from the sectors of Kinunu, Boneza and Busanza.

In his letter n° 632/04.09.01/4 dated on October 25, 1990, the Mayor of the Kayove commune, Nzabonimpa Anselme, had informed the prefect of Gisenyi that Tutsi in Kinunu, Boneza, and Busanza sectors were threatened by the assailants coming from the Gihumba sector in Rutsiro commune. He stated that some Tutsi were killed and 67 cows looted by the assailants (Nzabonimpa, 25/10/1990). In the same letter, the Nzabonimpa informed the prefect that on 9th October 1990, a group of assailant came from Gishwati forest and took several cows of Tutsi.

Between 25th February and 15th March 1991, Tutsi in Kayove commune were attacked, their homes burned and their cows looted. In his letter n° 297/04.04/2, dated on 13th May 1991, the Mayor Nzabonimpa Anselme informed the prefect of Gisenyi of the details, and that during the attack, 18 Tutsi were killed, 117 cows looted and 82 houses burned.

Again, on 28th December 1992, Tutsi in Kayove commune were killed under the order of Mayor Maburakindi Isidore. The Mayor summoned sector counsellors to a meeting with the aim to search for enemies in their respective areas. This operation was supervised by Major Habufite Pascal, the operation commandant in the region. Several Tutsi were killed and their houses burned. On the same day, a Tutsi, Sefura Ladislas, and his wife Nyirabudenderi Theresa, were burned alive in their house. They were accused of possessing arms acquired from their son, Rwigenza Francois, who was a priest at Muhororo parish in Kibilira commune.

The report of *Commission Politico-Administratives sur les troubles dans les préfectures de Kibuye, Gisenyi et Ruhengeri* confirms the massacres of Tutsi in Kayove commune. According to the report, violence against the Tutsi took place during the "searching" in Gishwati forest. Instead of searching for enemies in the Gishwati forest on 28th December 1992, the local population, backed by soldiers went to kill Tutsi surrounding the forest. Furthermore, Tutsi in this commune were also killed during the demonstration of CDR and MRND partisans in this commune. As mentioned in the report, the demonstration of CDR and MRND partisans was the main cause of the violence against Tutsi in various communes of Gisenyi Prefecture.⁵ Massacres of Tutsi in Kayove commune in December 1992 were perpetrated under the supervision of Mayor Maburakindi Isidore. Isidore, who replaced Nzabonimpa in 1992 was virulently against Tutsi, and was among the top leaders who planned and executed the genocide against Tutsi in this commune.

Conclusion

The involvement of Rwandan government officials in the massacres of Tutsi prior 1994 in Gisenyi Former Prefecture consists chiefly in encouraging, planning and directing the massacres. In some cases, however, officials directly participated in the massacres. Numerous well-documented reports have served to reveal that certain mayors spread unfounded rumors, exacerbated ethnic hatred, and encouraged the population to massacre Tutsi people. These officials facilitated the task of those perpetrating the massacres, by supplying them with equipment such as vehicles and fuel. On many occasions, security authorities did not intervene to prevent such actions nor took any steps to stop the killings of civilians by a mob. At the time, violent actions occurred,

⁵ Rapport de la Commission Politico- Administrative sur les Troubles dans les Préfectures de Kibuye, Gisenyi et Ruhengeri

perpetrators were under organized leadership. In this regard, local government officials have been found to play a leading role in most cases.

Further, the security forces such as the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) have played an active and well-planned role at the highest level in the massacre of Tutsi. For example, soldiers from Bigogwe camp in Mutura commune, organized fake attacks during the night of 4 February 1991 so that they could then unleash indiscriminate and bloody reprisals against those alleged to be responsible. The FAR are also accused of incitement to murder and of providing logistic support to the killers. Apart from FAR, others security forces such as gendarmes, and communal police were also involved in assisting the local population to kill Tutsi in their respective sectors.

In all cases of massacres, the reaction of the authorities to attacks was slow, weak and unconcerned. Those who were warned ahead of time, did nothing to avert the violence, while those who had a duty to intervene once the attack had begun, either denied claims or reacted after undue delay, following pressure from the international community (Report of International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violation in Rwanda, Since October 1990, January 7-21, 1993). Prior to the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwandan government officials denied the massacres of Tutsi. They consistently reported that events occurring were ethnic conflict, simple troubles between Tutsi and Hutu. Furthermore, they even asserted that Tutsi were the cause of troubles occurring in different communes, depicting a lack of comprehension or willful misunderstanding surrounding these massacres. Therefore, an intent of genocide had been apparent prior to 1994, and as such, it can be concluded that the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda was a culmination of a series of massacres that were made possible through the actions and involvement of various government officials.

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