

## *Historical Security Council*

### **Topic A: The Situation in Rwanda**

*\*Simulation start date will be 13 May 1994\**

*“[Rwanda is]...the most horrible and systematic massacre we have had occasion to witness since the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis.” Nobel Laureate, Bertrand Russell on the 1959-66 violence <sup>1</sup>*

### **History**

Rwanda is a small country in heart of Africa, to its west lies the country of Zaire (Democratic Republic of the Congo), to its north lies Uganda, to the south and east lie Burundi and Tanzania respectively.<sup>2</sup> Approximately the size of the American state of Maryland, it also hosts twice its population.<sup>3</sup> Rwanda on the eve of the genocide was one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Rwanda’s story is that of its two main ethnic groups: the Hutu and the Tutsi. These two groups share a common language, culture, and co-inhabit the same regions.<sup>4</sup> Historically, however, the Hutus and the Tutsis have played very different roles in society.

Centuries ago, populations of what are today called Tutsis migrated south from the lands around Ethiopia.<sup>5</sup> Over time, the smaller Tutsi population rose to a position of prominence in the society, often becoming kings over their more numerous Hutu neighbors. Fortunately, the relationship between the two peoples proved to be beneficial for all segments of society.<sup>6</sup> Over the centuries members of both ethnic groups intermarried and the distinctions which separated them became blurred. This system prevailed until the arrival of the Germans.

Anxious to secure their control over East Africa, the German Empire used the existing social structures to their advantage. They used the Tutsi’s traditional position in society to gain control over the population. Tutsis were given special privileges and access to higher education. When the German Empire lost its colonies following the First World War, Belgium was given control over the region. During the era of Belgian rule, Tutsi’s were charged with keeping the Belgians in control. To this effect, ethnic identity cards were distributed.<sup>7</sup> The colonial system of control began to break down as independence became closer to reality during the 1950’s.

Rwanda achieved its independence in 1962 under a cloud of ethnic violence. Hutu rebellions during the late 1950’s kill at least 20,000 Tutsis and displace 150,000 more.<sup>8</sup> In the following years violence escalates between the two ethnic groups with Tutsis attack from neighboring countries and Hutus massacring Tutsis at home. The Hutus consolidate their power in the

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<sup>1</sup> Goose, *The High Cost of Small Arms Transfer..s*

<sup>2</sup> Smyth, *Why Hutu and Tutsi are Killing Each Other.*

<sup>3</sup> Smyth, *Ibid..*

<sup>4</sup> BBC Website. *Rwanda: How the Genocide Happened.*

<sup>5</sup> Smyth, *Ibid..*

<sup>6</sup> Amnesty International *Timeline: Rwanda.* p1

<sup>7</sup> Amnesty International. *Ibid.* p2

<sup>8</sup> BBC Website. *Ibid.*

country however, driving Tutsis out of positions of authority and denying them access to education. By the early 1970's strict ethnic quotas are established, allowing Tutsis access to only 9% of jobs in the country.<sup>9</sup>

After several decades of relative peace, Rwanda would soon face another storm of violence. The cause of the 1994 violence can be traced to events from within and without the country. In 1987, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi dominated military force was formed in Uganda. Shortly after, the RPF and the Hutu dominated government in Kigali clash.<sup>10</sup> In Burundi, to the South ethnic violence erupts between Hutus and Tutsis, displacing upwards of 50,000 Hutus. Unlike Rwanda, the Tutsis still held power in Burundi.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the small country's problems were only beginning: In 1989, the price of Rwanda's primary export: Coffee collapses, impoverishing the country and unleashing a wave of economic chaos.<sup>12</sup>

### **The 1990's**

*"1. 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; - Acquires a Tutsi secretary or protégée. " The Hutu Ten Commandments"<sup>13</sup>*

Rwanda entered the 1990's in a troubled state. The economic chaos caused by the loss of coffee revenue and the governments economic policies resulted in a rapid two thirds devaluation of the Rwandan Franc.<sup>14</sup> The economic turbulence was only a harbinger of the suffering to come. Within the year, Rwanda was embroiled in violence. With extensive Ugandan backing, the RPF invaded from the north.<sup>15</sup> Before long, the conflict becomes internationalized, with forces from Zaire and even France entering the fray on the side of the Rwandan government. Eventually a cease fire was established between the two sides on March 29, 1991.<sup>16</sup> The war was extremely costly for the Rwandan government, which claimed it had "bankrupted its economy" for weapons to use against the RPF.<sup>17</sup>

After a period of relative peace, the RPF attacked again in 1993, pushing deep into the country and reaching the outskirts of the capitol, Kigali. The Rwandan government was hard pressed and called in their allies, the French.<sup>18</sup> The Rwandan forces, and their French allies fought until the Arusha Peace Agreement was signed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August. A Neutral International Force (NIF) was set up by the United Nations to supervise the reestablishment of the peace. This force was to

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<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International: *Ibid.* p2

<sup>10</sup> Amnesty International. *Ibid.* p2

<sup>11</sup> BBC Website. *Timeline: Rwanda.*

<sup>12</sup> Amnesty International. *Ibid.* p2

<sup>13</sup> Truman Web Design. *Kangura: The Hutu Ten Commandments.*

<sup>14</sup> Ould-Mey. *Democratization in Africa.* p14

<sup>15</sup> Goose. *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> BBC Website. *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Goose. *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Amnesty International. *Ibid.* p3

oversee the integration of RPF into the armed forces.<sup>19</sup> Altogether the Arusha Accords were very favorable to the RPF. The Hutu led government would soon have to share power.<sup>20</sup>

The conflict with the Tutsi RPF radicalized elements of the Hutu population. Rwandan President Habyarimana cultivated a movement of ethnic chauvinism called Hutu Power. Using his own political party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND), the president created a nationwide militia. This military organization was called the Interhamwe “those who attack together.” While there was not formal relationship between the government and the Interhamwe it was common practice for the military and presidential guard to provide training for the organization.<sup>21</sup> Before long, the Interhamwe numbered in the tens of thousands, claiming 30,000 members at its height.<sup>22</sup> It would be this militia that would figure prominently in the 1994 genocide.

In October, the Security Council expanded the mission of the NIF, and established UNAMIR in Security Council resolution 872. UNAMIR was given a limited mandate; it would not assist in recovering weapons and would limit its security operations to the city of Kigali, which would comprise the heart of a weapons free zone. The Kigali zone would be established by the parties of the conflict.<sup>23</sup> Despite the establishment of the UNAMIR force, the security condition in Rwanda remained troubled. Habyarimana continued to block the establishment of a power sharing government. Worse yet, incidents of violence against Tutsis continued to occur, and began to escalate over the next several months. There were assassinations of Tutsi leaders and random killings. The intensity and pitch of the violence had reached the point that by March many of the country’s human rights activists sent their families from the capital fearing for their lives.<sup>24</sup>

## **Rwanda Explodes**

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1994, at twenty minutes after eight in the evening the airplane carrying Rwandan President Habyarimana was shot down by a surface to air missile while on approach to Kigali airport. Within hours, Colonel Bagosora a Hutu extremist seized control of the government. Roadblocks were set up around the city, and Tutsis were systematically murdered.<sup>25</sup> Rwandan forces went door to door in the capital, killing thousands.<sup>26</sup> By the next morning Bagosora’s forces began assassinating moderate Hutus and Tutsi leaders. At that time a unit of Belgian soldiers from UNAMIR was sent to protect the moderate Hutu Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Within hours of their arrival members of the Presidential Guard surrounded the Prime Minister’s compound and demanded that the peacekeepers surrender their weapons. Surrounded, the Belgian soldiers reluctantly surrendered, and the Presidential Guard entered the residence of the Prime Minister then killed her. The Belgian soldiers were led away to Camp Kigali, a Rwandan military base and were beaten and then brutally killed.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> UN. *Independent Inquiry*. p2

<sup>20</sup> Human Rights Watch Website. *Leave None to Tell the Story*.

<sup>21</sup> ICTR. *Yearbook 1994-96*. p11

<sup>22</sup> BBC Website. *Rwanda: How the Genocide Happened*.

<sup>23</sup> UN. *Ibid*. p3

<sup>24</sup> Amnesty International. *Ibid*. p3

<sup>25</sup> Human Rights Watch. *Ibid*.

<sup>26</sup> PBS Website. *Frontline: The Triumph of Evil*.

<sup>27</sup> UN. *Ibid*. p8

The day after the killings the Security Council called for all sides in the conflict to remain calm until the air crash could be investigated. The Rwandan ambassador to the UN was less diplomatic however, calling the crash an assassination.<sup>28</sup> There would be no calm in Rwanda. The very same day, the RPF launched attacks on Rwandan government forces from their positions in the north. RPF forces in Kigali as part of the Arusha Accords launched their own assault, attacking the Presidential guard. Other RPF forces emerged from the demilitarized zone and linked up with their allies in the capital. Kigali descended into lawlessness.<sup>29</sup> The city became a killing ground as Rwandan military units turned their heavy weapons against Tutsi civilians hiding in the national stadium as well as the attacking RPF fighters. The RPF began to use its own heavy weapons, raining Katyusha rockets into the city.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, the events of April 7<sup>th</sup> set a precedent for the rest of the month: it would not be the last time heavy weapons were used against masses of refugees.

The initial outbreak of violence in the capital was only the beginning of the slaughter. Soon, violence erupted around the country. The Interhamwe take up arms against Tutsis around the country. Massacres began to occur around the country, led by the Interhamwe and overseen by soldiers and police officers. Within days the *genocidaires* developed more sophisticated tactics for carrying out their grisly work: Tutsi survivors would be ordered to gather in large crowds in public places. Once their organized forces would turn their weapons on the victims. The *genocidaires* would use stadiums, government buildings, and even churches to gather their victims into large groups in order to speed up the killing.<sup>31</sup> Communities all across Rwanda engaged in acts of genocide; local leaders often played a major role in encouraging violence, assuring the Hutus that the killing was justified, and for the good of the country.<sup>32</sup> When mere words couldn't move Hutus to violence, the promise of money, food, and even land were used as motivated.<sup>33</sup>

The lightly armed UNAMIR forces are largely unable to provide safety for the victims of genocide. As the violence escalates, the peacekeepers begin to find themselves on the receiving end of the violence. Civilians under the protection of UNAMIR receive fire from Rwandan mortars; conditions worsen to the point that even UNAMIR headquarters is bombarded on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. No peacekeepers were harmed during the attack.<sup>34</sup> There was growing pressure in the Security Council to withdraw the embattled peacekeepers. Throughout the country law and order had broken down. The Arusha Accords were in tatters and the country was embroiled in a violent civil war.<sup>35</sup> During this time, news of the genocide began to travel outside of Rwanda. The Security Council in its 30<sup>th</sup> of April statement publicly announced that much of the violence in Rwanda was directed against the civilian population.<sup>36</sup> The mandate of UNAMIR was adjusted in resolution, allowing it to act as an intermediary between both factions in the civil

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<sup>28</sup> BBC Website. *On This Day*.

<sup>29</sup> UN. *Special Report of the Secretary General*. p1

<sup>30</sup> Smyth. *Ibid*.

<sup>31</sup> ICTR. *Ibid*. p9

<sup>32</sup> Human Rights Watch. *Ibid*.

<sup>33</sup> BBC Website. *How the Genocide Happened*.

<sup>34</sup> UN. *Ibid*. p2

<sup>35</sup> UN. *Independent Inquiry*. p9

<sup>36</sup> UNSC. *Presidential Statement*.

war.<sup>37</sup> However, UNAMIR's presence on the ground was drawn down significantly, leaving only a small observation force.

Thus ends the

### **Focus Questions**

1. What is your country's experience with colonialism?
2. What is your country's relationship with Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, and Uganda?
3. What is your country's experience with genocide and ethnic cleansing?
4. What contributions to peacekeeping does your country make?
5. Does your country have any strategic interests in Central Africa? If so, what are they?
6. What is your country's position towards humanitarian intervention?
7. What aid has your country given Rwanda in the past?
8. How vocal was your country about Rwanda at the time?
9. Has your country experienced losses in peacekeeping during the past?
10. What other major peacekeeping operations were occurring in the months leading up to UNAMIR's deployment? How might these other operations impact your country's position on Rwanda?

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<sup>37</sup> UNAMIR Website. *Mandate*.

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