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For further information please see: *Rwanda: Persecution of Tutsi minority and repression of government critics, 1990-1992* (AI Index: AFR 47/02/92)

RWANDA

@Mass murder by government supporters and troops in April and May 1994

1. Introduction

At the start of April 1994 Rwanda was plunged into the most tragic part of its recorded history yet. By early May 1994 it was estimated that 200,000 people or more, most of them members of the minority Tutsi ethnic group, had been killed in countrywide massacres. More than 300,000 Rwandese have fled to neighbouring countries, most of them to Tanzania, and others to Burundi, Uganda and Zaire. About two million others are reported to be displaced inside the country. Many of those who have fled from their homes are said to be the lucky ones, but a significant proportion have severe injuries. In many cases entire families are reported to have been annihilated. Stories abound of severely traumatized children who are sole survivors of their families.

Virtually all the killers belong to the majority Hutu ethnic group, to which President Juvénal Habyarimana, the head of state whose killing on 6 April 1994 precipitated the massacres, also belonged. Those directing the killings are principally supporters of the former single ruling party, the *Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement* (MRND), Republican National Movement for Democracy and Development, particularly members of its youth wing, known locally as *Interahamwe* ("They who attack together"). From the mid-1970s until 1991 Rwanda's Constitution stipulated that all Rwandese citizens were members of the MRND by birth. During the past two years, the MRND has been allied to the *Coalition pour la défense de la république* (CDR), Coalition for the Defence of the Republic, an exclusively Hutu political party. CDR's youth wing, known locally as *Impuzamugambi* ("They who have the same goal"), has orchestrated a violent campaign against any Hutu supporting sharing power with the Tutsi-dominated rebel Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), and all Tutsi.

In the months preceding President Habyarimana's death, Amnesty International had received reports that government authorities and the armed forces were supplying military weapons to *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi*. These have subsequently been used in their killing spree. The Presidential Guard is reported to have been in charge of military training of the *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi* to constitute a militia responsible to the armed forces as well as to MRND and CDR officials closely associated with President Habyarimana. The current massacres in Rwanda are being carried out mainly by supporters or sympathizers of MRND and CDR, in conjunction with members of the security forces, particularly those of the Presidential Guard, the Gendarmerie, the regular army and local government police. Most killings are politically-motivated: to destroy the population groups viewed as potential supporters of the RPF and the multi-ethnic parties opposed to the MRND and CDR.

The massacres began soon after President Habyarimana of Rwanda and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi were killed on 6 April when their plane was brought down by a rocket. The two presidents were returning to Kigali from a regional summit in neighbouring Tanzania to discuss ways to end political crises in Burundi and Rwanda. The massacres are still continuing a month and a half later.

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There have been similar waves of massacres, albeit on a much smaller scale, since October 1990 when the RPF launched a war from neighbouring Uganda to overthrow the government. Soon after the war began the MRND government called on its supporters to help government forces fight the enemy -- the RPF, locally known as *Inkotanyi*, and its supporters. "The enemy" was used synonymously in government propaganda for the Tutsi ethnic group in general, members of which were attacked solely because they belong to the same ethnic group as most RPF combatants. Hutu identified by President Habyarimana's supporters as being sympathetic to sharing power with Tutsi have also been targeted. Tutsi throughout Rwanda, even in parts where there has been no armed conflict, have been subjected to extreme violence and massacres by government supporters for no obvious reason other than their ethnic origin.

In late October and November 1990 many Tutsi were killed in the northeastern Mutara region where the RPF began its attacks. Surviving Tutsi in the area fled to Uganda. Many Tutsi in other parts of the country were trapped between members of the security forces and Hutu gangs led by local officials. In Kigali mass detentions were carried out at the end of October 1990; most of the more than 7,000 people detained in Kigali were Tutsi.

In October 1990, just after the RPF's first attacks, more than 300 Tutsi were killed in Kibilira district (*commune*), in Rwanda's northwestern prefecture of Gisenyi. Responding to criticism by human rights groups, the government arrested two local government officials accused of masterminding massacres, but released them without trial within a few weeks. Immediately after the RPF briefly occupied the northwestern town of Ruhengeri in January 1991, members of the security forces and Hutu gangs, again with local officials, massacred as many as 1,000 or more Tutsi of the Bagogwe clan in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri prefectures. The clan had taken no particular part in the fighting, but its members were singled out for attack solely because of their ethnic origin. Former President Habyarimana originated from the area, which is dominated by Hutu. Anti-Tutsi propaganda had been particularly fierce there. Central government authorities imposed a news black-out on the region for several months and took no action against those responsible, denying to Amnesty International and others that any killings had occurred.

In March 1992 Hutu in Bugesera region, south of the capital, Kigali, killed as many as 300 Tutsi after the government-owned radio had broadcast what it said was the text of a tract, claiming that the RPF was planning to assassinate prominent Hutu politicians and that it had the support of the *Parti libéral* (PL), Liberal Party. The radio broadcasts reportedly hinted that the Hutu should defend themselves against the enemy and, as on other previous and subsequent occasions, the "enemy" was understood to refer to the Tutsi in general. Following an international out-cry, the government reported that several dozen suspected killers had been arrested. They were soon to be released without any independent investigation to establish responsibility. The only trial reported by the authorities was that of a soldier accused of shooting dead a 55-year-old Italian woman missionary who was helping Tutsi victims at Nyamata Roman Catholic church. The trial appears to have occurred due to foreign pressure and even then the authorities claimed the shooting was accidental. The soldier was sentenced to one-year's imprisonment.

Opponents of talks with the RPF who still dominated the former ruling party and the military stepped up the violence against the Tutsi and members of opposition political parties during the first half of 1993, as there were indications that peace talks between the government and the RPF might produce an agreement. The MRND and CDR rejected any agreement to share power with the RPF, and therefore to share power with the Tutsi. The peace talks began to move forward when, after the MRND formed a government with opposition political parties in 1992, the then Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, both of whom came

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from parties in opposition to the President, represented the government at the negotiations in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha. Prime Minister Dismas Nsengiyaremye repeatedly accused President Habyarimana of obstructing the peace talks and condoning political violence. In July 1993 this conflict resulted in the replacement of Dismas Nsengiyaremye by Agathe Uwilingiyimana as Prime Minister. The talks culminated in the signing of a peace agreement on 4 August 1993 and a formal end to the fighting. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) played a significant role in facilitating the talks and drafting of various agreements and sent military observers, the OAU Neutral Military Observer Group (NMOG), to monitor the various cease-fires between the parties to the conflict. Towards the end of 1993, after some months delay, a United Nations (UN) peace-keeping force known as United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) was deployed to help implement the peace agreement. NMOG was subsequently integrated into UNAMIR. The state-controlled radio and subsequently a privately-owned radio known as *Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines* (RTL) were used to denounce the peace talks.

The violence continued and the authorities delayed implementing the terms of the peace accord. By the start of 1994 the UN and the international community in general were expressing concern at the government's failure to implement it. The UN Security Council warned that it would withdraw UNAMIR if the stalemate continued. By the beginning of April 1994 it appeared that opponents of the peace accord could not hold out much longer and that the peace accord was going to be implemented. Since President Habyarimana's death on 6 April, blamed on the RPF by government sources, there have been many claims that it was opponents of multi-ethnic power-sharing among the President's own supporters who were behind the killing, as they were the only ones who would benefit from a disruption to the peace process.

After the President's death, the power-sharing arrangement between political parties was set aside and an interim government led by the former speaker of the National Assembly, Théodore Sindikubwabo, was set up. The interim government blamed the killing of President Habyarimana on the RPF and Belgian troops serving with UNAMIR. It evidently had no intention of implementing the peace accord. This and the massacres which started on 7 April led to a resumption of the war between the RPF and government troops. By this time, pro-government militia had been prepared and armed for a "final assault" on the Tutsi. These massacres appear to have been prepared to deprive the RPF of any support. During an operation characteristic of a coup d'etat the Presidential Guard moved quickly to kill the Prime Minister and the President of the *Cour de cassation*, Cassation Court, both of them Hutu, with some semblance of constitutional authority. The new authorities and the military mobilized their supporters against the "enemy" Tutsi and also against Hutu who they suspected of being allies of the RPF - that is to say, critics and opponents of the MNRD and CDR.

The initial killings by the armed forces set the militia killing machine in motion. Government and military authorities appear to have been involved at the highest level in the massacres, with the intention of destroying anyone identified as a supporter or a potential supporter of the RPF; the logic of the authorities' own propaganda was to designate every Tutsi as a potential threat. The subsequent campaign of killings was consequently committed with genocidal intent.

Genocide is a crime against humanity and, whether committed in time of peace or time of war, is a crime under international law (see Chapter 5 below). Genocide is defined in international law¹ not just as killing on a massive scale, but as killing or a number of other acts **committed with intent to destroy**, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. The Convention provides for the

¹by the United Nations 1948 "*Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*"
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punishment of those who carry out genocide and also for those who conspire to commit genocide or engage in public incitement to commit genocide, and those who attempt to commit genocide or are accomplices in it. Furthermore the Convention provides for the punishment not only of rulers and public officials who commit genocide, but also of private individuals. Rwanda has been obliged since the country acceded to the Convention in 1975² to implement its provisions in law and practice.

The genocidal intent that became apparent through the systematic mass murder of Rwanda's Tutsi was part of a larger picture of political murder. The overall picture was one of a political drive to wipe out all sectors of the population deemed present or future threats to those in power -- and one dimension of this threat, the Tutsi, were defined by their ethnicity. The targeting of the Tutsi minority for destruction, as the principal designated enemy, was a major part of this political program of murder. The systematic hunting down and murder of those associated with Rwanda's multi-ethnic opposition parties, Hutu and Tutsi alike, provided a political dimension behind the larger campaign of murder along ethnic lines that has outraged world public opinion.

All of the deliberate and arbitrary killings perpetrated on the authority of Rwanda's armed forces and *de facto* government since 6 April 1994 are gross violations of human rights law. The orchestrated targeting and murder of a huge proportion of the victims along strictly ethnic lines, moreover, requires the international community to meet special obligations under international law above and beyond its permanent commitments to suppress extrajudicial executions and other violations of the right to life.

A first step is to examine the evidence of an intent to commit genocide by the leaders that have dominated Rwanda's government and armed forces since 6 April and the institutions acting on their behalf or at their behest. To this end, the public smearing of the Tutsi minority indiscriminately as "the enemy", evidence that regular and irregular forces were armed and deployed with an explicit mission to destroy the Tutsi population, and the incitement and mass mobilization of the Hutu population by these forces in attacks on the Tutsi minority appear to show such an intent.

2. The slaughter of Tutsi and their "accomplices"

Within hours of the death of President Habyarimana, units of the security forces, MRND and CDR supporters in Kigali and other parts of the country were out on a hunt for Tutsi. Hutu who supported political parties which accept power sharing were also targeted. Within a few days of the start of the killings, massacres were occurring all over the country. The victims were surrounded in their homes and villages. Those who managed to escape from their homes thought the killers would respect churches, but they were tragically wrong. In fact, the confines of church buildings and compounds where many sought refuge appear to have made it impossible for them to escape. Members of the security forces and civilian gangs associated with them followed those fleeing. In most cases when the killers met resistance and could not use traditional weapons, such as clubs and machetes, they first used grenades and then firearms, including automatic weapons. Weakened or dying victims would then be finished off with knives and machetes. Only areas effectively controlled by the RPF appear to have been spared the worst of the carnage.

2.1 Killings of opposition leaders and critics in Kigali

² Decree-Law no. 8/75 of 12 February 1975.

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The initial victims in Kigali were Hutu and Tutsi opposition leaders, some of whom were government officials, human rights activists and other prominent Tutsi. These individuals were well-known and their killing appears to have been planned well in advance by the military. There have been persistent, but unconfirmed reports that a list of the victims had already been established by some security force commanders in conjunction with MRND and CDR leaders. The first reported victims were **Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana**, several other government ministers and the President of the Cassation Court, **Joseph Kavaruganda**. Before she was appointed Prime Minister in mid-1993 Agathe Uwilingiyimana, who was then Minister of Education, had been assaulted by men believed to be members of the security forces. There had also been a grenade attack on the house of Joseph Kavaruganda in 1993. The death of President Habyarimana appears to have provided the killers with a special opportunity to eliminate these officials. The coordinated nature of the attacks and the high profile of the regular army in them suggested considerable planning.

The security forces also launched a hunt for human rights activists who had already been persecuted in previous months and years because of their criticisms of human rights violations. Some of them, such as Monique Mujawamariya and Alphonse Nkubito managed to escape. Alphonse Nkubito, who is also a high-ranking public prosecutor, had survived a grenade attack in November 1993. He had been branded a traitor and supporter of the RPF when in late 1990 he ordered the release of Tutsi detained arbitrarily in the aftermath of the RPF's first attacks. Other human rights activists, such as **Fidèle Kanyabugoyi**, a Tutsi, and **Ignace Ruhatana**, a Hutu, were not able to escape and were killed. Fidèle Kanyabugoyi, a member of a human rights group known as KANYARWANDA, had previously been detained for his human rights activities in 1992 and 1993. He had collected information about the massacre in early 1991 of Bagogwe in northwestern Rwanda. Ignace Ruhatana was among some 30 people tried by the State Security Court in early 1991 on charges of collaboration with the RPF, simply because he had been found with documents critical of President Habyarimana and the government. He was among the few who were acquitted.

Following the first round of killings, soldiers then attacked a Roman Catholic centre in Kigali known as *Centre spirituel christus* and extrajudicially executed about 17 Tutsi, mostly priests and nuns. The killings were not random. European priests and nuns were locked in a dining room while the Tutsi were being killed. Those killed included **Father Chrysologue Mahame**, aged 67 and **Father Patrick Gahizi**, aged 48. The victims appear to have been targeted solely because they were Tutsi, many of them with a prominent social position.

These killings were swiftly followed by a hunt for Tutsi and Hutu who were known to support the politicians who had been killed. Militia set up roadblocks in Kigali and its suburbs. Each individual passing through these roadblocks had to produce an identity card which indicates the ethnic origin of its bearer. Being identified as or mistaken for a Tutsi meant immediate and summary execution. The killers made no attempt to conceal the killings -- or hide the bodies after the fact, as witnessed by journalists and other foreign nationals. There was no evidence that either central government or local government authorities or senior army officers opposed the killings by those acting on their authority. Quite the contrary, the evidence suggests the *de facto* authorities and top armed forces leaders had ordered and directed even this early stage of the murder campaign. This conclusion can be drawn in part from the systematic manner in which particular opposition leaders were hunted down and killed, the consistent, coordinated nature of the road-block operations, and the persistent pattern by which Tutsi in general and specific Hutu identified with the opposition were screened out and killed. This suggests orchestration, not

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mere acquiescence by higher authorities. Evidence of similar coordinated action was to emerge countrywide in the weeks to come.

Some Tutsi were trapped and tried to hide within Kigali. Many were quickly found and killed. For example, some Tutsi tried to hide at the stores of the Belgian Red Cross at Gikondo. Soldiers followed them there on 8 April and forced them out. Most were hacked to death while a few were shot dead. Bodies were scattered all around the store, apparently because the victims were killed as they tried to run away from their killers. Another massacre in Gikondo is reported to have taken place at the Methodist church. An unspecified number of Tutsi were reportedly killed there and at least 40 seriously injured.

Wounded civilians tried to seek medical attention at Kigali hospital, but many were killed either before they arrived there or in the hospital itself. For example, soldiers bayoneted to death two men inside the hospital on 11 April. Four days later, seven more patients were killed in the same hospital. The staff at the hospital were powerless to save the victims and the authorities took no action either to prevent further killings or to investigate those which had occurred.

On 17 April more than 100 Tutsi were killed by soldiers and militia at Nyanza, south of Kigali. They had been part of a group of some 2,000 Tutsi who were reportedly intercepted by soldiers and militia as they walked to seek refuge at Amahoro stadium in Kigali where some UNAMIR troops were camped. The attackers hacked some Tutsi with machetes in order to compel them to walk to a place where they would be slaughtered. On reaching Nyanza hill the victims were made to sit down before grenades were hurled at them. A witness saw a pile of at least 100 bodies and said many others were in houses nearby.

2.2 Massacres in northern and eastern Rwanda

Most of the massacres in eastern Rwanda appear to have taken place in the premises of churches where Tutsi and Hutu government opponents had sought refuge. For example, more than 800 people were reportedly killed on 11 April by government supporters and soldiers at Kiziguro Roman Catholic church, Murambi district of Byumba prefecture. Journalists and RPF fighters recovered about 10 survivors from a mass grave near the church. The attackers first forced the Spanish missionaries there to leave, before the killings began. One of the survivors, **Jean Bushejja**, said he and some others were forced to carry about 800 bodies into the mass grave. When they had finished carrying the bodies the attackers then turned on them and he threw himself into the grave to escape being hacked to death.

Hundreds more were killed by *Interahamwe* and gendarmes at Rukara Roman Catholic mission in Kibungo prefecture's Rukara district. The missionaries there reportedly asked a local government official to help protect the Tutsi hiding from militia. The official instead decided to cut the water supply to the mission. The missionaries were subsequently forced to leave as the *Interahamwe* and gendarmes attacked, hurling grenades through the windows of the church and finishing off others with guns and machetes. Similar killings of hundreds more were reported at Gahini Protestant church in Rukara district where many bodies were reportedly dumped in a pit latrine.

2.3 Massacres in Cyangugu prefecture

Massacres in Cyangugu prefecture in the southwest have been some of the most horrific and extensive. *Interahamwe* have been able to call on the support of the military when they have met resistance. Many Tutsi fled from their homes early on to escape being killed and took refuge at churches and a stadium in

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Cyangugu town. Many were killed there. Others were herded into administrative centres where they were systematically killed.

Soon after the killings began, Tutsi fled to Mibirizi Roman Catholic parish in Cyimbogo district. Militia attacked them there, apparently led by a businessman and the recently elected mayor (*Bourgmestre*) of Cyimbogo. The victims resisted and on 9 April the Prefect (governor of Cyangugu prefecture) and Roman Catholic Bishop of Cyangugu visited the area to appeal for an end to the attacks. On 18 April the attackers returned armed with grenades, machine guns and other automatic weapons which they used against the men who were putting up resistance. The attackers also received militia reinforcements from neighbouring Bugarama district. When most of the Tutsi men had been killed or injured, the attackers entered the church compound and killed all males they could lay their hands on, including babies. There were apparently some survivors and the attackers returned two days later. Only just over 300 women and children remained out of the original number of more than 2,000 people who had taken refuge at the church. The Prefect was apparently urged to open the border with neighbouring Zaire to allow potential victims to escape, but he reportedly refused saying that he had received orders to keep it closed. Thousands were also reportedly massacred by militia at Mushaka, Nyamasheke and Nkaka Roman Catholic parishes.

On 14 April three Tutsi Josephite monks in the company of Cyangugu's Roman Catholic bishop, Thaddée Ntihinyirwa, were killed at a roadblock mounted by militia about six kilometres from Nyamasheke parish. The bishop was attempting to evacuate them and several other members of the clergy from the parish. The following day, the militia attacked and killed an unspecified number of Tutsi and Hutu members of the opposition sheltering at the parish.

When the killings began about 5,000 Tutsi and Hutu members of the opposition gathered at Cyangugu stadium where they hoped they would be protected by the authorities from attacks. Amnesty International has received reports that individuals were then regularly picked out by militia and members of the security forces and killed while soldiers at the stadium stood by. On 29 April some tried to escape but militia and local police hurled several grenades at them and opened fire, killing an unspecified number. Those who managed to escape risked being killed as they approached the nearby border with Zaire which the Rwandese authorities had closed. Humanitarian organizations were prevented from visiting the stadium and the Prefect, Emmanuel Bagambiki, failed to facilitate access.

2.4 Massacre at Mukarange parish, Rwamagana district

More than 3,000 people, most of them Tutsi but including Hutu members of opposition political parties, were killed at Mukarange Roman Catholic parish in Kibungo prefecture's Rwamagana district in the east of the country. The victims were first herded into the parish main hall and grenades were hurled at them through windows. An estimated 2,500 were killed there. Some 500 or more tried to run but were mowed down with machine gun fire in the church compound. About 1,000 were reportedly herded towards Lake Muhazi and the attackers continued to shoot them. Only an estimated 50 survived by using banana stems as rafts to cross the lake. A journalist reported that he stopped counting when he reached 3,005 corpses.

2.5 Massacres of hospital patients and orphans in Butare

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The programmatic killing campaign has shown no respect for any of the traditional places of special protection or refuge in Rwanda. Churches were the most common traditional places of refuge to be horrifically violated, turned, as in Mukarange parish, into lethally enclosed killing grounds. Hospitals and orphanages followed. The only explanation was that the authorities intended the murder squads to seek out and kill their perceived enemies wherever they were. The sick and the children of the Tutsi were part of the designated enemy.

On 23 April government troops and militia killed about 170 patients and some staff at Butare hospital. The patients were being cared for by doctors of *Médecins sans frontières* (MSF), an international non-governmental humanitarian organization. Shocked by these killings of defenceless patients, MSF decided to leave the hospital. The authorities, who had reportedly given assurances to MSF that there would be no attacks on the hospital, took no action against the attackers or to protect any other potential victims. From the hospital the killers proceeded to a nearby camp for the displaced where they reportedly killed an unknown number of people.

On 1 May people thought to comprise members of the security forces and militia attacked and killed 21 orphans and 13 local Red Cross workers in Butare. The orphans had just been evacuated from Kigali to Butare where it was thought they would be safe. The only plausible explanation for these killings can be the ethnic origin of the victims, reinforcing the impression that the killers acted with genocidal intent. Killings in Butare took place after the Tutsi Prefect of Butare had been replaced in mid-April 1994. He and members of his family were reported to have been subsequently killed.

3. Killings by the RPF and its supporters

In addition to the massacres by soldiers, militia and others in areas under nominal government control, Amnesty International has also received reports of deliberate and arbitrary killings of government supporters by RPF combatants and by civilians in the areas under RPF control, although not on anything like the same scale. Before April 1994 such killings had occurred in various parts of northern Rwanda. For example, at the start of 1993 there were reports that the RPF killed about 300 Hutu supporters of the government in northwestern Rwanda to avenge massacres of Tutsi. Some Hutu were reportedly shot at that time when they refused to leave their homes and flee to Uganda.

Particularly in the last week, there have been some reports of such killings by RPF combatants since 6 April 1994. In one reported incident in mid-April 1994 an unspecified number of suspected *Interahamwe* were arrested by the RPF and tied in a manner known in Uganda as *kandoya* or "three-piece tying", with the victim's arms tied above the elbow behind the back³. One of the prisoners called **Kayiranga** was then killed when he was kicked in the chest and head. He reportedly died as he pleaded for mercy. An eye-witness reported that he did not stay to witness the fate of the others. It is likely that this incident was not an isolated one. Hutu fleeing from eastern Rwanda to Tanzania in early May 1994 alleged that they were fleeing from attacks by the RPF. They claimed that some Hutu had been killed and houses burned in their

³This form of restraint, which amounts to a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or torture, was in regular use by soldiers of Uganda's National Resistance Army until 1987, when it was formally banned by President Museveni after Amnesty International and others protested at its use.

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villages.

One RPF commander was reported to have told the press in April 1994 that RPF combatants kill *Interahamwe* when they encounter them. Amnesty International is concerned that such a statement from a senior RPF commander indicates that some prisoners and militia may have been executed by the RPF in violation of basic humanitarian principles.

4. Responsibility and purpose of the massacres

Information available to Amnesty International suggests that by early April 1994 the authorities had prepared their supporters both materially and psychologically to carry out the massacres which started on 7 April. Since 1990 the authorities had repeatedly told Rwanda's Hutu population that the RPF was fighting to reinstall a Tutsi monarchy that had been overthrown in 1959 and to seize their (Hutu) land. Political rallies and radio addresses had been used to convey the message that all Tutsi were enemies of the Hutu and supporters of the RPF. Indeed the authorities continually reinforced this interpretation, as virtually no action was ever taken against people who killed or committed other abuses against Tutsi civilians. Many attacks by government supporters were incited, ordered or condoned by the authorities. Each time it only took a radio broadcast calling on government supporters (Hutu) to "take up arms against the enemy" for a massacre of Tutsi to result. Since April 1994 the same pattern has been repeated on a massive scale.

Interahamwe militia were created and armed by leaders of the MRND. Addressing a public rally in Ruhengeri on 15 November 1992 former President Habyarimana denied that *Interahamwe* were involved in violence. He claimed that the militia were being falsely accused by government and judicial authorities who belonged to the opposition. He said that he did not need the army to support him during electoral campaigns, as he and *Interahamwe* were united.

A few days earlier, at a meeting attended by the President in Gisenyi, Léon Mugesera, an official of the MRND, called for the extermination of the Tutsi. He reportedly said that Tutsi should either voluntarily return to what he claimed was their ancestral country of origin, Ethiopia, or be thrown into Rwanda's main river, Nyabarongo, which leads to Lake Victoria and indirectly to the Nile, flowing north⁴. He allegedly said that the Tutsi should return to Ethiopia, like Ethiopia's Jewish or Falasha community had returned to Israel.

In December 1990 a journalist known to be close to top government officials published what he called the "Ten commandments" calling for hatred of Tutsi. The commandments urged Hutu to mistrust Tutsi and to have no pity on them, warning that "The Batutsi are thirsty for blood and power and want to impose their hegemony on the Rwandese people by the gun"⁵. No action was taken by the authorities in connection with this article, although many other journalists were detained around the same time because they criticized government officials or their policies, without calling for violence.

In addition to killings of Tutsi and opponents of the government which occurred from October 1990

⁴It is widely believed that the ancestors of the Tutsi in both Rwanda and Burundi originated to the north and migrated into Rwanda and Burundi centuries ago.

⁵"Les Batutsi sont des assoiffés de sang et de pouvoir qui veulent imposer leur hégémonie au peuple rwandais par le canon et par le fusil".

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onwards, it was clear by the start of 1994 that MRND and CDR leaders were preparing for a large-scale offensive of some sort. They were arming their supporters and training them in the use of military weapons. In February 1994 UNAMIR officials protested against the existence of training camps and the massive distribution of arms to civilians at a time when the government and the RPF were supposed to be preparing for demobilization of their combatants. In this way, it seems, the ground was prepared for the massacres under the very eyes of representatives of the international community.

The Prime Minister appointed after President Habyarimana's death was reported to have called on government supporters around the country to collect arms from Kigali. On 30 April the government-controlled radio called on people to take up arms against the enemy all over the country.

Immediately the massacres began, RTLM radio began broadcasting messages calling on the militia to step up fighting the enemy. This radio had continued operating throughout the period since 6 April, broadcasting calls for ethnic hatred and killings; they appear to constitute public incitement to commit genocide when taken in the context of the orgy of killings.

Members of the interim government have neither acknowledged the scope of the mass killing nor called on their supporters to stop attacking defenceless civilians, despite the international outcry. On 28 April the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that only about 10,000 people had been killed, countering estimates that as many as 100,000 had already died in the massacres. He and the Minister of Commerce told journalists that the only way to stop the killings was for the RPF to stop fighting government forces. They appeared to justify massacres of Tutsi on the grounds that the Hutu population was fighting to stop the Tutsi in the RPF from taking power. In mid-May 1994 the leader of *Interahamwe*, Robert Kajuga, told Radio France International that the killings were spontaneous and that the Hutu only fought in self-defence. He added that there was collaboration between *Interahamwe* and the armed forces, and that his militia were helping the army to defend the country.

5. Conclusion

Amnesty International is gravely concerned that the Rwandese armed forces and government appear to be responsible for inciting, perpetrating and condoning mass killings, particularly of members of the Tutsi ethnic group. The majority of the victims were killed while unarmed or were trapped in churches and other public places where they hoped they would be protected. The killings went far beyond people suspected of supporting the RPF and targeted any Tutsi of both sexes and all ages. In some cases described above women and girls were spared⁶. Statements made by government and other officials since October 1990 were evidently meant to incite Hutu to kill all Tutsi, with apparent genocidal intent. Virtually no one who has incited or perpetrated violence against Tutsi has been brought to justice, mainly because those in positions of responsibility at all levels either supported or condoned these acts. Indeed some Hutu who advocated peaceful and equal co-existence with Tutsi paid with their lives, or those of their relatives. These elements support a conclusion that the killings were planned and orchestrated principally to wipe out the Tutsi ethnic group in Rwanda.

Amnesty International is calling on the relevant bodies of the United Nations to take prompt action to prevent further human rights abuses in Rwanda and also urgently set up a mechanism to investigate and

⁶Ethnic affiliation in Rwanda and Burundi is established primarily through the paternal line, meaning that any child of a Tutsi man is considered to be Tutsi, whereas the child of a Hutu man and a Tutsi woman should be considered as a Hutu.

Mass murder by government supporters and troops in April and May 1994

establish whether genocide has been (and is still being) committed in Rwanda and, if so, to identify those authorities who have ordered, incited, encouraged or condoned it. Those identified as responsible for mass killings or genocide should be tried by a competent and impartial court of law. These recommendations are spelled out in more detail in Amnesty International's appeal to the UN entitled, *A call for UN human rights action on Rwanda and Burundi* (AI Index: IOR 41/02/94).