

Somalia and fulfilling Boutros-Ghali's grand dream, the UN departed, handing Mogadishu over to its warring factions.

Its final exodus, in March 1995, was marked by massive looting. Amid the ruins of Mogadishu, the UN had constructed a giant fortress for its expatriate personnel, complete with a shopping mall, street lights, satellite communications systems, a modern sewerage network, flower beds and other comforts. Costing \$160 million, it had all come from the Somali aid budget. As the UN withdrew, looters swarmed over the area, stripping everything of value. Within a few months even the foundations had disappeared. Nothing remained to mark its intervention, except anger and contempt.

The Somali debacle had repercussions around the world. When President Clinton took office in January 1993, he had high hopes that the United Nations, with the help of the US, could be used as an instrument for world peace. In the wake of the Black Hawk Down episode, he ordered a complete reappraisal of policy. The result was a presidential directive that set strict conditions on any US involvement in UN peacekeeping operations. Henceforth, before offering any military support to the UN, the US had to be satisfied that a vital national interest was at stake; that the mission was clearly defined in size, scope and duration; that a working ceasefire among all local parties was fully evident; and that there was both sufficient political will behind the mission and an identifiable 'exit strategy'.

Just when a far greater catastrophe than Somalia was about to erupt, the US and the UN had been reduced to the role of bystanders.

THE GRAVES ARE NOT YET FULL

In the tourist literature Rwanda was known as 'the land of a thousand hills', a country of magical beauty tucked away in the heart of Africa, with breathtaking views and crystal-clear lakes, like a tropical version of Switzerland. In the north-west, along the Congo-Nile crest, stood the giant peaks of the Virunga mountains rising to 14,000 feet, a volcanic range covered with thick woodlands, the domain of highland gorillas made famous by the work of the American primatologist Dian Fossey, and her book *Gorillas in the Mist*. Foreign tourists flocked to Rwanda, providing an important source of income.

The people of Rwanda – Banyarwanda – were renowned for being hard-working and orderly. With a high density of population, nearly every available piece of land was cultivated. Banana plantations, eucalyptus groves and coffee farms dotted the landscape. A large majority of Banyarwanda – more than three-quarters – adhered to the Christian religion. Church attendance was high. Church organisations formed a central part of everyday life, running schools and clinics.

A strict hierarchy of government prevailed. The country was divided into eleven *préfectures* led by *préfets*; 145 *communes* led by *bourgmestres*; 1,600 *secteurs* led by *conseillers*; and tens of thousands of *sous-secteurs* comprising small groups of households. At each level

Banyarwanda displayed a high regard for authority. There was almost no crime and little prostitution.

The government's record of economic management was considered impressive. Between 1965 and 1989 gross domestic product increased by nearly 5 per cent a year; inflation was low; despite a high rate of population increase, running to 3.7 per cent a year, there were advances in school enrolment and health care. About two-thirds of rural households were engaged in coffee production providing the mainstay of Rwanda's export earnings. Impressed by the government's commitment to rural development and to law and order, Western donors were generous with aid funds. Belgium, the former colonial power, was the main donor; Switzerland put Rwanda at the top of its list for aid; and France provided technical assistance and military training. Foreign aid constituted an increasing proportion of national income, rising from 5 per cent in 1973 to 22 per cent in 1991.

Yet there was an ugly streak that ran through Rwanda's politics. Ever since the idea of Hutu hegemony had taken hold during the 1950s, Hutu politicians had portrayed the Tutsi minority as an 'enemy' seeking to reimpose their rule over Rwanda. A key part of the ideology they constructed was the myth that the Tutsi were invaders who had overrun Rwanda in the pre-colonial era and enslaved the Hutu – an alien group, therefore, that had no legitimate status in the country. The myth had grown from accounts written by European travellers in the nineteenth century describing the ruling Tutsi aristocracy as being descendants of a 'Hamitic' people, with a culture clearly superior to that of the indigenous Hutu, and claiming they had migrated from distant lands such as the highlands of Ethiopia or the Horn of Africa. The same 'Hamitic hypothesis' was applied to other kingdoms in the Great Lakes region, such as Ankole, Bunyoro and Toro in modern Uganda. It fitted in with the fashionable nineteenth-century European concept of 'historic races'. But in Rwanda, instead of fading away, it became, in the words of the historian Jean-Pierre Chrétien, 'ethno-historic gospel' – a myth incorporated into the history books and seized on by Hutu politicians for their own propaganda purposes. In 1959 the Hutu leader Grégoire Kayibanda described Rwanda as 'two nations in a single state . . . two nations between whom there is no

intercourse and no sympathy, who are ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers of different zones, or inhabitants of different planets'.

Though gaining power as a result of the Hutu 'revolution' of 1959–60, Hutu politicians continued to use the language of hatred and division against the Tutsi minority to justify their persecution. They also found it expedient to whip up anti-Tutsi hostility to fortify their own position at times when dissension among Hutu clans was rife. In the early 1990s, when the ruling Hutu clique faced growing political opposition, they sought to maintain their hold on power by rousing Hutu against the Tutsi threat, fomenting a climate of fear and hatred, relying on the Hutu's culture of obedience to ensure their orders were obeyed and preparing for the onslaught well in advance by arming militias and organising death squads. The genocide that followed was caused not by ancient ethnic antagonism but by a fanatical elite engaged in a modern struggle for power and wealth using ethnic antagonism as their principal weapon. Though Western governments knew that massive killing was underway, they failed to take the steps needed to prevent it. The result was slaughter on a scale not witnessed since the Nazi extermination programme against the Jews.

A harbinger of that terrible violence came soon after independence in 1962. The Hutu 'revolution' had led to the exodus of some 130,000 Tutsis to neighbouring countries – Burundi, Uganda, Congo and Tanganyika. In refugee camps there, Tutsi exiles formed small insurgent groups with the aim of restoring the Tutsi monarchy, calling themselves *inyenzi*, a Kinyarwanda word for cockroach. The border raids they carried out inside Rwanda were largely ineffective. In December 1963, however, a group of 200 men, armed with bows, arrows and home-made rifles, crossed the border from Burundi, linked up with local Tutsi, attacked a military camp, seized weapons and vehicles and headed for the capital, Kigali.

Though the invaders were quickly routed, President Kayibanda took the opportunity to crush Tutsi opposition. Twenty prominent Tutsi politicians were rounded up and summarily executed. Radio Kigali broadcast repeated warnings that Tutsi terrorists were seeking to

reimpose their rule. Local officials were instructed to organise 'self-defence' groups. In Gikongoro, Hutu vigilantes, armed with machetes, spears and clubs, set out to kill every Tutsi in sight – men, women and children; some 5,000 Tutsi died. At Shigira, near the border with the Congo, more than 100 Tutsi women and children, rather than face slaughter by Hutu mobs, drowned themselves in the river. The World Council of Churches estimated that in all at least 10,000 Tutsis were killed. Tens of thousands more fled into exile.

The political effect of the *inyenzi* attacks was to give a considerable boost to the flagging popularity of Kayibanda. A Rwandan official confided to the academic, René Lemarchand: 'Before the attacks of the *inyenzi* the government was on the point of collapse. We were faced with enormous dissensions among ourselves. Not only have we survived the attacks but the attacks have made us survive our dissensions.' Tutsi activists in exile soon gave up their plots. But Kayibanda found it useful to resurrect the Tutsi threat when once more his regime was engulfed in political difficulty.

Events in neighbouring Burundi, where the Tutsi minority had managed to hold on to power, provided the opportunity. Since independence in 1962, Burundi's history had been even more turbulent than Rwanda's. Two of the first three prime ministers were assassinated. Seven governments had come and gone in quick succession. In 1965 a mutiny by Hutu army and *gendarmerie* officers led to terrible reprisals against Hutu leaders. An army coup in 1966 brought to power a Tutsi officer, Captain Michel Micombero, who set out to remove the 'Hutu threat' once and for all. The army and government were purged of Hutu members. Leading Hutu politicians and scores of soldiers were executed. Faced with a Hutu uprising in 1972, Micombero exacted revenge on a scale never seen before in independent Africa. Hutus with any kind of education – teachers, church leaders, bank clerks, nurses, traders, civil servants – were rounded up by the army and killed. In a campaign subsequently described as 'selective genocide', the Hutu elite was virtually eliminated. Possibly as many as 200,000 died. Another 200,000 fled into Rwanda.

Using Burundi as an example of the Tutsis' thirst for power and their willingness to kill for it, Kayibanda launched another round of

repression, hoping to unite the Hutu behind him. A ruling party pamphlet published in 1972 declared: 'Tutsi domination is the origin of all the evil the Hutu have suffered since the beginning of time. It is comparable to a termite mound teeming with every cruelty known to man.' In what was termed a 'purification' campaign, Kayibanda instructed vigilante committees to ensure that Tutsis were restricted to an ethnic quota of 9 per cent he fixed for schools, the university, the civil service and every sector of employment, including private businesses – a level said to represent their proportion of the population. In some parts of Rwanda, mainly in the west, Tutsis constituted as much as 30 per cent of the population. The result was another mass exodus of Tutsis.

But Kayibanda's hate campaign was not sufficient to save his regime. Ruling through a small group of politicians who came from his home town of Gitarama, giving preference to 'southern' Hutu clans, he lost the support of 'northern' Hutu. In 1973 he was ousted by the army commander, General Juvénal Habyarimana, a 'northerner' from Gisenyi, and thrown into prison, dying there, reportedly of starvation.

Habyarimana installed a one-party dictatorship subjecting the entire population to more rigid control than ever before. Every single Banyarwanda, of whatever age, even babies and the elderly, was required to become a member of his *Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement* (MRND). Everyone had to carry an identity card specifying their ethnic group and their place of residence. No one was allowed to move residence without official permission. The party was everywhere; every hill had its cell and its spies.

Tutsis faced the same discrimination as before, but no additional harassment. Habyarimana retained the quota system and limited Tutsi involvement in public life. He allowed one Tutsi into his cabinet, one ambassador in the foreign service, two deputies in the seventy-seat national assembly, and two members in the central committee of his party. In the army Tutsi were disbarred from becoming officers, and Hutu soldiers were not allowed to marry Tutsi women. On a wall in his presidential mansion in Kigali, Habyarimana kept a black-and-white photograph of Tutsi huts in flames, carefully labelled 'Apocalypse Révolution – Nov 1959', a reminder of the origins of

Hutu power. But for most of the Habyarimana years, during the 1970s and the 1980s, the Tutsi factor was of marginal importance.

As the sole candidate standing for office, Habyarimana was elected president in December 1983 and then again in December 1988 with 99.8 per cent of the vote. His main support, however, was confined to Hutu in the north-west, to the Bakiga, who formed a distinct cultural group. Incorporated into the Tutsi kingdom of Rwanda with the help of the Belgians in the 1920s, they had remained deeply attached to their own ruling clans and disdainful of 'southern' Hutu for their less fervent commitment to Hutu nationalism.

Habyarimana favoured his fellow northerners, notably those from his home district of Gisenyi, with cabinet posts, administration jobs, economic opportunities and foreign scholarships. Virtually all senior members of the army and security service were drawn from Gisenyi. A high proportion of development funds was diverted to the north.

A powerful northern clique gathered around his formidable wife, Agathe Kanzinga, the daughter of a Hutu lineage that had ruled an independent principality until the late nineteenth century. Known at first as '*le clan de Madame*', then as *akazu*, a Kinyarwanda word meaning 'the little house', Madame Agathe's inner circle included three brothers, a cousin and a bevy of senior army officers. Wealthy and privileged, they represented the real power behind Habyarimana's throne.

In the late 1980s, after fifteen years of relative prosperity, boosted by large amounts of foreign aid, Habyarimana's regime encountered growing difficulty. A sharp drop in world coffee prices cut farmers' income by half. Drought blighted food production. The government's budget in 1989 had to be slashed by 40 per cent. Gross domestic product in 1989 fell by 5.7 per cent. The shortage of land was becoming ever more acute. From 2 million inhabitants in 1940, the population by 1990 had reached 7 million. Whereas in the 1950s a typical peasant hill community consisted of about 110 people per square kilometre, by the 1970s the number occupying the same area had risen to about 280 and by the early 1990s it had reached an average of 420, with one northern *commune* registering 820. Adding to land pressures, the elite were quick to buy up land sold because of poverty.

There was growing resentment about Habyarimana's corrupt,

dictatorial rule. In 1988 a Catholic newspaper, *Kinyamateka*, began to publish candid articles about political issues. Though the government responded by arresting several journalists, other newspapers and journalists took up the cause, reporting on corruption and the lavish lifestyle of the ruling elite. In February 1990 Catholic bishops issued a pastoral letter condemning nepotism, regionalism and official corruption. Inspired by Benin's example, other prominent Rwandans began to call for an end to the MRND's monopoly on power, the separation of party and state, the scheduling of a national conference to draft a new constitution and the holding of free and fair elections. Tutsis joined in, complaining about the quota system and restrictions on their employment. Invited to attend the Franco-African summit in La Baule in France, Habyarimana, like other African leaders, was warned that French aid would henceforth depend on political reform. Then, on 1 October 1990, an army of Rwandan Tutsi exiles crossed the northern border from Uganda.

For many Tutsi exiles, thirty years after their exodus had first begun, Rwanda was little more than a mythical country. Thousands had only distant memories of it; thousands more, born in refugee camps, had never even seen it. By 1990 their numbers in Uganda, Burundi, Zaire and Tanzania had reached about 500,000, constituting one of the largest refugee communities in Africa. Most led a settled existence, though their presence often aroused local friction. In southern Uganda, where Rwandan Tutsis were related to the Bahima people, former rulers of the Ugandan kingdoms of Bunyoro and Buha, they were generally welcomed by the Bahima but not by the local Bairu. During Milton Obote's second regime in the 1980s, which was based on 'northern' support, they faced outright persecution. Determined to fight back, hundreds of young Tutsis joined Yoweri Museveni's southern-based National Resistance Army in its campaign to overthrow Obote. Among them was Paul Kagame, the son of a Tutsi family from the hill of Nyaratovu, in Gitarama, a lanky, intelligent figure who, at the age of four in 1961, had witnessed Hutu mobs set fire to Tutsi houses there before escaping into exile with his parents. By the time Museveni took Kampala by force in January 1986, one-quarter of his army – some 3,000 men – were

Tutsi fighters, the sons of exiles, many holding senior positions. The army's deputy commander, General Fred Rwigyema, was a Tutsi who had grown up in the same refugee camp as Paul Kagame. Thousands more Tutsis were recruited into Uganda's army during the early years of Museveni's regime to deal with insurgencies that Museveni faced in Acholi, Teso and West Nile. As a reward for Tutsi support, Museveni announced in July 1986 that Rwandans who had been resident in Uganda for more than ten years would automatically be entitled to Ugandan citizenship.

Exile organisations meanwhile campaigned for the right of Tutsis to return home. Habyarimana's response was to argue that Rwanda was already 'overpopulated' and could not absorb any more people. At a meeting in Kampala in 1987, leading exiles launched the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF). Its purpose, they said, was not only to promote the return of Tutsis, by force if necessary, but to support the wider cause of political reform in Rwanda. It sought neither to reimpose Tutsi rule in Rwanda nor to reinstate the Tutsi monarchy but to overthrow a bankrupt regime and establish a democratic government. Its political leaders included Hutu but were predominantly Tutsi; its paramilitary wing consisted almost entirely of Tutsi, many of them well trained, with combat experience. The movement gained impetus as a result of a growing backlash among Ugandans about the prominent role played by Rwandan exiles. When Museveni decided in 1988 to dispense with the services of General Rwigyema, the RPF acquired a popular and highly respected military leader. In August 1990, after two members of Kigali's elite fled to Kampala, bearing tales of how Habyarimana's regime was on the edge of collapse, split between north and south and drained by corruption, Rwigyema became convinced that the time was right to try to topple it. Overnight, on 30 September, some 4,000 Tutsis deserted the Ugandan army, taking weapons and equipment with them.

The invasion in October was a disaster. Nothing went according to plan. Rwigyema was killed on the second day, leaving fellow officers shocked and demoralised. Moreover, the invasion drew France into the equation.

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The French had nurtured ambitions about Rwanda since the 1970s. Although Rwanda was a former Belgian colony, they regarded it as a natural member of the Franco-African family – *la francophonie Africaine* – the group of African states that France supported aiming to promote and protect the French language, commerce and culture. The seventeen francophone states in Africa constituted the only region in the world where France retained enough influence to support its claims to medium-power status. What gave Rwanda particular importance was that, along with Burundi, it lay along the borderline between francophone and anglophone Africa.

Ever since an incident in the Sudanese village of Fashoda in 1898, when British forces prevented a French expedition from establishing a band of French territory running eastwards from Dakar to Djibouti, the French had been vigilant in guarding against anglophone encroachment in what they considered to be their own backyard – '*le pré carré*'. In his memoirs, General de Gaulle listed the disasters that had afflicted France in his youth and that had led him to devote himself to upholding France's '*grandeur*': the first on the list was the Fashoda incident. The 'Fashoda syndrome', as it was known, formed a basic component of France's Africa policy. To ensure that African issues received due attention, the French presidential office included a special Africa Unit – *Cellule Africaine* – with a wide remit to cover everything from intelligence work to bribery. In 1990 the *Cellule Africaine* was headed by the president's son, Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, popularly known as *Papa m'a dit*, or 'Daddy told me to'.

At first sight the invasion of a group of rebels from Uganda, wearing Ugandan army fatigues and carrying Ugandan army weapons, provided an obvious case for French intervention. It fitted directly into the French notion of an 'Anglo-Saxon' plot. The French took at face value Habyarimana's argument that the real purpose of the invasion was to re-establish Tutsi rule in Rwanda. With little hesitation, President Mitterrand, a personal friend of Habyarimana, authorised the despatch of French troops to Rwanda. Seeking assurance that help was on the way, Habyarimana telephoned the *Cellule Africaine* at the Élysée Palace on 2 October – the day after the invasion – to speak to Jean-Christophe Mitterrand. He was duly reassured. A French

political scientist, Gérard Prunier, who was present during the conversation, later recalled Jean-Christophe Mitterrand remarking, with a wink: 'We are going to send him a few boys, old man Habyarimana. We are going to bail him out. In any case, the whole thing will be over in two or three months.'

It was a decision that was to have disastrous consequences. For the French, it meant becoming ever more deeply involved in propping up a regime with genocidal intentions.

The first contingent of French troops arrived in Kigali from their base in the Central African Republic on 4 October, ostensibly to protect French expatriates and organise their evacuation. Habyarimana also managed to secure troops from Belgium and Zaire, whose president, Mobutu, was a close ally. Wanting to dramatise the threat he faced, Habyarimana arranged for government forces to stage a fake attack on Kigali, blaming it on 'enemy troops', prompting the French ambassador to report 'heavy fighting' in the capital. The French government duly responded by despatching more troops to Kigali. With foreign assistance, government forces succeeded in pushing back the rebels to border areas. What threat there was to Habyarimana's regime quickly faded. Mobutu's troops, after going on the rampage, were soon withdrawn. Belgium too, dubious about the whole enterprise, also pulled out its troops. The French, however, remained, taking the opportunity to become the central player in Rwanda's defence.

No sooner had Habyarimana secured the support of foreign troops than he unleashed a wave of repression against his opponents. Using the fake attack by 'enemy troops' on Kigali as a pretext, he ordered the detention of some 13,000 people, imprisoning them without charge. Many were tortured; dozens died. Reverting to the tactics of the 1960s, one of his ministers declared that Tutsis were *ibytso*, a Kinyarwanda term for 'accomplices' that was to become infamous. 'To prepare an attack on that scale required trusted people [on the inside],' he said. 'Rwandans of the same ethnic group offered that possibility better than did others.' But as well as Tutsis, the term was also applied to Hutu opponents of Habyarimana's regime. On national radio the minister of defence urged the population to 'track down and arrest the

infiltrators'. In revenge attacks organised by local officials, hundreds of Tutsis were killed. In a joint report in December 1990, European ambassadors warned: 'The rapid deterioration of the relations between the two ethnic groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi, runs the imminent risk of terrible consequences for Rwanda and the entire region.'

With French assistance, Habyarimana set in motion a huge expansion of Rwanda's armed forces. From the time of the invasion, the army grew from a force of 9,000 men in October 1990 to 28,000 in 1991. France provided training staff, counter-insurgency experts and huge quantities of weapons. It financed, armed and trained a Presidential Guard, an elite force recruited exclusively from Habyarimana's home district. It also facilitated arms contracts with Egypt and South Africa. An estimated \$100 million was spent on arms supplies, a vast sum for a tiny, impoverished country. Much of the money came from international funds – quick-disbursing loans under a Structural Adjustment Programme – intended for economic development.

Habyarimana's opponents, meanwhile, undaunted by his campaign of repression, continued to agitate for political reform. Under pressure from Western donors as well as local politicians, Habyarimana eventually agreed to abandon his one-party system. In June 1991 a constitutional amendment was passed making multiple political parties legal. Within months, sixteen opposition parties were launched. Once established, they demanded a role in government. Habyarimana at first resisted, but after massive street demonstrations early in 1992, he was obliged to open talks. The outcome was that in April 1992 Habyarimana formed a coalition government, giving control of key ministries to his own party, but conceding other cabinet positions to opposition parties, including the post of prime minister.

Determined to force through reform and shake up the old MRND administration, opposition parties in the coalition also took the initiative to make contact with RPF rebels. Since retreating to the Virunga mountains, the RPF had regrouped under a new leader, Paul Kagame. At the time of the 1990 invasion, Kagame, a major in the Ugandan army, had been attending a military training course at Fort Leavenworth in the United States. On his return to Uganda, he had

quit the army to join the rebels. By the end of 1991 he had managed to turn the RPF into a disciplined guerrilla force of 5,000 men. But though capable of staging hit-and-run raids in areas of northern Rwanda, the RPF had gained little popular support. Kagame was therefore amenable to approaches from members of the coalition for talks. In July 1992 a ceasefire was signed. Under international pressure, Habyarimana agreed to participate in peace talks in Arusha in Tanzania.

All these events – the end of one-party rule, the formation of a coalition government with reform-minded parties, the rapprochement with Tutsi rebels – enraged Hutu supremacists. In secret the northern clique around Madama Agathe, the *akazu*, planned a counter-campaign to regain control. The movement they led became known as Hutu Power. Their aim was not merely to eliminate the Tutsi threat but to rid Rwanda of Hutu *ibytso*.

A network of supporters, known as '*le réseau zéro*', was established in the army, the security service, the administration, the universities and the media to promote the cause of Hutu Power. Activists launched their own political party, the *Coalition pour la Défense de la République* (CDR), using it to attack the government's 'soft' attitude towards Tutsis and their 'collaborators'. Militants in the MRND formed a youth militia, calling it *Interahamwe*, a Kinyarwanda word meaning 'those who work together'. The CDR formed their own youth militia calling it *Impuzamugambi* – 'those with a single purpose'. Youths with no prospect of work were easily recruited with promises of land, jobs and other rewards to be reaped from the campaign. A secret society within the army, *amasusu*, ensured that both militia groups were provided with training and weapons. Death squads went to work.

Much attention was paid to identifying 'the enemy'. An army memorandum, produced in 1992, divided the enemy into two categories: the principal enemy and the accomplices of the enemy. The principal enemy was defined as:

the Tutsi inside or outside the country, extremist and nostalgic for power, who have NEVER recognised and will NEVER recognise

the realities of the 1959 social revolution and who wish to reconquer power by all means necessary including arms.

The accomplices of the enemy were defined as anyone who supported the principal enemy. The groups within which the enemy were said to recruit included Tutsi refugees, Tutsis inside the country and Hutu malcontents. The memorandum was sent by the army's chief-of-staff to all sector commanders, with instructions that it should be distributed as widely as possible.

Information about the 'zero network' and its objectives was picked up by Western embassies. The Belgian ambassador reported to Brussels in the spring of 1992: 'This secret group is planning the extermination of the Tutsi of Rwanda to resolve once and for all, in their own way, the ethnic problem and to crush internal Hutu opposition.' In August 1992 the head of the national information service, Christophe Mfizi, a senior official in the MRND for fifteen years, resigned, warning of the activities of the 'zero network' in an open letter. The state, he said, was being ruled by a northern oligarchy, milking it for private gain.

The press was constantly used to foment ethnic hatred. Of the forty-two new journals that appeared in 1991, at least eleven had links with the *akazu*. At the forefront of the hate campaign was the editor of *Kangura*, Hassan Ngeze, a small-time hustler with a talent for crude propaganda. In a memorable article published in December 1990, shortly after the RPF invasion, Ngeze laid out a doctrine of Hutu purity, listing what he called 'The Hutu Ten Commandments'. The first decreed that any Hutu who married a Tutsi woman, befriended a Tutsi woman or employed a Tutsi 'as a secretary or a concubine' was to be considered a traitor since all Tutsi women worked only for the interest of their own ethnic group. For similar reasons, any Hutu involved in business dealings with Tutsi was also deemed a traitor. Hutu were told to be 'firm and vigilant against their common Tutsi enemy'. Only Hutu should be entrusted to hold strategic positions in government, in the administration and the economy. Only Hutu should be employed in the armed forces. Ngeze's 'Ten Commandments' were widely circulated to popular

acclaim. Habyarimana championed their publication. Community leaders read them out at public meetings. The most frequently quoted commandment was the eighth: 'Hutus must stop having mercy on the Tutsis.'

A central purpose of the propaganda was to stir up the fear that the Tutsi, in order to regain power, were prepared to slaughter Hutu en masse. In December 1990 *Kangura* claimed that the Tutsi were ready for a war that 'would leave no survivors'. A pamphlet produced by Léon Mugesera, a university teacher and MRND official, in February 1991, claimed that the RPF planned 'to restore the dictatorship of the extremists of the Tutsi minority' by 'a genocide, the extermination of the Hutu majority'.

A speech by Mugesera in 1992 to MRND militants at Kabaya, not far from Habyarimana's home in Gisenyi district, inciting murder, gained particular notoriety. Excerpts were broadcast on national radio; cassettes were widely distributed. Mugesera's target was not only the 'inyenzi', the 'cockroaches' of the RPF but their accomplices, the political parties opposed to Habyarimana, who advocated negotiations with the RPF.

The opposition parties have plotted with the enemy . . . They have plotted to undermine our armed forces . . . The law is quite clear on this point: 'Any person who is guilty of acts aiming at sapping the morale of the armed forces will be condemned to death.' What are we waiting for? . . . And what about those accomplices (*ibytso*) here who are sending their children to the RPF? Why are we waiting to get rid of these families? . . . I would like to tell you that we are now asking for those people to be put on a list and for them to be brought to court so that they can be judged before us. If they [the judges] refuse . . . we should do it ourselves by exterminating this scum . . . The fatal mistake we made in 1959 was to let them [the Tutsi] get out . . . They belong in Ethiopia and we are going to find them a shortcut to get there by throwing them into the Nyabarongo river [which flows northwards]. I must insist on this point. We have to act. Wipe them all out!

Claiming that the enemy's objective was extermination, he urged his audience to 'rise up . . . really rise up' in self-defence. And he ended with this final warning: 'Know that the person whose throat you do not cut now will be the one who will cut yours.'

A series of organised killings occurred during 1992. In Bugesera, groups of *Interahamwe*, *gendarmérie* and Hutu peasants combined to launch an onslaught against Tutsi homesteads. Tutsi were burned in their homes and thrown into rivers. Those who tried to defend themselves were disarmed by government soldiers. In terminology that was to become all too familiar, peasants were told to 'clear the bush'; the slaughter of woman and children was called 'pulling out the roots of the bad weeds'. An estimated 300 people died; more than 3,000 fled the area.

A report into human rights abuses in Rwanda published in March 1993 by a group of international human rights experts from ten countries held Habyarimana and 'his immediate entourage' responsible for a string of massacres, torture, arbitrary detention and other abuses against Tutsis and members of the opposition, carried out over a two-year period. Despite the alarming nature of the report, it caused little international concern. France continued with its programme of support for the army and the Presidential Guard.

After a year of delay and prevarication, Habyarimana was eventually obliged to sign a peace agreement with the RPF. By 1993 Rwanda was effectively bankrupt, awash with refugees and dependent on emergency food supplies. Western donors warned that no more funds would be forthcoming unless Habyarimana signed. The Arusha Accords of August 1993 provided for the establishment of a broad-based transitional government to include Habyarimana and his allies, opposition parties and the RPF, that would remain in place for no more than twenty-two months until elections were held and a democratically elected government was installed. The Rwandan army and RPF forces meanwhile would be pared down and integrated. As a first step, a battalion of 600 RPF soldiers would be stationed in Kigali to provide security for RPF members of government. A United Nations peacekeeping force would be deployed to assist the process.

Habyarimana signed the Arusha Accords only to buy time. The *akazu* were vehemently opposed to them. For army officers and soldiers alike, they meant demobilisation: government troops were to make up only 60 per cent of a reduced army; senior command posts were to be shared equally with the RPF; the Presidential Guard would be abolished. In all, some 16,000 soldiers would be demobilised. For the MRND which had once governed Rwanda unchallenged, the Arusha Accords meant accepting just five cabinet positions out of nineteen, equal to the number allocated to the RPF. During the negotiations in Arusha a senior RPF official encountered Colonel Théoneste Bagosora, a leading member of the *akazu*, standing in a hotel lift surrounded by suitcases. Asked why he was leaving, Bagosora replied that he was going back to Rwanda to prepare '*apocalypse deux*' – the second apocalypse.

What prospects there were for a peaceful outcome in Rwanda were dashed only two months later by events in neighbouring Burundi. After a period of political reform, Burundi had elected its first Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, an engineer, in June 1993. Four weeks later in parliamentary elections deemed to have been free and fair, Ndadaye's Frodebu party won 65 out of 81 seats, taking 71 per cent of the vote. A committed moderate, Ndadaye subsequently named a Tutsi economist from the opposition as prime minister and approved a politically and ethnically balanced cabinet. On 21 October he was kidnapped by extremist Tutsi army officers, taken to a military camp and murdered. His death set off massive killings of both Hutu and Tutsi. Some 150,000 died; some 300,000 Hutu fled to southern Rwanda, spreading tales of massacre and torture.

The murder of Ndadaye was taken as irrefutable proof by Hutu supremacists in Rwanda that the Tutsi were bent on total domination. The only choice for the Hutu was to retain power or to face servitude, as in Burundi. Moderate Hutu parties, previously willing to abide by the Arusha Accords, also began to doubt Tutsi intentions, fearing they might be used as a Trojan horse for Tutsi ambitions. Conservative Hutu factions united behind Hutu Power.

The propaganda against Tutsis intensified. A new radio station was launched by the *akazu* – *Radio-Télévision Libres des Mille Collines* – ostensibly to entertain listeners with a mixture of pop music, gossip,

rumour and phone-ins, but in reality to prepare them for genocide. Of the fifty original founders, forty were from the three *préfectures* of northern Rwanda. They included Habyarimana, several members of his family, representatives from the MRND and CDR and a popular musician, Simon Bikindi, well known for his virulently anti-Tutsi songs. Although nominally private, *Radio Mille Collines* was allowed to broadcast on the same frequencies as the national radio, Radio Rwanda, between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m., when the latter was not transmitting.

A coordinated plan for 'self-defence' was drawn up. Its principal architect was Colonel Bagosora, the army's head of administration. Born in 1941 into a northern middle-class Hutu family – 'Christian and well-off', as he described it – he had devoted his life to the army, attending training courses in Belgium and France. Like his fellow conspirators, he was driven by an intense hatred of Tutsi. In an essay he wrote in exile in 1995 to justify genocide, he described the Tutsi as 'the masters of deceit', 'dictatorial, cruel, bloody', 'arrogant, clever and sneaky'. They had 'never had a country of their own to allow them to become a people' but had instead arrogantly tried to impose their supremacy over the rightful local inhabitants.

Bagosora set out to establish paramilitary 'self-defence' units in every *commune* in the country. They were trained locally by the military and by communal police and instructed to act in coordination with the military authorities, local councillors, local police and other militias. Bagosora arranged for the distribution of firearms and huge quantities of machetes. Between January 1993 and March 1994 Rwanda imported more than 500,000 machetes, double the number imported in previous years and enough for one for every third adult Hutu in Rwanda. One of the main importers was Félicien Kabuga, a wealthy businessman whose daughter was married to one of Habyarimana's sons, a principal financier of both the *Interahamwe* and the weekly paper, *Kangura*. By the end of 1993 there were hidden stockpiles of firearms, grenades, machetes and axes in most *communes*. Militia groups like the *Interahamwe* were meanwhile busy training and recruiting. A large number of lists were drawn up identifying people regarded as 'the enemy' and their accomplices.

While these preparations were underway, the United Nations machinery responsible for peacekeeping operations was slowly stirring into action. The Arusha Accords had envisaged that a peacekeeping force – United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (Unamir) – would be deployed in Rwanda in September, but wrangling over its scope and size caused months of delay. The United States, keen to rein in the UN's burgeoning peacekeeping costs, initially proposed a force no larger than 500. A UN military expert recommended a minimum of 8,000. The Canadian general chosen as Unamir's commander, Roméo Dallaire, asked for 4,500. On 5 October, two days after the Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia, the Security Council authorised a smaller and cheaper version consisting of 2,548 and a reduced mandate. Whereas the Arusha Accords had proposed a force to 'guarantee overall security', the Security Council, mindful of the Somali imbroglio, specified instead a force to 'contribute' to security, not throughout the country, but only in Kigali. Whereas the Accords envisaged that peacekeepers would 'assist in tracking of arms caches and neutralisation of armed gangs throughout the country' and would 'assist in the recovery of all weapons distributed to, or illegally acquired by, civilians', the Security Council deleted these provisions. The Unamir budget was not formally approved until April 1994.

By the end of December, Dallaire had managed to assemble a force of nearly 1,300 peacekeepers in Rwanda. They included 400 Belgian paracommandos, despatched from Somalia. But the bulk of the Unamir contingent was made up of troops from Bangladesh, poorly trained and equipped and lacking operational experience. The Unamir operation quickly turned into a logistical nightmare. Dallaire was short of vehicles, fuel, ammunition, radios, barbed wire, medical support and even petty cash. 'I spent most of my time fighting the heavy mechanical UN system, with all its stupidity,' he recalled. 'We would order torches, and after a long delay they arrived without batteries . . . Seeing to the most immediate needs stopped us from seeing what was reserved for us in the future.'

Even worse, Dallaire lacked any intelligence-gathering capacity. When he asked UN headquarters for intelligence support, his request was turned down. He was told that an intelligence-gathering

operation was contrary to peacekeeping policy. The effect was to leave him, as he said, 'blind and deaf in the field'. Though Western diplomats in Kigali were well informed about the momentum towards mass violence, they rarely shared what they knew with Unamir. A CIA analysis in January 1994 predicting that the Arusha Accords would fail, leading to hostilities in which at least half a million people would die, was not passed on until after the genocide was over. 'A lot of the world powers were all there with their embassies and their military attachés,' said Dallaire. 'And you can't tell me those bastards didn't have a lot of information. They would never pass that information on to me, ever.'

The signs were increasingly ominous. After a spate of killings in northern *communes*, a group of dissident officers in the Rwandan army sent a letter to Dallaire warning that more massacres were planned and that prominent opposition politicians had been marked down for assassination. The conspiracy, they said, was led by Habyarimana together with a handful of military officers from his home region. They themselves had once been a part of the plot but now wanted nothing more to do with it. After carrying out his own investigation into the killings, Dallaire reported to UN headquarters on 6 January 1994:

The manner in which they were conducted, in their execution, in their coordination, in their cover-up, and in their political motives lead us to firmly believe that the perpetrators of these evil deeds were well-organised, well-informed, well-motivated and prepared to conduct premeditated murder. We have no reason to believe that such an occurrence could not and will not be repeated again in any part of the country where arms are prolific and ethnic tensions are prevalent.

His request for reinforcements was turned down.

More details of the conspiracy emerged from a secret meeting on 10 January between the head of the Belgian contingent, Colonel Luc Marchal, and an *Interahamwe* commander, Jean-Pierre Twatzinze, who wanted to defect. A former member of the president's security guard,

Twatzinze described how the *Interahamwe* had trained 1,700 men in three-week sessions at Rwandan army camps. The training had focused on discipline, weapons, explosives, close combat and tactics. He had originally believed that the purpose of the training was to enable the *Interahamwe* to defend Kigali against the RPF. But since the arrival of Unamir in December, he had been ordered to make lists of all Tutsi in Kigali. He was now certain it was for their extermination. Since their training, the *Interahamwe* recruits had been scattered in groups of forty throughout Kigali. They were capable, he said, of killing up to 1,000 Tutsi in twenty minutes. He also claimed there were plans to assassinate Belgian peacekeepers to trigger Belgium's withdrawal from Unamir and precipitate the mission's collapse. He himself had distributed weapons and he knew the location of a stockpile at MRND headquarters. He was willing to show the cache to Unamir and to provide further information, he said, in return for UN protection abroad for himself and his family.

When Dallaire was informed of Twatzinze's offer, he was keen to take the initiative. In a coded cable to New York on 11 January, giving full details of 'Jean-Pierre's' information, Dallaire said he planned to seize the arms within thirty-six hours. 'Where there's a will, there's a way. Let's do it. [*Peux ce que veux. Allons-y.*]' He also recommended that Jean-Pierre should be given safe passage from Rwanda. UN headquarters, however, blocked the move. Dallaire was told that arms seizures went beyond the UN's mandate. As violence increased, he made several further efforts to persuade UN headquarters to authorise weapons seizures, warning again and again that the *Interahamwe* were planning a campaign of 'ethnic cleansing'. On 3 February he told New York:

We can expect more frequent and more violent demonstrations, more grenade and armed attacks on ethnic and political groups, more assassinations and quite possibly outright attacks on UNAMIR installations. Each day of delay in authorising deterrent arms recovery operations will result in an ever deteriorating security situation and may, if arms continue to be distributed, result in an inability of UNAMIR to carry out its mandate in all aspects . . . and

create a significant danger to the safety and security of UN military and civilian personnel and the population at large.

But UN headquarters adamantly refused. One difficulty was the position taken by the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. As Egypt's deputy foreign minister he had developed close links with Habyarimana's regime; he had visited Rwanda twice, negotiated a cooperation agreement with Rwanda and pushed through an arms deal, reversing a previous ban imposed by Egypt. As secretary-general he chose as his special representative in Rwanda a former foreign minister of Cameroon, Jacques Booh-Booh, a personal friend and fellow francophile, who adopted an openly pro-Hutu stance and kept putting an optimistic gloss on events in his reports to New York. Booh-Booh soon clashed with Dallaire, preferring to gather around him a group of Franco-African advisers, and lost no opportunity to undermine Dallaire's credibility in New York. Dallaire was consequently regarded in New York as a maverick inclined to exaggerate the difficulties that Rwanda posed.

Another difficulty was the impact of the Somali debacle. UN staff feared that another failure would produce a UN meltdown. 'We were cautious in interpreting our mandate and in giving guidance because we did not want a repetition of Somalia,' a senior official, Iqbal Riza, subsequently admitted. To Hutu extremists, however, the UN's conspicuous failure to act gave them encouragement to continue. 'It was the worst thing for us, just to stay, and to watch, without reaction,' recalled Colonel Marchal.

The political process had meanwhile stalled. The installation of a new interim government had originally been set for January 1994. But Habyarimana launched one challenge after another to the interpretation of the Arusha Accords, deliberately obstructing any progress. Behind the scenes the *akazu* had no intention of giving up power. The installation was postponed again and again, to February, to March, to early April.

Day after day, *Radio Mille Collines* kept up its broadcasts of incitement and rumour. One announcer openly called for the assassination

of the interim prime minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, a pro-democracy Hutu politician critical of Habyarimana's northern clique. A song by Simon Bikindi beseeching his fellow Hutu – the *bene sebahinzi*, the 'sons of cultivators' – to defend their rights and protect the gains of the 1959 revolution was played again and again:

... the servitude, the whip, the lash, the forced work that exhausted the people ... has disappeared forever. You, the great majority [*rubanda nyamwinshi*] pay attention and ... remember this evil that should be driven as far away as possible, so that it never returns to Rwanda.

One refrain from the song was repeated endlessly, like a mantra – 'a heritage that should be carefully maintained ... and transmitted to posterity'.

The weekly paper, *Kangura*, added to the climate of fear and suspicion. In January it accused Unamir and the Belgian contingent in Kigali of siding with the RPF and predicted a war by March. 'If the RPF have decided to kill us, then let us kill each other. Let whatever is smouldering erupt,' the paper said. 'The masses will rise with the help of the army and the blood will flow freely.'

Yet Habyarimana's options were fast diminishing. Western and African governments alike insisted on implementation of the Arusha Accords. East African leaders complained that delays in implementation threatened the stability of the whole region. Pro-democracy Hutu politicians, believing that Unamir's presence would protect them, became increasingly outspoken in demanding implementation. Simultaneously, Habyarimana was under attack from extremists in *akazu* for agreeing to sign the Arusha Accords in the first place. In March *Kangura* published a cartoon of Habyarimana carrying the RPF leader Paul Kagame, telling him: 'I've done whatever I could to get you Tutsis better off.' In an accompanying article, Hassan Ngeze predicted Habyarimana's imminent death in a public incident. 'Nobody likes Habyarimana's life better than he does,' wrote Ngeze. 'The important thing is to tell him how he will be killed.' On 3 April *Radio Mille Collines* warned that 'a little something' was about to happen.

On 6 April Habyarimana attended a one-day summit meeting of African leaders in Dar es Salaam. Once more, he was confronted with a barrage of criticism for prevaricating over the Arusha Accords. Though he rarely travelled anywhere at night, he insisted flying home to Kigali after the meeting. His Falcon jet, a present from President Mitterrand, flown by a three-man French crew, approached Kigali airport in darkness at about 8.15 p.m. On board, accompanying Habyarimana, were seven senior members of the government and the new president of Burundi, who had asked Habyarimana for a lift. The plane circled once, then, as it came in to land, it was struck by two missiles fired from a hill just outside the airport perimeter and crashed in the grounds of the presidential palace. All on board were killed.

Within minutes, the airport and the palace perimeter were sealed off by a cordon of troops from a nearby military barracks. Militias threw up road blocks across the city. News of Habyarimana's death was broadcast by *Radio Mille Collines*. The killing began.

No conclusive evidence ever emerged about the identity of Habyarimana's assassins. Hutu extremists accused the RPF of his murder and also claimed that Belgian troops were involved. The RPF blamed Hutu extremists. The prime suspects were members of the *akazu* clique determined to wreck any prospect that the Arusha Accords might be implemented, ending their hold on power. Habyarimana's murder was to be the trigger for a genocide that they had long planned. At the centre of the conspiracy was Colonel Bagosora who took charge in Kigali that night, directing operations. At a party to celebrate the national day of Senegal attended by Dallaire and Marchal two nights before, Bagosora remarked that 'the only plausible solution for Rwanda would be the elimination of the Tutsi'.

The first victims were carefully selected. With lists prepared well in advance, soldiers from the Presidential Guard and *Interahamwe* militia-men hunted down prominent moderate Hutus – politicians, senior government officials, lawyers, teachers, human rights activists and independent journalists – all regarded as opponents standing in the way of the *génocidaires*. Among their targets were the president of the

Constitutional Court and a minister who had threatened to close down *Radio Mille Collines*. Within an hour of the plane crash, troops blockaded the home of the Hutu prime minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Friends urged her to go into hiding, but she refused, insisting she wanted to make a broadcast from the national radio station to show that civilian authority was in control and committed to the Arusha Accords. A detachment of Belgian peacekeepers was sent to provide her with an escort from her home to the studios of Radio Rwanda, taking three hours to negotiate their way through roadblocks to reach her. As they arrived at her home, Rwandan soldiers opened fire. Unable to withdraw, the Belgians, together with Uwilingiyimana, waited in vain for reinforcements. After three hours of waiting, the prime minister and her husband fled over a garden wall. They were caught and killed later that day. The ten Belgians were taken prisoner, driven to a military camp, beaten up, tortured and killed.

The slaughter of Tutsis started simultaneously. Hundreds of prominent Tutsis, their names and addresses already listed, were tracked down in their homes and murdered. Gangs armed with clubs, machetes and knives went from door to door searching for Tutsi victims. Thousands were caught at roadblocks by militiamen demanding identity cards, killing Tutsis they found on the spot. Unamir soldiers in Kigali witnessed scores of executions. Describing an incident he saw only yards from the hotel that served as Unamir headquarters, a Unamir peacekeeper recalled: 'He just held him by his shirt and started dragging him . . . and just raised his machete and hacked him on the head . . . he did that twice and we were standing watching him . . . after that he just rubbed his bloodstained machete on his buttocks, and then searched his victim's pockets . . . we all screamed at this.' Not long afterwards a tipper truck came by with a prison detail to collect bodies from the streets. 'Someone flagged it down and dragged the body from under the tree and threw it into the tipper truck which was almost full and people were moaning and crying. You could see that some were not dead.'

In a radio broadcast a Hutu Power leader, Froduald Karamira, told listeners that the war against the Tutsi was 'everyone's responsibility'

and called on them to 'assist the armed forces to finish the work'. Thousands of Hutus responded, jogging through the streets of Kigali chanting, 'Let's exterminate them all.' *Radio Mille Collines* broadcast direct incitements to murder: 'The graves are not yet quite full,' it screamed. 'Who is going to do the good work and help us finish them completely?'

Massacres followed in quick succession. Soldiers from the Presidential Guard arrived at the *Centre Christus*, a Jesuit retreat in Kigali, at 7 a.m. on 7 April, demanded identity cards and selected nineteen people for execution, including seven priests and eight young women on retreat. At another church compound in Kigali that morning, sixty Tutsi men and boys were taken away and murdered. At a mission station on a hill in the Kigali suburb of Gikondo, hundreds of Tutsi, terrified by the gunfire and explosions in the capital, sought shelter with Catholic priests. During a mass for some 500 Tutsis, a killing squad burst into the church. 'The militia began slashing away,' a survivor recalled. 'They were hacking at the arms, legs, breasts, faces and necks.' The killing lasted for two hours. Similar massacres broke out across the country.

As the scale of the killing became evident, the RPF leader Paul Kagame warned that his forces would intervene if the slaughter of civilians did not stop. As part of the Arusha Accords, a battalion of 600 RPF soldiers had been stationed in Kigali at the national parliament building, a short distance from central Kigali, to provide security for RPF supporters. The bulk of RPF forces remained in the north. Late on 8 April Kagame announced a return to war and instructed his northern army to advance on the capital.

Amid growing turmoil, Western governments rushed to evacuate their citizens. French troops landed at the airport on 9 April and headed for the embassy. The embassy was crowded not only with French citizens but members of Habyarimana's clique, the *akazu*, whom France had supported for so long and who had been deeply involved in planning genocide. Among them was Madame Agathe Kanzinga, her brother and some thirty other extremists including the director of *Radio Mille Collines*, Professor Ferdinand Nahimana, responsible for organising hate broadcasts. Madame Agathe, her

children and the rest of her entourage were escorted on to the first French flight out of Kigali. On arrival in Paris, she received a gift of some \$40,000 from the French government, a sum taken from the budget of the ministry of cooperation designated for 'urgent assistance for Rwandan refugees'. Two extremist leaders were subsequently given an audience by Mitterrand. According to a former minister of cooperation, Bernard Debré, Mitterrand remained 'very attached to former President Habyarimana and his family, and to everything that was part of the old regime'. Among those whom the French refused to evacuate were the five children of the murdered prime minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and long-standing embassy employees, most of them Tutsis.

A contingent of 250 Belgian paratroops landed on 9 April. Belgium had made strenuous efforts at the United Nations to obtain a strengthened mandate for Unamir enabling UN forces to intervene militarily in Rwanda and stop the killing. Belgium was ready to attach its paratroop contingent to the Belgian peacekeeping force already on the ground. But France adamantly opposed the plan. Belgian paratroops were therefore confined to evacuation duties, passing scenes of slaughter on the street, along with the French. Some Tutsis who managed to board trucks heading for the airport were taken off at militia roadblocks and killed on the spot while French and Belgian troops looked on, under orders not to intervene.

Expatriate doctors from the medical charity *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) joined the exodus on 10 April after fifty wounded people waiting in emergency tents at the central hospital, presumed to be Tutsis, were dragged away and killed. 'We have decided it is no use to work here anymore,' an MSF doctor told an American reporter. 'It is useless to care for someone who is going to be killed.'

By the time the last evacuation plane had left Kigali, the only remaining foreigners were a team from the International Committee of the Red Cross determined to stay on, and a besieged force of ill-equipped Unamir troops restricted to a 'peacekeeping' mandate. Unamir posts were soon crowded with thousands of desperate people seeking shelter from marauding gangs.

The future of Unamir itself was in jeopardy. It had been established

to supervise a peace process that had evidently collapsed. UN officials advocated terminating the whole operation. There was considerable confusion about what lay behind the violence. Hutu extremists in the government portrayed the killing as a spontaneous reaction by Hutu to the murder of their president by Tutsi assassins. Western press reports blamed 'the chaos and anarchy' on ancient tribal feuds. UN officials in New York interpreted the killing as a resumption of civil war, about which they could do little. UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali saw no reason to break off an extended European tour.

Unamir's commander General Dallaire, however, was in no doubt about the cause of the violence. In a cable to New York on 8 April he described it as a campaign of terror that was well planned and organised, led by the Presidential Guard and directed at opposition leaders, the Tutsi ethnic group and at Unamir and other UN personnel. He also explained how precarious Unamir's position was. His Belgian troops, the backbone of Unamir, were scattered about Kigali isolated by roadblocks. They had no supplies of power or petrol. Ten peacekeepers were dead and he feared for the safety for the rest. Unamir had food for less than two weeks, drinking water in some places for only two days and fuel for at most three days. He was critically short of ammunition and medical supplies.

Dallaire was nevertheless adamant that his men should not withdraw. Three times he was told by UN officials in New York – once by Boutros-Ghali in the only phone call he made – to draw up plans for an evacuation, but he refused to comply. He argued that with reinforcements, he could stop the killing. He was incredulous when French and Belgian troops were sent to rescue expatriates but not used to help restore order. 'We were left to fend for ourselves,' he recalled, 'with neither mandate nor supplies.'

Worse was to come. On 12 April the Belgian government, facing domestic uproar over the death of ten Belgian peacekeepers, announced it intended to pull its contingent out of Unamir. Retreating from their posts, Belgian peacekeepers abandoned thousands of civilians seeking their protection, leaving them defenceless against attacks by the army and militiamen. At the *Ecole Technique Officielle*, a technical school in the Kigali suburb of Gatonga run by

Salesian Fathers, where 2,000 people were sheltering, a Belgian lieutenant explained that his men were under orders to withdraw and suggested they slip away under cover of darkness. Some approached him asking to be shot rather than to be left facing death at the hands of the militia and their machetes. When the Belgians surreptitiously began to pull out, a crowd chased after their vehicles, pleading, 'Do not abandon us.' Within hours nearly all 2,000 were slaughtered.

Watching the Belgians depart on 19 April, Dallaire felt a deep sense of betrayal. 'I stood there as the last Hercules left . . . and I thought that almost exactly fifty years to the day my father and my father-in-law had been fighting in Belgium to free the country from fascism, and there I was, abandoned by Belgian soldiers. So profoundly did I despise them for it . . . I found it inexcusable.'

Though gravely weakened, Unamir was still protecting some 30,000 civilians at its posts. But meeting in New York on 21 April, after Boutros-Ghali had produced an anodyne report on the crisis, the UN Security Council decided that without the Belgian contingent, Unamir was no longer viable. It passed a new resolution withdrawing the majority of UN peacekeepers and leaving behind a token force of 270 men with the remit to help secure a ceasefire between the government and the RPF and to assist humanitarian relief operations 'to the extent possible'. The last hope of reining back the genocide was gone.

Within two weeks of Habyarimana's death, the *génocidaires* had gained effective control of the country's administration and its network of *préfets*, *bourgmestres* and *conseillers*. A new 'interim government' was announced consisting entirely of Hutu Power zealots. Officials who showed no enthusiasm for the cause were removed. The radio was used to ridicule and threaten administrators and local political leaders who preached calm. Across the country the call went out for 'self-defence' against 'accomplices'. Killing became the main business for an entire hierarchy of control – the army, *gendarmérie*, communal police, party officials and civilian authorities – all sanctioned by the 'interim government'. Peasants were ordered and cajoled to take up the 'work'.

Even church leaders connived in the government's campaign, blaming the violence on the RPF and refusing to speak out against the mass murders taking place in their own church buildings. The Catholic archbishop, Vincent Nsengiyumva, a long-standing ally of the Hutu Power movement, who had served as a member of the MRND central committee for fourteen years, was quick to offer his support to the interim government. Anglican bishops followed suit, peddling the government's line.

Many clergy were shocked at the complicity of the church establishment and strove to give what help they could to Tutsi families flocking to them for protection. But some priests actively aided and abetted the *génocidaires*, assisting them in rounding them up for slaughter. The church president at Mugonero, Pastor Elizaphan Ntakirutimana, urged Tutsi refugees to gather at the mission station there. Some 2,000 were packed into the hospital there when soldiers from the Presidential Guard and militiamen sealed off the premises. On the evening of 15 April the refugees were told that the hospital would be attacked the next morning. Seven pastors among them wrote a letter to Ntakirutimana asking for help.

Our dear leader, Pastor Elizaphan Ntakirutimana,

How are you! We wish you to be strong in all these problems we are facing. We wish to inform you that we have heard that tomorrow we will be killed with our families. We therefore request you to intervene on our behalf and talk with the Mayor. We believe that, with the help of God who entrusted you the leadership of this flock, which is going to be destroyed, your intervention will be highly appreciated, the same way as the Jews were saved by Esther.

We give honour to you.

Ntakirutimana replied:

There is nothing I can do for you. All you can do is prepare to die, for your time has come.

Across Rwanda, church buildings where Tutsis desperately sought sanctuary became the scene of one massacre after another. More people were killed there than anywhere else.

Some groups tried to organise defences, arming themselves with stones but they were soon overwhelmed as militiamen and the military stormed churches, tossing grenades through the windows and wielding machetes at random. In many churches, because of the thousands crowded there, the killing had to be spread over several days. Those awaiting death had their Achilles' tendons cut to prevent them from escaping. A survivor at a massacre at Ntarama on 15 April recounted her story to researchers:

A group of soldiers and *Interahamwe* attacked the church. They made holes in the back walls and threw grenades through the holes. Everyone tried to take cover. The *Interahamwe* then came in with their machetes and began massacring. At least one uniformed soldier continued to shoot into the church to protect the *Interahamwe* until they were right inside the church and had begun their 'work'. The *Interahamwe* included woman and young boys, about eleven to fourteen, carrying spears and sharpened sticks. They used these to beat a lot of children to death.

As they macheted, the militia discussed their work, pointing out wounded people to each other to be finished off. After a while they were arguing as to whether they should continue to machete or if they should start looting. They decided to loot before everyone was dead . . .

I had fallen under some dead. I couldn't move because there were so many dead bodies on top of me. The *Interahamwe* left, thinking everyone was dead.

When researchers from African Rights arrived at Ntarama two months later, the church was still full of decomposing bodies. 'It was impossible to enter the church because corpses were piled so high at the entrance. This made it difficult to estimate the death toll; but looking through the window, every inch of the inside of the church was taken up by corpses who were piled on top of each other.'

Refugees fleeing Ntarama found themselves trapped at a river. A survivor recalled:

There were *Interahamwe* on both sides of the river bank and they were shooting. The *Interahamwe* on the Ntarama side ordered us to commit suicide by throwing ourselves into the river. In desperation and in the hope of avoiding an even worse death under the machete, very many people jumped and were drowned, including many babies strapped to their backs. Knowing that death awaited them, fathers threw their children into the river as a last gesture of love.

Those of us who refused to commit suicide ran up and down the river bank, playing hide and seek with our attackers.

River banks became a common location for execution, convenient for getting rid of bodies. Some 40,000 bodies washed down the Akagera river into Lake Victoria.

Hospitals were no safer. 'The percentage of doctors who became "killers par excellence" was very high,' concluded *African Rights*. 'A huge number of the most qualified and experienced doctors in the country, men as well as women – including surgeons, physicians, paediatricians, gynaecologists, anaesthetists, public health specialists and hospital administrators – participated in the murder of their own Tutsi colleagues, patients, the wounded and terrified refugees who had sought shelter in their hospitals.' The *British Medical Journal* reported that some of 'the most horrific massacres occurred in maternity clinics, where people gathered in the belief that no one would kill mothers and new-born babies'.

Teachers commonly denounced students to militia groups or killed students themselves. A Hutu teacher told the French journalist Patrick de Saint-Exupéry: 'A lot of people got killed here. I myself killed some of the children . . . We had eighty kids in the first year. There are twenty-five left. All the others, we killed them or they have run away.' Human rights activists were similarly involved. The chairman of one human rights organisation, Innocent Mazimpaka, along with his younger brother, the *bourgmestre* of Gatare, was subsequently charged

with responsibility for the slaughter of 12,200 Tutsis in Gatare *commune*.

For week after week, the hunt for Tutsis continued, from hill to hill, in town after town. Survivors told tales of grotesque cruelty. Mothers were forced to watch their children die before being killed themselves; children were forced to kill their families. A mother from Taba described how, after the *Interahamwe* had rounded up her family and killed all the men, the women were made to dig graves to bury the men. The children were then thrown into the graves. 'I will never forget the sight of my son pleading with me not to bury him alive . . . he kept trying to come out and was beaten back. And we had to keep covering the pit with earth until . . . there was no movement left.'

Tutsis were murdered by their friends and neighbours, by school-mates and colleagues; husbands were forced to kill their Tutsi wives or be killed themselves. A 47-year-old peasant farmer from Kibungo, the father of eight children, was questioned by an American journalist, Bill Berkeley, about the death of his brother-in-law.

The message from the top was passed down to the local village chiefs, the *conseillers*. The *conseillers* had lists of Tutsis who should be killed. They simply organised their constituents . . .

The leaders of the party and the leaders of the militia rounded up all the men in the village. We were told that we had a mission. We were given a list of people to kill. If we met someone on the list, they would be killed . . .

We would converge on a person. We killed a number of people, but jointly . . .

In his own village, they had killed nine people. He had used a machete; others had used clubs.

I knew some of them. They were neighbours . . .

I killed because I was forced to. I either had to do it or I would die myself. Many were killed for refusing to kill . . .

And the murder of his brother-in-law?

He did not deserve to die. He was an old man . . . We killed him in his house. He was dragged from the bedroom and killed in the sitting room. Emmanuel struck him first. He was the leader of the militia. I could not do it myself. For me, I stood by and watched. There was nothing I could do.

Towards the end of April, Rwanda's holocaust took a new turn. As RPF forces in northern Rwanda advanced southwards, converging on the capital and taking control of eastern areas of the country, the Hutu population in their path fled en masse into neighbouring Tanzania, fearing revenge for the massacres of Tutsis in their home districts. In a single day a quarter of a million people stampeded down the road to the Rusumo Falls bridge to cross the border, leaving huge piles of machetes, knives and spears by the roadside. Among them were Hutu Power leaders and groups of *Interahamwe* determined to keep their hold over the Hutu population. The plight of these displaced Hutu attracted far more attention in the outside world than the genocide in which many of them had participated. A massive relief operation was soon under way.

At the United Nations, members of the Security Council ignored mounting evidence of genocide, reluctant in the wake of Somalia to get involved in another African quagmire. France, still acting to protect its Hutu Power allies, insisted that the violence in Rwanda was not genocide but the result of a civil war. US officials went to extraordinary lengths to avoid using the word 'genocide' for fear that, under the terms of the UN Genocide Convention of 1948, it would create a legal obligation for them to intervene. A draft statement submitted to the Security Council on 29 April warning that 'genocide' contravened international law was watered down to a more acceptable version: 'The Security Council recalls that the killing of members of an ethnic group with the intention of destroying such a group in whole or in part constitutes a crime punishable by international law.'

On 4 May President Clinton, still smarting from events in Somalia, declared: 'Lesson number one is, don't go into one of these things and say, as the US said when we started in Somalia, "Maybe we'll be done in a month because it's a humanitarian crisis" . . . Because there

are almost always political problems and sometimes military conflicts which bring about these crises.'

The UN secretary-general, Boutros-Ghali, bungling as badly in Rwanda as he had done in Somalia, added to the confusion. Eight days after the Security Council, on his advice, had voted to withdraw the bulk of Unamir forces, he proposed that Unamir should be reinforced. His proposal was greeted with stunned silence.

On the ground, General Dallaire, endeavouring to find a way through the mire, went to see the RPF leader Paul Kagame, carrying a ceasefire proposal from the 'interim government'. Kagame was scathing. The 'interim government', he retorted, was no more than 'a clique of murderers'. He claimed that the idea of a ceasefire had been devised by France on their behalf.

Meeting again on 17 May, after further evidence of genocide, the Security Council, while still managing to eschew the word 'genocide', approved a new resolution authorising a second Unamir force for Rwanda of 5,500 troops – Unamir 2. But the exercise was largely a sham. There were no troops or equipment yet identified for the operation nor any plan for an airlift to transport them to Rwanda. There was not even agreement over what strategy Unamir 2 should pursue. Dallaire, desperate to stop the killing, proposed that troop reinforcements should land in Kigali where they could be rapidly deployed across the country. American officials, fearing that Unamir could become caught up in combat in Kigali between the RPF and government forces, favoured deploying troops on the periphery of Rwanda where they could establish safe zones to protect civilians. 'Sending a UN force into the maelstrom of Rwanda without a sound plan of operations would be folly,' argued the US ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright. The arguments and recrimination continued for weeks. Recalling these events, New Zealand's representative on the Security Council, Colin Keating, observed: 'While thousands of human beings were hacked to death every day, ambassadors argued fitfully for weeks about military tactics.'

On 8 June, two months after the first massacres, the Security Council finally produced an authorisation for Unamir 2. It even managed to mention the word 'genocide', though not in a stark form but

wrapped up in the phrase 'acts of genocide'. Asked to explain the American position in the light of previous statements, a State Department spokeswoman replied: 'We have every reason to believe that acts of genocide have occurred.'

'How many "acts of genocide" does it take to make a genocide?' a reporter asked.

'That's just not a question that I'm in a position to answer,' she replied.

But Unamir 2 was stillborn. Before any action was taken, France announced its own intervention. The French had become increasingly alarmed by the prospect that the 'interim government' might be defeated. By late May the RPF had gained control of large areas of Kigali, including the airport, and more than half of the country. The 'interim government' meanwhile had withdrawn to headquarters in Gitarama, taking with them the entire contents of the national treasury, including gold reserves and foreign currency. On 12 June the RPF captured Gitarama, forcing ministers to flee to Gisenyi, the Hutu Power stronghold in the north-west. Mitterrand was determined to prevent an RPF victory in Rwanda even if it meant continuing to collaborate with genocidal killers. According to Human Rights Watch, arms shipments from the French government or French companies operating under government licence were delivered to the Rwandan army at the Zaire border town of Goma on five occasions between May and June.

On 14 June, two days after the fall of Gitarama, Mitterrand authorised a plan to send French troops to Rwanda, dressing it up as a 'humanitarian' mission. 'Whatever happens, we will act. Every hour counts and it is now only a question of hours and days,' he said. 'Increasingly savage fighting is taking place and one can no longer wait.'

Within days, France assembled an expeditionary force – '*Opération Turquoise*' – designed more for military purposes than for 'humanitarian' use. It consisted of 2,500 troops, including commando units and special forces, heavy mortars, one hundred armoured vehicles, ten helicopters, four ground-attack planes and four reconnaissance jet planes. Military officers in Paris talked openly of 'breaking the back of

the RPF'. Among the officers appointed to the expedition were former military advisers to Habyarimana's government. Maps were produced delineating a zone of French control that included most of western Rwanda and parts of the city of Kigali still held by the 'interim government'.

When Mitterrand offered to put *Opération Turquoise* at the disposal of the United Nations, Boutros-Ghali leapt at the opportunity. While the Americans were still haggling over peacekeeping costs, France was not only ready to provide troops but willing to pick up the bill. In Kigali, however, Dallaire was hostile to any French intervention, believing their intention was to save the 'interim government' from defeat and split Rwanda into two. Well aware of France's secret arms deliveries to the *génocidaires*, Dallaire remarked in private: 'If they land here to deliver their damn weapons to the government, I'll have their planes shot down.' Despite considerable opposition, the Security Council nevertheless gave its endorsement to *Opération Turquoise* on 22 June.

The following day, French forces crossed into Rwanda from the Zaire border town of Bukavu. They were greeted by the Hutu population and the *Interahamwe* as heroes. Banners proclaimed 'Vive la France' and praised Mitterrand. French *tricolores* were displayed everywhere, even on Rwandan army vehicles. Broadcasting from Gisenyi, *Radio Mille Collines* called for 'you Hutu girls to wash yourselves and put on a good dress to welcome our French allies. The Tutsi girls are all dead, so you have your chance.'

One detachment of French troops, accompanied by journalists, headed for Nyarushishi, a camp where 8,000 Tutsi refugees had survived under police protection. Largely unnoticed, a second detachment consisting of 200 elite troops crossed from the border town of Goma to Gisenyi, headquarters of the 'interim government', and set up camp there, ready to defend the town from RPF attack. There were no Tutsi left in the area for them to protect. A Hutu resident in Gisenyi told a French journalist: 'We have never had many Tutsi here and we killed them all in the beginning without much of a fuss.'

In some places, the coming of the French set off more killing sprees as militias raced to complete their 'work' before they were stopped.

But the French anyway showed little inclination to disarm the militias or to dismantle their roadblocks. Asked why his troops took no action, Colonel Didier Thibault, a false name used by Colonel Didier Tazuin to cover his role as a former adviser to the Rwandan army, retorted: 'The French army has no authority to disarm the militia or dismantle the roadblocks even though they are a threat to civilian lives.' According to Gérard Prunier, a political advisor to *Opération Turquoise*, Colonel Thibault 'was itching to get at the RPF'.

The original French intention had been to press on to Kigali, but the risks became too great. On 4 July Thibault ordered his troops to draw 'a line in the sand' at Gikongoro, warning that he would give 'no quarter' if the RPF attacked. Having failed to reach Kigali, the French opted to set up a 'secure humanitarian zone' encompassing the south-western quadrant of Rwanda, abandoning the north-west and the 'interim government' in Gisenyi. As the scale of the atrocities in Rwanda became ever more apparent, the French gambit came to an ignominious end. French troops on the ground, disgusted by the evidence of massacres they found, felt betrayed. 'We have not a single wounded Hutu here, just massacred Tutsi,' reported one soldier. 'We have been deceived,' said a sergeant-major, staring at a group of wounded and starving Tutsi refugees. 'This is not what we were led to believe. We were told the Tutsis were killing Hutus. We thought the Hutus were the good guys and the victims.' Initially pleased at the welcome the militias had given them, they now felt revulsion. 'I've had enough of being cheered by murderers,' remarked one soldier. A French officer who had once instructed soldiers of the Presidential Guard broke down and cried, so appalled was he at the crimes committed by men whom he had trained.

On 4 July the RPF took Kigali. Within a few days of the fall of the Rwandan capital, as RPF forces advanced on the last Hutu Power strongholds in the north-west, the *génocidaires* organised a mass exodus of the Hutu population across the border to Zaire. In its last broadcasts from Rwanda, *Radio Mille Collines* spread fear and terror, warning that the RPF were devil-like fighters bent on killing them all. Led by local officials, whole villages decamped. The roads to Zaire became choked

with hundreds of thousands of Hutu, in trucks, cars, on bicycles, on foot, taking their livestock and what belongings they could carry. Buildings were stripped of window frames, door handles and corrugated-iron sheets. Watching the exodus at a border crossing near Goma, a relief worker observed: 'It was as though the whole country was emptying.' In two days about a million people crossed into Zaire. 'It was a silent line, a long, long black line of people, all of them walking silently like machines.' Among them were the militias and the remnants of the army, taking with them their weapons and equipment. 'Even if they [the RPF] have won a military victory they will not have the power,' declared a leading Hutu ideologue. 'We have the population. They have only bullets.'

Many prominent *génocidaires*, including Colonel Bagosora, passed through the French 'safe-haven' but the French made no attempt to arrest them. Mitterrand's spokesman explained: 'Our mandate does not authorise us to arrest them on our own authority. Such a task could undermine our neutrality, the best guarantee of our effectiveness.' So, to the end, the French protected the organisers of genocide.

Having largely ignored the genocide, the international aid community, prompted by television pictures of the Hutu exodus, now rushed to assist the mass of Hutu 'refugees' crammed into disease-ridden camps along the Zaire border, without food or shelter. Joining the bandwagon, President Clinton described the 'refugee' camps as the worst humanitarian crisis in a generation. In a publicity stunt, US Air Force planes mounted an air drop of supplies. Some 150 aid organisations arrived on the scene. The United Nations, unable to mount an operation to prevent genocide, now found no difficulty in raising \$1 million a day to spend on a refugee crisis organised by *génocidaires* for their own purposes.

On 18 July, after the last Hutu Power stronghold had fallen, Kagame declared the civil war over. The next day a government of national unity was sworn in comprising representatives of all main parties except the MRND. Twelve of the eighteen ministers were Hutu. The new president, Pasteur Bizimungu, was a Hutu relative of Habyarimana who had opposed him; Paul Kagame was installed as vice-president.

The RPF's victory brought an end to the genocide. In the space of

100 days some 800,000 people had been slaughtered – about three-quarters of the Tutsi population. More people had been killed more quickly than in any other mass killing in recorded history. Tutsis who had escaped the holocaust emerged ragged and starving from months of hiding in caves, swamps and forests and crept out from under sheds, inside cupboards and attics. Many had been saved by the help of Hutus. 'When I came out, there were no birds,' said one survivor who had hidden throughout the genocide. 'There was sunshine and the stench of death.'

The entire country had been laid to waste. Hospitals and schools had been destroyed or ransacked, government offices looted; there were no police; the treasury was empty; public utilities such as electricity, water and phone services had collapsed; a year's harvest had been lost. Everywhere there were ditches filled with rotting bodies. Nearly 2 million people inside the country were refugees, uprooted from their homes. According to the World Bank, the genocide had left Rwanda the poorest country on earth.

Yet the conflict was far from over. In their new base in Zaire, supported unwittingly by the international aid effort, the *génocidaires* regrouped and planned their return. The same clique of Hutu politicians, *préfets*, *bourgmestres* and military officers who had organised the genocide now used their control of the refugee camps and food distribution there to raise funds and buy arms for a new offensive. From exile, Colonel Bagosora vowed 'to wage a war that will be long and full of dead people until the minority Tutsis are finished and completely out of the country'.

This new phase of the conflict was to bring further tragedy to Rwanda. It was also to lead to the downfall of Mobutu's regime in Zaire.