



Southern China International MUN

Official Background Guide

1994 Historical Committee: Alleviating Rising Tensions in the Rwandan Civil War

Agenda overseen by Flora Meng

Chairs' Letter

Future delegates of 2020,

Welcome to the past.

In the present, it is April 6, 1994. We know nothing of the future, and neither should you.

Things do not seem right.

President Habyarimana and President Ntaryamira have just been killed in a plane crash after the plane was hit by an unknown source.

Blood is boiling. Responsibility is being thrown from both sides. Tensions are rising.

Peace has been undermined.

Delegates, how do we resolve this crisis?

Sincerely,

Chair Wu and Chair Meng

0. Chair's Introduction to the Topic

Failure. Utter despair. Desperation.

How would **you** feel if you were brutally slaughtered, tortured, raped in front of your family, and restrained from doing anything? Held at gunpoint, any sign of resistance ending with a bang, you feel agony – physical, spiritual, and mental.

You've given up the will to live, questioned the social order of the world, and wondered why humans can be so cruel due to ethnic background.

That familiar helmet, the blue colored UN helmet, that gave you hope... gave you hope that you can be safe. This hope – stands by unable to take action. You are left alone, to despair, to be tormented. You stare at this symbol of peace... at this symbol of hope.

They stand there... doing nothing.

You wonder why... after the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, and the Cambodian genocide... countries appear illiterate when it comes to reading the malignant deeds.

"As they say, history doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes." – Margaret Atwood.

Welcome to bloody massacre, systematic genocide, and the slaughter of innocence.

Welcome to UN failure, loss of humanity, and human ignorance.

Welcome to the Rwandan Civil War.

1. Description of the Issue

1.1. History of Issue

Around the beginning of the 1990s, Rwanda, as a small agrarian nation, reached one of the highest population densities in Africa.¹ During this time, approximately 85% of civilians were ethnically Hutu while the rest were Tutsi.³ From 1894 to 1918, Rwanda was part of German East Africa and came under the mandate of Belgium post WW1.⁴

The Hutu and Tutsi are two peoples who share a common past. When Rwanda was first settled, the people who lived there raised cattle. Soon, the people who owned the most cattle were called "Tutsi," and everyone else was called "Hutu."³ At this time, a person could easily change categories through marriage or cattle acquisition. It wasn't until Europeans came to colonize the area that the terms "Tutsi" and "Hutu" took on a racial role. The Germans, who were the first to colonize Rwanda in 1894, looked at the Rwandan people and thought the Tutsi had more European characteristics, such as lighter skin and a taller build, and thus, placed Tutsis in roles of responsibility.⁴

Similarly, throughout Rwanda's colonial period, Belgian rulers favored the minority Tutsis over the Hutus, furthering tensions that resulted from this phenomenon of the "few dominating the many".⁴ As a result, Rwandan people were subject to bloodshed and violence during the Hutu Revolution of 1959. During this revolt, over 300,000 Tutsis were forced to flee Rwanda, rendering the ethnic group an even smaller minority.³ The Hutus became the victorious party by 1951, forced the Tutsi monarch into exile and transformed Rwanda into a republic. A U.N. referendum later that year officially granted Rwanda independence from Belgium.²

Major General Juvenal Habyarimana, a moderate Hutu, came to power in 1973, becoming the sole leader of the Rwandan government for the next twenty years.⁶ Habyarimana founded the political party National Revolutionary Movement for Development (RMD) and was elected president under a new constitution in 1978 during an election where he was the only candidate.⁵

By 1990, Rwanda was invaded by the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), an army consisting of Tutsi refugees, from Uganda.⁶ This wave of ethnic tensions and conflict were caused by a number of reasons, namely a sluggish economy, food shortages, and poor weather.⁹ Collectively, these issues created an unstable political climate. Another source of mounting tensions in 1990 was the Tutsi diaspora. Those Tutsi who had been exiled over thirty years were gathering together to form the RPF.⁸ From the Hutu's perspective, these Tutsi were an unjust aristocracy who deserved to be exiled and that they were unfaithful to their Rwandan heritage, speaking English instead of French.³ The Tutsi, on the other hand, wanted the Rwandan government to make concessions. In response, a series of negotiations seeking to examine the "concept of democracy" and the formation of a "National Political Charter," which would reconcile conflicts between the Hutus and Tutsis took place.¹ Although these negotiations could have led to a peaceful compromise between the two ethnic groups, the RPF was reluctant to wait for the Rwandan government to make the changes it promised.

In 1992, the Arusha Accords were signed, and a ceasefire between the Hutu government and the RPF led to temporary peace.¹ The accord created a fixed timetable for an end to fighting and political talks, an agreement to power sharing, and authorization of a neutral military observer group under the auspices of the Organization for African Unity.⁷ However, because the creation of a transition government included the RPF, Hutu extremists were angered with the Rwandan government's decision to compromise in the Arusha Accords, fighting back with violence. Subsequently, following reports of massacres of Tutsi, the RPF launched another major offensive in 1993.⁶

Although the Tutsi's intent in attacking appeared to be to pressure the Rwandan government into recognizing their equality with the Hutus, the invasion was interpreted as an attempt for the Tutsi's to take back their power, an act that the Rwandan government was highly against.⁶ As such, Habyarimana responded by instituting genocidal programs directed against all Tutsi and any Hutu connected to Tutsi interests.⁴ The Rwandan president justified these acts by asserting that the Tutsi were seeking to restore a feudal system and to enslave Hutu race, an exaggerated evaluation of the situation that increased xenophobic attitudes in the country.⁹

1.2 Recent Development (As of April 6th, 1994)

On April 6, 1994, a plane carrying Habyarimana and Burundi's president Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down over Kigali. To this day, the culprits of this murderous act has not been determined and it is continually speculated whether those guilty of the crime were Hutu extremists or members of the RPF. Promptly after the plane crash, the Presidential Guard together with the Rwandan armed forces (FAR) and Hutu militia groups known as the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi set up roadblocks and began slaughtering Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

The organized killing of Tutsi and moderate Hutu began that night, led by Hutu extremists. Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, a moderate Hutu, was assassinated the next day, as were 10 Belgian soldiers who were guarding her. Her murder was part of a campaign to eliminate moderate Hutu or Tutsi politicians, with the goal of creating a political vacuum and thus allowing for the formation of an interim government of Hutu extremists.

2. Emphasis of the Discourse

2.1 Stance of Intergovernmental Organizations

International intervention in the Rwandan Civil War were mainly neutral and were aimed at assisting in ceasefire negotiations and ending the national conflict for both sides. In 1993, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and regional governments collaborated in signing the Arusha peace agreements, appearing to have ended the civil conflict. In later months, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) with a mandate to provide peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and general support to establish peace.³ Despite the UN's neutrality, following the plane crash that killed president Habyarimana, Radio Television Libre Des Mille Collines (RTLM) attributed the disaster to the RPF and UN soldiers.¹

In 1994, the UN pulled most of its troops in Rwanda, believing that the civil war was going to reignite.⁵ The UN was reluctant about further intervention for two reasons. Firstly, it is well established that organizations do not have the desire to involve themselves in issues of autonomy. In the case of the Rwandan crisis, a civil war between two legitimate groups was considered as a justified fight for autonomy.⁵ Secondly, the UN was not highly involved in the humanitarian crisis because it did not want to entangle itself in local politics, a situation that would threaten the UN's neutrality and legitimacy. Finally, the UN's lack of action was seen as an effort to preserve its military personnel. UNAMIR started with over 2,500 military personnel, and when fighting broke out in 1994, UNAMIR was directed to mediate a cease-fire, and to evacuate all but 270 UN personnel.⁵

2.2 Stance of Developed Countries

"Western" countries or more developed countries did not intervene extensively during the Rwandan Civil War.⁷ Even though most countries ratified the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, nothing was done to stop the on-going on slaughter. A number of reasons led to this result. The first was that the Rwandan conflict was a civil war, which meant that foreign countries were not obligated or necessarily justified to intervene. Another possibility is that few countries were aware of the massacres that were

occurring. One final reason for why most developed nations failed to intervene was because they did not anticipate any national interests that could have been fulfilled by stopping the bloodshed in Rwanda.

France: After Rwandan President Habyarimana's plane was shot down and the genocide began, his wife, Agathe Habyarimana, fled to Paris. French troops airlifted her out and, reportedly, gave her 230,000 Francs.⁸ This is worrisome because, according to the Rwandan government, Agathe Habyarimana may have been involved in the planning of the Rwandan genocide. France actually acknowledges the fact that there are "serious reasons to suspect" that she was one of the key players. While political leader Paul Kagame wanted Agathe to be extradited to Rwanda to face trial, France refused, promising to take her through their own courts.⁸ Although France arrested Agathe in 2010, they let her out shortly after. France also set up one of the largest relief programs, introducing the "Zone Turquoise," a region meant to protect Rwandan refugees.⁹

United States: The United States used a hidden veto to keep the world out of the conversation, threatening to veto any action in Rwanda and using its influence to stop the UN from sending more peacekeepers.⁷ Furthermore, sixteen days before the killings began, Bill Clinton received a message that declared a "final solution to eliminate all Tutsi."⁴ Despite receiving regular reports that signaled an upcoming genocide and knowing two weeks earlier that a humanitarian disaster would begin, the US made a conscious decision to not get involved because Rwanda did not have any apparent value to American interests. According to Clinton, "Whether we get involved in any of the world's ethnic conflicts must depend on the cumulative weight of the American interests at stake."⁷

UK: About three months before the genocide started, UN Peacekeepers caught a French plane making a secret landing at night.⁸ The plane was making a delivery to the Hutu extremists, full of weapons and mortars that would soon be put to use in the genocide. This was a direct violation of the Arusha Peace Accords that had ended the Rwandan Civil War. Members of the UN were forbidden to sell weapons to Rwanda—and yet the paperwork inside the plane made it clear that these weapons had been sent from all over the world, with companies in the United Kingdom supplying weapons for the Hutu extremists.⁵

Belgium: Belgium was a colonial power in Rwanda and had a deep political connection with their government even after decolonization. Their main connection, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), was initially mostly composed of Belgian soldiers.² The Belgian General Information and Security Service had previous knowledge of the genocidal intentions of the Habyarimana regime but were unable to act until it was too late.⁷

Out of the 2,548 troops authorized by the UN in October 1993, initially only 800 were deployed, half of which were Belgian.¹ Concerned about the continued armament of militia in February 1994, Belgium warned the UN of the potential for a massacre and urged the international community to strengthen UNAMIR's peacekeeping force. Belgian peacekeepers were stationed in Rwanda, and "the militia planned first to provoke and murder a number of Belgian peacekeepers, in order to 'guarantee Belgian withdrawal from Rwanda.'"¹ The militia knew that states would pull out their personnel if they were targeted. Belgium ultimately pulled their troops out of Rwanda due to numerous Belgian soldiers dying.⁷

Canada: In July 1993, UNAMIR Force Commander General Roméo Dallaire had limited information on the Rwandan conflict.⁷ Roméo was forced to proceed on his mission blindly and, due to the lack of information Canada was given, planned a poor mission with inexperienced experts in economic, political and human rights operational planning. This came

as a result of military operations that had ignored requirements for long-term addresses to the cause of the Rwandan conflict. Their mandate allowed them only to monitor the implementation of the Arusha Accords and to support the transitional government.⁷

2.3 Stance of Developing Countries

Countries around the world, especially from the West, use the principle of self-determination to justify a lack of intervention in foreign wars. Although it is understandable that Western nations would use this philosophy, it is important to look at whether this was simply a case of self-determination. An exception to the self-determination rule is that a neighboring nation has the right to intervene if this conflict will affect them. **Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda** and the **Democratic Republic of Congo (then Zaire)** were all neighbors and thus, had the right to intervene.⁷ However, they all played minor roles as they were involved in internal conflicts and lacked the resources to mitigate tensions in Rwanda. Uganda was pro-RPF since the rebel army attacked Rwanda from **Uganda**.⁷ Both Zaire and Burundi had civil conflicts and held no interest in Rwanda. **Tanzania** attempted to act as a neutral mediator.⁴ If the neighbors cannot do anything, then the intervention falls to the rest of the world.

Egypt: In 1990, Boutros-Ghali was the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs and signed a deal with the Hutus promising to send them \$26 million worth of weapons.⁶ To keep the arms sale secret, he had them labeled as “relief materials.” Boutros-Ghali would later justify this, saying that selling weapons was part of his job and that he did not think “a few thousand guns would have changed the situation.”⁷ Boutros-Ghali, though, did not play a passive role when it came to the Rwandan conflict, actively fighting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and convincing him to sell weapons to the Hutus.⁹

3. Possible solutions

3.1 In Favor of Developed Countries

Some of the greatest world powers, such as the United States and the United Nations, could have at least stopped the broadcast of the incidence in the case that they were unable to use military forces to stop the genocide. It is not that the United Nations did not want to save the people of Rwanda from the genocide, but the United Nations is not built to tackle genocide crisis efficiently. The United Nations should have intervened in the Rwanda genocide by providing the supplies, funds, and skills necessary to intercede. The United Nations is also blamed because of ignoring some precious warning before the war and relied very much on precedents. Although the outbreaks in Rwanda did not appeal to the interests of developed nations as they were seen as not of sufficient value to warrant prevention of the violence, expense of resources or the risk of losing more casualties, this delay contributed to thousands of Rwandan deaths.

3.2 In Favor of Developing Countries

- Gathering information with the help and participation of local leaders on the location of infiltrating ex-FAR/Interahamwe units;
- Providing resources to ease the suffering of the residents of the internally displaced camps;
- Organizing a political campaign to demonstrate that the government is not exclusively

Tutsi by sending out key Hutu ministers to tour the northwest and talk about Rwanda's future;

- Making known the government's presumption that most insurgents undertake their actions under extreme duress, so only those convicted of participation in the genocide will be punished;
- Constructing a public education campaign involving churches, community leaders, and others to isolate the genocidaires and separate civilians from militia members;
- Providing resources to returnees and internally displaced populations;
- Stepping up efforts to reintegrate ex-FAR into the Rwandan army, and once reintegrated, using some of these soldiers and officers to convince other insurgents to return;
- Creating and training local defense forces, selected by the resident populations, which are partially responsible for the security of their own areas.

4. Keep in Mind the Following

Considering the fact that this is the historical committee and that at the start of our session, the date is April 6th, 1994, right after the assassination of Habyarimana, prepare research on what happens later in history (hint: Rwandan Genocide took place between 7 April and 15 July 1994) to help guide your country's position and corresponding actions.

- What were the roots of the Rwandan Civil War?
- What role did the international community play in trying to resolve this war?
- Did the peace process contribute to the set of circumstances in which genocide occurred?
- Had the UN fully understood the social roots of the conflict, would contingency planning with regard to a forceful opposition be used?
- Had the Arusha process given the Rwandan extremists a stake in power? Could the neutral peacekeeping mandate of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) have secured the transition?

5. Evaluation

In 1994, Rwanda was caught between a civil war between its two major ethnicities, Hutu and Tutsi. While the international community was aware of the situation, it failed to react appropriately when the Hutu began deliberately murdering all Tutsi. The call to murder on sight all Tutsi men, women, and children was broadcasted over one of the two radio stations in Rwanda, yet neither the world nor the United Nations intervened to halt the violence.⁵ Regardless of whether third parties could have or would have used military force to stop the genocide, they could have at least attempted stop the radio broadcasts. This would have greatly decreased the murders in and of itself, since lists of Tutsi names, addresses, and license plates were announced through the radio. Despite how obviously the Rwandan conflict was escalating, it was allowed to carry on. It was not that the United Nations did not care or desire to save the victims of the war, but rather it was because the UN was never built to handle such a genocide crisis effectively. With this hindsight in mind, delegates should evaluate the extent of the role that the UN and international parties should have made to successfully mitigate the rising tensions in Rwanda without entangling themselves wrongly into the political conflicts involved.

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