

RWANDAN GENOCIDE: HOW DID THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ACT?

Ahmad Neshat “Keliwaal”¹, Ezatullah Aziz²

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ABSTRACT

President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda asked the Habyarimana to implement the accords. On 6 April 1994, President Habyarimana plane was shot near Kigali Airport while returning from Dar es Salam. The plane plunged to earth, and President Habyarimana, President of Burundi Cyprien Ntaryamira, and everyone else on board was killed. The Hutu blamed the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) for the incident. RPF was founded by the Tutsi elites who flee from neighboring countries. Following this incidents genocide and war happened in Rwanda and approximately 800,000 Tutsi and between 10,000 and 30,000 Hutu, or 11 percent of Rwanda’s total population, were killed during the genocide. Around 2,000,000 people were forced to migrate within Rwanda, and the same number of Hutu fled to Burundi, Tanzania, and Zaire. Critics argued that the International Community intentionally and unintentionally remained reluctant during Rwanda’s civil war and genocide. If the international community couldn’t avoid the civil war and genocide, they could have a humanitarian intervention to decrease casualties.

Keywords: Rwandan Genocide, Tutsi, Hutu, and International Community.

INTRODUCTION

In October 1990, several elites who were Tutsi officers formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in Ugandan and invaded Rwanda to retake their homeland. This caused the civil war between Rwandan Patriotic Front and President Habyarimana’s government army and the Rwandan Armed forces (FAR). During the civil war, due to unemployment, poverty, population growth, and RPF threat, President Habyarimana took advantage of the rural population’s vulnerability and used them to push Hutu extremist ideologies against the Tutsi. The private Hutu actors also used the anti-Tutsi campaign benefits of their businesses, such as selling their arms, militia training, and providing their hotels for the secret meetings (Alluri, 2009, pp. 13- 14). Fearing the instability in Rwanda that could threaten the whole region, the regional countries put pressure on Habyarimana to set for negotiation with Rwandan Patriotic Front. Due to the internal problems and external pressures, President Habyarimana set for negotiations that caused the Arusha accords. During the meeting in Dar- es -Salaam the head of states, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi of Tanzania, and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda asked the

Habyarimana to implement the accords. On 6 April 1994, President Habyarimana’s plane was shot near Kigali Airport while returning from Dar es Salam. The plane plunged to earth, and President Habyarimana, President of Burundi Cyprien Ntaryamira, and everyone else on board was killed. The Hutu blamed the RPA for the incident. However, foreign observers believe that Hutu extremists shot it, ‘the Forces Armies Rwandaises’ (FAR), who were not happy with The Arusha agreements (Magnarella, 2005, p. 815).

The Hutu Extremists



Source: (The Guardian,2011)

Some Hutu leaders asked their people and followers 'to send the Tutsi back to their country of origin, Ethiopia' through the Akanyaru river. Following this notice, some parts of the north flowing rivers filled with the dead, and Ugandan people pulled out almost 40,000 bodies from Lake Victoria. The murderers didn't only use simple ways to kill Tutsi and Hutu rivals, but they also mutilated and tortured their victims. They raped their victims, even wounded women, and killed pregnant women to eliminate the Tutsi psychologically. Under the command of Paul Kagame, The RPF started fighting in April 1994 and attempted to stop the massacring, but it was so difficult because the militiamen and soldiers were slaughtering civilians. The RPF captured Kigali on 4 July and took the second-largest city, Butare, on 5 July. On 18 July, RPF reached the Zairian border and captured the Gisenyi town. They defeated the Hutu FAR and militias and declared a unilateral ceasefire within three months (Magnarella, 2005, p. 815). Approximately 800,000 Tutsi and between 10,000 and 30,000 Hutu, or 11 percent of Rwanda's total population, were killed during the genocide. Around 2,000,000 people were forced to migrate within Rwanda, and the same number of Hutu fled to Burundi, Tanzania, and Zaire. The RPF with moderate Hutu established a new government on 18 July 1994. However, the country was in chaos. The RPF and moderate Hutu political parties created a new government on 18 July 1994, but the country was in turmoil. The new government was formed by a coalition of 22 ministers from the RPF (which had nine ministers) and four other parties. Top government officials were both Tutsi and . Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, was named president, and Paul Kagame was nominated as vice-president and defense minister. Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu, a Hutu, served till late August 1995, and Pierre Claver Twigema superseded him; he was also a Hutu. The government made a public commitment, establishing a multiparty democracy and ending the former regime's ethnic classification system (Magnarella, 2005, p. 815). In 100 days of Slaughtering, 800,000 people killed.



Source: (BCC,2011)

The Causes of Rwandan genocide

The Rwandan civil war and genocide are expressed as incidents rooted in the class division and 'social stratification' that was established through the identities of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Historians and scholars describe the various reasons and main factors that caused the Rwandan civil war and genocide, such as elite manipulation, population density and scarcity of resources, and high poverty level.

Elite Manipulation

The most common description about the Rwandan genocide is the desire of elites who wanted to stay in power (Uvin, 2001, p. 79).

Enforced labor systems and stereotypes of physical beauty were initially introduced by the Tutsi King in the eighteenth century and more institutionalized by Belgian colonizers. These kinds of systems contributed to the divided society based on ethnicity perception. Such structures ensured the Tutsi's access to employment opportunities, land, power, and other resources such as cattle. However, most were forced to physical working and agricultural cultivation, and most of the Twa were isolated in the forest for pottery and hunting. Local elite established and reproduced ethnic identities through these 'embedded patron-client relationships.' These manipulations of power by a small group of elites caused the 1959 social revolution, followed by the abolition of the Tutsi monarchy. The revolution caused the inter-ethnic killing and migration of thousands of Tutsi to neighbouring countries. Post-colonization, both governments of Gregoire Kayibanda from 1960 to 1973 and Juvénal

Habyarimana from 1973 to 1994 formulated one-party governments and discriminated against Tutsi. Both governments used the ethnic rhetoric to maintain their control, and class power politics within ethnicities were the primary weapon for competition (Alluri, 2009, p. 13).

The government of Habyarimana increased these competitions. Analyzers have pointed out some political and economic factors that caused manipulation by elites. The financial crises in the late 1980s were followed by the structural adjustment, the generating of internal political opposition, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invasion in 1990, and the following civil war. These factors together have threatened the power of the elites in Rwanda. As a result, a small but powerful group close to President Habyarimana, including his wife's family and other people in the army and administration, sought to secure their power and privileges through all their disposals, including violence and racism (Uvin, 2001, p. 79). This argument is based on the ideas of scholars from various disciplinary perspectives. The main idea of this argument belongs to the traditional political analysis. However, 13 other scholars, such as historians, an anthropologist, a legal scholar, a few journalists, and a human rights organizations, have also participated in this argument. All descriptions regarding the elite manipulation are essential because, throughout history, all genocides have been 'instigated, organized, and legitimized' by the state. Without local representatives of the states, no accurate action could happen in the genocide. However, these explanations don't encompass the whole story, and they fail to be accountable for the 'deeper social basis' on which the civil war and genocide process rest. The discussion focuses on the small group of people while the larger group or deeper social structure who perpetrated the violence were ignored (Uvin, 2001, p. 80). This is an understandable propensity due to several reasons. One reason is practical: most of what we understand well about genocide comes from human rights organizations, whose purpose includes identifying those legally accountable. These organizations' methodological bias is toward individual people rather than long-term social dynamics. Another factor is intellectual, if not sentimental. When confronted with atrocities of this scale, most people instinctively go for the perpetrators, i.e., flawed

individuals who can be blamed almost single-handedly for the mess, such as the Husseins, Miloevius, and Specht of the world. As Bastian points out, "If human nature is bestowed with an innate goodness, then the tendency is to regard communal riots as an aberration and to search for 'culprits' who can be held responsible for perpetrating the horrendous violence one encounters during communal riots" (Uvin, 81 Uvin, 2001, p. 81).

Poverty and Scarcity of Resources

Rwanda, the land country of a thousand hills,' is one of Africa's poorest and smallest countries, only covering 26.340 square Kilometers. It is same in size to Belgium or Burundi. Rwandans have put significant pressure on the country's land throughout the twentieth century (Magnarella, 2005, p. 801). Expert and observers' writings for the Economist Intelligence Unit in 1983 explained that when the Rwandan population reached 5.5 million, "with the population increasing at an average annual rate of 3.7 percent, in a country with the highest population density in Africa, the authorities are worried that it will be impossible to increase food sufficiently" (Magnarella, 2005, p. 802). At the time, an estimate showed that 95 percent of the population was fully engaged in agriculture. In 1993, one year before the genocide, the population had risen to 7.7 million without any significant improvement in the agriculture sector.

On the other hand, periodic droughts, soil exhaustion, overgrazing, soil erosion, and the abrupt war severely impacted food production that caused people's migration (Magnarella, 2005, p. 802). The ethnicity explanation is famous among economists, medical experts, public health specialists, agriculture, family planning environment, and as well as in some parts of the general press. It primarily claims that Rwanda's scarcity of ecological resources, as one of the highest population densities in the African continent, combined with one of the highest population growth rates, was the leading cause of genocide. According to the Malthusian argument, overpopulation and land scarcity inevitably contribute to communal violence and social conflict. Famine and violence are the only options when a country's 'carrying capacity' has been exceeded, allowing nature to restore ecological balance. Unfortunately, this is unpreventable (except

through vast progress in containing population growth). Rwanda is sometimes cited as an excellent example of this challenging Malthusian argument. The 1994 genocide was an unpreventable result of overpopulation and environmental constraints (Uvin, 2001, pp. 81-82).

How did the International Community act?

Some actions such as applying democratic values to Rwanda, not doing a militarily humanitarian intervention, and socioeconomic aid from the international community caused much unrest and problems during and after the Rwandan genocide.

Applying Democratic Values to Rwanda

The elite manipulation, poverty, and scarcity of resources were the internal reason for the Rwandan genocide and civil war. However, during the civil war, the International community's interference also caused more unrest in Rwanda. The international community put pressure on the democratization in Rwanda that wasn't compatible with the situation in Rwanda at that time (Orford, 2003, p. 97). The International community used the Arusha peace accords to put pressure on the Rwandan government for democratization. During the civil war, the international community mediated between the Rwandan government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). France was the host of the first negotiation between the Rwandan government and the RPF. After that, Tanzania took the responsibility and played a crucial role in the Arusha peace accords. Some other countries, such as Ugandan, Burundi, and Zaire, played essential roles as facilitators. Other countries such as Germany, the US, France, Belgium, Zimbabwe, Senegal, and Nigeria were observers during negotiations and peace agreement. The African Union and the UN and as the International Organizations were also participated in the negotiations and peace accords. A Tanzanian diplomat, Mpungwe was the mediator between the negotiations sides and he also had good relations with the US and France. The Arusha peace accord signed between the President Habyarimana and the RPF chairman Kanyarqenge on August 4 1994. All sides expressed their commitments for the joining of the RPF with the government and the democratic regime based on the elections in Rwanda (TARR, 2015, pp. 2-8). This peace agreement wasn't

acceptable for the extremist as part of government. They assumed that government was failed in negotiation and agreement. They didn't intend to share the power and participate in the elections. The unacceptance of a democratic government by a part of Rwandan government shows that democratic regime was not compatible with Rwandans situation on that time. Therefore, the agreement failed, the Hutu extremists started massacring, and the genocide happened (Orford, 2003, p.97).

Inaction in Military Humanitarian Intervention

Humanitarian intervention has several definitions, and here we discuss the definition by Kyrre Grimstad. He argues that "interference by one or several states in the internal affairs of another state [...] to prevent a situation where the most basic rights of the people of that state [are] being violated" (Farrell, 2013, pp. 2-4). This definition provides three elements or aspects of the humanitarian intervention, 'the act, the actors, and the beneficiaries.' The humanitarian intervention focuses on the act as the responsibility of states to punish or avoid 'grave breaches. The Geneva Convention explained the 'grave breaches' as "willful killing, torture or inhumane treatment; willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health; extensive destruction and appropriation of property not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly; taking of hostages; unlawful deportation or transfer (what is commonly referred to as 'ethnic cleansing')" (Farrell, 2013, pp. 2-4). Humanitarian intervention may happen in the form of socioeconomic aid or military action. The actors who take action for providing humanitarian interventions are states or international organizations, and the beneficiaries are states or people who receive the humanitarian intervention. The United Nations Security Council's approval is an essential factor for humanitarian intervention and the United Nations initiatives; for instance, peacekeeping missions provide a primary vehicle for the execution of military interventions. The United States and European countries seem to be the main actors during military interventions because they have facilities and resources such as funding, weapons, transportation, etc. During humanitarian crises, socioeconomic aid is often provided by

governmental and non-governmental organizations (Farrell, 2013, pp. 2-4).

'the 1948 Convention about the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide' argues that, all states should prevent and punish actions that cause genocide. During the Rwandan genocide, the international community was aware about the situation in Rwanda because the situation of Rwanda in early 1993 met the definition of Genocide provided by Convention. However, the international community didn't show any reaction and the genocide happened. One reason of the inaction of the international community was the "criticism and opposition" by the United States (Farrell, 2013, p. 7). The countries such as the US which often emphasizing on the protection of Human rights. However, has become silent during the Rwandan genocide. Some people claim that it was impossible to prevent the genocide. However, we can understand that by military intervention it was at least possible to reduce the casualties. The US not only didn't intervene to prevent the genocide, but also oppose the international community to give a response (Orford, 2003, p. 99). Burnett claims that the US opposed for the military intervention because the proposal provided by the UN Security Council was 'unrealistic' (Barnett, 1997, p.560). However, it wasn't the reason because big powers such as the US intervened in the areas and issues where they had interests and didn't take any action to save humanity and for the sake of humanity. The international community's inaction in preventing the Rwandan genocide was a big failure in 'upholding the Geneva human Rights Convention' (Farrell, 2013, p. 7).

The inaction and misuse of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) during the genocide were more shocking. Under the Arusha peace accord, the UNAMIR was established in Kigali, and UNAMIR was there when the massacre began in the city. The Mission didn't show any interest in intervening militarily to rescue civilians. Although Romeo Dallaire, the Canadian General, requested that his troops could protect and save the innocent civilians, the UN Secretary-General Boutros rejected his request. In mid-April, Belgium decided to withdraw 440 troops due to the killing its ten disarmed soldiers by the Presidential Guard. Subsequently, several hundred Bangladeshi troops also left Rwanda. The UN Security Council (UNSC)

On April 21, 1994, decided to reduce the UNAMIR forces to only 250 men through a unanimous decision. This mass reduction of troops showed that the international community was against the humanitarian military intervention to protect innocent civilians. We can say that military intervention wasn't existing during the Rwandan genocide. Only one positive thing came from the efforts of General Dallaire, who used public media and exposed the genocide to the world to bring the people's attention to the crises community (Farrell, 2013, pp. 7-8). The only action that the UN took was deploying 5,500 troops to Rwanda. On April 29, 1994, the Secretary-General wrote to the Security Council and requested to re-examine and reconsider their decision to decrease UNAMIR. He also mentioned in his letter and confirmed the death of almost 200,000 people and the continuation of the massacring (Ludlow, 1999, p. 14). Boutros-Ghali concluded that "this humanitarian catastrophe is rightly a matter of growing anguish in Africa and the rest of the world and demands urgent action by the international community" (Ludlow, 1999, p. 14). In response, on May 13, 1994, the Security Council decided to deploy 5,500 troops to Rwanda as UNAMIR II. The UNAMIR II aimed to provide security for international organizations and protect civilians. However, the forces were only permitted to be in self-defense status against the groups and people who threatened protected civilians. They didn't have open hands to save lives (Ludlow, 1999, p. 14).

The Socioeconomic Aid Post-Genocide

In comparison to the inaction in the military intervention during the genocide, the socioeconomic assistance after the genocide had some effectiveness. An African policy analyst, Jeff Drumtra, argues that "a post-genocide society that [had] also experienced civil war, massive refugee displacement, [...] and economic ruin. Today, Rwanda has come to be hailed for its remarkable socioeconomic recovery" (Farrell, 2013, p. 9). From 1994 to 2000, the new Rwandan government received almost \$4 billion in aid from the international community. The economic assistance from the international community helps the country in the short term. It also negatively affected Rwandan autonomy (Farrell, 2013, p. 9). According to the report of the Organization of

African Unity (OAU), "Rwanda's economic difficulties [were] compounded by its great dependence on external funds" (Farrell, 2013, p. 10). Due to the severe condition of loans by IMF and World Bank, the Autonomy of Rwanda was reduced, and this country was obligated to accept the criteria imposed by World Bank and the IMF for receiving loans. The dependence on foreign aid eliminated the sovereignty of the new Rwandan government and indebted this country to the international community (Farrell, 2013, p. 10).

CONCLUSION

The Rwandan genocide is expressed as an incident rooted in the class division and 'social stratification' that was established through the identities of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Historians and scholars describe the various reasons and main factors that caused the Rwandan civil war and genocide, such as elite manipulation, population density and scarcity of resources, and high poverty level. In the Rwandan genocide, besides the internal actors, International Community was also involved. Critics argued that the International Community intentionally and unintentionally remained reluctant during Rwanda's civil war and genocide. If the international community couldn't avoid the civil war and genocide, they could have a humanitarian intervention to decrease casualties.

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