

We are in extra ordinary times, our country and the whole world in general are threatened by COVID-19 pandemic; we thus have to keep on commemorating the history of the Genocide against the Tutsi and how it was stopped. The strengths that led to putting an end to the genocide are the same ones that lead us to finding efforts among ourselves to deal with any outbreak, we are sure we will win.

It is in the perspective to help Rwandans and the International Community to be ready for this history that the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) continues to highlight some activities that marked the plot to prepare the Genocide against the Tutsi. The following are events that marked the period from March 29 to April 4, 1991-1994.

1. GENERAL DEOGRATIAS NSABIMANA CHAIRED A HIGH LEVEL MEETING TO KICK OFF THE GENOCIDE

On March 29, 1993, General Deogratias Nsabimana, then chief of staff of the Rwandan armed forces chaired a meeting to streamline operations of “civil self defense”, which aimed to incite the population to kill the Tutsi and to lay totem that they could defeat the RPF. In this meeting that brought together the leaders of the town of Kigali, top military leaders, members of the parties in Hutu-Power faction, Impuzamugambi, and Interahamwe, additional weapons that would soon be distributed to the killers were provided.

This clandestine meeting was report in the report by French deputies led by Paul Quilesin1998 where they reported that the meeting was held in great secret, and that French had its minutes. This report by French deputies reminds that the distribution of weapons to Interahamwe militias was reported from January 22, 1992 in the telegram sent by Colonel Bernard Cussac who was a senior employee of the French embassy in Kigali where he was head of military cooperation between Rwanda and France.

In his Telegram, Colonel Cussac reported that the distribution of weapons was led by Rwanda’s the minister for interior and communal development, and carried out in prefectures of the north of the country namely, Gisenyi, Ruhengeri and Byumba; and distributed to men and young men selected by authorities while those who were given weapons were trained on their use by Rwandan armed forces.

Basing on this, Colonel Cussac confirmed that there was remarkable collaboration between government authorities, military leaders and Interahamwe; he deduced

that Interahamwe would undoubtedly use the weapons to kill the people. This time around was in 1992, which clearly shows that the genocidal plan to exterminate the Tutsi is not for April 1994, it rather started years before that year.

The distribution of weapons to Interahamwe militias was recalled by General Dallaire on January 11, 1994 in a Telegram he sent to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros-Boutros Ghali, requesting that UNAMIR be given the right to confiscate these weapons, but he was not given such right.

2. PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA ACCEPTED REPRESENTATION OF CDR IN PARLIAMENT IN BREACH OF ARUSHA PEACE ACCORDS

On March 29, 1994, president HABYARIMANA who continued to brush aside the establishment of transitional institutions as provided for by the Arusha Peace Accord, despite the fact that the sponsors of Rwanda continuously put pressure on him, accepted representation of the CDR in the transitional parliament in contrary to the provisions of the Arusha Peace Accord; CDR opposed the Accord.

This shows that HABYARIMANA too was in the CDR's plan to reject the Accord and to exterminate the Tutsi. CDR was a party that never ceased to denounce this Accord that aimed to seek solutions in peaceful ways. CDR argued that peace would only be brought by countering the Inkotanyi to force them back to Uganda in conjunction with extermination of the Tutsi.

3. THE PREFECT OF THE CITY OF KIGALI, COLONEL RENZAHO THARCISSE, PREPARED THE GENOCIDE IN KIGALI

On 30th March 1994, Colonel Tharcisse Renzaho the prefect of the City of Kigali, sent a list of people, including reservists, to be included in a so called civil self defense force to Army Chief of Staff, Colonel Déogratias Nsabimana. "Self Defence force" was a euphemism for murder squads. Renzaho's letter followed a broadcast by Ferdinand Nahimana on 28th March 1994, in which he had called for the self defence of the population, in preparation for the "final solution" to the "Tutsi league" which wanted to create "a Hima Empire" in countries that make up the Great Lakes Region. This unfounded ideology is still propagated by extremist adversaries of the top leadership of Rwanda. Nahimana called on all local authorities to exhort the population to this cause, a barely veiled call for the Hutu to unite and exterminate the Tutsi.

4. CLADHO, A HUMAN RIGHTS UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION IN RWANDA DENOUNCED THE KILLINGS COMMITTED BY HABYARIMANA'S ARMY

Also on 30th March 1994, CLADHO published a press release denouncing the attacks by soldiers, including those of the Presidential Guard, and the Interahamwe. CLADHO again demanded that disciplinary measures be taken against the soldiers and demanded the disarmament of the militias. HABYARIMANA's regime neglected the CLADHO's call and carried on distribution of arms to the populations, giving them military training and inciting them to commit genocide in case the authorities would issue orders to do that. This is one add on to the many proofs that clearly show that HABYARIMANA's government prepared the genocide and executed through its institutions.

On March 31, 1994, as UNAMIR's mandate was nearing completion, officials of Rwandan human rights organizations and other non-governmental organizations appealed to the Security Council so 'it "maintains" and "strengthens" UNAMIR, whose withdrawal would be interpreted as abandoning the civilian population to the worst calamities.

5. FRANCE CONTINUED TO SUPPORT HABYARIMANA'S GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS PREPARING GENOCIDE

April 2, 1993 After François Léotard, France's defense minister announced that the RPF "is progressing towards Kigali with troops disguised in civilian clothes. ", Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, supported by President François Mitterrand, decides to strengthen the French military system in Rwanda as well as military cooperation. On April 3, 1993 -Juvénal Habyarimana receives in his residence Ambassador Georges Martres, Defense Attaché Colonel Bernard Cussac, Advisor to the FAR Chief of Staff Colonel Jean Jacques Maurin and Michel Robardey to thank them for France's help in countering the RPF's attack of February 8, 1993 when the RPF troops carried out a defeatful offensive to Habyarimana's army until Shyorongi in the gateways of Kigali. This continued support of France to the government of Rwanda led the regime to feel that it could carry on preparations for the genocide without obstacles as it was backed by a powerful country like France.

6. EXTREMISTS OF THE HUTU-POWER FACTION USED RTLM TO INCITE THE HUTU ON KILLING LYING THAT THEY HAD DISCOVERED THE PLAN OF THE TUTSI TO KILL THE HUTU

On April 3, 1994: RTLM predicted that the RPF would do “a little thing” with its bullets and grenades from April 3 to 5 and then from April 7 to 8, 1994. It was probably a “mirror accusation” according to the procedure advocated by the disciple of expert Muchiell, by which the radical Hutu claimed that the Tutsi were preparing to do what they themselves intended to do. This lie spread by RTLM increased fear among the populations and led them to wrongfully accept that the Tutsi had the plan to kill the Hutu, this led to massive participation of the population in extermination of the Tutsi. At the time, there had already been a tense environment following the lies spread by CDR and MRND parties. People who felt in danger sent their children away from Kigali, while others took refuge in safe places. When the genocide begun, no place was spared, the whole country was ravaged.

On the same day, the German ambassador, speaking on behalf of the European Union, corresponds to part of his concerns regarding the increase in insecurity, the proliferation of weapons and the “unacceptable role of certain media”. He suggests that the support of the European Union would depend on the application of the Accords. It was a way to put pressure onto the Government so it could stop preparing massacres, but it did not pay off.

7. COLONEL BAGOSORA SAID THAT THE ONLY PLAUSIBLE SOLUTION TO RWANDA WAS GENOCIDE

On April 4, 1994, at a reception organized to celebrate the national holiday of Senegal, Colonel Bagosora who director of cabinet in the ministry of defense who firmly opposed the Arusha Peace Accord, announced to people that “the only plausible solution for Rwanda would be the extermination of the Tutsi”.

Among those present who confirmed Bagosora’s words in testimonies they gave to the ICTR or in different publications, were Dallaire, the commander of UNAMIR, Jacques Roger Booh-Booh who was the special envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Colonel Luc Marchal, a Belgian who was commander of the Belgian contingent within the UNAMIR, he was also deputy to Dallaire.

CONCLUSION

The above mentioned activities show that Habyarimana’s regime willingly refused to put in application the Arusha Peace Accords because it was opposed to it. It was rather busy streamlining implementation its genocidal plan

They also show that some powerful countries had enough information on this evil plan to exterminate the Tutsi, but uphold support to the regime that was planning to exterminate part of its population instead of cracking it down. (End)