

**By Aimable Twahirwa;**

A palace used as a propaganda headquarters of the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in the Southern province of Rwanda is set to be transformed into a five-star hotel.

The former palace of the then ruling National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND, french acronym) in Huye District, southern Rwanda is to be given a new lease of life as a hotel, a senior local administrative official in the region confirmed.

The Vice-Mayor in charge of Economic Affairs in Huye district, Andre Kamana explained that a foreign investor whose name has been kept a secret has agreed to turn the facility which was until recently being used to host meetings into a five-star hotel.

During the 100 days that witnessed Africa's worst genocide of the 20th century, the building was used as a staging post to direct the mass killing of Tutsis.

The palace built in 1980 also served as a base in the south of Rwanda for the youth militia known as the "Interahamwe" (Those who fight together).

According to Philip Gourevitch, a prominent author of a study of the Rwandan genocide, the Interahamwe militia "had its genesis in soccer fan clubs sponsored by leaders of the ruling National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND) party of President Juvenal Habyarimana.

It was also central to the Akazu (the core of the concentric webs of political, economic, and military muscle and patronage that came to be known as Hutu Power).

The central role of the Interahamwe militia in the planning of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi was made clear in a fax sent by the then head of the United Nations Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), Brigadier-General Romeo Dallaire of Canada, to his superiors in New York in January 1994.

This was three months prior to the start of the genocide.

Human rights organizations, international institutions and academic experts on the genocide against the Tutsi have assigned a central role to the Interahamwe militia

in the genocide.