



Historical Committee: Rwandan Genocide

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I. Background

In the early 1990's, Rwanda had a profuse agricultural economy and one of the highest population densities in Africa. The country's population was divided into two ethnic groups: the Hutus, comprising around 85% of the population, and the less numerous but dominant, Tutsi. After World War II, Rwanda came under the mandate of Belgium. During this colonial period, Belgians favored the decimated Tutsis over the Hutus; thus promoting a future of tension that was defined by violence even before the colony had become a country. Three hundred thousand Tutsis fled the country in 1959 after a Hutu revolution forced the minority to leave, decreasing its population even more. Two years later, the victorious Hutu forced the then Tutsi monarch into exile and declared the country a free republic. The decades after the country's independence have been charged with extreme ethnic violence.

In 1973, a military group inaugurated Major General Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu moderate, as the country's leader. Before becoming the nation's leader for two decades, he created a new political party: The National Revolutionary Movement for Development (NRMD). Five years later, he was elected president under the new constitution. Habyarimana was then elected twice in the 1980's unopposed. However, in 1990 the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), mostly containing Tutsi refugees, invaded Rwanda from Uganda. A ceasefire between both states in 1992 saw the government negotiate with the RPF. In 1993, Habyarimana signed an agreement in Tanzania that called for the creation of a transitional government that would include the RPF. This agreement enraged Hutu extremists, who would later take petrifying action to prevent it.

II. The Genocide

In 1994, a plane carrying then president Habyarimana and fellow Hutu Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi was shot down, killing everyone onboard. Hutu extremists blamed the



RPF and immediately began a highly organized slaughter. The RPF said that the plane was shot down by Hutu extremists to provide an excuse for the genocide. Lists of the Hutu government's opponents were handed out to militiamen in order to murder them and their families. ID cards issued at the time exposed ethnicity, so militiamen set up roadblocks to slaughter Tutsis with machetes. Thousands of women were kidnapped and kept as sex slaves. The party at the time, the MRND, had a wing called the Interahamwe, which turned into a militia for the purpose of the slaughter. Hutu extremists decided to aid the government by setting up a radio called RTL, spreading propaganda urging people to murder the Tutsis. Targets were also announced on the radio. The Rwandan Armed Forces and militia went from door to door executing Tutsis and moderate Hutu politicians. After 100 days of slaughter, around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus had been killed.

The international community did not take sufficient action to have a significant effect on the genocide. A 1999 Security Council inquiry into its actions stated "there was a persistent lack of political will by Member States to act, or to act with enough assertiveness." The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) found itself suffering from a severe lack of resources and political oversight.

II. Chronology

1959: Hutus overthrow Tutsi monarchy, causing major Tutsi emigration.

1 July 1962: The Hutus gain independence from Belgium. Rwanda and Burundi, where the Tutsis retain power, become two separate countries.

18 September 1962: The Republic of Rwanda is admitted as a UN Member State.

1 December 1963: 20,000 Tutsis in Rwanda are killed in response to a military attack by exiled Tutsis from Burundi, prompting more emigration.

5 July 1973: Major General Juvenal Habyarimana (Hutu) becomes President in a bloodless coup, setting up a one-party state.

1 October 1990: The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), formed by Tutsi exiles, invades Rwanda.



4 August 1993: Fighting stops after the Arusha Accords, a peace agreement between the government of Rwanda and the RPF, is signed.

October 1993: United Nations Security Council establishes the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) under the command of General Romeo Dallaire to oversee the implementation of the Arusha Accords. [See official resolution.](#)

6 April 1994: A plane carrying President Juvenal Habyarimana is shot down.

7 April: Radio Television Libres Des Mille Collines (RTLM) airs broadcast blaming the RPF for the plane crash. Killings begin, including the murder of Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and her accompanying peacekeepers by the Rwandan Armed Forces and “Interahamwe” militia.

21 April: UNAMIR forces are reduced from 2,165 to 270 after Member States ask to withdraw troops. [See official resolution.](#)

22 June: UNSC authorizes Operation Turquoise, a French-led humanitarian mission to save civilians in South West Rwanda. The mission has the unforeseen consequence of allowing soldiers and officials involved in the genocide to flee the territory. [See official resolution.](#)

4 July: Killings end after the RPF takes full military control of the entire territory of Rwanda.

8 November 1994 (Aftermath): UNSC sets up the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). [See official resolution.](#)

31 December 2015: ICTR is officially dissolved.

IV. Guide Questions

1. Does your delegation support UN intervention? If so, to what extent?
2. What does your delegation propose to decrease racial and ethnic tensions in Rwanda?
3. How does your delegation propose to address the Tutsi diaspora?
4. In what way does your delegation plan to resolve the conflict in the most effective way?
5. What would the most ideal outcome be for your delegation?
6. What resources and initiatives does your delegation have to achieve these goals?



7. How would your delegation help to prevent the escalation of violence among regular Rwandan citizens?
8. Does your delegation believe there is a need to further investigate the claims of crimes against humanity and genocide and, if found to have violated international law, how should the responsible party be punished?

V. Helpful Resources

Rwanda genocide: 100 days of slaughter (BBC, 2018)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-26875506>

Rwanda - Security Council Report (UN, 1999)

https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/1999/1257

Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations (UN)

<https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/historical-background.shtml>

UNAMIR Documents

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/unamir.htm>

UNSC Resolution 872 (1993) - Establishing Peacekeeping Mission

https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/872%281993%29

UNSC Resolution 912 (1994) - Reducing Peacekeeping Force

https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/912%281994%29

UNSC Resolution 929 (1994) - Authorizing Operation Turquoise

https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/929%281994%29



UNSC Resolution 955 (1994) - Establishing ICTR

https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/955%281994%29

Rwandan genocide: UN ashamed says [UN Chief] Ban Ki-moon (BBC)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-26917419>

Lessons from the UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda (2019)

<https://theconversation.com/lessons-from-the-un-peacekeeping-mission-in-rwanda-25-years-after-the-genocide-it-failed-to-stop-122174>

How the Genocide Happened (BBC)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13431486>

Understanding the Genocide Better (Vox)

<https://www.vox.com/2014/4/10/5590646/rwandan-genocide-anniversary>

VI. Message from the Dais

The committee will start right after news of the plane crash has reached the UN Security Council at the late hours of April 6, 1994 and will progress linearly from there. We hope this document will be useful as you conduct your research and redact your position. We also recommend reading the associated UN resolutions; they're not very long and provide valuable insight into the real-life actions this committee would like to improve upon. Position papers must be formatted in 1.5 spacing, size 12 Times New Roman with 1-inch margins as a PDF document. They should be a minimum of 2 pages but should not exceed 3 pages. The document must also distinguish between novice and veteran delegations. Some sort of citation is required, be it footnotes or a works cited page. Finally, they must be received by both chairs no later than Wednesday, September 18 at 11:59 PM.

Since this is a crisis committee, delegations are encouraged to use portfolio powers. These will account for 20% of their grade, while the other 80% will come from the debate. They



do not have to be in a specific format but should be signed by more than one delegation. Each signatory will receive a score based on the quality of the portfolio power. All portfolio powers must be sent via an email address which will be provided at the start of the committee. The members of the dais will be working in conjunction with a crisis director. If you have any questions, feel free to message either of us.

Best regards,

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