

Opinions

France fabricated reasons to stage Operation Turquoise

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French soldiers oversee the training of Interahamwe militia ahead of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. French forces on the ground were reported to have trained militia members and, in some instances, operated alongside genocidal forces in opposition to the Rwanda Patriotic Army. Internet

In the last article, we realised how the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi constitutes a bitter failure on the part of the international community. The global solidarity against the forces of evil that was highly praised since the end of the Second World War and after the genocide against the Jews had become very weak. France stands out

in that failure, not only in passivity but also in outright participation in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. French forces on the ground trained would-be killers and fought alongside the genocidal forces against the Rwanda Patriotic Army.

More and more oral testimonies and written materials continue to implicate France in the genocide committed against the Tutsi in 1994. Between 1990 and 1994, France helped Rwanda to increase its army from 5,000 to 50,000 men through massive recruitment. And as part of this recruitment programme, France established training centres in north-western Rwanda.

In June 1994, France found another way of prolonging its military support to the Rwandan Interim Government. At the time, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) was making a lot of progress, and its military victory was no longer in doubt.

Following its request to the UN Security Council, France secured a vote on Resolution 929. The resolution was adopted on June 22, 1994, and it authorised French military intervention in Rwanda with the possibility of

using force. In reality, French troops were already in action on Rwandan territory before the vote on the said resolution.

The “Opération Turquoise” was marked by numerous ambiguities, notably the contrast between known humanitarian ambitions and the nature of the engagement. The 2,500 soldiers who participated in the operation were battle-hardened. They were capable of changing, in a matter of hours, from strict neutrality to violent engagement. An impressive arsenal was deployed in preparation for war. It included warplanes, attack and transport helicopters, heavy mortar batteries, hundreds of vehicles, and so on. In the early days, it was envisaged to move up to Kigali. These orders were cancelled at the last minute. If the “colonial expedition” did not take place, it was for one reason: it was too late. On July 4, 1994, Kigali, the capital fell into the hands of the Rwanda Patriotic Front. The French troops were overwhelmed and overtaken. They remained with only one option: freeze the confrontation and take sanctuary in the zone still held by their allies, the killers. It was the only means of creating a secure humanitarian zone.

At the time when they were trying to solicit support for “Opération Turquoise”, the French diplomats displayed a map which proposed a zone to be under the control of France. As mentioned in various witness accounts, the creation of the security zone was to serve as a base to recapture areas that had been taken by the RPF and therefore prevent it from controlling the entire country. The project to come to the rescue of the In-

terim Government and the FAR preoccupied the French authorities. This project failed because of the RPA/F’s determination. The RPA/F was advancing so rapidly that the leaders of Opération Turquoise were forced to reconsider their plan. From then on, the security zones served to facilitate hundreds of thousands of civilians fleeing to Zaire, now DR Congo. The genocidal regime’s army (FAR) and other genocide perpetrators also fled.

Certainly, some hundreds of Tutsi were rescued. This helped the French government to justify the humanitarian argument. According to official discourse, France came to the rescue of people who were under threat. France was the only country that reacted and did not have any other objective except to protect people who were threatened and insecure. But behind that objective, there was a hidden one. The hidden objective was that France, under the guise of humanitarianism, wanted to assist the FAR to rectify the situation, re-establish the Interim Government’s authority over the whole of Rwanda, and then fight the RPA/F.

That objective was definitely in line with what can be termed “the general theory of France’s security”. François Mitterrand thought that leaving a single regime to be overthrown by a faction, especially a minority faction that was supported by a neighbouring country, would be enough to create a chain of reactions which would compromise the security of countries linked to France. That would discredit France’s guarantee.

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