

# Genocide tribunal sees videotape

Alison Campbell

Associated Press, May 26, 1998

ARUSHA, Tanzania (AP) — The images of young Rwandans clubbing to death two women — one on her knees begging for mercy — flickered across video screens Tuesday at the U.N. tribunal for the Rwandan genocide.

The three international judges in the Tanzanian courtroom watched the rare footage of Rwanda's 1994 slaughter solemnly, clearly disturbed. Prosecutors showed it to try to prove the killing was carefully organized by government-backed Hutu extremists.

The film showed blood running into the gutters from the bodies of another 10 Rwandans, some still twitching, on a road in the capital, Kigali. A man, apparently the killers' boss, nodded his approval at the carnage as he drove past.

The film caught the first days of the genocide, in Kigali. By the time the killing campaign ended about 90 days later, more than 500,000 people had been killed, most of them minority Tutsis.

Nick Hughes, a freelance British cameraman who shot the footage in the first days of the genocide, testified to the systematic nature of the killing: Men armed with clubs and machetes bludgeoned their victims in the

open, without fear of interference by passers-by.

There is little other footage of the genocide, since journalists were constantly threatened by militiamen who did not want their work recorded.

Hughes is a prosecution witness against Georges Rutaganda, a former vice president of the Hutu Interahamwe militia, a government-linked group responsible for much of the killing.

The trial of Rutaganda, 40, resumed Monday after repeated postponements because of his ill health. He is charged with genocide and crimes against humanity.

Hughes said he had arrived in Rwanda days after the massacres began April 6, 1994, "expecting some killing — that would not have been unusual."

"But after a time, one really began to get the feeling that something different was going on. What brought it home was the way in which people were being killed. We realized this was not just sporadic — this was something systematic," Hughes said.

Prosecutors are trying to show that the killings were orchestrated by the government

and that Rutaganda helped plan them.

“Tutsis would go to churches where they might remain unharmed for some time, until the militia arrived and organized the local people, sometimes against their will, to attack them,” Hughes said.

Twenty-four defendants, out of 35 indicted, are being held by the U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; four are now on trial. The tribunal was founded in November 1994 but has yet to complete a trial.