

# Rwanda Policy of Genocide Alleged – Travellers Speak of Reprisals against Tutsi Tribe

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From our correspondent-Nairobi  
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Allegations that the Rwanda Government is engaged on a deliberate policy of genocide against the country's former rulers were made by British travellers arriving here from the republic at the weekend. They claimed that President Kayibanda had sent his Ministers to the provinces to conduct a wave of assassinations against the Tutsi tribe in retaliation for a daring raid in December.

The tall, aristocratic Tutsis, although only a small proportion of the population, were Rwanda's traditional rulers until 1959. Then President Kayibanda's subject Hutu tribe broke their power in a revolt which some observers believed the Belgians inspired out of fear that the unpredictable Tutsis might provide a base for communist infiltration into central Africa.

About 140,000 Tutsis fled the country in 1959 and 1960, taking refuge in neighbouring countries, but when Rwanda became an independent republic in July, 1962, there were still 250,000 left in Rwanda, according to Belgian estimates. Their king, Kigeri, was exiled and their situation has been precarious ever since, but the latest and most terrible wave of violence was

provoked when Tutsi refugees in Burundi sent a raiding party into Rwanda on December 21 last year. The raid met with unexpected success and struck within 12 miles of the capital, Kigali, before being halted.

## Refugees killed

The raiders' route from the Burundi border, 35 miles away at its nearest point, took them through a Tutsi refugee centre at Nyamata. Having defeated the invasion, the Rwanda Government immediately started reprisals against refugee camps which it regarded, not unnaturally, as centres of subversion. In addition 20 Opposition leaders, both Tutsi royalists and moderate Hutus, were executed.

Ministers in President Kayibanda's Government were sent back to their home districts and many observers are now convinced it is they who are directing the widespread killings of Tutsis, which have since gone on at an ever increasing pace.

Rwanda's Army numbers only a few hundreds under Belgian and Hutu officers. Massacres are being carried out by groups of Hutu organized on a local basis and armed mostly with pangas. "It is as if Mau Mau was the

official policy of the Kenya Government and no Europeans were allowed to leave the country”, one observer said here at the weekend. Since the Government’s first reprisals on the refugee camps, the massacres have spread throughout the country and, as far as observers can tell, seem to be completely indiscriminate. Parties of pangarmed Hutu arrive at a Tutsi hut and call for the head of the house. He gives himself up, hoping he will be taken to the local police station, but is seldom seen again, unless his savagely mutilated body is found. From the number of corpses of women and children found in rivers it would appear that families are dealt with once the men of the family are out of the way.

United Nations officials have been asked to help but are reported to have taken the attitude that the matter is an internal affair of the Rwanda Government and no concern of theirs. Travelers and foreign residents in the country who have so far stood by now feel that some form of United Nations action is essential if the Tutsis are to be saved. They number one in 10 of Rwanda’s 2,500,000 people and with killings going on at the rate of 1,000 a day for the past month it is feared that President Kayibanda’s target is the whole 250,000. So far there has

been no attempt at resistance by the Tutsis and it is now felt that the only chance of saving them from annihilation is for them to be permitted to leave the country under United Nations supervision or to be moved to a limited area which they could regard as their own.

### **Avoiding friction**

Meanwhile, there is mounting criticism of President Kayibanda from neighbouring Burundi. Like Rwanda, Burundi has a population made up of both Hutus and Tutsis. Until now they have avoided serious friction and while King Mwambutsa is a Tutsi, his Prime Minister, Mr. Peter Ngendandumwe is a Hutu. But the danger of the conflict spreading across the border is causing increasing anxiety. Mr. Ngendandumwe is at present visiting East Africa to discuss the possibility of attaching his country to the East African Federation. In spite of the obvious appeal such a project has for East African leaders, he is likely to be questioned closely on the situation in neighbouring Rwanda. President Nyerere, Mr. Kenyatta and Mr. Obote are bound to be wary of becoming involved in what they would regard as “a Congo situation”.