

REPUBLIKA Y'U RWANDA



National Commission for the Fight against Genocide
Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Génocide
Komisiyo y'Igihugu yo Kurwanya Jenocide
-CNLG-



**MAY 1994: URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLOT TO EXTERMINATE
TUTSI THROUGH THE SO CALLED "AUTO-DEFENSE CIVILE" PROGRAM
LAUNCHED IN 1991 BY PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA**

The genocide against the Tutsi is not an accident. It is a plot organized by Habyarimana government through political, intelligence and military agencies from President Habyarimana himself and the military leadership. The *Auto defense civile* program was one of the most effective which contributed to the killing of more than a million Tutsi within three months.

1) « AUTO-DEFENSE CIVILE » was launched by President HABYARIMANA

The coinciding so-called auto-defense civile operation and genocide was widely used to kill Tutsi across the country, but its experiment had started in the former Byumba and Ruhengeri prefectures. The "*auto-defense civile*" was an operation aimed at selecting reliable and capable Hutu youth for military training and returning back in their communes after completing the course and being provided with weapons to train other youth to use them in so-called anti enemy killings.

The "*auto defense civile*" was launched in 1991 following the advice given by Lt Col Gilbert Canovas who was an adviser to the Commander-in-Chief of the government Forces. In his report of **30/04/1991** he suggested that there was a need to arm and train ordinary citizens from Umutara area especially in the former Muvumba and Rutare communes.

The meeting was followed by another one of **July 9, 1991** chaired by the Minister of Internal Security, Gen. Augustin NDINDIRIYIMANA which took place at army headquarter. It brought together intelligence officials from the military and Presidency. The minutes of that meeting indicated that it was meant to assess the speedy implementation of the President's proposal on national security where he said that "*Citizens should be provided with enough adequate equipment to fight for national sovereignty so that no one will dare to attack the country again in the future.*" This implies that President Habyarimana himself ordered the selection of citizens to be given firearms. The military and political agencies only worked on accelerated implementation of the proposal.



2) The "AUTO-DEFENSE CIVILE" endorsed that a Tutsi was an enemy of Rwanda and must be sought and killed.

The meeting of higher officials of the army had decided that in order to implement the request of President Habyarimana, it was necessary to first carefully analyse the identity of the enemy, identify them and then determine the proper way to deal with them. The task was given to the Commander in Chief and the army to conduct a study aimed at identifying the enemy of Rwanda and how to fight them.

The study was conducted and secretly published on **September 21, 1992** signed by Colonel Deogratias Nsabimana, the former Commander in Chief of the Rwandan Armed Forces. He shared it to President Habyarimana, to military and gendarmery leaders across the country so that it can be taught to the soldiers and gendarms. The document is one of the highlights of the Genocide against the Tutsi preparation by the government which disseminated genocide ideology material.

The main points in the document were as follows: *"The enemy is no longer in Uganda, but inside the country."* This meant that a divisionism system has been launched to separate people and incite them to quarrel among themselves so that *the bad* and *good people* appear and hence the good people would kill the bad under the pretext of getting rid of the enemy. Furthermore, the document said that *"the number of enemies inside the country has increased"* which meant that people in the *good part* must wake up and realize that there are many in the *bad people's part* and that requires more efforts from each person of *the good* to get rid of *bad citizens*.

The document then continued to clearly define who the enemy was and where to look for him:

"The enemy consists of two parts: a) the main enemy = a Tutsi inside the country or abroad who has never accepted the 1959 revolution. Where to look for = Tutsi refugees, Ugandan troops, Tutsi inside the country, foreign men who married Tutsi women, Hutu who are not satisfied with the current regime, (...) foreigners of the same origin as Tutsi, criminals who fled the country.

b) The enemy's ally or accomplice = Anyone who gives him any help."

This document is very important in the history of the Genocide against the Tutsi because it determined how a Tutsi would be called an enemy of the country and determined that anyone who would support a Tutsi in any way would be treated as enemy and killed.



3) « *AUTO-DEFENSE CIVILE* » was started by training killers and giving them the means and weapons to commit Genocide

Another document indicating the nature of the *Auto defense civile* was dated **29/09/1991** also written by Col. Deogratias Nsabimana who was the Chief of Defense Staff in Mutara. It was addressed to the Minister of Defense and outlined the recommendations of the meeting that was held to establish the procedure for the implementation of *Auto defense civile*. Nsabimana said the meeting had decided that during the selection of those who would be trained and given weapons the following should be ensured: at least one of the 10 houses (Nyumbakumi) selected by the Bourgmestre in collaboration with the commune council should be taken.

Colonel Nsabimana also indicated the number of weapons to be provided as follows:

Muvumba Commune = 350

Muhura Commune = 580

Ngarama Commune = 530

Bwisige Commune = 300

A total of 1760 were issued in 1991!

In late January 1993 and early February 1993, Colonel BAGOSORA led an operation of firearms distribution to the Interahamwe of the Northern region of the country. In his 1993 Agenda, which was presented as evidence against him in his case at the ICTR, some pages containing the information on the distribution of 500 weapons in Mutara, Giciye, Rubavu and Rwerere communes of Gisenyi Prefecture were exposed.

January 1994 was marked by the joy of some Rwandans who had rejoiced that 600 INKOTANYI soldiers and their politicians had arrived in Kigali on December 28, 1993, where they were ready to join the Transitional structures as planned by Arusha peace agreement. As for the Rwandan government and its forces, they were unhappy, and started genocide mobilization activities, including intensification of Interahamwe training and arming them through the so-called *auto defense civile*. All of this was aimed at mobilizing Hutu population to understand that all Tutsi are enemies of the country and should be killed.

One of the key achievements was the appointment of leaders of the program throughout the country, especially responsible for the administration of arms distribution and the training of killers. At the national level, the *Auto-Defense Civile* operation was assigned to Colonel Athanase GASAKE assisted with other leaders in the Prefectures.

In the City of Kigali, the commanding officer of the *Auto-Defense Civile* was Commander BIVAMVAGARA in collaboration with the Prefect of the City Colonel Tharcisse RENZAHO; in Kibungo the commanding officer was Colonel Pierre Céléstin RWAGAFIRITA; in Kigali Ngari, the operation was led by Major Stanislas KINYONI;



In Cyangugu Auto defense civile was under the command of Colonel SINGIRANKABO; in Gitarama it was led by Major Jean-Damascène UKURIKIYEYEU; in Butare and Gikongoro it was under the command of Colonel Aloys SIMBA who had deputies including Colonel Alphonse NTEZIRYAYO who was appointed the prefect of Butare during the Genocide. In Gisenyi and Ruhengeri Auto defense civile was commanded by the commanders of the military in those prefectures namely Colonel Anatole NSENGIYUMVA in Gisenyi and Augustin BIZIMUNGU in Ruhengeri who was later replaced by Colonel Marcel BIVUGABAGABO. These high ranking military were at the forefront of collaborating with the authorities of the Prefecture and the Commune to establish a mechanism for committing and accelerating the Genocide.

4) Method used to select the Interahamwe youth for training

A confidential report dated 07/02/1992 written by a former representative of the Byumba Investigation Service called RWIRAHIRA Vincent from Kibilira Commune in Gisenyi, outlined the progress of the implementation of the "*auto defense civile*". RWIRAHIRA stated that the Ministry of Defense had agreed to supply **300 weapons** to be delivered to selected population in Byumba and Ruhengeri prefectures; 180 were to be given to the people of Byumba and another 220 to be given to the people of Ruhengeri.

According to the Rwirahira report, a meeting was held at Ngarama sous prefecture headquarter to assess the progress of the "*auto defense civile*" and to approve the selection of two hundred and fifty (250) young men. The selection process would be done in secret by the bourgmestres in collaboration with the Security Council of the commune and send the selected ones to Gabiro military base, where they would be trained in the use of firearms from 29/01 to 05/02/1992. RWIRAHIRA continued to say that the meeting decided that the number of people to be trained should be increased gradually and that the bourgmestres would monitor the activity on a daily basis.

At the GABIRO camp, the Interahamwe training was led by Captain Engineer Faustin NTIRIKINA and Major RWABUKWISI Vincent. The two soldiers were very instrumental in the Genocide; NTIRIKINA is currently living in France and is one of the witnesses of Judge BRUGUIERE in his false accusations against Rwanda.

During the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, soldiers led by Major NTILIKINA of the Huye Battalion camped at Mont Kigali and were among the perpetrators of the Tutsi massacre in Nyamirambo, Biryogo, Nyakabanda and elsewhere.

Some of the Interahamwe trained in Gabiro were from Muvumba commune including: MWUMVANEZA Emmanuel, NKURUNZIZA Elias who was a councilor of Karama sector, MUNYANDINDA Sylvestre who was the agricultural monitor, KABURAME Jean Damascene, and others. These interahamwe were trained in 1992.



One of the soldiers who trained them, NDINDABAHIZI Emmanuel who spoke to the Rwandan Commission investigating France's role in the Genocide (Mucyo Commission), said Interahamwe were being trained to shoot, but especially they were taught how to kill people in a short time using traditional tools. One of Gabiro's leading Interahamwe, Joseph SETIBA, who led interahamwe in Shyorongi commune, told Mucyo Commission that the number of Interahamwe trained in Gabiro in 1992 was between 600 and 700.

5) Distribution of Machetes took place during the genocidal plan called “*auto defense civile*”

As part of the plan to carry out the genocide during the *auto defense civile*, Hutu youth were selected for military training and were given guns, ammunition and grenades but the government also set up a mechanism to buy machetes and distribute them to the public in a short period of time. Those machetes were used by the killers in the Genocide against the Tutsi.

In February 1994, an employee of the British company CHILLINGTON confirmed that their company had already sold many machetes to Rwanda in a few months, more than those which had been imported throughout the entire 1993. Documents for import licenses reviewed by Human Rights Watch between January 1993 and March 1994 show that 581 tons of machetes were imported into Rwanda. The imported machetes costed 95 million Rwf donated by the sponsor KABUGA Félicien.

According to the British Newspaper, *The Sunday Times* of November 24, 1996, between August and December 1993, CHILLINGTON sold other machetes to two employees of the Rwandan company called RWANDEX, Eugène Mbarushimana and François BURASA. MBARUSHIMANA who was an employee of RWANDEX was the son-in-law of KABUGA and the Secretary General of the Interahamwe at the national level. BURASA, a retired soldier and a member of the Hutu extremist party CDR, and a brother of Jean Bosco BARAYAGWIZA, one of the party's top leaders. The acquisitions and distribution of machetes among civilians who had been given military training was part of the "*auto defense civile*" program identified in the BAGOSORA agenda.

CONCLUSION

Apparently, the so-called "*auto-defense civile*" has become a major tool used by the Habyarimana government in planning and carrying out the extermination of the Tutsi. The operation helped to determine the youth who would be involved in the massacre of Tutsi and was launched by President Habyarimana. It is a sign that the Habyarimana government was in the plot of genocide.

Done at Kigali on May 28, 2020

Dr BIZIMANA Jean Damascène
Executive Secretary
National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG)

