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# Rwanda

## what would have prevented this?

### Failure to react...



Hutu militiaman with a Government soldier in Gikoma, Rwanda, 12 June 1994. Many militiamen, journalists and police officers saw the killing of the Tutsi as a by-product of civil war. In reality, at the point the genocide began, a ceasefire between the Government and RPF was still in place. The eruption of the genocide triggered renewed hostilities. In the absence of international intervention, defeat of the Government by the RPF brought a tacit end.



Rwandan soldier in a military vehicle, 9 May 1994. The display of this photo has been made possible by Agence France Presse.

Although the Rwandan genocide took many people by surprise, there had been enough warning signs that genocide was imminent. A history of discrimination, violence and massacres preceded and foretold the events of 1994.

### A History of Discrimination

Rwanda's three ethnic groups, the majority Hutu, minority Tutsi and smaller Twa population shared a common language, religion and culture. The country was ruled by a predominantly Tutsi monarchy until colonized by Germany in 1895. Belgium took control in 1916. Impressed by the highly developed monarchy and unwilling to accept it as African in origin, colonists and early explorers called the Tutsis a superior "black Aryan" race. Tutsis were given privileged positions in the colonial administration. Hutus were considered second-class "Bantu Negroids" and the Twas "pygmies".



Belgian King Rudolphe welcomed by King Mutara RWandolige (1911-1915) who worked in the beginning in close cooperation with the coloniser. After his coronation of Rwanda to Charles in 1946, the Belgian authorities reshaped Rwandan society according to European and Church values. Source: Royal Museum of Central Africa

In 1932, Belgium introduced identity cards stating the ethnicity of the bearer. Tutsi control ended in 1957 when the Catholic Church and the colonial authorities helped Hutu elites take power. The overthrow was violent. Tutsis were massacred, and thousands forced into exile. In 1962, Grégoire Kayibanda became the first elected Hutu president. His regime retained the identity cards. Kayibanda was overthrown by army officer Juvenal Habyarimana in 1973. Under Habyarimana, Tutsis were systematically discriminated against and subjected to sporadic violence.

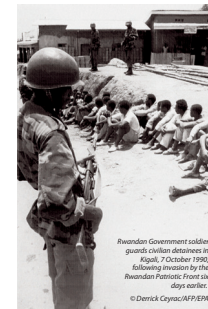
### Mass Murder

- Rwanda's genocide began on 7 April 1994
- Over 800,000 Tutsis were murdered in a hundred days
- Thousands of moderate Hutus were among the victims

Background picture: A wounded man lies in a Red Cross hospital, Rwanda, 19 June 1994. The display of this photo has been made possible by Agence France Presse.

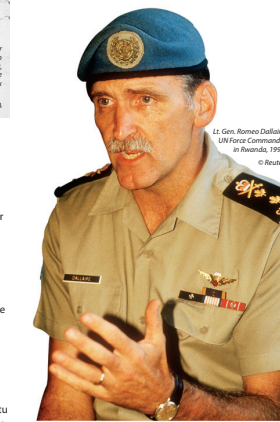
### War Breaks Out

In the 1980s, Tutsis in exile sought to return to Rwanda, but were prevented from doing so. Some joined the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a largely Tutsi rebel army that invaded Rwanda in 1990, seeking the right of exiles to return. Tutsis in Rwanda were arrested and harassed as accomplices of the invasion. Extremist radio and print media depicted all Tutsis as helping the invading force.



Rwandan Government soldier guard civilian detainees in Kigali, 7 October 1990. Following invasion by the Rwandan Patriotic Front on 1 October 1990. © Dennis Cyrus/IMF/B&H

A peace deal was signed in August 1993 in Arusha, Tanzania, between the RPF and the Rwandan government, designed to end the civil war. The UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) was sent in to oversee implementation of the accords. However, the accords had overlooked the growing threat of Hutu extremism in the army, the media and sections of government.



Lt. Gen. Romeo Dallaire, UN Force Commander in Rwanda, 1994. © Reuters

### Genocide

On 11 January 1994, UNAMIR Commander Lt. Gen. Romeo Dallaire alerted UN headquarters that extremist militia were preparing for mass killings and had assembled weapons for that purpose. Dallaire stated his intention to seize the weapons, but was denied permission since such action was considered outside the force's mandate.

A plane carrying President Habyarimana was shot down on 6 April, triggering the start of the genocide. Soldiers in the presidential guard targeted moderate Hutu leaders, including the Prime Minister, within hours. An extremist Hutu government was put in place by the military, and from then on the Tutsi population became the focus of the killing.

### Abandoned

As fighting resumed between the government and RPF, foreign embassies sent in troops to rescue their citizens, abandoning Rwandans to their fate. When the presidential guard killed ten Belgian UN peacekeepers, Belgium, the main troop contributor to the mission, recalled its soldiers. On 12 April 1994, the UN Security Council rejected the possibility of reinforcing the mission and the use of the term 'genocide' to describe the killings. Members voted to scale down the mission. Dallaire was left with only 354 troops. Nevertheless, his team managed to save thousands of civilians.



### Too Little, Too Late

On 17 May 1994, with the genocide finally undeniable, the UN Security Council voted to expand the UN peacekeeping mission to 5,500 peacekeepers with the mandate "to contribute to the security and protection of displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in Rwanda". However, no reinforcements arrived. A separate multinational force, led by France and authorized by the Council to use force to establish secure conditions for humanitarian relief, was deployed in late June. "Operation Turquoise" is credited with saving lives within the safe zone it established, but controversy over its full role continues. When the RPF forced the extremist government out of power and ended the genocide, soldiers, officials and militia were able to use the safe zone to flee into Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). Some of these soldiers and militia would later conduct incursions into Rwanda and participate in the ten-year war in the DRC which claimed over three million lives.



French soldiers in Gikoma, Rwanda, 27 June 1994. The display of this photo has been made possible by Agence France Presse.



Thoneste Bagesse in Arusha. Bagesse was Chief of Cabinet of the Ministry of Defence at the beginning of the genocide. The alleged mastermind of the genocide, he provided weapons and coordinated the internationalism. © AFP/Handout Joe

### Justice for the Victims

In 1995, the Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania, to prosecute persons responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda. Trials began in January 1997. The Tribunal has convicted twenty-eight people and acquitted five. Twenty-seven people are currently on trial and eight are awaiting the start of their cases. Eighteen accused are still at large. With over 100,000 genocide suspects in prison, Rwanda resorted to a modern version of village tribunals called 'Gacaca' as a way to handle the impossible caseload. Locally elected judges hear all cases except rape cases and those of local leaders who planned and led massacres. Gacaca courts may impose sentences of up to 30 years. Cases are referred to national courts if found to be outside the Gacaca mandate.



Thoneste Bagesse in Arusha, 1994. Bagesse was Chief of Cabinet of the Ministry of Defence at the beginning of the genocide. The alleged mastermind of the genocide, he provided weapons and coordinated the internationalism. © AFP/Handout Joe

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### Acknowledging Failure

After 1994, the UN initiated reviews of the lack of appropriate reaction by the international community to the situations in Rwanda and Srebrenica, which resulted in concrete recommendations. In April 2004, at a Special Session of the Commission on Human Rights commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, the Secretary-General acknowledged the "collective failure" of the UN to protect the people of Rwanda and announced a five-point action plan for the prevention of genocide. As part of the plan, in July 2004 the Secretary-General appointed a Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide to report through him to the Security Council on situations that, if not halted, could deteriorate into genocide.



Profound knowledge right and his family visited their lives to prevent 14 Tutsis in Gikoma. He hid them in covered trenches that he dug on his land. His cover lasted for three months. 12-year-old never would take the food out to them. Pictured in Gikoma, March 2004. © Agence France Presse

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