



CANADA'S PERIODICAL ON REFUGEES REFUGE

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SPECIAL ISSUE ON RWANDA

Prediction, Prevention, and Punishment of Genocide: Observation on Rwanda and Future Policies

Helen Fein

Many people are now asking whether we must passively await the predictable escalation of disaster from the politics of hate and fear to crisis, genocide, and gigantic flows of refugees which, in turn, lead to hunger, thirst, epidemics, the erosion of regions, and destabilization of governments.

I think not. These are not inevitable phenomena, like earthquakes, but are man-made calamities. We are witnessing the casualties of the old order of bystander states refusing to take steps to thwart genocide (or stop it in its early stages), justifying their abstention by the lack of national interest, and paying enormous costs to put band-aids on the living casualties. The casualties include the millions of dead, wounded, raped, maimed, and the homeless—refugees and internal exiles. Studies show that the overwhelming majority of refugees—over 16 million by the end of 1993 (not including the refugees from Rwanda)—are created by states committing genocide and gross violations of human rights.

My thesis is that genocide is preventable (as are political mass murders), because it is usually a rational act. That is, the perpetrators calculate the likelihood of success, given their values and objectives. One of the reasons genocide is likely to succeed is

that it is not deterred by other countries—indeed, the patrons of the perpetrators often aid them. Although there is much the international community could do were there the will, we should, for practical purposes, focus first on joint and individual actors

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REFUGE

YORK LANES PRESS
Centre for Refugee Studies
Suite 351, York Lanes
York University
4700 Keele Street, North York
Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3
Phone: (416) 736-5843
Fax: (416) 736-5837
Internet: refuge@vm1.yorku.ca

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Editor

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Issue Guest Editors

OGENGA OTUNNU

YOHANNES GEBRESELLASIE

Assistant Editors

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Managing Editor

ARUL S. ARULIAH

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rather than on international organizations who could step in to deter genocide. In the contemporary world this usually means patrons, donors, and allies.

The rationality of the perpetrators is sometimes overlooked because of the often dramatic mobilization of fear, hatred, and aggression. Genocide is committed from many motives: ideological, retributive (to prevent or respond to a threat), and economic. Genocide is the calculated murder of a segment or all of a group defined as being outside of the universe of obligation of the perpetrator, in response to a crisis believed to be caused by the vic-

tims, or an opportunity seen to be impeded by them. Crises and opportunities may be a result of war, challenges to the structure of domination, the threat of internal breakdown, or social revolution and economic development. Since 1945, most genocides have been state responses to rebellions or challenges by ethnic groups excluded from power, i.e., challenges to the structure of domination. War was often a precursor or consequence of genocide (Fein 1993).

Rwanda is another example of a modal pattern. The perpetrators represent an elite or segment of the dominant ethnic group that felt threatened



***Letter to the Editor from the Jewish
Civil Rights Educational Founda-
tion of Canada***

In your August-September 1994 edition you quote the statistical summary of various countries' claims and status. I am absolutely outraged that 268 applicants would be or could be declared as refugees by Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board. I plain and simply reject the suggestion that Israel is a country from which there could be legitimate refugees. Any citizen of Israel is free to come and go as [s]he pleases. Israel is a democracy that respects the rule of law. There are human rights commissions, there is an Ombudsman and there is, of course, a highly sophisticated court structure to which all citizens and even non-citizens have access.

I have travelled to Israel many times and have participated in legal seminars and if there is one constant with which I have come away it is the total independence of the Judiciary and its absolute commitment to the preservation of individual human rights.

I served as Chairman for twenty years of Canadian Lawyers and Jurists for Soviet Jewry and have visited the Soviet Union on four occasions. From countless contacts with citizens of the former Soviet Union, Jewish and non-Jewish it was obvious to me that many

considered emigration to Israel as a convenient vehicle to get to the United States or Canada. That in no way diminished their legitimacy in wanting to escape anti-Semitism, persecution and the violation of fundamental human rights in the Soviet Union. Many that were successful in gaining entrance to Israel then simply fled to the United States or Canada for economic considerations but evidently persuaded certain members of the Immigration and Refugee Board that they were legitimate refugees.

It is important for the credibility of the Immigration and Refugee Board that its decisions are based on accurate, honest and factual criteria. It seems to me that those members who granted refugee status to 268 applicants could use a basic course about Israel's democratic institutions and perhaps some insight into the realities of what constitutes a totalitarian, autocratic, or racist regime. To equate Israel with countries such as Iran, Iraq and Sudan is not only odious but it is simply preposterous. In the process it demeans the high regard to which the Board should aspire and it mocks the true definition of a refugee.

Bert Raphael, Q.C.

President, Jewish Civil Rights
Educational Foundation of Canada,
Toronto.

by imposition of a new structure in which their ethnic-group class interests could be subordinated. Although the conflict in Rwanda and Burundi between the Hutu and the Tutsi is frequently cast in a tribal or caste context, it is better understood as that of competing ethnic groups. The ranking and status of members of both groups was rigidified by the Belgian colonizers, who co-opted the Tutsi as administrators and soldiers and prevented individual mobility by mandating the use of identity cards.

The current crisis in Rwanda was instigated by responses to the negotiated settlement between the government and the Tutsi exile-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) after its invasion in 1990. The settlement authorized the return of Tutsi refugees, who had fled genocidal massacres in Rwanda in 1962, and the sharing of power with them in a transitional government prior to elections. The refugees—now 500,000 persons—added one to every 13.6 Rwandans in the most densely populated country in Africa (257 persons per square kilometer). This must have signified more intense competition for resources in the future.

The donor states and international aid organizations pressed the government to accede to the agreement. President Habyarimana played a double game, pretending he would implement it but bringing into the government an extremist anti-Tutsi party, the Coalition for the Defense of the Republic (CDR). One observer, Roger Winter, Director of the US Committee for Refugees, has called the CDR “Rwanda’s version of the Ku Klux Klan” (1994).

The presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi were eliminated in an plane crash on April 6, 1994—an act the Hutu extremists blamed on the RPF and the Tutsi, but outside observers attributed to the extremists. This was followed by a coup of the extremists, who murdered the next-in-line Hutu leaders whom they did not trust and organ-

ized the massacres by military, party, and youth organizations against the Tutsi, and extrajudicial executions of the moderate Hutu.

The period preceding the genocide in Rwanda was marked by the mobilization of hatred and fear against the victims, including (in Rwanda) public injunctions broadcast on the radio to kill Tutsi. Politicians mobilizing their constituency in Rwanda, as elsewhere, could remind their communities that members of the Other had committed crimes against their people. The Hutu could remember the genocide the Tutsi minority military leaders perpetrated in neighbouring Burundi in 1972 against educated Hutu, the subsequent massacres, and the assassination of the first democratically elected Hutu president of Burundi in 1993 by coup-makers in the Tutsi-dominated army.

It was in this early period of crisis (during the weakening of the state in Rwanda from RPF attacks) that patrons and allies had the greatest opportunity to deter the genocide.

The Rwandan government received arms to wage the conflict with the RPF from France, Egypt, and South Africa. France especially fortified the army with weapons and leadership in response to the RPF invasion, which was backed by Uganda. The French have backed Rwanda uncritically until recently, largely because (by their accounts) of the desire to support French-speaking states which they see threatened by English-speaking states (such as Uganda). They could hardly be ignorant of the potential for genocide, for the President’s paramilitary militia, the Akazu, had instigated mob killings of the Tutsi in 1990 in response to the RPF invasion. Uganda, which actively assisted the RPF, was acting not only from reciprocity (for the RPF had helped bring President Museveni to power), but from necessity, since refugees were in competition with Ugandans for land and water (Smyth 1994).

This adds to the cases in which genocide leads to war—as in Pakistan in 1971 and Uganda in 1979—by creating great numbers of refugees-warriors,

who can neither stay nor return home unless they dislodge the governments that led them to flee. War and rebel attacks against the state also often lead to genocide as in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burundi, China in Tibet, Ethiopia, Iraq, and Rwanda, among others.

The RPF were in sight of victory and settled for reinclusion. But reinclusion or reform could only succeed had the CDR and the Akazu and their followers been isolated and firmly suppressed. Winters notes that, “[r]epeatedly, we have seen extremists in conflicts around the world use incredible violence to forestall a peace they find unacceptable. We saw it most recently in Baruch Goldstein’s slaughter in Hebron, in imitation of Hamas’s bloody strategy” (1993).

To move from this issue to the general question of deterrence, several initiatives ought to be undertaken by concerned states and human rights organizations. We need to heighten the awareness of patrons and press them to prevent genocide by: a) coordinating the promises of donors with respect to withdrawal of aid and making further aid contingent on observing life-integrity rights (not tolerating massacres, extrajudicial executions, “disappearances,” or torture); b) isolating and suppressing extremist parties which resort to violence; c) promoting interdependent solutions; and d) warning the instigators that genocide will not pay. To do this, we have to make sure that it does not pay and stop paying off the perpetrators.

The role of punishment is not only to establish responsibility, but to avoid the future stigma of group guilt which impairs trust and leads to cycles of crime-revenge-crime. Thus, punishment is essential to enable the children of the perpetrators and the victims to start anew, to share a common moral consensus. And if punishment cannot be enforced, judgements still serve a function by shaming the perpetrators. Such shame can be reinforced if other states vow not to honour them or permit them entry, thus marginalizing them in the eyes of the world.

Dr. Helen Fein is the executive director of the Institute for the Study of Genocide, Cambridge MA.

In this case, it appears that the UN has authorized a rudimentary commission to investigate war crimes. This could be expanded to become an African-based international tribunal, or the tribunal charged with judging war crimes and genocide in Bosnia could be authorized to try genocide in Rwanda. Cohen has argued that it is imperative to try cases in Kigali rather than in Europe in order to assure the refugees' judgement will be made without bias and to give them enough security to return.

Although there may be hope in Rwanda in view of the policy of the RPF against collective retaliation (Kasfir 1994), it is imperative to bring in as many human rights monitors as needed to oversee the return of the refugees and the trials.

In the long run, we ought to create two key institutions on the interna-

there funds available, they could create an international radio network, broadcasting in native languages, that would unmask disinformation and propaganda, unveil the motives of agitators of hate, and promote respect for human rights and peace. This is not beyond the reach of our technology or resources.

The United States vacillated on recognizing genocide in Rwanda and did not do anything to prevent it. Despite spending vast sums of money—which may well exceed \$500 million—for humanitarian assistance in Rwanda, the United States has not made effective use of its power and leadership. Preventive leadership to make the use of genocide a dangerous risk could save millions of lives and dollars.

Warnings and deterrents ought to be backed up by a consistent policy of enforcement of existing American

ing recognition of new states provisional for at least two years.

In order to judge, expose, and shame the perpetrators of genocide when it occurs, we need an international criminal court (as has been discussed) to prosecute not only genocide but also terrorism and other international crimes. Such an institution should enable the victims (and organizations acting on their behalf) to appeal directly to the court to order the perpetrators to stop, to get restitution for the victims, and to make definitive historical findings regarding responsibility. Were there such a court, the revival of the Khmer Rouge since 1979 and the restabilization of the regime of Saddam Hussein after the Gulf War might have been thwarted.

There is a role for governments, international organizations, non-governmental human rights organizations, and the media to play in implementing this agenda. For governments, it would mean placing international human rights above temporary advantages from trading with and arming abusive powers. The movement to change the taken-for-granted assumption, that sovereignty implies indifference to our neighbours' crimes (like respect for family implied overlooking child abuse next door), is yet to emerge from gestation in images of mass flight, chaos, blood, and death. ■

Notes

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In order to judge, expose, and shame the perpetrators of genocide when it occurs, we need an international criminal court to prosecute not only genocide but also terrorism and other international crimes. Such an institution should enable the victims to appeal directly to the court to order the perpetrators to stop

tional level because, at present, victims and their representatives cannot invoke the UN Genocide Convention in any way. The first institution is an international criminal court to which victims and their representatives could go to prosecute offenders and ask for restitution. Second, we need a UN rapid-response force, as Brian Urquhart recommended (1993), a force consisting of professional volunteers, answerable to the Security Council (possible under the present structure), which can act immediately to halt or cordon off the perpetrators of genocide, so that we do not repeat the experiences of Bosnia and Rwanda: passing unenforceable resolutions in the first case, and avoiding intervention while the genocide was in progress in the second.

Much more could be done were the non-profit human rights movement and the media to act together. Were

laws, which proscribe giving aid to state perpetrators of gross violations of human rights. This should be extended to the international level, mandating that the world lending institutions demand a Human Rights Impact Statement as well as an Environmental Impact Statement.

At the same time, the international community and private donors could reward states, such as South Africa, Israel, and possibly Northern Ireland, which rectify past policies of violation and negotiate an end to group conflicts. In many cases, we could change the political environment of the potential perpetrators directly and indirectly to make sure that they lack arms and are isolated. We should prevent the escalation of conflicts wherever possible and anticipate the effects of sustaining or breaking up existing states. We could tie political legitimacy to the protection of human rights, mak-

Health Impact of Rights Violations in Conflict Zones and the Humanitarian Imperative: Rwanda—A Case Study

Dr. James Orbinski

I will address the health impact of rights violations in conflict situations and the link between health and human rights. I will do this using Médecins Sans Frontières' (MSF) experience in Rwanda as a starting point, and I hope to draw generic principles from this case in order to look at the nature and mechanisms of the humanitarian imperative in today's global context, and what this could mean for further efforts to define humanitarianism in the future.

As many will know, MSF is an international humanitarian organization that provides medical aid without discrimination to populations in crisis.¹ We rely on volunteer professionals and are independent of all states and institutions, as well as of all political, economic, or religious affiliations. The organization grew out of the frustration of a group of French doctors working in Biafra during the crisis of 1971. They were outraged that governments and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) were powerless to stop the forced starvation and displacement of millions of people, because such an effort would contravene existing international statutes and bodies of law. This initial contempt for established legal systems has spawned a global organization which, at any one time, has over 2,000 volunteers working with over 14,000 nationals in 70 countries today.

Like the International Red Cross and a legion of other NGOs, MSF

worked in the Cold War era with a commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to people in need. Unlike other NGOs, however, MSF frequently engaged in cross-border activities that violated state sovereignty to provide that assistance. Over time, this humanitarian imperative has evolved from a concept to customary behaviour that is accepted in international law. In the post-cold war world, MSF has developed its policy of speaking out against massive human rights abuses, most notably in Somalia in 1992–93, the former Yugoslavia, southern Sudan and, this year, in Rwanda. I was directly involved in Somalia and Rwanda in both political and medical management roles, and will share some of my reflections on these experiences.

If I were to speak in purely theoretical terms, the human dimension of the issues would be lost—and it is this dimension that is central to the principles of human rights and the humanitarian imperative derived therefrom. I believe the best way to address the issues I have outlined is to describe some of my own experiences as Chief of Mission for MSF in Rwanda. MSF is one of the world's largest independent medical relief organizations and, in Rwanda this year, we continue to be engaged with the largest humanitarian disaster we have ever assisted in. I will describe only one of my days, and the variety of events and issues that ran through that 24-hour period on June 17, 1994.

On that day, we had MSF teams working in both Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and Rwandan Government Forces (RGF) territory throughout the country. With the exception of a poorly supported UN ceasefire monitoring force, the international community left Rwanda in early April, after

the assassination of the Rwandan president. Only MSF and the Red Cross remained in Rwanda at that time, but a host of other NGOs were working in neighbouring Zaire, Uganda, Tanzania, and Burundi. That morning, after speaking for two hours via satellite telephone with MSF headquarters in Amsterdam, Paris, Brussels, and Toronto, I climbed into a UN armoured personnel carrier (APC) to attempt medical examinations and to deliver medical supplies to orphanages, churches, and schools on the other side of the front line in Kigali. These locales were sheltering Tutsi people from RGF militia, who would cull the churches at night, butchering hundreds, and sparing those who could come up with 40 US dollars, or who were spared by grace alone. Like many other mornings, ill-equipped UN soldiers crossed active fighting on the front line in Kigali, braved rockets, mortars, and shells fired directly at them, and moved through throngs of drunken machete- and gun-wielding militiamen at multiple checkpoints on the other side of the front line. Why? To give credence, if only symbolically, to the humanitarian imperative—to the rights of those people who literally cried with fear each day. We arrived at the Saint Michel Orphanage, one of many we visited that day. I got out of the APC and was greeted by the sneering eyes and physical cajoling of the Interyhamwe militia. The UN soldiers, who themselves were pushed and jeered, encircled me as we made our way into the orphanage. Inside, 119 children remained. The night before, 240 children and adults had been butchered here. These 119 sat in an open compound, each one alone, amidst the horror of all horrors. One little boy, about five years old, had both his ears cut off and a machete

Dr. James Orbinski is the vice-president, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Frontiers) Canada, and an associate at the Centre for International Health, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

This paper was presented at the First International Conference on Health and Human Rights, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

blow through his right eye. The left side of his body was paralyzed, and I wondered, as I examined him, what does it take to hold a child while he screams in terror, and wilfully and repeatedly destroy his body, not with a gun, but with the raw rage of a machete in hand? The boy smiled at me, and I could only return his smile.

At 2 p.m., I was looking out on over 600 casualties, mostly women and children, who were laid out on the road outside the school where a makeshift hospital and surgical unit had been set up. The gutters literally ran with blood, and the sweet smell of open flesh coursed through the hot African air. We worked in a fixed, concentrated way, inserting chest tubes, tying off bleeding arteries, closing eviscerated

bleed to death and not be able to climb out of the graves.

That evening, a nine-year-old girl, who had been brought to the hospital in the early stages of malnutrition, told me that "my mother hid me in the toilet. I saw through the hole, and watched them hit her with machetes. She was bleeding on top of my father who was dead, and I cried without noise. I stayed under the toilet for three days because there was anger in the village that was my home."

The following morning at our hospital in RPF territory there were, among our 500 patients, 90 badly injured Interyhamwe militia, who had butchered people like this little girl's parents, and the little boy at the orphanage. These 90 patients had been

At the same time, the RGF had announced on its radio that MSF personnel were assisting the enemy and were therefore not welcome in RGF territory. Rumour had it that a white MSF arm was worth 20 US dollars, and that a pair of arms would fetch 50 US dollars. Our vehicles were being directly targeted by attack helicopters in RGF territory.

abdomens on the road, and marking the foreheads of scores of living casualties on the roadside with the number "3," meaning irretrievable. We ran medical supplies through the front line from one hospital to another using UN APC's, and we ran the operating room as the shelling continued into the night. The field hospital was hit repeatedly by high-calibre bullets and, as heavy fighting continued, the emergency room was destroyed by shell fire the next morning.

At the same time, during a six-week period, over one million people were being butchered in the city of Kigali and around the country. They were butchered in a systematic, rational way, with militia being trucked in to facilitate the efficient elimination of the Tutsi Inyenzi—the Tutsi insects—as the militia called them. Mayors and civic officials provided lists of names and addresses, and people were killed in their homes or, more often, transported or marched to mass graves, where they were not shot, but had their hands and feet cut off so they would

brought to the RPF side of the front line in transport trailers during a temporary ceasefire, which the Chief of Mission for the ICRC, the UN force commander General D'Allaire, and myself had negotiated with the RPF and RGF forces.

The hospitals were also filled with thousands of civilians who sought shelter for fear of enemy reprisals outside hospital grounds. You can imagine the complexity of negotiating with commanders and soldiers who repeatedly entered the hospital grounds armed, and proceeded to interrogate civilians and to arrest military and militia personnel undergoing surgical and medical care. Both sides were also taking medical equipment and supplies from hospitals to care for their own soldiers, and had set up mortar sites behind hospitals to shell enemy territory. Naturally, the other side tried to counter-shell these sites, and stray shells came within meters of the hospital. My repeated requests to move the mortar sites were met with comments such as, "I thought you

were a doctor, since when do you advise us on military tactics?"

In hospitals around the country medical equipment was in such short supply that maggots were feeding on the wounds of patients who had not had their bandages changed. I remember vomiting after removing the infested dressings from the chest of a little girl injured by shrapnel. Both the RPF and the RGF hindered MSF or Red Cross air and land supply lines, and all movements of personnel in the country were being hampered by "new rules" and demands for nonexistent or unobtainable documentation at check stops.

At the same time, the RGF had announced on its radio that MSF personnel were assisting the enemy and were therefore not welcome in RGF territory. Rumour had it that a white MSF arm was worth 20 US dollars, and that a pair of arms would fetch 50 US dollars. Our vehicles were being directly targeted by attack helicopters in RGF territory. At the same time, in both territories, MSF was being accused of spying for the French, and my personnel were being turned away at the border, held for questioning for extended periods inside Rwanda, searched and harassed at checkpoints, while Rwandan nationals working with us were being taken out of hospitals and killed in the night. We assessed each situation, each risk, each threat according to the overall context, and either left MSF teams in place, withdrew them to safer locations within the country, or evacuated them completely, all the while trying to maintain the humanitarian imperative.

As I detailed events to our offices in Amsterdam, Paris, Brussels, and Toronto, MSF personnel were lobbying heads of state, the US State Department, and the Security Council for a multinational military intervention to stop the genocide, establish law and order, and support a system of national or international justice. A few weeks later, after intense international waffling, the French arrived in Rwanda as a de facto unilateral force with a Chapter 7 mandate to establish a humanitar-

ian safe zone in southwest Rwanda. No one was clear on the French motives—the RGF were celebrating in the streets expecting French military support, the RPF were preparing to battle the French, and the UN ceasefire force under Chapter 6 was watching the situation and preparing for all eventualities. A few weeks later, over 1 million people fled across the border into Zaire in fear of RPF reprisals, setting off the largest and fastest refugee movement in this century. Two thousand refugees were dying every day of cholera, dysentery, and thirst. During all this, we followed the same strategy of risk assessment and management while attempting to maintain the humanitarian imperative.

In assessing the health impact of rights violations in conflict situations, and particularly in Rwanda, the link between health and human rights is self-evident. Health defines a humane way of pursuing life itself and is, without question, the fundamental human right. Overall, 1.2 million people were murdered in an act of genocide, thousands of civilians died as direct casualties in the bloodiest civil war of this century, millions were displaced within Rwanda, and millions remain as refugees outside Rwanda in Zaire, Uganda, and Tanzania. Cholera, dysentery, malnutrition, and malaria strike in epidemic waves of previously unknown proportions. Rwanda's cities, roads, and farmland are covered with land mines and, most important, social stability through a system of law, order, and a national and international system of justice—the necessary precursor to rebuilding—remains a distant hope.

No amount of medicine or health infrastructure will ever begin to cope even minimally with these realities until people go home. And people will not go home because they are afraid for their lives, for their physical, social, and mental wellbeing, and for their dignity and rights as human beings. The single most important factor delaying stability in Rwanda today is not lack of food, water, or medicine, but the absence of UN human rights moni-

tors. Quite simply, people are ready to face justice, but fear injustice. They fear that the guilty will go free or that the rebels will exact retribution on the innocent and guilty alike.

Humanitarian principles, imperatives, and mechanisms must be clearly defined, at least in the minds of those who engage in humanitarian work and advocacy. So what is this concept called the humanitarian imperative? It is clearly an operational derivative of the link between the principles of health and human rights. It demonstrates the right to work for the benefit of others without the wish to do harm. The mechanisms of this imperative are independence, neutrality, and impartiality. It can be argued that the hu-

state armed conflict, and not to a conflict within a sovereign state.

Yet the 1986 International Court of Justice ruling,⁵ and four post-cold war Security Council resolutions⁶ confirmed the right of impartial access by humanitarian organizations in Nicaragua, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia, and most recently in Rwanda—all either interstate or civil war conflicts. The established laws, rulings, and resolutions not only legitimize humanitarian access and the right of people to receive assistance, but also the humanitarian imperative itself and the link between the principles of health and human rights. They explicitly affirm that the humanitarian imperative overrides sovereignty

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manitarian imperative and its mechanisms have become legitimized—although somewhat nebulously—in international law and expected codes of conduct.

International law is not static. It changes as societies change through history and, in our century, it emerges from four sources: first and most important, the UN Charter; the second is the law of treaty between states; the third is derived from generally accepted principles and decisions of international courts; and the fourth is derived from customary law, which means simply that an established custom of behaviour or principle can be used as a basis for defining the future nature of custom or principle.

Under the UN Charter,² and two General Assembly resolutions of 1988,³ humanitarian assistance is clearly an obligation of states. Under the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Two Protocols of 1977,⁴ it is a victim's right to receive assistance, and the right of humanitarian organizations to offer assistance. However, this body of law applies only during inter-

when that sovereignty is not capable or willing to meet the basic health needs of its population. Remember that international law is not static, and that what was, in the Cold War era, behaviour on the fringes of international law has in fact, by virtue of established custom, become law.

So it is the humanitarian imperative, its principles, and mechanisms that both drive and allow humanitarian organizations to work where human rights are violated or threatened. In terms of emerging trends in established humanitarian and customary law, the most dangerous thing is to do or say nothing when human rights are violated. When context overpowers the ability to act effectively on behalf of the humanitarian imperative, as in Rwanda, the imperative changes from a focus on individual people in need of assistance to a focus on the political context in which this overwhelming need arises. It is in this context of massive rights violations where advocacy becomes a mechanism of the humanitarian imperative, where advocacy must demand that responsibility to

protect human rights be assumed, and it is here where the humanitarian mechanisms of independence, impartiality, and neutrality are most challenged. As my Rwanda account illustrates, these latter mechanisms, recognized in established and customary international law, were certainly challenged. It was not and is not easy, but we and other humanitarian organizations did and are doing what we set out to do—act in accordance with the humanitarian imperative.

and international system of justice may be a military issue with clear humanitarian implications.

This issue speaks to the broader context of “globalism versus nationalism” and the sovereignty of states, which is a defining concept of our age. Human society is not and never has been static. It is always fluid and changing, and ours is clearly a world of paradox, where traditional nation-state structures and internal belief systems are at odds with growing global issues which

which the issue can be operationalized and codified into systems and bodies of law. The UN should become the mechanism or broker of humanitarianism in our world, and it should not be co-opted by superpowers or regional state interests. Nor should humanitarianism be co-opted by the UN for political purposes.

The UN is truly our only mechanism of hope, albeit imperfect and in need of reform. It is a very young mechanism, less than 46 years in a human history that spans scores of millennia. The role of NGOs, humanitarian organizations and, I believe, universities as well, is to force, push, and cajole the defining and shaping of humanitarianism as a global issue so that, through UN mechanisms, humanitarianism becomes an operational and enforceable global imperative.

For the little boy at the orphanage, the little girl who hid in the toilet, and millions of Rwandans, there is no suffering more terrifying—more inhuman—than the suffering inflicted by another human being. As Burke said, “all that is required for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing”.⁷ Our challenge in addressing the health impact of rights violations in conflict zones is to ask what we can do and, quite simply, do it. ■

Notes

1. Destexhe, Alain. Médecins Sans Frontières Activity Report 1993–1994, Group Graphique Chauveheid, Brussels, Belgium. 1994.
2. Articles 1, 55, and 56, United Nations Charter, 1948.
3. Resolutions 43 and 131, United Nations General Assembly, 1988.
4. Article 70, First Protocol of the Geneva Conventions, 1977.
5. Case Concerning Military and Paramilitary Activities In and Against Nicaragua (*Nicaragua v. USA*), International Court of Justice (1986) p. 125 para. 243.
6. Security Council Resolution 688, (1991), para. 3; Security Council Resolution 771, (1992), para. 4; Security Council Resolution 751 (1992), para. 14.
7. Burke, Edmund. 1770. “Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents.” In *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed., Little, Brown and Co., 1980. □

In my opinion, humanitarianism is not a military issue. But in a world where many nations sit on the brink of anarchy and where brutality has become the norm, law, order, and support for a national and international system of justice may be a military issue with clear humanitarian implications.

Impartiality, neutrality, and independence are not a license for passivity. These mechanisms do not imply that humanitarian organizations shall remain silent in the face of gross human rights violations. They imply that, in such circumstances, humanitarian organizations must remain neutral, impartial, and independent of influence in their recognition of the sanctity of the rights and the responsibilities inherent in the humanitarian premise. These mechanisms then, quite simply, become a means of counteracting inhumanity with humanity and, where this is impossible, of witnessing on behalf of the humane.

The danger, of course, in engaging advocacy on behalf of humanitarianism is not that it becomes the political issue that it should be, but that it becomes subject to political manipulation by states acting in their national or regional interests. This argument has certainly been made in the post-cold war world, and the quagmire of confusion around NGOs, UN agencies, and UN forces in Iraq, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, and now Rwanda is further evidence of this. In my opinion, humanitarianism is not a military issue. But in a world where many nations sit on the brink of anarchy and where brutality has become the norm, law, order, and support for a national

command our attention, and cannot be solved with traditional ideologies and mechanisms.

Just as the nation-state formed out of a need to protect networks of people—bound together by evolving economy, culture, and religion—the new world can evolve to protect that same network now emerging on a global scale. It is impossible, however, to ignore or forget tradition. The nation-state will not disappear, but can evolve incrementally with a new integrity firmly rooted in the valence of transnational global issues and values. The most important of these is the growth of humanitarianism as a basic principle of global social order, and it is a principle that is only beginning to take shape. There certainly is within societies, cultures, and religions a strong rootedness in humanitarianism, but its global face has yet to be clearly seen.

And how might this face emerge? A poet has written, “To every question why, there is a resounding Yes,” which I take to mean that the ideal is possible, but we just have to figure out how to reach it. Given what I have said about humanitarianism, its imperative, its principles, and its mechanisms, I think it is clear that the UN should not define the issue of humanitarianism, but evolve to provide mechanisms with

Forced Migration From Rwanda: Myths and Realities

Edmund Abaka and J.B. Gashugi

The ongoing Rwandan crisis has been attributed to the war between the Tutsi-dominated Rwandans in the diaspora and the Hutu-dominated regime at home. More often than not, the conflict has been presented as that between the Hutu and the Tutsi. The media largely ignored the tens of thousands of Rwandans killed in massacres that antedate the 1990s. The explanation of the crisis in terms of the repression of the Tutsi by the regime in Kigali (whose power structure is mainly Hutu) is similarly flawed. The characterization of the French intervention in Rwanda as a "humanitarian" venture is yet another myth. Consistent support by Belgium and France strengthened the Habyarimana regime and made it inflexible at the Arusha peace talks, which aimed at restoring democracy in Rwanda. Even though the horrors of the Rwandan genocide have now clothed the French involvement with an aura of "do-gooder," the original French intervention was a case of the Imperial Twitch (Elliott 1994, 17).

Realities

This paper will argue that the crisis in Rwanda is the culmination of a deep-seated antagonism arising out of local, national, and international conjuncture of factors. They include, among others, the colonial policies of Germany and Belgium, the lethargic response of the United Nations, the activities of France and Belgium in the post-colonial period, the regional policies of President Habyarimana, and the "Khaki Factor" in African politics. The assassination of Presidents

Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and Cyprian Ntaryamira of Burundi constituted the spark which set off this powder keg.

Colonial Legacy

The colonial policies of Germany and Belgium contributed to the Rwandan crisis. Changes that occurred in the colonial period eroded the legitimacy of Tutsi rulers. Furthermore, the spread of new ideas has also been cited as the *raison d'être* of the 1959–61 "revolution" which impacted on the Rwandan political system and, by extension, on the current crises (Maquet and d'Hertefeldt, 1959). This functionalist paradigm was based on the premise of a static, traditional polity in which the Hutu had been dominated by state structures from the pre-19th century period (Newbury 1992, 5). Unfortunately, it does not take into consideration changes over time and falls short of a holistic explanation.

Rwanda was under two different colonial regimes. The Germans ruled Rwanda from 1898–1914 and the Belgians took over from 1916–61. Both colonial regimes identified with and ruled through the Tutsi nobility (Newbury 1988, 3; 1992, 194). Until the 1940s, the Belgians educated the Tutsi, but not the Hutu, and replaced Hutu chiefs with the Tutsi (Zolberg et al. 1989).

Under Belgium, the monarchy was abolished and the Hutu hegemony replaced that of the Tutsi (Newbury 1988). The Rwandan power nexus was significantly influenced by non-Rwandan institutions, such as the Catholic church and the Belgian administration, and this impacted on the post-colonial political situation. The altered political situation and the means by which it was brought about sowed the seeds for potential conflict.

The colonial state transformed a hierarchical, flexible system into a rigid,

bureaucratic one that exacerbated ethnic divisions (Zolberg et al. 1989). Thus, Belgian colonial policy enhanced the coercive and extractive powers of the state controlled by certain dominant lineages, and thereby widened the gap between the Tutsi office holders and the mostly, but not exclusively, Hutu non-office holders (Zolberg et al. 1989; C. Watson 1991). Aloysius Mugabo, a Tutsi refugee in Uganda, summed up Belgian policy:

The Belgian offered educational opportunities only to us ... They told the Hutu that priority was given to the Tutsi. Then in the end, they said to the Hutu: "You see what the Tutsi are doing? They are getting the best jobs." ... They did this to create conflict between us. (C. Watson 1991)

The colonial administration adopted the classic divide-and-rule policy of European imperialism in Africa (Duignan and Gann 1969). The colonial demands for labour and taxes and obligatory cultivation of the 1950s that were enforced by the chiefs and, to some extent, by the Tutsi (though not all Tutsi became rich and powerful), made a lasting and unforgettable impression on the Hutu (Pakenham 1991; Newbury 1992, 193).

The most hated aspect of Belgian rule was forced labour:

In 1932, an elderly missionary complained that the authorities had requisitioned his parishioners so often they scarcely had time to grow food, and famine threatened. There was, he complained, the coffee drive, the buckwheat drive, tree planting, construction work, road cleaning and more ... elderly Tutsi refugees in Uganda recall massive terracing schemes and road projects, and say Tutsi overseers were often required to force Hutu to work. "If you didn't meet your targets, the Belgians would whip you ... They said, 'You whip the Hutu or we will whip you.'" (C. Watson 1991, 4)

Edmund Abaka is a Ph.D. candidate in the History Department, York University and a research associate at the Centre for Refugee Studies.

J.B. Gashugi is a political science student at the University of Toronto.

In effect, colonialism was an instrument which destroyed the social and political culture of Rwandese society by fundamentally transforming the political institutions. It also destroyed the traditional institution of divine kingship of the Mwami which, by giving cohesion to the diverse groups, served to minimize ethnic tension. In the final analysis, the contradictions of colonial rule laid the basis for the ensuing massacres, the refugee crises, and the present carnage in Rwanda.

The distrust sown between the two groups by colonial favouritism and exploitation, coupled with the machinations of the Catholic church, exploded in civil war after the abolition of the monarchy and the installation of a civilian republican government. The 1959 "revolution," led by the Hutu, overthrew the highly centralized monarchy that had ruled Rwanda up to the colonial period (Newbury 1992, 193). The formation of Le Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu (PARMEHUTU) in 1959, which adopted a pro-Hutu, anti-Tutsi platform, was one of the numerous methods aimed at addressing the contradictions which had existed in Rwanda (Newbury 1992, 196; Mazrui and Rotberg, 1970, 896). In November of the same year, the Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse (APROSOMA) was launched by Joseph Gitera (Mazrui and Rotberg 1970, 898).

The latent antagonism, which had also been fostered by the Catholic church, culminated in violence near Gitarama in central Rwanda and other parts of the country in November 1959. Thousands of Tutsi huts were set aflame. According to the UN Visiting Mission, "the incendiaries set off in bands of ten. Armed with machetes and paraffin, which indigenous inhabitants use in large quantities for their lamps, they pillaged the Tutsi houses they passed on their way and set fire to them" (U.N. Visiting Mission, 78; Mazrui and Rotberg 1970, 904). These acts of violence had a millenarian character (Hobsbawm 1971). The Belgian administration changed sides and sup-

ported the Hutu and, from 1960 onwards, the Hutu began to gain prominent positions in Rwanda. Thus, "the events of Gitarama carried to its penultimate state the social and political revolution which had begun in late 1959" (Mazrui and Rotberg, 879). Its origins lay in the inequities of the social and political order and aimed at an irreversible shift in relations between the ruler and the ruled (Mazrui and Rotberg, 880; Maquet, 160). By the time of independence in 1962, Tutsi authority had been broken. The Tutsi fled the country by the thousand and, by 1962, 250,000 Tutsi left Rwanda (Newbury 1992, 197). Seven thousand were installed at the Nyambata camp for refugees, and 15,000 were distributed throughout the Bymba, Kisenyi, and

Bantu language of Kinyarwanda and share basically the same culture. In the words of Faustin Twagiramungu: "We are the luckiest people in Africa. We have the same language, the same religion—traditional religion, at least. No dance or song is particular to either Tutsis or Hutus" (*The Guardian Weekly* 1994). Anthropologists debate about whether these groups are castes or classes. The general consensus is, however, that a hierarchy existed between them. All the same, cognizance should be taken of the fact that social mobility and intermarriage blurred the "caste" distinction. A Hutu who was made a chief could become a Tutsi through "kwihutura" (shedding Hutuness). Conversely, a Tutsi family could lose its cattle, become farmers, and eventu-

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Astrida districts (Mazrui and Rotberg 1970, 909; C. Watson 1991, 2). Consequently, the Belgians appointed Hutu chiefs and subchiefs to occupy the posts which had been vacated (Mazrui and Rotberg 1970, 909). Thus, up to the end of their mandate, the Belgians accelerated the "revolutionary" forces which unleashed terror in Rwanda.

Ethnic Conflict

The conflict has also been portrayed as an ethnic civil war between the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) and the Kigali regime. In the Kigali massacres, however, government troops and militias eliminated all moderate Hutu political opposition and attempted to erase the Tutsi population from the political map of Rwanda. The term "ethnic conflict," therefore, fails to capture what is now considered a genocide (Beresford 1994). A thorough understanding of the conflict must take into consideration Rwanda's past (Maquet 1961). The Banyarwanda (East Africa's largest ethnic group made up of 12 million, of whom 7.3 million live in Rwanda) all speak the

ally become Hutu (C. Watson 1991). The ethnicity argument is also unconvincing in view of the fact that some Hutu nobility saved their Tutsi friends and neighbours, and the first casualties of the pogrom turned out to be the Hutu (Beresford 1994). More importantly, confusion, misunderstanding, and misinterpretation characterize the treatment and group definitions of people by travellers, explorers, traders, European colonial administrators, geographers, and anthropologists. Ethnicity should be located clearly in time and space, and ethnic groups' tangled and often ludicrous histories should be traced (Southall 1985, 567; Amselle and M'Bokolo 1985).

The explanation of the crisis in terms of repression of the Tutsi by the regime in Kigali (whose power is mainly Hutu) does not capture the entire picture. In reality, both Hutu and Tutsi were at the mercy of a regional clique which repressed all of them. The genocide in Rwanda is rather the work of *escadron de la mort* who were armed and trained by Belgian and French mercenaries (*Rwandese Review* 1992).

The Role of the Leadership

The leadership of Rwanda since independence shares part of the blame for the current crisis. Their failure to live above ethnic, regional, and group differences fed into an already existing atmosphere of hate and enmity. The regionalism and favouritism of the first Hutu president, Kayibanda (his government was dominated by people from central Rwanda), provoked regional tensions and culminated in the coup of 1973 (Newbury 1992, 198). Gregoire Kayibanda was overthrown in a bloodless coup d'état on July 5, 1973 by Major-General Juvenal Habyarimana. Habyarimana, a Hutu aristocrat and former army chief of staff, cited the failure to deal with tribal politics as one of the reasons for the coup d'état. In 1988, he was re-elected for a third five-year term as the unopposed presidential candidate.

However, Habyarimana and his clique proved no different from their predecessor (*Africa Confidential*, 1994 May). His politics of regionalism favoured the north, distorted development, and created a backlash of discontent. More importantly, his resistance to the repatriation of Rwandese exiles from Uganda, Tanzania, and Burundi culminated in the RPF drive to "come back home" (Adelman and Sorenson 1994, 143).

In addition, repression at home by the Habyarimana regime heightened tensions. According to Kayitare, security and safety for Tutsi students deteriorated from 1973 onwards. There was systematic harassment of Tutsi women who, in the absence of protection from University security personnel, called upon their male colleagues for support. Names of Tutsi students were posted at the entrances to buildings and they were enjoined to leave or face the consequences, i.e. physical violence (Murunganwa 1989, 10; *Africa Confidential* 1994 Aug). Unlike the repression of the 1960s, this one was aimed at specific groups—the educated, students, and those in skilled and semiskilled positions (Murunganwa 1989, 12).

In Uganda, the Banyarwanda fared badly between 1980 and 1985. The second Obote regime persecuted the Banyarwanda because they were "cousins" of Yoweri Museveni's ethnic group, the Banyankole, and expelled 40,000 of them in 1982 (C. Watson 1992, 53). Even though Tanzania offered citizenship to the 36,000 Banyarwandan refugees, less than 5,000 completed the costly paperwork and, in March 1990, Tanzania began to expel the 40,000 Rwandan migrants, mostly Hutu. In Zaire, Kinyarwanda speakers were classified as foreign and denied political rights (Watson 1992, 53). Thus, exile was harsh enough to drive some of them into RPF ranks.

In January 1991, the Rwandan Patriotic Front overrun the northwestern Rwandan district of Ruhengeri and released all political prisoners. This daring attack forced French Marines (stationed in Rwanda since the October 1990 invasion) to evacuate French, Belgian, and German nationals from Ruhengeri and Gisenyi (*Africa Events* 1991). Despite the infusion of French paratroopers from Calvi, Corsica, the RPF offensive continued, prompting Habyarimana to call a ceasefire on February 16, 1991 and to agree to a regional summit. The summit brought together Ali Hasan Mwinyi of Tanzania, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Pierre Buyoya of Burundi, and Lunda Bululu (prime minister) of Zaire in Dar es Salaam. Here, Habyarimana, for once, expressed willingness to resettle refugees wishing to return home (C. Watson 1992, 53). He also offered general amnesty to all "rebels" who surrendered (*Africa Events* 1991). The RPF, however, rejected the ceasefire because they realized that the expansion of the fighting over the whole of northern Rwanda, rather than a spirit of compromise, occasioned the shift in Habyarimana's policies. Therefore, they wanted to take advantage of the momentum and bargain from a position of strength (*Sunday Standard*, 1989). The Habyarimana government responded to the invasion by giving carte blanche to troops and militia to massacre innocent civilians. Tutsi,

identified by their appearance and identity cards, were detained by soldiers and thrown into overcrowded police stations, jails, or football stadiums. Hundreds of children and the elderly perished in these conditions (*New African* 1990, 11; *Amnesty International Report* 1992, 223). Thousands of people fled the massacres and, within two weeks, 4,000 refugees had arrived at the border point in Kizinga. Refugees talked about government troops moving from village to village with lists of Tutsi to be executed. However, not only Tutsi were killed. Hutus suspected of collaborating with the rebels were likewise killed (*New African* 1990, 11).

Several summits, which aimed at finding solutions to the conflict between 1991 and 1994, produced few results due to the lack of commitment on the part of Habyarimana and the preoccupation of Mobutu Sese Seko with his own problems. On March 14, 1991, the Habyarimana government and the representatives of the Rwandese Patriotic Front met in Kinshasa, Zaire, to formalize the ceasefire. The position of the RPF at the talks was: an end to the discrimination against the Tutsi and the Twa minorities, a redress of regional imbalances, an improvement in human rights, and a clampdown on corruption and widespread abuse by the ruling Hutu clique (*Africa Events* 1991, 11). The RPF objective was the dismantling of the current institutions of dictatorship to enable the country to start on a new democratic path. However, talks on an all-party transitional government to end up the fighting ended nowhere.

The 1992 Amnesty International Report summed up the Rwandan situation thus:

Several thousand political detainees were held without trial until April when most were released. Dozens of members of the minority Tutsi ethnic group ... were arrested ... There were reports of torture, and "disappearances." Hundreds of extrajudicial executions by members of the security forces and vigilante groups were reported (*Amnesty International* 1992, 223).

According to the report, the Constitution was amended in June to introduce a multi-party (in place of the one-party) state and elections were scheduled for 1992. Unfortunately, several deadlines passed without any concrete attempt to implement the peace and constitutional plan.

In February 1994, President Habyarimana made a feeble effort to halt the Rwandan crisis by swearing in a transitional government. Four of the five parties involved refused to show up for the swearing-in ceremony because they were not satisfied with their promised share of power (P. Watson 1994; Beresford 1994, 23). Thus, for the fourth straight time, attempts to set up a multi-party government to rule till elections came to nought.

The shooting down of the plane carrying Presidents Habyarimana and Ntaryamira was the immediate cause of the massacres which were to reach genocidal proportions. In the second week of April 1994, extremist Hutus with machetes and guns murdered some 1,180 Tutsis at a church in Rwanda (*Toronto Star* 1994 April 16). Rampaging troops killed Rwandan Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana who had sought refuge in the UN compound (*Toronto Star* 1994 April 8, A1; April 9, A12). As the slaughter got underway, the RPF began to drive the Hutu-dominated army and militia towards the south. In May, most of Rwanda's government fled south in the wake of the RPF onslaught. The self-declared government, set up after the death of Habyarimana, fled from Kigali to Gitarama a week later (*Toronto Star* 1994 May 30, A12).

Many refugees were driven by the RPF victory and the worsening conflict between the Tutsi and the Hutu to Burundi in the south. Of those who survived the genocide, at least 2.2 million people are reported to have fled the country. In 5 days, a million Hutu refugees poured into Goma, Zaire. In camps across the eastern border with Tanzania and across the southern border in Burundi, hundreds of thousands of Hutu and Tutsi refugees languish (Gibbs 1994, 21). Hate radio broadcasts

by hardline Hutu spread hysteria among refugees, telling them that the new rulers would butcher them in reprisal and that they would thus be better off staying in the refugee camps (Brittain 1994; for an extended discussion of the French involvement in the Rwandan crisis, see Woldu and Abaka, *infra*).

The reasons behind the genocide in Rwanda and the forced migration of over two million people have often been couched in terms of ethnic clashes and the repression of the Tutsi by the Kigali regime. However, a careful analysis of the crisis shows that German and Belgian colonial policies, the activities of France and her allies, the failure to repatriate the Rwandese who had been forced out of the country, and the regionalism of Habyarimana and his ruling clique are the root causes. It is very important in the Rwandan question to recognize the fact that a person does not transmit refugee status to his child, grandchild, or great grandchild. ■

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The Roots of Rwandan Genocide

Charles David Smith

Pre-Independence

Genocide is a cruel word, one that would not exist in a sane world. Yet how else can we describe Rwanda, where at least half a million people have been slaughtered since April 1994. Tens of thousands more are dying of cholera, hunger, and dehydration in overcrowded camps just across the border in Zaire. Even in the relatively well-supplied camps on the Tanzanian frontier, killers and victims coexist in a tense environment.

Rwanda is part of the interlacustrine zone of East Central Africa, bordered by Lake Victoria in the northeast and Lake Tanganyika in the southwest. Unlike most of tropical Africa, this region is densely populated and has a history of feudal-type states. Four hundred years ago in Rwanda, as elsewhere, the *Hinda* or *Hima* pastoral peoples (the Tutsi) established hegemony over the agriculturist Bantu, called Hutu in Rwanda. Yet hegemony was not exclusively or even primarily a matter of conquest, but really a fusion based on symbiosis. Tutsi herders raised cattle on land that would not support crops (composted cattle manure doubles or triples the yield of plantain, the staple food: see Smith, 1985). In the precolonial feudal state of Gasabo, both groups benefited from their association as they had more food and therefore could organize better defence and enjoy greater security.

As Nkongoli (1994) points out, Hutu and Tutsi could both change status and aspire to be decision makers. Even if a Tutsi king controlled a central state, it was the chiefs and subchiefs who ruled at a regional level, and the village elders who made most of the day-to-day decisions. The Germans controlled this area until it was mandated to

the Belgians in 1917. The Belgian legislature passed the Mortehean Law in 1926, which directed the Kings to appoint only Tutsi as chiefs, and gave the Kings and chiefs greater powers, salaries, and tax collection rights, which they often abused. When a King opposed Belgian laws or policy he could be deposed; this is what happened in 1931 when the Belgians deposed King Musinga and replaced him with his son Mutara III (Kamukama 1993).

The Tutsi chiefs were doubly resented because they enjoyed special privileges and, simultaneously, they had to enforce unpopular policies such as taxes, forced labour, and punishment for violators. By 1953, the Belgians realized that the appointed Tutsi chiefs were extremely unpopular and demanded that chiefs be elected. By this time the Hutu were rightly mistrustful of the Belgian authorities, and they resented the powers invested in the Tutsi minority, which accounted for about 15 percent of the population.

Poverty also fuelled the unrest. As early as the 1920s, the smallholder coffee growers of Uganda and the Bukoba region of Tanzania, themselves relatively poor farmers, began to hire Rwandese migrant coffee pickers at starvation wages. These impoverished landless or nearly landless Hutu, who migrated during the coffee harvest, were fleeing almost perpetual famine.

By the mid-1950s, the Hutu began to organize popular movements, such as the Hutu Social Movement and the Association for the Social Promotion of the Masses, both established in 1957. By 1959, the Hutu-based opposition joined forces under the banner of the Parti du Mouvement de l'Émancipation Hutu, PARMEHUTU. Militant anti-colonial Tutsi, wary of Hutu nationalism, set up their own party, the Union Nationale Rwandaise, UNAR. UNAR and PARMEHUTU militants first clashed in November 1959, and

the result of this first ethnic conflict was that thousands of Tutsi were killed and at least 20,000 went into exile. Rwanda subsequently abolished the monarchy in January 1961, held two sets of elections, and gained independence on July 1, 1962.

Post-Independence

By the early 1960s, two dangerous patterns emerged: raids into Rwanda, and foreign intervention to prop up the Rwandese government. Many Tutsi were forced to flee their homeland and those that remained were subject to periodic repression. With little or nothing to lose, the Tutsi refugees began to launch the first guerrilla attacks. They called themselves *Innyenzi* (cockroaches), because they raided at night and then fled back across the Zairean, Ugandan, or Tanzanian borders. Although some Tutsi attained success in neighbouring countries, especially Uganda and, to a lesser extent, Tanzania, they never truly attained security in those countries where, as a warrior refugee community, they were both feared and mistrusted by neighbours and by governments wary of violating the Organization of African Unity (OAU) rules against interfering in another African country.

Over one million Rwandans, who began arriving in the 1960s, are residents of Uganda; about one-half of them are registered refugees (Kiddu-Makubuya, 1994). Most settled in the southwestern part of the country where they would blend in with the Ankle, a related interlacustrine pastoral people. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) set up six camps in this region where people were free to "come and go—with remarkable social consequences" (Kiddu-Makubuya, 1994). In the 1960s, the Obote government passed the Control of Alien Refugees Act, which made the Rwandans a special class of resi-

Charles Smith, Ph.D., is with the Department of Sociology, Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya.

dent subject to arbitrary questioning or even detention. In the 1970s, under Idi Amin, the government set up five large-scale ranching schemes that degenerated into violent conflict with local resident "squatters." The government blamed the Rwandan refugees for causing the trouble. By far the worst incident was in the Mbarara district in 1982, when officials launched a hate campaign against the Rwandese. Young members of Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC) formed gangs and a paramilitary special force that killed and raped at will. At least 35,000 Rwandans fled their homes. Many young men joined Musoveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) that was then in the bush, fighting a guerrilla war against Obote. When the NRA took power in 1986, there were at least five thousand well-armed, experienced, and well-trained fighters who formed the core of the RPF armed forces. When they left the Ugandan army en masse in 1990, they took weapons with them, and therefore had at least covert support from the government of Uganda.

The second dangerous precedent was European interference in the Rwandan conflict. This began in 1959, when Belgian authorities detained 919 Tutsi compared to 312 Hutu. As early as 1961, the Rwandese army, led by Belgian officers, barely managed to repulse an invasion force of Tutsi attackers that came within 20 kilometers of Kigali. Tutsi-dominated guerrillas invaded ten times between 1961 and 1966. To counter these attacks, and in revenge, the Hutu organized gangs that killed tens of thousands of Tutsi, including the leaders of UNAR and other organizations. Later, in 1979, a few young Rwandese refugees formed the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity which, in 1987, forged itself into the Rwandese Patriotic Front, RPF. The RPF tried for three years to negotiate the unconditional return of all Rwandan refugees and to accord all Rwandese equal rights. After President Habyarimana stated that Rwanda was already overpopulated and could not take in any more people, the RPF

took up arms. The RPF persisted despite heavy losses and the deaths of key military leaders, such as General Fred Rwigyema and Majors Chris Bunyenyezi and Peter Baingana, all killed in October 1990. After a series of attacks and reprisals, the RPF was close to military victory in January 1993, and it was only because of intervention by French, Belgian, and Zairian troops that the Habyarimana government could stay in power. The cruel irony here is that the same colonial powers who supported and strengthened the Tutsi monarchy, through subsequent military interventions, kept a million Tutsi refugees in exile by preventing a military victory.

On July 19, 1994 the RPF swore in a new government of "national unity;" but unity will be difficult to attain with one-half million refugees (mostly Hutu) in Tanzania and as many as two million panic-stricken Hutu flooding into Zaire, where tens of thousands are dying of cholera and starvation (*Weekly Review*, Kenya, July 22, 1994). The new President, Pasteur Bizimungu, and the new Prime Minister, Faustin Twagiramungu, are both Hutu, but there are few moderate Hutu left alive. Can the new government prevent killings in retaliation for the half-million people slaughtered by former members of Habyarimana's armed forces and the dreaded civilian militia, the *interahamwe*? Obviously, many of these ruthless killers are now refugees or in hiding. We can only hope that another round of slaughter can be avoided.

Judging by the previous experiences of Rwandans in exile, there is no permanent refuge in neighbouring countries. Tanzania has been the most generous country to date, but even there the political climate may at times present difficulties. Mwanza on Lake Victoria is the closest large Tanzanian city, and the Rwandan community there numbers about five thousand, including about one thousand new arrivals; almost all are Tutsi and relatively well-to-do, since they were the only ones who could reach this safe haven during the present emergency.

The day former President Habyarimana's plane was shot down, the Mwanza Rwandan community staged a public celebration. Given Tanzanian President Mwinyi's key role in trying to broker a negotiated settlement to the long-standing conflict, this public display was a misguided response. President Mwinyi was in Mwanza on official business and, when he learned of the celebration, he became upset because of the Arusha accord and Tanzania's role in trying to mediate the peace process. Mwinyi then ordered a roundup of the community leaders by the police. According to my sources (Street Kids International), they were later all released, but the community is keeping a very low profile and the newer arrivals are underground.

These Tutsi may have been in Tanzania for years; many young people have grown up in Mwanza, and some born in Tanzania are more Tanzanian than Rwandan. Will these youthful Tanzanian and Ugandan children of exiles want to repatriate? This will depend on their level of ethnic identity and on future developments in the war-torn nation. Rwanda will need the skills and determination of its exiles to attain peace and prosperity. ■

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The International Context of the Rwandan Crisis

Samuel M. Woldu and Edmund Abaka

Introduction

Africa is beset by many socioeconomic and political problems. Kaplan (1994) points out that scarcity, crime, overpopulation, ethnic conflict, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet. It is apparent that Rwanda and other African countries are facing cataclysms of crime, violence, famine, political and economic instability, ethnic strife, and a declining resource base. Rwanda is currently experiencing ethnic clashes, scarcity of resources, and a wave of urban violence and crime. In Rwanda today, criminal anarchy and violence appear to be the more real and immediate dangers to the social fabric of the society.

The theory of multicausality explains the incidence and prevalence of civil war in Rwanda. The impact of German and Belgian colonial rule, the lethargic response of the United Nations, the complicity and duplicity of France, Belgium, Uganda, and Zaire in the postcolonial period, and the dictatorship of Habyarimana, contributed to the present crisis. It appears plausible that the dwindling power base and diminishing economic prosperity of the Tutsi during successive regimes led to increased tension and disharmony among different ethnic groups in the society.

Successive regimes trampled upon the rights of the people and forcibly centralized economic and political power, under the rule of politically dominant ethnic groups at different times in the history of Rwanda. As discord, tension, and class differentiation sharpened among the various nation-

alities, deprivation, marginalization, forcible centralization of power, domination, nepotism, favouritism, and ethnic cleavages became potent weapons in the hands of the ruling oligarchy. The policy of impoverishment, victimization, deprivation, depopulation, and marginalization of the Tutsi ensued. This led to the creation of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1987 by children of exiled Tutsi in neighbouring countries. In October 1990, the RPF invaded Rwanda from Uganda, but was repulsed by the Rwandan army with the support of French and Belgian soldiers. The immediate spark which fuelled the Rwandan genocide was the shooting down of the plane carrying Juvenal Habyarimana (Rwanda) and Cyprien Ntaryamira (Burundi) from Tanzania. The two leaders were returning home from the Arusha peace talks on that fateful day, April 6, 1994.

The United Nations Response

The United Nations was lethargic in its response toward the Rwandan crisis. An isolationist American policy on peacekeeping refuses to send US troops overseas under UN command. It also spurns the notion of peacekeeping unless US interests are being advanced. This has paralyzed the United Nations peacekeeping efforts in Rwanda. Additionally, most member states of the UN lack the will to intervene. Furthermore, the UN lacks a clear policy framework to guide intervention. Consequently, it did not deploy troops in the field quickly and this resulted in the escalation of the crisis and the massacre of thousands of Rwandese.

The failure of the world body in Rwanda was aptly summed up by Louise Frechette, the Canadian ambassador to the UN (Barthos 1994):

We have not determined what types of activity the UN should plan for,

along the continuum from preventive deployment through observation missions, classic peacekeeping involving interposition, and more assertive and risky forms of intervention.

The UN needs a set of principles and guidelines to guide decision making. With the world community horrified by the massacre in Rwanda, the UN action was characterized by confusion, apathy, indecision, and fear. The diplomatic role of the UN in the Rwandan crisis has been largely ineffective in resolving the crisis. For instance, between the outbreak of war and the death of President Habyarimana, no serious diplomatic initiatives were made with either the OAU or other regional leaders. Though fourteen African countries called for an end to the hostilities and announced a readiness to respond favourably to an appeal from the UN Secretary-General, the policy of shunting African organizations aside (for reasons best known to the UN) is an ineffective and foolhardy policy. It should be noted that ECOWAS' action in the Liberian civil war shows that with logistical support and help from the international community, African organizations can play significant roles in crisis intervention, mediation, and prevention on the continent.

Moreover, the practice of sending lightly-armed peacekeepers into conflict zones reflects a failure to depart from the classic peacekeeping model involving interposition. Troops sent into crises situations should be well-equipped, mobile, and be able to protect civilians. UN soldiers watched helplessly while machete-wielding gangs attacked civilians sheltered in churches, a fact which underscored the UN's reluctance to send peacekeepers to Rwanda, despite the carnage. More significantly, the UN voted to reduce its force in Rwanda from 2,500 to a

Samuel Merha Woldu, Ph.D., teaches psychology at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria and is currently a visiting research scholar at the Centre for Refugee Studies, York University.

Edmund Abaka is a doctoral candidate with the Department of History, York University.

mere 270. Incidentally, there are still about 18,000 UN troops in Somalia. In the words of Koffie Annan, the UN Under-Secretary-General (Thompson 1994):

After the experience in Somalia and some of the things we see on our screen in ex-Yugoslavia, some governments are worried about sending their troops into situations where they believe they will be at risk.

One important means to overcome the reluctance in contributing troops to the UN peacekeeping operations is through the creation of a UN permanent army, as recently suggested by the Canadian Foreign Minister, Andre Ouellette.

The French Connection

The role of France in the Rwandan crisis is controversial. French support for Rwanda dates back to the beginning of the Habyarimana regime. Therefore, the intervention during the Rwandan genocide seems premeditated and unilateral. It is important to note that the intervention occurred minutes after the Security Council had sanctioned the move.

French policy in Africa has been guided by political and economic interests, regional dominance, strategic considerations, and a desire to demonstrate reliability and dependability as an ally. France has a long record of military and diplomatic support for the Habyarimana regime. It trained his "tonton macoute-style" militia and sent in troops to buttress his regime when it was threatened by the RPF in October 1990 (Brittain 1994). French troops had supported the Rwandan Armed Forces between October 1990 and December 1993. In addition, France supplied the Rwandan armed forces with arms and ammunition ranging from field artillery pieces to Gazelle helicopters and Noratlas and Guerrier aircraft. They also passed on night vision binoculars to the Rwandan army (Isnard 1994). Furthermore, the French bank Credit Lyonnais provided a \$6 million guaranteed loan for an arms purchase from Egypt in March 1992 (Hilsum 1994).

Political observers see the French deployment of troops as a continuation of the Elysees old policies, designed to prevent the RPF from taking control of Rwanda and possible implications thereof for Zaire and other neighbouring countries. Thus, it is probable that a stable, educated, and democratic government in Rwanda might be a bad influence on democratic forces and processes in Zaire (Brittain 1994). Interestingly enough, at the time of the French deployment, African nations such as Zimbabwe, Ghana, Senegal, and Ethiopia (already with troops on the ground) had been condemned at the OAU Summit. The failure of the UN and, for that matter, Western nations, to provide logistical support made the project a nonstarter. The

preserve the current administration or an alternative to the RPF, which they had opposed since its inception. International relief agencies also viewed the French role with suspicion. For instance, Médecins sans Frontières, Oxfam, and the International Red Cross declined to cooperate with a French unit created to coordinate humanitarian relief, accusing the French of seeking to use aid missions to boost support for the intervention (Tran and McGreal 1994).

France also temporarily blocked the application of Rwandan refugees seeking asylum in France. Rwandese students in France who applied for residence status also met a wall of silence. However, this might be consistent with tough new immigration laws

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paradox of the French connection is that France repatriated French nationals in April 1994, approved the withdrawal of the 2,000 UN troops in Rwanda just as the massacres were taking place, and turned around to offer "humanitarian protection" (2,500 troops) to refugees at a time the RPF was poised to take over. French soldiers also transported busloads of Rwandan soldiers to Zaire (McGreal 1994). Was this an attempt by France to shore up one of Africa's corrupt regimes and gain international credibility? Or, was France trying to secure maximum points on the public relations scoreboard? Was it a matter of regional control or supremacy among the poorest and defenceless African nations?

In a radical shift of policy, the French mandate was later broadened to stop the RPF advance after the capture of Kigali and Butare. This makes the humanitarian argument a shaky one. Critics were indeed of the view that France was planning to divide Rwanda or use it as a "safe haven" to

designed to keep out foreigners, especially Africans, from coming to France legally (Gambia 1994). Under these circumstances, "Operation Turquoise" was received with suspicion by the RPF, other countries and organizations.

The reasons behind the genocide in Rwanda and the forced migration of over 2.7 million people have often been couched in terms of ethnic clashes and the repression of Tutsi by the Kigali regime. However, a careful analysis of the crisis shows that German and Belgian colonial policies, the activities of France and her allies, the failure to repatriate Rwandese refugees, the regionalism of Habyarimana and his ruling clique, and a political power tussle may have been some of the causes of the genocide. It is pertinent, in the Rwandan question, to note that the war was mainly political rather than ethnic. In the same vein, one does not transmit refugee status to children, grandchildren or great grandchildren.

While Rwandans were trying to reshape their history, Zaire, like France

and Belgium, had been trying to stifle it. In 1990, Mobutu Sese Seko (Zaire) ordered his crack Division Speciale Presidentielle to help Rwandan soldiers beat off the RPF attack. Even after the death of Habyarimana, Zairean soldiers used false identities to buy ammunition, antitank shells, rocket launchers, and helicopters for Rwanda's interim government (*Africa Confidential* 1994). Before the death of Habyarimana, Mobutu Sese Seko had always supported the Rwandan Army with weapons, munitions, and fuel from the Goma base. In addition, remnants of the battered Rwandan army were seen crossing into Zaire with self-propelled cannon, light armoured cars, and even helicopters. These units have not been disarmed by Zaire (Isnard 1994). Some of the troops were even allowed to get UN special camps near Bukavu across the border from the French protection zone in southwestern Rwanda. This may have implications for future reprisals, peace and stability in Rwanda and in the region generally.

The Rwandan crisis has been a tragedy of apocalyptic proportions. It is estimated that between one-half to one million people died in the atrocities committed in April, May, June and July 1994. It is said to be the world's worst refugee catastrophe so far.

The Responsibility of the International Community

Foreign governments are "punishing" Africa by keeping quiet and not taking appropriate actions to stop civil war, famine, human rights abuses, etc. This encourages widespread social injustice, poverty, human rights violations, and the continued marginalization of Africa and other developing countries. By so doing, the West is guilty of inaction. History will judge the West as being apathetic and opportunistic in upholding its own economic interests at the expense of the welfare, dignity, and human rights of the people.

Foreign governments and NGOs should both be involved in social justice issues in the countries where they operate. Western governments and the

large multilateral organizations have considerable political and economic clout; they should exercise such influence for the benefit of impoverished groups in developing countries. Consequently, undemocratic leadership cabals, ruthless military dictators, and life presidents should not only be condemned, but also given a realistic period of time to relinquish power and set in motion a process for achieving political pluralism and multi-party governance.

In cases where unresponsive governments have not modified their behaviour and policies toward their citizens and have not demonstrated a move toward democracy, it is the duty of the community of nations to impose severe political, diplomatic, and economic sanctions promptly and without exception. It is imperative to ostracize and expel such leaders from international bodies.

The wealth of iron-fisted autocrats and that of their families and cohorts should be seized and invested in people-centred development projects and basic infrastructure. This should be done under the supervision of international observers and progressive forces in the host country.

Bilateral aid should be granted only to countries with clean human rights records. Funds should be properly accounted for and judiciously spent. At the same time, donor agencies and countries need to reassess the kinds of projects they support. Money for huge white elephant projects that have little or no direct benefit to the ordinary citizen should be re-channelled to more viable people-centred projects (Woldu, S. M. and Murray, E. 1993; Woldu, 1992).

As we move toward a "New World Order," the role of the international community in enforcing social justice, accountability, democratization processes and human rights cannot be overemphasized. In Africa, the role France played in perpetuating injustice and blocking democratic processes in Zaire, Togo, Cameroun, Ivory Coast, Chad, Central African Republic, Algeria, and other francophone countries

leaves much to be desired. The double standards of Western governments tend to entrench dictatorial regimes in power. It is paradoxical that many of these countries do talk about human rights and democracy, yet continue to prop up and support repressive dictators. Foreign support for Habyarimana strengthened his hand in ruthlessly dealing with other ethnic groups in Rwanda. Only firm action against totalitarian tendencies, an international condemnation of human rights abuse, and an insistence on a just and equitable world order would diminish many of the problems which tend to polarize developing countries and cause migration flows. ■

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Politique africaine de la France: arrêtons le massacre

François-Xavier Verschave¹

Abstract

The Rwandese genocide dramatically reveals the senseless nature of French policy in Africa—determined by personal relationships, speculation, and corruption. As the “reserved domain” of the French President for the past 35 years, French policy on the African continent has been dominated by personal relationships between the French President and his African counterparts, the military lobby, the francophone lobby (Fachoda Syndrome), and some French enterprises (ELF, Bouygues, Bolloré), all of which have escaped from any democratic control.

Hence in Rwanda, France armed, financed, and trained a regime that exhibited Nazi-like features with its guard presidential, militia, hatred propaganda (Radio Mille

Collines), pogroms throughout 1992, and finally the genocide of April 1994. Since the coming into power of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF)—perceived as pro-Anglo-Saxon because of its link with Uganda—France has multiplied its efforts to fill the (pro-French) vacuum left in the region, by calling upon the Zairean dictator Mobutu to “stabilize” the region, and by selling the usual military “package” (arms and training) to the Sudanese regime.

[The author is calling upon] the French population and the international community to mobilize against the present French policy in Africa, and identifies three French organizations that are currently lobbying for a human, pro-democratic and non-secretive French policy in Africa.

Le génocide rwandais, révélateur d'une politique insensée

La France a soutenu au Rwanda un régime en pleine dérive nazie, qui a installé à partir de 1990 l'équivalent des SS (la Garde présidentielle), des SA (les milices de tueurs) et une propagande radiophonique de masse sur la radio officielle des *Mille Collines*. Surnommée Radio-Machette, elle est le principal responsable, impuni, des massacres comme de l'exode mortel. Dès 1992, des pogromes, prémisses ou répétitions du génocide, ont été organisés par le Président Habyarimana, sa femme et son clan—depuis une maison appelée par dérision la «synagogue».

La France a financé, armé et formé la Garde présidentielle tribale qui, avec ses excroissances miliciennes, a exécuté le génocide. Au camp de Bigogwe, tandis que des instructeurs français formaient les commandos rwandais, de pleins camions amenaient chaque jour un chargement de civils destinés à être torturés et exécutés, puis repartaient avec les corps.

Toutes ces informations s'accumulaient à l'Elysée et Matignon plus d'un an avant les événements d'avril 1994: on a pourtant continué d'envoyer des armes aux responsables des tueries, bien après leur déclenchement. Paris a accueilli, avec les honneurs et l'argent de la Coopération, Mme. Agathe Habyarimana et certains des principaux instigateurs des massacres.

La France n'était pas au Rwanda en 1959, elle n'en connaissait rien: elle y est venue très progressivement, par les affaires et la francophonie. Puis elle s'est prise au jeu d'évincer l'ancien colonisateur belge—comme au Zaïre, comme elle l'a fait de l'Espagne en Guinée équatoriale, ou du Portugal en Angola—dans la perspective d'une sorte d'«Afrique latine», d'une Francafrique de la complaisance contre le Commonwealth du business, plus distant politiquement.

En bordure du Zaïre, le Rwanda était devenu un relais pour tous les trafics qu'autorise l'anarchie savamment entretenue de ce pays-continent (or, pierres précieuses, drogues, armes). Scellé par un accord secret de défense, l'alliance franco-rwandaise a pris la tournure familière, puis familiale, qui caractérise les relations entre le chef d'Etat français et ses homologues africains. Un trait poussé jusqu'à la caricature par Jean-Christophe Mitterrand,

le fils du Président et son conseiller aux affaires africaines jusqu'en 1992, qui s'est fait l'intermédiaire dévoué des familles Habyarimana, Bongo, Eyadema, Biya, ...

Sous ce «régime» économique et politique, la Francafrique est en perte de vitesse, face notamment au Nigéria, à l'Afrique du Sud et à certains pays d'Afrique de l'Est. Les chefs d'Etat des pays du «champ» perdent de leur prestige et, de plus en plus, de leur légitimité vis-à-vis de populations assaillies de difficultés. Mais, jusqu'au début de 1994, la parité du franc CFA et les accords de défense avec la France constituaient en quelque sorte des assurances tous risques contre l'irresponsabilité économique et politique. La crédibilité de cette protection était en jeu au Rwanda, et la France était mise au défi d'en prouver la fiabilité.²

Dans ces conditions, Jean-Christophe Mitterrand ne pouvait que répondre favorablement à l'appel au secours, en 1990, du président rwandais Juvénal Habyarimana. Sur un simple coup de téléphone au 2 rue de l'Elysée, il fut décidé d'envoyer plusieurs centaines de parachutistes français pour contrer la rébellion du Front Patriotique Rwandais. Celui-ci avait tous les défauts: il était animé par des Rwandais exilés en pays anglophone (l'Ouganda de Yoweri Museveni),

François-Xavier Verschave is the general secretary of SURVIE, a French NGO lobbying for an in-depth reform of French Official Public Development.

soupçonné donc de «faire le jeu des Anglo-saxons» (le syndrome de Fachoda); surtout, il échappait à l'influence des «Messieurs Afrique».³ Une fois décidé cet engagement aux côtés d'une dictature clanique, il ne sera plus possible de retirer le doigt de l'engrenage. La direction microcéphale de la politique franco-africaine est en effet incapable de faire appliquer ses contre-ordres: le soutien tardif, et peut-être sincère, aux accords de paix d'Arusha, a été saboté par des militaires français qui, comme au temps de l'Algérie, avaient épousé les thèses des extrémistes.

Pourquoi s'arrêter en si bon chemin ?

Loin de tirer les leçons du carnage rwandais, les mêmes géopoliticiens s'inquiètent maintenant du «vide» causé par l'effondrement du clan Habyarimana. On multiplie les appels, délégations et invitations envers le maréchal zaïrois Mobutu, auquel on demande de prendre le relais et de «stabiliser» la région. Celui qui ruine consciencieusement le Zaïre depuis plusieurs décennies et l'enfonce dans le chaos, celui qui autorise un début de génocide des kasaiens au Katanga, redevient en effet, pour la Françafrique néo-coloniale, le meilleur champion du combat francophone contre l'«anglo-saxon» Museveni. Il s'agit ainsi de montrer à tous les régimes autoritaires protégés par des accords de défense que la garantie de la France ne s'arrête pas à une bavure, fût-elle gigantesque. On est d'ailleurs en train de vendre le même «paquet» de services militaires au régime intégriste soudanais, pour lui permettre de mieux massacrer la résistance sudiste... adossée à l'Ouganda.

L'opération Turquoise survient alors comme une démonstration de force: il s'agissait de «rouler les mécaniques» dans les deux sens du terme (tester un dispositif logistique, affirmer un rôle de parrain régional). On a utilisé l'émotion suscitée par le génocide—mais on s'est bien gardé d'en arrêter les responsables et de faire taire «Radio-machette.»

Favoriser un rappel à la raison démocratique

L'abominable exemple rwandais, le retour en grâce de Mobutu et l'alliance soudanaise ne sont que les cas extrêmes d'une politique franco-africaine qui s'exerce avec les mêmes errements au Togo, au Cameroun, au Gabon, au Congo, au Tchad, ... La direction de cette politique relève depuis 35 ans du «domaine réservé» présidentiel. Confinée rue de l'Elysée, dans la cellule franco-africaine, elle échappe à tout contrôle démocratique, à tout débat sur ses objectifs et ses méthodes. N'y associant pas le peuple français, elle y a encore moins associé les peuples africains: c'est devenu une affaire entre chefs d'Etat.

L'obscurité a permis la prolifération de l'affairisme, de la corruption (en France et en Afrique) et des coups tor-dus. Le mauvais usage des crédits, le détournement de l'aide publique au développement, ainsi que des rentes agricoles et minières, ont contribué à endetter les pays du champ de la coopération française, et à dégrader leurs économies. Les avantages du pouvoir d'Etat n'en sont devenus que plus désirables: tous les moyens sont alors permis pour les conquérir et les défendre, à partir d'une base sociale de plus en plus réduite au clan présidentiel.

Cette évolution aberrante s'est accompagnée de la montée en puissance, en France, de groupes d'intérêts et de lobbies, que le pouvoir a utilisés, tolérés, ou laissé prospérer—au point qu'aujourd'hui il ne les contrôle plus guère. La politique africaine de la France est devenue un champ clos où rivalisent quelques dizaines de clans, corporations et réseaux: ceux des anciens responsables Afrique de l'Elysée (de Jacques Foccart à Jean-Christophe Mitterrand); ceux de tel ou tel ministre ou député (ancien ou actuel); Elf (qui cogère pratiquement trois pays africains); quelques entreprises très implantées, comme Bouygues ou Bolloré; à quoi s'ajoute le dangereux lobby militaro-africaniste. Sur le terrain, les stratégies des uns et des autres s'encastrent dans un désordre ravageur. La

déresponsabilisation et la démoralisation des acteurs de ce système sont telles qu'on pourrait le comparer à la centrale nucléaire de Tchernobyl: n'importe quel accident devient possible.

La crédibilité des institutions démocratiques françaises est en jeu: incontrôlé, l'exécutif est débordé par les groupes d'intérêts. Les fondements-mêmes de la République sont atteints: comment condamner le milicien Touvier ou le gestapiste Barbie, puis réserver le meilleur accueil aux instigateurs du génocide de près d'un million de personnes ? comment célébrer la Résistance à Hitler et révéler la force brute d'un Mobutu ?

Pour les citoyens français, il est urgent de mieux comprendre les aberrations de cette politique, et d'exiger qu'elle soit rappelée à la raison démocratique: le dispositif actuel compromet gravement l'image de leur pays et l'avenir de ses relations avec les peuples africains. A l'étranger, c'est un devoir de manifester une nette réprobation à ces dérives ubuesques—plutôt que le lâche soulagement d'un «abandon» de l'Afrique au seul pays occidental qui veuille s'en occuper. Le monde entier perdrait à cet abandon. Et la France est suffisamment inquiète de son image internationale pour qu'une pression extérieure l'encourage à plus de pondération. Ce fut sûrement le cas lors de l'opération Turquoise.

Des points d'appui dans la société française

Signalons-en trois:

- Une quinzaine d'organisations non-gouvernementales françaises viennent de constituer le «noyau dur» d'une «Coalition pour un contrôle démocratique de la politique africaine de la France».⁴
- Une trentaine de spécialistes, experts et universitaires, des questions de coopération et de développement, ont créé au début de 1994 un *Observatoire permanent de la Coopération française*.⁵ Son premier rapport annuel comporte un chapitre sur *La politique de la France au Rwanda (1973-1994)*.

• L'association civique Survie mène depuis onze ans une campagne pour une réforme en profondeur du système français de coopération, qui délègue beaucoup plus la mise en oeuvre de l'APD à un dispositif stimulant et coordonnant les initiatives de la société civile. Une proposition de loi en ce sens, initiée par Survie, a été co-signée par les 3/4 des députés. Mais sa mise à l'ordre du jour est freinée par les logiques contraires qui animent encore la majorité des «décideurs» de la politique franco-africaine. ■

Notes

1. Ouvrage collectif paru sous le pseudonyme «Claude Marchant»: *Nord-Sud, de l'aide au contrat. Pour un développement équitable*, Syros, Paris, 1991. Co-auteur, avec Anne-Sophie Boisgallais, de *L'aide publique au développement*, Syros, Paris, 1994. Auteur de *Libres leçons de Braudel. Passerelles pour une société non-excluante*, Paris, Syros, 1994.
2. «Il suffit d'écouter le silence gêné des dirigeants d'Afrique francophone face à cette tragédie [rwandaise]. Un silence assourdissant dont la signification est limpide: tous ou presque redoutent comme un précédent une victoire des opposants du Front Patriotique Rwandais. Il y a quelques jours à Paris, les ambassadeurs de ces mêmes pays réunis toutes portes closes autour de responsables français l'ont clairement fait savoir: quelle différence y a-t-il entre le FPR et les Casamançais basés en Guinée-Bissau, les Touaregs repliés en Libye, les Togolais implantés au Ghana ou les Tchadiens installés au Soudan? Aucune, à leurs yeux. Qu'ils représentent des régimes autoritaires vieillissants ou de jeunes démocraties, les excellences se sont montrées unanimes: pas question d'apporter aux rebelles du Front la moindre caution. «La France nous a imposé la dévaluation, qu'elle empêche au moins la déstabilisation», s'est écrié un ambassadeur» (François SOUDAN, in *Jeune Afrique* du 02/06/94).
3. Pour reprendre le titre *Ces Messieurs Afrique* de la galerie des portraits des éminences grises de la FrancAfrique, dressée par Antoine Glaer et Stephen Smith, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1992.
4. Contacts: Jean-Marie Fardeau, Agir ici, 14 passage Dubail, 75010-Paris, Tél. 33.1.40.35.07.00, Fax 33.1.40.35.06.20; ou Sharon Courtoux, Survie, 57 avenue du Maine, 75014-Paris, Tél. 33.1.43.27.03.25, Fax 33.1.43.20.55.58.
5. c/o CFSI, 8 rue de Dobropol, 75017-Paris. Contact: Laurent Barraud. Tél. 33.1.40.55.09.33. Fax 33.1.45.74.22.48. □

Abstract

The Repatriation of Rwandan Refugees: A Veritable Dilemma

This paper explores the problematic repatriation of Rwandan refugees and attempts to demonstrate that their return, in the absence of a durable peace, is not a definitive solution.

The situation in Rwanda has been extremely volatile since the killing of Rwanda's former President in April 1994. Genocide upon genocide occurs right now. About 2.5 million Rwandans have fled the country. Everybody asks the same question: "why?" The response from a majority of external observers is unanimous: it is a tribal conflict inspired by longstanding rivalry between the Hutu and the Tutsi.

However, behind these simplistic affirmations hides another reality. The war in Rwanda is, above all, a struggle for power. The elites of the country parade tribalism in order to justify the legitimacy of this power struggle. The stereotype of Hutu and Tutsi opposition is not sufficient to explain the Rwandan tragedy.

If there is to be a durable peace in Rwanda, the most fundamental condition is the way in which power is to be shared. Consequently, the question of repatriation within the Rwandan context remains a veritable dilemma.

Paradoxically, while many Rwandans are still fleeing, some refugees are already returning to this country consumed by violence and war. How can this phenomenon be explained? Two factors explain this premature return. The first is the dismal economic situation in the host countries, and the second is the socio-cultural nature of the Rwandan society.

The fact that some Rwandan refugees have returned voluntarily does not mean that this is the best solution for them and that they are not in danger. Many had no choice, because the miserable situation in the refugee camps forced them to go back home

before the end of the conflict. They returned home to flee cholera and hunger which claimed many victims. Remaining in the overcrowded refugee camps would mean risking death by disease; returning home would also mean risking death in the ongoing conflict. For many, the only choice is to return and die on their family soil.

It is important to stress that many Africans would prefer to die rather than leave their homeland. The reason for this is that their ancestors lie in the family soil. The African community is constituted by the living and the dead and both have a specific role to play in the community.

According to the renowned African author, Camara Lay, the dead do not die. They are in the field, in the river, in the forest; they are in the family soil and it would be cruel to forsake them. In the same vein, Yohannes Gabressellasie states that, in the African context, the sense of attachment which refugees have towards their homeland is strong. As some researchers note:

Return migration is important in Africa and is explained to a large extent by the social and cultural traditions (...). The cultural factors, however, in most of Africa play a decisive role. To most West Africans the ancestral village remains home.¹

Even if it is possible to solve the problem of civilian refugees repatriation through diplomatic negotiations or through a national program of reconciliation, the repatriation of 20,000 Rwandan soldiers will not be so straightforward. Indeed, it is no secret that the dismal situation in Rwanda is largely the responsibility of the former government and especially the army. How will the Rwandan Patriotic Front accept the repatriation of their worst enemies?

The politicians know that if these soldiers do not return now, they may attack at any time. What they do not know is how to accomplish their return

Boniface Shally B. Gachuruzi, Ph.D, is a researcher at CRS, York University.

Le rapatriement des réfugiés rwandais: un véritable dilemme

Boniface Shally B. Gachuruzi

Cet article explique la problématique de rapatriement des réfugiés Rwandais. L'étude s'inscrit dans une approche socio-historique et tente de démontrer que la tragédie rwandaise est avant tout une lutte de pouvoir. Elle démontre aussi que le retour volontaire de quelques réfugiés ne signifie

without the occurrence of another genocide.

The problem, therefore, becomes complex not only for the Rwandan politicians, but also for the political authorities of the region and of the United Nations. It is imperative to end the conflict and to prevent it from spreading to other countries in the region which have the same ethnic groups. Neighbouring Burundi is considered a volcano which can erupt at any time.

In such a reality, the new government in Kigali faces a tremendous challenge—to recreate the momentum of social metamorphosis. How will it brave this challenge in a climate of total distress? How will it fertilize its actions so that they grow and bear fruit?

The prospects for peace, the hope for a fertile life and a prosperous future are functions of the way in which this challenge will be addressed. The first imperative is to promote a tolerant spirit among Rwandan people, in spite of their tribal belonging. Rwandans must forsake the tribal hatred which asphyxiates and weakens them. This imperative seems a *sine qua non* condition for the collective national conscience of Rwandan social strata.

The outcome of this collective national conscience would be the interiorization of present options and the realization of the ideals that Rwandans will make for themselves based on their own interests and the requirements of their social environment. ■

pas qu'ils sont hors danger. Ce phénomène trouve sa justification dans des raisons économiques qui prévalent dans les pays hôtes ainsi que des facteurs socio-culturels qui caractérisent le peuple africain.

Trois parties constituent la charpente de cet article. La première partie fait une description sommaire de la situation et jette un bref regard rétroactif sur l'histoire du Rwanda pour mieux éclairer les causes de la tragédie rwandaise.

La deuxième est une analyse critique de l'affirmation selon laquelle la cause des événements qui ont endeuillé le Rwanda est uniquement tribale comme le laisse croire plusieurs observateurs, alors que la troisième explique les facteurs qui ont motivé le retour volontaire de quelques réfugiés.

Enfin, la dernière partie analyse la situation très délicate de 20 000 soldats Rwandais réfugiés au Zaïre ainsi que le risque de régionalisation du conflit. L'étude se termine par une réflexion sur les solutions possibles pour une paix durable qui, nous en sommes certains, peuvent faire la différence si elles sont bien appliquées.

La tragédie rwandaise

Depuis le mois d'Avril 1994, la situation qui prévaut au Rwanda est plus que dramatique. Les génocides se succèdent et aucun signe ne laisse présager l'espoir d'une paix durable.

Selon Chris Sassa,² l'ampleur de la tragédie a dépassé toutes les craintes. La bestialité et la cruauté ont eu raison sur le bon sens dans ce coin de l'Afrique qui en a pourtant vu d'autres. Cette fois, le sommet a été atteint. Il cite le témoignage d'un coopérant Canadien qui a assisté aux austérités et parle d'un hécatombe.

Car, c'est bien d'hécatombe, de carnage qu'il s'agit. (...) On a massacré dans l'enceinte d'une cathédrale, dans les chambres des hôpitaux, dans les asiles et orphelinats pour ne citer que ces lieux qui auraient du être des refuges (...) dans des conditions que la décence interdit de décrire. Les images rapportées sur le petit écran sont celles de l'apocalypse.³

Au moment où plusieurs réfugiés tentent de gagner les frontières des pays voisins, plusieurs autres rentrent dans leurs villages respectifs qui, il faut le dire, sont à feu et à sang. Comme on le sait, le rapatriement des réfugiés est tributaire à la fin du conflit qui les avait poussé sur la route de refuge. Qu'est-ce qui peut expliquer ce phénomène aussi bien déroutant que paradoxal?

Plusieurs hypothèses peuvent éclairer cette situation mais celles de la dégradation économique des pays hôtes ainsi que des raisons socio-culturelles semblent justifier ce retour au bercail. Nous y reviendrons.

Mais pour mieux comprendre le drame rwandais, il importe de jeter un regard rétroactif sur la cohabitation qui a caractérisé les groupes ethniques du pays de milles collines avant l'indépendance.

Pour la petite histoire, le Rwanda a toujours été occupé par trois groupes ethniques: les Hutus, les Tutsis et les Twas. Les Hutus constituent 84% de la population, les Tutsis 15%, alors que le groupe Twas ne compte qu'une pour cent. Les Hutus étaient des agriculteurs alors que les Tutsis étaient éleveurs. Le pays était gouverné par un Mwami (roi) Tutsi qui était investi du pouvoir absolu. Il avait le droit de donner ou de spolier les champs à la population selon qu'elle lui était soumise ou non. Ces pouvoirs étaient conférés aux chefs et aux sous-chefs Tutsis qui représentaient le mwami dans les villages. Les Hutus étaient des serfs et pouvaient être chassés de leurs terres

Boniface Shally B. Gachuruzi, Ph.D., est chercheur au CRS de l'Université York.

s'ils ne payaient pas le tribut au roi ou à ses représentants. Come l'indique T.F. Betts cité par Gaim Kibreab,⁴

The Hutu could only acquire the usufruct of cattle through personal service on a farm or through military service as Tutsi clients. They were subsistence farmers... compelled to pay tribute to the Mwami and the Tutsi chiefs who were his appointees.

En 1959, après une révolte sanglante des Hutus réunis au sein du parti Parméhutu, les Tutsis furent chassés du pouvoir et se réfugièrent dans les pays voisins. Ils reviendront cependant en 1961 pour participer aux élections tenues au Rwanda sous la surveillance de l'ONU.

Après avoir perdues ces élections, ils rentrèrent dans les pays qui leur avaient accordé asile auparavant, c'est-à-dire, l'Uganda, le Burundi, la Tanzanie et le Zaïre. C'est de l'Uganda qu'ils vont s'organiser pour reprendre le pouvoir.

Maintenant que nous connaissons la petite histoire du Rwanda, pouvons-nous être sûrs que les Hutus ne tenteront pas de reconquérir le pouvoir qui vient de leur tourner le dos. Peut-on être certain que la population civile ne payera pas pour une nouvelle course au pouvoir au Rwanda qui semble justifier les austérités dans ce pays?

Une guerre tribale ou une lutte de pouvoir pour le pouvoir

Depuis le début des massacres au Rwanda jusqu'aujourd'hui, le drame rwandais alimente les manchettes des télévisions et des radios. Tous les journaux en parlent, dénoncent et critiquent. Tout le monde se pose la même question: «pourquoi»? La réponse est presque unanime: il s'agit d'un conflit tribal, d'une rivalité entre Hutus et Tutsis.

Mais au delà de toutes ces affirmations quelque peu tapageuses, se cache une toute autre réalité évidente. Il s'agit avant tout d'une lutte de pouvoir. Celle-ci se mène entre les élites du pays qui lui donne une connotation tribale pour justifier sa légitimité car le seul cliché de l'opposition Hutue et

Tutsie n'est pas suffisant pour expliquer la tragédie rwandaise.

On a intoxiqué la population, on a tiré sur la corde de sensibilité pour attiser la férocité et inciter aux massacres. Le résultat de cette intoxication fut la chasse à l'homme qui s'est terminée dans un bain de sang.

Tous les deux groupes, chacun à sa manière, se présente comme le sauveur de la population. Les partisans de l'ancien gouvernement continuent à mettre en garde les Hutus contre le danger de la domination et de l'exploitation Tutsies dont ils avaient été victimes avant l'accession du Rwanda à l'indépendance. Pour sa part, le FPR se présente comme le libérateur des Tutsis assiégés ainsi que des Hutus que la dictature a écarté de la gestion du pays. D'où les représailles, les massacres des innocents civils et religieux.

Comme on peut le constater, la guerre au Rwanda n'est pas seulement tribale comme le laisse croire plusieurs observateurs. On lui colle cette étiquette pour justifier certaines prises de positions. Cette guerre est plutôt une lutte de pouvoir. En d'autres termes, les uns tentent de le conquérir, alors que les autres essayent de le garder jalousement. Ainsi donc, en mettant l'accent sur le tribalisme, on évacue tout soupçon de responsabilité de la soif du pouvoir.

En effet, les tribus et le tribalisme ne constituent pas les deux faces d'une même médaille. Plusieurs tribus peuvent cohabiter et tirer profit de cette unité dans la diversité sans qu'il n'y ait un conflit tribal. Le tribalisme peut de sa part se renforcer tout en respectant l'identité et l'intégrité des autres. Mais quand les assoiffés du pouvoir incitent à outrepasser les limites, l'apparence d'une relation de cause à effet entre tribus et tribalisme semble prendre le dessus.

En 1959, les Hutus ont combattu l'exploitation et la domination Tutsies. Malheureusement, ils n'ont pas jugé nécessaire de changer la gestion du pouvoir; bien au contraire, ils ont renforcé les structures centralistes comme ce fut le cas pendant le règne Tutsi.

Par conséquent, il était hors de question de cautionner des projets qui tentaient de réduire les différences ethniques. On comprend alors que la gestion du pouvoir ne pouvait pas profiter à toutes les composantes socio-ethniques.

De leur côté, les Tutsis n'ont pas supporté d'être complètement écartés de la gestion du pays par leurs anciens serfs. C'est pourquoi, ils ont lutté pour avoir leur part de gâteau au pouvoir sans partage qu'ont détenus les Hutus pendant près de 35 ans.

Ceci nous amène à conclure dans un premier temps que l'enjeu d'une paix durable au Rwanda est assujéti à l'exercice du pouvoir. Autrement dit, la paix durable dans ce pays ne sera déterminée que par la façon dont le pouvoir sera partagé. Ceci dit, le rapatriement des réfugiés Rwandais constitue un véritable dilemme parce que les règles élémentaires de la démocratie n'existent pas encore pour leur permettre de rentrer en toute sécurité.

Le rapatriement volontaire des réfugiés rwandais

Over the past four decades, the most often cited durable solutions to the plight of refugees have been either voluntary repatriation (...). Voluntary repatriation is the one often deemed as the most durable.⁵

En accord avec cette citation, on peut dire que le rapatriement des réfugiés Rwandais est la meilleure solution. Mais est-il possible de garantir leur sécurité une fois de retour dans leur pays? Ne risquent-ils pas de représailles? Peut-on croire aux déclarations des politiciens qui promettent de passer l'éponge à la situation? Ces questions nous semblent capitales même s'il est difficile d'y donner des réponses appropriées.

Le fait que quelques Rwandais soient rentrés volontairement ne signifie pas qu'ils ont pris une bonne décision et qu'ils sont hors danger; pas du tout! Deux raisons majeures peuvent justifier cette prise de décision. Il s'agit de la dégradation sanito-économique des pays hôtes ainsi que les facteurs socioculturels.

Dégradation sanito-économique des pays hôtes et facteurs socioculturels

Le retour de quelques réfugiés rwandais peut se justifier par le fait qu'ils n'avaient pas de choix. En effet, la situation sanito-économique dans les camps où ils sont entassés est la plus déplorable jamais connue dans l'histoire du monde contemporain. Ils sont rentrés pour fuir le choléra et la faim qui ont déjà fait des milliers de victimes. Devant le choix difficile de rester pour mourir de faim ou du choléra, ou bien de rentrer pour être tués en guise de représaille, ils ont préféré rentrer mourir dans leurs villages aux côtés des leurs. En rapport avec cet attachement à la terre natale, il est important de souligner que les Africains peuvent préférer creuser que de quitter le terroir familial pour la simple raison que là reposent leurs ancêtres. On sait en effet que la communauté africaine est composée des vivants et des morts et que chacun a un rôle spécifique à jouer au sein de cette communauté.

C'est à juste titre donc qu'un auteur africain de réputation internationale affirme que «les morts ne sont pas morts. Ils sont dans les champs, dans les rivières, ils sont dans le bois, ... etc», bref, ils sont sur le terroir familial et il serait cruel de les abandonner quel que soient les circonstances.

Même en temps normal, le transfert d'une population de son environnement ne se fait pas sans problèmes. Colin Turnbull⁶ dans son livre intitulé «*forest people*» rapporte l'histoire d'un pygmée déporté de son milieu naturel, la forêt, vers une grande agglomération. Celui-ci fut terrifié de se retrouver dans un espace ouvert. Mais, ce qui l'a beaucoup plus marqué n'est pas cet espace ouvert mais surtout l'indifférence des habitants de cet environnement social.

En déplaçant quelqu'un de son environnement, on détruit son tissu social et de ce fait, on l'expose à des traumatismes psychologiques. Nous partageons l'avis de Hall⁷ quand il indique que «l'incapacité à saisir l'importance et la profondeur du lien qui

unit l'homme à son environnement a conduit dans le passé à des erreurs tragiques» Dans la même veine, le psychologue M. Fried et le sociologue C. Hartman⁸ ont décrit le chagrin et le profond état dépressif qui se sont emparés des habitants de «West End» de Boston une fois relogés après la destruction de leur village urbain conformément au programme de rénovation. Ce n'était pas tant la perte de leur ancien environnement qui les rendait si malheureux que celle de cet ensemble des rapports complexes impliquant à la fois, bâtiments, rues et personnes, qui constituait un véritable style de vie. En fait, leur univers avait été détruit.

A cet effet, E.T. Hall⁹ souligne qu'aucune espèce ne peut vivre sans un environnement qui ne soit sa création exclusive, qu'aucune espèce ne peut survivre sinon en tant que membre intégré d'une communauté écologique.

Nous avons fait ce grand détour pour expliquer pourquoi quelques réfugiés Rwandais sont rentrés avant que la guerre ne soit terminée. Ceci explique aussi pourquoi les réfugiés Tutsis se sont battus pour rentrer chez eux. Pour toutes ces raisons, nous pensons que si les réfugiés Hutus ne rentrent pas maintenant, ils vont se battre pour regagner leur pays. Eu égard à toutes ces considérations, la paix au Rwanda est loin d'être acquise.

Et pourtant, il n'y a pas de solution autre que le retour au bercail. La question est complexe; sa complexité interpelle non seulement les politiciens Rwandais, mais aussi les Nations Unies et les autorités de toute la région.

Comment en effet, demander aux réfugiés de rentrer dans leur pays quand on sait bien ce qui va leur arriver? Comment les garder dans les pays d'accueil qui en plus d'être surpeuplés sont confrontés au problème d'une pauvreté chronique? Comment ramener une paix durable dans la région et au Rwanda en particulier? Ces questions nous apparaissent pertinentes surtout quand on sait que le rapatriement de 20.000 soldats Rwandais constitue une équation à plusieurs inconnus.

La situation de 20.000 soldats et autres indésirables du nouveau régime rwandais

S'il y a des problèmes pour lesquels l'espoir d'une solution durable est loin d'être trouvée, celui de 20.000 soldats rwandais ainsi que des milliers de civils réfugiés au Zaïre en est un. Pour ces gens, aucun espoir de retour dans leur pays ne pointe à l'horizon. Ils se trouvent dans un long tunnel dont l'issue est difficile à entrevoir.

Si le gouvernement par le biais de son vice-président n'a pas caché son intention de n'accepter que le retour des analphabètes, il y a lieu de se demander que sera le sort des intellectuels dont le pays a sûrement besoin pour participer à sa reconstruction. Le problème se pose encore avec beaucoup plus d'acuité au sujet du retour des 20.000 soldats rwandais.

En effet, il n'est un secret pour personne que, si la situation a dégénéré au Rwanda, l'ancien gouvernement et son armée en sont en partie responsables. Le tâtonnement dans l'application des accords d'Arusha qui visaient entre autre l'intégration en son sein des éléments du FPR et le retour volontaire des réfugiés Tutsis a fait déborder le vase. Maintenant que les forces du FPR sont légitimes après avoir signé une victoire militaire face aux forces gouvernementales, comment accepteront-elles à leur tour leurs pires ennemis? Quels genres de rapports pourront-ils entretenir? Du côté de la population civile, la situation n'est pas rose non plus. Comment concevoir en effet des bons voisinages de gens qui se sont endeuillés?

S'il est possible de trouver une solution sur le rapatriement des civils soit par voies diplomatiques soit en recourant à la réconciliation nationale, la solution au problème du retour des soldats rwandais reste pour le moment très peu probable.

Des solutions possibles, mais aussi des blocages.

La recherche de solution de rapatriement de 20.000 soldats réfugiés au Zaïre est une vraie casse-tête. Mais si le

nouveau gouvernement rwandais veut rétablir définitivement la paix, il n'a pas d'autre choix que d'accorder l'amnistie générale garantissant le retour de tous les réfugiés sans aucune restriction et d'investir beaucoup plus dans la politique de réconciliation nationale. Cette amnistie tiendrait compte du strict respect des droits de la personne et garantirait la sécurité des réfugiés une fois de retour.

Il ne fait ombre d'aucun doute effet que, tant qu'on aura pas encore réglé la question du rapatriement de tous les réfugiés, la paix est loin d'être acquise au Rwanda, car les 20.000 soldats réfugiés au Zaïre peuvent attaquer n'importe quand s'ils en ont les moyens. Le cas des ex-gendarmes Katangais \-Zaïrois peut servir de démonstration. En effet, quand Mobutu a pris le pouvoir au Zaïre en 1965, une partie de la gendarmerie katangaise sous la direction du Général Bumba Nathanael a refusé de se soumettre à ses ordres.

Ils se sont réfugiés dans les pays limitrophes dont la Zambie et l'Angola. Une dizaine d'années après, ils ont attaqué le Zaïre à deux reprises. N'eût été l'intervention des militaires français et marocains, le régime Mobutu serait tombé parce que son armée était en déroute.

Pour les pays hôtes, la présence des réfugiés sur leurs territoires constitue une monnaie d'échange. En effet, ces derniers peuvent exiger n'importe quoi du Rwanda en échange de l'extradition de 20.000 soldats pour garantir la sécurité de leur pays. Ils sont conscients que leur présence à l'extérieur constitue une menace permanente et ne manqueraient aucun effort pour les récupérer quelque soit le prix à payer. Ces pays voisins peuvent donc les faire chanter n'importe comment en les menaçant d'organiser et d'aider leurs opposants en vue d'une attaque éventuelle.

Le nouveau gouvernement de Kigali est conscient de cette menace qui pèse sur lui. Ce dont il n'a pas la moindre idée, c'est de savoir comment résoudre le problème de ses 20.000 soldats tout en évitant un autre génocide.

Et qu'est-ce qui arriverait s'il optait pour une ligne dure en refusant le retour de ses ressortissants? Dans pareil cas, il est probable qu'il négocierait directement avec les pays hôtes l'extradition des réfugiés. Une fois extradés, ils seraient jugés selon les lois en vigueur dans ce pays ou tout simplement exécutés en cachette pour ne pas alerter l'opinion internationale.

Dans un cas comme dans l'autre, le rapatriement des réfugiés qu'il soit volontaire ou pas, est un risque à prendre. En effet, on sait que le Rwanda fait partie de plusieurs pays du Tiers Monde où la démocratie est une question tabou et que certains États africains ne respectent jamais la parole donnée.

Le cas de Pierre Mulele exécuté à Kinshasa/Zaïre malgré toutes les assurances données par le gouvernement zaïrois aux représentants du HCR ainsi qu'aux autorités du Congo/Brazzaville où il s'était réfugié constitue une bonne illustration de manque de respect à la parole donnée.

On peut citer également à titre d'exemple le cas des anciens réfugiés Burundais qui sont rentrés lors des élections libres qui avaient porté le Président Ndadaye au pouvoir. Malheureusement, leur joie fut de courte durée parce que plusieurs d'entre eux ont péri dans le massacre qui a suivi l'assassinat du Président démocratiquement élu. Ce sont autant d'exemples qui nous laissent présager l'apocalypse au Rwanda si les réfugiés rentrent avant qu'une paix durable ne soit garantie.

Risque de régionalisation du conflit

Plusieurs pays de cette région d'Afrique de l'Est ont les trois tribus au sein de leurs populations. Le Burundi est en tête parce qu'il a les mêmes ethnies que le Rwanda voisin. Les Hutus y sont aussi majoritaire avec 85 pour cent de la population totale.

A l'est du Zaïre et plus particulièrement dans la province du Nord Kivu, les trois tribus confondus représentent la moitié de la population soit plus de deux millions d'habitants. Encore une fois, les Hutus y sont majoritaires.

Si la situation est sous contrôle au Zaïre, le Burundi constitue un volcan qui peut cracher n'importe quand. Les Hutus de ce pays vivent les mêmes conditions que celles pour lesquelles les Tutsis du Rwanda se sont opposés. Ils sont écartés du pouvoir politique et économique même si on remarque de plus en plus un effort très remarquable pour s'en sortir. Toutes ces raisons nous laissent croire qu'une présence prolongée des réfugiés rwandais au Burundi peut miner la bonne marche du processus de démocratisation qui y a déjà été amorcé. Les autres pays voisins à l'instar du Burundi n'ont pas intérêt de garder longtemps les réfugiés rwandais sur leurs territoires au risque de transférer ce conflit tribal dans leurs pays. Les Hutus évincés du pouvoir au Rwanda ne risquent-ils pas d'influencer les autres Hutus de la région pour se venger contre les Tutsis toujours minoritaires. De l'autre côté, les extrémistes Tutsis ne peuvent-ils pas servir d'éclaireurs pour éliminer les Hutus qu'ils jugent dangereux pour le pouvoir au Rwanda.

Une autre raison qui laisse croire que les autorités concernées devraient contribuer honnêtement au rétablissement de la paix au Rwanda est que la présence prolongée d'un grand nombre de réfugiés sur leurs territoires peut être une sérieuse menace pour leur pouvoir dans le cas où ces derniers s'associaient aux groupes d'opposition comme ce fut le cas en Uganda.

En effet, le FPR a renversé l'ancien gouvernement avec l'aide de l'Uganda qui lui servait de base arrière, de vivier et d'appui logistique pour utiliser les expressions de Chris Sassa.¹⁰ Selon lui, ils ont aidé Yori Museveni à prendre le pouvoir et beaucoup ont été intégrés dans l'armée ougandaise, certains à des hauts postes de commandement. Quand ils ont décidé d'aller lutter chez eux, Museveni n'avait d'autre choix que de leur renvoyer l'ascenseur.

Vous comprenez donc tout intérêt qu'ils ont à ne pas garder les réfugiés rwandais longtemps chez eux s'ils ne veulent pas subir le sort du président Habyarimana et des ses collaborateurs.

Conclusion

Nous voici au terme de cet article sur la problématique de rapatriement des réfugiés rwandais. Tout au long de cette dissertation, nous avons démontré le dilemme auquel les Rwandais qui ont trouvé refuge ailleurs sont confrontés. Ils doivent faire un choix difficile; celui de rentrer dans un pays où la paix est encore fragile ou de rester dans les pays d'accueil. Et pourtant, il faudra se décider et la meilleure option qui s'offre à eux est le retour volontaire dans leur pays.

Comme l'indique bien Julie Barbero¹¹ à propos du cas éthiopien,

... it is become increasingly clear that complete peace is not always a prerequisite to repatriation. (...), we believe that peace, democracy and economy recover must go hand and hand, and reinforce one another.

Mais, pour que ce retour soit sécuritaire, une batterie de mesures devrait être envisagée; il s'agit de l'amnistie générale et l'amorce d'un processus de démocratisation, ce dernier étant la seule capable de ramener le calme au Rwanda. Le rapatriement des réfugiés doit être aussi soigneusement et méthodiquement étudié pour éviter des aberrations. Pour ce faire, une connaissance approfondie de la culture africaine, des groupes ethniques et spécialement des Hutus et des Tutsis de toute la région s'impose.

Pour sa part, les Nations Unies par l'entremise du HCR et d'autres organismes doivent veiller à dénoncer toute exaction qui serait commise à l'endroit des rapatriés. Cependant, en vue d'éviter des frictions, cette intervention doit être souple et laisser une large marge de manoeuvre aux Rwandais qui doivent trouver eux mêmes une solution à leurs conflits.

Le nouveau gouvernement est confronté à un défi qu'il se doit de lever s'il veut une véritable paix au Rwanda. Ce défi est de ré-dynamiser les élans de métamorphose sociale. Comment affrontera-t-il ce défi dans un désarroi total où les gens s'enlisent actuellement et par quel moyen fertilisera-t-il ses actions pour qu'ils grandissent et

portent des fruits? La paix, l'espoir de vie féconde et d'un avenir présomptueux sont fonction de la manière dont ce défi sera levé.

L'impératif le plus urgent qui s'impose est d'amorcer une campagne de sensibilisation en faveur de l'esprit de tolérance qui doit habiter tous les Rwandais en dépit de leur appartenance tribale. Ils doivent se débarrasser de la haine tribale qui les affaiblit et les asphyxie. Cet impératif paraît une condition sine qua non de déclenchement d'une conscientisation au niveau de toutes les couches sociales du Rwanda. Si elle est dynamique, elle est susceptible de créer une alchimie et d'engendrer une action d'envergure capable de remettre le pays sur les rails.

L'aboutissement de cette conscientisation serait l'intériorisation des grandes options du temps moderne et un effort de réalisation de ces principes de la vie sociale. Bref, une fidélité du peuple Rwandais aux idéaux qu'il fera lui même suivant ses propres intérêts et les exigences de son environnement social.

Nous croyons que si les élites rwandaises veulent aujourd'hui changer la mentalité de gens qu'ils représentent, il importe qu'ils changent profondément eux-mêmes. Sans ce changement, ils couleront tous vers les embouchures de l'inconnu. ■

Notes

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