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My personal experiences during the genocide in 1994

The onset of genocidal killing must have started in Kibuye after we started to see people who had machete wounds coming to seek refuge [in our neighborhood]. It was not long before the attackers came and looted our livestock and destroyed our homes. We immediately went to seek refuge at Nzuki Parish where we found almost all the people there having major wounds inflicted by machetes. Shortly after, the attackers came to the parish and we escaped and went to hide in a bush. Thereafter, we went to our grandmother's home where we found that they had also never slept through the night due to fear of being attacked. We left our grandmother's home and went to seek refuge in a church at Mukingi. In this church, all the people had come to seek refuge were all locked inside the church. However, all the children including myself were taken and locked inside the vesting room that was inside church. Old women were left in the main part of the church [where pews are located] and when the attackers came and found the old women inside the church, they killed all of them.

The killers never managed to enter the vesting room where we were hiding. However, they later came to know that we were inside the church and they came to attack us in church that evening. When we heard them blowing whistles while they were coming to attack us, some members of that church's choir who knew that we were hiding in the vesting room, came and took us away and went to hide us in the bush. These choir members refused to take us to their homes for fear that the killer gangs would come to kill us. At the time, I did not know where my family members were and I had a feeling that they had all been killed.

I was all by myself hiding at night in the bush yet I was only 9 years old. Later, I left my hideout and as I was walking, I came across some people next to the entrance of the compound of a home. I requested them to hide me and they accepted and took me to the house where I found that they were hiding 11 other people. The owners of the home then locked us inside one of the rooms in the house.

After a while, the people we were hiding with in that house interrogated me and I told them that I had come to visit the owners of the home. They left to seek refuge at Kabgayi and I remained in the room all by myself. Later, I witnessed my maternal uncle being forced to dig a pit. Once he completed digging the pit, he was thrown inside and his tormentors buried him and only his head was left above the ground. His tormentors then beat him in the head using clubs and when I protested, they chased after me and was lucky to outrun them. I continued living though under very difficult conditions including getting a skin infection where I had rashes all over my body [as a result food deficiency]. However, I was eventually arrested.

When Inkotanyi soldiers were almost reaching the neighborhood that we were living at the time, we started witnessing many people from Bugesera coming to seek refuge in that neighborhood. They claimed that Inkotanyi was killing people.... and were also destroying peoples' homes.

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I stayed with the refugees from Bugesera and I felt that they were not happy with me because they used to insult me on a daily basis. I always cried when I had gone to sleep every moment I thought about how all my relatives had been killed. They also kept on telling me that my people were exterminating their people and they promised me that I was going to die with them [Hutu refugees from Bugesera]. Later these refugees left to seek refuge elsewhere. Whenever they had cooked, they normally used to take the pot from the fire and put it on my head because they were saying that it is my people [Tutsi] who were exterminating them [Hutu]. Whenever I complained that the pot was burning my head, they always insulted me.

We continued to escape till we reached Kibuye. After the genocide had come to an end, [Refugees from Bugesera returned to their homes]. We also left Kibuye and went home where I stayed although in grief. When my maternal aunt knew where I was, she came and took me away. The moment she saw me, she was shocked and one could see fear in her while I grieved. I had been sick with rashes all over my body. That is when she took me to a children's orphanage.

I do not have the strength to tell you all that I experienced. There are things that I have forgotten, although all the things I have written are simply a summary [of my experiences during the 1994 genocide].

Thank you.