

20121030-013 Mudaheranwa, Jackson

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Subject: History of Genocide

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History of genocide
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How I fled to go seek refuge and what I experienced during the genocide

War [genocide] started when I was at home and then my sister-in-law came and took me away. We went together and I spent the night [at her home] and the following morning, they [people living in my sister-in-law's home] went to cultivate land and when I work up, I saw very many people from a place called Gisoro in Rwoga Secteur come and burn all the houses in Semamana's home. They then asked me whether we were Tutsi and I responded that we were not and they moved on. When my sister-in-law returned to our home at noon, she found that all the people had fled and all the houses had been razed to the ground. After she returned, I went to hide so that the killer gangs do not come and find me at home. On 19-4-94, my paternal uncle came and found me at home [My sister-in-law's home]. He hid at the home and when killer gangs came the following morning [to look for people to kill], he managed to escape and the gang left. From then on, he was on the run.

After some time, my maternal uncles wanted to kill my sister Mukeshimana Carlatte who had been hiding at my maternal grandfather's home. That is when one of our neighbors told my mother to look for a young man to marry my sister Mukeshimana Carlette. My mother and my sister both refused [this advice] and that is when my sister-in-law went and brought my sister. By then, it was mid May 1994 and she hid my sister at a place that she had faith that she would be safe so that she could take her the morning after.

It is on 21st May 1994 that killer gangs arrested our paternal uncle and undressed him before calling my sister-in-law to come and see my paternal uncle's nakedness.

When she arrived, she sympathized and ordered the killer gang to return his clothes or else she was going to kill the gang members. They refused to return his clothes and did not kill him because he was a strong man and also from a very able family.

The killer gang fled and spent the night at Fereda's home and accused him [My paternal uncle of wrongdoing]. Fereda was by then a prosecutor. The following morning, a judge of a court of law came together with the person who was a Brigadier at Commune Masango so that they can listen to the [court] case before them. The plaintiff argued that he [my paternal uncle] should be put in prison all with the intention of getting the opportunity to kill me, his wife [Paternal uncle's wife] together with my other sister. He [My paternal Uncle] won the case and we knew we were now safe. Later, two killer gangs were brought and someone leaked information to me and my sister about what was going to happen.

We fled and went to a place where there were so many other refugees. We ran and when we were almost getting there, we saw gangs coming after us and we got into a banana farm and hid. The gang came and passed [close to where we were hiding]. It is God who had protected us from harm. [RPF] Inkotanyi liberated the area I was hiding at the beginning of the month of June 1994. Locals in this area used to be refer to Inkotanyi as cockroaches. However, we fled to a place in Karambi and when we arrived, Jean who used to live in Marie Therese's home asked why we were fleeing from Inkotanyi and yet we were one and the same with the Inkotanyi. I became extremely fearful because the people we were escaping with started talking in coded language that they should pound them [Killing cockroaches/Tutsis]. People pound them. That is the proverbial speech they were using [to refer to killing us Tutsis escaping with them (Hutus)]. We continued to flee and we reached at Kabagari.

Shortly after, a soldier who was putting on spectacles came to where we were and by then, my sister was putting on a cap with F.P.R (Rwanda Patriotic Front) insignia. The soldier then told her remove the cap before telling us that we wanted us to accompany him. We went with him to our hideout/where we had camped and there was nowhere to hide because my sister-in-law had hidden so many people. At the time, food had already been cooked and was almost about to be served. Suddenly, we saw a gang of Twa people coming towards us. Members of the gang were putting on banana leaves and carrying clubs and daggers. They [the gang] asked us to show us

our identification card although my younger sister did not have any. However, my older sister used to always carry an identification card of a Hutu man and she always said that she was a Tutsi although her husband was a Hutu.

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Later, my sister-in-law bribed them (gang of Twa people) with a gallon full of *Urwagwa* alcohol in addition to 500FRW so that they could set us free. They took with them the money and alcohol and went to drink the alcohol. After drinking the alcohol, they again came back and demanded that my sister-in-law gives them a cow and in case she failed to give them a cow, they threatened to kill all of us. They took the cow and went to slaughter and feasted on it. The soldier [whom the gang found us with] used to closely work with the gang but did not show it. After the gang had taken the cow, my sister-in-law and the soldier escorted us and we returned home where we hid. We used to eat soya and our bodies turned white like salt. Come the month of July 1994, people in the area we had been had all fled. We went to a home to borrow a sieve from one of the few people who had not fled so as to sieve the soya drink. While we were in that home, there came 3 soldiers.

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One of them (soldiers) was tall and did not know Kinyarwanda. Because my sister had studied upto the 4th year of secondary school, she told us that he (the soldier) was speaking in English. At the time, I was together with my sister and two other girls. My sister-in-law had hidden an old man together with that old man's daughter-in-law who was a Tutsi and who had refused to flee. Also being hidden was that old man's son-in-law who was hiding in the ceiling. In total, we were 7 people. One of the soldiers said, "you have to give me those keys so that we check whether you are hiding any Inkotanyi [Tutsi/ or members of Rwanda Patriotic Front] in the house." He [the soldier] knew that there were interahamwe in the house. The old man came from behind and insulted the soldiers because he knew thought that if the soldiers find the son-in-law hiding in the ceiling in of the house, they were going to kill him because the old man knew very well that his son-on-law was a member of the interahamwe.

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The old man started to say that he cannot hide Inkotanyi [because] I even hacked them to death in 1959." One of the soldiers started to explain to his colleague what the old man was saying. The two soldiers became very angry and told us to sit on the ground and look on the opposite side. Within a short while the soldiers shot the old man before shooting a girl called Peragie. I stood up and ran and passed through a banana farm. When my sister saw me running, she

followed me and the soldiers shot towards us. Good is great and even when we had reached far away, the soldiers continued shooting. Within no time, we saw a girl come running towards us.

God had just protected us. However, those soldiers had seen where we ran to and hid. They followed us and ordered us to come out. We came out and they asked us why we had not fled to seek refuge elsewhere like other people had done. We lied to them we had been suffering from cholera. The soldiers then told us that we had tried to cheat them and they now know the truth. [At the time] we had survived by feeding on *mutsima wa masaka* (Thick paste cooked from millet flour) and avocados that used to drop from avocado trees. The soldiers then asked us what we used to feed on and we told them. We then told them that we would like to go [with them]. They then told us that we will go to Ruhango. Some of our colleagues were going [to Ruhango]. My sister said that it is Interahamwe that have told us to go to Ruhango so that they can go and kill us.

After a couple of days, people started telling us that Interahamwe had already escaped and reached Congo. [At that time we knew] genocide had come to an end.

This genocide claimed the lives of my paternal uncle who was killed when he had gone to our grandfather's home in Butare. They [the Killers] threw his body in a pit latrine together with the body of my grandfather, his wife and his children. When genocide came to an end, we went and buried him.

[Another person that was killed during the genocide] was my older brother Uzayikorera Samweri. He left wherever he was hiding to go and join Inkotanyi. However, when he reached Murama, he met Cangacaga's sons who killed him in a gruesome way. No one buried him.

The other person [to be killed] was my older brother who used to live in Kigali. The last time I met him was in 1994. It is in the month of February 1994 that we could not find him and people used to say that he had joined Inkotanyi. After the genocide came to an end, people told us that he was a Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) soldier. Some of the RPF soldiers told us that they had seen him on the war front. To this date, he has never come back and that is how we took it.

Thank you. This is all that I had prepared.