

20121031-0075 Mujawayezu, Odette

Name: Mujawayezu Odette

Mujawayezu Odette
26th September 1999
Commune: Mugina
Prefecture: Gitarama
Secteur: Kiyonza

ETI Ruyumba

What happened in the month of April 1994 during the genocide

I, Mujawamariya, do recall that it was the day after the death of [President] Habyarimana is when civilians from Cyeru Secteur went to attack Kiyonza. They did not seem to be concern carrying guns and grenades.

Both Hutu and Tutsi civilian [in Kiyonza] were at first united to repulse the attackers. After knowing what was happening [Hutus] pulled back and said that they are not going to die with them [Tutsis]. The attacks intensified as [Tutsis] fought back the attackers using stones. What was amazing was to witness people armed with stones fighting those armed with guns and grenades.

It was not long before we sought refuge at the priest's residence. It was being said that nothing was going to happen to anyone who sought refuge at the priest's residence as they were going to survive. Within three days attacks intensified and that is when they [Extremist Hutu attackers] erected roadblocks along the roads. It this became very difficult for anyone [Tutsi] to go and get food. Those who dared [to leave the priest's residence] to go look for food never returned and became a forgotten case. The priest together with nuns escaped to go and seek refuge elsewhere for following the orders of a person called Ngirurwo. He also ordered that water to the hospital be disconnected. We had neither food to neither eat nor water to drink and went on for days for days and it reached a time we were now dying of hunger.

People [at the priest's residence] said that they were going to seek refuge in Burundi. Those who attempted the journey got killed on the way. On 25th April 1994, a killer gang that comprised mainly of Burundian refugees living in Ntongwe came to attack us at the priest's residence and had been promised that is they killed people hiding at the priest's residence, they were going to rewarded handsomely.

.....

The gang came wearing uniform and banana leaves and we grouped together as usual and went to fight the killer gang by throwing stones at them. The church and all the school' classrooms were full of refugees [Tutsis]. As the fight intensified, gang members managed to enter inside the church and in classrooms and started killing people using machetes, clubs and even shooting the refugees using guns. My parents and children were killed during the attack. Some people managed to escape the attack but most of them died shortly after.

I and another girl managed to escape and we went to hide in a swamp. At 11.00pm, we went to our neighborhood. Some people called us and took us to someone's home. They took in the girl that I was together with but chased me away. I went to another home but refused to open for me because they said that it was late in the night. As the day was starting to dawn, I went into a hideout where I stayed for a couple days. A girl in the home I was hiding in told her father that he does not chase me away, she was going to kill me in that home.

By then Inkotanyi had already launched an attack on Bugesera and civilians there used to refer to them [any Tutsi] as cockroaches. People started saying that it was being said that when Inkotanyi comes to an area, a Tutsi joins one of their own [Inkotanyi]. I was chased from the home I was hiding in and went to hide in the bush. One day, the new bourgumestre who had barely taken a month in in his new position called for a meeting. He gave orders that girls and women have been forgiven and should not be attacked. Those who had hidden came out from their hideout. I had then been in hiding and had spent 4 days without eating or drinking anything. Hunger pangs are what were hurting me most. I left my hideout in the bush and went to look for food to eat. I got some cassava variety called *rutamihisha* and it used to be said that if one ate that cassava variety, the person would stay awake all the time.

.....

I was also never infected with helminthes. I met with a man who asked where I come from [home locality], I lied to him that I was looking for our home and also my family members whom we went separate ways when we were escaping from Inyenzi [R.P.F Inkotanyi]. When he asked me about my home, I again lied to him that my home is in Kanzeze Secteur which is in Commune Kanzeze in Bugesera [region]. By that time, people [mainly Hutus] from Bugesera had already started to escape away from Inkotanyi [because it was being claimed at the time that RPF Inkotanyi was attacking Hutus, killing them and even cannibalizing them]. He then told me to go with him so that he could show me where other refugees from Bugesera were camping so that I could join them as they were camping at a place not far from his home. I recall that man and his name is Kanyoni, Emmanuel. He is still alive and I know him very well. I went and then returned to tell him that I did not see them [the Hutu refugees]. He then showed me his home where I went and he welcomed me. He then went to the Conseiller and got for me identification

documents. When time came to run away from Inkotanyi [who were advancing towards us], I escaped together with him to Kigumbo sub-prefecture [offices] in Nyabikenke and it is at Kigumbo sub-prefecture that [RPF] Inkotanyi caught up with us and returned us home [Kanyoni, Emmanuel's home].

Later, I [told them who I was] and they [Kanyoni, Emmanuel's family] realized that we were actually neighbors although they had not even recognized me because I had drastically changed [It was not easy to recognize people at the time because they had gone for months without food and their complexion had changed and most of them were extremely emaciated to a point of death].

I thought that I was the only one in my family who had survived the genocide. Later, I came to know that my maternal uncle survived the genocide and he later came and took me to his home where I still stay to this date.

In brief, this is what happened to me during the genocide.

Signed by Odette

[signature]