

20121030-008 Niyonsaba, Vincent

Commune: Masango

Secteur: Rwesero

Name: Niyonsaba Vincent

Genocide

It was on 16/04/94 when persecution [of Tutsis] started after the death of the country's president. I was then 12 years old studying in 3rd year of elementary school when this persecution started.

At the time, I had 2 sisters and 3 older brothers. One of my older brothers already had a wife and my parents were still alive. None of these people survived after the end of the genocide apart from me and one of my sisters. However, I later got a tragedy on 26/06/97 when she died.

On 17/04/94, the persecution intensified when people started to be killed and houses set on fire including slaughtering and feasting on people's livestock. Each one of us had to escape in different directions not knowing where one was going.

Everyone dispersed and I remained with my mother. We were the only ones remaining and we later went to seek refuge. When we reached a place called Butare, we reunited with two of my sisters and my father before we all went together to seek refuge.

We continued with our escape and met killer gangs on the way. We then ran into banana farms and that is when we got separated from our father. In the evening, we spent the night in Nyabivumu Cellule at Mr Joseph's home. The following morning, they escorted us as we were going into hiding among my mother's relatives at a place called Gisibiri. When we arrived, we found that there were so many people hiding in that place and we finally decided to go back. We spent the night at Mr Nyabigwi's home where we stayed for 3 days. On the 4th day, they chased us away when Mr Nyabigwi's son who had been living in Kigali arrived at the home.

We then went to a center [shopping center] where we met a man who showed us a home where we went. People at the home not only provided us with bedding and a place to sleep, they also gave us food to eat. He then waited when it was late at night and sent gangs to come and kill us. When the gangs arrived, they found that we had left and by that time we were in a forest at a place called Bienvenu in Gitwe. In the morning, we set out to go to Gitarama town and Kabgayi. On the way, we came across a gang that told us to return where we were coming from before taking all the men and young men that we were with and killing them.

We turned back thinking that we were going back to our Secteur. When we were almost reaching Buhanda, we were together with our paternal uncle and his son. A gang arrested them and put them in a vehicle that took them to be drowned in River Nyabarongo at the bridge on the border with Kibuye [prefecture].

We ran until they [gang members] lost track of us. We passed through a banana farm and stopped at a place very close to a Pentecostal church and next to the church was a home of a woman who welcomed us into her house and hid us in her house for 2 days. On the 3rd day, she told us that killing had intensified and some people have been burned alive inside houses. She told us to go with her so that she shows us where we could hide and took us to her millet farm and hid us under a boulder/large rock that was next to the edge of her farm. By then it was 9.00pm and the killer gang [came to where we were] to search [for Tutsis who were hiding] and they found us. They [the killer gang] arrested us and took us to a place where we passed through a cemetery. When we were about to reach where there was an Adventist church, our captors forced us to sit on the ground. Shortly after, a young man who used to work closely with this gang came and was able to recognize us because he knew us. He requested the gang to forgive us and they obliged. They then set us free to leave.

Before leaving, a man called Siturtoni told me to remain behind so that I go to work for him as a shepherd. The other people we had been arrested with left and before they could get very far, the gang went after them and caught up with them when they were about to reach the cemetery. The gang arrested one of my sisters and another young child while the other person that was with my sister managed to escape.

[While at Mr Siturtoni's home], one day after putting the cows back to their pen, I ran away and returned to Mr Nyabigwi's home so as to find out whether he was still alive. After reaching [Mr Nyabigwi's home] they [Nyabigwi's family] forced me to return back to where I had come from because Mr Nyabigwi's son wanted to kill me. His father [Mr Nyabigwi] sent me away staying that he did not want me to be killed. I returned back from where I had come from and arrived at 9.00pm before escaping.

I spent a month at the place that I had escaped to before gangs started to come looking for me so that they could kill me. I always hid [whenever the killers came to look for me.] One morning, the man that I was hiding in his home told me to leave so as to avoid the gang killing me in his home.

I left and went to what used to be our home and continues with the journey and crossed the road almost reaching a place called Rwankuba. I proceeded and crossed through Bihembe and went to Mr Hezekiya's home where my sister was hiding as I had come to visit her. However, when I was about reach that home, I knew people in that area knew me so I had to pass through banana farms so that people in the area do not see me.

I went to Mr Joseph's home where I stayed waiting for it to get dark. He sent me in the night to go and look for a person who could give me refuge. In all the places/homes that I went to, they all refused to give me shelter. I returned to Mr Joseph's home. In the morning, I went to my paternal aunt so that she could take me to a place that I could hide. The following morning, I went to meet with my sister who survived the genocide. We remained together [with our paternal aunt] and hid together. Everywhere she went to hide, she went with us.

We continued hiding in Mr Kayiranga's banana farm and also in the reeds at a swamp belonging to Mr Marakiya who was then an old man.

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Mr Kayiranga was married to one of my relatives and we continued to hide till the time the genocide came to an end when RPR Inkotanyi soldiers came and took us from our hideout in the reeds at a swamp belonging to Mr Marakiya.

Later, my only sister that I had survived with during the genocide died due to illness on 26/6/1997. I am now all by myself with no sisters or brothers. There were 7 siblings in my family including an older brother who was already married.

Among all those who were killed, Ndahimana Adan was stoned to death and his body thrown in a river.

Uwera Yuriya was killed after being arrested and transported in a vehicle belonging to Amani and taken to River Nyabarongo where she was hacked to death together with one of my parents and their bodies thrown into the river.

As for Kalisa Daniel, his leg had been chopped after being attacked by machetes and was recuperating when [the killers] took him and threw him in a pit that was at the main bridge at Masizi.

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Karangwa Esiee and his wife were killed at a place called Mucubira in commune Murama although upto now, we do not know how he was killed.

We do not know how our other parent [father], Kimonyo David was killed and where he was also killed.

We had a big family of about seventy five people (75) although we only have less than twenty five (25) remaining.

Out of all those people who died, only less than 10 were buried because most of them used to be hacked to death using machetes and their bodies thrown in a river while others were killed while escaping and I do not know where they died. Thus, we do not know where they were killed and who killed them.

My name is,

Niyonsaba Vincent

Commune: Masango

Secteur: Rwesero

I am a student at Ecole des Sciences Infimères de Kininda (E.S.I) [Kininda School of Nursing] at Bwakira in Kibuye.

At the moment, I have completed my second year of Tronc *Commun* [junior secondary school]

My father's name: Kimonyo David

My mother's name: Mukarubuga Nésie