

20121031-0046 Undimwana, Alphonsine

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Secteur: Mbat
Commune: Mugina

Assignment

My experience during the genocide in the month of April, 1994

After the death of [President] Habyarimana on a day that I still recall because it was on a Wednesday and Tutsis started to become fearful [as they thought they were likely to be the scapegoat]. People [Tutsis] began to fear for their lives started to spend most of the nights hiding in the bush, in millet farms and in any place that they could seek refuge.

It was not long before we started seeing people from Bugesera coming to seek refuge in our commune after their homes had been set on fire. As they were escaping to seek refuge, homes belonging to Tutsis in Kiyonza and Cyeru secteurs were set ablaze. Some of the people who were not able to escape and seek refuge elsewhere were killed. However, other people sought refuge in churches.

I and my family together with our neighbors were still in our homes because our secteur had not yet been attacked.

After about 3 days our members on the interahamwe gang came very close to our home and they came wearing beaded necklaces and jingles on their legs and arms. They called themselves *abapawa* [Armed youth wing of MDR Pawa political party] and came armed with guns, clubs, spears, bows and arrows. When they reached the market that was close to our home, they fired gunshots.

After hearing the gunshots we went to seek refuge in a church together with our neighbors. When we reached the church, we met other people who were already there and were from Runda and Ntongwe. There were also people from Kigali and those from Bugesera and had all congregated at this church that was close to our home.

About two days after seeking refuge in the church, interahamwe continues coming to attack us at the church in order to kill us. Whenever they [Interahamwe] came [to attack], we organized

ourselves where men fought back using machetes, spears, bows and arrows while us children uses stones to fight them. God was always on our side because the interahamwe always retreated.

They attacked us on a daily basis using grenades and guns and the attacked results in the death of some refugees. Latter, the interamahwe gang called Simusiga was given the duty attack the church. This gang was mainly made up of Burundian nationals and other hardened members of the interahamwe gang

They came armed with guns, machetes, clubs, whips, grenades and other types of weapons.

Those Burundians used to live at a place called Inyagahama in commune Ntongwe. We tried to fight them but realized that we were not going to defeat the gang because they outnumbered us. We lacked the strength to fight them because we were hungry and had gone for many days without food as the food we had come with had gotten finished. After realizing that they have overpowered us by attacking us with grenades and spraying us with bullets, some of the refugees dashed into the church and those who managed to escape, ran away.

When I and my colleagues realized that the attack had intensified with bullets flying above us, we escaped and had no idea where we were going. We only went different ways when we reached Nteko Secteur. I took the road leading to our home and it was not long before I came across a killer gang and one of the gang members had a gun. They arrested and threatened to take me to where the other people [Tutsi] they had arrested were so that they go drown us in a river the following morning.

They took me with them and after a walking a short distance along the road, we came across the Conseiller of Nteko Secteur who asked them to forgive me so as to be released. After being released, I returned to our home Secteur [Mbatu] and when I reached home, I found that they had destroyed our home the only thing remaining was what had once been our houses. The attackers had destroyed everything. I then went and hid in a millet farm in our neighborhood. I got so hungry that I decided to leave my hideout and go to a home nearby where they gave me food and water to drink. I met my brother at this home as it was the place he had been hiding. Apart from providing us with refuge, they also gave use food to eat.

I hid in this home for a few days and at this time my mother was still alive. When she heard that I was still alive, she came and took me so that we hide together in her hideout.

We went to the home she was hiding in. I found my older sibling had also been hiding in that home. After arriving at the home, the owners said that we [People hiding in the home] were too many for them to be able to hide us. They managed to get another place where they took me to

hide. I hid in this place for one night and left the following morning and went to my older brother's home because he was married to a Hutu.

I also spent one day at my older brother's home because it felt very unsafe as interahamwe gangs always used to come looking for him so that they could kill him. They [my older brother's family] got me a home nearby to go and hide in. I stayed in this home for a very long time till the time the home owners escaped and left me in their house all by myself. I was very fearful and decided to leave the house and go to where my older brother was hiding. We hid till the time Inkotanyi reached wherever we were.

How my relatives died

My fathers's name was Sakindi Léonard and I am not really aware of how he died. However, I inquired about his fate and was told that he may have gone to hide at a place and when they [Killers] discovered him, they killed him and threw his body in a pit latrine.

My mother continued to hide although it was all in vain. I guess she was killed in the month of May [1994] when Inkotanyi was almost about to reach where she was to liberate her. She was killed on Friday only for Inkotanyi to liberate where she was hiding on Saturday morning.

A killer gang is the one that got her from her hideout and took away all the clothes she was putting one and only remained wearing a skirt and a small t-shirt. They took her away and went to beat her so that she could tell them how she used to go to Kinihira and how she used to aid Inkotanyi

They took her to a school very close to our home and in that school, there was a very deep pit latrine where they [killers] used to throw bodies of people they had killed. On reaching that pit latrine, they [killers] they clubbed her to death and then threw her body in the pit latrine.

Kiwanuka Alphonse had been in hiding and halfway into the genocide he realized that he was not safe in his hideout. He left where he was hiding and went to hide in the ruins of our home that had been destroyed. Later interahamwe found him sitting in the ruins and took him to a pit that was at the market where the killer gang used to throw in bodies of people they had killed. On reaching at the pit, his captors clubbed him and threw him in the deep pit while he was still alive.

After throwing him in the pit, they took a huge rock to hit him and that is what killed him.

As for Uwanyirigira Marie, the gang arrested her after discovering where she was hiding and took her [to the deep pit] at the market where they were throwing dead bodies. At the time she

was with her young child. The gang started by throwing the child in the pit while still alive and then knifed her [Uwanyirigira Marie] in the chest before throwing her body in the pit.

Mukabayoje Sipéciose was hacked to death in a church.

Manyifika Marie Jeanne was hacked at the church but did not die. She escaped and went to hide at a home where they got her medicine that they used to apply on her wounds until the wounds healed. She continued to hide until the time the killers discovered her hideout in Rubingo. She was hiding together with Rutayisire who was a man from our neighborhood. [The killers] took them away and went to beat them.

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They then took them to the pit that was a few meters from a health Center and then hacked them to death before throwing their bodies in that pit.

There are so many things that I can talk about, however, let me stop at what I have so far said.

Thank you.