

International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide: Rwanda 1990-1994

Chronology of Key Events

1990

June 19: At a summit of Francophone African leaders at La Baule, in France, French President Mitterrand declares that French government assistance to African nations would be conditioned on their progress toward democratization.

July 5: President Habyarimana announces a package of political reform initiatives including separation of church and state and the preparation of a new charter under which multiple political parties could be recognized.

October 1: Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invades Rwanda from Uganda and attack government forces (FAR) at Kagitumbe. Offensive is halted with the help of the Belgian, Zairean and French troops.

1991

Date: Massacre of Tutsi and opponents in the prefectures of Ruhengeri, Gisenyi, Kibuye and Byumba.

February 19: Addressing a key cause of instability in the region, the governments of Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire, along with the OAU and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, initial the Dar es Salaam Declaration, which commits the Government of Rwanda to offer voluntary repatriation of refugees.

March 29: Ceasefire agreement signed at N'Sele, Zaire. OAU to supervise ceasefire with multi-national military observer group, as the ceasefire is violated almost immediately.

June 10: A new constitution is promulgated to allow for democratic reforms.

1992

March 4: massacre in Bugesera, attacks leave 300 dead and 15,000 displaced.

March 6: CDR formation announced

April 16: Habyarimana allows opposition parties to join the GOR, finally creating a coalition government.

July 12: At Arusha, Tanzania, the RPF and GOR agree to the deployment of the NMOG between their forces as peace talks begin. For the rest of this month, pressure from all sides is coming into the country to agree to a cease-fire, while rallies and road blocks occur in Kigali.

August 18: The RPF and the Rwandan government agree to the Protocol on the Agreement of the Rule of Law, the first of five protocols that will be negotiated over the next year culminating in the Arusha Peace Agreement.

November: Escalation of extremist Hutu militia violence - demonstrations by opponents of the regime.

1993

January 9: GOR-RPF sign conclusion of power-sharing accord.

January 20-22: Tutsi and opponents massacred in the prefectures of Ruhengeri, Gisenyi, Kibuye and Byumba.

February 8: RPF breaks cease-fire and advances towards Kigali.

February 22: Government declares cease-fire. Rwanda and Uganda ask UNSC for military observers at the border.

March 7: A new ceasefire accord is negotiated, calling for renewed talks at Arusha.

March 12: UNSCR 872 encouraging the talks in Arusha to continue.

April: UNHCR special rapporteur, Bacre Ndiaye, on illegal, summary or arbitrary executions visits Rwanda.

April 7: President and PM sign a joint declaration on human rights.

May: UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali reports to the Security Council and recommends setting up a UN observation mission on the border between Rwanda and Uganda.

June 9: Protocol on refugee return signed in Arusha.

June 22: UNSC establishes peacekeeping mission at Rwanda-Uganda border, known as UNOMUR.

June 24: Peace talks in Arusha are suspended – breakdown comes over issues related to force integration.

July 16: New government appointed – Agathe Uwilingiyimana, a protégé of MDR President Twagiramungu, becomes prime minister. New Foreign Minister Gasana is from same MDR faction.

August 3: Accord on military integration signed in Arusha.

August 4: Arusha Peace Accords signed in Arusha, Tanzania.

August 10: Report published by Bacre Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights in Rwanda identifying that the massacres fulfill the treaty definition of genocide, that reports of violence are increasing, extremist propaganda is widespread and militias are being organized.

September 16: Joint GOR/RPF delegation goes to NY to lobby UNSC for deployment of UNAMIR.

October 3: Black Hawk Down incident in Mogadishu, Somalia

October 5: UN Security Council Resolution 872 authorizes UNAMIR mission in Rwanda

October 23: Assassination of Melchior Ndadaye, Hutu, the first democratically-elected president of Burundi, by factions of Tutsi-dominated army; the various massacres leave 100,000 dead, and cause the exodus of 700,000 people, of whom 500,000 arrive in Rwanda.

October 22: Force Commander Roméo Dallaire arrives in Kigali, Rwanda.

November 16: UN peacekeepers raise UN flag in Rwanda.

November 17-18: massacres in Ruhengeri, in five separate locations.

November 23: Special Representative to the Secretary General Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh arrives in Kigali.

December 3: Dallaire receives letter signed by group of senior RGF and Gendarmerie officers discussing potential sabotage of peace process.

December 20: UNSCR 891 extending UNOMUR.

December 28: RPF battalion moves to the CND Parliament building escorted by Belgian and Tunisian peacekeepers.

1994

January 5: President Habyarimana installed but disagreement between parties blocks formation of the BBTG and National Assembly. Over the next few months, the BBTG will try to be installed multiple times but due to political infighting, party splits and violence, it is unsuccessful.

January 10: Dallaire sends fax to UN Secretariat in New York regarding meeting with informant in Kigali. Annan sends a cable back that same day refusing Dallaire permission for pre-emptive raids on arms caches, and orders him to request meeting with President Habyarimana.

February 14: German, Belgian, French and US Ambassadors meet with President Habyarimana to urge quick establishment of transitional institutions.

February 21: Hutu-supremacist CDR party demonstrates for right to participate in Transitional National Assembly. On the same day opposition political party leader (PSD), Felicien Gatabazi is assassinated. The next day CDR President Martin Bucyana is also assassinated. Violence escalates.

February 23: The parties again try to install the transitional government, but fail to do so.

February 25: Belgian FM Claes calls for a strengthening of UNAMIR after his visit to Rwanda.

March 19: Deputy Assistant Secretary Prudence Bushnell and Director of the Office of Central African Affairs Arlene Render arrive in Kigali to push for the political transition, stay until March 23.

March 22: UNAMIR completes Phase II deployment, troop strength now at 2,539

March 25: Ceremonies for the installation of the transitional institutions scheduled to take place, but cancelled due to a number of outstanding issues.

April 5: UN Security Council passes Resolution 909 extending UNAMIR mandate for six weeks with a review period.

April 6: President Habyarimana of Rwanda, President Ntaryamira of Burundi, and a number of government officials are killed in a plane crash on their approach to the airport in Kigali. President Habyarimana's death sparks violence and widespread massacres in Kigali that soon spread throughout the country.

April 7: Start of massacre of political opponents, Hutu in favor of power-sharing and Tutsi. This includes the kidnaping, torture and murder of ten Belgian peacekeepers while trying to protect the Prime Minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, who is also executed by government forces.

April 9: Former Parliament speaker Theodore Sindikubwabo announces the formation of an interim government and declares himself interim president.

April 9: Evacuation of foreign nationals begins.

April 10: Ambassador David Rawson closes the U.S. Embassy in Kigali as corpses in the streets of Kigali start to be collected.

April 11: Article in French daily *Liberation* written by journalist Jean-Philippe Ceppi uses the word “genocide” for the first time to describe the situation.

April 12: Rwandan Defence Minister speaks on Radio Mille Collines, calling for the Tutsi to be eliminated.

April 14: Evacuation of the last foreign nationals and the withdrawal of Belgian UNAMIR troops is announced.

April 21: The UN Security Council approves the withdrawal of approximately 2,000 UNAMIR peacekeeping troops in Rwanda due to security conditions. Only 450 remain to provide security to humanitarian workers and displaced persons in Kigali and throughout Rwanda.

April 27: At a general audience, Pope John-Paul II calls on ‘those responsible to work generously and effectively to put a stop to this genocide.’

April 28: Oxfam press release refers to the massacres in Rwanda as ‘genocide.’

April 30: Massacres condemned by the UN Security Council, but 4 states, including the US and the UK refuse to include the term ‘genocide’ in the Resolution. Boutros Boutros-Ghali calls in vain for the Security Council to ‘act forcefully’ to ‘put an end to the massacres’ and questions the wisdom of the reduction in UNAMIR manpower.

May 4: French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe calls on the United Nations to give UNAMIR more troops. In an interview on ABC Nightline, Boutros-Ghali affirms that ‘genocide’ is taking place in Rwanda.

May 12: Alison Des Forges of Human Rights Watch Africa publishes an article entitled ‘How governments can stop the genocide in Rwanda’ in the *New York Times*.

May 15: French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe uses the term ‘genocide’ when speaking to the press after a meeting of the Council of Ministers of the European Union.

May 17: The UN Security Council passes a new resolution (918) approving the deployment of 5,500 UNAMIR troops to Rwanda to assist the humanitarian operations.

May 22: Kigali airport taken by the RPF.

May 25: The UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali states that the response to the crisis in Rwanda is a failure for the UN and the international community. He refers to the massacres in Rwanda as genocide, inferring that the killings have explicitly targeted the Tutsi population.

June 7: UN Commission on Human Rights special envoy Rene Degni-Segui begins a week-long mission to investigate human rights abuses in Rwanda.

June 8: UN Security Council Resolution 925 admits that ‘acts of genocide’ have been committed in Rwanda.

June 12: OAU condemns ‘crimes against humanity.’

June 14: Gitarama taken by the RPF, as the ‘interim government’ flees towards Kibuye and Gisenyi.

June 17: France announces its plan to the UN Security Council to deploy 1,000-2,000 troops to Rwanda as an interim peacekeeping force until UNAMIR troops arrive.

June 22: The UN Security Council approves the proposal to dispatch 2,500 French troops to Rwanda, for no more than two months and operating under a Chapter VII UN peacekeeping mandate.

June 24: Forces for the French-led operation are deployed into western Rwanda through Goma and Bukavu in eastern Zaire.

June 28: Back from his mission in Rwanda, UN Human Rights Commission rapporteur René Degni-Ségui confirms that the term genocide can be applied to the Tutsi massacres and calls for the establishment of an international criminal court.

July 1: Security Council adopts Resolution 935 calling for a committee of impartial experts to examine and analyze evidence of 'possible acts of genocide.'

July 3: The UN Secretary-General authorizes France to create a 'secure humanitarian zone', comprising 20% of Rwandan territory in the south-west of the country (Cyangugu, Gikongoro, Kibuye).

July 4: Kigali is taken by the RPF. This is also the start of a massive exodus of Rwandans, fleeing advancing RPF forces, towards the north-west region (Ruhengeri, Gisenyi) occupied by the 'interim government.'

July 15: The Clinton Administration publicly declares that it no longer recognizes the Government of Rwanda (GOR), primarily on the basis of the GOR's support of the acts of genocide. Rwandan officials in Washington, DC, are asked to leave the country within the week, and the GOR's financial assets in the U.S. are frozen.

July 18: Unilateral ceasefire by the RPF. Establishment of Government of National Unity in Rwanda as Pasteur Bizimungu is to be inaugurated as President of Rwanda on July 19.