



Remembering Rwanda

**UCU Commemorates the 20th Anniversary of the
Rwandan Genocide
Holocaust Memorial Day 2014**

Introduction

It was only twenty years ago, that the world witnessed the organised and systematic slaughter of an estimated 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda. The genocide was horrific and barbaric. Carried out by two extremist Hutu militia groups, the Interahamwe and the Impuzamugambi armed with weapons such as guns, knives and machetes, Tutsis and moderate Hutus were attacked and killed, fuelled by the spread of anti-Tutsi propaganda.

Like genocides before, death has no distinction between gender and age.

This booklet forms part of our work to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day in which we not only remember those who were murdered in the Holocaust but also the many who were killed in subsequent genocides in Armenia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Darfur and Rwanda.

Genocide

The term genocide was recognised by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 following the adoption of a resolution that affirmed that genocide was a crime under international law. In December 1948, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) legally defined the crime of genocide for the first time.

The Convention (in article 2) defines genocide as:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group....any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such

***Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,
Article II***

Gregory H Stanton, President of Genocide Watch developed the Eight Stages of Genocide which explains how genocide occurs. At each of the earlier stages there is the opportunity offered to members of the community or by the international community to halt the stages and stop genocide before it happens.

Eight Stages of Genocide

Classification

The differences between people are not respected. There's a division of 'us' and 'them'. This can be carried out through the use of stereotypes, or excluding people who are perceived to be different.

Symbolisation

This is a visual manifestation of hatred. Jews in Nazi Europe were forced to wear yellow stars to show that they were 'different'.

Dehumanisation

Those who are perceived as 'different' are treated with no form of human right or personal dignity. During the Rwandan genocide Tutsis were referred to as 'cockroaches'; the Nazis referred to Jews as 'vermin'.

Organisation

Genocides are always planned. Regimes of hatred often train those who are to carry out the destruction of a people such as the training of the *Janjaweed* militia in Darfur.

Polarisation

Propaganda begins to be spread by hate groups. The Nazis used the newspaper *Der Stürmer* to spread and incite messages of hate about Jewish people.

Preparation

Victims are identified based on their differences. At the beginning of the Cambodian genocide, the Khmer Rouge separated out those who lived in the cities and did not work in the fields. Jews in Nazi Europe were forced to live in Ghettos.

Extermination

The hate group murders their identified victims in a deliberate and systematic campaign of violence. Millions of lives have been destroyed or changed beyond recognition through genocide.

Denial

The perpetrators or later generations deny the existence of any crime.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Rwanda

Rwanda is one of the few states in Africa to closely follow its ancestral borders. The Kingdom of Rwanda, controlled by a Tutsi royal family, ruled the region throughout recorded history.

On 1st July 1962 under the leadership of Grégoire Kayibanda as Prime Minister, Rwanda gains independence from Belgium. The following year in 1963, the Tutsi King Kigeli V, encouraged by the Belgian military, fled into exile to Uganda and neighbouring countries along with some 100,000 Tutsis as Rwanda is faced with growing political instability and tribal conflicts. Tutsi refugees trying to return back to Rwanda are forced back. Over 12,000 are slaughtered.

Between the period of 1963 and 1973 further violence continues between the Tutsis and Hutus. Tutsi's are prevented from attending and working at Universities and are restricted from Civil Service jobs. Prime Minister Kayibanda is ousted by a non-violent coup and installs Major General Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu commander of the National Guard as Prime Minister.

Habyarimana abolishes all other political parties and surrounds himself with Hutu supremacists. Policies of oppression against Tutsi's grow increasingly as Habyarimana wins a re-election in a single party race in 1983 and 1988. Voices begin to speak out in opposition and many Tutsis and moderate Hutus experience harassment, intimidation and victimisation.

Anti-Tutsi propaganda begins to spread.

On August 4 1993, an agreement was signed in Arusha, Tanzania between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), under mediation to end a three year Rwandan Civil War. This became known as The Arusha Peace Accord.

The Accords included other points considered necessary for lasting peace: the rule of law, repatriation of refugees both from fighting and from power sharing agreements, and the merging of government and rebel armies.

On April 6 1994, President Habyarimana and Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira are killed when the Rwandan leader's plane is shot down as it is about to land at Kigali Airport. Hutu extremists opposed to the Arusha Peace Accords are believed to be behind the attack.

The army, co-ordinating efforts of militia groups throughout Rwanda begin the slaughter of Tutsis and moderate Hutus opposed to their plan of extermination.

House to house search parties murder entire Tutsi families in their homes or in public spaces such as churches, hospitals or schools which were used as places of safety.

Road blocks are set up to prevent any Tutsis from fleeing.

The genocide begins.

100 Days in April 1994

7 April

The Rwandan armed forces and Interahamwe militia begin the systematic killing of Tutsis and moderate Hutus. UN forces, unwilling to breach their mandate, fail to intervene. Ten Belgian UN peacekeepers are killed.

8 April

The Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) launches a major offensive to end the killings and rescue 600 of its troops based in Kigali under the Arusha Accords.

9-10 April

French, Belgian and American civilians are rescued by their governments.

11 April

The International Red Cross (IRC) estimates that tens of thousands have been slaughtered. UN soldiers protecting 2,000 Tutsis at a school are ordered to withdraw to Kigali airport. Most are killed after their departure.

14 April

Belgium withdraws its troops from the UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda.

15 April

Thousands of Tutsis gathered at Nyarubuye Church seeking protection are slaughtered.

21 April

The UN cuts the level of its forces in Rwanda by 90% to just 270 troops. The IRC estimates the dead could now number over 100,000.

30 April

The UN agrees a resolution condemning the killing but omits the word 'genocide'. Tens of thousands of refugees flee into neighbouring Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire.

Mid-May

The IRC estimates that 500,000 Rwandans have been killed.

17 May

The UN Security Council issues a fresh resolution saying that 'acts of genocide may have been committed'.

It also agrees to send 5,500 troops with new powers to defend civilians, however deployment is delayed by disagreements between the US and UN over the financing of the operation.

22 May

RPF forces gain control of Kigali airport and Kanombe barracks, and extend their control over the northern and eastern parts of Rwanda.

22 June

With arguments over the deployment still continuing, the UN authorises an emergency force of 2,500 French troops under Operation Turquoise to create a 'safe' area in the government-controlled part of Rwanda. The killing of Tutsis continues in the 'safe' area despite the presence of the French.

4 July

The RPF takes control of Kigali and the southern town of Butare. Its leadership claims it will form a government on the basis of the Arusha Accords.

13-14 July

Refugees fleeing the RPF advance in north-western Rwanda flood into Zaire. Approximately 10,000-12,000 refugees per hour cross the border into the town of Goma. The massive influx creates a severe humanitarian crisis, as there is an acute lack of shelter, food and water.

18 July

The RPF announces that the war is over, declares a cease-fire and names Pastor Bizimungu as president with Faustin Twagiramungu as prime minister

The Rwandan Genocide was the slaughter of an estimated 1 million Tutsis and some moderate Hutus, during a period of 100 days from 6th April to 16th July 1994

A Journey of Survival

The genocide had been in planning for a number of years, and was mostly carried out by two extremist Hutu militia groups, the Interahamwe and the Impuzamugambi, against Tutsi and some moderate Hutus across Rwanda.

The following testimony was delivered by Jean Bosco Ngabonzima to UCU members to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2011.

Hello my name is Jean Bosco Ngabonzima, and I am one of the Rwandan Genocide survivors in 1994. I was born in 1979 in the small village of Kimisange in the outskirts of Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda. I was the second oldest of seven children. My father was a civil servant, and my mother was a nurse. The family was close and lived together happily until the outbreak of the genocide in Rwanda on 6 April 1994.

The following day we heard rumours that Hutus were out to kill every Tutsi in the country, claiming that we, the Tutsis had killed the Hutu president. We were advised to stay indoors. I had never seen my parents so agitated and terrified all my life. That night we heard screams and gun shots from our neighbours. Then there was a knock at the door and before we could even respond, the door fell in and about four or so people came in and dragged my father out by his legs. That was the last we saw of him.

We could hear him on the way begging for them not to kill his family and he was going to reward them the money. They later killed him on the road.

We were hiding under the bed but we could see everything. Mother told us to keep quiet. Then the shooting began. The bullets came in and hit everything in the way. Yet no-one dared scream. Mother could not cover all four of us.

I could smell the hot blood coming from under the right shoulder of my little sister and my mum who had been hit on her left leg (at the time) did not know whether it was me or my mum or my sister. I could not feel any sound of them. My mind was occupied with the terror of us being hacked to death.

We played dead, praying that the killers would disappear. Suddenly the door burst open and they came in praising themselves for a good job done. I was closer to the door and they kicked me in my belly. It was painful but the thought of being severed alive with their machetes, made me stay as quiet as a mouse.

One of them said: *'Let's make sure that he is dead with this'*. I didn't move an inch, nor did I make any noise. They must have thought that I was dead. So the next day I saw so many Tutsis in the area gathered to try to fight the perpetrators and Interahamwe with men and women fighting and throwing stones. First 4 to 5 day we managed to hold them until we heard they have got soldiers support and others perpetrators and other Interahamwe from other areas. That was when we decided to move to another place which was on top of the hill, so we could see them coming. On that hill we met others, many Tutsis running free for their own life and joining forces to keep fighting.

Because my mum was wounded she looked very weak and the next house to our house was the home of my grandmother, who was very disabled using a wheelchair. She couldn't do anything for herself and my mum decided not to come with us on top of the hill. She decided to stay with my grandmother to take care of her. From time to time I and a few other people would go to see them.

One night when we get there we found every house destroyed. There were no doors or windows and the hall roof was gone on the house. We sneaked into the house, we found them dead.

I cannot describe how they had been killed, because some of the older people tried to hide and not let me see them, and some of them asking me to say good bye to my mother and my grandmother and left them there we go back to the top hill.

Next day on the hill where we were gathering we kept fighting and try to hold our position and defeat them, and news spreads all over the town even on Radio RTLM calling for Interahamwe and perpetrators to join forces together even with soldiers to come to attack us because they said we are Inyenzi (Cockroaches).

I remember that day. I heard it on the Radio, later on about 4 o' clock we started believing today is another day of surviving.

People started to settle in their own place in the bush. Women and children including my young brothers and sisters were so tired. So starving no drink no food for almost 4 weeks and here comes a big attack with soldiers and Interahamwe. Some of them with soldiers came in front and others go around our place. All over we were ambushed and then we try to fight but they were so strong with a guns and grenades. For some of us it was first time we heard gun shots and see someone been shot and then we start running. And then they come and killed all women and children's and the ones who tried to escape were being killed by others who been ambushed by the people who tried to escape. That day is a day I'll never forget. It is a day I saw hundreds of people died. Killed by machetes, hacked and been shot everything you can ever imagine.

Luckily I don't know how I escaped. I just kept running all over in the area trying to find somewhere to hide.

I wasn't even scared to go the house of the killers who were our neighbours and then they chased me away and called the killer to come to kill me.

I kept running all over in the bush luckily I found a big bush very dark with a big hole in the ground. I didn't know if there were any animals in there but at that moment, I wasn't scared of any animals because I would rather be killed by animals instead of being hacked or butchered by machetes. I went in and stayed inside the hole all night and the next day. I could hear them there carry on killing and keep searching for survivors to finish all who didn't die directly and hear them talking about how they killed them and how proud they were of the job they had done. They knew there were some who escaped and they kept looking all over using sniffer dogs.

I stayed in that bush all day and then in evening, when I couldn't t hear any sound or someone talking, then I come out of the bush and went back to the top of the hill. That was where I found all people lying down dead, including my 2 young brothers and sister. I didn't know what do. I couldn't even cry because I was so scared while I was trying to touch my little brother to check if he is dead. I saw people who escaped come with soldiers in the distance and my first thought was they are bringing them here to kill as well. I just remembered the trick of playing dead again and lay down try to be covered with dead bodies and not breathe. And then I hear that people with soldiers were looking for anyone who was not dead talking about how they been killed. That was when I found out that they were RPF soldiers. I came out from under the dead.

I saw a few people I knew who survived and the RPF soldiers started to calm me down, telling me I'm safe now. We searched for wounded people all night and they took us to their base to another Hill called Rebero. That is how I survived Genocide.

I personally believe that surviving was partly a matter of luck – but it's also a great responsibility because many survivors are very poor and don't even have life's basic necessities.

That's why those who have something to share need to feel responsible for those who have nothing. I also think surviving is a privilege because when I consider what happened in Rwanda, all the determination of the killers and their accomplices, it's a miracle that some people managed to survive.

It's hard for other people to understand our experiences. Obviously not everyone can understand what I went through. Some people didn't even want me to live – they still don't want me to be alive today – and they're not happy to see me prosper. Those who went through similar things do understand, especially those who share our lives daily.

Further Resources

Suggested reading

Title: **We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families**

Author: **Philip Gourevitch**

Synopsis: A first person account by Philip Gourevitch of the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide which is based on interviews with survivors and perpetrators.

The book takes its title from a note seeking help sent by a group of pastors to the President of the Seventh-Day Adventist Churches' operations in western Rwanda.

Title: **You Alone May Live**

Author: **Mary K. Blewitt**

Synopsis: Is the 2010 memoir of Mary K. Blewitt OBE, founder of Survivors Fund (SURF), a charity that works to improve the lives of survivors of the Rwandan Genocide of April 1994.

By recounting her experiences that led her to be at the heart of assisting survivors in the aftermath of the genocide, Mary Blewitt reveals both the extraordinary suffering of those who survived genocide and how she was compelled to help them.

Title: **Speak Rwanda**

Author: **Julian Pierce**

Synopsis: *Speak Rwanda* is Julian Pierce's debut novel about the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Pierce chooses not to see from the largely observational role of international workers, but instead focuses on the genocide from 10 different Rwandan perspectives. Amongst the characters are Tutsi victims and Hutu *genocidaires*, civilians and soldiers, adults and children. By choosing these intertwining narratives, Pierce is able to present both the intense violence of the genocide and the reactions and motivations for perpetrators, victims and bystanders.

Title: **Keeping Memories - Rwandans in the UK**

Author: **Rwandan Youth Information Community Organisation (rYico)**

Synopsis: *Keeping Memories* is a collection of memories, photographs, paintings and poems representing the culmination of a project initiated by Rwandan Youth Information Community Organisation (rYico) that works to support and empower vulnerable young people in Rwanda as well as raising awareness of Rwanda in the UK.

Title: **Restorative Justice – Healing Wounds and Repairing Lives
Advancing the Human Rights of Survivors of Genocide in Rwanda**
Author: **SURF Survivors Fund**

Synopsis: *Restorative Justice* is an exhibition that explores the role of restorative justice in promoting the human rights and welfare of survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. It features photographic, written and video testimony of survivors participating in and benefiting from, restorative justice efforts.

Survivors Fund (SURF) was founded by Mary Kayitesi Blewitt OBE, a British citizen of Rwandan origin. Mary lost over 50 members of her family in the genocide and helped establish the first survivors' organisations in Rwanda working for the Rwandan Ministry of Rehabilitation from July 1994. Visit <http://survivors-fund.org.uk/> for further information about the work of this organisation.

Suggested Viewing

Title: **Sometimes in April (2005)**

Synopsis: *Sometimes in April* depicts the story of Rwanda's genocide, not only as it occurred in 1994 but also as the country was still experiencing healing and justice in 2004. The story follows two Hutu brothers – Augustine and Honore – through the genocide. The film begins with Augustine as a school teacher in April 2004 10 years after the genocide began, teaching his class about the atrocities.

We also learn that Honore is being tried by the International Crimes Tribunal for his role as an influential radio personality, encouraging and inciting Hutus to murder Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Most of the film is told as flashbacks, focusing on the stories of Augustine, his wife and two sons in Kigali, and a teacher in a Catholic school who is trying to protect Augustine's daughter and the other students.

Title: **Shake hands with the Devil**

Synopsis: In 1994, word began to spread around the globe of an incomprehensible tragedy unfolding in the small African nation of Rwanda.

In a period of just 100 days, the country's Hutu extremists had executed more than 800,000 Tutsis with ruthless efficiency. Genocide had once again blighted the world.

Title: **Shooting Dogs**

Synopsis: In April, 1994, the aeroplane of the Hutu President of Rwanda crashes and Hutu militias slaughter the Tutsi population. In the Ecole Technique Officielle, the Catholic priest Christopher and the idealistic English teacher Joe Connor lodge two thousand and five hundred Rwandans survivors in the school under the protection of the UN Belgian force and under siege of the Hutu militia.