

# The rwanda genocide impact of colonialism



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The Rwandan Genocide: the Impact of colonialism in the deaths of thousands of Rwandans There is no doubt that the Rwandan genocide is an example of the ugly history of colonialism.

This genocide resulted in the blood shed of 500, 000 people including children, elders and women[1]. There are three ethnic groups in Rwanda???" Hutu, Tutsi and Twa[2]. The genocide happened due to the tension between two ethnic groups in Rwandan called ??? Hutu??? and ??? Tutsi???. The Rwandan genocide left a lot of important political facts to be investigated and debated such as the role of the United Nations in peacekeeping, the role of colonization and decolonization in conflicts among ethnic groups and other important issues. In this research paper, I am going to discuss the role that colonialists played in ethnic mobilization in Rwanda. Colonialist Legacy in Rwanda In the article ??? Un train peut en cacher un autre: Narrating the Rwandan Genocide and Hotel Rwanda???, Harrow mentions that the Rwandan genocide is primordial where the tension between the Tutsi and the Hutu began in the past when the Tutsi migrated to Rwanda and settled There. However, the tension was emphasized by the Belgian and German colonialists who created differences between Tutsi and Hutu using different methods such as categorizing people in identification cards.

These colonialists gave privileges to the Tutsi who were just 14% from the overall population of Rwanda and unprivileged Hutu who were 85% from the overall population of Rwanda. Therefore, it??'s obvious that the tension between the Tutsi and Hutu is not only primordial, but it??'s also constructed. In his book ??? When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda???, [3] Madani believes that the

tension between the Hutu and Tutsi is primordial and constructed. In this article, Madani mentions that the Tutsi cooperation with the colonialist masters led to the oppression of the Hutus. The author points out that the Belgians viewed the Tutsi as superior and different from the Hutu in origin and race (For example, the Belgians used the claim that Tutsi are the descendants of Noah's son Ham). To justify their right of sovereignty over Rwanda, the Hutus referred to the Tutsis as outsiders this is because the Hutus were the indigenous people of the Rwandan land, while Tutsi were immigrants that settled in Rwanda. After the 1959 revolution which was started by the Hutus to overthrow the Tutsi monarchy and put the power in the hands of Hutus[4], The Hutu politicians emphasized on the right of Hutus to be the rulers of the lands and this led to the exacerbation of the tension between the two sides.

Obviously, this article proves that the factor behind tension between the Tutsis and Hutus is not only primordial, but it's socially constructed primordial factor because colonialist revived the tension between the two sides and constructed it using differentiation (for example they emphasized on the claim that Tutsis are the descendants of Noah). . In the book 'The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, And War in Rwanda', Straues studies the Rwandan genocide depending on the local level. To do his study, he made interviews with 210 who took a part in the genocide. Straues also made interviews with the Tutsis who survives the genocide in order to test the validity of his interviews with the imprisoned convicts. Straues mentions three factors which led to the Hutus to kill Tutsis including (A) the civil war which was between the Mouvement Revolutionnaire National pour le

Development (MRND)[5] and the Rwandan Patriotic Front[6] which led to the decentralization of the political conditions in Rwanda and made middle class citizens concern about their security, (B) the state institutions of Rwanda which played a role in mobilizing the Hutus against the Tutsis, (C) The categorization of ethnic identities which played a great role in increasing the Hutus hatred toward Tutsis[7].

This article proves that colonialists play a major role in exacerbating the tension between the Hutus and the Tutsis where they categorized the Rwandans into different ethnic groups. In addition to the article ??? The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, And War in Rwanda???, there is an important article called ??? Dividing and uniting: The use of citizenship discourses in conflict and reconciliation in Rwanda??? which deals with the effects that use of citizenship had on reinforcing the conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis. In this article, Buckley-zistel mentions that the notion of citizenship is so important because it defines the relationship between the people and the state, therefore, if changes were implanted on this relationship, there will be a loss of the collective sense of national identity. That is, when Hutus and Tutsis were categorized differently in citizenship; their sense of the collective national identity was eliminated and replaced by an individual sense of identity. This change contributed in widening the ethnic difference between the Tutsi and the Hutus and led both sides to kill each other[8]. In addition, Buckley-zistel mentions that the main reason for the tension between the Hutu and Tutsi was colonialism. She states that the three ethnic groups including Hutus, Tutsis and Twas were not exclusive categories.

However, after the arrival of colonialists (Belgians and Germans), the categorization of these ethnic groups was formed and they became exclusive groups. Buckley-zistel mentions that the Belgians and Germans categorized the population of Rwanda into three categories based on their appearance. The Ethiopian Tutsi was chosen by these colonialists as the superior ethnic groups because they were more similar in their physical appearance to the Europeans than the Bantu Hutus and Pygmoid Twa.

Thus, the superiority for the Belgians and the Germans was based of racial differences[9]. The writer mentions that Hutus and the Twas believe that the full rights of citizenship must be granted to them because they are the sons of the soil while Tutsis are merely immigrants that came from the Horn of Africa. The pogrom of 1959 which resulted in the assassinations of many powerful Tutsis shows the Hutu??™s denial of the citizenship for the Tutsis[10]. The writer mentions that in 1973 Kayibanda and his racist system of governing was replaced by Juvenal Habyarimana who promoted some changes regarding the conditions of the Tutsis. Habyarimana considered the Tutsis as ethnic groups and not a race which means that he accepted them as indigenous people who have political rights including relative engagement in the Parliament, embassies, cabinet and military. In the 1980s the relationship between Hutus and Tutsis improved and marriages between the two sides started to take place. The main aim for Habyarimana was to pursue nation-building and development and to show the whole international community that the goal of his government is to provide the whole members of the country with rights and not to exclude certain members from enjoying

these rights[11]. This article shows how the colonialists used identification cards to divide people so in order to make it easy for them to rule.

These colonialists could easily absorb the natural resources of Rwanda because people were killing each other over race. The initiatives of Habyarimana to promote reforms for the condition of the Tutsis are so important because it could remove some racial obstacles on the way of the two tribes. Mass-killing and the failure of U. N Peacekeeping.

The article ??? The fog of UN Peacekeeping: Ethical Issues regarding the use of Force to protect Civilians in UN Operations??? talks about important facts about the United Nations process of peacekeeping in Rwanda and ethical issues regarding the use of force.. Bloc and Daniel, the authors begin their article by mentioning the United Nations failure in the process of peacekeeping in Srebrenica where it could not prevent the killing of many people including the eight thousands men that were massacred by the Serbian general Ratko Maladic.

The authors mention that the United Nations failure in Srebrenica was repeated in Rwanda where thousands of people were killed and hundreds of women were raped, while the United Nations forces were watching. Bloc and Daniel say that the United Nations did not make a serious move during the genocide where they were watching the genocide instead of working seriously to rescue the victims of this miserable event[12]. In addition, the authors mention that the United Nations peacekeeping forces were not enough to prevent the casualties of the genocide. Instead of increasing the

peacekeeping operations, the United Nations stayed away from the dangerous areas.

The writers ask whether it was ethical to use force or not. To answer this question the writer imagined a situation where a peacekeeper is in a parole and during his work in this parole he faces a man rapping a girl. The question here, should he use force to rescue the girl, or should he step aside To answer this question, there must an ethical direction for the soldier to take[13]. The article also talks about the uncertainty regarding the use of force to protect civilians. That is forces can be manipulated by some members of the United Nations and therefore, the process of peacekeeping can be curbed. Bloc and Daniel also mention that the authority of using force does not tell the peacekeeper when, or where to use force, therefore; the soldier is the one who decides when and where to use force depending on the circumstances he faces in the battle field[14]. In 2000, the ambassador Brahami[15] who was the special advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations gave a peacekeeping review to the Secretary General in which he asked for authorization to use force for the United Nations peacekeepers in situations that cause threats to the civilians.

However, the quests in the reviews were not accepted by some members of the United Nations[16]. Another article called ??? The United Nations, Peacebuilding, and the Genocide in Rwanda??? talks about the United Nations failure in the process of peacekeeping in Rwanda. Berdal the author of this article argues that although the Cold War led scholars to produce a lot of writings about the United Nations, there is still a category of writings that

is still not apparent. He says that there are little accounts of the peacekeeping process that the United Nations executed inside Rwanda.

The writer mentions that France, Belgium and The United States of America failed to maintain the process of peacekeeping in Rwanda. He states that both France and Belgium have extensive advisory networks in different places including headquarters, training institutions, and among the forces of the government of Rwanda. Thus, the French and Belgians could get information about what was happening on the Rwandan ground[17].

According to this article, Clinton the president of the United States of America in that time reacted negatively toward the peacekeeping process in the war. Berdal mentions that the American government under Clinton was not providing the victims of the genocide with help. He says ??? Only got involved to aid the??|. Hutu refugee populations and the genocidires, leaving the genocide survivors to flounder and suffer??? The writer mentions that French reaction to the events of the genocide was not clear. He mentions that the French reaction toward the genocide was mixed where they were helping the old regime and the genociders.

Berdal mentions that Belgium was the only country that sent well-equipped to the mission of peacekeeping. However, he says that the performance of the Belgians peacekeepers damaged the process of peacekeeping because when the slaughtering began, the Belgium ordered a unilateral withdrawal of its contingent. We can see that the two articles prove that the United Nations organization was not taking serious actions toward the genocide. Obviously, the prevention of peacekeepers to use force in the process of peacekeeping has led the Hutus to continue their killing of Tutsis. I think that if the United  
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Nations peacekeepers were given the permission to use force, then the number of losses would be smaller. The role of the Press, the Media and the Militia in the Genocide

In the article ??? Press Silence before Rwandas Genocide???, Rivard , a Canadian journalism professor talks about his experience in Rwanda during the genocide and the role of the press in hiding the scandals and the events of this genocide. Rivard says that when he went to his classroom which contains Tutsis and Hutus students, he was not able to teach them or express his opinions freely about the genocide because the Rwandan government has hired a supervisor to attend his class to make sure that he will not say something that goes against their interests behind the genocide.

Rivard also mentions that the Rwandan students don't criticize their government where they just write about what they have seen from the official news. He also says that his students who were working as journalists for the Rwandan radio-station did not say a word about the scandals of the genocide because they were afraid of losing their lives. For example, he mentions that some of his students who work in the radio-station told him that were forced to cancel the news bulletins in order to read the president messages.

These students had to submit to the orders because they were afraid to lose their souls[18]. In the end of his article, Rivard asks, could the genocide be prevented if the journalists were given the freedom to address the scandalous events of the genocide[19]Clearly, this article shows how the government prevented people from expressing their opinion about the genocide. Rwandans who were against the genocide could not voice their

opposition because they were afraid of being killed. The colonialists did not prevent the Hutus from restricting freedom of speech which shows that they were satisfied with the acts genocide. According to the article ??? Echoes of violence: considerations on radio and genocide in Rwanda??? written by Li, the radio station ??? Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM)??? and other semi-private radio-stations were used during the war to push the Hutus to slaughter the Tutsi. Li mentions that these radio-stations were controlled by extremists Hutus who have a strong influence on the Hutus population. These radio-stations pushed militias to participate in the killing of Tutsis.

For example, Interahamwe militia[20] which is organized groups of Hutus was one of these militias. In this article Li argues that the role in which ??? Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM)??? radio station played can be clarified into three aspects: Ideologically, it had a great influence on the public where it could encourage people to go and slaughter Tutsis. Performatively, it could make the listener mobilize to kill the Tutsi and finally the RTLM made the participation in killing Tutsis as the main goal of everyday life[21]. It seems that the colonialists (France and Belgium) were intentionally ignoring the Hutus usage of radio-stations to increase the acts of the genocide because they wanted the people to be busy so they can take advantage of their lands including its natural resources.

The Consequences of the GenocideThe Rwandan genocide resulted in the deaths of thousands of people and the raping of innocent women and girls . In the article ??? Socio-political and Economic Context of Child Survival in Rwanda over the 1950-2000 Period??? Gakusi and Garenne, mention the <https://assignbuster.com/the-rwanda-genocide-impact-of-colonialism/>

mortality rates in Rwanda after the genocide. They state that after the genocide the Rwandan population suffered insecurity as the result of the killing of thousands of people. In 1995, most of the ENOS( largely the ones in the health sector) were expelled and many of the Rwandan elites that opposed the genocide were imprisoned, or forced to go into exile. In addition many educated doctors, nurses were killed in the genocide and others were forced to go into exile or prison.

In the year 2000, there were estimations which states that only 155 physicians were in Rwanda and 118 were abroad. Health facilities were destroyed which led to the deaths of many people. Although children were immunized, malnutrition was high. The new Rwandan government was pressured by the costs of rebuilding the country and was dependent on international aids which provided its government with 50% of the budget. Also, in 2000 the number of stunted children reached 42% which is a large number[22]. This article clearly describes the losses that Rwanda suffered from the genocide. All these losses would be prevented if Rwanda was not colonized. There is no doubt that all these losses is the result of the colonialists divide and rule acts, where they divide the Rwandans into different ethnic groups to make it easier for them to rule and to keep the country weak when they decolonize.

Conclusion In conclusion, I believe that if Rwanda was not colonized they would not face genocide. I believe that the primordial tension between the Tutsi and Hutus was not sharp and could be forgotten if the colonialists did not use their divide and rule theory. I think that The United Nations was not working seriously and maybe was manipulated by its strong members

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including France and the United States of America. There is no doubt that the Media was playing an effective role in exacerbating the tension because it was the medium between the extremists Hutus and the Hutus population. If there was not a medium (radio-stations) between the Hutu population and the Tutsis, there would not be as much as the anti-Tutsi mobilization by militias and the Hutu population during the genocide. The consequences of the Rwandan genocide is considered as one of the worst in history where nearly 800, 000 people were massacred, many girls and women were raped, 42% of children became stunted and many other losses.

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