

# Main problems and consequences of the rwandan genocide

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Genocide is the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group. It is understood by most to be the gravest crime against humanity that you could commit according to BBC News. It tears apart the lives of many innocent people and causes mass destruction. So, why would anyone want to commit such a heinous crime? And how does the group being targeted come back from such tragedy? The remaining Tutsi people of Rwanda could tell you.

In April of 1994 the Rwandan citizens were forced to discover what it was like to live through a genocide. There are two main groups established in Rwanda: the Tutsi's and the Hutu's, whom have had an ongoing animosity towards each other for years now. Although the Tutsi's were the minority group between the two, they held the most power within the country. The Hutu's were fed up with this, and they wanted their own control. In 1959, they terrorized around 330, 000 Tutsis to flee Rwanda, taking over the Tutsi power and declaring the country as a republic. This caused an outbreak of violence from the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the Tutsis and the Hutu's. A peace agreement was soon put into effect to prevent more casualties and the UNAMIR, led by Romeo Dallaire, were sent in to help. This seemed to exacerbate the situation and make what is known today as one of the greatest demises of one group of people.

On April 6, 1994 the president's, Cyprien Ntaryamire, plane was shot down over the city of Kigali. No one knows whether it was the Tutsi people or Hutu extremists. This created chaos in Rwanda and the Hutu's commenced their killing spree. " We will kill them like rats", claimed Hutu extremists radio

stations. The next target was the Prime Minister of Rwanda, Agathe Uwilingiyimana. She was assassinated by Hutu extremists. They also killed 10 Belgian peacekeeping soldiers because they knew this would allow Belgium to withdraw their soldiers from Rwanda. The Hutu's were aware that Belgium had the more experienced and better equipped soldiers compared to the Guyanese soldiers. They knew this would limit the UN's resources and ultimately allow them to be able to slaughter more Tutsi citizens. Everyone was targeted and no one was safe. Not even groups of people who sought refuge in churches were spared. Babies, children, husbands, wives, sons, and daughters all succumbed to the terrorization of the Hutu's. Everywhere you looked there was bloodshed, dead bodies covered the ground as if they were in a cemetery. The plane crash, assassination, and the UN limiting their soldiers are all examples of proximate causes of the genocide. There were also deep causes that started the genocide in Rwanda. One of the deep causes was based on the geographic location of Rwanda. The borders of Rwanda were drawn arbitrarily. Another deep cause of the genocide was the signing of the enforced sharing power written in the peace agreement, Arusha Accords, and the mass mobilization in Rwanda.

The UNAMIR and Belgium were the only hope these people had, and they were severely let down. " It was hard to believe that in the past weeks an unimaginable evil had turned Rwanda's gentle green valleys and mist-capped hills into a stinking nightmare of rotting corpses. A nightmare we all had to negotiate every day. A nightmare that, as commander of the UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda, I could not help but feel deeply responsible

for". This is a quote from Romeo Dallaire, the leader of the UN peacekeepers. Dallaire sent intelligence reports to the UN headquarters about having a hunch that the Hutu's were going to begin the genocide. Despite these reports the UN decreased their soldiers from 3000 to 450 and limited mandate to protect civilians. In January of 1994 Dallaire announced that he will begin the raids of weapons from the Hutu's in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. "Peux ce que veux. Allons-y", where there's a will, there's a way, he wrote this in the letter he sent to the UN headquarters about the genocide starting and what to do about the situation. The peacekeepers stationed in Rwanda consisted of two groups: the Belgians and the Guyanese. The Belgian soldiers had far more experience and weapons than the Guyanese soldiers. They were the backbone to the UN force. Once Belgium pulled them out of Rwanda there was not much the UN could do. They lost their strongest players and the only ones left to fight were the Guyanese soldiers. The Guyanese soldiers refused to leave their "brothers" in time of need and showed true loyalty to the Rwandans throughout the fight. The UN tried to help the poor citizens of Rwanda and were able to help few by escorting them behind the Rwandese Patriotic Front lines, which were lines of safety for the Tutsi's. The few they were able to save was nothing compared to the hundreds of thousands of innocent souls they lost. It was as if the UN completely lost control of the situation and were doing very little about it. Dallaire describes the situation as, "How a country moved from the promise of a certain peace to intrigue, the fomenting of racial hatred, assassinations, civil war and genocide". Although the UN was not nationally recognized as the blame for the genocide these people are certainly at fault

as well for the tragedy that occurred in Rwanda. This genocide serves as an example of ethnic conflict. There are three theories of ethnic conflict. They are: primordialism, instrumentalism, and elite mobilization. Primordialism focuses on identity being highly emotional. It is deeply rooted, and fixed or immutable. It cannot and will not change over time with different circumstances. It stems from blood and family ties. Instrumentalism is based on individuals having multiple overlapping identities. Our "primary" identity can change as our circumstances or situations change, or as we chose to emphasize different parts of ourselves. Conflict emerges where it seems like the best way for a group to pursue its collective goals and violence is the least costly way for the group to achieve power or protect themselves. The last theory, elite mobilization, is based on the fact the individuals have multiple overlapping identities, which can be manipulated or subject to priming, disinformation, and mobilized by other actors. Elite Mobilization comes from outside forces and it is the role of leaders versus the role of followers.

When comparing these theories to the situation in Rwanda, I think it is an example of elite mobilization. Elite Mobilization is based off outside forces and people's identities being able to be manipulated. Although the Tutsi's and the Hutu's never truly got along, they were civil before the genocide happened. Outside forces like the peace agreement, the UNAMIR stepping in, and other factors brought about the genocide. It is not an example of primordialism because primordialism is rooted in blood and family ties. Very little of this was shown throughout Rwanda during the genocide. The

genocide had nothing to do with family ties, it was against two different groups of people. It is also not an example of Instrumentalism because it states that violence is the least costly way for the group to achieve power and/or protect themselves, and violence was the only action and factor that the Hutu's used. Although it was not shown primarily throughout Rwanda, it was shown a little bit because the Tutsi's had to resort to violence in order to protect themselves from the Hutu's. The Hutu's did not have to use violence to achieve what they wanted, yet they did it anyway which goes against the Instrumentalism theory.

Few people helped, few people cared, and those that did could only do so much to stop the genocide. The few people who stayed to fight did the best they could to help the Rwandan people, but it was not enough to stop or even slow down the genocide. The International Response to this genocide was embarrassing. Countries, like my own, stood by and watched as hundreds of thousands Rwandan citizens cried for help. They pulled their troops out knowing that was the only way the Rwandan people might have been spared and basically left them for dead. Everyone knew what was happening, but no one wanted to intervene in fear of their own being killed in the midst of the fighting. These bystanders are no better than the Hutu's killing the natives, they also are to blame for this genocide. These people were starving, dirty, and helpless being tortured and brutally murdered in their own country by their own people and no one was doing anything to stop it. From April to July, 100 days, we sat back as a nation and watched as 800, 000 Rwandan citizens lost their lives. This genocide effected many very

deeply, especially those who lived within this tragedy through firsthand accounts. If the genocide of Rwanda could serve as any beneficial purpose, it should set a precedent for those who watched in silence and did nothing to stop the killings. If our world ever comes across a genocide again hopefully it will be handled differently. It is sad that 800, 000 citizens had to lose their lives to wake up our nation of the terror of genocide.