

The Rwandan Genocide

Shooting Down of the Aircraft Carrying Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana. Testimony of Paul Magabe

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The following text was one of the first articles published by Global Research. The testimony of Paul Mugabe questions the validity of the official version of events, which presents the Rwandan tragedy as the result of a "civil war".

The shooting down of the aircraft carrying Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira was a carefully planned US intelligence operation which contributed to precipitating the ethnic massacres.

The Shooting Down Of The Aircraft Carrying Rwandan President

Declaration on the Shooting Down of the Aircraft Carrying Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira on April 6, 1994

by Paul Mugabe

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The Perpetrator of the Presidential Aircraft Crash: Major-General Paul KAGAME

Maj.-Gen. Paul Kagame is the son of Rutagambwa and Siteriya and comes from Gitisi and Nyamagana near Ruhango (GITARAMA). He studied primary school in Uganda and finished four years of Secondary school at Ntare school in Mbarara (Uganda). He became a Major in the Ugandan National Resistance Army with the function of Deputy Chief of the Ugandan Directorate of Military Intelligence.

He subsequently became Vice-President of Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and Commander-in-Chief of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA). He became Vice- President of the Republic of Rwanda and its Minister of Defense.

He is now nominated to be President of the Republic of Rwanda, and was scheduled to be confirmed in that office on April 22, 2000.

Colonel James KABAREBE.

Colonel James Kabarebe was the private Secretary and aide-de-camp (ADC) of Major-

General Paul Kagame (see above). He became Commander of the High Command Unit at Mulindi. Later, this Unit became the Republican Guard under his leadership.

James Kabarebe was the Commander-in-Chief of the Congolese Army Forces (FAC) after Mzee Laurent Desire Kabila took power in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1997. Soon after, James took the control of forces determined to overthrow Mzee Kabila. He is now the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA).

Lieutenant-Colonel Charles KAYONGA

Lt.-Col. Charles Kayonga was chief in charge of the Operations Unit of High Command Unit at Mulindi - at that time with the rank of lieutenant - from December 1993 until July 1, 1994. From lieutenant, he was promoted directly to the rank of Lieutenant-colonel and given the command of the RPA battalion sent to Kigali to what is now the National Assembly (then the NDC: National Development Council) after the signing of the Arusha Accords. Kayonga had under his command more than 3,200 RPA troops, wearing civilian clothes, who clandestinely entered into the city of Kigali.

Preparing for Conflict While Negotiating Peace

Both the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the Habyalimana Government were preparing for war while engaged in the Arusha Peace Process.

Preparations on the side of Habyalimana's Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR)

The Rwandan Government was heavily involved during 1993 in buying military equipment: arms and ammunition. This is shown by the funds of 2.5-billion Rwandese francs, paid to Dominique Lemaunier, a French businessman, who was supposed to deliver the equipment. It was Marc RUGENERA, by then Finance Minister, who signed the contract for the purchases on the Government side. The deal was followed up by Lt.- Col. Kayumba Cyprien of the FAR (Rwandan Armed Forces).

In March 1994, arms purchased in Egypt and sent to Kigali by a British aircraft were distributed to the Interahamwe militia of Pres. Habyalimana's political party, the MRND. These Interahamwe militia units were being trained militarily and receiving arms and ammunition specifically to undertake a genocidal assault against the nation's Tutsi population. They also planned a massacre of some political opposition leaders, including those who happened to be moderate Hutu. At the same time the Interahamwe were recruiting, with their numbers growing to 50,000. Army (FAR) Reservists, too, were given instructions to train the Interahamwe. All prefectures of Rwanda received funds from the Government, to distribute to the Interahamwe.

President Habyalimana in 1993, meanwhile, deliberately delayed the implementation of the Arusha Peace Accords, in order to allow more time for his Army units and militias to prepare for the coming mass destruction.

Radio Television of Mille Collines (RTLM) was strengthened in human and financial terms from the Akazu (clan, support base) of Habyalimana, specifically to propagate ethnic hatred against the Tutsi and to mobilize all Hutu extremists favoring the genocide against the Tutsi population.

Preparations in the Rwandan Patriotic Front

During and after the signing of the Arusha Peace Accords, the Rwandan Patriotic Front was preparing for the final battle. After the signature by both sides involved in the conflict, (then) Major (now Major-General) Paul Kagame started visiting all Unit Commands under the areas controlled by RPF. He met with us (Rwandan Patriotic Army soldiers) and assured us that we should not believe at all in Arusha Peace Accords.

“Be ready with your military equipment, we are going to fight for the final war against the Kigali Government,” Major Paul Kagame told the RPF troops.

Thereafter, the military forces in different units received intensive training in Karama, a political-military center in Byumba prefecture. In addition, the nominally-civilian cadres of RPF also received some military and political training in Karama to support the RPA. When the RPF had sent its RPA battalion of 600 troops to Kigali under command of Lt.-Col. Charles Kayonga, other military units in civilian clothes also infiltrated the town of Kigali. Every time that RPF trucks came to our headquarter in Mulindi to load military supplies and firewood to be sent to the battalion in Kigali (at the CND, where the RPA battalion was based), arms and ammunition were also loaded, concealed among the supplies which were legitimately supposed to reach Kigali.

Heavy arms, including light artillery (such as mortars), were disassembled, before being loaded and later re-assembled upon arrival at the CND building.

The RPA officer in charge of that secret operation at Mulindi was Sub.-Lt. Moses of the High Command unit and Captain Charles Karamba of the DMI was based in CND building, orchestrating events from that end.

Captain Charles was the liaison officer between Mulindi and Kigali for that operation.

He was later appointed military attache in Eritrea, where he has the particular mission of buying arms and military equipments for the RPF. A day before the genocide started, there were 4,000 RPA troops in Kigali. The RPF's high-ranking officers in Kigali under MINUAR (United Nations International Monitoring Unit in Rwanda) were there to survey the preparations of the then- Government Army.

RPF officials tried at their best to convince other opposition political parties to address the Rwandan crises by eliminating President Habyalimana. Pres. Habyalimana has been reported as the key person who brought disaster to the country and the person who delayed the implementation of the Arusha Peace Accord. There were, however, other factors. The main political parties, the MDR and PSD, were reluctant to support the RPF proposal in the belief that the RPF itself would not respect the Arusha Peace Accord.

Gatabazi Felicien, the incumbent Secretary-General of PSD (Partie Socialiste Democrat), was killed by RPF gunmen while entering his compound in Kigali in February 1994, because he had opposed the RPF plan. The killers used a known and standard RPF method called “standing up”.

The RPF held a meeting between February and March 1994 at Mulindi with RPF- member businessmen, the sponsors of RPF's guerilla operations. Major-General Paul Kagame, closing that meeting, spoke about the Arusha Peace Accord, accusing Habyalimana of delaying its

imprimantation. A businessman named Kalinda Sweet Bread (who subsequently fled Rwanda in 1998 after the RPA killed his child), speaking on behalf of other RPF members, declared that the Arusha Peace Accord delayed the RPF program and that this would cost a lot of money which they would not be capable of providing in the coming days. Major-General Kagame asked for solutions. Kalinda responded that the real solution was to re-attack the Rwandan Government. That proposal was well-received by other businessmen and Kagame did not oppose it.

The Collapse of the Arusha Peace Accord Was the Opportunity for the RPF to Seize Power

It was clear that if the Arusha Peace Accord was to be implemented then both the Habyalimana Administration and the RPF would face possibly insurmountable difficulties. The extent of the corruption by the incumbent Hutu Government of Pres. Habyalimana meant that, if the Accords were to be implemented, senior officials, including the President, would be open to charges of corruption and abuse of power, including the many political murders which they had undertaken. Maj.-Gen. Kagame, for his part, recognized that, because the Arusha Accords called for one-man, one-vote, the Tutsi minority - which the RPF in large part represented - could not win outright power at any stage. (It was well-known that elections would not favor the RPF because Hutu power cores of the MRND, MDR, CDR, PSD and PL parties were composed mostly of Hutu.) As a result, both leaders, for different reasons, knew that implementation of the Arusha Accords was not acceptable, despite public posturing to the contrary.

Generals Habyalimana and Kagame were known, therefore, to believe that the power sharing was weakening both sides. The Arusha Accords were becoming increasingly meaningless to both of them, but they were required, for domestic as well as international reasons, to continue paying lip-service to the process.

Maj.-Gen. Kagame at this stage was clearly committed, therefore, to continuing the guerilla war against the Habyalimana, up to and including the assassination of the President. It has become clear that, in this process, Maj.-Gen. Kagame was aware of the fact that killing Pres. Habyalimana would initiate mass destruction and genocide. RPF officers, such as myself, were told in 1993 by the RPF leadership that intelligence reports indicated that Pres. Habyalimana's Hutu followers would begin a campaign to kill all Tutsis in the event that Kagame attempted to seize power. This intelligence was leaked to the exiled King of Rwanda, King Kigeli V, by his supporters within the RPF, and the King subsequently used the information to issue written warnings to the United States Government and the United Nations that a campaign of genocide was expected. These warnings are now a matter of public record.

It is understood that Pres. Habyalimana confirmed these warnings in separate messages to the King.

As an intelligence officer, I knew that Maj.-Gen. Kagame was well-informed of the fact that Pres. Habyalimana's Presidential Guard and Interahamwe militia were trained and armed to eliminate Tutsi groups in case Paul Kagame attempted to take power. He knew very well that almost all Tutsi were registered on the list of those who had to be exterminated. Militia Interahamwe units were deployed throughout the country, waiting to kill all Tutsi inside Rwanda.

The RPF's clandestine broadcasting unit, Radio Muhabura, consistently and openly broadcast at the time details of the Interahamwe's plans for attacks on Tutsis.

The following examples demonstrate that extent of that situation:

Gatabazi Felicien, noted above, was assassinated by the RPF because he had refused to endorse the plan to kill Habyalimana. The RPF had been afraid that he might reveal the plans to Habyalimana who was a close associate in an arms business which weapons supplied to Palipehutu, a criminal-extremist Hutu group in Burundi, and through Mr. Minani, who was at that time a Burundian Minister. The transit store of those arms was a company called Mimosa, a travel company located behind St. Andrews College at Nyamirambo, a suburb of Kigali. Mimosa belonged to Mbarushimana Antoine, a close friend to Gatabazi. Mbarushimana was subsequently killed by RPA at Nyanza (a sub-prefecture of Butare) after the genocide, in order to silence a witness of Gatabazi's death.

In response to the killing of Gatabazi, the PSD militants of Butare prefecture, ignoring the psychological operations of the RPF, killed Bucyana Martin, President of CDR (Coalition pour la defense de la Republique) in revenge, believing that their leader was killed by CDR or Habyalimana. The Interahamwe and CDR militia in turn reacted angrily and killed many Tutsi in revenge for the killing of Bucyana. This rapid and violent sequence of events made it clear to Kagame what would happen if he attempted to kill Habyalimana.

Another corroborating example was the death in 1993 of Katumba, one of the Interahamwe leaders, who was shot dead, presumably by the RPF, because the Interahamwe and CDR had killed so many Tutsi of Kigali. This wave of killings should have served as an alarm which could not have gone unnoticed.

Still, the plan of Kagame was to take power in Rwanda regardless of the lives of Tutsi and Hutu moderate which would be lost when the anticipated genocide began. Kagame's choice in 1994 of Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, to be the figurehead President behind whom Kagame could operate secretly, was beneficial to him in helping to bring his plans to fruition without causing international alarm. This process ended for Kagame when Pres. Bizimungu resigned in March 2000, tired of being a show president while the real power was with the nominal Vice-President and Defense Minister, Paul Kagame.

Military Personnel of RPA Were Trained to Operate Surface-to-Air Missiles to Shoot Down the Presidential Aircraft

Following the signing of the Arusha Accord by the Habyalimina Government and the RPF in January 1994, a battalion of the RPA was sent to the Parliament, the CND, in Kigali. At the same time, other RPA units secretly infiltrated Kigali in civilian clothes. Concurrently, Maj.-Gen. Kagame sent to Uganda four of his military personnel to be trained in the operation of the Russian-built SA-7 Strela man-portable surface-to-air missile (SAM). This type of missile was already in service with the Ugandan Army.

Given that there was no air threat to the RPA at the time - because the RPA units were in the center of the common capital city, Kigali, and because the Rwandan Armed Forces of Habyalimana had only a few armed helicopters - it is clear that the purpose of the training was specifically to shoot down the presidential aircraft of Pres. Habyalimana at the earliest possible opportunity. After training in Uganda, all four RPA troops were returned to Mulindi, the General Headquarters (or High Command) of the RPA in Byumba Prefecture, where they

were transferred to the Missile Unity (the term “Unity” normally applies to a three-battalion formation, but not in this case), which was in reality a small missile section commanded by Lieutenant Kayumba Joseph. Kayumba was later known to be living at Kanombe Barracks, in Kigali, and was later been promoted to the rank of Captain.

I was a witness of these events, living at Mulindi, and where Kayumba Joseph and his colleagues were friends of mine.

At the end of February 1994, considering the refusal of Habyalimana to implement the Arusha peace accord, Lt.-Col. Kayonga, then commander of the RPF’s Battalion based in the CND, sent a message to Lieutenant Kayumba ordering him to send the four missile-trained military troops to the CND. After receiving that message, Lieutenant Kayumba had immediately sent them to CND without informing Lt.-Col. Kabarebe James, his Commanding Officer. Lt.-Col. Kabarebe imprisoned Lt. Kayumba because of that failure to inform him of the transfer of the four troops.

In March 1994, the RPA’s High Command led by Kagame called on the RPF officials based in Kigali to return to Mulindi. Most of them left Kigali for Mulindi. Two weeks before the crash of the Presidential aircraft, Maj.-Gen. Kagame sent Lt.-Col. James Kabarebe to bring the SA-7 surface-to-air missiles to the CND detachment, and to give final instructions related to the new attack against the Rwandese Army forces (FAR) and brief the four soldiers designated to shoot down the aircraft of Habyalimana. Lt.-Col. Kabarebe spent more than one week in CND before returning to Mulindi.

Two RPF leaders, Colonels Kanyarengwe Alexis and Lizinde Theoneste, who had earlier served in the Habyalimana Government, gave information and instructions as to where the missiles should be placed. (Col. Lizinde Theoneste, who later defected, was subsequently assassinated in 1998 by RPF operatives in Nairobi, Kenya, in order to ensure the secrecy of the missile operation.)

The missile locations were at Masaka sector of the Kanombe commune, on the outskirts of Kigali, where aircraft make their final approach before landing.

Two weeks before the Habyalimana’s aircraft crash, 12 artillery systems were brought from Uganda, and arrived at our headquarters in Mulindi. In the meantime, our High Command was busy organizing meetings and preparing for the final battle to take control of Kigali. Those who attended the meetings were: Colonels Ndungute, Sam Kaka, Kayumba Nyamwasa, Twahirwa Dodo, Gashumba, Muhire, Mugambage Frank, Ngoga, Bagire, Biseruka, Musitu, and Karemera. Among the lieutenant-colonels were James Kabarebe, Ibingira, Rwahama, Nyamurangwa, Karangwa, Kadhafi, Karera, Gahutu, and others.

The Aircraft Crash and the Beginning of the Genocide Prepared in Advance by Hutu Power, and How Kagame’s Plans Became the Catalyst

Once the preparations to eliminate Pres. Habyalimana were completed, it was necessary to find a reason to force Pres. Habyalimana to travel by aircraft over the area where the missiles were deployed. Given that the missiles were deployed along the approach path to Kanombe Airport at Kigali, it was then only necessary to know the time of the return to Kigali by Pres. Habyalimana’s aircraft.

As part of the planning, the leaders of the RPF had been lobbying in friendly countries so

that these countries would convince Pres. Mwinyi of Tanzania to organize a regional summit about Burundi's problems, and about the implementation of the Arusha Peace Accords. The RPF insisted that military chiefs also be invited.

The summit was a trap for Habyalimana, giving Kagame a way to take power.

But as part of their prepared attack, Hutu extremists also took that opportunity to exterminate the Tutsi who had been listed days before. Kagame was aware that this would occur, as a response triggered by the death of Habyalimana. The RPF proposed that Rwandan and Burundian military chiefs be invited to the Arusha meeting. The aim of Kagame was that Major-General Nsabimana, the Army Chief of Staff, be killed with Habyalimana so that the leadership of FAR would be destroyed and non-existent. The FAR was already undermined by internal North-South regional dissent. Before the regional meeting was held and chaired by Tanzanian President Hassan Mwinyi, RPF president Alexis Kanyarengwe went to Tanzania and came back to Byumba. On his return, he met us at Rubaya in Byumba where we were in a meeting. He said: "Instead of continuing pushing from outside, it is better to go in and kill the enemy." That is what happened on April 6, 1994.

Before going to Dar-es-Salam Summit, Habyalimana went to see Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) President Mobutu Sese Seko to seek his participation so that he could support him against leaders of states favorable to RPF. He also asked Pres. Mobutu to provide him (Habyalimana) with intelligence support to check information on the RPF, and about the assassination attempt which the RPF was expected to commit against him. The information was provided by Ngbanda Honore, former security adviser to Pres. Mobutu. He participated to the meeting of the two heads-of-state. Ngbanda was the one who was going to help Habyalimana in analyzing and cross-checking the information related to death threats against Habyalimana. One day before the summit took place, Pres. Mobutu's advisers asked Pres. Mobutu not to go at the summit for security reasons.

RPF soldiers in the CND battalion, and those who had infiltrated in Kigali town before April 6, 1994, had finished war preparation. Other units were ready to attack. Colonel Lizinde Theoneste, RPF Member of Parliament, was an intelligence specialist. He was among RPF officials at the time staying in the CND building and collaborating in the RPF intelligence search about Habyalimana's army operations. Col. Lizinde, as noted above, is the one who recommended Masaka as the perfect site from where to shoot the presidential aircraft.

Col. Lizinde had a public notoriety, was very well known in many ways, and was a friend of mine. After the genocide, he told me many times that he was afraid to be killed one day because of the information he had about the aircraft crash. He told me that if he was killed it would be because of the secret he had about Habyalimana's assassination by Paul Kagame. Lizinde was also a private adviser of Kagame. I knew well about their friendship. Kagame promoted him to the rank of colonel and nominated him as an RPF member of Parliament.

In the end, Lizinde went into exile. Those who followed up his departure in exile, know that two officers have been asked to give explanations. These officers are Lt.-Col. Rwahama of the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), who had instruction to watch Lizinde and prevent his escape. The other officer is Lt.-Col. James Kabarebe, a Republican Guard commander. The two have been sanctioned for their lack of vigilance, which helped Lizinde to escape. That is one of the reasons Rwahama has been put aside.

After the departure of Lizinde, the intelligence service sent to me intelligence officers who were, in fact, friends of mine, to check if I knew his escape plan. It is Lizinde who told me that the four soldiers involved in the missiles had left Mulindi for Kigali (CND: Parliament House) in the perspective of presidential aircraft attempt. The four soldiers had been received in CND by Major Rose Kabuye who was in charge of that. Lizinde told me that it was Col. Kabarebe who gave the latest instructions to shoot Habyalimana's Falcon executive aircraft.

Before April 6, 1994, some RPF high-ranking officers withdrew their families from Kigali. Two weeks before that date, the Colonel James Kabarebe was the one who has been designated by Paul Kagame to convoy the missiles; James Kabarebe was also charged to communicate to those in CND the last instructions in regard to the war. He spent almost one week in CND before he came back to Mulindi.

Because Lizinde was aware of the plot to shoot down the presidential Falcon, on the morning of April 6, 1994, he asked some of his friends to leave Kigali before that night. He told them that it was not for the purpose of peace that James Kabarebe came to Kigali in CND. Colonel Lizinde personally went to bring his own family from Kigali but he did not find them and came immediately back to Mulindi.

The shooting down of the aircraft took place around 20.25 hrs local time. In the aircraft, were President Habyalimana, President Ntaryamira of Burundi, Major-General Nsabimana, Chief of Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), Ambassador Renzaho (a senior advisor to Habyalimana), Doctor Akingeneye (the president's personal doctor), and others. At the time of the shooting, I was watching the World Cup football with some of the RPF high-ranking officers, including Major-General Paul Kagame, Colonels Ndugute, Biseruka, and Twahirwa. Immediately after the aircraft crash, Colonel James Kabarebe came into the room where we were watching the football, and took Paul Kagame outside to discuss the matter in private. Soon after, Colonel James Kabarebe called upon Colonel Ndugute and other high-ranking officers for a meeting outside.

The High Command Unit immediately took the decision to attack Kigali that night. This Unit operated under the direct command of Paul Kagame and James Kabarebe. All other RPF Units prepared themselves and launched their attack.

Conclusion

The decision of Paul Kagame to shoot Pres. Habyalimana's aircraft was the catalyst of an unprecedented drama in Rwandan history, and Major-General Paul Kagame took that decision with all awareness.

Kagame's ambition caused the extermination of all of our families: Tutsis, Hutus and Twas. We all lost. Kagame's take-over took away the lives of a large number of Tutsis and caused the unnecessary exodus of millions of Hutus, many of whom were innocent under the hands of the genocide ringleaders.

Some naive Rwandans proclaimed Kagame as their savior, but time has demonstrated that it was he who caused our suffering and misfortunes. He has already put under protection some families who had given large amount of money in terms of war contribution, while our ordinary families were left to assailants of the Interahamwe.

Can Kagame explain to Rwandan people why he sent Claude Dusaidi and Charles Muligande to New York and Washington to stop the UN military intervention which was supposed to be sent and protect the Rwandan people from the genocide? The reason behind avoiding that military intervention was to allow the RPF leadership the takeover of the Kigali Government and to show the world that they - the RPF - were the ones who stopped the genocide. We will all remember that the genocide occurred during three months, even though Kagame has said that he was capable of stopping it the first week after the aircraft crash.

Can Major-General Paul Kagame explain why he asked to MINUAR to leave Rwandan soil within hours while the UN was examining the possibility of increasing its troops in Rwanda in order to stop the genocide?

I decided to reveal the truth and only the all truth so that everyone knows what happened. These were the hidden truths and that is why Kagame sent assassins with diplomatic passports to the United States of America to look for me, because he knows that I know who did what.

You may see that some people I mentioned are no longer alive because they were killed by the Kagame's death squads. Now, the world should start to ask questions, how and why such and such person was eliminated outside and inside Rwanda in suspicious way. I ask the International Tribunal to prosecute Major- General Kagame and his clique. As a witness who saw and heard what I have written now, I am ready to prove that Major-General Paul Kagame is guilty of the aircraft crash crime. I will give other proof which I hold later, in order to not undermine the inquiry.

An Important Note

The genocidal Hutus who killed defenseless Tutsis and other revisionists and extremist groups should not use this testimony to deny the existence of the genocide against the Tutsis and think that Kagame's crime against the President Habyalimana entitled them to kill Tutsis. Those responsible for the genocide of 1994 must be prosecuted according to international and national law.

I ask all Rwandans to isolate Paul Kagame. I ask the International Justice community to accomplish its responsibility in that matter. Furthermore, Kagame must be prosecuted for the assassination of Kabera Assiel, the former presidential advisor; Seth Sendashonga, the former Interior minister; Theoneste Lizinde, a former high-ranking official; Felicien Gatabazi, a former political leader; other former high-profile figures in the leadership of the RPF, and others.

The International Community did not know that Kagame does not have the capability to unite the Rwandan people. The world community welcomed him and gave him support. It must know now, once and for all, that such a criminal, whoever is, will never be able to unite the Rwandan people.

Jean-Pierre Mugabe: Given by my hand, in Washington DC, this 21st Day of April, 2000.

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