

# **MAJOR GENERAL PAUL KAGAME BEHIND THE SHOOTING DOWN OF LATE HABYARIMANA'S PLANE: AN EYE WITNESS TESTIMONY**

1. I have been keenly following talks on allegations of crimes committed by Paul Kagame, leader of Rwanda, and his attempts, against all odds, to deny them. I deem it necessary to inform Rwandans and the international community at large of the crimes I witnessed in the hope that he would stop deceiving people. It took quite a long time before I decided to make public this statement because I was in Uganda, where Kagame has a lot of covert agents who would have eliminated me. I know him very well because I worked with him in the Rwandese Patriotic Army since its creation. More so, I served in his escort for nearly 10 years, until I fled the country.

## **My background**

2. My name is *Aloys Ruyenzi*, I was born on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1971 in Mbarara, Uganda of Rwandan refugee parents. I grew up in Uganda and I joined the National Resistance Army of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni in 1987. I had a six-month course in Basic Military Training, after which I attended a six-month course in military intelligence. After the training, I was posted in the 23<sup>rd</sup> battalion based in northern Uganda, as intelligence staff. A year later, I was called back to Kampala and posted at the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), where Kagame was a senior officer. While in DMI, I was selected for another course called "the Intelligence and Self-Defence". When I fled the country, I was working in the Republican Guard, an RPA (Rwanda Patriotic Army) special unit that provides elements for the Presidential Protection Unit. I was Second Lieutenant and my army number was OP1460.

## **I joined RPA since its creation**

3. When the Rwandan Patriotic Front attacked Rwanda on 1st October 1990, I was among the fighters. First I was with the 4th battalion operating in the Akagera National Park, until we were pushed back to Uganda and started guerrilla warfare. I then joined the then LIMA Combined Mobile Force, from where I eventually joined the High Command Unit. This is equivalent to army headquarters in a regular army. However unlike the latter the unit's main duty was to escort Major Kagame, then RPA boss. I first was in the missile unit, before being appointed in the escort of Kagame.
4. When I joined the escort, I resumed my duties as intelligence officer. I would be most of the time close to Kagame as a member of the close bodyguards' team. In this capacity, I hardly missed any detail of what he would say or instruct to be done. Hence, my testimony is not a piece of hearsays, but a testimony of an eyewitness.
5. After the take over of government by RPF, I once again attended courses in military intelligence and Protection of VIPs. I took up duties as a presidential bodyguard. When the invasion of Zaire started, I was sent there as one of the confidants of Kagame to follow and give detailed account of any military

operation that took place. This was in a bid to make sure that he did not miss any detail by sending his own escorts. The crimes that I witnessed there are so much that I cannot detail them here. I was there on special assignment as member of the Republican Guards unit. I will do it in a different paper once I have time. What I can simply say for the time being is that a lot of crimes that were committed by the RPA were ordered by Kagame.

6. People were killed on a very large scale on orders of Kagame and officers who did not carry out orders to kill were either relieved of their duties or disappeared. Kagame does not tolerate anybody disobeying his orders. Similarly, during the time the RPA was fighting the so-called “infiltrators” in northern Rwanda in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, many unarmed Hutu civilians were killed in what looked like a true ethnic cleansing. I opposed those atrocities, until I was labelled as an enemy collaborator.

### **Reasons for fleeing the country I love so much and I fought for**

7. As I said earlier, I joined and served RPA<sup>1</sup> since its creation. When I joined it, I sincerely believed that I was struggling to end injustice towards our brothers, our parents and our motherland, and eventually to return home. In any case, this is what we were told. I never envisaged that our return would lead to killings and expulsion of the population we found inside the country. To my dismay, I realised that our leader and current President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame had a hidden agenda. To make matters worse, he would not tolerate any dissenting voice and opposing his orders could even lead to disappearance.
8. I had the misfortune of working in his escort, where the climate is abominable. There is a permanent climate of terror and mistrust, as everybody spies on everybody else. I was intelligence officer, but I knew very well that I was myself being spied on.
9. The intelligence officers do not carry out ordinary military intelligence work they are paid for. They are a squad of criminals that was set up by Kagame for his own ends. Its sole mission is killings opponents and other unwanted elements, so as to consolidate his murderous regime. It is therefore very difficult to work with him, more so as intelligence officer without adhering to his criminal policies. My aim now is that before I am eliminated I want make public a list of assassinations ordered personally by Kagame. The list is indeed very long.
10. I defected because I was realising that we were becoming a gang of killers. I could not stomach that situation which was contrary to what we fought for, that it is fighting for restoring a rule of law.
11. But it took time before I could flee for fear of being arrested and killed as a deserter. I feared being killed by the butt of a used hoe *agafuni*. The latter is the acronym given to the part of a hoe that RPA used to smash heads of people condemned to death. It is very sad that I kept on working deliberately with a man whose criminal records are so horrendous.
12. The opposition to atrocities planned and ordered by Kagame landed me in trouble as this was considered as tantamount to treason. In fact I was being

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<sup>1</sup> Rwandese Patriotic Army, the guerrilla force that overran Rwanda in 1994 under the leadership of Kagame

suspected of possible treasonable acts. I was eventually trailed and attempts were made over my life. I was by now labelled as one of the so-called “negative forces”. This was a label given to Interahamwe militia living in Zaire. I was even accused of having released Interahamwe in Nkamira-Gisenyi and put under arrest. This was mere fabrication. Not only there is no Interahamwe prison there, but also I never released anybody with evidence that he was involved in killings. There is no way I could show mercy to such people. I will emphasize here that I do not refer to those innocent Hutus who were labelled Interahamwe because simply by virtue of being Hutus.

13. By the time I worked with the Gendarmerie, people who were detained there were suspected of common law crimes mostly related to land and cattle disputes. I was unfairly arrested on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1999. Those who arrested me eventually got ashamed and I was released and allowed to resume my duties in the escort of Kagame.

### **My escape from many traps**

14. After allegations of conniving with the enemy were levelled against me simply because I did not support killings innocent people, attempts were made to get rid of me in ambushes. The first time I survived an ambush was in Gisenyi on my way to Kabaya thanks to a friend who had warned me. It was on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1999.
15. I did also escape narrowly a second attempt on my life, but my escort perished. One was called James Kabera, a private soldier, the other one was Hodari, a Mugogwe (a local ethnic Tutsi group of Gisenyi). It was on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2001. I was again going to Gisenyi on special assignment. I was ambushed in the mountains of Buranga in Ruhengeri. This time around, I had not been warned at all, as I could not imagine that I could be ambushed while on such a mission. I did not understand why I had been selected for the mission but even if I had known, I could not refuse the order. A vehicle trailed me right from Kigali and kept on indicating my position. The Toyota Land cruiser vehicle that I was in was sprayed with bullets and two of my escort were killed on the spot. I don't know how I survived.
16. The last attempt on my life was on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2001. This had been assigned to two groups to ensure that I don't escape anymore. One of the people involved felt bad and told me to flee, as he did not have any quarrel with me. The same day I fled to Uganda.
17. I was first kept under tight surveillance, under CMI (Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence) custody purportedly for my own security. When they gathered enough information and confirmed that I was a genuine asylum seeker, I was allowed to go out and look for shelter. I realised that I could not remain in Uganda, as Rwandan intelligence services there are even more active than Ugandan own services. Many Rwandan asylum seekers were picked there and sneaked back to Rwanda where they were tortured and killed. This is why I decided to go far from Rwanda in my quest for asylum. I am now in a place where I can denounce the atrocities committed by General Paul Kagame and his henchmen. I insisted on giving all these details in order to explain the difficulties faced by an RPA soldier who does not support what Kagame wants. I am hoping that slowly by slowly, the tendency of considering all Tutsi officers as killers will vanish in the minds of many people.

## **General Kagame did a lot of atrocities, he must answer for them**

### **A. Kagame's record.**

18. General Kagame is of quite a very bad character. He is extremely nervous, so much so that at time he can crash everything on his way and ransack a whole house. He does not tolerate any dissenting voice, what he says is gospel truth. I worked with him for a long time. He does not tolerate any advice and is trigger-happy. Once one of his close allies simply tells him that you are suspected of disloyalty, this is enough to warrant your death.
19. Kagame can spend a whole month without smiling. He can spend sleepless night abusing people and roughing them up. He does not spare anybody, he beats people at random. Anybody summoned at his home starts shaking excepts henchmen like Major general James Kabarebe. Other officers up to the rank of colonel like Ndugutse could be beaten to our disgust. He is a bloodthirsty person. When I worked with him, he would go very early in the morning to visit detention places of DMI2 to sometime supervise killing. *I recall once in Muhura when we were fighting to capture Kigali, he personally went on a 12.7mm AAC (anti air craft) mounted on a jeep of his escort and sprayed bullets on a peaceful market crowd of peasants gathered on a market place. It was in 1994. He then ordered his soldiers to use all available weapons and shell the market.* It is very saddening to see a leader getting involved in massacring people in a market, while sarcastically laughing. The few times you will ever see him smiling is mainly when he is killing or seeing people killed.
20. General Paul Kagame supervises the smallest detail of everything going on in the army. He even follows conversations between soldiers on military patrols on their walkie-talkie radios.
21. Every morning, he summons his signal officer and reads through all operations and routine army messages, to make sure that he does not miss anything. He uses to short circuit his military commanding officers by giving direct orders to field commanders without passing through the chain of command. Here I simply want to stress that there is nothing he can pretend to ignore. Nothing can take place within RPA without his knowledge. Apart from very isolated incidents carried out by petty criminals, all atrocities committed by the army in operational areas are sanctioned by him. The officers detained for so-called operational blunders are in actual facts detained because they did not kill the way he wants. They are not in remand for killing civilians, but for not concealing their bodies. For him that is a crime. The one who manages to kill the maximum and clear all the evidence will surely be promoted.
22. Major general Paul Kagame manages Rwandan army as his own militiamen. The whole army has become a wide intelligence network. When there are officially 5 intelligence officers, you can rest assured that there are another 20 under cover. There is no clear chain of command in the intelligence network, everybody spies on everybody else and reports to Major General Paul Kagame in person. Kagame is a very rough and security cautious person. He has got a network of criminals who are by this virtue untouchable. They are ready to carry out any dirty mission that Kagame assigns them. Those people are so

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<sup>2</sup> Directorate of Military Intelligence

deadly that nobody dares flee the country because they may be tracked anywhere and be killed. Kagame does not fear anybody. He does not care even about his health. He sleeps at 2.30 am and wakes up at 4.00 am. He does what he wants, when he wants. He is very stubborn and arrogant. He does not hesitate to call his entourage stupid people because he thinks that he is the cleverest man. He does not trust anybody and is very unpredictable.

**B. Some of the crimes he committed or ordered**

23. Major general Paul Kagame personally ordered the shooting down of President Juvénal Habyarimana's plane.
24. I got astonished when I heard him denying it. I equally got surprised by Rwandan Radio and some international media manoeuvre to absolve him of that act. I heard even civilian people like Minister Charles Muligande, trying to explain how militarily it was impossible.
25. Let me make it crystal clear, I attended the last meeting where the plan was hatched. I was there physically and I even know the names of those who carried out the shooting. I was working with them in the High Command unit. It is Lt Frank Nziza and cpl Eric Hakizimana.
26. It is not hearsays; I was present when the meeting took place. That was on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1994 from 2.30pm to 3.30pm. The Chairman of the meeting was Major general Paul Kagame, and the following officers were present: Col Kayumba Nyamwasa, Col Théoneste Lizinde, Lt Col James Kabarebe, Major Jacob Tumwine, Captain Charles Karamba. *I heard P. Kagame asking Col. Lizinde to report about his investigations and I have seen Col Lizinde giving to Paul Kagame a map of the selected place for the plane shooting etc.* I don't want to jeopardise the investigation, because I would be playing around with criminals who would take the opportunity to prepare their defence. But I simply want to say that I am ready to give evidence in court, should my testimony be needed. I would then say the whole truth, if I were still alive.

**C. Major general Paul Kagame gave orders to kill civilians.**

27. He ordered at numerous occasions to kill as many civilians as possible. This took place in many areas in Byumba, Ruhengeri and elsewhere, and long before the Tutsi genocide. *I say so because some people think that RPA killed in reprisal after the genocide. Even during the genocide, I saw and heard on several occasions major general Paul Kagame giving orders to kill civilians, especially in Mutara, Byumba and Kibungo. He would enjoy it like a football fan watching a football game and cheering his team.* At time, he even used his escort or selected DMI operatives to kill civilians.
28. Before the plan to get rid of Juvénal Habyarimana was hatched, meeting had been going on to prepare the final assault on Kigali. This had been the ultimate goal whatever the outcome of the negotiations. At that time, I was acting I.O for then Lt Silas Udahemuka (currently strong man in Kigali), who had got involved in an accident. In this capacity, I could attend all the meetings of the High Command. In one of the meetings, major general Paul Kagame ordered that civilians be lured into attending a public rally under the pretext of emergency food supply or security meetings, in order to round them up and eliminate them. And this happened the way it had been planned. *The reality is that mass killings of people took place under his orders.* Furthermore, he had a

special hatred against religious people. Whenever the latter would be spotted and rounded up, local commanders would always ask major General Kagame what to do. Invariably, he ordered for their killings. *I am even aware of the talks he had with Lieutenant colonel Fred Ibingira before the bishops were killed in Kabgayi. Similar incidents happened in Rwesero. The execution squad took the priests to Karushya and killed them.*

**D. The sparking off of the Tutsi genocide. I was in charge of collecting and analysing intelligence from our sources inside Rwanda.**

29. All the reports were unanimously stating that Tutsi would be wiped out if the war resumed. Any pretext would be enough to kick off the killings. Major general Paul Kagame did not care at all about those threats. Recently, when one of former RPA officers who deserted and fled the country said that RPA was to blame for the killing of Tutsi, Rwandan foreign affairs minister, Charles Muligande attempted against all odds to refute it. Why does he so pathetically tell lies? It will suffice to recall that Kagame himself used to say that Tutsi living inside Rwanda were opportunists and reactionary elements that had refused to flee. Their death was none of his concerns. In fact, all the forces that were used to kill innocent civilians in liberated areas would have been used to rescue Tutsi. This did not happen. God willing, I will, jointly with other colleagues, compile a comprehensive report about ethnic cleansing that was ordered by Kagame. At times, he did it personally. *I saw him personally instructing for the digging of mass graves for people who had been massacred in Byumba, Muhura and Murambi. Later, he ordered their removal and to be taken to crematory centres in Gabiro, Nasho, Masaka, Nyungwe, Kami, Gitarama military barracks and Mukamira.* At times, people would be packed alive into lorries and be taken directly to the above place to be executed on the spot.
30. Apart from the war of 1990-1994, he launched two bloody wars in Zaire and is still disturbing that country.
31. Major general Paul Kagame also instructed his officers and men led by then Col Kayumba Nyamwasa to massacre civilians in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi. I saw personally heavy artillery pieces and helicopter gunship shelling villages under the excuse of fighting insurgency. At time, no single infiltrators would have set foot there, or they may have been there but left long before the counterattack. People would be summarily executed after long suffering by torture.
32. He did not spare his own tribes mates Tutsi. Bagogwe and Banyamulenge of Zaire were killed to safeguard his own selfish interests. It is not easy to find the right wording, but what he did is indescribable. He killed so many Congolese of Rwandan origin, Hutu and Tutsi alike. This will also be detailed later. We were Inkotanyi-members of RPA, we know all the elements who were misguided into getting involved in crimes. People should be assured that soon or later, all crimes that took place on the Rwandan soil will be accounted for. It will serve as a lesson for many, for one may conceal a crime, but the crime does not conceal itself.
33. I take this opportunity to call upon all Rwandan fighting the general Kagame's regime, to avoid getting involved in any activities that would lead to shedding the blood of innocent people. Kagame concealed his crimes for nearly 10 years, but time has come to expose him. All criminals will end up being taken

to court to answer for their deeds. Why do they take the risk of being arrested one day and spend the rest of their lives in prison?

#### **E. The refusal to rescue Tutsi in 1994**

34. I cannot forget the pain that general Kagame inflicted to Rwandan of Tutsi ethnic group, his own tribe mates. Some were even killed on his orders. Others were deliberately left at the mercy of Interahamwe. He made sure that nobody comes to their rescue. Up-to-date, he is still pursuing his policy by repeating in Congo what he did in Rwanda. Why is he busy creating hatred between Banyamulenge minority and the rest of the Congolese population? Is it for the interest of Tutsis? Even in Rwanda, he does not spare anything to exacerbate tension between ethnic groups, by his policy of forced reconciliation. What he does will inevitably lead to a new wave of ethnic conflict and Tutsi will again be the main victims. I hereby condemn it publicly, I urge him to stop forthwith killing us, causing us to be killed and using us as political springboard. I urge him to leave our country and the region in peace. As I promised, with the help of courageous colleagues who managed to flee his death squads, we shall compile a comprehensive report of all atrocities General Paul Kagame was involved in. I deliberately refrained from talking about politics. I leave it to others more competent to denounce his dictatorship.
35. I know very well that people will ask themselves why a Tutsi who came from Uganda for that matter can leak such secrets, as people think that all former Ugandan refugees are all in good books with the regime of general Kagame.
36. For me, I am not leaking secrets, I am denouncing crimes. There are many people who are longing to do so, but who cannot because they don't have the opportunity. For to say such thing inside Rwanda or anywhere in Africa would put somebody's life in great danger. I spoke out because I have a chance of being in a country where I feel safe. I don't rule out reprisals against my family left in Rwanda, but I am doing it anyway to avoid more suffering for all Rwandans. My prayer is that the international community at long last takes the opportunity to put an end to its support to general Kagame's regime, which is decimating people under the pretext of protecting Tutsi. Everything is done for his own interest.

Norway, 05/07/2004

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Aloys RUYENZI

(Signed)

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