

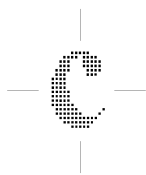
Conflict Policy Research Project (CPRP)

The Netherlands and Rwanda

A case study on Dutch Foreign Policies
and Interventions in the contemporary
conflict history of Rwanda

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Executive Summary

This report focuses on the impact of interventions by the Dutch government, notably through the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the setting of the contemporary history of post-war Rwanda. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has intervened either through diplomatic instruments, the donation of funds through multilateral organizations or through the implementation of development aid programmes in Rwanda itself.

Chapter two demonstrates that the genocide of 1994 was not a random incident in Rwandan history, but the almost inevitable outcome of a great number of background developments and of previous historical events. Land pressure has increased in Rwanda over the years, as a fast-growing population is condemned to share a fixed amount of arable land; and since its political independence a series of large-scale violent conflicts, mostly of an inter-ethnic character, have shaped the contemporary history. Through the combined effects of colonialism and deliberate political manipulation by various political elite groups, a process of polarization has emerged, which gained momentum at independence. A group of Hutu intellectuals took power in a bloody *coup* whereby large numbers of Tutsi fled in exile to neighbouring countries. A one-party state developed that was dominated by Hutu political elite, who carefully fostered the image of the former Tutsi elite as enemies among the largely illiterate Hutu peasantry. Furthermore, Rwandan history is closely bound to that of Burundi, and important political events in either one of these two countries have always strongly impacted on the other.

The military incursion by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF, a Tutsi-led rebel movement) in 1991 heralded a long period of internal turmoil, in the process exacerbating ethnic tensions and eventually resulting in the genocide of early 1994. It has been concluded that the Habyarimana regime stalled the ongoing peace talks in Arusha, in the process frustrating both hard-line and conciliatory Hutu political factions. Hard-line Hutu factions began to organize covert paramilitary organizations and prepared a political take-over. In early April 1994 the presidential plane was shot down, triggering almost immediately a well-orchestrated campaign of physical extermination of moderate Hutu politicians and a genocidal campaign against the Tutsi minority. Almost 10 per cent of the total population was annihilated as a result of the genocide, consisting mostly of Tutsis. Simultaneously, the military advance of the rebel RPF movement in mid-1994 resulted in a mass movement of an estimated 2.5 million Hutu refugees fleeing mainly to neighbouring Zaire and Tanzania. In the wake of the Tutsi-led RPF victory in Rwanda, a military stalemate developed, in which the remnants of the genocidal regime took refuge inside camps in eastern Zaire, from which raids were organized across the border into Rwanda. The so-called first rebellion led by Laurent Kabila and other anti-Mobutist groups overran these refugee camps, leading to another round of mass killings among civilians. A complicated war theatre emerged over time in the so-called Democratic Republic of Congo when pro-Rwanda rebel forces took on the DRC's newly appointed President Kabila in August 1998. Nowadays,

proliferations of armed rebel groups confront each other as well as President Kabila's troops, backed by a number of regional countries. As such the entire DRC quagmire stems directly from the prevailing unstable security setting in the Great Lakes' area, to which the Rwandan genocide has amply contributed.

Chapter three gives an overview of interventions by other actors not directly involved in the Rwandan conflict. The UNAMIR intervention became a complete failure because important donor countries refused to back up the operation when the genocide materialized. Most people within the UN bureaucracy were promptly informed about the risk of genocide against the Tutsi minority, but the Security Council nevertheless ordered the UNAMIR mission to be reduced from 2,500 to a mere 270 troops. The international community did not intervene on time to try to stem the genocidal tide, and their reluctant attitude can only be understood against the background of the failed US mission Restore Hope in Somalia. The withdrawal of UNAMIR was viewed with contempt by many African leaders, and has clearly contributed to the erosion of the UN's status of 'moral referee'. In the case of Rwanda, political indifference, as demonstrated by the entire international community, has led to passive acceptance of the genocide, setting a dubious standard for the credibility of future interventions.

The fourth chapter draws a broad picture of Dutch interventions in the Rwandan conflict and focuses mostly on the post-war period. The Dutch became an important donor to the new Government of Rwanda (GOR) after the RPF had militarily defeated the Hutu regime. The former Minister for Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk, showed a keen interest in the Rwandan conflict from the early days onward and developed a privileged relationship with the new political leaders. During his term in office he travelled frequently to the region and personally initiated new policies towards Rwanda. During the genocide, despite Minister Pronk's individual efforts to persuade other countries to join efforts in order to counter the genocide, the Dutch had very little impact on the course of events that unfolded after April 1994. In the aftermath of the genocide, when chaos prevailed and Rwanda was in dire straits, Minister Pronk immediately offered substantial financial aid. The Dutch initiative to support the incumbent Tutsi regime illustrates a far-stretching political engagement and provided the RPF regime with dearly needed international legitimacy and support. Even though the Netherlands therefore became a respected partner of the GOR and gained considerable international recognition for its role in the post-war situation, it failed to capitalize on its new status. In fact, the Netherlands never used its potential leverage to try to change counterproductive policies initiated by the GOR. The fragile security setting and the continuous threat of intervention by the remnants of the defeated Hutu army and the militia provided an effective alibi for the new GOR. Although the Netherlands complained about the excessive use of violence by government troops, notably during the forced evacuation of refugee camps inside Rwanda (among others Kibeho), during the counter-insurgency campaign in the north-west of Rwanda and when the newly formed Revolutionary Patriotic Army (successor to the rebel army RPF) helped the rebel movements headed by Kabila to dismantle the refugee camps in eastern Zaire, they failed to threaten or impose adequate sanctions. When reviewing the history of Dutch involvement in Rwanda various moments can be discerned during which the Netherlands effectively defended the GOR in international fora. Such moments could have been used to exert influence on the GOR, but somehow the Dutch government never considered such action. Although it had created the necessary prerequisites for political leverage, the Netherlands remained a

low-key actor in the realm of high politics, even regarding a small and politically unimportant state in sub-Saharan Africa.

In the realm of emergency and development aid, however, the Netherlands played a key initiating role. It becomes clear with hindsight that Rwanda became a pilot case for a new Dutch post-war rehabilitation policy, elaborated by Pronk himself, in which alongside more regular forms of development aid the Dutch ventured into other realms such as the restructuring the security sector and the rehabilitation of the justice sector. Furthermore, the Dutch government convinced important donor countries to change their attitudes towards the incumbent regime at important fund-raising meetings, so that also in the field of development aid, the Netherlands helped the incumbent regime to establish a legitimate presence as a reliable and trustworthy partner.

Overall, Dutch Rwanda development policy turned into a rather consistent policy, albeit that the impact of Dutch involvement is 'hidden' by the Trust Fund construction set up by Minister Pronk. The Trust Fund construction allowed donor coordination to some extent, but the relatively weak UNDP presence was superseded by its UN counterpart UNHCR. Infighting between the UN sister organizations and their rampant bureaucracy seriously hampered the effectiveness of the Trust Fund construction.

In the aftermath of the genocide the Netherlands invested heavily in the humanitarian aid operation that was largely materializing outside Rwanda, inflating the total amount of aid contributed over the last six years to Rwanda. In fact, the refugee camps in eastern Zaire and Tanzania became the most important recipients of Dutch humanitarian aid in the years 1994-1995. Although discussions about support to the genocidal regime emerged time and again, the humanitarian aid endeavour was never questioned, contributing to the revival of a Hutu genocidal 'rump state'. The Netherlands therefore also contributed to the prolongation of the conflict. Inside Rwanda the Netherlands had gradually established important sectoral programmes in the fields of justice, security and the rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees. In view of the prevailing culture of impunity, the Netherlands supported the training of judges, lawyers and the reform of the penitentiary sector. Other initiatives to stimulate reconciliation between the various population groups, such as promoting a quick assessment of different categories of genocide suspects, proved untimely and failed. In general, Dutch support proved important since other donors were reluctant to become involved. However, Dutch support to the security sector had rather mixed results. The *Gendarmerie Nationale* programme was successful and boosted their presence in the countryside, but the demobilization programme of the Revolutionary Patriotic Army was stopped after the GOR became involved in neighbouring DRC. Meanwhile, support to the reintegration of refugees was channelled through the Trust Fund and sometimes contributed to developments that were considered counterproductive. However, most of these funds were sharply earmarked, notably after the Dutch Embassy in Rwanda had gradually expanded its presence. The Embassy was able to exert considerable control on the funds spend in the various sectors.

Gradually, Dutch development aid made a full circle, notably when various integrated regional programmes were approved by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Such a development would normally signal the establishment of a regular bilateral relationship, but aid to Rwanda during the

entire post-war period has been funnelled through the modality of the humanitarian crises fund and its status to date remains unclear. The challenge for the Netherlands therefore seems unchanged: to what extent is the Netherlands willing to continue supporting the very regime that it helped to prop up, and if so, how can criteria be developed to judge the regime's performance and sanction its behaviour?

Abbreviations

AFDL	Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo
BBTG	Broad-Based Transition Government
CEBEMO	Catholic Dutch Co-financing Development NGO
CDR	<i>Coalition pour la defense de la republique</i>
CRU	Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DAF	Africa Desk of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
DCH	Conflict Management and Humanitarian Aid Department of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
DMP/NH	Multilateral Programmes Department and Emergency Aid Desk of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAR	<i>Forces armées rwandaises</i>
FAZ	<i>Forces armées zairoises</i>
FDD	Forces for the Defence of Democracy
GOR	Government of Rwanda
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
ICCO	Inter-church Christian Dutch Co-financing Development NGO
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
JEEAR	Joint Evaluation Emergency Assistance to Rwanda
MDR	<i>Mouvement démocratique rwandais</i>
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRND	<i>Mouvement révolutionnaire nationale pour le développement</i>
MSF	<i>Médecins sans frontières</i>
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
Novib	Dutch Co-financing Development NGO
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Aid
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PL	<i>Parti libéral</i>
PSD	<i>Parti social démocratique</i>
RCD	<i>Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie</i>
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army, successor of the RPF

RPF	Revolutionary Patriotic Front, until its victory over the FAR in 1994 the rebel army, later the denomination of the political party
RTC	Round Table Conference
RTLMC	<i>Radio télévision libre des mille collines</i>
SC	Security Council
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
TZ	Dutch <i>chargé d'affaires</i>
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNA	Uganda National Army
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRFOR	United Nations Human Rights Field Organization
US	United States
ZOA	Dutch NGO specializing in assistance to refugees

1 Methodology

1.1 Research Rational, Objectives and Questions

This case study is part of a more comprehensive study executed by the Conflict Research Unit of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’ on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project studies the current situation with regard to conflict-prevention policies and focuses on the development of an adequate policy mix to guide future interventions in conflict-ridden societies. The ultimate goal of this research is to suggest coherent policies that enable decision-makers to intervene effectively while simultaneously developing a relatively simple tool for the purpose of information gathering, processing, analysis and reporting of data relative to conflict prevention and conflict management. Such a framework should ideally facilitate a coherent policy response to situations of violent political turmoil within countries.

During the preparatory phase of this project a number of cases were selected in order to review the practice of Dutch Foreign Policy in the field. Besides Rwanda these cases were Liberia and Sudan in sub-Saharan Africa, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka in Asia, and Guatemala in the Central American region. The major criteria for the selection of this sample were the history of Dutch engagement, the nature and dynamics of internal conflicts in these countries and the wish to reflect the complexity of the so-called developing world. Reviewing these cases more or less automatically leads to a lessons-learned approach, highlighting Dutch-sponsored policies and interventions.

The focus on aims, instruments and options of Dutch Foreign Policy with regard to countries in conflict led to the formulation of the following more specific research questions concerning Rwanda:

- What were the aims of Dutch Foreign Policy regarding the Rwandan conflict?
- Which instruments were applied by the Dutch government in the Rwanda crisis?
- What were the effects of Dutch involvement in Rwanda?

1.2 Conceptual and Analytical Questions

In order to review Dutch policy endeavours regarding the countries in our sample, the Conflict Research Team of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’ (CRU) discussed the time-frame of the various country studies. In principle, the outbreak of large-scale violence during an internal conflict was retained as the starting point of the study. This implies that escalation to a higher level of violence marks the starting date of a conflict. Nevertheless, in some cases a number of years prior to such an outbreak of violence were included in the study in order to investigate the

prelude to such events or even sometimes periods of ‘normalcy’. In some cases the time horizon included a period of over twenty years, highlighting the protracted character of some of the cases involved (notably Afghanistan, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Sudan). On the other hand the period under study for some countries was abbreviated because of shortage of coherent data.

The central concept of this study is conflict-related interventions, subdivided into direct and indirect conflict-related activities. A debate is possible on what precisely constitutes conflict-related interventions, but it is widely recognized that this notion should comprise and acknowledge a wide variety of activities. In general, there have been many attempts to classify a conflict into distinct periods forming an ideal type life cycle.¹ Criticism of this model has led to a more flexible image of internal conflicts. Nowadays violent internal conflicts are viewed as a complex set of stages, ranging from violent to peaceful, manifest simultaneously within one country, whereby there is no fixed order or sequence of activities and periods. Conflict-related interventions are all interventions directed at affecting both the course and the intensity of a conflict as well as those interventions aiming at attenuating the negative effects of a conflict.

Meanwhile, it has become hazardous to limit the notion of conflict-related interventions strictly to periods of violent interactions between parties in conflict. Conflict-related interventions in this study are therefore viewed in a broader perspective, including conflict-prevention activities and post-conflict peace-building. Conflict prevention, yet again, is a notion not exempt from controversy.² In practice most so-called conflict-prevention interventions are belated efforts to contain conflicts once they have already erupted, and crisis diplomacy between actors has sometimes been labelled as conflict prevention. Post-war peace-building, finally, comprises a wide variety of activities in itself aiming at the reconstruction of post-war societies. To the extent that structural causes of conflict are taken into account, a number of such activities can be related to the dynamics of the conflict concerned or seen as ‘conflict preventive’ in the sense that they may prevent a reoccurrence of violence in the future.

We furthermore try to distinguish between direct and indirect conflict-related interventions. The first category comprises activities influencing the hostilities themselves. This mostly refers to attempts to mediate, contain or resolve the ongoing violent conflict through diplomatic and sometimes military and/or economic interventions. Indirect interventions aim at attenuating the negative effects of a conflict for the civilian population and victims of warfare in general. Such activities can be labelled humanitarian responses to violent internal crisis. Within this broad category, emergency aid (mostly food, medicine and shelter), rehabilitation aid (for example reconstruction of physical infrastructure and housing as well as the rehabilitation of services) and a return to structural development and political stability (supporting democratization, public political participation and economic recovery among others) can be distinguished. These interventions, however, do not interfere directly with the conflict cycle itself, nor are such actions aimed at parties in conflict other than people subject to the impact of such violence. Yet such aid may be diverted by combatants to their own benefit and thus lose its purely ‘humanitarian’ nature.

¹ See the dynamic phase conflict model by Bloomfield and Leiss, in Bloomfield, L.P. and A. Moulton, *Managing International Conflict*, p. 12.

² K. van Walraven (ed.), *Early Warning and Conflict Prevention*, chapter 10 conclusions, pp. 163-174.

The advantage of a distinction between direct and indirect conflict-related interventions lies with the fact that the latter seem to limit the benefactors' responsibility to humanitarian concerns. Hence, sometimes painful political choices between parties involved in a violent conflict can be avoided. Direct interventions, on the contrary, require a clear policy assessment of the opportunities and risks involved. Moreover, such actions will be weighted against the interest and profit calculations of actors involved. Next to bilateral actions, such interventions can be undertaken through several multilateral platforms and organizations, limiting the risk and responsibility for funding or for facilitating actors behind the scene. The amount of direct engagement by a third party signals the political importance attributed to a given conflict or actor entangled in internal conflict by such an external actor.

Our definition of conflict-related interventions, although broad in itself, does not account for all the actions of outside donors during a conflict situation. Nevertheless, it remains debatable whether such activities can be disconnected completely from large-scale internal violent conflict situations. Even so-called regular development aid can be interpreted as conflict-related if these actions have side effects on specific actors in a conflict-ridden society. In some cases, actors involved in violent conflicts have a distinct interest in keeping certain donor-support activities outside the realm of conflict in order to downsize the conflict's impact and to promote an image of 'business as usual' or even to boost its own dismal performance.

The development of policy priorities and guidelines are seen in this report as the outcome of a dynamic incremental process. Many policy guidelines result from the practice of everyday policy actually performed by those in charge of policy-making or, mostly, in response to important political events or developments initiated by third parties. In practice, policy has developed on the ground through the implementation of specific activities, which in turn provide feedback to, and often lead to the reformulation of, existing policies. The broad category of development activities can be viewed as 'implicit' policies pertaining to a specific country or a particular conflict, as they are the result of a complicated process of interaction between various actors regarding a vast array of thematic issues and modalities of execution 'in the field'.

With regard to Dutch policy interventions, a distinction will be made between different 'channels' of aid distribution. The Dutch Foreign Ministry contributes aid via multilateral channels such as the World Bank or UN organizations, via international NGOs and local NGOs, via so-called co-funding organizations and lastly on a direct bilateral basis. Fluctuations in the pattern and volume of aid distribution concerning specific countries may reveal certain political intentions and signals of the Dutch government.

1.3 Data Gathering

This study is largely based on written reports, scientific publications and the archives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of which a carefully selected sample of pertinent files have been scrutinized. The emphasis in this sample lies with political files, as political intentions appear more clearly from visits to the various countries by Ministers or high-ranking officials from the various directorates within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Additional fieldwork has been executed in Rwanda. A number of international organizations, government representatives and development projects have been visited to obtain feedback. A number of key individuals were interviewed on specific topics. Most of the data on funds spent have been retrieved from the Ministry as well as from reports to the OECD/DAC secretariat in Paris.

1.4 Specific Remarks on the Rwanda Case Story

The Rwanda case attracted much scholarly attention during the aftermath of the genocide³ on the Tutsi population in 1994, resulting in a wealth of publications on the genocide and its impact. Nevertheless, controversy on the causes, size and meaning of the violent events remains. Most observers have acknowledged the mass slaughter as a genocide perpetrated by the Hutu exterminatory movement on the Tutsi minority. There is a tendency among certain parties to adhere to the so-called double-genocide theory in which the human rights abuses of the victorious Revolutionary Patriotic Front (RPF) and the subsequent persecution of Hutu refugees outside Rwanda is portrayed equally as a genocide. History has by and large been interpreted by the belligerent political parties to justify cultural stereotyping, to extenuate crimes committed or to defend extremist political opinions. It is therefore crucial to review the political history of Rwanda with scepticism and distance.

The war, which materialized as a result of the RPF invasion in 1990, is still ongoing but has taken on a different geographical pattern. Whereas the pre-genocide conflict took place within the borders of Rwanda, the post-genocide conflict has witnessed the spread of violence to neighbouring Zaire, later Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Elements of the defeated army and Interahamwe militia continued to operate in Rwanda from the Kivu area until recently. The Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo (AFDL) rebellion in Zaire, which eventually led to the overthrow of Mobutu, did not result in a stable security setting but in turn triggered the so-called second rebellion. The latter rebellion sparked a regional war among some eight different countries, divided into two military blocs. Angolan and Zimbabwean troops support the ailing Kabila regime, whereas Rwanda and Uganda openly support rebel sections in the east of the DRC. Although a peace agreement has been signed in Lusaka, a military stalemate has developed which makes it difficult to implement post-war peace-building initiatives. As the conflict wears on, the proliferation of armed factions has increased in the eastern parts of the DRC, complicating possible future peace negotiations. Dutch efforts must be judged against this general background.

The start of this study has been set at 1989, the year before the first RPF rebels made an incursion in northern Rwanda. This date has been chosen to demonstrate the character of pre-genocide relations between the Netherlands and Rwanda. Rwanda, as a matter of fact, was never an important recipient of Dutch foreign aid before 1990 nor did this relatively small and isolated entity in the heart of sub-Saharan Africa figure prominently among its diplomatic relations.

³ For the sake of convenience the term genocide will be maintained although some scientists rightly argue that the murder of thousands of Hutu opposition members warrants the use of the double notion geno-politicide.

Data gathering in the Foreign Affairs' archives has focused on the missions to the region undertaken by then Minister of Development Cooperation Pronk, as well as on other files related to political decision-making and debates in government circles on the various issues that surfaced during the turbulent years following the genocide. A substantial number of some 1,300 files were traced, of which some 60 files were selected for further in-depth study (see annexe 1). This selection was based on a number of search questions and subsequently selected on the basis of qualitative considerations (see annexe 2).

The fieldwork executed within Rwanda consisted of a two-week visit by an assistant researcher⁴ that took place in August 1999. The field research focused mainly on the activities of Dutch development agencies inside Rwanda, as well as short visits to some Dutch-sponsored development projects. Finally, a number of Dutch development experts were interviewed.

⁴ For Rwanda the author acknowledged the valuable contributions provided by Irina van der Sluijs, who reviewed the archives and visited several Dutch NGOs in Rwanda as part of a two-week field trip. She has presented her data in 'Nederlands Buitenlands en Ontwikkelingssamenwerkingsbeleid ten aanzien van Rwanda (1988-1998)' in the framework of the Conflict Policy Research Project of the Clingendael Institute (The Hague, September 1999).

2 An Overview of the Rwandan Conflict

2.1 Causes and Historical Background

Rwanda can be characterized as an overpopulated land-locked state, largely depending on agriculture and possessing only limited quantities of natural resources. Rwandan agriculture has been confronted by scarcity through the deteriorating relationship between rapid population growth, diminishing areas of arable land and traditional agricultural techniques. In fact, land pressure has gradually developed into the single most important structural cause of economic and social tensions in Rwandan society. The economic perspectives for Rwanda are gloomy as it has very few alternative resources to develop or exploit.

From a political perspective the history of Rwanda can be viewed as a slow but steady process of centralization of the state and state institutions. The present national territory has been established by a continual process of warfare among erstwhile independent kingdoms, notably in the nineteenth century. Rwandan society has many homogeneous features from a cultural point of view, since all Rwandans share the same language, history and traditions. The gradual process of functional integration⁵ between Tutsi herdsmen and Hutu farmers has contributed to the development of a common culture. Racially, a distinction can be made between Hutus, Tutsis and Twa. There is an ongoing debate about the extent to which these identities can be labelled as primordial or as constructed identities depending on one's point of view. In pre-colonial Rwanda these identities were cultural constructs that were forged in the nineteenth century, whereas successive historical developments have contributed to the fixation of these identities in the political history of the country, enhancing the juxtaposition of Tutsi against Hutu and vice versa. The Twa, a minority pygmy people, have always been and continue to be a disenfranchised minority, geographically and culturally marginal within society.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the erstwhile elite conducted a gradual process of centralization. Contradictions had to do with centre-periphery contradictions more than with racial juxtaposition between Hutus and Tutsis. Forms of extreme social control can be found in Rwanda from the early days onward. This social control was subservient to political control by the King and his household, itself caused by the high population density in combination with intensive agriculture for livelihood purposes. A culture of extreme obedience developed as a necessary prerequisite for

⁵ Mainly as a result of so-called dung and cattle-keeping contracts. Dung contracts consist of an exchange between cattle dung used to fertilize agricultural lands and free grazing for the cattle. Cattle were regularly lent out to farmers who were allowed to keep part of the offspring in return. Such practices are quite common in sub-Saharan Africa, but the system normally involves (semi-) nomadic herdsmen and sedentary farmers, whereas in Rwanda the climate allowed the Tutsi herdsmen to remain stationary.

societal survival: 'Conformity is very deep, very developed here. In Rwandan history, everybody obeys authority.'⁶

First the Germans (1885-1919) and later the Belgians (1919-1959) actively promoted the power of the central state, thereby exacerbating social tensions within Rwandan society. The monarchy was reinforced to the detriment of small Hutu principalities. The Belgians openly supported the 'Tutsification' of the ruling elite, as well as the ongoing centralization of political power in the hands of a Tutsi minority. Early theories about the origins of the various ethnic/racial groups in Rwanda, widely acknowledged among the Europeans, led to the empowerment of Tutsis to the detriment of the Hutu and Twa peoples. The origin of the Rwanda kingdom was attributed to the Tutsis, who had 'refined and superior physical features' and hence were considered to be superior. This racist theory was in support of the presupposed 'natural order', in which domination by the Tutsis over the other ethnic groups in Rwanda was institutionalized. As a consequence Hutu were made to feel inferior and consequently began to resent elite Tutsi domination.

In the years leading to Rwandan independence, the Hutu leadership developed and became emancipated politically. This development can partly be attributed to the role of some Catholic clergymen who progressively sided with the oppressed Hutu against the Tutsi elite. Hutu politicians developed a Hutu version of Rwandan history, central to which was the concept of 'Rubanda Nyamwinshi' or majority Hutu ethnic rule equalling legitimate democracy. The Belgian authorities resented the strongly anti-colonial and communist overtones of the Tutsi independence movement and began to support the Hutu majority against their erstwhile protégés, presenting them as a mixture of backward traditionalists and revolutionary communists. In 1959, violence against the Tutsi rulers (Banyanduga) led to the first cycle of mass killings in Rwandan contemporary history and sparked mass migration to neighbouring countries (some 130,000 Tutsis fled to Burundi, Tanzania, Congo-Kinshasa and Uganda). Despite protests by the United Nations Trusteeship Commission, a de facto Hutu *coup* was facilitated by the Belgians and in 1961 Kayibanda declared the independence of Rwanda. The style of leadership that unfolded in the young Hutu republic was reminiscent of the Tutsi King (Mwami) to whom all authority was bequeathed. The old monarchic pattern of governance (a narrow circle of leadership recruitment, regional favoritism, lineage competition and corruption) fused with socialist rhetoric for mass consumption (justice, progress, moralism and social equality). A type of secretive authoritarian government developed that was grounded on an egalitarian but racial ideology. The new Hutu-dominated regime imposed a strict ethnic quota system to check potential Tutsi influence.

The Tutsi Diaspora tried in vain to invade Rwanda at the end of 1963, triggering a second wave of violence against the Tutsis that resulted in an estimated 10,000 dead between December 1963 and January 1964. In the early 1970s the Tutsi government of neighbouring Burundi executed a selective genocide on the Hutu population killing educated males of a certain age as a sort of pre-emptive genocide to cling on to power. This was strongly resented in Rwanda, where Hutu militia reacted by

⁶ Quoted from Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow we will be Killed Together with our Families*, p. 23.

unleashing a hate campaign against Tutsis. Although not many people died this time, a new wave of Tutsi migration followed.

On 5 July 1973 the army commander Juvenal Habyarimana, a northerner, took power in a bloodless *coup*. Immediately after seizing power Habyarimana abolished all political parties and created the *Mouvement Révolutionnaire Nationale pour le Développement* (MRND), thus imposing single-party rule. The MRND was a totalitarian party and administrative control was pushed to the extreme. Everybody had to be a party member and place of residence along with ethnic affiliation were registered on compulsory identity cards issued by the regime. As a result Rwanda had tight administrative control over its citizens.

In the regional context of the early 1980s Rwanda stood out as an enclave of relative peace and orderliness, in stark contrast to Obote's Uganda or Mobutu's Zaire and it progressively attracted more foreign aid. The regime's economic performance throughout the early 1970s and 1980s was quite considerable. From its status as poorest nation, it roughly equalled the average income of China in 1987. With hindsight the entire period from 1973 to roughly 1988 can be labelled as one of relative political stability, moderate economic growth and a favourable human rights record if compared to a number of contemporary regimes in sub-Saharan Africa.

2.2 The Conflict Dynamics

2.2.1 Prelude to the Genocide 1990-1994

From 1986 onwards, economic recession hit Rwanda's fragile economy through the progressive fall in world market prices for key commodities such as coffee and tin. The ruling Hutu elite groups only had a limited amount of resources to profit upon, of which the above-mentioned raw materials were the only local monetary resources. The remaining resource for personal and group enrichment consisted of international development aid, which was generously assigned by leading donors Belgium, Germany, the United States and Switzerland. Hence, competition among different political clans increased and control of the state apparatus became a prime target. At the same time accusations were voiced about the abuse of development funds by the state authorities. The impoverished rural masses, already overburdened with numerous taxes, were obliged to perform 'voluntary' *umuganda*, *i.e.* forced labour, on lands owned by supporters of the regime. These developments caused widespread resentment among the population at large. Simultaneously, President Mitterrand of France urged his African clients during a meeting in June 1990 at La Baule to implement democracy and to allow a multi-party system, and Habyarimana, confronted internally with critical opposition, reluctantly initiated a process of democratic reform.

The refugee question had always lingered at the background of the political agenda of Rwanda's consecutive Hutu regimes. Although a government commission had been formed from 1989 onwards to look into the possibilities for reintegrating Tutsi refugees, the issue was not vigorously pursued. In fact a subtle three-sided conflict emerged between the Habyarimana regime supported by Hutu hard-liners, an internal Hutu opposition and the expatriate Tutsi refugee community, the latter trying to

regain a position in Rwanda. The October 1990 Tutsi-led RPF (Revolutionary Patriotic Front) attack heralded the beginning of an extended tensing phase in Rwandan history, eventually leading to the genocide. The attack turned out to be a setback for the RPF. The FAR (*Forces armées rwandaises*), with timely support from the French, managed to recover and defeated the rebel forces. The French dispatched elite army units and quickly helped to oust the RPF rebels from northern Rwanda.

Meanwhile, a gradual process of democratization evolved leading to the proliferation of numerous political parties. Some parties were anti-Tutsi in nature such as the *Mouvement démocratique rwandais* (MDR)⁷ or even outright radical and racist, such as the *Coalition pour la défense de la république* (CDR), others more mildly pro-Hutu, such as the *Parti social démocratique* (PSD-Butare based). On the other side of the political spectrum the *Parti libéral* (PL) emerged, which attracted many well-to-do Tutsi businessmen and generally had an urban-based constituency. The political process replicated the ongoing power struggle between the MRND and the opposition, and the situation quickly became highly volatile because the existing power structure opposed genuine democratization. A proliferation of newspapers added to the confusion and exacerbation of tensions because of their extremist overtones and outright provocative propaganda.

Meanwhile, the RPF regrouped in the far north of Rwanda and launched a surprise attack on Ruhengeri in January 1991. From that moment onwards, the national army (FAR) became involved in a small-scale guerrilla war with the RPF in the north-eastern prefecture of Byumba. The RPF used a type of hit-and-run strategy to harass the FAR and managed to control and block the road to Uganda, the primary lifeline of land-locked Rwanda. The RPF's activities generated a wave of internal refugees who fled the northern border zones, creating an additional security issue.

The opposition forces (MDR, PSD and PL) eventually agreed to peace talks with the RPF (on 6 June 1991 in Brussels) leading to extensive peace talks in Arusha (Tanzania) heralding a cease-fire agreement on 14 July 1992. The peace arrangements were not accepted by the Hutu hard-liners, because they felt that their interests were not represented in Arusha. On 18 August 1992 an agreement was reached on the formation of a 'pluralistic transitional government'. Resistance against the moderate Hutu politicians mounted and CDR militants took to the streets to claim access to the peace talks.

Militias were being secretly trained by French instructors, under the guise of training FAR soldiers. These militia, Interahamwe (MRND) and Impuzamugambi (CDR) later played a key role in the genocide. At the same time, an underground paramilitary network developed, the so-called Zero Network, constituting a death squad along the Latin American model. The leaders of this network were publicly revealed by Belgian Professor Filip Reyntjens,⁸ and in fact an extremist movement gradually emerged within a semi-totalitarian context, aiming to seize absolute power through terror,

⁷ The MDR drew much of its support from the Giterama prefecture, representing a regional interest group, which from the early days had competed with the north-western clans, notably with the power base of the ruling MRND party.

⁸ Consisting among others of Mme Habyarimana's three brothers and Colonel Bagosora, head of the Defence Ministry.

already planning to gain support of the Hutu masses. Frequent street fights between the opposition and the CDR/Interahamwe materialized in late 1992 and early 1993, in which the process and legitimacy of the Arusha peace talks were disputed. In reaction to the January 1993 agreement on the composition of the Broad-Based Transition Government (BBTG) and the ensuing rejection by hard-line Hutu parties MRND/CDR, violence flared up leading to another wave of orchestrated killings of Tutsis.

In retaliation the RPF started a new offensive in the north-east pushing its troops as far as 30 miles north of Kigali. By March 1993 this military campaign had provoked the displacement of up to 800,000 internal Hutu refugees⁹ southwards. France immediately responded by sending more troops and arms to support the besieged regime of Habyarimana, not questioning the MRND's sabotage of the Arusha peace talks. In Europe French government officials issued false press statements on the situation by leaking news about RPF-initiated civilian massacres, whereas in reality Hutu extremist militia had perpetrated the genocidal acts of early 1993. These events traumatized the opposition forces, leading to a split whereby the official leaders of the opposition hesitantly resumed the dialogue with the RPF in Bujumbura, while dissident leaders of the MDR, PSD and PL gathered in Kigali with the MRND/CDR hard-liners and condemned the recent RPF attacks. The CDR/Interahamwe/hard-line 'akazu' supporters profited from this political turmoil.

Death squads had by now become operational and violent incidents led to a rapid deterioration of the security setting inside Rwanda. In this climate the position of President Habyarimana became extremely delicate. His only resolve was going along with the peace talks to satisfy the 'old' opposition and trying to stall the process in a bid to satisfy the 'new' opposition and the extremists. In this climate the peace agreement of Arusha was finally signed on 4 August 1993.

This agreement, although elaborated in great detail, proved to be unworkable because hostile factions could paralyse any decision-making by the BBTG. Moreover, the integration of the armed forces along the Angolan model¹⁰ was doomed to fail. The RPF had furthermore insisted on the formation of a neutral UN monitoring unit: the creation of a United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR) was sanctioned on 5 October 1993.

At this point in time another major trigger for violence took place in Burundi where the democratically elected president of Burundi was abducted by Tutsi army officers and killed in a military camp on 23 October 1993. This incident led to mass turmoil and reciprocal killings between the Hutu and Tutsi communities in Burundi, causing roughly 50,000 deaths. This in turn impacted strongly on neighbouring Rwanda. The CDR and other extremists seized the opportunity to denounce the Arusha accords and mobilized support among the common Hutu masses by presenting the assassination as a clear example of Tutsi perfidy. Their radio station *Radio télévision libre des mille collines* (RTLMC) prepared the ground by sending out a constant flow of propaganda and calls for action. As a consequence the CDR and the so-called Hutu Power group (hard-liners from the MRND and other

⁹ This total was reached by March 1993, including the earlier wave of around 300,000 refugees resulting from the 1990-1992 fighting.

¹⁰ The officer corps should be divided equally among both parties, and when a commanding officer was FAR, his second-in-command should be RPF and vice versa.

anti-Tutsi parties) merged to form one front against the projected common enemy, the Inyenzi (meaning cockroaches, a nickname for RPF and Tutsis).

In this highly volatile situation the UNAMIR started arriving at the beginning of November 1993, while a RPF contingent was simultaneously installed inside Kigali as part of the Arusha accords. By February 1994 it had become common knowledge that hard-line Hutu were distributing arms on a massive scale among their supporters. The effective transfer of power was endlessly postponed, which frustrated all parties concerned, notably the international community. Returning from a meeting in Dar es Salaam, the plane carrying President Habyarimana was shot down on 6 April 1994.

2.2.2 *The Genocide and its Consequences*

In the aftermath of the assassination of Habyarimana the extremist elements in the government and the army immediately took control of the Rwandan capital Kigali. From this city onwards the systematic genocide of Tutsis was organized, ordered and facilitated by the hard-line Hutu authorities. Despite hesitant resistance from certain army officers and a few *préfets* (Butare), the Zero Network gradually succeeded in covering the operation by installing an impotent puppet regime consisting of mainly 'new opposition' representatives, *i.e.* Hutu Power politicians. During the following months they served as the formal and so-called legitimate interim government while the killings continued. The generalized nature of the genocide was eventually hidden from outside public view under cover of the unfolding war between the RPF and the regular army. This cover-up was facilitated by France, which provided political support for the interim government in the UN and other international fora, discretely supporting the Kigali view that the genocidal violence was the inevitable response to the RPF's military advance.¹¹

After the first wave of violence, which was directed at Hutu moderates and the prominent Tutsi leaders figuring on extensive death rolls, a second wave was unleashed against groups of Tutsi refugees in public places and buildings such as schools and churches where they had found refuge. In roughly 10 to 14 weeks an estimated total of 500,000-800,000 Tutsis and about 30,000 so-called Hutu traitors were executed by a concerted effort of militia, elite sections of the army (notably the presidential guard) and civil servants in the public administration.

Meanwhile the RPF resumed hostilities on 7 April 1994 and during that month made impressive progress, capturing the north-east and the Tanzanian border areas. The reaction of the international community was rather inadequate and slow. The UN Representative Booh-Booh (a Cameroonian diplomat) signalled the slaughter of civilians in a rather subdued statement to the UN headquarters in New York. Canadian General Dallaire, in charge of UNAMIR,¹² forcefully condemned the killings and demanded the extension of UNAMIR's mandate and reinforcements to be able to halt the

¹¹ Alison des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, p. 657.

¹² UNAMIR consisted of some 2,500 troops, but the Belgian contingent of some 428 troops formed the well-equipped battle-trained core, supported mainly by Bangladeshi (937) and Ghanaian (841) troops.

oncoming genocide. He later stated that some 5,000 well-equipped troops could have prevented the genocide.¹³

UNAMIR's position was crucial. Everybody inside Rwanda was looking at UNAMIR to see whether it would act against the extremist forces in order to stop the genocide. It did not act and mostly stood by passively to witness the ongoing slaughter of civilians. This reinforced the position of Colonel Bagosora and his accomplices who saw UNAMIR's passivity as a sign of international indifference towards the genocide and quickly used all the weeks of inaction to execute the genocide.¹⁴ Belgium had delivered the most combat-hardened contingent to UNAMIR, but when ten Belgian blue-helmets were slaughtered while trying to protect the moderate Hutu prime minister,¹⁵ Belgium quickly decided to withdraw urging other participating states to follow its example. The important external actors present in Rwanda were not interested in trying to prevent the mass executions beyond the initial killings: the evacuation of foreign nationals had far more priority for the Belgian and French troops present; the US did not intervene effectively because of resource considerations; and the UN wished to avoid another Somalia at all cost. Two weeks into the crisis the UN even decided to diminish its presence in Rwanda, weakening the UNAMIR mission instead of strengthening it. The UNAMIR force was finally reduced to a mere 270 troops. Despite orders not to intervene in the conflict, UNAMIR troops succeeded in rescuing a large number of Tutsi refugees in a limited number of public buildings scattered around Kigali. UNAMIR commander Dallaire managed to maintain almost five hundred troops by delaying replacements.

Although the Bangladeshi and Ghanaian UNAMIR units remained in Rwanda, they did not pose a threat to the warring parties nor to the militia and Hutu extremists, nor were they capable of having an impact upon the unfolding genocide. Meanwhile the RPF swept through the eastern parts of Rwanda, and at the end of May 1994 it managed to surround Kigali, conquered the airport and cut the important road from Butare in the south to Gitarama in the centre of Rwanda. At that moment in time, despite important military progress and RPF successes on the battlefield against the FAR, the genocide has been executed unchallenged for eight weeks. In June 1994 Gitarama was conquered, and finally on 3 July Butare and on 4 July Kigali were captured by the RPF. In little over three months the RPF had secured its victory over the government forces and the FAR and militia forces had retreated to the south-west of Rwanda.

¹³ The sizeable evacuation force (900 troops) sent in to monitor the evacuation of foreigners, if combined with UNAMIR troops, is said to have been easily able to halt the genocide at this early point in time.

The week from 8 to 15 April 1994 is crucial in this regard because during this period Bagosora established the civilian puppet regime while convincing hesitant people in the army and the administration to join the extremist genocide against the Tutsis.

¹⁴ Alison des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, p. 595.

¹⁵ Soon after the death of ten Belgian peace-keepers, the Belgian government decided to withdraw its forces from UNAMIR as the peace process had collapsed anyway and there was no motive for the operation. Belgium mounted a vigorous campaign in the UN to have the whole UNAMIR operation stopped, obviously to lessen Belgian responsibility for deserting Rwanda.

2.2.3 *Opération Turquoise and the New Refugee Problem*

At the end of June 1994 France started a belated military intervention, backed by the impotent international community and sanctioned by the UN. *Opération Turquoise* was firmly criticized by a score of African states and the RPF, who interpreted the incursion as a belated French effort to rescue its puppet client regime and to prevent an all-out RPF victory. The intervention was the result of a laborious consultation process on the highest policy levels within France.¹⁶ *Opération Turquoise* represented a minimal political compromise response option that emerged from a range of more straightforward military intervention strategies, the latter obviously targeted at changing the military balance of power in favour of the interim government. The French intervention force, numbering 2,500 troops, was welcomed like an ally by the FAR and the militias. Minister for Defence Leotard was advised by Gérard Prunier, who suggested that the French rescue Tutsis at a place called Nyarushishi,¹⁷ where they had taken refuge. This would make good publicity for the French, silence the numerous critics of *Opération Turquoise*, and legitimize the professed humanitarian character of the operation. At first the French made a serious business of disarming militia and dismantling barriers in the border town of Cyangugu, but in the end the French forces proved disinterested in protecting Tutsi refugees or were indifferent to their fate.¹⁸ France refused to arrest interim government officials, who had entered the French-held zone when their temporary seats in the northern town of Gisenyi were threatened by the RPF. On 17 June 1994 the interim government fled to Zaire. The French operation had mixed results and lacked overall legitimacy because France had previously been closely allied to one of the conflict's parties. Although the French intervention saved lives, French troops often declined to intervene even though only limited pressure would almost certainly have sufficed to save many additional lives inside their zone of intervention, hiding behind the readily available excuses of insufficient troops and personal safety considerations. An estimated 17,000 Tutsis were rescued by the intervention, but these numbers, albeit significant, compare poorly to the amount saved by UNAMIR troops.¹⁹

With the deadline for French withdrawal approaching, a vast mass of refugees was set in motion. In the wake of *Opération Turquoise* the French intervention force allowed the bulk of the FAR and the armed militias to escape unharmed to Zaire, where the interim leadership and other political and civilian community leaders had already installed themselves. This operation allowed the remnants of the genocidal Hutu regime to regroup and to set up a rump state in refugee camps all along the borders. The mid-term strategy was obviously to regain the initiative and to launch a counter offensive against the RPF. For some observers 'the signal achievement of *Opération Turquoise* was to permit the slaughter of Tutsis to continue for an extra month, and to secure safe passage for the genocidal command to cross, with a lot of its weaponry, into Zaire'.²⁰ In view of its continuing support for the consecutive Hutu-led regimes, France stood accused as genocide facilitator. On 21 August 1994 the French left Rwanda, leaving 'their' humanitarian zone to UN peace-keepers from Ethiopia.

¹⁶ Eye witness account of Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, pp. 281-286.

¹⁷ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 285.

¹⁸ Alison des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, pp. 679-681.

¹⁹ UNAMIR saved some 35,000 Tutsis with only 500 troops.

²⁰ Quoted in: Philip Gourevitch, 'We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed together with our families', 1998, pp. 161

Over two million Hutus fled the RPF's military advance. Most had been told to flee by their local leaders, and tales of vengeance, fear and other propaganda also spurred this enormous mass displacement. Most of the refugees ended up on the shores of Lake Kivu, between Goma and Bukavu. The massive refugee crisis almost eclipsed the magnitude of the Tutsi genocide. Western countries mounted the largest, most rapid and most expensive deployment of international humanitarian aid industry in the twentieth century. Camps were rapidly organized into perfect replicas of the Hutu Power state - same community groupings, same leaders, same rigid hierarchy, same violence, same propaganda.²¹ In fact the *génocidaires* scored another major publicity victory by turning the confusion over the Tutsi genocide into a humanitarian concern for the displaced Hutus, who had fled the RPF advance in fear of being annihilated. The massive influx of refugees in the Kivu area was estimated at 1.2 million people, with the bulk staying in Goma (850,000) and Bukavu (332,000) and additional concentrations in western Tanzania (600,000) and Burundi (270,000).²² The unfolding humanitarian drama had an important political and military component. As the camps became organized, MRND politicians, the interim government, FAR military and militias reorganized. The international community meanwhile requested that the new government in Kigali install a broad-based government including members of the political parties of the pre-genocide spectrum, as a precondition for aid being re-established. The RPF was bewildered by these demands, because for them it was very difficult to identify trustworthy opposition Hutu politicians who had 'clean hands'. Kigali wondered what motivated the international community to help the genocidal forces to rearm, thus enabling them eventually to invade Rwanda. During the first months of the refugee crisis it became clear that the international community was in fact supporting the killers and some NGOs left the camps.²³ The border camps, where nearly one-third of the entire Rwandan Hutu population²⁴ was located, turned the Rwandan crisis into a regional crisis.

In neighbouring Zaire, Mobutu, who had been an old ally to Habyarimana's regime, continued to provide a safe hideout for the remaining Hutu leaders, while simultaneously providing access to the refugee camps for international aid workers. As a consequence a situation materialized that allowed the UN border camps to become a rump genocidal state, with an army that received large shipments of arms and recruited thousands of young men for the continuation of the genocidal campaign against the Tutsis. Until the proclamation of the official arms embargo by the UN, France alone provided, according to its own investigations, an estimated thirty arms deliveries to the subsequent Hutu regimes, during their reign and after they had been expelled from Rwanda.²⁵ Violent incidents were reported shortly after the establishment of the camps, notably in the Goma border area in the north-west of Rwanda where the Hutu extremist movement had originated. Bands of ex-FAR and Interahamwe militia targeted Tutsi and RPF units as well as survivors of the genocide. The RPF retaliated with brutal force killing civilians in the process. The Kigali regime repeatedly protested against the violations of Rwandan territory, but Mobutu turned a deaf ear.

²¹ id, pp. 163-168

²² Figures provided by the UNHCR. In: Gerard Prunier, *History of a genocide*, 1995, pp. 312

²³ Médecins sans Frontières left the Zaïran camps by mid-November 1994

²⁴ estimates calculated from Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda crises*, pp. 261-265.

²⁵ Assemblée Nationale, *Mission d'information commune. Enquête*, Tome I, p. 172, cited in Alison des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, p. 660.

2.2.4 The AFDL Insurgency and the Overthrow of Mobutu

One year after the genocide the population in the Zairean refugee camps was estimated at roughly 1.25 million. The influx of Hutu refugees from Rwanda had tipped the balance in favour of the anti-Tutsi forces in the Kivu. Zairean Tutsis, notably the Banyamulenge, had maintained rather strained relations with other ethnic groups in eastern Zaire for quite some time and a complete pacification of the region seemed highly problematic in the foreseeable future.²⁶ In the course of 1995 the exiled Hutu extremists from Rwanda engaged in a violent campaign against the Tutsi herdsmen in northern Kivu, continuing where they had left off inside Rwanda. This process of ethnic cleansing became a serious additional security threat to the already overburdened Rwandan government. In early 1996 thousands of additional Tutsi refugees came to Rwanda, fleeing persecution in northern Kivu. This outraged the new government in Kigali, which held Mobutu responsible for the acts of violence. Mobutu had acted as a Western agent protecting the *génocidaires* who 'owned their sustenance to the mindless dispensation of Western charity'.²⁷

Meanwhile, France continued to support Mobutu, and in fact through him supported the *génocidaires* who stayed in eastern Zaire. As late as July 1996 General Kagame, Vice-President of the Rwandan government and strongman of the regime in Kigali, warned the US that the RPF would clean up the camps if no action was taken by the international community. Debates within the international community on the issue of demilitarizing the refugee camps had not resulted in action on the ground. On the domestic front most of the Internally Displaced Persons' (IDP) camps in Rwanda had been cleared without violent confrontations between the army and the refugees, with notable exceptions including Kibeho. Moreover, in the wake of Kagame's visit to the US the Burundian authorities decided to dismantle the northern Burundi refugee camps in August 1996. The refugees returned to southern Rwanda and their reintegration apparently went rather smoothly. These facts added strongly to Kigali's credibility in handling the refugee crisis.

After the cleansing of northern Kivu, the Hutu Power groups supported by Mobutu's civil servants and Zairean military soon turned on the Banyamulenge living in southern Kivu. But instead of passively undergoing their ordeal, these Tutsi put up resistance against the Hutu Power and Mobutist forces who began to attack them in the course of September 1996. In Kigali, meanwhile, anti-Mobutu forces had been warmly welcomed and a rebel alliance had gradually been formed. The movement received training and equipment from the RPF, which used them as a front organization. The movement was a coalition of four different rebel organizations.²⁸ Recruitment of young adult soldiers was easy, as many Tutsi refugees wanted to return to their homeland. Furthermore, many so-called deserters from the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), the successor of the victorious RPF joined the fighting in eastern Zaire, feeding allegations about direct Rwandan involvement.²⁹

²⁶ *Africa Confidential*, 1 November 1996, p. 3.

²⁷ Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow we will be Killed Together with our Families*, p. 325.

²⁸ *Alliance démocratique des peuples* (the Tutsi-dominated component), *Forces armées populaires* led by Kabila (Mulelist background), *Conseil national de résistance* (Muluba Kasai origin) and the *Mouvement révolutionnaire pour la libération du Congo-Zaire* (Bashi ethnic group centred in Bukavu).

²⁹ *Africa Confidential*, 1 November 1996, pp. 1-3.

On 8 October 1996 the Deputy Governor of south Kivu ordered all Banyamulenge Tutsis out of Zaire within a week. It triggered war in Zaire, and within three weeks the RPA (Rwanda's armed forces) and the Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo/Zaire (AFDL) headed by Laurent Kabila took Goma. Many refugees began to leave the camps and returned to Rwanda, but a great mass of them were herded by ex-FAR, Mobutist forces and Interahamwe to the Mugunga camp, close to the Rwandan border, in early November 1996. Here roughly 750,000 refugees were used as a human shield against the attacks of the AFDL/RPA. The number of refugees drew another round of international press coverage in which it was postulated that genocide through starvation was under way. The international community wanted to intervene, but again without any mandate to separate the innocent refugees from the *génocidaires*. The AFDL/RPA attacked the Hutu Power militia and the camp was dismantled. Some 600,000 Hutus returned to Rwanda, and it was estimated that roughly 150-250,000 Hutus, civilians and militia fled westwards. The French tried to help the *Forces armées zairoises* (FAZ) by sending military experts and weapons, and France continued to support Mobutu's ailing regime, including repeatedly spreading false news to discredit the AFDL movement.³⁰

The response of the international community towards the renewed refugee crisis was unrealistic and untimely as the initiative remained with the RPA-supported AFDL. The UN's half-hearted interventions only served to prolong the crisis. The humanitarian intervention of the UN and its supporters indirectly covered the retreat of some remaining hard-line Hutu militias and FAR units, accompanied by dependent civilians. Whereas the international community focused attention on abstract and irrelevant questions about 'the violation of the territorial integrity of Zaire', itself a notoriously failed state incapable of even providing a minimum of security for its own citizens, the battle between the RPA/AFDL and the FAR/FAZ /Interahamwe continued unabated. Near Kisangani (Tingi-Tingi) the extremists reorganized but were eventually forced to move on, finally crossing the Zaire river to find sanctuary in Congo-Brazzaville and the Central African Republic. The international media focused on the battles at Tingi-Tingi and M'Bandake on the Congo river. Meanwhile many innocent civilians had been killed in the fighting, simply died of hunger somewhere in the Kivus or died anonymously in remote mountainous areas in eastern Zaire where they had fled. The issue of the 'disappeared refugees' continued to dominate the international agenda and became the focal point of heated debate between supporters of both parties to the conflict. In fact, the chaotic situation inside Zaire made it virtually impossible to make adequate assessments about accurate numbers of civilians 'lost'. Accusations were made against the RPA, accusing the victorious 'rebels' of gross human rights abuses against Hutu refugees in eastern Zaire. The rebel leader Kabila eventually bowed to international pressure to allow teams to investigate alleged human rights abuses. Estimates on the number of casualties varied from 100,000 to over 400,000 victims. However, the general feeling among African leaders was that the international community, after sitting out the Rwandan genocide, had very little credibility as moral referees in the war against the *génocidaires*.

In December 1996 the Tanzanian camps, containing another 500,000 Hutus were dismantled, so in late 1996 about 1.5 million refugees returned to their home areas and were left unharmed. A thorough investigation into the identities of individuals was impossible because of the sheer size of the returning crowd. The Rwandan government ordered the refugees to report to their local administration and

³⁰ *Volkskrant*, 15 May 1997.

gradually apprehended some of the responsible leaders. During a period of seven months the AFDL/RPA conquered Zaire and in May 1997 Kabila declared himself President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

During the course of 1997 and 1998 a gruesome war developed in the north-west of Rwanda in which the defeated ex-FAR and extremist militia attacked civilian and army positions and counter attacks were unleashed by the RPA in which military and civilian targets were indiscriminately attacked and exterminated. Entire hilltops were systematically shelled by government helicopters, entire villages eradicated and civilians slaughtered. A military stalemate developed whereby the RPA proved incapable of effectively defeating the insurgency movement. The high-handed methods of the army had by and large reinforced the position of the extremists because part of the rural population gave supplies and logistical support to the insurgents. From mid-1998 the government of Rwanda and the RPA gradually adopted a more reconciliatory attitude towards the population, recruiting a large number of ex-FAR soldiers into the RPA as well as making an effort to protect civilians. Yet despite the military victory over Mobutu, insecurity prevailed in western Rwanda.

2.2.5 *The 'Second Rebellion' and the Internationalization of the Rwandan Conflict: The DRC Stalemate*

The second rebellion materialized because Kabila did not give enough priority to ensuring control of the eastern borders and to preventing incursions by ex-FAR or Interahamwe militias which remained in the Congo and launched raids inside Rwanda killing genocide survivors and destabilizing the country. The ensuing chaos brought the Kagame-controlled RPF government to the verge of collapse. Local militia and ex-FAZ in the Kivu regularly joined or facilitated ex-FAR groups and Interahamwe in attacking civilian targets or prisons and military objectives in the north-western part of Rwanda.³¹ Kigali was wondering whether the AFDL's victory had given them any advantages and was clearly disappointed by Laurent Kabila. Additionally, Kabila unleashed a hate campaign against Tutsis resulting in a witch-hunt against 'anyone tall or unfortunate enough to be born with the more angular Tutsi features'.³² This move outraged the Rwandans, who had propped Kabila up and done most of the fighting for him.³³ Combined with the ongoing fights in the north-west of Rwanda, this change of policy threatened the survival of the RPF regime and Kigali supported a political front movement called the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD or *Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie*) initially headed by Wamba dia Wamba.

In early August 1998, in a bold move to surround Kabila's AFDL regime, the rebels flew reinforcements over a distance of 1,500 kilometres to the Atlantic coast, thereby opening a second front close to Kinshasa, next to the initial eastern front that they had opened at the Rwandan border at Goma a few days earlier. Initially the advantage rested firmly with the rebel forces and they were on the verge of chasing Kabila when Angolan and Zimbabwean troops came to his rescue on 25 August

³¹ *Africa Confidential*, 20 February 1998, pp. 4-6.

³² David Shearer, 'Africa's Great War', p. 101.

³³ For a detailed description of Rwandan involvement, see David Shearer, 'Africa's Great War', pp. 89-106.

1998.³⁴ The broad alliance of states that had originally supported Kabila to oust Mobutu split into two. A full-scale regional war materialized as Rwanda and Uganda supported the rebels whereas Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Chad and more covertly Libya and Sudan supported Kabila. Uganda had similar security concerns to Kigali and therefore backed this new rebellion. Burundi was the third supporter of the RCD. On the Congolese side a wide range of factions opposed the incumbent regimes in Kampala, Kigali and Bujumbura, such as the ex-FAR, the remnants of the genocidal militias, the Allied Democratic Forces (fighting Museveni in the western mountainous area) and various Burundian Hutu Groups (among which the FDD). Recently these groups had formed a loose alliance and an arms running network which had alarmed the various state elite groups in the three eastern countries. The intervention of Angola and Zimbabwe on the western front crushed the rebel forces in the west and they were left with the eastern front only.

The RCD, however, quickly split into two separate movements: the Kigali-sponsored Emile Ilunga faction and the Kampala-sponsored Wamba dia Wamba faction. The Wamba dia Wamba faction focused operations on the north-eastern part of the DRC, whereas the more powerful Ilunga RCD, with staunch Rwandan support, has gradually conquered the entire central-eastern part of the DRC. Recently both RCD groups have been confronting each other violently in Kisangani where their territories meet. The actions of the RCD and its Rwandan counterparts have aroused strong resentment among the local population in turn leading to armed resistance under the guise of the Mai-Mai militia umbrella. As a result, a proliferation of armed militias has materialized which makes it very difficult to reach a comprehensive agreement between all actors involved.

On 10 July 1999, an agreement was signed in Lusaka (Zambia) between the warring countries to end the violence and to address the various security issues underlying the conflict as well as beginning a genuine consultation of all groups involved. The representatives of the major rebel groups did not sign the agreement until recently (end of September 1999). As a result of the agreement the Organization of African Unity (OAU) should supervise the deployment of neutral peace-keepers in the rebel-held areas.

The Lusaka peace process has impacted upon the relationship between Uganda and Rwanda. Museveni has been meeting with Kabila and concluded an arrangement without consulting Kigali, demonstrating the frailness of political alliances in the contemporary crises in Central Africa. The enormous costs of the war operation and continuing donor pressure have motivated Museveni to take a more compromising attitude. Rwanda has succeeded in establishing a buffer zone in eastern Zaire to contain the anti-RPF forces in this area. For the time being Rwanda has benefited from the DRC

³⁴ The intervention by Angola and Zimbabwe was sanctioned by the SADC members during the 3 September 1998 meeting in Durban. The Angolan MPLA regime had a vested interest in propping up Kabila in order to distort the Unita lifelines that had relied on Mobutu's regime for almost twenty years. The Rwandan-supported rebels sided with some ex-FAZ (*Forces armées zairoises*) units and even flirted with Unita in their campaign against Kabila. Nevertheless, the MPLA tried diplomacy first and reluctantly rallied behind the Kabila cause championed by SADC and Mugabe's Zimbabwe. The renewed war in Angola in March 1999 further sapped the forces of the MPLA. The war efforts provided by Zimbabwe clearly have a commercial background, encouraging Zimbabwean businesses to displace South African competition. The DRC and the Zimbabwean armies have agreed to exploit mines together in the Sahab province.

adventure, since most insecurity and insurgent attacks have declined sharply since early 1999. Nevertheless, the external pressure on Rwanda is mounting to withdraw its support from the RCD and to comply with the conditions set out in the Lusaka peace settlement. Apparently the United States have been pressuring Kigali to accept the deal, in turn providing Rwanda with high-tech equipment to secure its borders.³⁵ Although the crucial security issue for the incumbent Rwandan government allegedly remains the disarmament of ex-FAR and Interahamwe forces, many rumours indicate a growing economic implication for the Kigali (as well as the Ugandan) regime or affiliated individuals in the DRC quagmire. Kabila is firmly opposed to installing a security zone, as it would compromise the territorial integrity of the DRC and limit his power. Furthermore the issue over peace-keeping troops remains problematic. Rwanda has been sceptical about possible involvement by the UN or other international organizations in view of their dubious track record during the genocide.

2.3 The Major Actors and their Strategies

2.3.1 *The Actors in Conflict: The RPF and the Habyarimana Regimes*

The RPF

The RPF originated in Uganda. In fact many present-day government and RPA leaders originate from the Ugandan-based Rwandan Diaspora. The core of the original rebel movement was formed in the enduring struggle against the Obote regime in Uganda. The Banyarwanda³⁶ element in Museveni's liberation army was considerable. An estimated 20 per cent of the early Uganda National Army (UNA) consisted of Banyarwanda and in the top echelons this proportion was even higher. The core of the RPF was therefore a battle-hardened guerrilla movement. The strategic aim of the movement had originally been to put pressure on the Habyarimana regime to let the Tutsi minority participate in decision-making and to promote reintegration of Tutsi refugees in Rwanda from Tutsi communities that had been exiled since independence. During the early phases of the conflict, elements of the Revolutionary Patriotic Front had used their network in the UNA to obtain arms and ammunition from their supply stores. After the first invasion in 1990 the RPF started to recruit among other expatriate Tutsi groups, eventually earning the RPF its label as the most highly educated rebel force in history.

The Habyarimana Regime

The Habyarimana regime had created a single-party state, in which the MRND dominated national politics. The inner circle of the Habyarimana clan, the so-called 'akazu', relied heavily on the President's wife's clan. This lineage originated from the north-west of the country, which had fiercely opposed centralization of the state until the 1920s. This clan proved to be the most persistent in the ensuing power struggle between the various regional Hutu elite groups. This infighting between Hutu elite groups, notably between the northern Hutu elite from Ruhengeri and Gisenyi and the southern and south-western clans (Butare, Giterama), had become a salient feature of internal politics from 1959 onwards.³⁷ Gradually, the MRND developed a more exclusionary political position towards the

³⁵ *Africa Confidential*, 9 July 1999, p. 1.

³⁶ Which refers to the Banyarwanda-speaking community, including Tutsis and Hutus from Rwanda.

³⁷ Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, 1996.

incumbent opposition groups, and Habyarimana successfully pursued a policy of divide and rule. During most of his reign, the regime developed a rather positive self-image, because it succeeded in fusing a paternalistic populist strategy with moderate economic growth and political stability during much of the 1980s. The interminable manipulations to fend off political reform and the inability to address the refugee crisis finally compromised the MRND's monopoly of political power.

2.3.2 African Actors: Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire

Uganda

Uganda has played a rather subtle role in the Rwandan conflict cycle. As the crisis in Rwanda evolved, Museveni provided at least token support to the Tutsis to whom he was indebted because of their part in the overthrow of Milton Obote's regime. Uganda and more precisely Museveni's regime had repeatedly been accused of complicity with the RPA in the initial phases of the Rwandan conflict. Evidence suggests³⁸ that Museveni was informed about the first RPA invasion but nevertheless maintained a critical distance from the movement's leaders. However, as most of the Front's leaders were among his closest friends he displayed a rather lenient attitude towards the RPA. The RPA was able to procure arms and ammunitions through its tight network inside the Ugandan Nation Army (NRA) in order to enable the RPA to continue fighting. When the RPA was repelled and threatened by the FAR, Museveni even allowed the remainder of the RPA's troops to cross the Ugandan border and escape to the Virunga mountains in north-west Rwanda, where the movement slowly rebuilt its capacity. Eventually, the covert Ugandan support had played a pivotal role in the survival of the RPA, and during the subsequent RPA attacks in 1992 and 1993 Uganda continued supporting the rebels through regular army provisions. The refugee crisis following the 1994 genocide that externalized and aggravated the Rwandan crisis demonstrated the firm strategic alignment between the Museveni and Kagame regimes. Uganda faced several armed rebel forces, among which the Lord's Resistance Army and the West Nile Bank Front are most significant. Sudan supports both rebel movements in order to destabilize Museveni's regime. As the post genocide crisis exploded in eastern Zaire, Museveni became a close ally of Kigali as Rwanda's northern areas provided shelter for rebel movements threatening to destabilize Uganda. The northern town of Bunia was of strategic importance for Museveni as both the Sudanese army and Ugandan rebel forces had been supplied through its airstrip. Bunia was captured on 26 December 1996,³⁹ and Uganda therefore supported the AFDL rebellion. The 'second rebellion' has provoked a split between the allies, as Uganda has propped up the northern wing in order to secure its own strategic interests. Museveni grew wary of Kabila's regime in the DRC as security threats from the Kivu region continued unabated. Kabila also opposed the formation of a larger economic community in the Great Lakes' area. Recently, however, Museveni seems to have shifted to a more compromising attitude regarding the DRC crisis, which has created political tensions between Kigali and Kampala.

³⁸ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis*, pp. 97-99.

³⁹ *Africa Confidential*, 3 January 1997, p. 6.

Burundi

Burundi has been characterized by a so-called silent genocide from 1993 onwards, with an estimated 200,000 Hutus and Tutsis killed. From 1996 onwards, when Tutsi strongman Pierre Buyoya took power in a *coup*, Burundi has been engaged in a low-level protracted civil war between the Tutsi-dominated army and the armed Hutu opposition, among which the Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD) are the most powerful. Burundi and Rwanda share some cultural and ethnic characteristics but the political history and internal politics differ substantially. In Burundi, the Hutu-Tutsi divide has been manipulated in a raw power struggle between contending Tutsi elite groups. The ongoing insecurity serves the purposes of hard-line factions within the Tutsi and the Hutu communities. In general the capital Bujumbura, its immediate surroundings and a few outlying areas are controlled and inhabited by Tutsis whereas the majority Hutus control the countryside. Major political events have always impacted on the neighbouring states, but somehow the reactions to the genocides of 1972 (on Hutus in Burundi) and in 1994 (on Tutsis in Rwanda) have been contained to some extent by the incumbent regimes of the respective adjoining states. Nevertheless, it is clear that the unfolding genocide and its aftermath have seriously impacted on the domestic political situation in Burundi. Hutu refugees from the south-west of Rwanda posed an additional threat to the military regime in Burundi, and the Burundian regime was quick to dismantle the refugee camps when the opportunity presented itself in August 1996. The crisis around the refugee camps in eastern Zaire at the end of 1996 had drawn the Burundian army towards the Kivu area in support of the AFDL insurgency sponsored by the Rwandan RPA, in an attempt to dismantle the camps and to destroy the rebel bases. After the forced evacuation of the camps, a coalition of anti-Rwandan forces materialized in eastern Zaire during 1997, harbouring some of the extremist Hutu opponents of Buyoya's government. This in turn forced the FDD to regain Burundi in order to continue fighting the Buyoya government. Some sources presently contend that the FDD have set up training camps inside Tanzania and recruited volunteers from Hutu refugee camps.⁴⁰

Tanzania

Tanzania has persistently tried to broker a peaceful solution between the belligerent parties in both Burundi and Rwanda, while simultaneously trying to get rid of its Hutu refugees. Not all of the Rwandan Hutu refugees returned in December 1996; most of the Hutu leadership and militia have stayed behind in Tanzania fearing reprisals and facing trial upon their return to Rwanda. Some tribes in western Tanzania share their culture and language with the Hutus from Burundi, facilitating their capacity to fuse with the local population. The Hutu opposition can therefore easily train rebels and infiltrate Burundi. In the period prior to the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the Tanzanian government had put pressure on the Habyarimana regime to comply with the Arusha Agreement. Their leverage at that moment in time was backed by the fact that they controlled the only remaining land access road to land-locked Rwanda, because the RPF was in control of the major transport road running through Uganda.

⁴⁰ *New African*, 15 February 1997, p. 15.

Zaire

Zaire had supported the Habyarimana regime during the entire period leading up to the genocide. In fact, Mobutu developed a privileged relationship with the MRND regime. Both leaders had seized power through military *coups* and both relied on an autocratic system of personal rule. When Habyarimana was confronted by the RPF attack in 1990, Mobutu sent Zairean troops to help defeat the insurgents. Their misconduct on the battlefield resulted in an early withdrawal, but the Zairean intervention underscored Mobutu's personal solidarity. Furthermore, the Tutsi identity problem had been a persistent feature of local politics in the Kivu areas. The arrival of many Tutsi refugees resulting from the first genocidal campaign in Rwanda in 1959 had swelled the ranks of the older Tutsi minority groups already residing in the eastern provinces. The legal position of existing Tutsi minorities in the east of Zaire had been an ongoing nuisance for Mobutu since they were difficult to contain militarily and could not easily be co-opted into his clientelist system because of local opposition by belligerent ethnic elite groups. As a result the Tutsis became a common enemy for both Habyarimana and Mobutu, opposing their monopoly on political power. The death of Habyarimana and the subsequent defeat of the FAR forced Mobutu to retaliate. Unconditional, albeit erratic, military support from the Mobutu regime for the Hutu extremist movement ensued.

Meanwhile, in the context of internal politics inside Zaire, the genocide and the ensuing refugee crisis provided President Mobutu with an excellent opportunity to once again lure Western support for his decaying regime.⁴¹ Although Mobutu had become obsolete and of little strategic interest to the major Western powers after the end of the Cold War, his resource-rich country was still coveted by many economic actors in the OECD countries and in the region itself. Mobutu successfully played out the conflict of interest between the international community, local actors and the incumbent political elites of neighbouring Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. Mobutu was interested solely in securing additional income for his clientelist network, leaving some of the spills for local representatives of his bureaucracy. This opportunistic attitude, which had worked well in the past, in fact aggravated the crisis because Mobutu never tried to assume control over the actions of his regional cronies and the Hutu hard-line leadership in the refugee camps. The ensuing quagmire provoked the regimes of the relatively small central lake states and led to the so-called 'first rebellion', which eventually resulted in the downfall of Mobutu.

2.3.3 External Actors: France

France had gradually emerged as the second leading donor (after Belgium) during the 1970s and 1980s. An agreement had been signed on military cooperation and training in 1975⁴² between Kigali and France. France had a reputation for championing the support of African allies in the *pré carré* (or backyard) or francophone countries. African affairs received separate treatment within the realm of French foreign policy. A special unit, *la cellule africaine*, had always maintained a direct link with the *Présidence*, firmly outside the grip of the French Foreign Office (at Quai d'Orsay). France defended its involvement and interventionist policies on the bases of a shared language and culture between the

⁴¹ *Africa Research Bulletin*, October 1996, p. 12421.

⁴² Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 89.

cultural heartland of France and, notably, former colonies in sub-Saharan Africa firmly upheld through the network of the *francophonie*. In fact France always forwarded the cultural argument even when other interests clearly coincided with its policies on the ground. The fact that the Rwandan political elite had been assimilated with French culture and language has facilitated this strategy.⁴³ France maintained a military position in a score of sub-Saharan states, among which Senegal, Ivory Coast, the Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti and Gabon contain an estimated 8,700 troops.⁴⁴ France's superpower status is largely based on its privileged geostrategic position on the African continent. After the end of the Cold War commercial interest from private companies based in the US, Canada and other OECD countries for the resource riches of various erstwhile francophone client states has added an economic incentive to a continuous 'scramble for Africa'. US involvement in training Ugandan army units and hence covert support for the RPF military prior to the genocide has biased French perceptions towards the Rwandan crisis. Throughout the Rwandan crisis Paris backed the Habyarimana regime and continued supporting the interim government during its brief genocidal reign. The military intervention *Opération Turquoise*, eventually partly successful as a humanitarian endeavour, simultaneously facilitated the retreat of the defeated MRND regime and the extremist militia. The remaining FAR military and militia in the refugee camps inside Zaire discretely received arms and military aid from French military circles. France provided Mobutu with arms and military advisers to face the AFDL rebellion in the Kivu area and backed up his crumbling regime until its downfall in May 1997. France continues to oppose the RPF government in Rwanda up until the present.

⁴³ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, pp. 103-107.

⁴⁴ Guy Martin, 'Continuité et changements dans les relations franco-africaines', p. 10.

3 Conflict-related Interventions

A limited number of conflict-related interventions will be highlighted in this chapter. The first section deals with the multilateral interventions, among which UNAMIR I and UNAMIR II figure prominently. Secondly, a few bilateral interventions are reviewed, for to a lesser extent Belgium and the United States played a facilitating role for some of the actors involved.

3.1 The UN and UNAMIR

The first multilateral interventions had been initiated by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which had installed the *Groupe des observateurs militaires neutres* to oversee implementation of the Dar es Salaam cease-fire agreement concluded between the RPF and the Habyarimana regime after the February 1993 war. This observer unit consisted of only sixty men unable to control the situation effectively and providing only a limited political signal to the warring parties.

To facilitate the negotiations in Arusha and to quieten the Habyarimana government's fears of the RPF being rearmed from Uganda,⁴⁵ the United Nations had created the United Nations Uganda-Rwanda Observation Mission (UNUROM) by Resolution 846 (of 22 June 1993). The Arusha Peace Agreement was finally signed on 4 August 1993.⁴⁶ As stated earlier, the agreements formed a complex but practically unworkable settlement. In order, however, to oversee implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement, the UN created the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR) on 5 October 1993 (Resolution 872). The UNAMIR forces began arriving in Rwanda from November 1993 onwards. Special UN Representative Booh-Booh seemed unable to wrestle a solution when Habyarimana continued to frustrate implementation of the Agreement by allowing hard-liners to block installation of the BBTG. The UN seemed to interpret the situation as a purely technical problem, which could be solved without putting pressure on the actors involved. When the crisis broke out, the UNAMIR unit was poorly equipped and hardly in a position to face the unfolding events. There were some 2,500 troops, of whom the Belgian contingent (440 troops) was the best-trained unit. Moreover, the mandate provided had been severely limited to mainly self-defence. When the UN Security Council was informed about the killings of the Hutu moderate politicians, Tutsis and the Belgian

⁴⁵ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 194.

⁴⁶ The agreement consisted of a number of different agreements;

- the cease fire agreement of 12 June 1993
- the power-sharing agreement defining the modalities of the Broad Based Transitional Government (BBTG) of 9 January 1993
- the protocol on the repatriation of refugees signed on 9 June 1993
- the armed forces integration agreement of 3 August 1993.

peace-keepers, it strongly condemned these acts but did not provide a broader mandate for UNAMIR by moving the operation to a so-called Chapter VII mandate. Instead it delayed a decision for almost two weeks. In the meantime an evacuation force was rapidly formed consisting of some 900 elite troops from Belgium and France to evacuate their nationals from Rwanda. UNAMIR, intimidated and impotent, was condemned to observe passively the unfolding genocidal scenario.

Already on the evening of 7 April 1994 the UN Security Council (SC) as well as staff members knew that a large number of Hutu politicians and other civilians had been killed by militia and the security forces. The US, French and the Belgians knew that the Habyarimana killing spelled disaster for the Tutsi community and they expected a large-scale massacre of Tutsis. In this context they began to plan evacuating their own nationals from Rwanda as of 8 April 1994. The US meanwhile did not support either broadening the mandate of the UNAMIR forces in the country or sending additional troops and supplies which could have been airlifted in a couple of days. Instead the US suggested the withdrawal of UNAMIR. France, Belgium and Italy tried to stage an early intervention but this effort somehow never materialized. Belgium was afraid to meddle in internal affairs whereas France expected the RPF to denounce a solitary French effort.⁴⁷ The week of 8 to 15 April 1994 was crucial in this regard because during this period the interim head of government in Rwanda, Colonel Bagosora, established a civilian puppet regime while convincing moderates in the army and the administration to join the extremists in genocide against the Tutsis. Meanwhile, many people came to UNAMIR and Belgian and French authorities with the clear request not to abandon the moderate forces inside Rwanda.

Two weeks after the start of the genocide the SC decided to reduce UNAMIR presence to a mere 270 troops. The Special Representative was to continue his efforts to broker a political settlement for the crisis. Resolution 912⁴⁸ clearly reflects the low priority Rwanda received from the major actors, notably the US and the UK. There was also a clear effort to obfuscate the events in Rwanda by avoiding the use of the term genocide. Moreover, events inside Rwanda were described as chaotic and anarchic, *i.e.* a situation in which outside parties even when equipped with a proper mandate could hardly intervene because they would become entangled in anarchic violence.

The decision to reduce UNAMIR was heavily criticized, notably by African states and the OAU. Although Human Rights Watch and other well-informed sources issued statements in which the true nature of the events in Rwanda was specified and labelled by its true name, the SC remained deeply divided on the issue. By sheer coincidence Rwanda happened to be a non-permanent member of the SC. When some non-aligned states tried to issue a strong statement about the responsibility of the interim government for the genocide they were obstructed by China, the US and the UK, which for various reasons opposed the term genocide. Although the US and Belgium refused access by interim government officials to their countries, the interim representatives were allowed to sit with the other member states of the Security Council. At the 16 May 1994 meeting, instead of strongly condemning

⁴⁷ Alison des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, pp. 605-606.

⁴⁸ 'In this scenario, a small group (estimated at 270) headed by the Force Commander, with necessary staff, would remain in Kigali to act as an intermediary between the two parties in an attempt to bring them to an agreement on a cease-fire ...', quoted from D.A. Leurdijk and A.E. Okma, *Decision-making by the Security Council*, p. 8.

the interim government, most member states chose to speak ‘only in vaguest terms about humanitarian catastrophes’.⁴⁹ Finally on 17 May 1994, Resolution 918 provided a renewed mandate for UNAMIR, as well as an expansion of the force to 5,500 troops and an arms embargo against the government of Rwanda. The renewed mandate, among other things, stipulated that UNAMIR should ‘contribute to the security and protection of displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in Rwanda, including through the establishment and maintenance, where possible, of secure humanitarian areas’.⁵⁰ The implementation of UNAMIR II, however, was seriously hampered by interminable bureaucratic negotiations about troops, equipment and finances. Although during that period and in retrospect interested parties have been outraged because of these delays, it is a usual procedure in the process of mounting a UN operation. In practice, the UNAMIR II operation never saved any Rwandan civilians from genocidal violence for the simple reason that by the time the operation was executed the genocide was nearly completed and the RPA had secured military victory over the interim government. The untimely character of the UN interventions was amply demonstrated by the delayed adoption of Resolution 925 on 8 June 1994. Interminable discussions about logistical modalities furthermore amply demonstrated the unwillingness and indifference of the international community and leading member states of the UN system.

At this point in time France offered to intervene and the Security Council approved Resolution 929 which allowed France to deploy its troops in the framework of *Opération Turquoise*. In view of the outspoken French support for the Habyarimana regime this intervention had a rather ambiguous character.

By the end of July 1994 UNAMIR II troops arrived in Rwanda. Ethiopian troops took over French positions in the south-west on 24 August 1994. In response to the genocide the UN established an international court for genocide criminals in Arusha on 8 November 1994. Meanwhile the UN extended UNAMIR II’s mandate as late as 8 March 1996, but by then its presence had been limited to a mere 1,400 troops and its mandate had been reduced to monitoring and facilitating the return of the mainly Hutu refugees from neighbouring countries. When an additional request for prolonging UNAMIR II was formally turned down by the GOR, its mission ended. During the repatriation, retreating UNAMIR troops were scowled at by Rwandans who told them never to come back as they failed to intervene when it really mattered.

3.2 Belgium

In the wake of the genocide and the early withdrawal of the Belgian UNAMIR contingent, relations became rather strained with the incumbent RPF regime. Somehow the Belgian response to the slaughter of ten UNAMIR soldiers in the early stages of the genocide reflected what could be labelled the ‘small state response’. Such a response focuses on the perceived incapacity of a small state to intervene effectively in violent conflicts without the support of major players. The Belgian government immediately seized the opportunity to withdraw its troops as soon as the news about the

⁴⁹ Alison des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, p. 643.

⁵⁰ Dick Leurdijk and A.E. Okma, *Decision-making by the Security Council*, p. 9.

killing of their soldiers had emerged. There was no consensus in Belgian political circles about the aims and means of Belgian presence in Rwanda at the time of the genocide. Moreover, the rhetoric of peace-keeping was used to absolve and dissociate itself from the emerging drama. Although Belgium cannot be held responsible for the ensuing genocide, it failed to take a political stand against the extremist Hutu movement. Since Belgium had been actively engaged in post-colonial Rwanda, and as it had by far the largest share in the expatriate community residing in Rwanda, it was well placed to analyse the political developments inside Rwanda. When the situation deteriorated the Belgians evacuated their own nationals and in the process managed to save a number of opposition members and their families. The failure of Belgium to acknowledge the importance of their proper role has undermined the credibility of their presence in Rwanda. Nevertheless, Belgium developed a rather pragmatic and prudent approach to Rwanda and maintained an important donor presence after the genocide.

3.3 United States of America

The United States had for a long time only held marginal interest in sub-Saharan Africa. During the Cold War it counted on its European allies to handle the situation. France was seen as the only reliable partner because it was perceived as having a long-term strategic engagement at least in Africa's francophone countries. The Congo crisis of 1964 clearly marked early American involvement as the US installed and propped up Mobutu's regime in an effort to support a weak ally (Belgium). With the end of the Cold War the inherent American tendency to regard African issues strictly as non-relevant unless proven to the contrary was reinforced. A policy of 'cynical disengagement' during the Bush administration demonstrated the continuity of this historical neglect.⁵¹ Essentially, this policy consisted of keeping costs at a minimum and trying to avoid commitments that could create internal political turmoil.

The Rwandan case reflects changing US policy regarding sub-Saharan Africa. When the full impact of the genocidal events were reported to US officials they initially blocked the deployment of 5,500 peace-keepers to Rwanda and instructed their officers to avoid using the word genocide. The US withheld support for the UNAMIR II mission at a crucial point in time. The US shied away because of the Somalia disaster, and President Clinton's decision was in line with popular feelings not to become involved in risky peace-keeping operations. In fact, the US government was fully aware of the massacre that was taking place but its analysis was rather superficial. The Rwandan conflict was perceived as a replica of the Somalian conflict and the opportunity to intervene at low cost with great effectiveness was overlooked. Another tragedy as a result of meddling in a murky ethnic quagmire was something Clinton wanted to avoid at all cost. When Clinton was confronted with the Rwandan issue he demanded whether the Afro-American community, which contains a considerable voting power bloc, had expressed a strong commitment. When the answer was negative the only possible domestic incentive to intervene had disappeared. The prevailing policy alternative of low-cost non-intervention emerged as the inescapable end result. Other crises in the world, such as the fighting in

⁵¹ Peter J. Schreder, 'American Foreign Policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa', p. 558.

former Yugoslavia, drew the attention of the US, and the interest for Rwanda did not go beyond the normal rhetoric of condemning the violence and encouraging all parties to promote stability and order. The indifference of the Clinton administration and its subsequent failure to intervene effectively during the genocide resulted in a hostile relationship with the RPF. Relations improved only after the US openly admitted its role during the 1994 genocide. The US allegedly supplied the RPA with military equipment and specialized military instructors, enabling the RPA to extend military operations in adjoining Zaire.

The ongoing war in the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo), which has been labelled by some as the First African World War, certainly reflects a hidden dimension in which France and the US compete for economic and political domination of sub-Saharan Africa. US policy has gradually favoured the establishment of private sector involvement in Africa, ultimately to be able to penetrate potential markets at low cost. There is a growing consensus among American officials that foreign policy should serve as a facilitator for US enterprise in all regions of the world, including francophone Africa.⁵² A number of important Afro-American summits have underlined the importance of American economic growth, and the economic competition between France and the US has motivated political activities by these actors with regard to the major political crises on the African continent.

⁵² Peter J. Schreder, 'American Foreign Policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa', p. 561.

4 Dutch Policies and Interventions

4.1 Introduction

From the Dutch government's perspective the cumulative impact of intra-state wars had a devastating effect on the development process in general and on Dutch interventions in particular. The policy debate from the early 1990s onwards regarding development perspectives therefore focused largely on the containment and resolution of internal conflicts as a necessary prerequisite for political and socio-economic recovery. The policy paper entitled 'A World in Conflict' contained a political analysis of prevailing violent conflicts and sketched a more problematic environment in which development efforts were taking place. The ensuing policy development concentrated on creating conditions for stability and peace by promoting initiatives and actors who tried to realize such targets. This policy objective materialized in the so-called Development for Peace policy, which was forwarded by the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Jan Pronk during a speech at Princeton. This policy aims to support reconciliatory or peace-building initiatives that seek to rebuild links between competing or divided groups within war-torn societies.⁵³

From 1990 onwards Jan Pronk was deeply engaged in shaping Dutch development policy in sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, initiatives undertaken as a result of his personal engagement have formed the backbone of Dutch foreign policy towards Africa during the last decade. This applies specifically to the Rwanda case, during which policy guidelines were developed mostly on the personal initiative and assessment of Minister Pronk. During numerous missions he determined the major orientation, indicated the volume of aid and proposed priority sectors eligible for Dutch support. In the aftermath of the genocide a Dutch temporary representation was stationed in Kigali, which gradually developed into a medium-sized Embassy comprising to date eight Dutch staff. Jan Pronk was able to play an important role in the aftermath of the genocide because the Netherlands was considered 'neutral' as a donor country by the incumbent regime in Kigali. The Netherlands had never been implicated directly in the unfolding traumatic events that resulted in the genocide and the successive power transfer from a Hutu government to a Tutsi-led government. As can be inferred from the history of the conflict, many donors, bilateral and multilateral alike, had lost their credibility in the course of the violent events and the Tutsi-dominated RPF did not want to associate with them. The Netherlands by contrast had offered support even during the genocide, and in the years following the genocide Minister Pronk developed a privileged relationship with the RPF leadership and moderate Hutu politicians and was able to maintain his status as a credible critical outsider throughout the post-genocide period. A number of facts furthermore underline the personal bond between Rwanda and Minister Pronk.

⁵³ Statement by Jan Pronk in the general debate in the Second Committee held during the Fifty-first Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 14 October 1996

Minister Pronk undertook eleven missions to Rwanda and the Great Lakes' area in less than three years (see annexe 3: list of visits by Minister Pronk to Rwanda). High-ranking Dutch civil servants from the Ministry visited Rwanda only twice in the same period, of which one visit coincided with the first ministerial mission executed during the genocide. The Director of the Conflict Management and Humanitarian Aid Department (DCH) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Kigali independently at the end of 1996. All other visits to Rwanda were executed by low-ranking officials working for DMP/NH prior to mid-1996 and for Direction Africa (DAF) and DCH thereafter, and mostly concern preparations for ministerial missions or execution of plans initiated by Minister Pronk. Minister Pronk regularly received high-ranking GOR officials and frequently discussed developments directly.

Compared with the pre-genocide period, the volume of total Official Development Aid (ODA) that the Netherlands spent on Rwanda increased substantially after 1994. The erstwhile dominant donors Belgium and France diminished their aid towards the incumbent RPF government, whereas the German contribution remained constant (see annexe 5: ranking of bilateral ODA donors before and after the genocide). Relative outsiders such as the UK and the Scandinavian countries substantially upgraded their support to the new government. The genocide therefore served somehow as a watershed: francophone sponsors withdrew and anglophone sponsors took their places. However, the Netherlands, Canada and the Scandinavian countries had little interest in Rwanda prior to the genocide and were considered as 'neutral' donors. As a donor country the Netherlands ranked third during the period 1995-1997 and therefore had become an important 'player' on the donor list. The external financial support underwent another important shift because since 1994 the bulk of foreign aid was disbursed through multilateral channels whereas previously bilateral aid had predominated (see annexe 6: Net ODA 1988-1997). This latter trend signals a rather common feature of aid in emergency situations. Aid is in general channelled through a multilateral platform when a state has been hit by a serious calamity or when a state has lost control over its territory. The Rwandan genocide left the country devastated with most government institutions simply destroyed and many government officials either murdered or turned into refugees. The humanitarian disaster inside Rwanda with a huge number of internally displaced persons and almost 2 million refugees in camps in neighbouring countries had left a vacuum. There was simply no counterpart or infrastructure available inside Rwanda to implement aid emergency programmes effectively. The initial takeover by humanitarian INGOs and specialized multilateral organizations (UNHCR and UNDP) was a logical response to the Rwandan crisis. More than four years later, however, this initial tendency still predominates (see annexe 6: graphs of bilateral and multilateral aid), because the largest portion of donor money is still being handled by such organizations. Most donors have not clearly defined their position towards the incumbent regime as a result of the ongoing conflict inside and outside Rwanda, the prevailing insecurity in the north-west of Rwanda, the lack of democratic reform and inclusiveness, as well as the GOR's lack of implementing capacity.

The Dutch interventions can be divided into the two clusters that were identified in the methodology (chapter 1). Diplomatic activities such as visits by the Minister or high ranking civil servants, including the efforts of the Dutch government to broker donor alliances at Round Table Conferences or other important donor forums, comprise the first cluster of so-called direct conflict-related interventions. The second cluster of so-called indirect conflict interventions consists of all types of

financial allocations to the GOR, multilateral agencies or NGOs with the aim of alleviating the suffering of victims of the political crisis emanating from the Rwandan tragedy. As a result multiple project interventions were executed predominantly through the multilateral and international NGO channels.

This chapter first contains a chronological overview of political initiatives and activities initiated by the Netherlands during the contemporary history of Rwanda. An attempt was made to relate Dutch policy initiatives to the chronology of the contemporary conflict history of Rwanda in order to be able to detect the possible impact of such interventions, as well as their timeliness. Secondly, a limited number of priority sectors and development aid channels are reviewed to determine whether consistent policies can be distinguished on this level and a rough evaluation of their impact is presented. Finally, a tentative assessment will be outlined of the overall impact of Dutch interventions in the case of Rwanda.

4.2 A Chronology of Dutch Interventions in the Rwandan Conflict Cycle

Dutch engagement prior to the 1994 genocide had a rather limited character. There was no Dutch Embassy in Kigali and the country used the Dutch representation in Kinshasa (erstwhile Zaire, currently Democratic Republic of Congo). The most important Dutch presence in Rwanda was the SNV organization, which had been executing a number of development activities. Furthermore, Dutch co-financing organizations (MFOs) – Catholic Dutch Co-financing Development NGO (CEBEMO) (later Bilance, currently Cordaid) and Inter-church Christian Dutch Co-financing Development NGO (ICCO) - financed activities of mostly Catholic and Protestant counterparts and the secular organization Dutch Co-financing Development NGO (Novib) financed other local counterparts. The total ODA spent yearly on Rwanda oscillated between 10-20 million guilders during the period from 1988-1993 (see annexe 4: Dutch ODA to Rwanda 1992-1998). In the mid 1980s Rwanda had received status as a so-called ‘sector country’ within the Dutch development cooperation system and by October 1990 a more substantial status as ‘regional country’ was under consideration enabling the broadening of the bilateral relationship. ‘Sector countries’ were countries in which priority sectors were earmarked as recipient sectors for Dutch development aid. These sectors had been rural development, health and drinking water delivery. At the end of 1990 under the heading of *regioland* a more substantial relationship was conceptualized focusing on agriculture, alternative labour-market development and soil conservation. While the Dutch government considered the intensification of its relationship with Rwanda, the RPF invaded Rwanda in October 1990. As a result the Dutch development organization SNV repatriated a number of staff and halted operations in two of the four prefectures in which they had been active. The prevailing insecurity, consequently, was viewed as a serious problem compromising future developments.

At a round table conference on Rwanda held in Geneva in July 1992 the Dutch delegation was instructed to express its concern over the structural problems facing Rwanda, especially the interaction between high population growth, non-mechanized agriculture and the limited absorption capacity of the natural environment. Additionally, the delegation was to stress the necessity of putting an end to the rebel activities, to be critical about human rights violations and to encourage national

reconciliation. The institutional weakness of the Habyarimana administration, the political instability facing the regime and the apparent lack of donor coordination were seen as structural obstacles to address adequately the problems outlined above. During the conference the Netherlands therefore proposed forming a working group headed by a lead donor and consisting of representatives from the Rwandan government and some other donor countries to develop a long-term strategy, but this suggestion was not endorsed by the meeting.

The February 1993 war had generated an additional refugee stream towards Kigali and the southern prefectures. Moreover, the Habyarimana regime was not able to respect the Structural Adjustment Policy conditions and suffered additional setbacks because of the war with the RPF. As a result, the Rwandan government requested financial aid from the Netherlands to enable it to tackle the prevailing socio-economic problems, notably the support and rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDP). The Habyarimana regime furthermore demanded funding for the future demobilization of the RPF and the FAR, but the Dutch government refused since no formal agreement between the contending parties had yet materialized. Official diplomatic talks between the parties had been taking place from June 1992 onwards at Arusha in Tanzania. The Arusha meetings were finally successful and an elaborate agreement was signed on 4 August 1993.

The Netherlands maintained a neutral position throughout much of the period preceding the 1994 genocide. Its official position was broadly aligned with the official policy of the major donors, such as the United States and Belgium. Officially, most donors, with the notable exception of France, favoured a negotiated settlement between the Habyarimana government and the RPF. The Netherlands wanted to contain the violence and hoped that a workable compromise would result from the talks in Arusha and provide a solution to the armed conflict. A proper Dutch strategy aiming at conflict prevention, apart from normal diplomatic *démarches*, was not formulated in this period because such a dimension of foreign diplomacy had not yet materialized. The refugee problems inside Rwanda were initially addressed by some of the Dutch MFOs that financed shelter and relief efforts aimed at the internally displaced persons (IDPs) resulting from the war with the RPF. By and large the Dutch government conditioned its aid to Rwanda in line with the development of the Arusha peace process.

The assassination of Habyarimana and the speed with which the subsequent events took place within Rwanda baffled most outsiders. Many actors claim with hindsight that they could not have foreseen the scale of the killings. In an early response the European Union, supported by the Netherlands, forwarded a suggestion to initiate an OAU-led intervention to stop the killings and to protect the humanitarian organizations, but the initiative never materialized.

Minister Pronk visited Kigali in the third week of May 1994 (from 11-17 May 1994), roughly six weeks after the genocidal campaign against the Tutsi minority and the Hutu moderates had been launched. Pronk was the only government official of an OECD member state to visit Rwanda during the genocide. During his visit Pronk had access to many actors in the conflict as well as to outsiders such as the UN commander in charge of UNAMIR and NGO representatives. Although members of the interim government tried to cover up the crimes of the regime itself by blaming the RPF, Pronk was able to gather relevant information on the war itself and the ongoing genocide and consequently could establish a fairly balanced perception of the situation in Rwanda. In view of the ongoing chaos

Pronk strongly favoured a forceful multilateral presence inside Rwanda and was strengthened in his view that the UN should have reinforced its presence instead of diminishing UNAMIR. Surprisingly, the professed aim of his mission was humanitarian⁵⁴ and his major concern focused on aid delivery during the ongoing conflict and the chaotic internal security situation. In fact, a political intervention such as a strong statement issued by a visiting Minister of Development Cooperation from a Western donor country would have been most appropriate and timely in terms of the conflict-preventive impact in view of the severity of the ongoing mass slaughter, but this never materialized. Minister Pronk apparently shied away from direct political intervention as he could have condemned the genocide and urged the interim government to put a halt to the killings. Furthermore, Pronk might have used leverage by threatening to exclude the regime from any future development assistance or to plead for military intervention in case of non-compliance. As a result of this political impartiality or ‘neutrality’, Pronk limited the potential of his intervention to an assessment of humanitarian aid inside Rwanda and in the neighbouring countries that were receiving the brunt of the refugees.

In early July 1994 the Dutch government voiced its concern over the lack of commitment to support the UN initiative to deploy UNAMIR II. Minister Pronk had vainly tried to persuade Security Council members to extend UNAMIR II’s mandate to enable the enforcement of a cease-fire and deployment of a substantial peace-keeping force in order to protect effectively the majority of the people threatened. The Netherlands was prepared to pledge financial help and offered to facilitate the transport of troops, but did not consider deploying Dutch troops in view of the Belgian UNAMIR experience.⁵⁵ The Netherlands’ strong verbal commitment to halt the genocide therefore was not matched by a willingness to send troops and illustrated the prevailing Western reluctance to intervene directly in the Rwandan conflict. The ‘body-bag’ syndrome cast a prohibitive shadow on even modest propositions to intervene militarily. Outside involvement was as a result limited to humanitarian relief operations towards victims of the conflict in general, avoiding the necessary but painful exercise of developing a political stand towards the belligerent parties in conflict. Already in early July 1994 the genocide had practically been carried out, and consequently the international debate on UNAMIR II’s deployment lost all significance.

A second visit from 17-21 July 1994 took Pronk to Zaire (Goma), consulting with a great number of INGOs located in the Kivu area. The international community’s major priority had shifted towards the refugee crisis materializing outside Rwanda. The magnitude of the refugee flows had outflanked the capacity of the specialized INGOs to deal adequately with the crisis. The Netherlands pledged another 20 million guilders on behalf of humanitarian emergency aid. Most of the funds were allocated to the large INGOs and specialized UN organizations (ICRC, MSF, UNHCR). The Netherlands was engulfed by the massive demand for aid emerging from the crisis situations in Tanzania and Zaire. Pronk facilitated the aid response by third parties as well as providing special services such as military transportation for food shipments to Zaire. Additionally, the Dutch government sent a number of specialized military personnel to provide water facilities, emergency health support and airport handling to facilitate the arrival of food and supplies to refugees in eastern Zaire. Most of the military personnel only stayed for a limited period of two months, from the end of July until the end of

⁵⁴ Foreign Affairs Archives no. DDI/BB, DAM ara00531.

⁵⁵ Foreign Affairs Archives no. DDI/BB. DMP/2025/01442.

September 1994. The JEEAR report concluded that despite a positive output in terms of saving lives and preventing the spread of contagious diseases, the overall effectiveness of the external military deployments of the US, the UK and the Netherlands was hampered by inadequate and rushed reconnaissance assessments.⁵⁶ Moreover, the engagement of a mere 108 troops⁵⁷ engaged at any time during the intervention period demonstrated the limited scope of Dutch engagement; it was merely a token of political goodwill in response to the enormous media coverage of the massive refugee crises and subsequent public outcry. Furthermore, it was a relatively safe intervention with an obvious humanitarian and logistical objective executed by military personnel.

The Rwanda crisis was reviewed during hearings on 28 July 1994 in the Dutch parliament. The parliamentary committees for Foreign Affairs and Defence concluded that the Netherlands had reacted promptly and adequately to the Rwandan crisis, and that the subsequent UN withdrawal was understandable in view of the explosion of violence and chaos. Minister Pronk, however, was convinced that the international community, including the Netherlands, had taken a wrong decision, thereby jeopardizing its future legitimacy to intervene in Rwanda. The international community should have intervened more actively after 6 April 1994; now the only remaining field of intervention left was that of humanitarian relief.⁵⁸

Pronk thought that the Dutch contribution to the humanitarian relief effort itself had been successful and quite substantial, but that simultaneously the aid contributed to the creation of a breeding ground for extremist Hutu forces and enhanced the life span of the camps. During the ensuing debate about the desirability of continuing to supply the *génocidaires* in the camps with humanitarian aid, the effectiveness of withholding support as a strategy to combat the hard-line Hutus was challenged. Although Minister Pronk was aware that many *génocidaires* were living in the camps, they could not be excluded from the aid delivery for fear of exacerbating existing tensions in the refugee camps. According to some Dutch government officials the extremist leaders had already diversified their resource-generating strategies sufficiently to withstand such pressure and to be sure that innocent civilians would bear the brunt of withholding emergency aid. Additionally, the persistent rumours about war crimes and human rights abuses allegedly committed by the new government in Rwanda provided an incentive for refugees to stay in the camps. A long-term donor presence in Rwanda was consequently deemed necessary to gradually improve stability inside Rwanda, thereby providing an incentive for the refugees to return voluntarily.

Meanwhile, the European troika visit to the Great Lakes' region which had been initially approved on 6 May 1994 was executed as late as 28 August to 3 September 1994, perfectly illustrating the ineffectiveness of the international community to deal with the crises in Rwanda. By then the genocide had already taken place and the EU could only react to new developments on the ground. Minister Pronk had severely criticized the repeated delay of the mission, which had seriously undermined the EU's credibility in the region. The delegation concluded that the new government deserved EU support and that the limited humanitarian support, once direct needs had been sufficiently addressed,

⁵⁶ JEEAR, volume 3, 'Humanitarian Aid and Effects', p. 60.

⁵⁷ JEEAR, volume 3, 'Humanitarian Aid and Effects', p. 60.

⁵⁸ Foreign Affairs Archives no. DDI/BB, DDI-DAF 201500332.

should be expanded to initiate substantial long-term structural external support, including economic support to enable post-war rehabilitation.

The official visit to Rwanda from 21 to 24 October 1994 by Minister Pronk signalled the beginning of regular political consultations with the new government in Kigali. The initial contacts with representatives of the new government in Rwanda were quite positive. The Rwandan regime encouraged the Netherlands to take a leading role with regard to external initiatives on behalf of Rwanda. Pronk initiated a Trust Fund for Rwanda, to be administered by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). He urged the new government to take measures that would encourage the return of refugees, because in his view the refugee camps were a fertile breeding ground for future violence. During this period Rwanda was repeatedly accused of committing human rights abuses against Hutus accused of complicity in the genocide.

On 18 and 19 January 1995 the UNDP and Rwandan government organized a Round Table Conference (RTC) in Geneva on the rehabilitation of Rwanda post-genocide. The need for addressing the immediate priorities was estimated at roughly 750 million US dollars for 1995, and these priorities were the rehabilitation of the government infrastructure and the physical infrastructure of the country, and the construction of houses for refugees and survivors of the genocide including livelihood support for these groups. The majority of the donors were represented on a low diplomatic level; only the Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland had sent their Ministers. In general, most donors were critical towards the new government, expressing doubts on the absorption - and executive capacities - of the new GOR. Minister Pronk, however, expressed clear support for the RPF-dominated government and urged other donors to help the new government in executing its intended policies.⁵⁹ Additionally, the Netherlands did not require any political preconditions on the aid committed because such considerations would only have frustrated the execution of intended policies. For the year 1995 a total of 30 million US dollars was committed by Pronk, directly contributed to the Trust Fund for Rwanda. A total amount of 590 million US dollars was pledged by the donor community, roughly half on account of multilateral institutions (World Bank, IMF and OPEC funds). Dutch priorities focused on a host of issues, among which the rehabilitation of the justice sector and rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees figured prominently.

On a visit to the Netherlands on 29 March 1995, Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame urged the international community to stop supporting the ex-FAR and militias gathered in the refugee camps. Kagame held the international community responsible for the deterioration of the regional security setting by supporting the *génocidaires*. As a result the arms embargo against Rwanda was considered counterproductive, as it punished the incumbent government for crimes committed in the past by the former Hutu regime and hindered legitimate self-defence. Kagame was outraged by the role of the NGO community working in the camps. Nobody seemed to be accountable for the violence emerging from the militia in the camps and nobody seemed willing to separate genuine refugees and *génocidaires*.

⁵⁹ Foreign Affairs Archives no. DDI/BB, DMP/MZ00296.

Minister Pronk again travelled to Rwanda and Zaire between 6 and 12 April 1995. He attended the commemoration of the genocide in Rwanda on 7 April 1995, where he was the only external official to attend the ceremony. The Rwandan authorities were embittered about the lack of international support and complained that they did not receive help whereas the perpetrators of the genocide were being fed by the same organizations that abandoned Rwanda during the genocide. The international community had completely lost its credibility. The ongoing UN *Opération Retour* had not been very successful and the Rwandan authorities were running out of patience. This UN operation was intended to resettle all the internal and external refugees peacefully. Moreover, the international fixation on the protection of human rights had poised UNAMIR II squarely against the new government. During a visit to the Netherlands the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Ayala Lasso had already informed Pronk on the overemphasis of the international community on recent human rights abuses as opposed to the lack of commitment for research into the practices of genocide.⁶⁰ This attitude had worked against the UNAMIR presence in Rwanda. Minister Pronk nevertheless stressed the importance of non violent evacuation of the refugees and IDPs in collaboration with the UN.

In a belated response to Vice-President Kagame's complaints about the lack of willingness among international donors to police the refugee camps, the Netherlands dispatched a limited number of civil police officers to Goma in order to assist the Zairean troops that were deployed in the camps as of May 1995. Their assignment was to monitor the performance of the contingent of presidential guards, but their limited number (about eight policemen) and the magnitude of the mandate (policing half a million refugees) crippled the potential of the Dutch intervention from the start.

On 12 May 1995 Rwanda's President Bizimungu visited the Netherlands to discuss among other things the resettlement of the IDPs and the Kibeho incident. Kibeho caused a major upheaval in the international community because the RPA allegedly killed around 2,000 civilians during the forced evacuation of the IDP camp. Bizimungu stressed that Kibeho became a centre for former militia who were hiding from persecution and who had used the Kibeho camp as a sanctuary to rearm. According to official sources in Rwanda, the violent events had partly been provoked by militia who killed people wanting to return to their villages and who had deliberately provoked a violent reaction from the military by shooting at soldiers from the crowds. Others, among them various NGO officials and UNAMIR soldiers, pointed to the fact that many refugees had been killed indiscriminately by RPA soldiers during the chaotic evacuation of Kibeho. Pronk had suspended funding to the Trust Fund as a clear signal to the GOR, and simultaneously had dispatched official complaints to government officials. Most other donors had suspended funding commitments as a result of the violent evacuation.

On 19 and 20 May 1995 Pronk again visited Rwanda. Talks focused on the continuing refugee crisis in the Kivu area. During this so-called informal donor meeting of the Rwanda Operational Support Group, the relationship between the Kigali government and the 'friends of Rwanda' seemed to have been re-established. The debate on the possibility of dismantling the camps around Bukavu and Goma lingered on, despite pressure from the United States to address this pivotal security threat adequately. The interminable discussions over the refugee camps acted as an important turning point in the international interventions in the aftermath of the genocide. From mid-1995 the apparent lack of

⁶⁰ Foreign Affairs Archives no.DDI/BB, DAF2015/00307.

coherent policies concerning the refugee crisis, and its impact on the fragile regional security setting, warned of a crisis of regional proportions. The joint humanitarian relief operation motivated by the desire to prevent massive starvation of innocent civilians degenerated into the recreation of a 'genocidal rump state' lingering at the borders of Rwanda.

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) held on 6 and 7 July 1995 in Kigali demonstrated the rather hesitant donor support to the new government. The necessity of politically supporting the incumbent regime emerged as an outstanding feature of the MTR. Despite the events at Kibeho (April 1995) the Netherlands continued to support the new government. Pronk had initially decided to suspend an amount of 5.5 million US dollars to the UNDP Trust Fund to illustrate discontent over the RPA's dubious involvement in the Kibeho refugee camp evacuation. However, Pronk announced the commitment of an additional 10 million US dollars to enable reintegration of IDPs in Rwandan society. Another hot issue was the relationship between the NGO community and the new government. The 'code of conduct' approach had been interpreted by many NGOs as an effort to muzzle their autonomy whereas the government wanted the NGOs to coordinate more efficiently and to comply with rules and regulations. The NGOs hotly contested the legitimacy of the government's actions. The Netherlands sided in this dispute with the GOR, suggesting that other donors finance NGO requests only when agreements were signed with the ministry concerned, thus commanding compliance among the NGOs.

On 5 September 1995 Pronk travelled to Rwanda to verify whether the recent government reshuffle had impacted on major GOR policies. Two prominent moderate Hutu politicians, former Prime Minister Twagiramungu and Minister Sendashonga, had been dismissed. Sendashonga was Minister for the Interior and had accumulated evidence of human rights violations allegedly perpetrated by the RPA.⁶¹ Despite vehement protests no action was taken against those accused of complicity. The new Prime Minister Rwigema confirmed commitment to the existing policies. Talks furthermore focused on the refugee crisis and notably on the camps inside Zaire. It seemed highly unlikely that these camps would be evacuated before the end of 1995. The ex-FAR and militia had seized power inside the camps, threatening everyone who wished to return voluntarily to Rwanda. The UNHCR returnee programme had therefore not been successful.

On 4 October 1995 Pronk met with the regular Development Committee of the Dutch Parliament to discuss events in Rwanda and the Great Lakes' region. The Netherlands continued to support the Rwandan priorities of reconciliation, return to rule of law and return of refugees. In summary, the Netherlands had pledged a total amount of 80 million US dollars during the course of 1995. Most of the money was channelled through the Trust Fund construction. Dutch policy priorities were the UNDP-sponsored rehabilitation of government capacity and infrastructure, rehabilitation of the justice sector and reintegration of refugees. Priority had been given throughout this period to rehabilitating the justice sector by training rural police, public prosecution and the prison infrastructure.

⁶¹ Sendashonga was murdered in mid-1998, while in exile in Nairobi.

The Netherlands became the third most important donor in 1995, with only the United States and Germany ranking higher.

At the end of 1995 the internal political situation was deteriorating. The new regime seemed to have become highly irritated by critical external evaluations of GOR actions and alleged as well as documented abuses of power by the RPA. During 1995 Hutu and Tutsi moderates had been harassed and many had fled Rwanda. Many moderate Hutu politicians had been intimidated by the security services and the Department of Military Intelligence, and had received death threats. Furthermore, the ongoing stagnation of the detainee situation seemed to demonstrate political unwillingness to bring those allegedly responsible for genocide to trial.⁶² The GOR had been accused repeatedly of using a 'double tongue' when expressing a genuine desire to let the refugees in camps outside Rwanda return to their homesteads. The GOR prevented Hutu elite members from returning to Rwanda by refusing the restitution of their property. This injustice was covered up by accusing these individuals of responsibility in the genocide. The incumbent regime therefore appeared gradually to increase ethnic polarization inside Rwanda. The Netherlands had been regularly briefed on these developments but decided nevertheless to continue supporting the GOR. However, the GOR was asked to account more precisely how Dutch aid was being spent on rehabilitation and national reconciliation. The hard-liners inside the GOR seemed to win ground to the detriment of moderate politicians.

A second RTC was held in June 1996 in Geneva during which the Netherlands pledged an amount of \$100 million over a three-year period (1996-1999). The mid-term review of RTC II was held on 10 October 1996 in Kigali. Prime Minister Rwigema announced to the donor community the end of emergency relief and urged them to support the development programmes. Many donors were sceptical about the procedures regarding the genocide perpetrators. The Dutch had funded so-called *commissions de triage* set up to separate the genuine criminals from the innocent but this initiative had not generated sufficient output.

In October 1996 the AFDL rebellion in eastern Zaire materialized and the refugee camps were attacked and dismantled, leading to a chaotic situation. A large and steady flow of refugees was finally returning to Rwanda, whereas many Hutus fled further inland. During a briefing of the regular Commission of Foreign Affairs (6 November 1996) Minister Pronk and Dutch Foreign Minister van Mierlo reviewed the refugee crisis in Zaire. According to the Dutch government the situation in eastern Zaire had exploded because the Rwandan Hutu extremists had created a second Rwanda inside Zaire. The international community had not intervened effectively in the emerging refugee crisis partly because some actors were submissive whereas other actors, notably France, had specific geopolitical interests. According to Pronk, the crisis was partly due to economic differences between various population groups and could not be attributed solely to ethnic antagonism in the region. Although almost all observers were aware that the RPA operated within Zaire, the Rwandan government had been officially urged by the Netherlands to exercise the utmost constraint and not to interfere militarily

⁶² The transfer of prisoners from overburdened prisons has not always been facilitated by the GOR. The GOR demanded new security requirements for the newly built prisons, hence frustrating the timely transfer of prisoners.

in the conflict in eastern Zaire. Under international pressure, Kinshasa and Kigali had been encouraged to start negotiations to alleviate the existing differences.

From 30 November to 7 December 1996 the Director of the Conflict Management and Humanitarian Aid Department (DCH) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited the Dutch representation in Kigali to discuss the annual Dutch policy plans for 1997. The Dutch interventions had been mostly funded through the emergency relief channels but at this point in time this interim policy was to be revised. In fact, the relationship with Rwanda had intensified during the last two years and Dutch engagement was gradually shifting from emergency relief towards more durable forms of development cooperation. However, aid for Rwanda still came from the DCH and was financed through the Emergency Aid modality. The GOR's lack of capacity was perceived as a severe constraint on the timely implementation and execution of programmes and activities. Although the Rwandan government dearly tried to convince the donor community that it was able to control the aid funds directly, the Netherlands continued to deposit money in the UNDP-controlled Trust Fund. The Netherlands intended to continue supporting the governance capacity of the Rwandan authorities.

An evaluation report issued by the Dutch representative (TZ) in Kigali highlighted the tensions between the Rwandan government and the UN. There were considerable problems with aid coordination due to the Rwandan government's lack of capacity, the intransigent attitude of some NGOs, the arrogance of some government officials towards foreign donors and infighting between the UNDP and the UNHCR. The UNDP demonstrated a lack of coordinating capacity that was causing a proliferation of overlapping activities by different development actors. In fact these actors should comply with official government priorities but failed to do so, thus aggravating the tensed relationship. The Rwandan attitude was high-handed, expecting the international donor organizations simply to comply with GOR priorities.

In March 1997 Minister Pronk engaged in a bilateral initiative to visit the Great Lakes' region since the projected EU troika visit had been cancelled. Pronk remained positive about the intentions of the incumbent regime in Kigali and acknowledged that the reception of some one million refugees in Rwanda had stretched government capacities. Pronk also expressed his concern about the apparent involvement of RPA troops in the mass murders taking place inside eastern Zaire. The Rwandan authorities denied allegations of mass murder and certified that the RPA was engaged in common warfare with the enemy. During the same mission Minister Pronk furthermore met with Laurent Kabila, leader of the AFDL in Goma. He tried to convince Kabila to comply with the diplomatic initiatives for mediation between Mobutu and the AFDL. Pronk urged Kabila to admit an independent UN research unit to investigate into the accusations of mass murder on the retreating Rwandan refugee population in eastern Zaire.

Half a year later Pronk paid his last visit as Minister of Development Cooperation to Rwanda (16-19 October 1997) to discuss the state of affairs and notably the deteriorating security setting in the north-west of Rwanda. His political message to the Kigali government was consistent with the position that the Netherlands had taken throughout the post-genocide period: Rwanda should not compromise its credibility by responding with large-scale violent counter-insurgency campaigns in response to the attacks by ex-FAR and militia inside Rwanda. Minister Pronk explained to his Rwandan counterparts

that his Rwanda policy was under increasing pressure in the Netherlands since Amnesty International had issued a number of critical reports about human rights violations allegedly perpetrated by the RPA. Rumours about the massive slaughter of Hutu refugees in neighbouring Zaire had furthermore undermined political tolerance towards Pronk's more or less lenient Rwanda policy. Minister Pronk furthermore evaluated the nature of the aid programme with his Rwandan counterparts. The Minister, the Rwandan government and many organizations operating inside Rwanda agreed that Rwanda was in transit from a stage in which emergency humanitarian aid predominated to a more structural development phase. Nevertheless, the most pressing issues remained the reintegration of refugees from Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania and the build-up of governance capacity. Dutch priorities focused on education, justice, and reconciliation and reintegration of refugees. Pronk voiced his concern about the rigid and large-scale 'villagization' programmes (Imidugudu) set up by the GOR to accommodate returning refugees. The Netherlands still did not consider executing a regular development programme in Rwanda mainly because the GOR lacked sufficient capacity to implement such programmes. However, the Trust Fund construction was heavily criticized by the Rwandan government, NGOs, and to some extent by the Dutch government itself. The Trust Fund had become too bureaucratic and inefficient.

At the donor meeting in early 1998 in Brussels, the Netherlands announced its support of the GOR's priorities, namely debt relief, demobilization and the creation of a support fund for survivors of the genocide. In view of the fact that Rwanda remained in a transition phase, the initiation of a regular development relationship between the Netherlands and Rwanda was considered untimely. Minister Pronk continued supporting the Trust Fund construction, in order to balance the demand for ownership from the GOR against Dutch requirements of flexibility and accountability.

In response to this prudent and balanced assessment, the Dutch Embassy in Rwanda questioned the concept of Rwandan 'ownership' as this tended to privilege a minority within a minority. According to the Embassy there should be more control over Trust Fund money because the dominant Tutsis of Ugandan descent were disproportionately profiting from Dutch development money to the detriment of other population groups. In contrast to the assessment that support to the rural sector was not a priority, the Embassy stressed the importance of preventing future conflict by opportunely investing in this sector. Furthermore, the Dutch representation strongly promoted the creation of physical and material conditions as an enabling environment to generate an improved 'climate' for human rights.

During 1998 there was growing discontent among various NGOs operating in Rwanda about the unabated Dutch support for the GOR, particularly owing to the evidence of RPA responsibility for atrocities committed in the north-west of Rwanda during this period. Minister Pronk, however, retorted that the development of democracy in Rwanda required steady support in which setbacks were inevitable. The generous development aid allowed the Netherlands to participate and to influence political decision-making in the region. It was intended that shortcomings in government performance in states such as Rwanda were to be used to design targeted aid to improve governance capacity in specific sectors.

An important donor conference was held in Stockholm on 2 and 3 July 1998. The main priority of this meeting was to discuss the economic and social recovery programme for Rwanda, focusing on

macroeconomic reform and more specifically on Rwanda's foreign debt. The GOR exposed its intentions of concentrating its policies on structural reform of government sectors, education and health services. The Netherlands expressed its commitment to continuing to support the reconciliation and reconstruction programmes as well as long-term policies aiming at sociopolitical development. The Netherlands also encouraged the institution of a multilateral debt relief fund for Rwanda. Furthermore, the Netherlands clearly voiced its disappointment concerning the fact that few countries had actually donated funds for debt relief servicing. The Netherlands proposed to institutionalize a donor meeting on the macroeconomic performance of Rwanda on a biannual basis. Other donors, notably Germany and Switzerland, openly voiced political criticism about the lack of inclusiveness and failure of the GOR to accommodate the UNHRFOR mission.

In August 1998 the so-called second rebellion emerged in the Kivu region. Both the Rwandan and Ugandan governments were involved, but the Rwandan authorities denied their involvement. This in turn provoked sharp protests from many donors supporting the incumbent regime. The Dutch representative in Kigali explained the extent of Dutch discontent with the RPA engagement to the military leadership and that subsequent denials would compromise Dutch support to the GOR.⁶³ The ensuing regional war had convinced many donors that the GOR had overestimated its capacity to set the rules of the political game in Central Africa. The high-handed attitude of some Rwandan leaders had clearly antagonized even its most fervent supporters. The new Development Cooperation Minister of the Netherlands was more critical towards the Rwandan government than her predecessor. In a letter dated 6 November 1998 addressed to her British counterpart, Clare Short, she underlined Dutch criticism on the Rwandan role in the DRC crisis. The GOR should have been more open about its intentions according to Mrs Herfkens. Kagame eventually acknowledged RPA involvement in the DRC quagmire, but political leverage from external actors seemed to have been quite marginal as the GOR did not alter its engagement. Despite its criticism the Netherlands recognized the GOR's genuine security concerns in the DRC crisis. Nevertheless, the crisis in north-western Rwanda provoked a discussion on political conditions for Dutch aid. A number of political criteria, such as broadening political participation, improving the situation for the prisoners, resolving the land ownership issue and a number of economic criteria would be used as an objective standard against which GOR performance was to be judged. Such 'benchmarking' would determine the nature and the volume of development aid in the future.⁶⁴

On 16 October 1998 in a letter to the Dutch House of Representatives, the newly appointed Minister for Development Cooperation Mrs Herfkens declared that she would honour the commitments to Rwanda adopted by her predecessor totalling \$110 million. Rwanda could therefore expect a Dutch contribution for 1999 but Mrs Herfkens refused to engage in any long-term commitments towards Rwanda. Mrs Herfkens announced a more rigid approach towards the Trust Fund. Essentially, this approach signalled the transition towards direct supervision of earmarked funds implying that each activity would be guided separately through the UNDP structure. At this point in time the Netherlands had furnished roughly half of the entire Trust Fund budget (\$41.2 million). The new policy line initiated by Mrs Herfkens aimed to develop criteria that would eventually serve to monitor the

⁶³ Communication to the author on 21 September 1999.

⁶⁴ Foreign Affairs Archives no. DDI/DCH, DCH201900423.

Rwandan government's performance. This development marked a new watershed in the relationship between the Netherlands and Rwanda, because a clear relationship has been made between the political performance of the regime in Kigali and the provision of development aid by the Netherlands. In April 1999 the UK convened a meeting with the Rwandan authorities during which a so-called Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was finalized. During this period the UK had taken the initiative and expressed its ambition to lead the donor community regarding the Rwandan case. This MOU contained a limited number of priority considerations that could be used to develop criteria. These criteria concerned socio-economic policy, good governance and democratization, combating impunity, conflict resolution and macroeconomic performance. The development of straightforward and measurable criteria, however, has not yet materialized.

On 17 May 1999 the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs informed the House of Representatives about the situation in Central Africa. The security situation had stabilized since December 1998, and most of the Interahamwe and ex-FAR had been chased from Rwanda or surrendered. The Dutch government had decided to comply with financial commitments already pledged. Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs promised to evaluate the GOR's performance against the 'benchmarks' agreed upon in the MOU between the UK and Rwanda, to decide whether Rwanda would qualify for structural long-term bilateral aid. For the near future Rwanda would figure on the so-called DMV country list (democratization, human rights and peace-building). This list was issued as a result of structural reform in the development cooperation sector,⁶⁵ implying that in these countries specific thematic activities would be considered for funding, but that a broad and more encompassing bilateral development strategy would only be implemented in a limited number of countries (seventeen), not including Rwanda. Rwanda has, however, been given a special status and figures as a candidate for this more exclusive and encompassing development status.

In summary, although Minister Pronk did his utmost to persuade the UN Security Council to intervene, the Netherlands did not initiate an effective policy against the genocide in Rwanda. During the aftermath of the genocide, notably after the spillover movement of some two million Hutu refugees to neighbouring countries, the Netherlands acted promptly and generously in terms of money pledged and support offered. With regard to post-conflict rehabilitation inside Rwanda the Netherlands took a leading role, among others by setting up the UN Trust Fund, thus helping to legitimize the GOR and setting an example for other donors. Yet international support for the refugees in Zaire contributed by and large to the recreation of a genocidal rump state of the remaining militia and their extremist leaders, and helped to prolong the political crisis in the region. The Netherlands did nothing to contribute to a timely diffusion of this critical security issue. Only when the RPA decide to dismantle the IDP camps inside Rwanda as a starting point for enforced repatriation, and the Kibeho camp incident materialized, did the Dutch government criticize the GOR's behaviour. The Dutch more or less complied with the international outcry regarding Kibeho and related incidents. On the one hand, therefore, the Netherlands unwillingly contributed to the GOR's political isolation; on the other hand, however, Minister Pronk used his influence to convince other donors to support the GOR, notably

⁶⁵ In June 1999 the Dutch Parliament decided to endorse the Ministry of Development Cooperation's proposal to limit structural aid to some seventeen countries, while subsequently allowing for limited thematic aid to other countries under three headings: DMV, Environment, and Trade and Industry

concerning the mass repatriation of refugees, the support to the Justice Department and macroeconomic issues such as debt servicing and the timely disbursement of funds pledged to the rehabilitation of Rwanda during the various Round Table Conferences. Furthermore, Minister Pronk maintained a lenient attitude towards some of the crucial interventions undertaken with Rwandan military support, notably in the DRC, which were seen as legitimate self-defence by a besieged regime.

4.3 An Assessment of Dutch Development Aid Interventions

Dutch development aid to Rwanda was largely channelled through the framework of the United Nations Development Programme's Trust Fund. Furthermore, a number of themes can be distinguished that have received priority. With hindsight it can be postulated that most of these priorities are intimately linked to the concept of conflict prevention as it gradually emerged in the wake of the Rwandan tragedy. Minister Pronk had decided to give the incumbent RPF-led government of Rwanda the benefit of the doubt. Dutch development aid's priority sectors to some extent reflect the policy priorities of the GOR while simultaneously reflecting the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' concern to contribute to the creation of a more stable post-conflict Rwanda. After the initial stage of emergency aid the Netherlands gradually developed an aid programme, which was revised according to Rwanda's needs and the assessment of the Minister. Rehabilitation of the justice sector had been a priority from the very start of Dutch engagement. Minister Pronk emphasized the importance of combating impunity and restoring the constitutional state. Simultaneously, due to the nature of the conflict and its most important consequences, much attention focused on rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees and the victims of the genocide. The Netherlands furthermore gave high priority to macroeconomic support, in order to improve the conditions under which the new government could operate. In the wake of these priorities a number of other sectors were adopted, namely demobilization of the FAR and RPA soldiers and education. During the second half of 1997 a new component was added focusing on district-based integrated development. The latter component signalled a return to more structural aid towards Rwanda. Dutch development aid had completed a full circle, strongly reminiscent of early SNV engagement in Rwanda.

4.3.1 *Emergency Aid to the Refugees*

During the post-genocide refugee crises, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported a host of INGOs and NGOs. The INGOs concerned, such as *Médecins sans frontières* or the International Committee of the Red Cross, received allocations in order to be able to tackle the humanitarian crisis which had resulted from the genocide and the RPA's subsequent military victory. The prolonged assistance to the refugees, notably in Zaire (Goma and Bukavu), had stirred emotions inside as well as outside the organizations concerned. Gradually the INGOs were left to their own devices while the international community turned a blind eye to the presence of hard-line Hutus and the build-up of a neo-genocidal replica state in the camps. The debate about the possible separation of *génocidaires* and innocent civilians dragged on and was characterized by the absence of a notion of urgency, resulting in endless so-called technical discussions. In the end the situation in the camps became intolerable for

some INGOs, which subsequently decided to terminate their activities.⁶⁶ The remaining INGOs remained strictly within the narrow confines of their mandate, totally ignoring the political consequences of their actions. Some observers bluntly accused these INGOs of selfishness in the interest of institutional self-preservation. In retrospect, the ensuing crisis can partially be blamed on the selective blindness of the international emergency business.

Inside Rwanda numerous NGOs deployed activities in the wake of the 1994 crisis. The Dutch SNV gradually rebuilt its presence and eventually started to rehabilitate two regional programmes entitled PRADECS (*Programmes de réhabilitation et d'appui au développement communautaire*) in Gitarama and Cyangugu. These integrated regional programmes signalled a return to normalcy in the practice of Dutch engagement in Rwanda. The major obstacle for implementing these structural programmes stemmed from the fact that long-term funding could not be obtained through the emergency funding regime that had prevailed in Rwanda. On the local level, therefore, the shortcomings of Dutch aid policy clearly surfaced. Whereas the Dutch Embassy and Dutch NGOs were engaged in transforming emergency aid into a semblance of integrated coherent long-term projects, the emergency funding modalities imposed by the Ministry did not facilitate the development of such an approach.⁶⁷ As a result many NGOs conformed to the requirements stipulated in the funding regime by inserting emergency criteria into funding requests, thus contributing to the dissimulation of reality through 'cognitive scripting'. This led to the curious situation that most NGOs had been engaged in 'regular' integrated development projects after a brief period of emergency aid, whereas the Ministry still funded almost exclusively through emergency modalities. The practical field reality and the political reality in The Hague clearly were at variance.

4.3.2 *The United Nations Development Programme Trust Fund*

At the request of Minister Pronk a UNDP Trust Fund was created in March 1995. Pronk's first assessment had been that Rwanda was a collapsed state in which most institutions had stopped functioning while simultaneously facing a massive humanitarian crisis. The Dutch response was therefore to pledge a lump sum to the incumbent regime in order to facilitate a transition from post-genocidal chaos to the restoration of normalcy. The Trust Fund served this initial purpose well. At that time the Netherlands did not have a well-equipped local representation nor were there 'proxy' organizations available to take on the requirements of implementing a large-scale aid operation. The choice for a large UN specialized organization was therefore quite pragmatic at first. During 1995 and much of 1996 the UNDP and the UNHCR had rapidly deployed their organizational infrastructures inside Rwanda and gradually expanded operations from sheer emergency relief to more structural forms of assistance. The clear advantage of the UNDP as Trust Fund holder was the fact that all GOR requests, or requests from NGOs and INGOs working inside Rwanda, passed through the UNDP bureaucracy. Initially this procedure allowed external donors to benefit from a minimum of control on project proposal and spending. Yet complaints about the Trust Fund resurfaced regularly throughout

⁶⁶ Among them the Dutch branch of *Médecins sans frontières*.

⁶⁷ Interview of 13 August 1999 with local SNV staff member Mr Verhulst in Kigali; in Irina van der Sluys, 'Nederlands buitenland en ontwikkelingssamenwerkingsbeleid ten aanzien van Rwanda', annexe 10.

the entire period. Complaints focused on slow and bureaucratic procedures, the waste of funding, competition between the UNDP and the UNHCR and the lack of transparency regarding decision-making.

During the course of 1995 and 1996 serious competition had emerged between both sister organizations of the UN. In fact, the UNHCR expanded its mandate and started all types of rehabilitation activities, claiming that it had to do what others could not. The UNHCR had the capacity in the field, the other UN agencies did not. The refugee crisis furthermore provided an additional dimension, because time and again numbers of refugees would re-enter Rwanda. Simultaneously, the massive return of refugees at the end of 1996 gave a new impetus to the conflict and work for the emergency organizations. The wave of refugees provided new money for the UNHCR, which among others led to support of the controversial 'Imidugudu' initiative. The UNDP by contrast was seriously understaffed and gained substantially less funding, while desperately trying to maintain a critical dialogue with the GOR on crucial issues concerning resettlement and rehabilitation. The ensuing struggle for competencies between the UNHCR and UNDP suited the Rwandan authorities well, but it frustrated donor countries. As a result a Joint Reintegration Programming Unit was established in 1998 to supervise the transition from emergency activities (executed by the UNHCR) to rehabilitation and structural development (supervised by the UNDP). Unfortunately, by then most of the available funding had dried up and the UNDP was left with the legacy of UNHCR policies. The persistence of Minister Pronk to hold on to the Trust Fund construction can partly be attributed to his conviction that the UN and its constituent bodies should be reinforced by the individual member states. Nevertheless, the use of a multilateral channel also provides a security valve for the donor concerned. If things turn sour with a government the donor can always put the blame on the executing agency. Even though the Netherlands had gained a reputation of firmly supporting the GOR, Minister Pronk kept up a rear guard. His statement of 6 November 1996 to the Foreign Affairs Committee testifies to that effect: 'The Dutch government has never given money to the Rwandan government either directly or indirectly'.⁶⁸ Even Dutch support was largely covered behind multilateral screens.

4.3.3 *Rehabilitation of the Justice Sector*

After Dutch aid had resumed and the emergency phase had gradually faded into the background, priorities emerged. As has been stated above, the Minister for Development Cooperation developed a keen interest in the *rehabilitation of the justice sector* in Rwanda. In practice a number of different activities were engaged upon. Throughout this period the Netherlands procured institutional support to the Rwandan Ministry of Justice by providing training and by funding part of the civil servants' salaries to be able to maintain its capacity and to compete effectively with more profitable economic sectors. An important project concerned reinforcing the rural police to enable the GOR to enforce law and order and to combat impunity. The penitentiary sector also benefited from Dutch support.

⁶⁸ Foreign Affairs Archives no. DDI/DCH/2019/00514.

In the wake of the genocide scores of suspects had been incarcerated in Rwandan prisons and rural detention facilities under very poor conditions. Poor sanitary facilities and overcrowding had led to the spread of diseases and many prisoners died in the course of the first two years of detention. The Netherlands was among the few donors to engage consistently in this very sensitive area. Minister Pronk had repeatedly urged the Rwandan authorities to address the issue of detainees. In early 1996 he complained about the apparent lack of political will to bring the genocide suspects to justice. In the course of 1997 a gradual improvement led to the administration of justice to some 300 detainees, whereas some 4,000 people had been relieved of custody on humanitarian grounds. Meanwhile, the effects of these changes were annulled by the influx of new suspects, arrested in the wake of the massive return of refugees from October 1996 onwards. The overburdened prisons were not able to absorb the ever-growing population of detainees; the total prison population at the end of 1997 was estimated at some 130,000. Many donors heavily criticized the GOR for the slow pace of jurisdiction, the fact that many detainees were held without files or that the procedure of verifying accusations was deliberately obfuscated and, finally, the poor conditions of detention. Moreover, the Netherlands was the only donor to procure funding for the construction of new prisons in order to alleviate pressure on the existing infrastructure and to contribute to improving the living conditions of detainees. During 1997 the Netherlands and Rwanda negotiated the expansion of detainee capacity. The crucial issue was the GOR's promise not to use the expansion to incarcerate more prisoners instead of working on ways to diminish their numbers and to speed up procedures to classify criminals according to their responsibilities and severity of crimes committed. An early effort to assist the GOR to sort out the 'small-time' *génocidaires* as opposed to the high-ranking responsible *génocidaires* proved a complete failure. In November 1995 Minister Pronk agreed to the funding of the so-called *commissions de triage* set up in the Rwandan Justice Department to determine whether incarcerated persons should be released or remain in custody on alleged responsibility for genocidal crimes. In total a sum of \$2 million was disbursed to facilitate these commissions to operate. In August 1996 a confidential message from the Dutch Embassy mentioned the inefficiency of the commissions. In fact, an evaluation reporting on the project concluded that its major accomplishment 'probably will limit itself to a number of cars and motor bikes which have been bought to enable members of the commissions to circulate'.⁶⁹ Rwandan officials also favoured the integration of the remains of the project in the justice sector and to stop the project.

An agreement on building a new prison was finally concluded in 1998 but the choice of location and bureaucratic obstacles hindered the effective execution for some time. During the course of 1998 the number of prisoners remained stable and a limited number of accused were even liberated. The GOR announced the liberation of about 10,000 so-called *sans dossiers* in order to diminish the number of prisoners. Simultaneously, about 7,000 people had pleaded guilty in exchange for a reduced penalty.⁷⁰ The justice procedure itself however stagnated, the target of judging 5,000 accused during 1998 had proven to be overambitious. However, during 1998 a number of magistrates had been fired and the jurisdiction became dominated by Tutsi magistrates. The likelihood of an independent jurisdiction consequently seemed to have been jeopardized. Meanwhile, the GOR had initiated a discussion to render justice of minor cases through the traditional court system 'gacaca'.

⁶⁹ Foreign Affairs Archives, kigi043/12224.

⁷⁰ Dutch Embassy in Kigali's Annual Report for 1998, section 33.

The Netherlands had also supported the equipment and facilitated the functioning of the *Police Communale* (rural police) to promote security in the countryside and to establish law and order. A substantial aid programme was executed in the first years after the genocide. Dutch funding enabled recruitment, equipment and housing for a substantial number of *gendarmes*. The importance of this intervention lies in the fact that it clearly demonstrated direct Dutch involvement at the explicit request of the GOR in order to come to grips with the internal security setting. The programme aimed to improve stability, to combat impunity and to reinstate the confidence of the general public in the police and was conflict preventive in nature. Initially, the Dutch also provided support to the *Gendarmerie Nationale* in order to improve the human resource capacity of this paramilitary organization. The Netherlands aimed to restore law and order as there were no civil police services functioning at that moment. In August 1995 a contribution of US\$ 650,000 was supplied to invest in capacity-building at the national level. The project aimed at training *gendarmes* in civil police tasks in view of the prevailing anarchy. Dutch support to the training centre was criticized by outsiders, because the Netherlands had obviously supported the military with development assistance funds. Dutch support for both the *Gendarmerie Nationale* and the *Police Communale* became politically sensitive interventions.

The UNDP 'Communal Police Programme' aimed to reconstruct the Rwandan civil police force. Under the heading of Conflict Prevention and Mediation, the objective was to rebuild community police forces in order to restore law and order, as well as promoting peaceful co-existence between resident Rwandans and returnees from the refugee camps outside Rwanda. The training programme aimed at educating police forces in regular police tasks as well as sensitizing future policemen on human rights issues. During Phase I of the project a training centre had been established at Gishali and 750 policemen had been trained between November 1995 and March 1996. The Dutch contribution was US\$400,000 out of a total of US\$450,000. During Phase II an additional contingent of 750 policemen were trained. As these men had been commissioned to the various communes of Rwanda, the absence of adequate housing became a bottleneck for the effective deployment of the trainees. With Dutch cost-sharing of \$2.3 million (nearly 90 per cent of the total budget), 131 housing facilities were to be constructed in 66 communes (out of a total of 154). Phase III (\$3.5 million) comprised training another 750 policemen and completing the building programme. Despite some setbacks in the north-west of Rwanda due to the insecurity and subsequent destruction of some of the sites, the building programme had been completed in 50 communes and was under way in the remaining 16. Phase III aimed to construct Communal Police housing in another 65 communes. Lt.-Col. Cees de Rover stated in an evaluation at the end of 1995: 'the Communal Police cannot draw upon any experienced personnel. The professional requirements attached to command responsibilities are neither recognized nor catered for within the current levels of training at Gishali.'⁷¹ De Rover concluded 'in light of current levels of training available to them, it is highly improbable that Communal Police officers will be able to function at an acceptable level within their respective communes'.

⁷¹ Foreign Affairs Archives no. DDI/DMP RW009801.

The support of the *Police Communale* constituted a highly risky and uncertain investment for Dutch development cooperation inside Rwanda. Finally, when the overriding security concerns for the GOR diminished slightly due to the effective counter-insurgency campaign in the north-west of Rwanda, a law was formulated to integrate the *Gendarmerie Nationale* in the RPA. This put a stop to the militarization of society. The proposed law was voted through the Rwandan Parliament during the course of 1999 and the empowerment of the *Police Communale* had gained momentum. Hitherto, the *Gendarmerie Nationale* had been the most visible police force perceived as a rather arbitrary power equipped with an unclear mandate and too much authority, but as of 1999 the *Police Communale* was to become solely responsible for the maintenance of law and order at the communal level without interference of paramilitary forces such as the *Gendarmerie Nationale*. Policemen working and living among the population inspired much more confidence against abuse of power, impunity and injustice. Nevertheless, the investment of the Netherlands in this field proved sustainable only when conditions inside Rwanda were favourable to institutional change in the security sector.

4.3.4 *Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Refugees*

The *rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees* also received priority within the Dutch programme for Rwanda. The Netherlands had initiated and supported many separate projects and organizations in this field. The UNDP Trust Fund had received additional funds (US\$10 million) in response to the massive return of refugees at the end of 1996. The Dutch government furthermore funded numerous initiatives by NGOs, the SNV, Memisa, Dutch Co-financing Development NGO (Novib) and ZOA to name a few. In fact, during the course of 1997 it became clear that Dutch interventions were rather numerous and coordination had become difficult.

The Rwandan government's 'villagization' policy was a response to the enormous need for shelter and housing for the returning refugees. The issue of the 'Imidugudu' villages had raised doubts among the donor community about the GOR's true intentions. Whereas the government claimed that clustering new houses in villages along public roads mainly served the purpose of efficiency (service provision), opponents stressed the hidden security argument. Clustering people would facilitate control and protection against terrorist attacks. Additionally, critics stressed that such policies would go against the traditional building strategy of peasants who used to build their houses close to the fields, resulting in a pattern of scattered housing. Dutch development favoured an approach in which these projects focused on people's participation within the context of an integrated rural development strategy based on the arable land available, the ecology of the hilly countryside, land rights and traditional livelihood strategies of population groups. By the end of 1998 many large-scale 'Imidugudu' projects had only partly been completed and entire new villages remained vacant. The Netherlands, meanwhile, had channelled aid through Dutch NGOs or by earmarking funds through the Trust Fund construction, which allowed the Dutch to control spending more closely. The SNV and ZOA, for example, had integrated a housing component into existing programmes, reinforcing the integrated and structural nature of the interventions. The ZOA Nyamata programme illustrates the manner in which Dutch development aid has been used. ZOA initially engaged in emergency assistance to the Bugesera district, followed by a more focused approach directed towards the integration of refugees. This approach was prolonged by necessity until mid-1997, in order to facilitate installing an estimated

30,000 returnees in this district only. The housing component of the project centred on popular participation and sustainability, by initiating small-scale activities inside existing settlements. The ZOA approach exemplified the general NGO attitude. The NGOs had always refused to participate in large-scale government housing programmes. From 1997 onwards an integrated approach was deployed covering health, water provision, social rehabilitation and the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a result an entire area benefited from a range of activities that mutually reinforced each other and have been evaluated positively.⁷² Collaboration with local authorities has improved notably and has generated a more flexible and dynamic attitude with regard to such integrated and highly complex development projects. However, although a broad multisectoral approach seems promising for the effective rehabilitation of local communities and government structures and services, much more needs to be done to arrive at a functional integration of the various programmes. Agriculture and health, although officially not recipient sectors for Dutch support, were perceived as indispensable additional areas of intervention and continued to figure in most integrated development projects implemented with Dutch support⁷³ in Rwanda.

In general the GOR performed well with regard to the massive influx of refugees at the end of 1996 and during the course of 1997. In total an estimated number of 1.2 million refugees have been resettled, regardless of numerous cases of power abuse, fraud and errors of fund allocation⁷⁴ by the GOR.

4.3.5 *Macroeconomic Support*

Another important sector has been the *macroeconomic support* for Rwanda. Minister Pronk was the first to pledge financial contributions in order to facilitate debt relief for the GOR. On an *ad hoc* basis the Netherlands recurrently disbursed approximately US\$3.5 million a year for debt relief. In October 1997 Pronk pledged an amount of \$ 25 million in an effort to stimulate a more structural approach towards Rwandan macroeconomic problems. The total external debt was estimated at \$ 1.2 billion in 1998.⁷⁵ It was hoped that this initiative would stimulate other donors to participate. Rwanda could thus be enabled to qualify within three years for the status of Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC). Such a status gives low-income countries access more easily to so-called soft loans and credit facilities, in turn enabling a more stable macroeconomic policy to materialize. The Netherlands favoured the creation of a Trust Fund for multilateral debt relief but the RPA's intervention in the Kivu area urged some members of the donor community away. Only the UK and Sweden followed the Dutch example in alleviating Rwandan debts. Additionally, the lack of budget transparency fuelled allegations about aid fungibility. The donor community feared that macroeconomic support would somehow be employed by the GOR to finance its intervention in neighbouring DRC. The Stockholm conference

⁷² Dutch Embassy in Kigali's Annual Report for 1998, section 63.

⁷³ Internship report by Irina van der Sluijs, 'Rwanda Case Study', Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999, p. 39.

⁷⁴ Dutch Embassy in Kigali's Interim Annual Report (July to December) 1997, section 20.

⁷⁵ CIA, *World Factbook 1999*, section on economy.

held in July 1998 nevertheless resulted in partial support for the GOR. Both Sweden and the UK honoured their pledges. In the near future donor attitudes would depend on Rwanda's willingness to follow a process of peaceful negotiations with the contending parties embroiled in the DRC crisis.

4.3.6 Demobilization

In November 1997 the Netherlands pledged \$2 million for the implementation of the first stages of a *demobilization* programme in Rwanda. In the initial programme proposal the GOR promised to demobilize 40,000 ex-FAR and 17,500 ex-RPF soldiers in order to create a more efficient army. Meanwhile, the GOR were aware that most ex-FAR military were a security hazard as long as they did not receive means to rebuild their lives or to reintegrate into civil life. Numerous incidents had been reported of soldiers using violence to obtain goods and services or acts of banditry. Although other groups in Rwandan society were equally entitled to support in order to rebuild their lives, the ex-soldiers formed a nuisance factor that could not be ignored. The proposed programme extended over a period of three years and included direct measures to enable reintegration including registration and coordination of the process as well as specific facilities for economic and social reintegration. These latter components focused on schooling and vocational training as well as setting up micro-businesses and promoting support for specific target groups such as handicapped persons and child soldiers. The Netherlands adopted a rather prudent approach in which reintegration was earmarked for immediate support, whereas more complex social and economic programmes were to be monitored more closely.

In 1999 an evaluation of the programme⁷⁶ concluded that the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) had demobilized a total of 11,053 soldiers. Some 2,364 ex-child soldiers were demobilized in 1995 and sent to school. Another 5,050 were demobilized in September 1997 and finally 3,639 soldiers followed in December 1998. The first group of demobilized soldiers contained a substantial amount of children and elderly (some 1,500) as well as a great number of ill-suited recruits. The first results of the entire demobilization programme revealed its highly ambiguous character. The donor community accused the GOR of using the programme to get rid of disabled, elderly or otherwise unsuitable soldiers while meanwhile recruiting others to beef up the RPA's fighting capacity. The project therefore merely served to pay for the social cost of army reorganization in Rwanda. Meanwhile, in view of the insecurity in north-west Rwanda the RPA decided to recruit some 10,000 ex-FAR into its ranks in order to change the ethnic balance of the RPA and to enlarge the RPA's legitimacy. This change of strategy altered the initial objectives of the demobilization programme since a substantially lower number of soldiers would eventually be eligible for demobilization. Furthermore, involvement in the DRC in August 1998 hampered the execution of the demobilization programme and reduced donor support for the programme. The third wave of demobilization coincided to some extent with the successful pacification of the north-west. The programme has therefore had a limited impact in its initial stages but has nonetheless successfully helped a number of children and some ex-FAR to reintegrate. Nevertheless, in view of the total

⁷⁶ Foreign Affairs Archives no. DDI/DCH rw015701.

number of ex-FAR soldiers (estimated at some 50,000 in its heyday) and the RPF (at some 25,000), a rather marginal rate of demobilization has been accomplished. The fate of most ex-FAR remains unclear as numerous soldiers fled Rwanda after the RPF takeover and a substantial number were integrated into the RPA. In fact a new survey should trace real numbers of ex-FAR still to be demobilized and subsequently look at the present size of the RPA. Initially the GOR had pledged to demobilize all but 20,000 troops, but the fundamental problem, however, remains that it is extremely hard to convince critical donors of the usefulness of a demobilization programme if the GOR simultaneously continues to recruit new soldiers for the RPA.

The Netherlands had not disbursed additional funding after the initial tranche at the end of 1997 because at the time when a second contribution was under consideration the RPA became involved in what is referred to as the second rebellion in the DRC.

4.4 Conclusions regarding Dutch Policies and Interventions

The Rwandan genocide was ultimately the result of a power struggle between different Hutu elite groups inside Rwanda, in which the hard-line north-western elite was victorious. The ensuing battle with the RPF resulted in the ousting of the genocidal regime, but in the aftermath of the genocide security and the struggle for regime survival remained by far the most relevant policy objective of the incumbent RPF regime. Therefore, all external meddling with the Rwandan people, polity and society has to be judged first and foremost from the perspective of the overriding security constraints of a regime engaged in a struggle for military and hence political survival. In this regard external powers can be divided into roughly two groups: one group of countries with vested political and economic interest in the outcome of the power struggle in Rwanda, regardless of the side chosen; and another group of relatively neutral donors. The Netherlands can be categorized as a neutral donor, as it was able and willing to play an important role in the realm of rehabilitation and development assistance. The Netherlands was rightly perceived as a relatively speaking innocent donor which had not been implied in open support to the former Hutu regimes and hence could not be blamed for responsibility concerning the genocide.

Dutch involvement in Rwanda is the direct result of the personal engagement of the former Minister for Development Cooperation Jan Pronk. During his term he developed a political analysis of the role of development cooperation in countries in conflict. Minister Pronk was very keen on playing a mediating role concerning countries engaged in conflict or confronted with post-war rehabilitation as he strongly believed that such a mandate was the logical and moral obligation of a rich Western country facing the post-Cold War proliferation of internal conflicts.

Minister Pronk was the only high-ranking official from an OECD country to visit Rwanda during the genocide. Although he was able to establish a fairly complete picture of the severity of the events he did not issue clear political signals to the interim government of Rwanda, but instead limited his mission to an assessment of humanitarian needs for the affected population. On the international level Pronk tried to convince other donors to support the timely dispatch of a renewed UNAMIR contingent to save as many civilians as possible from the onslaught at the hands of extremists. Although

concerted diplomatic efforts strongly supported by Minister Pronk convinced the Security Council to approve UNAMIR II, the interminable discussions between various potential supporters about logistical arrangements compromised its potential impact from the start. None of the important actors that could have intervened militarily were willing to dispatch troops and equipment promptly. The majority of the international community simply stood passively by and proved impotent to intervene effectively. No direct intervention by individual states was therefore executed. The Netherlands, being a small state, did not deviate from this general pattern of donor behaviour and did not undertake any direct military effort to intervene during the genocide.

The Netherlands responded to the refugee crisis in neighbouring Zaire and Tanzania where many Hutus had gathered. The sheer magnitude of human suffering overwhelmed the international community and attention understandably initially focused on efforts to provide shelter and food relief. Minister Pronk was keenly aware of the fact that the international community had lost its credibility and consequently was condemned to procuring humanitarian relief only. The international response to the refugee crisis resulted in the single largest operation of its kind. However, failure to address the political dimension of the refugee crisis enabled the hard-line Hutus to rebuild their military strength inside the camps. Weapons were flown in to supply the ex-FAR and militia, with the covert complicity of France and General Mobutu of Zaire. The INGOs working in the camps did nothing to stop this development and continued unabated to provide food, shelter and medicine to all refugees. The failure to address the political crisis finally resulted in the direct intervention of the RPA, under cover of the AFDL front organization. The responsibility for this enlargement of the Rwandan crisis to take on regional, almost continental, dimensions partly lies with the international community. Policy circles in the Netherlands engaged in a discussion on the feasibility of separating *génocidaires* and civilians inside the camps, concluding that deprivation of aid would surely prove to be an ineffective instrument as the extremist leadership had already established alternative income strategies. The ensuing recreation of a genocidal regime in the camps was the second major error of judgement made by the international community. The Dutch government did not alter its policies concerning the refugee crisis and therefore also facilitated the realization of a worst-case scenario, even though it was aware of the problems on the ground.

On the political level the impact of Dutch interventions has been marginal throughout the Rwandan crisis. The Rwandan authorities have been able to ensure the Netherlands' continuing support almost constantly, even when the GOR was clearly implied in controversial political and military campaigns. The position of the Netherlands as a neutral third party that combined a critical attitude with the personal sympathy and a level of understanding by Minister Pronk for the ambivalent actions of a besieged regime, to a large extent account for this lenient attitude. Pronk's notion of 'buying a place at the table', implying giving some financial support in order to become a recognized political actor, did not automatically imply that political weight and influence were bestowed upon the Netherlands by the contending parties. The Netherlands therefore in the end had very little political leverage on the GOR, even though it had become one of the major external donors. The Dutch initiated diplomatic interventions on only two occasions, namely as a reaction to the Kibeho incident and in protesting against support to the second rebellion in the RDC in August 1998. These interventions, however, hardly yielded any effects as the GOR continued to execute its policies. The GOR over time did not as hoped become more inclusive, displaying a high-handed arrogant attitude that resulted in loss of

goodwill. In fact, the GOR was unwilling and unable to respond to external political pressure because the internal and regional security settings were very unstable and the balance for regime survival rather precarious. In this sense the Netherlands faced the same obstacles as all other donors.

Setting the example for other donors and pioneering aid to specific areas of intervention therefore constitute the Netherlands' most important intervention with regard to the post-genocide epoch in contemporary Rwandan history. The Netherlands proved to be a valuable ally, because it openly urged other donors to honour pledges engaged upon. During the first Round Table Conference held in Geneva Minister Pronk told other donors to set aside their distrust and to commit support to the GOR. This pioneering role has probably contributed to solidifying the international legitimacy of the new regime in Kigali.

In the realm of financial support in the initial emergency situation and with regard to development assistance in general, the overall conclusion is warranted that the Netherlands generously provided such assistance from the early days of the crisis until the present. Probably the most important contribution (but difficult to quantify) to Rwanda was the massive emergency and reconstruction aid without any political preconditions that were pledged during Minister Pronk's first mission to the region. Secondly, the initiative to launch the UNDP Trust Fund construction boosted international recognition towards the new regime. The initial reaction of the Netherlands to the unfolding Rwandan crisis was to commit a large sum of money to the new government in order to face the consequences of the war and the genocide. Minister Pronk rightly assessed that if the Dutch government would not help the incumbent RPF regime to rebuild the Rwandan state it would have collapsed with all the consequences such anarchy would entail. Minister Pronk therefore facilitated the incumbent regime to capture effective control of the state and its institutions. Failing to deliver timely aid would almost certainly have led to further anarchy, continuing bloodshed and impunity.

The Dutch-initiated Trust Fund initially served its purpose since adequate logistics and coordination could be organized on short notice. The UNDP Trust Fund started receiving funds from donors that had hitherto been rather hesitant, such as Japan. The Trust Fund served as a more or less neutral aid-rallying point, while simultaneously fending off individual responsibility for actions or projects funded through this channel.

As time went by the UNDP's weaknesses began to offset some of the initial advantages. The bureaucratic nature of its procedures, the lack of transparency partly as a result of donor infighting over decision-making and the competition with its sister organization, the UNHCR, created an atmosphere of distrust and frustration between the GOR, individual donor countries and the UNDP itself. The nature of the conflict's dynamics time and again interfered with a regular rehabilitation process. The international community continuously displayed distrust towards the GOR, a process fuelled by news about and alleged involvement of the RPA in human rights abuses.

With hindsight the gradual decline of the UNDP as a pivotal player for the distribution of Dutch aid coincides to some extent with the growth of the Dutch Embassy in Kigali. At first the lack of local Dutch capacity had been among the very reasons for favouring the UNDP construction, but with the expansion of the Embassy more expertise became available to monitor the spending of Dutch aid.

Moreover, doubts about UNDP's capacity to implement and monitor projects properly had surfaced in the international community in Kigali. The Embassy hence became more prominent as an intermediary between the GOR and the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation. Meanwhile, the DCH Directorate, as the principal budget holder, was faced with structural problems as the new Conflict Prevention Unit had to design new policies while simultaneously implementing them. Consequently, decisions about the allocation of aid mostly resulted from the initiatives of Minister Pronk personally and dialogue with the local Embassy or other executing agencies. The intermediary level between the Minister and the field office had been reduced in the case of Rwanda, implying that the Minister personally handled all major aspects of the relationship. Minister Pronk determined the priority sectors eligible for Dutch aid and even discussed details for implementation during his frequent visits to the region. Following his instructions a number of 'windows' materialized, of which rehabilitation of the justice sector and reintegration of refugees were the most important. In this regard the Netherlands has been able to direct a certain number of developments. The continuous debate between the GOR and Minister Pronk about many different aspects of the post-war rehabilitation process, the intimate knowledge of internal developments inside Rwanda and the constructive attitude of the Dutch have contributed to maintaining a lenient attitude towards the GOR.

Within the field of development cooperation, the Netherlands has been active in quite a substantial number of areas. Overlooking all the different initiatives, sectors and regions in which Dutch aid has been disbursed, one can only conclude that there has been a proliferation of projects within the framework of a rather consistent Dutch post-war Rwanda policy, in which support to the justice sector and the security sector figured prominently. The justice sector received substantial Dutch aid, on the institutional level as well as on the operational level. With hindsight it can be concluded that the support to the justice sector has not yielded the results aimed at because, as some observers stated, 'the time was not ripe for a process of genuine reconciliation by administering justice to the genocide suspects in fair trials'.⁷⁷ Consequently, the training of lawyers, magistrates, and support to the so-called *commissions de triage* failed to produce even modest levels of output; very few people were convicted or acquitted. Dutch support to the *Gendarmerie Nationale* in view of the absence of normal police in the immediate post-genocide period was highly politicized and criticized. Simultaneously, the training and housing of the *Police Communale* was an equally sensitive issue and did not produce the desired end to the militarization of Rwandan society. Eventually, when internal security again improved markedly at the end of 1998, a law was passed through the Rwandan Parliament that formally ended the rather broad mandate of the *Gendarmerie Nationale*, which had hitherto superseded the *Police Communale* in matters of internal and even local security. Dutch investment in these services became productive and justified only when the internal security situation became less tense. This conclusion also applies to the more diverse and integrated regional development programmes executed by Dutch NGOs in collaboration with their Rwandan counterparts. The Nyamata (ZOA) programme illustrates this development clearly, as well as the so-called *Programmes de réhabilitation et d'appui au développement communale* (PRADEC) executed by the SNV. Therefore, the effectiveness of Dutch development aid investments was rather limited.

⁷⁷ Personal communication to the author by several senior civil servants of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

After the emergency needs had been addressed, the Dutch Embassy and local executing agencies were confronted with the important issue of rehabilitating Rwanda. Rwanda had been completely devastated by the genocide, the internal war and subsequent insurgencies and counter attacks of the RPA. Immediately after the war in 1994, there was no local administration, no civilian police, and no government presence available in an organized manner, and the health and educational infrastructure had almost ceased to exist. Precisely for this reason, an integrated development approach at the local level forced itself upon the individual executing agencies. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs sanctioned the emerging reality of such approaches as the most realistic and sensible course of action. From the end of 1996 onwards the major discussion focused on the necessity to formalize the implicit policy change from emergency aid to a more structural form of aid. The Dutch Embassy in Kigali favoured a gradual transformation to other funding modalities for Rwanda, in fact facilitating the emergence of a more structural relationship between the Netherlands and Rwanda. As can be inferred from the chronology of Dutch interventions, the fact that most of the funding came from DCH, funded through the emergency aid modality, made it difficult for the Dutch Embassy in Kigali to develop long-term structural programmes. This issue repeatedly resurfaced in the discussions between Minister Pronk and the staff in Kigali. The choice of the emergency funding modality facilitated and enhanced direct political control by the Minister himself. This situation persisted throughout the 'Pronk' period, but blocked the eventual transition from emergency aid to a more stable structural relationship with Rwanda. Such transitions had become the norm in the practice of development assistance given to countries in conflict, but Rwanda somehow remained 'in limbo'. For most of the professionals engaged in the practice of implementing projects and distributing funds, such a structural relationship already existed on the ground. Frustrations about the inadequacy of the Trust Fund detour of Dutch funds infuriated many local Dutch NGO representatives. Nevertheless, Minister Pronk did not give in to this pressure. With hindsight it seems that the Minister was stuck between mounting criticism inside the Netherlands on the actions and performance of the Kigali regime and the pragmatic and indulgent attitude of many development actors inside Rwanda. He therefore maintained support for the 'neutral' UNDP while simultaneously restricting its autonomy through the windows' approach. Pronk had manoeuvred well politically because he steered clear of trouble, but unfortunately it resulted in the present stalemate concerning the future status of Rwanda as an aid recipient. Depending on one's point of view, the present Rwandan government performs as well as or as badly as many other sub-Saharan countries, and in that sense has become a coincidental test case for the internal debate regarding the new policy of good governance as a prerequisite for Dutch development aid.

As of early 1999 a more stable security setting inside Rwanda materialized and the GOR could also start implementing its rehabilitation programme in the north-west. The GOR was furthermore forced to consider normalizing its internal political situation as the external threat had ceased to exist. Hence, the arguments of the donor community to initiate democratization and to allow the opposition to participate in the political process gained momentum, and as a result a genuine debate about development priorities and transparency of government policies can no longer be postponed by the incumbent regime in Kigali. The Lusaka cease-fire agreement has been used by the international donor community to urge Rwanda to come to terms with its neighbours, and to aim at a negotiated settlement.

Although in the recent past, time and again, attempts were made to entertain a critical dialogue with the GOR, there was little leverage and the GOR at the end of the day drew its own conclusions. Minister Pronk's policy of benefit of the doubt had more or less marginalized Dutch leverage in advance simply because in his view there was no alternative available. In the regional context there was no regional security mechanism available, the OAU as well as the UN had proven to be either unwilling or unable to intervene when it mattered, and the incumbent RPF was the only party around with sense and direction to tackle the aftermath of the genocidal disaster. Although the Dutch support was partly dissimulated behind multilateral screens, their continuing support can be viewed as outspoken political support for the RPF regime and has contributed to the provision of an enabling environment for the Tutsi-dominated political regime in power. The Netherlands should consequently consider a more critical long-term relationship as it is perhaps partly responsible for the creation and survival of the incumbent regime in Kigali. In the Rwandan case, viable and easy donor exit options are few and far between.

5 Conclusions and Policy Considerations

The Netherlands did not intervene on the highest policy level regarding the genocide in Rwanda, simply because as it is a relatively small state with limited military capacity it cannot aspire to play such a role. Furthermore, the Netherlands did not have an Africa policy at the time of the Rwandan drama that could have been useful in helping to formulate an adequate policy response to such events. The Netherlands hence did not possess the institutional capacity or the political ambition to design and implement a political response to the Rwandan tragedy. Consequently, in the absence of a clear policy design no coherent response could be expected at the highest levels of the Dutch Foreign Affairs bureaucracy.

In this political vacuum the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation could more or less implement and sanction his own ideas. Moreover, sub-Saharan Africa had always been of rather peripheral interest to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and had been 'left' to the Development Cooperation sector. During this period new ideas about conflict prevention and post-war rehabilitation were widely circulating in Western political and scientific circles, leading to a proliferation of new initiatives and new actors. In this setting Minister Pronk tried to reshape existing instruments such as emergency aid and development aid to improve post-war rehabilitation in countries that had experienced internal conflicts, notably in sub-Saharan Africa.

During the post-genocide period the Netherlands became one of Rwanda's major external aid donors. Through the concept of conflict prevention the Netherlands' priorities focused by and large on two major dimensions of the post-war rehabilitation process: the justice and security dimension; and the rehabilitation and reintegration of refugees. As can be inferred from the broad overview presented in this report, in the short term the effectiveness of Dutch investments and projects in these fields was determined to a large extent by the GOR's perception of the internal and external security settings. The policy objectives motivating Dutch interventions in these sectors must, however, be related to the desire to create an enabling environment in which the underlying causes of conflict, culminating in the genocide, can be addressed adequately and hopefully neutralized. Viewed from such an angle it is still quite premature to judge the full impact of Dutch engagement in the various sectors mentioned.

The Netherlands' choice to support the incumbent RPF regime in Rwanda, albeit under the guise of the UNDP Trust Fund construction, has helped to legitimize the regime in power and can be seen as political support. The Tutsi-led regime represented a more or less viable counterpart in the absence of alternative actors. This situation has persisted until the present because the opposition inside Rwanda remains embryonic and internally divided. The Netherlands has given the 'benefit of the doubt' to the present regime, but no political leverage has materialized throughout the post-genocidal period. In the end the Netherlands has been reluctant to use development aid as an instrument to command compliance regarding specific political concessions.

Dutch policies towards Rwanda were never timely, but were reactive in nature. Despite Minister Pronk's efforts to promote direct multilateral interventions in the domain of 'high politics', no choices were made because the Netherlands copied the general donor attitude. On the level of development aid, the Netherlands implicitly supported the new regime, as well as playing an innovative and leading role. The Netherlands continued this support throughout the post-genocidal period despite the fact that as time wore on the new regime developed a rather high-handed attitude and initiated debatable military and political activities. In summary, there seems to be a lack of awareness of the impact of such implicit policy choices, let alone a set of criteria by which the desirability of such support can be measured.

The fundamental question remains the same: does the Netherlands possess the political ambition to develop policy guidelines for possible interventions in sub-Saharan Africa, and if so, which instruments can be used most effectively and promptly? The Rwanda case clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of some of the instruments applied, notably macroeconomic support and integrated regional programmes for the reintegration of refugees. However, in the case of Rwanda there is no such thing as being a 'neutral' donor and the Netherlands should recognize its responsibility regarding the current political situation. The essential question is therefore whether the Netherlands wishes to be associated with the current regime and only be instrumental in the execution of some of its policies, or give meaning and content to the notion of a 'critical dialogue' in order possibly to attain the objective of long-term conflict prevention.

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