

# SURVIVAL

AGAINST THE ODDS

a book of  
**testimonies**  
from **survivors**  
of the **Rwandan**  
**genocide**



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A Book of Testimonies from Survivors  
of the Rwandan Genocide



Produced by Survivors Fund (SURF) with generous  
assistance from The Funding Network.

# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b> by Mary Kayitesi Blewitt	1	<b>THE TESTIMONY OF ALINE</b>	30
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> by Lindsey Hilsum	4	<b>THE TESTIMONY OF FERIDINA</b>	34
<b>BACKGROUND</b> by Mary Kayitesi Blewitt and David Russell	6	<b>THE TESTIMONY OF GAUDENCE</b>	38
<b>ABANDONED BY THE WORLD</b> by Katharine Quarmby and Mary Kayitesi Blewitt	8	<b>THE TESTIMONY OF CLARE</b>	44
<b>REMEMBERING THE SURVIVORS</b> messages edited by David Russell and Anne McFerran	16	<b>MARY'S STORY</b>	48
<b>PERSONAL STORIES:</b>		<b>AFTERWORD: LETTERS OF THANKS FROM SURVIVORS</b>	52
<b>SURVIVAL AGAINST THE ODDS</b>	19	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	58
<b>THE TESTIMONY OF VALENTINA</b>	20	<b>CHRONOLOGY OF THE GENOCIDE</b>	64
<b>THE TESTIMONY OF DAPHROSA</b>	24	<b>ABOUT SURVIVORS FUND</b>	68

## A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is dedicated to Clare Alphonsina and to all 'Clares' who survived the horrific experiences of the Rwandan genocide, but who subsequently died from its legacy. Many women like her are racing against time to tell their stories as a historical record. They hope to educate the world about the dangers of crimes against humanity in the belief that the world will not be indifferent to the suffering of humankind.

This book is divided into sections, all of which shed light on the Rwandan genocide in a slightly different manner, although they often overlap in topic or specific content. This intentional cross-over was done in order to ensure that readers appreciate the full impact and magnitude of the genocide, the horrendous effect it had on the lives of the victims and the survivors, and the immediate call to aid the remaining survivors.

The general background provides factual information about the genocide. The section entitled *Abandoned by the World* is a living history of the genocide, relating the factual occurrences of 1994 with the actual stories of those who survived. *Remembering the Survivors* highlights the impact of a SURF event in Trafalgar Square where women from the UK read aloud the testimonies of women survivors of the genocide.

The *Testimonies of Valentina, Daphrosa, Aline, Feridina, Gaudence* and *Clare* are the stories of the survivors themselves. The words are their own, shared with the world to make sure the truth of the genocide is recorded in history. Their testimonies are of great importance to the survivors. We hope we have done them justice in this book.

# FOREWORD

BY MARY KAYITESI BLEWITT

**F**or many survivors in Rwanda today, there is no life after genocide. Many have lost their extended families, the backbone to African society's existence. Many more, especially those women raped and those children orphaned, continue to lead a uniquely troubled existence. Many feel their survival is its own form of torture. They are desperately impoverished, commonly infected with HIV/AIDS and often responsible for large families. So the positive impact of counselling and medical support, income-generating initiatives, vocational training, education and house-building programmes is being offset by the legacy of genocide: in particular untimely and unnecessary deaths from HIV/AIDS.

Poverty is a major constraint upon the ability of survivors to rebuild their shattered lives after genocide. They share a collective predicament – they feel as if they are drowning in crisis after crisis, none of which can be easily solved. But unless they can establish some economic security, survivors will remain utterly dependent upon government or charitable aid for every aspect of their lives. Not only does this destroy their confidence and self-esteem on a day-to-day level, it also creates profound insecurity.

Another common problem faced by the survivors is trauma. Thousands of traumatised people are supported by only a handful of trained counsellors. Women of all ages were vulnerable to rape; the youngest victim we know of was just six-years old in

1994 and the oldest was 71. Some women were pregnant at the time of the rapes and others became pregnant as a result of them.

There is also a chronic shortage of adequate housing for survivors. Either they do not have homes of their own, or their houses were destroyed during the genocide. They need to know that their children, most of whom have no relatives, or a few impoverished ones, will not be homeless after they are no longer there for them.

The overwhelming preoccupation for both widows and orphan-headed households is the struggle to provide for their children's everyday needs. Some also have to contend with children who require special care as a result of the trauma they endured during the genocide. Not only did these youngsters witness extreme instances of violence being carried out on close relatives and people all around them, but some had to watch as their mothers were raped. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of social networks in sustaining individuals in countries like Rwanda, where state provision for health and social services is limited and employment and housing are scarce.

Those who are most isolated are the women who have borne children as a result of being raped: their families reject both them and their children. Rejection by their few surviving relatives is a source of unimaginable emotional distress, and their isolation is increased by the stigma of rape.

**‘The onus lies on both Rwanda and the international community to ensure the will and the resources are there to support justice for survivors. Only when justice has been served will there be healing and respect for human rights. To seek to short-circuit this process is to risk seeing history repeat itself.’**

They feel they have lost their dignity, are alone and utterly powerless.

Rape has also increased, as it still does, the spread of HIV/AIDS. Over time, survivors have gradually been alerted to the risk of the deadly disease and some have taken a test. Around 70% of the women tested are HIV positive. Emotional, financial, social and practical obstacles deter women from wanting to discover their HIV status. Yet the relatively high incidence of HIV infection in Rwanda at the time of the genocide, coupled with the fact that a substantial number of the victims were raped more than once, makes it inevitable that many contracted the virus as a result of rape.

able to collect a few of their stories here. But whether young or old, infected by HIV/AIDS or not, the outlook they share is bleak. Survivors do not expect to live long. Their greatest fears are for their children. Opportunities for victims to improve their lives are scarce and their troubles are very real. Their ill health prevents them from thinking about the future. Instead their minds remain persistently focused on the genocide and the bitterness and pain associated with it.

The scars of the genocide remain raw, with survivors still having to do daily battle with grief, pain and suffering. Mutual suspicion and tension is ever present amongst the people of Rwanda. The situation is exacerbated by the painfully slow justice system, which offers little comfort to survivors. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has only secured the conviction of a handful of the *genocidaires*. Survivors have no right to pursue civil actions within the ICTR, and vulnerable witnesses receive neither physical nor psychological support.

Genocide is a crime against humanity, which must be recognised through the justice system. Perpetrators have to be made to take full responsibility for their actions. Only when this is the case can reconciliation and national reconstruction in Rwanda truly begin.

In an attempt to speed up trials, the Rwandan government has now introduced the traditional *Gacaca* system of justice. Key to the *Gacaca* process is the public confession in the presence of the wronged. This step is seen as indispensable to speed up reconciliation, but survivors remain sceptical that it will deliver justice. They do, however, see it as a chance to find out how and where their families died. At least then they can

secure some closure, as they finally bury their dead with some dignity.

The onus lies on both Rwanda and the international community to ensure the will and the resources are there to support justice for survivors. Only when justice has been served will there be healing and respect for human rights. To seek to short-circuit this process is to risk seeing history repeat itself.

One of the few heartening facts to emerge from Rwanda today is how survivors draw support from each other, through local survivors' groups that bring together orphans, widows and the most needy survivors. Through groups like AVEGA (*Association des Veuves du Genocide d'Avril 1994*), The Solace Ministries and AOCM (*Association des*

*Orphelins Chefs de Ménage*), Survivors Fund helps survivors to relay their experiences. It remains vital that these voices are heard, that the memory of genocide does not fade, and that the victims and survivors of the genocide are never forgotten. We hope that this book will help to secure those aims.

### **WE MUST LEARN LESSONS FROM RWANDA'S EXPERIENCE.**

**Mary Kayitesi Blewitt**  
Founder and Director  
Survivors Fund (SURF)

Because the psychological impact of genocide is more easily hidden than its physical effects, many survivors suffer trauma quietly. It is widely agreed that the numbers of survivors who have spoken about what happened to them is small compared to the overall number of victims. We are fortunate to have been

The history of Rwanda, indeed the history of humanity, lives in these pages. But these pages are not enough. More must be done to document the lives, the deaths, the survival and all that goes with it for the survivors of the Rwandan genocide. Time is running out for thousands of women who were viciously raped and raped and raped again as part of a systematic effort to infect them with the HIV virus, allowing the deadly virus to inflict the final act of execution in the years following the genocide.

# INTRODUCTION

BY LINDSEY HILSUM

Back in 1994, the survivors of genocide were desperate to tell their stories. I travelled Rwanda, listening to the unspeakable horrors they related. Their pain was fresh, and they seemed to feel that telling an outsider would in some way validate their suffering. They wanted me - a foreigner, a journalist - to pass their stories onto the world beyond Rwanda, which had failed to come to their aid when they needed it most.

Eleven years on, survivors feel differently about talking. One of the widows who was raped asked me recently, "What's the point of telling our stories again? I've told mine over and over to journalists and other people, and it doesn't make any difference. We still have nothing, and we're still suffering."

I found it hard to reply. Telling your story to a journalist isn't therapy, and it doesn't automatically bring succour. After so many years, why should the survivors relive the pain because a journalist needs a story?

And yet it is only through hearing the voices of the victims of genocide that anyone else can get an inkling of what they endured. The world needs to hear them, because it is important that we don't forget. In Rwanda, every survivor's experience is unique, and the collective story they tell is as important now as it was in 1994. If they stop telling their stories, the world will move on, and the pain they can never put behind them will be forgotten by everyone else.

It's not enough, of course, just to listen. That is why this book is important. SURF listens to survivors – to their stories, and to their needs. Then it acts. SURF is bringing anti-retroviral drugs to women who became HIV positive after being raped during the genocide. It is helping widows look after the orphans of genocide. And it is making sure that none of us forget.

So I would say to the survivor who was reluctant to retell her story, that she has every right to keep quiet, to nurse her pain, to share it only with those she trusts. But her story is important, and the world still needs to hear it. The onus is now on us. We should read the stories in these pages, however painful it is to learn of such desperate cruelty and grief, however guilty it makes us feel. Then we should pledge to support the survivors of genocide in any way we can, and never to abandon them again.

**Lindsey Hilsum is International Editor of Channel 4 News and a Patron of SURF.**

# BACKGROUND

Rwanda, a small landlocked country in central Africa, is often called 'the land of a thousand hills' or 'the Switzerland of Africa'. Situated immediately south of the Equator and bordered by the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi, today it is home to a population of eight million people.

The population of Rwanda is made up of three ethnic groups: Twa, Hutu and Tutsi. Traditionally, Twa were hunters; Hutu were farmers; and Tutsi were cattle keepers. They shared a language and a culture. They shared the same king, who was traditionally a Tutsi. They intermarried over the years and they fought together to stop the slave trade. People moved between the groups and there was social mobility.

The relationship between the Hutu and Tutsi identities took a new turn when the European colonisers arrived in Rwanda at the end of the 19th century. At the 1885 Berlin Conference, which carved up Africa between the European empires, Rwanda fell under German rule. But after Germany's defeat in the First World War, Rwanda was transferred to Belgian control in 1919.

**'For centuries, Rwanda had not experienced ethnic divisions or any other sectarian tendencies. It was only with the arrival of European colonialism that a racial/ethnic ideology was introduced and discrimination was endorsed.'**

Rwandans was socio-economic until the Belgian rule introduced identity cards and a policy of divide and rule.

The widespread discontent engendered by these divisions eventually resulted in a revolt in 1959, which left 20,000 Tutsis dead. Thousands more were forced to flee as refugees, to Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi. As the inevitability of independence loomed, the Belgian colonisers abandoned their policy of indirect rule and shifted support from the minority Umwami party to the majority Parmehutu party led by Grégoire Kayibanda, who eventually led Rwanda to independence in 1962. Violence continued from 1963 until 1967, when 100,000 Tutsis were butchered with machetes and dumped in rivers. Violence, arrests, intimidation and abuse all increased during President Juvenal

Habyarimana's Second Republic, which claimed to be sympathetic to Tutsis. In 1973, thousands of Tutsi students were massacred.

Meanwhile, Rwandan refugees forced into exile in Uganda, Tanzania and abroad were experiencing hard lives. They were also denied a right to return, despite being Rwandan citizens. The Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) emerged and took up arms against the Rwandan government, finally leading the international community to recognise the refugee crisis. A series of agreements backed by the international community was signed between the RPF and the government of Rwanda to ensure a peaceful settlement of the Rwandan crisis.

But on 6 April 1994, after President Habyarimana signed a peace agreement in Dar Es Salaam, his plane was shot down and he was killed on his way back to Kigali. Following the horrific genocide of 1994 that ensued, and that thrust Rwanda into the eyes

of the world, the people of Rwanda are only now slowly beginning to emerge from the most traumatic period of their history.

Since those dark days, tremendous efforts have been made to tackle the complex problems facing Rwanda. The legacy of death and destruction, however, is a generation of survivors who have not only been traumatised by their experiences during the genocide, but who have to cope with lasting consequences that are far from over.

**This book is dedicated to these survivors.**

For centuries, Rwanda had not experienced ethnic divisions or any other sectarian tendencies. It was only with the arrival of European colonialism that a racial/ethnic ideology was introduced and discrimination was endorsed. The main distinction among

# ABANDONED BY THE WORLD

## VALENTINA:

"Before the genocide I lived with my parents, four brothers and three sisters in Kibungo, which is near Nyarubuye parish. We were a happy family and lucky children who wanted for nothing. We had many many friends and neighbours who were Hutus. We were Tutsi."

## DAPHROSA:

"Before the genocide our family lived a happy life. We had five beautiful children; two boys and three girls. My husband always used to make time for us to go out together. He would come back from work with presents for the children. They could never wait for him to come home. We understood each other. We had no problems in our marriage. We always thought that we would grow old and die in old age together."

Prior to the genocide, even though many Tutsis lived what seemed like a peaceful life with their Hutu neighbours, there were already signs of the troubles ahead. Hutu extremists actively promoted ethnic divisions in schools. Teachers were told to report the tribal grouping of students that they taught, and students were forced to state their tribal affiliations in class. Parents had to bring to school their identity cards, which identified them by tribe, while teachers would remind Tutsis how dangerous they were.

## ALINE:

"When the genocide began, I was in the

first year of secondary school. I remember some people being killed and the headmaster saying there were *inkotanyi* (infiltrators) in the school. I felt frightened but had no idea what he was talking about. One of the boys told me to have courage because we were to be expelled from school. The intimidation continued and then the segregation of Hutu and Tutsis started."

Hutu extremists played on the public's deep-rooted concerns about unemployment and economic decline, laying the blame on rebel Tutsi forces, the RPF. They fostered fears that Tutsi exiles returning from previous genocides would grab land from Hutus. Just as the Nazis limited the rights of Jews, making them non-citizens in 1935, Hutu extremists published the so-called Ten Commandments in 1993, in the government-controlled paper, *Kangura*, calling for total rule over the Tutsi minority through Hutu power. This genocidal ideology was disseminated to all corners of Rwanda – helped in no small part by Hutu domination of the media.

The radio and television station, *Mille Collines* (RTLM), founded in 1993, played a central role in fostering genocide by playing on Hutus' fear of a return of Tutsi dominance. It fomented tension and persuaded ordinary citizens to distrust Tutsis, creating the climate for them to be hunted down and killed later. The best ways of killing – with guns, grenades, machetes, spears, bows and

arrows – were depicted, and Hutus were encouraged to kill children as well. The message was that no Tutsi should be spared, neither young nor old; that no Hutu was exempt from the task of exterminating the Tutsi people. Such propaganda inevitably poisoned the minds of many Hutus.

## DAPHROSA:

"Even before the war the neighbours began to get suspicious of us and behaved strangely towards us. We were called snakes. We became housebound. There were markets and shops we were not allowed to use."

Even some churches became involved in the genocidal hatred.

## DAPHROSA:

"Between 1990 and 1994, politics began increasingly to divide people. Segregation became common. In our church there was no animosity in the beginning. But other churches were dividing people, even refusing to give the Eucharist to Tutsis."

The genocide began on the 6th April 1994 when President Habyarimana's plane was shot down. He was returning to Rwanda having finally signed a peace agreement with rebel Tutsis in Tanzania. Within hours lists of names of opposition party members, moderate Hutus, and prominent Tutsis had been disseminated and the massacres began. As a result of the introduction of identity cards by Belgian forces during the colonial era, the ethnicity of people in Rwanda could easily be traced. The genocide could thus take hold.

## VALENTINA:

"The killing began on a Friday afternoon. The day after President Habyarimana's death was announced, fires were burning

in the neighbourhood. On the 12th April we heard that one of my Tutsi neighbours had been attacked and murdered. We knew what this meant for us Tutsis."

People were murdered in their homes and in the street, and buried alive in already prepared mass graves.

## DAPHROSA:

"We left our house but did not get far. My husband was captured and beaten and I was forced to return home. He told us to expect the worst. The *interahamwe* dragged him back to the house, demanding that he give them all he owned, saying he wouldn't need it any more because he was going to die. They hit him and sat him in the chair in the sitting room. They brought us all in the sitting room and started forcing us – my young daughters as well – to take our clothes off."

Tutsis congregated in churches, schools, public buildings, hospitals, stadiums and other places they believed would provide sanctuary. But there were no safe places.

## VALENTINA:

"We fled to the church in Nyarubuye with my family. This is where, as my parents told me, Tutsis had found sanctuary in previous attacks in the 1950's, 60's and 70's ... We had no food or water but at least we had shelter and we were safe. Or so we thought. Now we know that around 3000 Tutsis sought refuge in the church. There were many refugees arriving with horrific stories of massacres of Tutsis. Some had been injured. It was a frightening experience."

The killers targeted churches in particular, knowing that many had fled there in the belief



that they would find refuge. One missionary said at the time: "There are no demons in hell any more; they are all in Rwanda." Although some fought bravely against the killers, many priests and nuns took an active part in perpetrating the slaughter – killing with their own hands. Others gave absolution to the killers and encouraged them to carry on their work. Many others in authority – local councillors, mayors, teachers – killed those they had previously been responsible for.

**VALENTINA:**

**"At 3pm on the afternoon of the 15th April the killers arrived, led by the mayor Sylvestre Gacumbitsi. I recognised many of our neighbours among *interahamwe* who surrounded the church. They carried knives and clubs and were supported by soldiers. Soon the church was encircled and the militia were shooting at everyone. Inside the church it was chaos as everyone ran around screaming, trying to find a place to hide. Originally I had been with my mother and brother but we became separated in the hysteria that ensued."**

Spearheading the killing were the gangs known as *interahamwe*, a Kinyarwanda word meaning "those who attack together." Many were young and unemployed, recruited and trained to hate and kill the Tutsis. They used machetes, nail-studded clubs, axes, knives, guns, grenades and even farming implements such as hoes to massacre and maim.

**VALENTINA:**

**"I heard the sound of gunshots. Some people ran as soon as they heard the fighting but they were immediately gunned down and killed by the *interahamwe*. First they asked people to hand over their money, saying they would spare those who paid. But after taking the money they**

**killed them anyway, they took off their clothes, leaving them naked, and then they started to throw grenades. I saw a man blown up in the air, in pieces, by a grenade. The leader of the *interahamwe* said they are snakes and to kill snakes you have to smash their heads. The killers then entered the church hacking and clubbing as they entered. If they found someone alive they would smash their heads with stones."**

The *interahamwe* spared no-one, not even children. They would beat people to death, hacking off their limbs, burying them alive or throwing them into the swamps. Many victims had their Achilles tendons cut with machetes if they tried to escape, to immobilise them so they could be finished off later.

**VALENTINA:**

**"Gacumbitsi [the mayor of Nyarubuye] added: 'If anyone is hiding in this church because of a mistake, because he or she is a Hutu they should tell me now.' After a few seconds a boy of about seven or eight stood up. 'I am a Hutu,' he said. Of course everyone knew he wasn't Hutu. Two *interahamwe* soldiers ran forward and beat him with machetes so fiercely that his body went flying up in the air, and came down in several pieces... I saw the killers take little children and smash their heads together until they were dead."**

Pregnant women were disembowelled. Breast-feeding women had their breasts cut off because they were bringing up 'snakes'. Babies were not spared.

**GAUDENCE:**

**"I was carrying the baby on my back when the killers came. When we arrived at the compound – me still with the baby on my back – a group of male killers struck me**

**with whatever they had to hand: machetes, axes, clubs, sticks, swords and spears. I knew I was going to die and I asked God to forgive me all my sins. Then I heard a voice saying: "And this baby who is shouting must be silenced." They hit him just once and he died immediately. Later, I took the baby from my back, made a small bed with the clothing I was carrying him in and put him to lie near his dead father. I covered him and I felt that he was safe with his father. It was then that I realised that I was not dead. I was the only person in the compound still moving; everyone else was silent because they had died."**

The genocide saw a systematic programme of rape being used as a weapon of war. It was part of a deliberate strategy.

**DAPHROSA:**

**"Our housekeeper raped me. My husband wanted to intervene but they hit him with a club on his neck. They would pour beer for us, mocking that Tutsi women did not want them before, but now they were going to have us. Each took us in turns, my daughters wanted to scream out in pain but were too scared so they remained quiet. My husband was forced to watch the whole ordeal – they wanted him to watch and die slowly – and helplessly he watched them violate us. Then they hit him with a hammer on his head and back. He died the next day."**

Those women who escaped murder were subjected to genital mutilation, rape, gang rape, and rape with objects such as sharpened sticks or gun barrels. Many died as a result of their abuse.

**DAPHROSA:**

**"The raping continued into the second day. They continued to rape my**

**daughters, saying they wanted to test Tutsi women. They slashed me across the breast. The housekeeper boasted about raping me, his employer, to the others. He knifed my genitals after raping me."**

Many women were deliberately infected with HIV by their attackers. The effect is increasingly visible today. Among the women who were tested for HIV/AIDS in the five years following the genocide, 70 per cent were found to be HIV positive. Many are dying because of lack of medication. There is hardly a woman who was infected in 1994 who is not dead or dying today.

**ALINE:**

**"My father had to watch us being raped. When he died, we were taken away by a woman councillor. We had to do domestic work for her. She gave me to her brother as a wife. He took me to the *interahamwe*. There were four of them. While I was at home I was raped by four men. Here I was to be raped by another four men. I begged them to stop, but they refused. They said that we used to refuse Hutu men, and that now they had the right to do as they wished with us. Then they took me to their command post and kept me there for a month, raping me whenever they wished. I was fourteen years old."**

First they killed the men and the boys, then they killed the women. Educated Tutsi men and women were targeted. Many families and children witnessed the deaths of their loved ones. UNICEF estimates that more than a third of Rwanda's children witnessed their families being murdered.

**VALENTINA:**

**"The survivors wandered around, discovering who was dead and who the killers hadn't managed to kill. I tried to**

find my parents but I couldn't find anyone from my family.

"Three days after the killing began, another group of killers came, led by Antoine – who had been our neighbour and a friend of our family. Later that day, when it seemed that almost everyone was dead, the *interahamwe* brought their dogs which began eating the dead. Some soldiers dragged out 15 people who were still alive. I saw my sister among them. She was badly hurt. We only looked at each other and couldn't speak. The soldiers hit her with machetes and clubs until she lay still and that was the last time I saw her alive. One by one the soldiers finished off the survivors. Later that evening, when the *interahamwe* had gone home after a day's work, I crawled back in church to hide among the dead bodies. I crawled to my mother's body and lay there for I don't know how long. During the course of the killing I had seen militia kill my father, my mother, my sister and my brother Frodise."

It is estimated that 300,000 children were killed in the Rwandan genocide, nearly one third of those who lost their lives. No words can describe the suffering of those who died, the cruelty of the killers, or the pain of those who survived, traumatised for life.

**VALENTINA:**

"I watched as dead bodies turned colour to greenish yellow and then dark blue, then bodies turned into skeletons. I lay among the rotting corpses for 43 days without food and only holy water or rain water. I lay among the rotting corpses, too weak to stand up, convinced that the world had come to an end. A few other children emerged from hiding places around the church. Now I'm not sure how

I survived. I do remember that for the first few days I was in terrible pain from the wounds on my head, but then I became like a log; it was if I couldn't feel, and I could barely move except to crawl out to drink rain water. Now I am 22, but feel much older."

The children who survived the genocide were pulled alive from heaps of corpses, or found wandering alone through deserted streets. Some had survived by hiding in cupboards, or in the bushes, unable to do anything when their families were massacred.

Rwanda's Ministry of Social Affairs estimates that 106,587 children survived the genocide. UNICEF estimates that 95,000 children were orphaned by the genocide. Many of them sustained terrible injuries.

The killers were often former friends and neighbours.

**VALENTINA:**

"I knew one of the soldiers. I begged him: 'Can you find it in your heart to forgive me for being Tutsi?' He spat at me and said: 'I'm not going to smear myself with your blood. I'm going to ask someone else to kill you.' He gestured to Antoine, our other neighbour. 'I'm going to kill you,' he said, and I put up my hand to protect my head from his machete. Then he began smashing my hands with a clubbed stick, so that my fingers were broken and my skull was bleeding and the pain was terrible. After that he beat me some more on the shoulders and then again on my head which was agonising, and soon the pain was so terrible that I knew no more."

Victims felt that their bodies had perished, but somehow they survived.

**GAUDENCE:**

"Many people had taken refuge at the dispensary. Then the *interahamwe* came to kill people there. All the people left, including those who were in-patients. I immediately felt as if I had died again. I cannot say I was sleeping, it was as if I were dead. After some days (I don't know how long I lay in the valley of death) one of the workers recognised me. He told my husband's relatives but they did not come to my rescue. I stayed at the hospital and lost count of the days. My body began to rot and there were maggots on my head, my face and other places where I had been injured. I was covered in maggots and smelt badly. It was at this time I learned the difference between body and spirit. The body was completely dead but my spirit was still alive inside that rotten body."

Some survivors were left to struggle on, not touched again, although this was not out of compassion.

**DAPHROSA:**

"I was left alone. People would come to the house, look in at me and just leave. I had no-one to bring me water. I had no-one to help me bury my husband and son. They told me they wanted to see how a Tutsi corpse decomposes."

**GAUDENCE:**

"People, especially children, would come to see me through the glass in the door. They had never seen anything like me locked up in a room... Later I crawled slowly on the ground like a reptile and arrived at the road. When I arrived at the main road people came to see me because I was something interesting to watch. Even the *interahamwe* came to look at me, but no-one could kill me because no-one kills a dead person."

At last the horror was over. The country was liberated; the genocide over; some families reunited.

**VALENTINA:**

"On the 26th May a man appeared who lived near the church. When he caught sight of me he wasn't sure if I was dead or alive. He brought some food and threw it to me and returned with a white journalist. He was a Frenchman who had been making a documentary about the genocide and he had been filming all the dead bodies at what I later learnt was the massacre of Nyarubuye, where 3,000 people were killed."

But lifelong friendships were destroyed by the genocide and the legacy of hatred and fear remains.

**DAPHROSA:**

"We really have no friends after the genocide. Those we thought were friends had been the ones who behind our backs had planned our execution. Just imagine that no-one came to your rescue when you were injured. Just imagine that no-one gave you water to drink when you were thirsty. Friendship ended with genocide. Our neighbours did not really want us back. Many had looted our property, both the bar and the home."

Daphrosa and her daughters Aline and Tina found that they were HIV positive. The two girls also found that they were pregnant as a result of the gang rape they suffered.

Because of their Christian faith, they decided to keep the babies.

**DAPHROSA:**

"I worried about getting sick first. Who would look after my children? What if we all got sick at the same time? I prayed that by the time I died, my youngest child would be old enough to look after herself. I felt we were surrounded by death. I was frightened. I lost my senses. I didn't even want to take a bath or eat, because I was carrying this secret, which I couldn't share with anyone. Then I had the courage to visit AVEGA. They helped me deal with my infection; I was given support and advice on how to survive. We met others who were HIV positive and who managed to live normal lives. I know that death will come one day. Meanwhile I will have to try and live life to the full."

Most survivors raped and infected with HIV have no access to the antiretroviral drugs needed to keep well. Meanwhile many rapists awaiting trial at Arusha prison, as part of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), get free medication. Prisoners held in Rwanda are entitled to medical assistance, three meals a day and family visits. The survivors can barely meet their basic needs. The suffering is not at an end. Funding is scarce.

**DAPHROSA:**

"We are being helped by Survivors Fund (SURF) to access drugs. I have started taking them but my children have not. I worry about where the money for antiretroviral therapy will come from. Maybe their immune systems will hold up but I also hope that supporters or donors will give them access to medication if they need it. I wonder if I will spend the rest of my life begging for help. I have nowhere to farm. I have no job."

At the end of the war over 130,000 people were detained on suspicion of having organised or taken part in the genocide. Trials started in 1996, but faced with the huge number of cases to hear the government decided to use the *Gacaca* system of justice. It is a time-honoured way of resolving conflicts and it is hoped that its use will speed up the genocide trials and hasten a return to normality.

Some of the more powerful perpetrators fled the country in an attempt to avoid the death penalty for Category One crimes. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda based in Tanzania was set up by the United Nations in 1994. Despite having over 800 staff and having spent over half a billion dollars, it has so far secured only a handful of convictions. But even when justice is seen to be done, it does not always bring about closure for survivors.

**VALENTINA:**

"I went to Arusha to testify at the ICTR where I saw the mayor of Nyarubuye, Sylvestre Gacumbitsi. I knew him but of course he didn't know me. He looked fat and healthy and he wore a smart suit and a tie and he looked contented. I was terrified, then I felt very angry. That gave me the courage to speak and tell my story. He did not seem remotely concerned at what I had to say. Then his lawyers asked me questions, which made me both scared and furious. What right had they to question my credibility in this way, after what I had suffered? My testimony at the international court brought me no relief. All it did was make me relive the horrors of Nyarubuye Church."

The pain of the survivors drags them down.

**ALINE:**

"I could find no peace living in Rwanda so I went to Uganda. I have since returned, but get tormented about *interahamwe* raping me in the open. Everyone knows about it. I have no peace. Eleven years on from the genocide I don't know how I will continue to survive. Those Hutus who violated me have their own families. They have married and have children. As for me I will die with no child and no future. Life? I have no life. All I am waiting for is death. Nothing else. That's all that is left for me. I have no future. No life."

**VALENTINA:**

"I imagine my mother coming in the middle of the night. We embrace and then I show her my mutilated hand. I tell her: 'look what has happened to me.' We have a chat and she tells me she has been long gone. I see her and we talk. Then I wake up and see my mother's image vanishing into darkness. Then I remember that my mother is dead and gone for ever."

The United Nations had ample evidence that the genocide was about to be unleashed on an unsuspecting Tutsi population. Yet it did nothing. It pulled out what force it had. Foreigners were evacuated to safety. The leader of the UN mission in Rwanda, Romeo Dallaire, wrote later: "We watched as the devil took control of paradise and fed on the blood of the people we were supposed to protect."

It is estimated that up to a million people perished in Rwanda. They were brothers and sisters, mothers and daughters, fathers and sons. They loved and were loved. They had families and friends.

The world said: "Never again" after the Holocaust. Yet the international community – indeed the entire world – stood by as the Rwandan genocide unfolded and did nothing.

# REMEMBERING THE SURVIVORS

To give a voice to the estimated 25,000 women and girls raped and deliberately infected with HIV in 1994, and to focus attention on SURF's campaign to secure free antiretroviral treatment for them, over 100 women joined together in solidarity in Trafalgar Square on 16th July 2004 for the Reading of the Testimonies. From Baroness Shirley Williams to Beverley Knight, Lady Jakobovits to Helen Baxendale, Ellen Thomas, Hannah Waterman and Josie Darby, the survivors were given a truly public voice.

In April 1994 I was about to take my A levels and international events were vague, woolly things. It wasn't that I was especially callous, or thought that world occurrences were of no concern, but I was more interested in my revision and getting the grades which would sweep me off to university and independence. The world passed me by: it was somewhere 'out there' on the peripheries.

Last year, however, when a friend who was involved with SURF asked whether I would like to read a testimony in observation of the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan massacre, I immediately said yes. I knew hardly anything about the genocide but my reaction was a gut response: a massacre entailed victims, and victims deserved sympathy. A few weeks later an information

pack arrived for me and through that, and through subsequent searches on the internet, I read more and more about Rwanda. I learnt that it wasn't only me who stood on the sidelines: both the international media and international community failed to respond to the systematic massacre of the Tutsis in 1994.

This is why the SURF Reading of the Testimonies, ten years on, was especially important: as well as being a gesture of remembrance it also gave those women who suffered – and survived – a voice and a platform.

Eloise Millar  
Writer

All the women stated why it was important for them to give the survivors' testimonies a voice. Their reasons are interspersed with the testimonies in the following pages.

Many of the women who survived the horrors of the genocide in Rwanda are still very frightened by their experiences. This profound fear is compounded by the release of many of the killers through the *Gacaca* system. Many women regularly see the men who raped them and killed their families. For many of the survivors having their pictures printed in a book, next to their testimony, is something that causes them great alarm – it would allow the killers to know where these women live and what they look like. Ever

careful to protect the survivors for whom SURF speaks, SURF had asked women of the UK to read aloud in Trafalgar Square the testimonies of Rwandan women. These

women in the UK allow their faces to be shown here as a testimony to the genocide, so that the stories of the Rwandan women are told whilst keeping those women safe.



Photos generously provided by Sam White.

# PERSONAL STORIES: SURVIVAL AGAINST THE ODDS

Memories of events of the Rwandan genocide are still fresh in the minds of its survivors. Survivors place no belief in the saying that to forgive, one must forget. It is impossible for survivors to suppress the memories of what happened in 1994. Their memories can only be laid to rest once they have been given the time for their wounds, still raw, to heal.

The survivors may have cheated death, but they tasted it. They have paid a considerable price for survival. They know what it is to

suffer; they know what it means to lose loved ones, relatives and property. Most of them today live below the poverty line. They need to be consoled and cared for. Many orphans and widows have lost everything.

Despite the painful stories, we are encouraged to find that, incredibly, some survivors hold out hope for a better future. They are not lost forever. Here are some of their stories.

# THE TESTIMONY OF VALENTINA

**M**y name is Valentina. I am a survivor of the Rwandan genocide. This is my testimony.

I was 11 years old at the time of the genocide, living with my parents, four brothers and three sisters in Kibungo, near Nyarubuye. We were a happy family and lucky children who didn't want for anything. I was the third oldest, at primary school in year three. We were Tutsi, but had many friends and neighbours who were Hutus.

The killing began on Friday afternoon. The Tutsi of Nyarubuye had sensed an impending disaster. We were unaware that elsewhere in the country massacres of Tutsis had begun, immediately after Juvenal Habyarimana, the President of Rwanda, had been assassinated.

My parents were greatly worried on hearing about the assassination on the radio. Soon after fires began to burn in our neighbourhood.

We heard that the killing of Tutsis had begun in Rwanda's capital Kigali. On 12th April, our Tutsi neighbours were attacked and murdered.

We knew what this meant for us Tutsis. Several adults went to appeal to the Mayor, Sylvestre Gacumbitsi. He was Hutu, but when he advised that Tutsis should seek refuge in the Catholic Church, everyone took him at his word. After all, as my parents told me, this is where Tutsis found sanctuary during previous attacks in the 1950's, 60's and 70's.

The actual killings began when the army entered in Nyarubuye, killing Tutsis in the local marketplace. My family and I fled to the church. It was the 13th April.

We arrived to find that the priests had fled, that there was no food or water. But at least we had found shelter and were now safe. Or so we thought.

Around 3,000 Tutsis sought sanctuary in this church. Many refugees recounted horrific stories of massacres of Tutsis. Some had been injured. It was a frightening experience.

At 3pm on 15th April, the killers arrived. They were led by the Mayor, Sylvestre Gacumbitsi. I recognised many of our Hutu neighbours amongst the *interahamwe* who surrounded the church. They carried knives and clubs and were supported by soldiers.

The church had a number of little rooms off

the main nave, used by the priests for storage and living quarters. Many people chose to hide here. As I crouched in a corner, Gacumbitsi appeared. He had a microphone with him. He shouted: "We are the *interahamwe*. We are about to eliminate every Tutsi so that in the future no-one will even know what a Tutsi looked like. If anyone is hiding in this church by mistake, because really he or she is a Hutu, they should tell me now." After a few seconds a boy of about seven or eight stood up. "I am a Hutu," he said. Of course everyone knew that he wasn't Hutu. Two of the *interahamwe* ran forward with machetes, slashing him so fiercely that his body went flying up in the air, coming down in several pieces. I watched all this, terrified, as everyone screamed, begging to be saved.

But the church was encircled. The *interahamwe* opened fire. Some people tried to escape, but they were immediately gunned down. Inside the church it was chaos as everyone ran around, screaming, trying to find a place to hide. Originally I'd been with my mother and brother but we became separated in the hysteria that ensued.

The killers then entered the church. People were stripped of their clothes. They were asked to hand over their money, thinking that their lives would be spared. But the killing soon began. Grenades were thrown. I saw a man blown up in the air in pieces. Then the *interahamwe* started hacking and clubbing everyone. Their leader said all Tutsis were snakes and that to kill snakes you have to smash their heads, so if they found someone alive they would smash their heads with stones. I even saw them take little children and smash their heads together until they were dead.

The killings continued over four days. At

night the butchers rested, guarding the church so that no-one would escape. There was so much noise, people begging for mercy. But the *interahamwe* would not listen, would not let anyone get away.

I'd been hiding in a small cubbyhole, quite near the entrance of the church. Because it was so small, nobody bothered to check to see if anyone was in there. I would watch the *interahamwe* throw children at the wall above me, or kill people with machetes. At the end of each day, men would come and stick knives in those who lay wounded to make sure they were dead.

At night all you could hear was people wailing. Survivors wandered around to discover who was dead and who the killers hadn't quite managed to kill. I crawled out of the hole and tried to find my parents but I couldn't find anyone. The next day, the killers returned and the slaughter happened all over again. It's impossible to tell you how terrible it was.

Three days after the massacre began, on 16th April, a new group of killers arrived. They were led by Antoine, once a neighbour and friend of our family. I was hiding underneath a pile of bodies, and as Antoine and his companions passed me by, I held my breath. Later that day, when it seemed that almost everyone was dead, the *interahamwe* brought their dogs which began eating the dead. That was horrible. When the dogs came near me, I swiped at them and they left me. Soldiers walked around checking if anyone was alive. Those they found they dragged outside. In all, there were 15 including me. They sat us down in the churchyard with many other people. I saw my sister among them. She was badly hurt. We could only look at each other. We couldn't speak. One by one the soldiers

I am 15 years old and I live in London. Since I was young I have known of the Terrible suffering of the Rwandan genocide. today I want to show my support for the female survivors of this horrific event and I hope to increase awareness of the suffering which still exists today by reading the testimony.

Laura Lumley  
Student

To think that I watched the evening news and switched over makes me squirm. I saw the pictures and I heard the reports. I talked about it with friends. I did nothing.

I run the Holocaust Educational Trust. We strive to ensure people never forget the horror of the past but also learn for the future. Fifty years after the Holocaust we witnessed another tragedy. What did we learn? How could it happen?

I am proud to be here today to show my support for the Survivor's Fund whose work is so crucial. I have been privileged to work with SURF and its founder – an inspiration to us all.

Karen Pollock  
Chief Executive  
Holocaust Educational Trust

began to finish off the survivors. When they reached my sister, they began to hit her with machetes and clubs. She was still. That was the last time I saw her alive.

I knew one of the soldiers, whose name was Ferdinand. I begged him: "Can you find it in your heart to forgive me for being Tutsi? Please spare me." He spat at me, and said: "Is this a hospital that I should forgive you? But I'm not going to smear myself with your blood. I'm going to ask someone else to kill you." He gestured to Antoine, our other neighbour.

22

"I'm going to kill you," he said. I put up my hand to protect my head. He began smashing my hands with a clubbed stick, so that my fingers were broken and my skull was bleeding. The pain was terrible. After that he beat me some more, on my shoulders and then again on my head. The pain became so

agonising that I knew no more. I passed out. When I gained conscious, I was still bleeding, lying covered in a mixture of blood and mud from the rain that had been pouring down all day.

Later in the evening when the *interahamwe* had returned home, I crawled back to the church to hide amongst the dead. I found my mother's body and lay there for I don't know how long. During the course of the killing I had seen the *interahamwe* kill my mother, my father, my sister and my brother Frodisé.

The church was stinking; bodies were rotting around me. I remember a girl screaming and shouting. I tried to sit up and speak to her, and when she saw me moving she ran towards me. But she lost her balance and smashed into me, which really hurt. She was like a person possessed. Although she was badly hurt, she had a lot of energy. She kept running from one end of the room to the other, falling over the bodies, until she stepped on a mine. Her body exploded. She groaned until she died. I crawled over and put a cloth over her body.

I stayed among the dead in the church at Nyarubuye for 43 days without food. I had only holy water or rainwater to drink. I watched as dead bodies turned colour, greenish yellow and then dark blue, then turned into skeletons. I lay among the rotting corpses, too weak to stand, convinced that the world had come to an end. I became weaker and weaker. Wild dogs found the church and started eating the corpses. One came close to where I was lying and started to eat a body. I took a stone and threw it at the dog, driving it away. They were scared of me, so left me alone.

In the weeks that followed, a few other children emerged from hiding places around

the church. Now I'm not sure how I survived. I do remember that in the first few days I was in terrible pain from the wounds on my head. I became like a log; I couldn't feel and barely could move, except to crawl out to drink rainwater.

On 26th May a man appeared. His name, I now know, was Caliste. He lived near the church. When he caught sight of me, I think he wasn't sure if I was dead or alive. He brought some food and threw it to me. He then returned with a white journalist. He was French, and had been making a documentary about the genocide, filming the dead at what I later learnt was the massacre of Nyarubuye, where 3,000 people were killed.

I now live with a cousin, who was in Kenya during the genocide. I am studying at school.

I went to Arusha to testify at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), where I gave evidence against Gacumbitsi, former Mayor of Nyarubuye. I knew him, but of course he didn't know me. He looked fat and healthy, and contented. He wore a smart suit with a tie. I was terrified at first, but then I felt

very angry. That gave me the courage to speak out and tell my story. He didn't seem remotely concerned at what I had to say. Then his lawyer asked me questions, which made me both scared and furious. What right had they to question me in this way, after what I had suffered? My testimony brought me no relief. Worse, I had to relive the horrors of Nyarubuye Church.

Gatumbitsi was sentenced in 2004 for crimes related to genocide. At least this is a recognition that genocide happened, and that those in charge must take responsibility for their actions.

But my story and grief is far from over. I have a recurring dream. I imagine my mother coming in the middle of the night. We embrace, and then I show her my mutilated hand. "Mother, look what's become of me," I tell her: "Look what has happened to me." We talk and she tells me she has long been gone. Then I wake up and see my mother's image vanishing into darkness. Then I remember that my mother is dead.

23

# THE TESTIMONY OF DAPHROSA

**M**y name is Daphrosa. I am a survivor of the Rwandan genocide. This is my testimony.

## Life before the genocide

I met my late husband whilst he was working as a customs officer. At the time, I had a job with an Indian company clearing goods at customs. Once I got to know him, he would sometimes help me jump the queue to get my goods cleared quicker. This made my boss happy with my work.

I started to treat him as a brother. I was young then – he was eight years older than me. I didn't ever think of him as my future husband but I think he always fancied me, and wanted me to be his wife. I was carefree, funny, and wild then. I jumped and ran everywhere. He would tell me to behave as a grown woman. I would tell him to save his lectures for his future wife.

After a time, we met each other's parents. My father grew fond of him, and my mother always spoke highly of him as a potential husband who would make me happy. I really didn't want to marry someone older than me. In the end I gave in to pressure and agreed to marry him. It was a decision I never once regretted.

We lived a happy life. We never argued or quarrelled. We understood each other. We had no problems in our marriage. We always thought we would grow old and die together.

My husband always made time for us to go out together. We had five beautiful children: two boys and three girls. We would go to Lake Muhazi and have fun. He adored the children. He would always come back home from work with something in a carrier bag, presents for the children. He knew what each child liked. They could never wait for him to come home.

In short we had everything we needed, we never lacked anything nor did the children go without things they wanted. We were not rich, but we certainly weren't poor. We had just enough. The house we lived in had four rooms. Girls slept in one room and boys in the other. We had a family car and my husband had a company car. We didn't work weekends. By the time the children had grown up, I had left my job and set up my own business – running a bar in a room off the main house.

## The children

Allan, my first born was my only child who loved me most. I was very happy with him. He did not like to speak much. Maybe he was meant to die – that's all I can say. He was very clever. His father used to say that he was destined to go places. He was the model child for the rest of the family. I don't want to say too much. Remembering him is too sad and painful.

Aline was a peaceful child. I could put her to sleep and just get on with my work with no trouble at all. Many people didn't even know

I had a baby at home. You only needed to feed her. She never changed growing up, always placid.

Tina was a calm child too, thoughtful but not very clever. When she was in a secondary school, I was always frustrated. I would try teaching her how to solve a maths equation, but she would not understand a thing. She found French the most difficult subject. At times her mistakes, made me laugh. If I told her that she was a girl in French, she repeated it to me saying I was a girl. She always made me laugh. She was the most lovely and pleasing child. She never gave me trouble and doesn't now.

Eric, the youngest of the boys, was a comedian. He would make us laugh all the time. He was very fond of me. He would not drink tea without asking me to taste it first, but then he would turn the cup round because he wanted to drink from where I had drunk. He liked to be the centre of attention, and was very streetwise and an inventor too. He always knew how to get his own way and how to be in the good books. He liked cars. He used to make pretend cars and play in his room for hours giving his sisters a ride.

All my children taught themselves how to drive. If we parked the car in the drive, the children would jump in and try drive off. Sometimes we would be called if they actually did. We used to have such good times together.

Innocente was my youngest child, and her father adored her. She used to hold onto my dress so that she would always be my side. She slept in my bed until she went to secondary school. She loved having mum and dad around. She lived for dad, imitating his every move and word. She was the most spoilt of all, being the youngest.

## Towards the genocide

Before the war, our neighbours began to get suspicious of us and behaved strangely towards us. Since the war in 1990, there were rumours that we were *inkotanyi*. One of my husband's friends had in fact been imprisoned, accused of being an *inkotanyi*. This scared my husband.

Our neighbours would keep their distance from us. We were isolated. We were called snakes. We stopped being seen as people. We became housebound. Only a handful of neighbours would drink at my bar. A few others dared too, especially soldiers, as I had the largest bar in the area, always well stocked. Sometimes when drinks ran out in other places, they would come over to my bar. I was always careful with these people. I acted friendly.

But one day, when a Hutu we know died, the tables turned. I was vigilant. I kept my bar closed and hoped for the best. There was trouble stirring but no-one harmed my family. Neighbours said I was their good mama, even nicknaming me *Mucyecuru* (grandma).

We had to survive somehow, so I decided to keep the bar open. I used to roast the best chicken in the neighbourhood, so crowds of young people used to come to my bar. I would befriend many of these unruly gangs, giving them free drinks and telling them not to fight each other. I would tell them that all I cared about was my business; that I was a Christian and prayed for them. They always insisted on knowing which side I supported.

Just like the bars, many of which took the names of political parties that were beginning to form, there were markets and shops where we were not allowed to shop. They refused to sell us food. Sometimes they would tell us to take our money elsewhere.



Between 1990 and 1994, politics increasingly began to divide people. Segregation became common. In our church there was no animosity in the beginning but other churches were dividing people, even refusing to give Eucharist to Tutsis.

There were three radio stations in the country; Radio RTLM (Radio Télévision Libres des Mille Collines) was Hutu, Radio Muhabura was supposed Tutsi, and Radio Rwanda for all the people. Radio Rwanda would promote the messages of government, which over time became more and more anti-Tutsi. People who worked on Radio RTLM, such as Kantono, would incite his listeners to kill the Tutsi enemy. Radio Rwanda and RTLM played a big role in the killings. It even taught killers how to use a machete to murder people quickly, and the Hutu Ten Commandments.

### The genocide begins

When the genocide began, my housekeeper promised he would help protect us. But he was *interahamwe* [one of those that killed].

We still tried to live normally, despite the genocide. We would open the bar but few people would come to drink. Those who did would leave without paying. On the third day, things went from bad to worse. The *interahamwe* stormed the bar. They took everything. Our housekeeper was among them.

Finally, we decided to try to escape the madness. We left the house but didn't get far. My husband was captured and beaten and I was forced to return home. He told us to expect the worst.

The *interahamwe* dragged him back to the house, demanding that he give them all he owned, saying he wouldn't need it anymore as he was going to die. They forced him to

sign away his cars, property and belongings. They hit him and sat him in the chair in the sitting room. They brought us all in the sitting room and started forcing us to take our clothes off. The housekeeper raped me. My husband wanted to intervene but they staved him off, hitting him with a masus [a club with nails] on his neck. He fell back in the chair.

They would pour beer for us to drink, mocking us that Tutsi women did not want them before, but that now they were going to have us. Each took us in turns. My son tried to stop them, I suppose thinking he was going to die anyway. But they fought him off, hitting him with everything they had – masus, knives, sticks – until he died. The *interahamwe* said they wouldn't waste a bullet on him, and they threw him behind the chair that my husband was sitting in.

Then they continued raping us. My daughters wanted to scream out in pain but were too scared to, so we remained quiet. My husband was forced to watch the whole ordeal. They didn't want to kill him quickly. They wanted him to watch, then die slowly. Helplessly, he watched them violating us. They then hit him with a hammer on his head and back. He died the next day.

The rape continued into the second day. I could not take it anymore. But when I tried to resist, they hit me on my arm and shoulder. Blood started flowing and the children began to scream. They attempted to run off but were stopped. They continued to rape my daughters too, saying they wanted to test Tutsi women. They then slashed me with a knife across my breast. Every so often they would take a break to drink whisky, which made them go even more crazy, as they took it in turns moving from one of us then to another. By the time they left, we couldn't even stand.

The housekeeper boasted about raping me – his employer – to the others. He knifed my privates after raping me. On the third day, they returned with a community officer. She said she was going to protect my girls. But when she left with the *interahamwe*, I could hear them mocking me, saying that they were taking them to be their wives.

I was left alone. People would come to the house, look in at me and just leave. I had no-one to bring me water. I had no-one to help bury my husband and son. They told me they wanted to see how a Tutsi corpse decomposes.

### Surviving today

A soldier that I used to bribe to keep friendly, so that he wouldn't take away my car, found me and my dead husband and son. People had looted my house, coming in and out carrying goods, stepping over me though I was still alive. Some even stepped on me.

He ordered the neighbours to bury my husband and son behind our house. He was helping to move injured people from place to place, and said he may be able to take me pretending I was a wife of a soldier. He told me to first find my children, then he would return to take us away. A neighbour,

I am a Holocaust survivor. After the Nazi Holocaust, Jews the world over cried to God and to mankind – 'Never Again'. I have watched with horror the pain of the women of Rwanda and as a Jew, a mother, a grandmother and a great grandmother I have to stand up and cry again to God and to mankind and say 'Never Again'.

Lady Jakobovits  
Social Activist

Sebazungu, had hidden my youngest two. Thankfully, they were safe. After a week the soldier returned and took us to a Red Cross Camp.

The Red Cross treated me and the wounds began to heal. But once the war ended, they asked those who had somewhere to return to leave. I couldn't go back to Kiyovu for fear that *interahamwe* still hiding there would kill me, and my children. I didn't think anyone else had survived except us three. When the soldier came to check on us I asked him to take me to my parents' home, hoping they were still alive.

All my brothers except for one had been killed. I learnt that my mother had survived and was in an RPF camp with my surviving brother. We stayed there until my brother returned. He was surprised to find us, and told us the good news – that he had found my girls alive in Kigali. They had no idea we three had survived either. We were soon reunited. Tina and Aline were alive and safe. We were soon reunited,

We really have no friends after the genocide. Those we thought were friends, had been the ones who behind our back had planned our execution. Just imagine that no-one came to your rescue when you were injured. Just imagine that no-one gave you water to drink when you were thirsty. Friendship ended with genocide.

Our neighbours didn't really need us back. They had lived well and profited from us being away. Many looted our property, both the bar and home. Just after the genocide, *interahamwe* that had not fled tried to kill us with a grenade so that we would not be alive to pursue justice. A grenade was thrown into my room and it exploded, narrowly missing me. We had to move away from our home,

because we were still in danger. We survived but they are not happy we are still here. They were sure we had to die. They refused to hide us but we survived. They must live with their guilt.

My youngest boy found it hard to cope. He is greatly disturbed from the trauma of seeing what happened during the genocide. He was so shocked he was unable to cope. He developed behavioural problems. He couldn't step into the sitting room after what he saw there.

We slowly began to try to rebuild our lives. We asked for support from AVEGA and got help with dealing with post-traumatic stress. They trained us and advised us on how to survive. I received help with coping mechanisms. Sometimes, I was given specialised training to help solve the many problems I faced. They helped me to find ways of dealing with the aftermath of genocide, helping my children to cope and that gave me great strength.

I began putting things in order, rebuilding my life, providing for my children. I started a small business. We had money in the bank before the genocide, and I managed to reclaim 4,000,000 RwF (£4,000). I was able to take care of my children's needs, especially looking after my girls through childbirth. This was the greatest challenge of all. They were hospitalised. I didn't have any help or friends and they were in a bad state.

I struggled with my business and managed to build us a new home away from where we used to live, to escape the neighbours. We are managing somehow, not the way we used to live but not so badly off either. The bottom line is that we do not go without food.

*interahamwe* babies, I wasn't happy. But I have faith that helped me stay strong. The girls were convinced that they had to abort the unwanted pregnancies. There were free doctors helping with abortion, but I thought against it and worked hard to teach them, to convince them that this was not the way out. They agreed.

I was scared of death. I feared losing them so soon after finding them again. I would not forgive my stupidity if the abortions had killed them too. I also felt that abortion is killing, and by aborting the babies we would be no different from those killers who tried to kill us. It was a sad decision for all of us.

I prepared them for the big day, took them to check-ups and bought baby clothes just like any expectant grandmother would do.

**I am originally from New Zealand, I am a homeopath and naturopath and I live in North London.**

**Earlier this year I lost a very good friend to AIDS. With the help of antiretroviral drugs, he had lived with AIDS for over 15 years. He had a creative life, he was an artist, and I really value having known him, he had such strong spirit.**

**I cannot imagine how the women and children of Rwanda have suffered since the genocide of 1994, without access to antiretroviral drugs. It is imperative that this injustice is redressed, and that they are given the same chance to live a better life that my friend had.**

Tulip Hambleton  
Homeopath

When I found out that my girls were carrying

We celebrated together when both babies were born. But one of my daughters was unlucky – her baby died soon after birth.

### **Dying tomorrow**

It would have been a miracle to escape infections, but everything was possible. However, we soon found out that all three of us were HIV positive. I worried about getting sick first. Who would look after my children? What if we all got sick at the same time? I prayed that by the time I died, the youngest child would be old enough to look after herself. I felt we were surrounded by death.

I was frightened. I lost my senses. I didn't even want to take a bath or eat, mainly because I was carrying this secret, which I couldn't share with anyone. Then I eventually had courage to visit AVEGA again. They helped me to deal with my fear, to cope with the infection. I was given support and advice on how to survive, advice which I found most helpful. We met others who were HIV positive and who still managed to live normal lives.

I know that death will come one day. Meanwhile I have to try to live my life to the full. That gave me courage to tell my children, especially my daughter, who was losing weight and had the symptoms of being HIV positive. When she left hospital after her pregnancy, people suspected she was HIV positive and all the rumours forced her to escape to Uganda.

When I told my other daughter, she refused to believe me and did not want to take a test. But her son tested HIV positive and she had no choice but to be tested because it was evident that the baby had caught the virus from his mum. Eventually they accepted their status too. Sometimes we sit and remember

and cry. Counsellors say that crying is therapeutic, so I let them have a cry now and then.

We are being helped by SURF to access antiretroviral therapy. These survivors organisations have become like family. I have started taking antiretrovirals but my children have not. I worry where the money for antiretroviral therapy will come from. Maybe their immune systems will hold up, but I hope that they will also be able to get supporters or donors to give them access to antiretroviral therapy like myself.

I have a lot to take care of still. My son is still not well. I worry about my young daughter too. What will happen to her if we all die? The greatest challenge we face is telling my grandchild that he is HIV positive. He is still young, but I don't know if I ever will have the courage to explain to him that he is infected too.

When I see that 11 years on I am still able to survive, I wonder about life ahead. But I am not certain what the future holds. I wonder if I will spend the rest of my life begging for help. I have nowhere to farm. I have no job. I have no real future. I keep asking myself what I will do. Then I turn to God. Whatever God's will, it will be. I may still then be here in ten year's time.

To think that I can see the future and plan ahead is impossible. I will take whatever God plan, that's how I am able to keep my morale high, smile and sometimes even have a laugh.

# THE TESTIMONY OF ALINE

I am the third born in my family. I have two sisters and now one brother. My other brother was killed in the genocide.

Before the war, we had a happy life. We would go out together on family trips each weekend. We girls liked to go out with dad, and the boys with mum. We went out a lot and had some great times. We would eat out on the weekend, feasting on special roast chicken. We were a model family in the community and we were really happy.

When the genocide began, I was in the first year of secondary school. I remember some being killed and the headmaster saying there were infiltrators (*inkotanyi*) in the school. I felt frightened, but had no idea what he was talking about. I didn't really understand the full implications.

One of the boys told me to have courage, because we were to be expelled from the school. I worried about what my father would say, especially if he thought that I had been involved in politics. But things seemed to settle down a bit after that, but the intimidation continued and then the segregation of Hutu and Tutsi started.

I remember when the 1990 war began, before the genocide. I was still in primary school and the girls there used to say *inyenzi* were crawling around everywhere, that they had tails. I didn't understand any of this. When the teachers asked the Hutu to stand in class, I would stand up. But the teacher would then

tell me to sit down, because I wasn't Hutu. There were only three Tutsis in my class, so I started standing up with them, very confused about the significance of this.

## The genocide

Thinking about the genocide, I sometimes think, at least my brother died immediately. My father had to watch us being raped and abused. My mother was raped, then my sister and then me. My father was forced to watch. He couldn't move, not even look away.

When he died, we were taken away by a female councillor. She was called Nyirabagenzi Odette. We stayed with her for 3 days, cooking and doing domestic work for her and the *interahamwe* guarding her.

In April I had the opportunity to visit Rwanda at the time of the commemoration of the genocide.

I will never forget meeting one group of women who had suffered seeing their family murdered and were then raped. When we asked what we could do to help them they replied: 'Just tell people in your country how it is for us.' Then they said they would like medicines so that they will live to see justice done.

Ruth Wooldridge, OBE  
Palliative Care Nurse

The councillor said I should take a man as a husband, as she wasn't employed to protect Tutsi. She was in fact killing them herself. She then gave me to her brother as a wife. He was called Munana. He said he was going to protect me, and I believed him. I was at that point separated from my sister Tina. That was the last time I heard from her until after the genocide.

He took me to the *interahamwe*. Their were four of them. I remember one was called Seseseke, and another Gisenyi. While at home I was raped by four men. Here I was to be raped by another four men.

I begged them to stop, but they refused. They said that we used to refuse Hutu men, and that now they have the right to do as they wished with us.

They then took me to their command post, at a place they called Soferwa, where they did their killing. When we arrived they put me with street kids and delinquents, saying that they had brought them Tutsi women to test. They kept us there for one month, raping us and doing with us what they wanted.

I was only 14 years old at the time. The Councillor's brother, Munana, was my old classmate. I begged him to keep me to himself, not allow me to be raped by everyone and anyone. But he didn't want anything more to do with me, so took me to find refuge in St. Famille Church. There were many refugees

Many *interahamwe* made regular visits to this church. They came in large numbers, taking me and other women out of the church to rape us. I lost count how many times this happened. I can't even begin to explain. This went on for two months. The *interahamwe* would bring soldiers who were

My name is Polly Toynbee. I'm a journalist at The Guardian. I'm here because what happened in Rwanda was a disgrace to the western world that stood by watching and letting it happen. It is just as shocking to hear that the survivors are still not getting the medical and financial support they need, especially the women who were serially raped and deliberately infected with the HIV virus.

Polly Toynbee  
Journalist

manning the roadblock, to show them stubborn Tutsi women who refused to have a Hutu man. They gave me to seven soldiers, who all raped me until they had enough of me.

## Life after the genocide

When the war ended, I was in St. Famille Church. One morning we woke up as usual, expecting the worst as usual, but there was no one around the church, except for refugees fleeing from the RPF soldiers. I ran home to see if anyone was there, and found my sister Tina. The house though had been razed, so we had to make and live in a small makeshift house.

Whilst out fetching water, I met an RPF soldier. He looked after me, and Tina, for 2 months. He bought us food, checked on us until mum returned.

I soon found I was pregnant. So was my sister Tina. As my mother is a devout Christian, she would not allow us to have an abortion. She said the children were innocent creatures, even though there were people willing to help get rid of unwanted babies from *interahamwe* pregnancies.

I carried the baby, but it died. I spent so much time in hospital unwell. We didn't know why. Then I found out. The doctor told me that I was HIV positive.

Luckily, my mum stayed strong for me. Otherwise I wouldn't have known what to do. She looked after me, gave me milk and nutrients. She would tell my young siblings to go easy on me, as they still had a life ahead that I didn't have. Every little money she earned, she spent to try helping me. By the end of the genocide, I had lost a great deal of weight, but I slowly began to start putting on weight again.

In our neighbourhood, we were the only Tutsis who survived. But neighbours, and people who had witnessed my ordeal, spread rumours. They would mock us, saying that the Tutsis had won. They would say that I was infected and useless.

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When you experience tragic events such as what happened in Rwanda ten years ago through a television set, I think it's very easy to assume that once the cameras stop filming, and the journalist stop reporting, that the suffering you're witness to ceases as well.

The work of the Survivors Fund is so important not only because it provides vital medical and financial support for those who have been affected by the genocide, but also because it reminds us that those who survived are still with us and that their needs and their stories must never be forgotten. I hope that we help to makes a difference.

Hattie Morahan  
Actor

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Sadly I have experienced at first hand one of my closest friends living with HIV. The fundamental difference though between my friend and Nathalie (who's testimony I am giving a voice) is quality of life. It is with this in mind that I whole heartedly support SURF's aim to give these brave women access to affordable treatment and the chance to live as normal a life as possible.

Hannah Waterman  
Actor

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I could find no peace living in Rwanda so I went to Uganda. I have since returned, but still get tormented about interahamwe raping me in the open. Everyone knows about it. I have no peace. I don't know. Just thinking about it all is traumatic. There is nothing we can really do.

Eleven years on from the genocide, I don't know how I will continue to survive. Those Hutus who violated me have their own families; they have married and have children. As for me, I will die with no child or future.

Life? I have no life. That is why I wanted to stay away in Uganda and never return to Rwanda.

I am not happy here. When I see my classmates, people I grew up with, it hurts. All I am waiting for, all I have to look forward to, is death. Nothing else. That's all there is left for me. I have no future. I have no life.

# THE TESTIMONY OF FERIDINA

**M**y name is Feridina. I am a survivor of the Rwandan genocide. This is my testimony.

On the 7th of April, I heard on the early morning news that the President had been killed in a plane crash. I suspected the worst, but had no idea of the scale of the atrocities that were to follow. In Nyarubuye, the killings didn't start until the 13th April. We were hearing stories from refugees fleeing neighbouring towns that Tutsis were being attacked and killed in Kigali, that organised gangs of well-armed men were looking for Tutsis to kill; that road blocks were being erected everywhere to stop Tutsis from escaping the slaughter.

Many refugees were coming to Nyarubuye seeking sanctuary in the church. We heard these stories of mass killings, but still did not think it would spread to our hometown. The death of ten Belgian soldiers and the Prime Minister was cause for great concern, but there had been unrest before, that was soon contained.

By the 11th of April, across the communes of Kibungo, people fled and homes burned. Many headed towards the Rusumo border with Tanzania, but many decided the parish church of Nyarubuye offered a safer refuge, hoping to buy time until the situation normalised.

I arrived at Nyarubuye Church on the 13th of April. I tried to find out what was going on.

Many refugees, mostly Tutsis but also some Hutus, had gathered. Many of the newer refugees arrived with machete wounds speaking of carnage. I returned home to bring my wife and children to the church and found that they had heard shooting and had already fled there. I returned, full of anxiety, but could not find them anywhere. The place was packed full of people crying, hungry, desperate and confused. I searched until it was too dark to find anyone. I heard stories that the massacres were intensifying, that mass slaughter and carnage was a reality.

On the 14th of April, the *interahamwe* began to arrive in large numbers from across the communes. We could see them preparing to attack the church, homes burning behind them. We decided to arm ourselves with stones and clubs. We marched towards the *interahamwe*, with a view to provide a line of defence to try to protect the women and children. Tutsis and Hutus were united in trying to stop the *interahamwe* from reaching the church.

At a market called Nyarutunga, our defence captured two *interahamwe* who were leading the attack. Some men, whom we had left behind, called for reinforcements and assistance from the police and gendarmerie. When they arrived, supposedly to protect us, they separated Tutsis from Hutus.

They ordered the Hutus who had joined with us in our defence to kill the Tutsis. Then they started shooting in all directions, killing and

wounding many refugees. They kept firing, while *interahamwe* hacked to death anyone that fell or attempted to escape. We ran in different directions. It was pandemonium. Most of those who died were women and children. They could not run as fast as men to avoid the grenades.

I managed to escape and returned to my house to see if my family had returned. I had a plan to escape to Tanzania. They were not there. They were at the church, but due to the thousands of refugees that had gathered there, I had not managed to locate them.

I went back to the church, where thousands more people had gathered in the churchyard. Many more were hiding in the church. There was hardly room to move, never mind search for them. As darkness began to fall I still had not found them, but decided anyhow to spend the night there.

Early in the morning of the 15th of April, the killers came. They were stripping people to take their clothes, stealing anything valuable, demanding money.

I managed to enter the church, which was packed, climbing and jumping over people. There were people everywhere. I found a young man I knew who told me that he had seen my family. That was a relief, but I still had to find them. I eventually reached them. We tried to leave, but we couldn't negotiate our way out of the packed church especially with two distressed children.

That afternoon, the Mayor of Rusumo, Sylvestre Gacumbitsi, arrived. People ventured out of the church to speak with him, to tell him the problems they were facing.

Many people were by now hungry, especially the elderly and the children. Many had

diarrhoea and the children were getting dehydrated and sick. The situation was bad.

The Mayor had come in a convoy with many soldiers accompanying him, along with local businessmen from Kibungo, including a former government official called Cyasa and a well-known trader called Nzabonimana. They had brought with them countless *interahamwe*. As the refugees gathered to hear what the Mayor was going to say, thousands more *interahamwe* descended on the church waving machetes, sticks, and clubs, joining the Mayor's entourage. They began to encircle the church, with us trapped in the middle.

The Mayor signalled the start of the killing, using a machete to hack down a man. He then gave orders for the soldiers and *interahamwe* to begin the massacre. They began to fire indiscriminately into the crowds. Chaos and carnage broke loose. Shooting and cries could be heard from everywhere, and then the explosions rang out as grenades were thrown into the crowd.

Many people fell. Some retreated into the church, while others fled in all directions. Shots were fired and grenades thrown through the windows of the church.

My family and I were still in church unhurt. But we struggled to get outside, away from the church and the flying bullets and grenades. Many people were killed in the stampede to escape. Those who got out, met only more bullets. Many fell, while others were forced back into the church.

Grenades thrown in church exploded on people, scattering their body parts around. Many people lay injured, unable to move, and bodies piled up on top of each other.

I was aware of the facts but shamefully not the detail. As a journalist, the term 'Rwandan genocide' was more than familiar but how much did I actually know about the people who lived it and survived it? Not enough, which is why I decided to take part in the Reading of the Testimonies. Of course it was an honour to be asked and it wasn't something I was likely to say no to, but the day has changed my outlook. Reading the words, meeting the survivors and organisers has opened my eyes – everyone's eyes must be opened.

Amanda Walker  
Journalist

My family managed to escape into the backyard of the church. With other refugees, we closed the door to the yard and pushed it to stop the *interahamwe* and soldiers getting to us. But the shooting continued, and soon grenades were being thrown over the wall of the courtyard. I was lucky to be near the door: the grenades missed me.

With my family I managed to escape to the priests' houses. I knew this place very well. I prayed here always, and I knew the priests too. The priests tried to console us and asked us to pray. My family was sitting down in a corner of the house. The shooting continued non-stop around us. The bullets were too much to bear. I tried to climb the fence fearing that we would eventually be overcome by *interahamwe* who were now harassing the priests to hand us over to them.

Unfortunately the *interahamwe* spotted us. I saw them coming and ran to hide amongst the dead bodies. There were many bodies so I pushed my weight under them. But my wife and children were caught.

Before they killed my wife, they raped her. I saw it all. They gang-raped her. I managed to see five men, after which I could not see. My senses failed me. I fell unconscious. My youngest child, whom she was breastfeeding, was torn from her and smashed against a wall and died straight away. My other child rubbed his fingers begging for mercy and pardon, as if he had done something wrong. A group of *interahamwe* hacked him to pieces with machetes. He too died.

After they had raped my wife, they began debating who should take her home for a wife. They decided that all should have a piece of her. One man cut her arm off, and one the other. They tore her to shreds so that no-one could have her.

Every day, many women and girls were raped. Some were spared as future wives, but many were killed after the sexual ordeal. No-one would say anything. It was time to die. Families could only watch helplessly as their loved ones cried out for mercy or help.

I watched all this happen. It's a miracle I survived. Each night the shooting usually stopped when the *interahamwe* returned home. I would emerge from under the dead bodies to see if there were any survivors. Apart from my immediate family, all my relatives had sought sanctuary in the church;

Being involved in the 'Remember Rwanda' campaign has been an honour and a privilege. At one point I was helping to edit these testimonies, I must have read at least 50, each story full of unspeakable horrors. These women, men and children had been through so much, one wonders how they move on from their harrowing past; but they do, because these survivors personify the strength, courage and resilience that is human spirit. They are examples to us all, and lessons.

As I worked my way through the dozens of testimonies I consciously kept my anger, that this was allowed to happen, alive. I never wanted to become desensitized to mass cruelty, to mass horror, to genocide. So even now as I write this quote, my heart goes out to every innocent human being who bears the scar of this atrocity. May their wounds heal. May they repair their lives and be happy. May we all advance to a future of oneness and awareness so that this may never ever happen again. But until we are there, may we never forget.

Josie D'Arby  
Actor

over 200 of them. They were all killed, one by one. I thought, well, they have killed all my family, why am I still alive?

Days passed by. *Interahamwe* would find people to kill, but here I was still alive. The bodies were beginning to decompose and the smell was unbearable. *Interahamwe* could not bear it any longer and they stopped coming back to the church. I stayed with a handful of survivors, living among the thousands of dead bodies. So many people had been killed.

I was able to identify the bodies of all my relatives. I became hysterical. The grief was too much to bear. I wanted to die, to stop the pain. I left the church courtyard and ventured out hoping that I would be lucky enough to find someone to kill me.

I wandered from one roadblock to another asking people to kill me, but they refused. Hutu refugees had begun to flee to Tanzania in large numbers, apparently escaping the RPF soldiers who had arrived in Kibungo around the 22nd of April. I was rescued by RPF soldiers.

# THE TESTIMONY OF GAUDENCE

**M**y name is Gaudence. I am a survivor of the Rwandan genocide. This is my testimony.

In 1994 I was married with a baby. We were living in Muhima near the Kabuga business building.

It was on 7th of April 1994 at 5.30 in the morning that we first heard President Habyarimana was dead. My husband was terrified, saying that he knew the Tutsis would not survive. He went to hide at a neighbour's, but I stayed at home. My husband was right. That morning the worst things happened. People were herded into a beautiful new big compound near our house to be killed. We could see the killings through the windows of our house. Men armed with machetes, sticks and pangas hit people until they fell down dead. I began to pack things in a suitcase in order to flee that evening. I bathed my baby and dressed him.

## Widowed

A directive was issued, telling all men to join a neighbourhood security watch. My husband went but before leaving he told me: "I am going, but I am not sure I will be coming back." Indeed, it was not long until the men, including my husband, were attacked and killed.

I was frightened to stay at home alone, so I visited a neighbour. She told me someone had just been killed: it was my husband. Before I could hear the details, a group of

I am 34. I am a widow, a single mother of two, positive, brave and vulnerable. Since my beloved husband died suddenly last year I have begun the open-ended task of rebuilding my shattered life; redefining my relationships with the world and all those around me.

Still existing somewhere between the extremes of shock and calm, fateful acceptance, I feel a profound and humble connection with the Rwandan survivors. Though positive about my new future, I also realise that in one year, two years, ten years, that pain, loss and grief doesn't go away. One survives another year only to emotionally endure the next, and the next, and the next. My heart truly goes out to those who lost their loved ones in the Rwandan genocide, and applauds the work of SURF for actively working to create a brighter future for those left behind.

Imogen Harvey Lee  
Stained Glass Maker

more than 30 men came into the house asking: "Where is Alphonse's wife?"

"Here I am," I said.

"Take us first to your house and give us money," said one of them.

"There is no money at home," I answered. They told me to go with them.

The minute I received the e-mail about the Survivors Fund Reading of Testimonies in Trafalgar Square I decided to sign up. (Later on it dawned on me that I had agreed to read in front of an audience). I didn't realise the scale of the day but I just thought it was a way to make a small contribution.

At the time of the genocide I was miles away, mentally and physically. I was chasing a two-year-old and expecting a second baby, and I was living in Budapest.

Everyone failed Rwanda and Rwandans at the time of the genocide but I can make a difference by keeping the survivors' plight – past and present – in the hearts and minds of people today.

Michele Beity  
Art Consultant

I was carrying my baby on my back. On the way, I passed one of our neighbours, Papa Louis. I asked Papa to look after my baby, but he was seriously injured and could not manage it. So we continued, my baby still on my back. We finally arrived at the compound next to home, when the men immediately struck me with whatever they had to hand: machetes, axes, clubs, sticks, swords and spears. I knew that I was going to die and prayed, asking God to forgive me all my sins.

## Bereaved

Then I heard a voice saying: "This baby who is shouting must be silenced." They hit him just once and he died immediately. After killing him and leaving me for dead, they closed the gate of the compound and went to find other people to kill.

I could hear people crying out in agony, calling for help until one by one they breathed their last breaths. I was badly injured and

covered in my own blood, blood from my baby and blood from other people. I didn't know whether I was alive or dead. I took my baby off my back, made a small bed with the clothing I was carrying him in, and put him to lie near his father. I covered him and felt he was safe with his father.

It was then that I realised I was not dead. I was the only person in the compound still moving; everyone else was silent because they had died.

I managed to escape from the compound, but did not know whether I should go home. People saw me staggering around, and it was a miracle that no-one shouted at me. I was covered with blood and my head had been smashed open. I was numb and could not feel any pain. Then I saw a lady staring at me. I asked her if she could take me to her house. She was my neighbour and wife of one of the men who had tried to kill me in the compound. She shouted to her husband to come and finish me off. The husband came and said: "She is going to die very soon; I will not waste my energy on her." He left me.

## Hidden

I continued walking aimlessly and saw a boy. I asked him to hide me at his house. He told me he couldn't let me in because there were killers waiting at the gate. He said he would monitor the situation and come back for me in the evening. He eventually returned, and smuggled me into the compound where I found many people hidden there. When they saw me, they were afraid. I too was shocked to see them and fainted. When his father came, he thought I was dead, and put me in a small house where they kept turkeys. The other people who were hiding there were afraid and went to find somewhere else to hide.

I could hear the family debating whether I was dead but I couldn't move, let alone speak. They forced tea down my throat, and I swallowed a little. They kept giving me tea and on the following day I fully regained consciousness. Then they told me that they were planning to leave and so had to find another place for me. I was too weak to go anywhere. Their grandmother had a house nearby, behind the compound. The next evening they broke down the fence between the houses and carried me there.

When the grandmother saw me, she was afraid because she said I looked like an animal. I told her I had been asked to come to her and hide because I was too weak to go anywhere else. She was poor and there was no light in her house but she took pieces of wood and made a fire. Then she cleaned me, gave me some of her clothes, and dressed the wound on my head with a piece of cloth where my brain was exposed. But when she gave me food, I could not lift my arm to eat. She saw milk coming out of my breast, and asked me if I was pregnant or had a baby. I said: "I left my baby with his father, but they were both killed." She was very sad.

### Refuge

In the morning she washed my clothes, which were covered with blood, and then tried to take me to a hospital for medicine. But there were roadblocks everywhere and many Tutsis were being killed. People were crying in pain, while others were singing and dancing every time a Tutsi fell and died. The old lady waited until evening and asked a soldier who was their neighbour to take me to the hospital. He came with his car and took me in with the old lady and two of her grandsons. The old woman stuffed clothes under my jumper to pretend I was pregnant and in labour. As we reached each roadblock, the soldier explained he was taking his pregnant

wife who was about to give birth. We arrived at the hospital where I was admitted and my wounds treated. My rescuers left me there, promising to come back to visit me.

Many people had taken refuge at the hospital. But some time later, *interahamwe* arrived to carry on the killing. Many people managed to escape, including most of the in-patients. But I couldn't move. I felt as though I had died again. I cannot say that I was sleeping; it was as if I were dead. After some days – I don't know how long I lay in the valley of death – one of the hospital workers recognised me whilst checking up on the people left. He informed my husband's relatives, but they didn't come to my rescue. Nor did the hospital worker.

I lost count of the days I was left there. I had injuries all over and soon there were maggots eating my wounds on my head, on my face, on my body. I was covered in maggots and smelt so bad. It was during that time I learned the difference between body and spirit. The body was completely dead but my spirit was still alive inside the rotten body.

Then I began to reflect. "I thought I was still alive, but I realise I am dead. Is this how all dead people are? Do they see their bodies?" A miracle had happened to me because I had not eaten for days; I learnt that one can live without eating. I prayed to God to lift my spirit out of my maggot-ridden body. I don't know how, but most of the maggots disappeared, except in my head and on my right hip where the wounds were excessively deep and open. Other hospital workers came to watch me die, refusing to treat me. They could see my eyes were open, looking at them.

### Paralysed

Maggots made a trail from my body to the door. The hospital workers put on rubber

boots and gloves and pulled me outside. They did not lift me up but instead dragged me on the ground like a dead animal. They then cleaned the room. While outside, it rained. It was good for me because I finally had water to drink, although it was painful because I could not move my arms and had to drink like an animal.

When they had finished cleaning the room, they pulled me back in again. But after some time the maggots came back. The workers cleaned the room again and this time shaved my hair with a new razor blade. They discovered that my head was covered in wounds, which they disinfected. They tried to feed me porridge, saying: "Tutsis are special. They die and come back again to life. But let us see what will happen to this person." After treatment I would try to sit up, but my right side was completely paralysed. It was as if I had no right arm, no right leg and no right side. People, especially children, would come and watch me through the glass in the door. They had never seen anything that looked like me locked up in a room.

I was very thirsty and whenever I heard somebody passing I shouted for water. But this cry was in vain, as no-one helped. Then I heard the sound of many boots, so I shouted loudly: "You people!" A worker came and told me to be quiet because it was soldiers looking for Tutsis to kill. If they heard me, they would shoot me. But I kept shouting and some soldiers finally arrived. They saw me, a dead body who could not even move. They asked me how I was doing. "I have been locked up in this room and no-one lets me out," I said. They ordered the workers to open the room.

### Pity

When the soldiers saw me they took pity. "When did this lady come here?" asked the

soldiers. "On April 8," replied the worker. "What does she eat?" they asked. I shouted that they had refused to give me water. I tried to crawl to them, begging them to kill me but the soldiers pushed me back into the room and angrily ordered the workers to find me some food. They said that if I died they would be in trouble.

The worker brought water in a small five-litre jerry can and I drank it as if I had stolen it, fearing that they would stop me drinking. They gave me food once a day but because my arms were not functioning I could only eat with my mouth like an animal. After nearly two weeks I was able to sit up, despite my injuries. The workers said this meant that I would not die. They stopped giving me food and water. I decided to try to escape.

As I could not walk, I had to crawl. I moved slowly along the ground, like a reptile, and finally arrived at a road. I crossed it, coming to a place where aubergines were planted. When I saw children passing, I asked them to give me some aubergines to eat. I continued crawling. When I arrived at the main road, people came to see me because I was something interesting to watch. Even the *interahamwe* came to look at me, but no-one would kill me because no-one kills a dead person.

A soldier approached me, saying: "This thing is making our town dirty. Let me kill and remove this dirt." He took his gun and loaded it. As he was about to fire, his colleague came running up to him, grabbing his arm saying: "Can't you find people to kill? Is this someone to kill? Do you want to put this one on the list of those you killed?" They left me. After that, it rained heavily and I was left alone. When the rain stopped people returned and took me back to the hospital. It was difficult to carry me. When the workers



saw me, they insulted me because they hadn't given me authorisation to discharge myself. They tried forcing me back into my old room, but I didn't want to lie there. I wanted them to kill me and end my misery, but they couldn't.

### Recognised

I crawled back to the main road, hoping to meet angry *interahamwe* who would kill me. Some ladies saw me and took pity on me and told me where I was. I saw many Red Cross cars passing, and hoped one might stop. One did, but when they saw me they almost vomited and drove off.

From morning to evening I waited by the road, cars passing but not one stopping. Then, late in the evening some policemen passed. One hit me with his gun. I looked him in the eye and recognised him because he knew my father, Bakundukize Jacques, and used to come to our house. When he hit me a second time, I asked him why he was beating me. He became afraid and left me.

I crawled across the road to a house where a lady recognised me. She took pity on me and gave me a sweet potato. Then she took me into her kitchen and made a fire for me. I slept by the ashes and had a nice sleep.

Her husband returned home early in the morning and told me to leave because he didn't want anyone to see me in the house. I left through their back door onto a gravel path. The stones entered my wounds and it was agony. When I reached the road, I was covered in blood. People saw me and recognised me from the hospital. They wondered how I had managed to get there. A good man took pity and along with his wife cleaned my wounds and took me to a valley nearby and left me out in the sun. I was like an exhibition, and people came to see me

exclaiming: "That woman who was at the hospital is now in the valley!"

### Spared

Later on, the *interahamwe* came and the good man told them to spare me. In the evening a little girl came and told me her mother said that if I went to their house they would give me food. They lived up the hill, but I could not climb as I could not walk and my whole body was covered with wounds. I tried to crawl instead but it was impossible. I asked people passing by to carry me, but they refused. A soldier with Bible in hand passed by, and I asked him, but he said he couldn't help because other soldiers would kill him if they saw him. But he did give me 200 francs to give to the children to go and buy me a drink. He left me, and other soldiers asked me what we were talking about. I was surprised when they agreed to help him carry me. They were frightened to be seen so they left me near the house. I called the woman's children and told them to tell their mother I had made it.

She sent her daughters to carry me. The mother prepared warm water and washed me, helping to clean off the maggots. She gave me clothes and laid out a mattress in the small house behind hers. They began to care for me. They brought me food, and after eating I slept.

### Rescue

My time there was hard, as the Tutsis still alive were being aggressively hunted down. The woman's husband was a Hutu, but she was a Tutsi. She could not leave the house. The *interahamwe* would search local houses each day to try to find Tutsis in hiding. For some time on, they did not come to the small house, until one day I awoke to see them opening the door and entering my room. I was concealed and though they looked everywhere they did not find me.

The lady had not told her husband that I was there, but she thought that now she should. Her husband took pity on me but was afraid that the *interahamwe* would find me and kill them all. He told his wife that she had to find another hiding place for me. She told me but said that she would continue to take care of me. She took me to a neighbouring house, recently abandoned. She continued to feed me and help in every way she did before. I began the long road to recovery, and in time could even make it to the outside toilet on my own.

The RPF soon made it to our regions, but we did not know. Then one day, there was a massive noise of gunshots. The next day, I waited for people to bring me food but nobody came. After a long time a child came and told me that her mother had sent her. She ran off before I could follow her outside to see where she went. I decided to go to the family's house but it was shut up. Even the curtains were drawn. Nobody was there, not even a bird. I saw many bullet holes. I prayed and asked God where I should go. At that moment I saw an RPF soldier. He shouted to me to join a group of people down the hill where I could receive treatment.

Miraculously, among the soldiers treating me there was one I had previously met at Kibogora when I was doing a survey for ONAPO. I recognised him and he recognised me. He gave me powder to make drinks, and they gave me food.

### Treatment

A short time later, I became very sick. I was taken to Kigali Central Hospital, vomiting and suffering terribly. They took me to intensive care and I nearly died again. I fell into a coma and was in intensive care for two weeks. They were expecting me to die, but I clung on to life.

They moved me to another ward where I remained in a coma for months. No-one can count the number of serums that were injected in me. Sometimes, the nurses covered me, believing that I was dead, then realising that I wasn't. I remained like that for months and months; not alive, but not dead. Many doctors assessed that my head injuries were too serious to operate on.

After a long time I regained consciousness. But I could not recognise people or objects. I could hear but could not speak nor understand what I was hearing. Slowly I began to communicate with people using gestures. Someone asked a doctor who I was and he said that I was Gaudence. I used gestures to ask the meaning of Gaudence and the doctor told me that it was my name. I was amazed to learn that I had one. He began to teach me to say my name.

I had forgotten how to read and write. I could not recognise anyone, not even my mother or my friends. Today I still cannot read and write, but I plan to learn again. I can read and write Gaudence, and hope to build on this start.

Today, I am still suffering because my treatment hasn't healed me completely. The doctors recommend surgery abroad, but the Government Fund for Rwanda cannot afford to pay for me. I pray to be healed. Maybe one day someone will help me.

**Gaudence was sponsored in 2004 to go to South Africa for surgery, after recording her testimony. She is now able to read and write. She has made a tremendous recovery and is now hopeful for the future.**

# THE TESTIMONY OF CLARE

**M**y name is Clare. I am a survivor of the Rwandan genocide. This is my testimony.

I was born in Kibuye, Gitesi. I was married to Leonel. Both he and my two children were killed in the genocide. Only my brother and I survived. I am now 30 years old.

At the time, we were living in Muhima where my husband was a technician for Radio Rwanda and I was a trader. When the genocide began my daughter was away working in Kibungo. We waited for her to come home, but we ourselves were in danger. I found out later that my daughter had been killed at her grandfather's home.

On the 11th of April, the killings began. I was taken captive, and experienced all forms of torture. I was beaten and hit badly. I was forced to drink blood from dead and injured people.

On the 3rd of May, with my son, the *interahamwe* took us to a pit by a roadside to be killed. We were pushed in alive. Then a grenade was thrown in. I lost consciousness.

After a while I came to. It felt like I was in a dream, but then I was sure I heard someone passing by. I called out for help. Someone answered, whispering to me to stop calling. He said if the killers heard me they were sure to come back to finish me off.

He told me to keep silent and promised he

would return when darkness came to rescue me, if I was still alive. I lay as still as I could. I had no idea what day or what time it was; or how long I'd been in the pit.

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I hope that reading these testimonies will go some way towards letting the survivors know that they won't be forgotten in our hearts.

Gayathoi Chidambi  
Psychologist

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After some time I began to feel my senses, and memory, return. I remembered who I was. I felt alive. I remembered being taken to the pit, what the killers said at the pit. And then I remembered my son. But when I reached out to touch him, I could only feel his smashed skull.

Surely he couldn't be dead. I kept thinking perhaps the body next to me wasn't him. After all there were lots of bodies in the pit. That evening, as light began to fail, the man I'd talked to returned. He called out to see if I was still alive. I told him I was.

He asked whether I knew where I was injured. I told him I wasn't sure, but I believed that if I tried to stand up I wouldn't be able to. He told me to check my legs, as without them he wouldn't be able to get me out. If I couldn't move, he said he could find

someone to kill me to save me from the agony of a slow death.

He said he wouldn't be able to hide me because if he was seen carrying me, the *interahamwe* would kill us both. So he left to find other people to help him take me to Saint Famille Church. After a while he returned with another man. They asked me to tie a rope around my chest. When I tried to do this I realised I had lost my arm. When the man asked what was happening, he told me to check that my legs hadn't been injured. That was when I felt a gaping hole in my right leg.

The man comforted me, saying not to worry; that if my chest wasn't hurt, they'd be able to get me out. But then, when I felt my chest, there was a big gash between my breasts. I told the man my chest was hurt. He told me to put the rope around my waist, and to hold on to the edges of the pit to try and find the steps, which the men who'd dug the pit had used to get in and out. He kept encouraging me to keep feeling my way around the pit with my injured hand. By shining his torch in the pit, he was able to guide me to the steps.

Then the man carefully began to pull me up, telling me that both men would pick me up with their hands once I reached near the surface. But I was full of fear and anxiety, because I thought they might want to kill me. In my panic I kept falling back into the hole. This went on for nearly thirty minutes as I kept falling back in again and again.

Eventually the men devised a plan to double the rope under my chest, then tying it to my good arm. In this way they were able to pull me out of the pit. They then took me to a ministry building near Muhima, where they left me to try to find something to tie my shattered arm and bandage my chest.

On their return, they took me to Saint Famille Church from where the Red Cross were taking those seriously injured like me to King Faisal Hospital. From here I was taken to Byumba where my arm – by now rotten and covered in maggots – was amputated.

As soon as they'd treated my injuries I started feeling better. Then the RPF took over and I knew the worst was over.

I look back on the horrific ordeal the *interahamwe* put us through: how they raped us, tortured us with the most malicious pain, beat us and stripped our clothes off in public – in broad daylight. So many bad things were done to us. But for me, the worst was

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I'm a mother of two children and I live in London. I've come to take part in the Reading of the Testimonies because I think it's shameful that the female survivors of the Rwandan genocide who are HIV positive haven't got access to free antiretroviral drugs. These women have already viewed untold horrors – seeing their families massacred only to be raped by the men who perpetrated these horrors.

Our governments stood by and allowed the genocide to happen. The least we can do is to provide a lifeline to the women we let down. The cost, in Western terms, is so little. The benefit to a whole generation of youngsters in Rwanda would be so great: they would have their mothers around.

Helen Baxendale  
Actress

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the way they made me drink the blood of the soldiers, saying it was my fault, that they had been injured by my relatives.

The worst torture was the rape. The killers came 10 to 15 men at a time, each taking turns. You'd lose count of how many raped you. But I recognise six of the rapists who still live here in this community.

The legacy of the rape will remain with us forever, because we're now HIV positive and dying from AIDS. Slowly, I am beginning to observe my body disintegrate. It became obvious that we must have been infected when we saw those who raped us dying from AIDS. All forms of infection are an everyday ordeal, a potential death threat.

Once I had a family. Today, I live alone. I have no children; no husband. Now just living is a challenge. If only I had a home to go back to. But I am typical of so many women survivors who are sole survivors,

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I am 28 years old and live in South London. I was horrified to learn of the atrocities suffered by the women of Rwanda in the 1994 conflict. It's hard to believe that in this day and age these women are still suffering when there is so much that can be done to improve their lives.

Sally McEwan  
Interior Stylist

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managed to build homes for widows. AVEGA helps me and others living with HIV/AIDS. We ask a lot from them, but they are patient with us and they help provide drugs for us to stave off and fight opportunistic infections.

I wish a sponsor might hear our story and help galvanise support to help AVEGA, which is our only hope to have a chance of life.

My dream is to have a home of my own. I don't have a house, but rent accommodation. But I worry about keeping up the rent. If a well-wisher were to build me a home, I would be very lucky.

**As we raced to produce this book of testimonies, those involved with the project were shattered to learn that Clare died prior to the publication of her testimony in print. While we are saddened by the loss, we can take some solace knowing that at least Clare's story lives on. For others, it may not. Clare's passing has been a brutal reminder of how we must race against time so as to document the tragedies inflicted upon the survivors of the Rwandan genocide. We must document the lives of all 'Clares' so that the world does not forget them.**

whose homes were also destroyed. Life for me is hard. I am disabled. I can't do anything and I don't have the means to do anything. I depend on charity and organisations such as AVEGA to help me meet basic needs, and access medical support, food and clothing. AVEGA has even

# MARY'S STORY

## Stories they do tell

I consider it an honour and a privilege to work on behalf of, and represent, survivors of the Rwandan genocide. I am not the most patient and attentive individual, however working with survivors has disciplined me. Above all, it has taught me how to listen. At the same time I have learnt more about myself through finding ways to relieve the distress of others.

To be honest, sometimes I do not know whether I am lucky or unlucky that survivors trust me enough to feel able to tell me their stories. Many stories still remain unspoken and untold. It is one of the reasons that I set up the Survivors Fund: to give a voice to survivors; more importantly, to honour those who were killed in cold blood. Why is it important to tell the story?

## Disclosure is a personal burden

My personal experiences have prepared me to dedicate my life to survivors of genocide and to help them speak out. My parents protected me from the pain of sharing their horrific experiences as they had fled Rwanda during the 1959 revolution, a revolution that foreshadowed the genocide that was to come 35 years later. My maternal grandparents, as well as other relatives, lost their lives in this massacre. Many people, however, have no comprehension of this history. One cannot understand the genocide of 1994 without charting the extent of the persecution of Tutsis which preceded the horrific 100 hundred days in which one million Rwandans lost their lives.

My paternal grandfather had remained in Rwanda during the 1959 revolution, but he came to Burundi for my father's funeral. On his return he took with him my youngest brother and sister. We were to remain separated for years. I was so young that I can barely remember the separation, and cannot recall my mother speaking about it much. I can only imagine now that this must have been her way of dealing with the tragic situation, a way of coping that I was to see again and again later in life.

Before meeting my mother, my stepfather had spent seven years in a Rwandan prison. My mother had witnessed first-hand death and destruction. Neither had any help or support, except through each other, to be able to deal with this trauma. It still amazes me that despite everything they had been through, they never shouted or argued, and at least to me, never allowed their despair to show or hate to rear its ugly head.

Having worked with survivors, I now know how this is possible. The denial, helplessness, guilt and despair were forced into the shadows in order to focus on the immediate needs of providing food and shelter for the family. They literally had no time to think of their loss and grief.

## Genocide

I spoke to my brother, Jean Baptist, on the phone just two weeks before the killings started. I told him to leave the country but he just laughed and said that I was such a big

sister, always worrying. It was to be the last time I ever heard from him. He was among the first people killed in the genocide. I learnt of his death from refugees who were fleeing the country.

As soon as I could, I flew to Rwanda; what I saw and heard then I will never forget. I saw bodies floating down the Kagera River to Lake Victoria in Uganda. I heard stories from survivors that had managed to escape that made my emotions freeze.

Everywhere I went smelt of death. Bodies were literally piled up as they were removed from mass graves. I remained numb all this time, but could not cry. God and the survivors: only they know how horrendous it must have been to be in Rwanda over those 100 days.

In previous conflicts my family had always found sanctuary in my grandfather's village. This time was no different. But by then, four weeks into the massacres, many people were telling of horrific death in the capital. Foreign nationals were being airlifted from Rwanda. In rural areas, such as my grandfather's village, people thought the massacres would not spill over, believing that only those involved in politics and business were being sought. No-one anticipated the massacres that followed. It was literally unimaginable then to believe the scale and scope of the killings.

Together with other locals, members of my family congregated in the local school. They were told to wait for the local mayor to address them about their security. But they were soon herded into a classroom, where they were locked up until the *interahamwe* (literally: "those who attack together") were trucked in, all armed with machetes.

My niece was one of the few to survive the massacre, and told me exactly what had happened and who was there. In all, 50 members of my family were slaughtered in cold blood in 1994.

## Survivors

After tending to the dead, I then turned my attention to those who survived. Many survivors thought it a miracle that they had escaped with their lives. Speaking with them, the full impact and implications of the genocide slowly started to sink in. Every story I heard added a new chapter to my understanding of what happened, as I began to absorb the pain of the survivors and better understand what they had been through and felt.

During my time in Rwanda I met many women who told me confidentially how they had been raped and deliberately infected with HIV during the genocide. They were not alone, as thousands of women were put through the same dehumanising and degrading experience – many in front of their own families, who were then killed whilst they were allowed to live, being told by their rapists: "You alone are being allowed to live, only so that you will die of sadness." Many of these women are now dying from AIDS-related illness.

Despite having survived the ordeal, many, not even knowing how many times or by how many men they had been raped, were still able to come to terms with their experiences and somehow, incredibly, get on with their lives. As time has passed, I fully understand and live their pain. But as I listened to their stories then, all I could feel was helplessness and guilt for having survived and not suffered like them.

Many trusted me with the only possession they had after losing their entire families: their memories. It was like opening Pandora's Box. In thousands, they told their experiences to me. Every day I would sit through testimonies of despair. I soon began to experience a physical, as well as mental, numbness from sharing their pain. I would literally block my mind and focus on how to help and ameliorate those who were pouring out their feelings and stories to me, whilst at the same time seemingly listening.

Many told me that they felt safe and able to speak to me exactly because I listened to them. But they had no idea: I was in my own fantasy world, thinking of how to fix... fix... fix... something. How to turn the clock back, so that I could tell them it was all a dream. But it wasn't a dream. These were really people. This was real life. It was fact.

So there I was. I listened and, as each night fell, I cried myself to sleep. I cried for my family. I cried for the survivors; for the pain their families went through before they died. I cried for all the dead who didn't see another day to tell their stories. I cried for me, and the trust placed in me to help all those who witnessed the worst nightmare of their lives. But every night, I emptied my mind to make space in my head for more stories the next day.

Revisiting memories, thus experiencing again what they had been through, was a big challenge for some, especially children. Many instead preferred the solitude of silence, to protect themselves from the fear of

being listened to – and of listening to themselves.

Sometimes I wanted to ask them about their stories, but I feared the description of the sights, smells and sounds of human destruction that they were forced to witness; nevermind the descriptions of the deaths of their family and friends. I suppose I wanted to live their lives, to remember their pain and draw energy from it so that it would enable me to make sure that they and their stories are never forgotten.

### **Survivors Fund**

The time I spent with survivors inspired me to think about what more I could do to help. I wanted desperately to do something constructive, to channel my anger and negative energy positively. Survivors were ready to share their memories with me, memories of their loved ones. They trusted me, with no guarantee that I would make their lives better. They had only one thing they asked of me: "Please don't let the world ever forget what happened to us."

Each survivor would tell me the same thing that I too felt: that they had survived only to serve as witnesses, for the world to draw lessons from their experiences and to try to ensure that this should never happen to anyone in the world again. I felt a call to support survivors, to use their pain to educate others about the suffering that should, and could, have been so easily prevented. Only by doing so would I be able to make sense of my life.

That is why I set up the Survivors Fund: to help me to help the survivors of the Rwandan genocide. It became a relief, because finally I could do something to help my people, because sadly, the genocide did not stop when the killing ended. It continues today.

This book is a vital part of the work of the Survivors Fund. It ensures that the testimonies of the survivors are recorded for posterity, ever more pressing as we lose more and more survivors to HIV/AIDS. We hope that this will be the first of a series, to be used as an educational tool in the UK and countries worldwide to inform and educate more people about the experiences and plights of survivors of the Rwandan genocide. Just as importantly, we hope that it will

provide support to survivors, to show that they are not alone and, in time, to encourage them to speak out as well.

We all have a responsibility to act to stop human suffering. Survivors Fund has taught me that all of us must play our part and make our voices heard too, because only by working together can we make a real difference.

**Mary Kayitesi Blewitt**  
Founder and Director  
Survivors Fund (SURF)

# AFTERWORD: LETTERS OF THANKS FROM SURVIVORS

Kigali 24/05/2005

SURF – Rwanda  
National Coordinator

## Re: Thank You

I am delighted to get an opportunity firstly to pass on my heartfelt greetings and my best wishes.

Secondly, to thank you for the support you have given me, and the continued commitment you have shown to the survivors of the Rwandan genocide. You have enabled me to rebuild my life after genocide, especially a home you built for me in Gitarama village; you have helped me to bury my dead relatives who perished in the genocide with dignity, not to mention helping us to look after our siblings; and your support to Solace Ministries. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I am now back to school and my siblings are in school too, we hope that you will stay with us and help us grow into responsible adults.

I thank you again and wish SURF and Solace Ministries the best in your endeavours. Your love to us and dedication will remain with us forever.

May God bless you all.

Thank you,

Munyaneza Samson

Kigali 24/05/2005

MUNYANEZA SAMSON

SURF - RWANDA  
Coordination Nationale

objet: Gushimira

Njewe mu muwanya muna  
mbonye, mbere ya byose mbonye kubaramutse mufuriza  
amashuri no gushimira mu byo umukora byose.

Mubwira nero nanatse nyira ngo  
mbashimira inkunga mubonye burashya mutuzirika twa abanyarwanda  
barokotse ihururu na GENOCIDE, natashimira inkunga yose  
muwanya ngo mbashimira ubushyamba umuho ya GENOCIDE  
mubonye yabonye byari mu muryango wa GITARAMA, aheretse  
imibiri yabonye byari mu muryango wa GITARAMA, aheretse  
imibiri yabonye byari mu muryango wa GITARAMA, aheretse  
SOLACE MINISTRIES mbashimira byari mu muryango wa  
GITARAMA uhera barahamye inkunga yanyu n'ubundi  
kuzira ngo mugira umuho twavuye abanyarwanda nyabagabo  
kandi byari mu muryango wa GITARAMA aheretse abanyarwanda.

Nongeye nero kubashimira, no kubifu-  
riza umugisha, ubonyobozirira SURF RWANDA hamwe  
n'ubonyobozirira SOLACE MINISTRIES inkunga yanyu n'ubundi  
muwanya mutuzirira muri byinshi imuna ibanyarwanda itaka.

Murakoze

Munyaneza Samson

23/05/2005

**RE: Thank you to SURF for all your support**

Board of Trustees,

To the Director and Governors of SURF, I am happy to be able to write to you, and to extend my sincere gratitude for your support and to wish you the best in your everyday tasks.

In short, I can't stop thanking you for coming to my rescue when I was drowning in problems beyond my control. You responded and my life has been transformed both at home and at school.

You have ensured that I don't go without food, without school – even my siblings are in school because of your support. There is so much I can't express... you have been there for me and I can never find the words to say thank you.

I always pray to God to protect you and to grant you the best in your work.

**Uwurukundo Julienne**

Je 23/05/2005.

UWURUKUNDO Julienne

Impamvu: Gushinira  
inkunga matwe n'  
umuryango wa SURF

Umuryango wa SURF.

Bwana Muryango w' umuryango  
wa SURF.

Nejewe no kubandikira iy' ikabwira yo kubashimira inkunga niza mwanteye, zose sinamwe ikabwira umuryango w' umuryango wa SURF.

Muri make, Bwana Muryango, sinze kubashimira inkunga mwanteye ukwari muri inkunga niza mwanteye, zose sinamwe ikabwira umuryango w' umuryango wa SURF. Muri make, inkunga niza mwanteye, zose sinamwe ikabwira umuryango w' umuryango wa SURF. Muri make, inkunga niza mwanteye, zose sinamwe ikabwira umuryango w' umuryango wa SURF.

UWURUKUNDO Julienne



18/04/2005

To the Director of SURF,

I am writing to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I will never forget your support, the extraordinary thing you did for me, which has become a living testimony of your love and dedication. My head had a hole and had been shattered by the injuries I sustained during the genocide. You helped me receive the crucial surgery which has transformed my life.

I had tried everywhere before; you passed the test of time... empathy and love for people like me. I can only pray that the God of heavens and earth gives you everlasting blessings.

I am a living example of a second miracle, my head is healed, my senses are back and the constant pain has long gone.

Thank you. I always have you in my prayers.

God bless you,

**M. Gaudence**

le 18/4/05

SURF RWANDA  
Received  
Date: 18.10.4.2005

Ku Muyobosi wa SURF,

Mbandikiye ngirango mbagezeho Ishimwe mbashima  
nyuzuye umutima wanjye.

Sinzibagirwa ineza mwanginiye, Igikoma cyanyu cyo  
kumvuta cyabereye benshi ubuhanga bukomaye  
ku'urukundo. Umutwe wanjye wari wanjagawe  
n'interahamwe muri 1994, waharaga uragaye ukera  
ubu barwuvuye!

Nari naratabaye benshi nta gisubizo, maze  
mutsinda igitego cy'impuwe, cy'urukundo,  
namwe Imana yaremeye juu n'isi izabaye  
umugisha n'amahoro biva kuri yo.

Byabereye igitangaza abambona ubu buko  
ubwenge bwagarutse n'uburikwe bwa kuri  
Segenda buratunga.

Mwarakozze, nza herabashirikiye mu masengaho.

Uwitaka abaye umugisha.

M. Gaudence.  




Kigali, 23/05/2005

Dear SURF,

**RE: Thank you for being there**

I am extremely happy to be able to write to you with thanks for enabling me to go to school and getting out of poverty and despair.

I am an orphan: my parents were killed during the genocide and only myself and my sibling survived.

I want to thank you for giving me back my life. Through Solace Ministries you have enabled me to go to school, more importantly helping me to meet the basic needs. We orphans have no-one else to help us. We have many problems, being heads of households, providing for a household with no income, job or help. With your support and Solace Ministries' dedication to orphans, we are slowly rebuilding our lives.

I thank you.

**Nshimiyimana Felix**

Nshimiyimana Felix

Kigali, kuwa 23 Gicurasi 2005

IMPAMU: Gushima Inkunga  
mwa duteye.

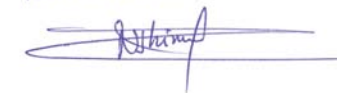
Muryango wa SURF,

Njijwe no kubandikira iyi barwa,  
mbashimira inkunga mwanteye yo kubasha kubona uburyo  
bwo kwiga no kwivana mu bukenye.

Mu by'ukuri, ndi umwana w'impfuye  
ku baturanyi bose bakaba barishwe mu gite cyo gashyamba, nkaba  
nkomekwe ku Bikongoro, ubu nkaba n'uburyo by'impfuye zireye akaba  
mbana n'undi mwana. Nkaba narashimiyemo inkunga yanyu  
mwanteye mu nyujije mu muryango wacu uduhuha uruzi uruzi  
"SOLACE MINISTRIES" icyo inkunga ikaba izamfasha kwiga,  
andika no kubasha gukemura ibibazo onye mfite, kuko twabwo  
abana b'impfuye twaba dutuye ibibazo by'imiriduko isanzwe kandi  
no kwivana mu bukenye, kandi twabwo twabwo twabwo twabwo twabwo  
MINISTRIES kuko ibibazo byacu ibikozaga k'umutima.

Mbye mbashimiyemo.

Nshimiyimana Felix



**Re: Thank you SURF**

I am writing to thank you for the love and understanding you show us. May God bless you.

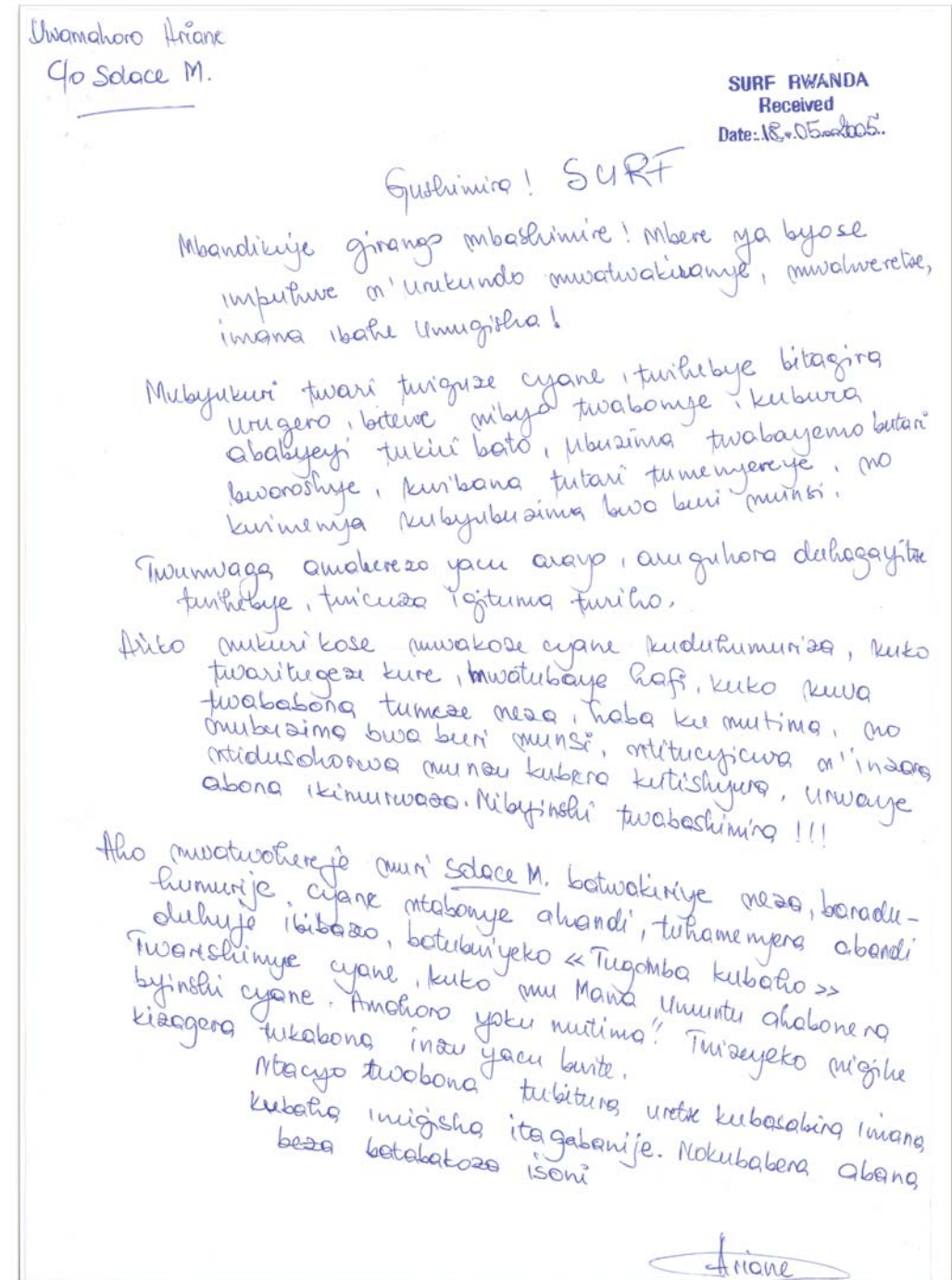
We were very isolated, helpless beyond measure and traumatised by what we saw during the genocide. Losing our families when we are still young, everyday hardship and trials; overnight we had to assume a role of parenting ourselves with no experience. We thought our lives were destined to suffering and regret while we survived.

Thank you for being there to calm us down and reassure us. Since you came into our lives, our lives are more positive and we look forward to life. We do not go without food anymore. We are not being evicted because we cannot afford rent. When we get sick you are there to help. Frankly there is so much to thank you for!!!

You helped us to get out of isolation and introduced us to people with similar experiences. Together we share a journey to recovery. We are very happy; we believe that we will eventually get a home of our own.

We have nothing we can give you in return for your kindness – only God will reward you, but we promise you to be good and responsible children.

**Ariane**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our sincere thanks go to the survivors who have given their life stories with a hope that the world will learn from their experiences and prevent further human suffering... **Valentina, Daphrosa, Aline, Feridina, Gaudence, and Clare.** We are truly grateful for the cooperation from our partner organisations **Solace Ministries** and **AVEGA**, and to **Mr. Gabo Wilson**, Director at SURF's Rwanda office. Without their help this work would never have succeeded.

SURF would also like to extend a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who has supported SURF's work over the years, especially those who joined together on 16th July 2004 in solidarity with the women survivors of Rwanda to give a voice to their testimonies:

Ms Claire Gammon Dr Monique Anderson Ms Helen Atkins Mrs Jackie Baines Ms Helen Baxendale Ms Madeleine Beale Ms Nicoletta Bertoldi Ms Michele Biety Ms Mary Blewitt Ms Hilary Blume Miss Janice Booth Mr Paul Bradley Ms Isabel Brenner Ms Jackie Britton Mr Colin Bryant Miss Deanna Buckman Ms Caroline Burghard Miss Catherine Cartwright Dr Gayathri Chidambi Ms Tanuka Chokroborty-Loha Ms Sarah Clifford Mr Shimon Cohen Miss Llana Conn Mrs Penelope Conway Ms Polly Cook Miss Josie D'Arby Ms Michelle Dempsey Ms Debbie Djordevic Ms Suzanne Eustace Miss Gisele Edwards Ms Maire Fahey Miss Shanti Faiia Ms Neneh Faye Ms Felicity Ferdinando Mrs Felicity Finch Ms Kerry Fox Miss Maggie Foyer Ms Janet Bainana Gasaatura Ms Clare

Gorham Ms Lola Gostelow Ms Tulip Hambleton Ms Imogen Harvey Lee Miss Jana Hasprunaroia Mr David Harewood Ms Brook Hayes Miss Cally Haynes Ms Lindsey Hilsun Ms Jo Hofman Mrs Lucy Howard Ms Liz Howell Miss Fatin Ibrahim Ms Seeta Indrani Mrs Jane Jackman Miss Sarah Jacobs Lady Amelie Jakobovits Ms Ruth Jenkinson Mr Danny John-Jules Mrs April Johnson Ms Amina Juma Mrs Jean Karsbergs Miss Roulin Khondoker Ms Miriam King Miss Beverley Knight Ms Flavia Kraus Ms Marissa Lea Ms Sue Leifer Miss Sara Lethby Ms Caterina Loriggio Ms Kirsty Little Mrs Thea Lumley Miss Laura Lumley Ms Uma Mahadeva Ms Thoko Matsha Ms Kym Mazelle Miss Sally McEwan Miss Joanne McIntosh Ms Polly J McLean Miss Catherine Meaden Mrs Tina Meaden Miss Hilary Merrett Miss Fay Miah Miss Eloise Millar Ms Hattie Morahan Ms Shirley Murgraff H.E. Rosemary Museminali Ms Suzan Nicolai Ms Sarah Norman Ms Elle Osborne Ms Anita Parmar Rev Bonnie-Belle Pickard Ms Karen Pollock Ms Vicki Prais Ms Alison Proud Miss Rana Refahi Miss Chantal Refahi Ms Gaby Roslin Miss Francesca Russell Ms Emma Sandler Miss Amna Shaddad Miss Anna Sideris Ms Beatrice Smith Ms Fiona Smith Ms Rachel Stevens Miss Sarah Sultoon Ms Ellen Thomas Ms Polly Toynbee Ms Karen Twining Ms Lynne Wade Ms Amanda Walker Ms Sandy Warr Ms Penny Waterhouse Ms Hannah Waterman Ms Fiona Watson Dr Rush Wickramasineme Miss Dawn Marie Wilkinson Ms Alison Wintgens Ms Victoria Woodward Ms Ruth Wooldridge OBE Rev Lisa Wright Ms Sharon Wymark.

And a big thank-you to all those that helped to make the event in Trafalgar Square possible:

Mr Simon Brodtkin Mr Elliot Frankal Mr Anup Karia Mr Colin Kabiswa Miss Vikki Miller Miss Mahlet Mairegn Mr Chris Robinson Mr Cyrus Tiz Miss Hester Alban Davies Ms Uma Mahadeva Ms Claudia Escobar Mrs Rose Callaghan Ms Annie Liebeck Mr Marcel Hakizimana Ms Rose Umulisa Mr Frank Tumwesigye Mr Richard Blewitt Ms Jeanette Kagabo Mr Drew Sutton Mr Louis Rudasigwa Mr Joe Loriggio Ms Claire Gammon Mr Ekow Essuman Ms Jane Hammond Mr Colin Mathews Mr Sean Mcweeney Mr Dan Hyslop Miss Sarah Galal Mr Neill Quinton Mr David Lumley Ms Rachel Collingwood Ms Anne McIntosh Ms Caterina Loriggio.

Much heartfelt gratitude to **Fergal Keane, OBE** and **Lindsey Hilsum**, both of whom have been a great strength to the work of Survivors Fund and international advocates for the survivors of the Rwandan genocide.

Putting together this book would not have been possible without the contribution of **David Russell (The PR Office), Anne McFerran, Katharine Quarmby, and Mary Kayitesi Blewitt.**

And a special thank-you to **Priscilla Elworthy** and all the team at **The Funding Network**, for giving SURF a grant for the book, without which this book would not have been possible.

This section would be incomplete if we did not extend a very sincere thank you to **Drew Sutton** and everyone at **Nice Images** who collected the testimonies for this book and to **Sam White** for taking photos of the women readers in Trafalgar Square.

The tireless work of SURF's designer, **ibdesign**, cannot be forgotten, especially given the tight deadlines in which this work was done. Thank you, **Liam Dempsey.**

# CHRONOLOGY OF THE GENOCIDE

**January 1993** Signing of the protocol of the Arusha Accord on a transitional government to include opposition parties and the RPF. Militias continue to provoke violence and unrest throughout Rwanda.

**February 1993** The RPF launches a new offensive and threatens to take Kigali. France sends additional troops and weapons to stop the offensive. One million people flee in front of advancing RPF troops.

**March 1993** A new ceasefire is negotiated in Dar Es Salaam between the Rwandan government and the RPF. The RPF withdraws to the north. The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 812 authorising an intervention force in Rwanda. The Intervention Commission of Inquiry publishes its report citing, grave human rights violations by the government which is described as genocide. Several donor countries threaten Rwanda with sanctions as a result of the report.

**May/June 1993** New accords signed in Arusha concerning refugee repatriation and the unification of the armed force RPF. Emmanuel Gapyisi, leader of the Movement Démocratique Républicain (MDR), is assassinated. Agathe Uwilingiyimana of the MDR is named as head of the new transitional government.

**August 1993** The comprehensive vision of the Arusha Accord is signed. This include the provision for the instalment of transitional government, including the RPF, the unification of the armies, demobilisation and arrival of UNAMIR. Beginning of hate radio broadcast on Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM).

**September 1993** The Secretary General recommends to the UN Security Council that a peacekeeping force be provided for Rwanda without delay.

**October 1993** Eighteen elite US troops are killed in Somalia. The UN Security Council approves Resolution 875 which creates the UNAMIR, a force of 2,500 soldiers from 23 countries. Candadian Brigadier-General Romeo Dallaire is appointed force commander of UNAMIR.

**Nov/Dec 1993** French troops leave Rwanda; UNAMIR troops deployed. A contingent of RPF troops arrive in Kigali on 28 countries. Diplomats in Kigali and Dallaire receive an anonymous letter from within the Rwandan army warning of a plan to kill Tutsis in order to prevent the implementation of the Arusha Accord.

**January 1994** Rwanda takes its seat as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. Adopts Resolution 893 approving deployment of a second infantry battalion to

demilitarised zone.

Investiture of Habyarimana as president.

Transitional government fails to take off, with each side blaming the other for blocking its formation.

Human Rights Watch Arms Project publishes a report on the continued arming of Rwanda .

The Belgian ambassador in Kigali, Johan Swinnen, warns of violent demonstrations in Kigali by the *interahamwe*.

The CIA reports that if hostilities resume in Rwanda, up to half a million people could die.

Dallaire informs UN headquarters there is an informer from the heart of Hutu power, who warns that a genocide against the Tutsis is planned. Dallaire tries to persuade UN headquarters that he be allowed to conduct arms seizures.

**February 1994**

The two well-known political leaders, Felicien Gatabazi of the Parti Social Democrate (PSD) and Martin Bucyana of the extremist Coalition for the Defense of the Republic (CDR) are assassinated within days of each other. The perpetrators are neither identified nor punished. Violence escalates in Kigali and around the country.

**March 1994**

A joint communiqué is issued by Kigali diplomatic community asking for acceptance of the CDR.

Boutros-Ghali writes a report to the Security Council stating that the security situation is deteriorating and requesting an extension of the mandate on UNAMIR for six months.

**5 April 1994**

The Security Council, with Resolution 909, renews the mandate for UNAMIR with a threat to pull out in six weeks unless the Arusha Accord is applied.

**6 April 1994**

Returning from the summit meeting at Dar Es Salaam, the plane carrying the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, Juvelal S. Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira, is shot on approach to Kigali airport. The perpetrator remains unknown to this day.

Within moments of the crash, systematic massacres of opposition leaders of the PSD, MDR and Liberal Party (PL) begin. Military and militia road blocks go up all over Kigali.

**7 April 1994**

Assassination of Prime Minister Agathe Uwinyimana and ten Belgian UNAMIR soldiers.

RPF troops in Kigali leave their garrison and engage the Presidential Guard. RTLM broadcasts that the RPF and the Belgian peacekeepers are responsible for the death of the president.

Coordinated and extensive massacres of Tutsis and political moderates are carried out by the Rwandan Army and militia groups in Kigali and the countryside.

**8 April 1994**

Increasing numbers people are killed.

Former parliament speaker Theodore Sindikubwabo announces the formation of an interim government and declares himself president.

**9 April 1994** French and Belgian paratroopers evacuate expatriates. *Interahamwe* and Presidential Guard conduct massacre at Gikondo. Sindikubwabo meets Dallaire and asks him to negotiate a ceasefire with the RPF.

**10 April 1994** Prisoners are put to work with refuse carts picking up bodies. Ambassador David Rawson closes the US embassy in Kigali.

**11 April 1994** Dallaire obtains a ceasefire to facilitate the evacuation of expats. The Belgian peacekeepers abandon Kicukiro, leaving behind 2,000 people.

**12 April 1994** RPF reinforcements reach Kigali; the battle of Kigali begins. The massacre of Tutsis continues throughout Rwanda. The interim government flees to Gitarama as the RPF moves on the capital. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Mr Willy Claes meets Boutros-Ghali in Bonn to tell him of the Belgian withdrawing soldiers from UNAMIR. French embassy closes its doors.

**14 April 1994** Belgium announces it is withdrawing its troops from UNAMIR. In Kigali wounded people are dragged from a Red Cross ambulance and killed. Killing spreads everywhere in Rwanda

**18 April 1994** An attempt by the RPF to silence the RTLM fails. The interim government dismisses the Prefect of Butare.

**19 April 1994** Massacres begin in Butare, which has previously been spared the worst of the violence. The Prefect of Butare – who had opposed massacres – is arrested and killed along with his whole family. A hard-line extremist takes his place. The last Belgian peacekeeper leaves Kigali.

**21 April 1994** The Security Council votes on Resolution 912 to withdraw the bulk of the UNAMIR peacekeepers from Rwanda, authorising 270 to remain.

**28 April 1994** Oxfam issues a press release that the killing in Rwanda amounts to genocide.

**29 April 1994** A long Security Council debate discusses the use of the word genocide in the Presidential Statement. The UK and the USA resist the use of the word.

**17 May 1994** The Security Council votes for Resolution 918, approving the deployment of 5,500 troops to Rwanda but no troops are available.

**22 May 1994** The RPF captures the airport in Kigali. The government forces continue to flee south in front of an RPF advance.

**25 May 1994** The UN High Commission of Human Rights sends Renè Degni-Sengui to investigate grave violations of the international Human Rights Laws in Rwanda.

**27 May 1994** UN forces evacuate the first refugees from the Mille Collines Hotel.

**29 May 1994** The RPF takes Nyanza.

**2 June 1994** The RPF takes Kabyayi.

**8 June 1994** The RPF announces that three bishops and ten priests were killed by RPF soldiers.

**10 June 1994** Massacre of 170 refugees from Saint André Church.

**11 June 1994** French alliance announces intention to intervene in Rwanda.

**13 June 1994** The RPF takes Gitarama.

**17 June 1994** France announces its plan to the UN Security Council to deploy troops to Rwanda as an interim peacekeeping force.

**21 June 1994** First French troops arrive on the Zaire-Rwanda border.

**22 June 1994** The UN security forces authorize armed humanitarian intervention in Rwanda at the request of the French.

**23 June 1994** French troops arrive in Rwanda with Operation Turquoise.

**28 June 1994** A report issued by the special reporter of the UN Commission on Human Rights states that the murder of the Tutsis in Rwanda is genocide and calls for an international tribunal to bring the organisers of genocide to justice.

**1 July 1994** The UN Security Council votes on Resolution 935 calling for the establishment of a commission of experts to examine evidence of "possible acts of genocide".

**3 July 1994** The RPF takes Butare.

**4 July 1994** Kigali is captured by RPF.

**5 July 1994** France creates a "safe humanitarian zone" in the southwest of Rwanda.

**6 July 1994** Canadian relief flights into Kigali are resumed.

**13 July 1994** The RPF takes Ruhengeri in northern Rwanda, prompting a mass exodus of Rwandans in the direction of Goma, Zaire.

**14 July 1994** An estimated 6,000 people per hour file into the French safe zone, including members of the militia and interim government officials.

**15 July 1994** The US government withdraws its recognition of the former government of Rwanda.

**17 July 1994** The RPF takes the last government stronghold in Gisenyi and declares the end of war.

**19 July 1994** A government of national unity is formed in Kigali with Pasteur Bizimungu as President and Faustin Twangiramungu as Prime Minister. Members of the MRND and CDR are excluded from the new government. Cholera is first diagnosed among refugees in Goma. Announcement of the end of compulsory identity cards.

**22 July 1994** The US government announces a massive relief operation for Rwandan refugees in camps.

**29 July 1994** France begins the withdrawal of its Operation Turquoise troops.

**31 July 1994** As part of Operation Support Hope, the first contingent of the US Military arrives in Kigali to deliver humanitarian assistance.

**22 August 1994** Departure of the last Operation Turquoise French troops. Major refugee movements towards the south of Rwanda and Bukavu, Zaire.

# ABOUT SURVIVORS FUND

**S**urvivors Fund, or SURF, is a charity dedicated to aiding and assisting the survivors of the Rwandan genocide. Since 1997, SURF has been supporting medical care for women survivors with HIV/AIDS, counselling for survivors, vocational training and home building for orphans. These are just some of the projects that SURF funds to help survivors rebuild a sense of self and trust in humanity. Programmes are delivered through partner organisations, including AVEGA, Solace Ministries and the AOCM.

Founded by Mary Kayitesi Blewitt at the behest of survivors, after herself losing 50 family members during the genocide, the charity is supported by, amongst others: the Department for International Development; Comic Relief; The Elton John AIDS Foundation; The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund; the Lindean Trust; the Pears Family Charitable Foundation; the Charities Advisory Trust and The Funding Network.

Individual donations are vital to help SURF continue to make a vital difference to the lives of survivors in Rwanda and the UK.

To contribute, volunteer or learn more, please:

Visit: [www.survivors-fund.org.uk](http://www.survivors-fund.org.uk)  
Email: [info@survivors-fund.org.uk](mailto:info@survivors-fund.org.uk)  
Call: **+44 (0)20 7610 2589**

Or write to:

Survivors Fund (SURF)  
10 Rickett Street  
West Brompton  
London SW6 1RU  
United Kingdom

Survivors Fund (SURF) is a registered UK charity no: 1065705. Company limited by guarantee in England no: 04311565.

" The genocide in Rwanda is being fictionalised in films and novels now, but nothing conveys the terrible suffering of the victims as powerfully as their own words.

I feel that one of the most important things we can do is keep on telling the stories, so survivors know that their words have value and meaning, and that we will never stop caring about them."

**Lindsey Hilsum**

International Editor, Channel 4 News  
Patron of SURF



Often called 'the land of a thousand hills' or 'the Switzerland of Africa', Rwanda erupted in unspeakable violence for 100 days in 1994 as the *interahamwe*, or 'those who kill together', inflicted torture, slaughter and rape across the country.

This book documents the lives of those who survived the genocide. This book is their story – bravely told so that the world would know with no uncertainty what had happened in Rwanda.



**Survivors Fund (SURF)**  
[www.survivors-fund.org.uk](http://www.survivors-fund.org.uk)