

THE RWANDA "GENOCIDE FAX": WHAT WE KNOW NOW

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New Documentation Paints Complex Picture of Informant and his Warnings

First Publication of "#Rwanda20yrs" project by U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the National Security Archive

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Washington, DC, January 9, 2014 – Twenty years ago this week, the commander of United Nations peacekeeping forces in Rwanda (UNAMIR) wrote a "[Most Immediate](#)" cable to his superiors in New York that has come to be known as the "Genocide Fax." Dated January 11 but received in New York at 6:45 p.m. on January 10, the fax from General Romeo Dallaire cited information from "a top-level trainer" for a pro-regime militia group known as the Interahamwe, and warned of an "anti-Tutsi extermination" plot.

Three months after this warning, Interahamwe members took the lead in the 100-day genocide of at least half a million members of Rwanda's Tutsi minority, along with tens of thousands of "moderate" Hutus. The massacres took place against the backdrop of a war that pitted the Hutu-dominated regime against Tutsi-led insurgents who had invaded the country from neighboring Uganda.

Over time, the "genocide fax" became a symbol of the failure of the international community to prevent mass killing in Rwanda. In reply to the fax, U.N. officials rejected Dallaire's request for authority to raid suspected arms caches, and instructed him instead to consult with government leaders tied to the Interahamwe. It was one of

several turning points when the United Nations, backed by the United States and other powers, failed to take action that might have prevented the genocide.

Thanks to new documents, including evidence submitted to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), it is now possible to piece together a much fuller account of the man who inspired the "genocide fax" and how and why UN officials and other decision-makers responded, or failed to respond, to his warnings. For example, the documents posted today include the never-before-published statement given to tribunal investigators in 2003 by the widow of the "genocide fax" informant.

Today's e-book and [op-ed in the *New York Times*](#) by Michael Dobbs are the first publications of a joint "#Rwanda20yrs" project co sponsored by the National Security Archive (at George Washington University) and the Center for the Prevention of Genocide of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Who was Jean-Pierre Turatsinze?



OUTGOING CODE CABLE

DATE: 11 JANUARY 1994

HIR 47

TO: BARIL\DPKO\UNATIONS NEW YORK	FROM: DALLAIRE UNAMIR\KIGALI
FAX NO: MOST IMMEDIATE-CODE CABLE-212-963-9852 INMARSAT:	FAX NO: 011-250-84273
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROTECTION FOR INFORMANT	
ATTN: MGEN. BARIL.	ROOM NO. 2052
TOTAL NUMBER OF TRANSMITTED PAGES INCLUDING THIS ONE: 2	

1. FORCE COMMANDER PUT IN CONTACT WITH INFORMANT BY VERY VERY IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT POLITICIAN. INFORMANT IS A TOP LEVEL TRAINER IN THE CADRE OF INTERHAMWE-ARMED MILITIA OF MRND.

Jean-Pierre Abubakar Turatsinze, shown here in [a previously unpublished photograph](#), emerges from this new evidence as a much more complicated figure than was apparent from earlier versions offered in Dallaire's memoirs and other accounts. Half-Hutu and half-Tutsi, Turatsinze operated on both sides of the political and ethnic divisions in pre-genocidal Rwanda.

While Turatsinze's prediction of mass murder of Tutsis by the Interahamwe militia proved chillingly accurate, he misled U.N. peacekeepers key points and exaggerated his own importance. Judges at the ICTR have discounted some of the information that Turatsinze provided to Dallaire, including statements that have been cited as evidence for a meticulously pre-planned genocide.

Whether the genocide was planned, and therefore foreseeable, in advance has been debated heatedly by historians, government officials and lawyers at the international tribunal. The "genocide fax" has been an important part of this debate. In these postings, we attempt to provide the back story to the "genocide fax" and the mysterious informant who told Dallaire that "[in 20 minutes his personnel could kill up to 1000 Tutsis](#)."

Sidebar: [READ AN ANNOTATED VERSION](#) OF THE GENOCIDE FAX

The most complete version of Turatsinze's background comes from his wife Genevieve, who was interviewed extensively by investigators for the ICTR. In a 2003 interview, still considered confidential by the ICTR, [Genevieve told investigators that the couple got married in 1990](#), and had three children, including twins born in the months immediately preceding Rwanda's descent into chaos in April 1994.

According to his wife, at the time of their marriage, Turatsinze worked [as a driver for a well-connected politician from the ruling MRND party](#) called Donat Hakizimana, then serving as prefect (governor) of the western province of Kibuye. In October 1990, after Hakizimana was appointed head of the Rwandan intelligence service, he took Turatsinze with him to Kigali. Turatsinze arrived in the Rwandan capital during a period of political turmoil. The RPF had just launched an invasion of the country from neighboring Uganda. The autocratic president, Juvenal Habyarimana, was under pressure from France and other western donor countries to establish a multi-party system.

With everything in flux, Turatsinze saw an opportunity in politics. [His political patron was a man named Mathieu Ndirumutse](#), a leader of the ruling MRND party. Ndirumutse used Turatsinze as an intermediary to the Interahamwe ("Those who fight together") youth organization, which was founded in 1992 to combat the youth wings of rival political parties. As Rwandan politics became ever more polarized, the Interahamwe degenerated into a band of armed thugs, whose principal goal was to keep the Hutu-dominated MRND in power.

Political tensions in Rwanda escalated following the assassination of the democratically elected president of Burundi, a moderate Hutu, in October 1993. The crisis atmosphere was further inflamed in December with the deployment in Kigali of a battalion of RPF troops, under the terms of the Arusha peace accords, which were meant to lead to the formation of a broad-based transitional government. It was around this time that the Rwandan army [began channeling weapons to the Interahamwe](#) "to protect MRND militants from possible assault", according to a prosecution witness testifying before the ICTR.

In late 1993 or early 1994, Turatsinze [told his wife](#) that the ruling party was "planning to commit some massacres of people." If he remained a member of the MRND, his wife told ICTR investigators, he would have to "start by killing me and his mother." Given the fact that Turatsinze's wife and mother belonged to the Tutsi minority, Genevieve understood this remark to mean that "the massacres were going to be against the Tutsi population."

EXTRACT FROM DOCUMENT

Whilst in Kigali, my late husband got involved in politics, particularly the MRND party, although I am not exactly sure in which year this was. As days went by, my late husband told me that there were divisions within the MRND and that the party was going to break up into two that is one group from the North (BAKIGA) and the other group from NDUGA. My late husband did not come from any of the two warring parties, and according to what he told me, the party was planning to commit some massacres of people. He further told me that if he remained within the MRND, it would mean that he would start by killing me, and his mother. Because I am Tutsi, and his mother was Tutsi, I understood this to mean that the massacres were going to be against the Tutsi population. As a result of this, my husband wrote a letter of resignation from the party. I think that this was either at the end of 1993 or the beginning of 1994.

In the meantime, Turatsinze was getting into trouble with his bosses, who found him arrogant and undisciplined. He had been given the assignment of distributing weapons to Interahamwe members-but was [suspected of selling many of the weapons for personal profit](#) to a rebel group in neighboring Burundi. By early 1994, this son of a Tutsi mother and Hutu father had personal, financial, and ideological reasons to switch his allegiances.

In some ways, Turatsinze was the ultimate outsider, a factor that may have contributed to his disillusionment with the MRND, particularly after the party embraced an ideology of "Hutu Power." Not only was he half-Tutsi, he had also [converted from Christianity to Islam](#), a religion embraced by less than two per cent of Rwandans. At some point prior to 1993-precisely when is unclear-he adopted the Muslim name Abubakar in addition to his Christian name, Jean-Pierre. Curiously, these divided loyalties do not appear to have been an obstacle to Turatsinze's advancement in the Interahamwe, at least up until the end of 1993.

SIDEBAR: Read [an annotated version of an interview](#) with Turatsinze's wife.

- **How did Jean-Pierre make contact with UN peacekeepers?**

CNR 12

10016678

OUTGOING CODE CABLE

DATE: 11 JANUARY 1994

HR 87

TO: BARIL\DPKO\UNATIONS NEW YORK	FROM: DALLAIRE\UNAMIR\KIGALI
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1. FORCE COMMANDER PUT IN CONTACT WITH INFORMANT BY VERY VERY IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT POLITICIAN. INFORMANT IS A TOP LEVEL TRAINER IN THE CADRE OF INTERHAMWE-ARMED MILITIA OF MRND.

Dallaire's January 11 cable refers to a "[very very important government politician](#)" [sic] as the facilitator of meetings with a "top-level trainer" in the Interahamwe militia. In his memoir, Dallaire identifies this unnamed politician as Faustin Twagiramungu, who had been named as Rwanda's prime-minister designate in the transitional government due to be set up under the Arusha accords. At the time, Twagiramungu headed a Hutu-based party known as the MDR that had emerged as the principal internal opposition to Habyarimana's MRND party.

Further evidence of the role played by Rwanda's political opposition in introducing the informant known as "Jean-Pierre" to the UN is provided by a January 11 cable from Dallaire's civilian superior, Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh. The [cable refers to another MDR member](#), related to Turatsinze by marriage, as the key intermediary with the informant. This mysterious go-between has [since been identified](#) as a man named Charles Ntazinda, a senior Foreign ministry official and one of the founding members of the MDR.



UNAMIR commander, General Romeo Dallaire, 1994

Photo credit: UN Photo/Milton Grant

Acting on the information received from Twagiramungu, Dallaire assigned his subordinates to make contact with "Jean-Pierre" on the afternoon of January 10. As relayed to New York by Dallaire later that night, Turatsinze claimed that the Interahamwe was providing military training to its supporters, with the assistance of the Rwandan army. According to Turatsinze, the Interahamwe was no longer focused primarily on defending the capital from attack, but on [a much more sinister mission](#):

6. PRINCIPAL AIM OF INTERHAMWE IN THE PAST WAS TO PROTECT KIGALI FROM RPF. SINCE UNAMIR MANDATE HE HAS BEEN ORDERED TO REGISTER ALL TUTSI IN KIGALI. HE SUSPECTS IT IS FOR THEIR EXTERMINATION. EXAMPLE HE GAVE WAS THAT IN 20 MINUTES HIS PERSONNEL COULD KILL UP TO 1000 TUTSIS.

7. INFORMANT STATES HE DISAGREES WITH ANTI-TUTSI EXTERMINATION. HE SUPPORTS OPPOSITION TO RPF BUT CANNOT SUPPORT KILLING OF INNOCENT PERSONS. HE ALSO STATED THAT HE BELIEVES THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT HAVE FULL CONTROL OVER ALL ELEMENTS OF HIS OLD PARTY\FACTION.

Turatsinze offered to take the peacekeepers to the site of a "major weapons cache with at least 135 weapons," including AK-47 rifles supplied to the Interahamwe by the army. In return for cooperating with UNAMIR [the U.N. peacekeeping force in Rwanda], Turatsinze requested protection for himself and his family. Sensing an opportunity to crack down on political extremists, Dallaire told his superiors that he was planning to "[take action within the next 36 hours](#)." In addition to seizing the weapons caches, he also requested permission to spirit the informant out of Rwanda for his protection.

Dallaire injected a note of caution into his cable, saying that "the possibility of a trap" directed against "the very very important political person" (i.e. Twagiramungu) could not be "fully excluded". What the UNAMIR commander did not know at the time was that [Turatsinze may also have been in contact with the Tutsi-led RPF rebel group](#), which had moved into the parliament building in Kigali. Evidence of Turatsinze's contacts with the RPF only emerged a decade later at the Rwanda war crimes tribunal.

Nevertheless, Dallaire [ended the cable](#) with his old French-Canadian army motto, aimed at persuading his bosses in New York to approve his plan to seize the Interahamwe weapons caches: "Where there's a will, there's a way. Let's go."

13. PEUX CE QUE VEUX: ALLONS-Y.

What did the UN do with Turatsinze's information?

SUBJECT: Contacts with informant ✓ /

90

1. Ref. Dallaire cable CNR 12 of 11 January on which he is to brief you early Tuesday morning.
2. Information is cause for concern but there are certain inconsistencies. We must handle this information with caution.
3. We await your considered assessment and recommendations. No reconnaissance or other action, including response to request for protection, should be taken by UNAMIR until clear guidance is received from Headquarters.

Regards.

Due to the seven-hour time difference between Kigali and New York, the "genocide fax" reached the United Nations on the evening of January 10. A UN spokesman, Fred Eckhard, explained later that officials felt that Dallaire had to be kept "on a leash" as he was "champing at the bit." [Toronto Globe and Mail, September 25, 1997.] Worried that the UNAMIR commander was exceeding his authority, UN officials [drafted an immediate reply](#) ordering him to take no action on the information from Turatsinze until he had received "clear guidance."

Even though this reply bears the signature of Kofi Annan, then head of UN peacekeeping operations, markings show that it was actually drafted by his assistant, Iqbal Riza. The following day, Riza drafted [a more considered reply to Dallaire](#), describing the proposed raid on the alleged arms caches as clearly "beyond the mandate entrusted to UNAMIR" under [UN Security Council resolution 872](#). Traumatized by memories of the loss of 20 UN peacekeepers in Somalia two months earlier, New York ordered Dallaire to refrain from any "course of action that might lead to the use of force and unanticipated repercussions."



Iqbal Riza

Photo credit: UN Photo/Milton Grant

In place of the proposed arms raid, Dallaire and Booh-Booh were instructed to inform President Habyarimana about the latest developments, and demand government action to rein in the extremists. Permission to "extend protection to the informant" was also denied.

New York's refusal to approve the proposed raids on the arms caches was enormously frustrating to Dallaire. The UNAMIR commander felt that he had the clear authority under the Arusha agreement to confiscate illegal weapons in the Kigali area. As his aide, Major Brent Beardsley, recalled in an interview two decades later, there was "a big disconnect between us in the field and New York." Beardsley uses the phrase "Somalia syndrome" to describe the caution displayed by UN officials in New York. This was a reference to the caution among US and UN officials generated by the deaths of US soldiers in Somalia in the fall of 1993.

Over the course of the following month, UNAMIR officers had at least four more meetings with "Jean-Pierre." On the evening of January 12, he [escorted a](#)

[Senegalese peacekeeper into the MRND party headquarters](#), and showed him a stack of about 50 automatic rifles in canvas bags, with sealed boxes of ammunition. The following evening, he took the peacekeepers to another three locations around Kigali where additional weapons were stored. The largest cache, with more than 100 automatic rifles, was located near his home in the Kanombe district of Kigali.

A [confidential January 13 report](#) to Dallaire suggests that Turatsinze was eager to establish a link between the weapons distribution operation and the MRND. According to the report from Captain Frank Claeys, one of Dallaire's intelligence officers, the informant offered to "move some of the weapons at his home to the party building to increase the number of weapons there if we should do an operation there."

UNAMIR officers [informed Turatsinze](#) of the rejection of his request for political asylum at a meeting on January 20. While he continued to meet with UNAMIR officers, he declined to show them the lists of Tutsis slated for "extermination" that he claimed to have compiled on instructions from the MRND. When asked for the lists, he would reply with a question of his own: "[Where is my security?](#)"

In an effort to demonstrate that raids on arms caches were within UNAMIR's mandate, Dallaire [wrote a long memorandum for New York on January 31](#), citing a clause in the Arusha peace agreement that authorized UN peacekeepers to "assist in the recovery of all weapons distributed to, or illegally, acquired by civilians." He warned that both the Hutu-dominated Rwandan army and the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front appeared to be preparing for a fresh outbreak of hostilities. At the same time, [Dallaire reported](#), both sides were also clamoring for more effective action by UNAMIR to end the impasse.

The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations remained determined to stick to its much narrower interpretation of the Arusha accords. In [a February 3 cable](#), New York made clear to Dallaire that UNAMIR "cannot take an active role" in recovering illegal weapons and should restrict itself to a "monitoring function." The cautious stance adopted by DPKO can be explained in large part by the lack of support from major western governments for a more active UNAMIR role.

Jean-Pierre, meanwhile, began [feeling the heat](#) from fellow Interahamwe members who suspected him of betraying their secrets to UNAMIR. At the meeting on February 10, Turatsinze told his UNAMIR contacts that he was being sent to the Congo for [two-month "commando training."](#) He vanished soon

after this meeting - but did not go to the Interahamwe training camp in the Congo. Instead, he went to Tanzania, where he was recruited to join the RPF.

READ THE DALLAIRE CABLES ON JEAN-PIERRE [HERE](#)

READ THE INTERNAL UNAMIR MEMOS ON JEAN-PIERRE [HERE](#)

READ US STATE DEPARTMENT CABLES ON JEAN [_____](#)

Date	Source	Brief Description	Link	From	To	Cable #
1/10/1994	Kigali	The "genocide fax"	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/816325-19940111a2-unam-rwdp.html	Dallaire	Baril	MIR 67
1/10/1994	New York	UN HQ orders Dallaire not to take any immediate action on Jean-Pierre information	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/894524-19940110c-un-rwdp.html	Annan	Booh-Booh	UNAMIR 74
1/11/1994	Kigali	Booh-Booh names designate-PM Faustin Twarimungu as intermediary for Jean-Pierre	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/816327-19940111k-unam-rwdp.html	Booh-Booh	Annan	MIR 79
1/11/1994	New York	UN HQ orders UNAMIR to seek meeting with President Habyarimana regarding informant allegations	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/816324-19940111i-un-cable-from-annan.html	Annan	Booh-Booh	UNAMIR 100
1/12/1994	Kigali	Dallaire tells Annan that Habyarimana "very scared" by reports of arms caches	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/894591-19940112.html	Dallaire	Annan	
1/13/1994	Kigali	Booh-Booh reports on meetings with Habyarimana and western ambassadors	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/816328-19940113f1-unam-rwdp.html	Booh-Booh	Annan	MIR 95
2/2/1994	Kigali	UNAMIR requests authority to recover illegal weapons: warns that both sides preparing for a conflict; delay could be dangerous	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/894546-199402021-unam-rwdp.html	Booh-Booh	Annan	MIR 256
2/3/1994	Kigali	Dallaire reports on request from Rwandan defense minister for assistance in cracking down on illegal weaponry	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/894525-19940203a1-unam-rwdp.html	Booh-Booh	Annan	MIR 267
2/3/1994	New York	UN HQ insists that UNAMIR role in recovering weapons must be limited to "monitoring" Rwandan army efforts	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/894526-19940203d1-un-rwdp-cable-from-annan-to-dallaire.html	Annan	Booh-Booh	UNAMIR 363
2/15/1994	Kigali	Booh-Booh and Dallaire repeat call for deterrent operations and creation of UNAMIR radio station	https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B5uQnFUS4VhKUGVpd2p4MVV0Z1U/edit	Booh-Booh	Annan	MIR 353
2/16/1994	New York	Annan instructs Dallaire to stick to mandate, ignores call for radio station	https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B5uQnFUS4VhKcU1IRU90ZUNqWnc/edit	Annan	Booh-Booh	UNAMIR 479

Date	Brief Description	Link	From	To
1/13/1994	Report on third meeting with	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/816381-extra-dallaire-cables.html#document/p2/a130905	Claeys	Dallaire

	Jean-Pierre			
1/20/1994	Report on fourth meeting with Jean-Pierre	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/816381-extra-dallaire-cables.html#document/p2/a130912	Claeys	Dallaire
2/10/1994	Report on fifth (final) meeting with Jean-Pierre	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/816381-extra-dallaire-cables.html#document/p6/a130914	Claeys	Dallaire
2/17/1994	Claeys provides additional information from Jean-Pierre	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/816381-extra-dallaire-cables.html#document/p12/a131029	Claeys	Dallaire
2/22/1994	Claeys summarizes information on weapons caches provided by Jean-Pierre	https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/816381-extra-dallaire-cables.html#document/p13/a136921	Claeys	Dallaire

- **How accurate was the information received from Jean-Pierre?**



UNAMIR peacekeepers with soldiers of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, July 1994

Photo credit: UN Photo/John Isaac

One of the structural weaknesses of UNAMIR was the [lack of a professional intelligence evaluation unit](#). The officers who made contact with "Jean-Pierre" were known as "military information officers" rather than "intelligence officers". Their mission under Chapter VI of the United Nations charter was to "monitor" compliance of the different parties with the Arusha peace agreement, rather than pro-actively "enforce" the agreement.

Lacking the resources to fully evaluate Turatsinze's credibility, UNAMIR forwarded his reports to the Belgian military intelligence service, the SGR, four thousand miles away in Brussels. (The former colonial power in Rwanda, Belgium provided the military backbone of UNAMIR and was responsible for security in Kigali.) Appearing before a Belgian Senate inquiry in 1997, the Belgian intelligence analyst for Rwanda expressed skepticism about "Jean-Pierre." "[He was a deserter.](#)" Major Hock testified. "A priori, therefore, he was not reliable. Don't forget this might be disinformation. There are regularly people who present their services for financial gain or in the hope of becoming a political refugee."

A February 2, 1994 report on the Interahamwe prepared by Hock dismissed the information about "[weapons caches and distribution](#)" as neither "very reliable" nor "particularly useable." Hock added that UNAMIR was handicapped by the fact that it was compelled to collaborate with the Rwandan Gendarmerie ("[a section of which very often has links with criminals](#)") and had difficulty penetrating "a population that is already secretive and easily hypocritical by nature."

Read the full report [here](#). (In its [1997 report](#), the Belgian Senate criticized Hock and the SGR for paying insufficient attention to the information provided by "Jean-Pierre," and declining his requests for protection.)

In a [January 12, 1994 dispatch](#), the French embassy in Kigali described the information provided by "Jean-Pierre" as "serious" and "plausible", noting it coincided with a sudden spike in political violence in the capital. At the same time, the embassy drew attention to the involvement of prime minister designate Twagiramungu, an outspoken opponent of President Habyarimana, cautioning that "one cannot exclude a disinformation maneuver designed to discredit the president."

Twagiramungu's own views about the reliability of "Jean-Pierre" underwent a 180 degree shift between 1994 and 1997. Initially, he expressed "total, repeat total, confidence in the veracity and true ambitions" of Jean-Pierre, according to [a January 11, 1994 UNAMIR report](#). "He is 100% sure that the individual wants out of all these killings and disruption." Three years later, Twagiramungu dismissed Turatsinze as a "little bandit", [telling the Belgian Senate](#) that "these kind of people seek to acquire advantages by selling information or lying."

These conflicting assessments probably tell us more about Twagiramungu's changing political fortunes than they do about Jean-Pierre. In 1994, Twagiramungu had a political interest in discrediting the ruling MRND party.

Considered an ally by the RPF, he was appointed prime minister of Rwanda following the genocide. By 1997, however, he had become a political enemy of the RPF, and was living in exile in Belgium.

A less partisan analysis of Turatsinze's information is provided by the Rwanda war crimes tribunal. The ICTR has found that the Rwandan army channeled weapons to the Interahamwe from late 1993 onwards, and provided military training to Interahamwe members. On the other hand, the [judges were unconvinced](#) that the purpose of the military training and weapons distribution was the "extermination" of Tutsis, as claimed by Turatsinze, rather than preparation for renewed hostilities with the RPF.

The [ICTR noted](#) that some of the information provided by Jean-Pierre to UNAMIR was incorrect, including his claim that he had received commando training from the Rwandan army. The judges were also skeptical of Turatsinze's assertion that he had been ordered to "register all Tutsi in Kigali," [citing evidence](#) that such lists were confined to "people suspected of collaborating with the RPF." A 2008 judgment in the case of Theoneste Bagosora, a Rwandan army officer convicted of genocide, returned [a mixed verdict on Turatsinze](#).

521. In addition, the Chamber has heard ample evidence considered above about the training of civilians prior to April 1994, which corroborates to some extent Jean-Pierre's information that members of the *Interahamwe* were trained. It cannot be excluded that the training of civilians and the distribution of weapons prior to 6 April 1994 were part of a larger civilian self-defence strategy in response to the fear of resumed hostilities (III.2.6.2). There is also corroboration for Jean-Pierre's information concerning the preparation of lists by members of the *Interahamwe* (III.2.5.4). However, the other information available indicates that these lists were not focused exclusively on ethnicity and instead were directed more generally at suspected opponents of the regime.

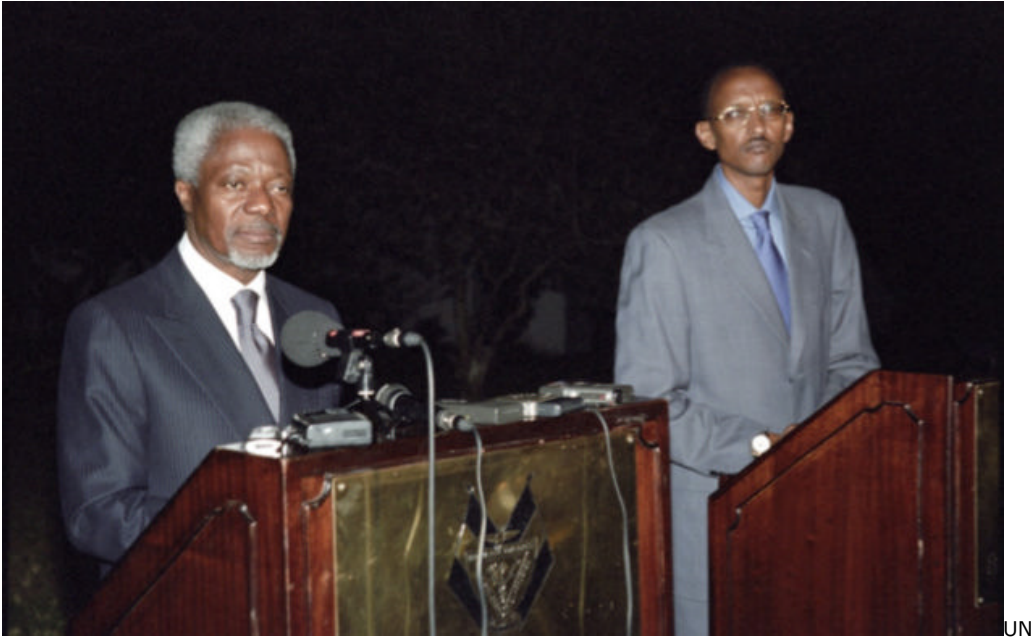
522. In sum, the information provided by Jean-Pierre lends some credence to the fact that the *Interahamwe* received training and had secret caches of weapons. However, in light of the concerns raised above, the Chamber is hesitant to rely on his assertion that the purpose of these activities was to kill Tutsis, as such.

There were other "[inconsistencies](#)" in the information supplied by Jean-Pierre, as noted by the UN Department of Peacekeeping. It is difficult to explain, for example, why the Interahamwe would trust someone who was married to a Tutsi, and was himself half-Tutsi, with a mission to exterminate his own relatives. Turatsinze's mixed ethnicity was immediately apparent to anyone [inspecting his identity card](#).

As events unfolded, Turatsinze's warning of "anti-Tutsi extermination" proved grimly prophetic. Within three months of his initial meeting with UNAMIR officers, Interahamwe thugs were murdering Tutsis at roadblocks in Kigali and other cities for no other reason than their ethnicity. (The vast majority of these murders were carried out with machetes and other primitive weapons, rather

than the automatic rifles distributed to the Interahamwe earlier in the year.) The fact that several of Turatsinze's predictions came true in April 1994 is not by itself proof of the reliability of his information in January 1994, according to the ICTR.

- **Was Jean-Pierre linked to the RPF?**



Secretary-General Kofi Annan with Rwandan President (former RPF leader) Paul Kagame, 2001

Photo credit: UN Photo/Evan Schneider

While it is clear that Turatsinze had ties with the moderate Hutu political opposition inside Rwanda, and particularly the MDR party, his links with the armed RPF rebels are more controversial. Appearing before the Rwanda war crimes tribunal, [several witnesses speculated](#) that "Jean-Pierre" might have been an RPF agent who had managed to infiltrate the Interahamwe. Reliable evidence to support such speculation is lacking, however.

What seems incontestable is that the [RPF found out very quickly](#) that UNAMIR had succeeded in "infiltrating" the Interahamwe, and may have offered him "protection." It is also certain that Turatsinze joined the Tutsi-led rebel group soon after breaking with the Interahamwe—contrary to his statement to UNAMIR officers that he was going to the Congo for "combat training" with the Hutu-dominated militia.

The most authoritative account on what happened to Turatsinze after UNAMIR rebuffed his request for protection is provided by his wife Genevieve. According to the statement she provided to the ICTR, her husband moved to Tanzania, where he met with relatives who were RPF members. About two

weeks before the shooting down of President Habyarimana's plane on April 6, 1994 (the event that triggered the genocide), Turatsinze [joined the rebels](#) in northern Rwanda.

us at the Rusumo border crossing on the Tanzanian side. My late husband had family members in Tanzania and some of them were RPF members. These are the ones who convinced my late husband to join the RPF. My late husband told me about his intentions to join the RPF and left about two weeks before president HABYARIMANA Juvenal died. He actually went with our SUZUKI motor vehicle.

One month later, some of my late husband's relatives who had joined the RPF came back, but they distanced themselves from me. When I tried to inquire about my husband, they used to tell me that he was well and that he was in very good books with senior members of RPF at MULINDI, Byumba.

Turatsinze seems to have been on good terms with RPF leaders who operated out of the town of Mulindi in northern Rwanda, prior to capturing the town of Byumba. In late 1994, the family [received news](#) from a Muslim member of the new, Tutsi-led government, Abdoul Karim Harelimana, that Turatsinze had been "killed in battle."

I came back to Rwanda in September 1994. In a month I cannot exactly recall, but towards the end of the year, my late mother in law, NGUTEGURE Hadija told me that she had been told, by Minister Abdoul KARIM that my husband had been killed in battle. If and whether he is surely dead, I did not bury him and I do not know how he died and where.

Like several other aspects of the "Jean Pierre" story, the circumstances of Turatsinze's death remain shrouded in mystery. His widow was unable to establish where he died, or how-or even whether he was "surely dead."

• **Lessons from the "Genocide Fax"**



UN Security Council debate on Rwanda, June 1994

Photo credit: UN photo/Milton Grant

An obvious lesson arising from the confusion surrounding the "genocide fax" is the need for better intelligence. As they later acknowledged, UNAMIR commanders did not have the intelligence capabilities to make a proper evaluation of the information supplied by "Jean-Pierre," or assess his reliability. Testifying before the ICTR in 2004, General Dallaire said that he acted largely on his instincts in recommending a raid on suspected arms caches on the basis [information which had not yet been corroborated.](#)"

But inadequate intelligence was not the only challenge confronting the United Nations. It is now clear that the 47-year-old Canadian general found himself in a virtually impossible position in early 1994, two months after arriving in Rwanda at the head of a [2,548-member international peacekeeping force](#). With both the government and the RPF openly preparing for renewed hostilities, he felt that he had to do something dramatic to "[seize the initiative](#)" from the hardliners. But he was limited by the restrictive "peace monitoring" mandate imposed by the Security Council and a lack of military resources. Apart from the 420-member Belgian contingent, which was responsible for security in Kigali, the rest of his force was under-equipped and ill-prepared.

What seemed like a risk worth taking from Dallaire's perspective was viewed very differently by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York. From where they sat, Annan and Riza had reason to treat the unevaluated information from "Jean-Pierre" with a high degree of caution. DPKO was coming under daily pressure from the United States and other permanent members of the Security Council to [avoid a repetition of the Somalia debacle](#).

DPKO did not just reject the request for action in response to the "genocide fax," it also displayed passivity in the face of repeated requests from both Dallaire and his civilian superior, Booh-Booh, in January and February for a generally more assertive stance on the part of UNAMIR. In [a February 2, 1994 cable](#), Booh-Booh and Dallaire both called for "determined and selective" deterrent operations in cooperation with the Rwandan military. They also recommended a vigorous public information campaign including the establishment of a UNAMIR-run radio station to demonstrate that UNAMIR was doing "all within its ability to carry out its mandate."

The alternative, [they warned](#), was stark.

9. Each day of delay in authorizing deterrent arms recovery operations will result in an ever deteriorating security situation and may if the arms continue to be distributed result in an inability of UNAMIR to carry out its mandate in all respects. We therefore, seek your guidance and approval for us to commence deterrent arms recovery operations.

With hindsight, Dallaire's warnings proved prescient. His superiors in New York can certainly be faulted for failing to support the judgment and recommendations of their own field commander. In the end, however, the United Nations Secretariat carried out the wishes of the Security Council, and particularly its permanent members, led by the United States.

State Department records released under the Freedom of Information Act show that the UN officials briefed the United States, Belgium, and France on the "emerging crisis" in Rwanda, both [in Kigali](#) and [in New York](#). But there was zero enthusiasm in the Clinton administration for running any significant risks in Rwanda in the wake of the Somalia debacle and mounting criticism of UN peacekeeping efforts by the Republican-controlled Congress. The United States took the view that it was up to the rival Rwandan factions to "[assume their responsibilities](#)" under the Arusha accords. Failure to carry out the accords, Washington hinted, could result in the withdrawal of UNAMIR altogether.

NOTE: While we have drawn on multiple sources to research the story of "Jean Pierre" and the "genocide fax," we acknowledge that there are still significant gaps due to the still incomplete nature of the historical evidence. If you have further information about the life and death of Jean Pierre Abubacar Turatsinze, please contact mdobbs@ushmm.org. We will publish new details about the case as they become available.

- ## THE DOCUMENTS

[Document 1](#)

United Nations Security Council Resolution, 872 (1993)
Adopted 5 October 1993

[Document 2](#)

DATE: 10 January 1994
FROM: Booh Booh/UNAMIR/Kigali/Rwanda
TO: Annan/UNHQ/UNations/New York
SUBJ: "Contacts with Informant"
CABLE No.: NIR 74

Document 3

DATE: 11 January 1994
FROM: Dallaire/UNAMIR/Kigali
TO: Baril/DPKO/UNations/New York
SUBJ: "Request for Protection for Informant"
CABLE No.: NIR-67

Document 4

DATE: 11 January 1994
FROM: Booh Booh/UNAMIR/Kigali/Rwanda
TO: Annan/UNHQ/UNations/New York
SUBJ: "Contacts with Informant"
CABLE No.: NIR 79

Document 5

DATE: 11 January 1994
FROM: Booh Booh/UNAMIR/Kigali/Rwanda
TO: Annan/UNHQ/UNations/New York
SUBJ: "Contacts with Informant"
CABLE No.: NIR 100

Document 6

DATE: [Redacted] c. 12 January 1994
FROM: Dallaire/UNAMIR/Kigali
TO: Annan/UNHQ/UNations/New York
SUBJ: [Redacted]
CABLE No.: [Redacted]

Document 7

DATE: 12 January 1994
ORIGIN: French Embassy
SUBJ: Treat of Civil War
(French language)

Document 8

DATE: c. 13 January 1994
FROM: Capt. Frank Claeys (UNAMIR)
TO: Gen. Romero Dallaire (UNAMIR)
SUBJ: "Meeting on 13 January 1994"

Document 9

DATE: c. 20 January 1994
FROM: Capt. Frank Claeys (UNAMIR)
TO: Gen. Romero Dallaire (UNAMIR)
SUBJ: " Contact on 201900 Jan 94"

Document 10

DATE: 3 February 1994
FROM: Dallaire/UNAMIR/Kigali
TO: Baril/DPKO/UNations/New York
SUBJ: "Deterrent Operations"
CABLE No.: MIR 267

Document 11

DATE: 3 February 1994
FROM: Booh Booh/Dallaire, UNAMIR, Kigali
TO: Annan, UNations, New York
SUBJ: "Recovery of Illegal Weapons"
CABLE No.: NIR 363

[Document 12](#)

DATE: 2 February [1994]
FROM: Booh Booh, UNAMIR, Kigali
TO: Annan/Jonah, UNations, New York
SUBJ: Update on Security Situation and Request for Commencement of Deterrent Operations Aimed at the Recover of Illegal Weapons
Cable No.: MIR- 256

[Document 13](#)

DATE: 10 February 1994
FROM: (UNAMIR, MIO) Capt. Frank Claeys
TO: (UNAMIR, FC) Gen. Romero Dallaire
SUBJ: " Report on Meeting with Informant at 10 1900 Feb"

[Document 14](#)

DATE: 6 December 1994
ORIGIN: Belgian Senate
SUBJ: Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Rwanda

[Document 15](#)

DATE: 21 March 1997
ORIGIN: Belgian Senate, Special Commission on Rwanda
SUBJ: Testimony by Major Hock

[Document 16](#)

DATE: 3 April 2003
SUBJ: [Genevieve - Turatsinze's wife -Testimony before ICTR]

Document 17

DATE: 22 January 2004

ORIGIN: International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda

SUBJ: Testimony ICTR-98-41-T (Continued)

Document 18

DATE: 8 November 2006

ORIGIN: International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda

SUBJ: Testimony in case no. ICTR-98-44-T

Document 19

DATE: 13 November 2006

ORIGIN: International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda

SUBJ: Testimony in case no. ICTR-98-44-T (Continued)

Document 20

DATE: 21 November 2006

ORIGIN: International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda

SUBJ: Testimony ICTR-98-44-T (Continued)

Document 21

DATE: 23 November 2006

ORIGIN: International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda

SUBJ: Testimony ICTR-98-44-T (Continued)

Document 22

DATE: 27 November 2006
ORIGIN: International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda
SUBJ: Testimony in case no. ICTR-98-44-T (Continued)

Document 23

DATE: 18 December 2008
ORIGIN: International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda
SUBJ: Judgment and Sentence in case No. ICTR-98-41-T

Document 24

DATE: 2 February 2012
ORIGIN: International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda
SUBJ: Sentence and Judgment in case no. ICTR-98-44-T

Document 25

Memoir of former UNAMIR Officer, Amadou Deme (French language)

Document 26

Report on "Interahamwe" by Belgian Major Hock to Belgian Authorities