

INTER OFFICE MEMORANDUM

To: FC

From: CHO

Date: 16 May 1994

CASE NO. ICR-98-41-1  
EXHIBIT NO. DB 290  
DATE ADMITTED 23-11-2001  
TENDERED BY DEFENCE  
NAME OF WITNESS MACNEIL

Subject: MEETING BETWEEN HAC- OPERATIONS OFFICER OF THE GENDARMERIE-G2 OF THE RGF AND SOME THIRTY MEMBERS OF THE INTERAHAMWE AND VARIOUS SELF DEFENCE FORCES.

1. The above mentioned meeting was held between 1230 hrs and 1445 hrs 16 May, 1994 at the Diplomat Hotel in Kigali. In attendance were the following persons:

- a. Colonel Yaache, CHO;
- b. Lt Col Paul Rwarakabiji, Gendarmerie Operations Officer;
- c. Col Aloys Ntiwiragabo, G2 RGF ;
- d. Some leaders of the INTERAHAMWE and the various self defence forces,
- e. Major Pajik, and
- f. Major MacNeil.

AIM

2. The aim of the meeting was to confirm the detailed planning for the evacuation of some two hundred and sixty orphans from the Gisimba and Gitega orphanages in Kigali for evacuation to Kampala and thence overseas.

DISCUSSION

3. Colonel Yaache welcomed all the participants to the meeting indicating to them that he was the Chief Humanitarian Officer for UNAMIR and that one of the main tasks of the Humanitarian Assistance Cell and indeed that of UNAMIR was to see that the many displaced persons in fear for their lives should be allowed to return to areas of the country that they wished to return to. He indicated to all present that preliminary discussions had been held previously with the Chef du Cabinet of Rwanda, the G3 of the Gendarmerie and some of the leaders of the INTERAHAMWE and militia groups and it was agreed in principle that as a humanitarian gesture and to show the outside world that the government of Rwanda could count on its citizens to follow direction given by the government.

4. Colonel Yaache went on to say that the specific aim of this meeting was the detailed planning for the initial transfer of displaced persons which centred on the evacuation of the orphans. He further stated that UNAMIR's intent was to conduct the operation in three stages:

- a. the evacuation of the orphanages;
  - b. the evacuation of the displaced persons camps; and
  - c. the evacuation of the displaced in hiding.
- c.

5. The floor was then given to Lt Col Paul Rwarakabiji, the Operations Officer of the Gendarmerie, who confirmed to all present that with preliminary talks complete on this topic he was ready to determine from those present the manner in which they would participate in this operation. He went on then to outline the participation of the Gendarmerie and indicated that during previous meetings he had convinced UNAMIR that their participation should consist of the vehicles to transport the orphans and some armed escorts in jeeps or pickups to augment the Gendarmerie and to show the cooperation of UNAMIR. He indicated that he had suggested to UNAMIR that the use of armour assets would be inappropriate for this operation. At this point all leaders present agreed that this would be most inappropriate. He went on to confirm that the evacuation was set to commence at 0900 hours the next day.

6. At this point in the meeting it appeared that the majority of the leaders of the INTERAHAMWE and local militias were in agreement with the plan. However it appeared that some present who had not attended previous meetings were somewhat puzzled and remained silent with but a blank stare and perhaps a smile as to the magnitude of the operation that was about to be launched within 24 hours.

7. Colonel Yaache interjected at this point indicating that he could not confirm that the operation could in fact take place the following morning as UNAMIR had not as yet received a final response from the RPF. He indicated that for that reason a sequence of events and details on participation could be worked out and put in place once the cooperation of the RPF was assured.

8. The G3 of the Gendarmerie and the G2 of the RGF at this point gave an impression that something very important was lacking in convincing all those present that there was in fact a requirement at this time for a meeting. Nonetheless, the President of the INERAHAMWE indicated that his intention was to put 10 of his members along the route to warn of the operation and that his organization had decided to employ 20 members to announce on radio where displaced persons in hiding could report and where they would be met by his people and a representative of UNAMIR for evacuation to a location they wished to go.

9. At this point in time the G2 of the RGF raised the point that the timetable for the operation must be such that all government forces including the self defence forces be aware of the exact itinerary of the convoy and how long it would take to return. Colonel Yaache indicated that the convoy would only take 100 orphans as that was all the Hercules aircraft could hold. If this operation was successful, then it would be repeated at a later date for other orphans based on the availability of aircraft.

10. Talks now shifted to specifics of where the escort would drop the convoy in the area of the RPF lines. After some discussion the point was identified as the RGF position near the Kigali English School.

11. The G2 then raised the point that there must be a ceasefire during the operation and a guarantee from the RPF that they would not use the occasion to launch an offensive. Colonel Yaache explained that this concern would be addressed before the launch of the operation and was a major reason why in all likelihood the operation would not be able to take place the next day.

12. The floor was opened then to concerns of the leaders and things really went downhill. One leader indicated that he would have to be able to traverse RPF lines to reach the RGF lines near the airport so that he could personally verify that the orphans had arrived at the airport. The G2 of the RGF agreed that this was a real necessity. Colonel Yaache explained that this would definitely pose a problem with the RPF and would undoubtedly be a major difficulty for the completion of the operation.

13. Another leader indicated that he was not convinced that there was a requirement to evacuate the orphans as they had not been endangered since the commencement of hostilities. He asked HAC as to who in fact had suddenly decided to evacuate those particular orphanages while there were others just as deserving and more in need. Colonel Yaache explained that the decision was in consultation with the Rwandese Government and the RGF based on certain compelling reasons and that other orphanages would be looked at later.

14. This particular leader went on to indicate that he felt there was a lack of fair play in UNAMIR as this was a second attempt to evacuate Tutsis from Kigali, the Milles Collines being the first. He felt that someone was making a concerted effort to empty the RGF side of Kigali of Tutsis so that the RPF could lay siege to it.

15. The meeting ended with the HAC team indicating that they would raise the concerns raised during the meeting with the FC. In summary these include:

- a. There must be a ceasefire and guarantee from the RPF that they will not take advantage of the situation if this operation proceeds.

- b. A means must be worked out so that representatives of certain militias can make contact with their comrades in the area of the airport with permission to cross through RPF territory.
- c. Certain leaders are skeptical about outside interests being suddenly concerned about an area and forcing the hand of UNAMIR to favour the Tutsi versus the Hutu (a feeling that led one leader to express the view that he felt that the FC was not neutral in this conflict).
- d. They are concerned that there is a concerted effort to empty the RGF area of Kigali of Tutsis so that an RPF siege can take place.

18. The INTERAHAMWE representatives and militia leaders left the meeting certainly unimpressed in this authors view. The G3 of the Gendarmerie was most perplexed as was the G2 of the RGF.

19. It was evident from the proceedings of the meeting that the RGF lacks control of the militia groups and the will to marshal these groups in any positive way.

20. It is felt that there will likely be some bad press towards UNAMIR from Radio Rwanda concerning this operation particularly in view of the presence of the G3 of the Gendarmerie and the G2 of the RGF.

21. The issue of evacuation of displaced persons in Kigali remains a very sensitive one that needs to be handled with extreme tact and caution.

D.J. MacNeil

Maj  
CHO

for