



## **IMS assessment mission:**

### **The Rwanda media experience from the genocide**

International Media Support • Report • March 2003  
Monique Alexis, IMS Consultant  
Ines Mpambara, Co-director of Rwanda's School of Journalism

# Contents

<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1 Background for the mission .....	3
1.2 Mission Objectives.....	3
1.3 Method and Scope of work .....	3
1.4 Structure of the report.....	4
<b>2 The Rwandan Context</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 Political background .....	5
<b>3 The media and the genocide</b> .....	<b>10</b>
3.1 Historical development of the Rwandan media before the genocide .....	10
3.2 The media during the genocide: the hate media.....	14
<b>4 The media after the genocide</b> .....	<b>19</b>
4.1 Reconstruction of a destroyed media sector (1994 - 2003).....	19
4.2 Today: Absence of pluralism and constant threats and pressures .....	20
4.3 The new Press Law and the High Press Council .....	22
4.4 The school of journalism .....	22
4.5 International actors in Rwanda media development after the genocide .....	23
<b>5 The lessons learnt</b> .....	<b>24</b>
5.1 Characteristics of the hate media .....	24
5.2 How could it happen? .....	25
5.3 What were the consequences for the media-sector and civil society? .....	26
5.4 Which lessons can be learnt? .....	27
<b>6 Appendices</b> .....	<b>28</b>
6.1 Appendix I: List of abbreviations.....	28

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background for the mission

Since 19 September 2002, when the present crisis started in Ivory Coast, growing restrictions have been brought on the media, both through government censorship and the threat of mob-violence. Government officials have also publicly blamed the national and international media for stirring up tension in the country, using it as an excuse to curtail media independence.

Owned by political leaders, a lot of media are spreading hate messages targeting different political parties, ethnic groups and religions, methods reminding the Rwanda media before the genocide.

In November 2002, in response to rising concerns for the safety of journalists and the overall degradation of the situation in Ivory Coast, Media Action International (MAI), in collaboration with the International Federation of Journalists, International Media Support (IMS) and Communication Assistance Foundation, organized a seminar near Abidjan entitled "Journalism and conflict" to enable journalists to face the challenges of reporting during conflicts, highlighting basic journalist professional standards and their application during conflict situation. The forty journalists and editors who participated in the seminar expressed the wish to continue to work on the question of ethics to improve relations with their colleagues.

At the beginning of 2003, MAI was asked to implement a second workshop in Ivory Coast addressing the role media are playing in the current crisis and the way media could contribute to a peaceful solution of the conflict in the country.

One way to achieve the objective will be through increasing awareness of the Rwandan media experience during the 1994-genocide and the consequence of partisan-media

With International Media Support and in order to provide pertinent insight to the debate and increase the awareness of the coming workshop's participants of the Rwanda media experience during the genocide, Rwandan journalist - Ines Mpambara, co-director of the School of Journalism and Communication of Rwanda - will share her first hand experience of a conflict where media played an important role. She will also provide historical evidence of the negative consequences of media activities that promote division, conflict and violence.

### 1.2 Mission Objectives

The mission's objectives are following:

- Provide expert-support for research carried out locally in Kigali on the effect of hate-media on the field of journalism in Rwanda and on civil society. The results of the research will then be shared with participants at the Media Action International workshop in Ivory Coast.

### 1.3 Method and Scope of work

To identify which lessons can be learnt from the Rwandan experience in order to share them with journalists working in countries facing conflicts and see how these lessons can effectively be applied in other countries, investigations will be carried out locally in

Kigali among journalists, editors, media-owners, media-associations, civil society and government-representatives. Following questions will be addressed:

- The role of the Rwandan media before and during the 1994-genocide: who directed the process, which role played ordinary journalists, editors, and publishers, why did they accept that role, why did propaganda succeed so much
- How hate-media were identified in the Rwandan context, on which criteria
- How Rwanda's civil society has been affected by hate media
- The consequences faced by media-professionals as a result of Rwandan media- activities in 1993-1994, have professionals learnt lessons from the past, what would they do differently
- Are there safeguards today in the Rwandan media sector against future violations of recognized norms of media activity? If so, what are they?

#### 1.4 Structure of the report

This report will deal with Rwanda's media experience from the genocide, its consequences on the media-sector and the lessons to learn and share with journalists in countries facing conflicts.

Therefore it will present the Rwandan context (politically, socially, economically). It will analyse what happened before and during the genocide in Rwandan media. It will then look at the situation of Rwandan media after 1994 until today, analysing the consequences of what happened during the genocide on today's media-sector. This report will then draw the lessons to learn from the Rwanda media experience and see what can be shared with journalists in conflict-faced countries.

## 2 The Rwandan Context

To better understand what happened during the genocide and why Rwandan media could be manipulated and used as they were, it is necessary to look into Rwanda's history.

### 2.1 Political background

Rwanda - the scenery of the 1994-genocide - is a small generous land with a prosperous agriculture. The country looks like a big garden with a few remaining forest areas. The highlands have long kept hostile tribes away so that Rwanda remained free of foreign influence until the coming of the white man. Thus the country's prosperity and security explained for the high density of population, which brought centralised forms of political authority and a high degree of social control.

Linguistically and culturally, the population of Rwanda was rather homogeneous, as it was made of three groups, the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa. They spoke the same Bantu language, had always lived side by side and often intermarried.

The Twa, the smallest group (about 1%) were traditional hunters in forest-areas. The Tutsi were traditionally cattle-breeders (over 16%). The Tutsi looked somewhat different, they were generally tall and thin with sharp angular faces. The Hutu, the vast majority (over 80%) cultivated the soil.

#### *A. Colonial times*

When they arrived in the 19th century, Europeans got fascinated by the Tutsi whom they considered superior to the two other groups. This conditioned the views and attitudes of Europeans towards Rwandan social groups. It influenced decisions made first by Germans, and later by Belgian colonial authorities. But this attitude had also an impact on the natives. It increased Tutsi cultural ego, it crushed Hutu feelings so that they transformed into an aggressive inferiority complex. These feelings plus the political and administration decisions of colonial authorities favouring one group over the other made a dangerous social bomb throughout colonial times.

Europeans helped the Tutsi king extend his power on the whole Rwanda. So at the time, conflicts were more between the centre and the far away provinces than between Tutsi and Hutu.

The Catholic Church became from the beginning an important element in the Belgian organisation of Rwanda. The "fathers" had been there since the beginning. They were experts: they spoke the language - Kinyarwanda - and they knew the traditions. By World War II, the church had become the main social institution. It had a monopoly on education, but a limited monopoly because education was neither free nor compulsory. Illiteracy remained high. Priority was given to the Tutsi. The Hutu had to study theology to get educated, but then it was difficult for them to get employment corresponding to their level of education, which made them bitter and frustrated. Some Hutu left Rwanda to settle in Uganda where there was work.

The Hutu, deprived of political power and materially exploited by the white and the Tutsi, were told they were inferior. They started hating all Tutsi even those who were as poor as they were.

#### *B. Towards independence (1945 - 1962)*

After World War two, the social atmosphere progressively deteriorated in Rwanda. The church began to favour the growth of a Hutu elite. The white church whose members traditionally came from the European aristocracy was changing. Its members belonged

more and more to the lower class and they felt no sympathy for the aristocratic Tutsi. The Tutsi elite on the other side was picking up ideas of equality and self-government. At the same time they were aware of the temporary social position. So the Tutsi elite started contesting the colonial social order.

The church had a weekly publication - Kinyamateka, the most read paper in Rwanda at the time - which became one of the main organs used in the process of change by the European part of the church.

Slowly, the Hutu, feeling that they had support from one of the leading institutions of the white man's system began organizing. Soon, the first political parties were created, two Hutu parties - the MSM (Mouvement Social Muhutu) and APROSOMA (Association pour la Promotion Sociale des Masses)- and two Tutsi parties - the UNAR (Union Nationale Rwandaise) monarchist, hostile to Belgians and supported by the Communists and the RADER (Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais). The UNAR created problems between Tutsi and Belgians.

In 1959 occurred the first explosion between Tutsi and Hutu and a break between Tutsi and Belgian authorities that considered the Tutsi as backwards traditionalists and communists. There was a fight between two competing elites, the Hutu's produced by the church and the older Tutsi elite which had been promoted by colonial authorities. Fighting went on, houses were burnt down, worst in the northwestern area where colonial administration had started replacing Tutsi chiefs with Hutu ones. The Hutu chiefs organized the persecution of Tutsi who fled to Congo, Burundi, Tanganyika and Uganda.

Local elections were held which gave a Hutu majority. This was called the 1959 social revolution. The new "bourgmestres" were as oppressive as the former, which sent new waves of emigrants to Uganda. Legislative elections were held in 1961 where the Hutu got 78% and the Tutsi 17%.

The childless Tutsi king died and the Tutsi could not agree on the succession. Rwanda became an independent republic in 1962.

### *C. The first Republic (1962 - 1973)*

Grégoire Kayibanda, who had created one of the first political parties, the MSM, became Rwanda's first president. The political system was monopolized by his Hutu-based party which became the MDR (Mouvement Démocratique Républicain)-Parmehutu. The government harassed political opponents and Tutsi. The violence increased when groups of Tutsi exiles based in Uganda and Burundi launched a series of attacks on Rwanda during the early 1960s. Government authorities retaliated these attacks by organized massacres.

President Kayibanda's Rwanda's values were based on the dignity of being Hutu, the correlation between demographic majority and democracy, Christianity and hard work.

By the 1970s, the Tutsi were excluded from political influence. So politics began to divide along regional instead of ethnic lines. Hutus from northern Rwanda began to resent the power and economic advantages enjoyed by the central region where the president came from.

In 1972, massive killings of Hutus in Burundi pushed Rwanda's authorities to harass and expel Tutsi from schools, civil service and private business. This led to a new major exodus of Tutsi. These persecutions generated more violence in the country. These disturbances, together with economic and regional resentment encouraged General Juvenal Habyarimana, then minister of Defence, who was from the north, to overthrow the Kayibanda government.

### *D. The second Republic (1973 - 1994)*

#### *The authoritarian rule (1973-1990)*

The new president consolidated his rule by proscribing the former ruling party and

dissolving parliament. A year later, former president Kayibanda and seven government members were sentenced to death.

In 1975, president Habyarimana announced the creation of a new political party, the MRND (Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement). The one-party system was chosen. Every single Rwandan citizen had to be a member. The party was everywhere. Administrative control was very tight: travelling was tolerated, but not changing of address without a good reason. In early 1980s, Parliament was changed into a National Council for Development. A more centralized system of administration was introduced. Political violence against Tutsi diminished in the absence of border attacks. But this did not prevent discrimination against the minority.

The authoritarian system worked economically: in 1987, Rwanda was doing better than most of its neighbours. The mortality rate was down; hygiene and medical care were improving as well as education. But the dependence on foreign aid was enormous by the late 1980s. International donors (mostly Belgium, Germany, the United States, Canada and Switzerland) were satisfied with the orderliness of Rwanda.

It is at that time that the sources of enrichment for the elite started shrinking, i.e. coffee, tea and tin exports which brought divisions among Rwanda's elite. The land question was also becoming a problem because of an increasing overpopulation. In June 1990, President Habyarimana attended the Franco-African summit at La Baule where President Mitterrand wanted to link economic help to democratization. He advised Habyarimana to introduce a multi party system in Rwanda. So Habyarimana's authoritarian rule was under internal and foreign pressure to take steps towards a democratic transition.

#### *Transition to democracy and war with the RPF (1990 - 1992)*

Rwandan exiles who had been forced to flee the country since 1959 had repeatedly asked for the right of return. The exiles had been theoretically allowed to do so under Kayibanda, but the second republic's government refused them to come back because the country was over-populated. At the time, Rwandan Tutsi exiles were estimated at 600.000. (Approximately 9% of the population inside Rwanda).

On 1. October 1990, the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA), the armed wing of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), a group of mainly Tutsi exiles based in Uganda, invaded Rwanda. Many RPA-soldiers had previously fought in Museveni's National Resistance Army, which overthrew Uganda's president Obote in 1986.

The RPF claimed that the attack was the only means of pressing Habyarimana's government to allow and undertake democratic change.

By early 1991, the government was under pressure to allow multi-party politics. Political groups, which had operated underground, began to demand formal recognition and to be allowed to participate in government. In June, the Constitution was amended and the Political Parties Law legalized opposition parties. The government negotiated with opposition leaders on the possibility of adopting a transitional coalition government where the major opposition-parties would be represented. The transitional coalition government was established in 1992. The president's party kept half of the cabinet's posts. This government initiated negotiations with the RPF, which led to a cease-fire and peace-agreement.

In spite of the fact that the RPF broke the cease-fire in early 1993, the Arusha-Accords defining the terms of the peace-agreement with the RPF were signed in August 1993. But the implementation of the Accords was repeatedly obstructed by president Habyarimana and other MRND politicians.

The Arusha Accords were designed to change the presidential system into a parliamentary one with most of the president's responsibilities transferred to a Council of Ministers. In the transition period, cabinet's positions should be shared between the MRND, opposition parties and the RPF. A transitional National Assembly would be

established with representatives from these parties. And at last, the Accords called for the integration of the RPA into the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) on a 40-60% basis. During the transition, the RPF would have a battalion of 600 troops in Kigali. In October 1993, the UN Security Council passed a resolution approving an international force of 2,500 troops, UNAMIR (UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda).

#### *Organizing violence: the growth of the MRND and CDR militias (1992-1994)*

The process of democratisation and the Arusha Accords were a major threat to members of the ruling elite. Especially the reforms in the military and the government were tough for the hard sections of the FAR and the ruling party MRND. The president had also publicly expressed an ambiguous attitude.

In 1992, while the multi-party transitional government started a series of reforms, the ruling party created a militia - the "Interahamwe" (those who work together). At the same time, another extremist political party emerged, the CDR (Coalition pour la Défense de la République) with also a militia.

Militia members were recruited among the two parties' youth organizations. They were paid and provided with weapons. These groups started expanding in the country in 1992, harassing individuals. According to Human Rights Watch's reports, these groups were military trained in late 1993 and early 1994.

Besides the militias, another underground organization with official backing emerged in 1992: a death-squad, "Network Zero", is reported to have targeted political opponents for assassination to discredit democratic reforms, the multi-party system and the peace-process. The leading members of Network Zero were important figures from the presidential close circle.

In February 1992, Human Rights Watch reported, "most leading activists believe that the government has compiled lists naming people to be assassinated when circumstances require." The existence of the lists became more obvious in the months prior to the genocide. This period was marked by an increase in the activities of the paramilitary groups. This violence discouraged the implementation of the Arusha Accords.

#### *The genocide (1994)*

On 6 April 1994, the plane carrying president Habyarimana and Burundi's president Ntaryamira was hit by a missile and exploded near Kigali airport. All on board were killed. The two presidents were coming back from a meeting of regional head of states in Dar-es-Salaam where Habyarimana had finally agreed to implement the Arusha Accords of 1993. Nobody has yet been found responsible for the crash.

Hardly half an hour after the plane hit the ground, government security forces and militia began selective killings in Kigali. The first week, about 20,000 people were killed in and around Kigali. Three months later, 500,000 had been slaughtered and two millions fled.

The first victims (moderate Hutus and Tutsis) were opposition members in the government and the parties - among them the minister of information who had tried to introduce reforms at Radio Rwanda, leaders from civil society, journalists and human rights activists. Then the Tutsi and those who helped or protected them were massacred.

A self-proclaimed government was established on 8 April. The new cabinet's members were from the MRND, the president's party, the CRD and other extremist Hutu-power parties.

The RPF launched a military attack in northern Rwanda on 7 April and arrived in Kigali to reinforce the 600 RPA troops. RPF-forces fought against the FAR which prompted the interim government to move to Gitarama. In June, the government moved further away to Gisenyi. Meanwhile government forces continued killing civilians.



The international community took no effective action to stop the killings. The only foreign intervention was French "Operation Turquoise", a humanitarian mission which created safe areas for Tutsi in the Southwest.

On 18. July, the RPF had won the war. The next day, Pasteur Bizimungu became president and Major Paul Kagame was appointed vice-president and defence minister of a transition-government.

A part of Rwanda's population was dead, another part in exile, another part displaced. The country and its economy were destroyed, Rwanda had lost its infrastructures, the state's safe was empty.

#### *E. After the genocide: the transition (1994 - 2003)*

In November 1994, the UN Security Council established The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha to judge the organizers and perpetrators of the genocide. Today, the ICTR is halfway through its mandate, which should end in 2008. But it is working very slowly. Nine years have gone since the 1994-genocide and Rwanda's prisons are overpopulated: thousands of people are still waiting to be judged. To hasten the reconciliation-process, the transition-government has established "Gacaca" (= the people's courts) which should contribute to liberate 80.000 prisoners. The transition period defined by the Arusha Accords should be concluded by a referendum on a new constitution (scheduled in May 2003) and by legislative and presidential elections (scheduled at the end of the year).

Today there is no sign or guarantee that the political opposition will be able to participate in these elections on the same basis as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) which has been in power since the genocide. Control over activities of political parties was until now explained by the security problems Rwanda has experienced since 1994 where there has been a constant war on Congo's territory with Habyarimana's Hutu heirs. And since 1998, RDC's Laurent and later Joseph Kabila have given political and military support to Rwanda's Hutu militias, thus maintaining a security threat to the country.

Faced with the risk of electoral competition based on ethnic lines, the RPF is not keen on unrestricted electoral competition. Thus for the last three years, political parties have been dismantled or forced to accept the consensus imposed by the RPF. Restrictions on civic and political rights are being imposed in the name of the country's stability and unity, and reconciliation. Deep divisions among the country's leaders have led to three resignations, those of the national assembly's president, the prime minister, and the president. On 17. April 2000, Paul Kagame became president.

The RPF does not tolerate much criticism or challenge to its authority. Most of the opposition has been forced into exile. The government's repression of critical voices radicalises the opposition inside and outside. A coalition has even been made between some heirs of the Hutu power and survivors of the genocide.

Now the Rwandan government has withdrawn its troops from Congo. But the external security situation and the fragile reconciliation-process at home make the government cautious. The year to come with a referendum and presidential and legislative elections will be a test for the RPF-led but still transitional government

### 3 The media and the genocide

#### 3.1 Historical development of the Rwandan media before the genocide

The Rwandan media have often been blamed for being a major cause of the genocide which began on 6 April 1994 and brought about 500,000 people to die in three months. This report looks at the development of Rwandan media before 1994, their role during the genocide and the impact it had on the whole press-sector in Rwanda afterwards.

##### *A. Government-controlled public media*

###### *Radio Rwanda*

Since World War II, radio has been the most important means of mass communication in sub-Saharan Africa, and also in Rwanda where illiteracy is relatively high and where many live out in the country. By the end of the 1980s, one out of 13 Rwandan inhabitants had a radio.

Like most countries in Africa Rwanda has not had any independent broadcasting service or any reliable license-procedure for private radios.

All Rwanda's population speaks Kinyarwanda. Few outside major cities speak French or English. So most Rwandans get all information from Radio Rwanda, the one national radio-station, which has been broadcasting since 1961, a year before independence. Radio Rwanda started broadcasting in Kinyarwanda, French and Swahili, now all the station's programs are in Kinyarwanda.

Radio Rwanda has always been a government-controlled media, during the first Republic under the MDR-PARMEHUTU party-system of president Kayibenda and then during the second Republic under president Habyarimana's MRND-party's firm grip until the genocide. An example: all news-bulletins started with a Habyarimana-speech. The radio's journalists were considered like civil servants. Radio Rwanda had a very formal style. All what it said was considered the truth. The radio-station was the government's voice: nobody contested its authority. The only music played was traditional Rwandan music.

After the RPF's attack in October 1990, according to Albert Baudoin Twizeyimana who worked there at the time, Radio Rwanda started broadcasting propaganda against the RPF, which had to be called "the enemy". The government's communiques insulted the Tutsi. And reports among the farmers had to go along the same line.

However, after the legalization of opposition political parties and the new press-law of 1991, during what is called "the Rwandan media's golden age" in 1992, opposition-politicians tried to withdraw Radio Rwanda from MRND's control. Besides weekly chronicles obtained in 1992, opposition parties did not have much success in making Radio Rwanda more independent. The RPF's military advance radicalised political positions, and Radio Rwanda was on the front-line, broadcasting false reports and MRND-communiqués using the ethnic line to mobilize troops and ordinary citizens against invaders. During the negotiations of the Arusha Accords, reports had to show that cohabitation was impossible.

Journalists who did not obey orders were pressed to resign. The rest of them tried to comply with it to keep their jobs. Twice, in 1992, and in 1993, Radio Rwanda's staff will go on strike to demand more freedom to work, a clearer and more precise editorial line and more material resources.

In the early 1990s, five of Radio Rwanda's fifty journalists were Tutsi.

Until the creation of the private radio-station RTML in 1993, Radio Rwanda was the media with the biggest impact in Rwanda with its regional stations.

### *Television*

Rwanda's public television started broadcasting in 1992. Broadcasting was limited to three evenings a week, on weekends until the genocide. There were three news-bulletins every evening, one in Kinyarwanda, one in French and one in English. The impact of television was very limited because only the rich elite had TV at the time. The middle-class had TV-sets to play videocassettes.

Florian Ukizemwabo, a journalist who worked there until the genocide says that there was a certain independence because the chief-editor would not tolerate unbalanced news. But Florian adds that some journalists insulted the RPF regularly considering they were patriots defending the country.

### *The written press*

By the 60s, the state had two weekly publications, "Imvaho" (= the truth) in Kinyarwanda, and "La Relève" (= relief) in French. The two newspapers' journalists were considered as civil servants. According to Florian who worked at Imvaho, the two publications expressed the government's official opinion.

By the same time, Rwanda had also its own press agency, "L'Agence Rwandaise de Presse" – ARP, which made a compilation of international telegrams then sold to the media.

### *The public media's governing body: ORINFOR*

The ORINFOR - L'Office Rwandais d'Information - was established by law in 1974 under president Habyarimana's initiative. The ORINFOR replaced the ministry of information and its mission was to control all government media. The ORINFOR was responsible to the president's office. A board of directors controlled ORINFOR's activities and budget and, both the board members and ORINFOR's director were appointed by the president. ORINFOR's director was also the spokesman for the president's office.

In 1991, during the democratisation, the transitional government removed ORINFOR from the president's office and placed it under the ministry of information. In practice, ORINFOR stayed closer to the president and independent from the ministry of information.

ORINFOR's director was the same person - Christophe Mifzi - from 1974 until 1990, after the RPF-invasion. In spite of the president's control, Mfizi had tried to open the organization for reforms. After the RPF-attack in 1990, Mifzi was replaced by Ferdinand Nahimana, a university-professor known for his extremist political ideas and prejudices against Tutsi. This nomination reinforced MRND's control over ORINFOR.

With the legalization of opposition's political parties in 1991, ORINFOR was pressed by opponent representatives to give all political parties equal access to Radio Rwanda. Each major opposition party was then given 15 minutes a week to present their programs. This was not much but it contributed to the rising support for opposition parties afterwards.

In mid-1992, Nahimana was dismissed for censoring speeches of opponent representatives. In reality, his dismissal was due to inflammatory communiques broadcast prior to a massacre.

Nahimana was not replaced for a year because the cabinet could not agree on the person. All efforts from the ministry of information to introduce reforms were boycotted by the MRND whose members occupied key-positions in ORINFOR. Besides, journalists close to the MRND and the president were given the most important news-programs on Radio Rwanda. This means that ORINFOR pressed Radio Rwanda to broadcast false reports and alleged RPF-abuses. It also prevented human rights groups from presenting their communiques.

At last ORINFOR got a director but he failed to improve the independence of reporting

of Radio Rwanda because many journalists there were pro-MRND.

### *B. The private media: towards pluralism*

#### *The written press*

"Kinyamateka", a monthly newspaper in Kinyarwanda, published by the Catholic Church, was Rwanda's first private media. It was created in 1933. "Kinyamateka" enjoyed a widespread distribution through the church, which was firmly established in the whole country. It expanded from 1955 when Grégoire Kayibenda, Rwanda's future president, became its chief-editor. Then Kinyamateka contributed to vehicle the ideas, which were to bring the 1959 social revolution. The newspaper played a significant role because repeatedly arguing that the Hutu majority should have political representation. In the 1960s, Kinyamateka was the only significant media in Rwanda, besides Radio Rwanda.

In 1967, the church created a second publication, the bi-monthly "Dialogue". Both "Kinyamateka" and "Dialogue" were protected from government harassment because they belonged to the church. But generally after independence, both papers had to be moderate in their critics of the government or its treatment of the Tutsi. Three Kinyamateka-journalists and editors who were too bold were jailed, had to flee, or were threatened.

A real independent private press emerged in Rwanda in 1988: "Kanguka" (=wake up!) a newspaper in Kinyarwanda, was created and supported by a rich powerful Tutsi businessman, Valens Kajeguhakwa. Kanguka denounced corruption scandals, which brought threats on its journalists and supporter. But the independent newspaper gave new dynamic to the church's publication, Kinyamateka, which became more critical again. Both newspapers were well considered by foreign donors. So other publications appeared in early 1990, mostly in Kinyarwanda.

The success of Kanguka pushed the president's close circles to start a parody-paper - "Kangura" (=wake him up!). Kangura fought against the themes debated in Kanguka. The mission of the government-backed newspaper was to answer Kanguka's critics following an ethnic ideology. The editor - Hassan Ngeze - who was actually working free-lance for Kanguka in Western Rwanda, was all but a professional. Ngeze will become a puppet in the hands of Kangura's promoters. Kangura was to play a significant role in the rise of hate-media.

The new independent press was rarely created by media-professionals. The new publications were mostly the new means of expression of a population tired of thirty years' one party system.

The independent press quickly expanded with multi-party politics and the legalization of opposition parties in June 1991. The number of independent newspapers rose from a dozen to 60, most of them affiliated with or financed by the various political parties, following a political ideology. Some newspapers expressed extremist opinions like the militias' and the new extremist party, the CDR's. Many newspapers disappeared a year later. By 1992, about 30 newspapers were still publishing.

The independent press in Rwanda faced a lot of pressures. The explosion of the media almost corresponded to the first RPF-attack on the Rwandan border. The media multiplied in an atmosphere of beginning ethnic-civil war. The war with the RPF brought restrictions on the freedom of movement of journalists. Private media, which were critical of the ruling party MRND had problems to come around. So it was easier for authorities to promote their version of events. The war also disrupted the distribution of newspapers. Critical journalists could be accused to support RPF. Journalists were submitted to arbitrary arrest and detention. Newspapers were seized by authorities. Following the RPF's attack of October 1990, from 1990 to 1992, over forty journalists were arbitrarily arrested, detained or brought to trial. Most of them

were accused of being RPF-supporters.

After 1992, the transitional government succeeded somewhat in bringing down the number of arbitrary arrests and detentions of journalists.

#### *The rebels' radio*

In 1992, Radio Rwanda's monopoly was kind of broken when the RPF established a radio-station "Radio Muhabura" broadcasting from Uganda. Most Rwandans could listen to it except those living in the South. If Radio Rwanda was more or less MRND-controlled, Radio Muhabura was RPF-controlled. So the radio-station did not help much to the free flow of information. It was of course difficult for the new radio-station's journalists to conduct on-site investigations in Rwanda. So they had to rely upon confidential contacts for information on what was happening inside the country. The fact that they could not bring concrete evidence prevented them from denouncing assassinations, massacres and human rights violations efficiently. The reports stayed vague. On the other side, Radio Muhabura never reported abuses committed by RPF-troops, even when there was evidence. The new radio-station had the same formal style as Radio Rwanda.

#### *C. The training of journalists*

There was no school of journalism in Rwanda until 1999.

Journalists working in public media had some training: Thomas Kamelindi who was working at Radio Rwanda until the genocide said that while he worked there, 72 journalists went several months to Belgium to get trained.

The few who had a full journalist-education had got it through scholarships generally in the former Soviet Union. Florian Ukizemwabo was one of them.

The private media's journalists were generally not as well trained as their colleagues in public media except for those working for the church-publication, Kinyamateka, whose editors were professionals educated in Belgium. Most journalists would usually have some university education and then learn by doing.

A special case was Kangura's chief-editor, Hassan Ngeze whose education was said to be modest, at primary-school level. He still worked as a bus-controller while he was free-lancer for the new independent newspaper Kanguka.

#### *D. Printing facilities*

From colonial times, the church had created strong printing facilities in the Great Lakes region in order to promote preaching. Each Rwandan diocese had its own printing facility. Later, the church's well-trained workers started their own private printing-houses.

In the early 1990's, Rwanda had two over-equipped state printing-houses, "Imprimerie Nationale" and the "Régie de l'Imprimerie Scolaire" and several private ones

#### *E. The press-law of 1991*

With the explosion of the number of private media in 1991, the necessity of a press-law was obvious. The Press-law was adopted in November 1991. The new law established a National Commission on the Press, which could warn or revoke a journalist "for failure to observe press-laws." Article 3 said: "The press shall ensure sincere and/or fair, independent and responsible reporting"

The press-law required newspapers to deposit copies of all issues to the administrative and judicial authorities. It provided for several penalties, including imprisonment for offences like defamation of the president. Several articles could give way to any interpretation.

Critical journalists could be accused by authorities of being "RPF supporters",

“accomplices”, according to Article 47, for “inciting the armed forces with the intention of subverting them from their military duties and obligations to obey their superiors”. As to audiovisual media, Article 16 of the Press Law said, “ the freedom to establish and operate a radio and television station is guaranteed to every person”. The license procedure was regulated by government bodies. Applications had to be sent to the ministry of information. A government-commission made of diverse ministries’ representatives looked at them and gave its advice. The cabinet took the final decision. The only radio-station, which got a license, was the soon famous RTLM.

#### *F. International media*

Before the genocide, no international media was broadcasting in Kinyarwanda. The educated urban population listened to radio France Internationale (RFI), BBC, Voice of America, and Deutsch Welle.

### 3.2 The media during the genocide: the hate media

While the new independent press struggled to survive in spite of many constraints from 1991 and onwards, another press was emerging. That press backed by officials and the president’s close circles practiced undisguised hate-speech against Tutsi.

#### *A. The rise of hate-media*

##### *Kangura and extremist newspapers*

The first media known for constantly insulting Tutsi was Kangura, the parody-paper created to counteract the first real independent newspaper Kanguka. The mission of Kangura was to mobilize people around the president on the basis of an ethnic ideology excluding Tutsi.

Kangura’s editor, Hassan Ngeze, being neither an intellectual nor a professional, was all the easier to manipulate by the newspaper’s promoters. Ngeze would make possible to publish articles answering the new press which was becoming more and more critical towards the president.

Kangura’s first articles were “shooting” directly at Kanguka’s promoter, denouncing the Tutsi elite’s monopoly on commerce and business. Kangura denied any discrimination. After the RPF’s attack of October 1990, encouraged by the state-newspaper “La Relève” criticizing the RPF-attack and the political intentions behind it, Kangura published “The ten Hutu commandments”, a reference to the ten commandments of the Bible widely known in Christian Rwanda. The ten Hutu commandments were a true incitement to hatred, and discrimination against Tutsi. The newspaper defended itself saying that Tutsi were dangerous because they wanted to exterminate the Hutu, so they had to be stopped before striking.

An example of the discrimination conveyed by the commandments: the last commandment said: “Any Hutu must know that a Tutsi woman, wherever she is works for her Tutsi ethnic group. Therefore is a traitor any Hutu who marries a Tutsi woman, or who has a Tutsi concubine or who hires a Tutsi secretary, or protects a Tutsi woman.” The 10 Hutu commandments concluded, “Every Hutu must widely disseminate this ideology. Any Muhutu who persecutes his Muhutu brother for having read, spread and taught this ideology is a traitor.”

The issue will not be seized by authorities because of the freedom of expression, even if the law prohibited any incitement to ethnic hate.

Kangura did not only attack Tutsi but also moderate Hutu who were opposition-leaders, accusing them of incitement to division. The Liberal Party was particularly under attack, accused of being a RPF-antenna in Rwanda. The newspaper was particularly hard on two moderate politicians, pictured naked in a series of vulgar cartoons.

Kangura also denounced people, claiming that they were accomplices, traitors and enemies, working for the RPF in Rwanda. The newspaper once published a list of merchants suspected of supporting the RPF. In the same line, Kangura attacked some foreign correspondents, accusing them of being RPF-agents.

These denunciations had serious consequences: Government authorities persecuted the people denounced by the newspaper. Any denunciation could lead to a murder by militias, which were almost state-sponsored. Government officials could also be denounced: Christophe Mifzi, ORINFOR's director for many years, was fired after Kangura published a letter complaining about him. So Kangura was feared by people who saw the actions called for in the paper happening.

In contrast to colleagues from the independent press, Kangura's journalists were hardly prosecuted despite their violations of the law. On the contrary, they were supported by MRND's and CDR's party-leaders. Kangura had no financial problems. From mid. 1991, the newspaper had a circulation of about 10.000 copies and was printed at "Imprimerie Nationale" free of charge.

Kangura was not the only paper promoting hatred. Other hate-papers were also government-backed, supported by the extremist party CDR or by the militias: the monthly magazine "Umurava" was created and financed by prominent persons from the government and the military. About ten publications were known for inciting to ethnic hatred. Some of them were MRND and CRD-supported. "Interahamwe", an official MRND-newspaper, directed by a militia-leader, launched violent attacks against opposition leaders who took part in the negotiations of the Arusha Accords. Others, like "La Médaille Nyiramacibiri" intimidated journalists reporting on human rights abuse against Tutsi.

#### *Radicalization of the press*

When ORINFOR's new director, Ferdinand Nahimana came to office, he decided that Radio Rwanda would be the fighting tool of the system, denouncing the pseudo-conspiracy of the enemy - the Tutsi - in order to mobilize the Hutu in favour of a system which was becoming increasingly unpopular.

In March 1992, Radio Rwanda broadcast a communique five times where a human rights association announced that the RPF was about to murder several Hutu politicians and then would announce that the massacres had been committed by Hutu political parties. The killings were to be committed by the Liberal Party (PL). The purpose was to provoke massacres between Hutus. The news - which turned out to be false - provoked a massacre in the Bugesera-region where hundreds of Tutsi were killed and thousands of houses burnt down. The violence was organized by militias and military. The whole story had been set up by a group of people among who were Kangura's editor, Hassan Ngeze and Ferdinand Nahimana.

The episode led to the firing of ORINFOR's director. No successor was found for five months, which favoured excesses and bad developments at Radio Rwanda. To protest against the absence of editorial line and the financial and material problems, Radio Rwanda's staff went on strike.

At the end of 1992, a journalist from Radio Rwanda who was member of the Liberal Party was murdered. Four members of the extremist party CDR who had been seen by several witnesses were arrested. They were acquitted in 1993 following a new RPF-attack.

The impunity enjoyed by authors of crime and other violence encouraged extremists in favour of Hutu power. Aggressions against journalists increased in 1993.

#### *RTLM and its role in preparing the genocide*

The fired director of ORINFOR, Ferdinand Nahimana, was convinced after his experience at Radio Rwanda, that radio was a powerful means of communication and that it was necessary to create an independent radio-station entirely devoted to the promotion of the ideology of extremist members of MRND. Radio Rwanda was not the regime's radio

any longer now that it had granted access to opposition-parties. Hutu-extremists considered the public radio in the hands of opposition-parties and of the RPF.

Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines - RTLM (=one thousand hills free radio TV) was created in April 1993. RTLM was born when the Arusha Accords were signed between the Rwandan government and the RPF. The radio's shareholders and founders were known personalities, bank managers, businessmen, journalists from public media, military officers, and government officials. Most of them were members of the MRND and the CDR. They had key-positions in the government before and during the genocide.

In July, RTLM could broadcast in the whole country via a network of transmitters owned and operated by Radio Rwanda. The newspaper Kangura congratulated and reported on the new radio's adventures.

RTLM employed eight journalists. Most of them, in contrast with Kangura, were highly experienced professionals. They had all worked in government-media or for MRND or CDR-publications.

RTLM was from the beginning a western-style talk-show radio, interactive with audience-participation, lots of jokes, and popular music. RTLM's broadcasters did not provide news-reports, factual reports nor programs with items of public interest. They presented informal comments on various subjects. They had long interviews with guests, invited listeners to call the radio and give their comments. RTLM was modern and used street-language. This was new in Rwanda where Radio Rwanda and Radio Muhabura were known for their formal tone. RTLM had no competition there and became popular at once. The radio was listened to mostly in urban areas and among the soldiers, even the RPF's rebels. The young were an important audience; they formed the big majority of militia members.

From July to October 1993, RTLM-programs consisted mostly of popular music. But on 21 October, Burundi's first democratically elected head of state, Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, was murdered by officers from the mainly Tutsi Burundian army. This had a big impact in Rwanda where the Arusha-accords and the transition to democracy seemed fragile. The assassination of the Burundian president led to revenge killings among the Tutsi in Burundi. The army, which was mostly Tutsi retaliated and committed atrocities against the Hutu. 50,000 died and 150,000 were displaced.

RTLM-programs changed and began inciting to ethnic hatred against Tutsi. RTLM criticized the Arusha Accords, described the RPF as dangerous as well as the Tutsi in general. The radio-station gave a distorted presentation of the events in Burundi, trying to create panic, saying that violence would soon spread to Rwanda, asking listeners to intervene on behalf of the Hutu in Burundi. RTLM even claimed that the RPF and not the Burundian soldiers was behind the massacres in Burundi. RTLM used the Burundi crisis to denounce the Arusha Accords.

Like the newspaper Kangura, RTLM regularly denounced opposition members and persons who were known to be critical towards the government as traitors, RPF-accomplices and enemies. The radio-station also targeted leaders of civil society and journalists who supported the Arusha Accords, human rights activists and journalists reporting on abuses committed by the MRND, the CDR or the militias. A few independent newspapers were constantly under attack of RTLM.

Indeed, the rise of hate-media and the preparation of the genocide were not things which happened overnight, a few independent newspapers and human rights organizations were aware of the radicalisation, the increase of violence and the impunity enjoyed by their authors. They denounced it, which made them targets of the new radio-station accusing them of serving the enemy.

Several RTLM shareholders and founders were leaders of the militias or members of the notorious death-squad. The direct link to the radio-station meant that whoever reported on militia-violence took a risk of being denounced as an enemy afterwards. And whoever was denounced by RTLM could be attacked by the organizations later. There are also examples where the militias answered calls for action at RTLM: broadcaster



could say that the enemy had infiltrated an area and then asked the population to search for them. Militia would then block roads and harass people in the mentioned area.

RTLM violated several articles of the Press Law and the Penal Code by inciting to ethnic hatred, conflict among the population and violence, denying the right of reply, and not respecting basic principles of journalistic ethics. The radio-station received several warnings of the minister of information at the beginning of 1994. Some government-members initiated civil defamation cases against some broadcasters, but the cases were blocked by the tribunal of first instance. Even president Habyarimana interfered advising the prosecutor from taking any measures against RTLM broadcasters.

The diplomats were concerned about the radio-station but mostly because it undermined the Arusha Accords with its critics.

During the few months prior to the genocide, RTLM was on the front-line in broadcasting ethnic propaganda, lending the microphone to ordinary people in order to mobilize them for the last fight. RTLM's messages and slogans were supported by several extremist newspapers with Kangura on the front line.

RTLM-popularity had an impact on Radio Rwanda, which did not want to stay behind. The public radio-station decided to adopt a more violent hateful tone. So the day before the genocide, the written press was staggering behind radio media more adapted in a country with high illiteracy rate and where oral communication remained the main way to transmit messages.

#### *RTLM during the genocide*

When the plane carrying Rwanda's and Burundi's presidents was hit by a missile and crashed close to Kigali airport on 6 April, RTLM was the first to announce the event within an hour. Other media did not announce the crash until later that night.

RTLM was also the first to announce the inauguration of the self-proclaimed interim government on 8 April. The radio-station never said it was a coup. The new government claimed being a coalition government but new opposition-members replacing those who had been murdered belonged all to extremist Hutu-power factions of parties close to the MRND.

RTLM started accusing the Hutu opposition and the Belgian soldiers of the UNAMIR. The station said that the RPF was behind the crash with the help of the Belgian part of the UNAMIR. The RPF launched an immediate attack to prevent the genocide of the Tutsi. The army, which had lost its chief in the plane-crash, asked the militia to help fight the enemy. The militias, which were far from the battlefield began then hunting opposition-leaders and civil society leaders in and around Kigali, killing all who were considered opposed to the former regime. Independent journalists were hunted down while RTLM-broadcasters enjoyed personal protection from authorities.

From then on, RTLM broadcast 24 hours a day during the first weeks of the genocide.

Then RTLM called for lynching and killing actions against Tutsi, whom broadcasters called "cockroaches" and "snakes": Tutsi were identified with RPF who had murdered the president, just invaded Rwanda and were going to exterminate all Hutu if they were not going to be stopped before. The station described the rebels as devils unable to control their impulse to kill. Therefore conventional warfare would not work. Their extermination was the only solution. Any Tutsi was, according to RTLM, an RPF-agent and therefore had to be caught and killed. The station ordered its audience to participate in the manhunt. The on-going massacres were justified by RTLM as self-defence actions.

Besides inciting to genocide, RTLM played a more direct role in helping the killings: the station advised militias in managing road-blocks, it helped them to search, identify and find people who were supposed to be eliminated. Broadcasters would for example give

address and car number-plates of persons trying to hide or escape. They would also invite listeners to call and give information to help find specific persons. People opposing the killings were denounced as RPF-supporters, which led to death.

Another group targeted by RTLM was priests who were suspected of hiding and protecting people in churches and convents. During the genocide, a part of the church was working with the interim government helping militias in their macabre work while the other part risked their lives trying to save people from death. RTLM claimed that RPF-troops were using churches as military-bases, which encouraged attacks on churches. Some of the big massacres during the genocide took place in churches.

The armed forces and para-military forces - the militias - that were hunting down the Tutsi and were behind the big massacres during the genocide were important targets of RTLM, which conveyed information between them such as demands of weapon and ammunition supplies.

Meanwhile, the radio-station went on talking with listeners, interviewing extremist politicians, civil servants, members of the government who all encouraged the population to assist the security forces during the war.

Ten days after the beginning of the genocide, the RPF demanded that RTLM be closed because of its responsibility in the massacres. This would be one of the conditions before any negotiations with the interim government. The government ignored the demand. The RPF bombed RTLM which had to flee and then used mobile FM transmitters to broadcast disinformation from inside the French-controlled area on the border between Rwanda and Zaire, asking hundreds of thousands of Hutus to flee to refugees camps where they could be grouped again and join fighters.

#### *Radio Rwanda during the genocide*

During the first days of the genocide, the minister of information was murdered. ORINFOR's director fled from the country. Both of them had tried to introduce reforms and improve the independence of Radio Rwanda. They were replaced by an extremist from a Hutu power faction and a Radio Rwanda journalist who was RTLM shareholder.

Radio Rwanda's moderate journalists were either killed or fled, feeling threatened. They were replaced by journalists alleging extremist opinions. But a few journalists stayed and collaborated with the new authorities.

Radio Rwanda became the interim government officials' media, broadcasting information-bulletins. Journalists read communiques sent by the military forces. According to Albert Baudoin Twizeyimana who left Radio Rwanda when the genocide started, these communiques either asked people to stay home, or to participate in the killings. They also gave information on the massacres. After a while, Radio Rwanda became a platform for extremist politicians and government officials inciting to genocide. The radio-station did not seem to have played a direct role in directing and assisting militias. But it incited people to genocide by calling them to help armed forces defend the country against the enemy. Journalists who worked at Radio Rwanda during the genocide left to Zaire in July.

The genocide, which lasted from April until July 1994, killed a million Tutsi and moderate Hutu. Forty-eight journalists were killed, most of them victims of militias. The genocide had been meticulously prepared and the media played an important role because they were deliberately used by authorities to promote hate and violence. Thus massacres could be perpetrated with people's accept and participation because of the indoctrination which had been carefully thought of by the promoters of hate-media.

## 4 The media after the genocide

When the RPF won the war in July 1994, one million were dead and two millions had fled to Zaire following former authorities calling for exile through Radio Rwanda and RTLM. Rwanda was devastated: the economy was ruined, infrastructures were destroyed, and the state-money had been taken away. The Rwandan press paid a high price: half the journalists had been killed or had disappeared during the genocide, others had fled, and a few were in prison. The profession was destroyed. Printing-houses were heavily damaged.

The newcomers and the population's main concerns were daily survival. The press sector was not a priority.

### 4.1 Reconstruction of a destroyed media sector (1994 - 2003)

A *written press* emerged again thanks to external initiatives such as Reporters sans Frontières'. A number of newspapers were soon published like Kinyamateka, Rwanda Rushya (Tutsi), and Le Tribun du Peuple (close to the RPF)

*The national radio* started its programs again but with a different tone. The new government, following the Arusha Accords, was composed of various political parties opposed to the former regime and the RPF. The government's objectives were unity and reconciliation. They became the new editorial line of Radio Rwanda. The new staff was made of RPF-journalists from Radio Muhabura and former Radio Rwanda journalists who had fled during the genocide and had returned. Florian Ukizemwabo who was reintegrated in the public audio-visual media after the genocide tells that he got a warning after a report on a camp of displaced Hutu and Tutsi where he advocated for the two groups' cohabitation. He was told not to deal with the topic.

*Television nationale du Rwanda* started broadcasting again. From 1994 until 1998, most of TV-Rwanda's directors were military persons.

Since it was commonly said that the genocide was the result of a propaganda done by the media, the government's policy towards them was extremely cautious.

At the same time, the threat of refugee-camps where Rwanda's former armed forces and militias got reorganized was still there. Extremist journalists created an association of journalists in exile and managed to publish new issues of their newspapers still inciting to ethnic hatred.

The Press-law of 1991 had become obsolete with the new government. Rwanda's press sector was in a *law-vacuum* favouring abuse and excess but also arbitrary decisions of the government. Thus two human rights radio-projects were rejected in 1994 without official explanations. The only radio-station allowed was Radio UNAMIR, the United Nations radio, accepted after various pressures.

New private publications emerged but some of them were submitted to pressures, journalists were arbitrarily arrested and detained, some accused of having taken part in the genocide.

Facing the growing threat of the ex-armed forces and Hutu militias behind the border to Zaire and the underground publication of extremist Hutu media, the government became more radical and the press paid for it. Journalists from public media, especially from Radio Rwanda, got arrested, accused of participating in the genocide. Foreign journalists were also threatened or aggressed. The private press avoided sensitive topics. But pressures and threats went on. More journalists went into exile. Many private publications disappeared.

In 1999, media-professionals tried to create professional associations such as "L'association Rwandaise des Journalistes" (ARJ) and "L'association rwandaise des femmes journalistes" (ARFEM). A press-house was also established with international cooperation support.

#### 4.2 Today: Absence of pluralism and constant threats and pressures

*A. The audio-visual media - Radio Rwanda and Television Nationale du Rwanda* are still a state-monopoly. Private radio and TV do not yet exist: licences have until now been refused to private investors because of the tragic impact of RTLM during the genocide. Radio is still the most popular media in Rwanda.

The public media, which also comprise two written publications - *Imvaho* and *La Nouvelle Relève* - are still under the public media's governing body, ORINFOR, which has kept the same structure as before the genocide, its director being appointed by the cabinet and being still spokesman for the president's office.

Public media still reject opinions, which are contrary to the official line. Civil society organizations have to pay a lot to get media-access. Sometimes they are censored.

*B. The private press* is submitted to such juridical, financial and material pressures that the number of newspapers stays low. Rwanda does not have a daily. There are a dozen titles, most of them in Kinyarwanda, a few in French and a few in English. Most journalists are newcomers whose parents emigrated to Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi or Congo. A big part of them did not know Rwanda before the genocide. The private press, which is not close to the official line, has problems to get printed. They have to go to Uganda, which has good and cheaper printing-facilities. Newspapers, which are close to the official line - four titles are clearly pro-government - get printed at the national printing-house. They survive with advertisements bought by various state-administrations and big public companies, which is almost impossible for newspapers criticising the government.

Most newspapers sell fewer than 4000 copies and almost all of them are concentrated in the Kigali area. Newspapers are relatively expensive (between 100 and 500 Rwandan Francs = 0,25 to 1,25 euro) and thus inaccessible to most Rwandans.

Private media practice self-censorship. Some topics are forbidden such as Rwanda's army in Congo and abuses committed by the RPF. *New Times'* chief-editor - Gaspard Safari says, "Survivors look at media as traitors, genociders; killers consider that media are controlled by and part of the government, so journalists who did not have a role in the genocide stay shy and censor themselves."

"The government has succeeded in making people shy away from being vibrant", says Safari. "When you write something the government does not like, it says "genocide", "division". The government will not forbid but it will pick on you all the time."

According to several media professionals, there is hardly any independent newspaper in Rwanda today, except "Umuseso", a weekly publication in Kinyarwanda selling out its 4000 copies that have to be printed in Uganda.

Umuseso's editorial line is to denounce corruption and errors not covered by public media. Two members of the staff have until now been jailed, one for publishing an article on corruption in the military and the other for incitement to division in articles regarding the end of the transition, and for a cartoon insulting the head of state. The publication's director - Marc Mc Dowell - says that authorities make things hard for them: they are excluded from press conferences, they hardly have any advertisement-income because no private firms dare, they get threats and their families are intimidated.

The Rwanda Voice also claims to be independent. Its chief-editor, Michael Munyaneza,

is fighting to get 2000 copies published at least twice a month. He complains about the government's excessive control over the media. According to him, the small market-share, the government's sensitivity and the lack of professional journalists explain the low number of private newspapers and their fiasco. Munyaneza criticizes the journalists' limited access to information when they investigate corruption or security matters.

The church's publication - Kinyamateka - still exists, published in Kinyarwanda with 5000 copies twice a month. The publication is popular and easy to read (according to its editor). It gives a Christian view on events. The church being established in the whole country, Kinyamateka has no distribution-problem. It has also its own printing-facilities.

*C. The international media* - BBC, Deutsch Welle, RFI and Voice Of America - have correspondents in Rwanda. BBC and Voice of America broadcast in Kinyarwanda one hour a day each. Their programs are very much listened to.

Foreign correspondents say that their reports are often commented. There is a constant control over what they do, which gives stress. Covering the coming elections will not be easy. They fear more pressures then.

Authorities are informed on journalists' movements. One has to call them before broadcasting to inform on the subject and give them a chance to make their point. When authorities are displeased, they give a warning. After three warnings, a foreign correspondent has to leave the country.

#### *D. Internet*

Internet was developed in Rwanda after the genocide. There are at the moment three servers, one, Rwandatel, is state-controlled, there is the university server, Kist, and the last one, Télé 10, is private.

There are several Internet-café's in the capital, Kigali where anyone can have access to Internet.

A part of the Rwandan diaspora has established web sites. Some of them are run by new political parties developing outside Rwanda. The news broadcast on these sides are not always accurate. But their impact is limited, Internet being accessible to very few urban educated Rwandans.

The ministry of information has not taken any step to control or regulate access to Internet.

#### *E. The Press house and the journalists' association*

*The press-house* was created in 1996. It was financed by UNESCO. The press-house gathers the whole press-sector, the public and private press, the audio-visual media, the written press, etc...

The press-house is to be used for in-training of journalists, seminars, workshops, and conferences. The press-house is also a place where media can get help in their work: journalists can photocopy, send fax and make the layout at lower prices.

The director of the press-house - Abbé Karekezi - confessed that the press-house has not been functioning well for a while, partly because of financial problems (UNESCO is not financing any longer) but also because of the lack of interest of the media.

#### *F. The Rwandan journalist association*

The Rwandan Journalist Association gathers about a hundred journalists, half of them come from the private press.

The mission of the association is to defend and promote journalists' rights and work for strengthening professional and material capacities of the press. The association is not very active and it has lost credit among media professionals.

On the initiative of the "Minalog" (Ministry of local administration, information and social affairs), the association has just elaborated a code of ethics for journalists. Unfortunately, according to one of the members, few professionals showed interest. The decision to elaborate a code of ethics was taken because many journalists do not read the press-law. Few of them are aware of their social responsibility.

The code of ethics establishes the rules of behaviour for journalists, and their obligations towards their readers, listeners, audience, and towards themselves. It will promote mutual solidarity inside the profession. It will tell journalists how to respect the new press-law.

#### 4.3 The new Press Law and the High Press Council

A new press-law was adopted and published by the president in July 2002. The press-law had been on the way for six years before it was finally promulgated. The press-law was elaborated by the ministry but journalists were consulted during its elaboration.

A couple of articles were contested by journalists: the articles said that whoever via the press tried to incite a part of Rwanda's population to commit genocide, without success, could get a sentence from 20 years' to life-time imprisonment. If incitement to genocide via the press met success, the perpetrators would risk death penalty. Journalists asked that such measures be included in the penal code instead. The two articles were suppressed on the president's decision.

The new law has no special safeguards regarding genocide.

The new press-law asks for prison-sentences for a few press-offences such as violation of privacy and defamation.

The press-law is also questionable regarding criminal liabilities. Article 88, for example, says, "perpetrators for offences committed through the press are prosecuted in the following order, the publishing director or editor, the authors, the printers, the vendors and distributors." This means that vendors, who have no responsibility for published articles, might be sentenced to jail if the directors or journalists of a prosecuted publication have fled or disappeared. This disposition might incite printers and vendors, who are crucial elements to disseminate information, to only take charge of pro-government newspapers.

The new press-law also establishes a new body, the High Press Council (Le Haut Conseil de la Presse) to guarantee the freedom of the press. It consists of nine members, three of them are elected by the private press, one comes from the public media, two have been chosen by the cabinet among six candidates proposed by civil society organizations, and three come from central administration. Media professionals do not consider this new body independent because of its composition.

The high press council will give its advice on applications for private radio and TV-broadcasting-licences: four applications are in the pipeline. The high press council will also give press-cards and withdraw them if it judges it necessary. The high council will also deal out audio-visual media access to political parties before elections.

The ministry of information (MINALOG) keeps the final attribution of publishing and broadcasting licences and the accreditation of foreign journalists.

#### 4.4 The school of journalism

Many observers consider Rwanda's press as mediocre because of its lack of professional training and because journalists do not check their sources of information well enough.

Until 1996, Rwanda's journalists were either professionally trained outside Rwanda or trained "on the job" with a few seminars and workshops to improve their skills.

The School of Journalism and Communication was founded in 1996 at the National University of Rwanda. The curriculum was very theoretical with much thinking about the role of the media. But there was no practical training. So the hundred students who graduated from the school in June 1999 had no practical training at all.

In 2000, the school changed its name, its goals and its program of study to better reflect the changing world of communication and to be more in step with the needs of the country, especially since Rwanda was emerging from the aftermath of the genocide where media played a big role.

The new program launched in October 2000 consists of a four-year plan and emphasizes more practical aspects of training future journalists than theory. Some of the school's basic goals are:

- To emphasize to students the importance of fairness, accuracy and responsibility in journalism and communication
- To provide students with a strong educational background in areas such as history, economics, political science and sociology
- To expose students to the national needs in journalism and communication and to prepare them to best meet those needs
- To provide a forum for training already-employed journalists in a continuing-education context

The school has problems to find national trainers and keep them: most Rwandan professionals are dead, in exile or in jail. There are several guest-teachers from neighbouring-states. American foundations such as the Fullbright send trainers regularly, and there is a partnership with the journalist-school of Lille in France.

One of the criteria to recruit students is their language-skills in Kinyarwanda, French or English. Unfortunately the best students choose medicine.

Most students attending the school want to work in the field of communication, which is less dangerous and better paid. Those motivated to study journalism see it as a way to become politicians.

A guest-teacher met at the school who was about to start courses on Opinion journalism and Actuality and critique of the media predicted it would be difficult to debate on the Rwandan case. Many topics and words are still taboo. As she remarked, "it seems that people do not yet know which lessons are to be learnt from the genocide"

#### 4.5 International actors in Rwanda media development after the genocide

Considering the role played by Rwandan media during the genocide, several international actors have been involved in the press-sector from 1994 and onwards.

Studies have been done on the part played by the media in the genocide, help has been given to rebuild the destroyed media-sector, professionals have been sent to train journalists, trainers assisted in starting the school of journalism, support has been given to the creation of a press-house, financial and material resources, professional advice have been given to strengthen independent media.

Among contributors are professional international organizations (Reporters sans Frontières, Media Action International, Panos, Fondation Hirondelle, Article 19), journalist-schools, and international cooperation (UNDP, DFID, the Dutch embassy, SIDA...)

## 5 The lessons learnt

### 5.1 Characteristics of the hate media

There are some characteristics common to hate-media whether they were inciting to genocide in Rwanda or to holocaust during Hitler's Nazi regime. If we look at the Rwandan example, here are the ingredients, which made hate-media a success:

- *A strong ideology was behind:*  
Professor Ferdinand Nahimana developed the ideology of a strong Hutu race ruling prosperous principalities in north-western Rwanda before colonial times. This was actually the thesis that he presented at the university in Paris and for which he was congratulated at the time. According to Nahimana, the Tutsi king used the white colonists to overtake the north-western region and oppressed the Hutus (who represented over 80% of the population) until the social revolution of 1959. The Hutus' supremacy afterwards was just fair democracy. The RPF-attack in 1990 was considered as a Tutsi-attempt to conquer Rwanda and annihilate The Hutus. The Tutsi were dangerous enemies. If the Hutus wanted to survive they had to exterminate the Tutsi. It was self-defence. This was Professor Nahimana's theory.
- *Control over strong mass media, populism, and demagoguery:*  
To transmit this ideology to the masses, it is necessary to have strong media. Hutu-power adepts needed mass media to spread their message. The newspaper Kangura was the first attempt: it was a parody of the first real independent newspaper in Rwanda. Its editor was a non-professional easy to manipulate. Popular language was used as well as cartoons. Its editorial line was to incite to ethnic hate. Kangura's promoters, founders and publisher belonged to Rwanda's president's close circles. Other extremist newspapers emerged supported by extremist political parties. Meanwhile, the mass-media which had been government-controlled since independence, the national radio, Radio Rwanda, was becoming more difficult to control because of the rise of political pluralism which was bringing reforms in the public broadcasting-system. Therefore the creation of RTLM, a private super-professional radio-station with well-trained popular journalists, who were pro-Hutu-power. The radio-station was financed by Hutu-power friendly businessmen, politicians, and military. Most of them had key-positions in the government and were close to the president's wife. Because the president's close circles supported it, RTLM could broadcast throughout the whole country thanks to Radio Rwanda's network of transmitters in the regions. The radio-station had immediate success because of its small-talk style programs with popular music, audience participation, and street-language, which was new in Rwanda. Even the "enemy" listened to it. RTLM was the perfect tool to spread Hutu-power ideology.
- *Psychological preparation to hate:*  
In order to bring so many people to hate and then kill, one needed to "prepare" people. The first step was *to misinform or not inform* properly: an uninformed audience was easier to manipulate. RTLM had no news-bulletins, no factual reports. Presenters commented rumours or events. False news, like RPF-conspiracy, abuses and-massacres, was common. Propaganda-methods, like presenting a specific intolerant opinion as the ordinary man's, were used. The second step was to *sow division and fear* so it would lead to conflict. Kangura's and later RTLM's programs all criticized the Arusha Accords. They tried to demonstrate that peace, cohabitation with Tutsi were impossible. Anyone advocating for reconciliation, like moderate Hutus, was not to be trusted. Moderates were accomplices, they were pro-RPF, they were not



patriots, they were traitors. The Hutus formed a group where there must be solidarity. It is "us" against "them".

The following step was to *make a devil out of the enemy*, dehumanise him. Kangura started with the publication of the Ten Hutu Commandments, a reference to the Bible's Ten Commandments widely known in Christian Rwanda. The Ten Hutu Commandments were a clear incitement to discriminate and to hate Tutsis. Kangura's vulgar cartoons ridiculed prominent moderate Hutus and Tutsis. Tutsis were called "cockroaches", "snakes" all day long; they were not human beings any longer. They were becoming dirty and dangerous insects one should crush. Tutsi were described as extremely dangerous, unable to control their impulse to kill.

- *Violence invades everything:*

Both Kangura's and RTLM's speech and language were increasingly violent as militias' actions multiplied throughout the country. Words as "enemy", "accomplice", "traitor", "massacre", "murder" were used everyday. Insults became common and nobody could respond. Denunciations were ordinary during the genocide where RTLM gave information to militias to help them search and find specific persons. A threshold was crossed where any language was allowed and tolerated.

During the genocide, lists of killed Tutsi and moderate Hutus were read and presented as victories, murderers and perpetrators of massacres were singled out and presented as heroes, which encouraged more killings.

## 5.2 How could it happen?

How could hate-propaganda succeed so much in Rwanda through the media?

- *Rwandan hate-media – Kangura and RTLM and in a minor grade Radio Rwanda – were all backed, financed and supported by powerful and influential politicians, businessmen and military officers who were close to the president.* These private media used state-facilities, like printing-houses (Kangura) and radio-transmitters (RTLM) without even paying for using their services.
- There existed *no independent institutional framework* in Rwanda to counteract, stop and sanction hate-media supported by men in key-positions in government. There was *no independent licensing authority* responsible for public and privately funded broadcasting. Public broadcasting was a government monopoly with a management-board which was not independently appointed, had neither financial autonomy nor editorial freedom. The press-law of 1991 opened up for media pluralism but licenses should have been granted according to criteria considering balanced political and ethnic viewpoints
- *Violations of the law were not sanctioned.* Both the press-law and the penal code were violated by hate-media, and RTLM received several warnings from the minister of information but there were no sanctions. Defamation-cases were raised but blocked by non-independent courts. Impunity made it possible for the radio-station to go on broadcasting as usual.
- *Rwanda's population was generally not well informed.* The majority got their information through Radio Rwanda, which was government-controlled and biased in news-presentation, especially after RPF-attacks where patriotism was the rule. So Rwandans were easy victims.
- *Journalists were easy to manipulate because of the general lack of professional*

*training*: there was no sensitisation on journalism-ethics, conflict-journalism, or social responsibility. Kangura's Chief editor, Hassan Ngeze, who is being judged in Arusha at the moment, was a good example. Some journalists were politically involved, like a part of RTLM's staff, the professionally trained, who were pro-Hutu-power. And at last, journalists who were generally not well paid and unorganized, were easily attracted by financial and material advantages. Besides a good salary, they could be offered credit, seminars and missions abroad.

- *The private independent press, which existed just before the genocide and was denouncing the hate-propaganda and the increasing violence, had not had much experience.* The journalists were often not professionally trained, militias commonly harassed them, families received threats and several of them chose to flee in exile. Those (48) who still were there during the genocide were killed.

### 5.3 What were the consequences for the media-sector and civil society?

- The genocide killed half the profession (48 journalists), sent several to jail and many into exile.
- The media-sector was physically and financially destroyed: printing-facilities were severely damaged, the economy was in ruin, and investors had disappeared.
- The media were and are still now mistrusted in general by authorities and civil society. The role of the journalist is misunderstood: He is either a civil servant working for the government or a partisan working for a political party. He cannot be trusted. You can be sure the information you give him will be distorted, manipulated or worst, used against you.
- The media, feeling this mistrust, have problems to work today, so they get disillusioned and apathetic. Independent media, which are critical, do not really get access to information, so they are not taken seriously. It is a vicious circle. Media practice self-censorship to survive and avoid dealing with taboo-topics like ethnic conflict, Rwanda's army's presence in Congo and corruption. According to many observers, the quality of the Rwandan press at the moment is mediocre.
- The profession is not attractive: Rwanda's school of journalism has difficulties recruiting students. Journalism is considered as dangerous and not well paid. It does not bring respect. The school has also problems recruiting Rwandan trainers.
- Rwandan authorities are using the role of the media in the genocide to limit the freedom of expression. Authorities forget that hate-media were actually established and supported by those who had power. Today, independent newspapers are controlled and harassed if they are critical towards the government. Public media are government-controlled. Foreign correspondents are watched. The new press-law has been adopted after six years of discussions. The new body established by the press-law to control the freedom of the press is still not independent. No private broadcasting licenses have been given yet. The press-house and the journalists' association enjoy no credit among professionals who do not consider them independent. There is still no adequate media institutional support for democracy.
- Rwandan civil society does not really understand the role of the journalist: again, he is either an agent of the government or working for some financial or

political interest. This is a problem before the coming elections.

- Because authorities still put limits on the freedom of expression, Rwanda's civil society is not well-informed. There is no open debate. Many topics are taboo. Participation in multi-party politics means nothing if people have neither access to information nor opportunity to express their opinion.

#### 5.4 Which lessons can be learnt?

Some lessons have been learnt from the role of the media during the genocide and some can be shared with journalists facing similar crisis in their country:

- *Professional training of journalists – initial training and in-training - is crucial* to avoid such developments. Journalists who are well educated, who know journalism-ethics and who are conscious of their social responsibility are not easy to manipulate. Journalists should also learn conflict reporting. It will prevent them from being manipulated. Reliable journalism will also help citizens to take well-informed decisions and thus avoid or solve a conflict. Therefore the school of journalism in Rwanda and therefore the recent change of the curriculum to better answer the needs of a country emerging from the aftermath of the genocide where media played a crucial role.
- *Organizing the profession* is also essential to become more independent towards authorities. A professional organization might also help journalists to get better salaries and working-conditions so they are not so easily attracted by doubtful propositions. Therefore some attempts in Rwanda with the Press-house and the journalists' association.
- *Independent bodies to regulate the profession and protect media from interference* have to be established. One independent licensing authority should for example be responsible for public and privately funded broadcasting. Licences should be given according to criteria where political and ethnic opinions are balanced. Such a body exists in South Africa with success. The Rwandan High Press Council is a first attempt of the kind. Its composition does not show independence from the government. Its mission reveals that the cabinet will still control the media. The role of the media is often underestimated in a democratisation-process. But real democracy cannot be achieved if citizens are not informed nor are allowed to express their points of view.
- *The public broadcaster should be made independent from the government*, with an independently appointed board of directors, own budget and editorial freedom. Radio Rwanda and Télévision Nationale du Rwanda are still government-controlled.
- *A legal framework with safeguards against future violations of recognized norms for media activity* has to be elaborated. Professionals should be consulted during the elaboration of the law. *Independent courts must exist to implement the law.* A new press-law has been adopted in Rwanda, but several articles can be interpreted in such a way that authorities can use them to limit the freedom of expression and gain control the media.
- The last advice comes from a Rwandan journalist who advised colleagues from copying non-resident international media who, because they do not know the culture and local languages, often will use witnesses turning out to be false in their reporting.

## 6 Appendices

### 6.1 Appendix I: List of abbreviations

APROSOMA : Association pour la promotion sociale des masses

ARFEM : Association Rwandaise des Femmes Journalistes

ARJ : Association Rwandaise des Journalistes

CDR : Coalition pour la Défense de la République

FAR : Forces Armées Rwandaises

ICTR : International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

MAI : Media Action International

MDR : Mouvement Démocratique Républicain

MINALOG : Ministère de l'Administration Locale, des Affaires Sociales et de l'Information

MRND : Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement

MSM : Mouvement Social Muhutu

ORINFOR : Office Rwandais d'Information

PL : Parti Libéral

RADER : Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais

RPA . Rwanda Patriotic Army

RPF : Rwanda Patriotic Front

RTLTM : Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines

UNAMIR : United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda

UNAR : Union Nationale Rwandaise