

The contribution of memory in healing and preventing genocide in Rwanda

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ABSTRACT: Despite past efforts to prevent genocide and systematic episodes of worldwide human rights violations, such atrocities have continued to persist. After the Holocaust, the United Nations put in place the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and vowed 'never again'. Thus preventing genocide became a collective, as well as an individual responsibility. In Rwandan culture, memories are associated to individuals or places based on social construct safeguarded both by oral tradition and writing. This paper specifically explores genocide prevention strategies involving memory and commemorations. This research uses a phenomenology paradigm because it highlights the group remembering, and assesses how genocide memory and commemoration are lived by people. Data was collected through document analysis and subsequently analyzed using content analysis. Research findings have highlighted the role of memory in post-genocide period as one of the approach used to prevent genocide in the future.

KEYWORDS: genocide, memory, prevention, Rwanda, commemoration, culture.

1 INTRODUCTION

In Rwanda, a small country situated in East Africa between the Republic of Uganda in the North, Tanzania in the East, Burundi in the South and the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC) in the West, occurred genocide between April and July 1994. It was qualified by Human Rights Watch (1996) as the fastest and most vicious genocide recorded in human history. Its capital city is Kigali. Geographically, the country is divided in 5 provinces: the South, North, West, East and Kigali City. Provinces are composed of districts, which are divided in sectors and cellules. After the cellule, the small administrative entity is called Umudugudu¹.

Rwanda experienced genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi population in which it is estimated that at least 1,074,017 Tutsi were brutally murdered according to MINALOC² report (Kantengwa, 2014). Tutsi were killed and disposed of throughout the country. This genocide damaged and destroyed social cohesion and the social make up of Rwandan society. It also destroyed the unity that Rwandans had developed and relied upon for centuries.

According to Samuel Totten and William S. Parsons (2009, p.3), the term genocide was coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944. To form the new term, Lemkin combined the Greek *genos* (race, tribe) and *cide* (Killing). Thus, genocide was defined by Lemkin as:

"...The coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be the

¹ Umudugudu: is an administrative zone which can have a population changing within a range of 100 and 120 households.

² MINALOC: Ministry of Administration and Local government made a report on victims of genocide in 2004. It is not published.

disintegration of the political and social institutions of culture, language, national feelings, religion, economic existence, of national groups and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group" (Totten & Parsons, 2009, pp. 3-4).

However, what happened in Rwanda in 1994 was recognized as genocide by United Nations in resolution S/RES/955 (1994) of 8 November 1994 indicating that genocide and other systematic, widespread and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law had been committed in Rwanda. To put an end to such crimes and to take effective measures to bring to justice the persons responsible, the above mentioned resolution established an International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) for the prosecution of persons responsible for perpetrating this genocide. This tribunal would contribute to ensuring that such violations are halted and effectively redressed.

The prevention of genocide, like the prevention of armed conflict, calls for a whole set of actions such as political, social, legal and economic, depending on the context, and involves the responsibility of different actors for the sake of protecting future generations. In the context of post genocide Rwanda, the transitional period involved a set of judicial and non-judicial measures contributing to reestablish social justice among people. The examples are, the National Assistance Fund for the Needy Survivors of Genocide (FARG) in 1998, the National Commission for Unity of Reconciliation (NURC) in 1999, Gacaca courts in 2001, the National Commission of Human Rights (NCHR) in 1999 and modified and completed in 2002, the National Commission of the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) in 2008 and other various institutional reforms.

It is in this regard that, as a contribution to the 'Never Again' campaign, the Government of Rwanda, and the civil society have implemented the practices of memory and commemoration as one of the approach of coping with the post genocide period.

As mentioned in the statement of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) President Jakob Kellenberger in the international forum organized by the Swedish government on 26-28 January 2004, keeping alive the memory of past acts of genocide is an effective way of strengthening the resolve to act early on to prevent genocide from happening again in any context. He argued that Holocaust memorials are extremely important. It is imperative that the genocide that occurred in Rwanda 10 years ago, and indeed all other acts of genocide, be remembered (ICRC, RESOURCE CENTRE, 2004).

In that way, Albright and Cohen emphasized that to honor the memory of past victims of genocide and mass atrocity provides a meaningful contribution to preventing it in the future. (Albright & Cohen, 2008). This year, with the 20th commemoration, On 7 April, 2014 commemoration has been organized under the following theme: "Remember, Unite, Renew". The commemoration honored the nearly more than one million people who lost their lives in Rwanda from April to July 1994. This year, also, people celebrated the remarkable story of resilience and hope of Rwandans as they have built a new and cohesive society. All speeches addressed the need to make never again effective; thus all committing to a non-repetition of genocide anywhere in the world (The Kwibuka20 team, 2014).

In the view of Paul Ricoeur in the collective book called "pour quoi se souvenir?" the concept of memory, is significant. It does not only mean 'you will remember' but rather 'you will continue to tell', to recount, to testify (Académie universelle des cultures, 1999, p. 80).

In the same light, Sacco (2013) states that memory refers to the ways in which individuals and societies choose to remember (or forget) certain moments and events in their history. Individual memory can take several forms, such as an oral history interview, a piece of artwork, or the personal decision to wave a particular flag on your front porch. Societies have chosen to display their collective memory through statues, monuments, parades, and holidays such as Memorial Day (Sacco, 2013). This paper is focusing on Rwandan culture in memory, identifying the group remembering and highlighting what are the tools of safeguard in practice during genocide commemoration.

2 MATERIAL AND METHODS

The sampling technique used in this paper is a simple random sampling. Among over 15 events of commemoration organised in Huye District, we choose Karama and Songa randomly.

Document analysis is the main tool of data collection. Basically, knowledge of the history and background close to a specific situation comes from reviewing documents. We analyzed documents produced for the sake of commemoration. Documents reviewed are essentially, the official Gazette, No special, 2009 on national orders and heroes, invitation letters of 20th commemoration, notes taken in the event of commemoration, banners, announcements, poems and testimonies, speech of the guests of honor. This research is concentrated on two commemoration events hosted at Karama Genocide

memorial site in Karama Sector on 27 April and Songa genocide memorial site in Kinazi Sector on 28 April both located in Huye District, Southern province.

We supplemented the data with observation and notes taken during the event. As such, the review of documents is an unobtrusive method, rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the study.

Through analysis, we kept the phenomenological aspects relating the experiences for genocide survivors. With the insight of Willis (2007) in qualitative research, the conclusions do not investigate the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi as a phenomenon, but rather the experiences of the people as they participated in that phenomenon of commemoration, which in turn allows a deeper understanding of the phenomenon through examination of these experiences. He states that “the focus is thus on understanding from the perspective of the person or persons being studied” (Willis, 2007, p. 107).

For the ethical considerations, we do not reveal the names of the people who performed poems and gave testimonies. We use forged names to recall the owners of these documents when needed. This research has taken 8 months starting January up to August 2014.

3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is based on documents reviewed and has not used interviews. The content may have limitation in term of collecting the views of people who wrote poems and gave testimonies. Analysis is based on the interpretation of the researcher without the additional interaction with the people who wrote poems and gave testimonies.

4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The review is focusing essentially on three documents. The official gazette on national order and heroes (2009) and the report of Human right (2010) to analyze the Rwandan culture in memory. The package of documents, invitation letter, announcement and banners, helped to find out what are the activities describing the mourning period and who are the groups remembering and the way it is coordinated. Lastly, the analysis of poems, testimonies and speech of the guest of honors shared on the commemoration day helped to find out what are the tools used to keep memory and portrayed the perception of survivors vis à vis the commemoration and showed how the must of remembering is experienced by the community in general. Findings are organized in three main sections related to the objectives of the study.

4.1 RWANDAN CULTURE IN MEMORY AND COMMEMORATION

In Rwandan culture, memories are associated to individuals or places based on social construct. Both oral tradition and writing are used to collect testimonies. The use of technology is applied to conserve data for future commemorations or for education purposes. As mentioned in the Human Right Report (Republic of Rwanda, 2010), the right of culture for Rwandan people is ensured and stated in the policy. Rwandans enjoying their right to culture, with different troupe of traditional dance, using their mother tongue will help use culture for the social reconstruction as well as nurture a sole Rwandan identity instead of the hate ideology of genocide. This is shown by the instauration of several associations including the association of old wise men (*Inteko izirikana*)³, association of writers, photographers, musicians, craftsmen, editors, association of dancing groups, the Rwanda Cinema Centre, the play production groups, as well as the national cultural troop (*Urukerereza*)⁴ and different private cultural troops like “*Inganzo Ngali*”⁵ and the local cultural clubs of students in various secondary schools usually developing the songs feeding the emotions during the commemorations.

Culture of memory is reinforced by museums in different places in the country. For example, The National Museum at Butare in the southern province with its specialized branches spread across the country, such as the Natural History Museum at Nyarugenge, Kigali city (2006), the Arts Museum at Rwesero (2006), the Museum of Ancient History at Rukali/Nyanza (2008) as well as another branch at the Ex-State House in Kanombe.

³ *Inteko izirikana*: is a non benefit association of old wise men to promote Rwandans culture and their mother tongue “Kinyarwanda”.

⁴ *Urukerereza*: is a name of a Rwandan national cultural troop of dancing.

⁵ *Inganzo ngali*: is a private Rwandan cultural troop of dancing created by student survivors.

It is in the memory of our ancestors, who after all, were ordinary people who overcame difficult situations of geography, climate and politics, and thus stand as an inspiration to all ordinary people who struggle in the present. They also represented people who initiated significant changes in their lives or in the whole society. Examples are many: The champions are *Rukara rwa Bishingwe*, the national hero who, while in hand cuffs, killed two armed colonial soldiers with their own bayonets, *King Mutara III Rudahigwa*, who initiated the abolition of *Ubugake* (serfdom). In memory of their achievements, they stand as role models, hence motivating younger generations to do so.

Nowadays, Rwanda's post genocide, has hero's day scheduled on the first of February every year starting by 2002 recognizing the achievement of national heroes (Minispoc, 2009). There are three categories of heroes: *Imanzi*, who demonstrated outstanding achievements characterized by supreme sacrifice, outstanding importance and example. In this category, the person is no longer alive. *Imena*, which follows *Imanzi*, is reputed for his/ her extraordinary acts for the country which are characterized by supreme sacrifice and high importance. Examples are Nyange students who refused to be separated and boldly told the attackers that they were all Rwandans and were shot by those attackers called Abacengezi⁶ (Human Rights Watch, 2000) in 1997 and six of them died. (Republic of Rwanda, 2014)

Lastly, *Ingenzi* is notorious for his/her good ideas or his/her outstanding achievements characterized by supreme sacrifice, great importance and high example. In these two last categories, *Imena* and *Ingenzi* are heroes either alive or died.

According to the Law no.13/2009 (Republic of Rwanda, 2009) on National orders and heroes, some benefits are granted to heroes when they are still alive or to their family. For the heroes with high bravery, a variety of memorializing is done: a record in the book of heroes, burial in the cemetery of *Imena*, places like parks, houses, streets named after them, or erected statues on his/her tomb after death. At Heroes' Day, which is celebrated at a national level, new brave persons are announced and rewarded, followed by a remembrance of past heroes.

Among the national orders exists a national liberation medal (*Uruti*), also known as the Campaign against Genocide medal. People, who get these medals, serve as role models in the society from generation to generation. This recognition is used to advance social justice and prevent any social conflict, which could lead to atrocities such as genocide.

As stated by the Executive secretary of the Chancellery for Heroes, National Orders and Decoration: "remembering our national heroes inspired Rwandans to adopt similar values, especially young people, and thinking on how we can contribute to building the Rwandan spirit and advance social justice" (Republic of Rwanda, 2014).

4.2 GROUP REMEMBERING AND COORDINATION OF GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION

Manifestly, the focus of collective memory is the memories shared by nations or large groups of people about significant events in the history of the group as a whole. Most of the time, the events matching with collective memory are those of wars, terrorist attacks or genocide. These remembrances provide the foundation for collective memory because the relevant events had a meaningful impact on a large portion of the overall population. When countries choose which events or incidents to remember, they keep some tools to visualize them and set up some construction of physical memorials. During commemoration, people come to mourn and learn through testimonies, speeches from authority, visiting the site and the exhibition inside them. The overall message during these commemorations, call people to contribute to rebuilding the country as well as preventing future genocide.

Memory and remembrance activities are simultaneously individual, collective, national and international. The memory and commemoration of genocide has become nationalized, meaning participation is found from socially high levels to the local entity at villages. At the beginning in 1995, genocide commemoration was coordinated and initiated by a group of survivors under the umbrella named *Ibuka*.⁷ This association collaborated closely with the Ministry of Sport and Culture (MINISPOC) to accommodate and make possible commemorations throughout the country. There are 15 associations under *Ibuka*: Association des Etudiants Rescapés du Génocide (AERG), Association des Orphelins Chef de Ménage (AOCM), Association des Rescapés du Génocide IMPUHWE (ARG IMPUHWE), Association de rescapés du Génocide de Rukumberi (ARGR), Association de solidarité de rescapés du génocide Mpire (ASRG MPORE), Association des veuves de Save

⁶ Abacengezi: Rebels, insurgents or infiltrators troop engaged in skirmishes happened in 1997-1998 in Rwanda. They attacked the Nyange School 18th March 1997.

⁷ *Ibuka*: is an umbrella of survivors' associations. The term can be translated in English as: remember. All associations in this umbrella observe a mourning period of 100 days starting from 7th of April to July 4th.

(Duhozanye), Association de familles témoins de solidarités (AFTS), Association des Veuves du Génocide Agahozo (AVEGA), Dukundane Family and many more. All of them actively participate in commemorations and sometimes have branches in provinces or districts. One of the main objectives of these associations have is preserving the memory of the genocide against Tutsi. Hence, *Ibuka* promotes participation and articulates a special perspective on memory and commemoration. *Ibuka* moved from individuals, members, and other Rwandans collectively coming together to becoming nationally supported with the institutionalization and participation of government through MINISPOC and the National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG), created with the Law 07/2007 of 16th February 2007 and officially active by 21 April 2008 (Republic of Rwanda, 2010). Since this period, the commemoration is organized, nationalized and coordinated by CNLG under Ministry of sport and culture (MINESPOC). The aim of CNLG is honoring memory, telling the peoples' stories, and rebuilding Rwanda. It is collaborating with public and private organizations working within and outside the country. Remembering the past helps survivors to heal as well as helps future generations to come so that they may live in peace. Conversely, concerns are raised, especially from the international community, that the nature of crime during the genocide can be relived because of memory and commemoration. In this regard, CNLG continues to make connections with organizations and individuals around the world interested in preventing genocide. Today, the international community, all Rwandans in various categories respect the commemoration day scheduled on 7 April every year. Because of the specificity of the 20th commemoration activities, the organization has been done by the Kwibuka20⁸ team enclosing various actors in coordination with CNLG and Aegis Trust (The Kwibuka20 team, 2014).

4.3 MOURNING PERIOD

The mourning period is started by a flame of remembrance officially lit by His excellence President of the Republic Paul Kagame at Kigali Genocide memorial (KGM) Centre. Across the country flags are flown at half-mast one week from 7th April up to 13th April at the end of the official mourning period. A moment of silence is observed at 12 a.m.

Generally, every event of commemoration encloses a walk to remember, night vigils, prayers, testimonies, poems, remembrance and healing songs, decent burial when new remains are discovered, speeches of the official guests. Survivors' groups observe a period of mourning for 100 days between the 7th of April and July 4th, while, officially, genocide commemoration lasts only a week from the 7th till the 13th of April. Commonly, the schedule of local commemorative events across the country considers the day of mass massacres of each place and the availability of the community concerned.

According to *Ibuka*, the period of commemoration is an opportunity to dignify the victims of the Genocide. It is also a way to discover people's economic and psychosocial situation.

In the beginning (1995), survivors through *Ibuka* and other organizations took the lead in organizing local commemorative ceremonies or constructing local memorial sites. Their commitment exceeds that of the state.

According to the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, in the 17th commemoration for the UN, the only way to truly honor the memory of the more than 800,000 people who perished in Rwanda is to ensure that such tragedies never occur again, arguing that preventing genocide is a collective and individual responsibility (United nations Secretary-general, 2011)

During the mourning period, people provide messages of support to survivors. They use readings of letters from orphans, widows and musical performance by Rwandan singers. The activities during the mourning period include attending conferences on genocide, inflecting the flag, remembrance, cleaning memorial sites, and providing support to vulnerable survivors. In this period some leisure activities and symbols are forbidden such as parties or applauses during a commemoration. In addition, commemorations can also be organized by the local government (sectors and District under the national instructions). Other organisations or private people are invited and guidance and instructions are provided by CNLG who coordinates commemorations.

⁸ *Kwibuka20*: the term *kwibuka* is a Rwandan verb translated in English as to remember. *Kwibuka20* is the team organizer created to coordinate the 20th commemoration in Rwanda.

4.4 TOOLS TO SAFEGUARD MEMORIES

The events of commemoration use various tools to safeguard memories such as genocide memorial sites, written memory documents, oral testimonies, songs, speeches stressing the official theme to guide commemoration and including lessons to advance social justice, promote healing, and prevent any conflict or form of atrocity from resurfacing.

4.4.1 GENOCIDE MEMORIAL SITES

In Patrick's work (Patrick, 2012) where he explored some of the psychological, sociological, emotional and spiritual needs by analyzing Martin Luther King memorial and the WWII monument site, he pointed out that those memorials are the physical expression used to preserve or represent individual memory, group identity and collective memory (Patrick, 2012).

Survivor groups have called for and taken part in the creation of memorials, and made practical efforts to gather and help preserve or bury the remains of the dead. 400 memorial sites are spread throughout the country's different districts. These include, but are not limited to: Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, Murambi, Kiziguro, Nyamata, Nyarubuye, Ntarama, Nyamasheke, Nyundo, Bisesero (Association des Etudiants Rescapés du Génocide (AERG), 2009).

In general, memorial sites contain mass graves, exhibition of some traditional weapons (machetes, cudgel, sword, knife...) and modern weapons (Kigali Genocide Memorial centre, 2004).

For this paper, we consider the Karama and Songa genocide memorial sites in Huye district. All of them are memorial sites at district level characterized by the building inclosing mass graves containing the remains of victims. In assessing the testimonies for witnesses, we found out that the mass killings started at 10h00am and ended at 3h00pm. The dates of killings are separated by one week. Karama killing happened on 21st April and Songa came on 28th April. Refugees gathered at Songa or Karama ate the meat of their cows and goats prepared on barbecue on the site. On both sites, people of Tutsi tried to resist to killers by throwing stones. The organization of resistance was that men threw the stones gathered by women and children by amassing them in heaps. Even if the resistance fight permitted survival for a small group, they were weak because of the lack of modern weapons.

According to the representative of survivors in Karama, in the genocide memorial site are buried around 67.000 victims killed at Karama place and others collected from other sectors neighboring the site in former Runyinya commune. According to the testimony of Latifa told on the 20eme commemoration, Tutsi massacred at Karama were native of former Runyinya commune and many others from the surrounding communes such as Mubuga, Rwamiko, Kivu, Muganza, Mudasomwa, Kinyamakara in former Gikongoro prefecture, Maraba, Huye in former Butare prefecture all in actual Southern province. The reality of this killing is underestimated in the work of Scherrer (Scherrer, 2002) where the estimation of refugees is fifty thousand Tutsi civilians. All remains of victims from the site of killing were found from digging the toilet near the health center where victims were thrown. Others were found in various sectors surrounding the site. Survivors and others who lost friends, members of family, and population neighbors of the site come for commemoration to honor the victims every year.

In Songa genocide memorial site rest around 43000 souls of victims (Executive Secretary of Kinazi Sector, 2014). Victims were the Tutsi who came from Gikongoro (Bunyambiriri), Kibuye former prefecture, and other communes surrounding former Rusatira commune such as Ruhashya, Nyabisindu, Ntyazo, Muyaga, Mugusa and Ntongwe in former Gitarama prefecture. The number of refugees is not known. They were assembled at the ground of Songa ISAR (Institut des Sciences Agronomiques du Rwanda) on the Hill called Bututsi. The memorial exists since 1995. Refugees stayed at the site for a week from 21st up to 28th April 1994. The last date is the well-known day of mass killing at this place. The day before shooting, there was a helicopter watching where people were collected. Survivors assume that it was the President of Rescuers⁹ Sindikubwabo Theodore who came back from Butare to encourage militia and Hutu power to exterminate all Tutsi as he blamed them for being "ntibindeba" which can be translated as "this doesn't concern me"¹⁰ (Fussell, 1998). Before the

⁹ Government of rescuers: The government following the death of Juvénal Habyarimana starting from April 7 to July 4, 1994.

¹⁰ Ntibindeba is translated as "this doesn't concern me" which insinuated the attitude of "neutrality" during 1994 genocide. The term is used first by Sindikubwabo Theodore in his April 19 speech in the meeting at former Gisagara sub-prefecture in Butare. He declared that those whose attitude was "this doesn't concern me" (ntibindeba) must disappear from the communes. He insisted: Anyone who does not help his fellow Rwandans to fight the RPF is also an enemy and must be treated as an Inkotanyi....Whoever hides and does not show up to carry out the plans decided on by the administration is also an enemy.

passage of Sindikubwabo some Tutsi were still living. Therefore, on 24 April 1994, militia and communal police murdered a group of Tutsi in the house of Gashagaza¹¹ at the hill of Sazange in the neighborhood of Songa ISAR (one kilometer (1km) from the memorial). On 28 April a group of more than 40000 Tutsi was shot in the compound of ISAR Songa at the Bututsi hill. The Rwandan Defense Force owners of the place where the killing occurred donated the site for the victims to use as a memorial site. It is now where the victims are buried and where survivors remember and mourn.

4.4.2 WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

With this tool, a writer or witness, shares with all members of his/her social group or readers a specific vision of the world which is influenced by his life experience. This fittingly reflects the thoughts and views of the group in which he belongs. This can be the case of books, journals, testimonies of survivors or other eyewitnesses, from different regions in the country. Written works help to spread awareness and serve to preserve memory and history for the future. In the same light, Vincent Engel argues that “apart from its ability to preserve memories of the past, literature can also help overcome the three major obstacles potentially obstructing the recollection of a traumatic event” (Lavenne, Renard, & Tollet, 2005, p. 8).

According to Engel, V. (2005), a traumatic event can seem unimaginable, incommunicable, and unspeakable. In the case of genocide memory, the representation and reproduction of stories become difficult and almost impossible because of the extreme, emotional nature of genocide. Therefore, the specificity of a memory document is considered “unobtrusive” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). It allows the researcher or analyst to “gather data without interfering in the ongoing flow of everyday events” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.128). In this regards, it permits to commemorate and represent the memories of genocide. These memory documents include academic research, written testimonies, journals, brochures, photos, etc. In this paper; memory documents analyzed are 2 testimonies, one from Karama memorial site and the other one from Songa.

According to Latifas’ testimony of 20th commemoration at Karama genocide memorial, before being at Karama parish Latifa and some members of her family escaped the killing happened at Mata in former Rwamiko commune and Ramba in former Runyinya commune where soldiers shot Tutsi on 12th and 13th April 1994 instead of protecting them. She noticed also that in Buhoro sector at Gisuma village many Tutsi were killed before reaching Karama parish. At Karama, Tutsi refugees tried to resist to killers with stones collected at the ground near the health center and some pieces of bricks and slabs. They would then pile them up for the men to pick and throw at the militia. Tutsi were speared on the ground of catholic parish of Karama, at health center of the nuns, in the classrooms and the ground of the primary school. Killers used machete, modern weapons, and gadgets. Soldiers, gendarmes, communal policemen and Interahamwe (professional killers) from all sectors of former Runyinya started shooting the Tutsi refugees at the parish. In the school and the church were both humans and cows remains. This side of killing went quick and killers started to share the cows still alive. It was around 3pm, when the group of killers of the market place went to join those of ground of school to get their shares of cows of the Tutsi. People who survived tried to escape towards the footpath conducting to Burundi via Akanyaru River. Brave survivors organized others such as a group of men including Mr Munyankindi Straton, Dismas Butera, Mugenzi Sylvestre who passed through the church and health center to call everybody still breathing to come and run towards Burundi. The travel was organized by men in front, children, women and teenagers in the middle then other men behind the group. Unfortunately, Latifa was not able to reach Burundi like others and tried to return to her village in Nyamagabe district to find refuge in the neighborhood of her maternal grandfather village. She lived at Kamishyashya hill where a house worker for her parents gave her potatoes deposited in the banana’s plantation to be eaten at the night. Because some neighbors saw her in her refuge, she changed the location and went to Zaga where she is not known. There she was with others and went to find cassava in the field where they faced big problem when they met Interahamwe militia. They escaped by running to reach the bush not far from them and laying inside. After Zaga hill, she decided to return to the neighborhood of Mata and Ramba where she found a woman who hid her and gave food until RPF rescued them in July. She finished her testimony by thanking the RPF and begging to people who were not concerned to help by showing where the remains of victim are by indicating the area at least. She emphasized the importance of burying the lost.

According to the testimony of Sawuda, on the 20th commemoration hosted at Songa genocide memorial site, the killers were soldiers from ESO (Ecole des Sous Officiers), communal policemen, gendarmes from Nyabisindu, Interahamwe militia from Rusatira, Ntyazo, Mugusa and Nyabisindu. They used modern and traditional weapons. Killings started at 10am and

¹¹ Gashagaza house: a group of Tutsi people have been killed by burning them in Gashagaza house on 24 April 1994.

lasted until to 3pm. Before mass killing, Tutsi tried to defend themselves by throwing stones and traditional arches and arrows to prevent the entrance of attackers in the compound where they were assembled. Men threw the stones and women and children collected stones and arranging them in heaps. They did the same on 28th April. To not be touched by the crash or shootings victims who were still alive were advised to lay down with the head down. When killers were tired and stopped shooting, survivors organized a plan to escape and seek refuge to Burundi in the south of former Butare prefecture. Some men took the lead to organize the travel. One of the organizers had a whistle to give instructions. Some survivors were already tired and hungry and instead of walking towards Burundi tried to find a place to hide in the bush. The ends of this testimony as the one's of Latifa, is requesting all people who were not concerned and watched everything, to collaborate by showing the remains of victims to be buried and honoring them during commemoration for the sake of healing. They ask to discretely putting an indication where remains of victim are if they fear to be suspected as killers. Apart from these testimonies, there is another testimony of Mustafa, who talked about his journey of discover his family 20 years after genocide. In 1994, 2-3 years old, Mustafa left alone when his mother was killed and thrown in the toilet digging with other people killed at his native hill called Sazange. Mustafa walked in the road alone and was picked up by a car which failed to run over him. He was been placed in the orphanage of Sovu called "Terre des Hommes" in former Huye commune. He was almost 3 years and did not know his name. At the orphanage, they gave him a name and took care of him. At 5 years, he was adopted by a family living in former Gikongoro prefecture in actual Nyamagabe district, Mugano sector. The adoptive father took photos of him when they reached home. With time Mustafa became conscious that the adoptive parents were not his real parents even if they were good. At school he did not perform well and was always isolated. When he was at school, he shared his worry to a friend that he remembered two words Rwagasore and Rusatira. He asked his friend where Rusatira is. He informed him that this area exists in former Butare and promised to accompany him to show him. At the end of semester II in 2013, Musfata came in Butare to find Rusatira area and try to meet Rwagasore. They asked people they met if they know a certain Rwagasore who had a sun of 2 or 3 years during the genocide. After three trials, they found his sister who said strictly that he is her brother. At this moment Mustafa couldn't say a word. The discussion was between the friend of him and his sister. He ended his testimony by thanking his adoptive family and showing them to all present at the commemoration. One participant in this commemoration, a nurse who helped Mustafa's mother give birth to Mustafa, seeing the joy on this boy's face, recounted the story of his birth and told the audience Mustafa's real birth name. All attendees were full of the emotions and the representative of Ibuka gave a cow to the adoptive family of Mustafa for having helped this boy. This testimony has been a great moment of healing to him and other survivors from this region.

4.4.3 THEMES OF REMEMBRANCE

From 1995, each commemoration has a specific message to transmit to all Rwandans and the international community. The themes of remembrance were only in Kinyarwanda and chosen by the Ministry of sports and culture (MINISPOC). The close collaborators in that action of remembrance and commemoration were IBUKA and other survivors' associations spread over the country. CNLG has the mandate to suggest the theme and communicate it to other collaborators before April every year. Then, the official theme is decided in cabinet meetings chaired by His excellence the President of the Republic of Rwanda. Most of the time, these themes are posted on banners located in public places. The singers, filmmakers, poets, dreamers, try to include the theme in developing their arts for commemoration. Some artists are known for their invention. Famous singers Eric Senderi, Munyanshoza Dieudonné alias Mibilizi, Mariya Yohana Mukankuranga, Grace Mukankusi, perform their songs of memory, preserving dignity, peace building during the morning period.

This year, banners portrayed the theme: remember unite renew. Other messages of remembrance were putted on cars of transportation with a band roll in a white color and written in grey color such as "we will remember all the time", "never again to genocide", "let us remember by uniting and helping survivors". Among the official themes of remembrances for early years, we can point out " Let us all join efforts in fighting trauma" for 2010, "learn from our history to shape a bright future" for 2012, and "striving for self-reliance" for 2013. Ongeraho rya Jambo rya Perezida ryari ryibanze kuri ibi bintu, after genocide we chose to be together, we chose to be accountable, we chose to think big, this statement brings energy within the destroyed people

4.4.4 ORAL TRADITION

Oral tradition is another tool of memory and commemoration. It is supported by the writing-and recording of narratives. Survivors and other witnesses may present testimonies, songs, films, poems that are alternately used during commemoration period. Musical instruments are fundamental part of culture and memory, and are the essential factors in shaping the identity preserved through memory. Music is recorded and transformed into CD, DVD or films. The messages of these songs reflect the genocidal event and the remedial way to contribute to the healing of survivors, and advocate social justice for an

effective, 'never again' for all humanity. This year Munyanshoza Dieudonné alias Mibilizi was present at Songa with his troop for this event.

The poems and speeches on the event of commemoration emphasize the theme in vogue. The messages transmitted at Karama and Songa 20th commemoration are emphasizing hope to survivors, and remembering by self-reliance. They are also acknowledging the efforts deployed by various actors in preparing commemoration; survivors' efforts in coping with post genocide effects, the gratitude towards RPF for stopping genocide, the achievement of the government of union in promoting social justice where citizens are equal. Speakers and poets emphasized the shame of burying 20 years after and argued that people who have the information of where remains are need to give this information to honor the dead with decent burials in memorial sites.

It is pointed out that testimonies were tools of healing. The example is the testimony of Mustafa 24 years old revealing the joy of discovering his siblings and shared the burden he had when he searched for his family during all this period. Through this testimony, it was the first time this survivor commemorated his losts and met some survivors members of his family. When he expressed his feeling at this ceremony, most of participants cried of joy. None did not know if he was still alive. Some of members of his family believed that he was murdered with other members of the family and thrown in the toilet digging located in the neighbourhood.

5 CONCLUSION

This paper explored genocide prevention strategies involving memory and commemorations. The objectives were to identify the group remembering in Rwanda and highlight what are the tools to safeguard in practice before, during and after the commemoration period.

In this paper, it is pointed out that memory is attributed either to a single individual or to an entire group. For this reason, there must always be a relationship between the personal memories and the collective memory. Also, the only way to truly honor the memory of those who perished in Rwandan genocide is to ensure such events can never occur again.

Both Karama and Songa 20th commemorations had their night plans of vigil, walks of remembrance, prayers, testimonies, poems and speech of the guest of honor.

Both oral tradition and written documents are still used to collect testimonies and in commemoration. The right of culture for Rwandan people is ensured and stated in the policy that Rwandans individually or through various groups, use their mother tongue, and therefore, focus on the social construction of a place, individuals or collectivities with the aim of commemorating them. We found out that all Rwandans are involved in memory and commemoration. An activity which has been dedicated to survivors under the umbrella of IBUKA in the last decade. The date of commemoration is chosen in consultation of all stakeholders involved for every place after the national one celebrated on 7 April. Also, the tools to safeguard the memory found are testimonies, poems, and banners of the annual theme of remembrance, genocide memorial sites, invitation letters, and commemoration day. This research highlighted the role of memory in post-genocide peace building as one of strategy to preventing genocide from occurring again. Another research focusing on keeping testimonies is recommended.

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