

# From Kayibanda to Jambo ASBL- Preserving a covenant with Belgium

Following the decision to include a genocide denier in the Group of Experts to assist the Parliamentary Commission on Belgium's colonial past, Ingabire Victoire called on the government of Rwanda to welcome that appointment which, according to her, "extremely honours Rwandans". Evidently, Jambo asbl (the Belgium based organisation of descendants of genocide perpetrators) and Ingabire Victoire never banished the memory of Parmehutu's gratitude for Belgium's colonisation, and 60 years later the mantle falls on them. Consequently, for a certain, the past is not dead.

In April 1963, Gregoire Kayibanda, President of the First Republic, wrote a letter to Belgium's Ambassador to Rwanda, Col. Guy Logiest, who was the Colonial Resident Administrator of Rwanda prior to independence. Kayibanda told Logiest that his arrival in Rwanda in 1959 marked the final liberation of the Rwandan masses and essentially contributed to the success of the Hutu Movement.

Remarkably, Col. Logiest arrived in Rwanda in 1959 and found that Parmehutu as a political party or movement was uninterested in independence mainly because it was lacking a nationalistic ideology. Its official discourse was "Down with Tutsi colonisation; Independence from Belgium later". Kayibanda even called on the "People of Rwanda" to always honour and remain eternally grateful to Belgium ostensibly for this monumental triumph of downing "Tutsi colonisation."

This victory cemented the covenant in the minds of those who considered Tutsi colonisers. For instance, on the day of the inauguration of the first parliament and the provisional

government after local elections won by Parmehutu in October 1960, Kayibanda told his cabinet ministers, "it is necessary that the work, relations and friendship continue between blacks and whites who want to contribute to the authentic liberation of the Rwandan people". He also solemnly thanked the Belgian government "for the wise and progressive action initiated for the emancipation of our people." On that occasion, Kayibanda pleaded with the Rwandan people to continue moving forward under the watchful eyes of Belgium. Ironically, those who believed themselves to have gained independence from the colonial Tutsi were suddenly willingly placing themselves under the suzerainty of the Belgians.

Similarly, two years later in his address on Rwanda's Independence Day on July 1, 1962, Kayibanda formally thanked Belgium "for all the efforts that it has deployed to help and guide our country towards self-determination." He further declared that "all in all, the results of 40 years of Belgian administration are positive, and generations to come will be grateful to Belgium". In concluding this speech, Kayibanda informed Belgium that it will always be considered as "the first friend of Rwanda" after having supported the "1959 revolution" that massacred, exiled Tutsi, and legitimated their elimination as a political choice that could be implemented at any time of convenience.

## **Revolution and genocide**

The "1959 revolution" discourse was particularly revived before, during and after the genocide against the Tutsi. At the height of the Genocide, Shingiro Mbonyumutwa, a leader of MDR "Hutu Power" faction and the son of one of the architects of Parmehutu, the father of one of Jambo asbl founders, was on record instigating the killing of the Tutsi. He enthusiastically encouraged the Interahamwe on the roadblocks to "resist", saying: *"Imagine that those Tutsi from outside start to revenge against the Hutu who held them out for 30 years. I tell you, the Hutu problem in Rwanda will soon be*

*solved! They will exterminate, exterminate, exterminate ... until they remain alone in this country. So, let no one slow down the effort."*

Upon the arrival of the genocidal government in former Zaire in July 1994, the "government in exile," as they referred to themselves, set itself a new mission of "*bringing Rwandans together around the republican values based on the 1959 revolution.*" According to the minutes of a meeting of the High Command of the Genocidal Army held in Goma in September 1994, it was ordered that Rwandan refugees would be sensitized and in them instilled essential elements of the ideology of the 1959 revolution. The extremists thus began an "ideological coaching" that remains the intellectual foundation for the prevailing genocide denial discourse that is perpetrated by the Jambo genocidal offspring.

A key recommendation from the September 1994 High Command of the Genocidal Army was the immediate recruitment of "new figures, untarnished, credible in the eyes of partners". Those in attendance were encouraged to engage their contacts "to point the finger at the personalities they would like to have as interlocutors."

This "government in exile" had been advised by their powerful friends in the international community, themselves accessories to genocide, to establish a new political organization representing the refugees. Only this way would they provide the diplomatic support that this government in exile seriously needed given the PR nightmare it would cause to these friends to openly support genocide perpetrators with intent to recapture state power and "finish the job" of wiping out the surviving Tutsi.

Owing to this advice, "RDR" or "Rally for the Return of Refugees and Democracy in Rwanda" was officially created in April 1995 in the heart of the main camp of the Genocidal Army in Mugunga, with the mission to "help to make known the truth

about the tragedy of the Rwandan people". A few years later, Victoire Umuhiza Ingabire would take the helm of the RDR.

### **Jambo part of a relay**

As a response to the dynamic need to find "new figures, untarnished, credible in the eyes of partners" to defend values of the "1959 revolution", Jambo, which branded themselves the "Hutu Diaspora", was established to pursue Parmehutu's "authentic liberation of the Rwandan people".

Indeed, in 2016 Jambo promoted an article calling on the '**Hutu Diaspora**' to affirm their 'Hutu identity' and to be proud of their Hutuness". In that article based on interviews with the "Hutu Diaspora" in Belgium, the author asserted that "Hutu diaspora communities have created an opposition movement". Regarding the genocide against the Tutsi, the article said that the "Hutu Diaspora" deny the term "genocide" until the current "Tutsi government" acknowledges the double genocide in Rwanda and in DRC.

It is often argued that history repeats itself, if forgotten. Today, 60 years after Kayibanda and Parmehutu commended Belgium for contributing to the success of the "Hutu Movement" in 1959 – 1961, Victoire Umuhiza Ingabire and Jambo are full of gratitude to Belgium's House of Representatives for nominating a member of Jambo, a soi-disant "Hutu Diaspora" in Belgium, to assist its Parliamentary Commission on Belgium's colonial past.

Assuming that the House of Representatives was looking for an "expert" who would reiterate that "the results of 40 years of Belgian administration in Rwanda were positive", naturally they had to look for people willing to associate with Parmehutu's sycophantic vow that "generations to come will be grateful to Belgium".

Jambo, an extension of Shingiro Mbonyumutwa's "Hutu Power" and Ingabire Victoire's RDR established around values of the "1959

revolution", can only be more than willing to give heed to the plea of Parmehutu to remain eternally grateful to Belgium.

From the perspective of the Belgium, it has historically found itself in a political covenant that was too good to be true. First, it was embraced at the time when a hostile anti colonial political environment was sweeping away colonisers across the entire African continent. Second, it has discovered that it can sustain this embrace through the offspring of those with whom it entered the covenant, who continue to hunt for colonialists with the support of Belgium. For Belgium, therefore, it would be too cruel if it didn't reciprocate the love.