

Draft Agenda
International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide
Rwanda 1990-1994

The Hague, June 1-3, 2014

We are planning a mixture of formal and informal activities for our conference, based on the formula previously used by the National Security Archive. There will be four primary working sessions of the conference, divided into two sessions each on Monday, June 2, and Tuesday June 3. Each session will be three hours long, with a coffee break in the middle (precise time to be determined by the moderator.)

During the first day, we will focus predominantly on the lead-up to the genocide, between October 1990 and April 1994, with the theme, “Failure to Prevent.” During these sessions, we will ask whether it was possible for the international community to foresee and prevent the gathering catastrophe in Rwanda. The second day will focus on the international response to the genocide (“Failure to Protect”). We will pay particular attention to the role played by the United Nations Security Council. We will close with a “lessons learned” session, looking at the similarities/differences between Rwanda and contemporary mass atrocities. It is important to note that we are striving for greater historical understanding, not apportionment of blame.

We want to keep the discussion informal and dynamic. In keeping with our desire to create a relaxed atmosphere, we encourage casual or business/casual attire. Participants will be encouraged to intervene multiple times, and pose questions and comments to each other, rather than making prepared speeches. The goal is to expose participants to the views of decision-makers and eyewitnesses representing a wide variety of different vantage points, and learn from each other’s experiences. The working sessions will be closed to the press, but an audio record will be kept for historical purposes. (All participants will have an opportunity to review, and if necessary correct, a transcript of their remarks prior to publication.) The draft agenda below outlines some proposed subjects for discussion, but we welcome further suggestions.

Simultaneous English-French interpretation will be provided.

Sunday, June 1

7 p.m. Dinner

- Welcoming remarks and informal discussion.

Contact:

Monday, June 2: Failure to Prevent**9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. Working Session 1**

“Peacemakers and Peacekeepers: The promise and perils of Arusha, 1990-1993”

We will examine whether international decision-makers and diplomats were aware of the potential for disaster in Rwanda during the pre-genocide period. Were the concerns of diplomats and other observers on the ground in Rwanda adequately communicated to the highest levels of government? Did we have a coherent strategy for dealing with the challenges of democratization in Africa in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War? Was the crisis exacerbated by policy differences between Paris, Brussels, and Washington involving conflicting priorities and national interests?

- Background to Arusha, e.g. Mitterrand’s La Baule speech, June 6, 1990; introduction of multi-party system; RPF invasion of October 1 1990.
- Political negotiations. (July 1992 - January 1993)
- Massacres of Tutsi and RPF offensive of 8 February 1993.
- Military negotiations in Arusha. Signing of Arusha agreements, August 1993
- Conversation between “Peacemakers and “Peacekeepers”

12.45 p.m. – 1.45 p.m. Lunch**2 p.m. - 5 p.m. Working Session 2**

“The Failed Peace: October 1993-April 1994”

We will look at the implementation of the Arusha peace agreement, with a particular focus on the role of UNAMIR. Did UNAMIR have sufficient resources, and a sufficiently broad mandate, to accomplish its mission? Was there a breakdown in communication between Kigali and New York? Was the Arusha agreement poorly designed or poorly implemented? Was there a Plan B in case the peace agreement failed to hold?

- UNSC vote to authorize peacekeeping mission in Rwanda, October 5, 1993
- Assassination of Burundi president Melchior Ndadaye (October 21, 1993) and arrival of UNAMIR in Kigali.
- Jean-Pierre warning, January 10, 1994
- Belgian call for a strengthening of UNAMIR, February 25, 1994
- Shootdown of Habyarimana plane, killing of Belgian peacekeepers, and beginning of the genocide April 6-11. 1994.

7 p.m. Dinner

Tuesday, June 3: Failure to Protect**9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. Working Session 3***“Inside the UN Security Council, April - July 1994”*

We will examine the record of the U.N. Security Council in supervising the deployment of UNAMIR and responding to the upsurge in violence in Rwanda following the April 6 assassination of President Habyarimana? Were UNSC members adequately informed about what was going on in Rwanda? Who took the decision to withdraw UNAMIR, and what were the decision-making processes between the US government? Are there structural weaknesses in the way the Security Council operates, such as lack of an independent intelligence capability?

- What did we know-and when did we know it?
- The UNAMIR withdrawal decision, April 11-21, 1994
- Debating the G-word, April 21-May 5, 1994
- Ending the genocide, May 15-July 18, 1994. Operation Turquoise and the victory of the RPF
- Unresolved mysteries and controversies.

12.45 p.m. – 1.45 p.m. Lunch**2 p.m. - 5 p.m. Working Session 4***“Lessons from Rwanda”*

We will seek to draw broader lessons from the Rwanda tragedy, examining its relevance for modern-day crises. Was the Rwanda genocide *sui generis*, or does it reflect broader challenges facing the international community following the end of the Cold War? What does Rwanda teach us about the mechanics of genocide and mass atrocity? How much influence did the international community have over events in Rwanda? Did it use its influence wisely and/or effectively? What role did domestic politics, and internal political splits (cohabitation in France, divided government in the United States, multi-party coalition in Rwanda) play in the Rwanda tragedy? What were the missed opportunities and lessons for prevention? What progress, if any, have we made over the last two decades?