A wide river flows through a valley, with mountains in the background. The river is surrounded by lush greenery and some small structures on the banks. The water is slightly turbulent, creating small ripples and waves.

THE BANYAMULENGE SOLDIER

**GENOCIDE BETWEEN
CONGO AND RWANDA**

CHRISTOPHER P. DAVEY

THE BANYAMULENGE SOLDIER

ETHNIC CONFLICT: STUDIES IN NATIONALITY, RACE, AND CULTURE

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The Banyamulenge Soldier

GENOCIDE BETWEEN CONGO
AND RWANDA

Christopher P. Davey

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FOR MY GRANDPARENTS.

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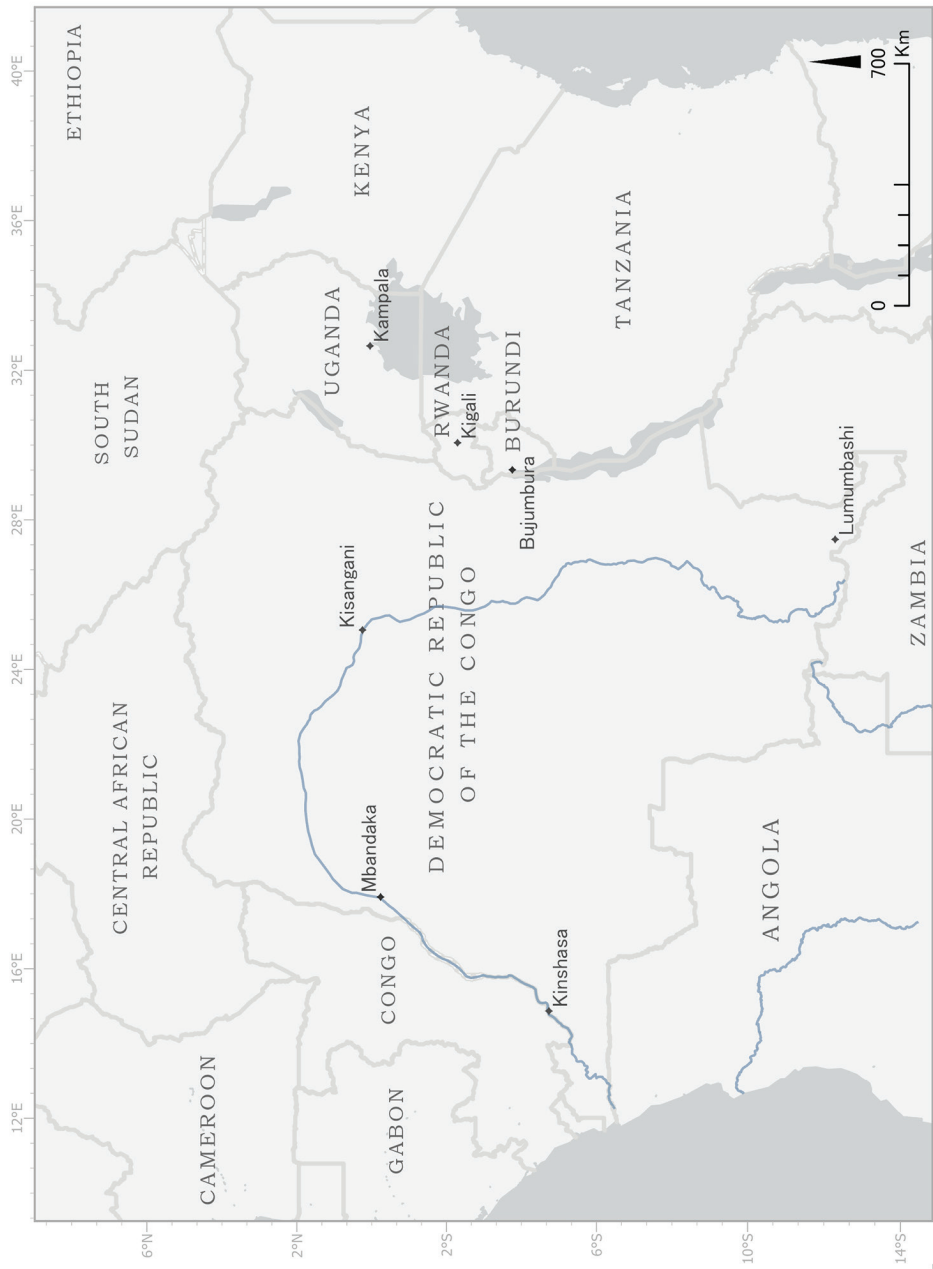
Abbreviations

ADP	Alliance démocratique du peuples
AFDL	Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo
ALiR	Armée de Libération du Rwanda
ANC	Armée Nationale Congolaise
CDR	Coalition pour la Défense de la République
CEREA	Centre de Regroupement de Africain
CNDP	Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple
CNRD	Conseil National de Résistance pour la Democratie
CNS	Conférence Nationale Souveraine
DMI	Rwandan Directorate of Military Intelligence
ex-FAR	(Former) Forces Armées Rwandaises
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FAZ	Forces Armées Zaïroises
FDLR	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda
FNL	Forces nationales de libération
FRF	Forces Républicaines Fédéralistes
<i>genocidaires</i>	those who perpetrated the 1994 genocide in Rwanda
GRSF	Gatumba Refugee Survivors Foundation
Interahamwe	those who work together, a pre-1994 paramilitary group
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
Lumumbaists	supporters of Patrice Lumumba
M23	Mouvement du 23 mars
MAGRIVI	Mutuelle des Agriculteurs des Virunga
MDR	Mouvement démocratique républicain

MLC	Mouvement de Libération du Congo
MNF	Multinational Intervention Force
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MPA	Mahoro Peace Association
MRLZ	Mouvement Révolutionnaire pour Libération du Zaïre
MRND	Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
Mulelist	those who rebelled in 1960s in connection with Pierre Mulele
NRA	(Ugandan) National Resistance Army
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PRP	Parti de la Révolution Populaire
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la démocratie
RDF	Rwandan Defense force
RNC	Rwandan National Congress
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RTL	Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines
RVI	Rift Valley Institute
UDPS	Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNCG	United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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(above) Map of the Minembwe area in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. (Courtesy Maps by Sophia Hayes, 2024.)

(facing page) Map of the Central African Great Lakes region. (Courtesy Maps by Sophia Hayes, 2024.)

THE BANYAMULENGE SOLDIER

Prologue

LIEUTENANT NICOLAS KIBINDA

The name Nicolas Kibinda echoed in a ghostly manner across almost all the soldiers I spoke with both in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the diaspora. As one described: “Nicolas, he was a brave man, a leader, unfortunately killed without accomplishing his mission. For the Banyamulenge soldiers he was the number one.”¹ Nicolas, a young Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)-trained Banyamulenge officer, never made it to Kinshasa along with his victorious comrades in 1997. Was it the Rwandans who were responsible for letting him die? Were they actually the ones who pulled the trigger? The significance of this one death cannot be overstated. For many Banyamulenge, Nicolas’s death was one of the many sins committed by the RPF and Rwandan president Paul Kagame.

Nicolas was born, like many other Banyamulenge young men, in the Hauts Plateaux of South Kivu, an eastern Congo province. Life was shaped by rites of passage into manhood through cattle, marriage, and perpetuating the group in its relative haven of pastures and meadows. It just so happened that Nicolas was born and became a man at a time when different wars, genocides, and liberation movements would have a greater claim on his body. He started on a traditional path: reaching manhood, marriage, and then pursuing a career in education outside of South Kivu. This was when the RPF found him. In 1989 he was recruited into the RPF and formed part of a rebel vanguard invading Rwanda, occupying in Kigali, and then ending the 1994 genocide.

His new life continued after witnessing the horrors of Rwanda, and liberation called again, or rather the RPF. He recruited Congolese brothers

to fight the RPF's new war in Congo: remove a dictator and Rwanda's 1994 *genocidaires*. Crucially, for Nicolas his kin were also being targeted by the same *genocidaires* in eastern Congo. He crossed back into Congo in 1996 now leading the vanguard, the invasion, the liberation. Yet this lieutenant had started to outgrow his Rwandan masters. In December 1996 on the cusp of Congolese victory, he was shot and killed, leaving his wife a widow and his children fatherless.

The story goes that his unit, under Rwandan command, had driven the *genocidaires* from the area. Although the fighting had subsided, a stray bullet caught Nicolas in the head, killing him instantly: the soldiers who were present rejected the idea that it was an enemy bullet. It was the Rwandans, specifically, RPF Captain Eric Murokore. It is claimed he ordered the shooting to remove a potential rival for command, as the highest ranking Banyamulenge soldier, and to keep Banyamulenge soldiers in line. The evolving Rwandan military objectives in eastern Congo had taken shape, and compliant, legitimately Congolese foot soldiers were essential.

Nicolas was made into a martyr, sanctifying the cause of Banyamulenge liberation in a series of wars and genocides, where people across the Great Lakes region were clamoring for peace and security. There was a silent hope in many narratives I encountered that perhaps things might have been different if he had survived. This was implied about the deaths of other key figures, all treated with a measure of suspicion. However, because Nicolas is dead and the Banyamulenge are not yet free of their *genocidaire* tormentors or betrayals of brotherhood, the fighting continues in his name. If he had lived, things would have turned out very differently, perhaps. Nicolas was invested, after his untimely death, with an almost superhuman power of being able to fight off both the Congolese and Rwandans. His life and death shape the substance of a story about genocide against the Banyamulenge people, as well as a potent symbol of how it can be prevented. It is story about the perception and experience of genocide between Congo and Rwanda.

One soldier, close to Nicolas, remembered his last words to him months before his death: "If it is possible that we cannot meet again. Tell your colleagues . . . they should prepare themselves and come down to Congo.' He said, 'I will come, go first, then you will come after me.'"² To this day Nicolas's legacy is one of charting the path of Banyamulenge soldiers into the fight, trying to find their place in Congo.

Introduction

MEETING NGABO AND RUGIRA

In some cases, victims became perpetrators, while perpetrators were themselves sometimes subjected to serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, in a cycle of violence that has not yet abated.

—OHCHR, *MAPPING REPORT*¹

Two Soldiers, One Cause

Ngabo and Rugira were the first soldiers I met.² Both swore by the importance of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in ending genocide. Both came to Rwanda as liberators. Ngabo was born in Uganda and Rugira in the hills of South Kivu. Both left homes and family to go to Rwanda in the face of persecution, seeking improved opportunity. Both became committed members of the RPF, a force that ended the genocide in 1994 but in turn engaged in its own atrocities. Both their stories demonstrate the layering of identities. It is Rugira's experience as a Banyamulenge soldier that demarcates an identity narrated by genocide. Their reflections introduce the hidden complexity in perpetrator and victim stories at the heart of this book.

Ngabo, like many young Rwandan Tutsi men growing up in 1980s refugee settlements in southern Uganda, only knew Rwanda through the stories of their parents. After the success of Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) in toppling an oppressive regime, a fight many Rwandan Tutsi had participated in, things were looking good. This is until anti-Tutsi sentiment swelled against this inevitably perceived refugee community, and the future was once again increasingly bleak. Ngabo joined the RPF in an effort to return to a lost home. He crossed the Uganda-Rwanda border in 1993 at

the height of the civil war. His hope was to achieve what his parents could not: Tutsi security in Rwanda. He was successful. Ngabo demobilized and now works as a state journalist in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, owning a ranch in the east of the country where his family lives in safety. He is driven back and forth in his favorite car by a former *genocidaire* with whom he now shares his home and table. His story fits in the complex post-genocide successes and hidden inequities of contemporary Rwanda.

Rugira, like other Congolese Tutsi from the province of South Kivu, or Banyamulenge, faced marginalization by Mobutu Sese Seko's ailing state. Many considered Banyamulenge to be just another set of Rwandan refugees outstaying their welcome. Enticed by RPF recruitment networks promoting a message of brotherhood and liberation, Rugira was given purpose where poverty and violence were all that were left for him in the remote, rural hills of South Kivu. Rugira joined the RPF and entered a training camp in the same year Ngabo joined the war. Rugira fought alongside Ngabo and thousands of other RPF soldiers in removing the *genocidaire* and creating a safe state for Tutsi in an increasingly hostile region. This cause continued for both of them in 1996 as part of the RPF-led Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo (AFDL). Rugira at this time was the recruiter and political trainer for new recruits. He went on to fight in successive wars in Congo, eventually being brought into the Congolese national army as an officer overseeing a makeshift military barracks in South Kivu. But for Rugira, the safety and security of his own life, his family's, and his community were less than guaranteed. Unlike Ngabo, for Rugira the *genocidaire* is still seen at the door, in a country where he is still considered a foreigner. Liberation became imprisonment, caught between Congo and Rwanda.

Across the stories of Ngabo and Rugira one gets a sense of the potency of the narratives of genocide. Each of them saw discriminatory—even genocidal—violence creating waves of refugees and exiled Tutsis throughout the Great Lakes region. Both experienced the horror of the Rwanda genocide of 1994 as they marched with the RPF, driving out and killing suspected *genocidaires*. Rugira witnessed growing genocidal attacks against his family in South Kivu after 1994. These soldiers took up roles in the RPF-led movement to eradicate the *genocidaire* threat from the region by forcibly returning or massacring Rwandan refugees across Congo. To this day, Rugira's kin and homeland are believed to be still under the threat of genocide as a Tutsi community in South Kivu. These experiences constitute a multidirectional

violence, reaching genocidal proportions. Here I mean the crisscrossing of social actors and violent conflict beyond the binary of perpetrator and victim and inclusive of multiple participating actors.³ This is a book about how these episodes are layered in the lives of Banyamulenge soldiers, creating a story and identity captured by narratives of genocide.

The argument I make throughout this journey is about genocide narrative identity, meaning a narrative identity shaped by experiences of social destruction or uses of genocide as a concept. In the case of Banyamulenge soldiers I see how the stories we tell about ourselves shape who we are. Banyamulenge experiences of genocide between Congo and Rwanda are layered around agencies of victimhood and perpetration of genocide. I use soldier and other community narratives to show the subjective nature of genocide in perception of an event, strategic deployment of the label, and in the (re)shaping of social worlds inhabited by this community and therefore impacting others in Congo and Rwanda.⁴ Even the use of the term soldier, and not combatant or armed actor, reflects how actors presented themselves to me, as well the active role they took in various conflicts.

Relational sociology gives a theoretical scaffolding for how I use genocide as a relational concept and chart the course of narratives from various networks filling the in-between space occupied by Banyamulenge people in social, physical, and political ways. I conclude that a genocide narrative identity creates meaning for these histories of violence while simultaneously subverting pathways to peacebuilding and reconciliation. Conflict in Congo is composed of a multitude of factors: land, politics, race, belonging, memory, resources, colonialism, and rebellion. I examine these through the lens of narrative identity as articulated by Banyamulenge soldiers. In doing so I do not aim to relegate broader factors, but to sense them through the centrality of social actors. Subjectivity and narrative identity are discussed further in the next chapter.

In this chapter I introduce a history of the stories told by the many of the soldiers I spoke to. This initial context includes the marginalization of the Banyamulenge and other Tutsi on a regional scale and their response through a series of events from the Rwandan civil war, genocide, into both Congo Wars (1996–1997 and 1998–2003), and introducing the AFDL and other key groups articulating a persistent *genocidaire* threat.⁵ I discuss why this retelling of such well-trodden history offers a distinct take on this period into the present through my fieldwork. I then move on to my use of a genocide lens in this research, and I offer

a cultural historical profile of Banyamulenge as Congolese Tutsi. In this discussion I explain why I focus on the concept of genocide in the case of the Banyamulenge. I conclude the chapter by outlining the subsequent chapters of the book.

A Story within a Story

Telling history in Africa, like many other postcolonies, is a political act. What is left out, what is center stage, whose trauma informs social life, and what is simply forgotten or erased are all questions at the heart of African history. This is acutely the case across Congo and Rwanda. The very title of this book is equally telling as “a Banyamulenge soldier,” not a Congolese soldier. Some Congolese outside of Banyamulenge communities would prefer the title Rwandan soldier. This reflects the very dynamics of belonging and identity addressed throughout. This book tells the story of a group of soldiers keenly aware of this disparity. Banyamulenge soldiers have fought across civil and international wars and in their own backyards in defense of their homes and families from threats of genocide. This group, like most others in the region, became embroiled in violence that sought to obliterate enemy groups, more precisely the *genocidaire*. This brief history is of the overall story through the narratives of these soldiers and tells of the identity and violence embedded in the African Great Lakes region.

Banyamulenge people have lived in Congo for centuries as pastoralist communities in the eastern province of South Kivu. After independence, representative political leaders in Kinshasa decided to endow their people with recognized tribal identity by attaching them to the Mulenge hills of the South Kivu province they lived in. This Banyarwanda (or people of Rwanda) group, like others in eastern Congo, trace a heritage back to the expansive Rwandan kingdom that dated from the tenth to nineteenth centuries. As pastoral communities, they depended on cattle herding and cooperation with sedentary farmers, such as their Bafuliro and Babembe neighbors. Colonization by the Germans and then Belgians in the region saw the movement and upheaval of peoples for the purpose of establishing labor regimes and territorial control. Among those moved were more Banyarwanda into the hills of South Kivu.

Independence brought little stability. Congo’s first elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, was assassinated as a result of a macabre conspiracy

of traitors and Cold War politics. Lumumba was a brash, outspoken anticolonialist, finding himself increasingly crushed between secessionist forces and neocolonial aggression.⁶ The installation of journalist turned general Mobutu Sese Seko came at the cost of a civil war that disrupted and damaged the socioeconomic ecosystem in the rural hills of eastern Congo, or, at the time, Zaïre. Banyamulenge soldiers and communities found themselves shifting from supporting a pro-Lumumba Marxist rebellion to aligning with Mobutu's state. Rwanda's ascent to independence was no less brutal, seeing the rise of Hutu ethnocracy and the exile of thousands of Tutsis into southern Uganda and parts of eastern Congo, at the price of thousands of lives. As independent postcolonies, the regimes of Rwanda under Grégoire Kayibanda and then Juvénal Habyarimana, and of Congo with Mobutu, survived, maintaining dominance through political, patrimonial elites.

The end of the Cold War brought about an era of human rights and democracy, pressuring these regimes into allowing political parties. In Rwanda, this process was intensified by the RPF invasion and commencement of a civil war.⁷ Rwandan Tutsi refugee soldiers, practiced in liberative guerrilla war by filling the ranks of Museveni's NRA, launched a war to guarantee a place in their parents' home state that would exacerbate tensions and contribute to one of most fast-paced genocides in global history. Propelled to the international stage from Museveni's closest ranks was Paul Kagame. An intelligence officer during the Ugandan war, Kagame took control of the wounded but not defeated RPF in late 1990 and led it to victory in 1994. As an archetypal hero-villain he remains in power as of this writing, having overseen the upheaval of the region through promoting two Congo Wars and the reinvention of Rwanda as a globally recognized success story of life after genocide.

The explosive epicenter of this wider story sits in 1994. From April to July, at least half a million mostly Tutsi Rwandans were murdered. Rwandan Hutu dominated the military and the militias, and they recruited ordinary citizens to operate in an organized fashion to work together to keep control of their country. This far-reaching event was a result of colonialism, civil war, leveraged state power, and varied but broad participation from the population.⁸ Across the border in Zaïre, Hutu-Tutsi distinctions and anti-Banyarwanda sentiment worsened, as groups like the Banyamulenge became Mobutu's scapegoats for maintaining control over a stillborn democratization process. This pressure only further paved the way for Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda to join the RPF by the thousands.

The Rwandan genocide was a monumental horror for the twentieth century. What then followed in the exodus of Rwandan refugees became the start of a war without end, or *intambara itagira iherezo*, that rumbles on in the present. More than a million Rwandan refugees, along with tens of thousands of perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide, fled into the already troubled communities of eastern Zaïre. *Genocidaire* attacks back into Rwanda grew in frequency. It was at this point that Banyamulenge were increasingly pushed out or killed in the thousands by coalitions of Hutu refugee warriors, Congolese military, and local defense, or Mai Mai groups. During 1996, the AFDL was formed at the behest of Kagame and Museveni to solve multiple problems at once: depose Mobutu, erase the *genocidaire* threat and that of other rebel groups, and install a Tutsi-friendly regime in Congo.

Laurent Désiré Kabila, a former anti-Mobutu rebel turned smuggler from the southern province of Katanga, was placed at the head of the AFDL conglomeration that relied heavily on Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge RPF soldiers. As a result, the AFDL/RPA emptied the refugee camps of more than a half million refugees back into Rwanda and killed hundreds of thousands of those who fled further into the Congolese forest. Kabila became president and was assassinated as fast as war returned in 1998, this time pulling in other central and east African states. Now the Rassemblement Congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) represented the Rwandan, Ugandan, Banyarwanda, and Banyamulenge charge back into Congo, continuing a forever war that would not be stopped by a peace agreement in 2002 but would roll on with various rebellions and perpetual local insecurity. During the ongoing fighting in 2004, 166 Banyamulenge refugees that were assembled in the Burundian border camp of Gatumba were massacred. This event, like ongoing multidirectional violence, would fuel not only continued fighting but a flow of Banyamulenge refugees out of Africa into the Global North.

In Rwanda, Kagame consolidated power under closely policed elections from the 2000s to the present, and he steadily amassed executive power under the RPF high command, working through Congolese proxies to extract mineral wealth and diminish rebel threats, like the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and small-time Rwandan rebels like the Rwandan National Congress. Since 2017, fighting in South Kivu has involved a variety of local defense groups, including Banyamulenge armed groups Twirwaneho (“let us defend ourselves”) and *gumino* (“let us stay here”), Rwandan and Burundian rebels, the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC), the United Nations Organization Stabili-

zation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), and the various African intervention forces. As of this writing, the Mouvement du Mars 23 (M23) is retreading the path of Rwandan-backed Congolese Tutsi occupation of eastern Congo. This book traces the trajectory of Banyamulenge soldiers from the 1960s to the early RPF period and to the present moment, where peace and justice are as elusive as coherent memory and history. The substance of this examination is composed of the stories that tell the genocide narrative identities of Banyamulenge soldiers between Congo and Rwanda. These narratives show the multidirectional nature of violence, where Banyamulenge can be seen superficially as perpetrators and as victims.

In addition to telling a compelling story, I seek to modify the way we think about genocide in the African Great Lakes region. It is the story of the origins of contemporary Banyamulenge soldiers and their involvement in the evolution of RPF violence, including the destruction of refugees in Zaïre, and in conflict up to the present. The Rwandan conflict has an enormous literature, but this book's long-term view reveals genocide as part of this region's history, with a fresh approach to this conflict and its regional impact.

This research is, then, the first critical genocide-focused study of Congolese Banyamulenge soldier identities. It uses the concept of genocide narrative identity to explain how social actors perform, see, and define themselves through episodes of genocide. Since the 1990s, these combatants have experienced decades of violent conflict. This book's story will challenge the way people are categorized in the study of genocide. In doing so, I aim to revise the way we think about the Congolese and Rwandan conflicts, revealing a continuum of violence that still reverberates across the African Great Lakes region. The book does this through the narratives of Banyamulenge soldiers that could, in the Mapping Report's words, be considered both perpetrators and victims. These soldiers joined and fought in the RPF from 1990 to 1996. They became integral to the new Rwandan state and the Rwandan-fronted rebellion against President Mobutu of Zaïre in 1996. In response to the threat of continued genocidal violence against Tutsis in the region, they participated in hunting and executing thousands of Rwandan and Burundian Hutu refugees and *genocidaires* in Zaïrean refugee camps, and then fighting in subsequent rebellions and localized conflicts from the 1990s into the present. RPF training and exposure to genocide created a performative space for these Banyamulenge soldiers to construct and identify

the *genocidaire* as an existential threat. These networks of understanding both self and situation perpetuate themselves and lead to the present iterations of these conflicts.

To meet this challenging task, I used an ethnography of soldiers' narratives gathered throughout dozens of interviews over several years. These accounts are analyzed from a genocide studies perspective in order to outline a relational take on identity. I see genocide in a social and structural view as the destruction of groups and their identities. The concept of genocide narrative identity reveals the dynamic, reflective elements of how social actors see themselves and therefore how they construct their social world through multiple instances of genocide. The substance of Banyamulenge soldier genocide narrative identity is found in the expression of their experience. Additionally, I use interviews with the Banyamulenge diaspora both in the United States and Africa, as well as relying on interviews with journalists and UN actors, NGO reporting, and other refugee accounts to contextualize these soldier narratives.

Typically, analysis of globally recognized cases like the Rwandan genocide of 1994 rely on neat categorizations of actors as either perpetrators or victims. The genocide narrative identity of Banyamulenge soldiers as self-perceived victims of genocide and violent actors in the region are juxtaposed, pushing beyond the conventional notions of perpetrator and victim. While some extrapolations about broader Banyamulenge communities and its political divides are discussed, this work does not intend to examine the group and soldiers as a single entity. My analysis accounts for varying socioeconomic situations and political factions within networks of soldiers, diasporas, and other actors. This approach adds empirical evidence to this view, with a layered and narrative-based view of identity, a genocide narrative identity. This new concept showcases the continual forming and reforming of identity through exposure to this kind of violence. I explore a relational approach to the identities within a group across an array of multidirectional experiences with genocide. Genocide is therefore a relational or interactive concept underscoring group destruction inclusive of physical, structural, and cultural violence. In this sense, groups and identities are shaped by connections that are produced and reproduced. Genocide, in the relational context, is the destruction and production of these figurations. Within genocide studies, this book adds to the relational exploration of this phenomenon.

Most publications about the Banyamulenge describe their ongoing cyclical roles in various armed groups in eastern Congo and their past rela-

tionship with Rwanda. This book deploys Banyamulenge narratives to articulate a longer history, including the under-researched and formative period of their induction into the RPF and involvement in post-genocide Rwanda, as well as their removal and execution of refugees in Zaïre. I also explore further the fractured relations of this group within Congo and with Rwanda. This book encounters and analyzes some of the key debates around the Rwandan conflict: the double genocide theory and the history and evolution of RPF violence. It makes a novel contribution to the sensitive and contested topic of how the Rwandan armed forces' violence has developed and changed from civil war, genocide, and then into regional conflicts, making this group influential actors in the Great Lakes region.

Why Genocide?

Genocide, in its perpetration, perceptions, and lived experiences, is at the center of this research. Consequently, this book aims to address a twofold problem. First is the ingrained notion of perpetrator and victim identities in genocide discourse. Second is the conundrum of unending conflict in eastern Congo. Both problems are examined in the context of the Banyamulenge. The first problem, if unanswered, leaves the second a riddle. In eastern Congo, the application of the traditional notions of perpetrator and victim does not even approach the level of subjectivity in how actors see themselves, let alone the perception of Others.⁹ The colonial and postcolonial context of these problems further increases the need for innovative theory and analysis. As discussed in the next chapter, a relational framing of this kind of mass violence is used to sense the interconnections of destructive power and the broader physical, cultural, and structural types of violence.

Raphael Lemkin's construction of the term genocide described a process where a social group's foundations are targeted and "annihilated."¹⁰ His later research, following international agreement on the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG), would include a variety of cases, inclusive of European colonial empires in the Americas, Africa, southern Asia, and around the Pacific.¹¹ The underlying theme of Lemkin's work was the colonial context of cultural groups and their social destruction. Steamrolled by post-World War II victor's justice, this specifically cultural notion was to be erased from the final, negotiated UNCG. The US, UK, and Soviet governments, among others, were unsurprisingly reluc-

tant to incriminate themselves in any past or present violence against colonized or minority groups.¹² The product of treaty negotiations was a legal definition of genocide limited to acts of killing and physical subjugation of the group, and it has bounded popular, political, and academic discussions ever since.¹³ This book employs a social model of destruction, as embedded in Lemkin's own approach.¹⁴

Beyond the "critical orthodoxy" of Holocaust scholarship, there can be a deeper conception of actors within genocide.¹⁵ This is presented by Primo Levi in *The Drowned and the Saved*. His description of a "Gray Zone" begins by reminding readers of the impotency and troubling objectivity of most actor-centered accounts of violence,

Nevertheless, perhaps for reasons that go back to our origins as social animals, the need to divide the field into "we" and "they" is so strong that this pattern, this bi-partition—friend-enemy—prevails over all others. Popular history, and also the history taught in schools, is influenced by this Manichaeian tendency which shuns half-tints and complexities: it is prone to reduce the river of human occurrences to conflicts, and the conflicts to duels—we and they, Athenians and Spartans, Roman and Carthaginians.¹⁶

Addressing the human condition from the perspective of what I call social actors, not animals, Levi recognized the foundational level from which the sociological analysis of the human should be built. More often than not, the description of actors within genocide as perpetrators or victims belies the presence of human relations even in cases of mass suffering and violence.¹⁷ It was the social construction in the Holocaust of functionaries, guards, prisoners, *Sonderkommando* and *capos* alike, that resulted in the blending of identities and the "moral collapse" of all those involved.¹⁸

According to Levi, "It is a gray zone, with ill-defined outlines which both separate and join the two camps of masters and servants. It possesses an incredibly complicated internal structure, and contains within itself enough to confuse our need to judge."¹⁹ Action is a product of knowledge and experience connecting an actor's present and past, and as such requires a social and structural level of analysis. Critical views of highly moralized, political, and invested histories, or even their selective or shallow nature, come to bear in Congo and Rwanda. It is common across the Great Lakes region to see conflict and genocide as primordial, tribal violence as much as simpli-

fied ethnic blocks, that is, Hutus and Tutsi. Genocide becomes too often a simplifier, not a magnifier of complex identities and relations driving conflict and resulting in group destruction. While the concrete caricatures of perpetrator and victim have been ventured beyond by various scholars, it remains an underpinning of discourse in places around the region in Congo and Rwanda where political power is contingent on retaining distinct contrast with existential enemies.

Innovations in genocide scholarship have developed critical ways of looking at this phenomenon. These perspectives see beyond the sacrosanct label of genocide, looking to the politics that are often hidden by such totalizing labels.²⁰ Further obscured are the different actors involved, including more traditional liberal states, as heralds of human rights involved in perpetration. For example, the post-World War II role of twilight British Empire in both Kenya and Nigeria saw a victor over fascism directly killing, starving, and imprisoning a targeted group in the former, and then indirectly sponsoring conditions of life ripe for destruction in the latter.²¹ This book follows such trajectories in seeing the subjectivity in genocide narrative identity. Recent studies in the field have made significant strides to push beyond the binary caricatures of perpetrator and victim, and this book builds on this progression.²² The thin, deterministic notions of perpetrator and victim are reframed as social actors. I address in the next chapter that this means thinking about perpetration as a system, not exclusively as prosecutable acts of high-ranking military leaders, or agency-free foot-soldier followers.

I use the term genocide in this book to identify a handful of episodes experienced by Banyamulenge soldiers, underscoring the multidirectional nature of conflict and mass violence in the African Great Lakes region. These episodes include the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the contested case of massacres of refugees from 1996 to 1997, and the various attacks on Banyamulenge as foreigners in their own country since then. Genocide is also applied to the subjective perception of violence as key plot points in Banyamulenge soldier narratives and perceptions of violence against their community, layered across these episodes. Banyamulenge soldiers, who joined the RPF in the early 1990s, followed their brothers, peers, and commanders on a journey that would be an intensely gray experience. Both 1994 and 1996 were seen as years of genocide by these actors. This book takes on the often-politicized notion of double genocide in Rwanda and expands its scope beyond the 1994 genocide and concurrent RPF violence to 1996's continued genocide of Tutsis and the genocide of Rwandan refugees. What

happened in the latter case constitutes a hidden genocide in and of itself. Of the Rwandan refugees and armed actors present in eastern Zaïre, 233,000 were systematically encircled and killed by Rwandan, Banyarwanda Tutsi, and Banyamulenge soldiers.²³

Reticence to analyze the attacks on Hutu refugees, be they Rwandan or Burundian, is perpetuated by qualms about the claims of the Mapping Report or the report's own limitations in applying genocide. Yet positioning the report alongside survivor accounts and these soldier narratives indicates a use of violence that is total and destructive in obliterating the enemy, carriers of genocide ideology, man, woman, or child, soldier or civilian.

The Banyamulenge

Closely following the query of why genocide is why Banyamulenge? My search for Banyamulenge soldiers started indirectly with Ngabo. For him the only way to make his journey to Rwanda was as part of the "liberation movement."²⁴ In Ngabo's view, the RPF had brought people together and made Rwanda a safe place for Tutsi and Hutu alike. This political project inspired a sense of belonging that would spread throughout the region. The RPF's aspiring big tent of belonging extended to the Banyamulenge and other Congolese Tutsi. When asked about who the Banyamulenge were, Ngabo expressed a mixture of disdain and amusement.²⁵ These were brothers in the same liberation project, but they warranted suspicion. He claimed some Rwandans and even Congolese referred to themselves as Banyamulenge, as this made it easier for them to migrate to Europe. Banyamulenge might also describe themselves as Rwandans in order to come across Congo's border. Ngabo was convinced, however, that one could easily tell the "real" Banyamulenge apart from the pretenders. The trick to telling them apart was where and when they claimed to have arrived in Rwanda. Despite taking me to a Banyamulenge church in Gisenyi, one of many dotted around Rwanda and eastern Congo, and meeting members of the congregation there, it was still unclear who the Banyamulenge were and why they were shrouded in apparent suspicion. Ngabo was certain that I needed to cross the border to find them in their own places. South Kivu was where the real Banyamulenge lived: in the hills with their cows.²⁶

Upon arrival in Congo, an immediate question I was confronted with, by both soldiers and their community, was: Why focus on us, why the Ban-

yamulenge? This query was only amplified by other Congolese researchers and social media warriors as I shared and published more of my research. The experience and narratives of Congolese groups related to genocide can indeed be located in the Hema and Lendu conflicts, among others.²⁷ Congolese researchers I spoke with outside of Tutsi communities felt that this focus on the Banyamulenge elided attention to the perpetration the latter have been steeped in, not least the role of Kigali and their sponsored groups in other communities' suffering. Talk of genocide about one Congolese group distracts from the larger catastrophe of the Congolese people, encourages tribalism and the breaking up of the country, referred to as Balkanization, and attributes uniqueness and exceptionalism to a single group's tragedy. This critique is sweeping but carries symbols and material nature of relations in Congo. Furthermore, Banyamulenge soldiers and Tutsi peers in North Kivu have had similar experiences with claims of genocide, so why not include them?²⁸

I undertook a focus on Banyamulenge soldiers and the community's diaspora network for three reasons. First, at the root of the Congo Wars since the 1990s has been the relationship between the RPF and South Kivu Congolese Tutsi. Although comparable to that of Tutsi brothers in North Kivu, what is distinct about the Banyamulenge is their multigenerational connection to Congo prior to colonization. This embeddedness and the questioning of their claims to indigeneity are one of the foundations of the violence experienced by this group. Second, Banyamulenge soldiers carry multidirectional experiences of genocide in Congo and Rwanda, through their perpetration and victimhood, offering a compelling case study of questioning the logic of labels in genocide studies replicated in the Mapping Report. Third, as my research began, I developed a broad network of contacts and research participants in both Congo and the wider Great Lakes region, as well as in the Global North. These relationships, focused on but not limited to Banyamulenge, offered a rich insight into violence, identity, memory, and how "genocide" as an idea, label, and experience shape these elements. In the words of novelist Nadeem Aslam, I found myself compelled to "Pull a thread here and you'll find it's attached to the rest of the world."²⁹

Culturally, the Banyamulenge are distinct as a transhumance community in eastern Congo. Traditionally, they have been centered around the Uvira, Fizi, and Mwenga territories of South Kivu. This is essentially a triangular area from Lake Kivu in the north, down to Lake Tanganyika in the south, and beyond the Hauts and Moyens Plateaux heading west.³⁰ The area

of Minembwe in the middle of this triangle constitutes a symbolic homeland for many Banyamulenge, which I discuss further in chapters 5 and 6. The region contains forests, rolling hills, and plains that are home to a variety of Congolese groups, including Bafuliro, Babembe, and others. Clan membership by birth is embedded in the socioeconomic organization of the broader community. Clans claim distinction based on historic migration and locality. Subclans then make up the detailed paternal lineage between larger groups. Colonialism brought mass conversion to Christianity, rejecting pastoralist culture, to an extent, while adopting strong social conservative practices and views. Marriage is still a largely traditional affair, with negotiated dowries bringing families together for the benefit of all. Marriage is strictly inter-, not intraclan. The cow holds a central place as the lifeblood of community; they center in rites of passage, marriage, wealth, ownership, and relations with neighboring communities.

Pentecostal Christianity merged with traditional Banyamulenge dancing and spiritual beliefs, finding congruence in biblical liberation stories, such as Moses leading Israel out of Egypt to a promised land. Strong community values do not, however, imply homogeneity. Across South Kivu, in rural and urban areas, cultural practices have been adapted, and further so into the diaspora. The political conflict, originating from Kinshasa, Kigali, or Bujumbura reaching South Kivu since the 1990s, has a local impact on Banyamulenge clan associations as another layer to dynamic group relations. My personal experience, no doubt shaped by being seen as an outsider willing to tell the communities' stories, has been of an earnest people, cautious of others, and often insular.³¹ Many are increasingly aware of how their name has been used for war and how they seem to be the victims of *intambara itagira iherezo*, the war without end. Banyamulenge articulation of "genocide" since 2017 has been an all-too-easy telling of victimhood and violence.

I still encounter the quizzical response to working with these communities first given by Ngabo. When asked in an interview, a prominent scholar on the region gave an equally perplexing statement: "The Banyamulenge? They don't exist. It's an RPF invention."³² They claimed the term had gained some currency, but only as a result of their persecution being the stated reason for the 1996 invasion: a Trojan horse for Rwandan expansion. By this point, I had already met self-identified Banyamulenge in North and South Kivu. Conversely, interviewed Banyamulenge soldiers and political actors lamented that their name had been used for the AFDL mission and by subsequent armed groups. Nominally, soldiers associated these groups with

Kigali as the sponsor or puppet master for such troublemakers.³³ From these early field visits, it was apparent that despite Ngabo's vision of Rwanda as a sanctuary, individuals on both sides of the border saw themselves through a layered set of narratives and interconnections. The Banyamulenge added a further level of complexity. What was the relationship? How had Rwanda become so embroiled in these people's lives, and how was it that the Banyamulenge had done the same? Like Ngabo in the 1990s, many rationalized that the only future for them was to join the RPF's liberation movement. During this period, hundreds of young Banyamulenge men left their homes, cows, and hills for battlefield Rwanda. When they returned in 1996, however, their home and its surrounding area had become a battlefield for belonging and survival.

The history of Kinyarwanda-speaking communities of eastern Zaïre, where they arrived from and when, offers a deeper view of Banyamulenge positionality.³⁴ It is possible to generalize that those Rwandans, identifiable in the past or present as Hutus or Tutsis, migrated under kingdom-era political push factors, as well as colonial ones or more recently as a result of conflicts in the region. Many of these groups assumed political identity in connection with their new locales, underscoring the settled and permanent nature of the migrations. Those who arrived with the 1994 post-genocide exodus would be the exception. Integral to the understanding of the lives and fates of these waves of migrants and refugees has been the development of colonial and postcolonial notions of national and indigenous identities. The Congolese Banyarwanda group can be divided into discrete categories, each label loaded with its own political and historical significance. *Banya* itself means people from, thus these waves of migrants and refugees sought to establish their own identity through association with new settled places: Banyamulenge of the Mulenge hills in present South Kivu, with both Banyarutshuru and Banyamasisi from respectively Rutshuru and Masisi areas of North Kivu.³⁵ The Banyamulenge are historically Tutsi in their cultural, economic, and social traditions and perceptions. At the time of the First Congo War, Banyarwanda groups in North Kivu made up 50 percent of the province's population, of which three-quarters identified as Hutu (mostly Banyarutshuru) and the remaining as Tutsi (mostly Banyamasisi).³⁶

The first wave of migrants into South Kivu from Mwami Rwabugiri's nineteenth-century Rwanda came in midcentury as political exiles. Historians offer a variety of accounts, from describing these mostly Tutsi elites arriving and negotiating settlement rights with local tribal leaders, to Tutsi

elites bringing with them their own Hutu laborers to settle the area for pastoral use, or “aristocratic” elites who were fleeing attempts to centralize power and avoid taxation.³⁷ Regardless, this wave arrived and settled prior to the establishment of colonial rule in the region now defined as South Kivu. From this point on, these Tutsi pastoralists became autonomous, without any separatist leanings.³⁸ During the colonial period of the 1920s to the 1930s, these groups spread deeper into Congo due to local political and economic oppression, and they were added to by waves of further laborers, those the Belgians transferred from Rwanda to Congo’s arable lands and also into present-day North Kivu.³⁹ The latter group, brought in to meet white settler demand for labor, occupied and settled on land seized from traditional hunting use by the Hunde in Masisi.⁴⁰ Push factors of famine in Rwanda would compel further thousands to cross the border in search of land and survival into the 1940s.⁴¹

It was the 1960s and early 1970s that saw the first postcolonial wave of political refugees. These were mostly elites fleeing the conflict between emerging political groups in Rwanda as products of decolonization.⁴² Hutus fleeing Burundi during the early 1970s also contributed to the growing number of Kinyarwanda speakers now occupying eastern Congo. Preindependence twentieth-century movements saw 85,000 migrants from Rwanda. During the 1960s a further 120,000 came over the border.⁴³ During this period, the Banyarwanda groups in what was Zaïre experienced a political awakening and became involved in domestic politics. Through the appointment of Banyamasisi Tutsi Barthélemy Bisengimana as a chief cabinet officer, Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge groups experienced the political and economic benefits of patrimony within the Mobutuist state.⁴⁴ This followed their allying with the national army because of the Mulele Rebellion, or Simba War. It was at this point that those traditionally (i.e., prior to the 1960s wave) present in the South Kivu started to distinguish themselves from the newcomers by using the self-identification Banyamulenge.⁴⁵ This trend continued with the reception of Burundian refugees, prompting a drive to claim legitimacy through residency rather than ethnicity. Further Burundian refugees—about 50,000—also arrived in 1993 in the wake of the violence that followed the assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye.⁴⁶

The legal and political reverberations of this over one-hundred-year-old stream of Kinyarwanda speakers intersects with the development of citizenship, customary law, and land claims. Under the indirect Belgian colonial

rule, those deemed native or autochthonous at the point of establishment of the Congo Free State in 1885 received semiautonomous status under customary law. Belgian authorities, in support of population movements westward from Rwanda, allowed Kinyarwanda speakers their own Native Authority, giving them the power of land use and ethnic citizenship.⁴⁷ This Native Authority only lasted until 1957, when it was disbanded, removing the political influence of Kinyarwanda speakers in the area who had been present for more than a generation.⁴⁸ This distribution of power further underscored the divergences in land ownership conflicts not only between Banyarwanda and other groups, but between the waves of migrants, laborers, and refugees.⁴⁹ It was this conflict and steady erosion of power that led to Banyamulenge involvement in the Mulele Rebellion.⁵⁰

The 1972 Citizenship Law then granted citizenship to “all immigrants from Rwanda and Burundi,” another benefit to the Kinyarwanda speakers of Bisengimana’s appointment.⁵¹ The Banyamulenge were not as benefited by this move as other Banyarwanda groups were. For those in North Kivu, this gave official recognition and some level of parity and possible intervention in localized disputes over land in the densely populated areas, and undoubtedly turned popular tides against these Kivu groups.⁵² The fall of Bisengimana and the realignments of patrimony under Mobutu in favor of the various non-Banyarwanda groups led to the promulgation of the 1981 Citizenship Law.⁵³ This legislation cancelled the citizenship of those to whom it had been granted in 1972 if they could not prove pre-1885 residency. This law, however, was inconsistently enforced due to the weakness of the state.⁵⁴ This move reinforced the prevailing belief and propaganda of Zaïrean political actors and their constituencies that Kinyarwandan speakers did not belong and never had.⁵⁵

The swelling of domestic opposition to Mobutu’s kleptocracy, notably under the illegally formed opposition Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS) and growing student movement, meant that people began publicly questioning their leader’s infallibility.⁵⁶ Inflation was on the rise and would become hyperinflation by 1993. Foreign aid was suspended after the massacre of University of Lubumbashi students in May 1990. It became clear to all, including the kleptocrat himself, that Mobutu was commanding a sinking ship.⁵⁷ These pressures prompted the unveiling of a multiparty state in April 1990. The Conférence Nationale Souveraine (CNS) stalled at several points in 1991 and was often stacked with Mobutulist delegates. It was at this point that enforcement of the 1981 Citizenship

Law was brought to bear.⁵⁸ The schismatic rhetoric between the subscribed indigenous and ascribed foreigner labels, increasingly leveled at Banyarwanda, became a core issue of the CNS. Mobutu maneuvered for survival and proposed the rejection of any citizenship claims outside of the pre-1885 benchmark. In 1995, parliament striped citizenship from non-indigenous groups. At this point Mobutu had already sowed the seeds of discord in his manipulation of various ethnic groups. By 1996, North Kivu had seen three separate “ethnic wars”: in 1993 in Walikale and Masisi, across the summer of 1995 in North Kivu, and again in April 1996. In late 1996, local authorities ordered Banyamulenge in South Kivu to leave or face massive retaliation.⁵⁹ This period of violence targeted Kinyarwanda speakers and saw the realignment of political actors against Tutsi Banyarwanda with power relationships reaggregated by the arrival of the Rwandan exodus in 1994. In more than 498 days of violence, from 1993 and 1996, 33,500 to 49,000 died and 570,000 people became displaced.⁶⁰

Independent and postcolonial Congo absorbed the colonial classifications of indigeneity and citizenship. As Crawford Young laments, “The silent incorporation of many defining attributes of the colonial state in its post-independence successor for three decades validated the ‘postcolonial’ characterization.”⁶¹ Young describes the consequences of this incorporation as “corrosive” and “eviscerating.”⁶² For 1990s Zaïre, this was the brutal reality, especially for the various Banyarwanda groups in the Kivus. Tied into these politico-legal tropes of belonging were specific indications of inclusion/exclusion with the state. For the Banyarwanda peoples of eastern Congo present since the late 1800s, this meant a struggle for power, (un)achieving the privileges of citizenship, and a complete reversal of their indigenous status. Postcolonial Congo was filled with the violence created by this colonial inheritance and its modern politics of ethnicity, indigeneity, and citizenship. The crimes of colonialism are most apparent in this case: exploitation of native populations, followed by the politicization of indigeneity, and distinguishing who is a native and who does not belong in the Postcolony.⁶³ The emergence of these conflicts of belonging are addressed in chapter 2.

Subsequent wars and localized conflict in eastern Congo have set Banyamulenge soldiers and their respective communities as key players. Alongside neighboring communities, this group has been devastated by both Congo Wars, massive displacement, and persistent mismanagement of the state. Banyamulenge communities across Congo have come under attack,

especially those in South Kivu, where they are often burdened with the dynamics of collective victimization. Soldier involvement in Rwandan-led wars, as well as continual ascription as foreigners, add to the delicate, fracturing nature of intercommunal relations. The story of the Banyamulenge people, as shared in this book largely through the experiences of soldiers from these communities, is an ongoing one. As of the 2000s the debates around ethnicity, nationality, and citizenship have been (slightly) clarified between a 2004 naturalized citizenship law and the 2006 constitution.⁶⁴ Both of these interventions, however, still link indigeneity to these dimensions of belonging. In some ways, and regardless of law and constitution, there is a poisonous streak in popular Congolese discourse that still attributes Banyamulenge and other Kinyarwanda speakers the role of foreigner. As a political self-identification, the label Banyamulenge is contested by many Congolese but remains a powerful self-assertion of belonging.

Organization of the Book

This book establishes the patterns, meaning, and interpretation of violence throughout this period, relying foremost on Banyamulenge soldier narratives. I do not seek to victimize, exonerate, or accuse beyond the existing accounts and narratives used in this book. Identifying a genocide narrative identity within these soldiers, and to an extent their communities, unravels a part of a wider story of multidirectional violence necessary to be told for peace and reconciliation in the Great Lakes region.

I have organized the book into seven chapters, followed by a conclusion. While this flow is conventional, the progression between the chapters functions as a set of layers. First, chapter 1 engages with theoretical aspects of my argument for a genocide narrative identity to understand this story of genocide between Congo and Rwanda. I trace the ideas of narrative identity and social actors as basic concepts behind the larger idea of genocide narrative identity. I address the fundamental problem of critical approaches to the Rwandan genocide as it is promoted by the RPF state, as well as the relevant literature and my field methods. Chapter 2 outlines the backdrop for the crises in both Congo and Rwanda in the 1990s, taking back-and-forth glances across both countries seeing rebellions and relations to state power. The situation of the Banyamulenge is framed in their involvement in 1960s

Cold War and Congo's postcolonial conflicts and their attempts at seeking belonging, which ultimately fail as a result of discrimination produced by the Postcolony condition of Mobutu's state into the 1990s. This is juxtaposed with the growing crises of civil war and genocide in Rwanda. Here I focus on the systematic nature of RPF violence as a prelude to the 1996–1997 First Congo War. The shifts in power as a result of the arrival of a million refugees and thousands of *genocidaires* are then traced to both 1994 and 1996, further setting the scene for the war. Chapters 3 and 4 lean into greater detail of this period showing the development and performance of genocide narrative identity for Banyamulenge soldiers. Chapter 3 is the story of the journey, both in terms of distance covered and networks and narratives formed for Banyamulenge soldiers in the RPF and AFDL. Chapter 4 follows these would-be liberators back into Congo and the refugee camps where the destruction of the latter and many of their inhabitants is documented within the soldier's gaze of the *genocidaire*.

Chapter 5 outlines the Second Congo War and its aftermath, focusing on the evolution of Banyamulenge soldiers and political actors in rejecting their past masters, the RPF, and weaving a narrative relation between self-defense, or the tradition of *gumino*, and the community's concurrent experience of massacres, namely in the Burundian UN camp of Gatumba, where 166 Banyamulenge refugees were killed. The themes of this chapter are continued into chapter 6, with the 2017–2021 escalation of violence in South Kivu. Across these two chapters I also examine Banyamulenge diaspora communities' performance of genocide narrative identity in both memorial events and support of new resistance to the state as well as to neighboring groups believed to be expressing a new wave of *genocidaire* tendencies. Chapter 7 then doubles back over this period to revisit the RPF-relation to Banyamulenge genocide narrative identity. I describe the use of memory in both cases as an aegis of atrocity, where the idea of the *genocidaire* is mobilized as a weapon and shield for crimes committed in the name of vanquishing this enemy. Reflected on here is the impact of this use of memory on Banyamulenge communities, and attempts to replicate it, as a further performance of genocide narrative identity.

The conclusion revisits the formation of genocide narrative identity across the experiences of Banyamulenge soldiers, and therefore between Congo and Rwanda. The theory is discussed again after telling the story and is framed as driving potential positive impacts and perils for Banyamulenge communities' peace and security. Positive impacts include the potential

for transformative change driven by community innovations in diaspora-driven dialogue, survival and resilience, and reconciliation. Perils include the challenge of the Balkanization and federalization debate, how genocide as a label can be a roadblock to peace, and the dynamics of self-defense in mass violence. I aim to answer the question posed by a soldier I spoke with: How does this research led to justice and peace?

Genocide

NARRATION, RELATION, AND SOCIAL ACTORS

Even what you're going to say, there's no secrets. This is what happened. It is not betraying the country. It's asking about what happened in history, it's our history.

—JANVIER¹

Myself, I fought that war. I don't want to give you my point of view based on my feelings or being sentimental, but I want to give you the true information that had taken place. I think without doubt that I am among the rare people that you could find in this country that could give you the true version.

—MOISE²

Relating to Truth

Cornering truth in fieldwork is a slippery task. Such an undertaking is a fool's errand in the layers of Congo's conflict. Seeking out such finality loses the richness of diverse lived experience.³ Sensing and understanding the interconnected nature of actor agency and narrative identity is this book's chosen path to grappling with this subjectivity.⁴ Exploring violence through a relational approach is key to both identity and genocide. The "truth" I was seeking from Banyamulenge soldiers was their perspectives, situatedness, and positions in co-constructing identity and networks.⁵ Expressing their truths might set them free from the violence they created and faced, further ingrain its uses and justifications, or possibly even imprison them. In this relational framing, narrative is indeed a medium that navigates agency and structure.

If a relational approach to genocide embraces such subjectivities, this view allows us to see how genocide is participated in, mobilized, seen, executed, remembered, and justified. Accordingly, social actors and not binary perpetrators or victims make up the field in which humans see and experience genocide. Genocide narrative identity, a concept this chapter frames and that is central to this book, is a way of understanding and conceiving of social actor identities in genocide.⁶ Leveraging the basic principle of narrative identity, that the stories we tell about ourselves shape who we are, proffers an angle on genocidal violence seldom explored.⁷ Genocide narrative identity is a way of understanding how multiple exposures to genocide shape identity through the stories told about these experiences.⁸ Relations between memory, identity, and violence, even on a genocidal scale, cannot be frozen in any sense.⁹

A relational approach to genocide sees beyond familiar caricatures of perpetrator and victim into agency and structure, yet more so to the connections and networks that shape not only violence, but genocide-related identities. Social actors as relational figures carry narratives that capture an observable expression, seen through performance. The typical relation of perpetrator and victim is often seen in a moment of time, meaning a perpetrator engaged in an act of mass violence against a victim. In the context of multidirectional violence and layered experiences of genocide, this relation becomes dynamic. The latter then further develops in a post-genocide context where mass violence may take place, as it does for Congolese Tutsi like the Banyamulenge. The notion of social actors does not erase the legal objectivity or even subjectivity of perpetrator and victim. It does open space to see more kinds of relations in social structures of perpetration, survival, and victimhood.

Genocide narrative identity helps make sense of the “truths” I encountered throughout my interviews with Banyamulenge soldiers and other community members. Having this subjective perspective teases out the particular agencies and structures of specific cases in the Great Lakes region.¹⁰

Existing scholarly works, including Banyamulenge and other Congolese accounts, often lack this critical perspective. Debates around denial and “double genocide theory” segment analysis into politicized silos, preventing clear understanding of the emergence of RPF violence, and foremost the place of Banyamulenge soldiers and their practices of violence. More often than not, talking about “genocide” creates a zero-sum outlook of preserving victimhood outside of the nuances of multidirectional violence.¹¹ Taking

these relational ideas of genocide and social actors in hand, one can move toward the role that genocide plays in narrative identity. It is this concept that makes visible the relations of genocide between social actors, making narratives the social thing I observed as a component of social networks.

This chapter captures the subjectivity and relations in this book. I posit genocide as the most formative and destructive kind of violence in the Congolese and Rwandan conflicts. Genocide is a highly potent way of sensing violence, and for some it imposes fixed narrative identities on multidirectional violence. Thus I discuss the persistent problem of the “double genocide theory” related to the Congolese and Rwandan wars as a problem of obliterating certain histories.¹² Through a broader discussion of theory, I offer an account of relations in genocide and how it underpins this term and actors throughout the book. This evolves the problematic binary of perpetrator and victim, using a general narrative principle that the stories we tell about ourselves construct who we are, framing social actors as a central agent, with experiences across perpetration and victimhood.¹³ Use of this model is situated in a brief review of a micro-level approach to civil war. I include commentary on the field research behind this book. This chapter explains how genocide narrative identity is defined as a framing of perpetration. This concept moves the assessment of actors in this violent history beyond the confused simplicity of perpetrators and victims. A genocide narrative identity brings a deeper social view of how violence and actors are part of an interactive, connected whole. Where narrative is presented as truth, I use this approach to not subvert Banyamulenge soldier narratives of the past but to contextualize and understand them, presenting how they sensed themselves in their actions and circumstances.

RPF Violence and “Double Genocide”

A barrier often presented to critical engagement with Congo and Rwanda’s interlaced histories is the question of how to assess multidirectional violence involving both countries. It is without doubt that during 1994 a Hutu Power movement, mobilizing militias, soldiers, and politicians, executed a genocide of Rwandan Tutsis and perceived Hutu sympathizers. This fast-paced series of organized massacres, rape, and looting killed at least half a million Rwandans. This mass social action occurred in the context of a civil war and a tenuous peace deal, and at a time when Rwanda’s future was up

for grabs. Despite the vast analysis of this period, one of the most persistent problems of modern Rwandan history, memory, and politics is the silence hanging over violence committed and sponsored by the RPF in Congo and Rwanda. This group's violence in both countries matters for the story of Banyamulenge soldiers, as they were core participants. These perceived crimes continue to motivate interminable anti-Tutsi violence in the region.

Discussions of RPF violence in Rwanda and the 1996–1997 refugee massacres in Congo, and support of atrocity-prone rebel groups, inevitably raise claims of a double genocide. The double genocide theory states that two genocides occurred in the space of the 1990s overlapping each other, one accepted internationally as “The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda,” and another by the RPF against Hutus. Claims of a double genocide are used by many groups to label the history I tell in this book. In its deceptive simplicity this label is used to muddy the reality of the events of 1994 and to deflect politicized and earnest revisionism away from pro-RPF histories of Rwanda. On the one hand, former *genocidaires* and diaspora actors claim that during this civil war there was no genocide of one group, thereby equating the violence exercised by the Hutu Power movement and the RPF. For example, in the context of our story in the Great Lakes region, the FDLR in its mountain retreats of eastern Congo, uses the notion of a larger “catastrophe” in Rwanda, wherein two genocides occurred, one by the Hutu Power movement against Tutsis and another by the RPF against Hutus.¹⁴ Defenders of the RPF legacy and its internationally accepted narrative use the double genocide label as a way to identify denialism, false revisionism, and genocide ideology. Double genocide becomes a battering ram for both sides. The casualty in the middle is, as always, representative histories of violence in the 1990s and onwards between Congo and Rwanda. This is the real problem of the double genocide. Identifying denial against a group's suffering is a legitimacy linchpin in this zero-sum game.¹⁵ The legacy of this use of “genocide” is played out in Banyamulenge narratives, where similar claims to exclusivity are sought and their multidirectional experiences in perpetration and victimhood are blurred.

The notion of double genocide in Rwanda is often attributed to defense arguments at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).¹⁶ Concurrently, the Rwandan government rejected ICTR investigations of RPF violence, as this advocated a search for moral equivalency or collective guilt: a double genocide. There is little evidence to suggest that the prosecution team supported what emerged as the double genocide theory.¹⁷

Closing arguments for multiple defense cases list an array of typical arguments ranging from unreliable witnesses to a lack of jurisdiction, that the accused were actually acting to save Tutsis and not facilitating their killing, documented alibis, and goodness of character.¹⁸ Defense lawyers from this court have gone on to propagate a broad conspiracy of an organized RPF genocide against Hutus from 1994 into the 2000s.¹⁹ This theory emboldens the politics that stands in the way of tracing the changes in violence, including comparisons of atrocities that hide in the shadows of canonized genocide.²⁰ Studies of concurrent violence in 1990s Rwanda typically dismiss the notion of double genocide as unhelpful in search of evidence for atrocities on all sides.²¹ This book subverts zero-sum politics and conspiracy theories by tackling RPF violence and its long-term impacts through some of its earliest recruits, Banyamulenge soldiers. Through their eyes we gain a view of the meanings, roles, and uses of violence in the name of protecting Tutsi populations across the Great Lakes.

Due to the arresting nature of this problem, it is helpful to review the claims made in this debate. A book that attracted considerable attention was Judy Rever's on the RPF and its alleged crimes. The book uses two hundred dissident interviews, building on a narrative also articulated in the Spanish Court indictment of forty top RPF leaders in 2008 for crimes committed between 1990 and 2002.²² The book's reception was indicative of the tensions around how double genocide claims are used. Echoing ICTR defense lawyers, Rever asserts that the RPF not only engaged in its own genocide, but conspired to initiate the 1994 genocide. Supported by previously unreleased documentation from the ICTR prosecutor's office and analogies to the Holocaust, she positions the RPF as a modern-day *Einsatzgruppen* complete with a network of killing sites (in Rwanda not Congo).²³ This potentially enlightening source material does not shed any further clarity on post-genocide Rwanda. Petitions against Rever's book tour brought the indignation of the double genocide claim.²⁴ What is left out if this gathered data is completely dismissed?²⁵ Analysis of RPF violence requires an approach that does not diminish the gravity of genocide against Tutsi and moderate Hutus during 1994.²⁶ Rever's book misses the opportunity to assess the patterns and trajectories of RPF violence from the 1990s into the present.²⁷ Such a challenge is, in part, a result of RPF deflection of more rigorous investigation, combined with the highly politicized context of research on Rwanda.²⁸

This revisionist discourse has also been promoted by RPF defectors directly, claiming responsibility for shooting down Habyarimana's plane

and a subsequent campaign of systemic targeting of Hutu civilians.²⁹ These claims were echoed in the 2014 BBC documentary *Rwanda: The Untold Story*, with assertions of who and how many people actually died in the genocide.³⁰ Other attempts to assess the numbers game of death tolls across the civil war and genocide are not conclusive and do not rule out the impact of the RPF's arrival into an area in increasing death rates.³¹ Not rigorously questioned in the dissident critiques or numerical debates is the systematic and targeted nature of RPF violence.

Thus two main camps have emerged over time with different uses of "double genocide theory": equation of all violence as genocide, or blockading evidence-based revisionism in the name of preserving the RPF's legacy as saviors. One camp vociferously attacks the historical record, sometimes in the name of anti-Western neoimperialism, engaging in genocide denial and ill-founded conspiracy. Such revisionism can play into the hands of Hutu Power propagandists.³² These views are remissive or ignorant of the RPF's agency and careful constructions of memory. The second camp are those defending the accomplishment and integrity of the RPF. In this framing RPF violence cannot be circumscribed under the double genocide theory. Any violence is the expression of frustrated, ill-trained young people in the face of the massive devastation of genocide. In this approach, the refugees killed in Congo became casualties of revenge and circumstance, piling in comparison for those lost in 1994. RPF apologists foster an environment where attempts at more thorough historical revisionism of this period or analysis of RPF violence are seen as politically and morally questionable.³³

These two camps are not exclusive and do not represent the views of all parties, nor populations that identify as Rwandan. They are often, however, the loudest in the room, and subsume other voices.³⁴ Most troubling is that both these trajectories miss the spaces for debate about the nature of RPF violence and its meaning and what, if any, are the shared threads from the emergence of RPF power in the early 1990s to the massacres of Rwandan refugees in Zaïre and further atrocities during the Congo Wars. The prevalence and extent of RPF violence is not necessarily a matter of revisiting if such things happened, but a question of who is framing them. The notion of double genocide does not address the scope and structures of the violence perpetrated by the RPF as described in the following chapters.³⁵ RPF dissidents fall into the precarious space of preserving the legacy of the party while critiquing Kagame as public enemy number one. They follow a spectrum from advocates of all-out revolution, prophets of further genocide, and

activists for increased democracy and deeper national reconciliation.³⁶ Furthermore, the dismissal of RPF critics under the double genocide label misdirects important questions about patterns and evolution of RPF violence from 1990 to the present.³⁷ As demonstrated by another BBC foray into the topic, this time through the historical fiction series *Black Earth Rising*, who is telling the story of violence has seemed to matter more than the question of whether or not it happened.³⁸

The conceptualization of genocide in these arguments, reflected in mainstream scholarship, neglects emergent approaches in genocide studies. Genocide is, for many, simultaneously bounded by the legalization of the UNCG and the “maximalist” standards that sanctify mainstream cases of genocide against others, Rwanda being one such case.³⁹ The Rwandan government has created a narrative that supports such interpretations of genocide being a legally defined, distinct event, and not a relational process of violent identity construction. This has been accomplished through its criminalization of denial and revisionism with the legal tools for prosecuting “genocide ideology” and “divisionism.”⁴⁰ These instruments of state discipline and punishment will be discussed in chapter 7. What sometimes provokes these extreme attempts at explaining the RPF is the latter’s own iron-fisted grip on historicization.⁴¹ Management of Rwandan society and politics is rooted in narrative monopolization that prevents, or strongly discourages, discussion and analysis of the ruling party’s violence both at home and abroad. Indeed, a competitive model of memory does little to address the problem of representation of multidirectional violence. A more subjective take on the destruction of social groups is needed to sense social actors, their narratives, and how these shape identities making figurations and networked narratives. A genocide narrative identity helps understand this complexity without resorting to the exclusivist caricatures and narratives.

Relations and Social Actors

What qualifies as genocide is a highly contentious question. Genocide is legally defined as the intentional destruction of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.⁴² Genocide scholars have increasingly framed genocide in addition to or outside of this UNCG phrasing.⁴³ Decades of subsequent genocide scholarship can be viewed through two broad groupings. The first, a liberal perspective emphasizing perpetrator intent that accepts the lim-

itations of the UNCG in assessing cases of typically only physical destruction.⁴⁴ Second is the critical, postliberal perspective drawing from Raphael Lemkin's notion of broader social group destruction.⁴⁵ The resurgence of colonial case studies in the field is tied to a broadening of the postliberal perspective into a more structural account of genocide and the connections of climate violence.⁴⁶ The liberal view centers on the individual agent, and the postliberal on structures. A balanced agent-structure approach through relational sociology helps bridge this binary. A relational approach to genocide develops the sociological roots of Lemkin's study of a wide range of colonial genocides.⁴⁷ This is an appeal to socially constructed reality in which actors continually (re)shape their social worlds through interaction and interconnectivity. Genocide, from this perspective, is seen through the relations between agents and structures. Taking this relational approach, I define genocide as the destruction of a social group, the violence of which is broadly direct/physical, cultural, or structural.⁴⁸

Relational perspectives of genocide see the obliteration of social groups. This kind of mass violence is not limited to physical killing.⁴⁹ The crux of genocide as a relational concept revolves around the destruction of "social identities connected by relations of difference."⁵⁰ For example, Tutsis were identified as a specific group within complex Rwandan social relations, up to 1994, that led to the attempted destruction of the group. This opens up genocide as a concept of social group destruction inclusive of civil wars, colonial oppression, and the targeting of political and cultural groups. Consider here the many factors at play in the 1994 genocide from colonialism to the destabilization of civil war. The practice of group destruction is based on the target group's "inherently dangerous, uncontrollable, and unwinnable" nature.⁵¹ The methods of this destruction must then be broad, including direct, cultural, and structural forms of violence within a genocidal system's work of obliteration.⁵² The layered genocides discussed in this book are often devoid of political context and miss a more complex analysis.⁵³ This absent relational approach is inherently multidirectional, seeing the interactions that shape violent practices, including the mobilization of memory.

Early developments of the relational approach include a structural account of "degenerative warfare" in various types of violent conflict and the primary targeting of civilians.⁵⁴ Relational genocide, through an agent-structure view, can be seen as a power relation.⁵⁵ The key interaction is between those engaged in destructive actions and civilians as the targets of

such actions and the process of identity difference and social group construction of the Other. The traditional reliance on perpetrator and victim categories then only shows a linear view of potentially multidirectional cases, like those in the Great Lakes region.⁵⁶

The formation of identity in genocide is inherently problematic. What are the implications of victims killing, or killers becoming victims? How does this shape identity and participation in genocide? The binary characterizations previously inscribed into the field of genocide studies still can result in a parsing of actors into either perpetrator or victim categories.⁵⁷ The origination of these popular categories in genocide studies sits with Raul Hilberg's 1992 study. What remains to this day is a caricature of a functional perpetrator who knew their role.⁵⁸ This "modular" approach was intended to be a shorthand, not a lasting unit of comparative analysis across a global set of cases.⁵⁹

Missing from this version is how perpetrator and victim identities are formed, which leads to a few other questions. Does a relational account allow for micro-level analysis of actors and a view upward to the meso level? An answer may not be sufficient to explain how individuals or groups move from overlapping environments and experiences into developing unique self-perceptions. Is there a layering of identity that can occur when persons are subject to forms of mass trauma and violence and then participate in such actions themselves? What is the role of actor agency in the potential variations of this scenario?

Further exploration of relational genocide helps answer these questions. At the core of social relations is the idea of figurations as the formations of the fabric of human societies and therefore the core of what genocide destroys. These "social figurations" are bunches of threads of numerous lives, agencies, and motivations.⁶⁰ Figurations represent the dynamic and process-oriented nature of how the social world exists and perpetuates.⁶¹ Genocide can be examined through social figurations in at least two ways. On the one hand, it is the production of figuration: genocide is a generative project of building identities and polities.⁶² On the other hand, existing social figurations become the target of perpetration.⁶³ This adds to Lemkin's assertion that genocide is the displacement of one social pattern by another.⁶⁴ Genocide produces distinct networks of relations.⁶⁵ Figurations of actors simultaneously exercise agency in their actions and reshape the social world.⁶⁶

A relational view of identities frames the fluid, social construction of

the same as both destructive and productive. These two factors coalesce in new relations.⁶⁷ The production of difference is a result of a full complement of social, economic, and political dynamics. In the Banyamulenge soldier experience, these dynamics specifically translate into indigeneity, colonial classifications with their postcolonial meanings, and the identification of actors in relation to the emerging, crisis-ridden state.⁶⁸ It is through engaging with the group and individual soldier participant narratives that I identify the relations of genocide and how identity-based difference frames action and identities.

A notion of obliteration also entails the dual action of perceiving and/or ascribing identity in the Other, with the deployment of violence to erase identity, dismantling the group ontologically. This level of destruction is foremost experienced and understood by those who are targeted. A relational approach to genocide must at least function along lines of experiential, asymmetrical exchanges of power between groups. My approach is to understand narrative identities in a relational context, demonstrating the gathering of experiences and perceptions that lead to genocide and follow from it. This book is an attempt to situate and understand the *how* of Banyamulenge soldier participation as a reflection of genocide narrative identity between Congo and Rwanda.

This approach is an analysis of actors and environments through their relations and networks.⁶⁹ This bridges gaps in genocide studies in the agency and structure dichotomy, framing agency as active and dynamic and structure as sets of limiting or enabling environments.⁷⁰ The vital contribution of relational sociology to this research is that within figurations and networks, identities are shaped by actors and the social worlds they create. Overlapping with this approach is the umbrella of practice theory, where social worlds and actors are linked through a cycle of cocreation.⁷¹ Actors engage in making and remaking identities, making the latter performative.⁷² This view can liberate analysis of actors in genocide from set characterizations of perpetrator and victim. I add a further dimension of observable networks in this book through the networked narratives of Banyamulenge soldiers as they move from homegrown explanations of violence to RPF-based narratives, and how the latter are then reinterpreted in successive involvement in armed groups.

A relational approach to networks emerges that is key to the analysis of social figurations. Deterministic views miss the constitutive elements of the social world and the capacity of society and culture to shape behavior.⁷³ Inter-

action impacts other actions, all within networks of relations. Actors therefore are at the center of this ever-present exchange.⁷⁴ Tracing network connections of actors in genocide to experience, perception, and the structures that support the interpretation of these social things are crucial to understanding the relationships and the production of identity-based relations.

In sum, what is considered as relational in this book includes but is not limited to the substance of the relational world as both human and material, fluidly forming networks, reflexivity as social action, and social interaction as necessarily contradictory and oppositional.⁷⁵ The formation and re-formation of identity is the actor's ability to adapt and adjust in varied environments. While this shiftiness of structures proffers a more interconnected account of agency and environment without succumbing to complete individualization, how does one deal with the issue of intent?⁷⁶ The implication here is situating intent as outcomes and not as deciphering preconceived meaning. A relational repositioning of intent sets it under agency and relations as perception and purposeful action. I return to this idea in a moment as I introduce the concept of social actors.

Reworking agency and structure can translate this aspect of perpetration. Genocide can be seen as a series of networks that frame relations, agencies, and identities within limitations and enablers.⁷⁷ Networks are sites of performative action where actors engage with and exchange power. It is then feasible to consider violently interacting networks both in terms of the experiences and perceptions of actors that use destructive violence within an intergroup asymmetrical power exchange. As such, Banyamulenge soldiers experienced genocide in parallel to their Tutsi brothers in Rwanda throughout the 1990s and into the present.

For a relational genocide approach to clearly bridge the agent/structure gap, a more coherent and useful conception of the individual is needed. This is the case in this book's narrative stories, where the words perpetrator or victim can potentially slip so easily off the page and into public discourse. These categorizations become more problematic when applied to multidirectional violence; talking about victims becoming perpetrators and vice versa leads to limited thinking devoid of multidirectional, historically layered context. These are sore problems for our sense making in the African Great Lakes region.

As the Congolese and Rwandan Tutsi networks merged narratives and relatable experiences of violence, overlaid with the violent exodus of refugees, genocide shaped opportunities and constraints. In its simplest sense

I see genocide as the destruction of social groups. In this complex case of multidirectional violence, actors collectively propelled themselves toward the production of identity-based difference and violent obliteration of the source of their problems, the *genocidaire*. In order to fully utilize a relational approach to genocide and hold a critical view of perpetrator and victim categories, embracing their subjectivity, a fresh view of actors needs to be posited.

Questions of genocide identities have since been neatly pressed into categories of perpetrator, victim, and sometimes bystander or upstander.⁷⁸ All are conceptually loaded with baggage from case-based perspectives from authoritative cases of genocide like the Holocaust, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia. The implication here is that perpetrators are synonymous with organized hierarchies, with victims as groups defined by the limitations of the UNCG.⁷⁹ As discussed in the introduction, a social world populated without Levi's grayer sets of us, perpetrators and victims, displaces processes of violence and how actors themselves shape such processes.⁸⁰

If the social construction of actors is framed by how we see and describe the latter, we must then acknowledge that actor incarnations are necessarily subjective.⁸¹ It is an endeavor that requires acknowledging the ways in which actors see and sense themselves. How does one distinguish between possible perpetrator-victims or victim-perpetrators who engage in violence, with situated knowledge of a group's threats and experiences? The conceptual weakness of most descriptions of these identity categories and attempts at understanding the formation of genocide identities fall into a tendency of categorizing actors as morally good victims and evil perpetrators. A gray zone offers a far more useful conceptualization of a violent structure that form, reform, and layer identities.⁸²

The typecasting of such actors, generally for legal, political, or historical purposes by academics, activists, and the protagonists themselves, also blinds analysis to the role of moral agency in the actors themselves.⁸³ Furthermore, isolating actors via existing conceptual frameworks in an assembly-line fashion discounts the vital social connections and intersubjective perceptions at both intra- and intergroup levels.⁸⁴ The messiness of actor relations in any social environment is thrown out in the name of making simple sense of violence, which leaves too little attention paid to the sense that actors have about themselves and genocidal violence.⁸⁵ This trend permeates popular perceptions of genocide. Perpetration is symbolized through visceral iconography of skulls and nationalist symbology. Actors are confined to a box of psychological dysfunction and uncivilized

barbarity.⁸⁶ As categories, perpetrator and victim are teleological explanations of genocide that ascribe uniform agency and broad culpability. This is done without a context of how identity is formed and how participation in violent destruction occurs.

These caricatures in genocide studies replicate such simplifications. I propose that what can be understood in Great Lakes' and Banyamulenge soldier histories is that individuals are first of all *social actors* that have been ascribed and subscribed with layers of perpetrator and victim identities. Subjectivity, performance, and agency are essentials to understanding social actors in genocide narrative identity. There are points of valuable comparison when thinking about the production of gender and genocide identities. Genocide studies often construct the latter without rigor and to satisfy the need for clear intent and victim-oriented justice.⁸⁷ This is often done to understand who's who and offering deceptively concise explanations of a given case.⁸⁸

The gendering of actors occurs across the spectrum of international and local contexts of any given case. Congo holds its own specific traditions and productions of gender identities that have evolved and been disrupted over time.⁸⁹ The gendering of actors in genocide and Congo has been treated in a variety of ways. The high prevalence of sexual violence further entrenches the gendering of the battlefield through assumptions about male combatants/perpetrators and female civilians/victims, missing the feminizing of opponents by using rape as a weapon of war. There can be no exclusive determination of women as victims and men as perpetrators, despite the chorus labeling Congo as the "rape capital of the world"⁹⁰ and "the worst place in the world to be a woman."⁹¹ Militias and soldiers in Congo use sexual violence to target men almost as frequently as they do women.⁹² Research among soldiers in Congo also reports an internationally higher incidence of female recruits.⁹³ Despite their use in popular discourse, the double binary gendering of female victims and male perpetrators is increasingly being abandoned in fields of peace, conflict, and gender studies.⁹⁴

A social actor theory of relational genocide presents dynamic nuances for understanding not only gender identities in genocide, but also genocide identities themselves. In this approach identity has to be grounded in social relations. It is created through performance, agency, thought, and action, of which narrative provides a platform of expression and observation.⁹⁵ This produces culturally significant but malleable personhood, beyond symmetrical typologies, through sensing performance.⁹⁶ As with

gender, actor identity within genocidal processes is at once relational, structural, performative, and fluid.

These views offer a possible conception of a social actor in genocide. Agent-based approaches to an actor in genocide help reveal a micro-level account of action to an analysis of macro-level interaction. In sociology the social agent is a vehicle for knowledge and capability.⁹⁷ Knowledge amalgamates individual reflexivity, purposiveness, and intentionality.⁹⁸ This presents an alternative view of intent in moving past the *dolus specialis*, or special intent. In the liberal conception of genocide this is the need to define the inner thoughts of a single perpetrator, and consequently the hundreds of people executing vast structures employed in a destructive process.⁹⁹ The social actor presents intent more broadly as outcomes of action, which are intentional or unintentional framed within the social actors' interactions, agency, and social power.¹⁰⁰ This establishes genocide as an outcome of action with or without specific intent to destroy a group.¹⁰¹ The performativity of a social agent offers possibilities for conceptualizing actors' identities in genocidal processes seldom addressed by genocide studies.

Social actors are inherently relational, to others and their environment, constantly engaging in decisions based on available options and resources. Individuals are not necessarily equated as distinct, independent actors, but are working parts of the socially constructed world.¹⁰² Social actors are dynamic and emergent entities constructed in a fundamentally social environment. They operate in and navigate a social world using available means, all the while demonstrating knowledge and capability.¹⁰³ This forms a two-part understanding of agency as knowledge and capability, showing observable complexities of social life and by extension genocidal destruction.¹⁰⁴ Social actors are situated in spaces to formulate responses and gather resources. In genocide processes, agency is a nondefining but primary quality.¹⁰⁵ A social actor's agency (knowledge and capability) is key to engagement with structures and experience, a relational link with others and the environment. Understanding social actors in these ways allows for further exploration of participation in violence and self-sensing of that participation, making identity the evolving product of exchange, interactions, and relations between others and self.

This book's approach to relational, social actors, and violence, incorporates multidirectional exposures to genocide and the ongoing processual brutalization of the actor. These factors are not causal, but dynamic, flowing between incidents, impacting knowledge and capability, and forming identity. The

social actor and their identities are socially constructed within the structures around them. In order to understand social actors as relational entities, the appropriate level of micro- or macro-analysis needs to be established.

Framing Participation in Violence

Civil war studies offers a more robust theoretical framing of narratives and grassroots level perspectives by presenting missing elements of micro-level analysis and contextualizing cases as local patterns of violence rather than a schema of stages of genocide.¹⁰⁶ My thinking has relied on a nuanced approach in global analysis of local violence as integral to the production of politics, identity, and material and social goods.¹⁰⁷ This comprehensive theoretical approach can be brought to bear on qualitative interviews offering insights into social sanctions, grievances, and incentives, especially where these factors are influential in mobilization and participation in the different groups of conflict participants.¹⁰⁸ Localized analysis of recruitment and larger socioeconomic and political factors offer an understanding of conflict aided by a concurrent use of theory, local contextual factors, and robust participant data. The latter reveals how networks and identities form, the mobilization of identity labels in conflict, and their interchangeability.¹⁰⁹ Civil war studies presents the relational aspects of social actors, pushing back against trends away from a balanced micro-level approach.¹¹⁰ Guided by relational theory, this viewpoint can offer a richer interpretation of genocide tied with explanations beyond a given case. This trajectory has similarities to that of growing perpetrator studies work, focusing on the micro-dynamics to build a wider picture.¹¹¹

Zooming to the grassroots of participation in conflict takes a “thicker” level of analysis by displaying “endogenous” factors that drive violence.¹¹² This view also casts a wider net on interactions beyond those associated with the local, seeing how relations weave in and out of conflict and even peacemaking.¹¹³ Rejecting “master cleavages,” the dynamics of social relations show how identity is formed through violence.¹¹⁴ At this level, a relational identity journey can be identified where, for example, emotively framed horrific stories of child soldiers can instead be seen through relations of rationality, shame, disgust, and brutalization.¹¹⁵ I address the shaping of identity under such violent conditions in later chapters where the recruitment and combat of Banyamulenge soldiers is assessed in detail.

Studies on participation in violence in Congo demonstrate this meeting of qualitative evidence and theory on a micro-level, critiquing the reductive greed-grievance binary.¹¹⁶ Discussions of the participation of women and men recruited into the Congolese army note how actors were often recruited from deprived circumstances. They saw their commission of violence as an opportunity to secure economic and social power.¹¹⁷ Recruitment into armed groups represents a complex mixture of circumstance, opportunity, and necessity.¹¹⁸ Such studies utilize the voices and self-perceptions of participants in the process of establishing fresh theoretical approaches.

The voluminous amount of international humanitarian reporting from the 1990s to the present is used to frame this book's micro-level accounting of relational, social actors in genocide.¹¹⁹ Such reports are subject to their own politics and to those of the region. Consider here Robert Gersony's draft report on Hutu massacres in mid-1990s Rwanda and the Mapping Report. Both reports have been successfully called into doubt by the post-genocide RPF government. The Mapping Report is an essential body of evidence and backdrop for this book, covering Congo from 1993 to 2003. It makes a tentative claim of genocide for Rwandan Hutu refugees, but with the caveat of a requisite "full judicial investigation" in order to justify the initial, albeit detailed findings.¹²⁰ Crucial in this report is a documentation of the multidirectional violence, particularly that experienced by the Banyamulenge, framed too simplistically as perpetrators and victims. The political fallout of this report in our story is discussed further in chapter 7.

Given this existing work, how is a micro-level perspective reflected in the African Great Lakes region? Congolese scholars and others have tackled discussion of the claims of genocide in Congo as well as this broader period of conflict in the 1990s. Few have done so in a way that arrived at the heart of participation, beyond the well-researched case of Rwanda in 1994.¹²¹ The colonial legacy in the region is one of fractured belonging, citizenship, and land rights. All became highly contested politically and were leveraged in the formation of postcolonial elites. A critical account of the AFDL/RPF's culpability in mass crimes has also emerged, classifying the attacks on Rwandan Hutu refugees and Congolese civilians in the eastern Congo as systematic and political, as "massacres" that can be labeled as "xenophobic" and "ethnic."¹²² Recent work offers a more concise narrative of not only Banyamulenge participation, but also the destruction of refugee camps in the eastern Congo.¹²³ Frameworks that can assess the micro-level social actor participation in such processes lack these area studies perspectives. There

is a pervasive need for analysis that sees the political, not simply “creed, greed and booty.”¹²⁴ More in-depth histories of the Banyamulenge bring in a detailed accounting of the historical processes such as the emergence of Banyamulenge political consciousness, exclusion from democratization, and persecution under Mobutu.¹²⁵ Yet most analysis of the region lacks broader comparative and theoretical depth, leaving narrow cases without richer context.¹²⁶

Congolese scholars, including a few Banyamulenge writers, have offered varying comment on these conflicts and the claims of genocide.¹²⁷ From this group emerges some consensus around the “systematic and deliberate killing” of 233,000 refugees and other civilians during the First Congo War.¹²⁸ This period of transition is one that brought about “acts of genocide.”¹²⁹ This consensus belies the often vociferous debates among Congolese scholars, reflecting on the politics of belonging and indigeneity in Congo. Some critique the role of the Banyamulenge as “ethno-nationalist” as creating an exclusivist account around their belonging in Congo.¹³⁰ The postcolonial politics of Congo are essential to this study and the experiences of genocide for Banyamulenge communities. Conversely, boxing in one group as a problematic minority recycles politics into analysis without attending to a longer, deeper assessment.¹³¹

Banyamulenge writers, on the other hand, have crafted a narrative that offers deep perspective into various Congolese conflict entanglements, from both political actor and soldier perspective. Broadly, these accounts, in addition to the individual soldier-refugee memoirs shown below, tend to abstract agency and participation in violence. One particular account of Banyamulenge military history is insightful and in some respects is tacitly a soldier account. This book, *Behind the Scenes of the ‘Banyamulenge Military’*, by Rukumbuzi Delphin Ntanyoma, traces a long history of involvement in conflict by necessity, raising the role of conspiracy against Banyamulenge from the 1960s to the present.¹³² Across Banyamulenge writers, their military role is generally subsumed into experiences in victimhood, while questions of perpetration are left unanswered. My book’s relational account bridges this gap in (re)analyzing these accounts and soldier interviews.

Existing biographical accounts of AFDL or even RPF soldiers are limited in number. Many published firsthand accounts of RPF violence in both Congo and Rwanda are by dissidents or survivors.¹³³ Notable figures include Theogene Rudasingwa, Gerald Gahima, and Abdul Ruzibiza.¹³⁴ These are critical in their own ways and are largely based on individual observations

of the RPF during their service. Paul Rusesabagina has also voiced scathing criticism of Kagame and the RPF, publishing a catalogue of alleged RPF crimes. The evidence base of this document is hard to identify. Rusesabagina, after the success of the *Hotel Rwanda* film, became an exiled “hero” and is now a convicted terrorist.¹³⁵ Typically, when you mess with the legacy and sanctity of the RPF narrative you become sidelined at best, and disappeared at worst.¹³⁶ This violent dynamic of Rwandan memory is also discussed further in chapter 7.

Accounts by other Congolese Tutsi soldiers are even fewer and include, for example, a biography of long-time Banyarwanda militarist Laurent Nkunda.¹³⁷ A fictionalized biography tells the story of a leading Banyamulenge soldier, now a ranking member of the FARDC.¹³⁸ This novel appears consistent with the narratives and plots shared by my participants. Memoirs by Rwandan refugee survivors of the First Congo War camps present an arduous account of RPF violence, as rumor and past experience propelled armed actors and refugees across the jungle. These accounts are substantiated when read alongside humanitarian reporting.¹³⁹ A comprehensive history of these refugee experiences is yet to be written and is sorely needed to add to multidirectional reconciliation for Rwandans and affected Congolese populations.¹⁴⁰

Banyamulenge accounts of these histories are limited and concentrated around refugee voices, as well as some elite-level narratives. Among the diaspora voices is Sandra Uwiringiyimana’s *How Dare the Sun Rise*. This narrative typifies the Banyamulenge narratives of experiences of violence, victimhood, and spiritual deliverance.¹⁴¹ An elite-level narrative comes from Manassé Muller Ruhimbika’s *Les Banyamulenge (Congo-Zaïre) Entre Deux Guerres*. Ruhimbika is a long-standing political figure in the community and has participated in various rebel movements as well as holding government office.¹⁴² This book created, for community intellectuals, a backbone narrative echoed in many of the soldiers I spoke to. Two Banyamulenge memoirs from respectively a former RPF soldier and RPF political operative, now living in the diaspora, offer further parallel accounts to my participants. Georges Budagu Makoko, now living in the United States, wrote a memoir titled *Ladder to the Moon*, which detailed his education in Uvira and joining the RPF in the early 1990s to defend his kin.¹⁴³ Alex Mvuka Ntung’s *Not My Worst Day* similarly details a juvenile experience around the rise of the RPF, but working as an informant for the movement.¹⁴⁴ These accounts support my discussion of soldier narratives in chapters 3 through 5.¹⁴⁵ As noted

above, most Banyamulenge accounts, and like Ntanyoma, retell collective violence that has targeted them, while narrators distance themselves from violence they engaged in under the RPF, AFDL, and later groups through relegating agency. Such things were not in their control.

Civil war studies and personal accounts raise a variety of perspectives on the layers of genocide and accompanying subjective perceptions between Congo and Rwanda in the 1990s and beyond. While a model of bottom-up assessment is needed in the history between Congo and Rwanda, it is largely absent. The research behind this book engages in this gap by bringing to light Banyamulenge soldier accounts as social actors in genocide between Congo and Rwanda. The following section will address the how of the field-work that gathered these rare but central narratives.

Finding Voices

The field research behind this book evolved over several years. Field visits were carried out in Rwanda (Kigali), DRC (Bukavu, Goma, and Kinshasa), and Kenya (Nairobi). These visits were conducted over several trips for periods lasting many weeks. I encountered the core participants of this research, both soldiers and political actors in Banyamulenge communities, initially through prominent figures in the Banyamulenge diaspora as well as through researchers with experience in Congo. Once in the field I used a snowball method from first contacts and making my own connections. Working with community-based field assistants and translators in each location was crucial to building these networks and in opening conversations with those who had not shared their stories. This step was crucial in navigating outside of political factions within urban Banyamulenge groups, especially in Bukavu, where leading community members hold government office and run NGOs.

Of the core forty-four people interviewed, thirty-two were current or former soldiers and twelve were political actors.¹⁴⁶ Both categories can be subdivided to include the following kinds of actors. Soldiers included long-standing and ranking FARDC officers, wounded and retired FARDC or soldiers from other groups, and former soldiers who now work in other professions, such as in NGOs or in an official state capacity, and recent armed group members. Political actors included people who worked exclusively as state or rebel government actors at some point in their career; this also included

community elders and leaders. Involvement in conflict dating back to early RPF recruitment in the 1990s Rwandan civil war acted as the primary criteria for both main groupings. Most participants were recruited into this liberation movement in their late teens or worked in support of recruitment and informant networks. Involvement in the AFDL or other subsequent groups acted as secondary criteria. Older participants who had a longer history date back to both the RPF and AFDL, and a few younger ones just to the latter. Banyamulenge RPF soldiers from the 1990s were more likely to have stayed militarily active, whereas those whose first military activity was in the AFDL had a wider varied set of subsequent careers. Interviews in the Great Lakes region were conducted with field assistants in Swahili, French, and Kinyarwanda, and translated into English.

Contact with participants included at least one or two preliminary contacts to establish the nature of the project and to create a setting of confidentiality. This was particularly acute for Banyamulenge soldiers still serving in the FARDC. In these cases, we sought out obscure hotel rooms or bars at especially quiet times to ensure confidence in giving an interview. Most participants had two interviews, and some had three or four. I used social media like WhatsApp to maintain contact and engage in follow-up outside of the field. The conditions for an interview were often tense. One soldier made sure he was not described, even anonymized, at a given place and location for fear of being identified, despite now living in relative safety in the Global North. On another occasion one political operative interviewed in South Kivu demanded a sudden change of location due to the (apparent) observation of a Rwandan government informer. In all cases participants gave informed consent and were offered anonymity for the interview. No one requested to be mentioned by their own name.

Returning to the field after 2019 was made difficult by COVID restrictions. I therefore sought out further participants in the Banyamulenge refugee diaspora based in both the United Kingdom and the United States. Most of these refugees are now settled around urban centers in both countries.¹⁴⁷ I conducted further interviews using similar sampling methods with former soldiers (included in the above total). Many of these persons were equally hesitant, and in some cases even more hesitant, to share their experiences for fear of jeopardizing their current immigration status or the ability to return for visiting family or property in Rwanda. In some cases, soldiers were worried about endangering the safety of family living in either

Congo or Rwanda. Diaspora interviews were also conducted in a field visit to Nairobi, Kenya, where many former Banyamulenge soldiers have settled alongside family and relatives.¹⁴⁸

My Global North fieldwork connected me with Banyamulenge diaspora organizations, including the Gatumba Refugee Survivors Foundation (GRSF) and the Mahoro Peace Association (MPA). Work with the former has led to a growing set of survivor testimonies from the Gatumba refugee camp attack. This is discussed in further detail in chapter 6, noting the narrative significance of the massacre, which has led to the building of a Gatumba Survivors Project.¹⁴⁹ Across all this fieldwork, I conducted dozens of interactions with civilians, NGO workers, and reporters, as well as other individuals working in similar capacities around this history. Many of these small, quiet conversations, including those with young people in the diaspora born here in the United States, have equally confirmed and disrupted my perspective over time. Overall, the wide-ranging field of this research exposed me to communities that were militarized but where soldiering is a frequent recourse to survival or opportunity.

The narrative analysis method used for this work is grounded in the preceding discussion of relational approaches and the concept of genocide narrative identity. I relied on various existing theory and methods in shaping my approach to the subjectivity and integrity of producing interview transcripts.¹⁵⁰ Interpretation, meaning the retelling of stories to me and my own retelling of them to you as the reader, underpin the intersubjective nature of this book.¹⁵¹ Story and identity become symbiotic in the creation and retelling of narrative. In my process of reading and rereading transcripts I sought out narrative plot points across participants' life histories.¹⁵² This is discussed as Paul Ricoeur's *emplotment* in the next section.

The process of my research captures two levels of performativity: the interaction of social actors in their experiences of genocide and the narrativization of the latter in the interview process.¹⁵³ Such layering makes this research and genocide narrative identity inherently subjective, persisting across differing actors' spaces and times.¹⁵⁴ Allowing for subjectivity in how participants mobilized understandings of genocide was essential to this process. Typically, the perception of genocide, both in the region and in the diaspora, was shaped by RPF narratives in the 1994 genocide. This framing was applied to various points, orbiting a long history of Banyamulenge experience since the 1960s. The roots of this perception are discussed

in chapter 3. The construction of these narratives is described further in each of the chapters. This issue of collective traumatic memory and narrative is returned to in chapter 7. The conclusion of this chapter discusses the use of narrative identity in how I define genocide narrative identity and is revisited throughout the book.

Across various field locations, the space in which the narratives were told often shaped the perspective as either collective or individual narratives. Politically safer places like Kenya and the United States offered at the same time an environment where soldiers, now refugees, were able to speak freely and broadly about their experience. As noted above some were still hesitant to share details that might endanger the safety of relatives. Soldiers routinely shifted between their perception of a collective community, or soldier narrative, to their individual one, indicating an assumed unitary experience. This was a margin I often had to work with to find the more material connections in memory between the assumed collective and the individual account. The presentation of the collective and individual narrative was equally consequential in understanding the role of genocide narrative identity as a group experience and individual manifestations. My telling of these narratives throughout the book oscillates from quoting, voicing, and summarizing community views I encountered. Further, I present my own personal, critical analysis in this telling.

An additional intersection of subjectivity, narrative, and relations is in the contemporary context of non-investigated and prosecuted potential war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide both experienced by the Banyamulenge communities soldiers are drawn from and by those they engaged. This multidirectional violence has not yet been subject to judicial procedure and entails a context that is still highly contested by many parties from the early 1990s up to the time of writing. Furthermore, it frames soldier narratives within murky contestability.¹⁵⁵

In sum, a more subjective approach to genocide was necessitated by participant narratives. Janvier and Moise's claims of gifting to me the Truth, when viewed through the lens of subjective narrative identity, present something much richer than a fantasied, objective account. Soldiers offered a performed narrative of the past (re)constructed in the present, embedded in the perceptions of ongoing violence. In reading this book, one can see how these dynamics shape the person and how the person shapes their surroundings, linking back to the relational theory underpinning this work.

Genocide Narrative Identity

If relational genocide is the embracing of subjectivity in how this phenomenon is mobilized, seen, executed, remembered, contested, and justified, then social actors and not a binary of perpetrators and victims, make up the social field in which humans experience genocide. Genocide narrative identity is a way of understanding and conceiving of social actors in genocide. Returning to the basic principle of narrative identity, the stories we tell about ourselves shape who we are. A genocide narrative identity is a way of understanding how multiple exposures to genocide shape identities through the stories told about these experiences.

A relational approach to genocide sees beyond caricatures and into agency and structure, and more so the connections and environment that shape not only violence, but genocide identities. Social actors are relational figures, observed on a micro-level basis, where narrative captures an observable expression as performance. This approach does not collapse the distinctions between possible identifications of perpetration or victimhood, but it critically teases out the particularities of specific cases.¹⁵⁶ Existing Banyamulenge and other Congolese accounts lack this critical perspective. Debates around denial and the Rwandan double genocide theory segment analysis into politicized silos, preventing clear understanding of the emergence of RPF violence and foremost the place of Banyamulenge soldiers and their practices of violence.

Taking these ideas of relational genocide and social actors, what does narrative show us about genocide identities? It is this concept that permits us to see the relations of genocide between social actors, making narratives both the substance of these observations as well as a material element of social networks. On the human, interactive value of story, Paul Ricoeur describes, "The narrated story as a temporal totality and the poetic acts as the creation of a mediation between time as passage and time as duration."¹⁵⁷ As humans, our stories give meaning to the distance from the past and our travel between points. Narrative is arranged around plots points or emplotment as the active construction of the past and its meaning. This construction produces what Ricoeur calls "narrative identity."¹⁵⁸

When a narrative is produced, it forms the social actor identity as a character in their story.¹⁵⁹ Story and identity become symbiotic. Vital in this rendering of narrative identity is the use of emplotment in temporal underpinnings to the story. Emplotment serves two purposes. The first is that it offers

some temporal “permanence,” bringing together what would otherwise be disparate of life and the past.¹⁶⁰ The second follows from this reflective practice of narrative construction; it is the connection of emplotment to a narrative identity. There is overlap from action, captured by the emplotment, to character or identity.¹⁶¹

Identifying Banyamulenge soldier emplotment generates an understanding of how identity is formed as genocide narrative identity. This means seeing experiences of genocide, their antecedents, outcomes, and perceived futures, as nodes of social actor formation. This is not a neat process but one of ruptures and dislodged self-perceptions of violence and realities.¹⁶² Networked narratives are in turn generated through organizations like the RPF, AFDL as well as through intergenerational discourse and diaspora connectivity. These construct the *genocidaire* and the layers of performance as social actors, and the performance of narratives in the research process all constitute the substance of genocide narrative identity.

The following chapters of this book document these narratives, from soldiers’ memories of their parents’ struggles in the long night of Mobutuism, to the dawn of liberation in the 1990s, and the tragedies of war and massacre that followed people to the present. They allow the observer a view into the shaping of the Banyamulenge soldier, alongside their Tutsi compatriots from Rwanda and North Kivu, as social actors in genocide between Congo and Rwanda. There is a disparity in explanations of how identity is formed within genocidal processes of the multidirectional violence discussed in this book. Although the label of genocide has been successively applied to Congo by various UN-commissioned reports and debated by various scholars, little further attention has been paid to the actual processes of destruction, the factors of perpetration, and the shaping of identity in genocide.¹⁶³

Between Tides

REBELLION AND THE STATE

In V. Y. Mudimbe's novel *Between Tides*, he explores the tensions between identity and agency. Mudimbe's protagonist Pierre Landu is a Catholic priest who becomes a soldier in Congo's communist wars of the early 1960s. He struggles with multiple identities and recounts his struggle through this geopolitical context.¹ Reflecting on the split nature of his identities between rebellion and tradition, Landu ponders these disconnections.

Two weeks now since I volunteered, escaped to the bush to join men and women fighting the established order—or rather the consecrated and approved disorder. My rebellion was a return to the fold: I was re-joining those who cared. I thought I could be useful to them. My degrees and academic titles, the prestigious aura. . . . I am merely a number like all the others. I have no part to play in strategies and tactics. . . . I was in truth drifting between tides. Armed and disarmed, outlaw and just man at once.²

Similarly, Banyamulenge soldiers, reflecting their wider community, were caught between postcolonial tensions as a result of this period of upheaval. In the wake of Lumumba's death, young Banyamulenge joined the Maoist rebellion of Pierre Mulele, then switched to the emergent military dictatorship of Mobutu, giving this community a brief seat at the president's table. Their victory became a millstone: acceptance was followed by denial of citizenship to them as perceived Rwandan immigrants. The major iden-

tity development of this period was both the establishment of a narrative of the community as embattled and as a distinct political, ethnic community. In this period the label of Banyamulenge was first subscribed. In the wake of the near-death birth of postcolonial Congo, Banyamulenge soldiers and political actors were thrust to the frontlines of a rigged fight for belonging. In Achille Mbembé's words they were vulnerably situated in the Postcolony at the crosshairs of violence and power exercise by the state.³

This chapter oscillates between Congo and Rwanda, backgrounding the pre-1990s events of rebellion and relations to the state through the voices of both Banyamulenge soldiers and political actors. They considered themselves as Landu, armed and disarmed, outlaw and just men. Building on the snapshot of history in the introduction going back to a time of Rwandan kingdoms, I address postcolonialism as a key dynamic in the Zairean state and the political evolution of the Banyamulenge. The impact of the Mulele rebellion is framed by soldiers as the first rebellion by the community against the state, and then fighting against their neighbors as the rebellion fractured. Despite being aligned with Mobutu, the blocking of Banyamulenge access to citizenship created a "doubtful nationality," led to rebellion in boycotting elections, and made them a scapegoat of Mobutu's democratization. The betweenness that emerges is not just that of political violence, but how the latter is situated in the overlapping geographies of being between Congo and Rwanda. Rwanda's history of dictatorship, civil war, and genocide is juxtaposed alongside this Banyamulenge story in Congo. Into the mid-1990s the mass violence on either side of the border collides with the exodus of refugees and *genocidaires* from Rwanda into Congo. This was the event that profoundly realigned how the Congolese state and local actors related to the Banyamulenge and to the devastating impact of the arrival of nearly a million refugees and *genocidaires*. I trace two shifts in power relations in the building up to the end of Mobutu's reign: first in how the arrival of Rwandans in 1994 shifted already tense relations in eastern Congo against Tutsi, and then in 1996 with the advent of the AFDL, and how the RPF regime led a temporary reversal of these dynamics. The regionalization of the genocide and its background political conflict between RPF liberation and Hutu Power started here and still has an effect in Congo today. These events made unemployed and relatively disadvantaged young Banyamulenge men ripe for RPF offers of recruitment laden with promises of power and belonging. Many of those mobilized from the community from 1990 to 1996 are still fighting today.

The First Rebellion and the Roots of Exclusion

In an unexpected meeting, I encountered three generations of Banyamulenge soldiers in the back garden of our Yorkshire suburb in 2020 during the COVID pandemic. A member of the Banyamulenge diaspora living in northern England had been talking with me for some time, and we had finally arranged to meet. With him were former soldiers who had fought across the RPF, AFDL, RCD, and also in the Mulele Rebellion. Phillipe, who fought with and then against Mulele's Simba warriors, recalled how he joined the national army in 1966 after Mulele's movement faltered, resulting in the raiding of Banyamulenge cattle in his home of Uvira. He recounted how following the "government arming the Banyamulenge, 40 people died in a subsequent attack."⁴ Phillipe shared this memory in connection with how these past events mirrored the 1990s up to the present.

The Cold War played out in the Great Lakes region, centering on state crises in Congo, to devastating effect. For older soldiers like Phillipe, this history began with the Mulele Rebellion in 1963.⁵ The advent of the rebellion saw the rise of Pierre Mulele, Patrice Lumumba's former education minister, after his introduction to Maoist thought and strategy months earlier in China.⁶ In 1963, Mulele briefly inspired other regionally based rebellions, including the Simba Rebellion in central and also in eastern Congo, which saw the mobilization of disparate eastern Congolese forces, Lumumbaists, Katangan secessionists, and those opposed to the Joseph Kasavubu's government, and even incorporating Banyamulenge youth, or *abagiriye* into this broad movement.⁷ Most soldiers who lived through this period blended the nuances of Mulele and Simba rebellions. While these overlapped in timespan, ideological leanings, and enemies, they occurred in different locations. I reflect this murkiness as it was presented in the narratives.

In the narratives of older AFDL political operatives, like Moise, fighting provided a crucial opportunity: "some of our youth felt the need of joining the Mulelists. Some of them [joined] so that they can . . . get training and come back to defend the community."⁸ With the Banyamulenge's limited awareness of the national dynamics of the rebellion, their interaction and eventual siding with Mobutu's Armée Nationale Congolaise (ANC) reveals more about local concerns of the community.⁹ A prominent group, the Centre de Regroupement de Africain (CEREA), also gained Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge support in this period, representing the latter groups'

interests in the Kivus.¹⁰ A turning point, and moment of political awakening and initial generation of Banyamulenge identity, came when localized looting by Mulelist rebels of Banyamulenge cattle started in 1964.¹¹ This period represents the advent of the subscribed Banyamulenge identification as a political ethnic label. It was a repositioning to a land-based identity and belonging in Congo. Investing in the ANC as a structure entailed adopting a language of power with ties between land and ethnicity.¹² For Banyamulenge this meant emphasizing a precolonial tie to the Mulenge hills, where past pastoralist chiefs claimed authority.¹³

Moise deployed the pastoralist lifeblood symbology of the Banyamulenge cow to connect land and identity.¹⁴ The rebels knowingly turned on the Banyamulenge. "After the rebels became weak, they went against the Banyamulenge because we had cows. We were living much better life than them. Those rebels turned their sights against the Banyamulenge so that they can take away our cows."¹⁵ He continues by dwelling on the security and peace that came with aligning with Mobutu in response to this threat:

After what had happened, they started a war among the groups . . . : the Bafuli, the Babembe, the Nyindu, the Simbas. We fought. We joined the Mobutu regime. They gave us guns. . . . That body of Banyamulenge volunteers, the one that fought with other groups, this is our community's right to defend our cause. . . . We fought and defeated them because we were also getting support from the government. That passed by. Peace came. Life was more normal. We started observing a period of peace.¹⁶

Moise's retrospective of the Banyamulenge's turn against the Muleleists picks out the heavy price that would be paid by gaining "peace." Thierry, another political operative, added the following about relations between his community and neighboring groups the Babembe and Bafuli: "Those people . . . started taking everything by themselves and everything they thought belonged just to them. In addition, the other reason is that the Banyamulenge were supporting the government of Joseph Kasavubu and Mobutu as part of the army back then. Those rebels were also fighting with that government."¹⁷ His community was empowered by Mobutu and the ANC, as well as the central government via recognition of their regional significance as an ally. However, the division sown into the fabric of many South Kivu communities would contribute to exclusion in the end, not only locally, but also on a national level after the fall of Bisengimana.¹⁸ The conflict that ensued

locally prompted the persecution and displacement of some Banyamulenge groups during the late 1960s.¹⁹ In the words of Bonte, an early RPF recruit, "During the time when the Banyamulenge were in the government they were strong. They chased the Babembe. Even when the war ended, the hate and grudges remained up to today."²⁰

Moise recalls that this was a period marked by the spread of disease because of displacement into squalid conditions without supplies.²¹ But the newfound empowerment of the Banyamulenge and their incorporation into the Congolese army germinated the seeds of political recognition and some representation.

That is why the government provided guns and gave training to our children so they can go fight those people because we knew the place. I will tell you something very important. The Banyamulenge were recruited and became soldiers of the government in 1968. . . . After we defeated them, the government said, "these people they are just one tribe. They fight as one tribe. They speak the same language. They live the same way."²²

This perception of advantageous utility was a theme in how many Banyamulenge soldiers saw themselves: a line of defense, beneficiaries of contemporary power relations. The caveat of this deal was layered into his interpretation of these events: "They said, 'if we continue to keep them together, they may turn the guns against us. So let's have them scattered. Pay them. Give them salaries.' Therefore, they were integrated into other battalions in the Congolese army so that we could not continue to grow in numbers, it was thought that they may even eventually come and fight against the government."²³ This echoed the statements of soldiers following the success of the AFDL and Kabila's rejection of Rwandan involvement in Congo in 1998, where the potency of Banyamulenge political awakening was stifled by dispersal and eventual attacks on soldiers.²⁴ It was after this military integration process, according to Moise, that in 1970 "the war of Banyamulenge [with] the other tribes it kind of, it started officially."²⁵ This juxtaposition of a negative peace formed a key plot point for these narratives and that of Banyamulenge identity itself.

In the gaze of soldiers and political actors, this period became the benchmark for the community fighting for itself where the state is unable to do so or is inept. Banyamulenge theologian and intellectual Lazare Sebitereko

Rukundwa articulates at this historical juncture the advent of a Banyamulenge “Matthean community.” This means that Banyamulenge were justified in a “purely self-defense” type of violence to protect themselves against hostile neighbors,²⁶ from which they are seen as “deviant.”²⁷ The Mulele Rebellion, for Rukundwa, marks out the beginning of a righteous and spiritually justified use of arms in the name of protecting against Banyamulenge neighbors as thieves, murderers, and rapists. The betweenness of the relations of rebellion and the state resonated here in the founding narrative of the community’s taking up arms.²⁸

The fight for survival is enmeshed into this retrospective view, and in many cases perpetuated through intergenerational transmission. In a Bukavu Banyamulenge church sermon, I heard echoes of this positionality. Israel, both biblically speaking and in the sense of the modern state of Israel, also denotes a Matthean community of a people under siege. The preacher connected, as did some of the soldiers I spoke with, the courageous necessity of the Jewish people in violently defending themselves as circumstances dictated.²⁹

Similar to the complex configurations of localized conflict in North Kivu among the Banyarwanda and their Congolese neighbors around land ownership, Banyamulenge narratives prioritize nationality, belonging, and citizenship. These wants and grievances helped form particular regional networks and relations with neighboring groups, especially the Babembe and Bafuliro. To capture this sentiment, the phrase “doubtful nationality” was consistently used by soldier and political operative alike.³⁰ The question of nationality and citizenship served as a core plot point for Banyamulenge narratives across these periods, from the post-Mulele Rebellion era to the twilight of Mobutu’s regime. Amani, an AFDL operative who refused to fight in 1996 but worked locally to bolster support and recruitment for the AFDL, echoed this narrative: “That defense was about our Congolese nationality; it is for the land. The land belongs to the culture. If we do not have the land under an authority that we manage ourselves . . . , the government looks at us as if we are strangers or refugees. That is what we were seeking during Mobutu period, for us to get that nationality. That was the fight.”³¹ Land was an accessory to the conflict, which from the 1960s to the present was about belonging and political representation. Eugene, another political operative, also stated, “If you don’t have the nationality, you don’t have control over the land. You cannot do anything on it because you do not belong there. They can move you at any time.”³² The relation to the land was

ordered by nationality and, in this description, a lack of control over security and subsistence.

Limited political success during the 1970s and 1980s saw the prominence of two notable Banyamulenge figures: Gisaro Muhoza and Joseph Mutambo. Muhoza was elected to the national assembly and attempted to obtain an officially recognized homeland for the Banyamulenge in South Kivu centered in the Bijombo area. This move sought to reconstitute Tutsi areas of Itombwe colonially recognized from 1910 to 1933.³³ Muhoza further propagated the subscription of Banyamulenge to distinguish themselves from newly arriving Rwandan refugees.³⁴ This was integral to how he represented the community as part of the Uvira zone in faraway Kinshasa, and it influenced the inclusive Citizenship Law of 1972.³⁵ His time in office is largely seen as a heyday of belonging in Congo; Muhoza was seen as a man of the people in the Uvira area, not just for the Banyamulenge.³⁶ Mutambo attempted to follow Muhoza's success in 1982, but he came a decade late. Having operated under Muhoza's wing in Kinshasa, and being similarly educated, his high hopes of repeating his mentor's success were largely dashed by the 1981 Citizenship Law.³⁷

The move to secure a recognition of autonomy and political ethnic identity as Banyamulenge has become a pillar in the claims for peace and security in subsequent generations. A complex tension here arises out of these aspirational claims. Banyamulenge typically see themselves as excluded for not being sufficiently Congolese due to a distinct Rwandan heritage, intermingled with anti-Tutsi discrimination that views this community as another group of foreigners, akin to Banyarwanda in North Kivu. This sentiment deepens as Banyamulenge elites seek to solidify a homeland within the Plateaux areas where they have traditionally lived side by side or village by village with Babembe and Bafuliro. Reconstituting an old colonially demarcated zone from the early twentieth century at this point further disrupts existing claims to lands by neighboring groups. As appealing as this option might seem, and as frequently as the ethnonationalist accusation is applied to Banyamulenge claims, other groups, aligned with anti-Tutsi elements, commit a double fallacy. They deny Banyamulenge belonging as foreigners because they are not connected to their own land, while complaining that Banyamulenge shun being "Congolese" because they seek to subscribe to a land-based tradition of belonging. I return to this theme in chapter 6. This period from the 1960s into Mobutu's failed democratization crystalizes this set of issues for all parties.

The focus on national belonging came to a head in the events from Bisengimana's lobbying for and achieving the 1972 Citizenship Law, which extended citizenship to all Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge. This was then overturned by the 1981 revision adding the requirement of precolonial (1885) residency as a result of anti-Tutsi sentiment in Mobutu's Zaïre.³⁸ These actions escalated as they were mobilized in both the CNS and the regionalization of the Rwandan conflict, even before the arrival in Congo of the exodus of ex-FAR (Forces Armées Rwandaises)/Interahamwe and refugees. What is crucial to note is that it was not exclusively the prohibition of citizenship in Zaïre that was the problem for the Banyamulenge but the highly contingent politics of the Zaïrean Postcolony.³⁹ The Congolese state dealt in currencies of belonging resulting in competing identities experienced by the Banyamulenge.

Georges, an early 1990s RPF recruit, was eighteen in 1988 when he got caught in the backlash against the selection of a Banyamulenge hospital administrator in his home area. There was a protest against the selection of a supposed "foreigner." This turned to violence as Georges and others were beaten. He wondered, "How did this come from a hospital to us?"⁴⁰ His childhood memories are filled with the warmth of family, friends, and school. Friends frequently included those from other groups, where *kugalira*, the practice of gifting cows, was common; "[we were] friends as children, we didn't know all that, during times of crisis things became worse, that is when they were fed with hatred."⁴¹ Crisis and conflict were two fiendish twins that often led to this kind of disruption of everyday life. Such breaks in relations were described by former soldiers like Georges as the rise of ever-present discrimination.

While studying public health administration at the University of Kinshasa in the early 1990s, Eleazar, a former AFDL political operative, experienced the following: "We [were] told to go back to Rwanda. They had even started to create, invent the slogan. The slogan of R-R-R which means *Rendre, Rendre* the Rwandans, return the Rwandans to Rwanda."⁴² Leonard, also an AFDL political operative, recounted how his peers had been prevented from attending university because they had been labelled Rwandan.⁴³

The burning of ballot boxes was a similar plot point for many of the older political operatives and young RPF recruits that linked to tensions over belonging. This moment served as a marker for both groups, signifying their marginality, again as a question of political underrepresentation and growing exclusion, as well as a demonstration of the need for communal self-

defense. Balthazar, who would join the RPF in 1994, cited these attacks on polling stations in the South Kivu areas of Bihumba and Kissani as a seminal event.⁴⁴ He was twelve years old at the time: "When I was growing up, I saw that during that time there was an election where we were denied voting as well as citizenship, so my parents decided to go and destroy the polling stations, that's what made me aware of what we were going through. . . . It was attacked; they tore those ballot papers and just destroyed the stations."⁴⁵ This incident was part of a series of attacks, a response to the growing animosity produced by the 1981 changes in the Citizenship Law and continued breakdown in local relations after many Banyamulenge turned against the Mulele Rebellion in the late 1960s. Attacks on ballot boxes and polling stations occurred in 1982, 1984, and (according to participants) in the CNS transition election of 1992.⁴⁶ Edward, another political operative, cited the 1992 ballot box attacks as a demonstration of the conflicted position of the Banyamulenge. Their options seemed constrained to defending the community by rejecting the restrictive framing of nationality and the election, or to not respond and continue to be violently marginalized:

[In the] 1991, or 1992, election in Congo, Banyamulenge [were] banned from voting. Banyamulenge had to defend themselves and destroyed polling boxes. Only that time many were cast into prison, leaders were taken to prison. Families had to pay bail for release, the men returned. Because Banyamulenge were cattle keepers, people would take our cattle, they would do anything because we had no rights. Young men [were] motivated by this to join the RPF, and then to return and wage the same fight.⁴⁷

Janvier, who would join the RPF in 1993, again asserted a conspiracy, even tipping point, of exclusion from the electoral process, "Yeah, you know, we were born and grew up, but we lived in that kind of condition, and it was not too much by then, but we knew that we were surviving by effort. By our own strength. We couldn't even vote for the president; we were denied by being told we were not Congolese. Then our parents would go and burn all the polling stations. We grew up seeing all of that."⁴⁸ The exclusion reflected on by early RPF recruits indicates again the lack of political representation and recognition. Doubtful nationality became the point of reference of not only the impact of the CNS, but also a confirmation of the relationship between the state and Banyamulenge, as they saw themselves and were ascribed as

foreigners by local and national authorities. Political representation of Tutsi interest groups was blocked. CERECA was shut down in the wake of the CNS' anti-Banyarwanda drive.⁴⁹

These increasingly violent responses to state policy widened the social distance between the Banyamulenge and neighboring groups. Their growing conflict with the Babembe and Bafuliro can be characterized by emerging relational identities. The notion of who was an autochthon and who was of a doubtful nationality spurred further marginalization and discrimination into the early 1990s. Janvier indicated that this labeling began to be embedded in the perception taught at schools. "After Banyamulenge graduated and came back [home] they encountered the mentality that they didn't belong there, they should go back to Rwanda. And [Babembe] felt that their parents should not work for us as they used to, because they were our servants. They worked for us."⁵⁰ Many Banyamulenge were sent away for schooling in urban areas like Bukavu or Uvira, or even across the border into Burundi. This privilege was acquired through the sale of cattle.⁵¹ Janvier indicates here a shift in a socioeconomic hierarchy of relations in Minembwe. Not only did the intensity of the demand that the foreigners return to Rwanda grow, but it also altered power relations for the Banyamulenge.

Other participants assigned a more varied timeline to the breakdown of neighboring intergroup relations. Budagu notes that the increase in cattle theft began as early as 1978.⁵² Leonard also discussed that even prior to the advent of the CNS Mobutu was favoring other groups to control the region.⁵³ When asked about who was responsible for promoting exclusion and doubtful nationality, Leonard responded adamantly, "It was the very same people that were coming within the community. . . . These people were raised within the Mobutu regime. They did not come from other countries, no. They came within the community. There are those that are raised and given power, given position in the Mobutu regime. They would start by talking negatively about the identities of Banyamulenge."⁵⁴ He went as far as to characterize this infiltration as a "manipulation" of Mobutu by these neighboring groups.⁵⁵ Others pointed toward specific communal incidents.⁵⁶ Thierry recounted how local Bafuliro in the Fizi area abducted more than a dozen children from Banyamulenge families starting in September 1996. Despite protests made to the government, Thierry claims that these children are still missing and have most likely been trafficked into Tanzania. Furthermore, he recounted how in August 2017, in this same area a Banyamulenge family (father, mother, and three children) was burned alive

in their house by a displaced Babembe male.⁵⁷ For Thierry, these incidents connected to a significant portion of his narrative describing past and ongoing insecurity, even after various conflicts and armed groups purportedly defended and secured the rights of the Banyamulenge.

Describing the early 1990s, Umwami, a political actor, recounted the discrimination, exclusion from formal education institutions, and removal of Banyamulenge from public service positions. He claimed this was justified by the state and its allies and could be explained by these changing relations: "They put on us what you call a doubtful political [status] . . . meaning they doubted us, by saying that we are not Congolese. It was called a doubtful nationality. During that time, we were exempted from participating in social and political life. They started taking away our IDs, our nationality."⁵⁸ For many teens and young adults at the time, this would translate into an avenue for opportunity and empowerment. Joseph claimed that being labeled as strangers helped him relate the plight of this community to the offer of joining the RPF,

For us, in order for us to go into the military [the RPF] . . . it was a cause. There was a problem. Because it was the torture and the struggle of the Banyamulenge. Until where it has reached here, we were told we are strangers, that we should go back where we came from. We were denied nationality and citizenship. And they say there will be a census, but we will not be included. Then we saw that this may lead to us being terminated. There came to be a point whereby most of our chiefs of our villages were captured. [They] were arrested.⁵⁹

When Joseph left to join the RPF in the latter part of 1994, the situation in North and South Kivu had dramatically worsened because of the shifts of power and catalyzation of violence against Tutsi Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge. His statement above reflects the danger ("this may lead to us being terminated") of this situation. The census was put into place by the CNS because of demands by parties associated with anti-Tutsi sentiment.⁶⁰ Decided upon in 1991, the census would seek to establish immigration and citizenship status within eastern Zaïre, based on the 1981 Citizenship Law. This move sparked violence against and in defense of Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda in both provinces.⁶¹ It was a key recruiting tool for those like Nkunda working among the Rwandan Tutsi refugee and Banyarwanda populations of North Kivu.⁶²

Shaping and ascribing Banyamulenge identities was a narrative identity relation of doubtful nationality. When asked about the reasons beyond legal and political exclusion, participants considered themselves targeted because of specific Tutsi-like “*morphologie*.”⁶³ Gustav, a 1996 RPF recruit, summed up the “contaminated” ideology brought into Zaïre by *genocidaire* forces and the violence connected to this ascribed ethnic identity: “morphologically, we were already victims.”⁶⁴ The intensely subjective identification of whose features appear to be Tutsi or Hutu carried currency not only in Rwandan history, but also regionally, especially in eastern Congo. In a postcolonial context, the racialization of socioeconomic identity and ethnicity was a reification of identities utilized in the growing division between communal groups in both North and South Kivu.⁶⁵ The shift of power in both provinces, at local and state levels, further operationalized these characteristics as exiled Rwandan armed groups forged relationships. The latter increasingly realigned against Banyarwanda Tutsi in North Kivu and Banyamulenge in South Kivu.

The experience of Matthias, an RPF recruit and current FARDC officer, is illustrative of the ascription of Banyamulenge as Tutsi, finding themselves, often for the first time, connected with a broader regional ethnic and political distinction. In 1990, he was attending secondary school in Bukavu and would travel through Rwanda via Cyangugu to visit family. On one of these journeys, he fell into the hands of FAR soldiers,

I was arrested; the reason was that I was a Tutsi. In the other side of the border or in Rwanda, they say that I resemble the other Tutsis of Rwanda who had joined the [RPF] organization in Uganda. When they arrested me they said I was Tutsi. It was my first time to know what it was like to be told that I was a Tutsi. Because at our home, we don't have the Hutus, we don't have the Tutsis. We really didn't know anything about that.⁶⁶

Twenty-one years old at the time, Matthias was not yet politically aware of such distinctions. Yet, his tall build, defined by the Belgian colonial powers as a Tutsi feature, made him a target for suspicious, marauding soldiers.

For participants, *morphologie* aided in the explanation of how the 1994 Rwandan refugees were able to integrate into Congolese society, reflecting on the ongoing presence and integration of the FDLR. Eleazar stated,

It's racial, a racial problem. They [ex-FAR/Interahamwe] say that they were chased by the Tutsis and, and if they are here, they want revenge against the Tutsi that are living within the Congo. So, the Hutus here, in the Congo, according to the history, they call themselves brothers. And the very same thing still exists today. They are still very similar today . . . the Banyamulenge are still considered to be strangers. Others, the Hutu, they struggled, but they come here, they learn good Swahili, they get along very well, they're given citizenship, identity card, and just automatically become Congolese. Because even most of them, they look alike. They look like them.⁶⁷

Contrasting colonial and postcolonial inequality faced by Hutus in Rwanda with that of the marginalized Banyamulenge, he perceived how the former were able to avoid being ostracized and were even welcomed on account of physical appearance. Leonard emphasized the same conclusion between Tutsi physical appearance and belonging in Congo, referring here to the removal order given by the South Kivu governor in 1996:

So that governor was within the regime of Mobutu, gave an ultimatum, to chase us away that the Banyamulenge should leave the country and go to Rwanda. It was the same thinking of *morphologie*, that Banyamulenge are not Congolese. They are Rwandese. I wish that that logic, the logic that I am telling you, I wish that you also say or write the exact what I've said with honesty and with, with honesty and clearly what I am saying to you.⁶⁸

Appearance, as with other markers of identity accounted for difference as well as motivations of violence. Markers were realized in a violent process of distinction making. I return to this key 1996 plot point in the following chapter.

Patience, who joined the RPF in 1994, witnessed the destruction of the Rwandan genocide, the consequences of this *morphologie* perception, and the ideology that was carried by the ex-FAR and Interahamwe into the Kivus. It was that "the people that they killed were people that were looking like us, we looked like we had a similar *morphologie*, and Tutsis looked the same [as us]."⁶⁹ Expressed in a visceral sentiment, Umwami described the potency of the visual aspect of narrative identity as, "It is just the hate,

I don't know it is just the hate. They just wanted to finish us. That's why they wanted to wipe out all of us. It is just the hate that they have. I see the Burundais and Tanzanians are close friends to them, and a lot of FDLR are already in these countries; so, when they see us with this *morphologie*, with the look of Tutsis, the hate multiplies."⁷⁰ Again referring to the integration of Hutus, perceiving them to be FDLR, it was the difference in appearance that generated hate. Speaking of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe, Leonard distinguished this behavior of the Other as "inexorable hate."⁷¹

Considering how these participants viewed the exclusion of their community in Mobutu's Zaïre, how unique was this scenario? Indeed, while Mobutu ruled by maneuvering, pitting contesting groups against one another, the Banyamulenge do appear to have been placed in an idiomatic situation, between identities. Being Banyamulenge, as such, does demonstrate the troubles of postcolonialism and the specific space allotted for this group in the discourse of indigeneity and the reification of European notions of identities under Mobutu.⁷² The Mulele Rebellion and various attacks on ballot boxes and polling stations demonstrate the willingness to resort to violence in agitating for political representation and recognition. To be Congolese, and to be recognized as such, was a primary part of the above element of these narratives. These plot points would cut a path for the soldiers' journey that many young Banyamulenge would undertake in the coming months and years.

Having been recognized as Tutsi (by heritage, culture, or appearance), or as the Rwandan foreigner occupying Congolese soil, the Banyamulenge saw the opportunity to achieve long-term aspirations through embracing this ascribed identity as *inkotanyi*.⁷³ The space occupied by this community shaped their sense of belonging, and perceived paths to empowerment, beyond the marginalization of the Postcolony. This adaptation was solely a political problem interpreted through race and nationality. It was these framings and sense of insecurity that the younger generation of potential RPF recruits would take with them into the Rwandan civil war and the aftermath of genocide.

Rwanda in 1994: "When storms come up from East . . . and make war"

The following section draws out the strands of Rwandan violence that became regionalized in 1994, including the Hutu Power genocide targeting

of Tutsi but focused on the RPF's systematic violence against the *genocidaire*. This focused view offers foregrounding for the construction of genocide narrative identity in Banyamulenge soldiers as the first fruits of the RPF as a regional force. In turn, I recognize the genocide narrative identity embedded in the subjective, subaltern Hutu Power view as an oppressed population. Launching a mass targeting of Tutsi as perceived RPF insurgents was in part driven by an elite ideology and the commonly held view that this group posed an existential threat.⁷⁴ The fate of this social group became the framing for narrated identities across the region.

In October 1990, the RPF launched its ill-fated first attack on Rwanda. Paul Kagame took the reins of the insurgency from fallen comrade Fred Rwigyema and relaunched a guerrilla campaign that dragged into a 1993 negotiation with the Arusha Accords. That year was the worst yet, as it was also in Zaïre and Burundi. Parallel to top-level power sharing talks, Hutu militias aligned with the leading parties, MRND (Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement) and CDR (Coalition pour la Défense de la République), started distributing weapons and killing opponents and Tutsi civilians.⁷⁵ In turn, the RPF responded in various areas, conducting their own targeted killings of local MRND leaders.⁷⁶ Although the Arusha Accords were signed by the end of the year, belligerency was at an all-time high and the FAR was continuing to mobilize and train militias.⁷⁷ Despite efforts by United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) to round up weapons and warn of further attacks, preparations had already been made to curtail power sharing as a next step for Rwandan politics.

Following the downing of Habyarimana's plane on April 6, 1994, a local- and elite-initiated transition from civil war to genocide began. This targeted those considered by Hutu extremist elites to be antithetical to their preservation of the 1959 Hutu Revolution.⁷⁸ Localized killings spread throughout the country via a network of militias, including the Interahamwe, government officials, and the FAR. The execution of ten Belgian peacekeepers by soldiers forced the reduction of UNAMIR troop numbers and their retreat into defensive positions.⁷⁹ Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) supported calls to order and increased local mobilization of thousands in this work of death.⁸⁰

The tightly packed geography and population density of Rwanda enabled the killings to spread quickly.⁸¹ The majority of these deaths took place between the second week of April and the third week of May. This works out to a rate five times that of Nazi death camps.⁸² Women were raped

by the tens of thousands. Tropes of “beautiful” but “arrogant” Tutsi women fueled this violence.⁸³ Weapons used in the genocide were typical day-to-day manual labor tools, in many cases purposefully distributed to the mostly young Hutu men for the task. In some cases, people were just as likely to be shot, depending on their age, gender, and locality, as they were to be hacked to death by machetes.⁸⁴ This series of events became the kernel of genocide narrative identity traced in this book, for not only all Rwandans but also for those considered attached to Rwanda living across the border in eastern Zaïre. As a regionalized crisis, civil war and genocide in Rwanda proved to be ruinous for more than at least half a million Rwandans in 1994.⁸⁵

Simultaneous atrocities by the RPF were documented around this time. Given the highly organized and structured nature of this force, these killings were systematizing political assassination as a method of creating compliance in occupied areas.⁸⁶ These were not mirror atrocities to the Interahamwe and FAR, but in Gérard Prunier’s words they were “a policy of political control through terror.”⁸⁷ The UN refugee or Gersony Report, Alison Des Forges’ *Leave None to Tell the Story*, and other humanitarian NGO commentaries all suggest that RPF violence was not ad hoc or limited in scope and scale.⁸⁸ Without classifying this destruction, these reports describe a clear, distinct pattern of achieving political objectives through violence at great human cost. Commencing the invasion on October 1, 1990, the RPF was only able to gain a temporary foothold in Byumba before promptly retreating. A week later, from their redoubt in the Virunga Mountains, the RPF launched small-scale attacks, resuming its Byumba position in 1992.⁸⁹ Liberation was in reality an exercise of population management through uprooting communities and creating internally displaced people.⁹⁰ The RPF killings that accompanied this period peaked in 1993 and continued as the RPF spread from east to west and routed the *genocidaire* forces by mid-1994.⁹¹

A multifaceted approach simultaneously displaced refugees and exposed would-be recruits and future RPF subjects to political teachings, courtesy of the *abakada*, or political operatives. Additionally, the looting of property and targeting of civilians was carried out based on stated or suspected party and “ethnic” affiliation.⁹² *Abakada* were drawn from local communities and supported the effort of reorganizing the occupied territory and ensuring the dispersal of anticolonial and pro-national unity ideology.⁹³ In order to facilitate legitimacy for a future government, RPF sought out and then secreted pro-RPF Hutu community leaders behind their 1994 lines.⁹⁴ This meant the recruitment drives within Rwanda, which began in earnest following the

re-entrance in Byumba, included *both* Hutu and Tutsi. This included welcoming FAR deserters and pro-Hutu militia members, partly by pressing young Hutu males from the internal displacement camps into RPF soldiery. Once the events of April to July 1994 unfolded, however, those considered Hutu and capable of using any lethal weapon were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, disappeared, and frequently executed in an extrajudicial manner. These efforts also included blocking NGO and humanitarian access to areas where such actions were taking place.⁹⁵ During this civil war period, a trickle of new recruits was also arriving from Zaïre, as discussed below. These recruits would later form the backbone of mid-1990s recruitment and the AFDL invasion.

The harbinger of RPF military power and engine of political violence was the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI). This RPF organ, whose existence has been previously minimized, trained and equipped so-called technicians as part of the Network Commando.⁹⁶ Knowledge about this group comes from former RPF actor accounts and from the technicians themselves.⁹⁷ Ruzibiza maps out various acts of violence committed by the RPF while abdicating responsibility to politicians and all the way to Kagame himself.⁹⁸ The most comprehensive picture of the DMI and the Network Commando comes from Rever's interviews and the Spanish indictment, relying heavily on RPF dissidents. The Network Commando operated in early 1990s Rwanda with up to three hundred "technicians."⁹⁹ The group was allegedly established in 1992 and formalized the work of eviscerating any remaining elite level opposition to the RPF; activities also included reconnaissance and infiltration of Hutu extremist units.¹⁰⁰ Technician and commando training included use of various means of execution and assassination.¹⁰¹

Practices included luring out civilians or other potential targets with promises of food, protection, and safe passage, as well as false flag attacks. The latter involved attacks conducted by commandos and later claimed to be Interahamwe attacks.¹⁰² The purpose of this alleged strategy was to foment discord and foster support for the RPF, where they would then retaliate against supposed *genocidaire* attacks. According to one former operative, testifying as a witness in the Spanish indictment, their aim was to "eliminate as many Hutu people as possible from Rwanda . . . [and] seize power by force—even sacrificing the Tutsis who had remained in Rwanda [who were] considered traitors."¹⁰³ Notwithstanding further investigation and any revived activity from the Spanish case, what is specifically known about the Network Commando can only be pieced together by linking the actual

network of actors and accounts from former RPF soldiers.¹⁰⁴ It can be presumed that this violence most likely involved the DMI.

The RPF drained inhabitants from areas in its control from 1992 to 1994 as part of a “systematic regrouping policy.”¹⁰⁵ Under the RPF, occupied parts of northern Rwanda, populated by a million Rwandans prior to 1994, were left with only 2,500 residents.¹⁰⁶ Many fled in the opposite direction of RPF zones, compounding the internal displacement crisis, where thirty camps were filled with 950,000 Rwandans by mid-1993, with a third of this number being displaced multiple times by the end of 1993.¹⁰⁷ While some remained in Byumba and the growing RPF zones, foreign visitors consistently described these areas as empty and “eerily calm.”¹⁰⁸ Robert Gersony similarly reported areas being “virtually deserted” in late summer 1994.¹⁰⁹ As the genocide began, the RPF opened a corridor from Kigali, allowing for an influx of nearly 200,000 displaced people by the end of April 1994.¹¹⁰

Following the expansion of the RPF zone, civilians were disappeared and many ultimately killed in a process lasting into 1995, with the infamous massacre of the Kibeho camp, as discussed below. Gersony’s findings indicated that between twenty-five thousand and forty-five thousand Rwandans were killed by the RPF from April to August of 1994.¹¹¹ His report describes a “scene of systematic and sustained killing and persecution of Hutu civilian populations by the RPA,” as observed during late 1994 fieldwork. The nature of the violence is characterized as the gathering of suspected opponents and *genocidaires* by means of ruses, conducting house-to-house executions, and “well-coordinated” attacks on those reported to be hiding in swamp areas. Refugees trying to flee toward Burundi during 1994 were stopped, harassed, and sometimes killed.¹¹²

Byumba, the hub of the RPF invasion, became a recurring site for disappearances and killings.¹¹³ As early as February 1993, thousands had been subject to RPF attacks across both Byumba and Ruhengeri.¹¹⁴ These incidents, like others from 1990 to 1994, are hard to corroborate.¹¹⁵ On April 20, 1994, some three hundred displaced persons from outside the RPF zones were “denounced” as *genocidaires* and shot. While commanding officers were reportedly not present, legitimating authority was lent to such actions. As with many other cases, it is hard to imagine actions like this going unsanctioned within the highly structured nature of the RPF. Five days later, under the guise of protective relocation, sixty political leaders and civil society members from Byumba and Rutare were executed en route to a supposed refuge.¹¹⁶ On April 23, a further massacre occurred of more than two thou-

sand persons crowded into the football stadium in Byumba. As supposed *genocidaires*, the prisoners were sprayed with automatic weapons fire. The bodies were then loaded onto a truck and taken for incineration.¹¹⁷

After the RPF advanced south, engulfing eastern Rwanda and avoiding the remaining FAR military presence and major centers of the genocide, they proceeded to march west. The RPF was seeking a military victory, following the now total failure of negotiated peace, only indirectly ending the genocide.¹¹⁸ Killings escalated as the front advanced during the months from May to August. According to reports, the DMI detainment camp at Kami, just north of Kigali, became a killing center for both Hutu and Tutsi prisoners.¹¹⁹ Run by Karenzi Karake as early as May 1994, its use continued into 2016. Here inmates were tied up, tortured, and then executed for alleged connections to the genocide, the FDLR, or the political opposition.¹²⁰ One analysis, based on defector interviews, posits that the RPF were committed to a military victory at all costs, even that of Rwandan Tutsis being slaughtered in the west. A cultural distance between Ugandan returnees and Tutsi victims and “high tolerance” of civilian deaths facilitated a strategic logic of all or nothing.¹²¹

The pattern of being called for public meetings offering sanctuary or resettlement, or being moved to another location, appears consistently in the reported attacks on civilians suspected of being involved in the genocide. Des Forges describes this as “a practice which gave rise to the bitter joke that *kwitaba imana*, meaning to die, had come to mean the same as *kwitaba inama*, to attend a meeting.”¹²² In Mututu, Butare prefecture, during early June, local children were found by the RPF and asked to bring their parents out of hiding. Days later, men, women, and children assembled for supposed relocation in the Mututu commercial district. Many of the young men were then singled out and shot, while others were tied up in the market. This group was then released and sent toward the center of Muyira. The RPF soldiers again turned on the column, firing at males within the group.¹²³ Half of those interviewed in late 1994 by Gersony’s team in camps in Zaïre cited eyewitness violence by the RPA against Hutu civilians on this scale in Kibungo, Butare, as well as in and around Kigali, eastern Ruhengeri, and Byumba, as a reason for not returning to their homes in Rwanda. Interviews contained stories of the RPF using *kwitaba inama* to draw out those in hiding and suspected *genocidaires*.¹²⁴

Mass arrests were another element of RPF systematic violence and use of terror. In the process of “triaging” all they discovered, the RPF would use

new allies and local recruits to identify *genocidaires*. In Butare, RPF operatives called on witnesses to the genocide to make accusations of those already detained.¹²⁵ The number of those arrested exploded from thirty thousand in July 1994 to eighty thousand in November 1996. Many of those imprisoned experienced beatings and torture. Some even suffocated due to the deplorable conditions.¹²⁶ At the Huye football stadium of Butare in July 1994, hundreds were gathered from the Ntyazo, Ngenda, and Runyinya communes.¹²⁷ Some were released after lengthy questioning in nearby buildings, but many of the men were kept in detention for further interrogation and then reportedly taken out to the local woods, where screams were heard by local residents for the following two days. These detainees remained missing, presumed dead.¹²⁸ In the wake of the RPF, the network of *abakada* appointees remained, directing the work of accusation, denunciation, and political order. Officials unpaid by the RPF were given free rein to plunder for their compensation.¹²⁹

The RPF's steady stream of massacres and disappearances continued into 1995, peaking at Kibeho.¹³⁰ This location, supported by UNAMIR, housed up to 150,000 Rwandans. Accounts acknowledge that some of the inhabitants were armed and had participated in the genocide. Over the course of several days, from April 19 to 24, the RPF marched into the camp with the intention of clearing it, undoubtedly in search of suspects.¹³¹ During these six days, 4,000 Rwandans, mostly Hutu inhabitants, were believed to have been killed by the RPF. The RPF leadership and the international community were increasing the pressure to close the many camps in the southern half of the country. As a result of the refusal of refugees to go anywhere for fear of being killed outside the camps, RPF soldiers on the ground engaged in increasingly aggressive measures to clear this camp in particular. Those wounded or killed were victims of mortar fire, gunshots, and machete blows. In front of international aid workers and UN medics, RPF soldiers dragged men and women out from their hiding places in the camp and shot them in broad daylight.¹³²

While this scale of violence may qualify under Prunier's general characterization of RPF violence as "decentralized [and] limited," this period demonstrated the *modus operandi* of an embattled RPF, with soldiers on the ground functioning in a civilian-filled war zone, doing more than just terrorizing to secure control over a suspect population. Extrajudicial arrests, executions, and disappearances were systematic. RPF conduct and treatment of those essentially deemed as foreign in their homeland is telling of

the future measures taken in the handling of refugees in Zaïre. Kibeho was not a “speed bump,” but a sure sign of future operations against perceived *genocidaires*.¹³³ Kibeho would become a cautionary tale for refugees inside Zaïre thinking of returning to Rwanda, a wedge in the National Unity government, and a rallying call for ex-FAR and Interahamwe leaders.¹³⁴

This slice of RPF-focused Rwandan history shows the kinds of rebellion and relations deployed by the group to achieve its aspirations of security and political power. Violence was reproduced along colonially inherited lines and in response to the genocide: identification of suspects on changeable criteria, gathering Rwandans (mostly Hutu) together by means of the public meeting ruse, disappearing of suspects, and executions. This indicates that RPF action was situated within the structural and direct violence of warfare.¹³⁵ Their own refugee identities, militarized through the return by force and at all costs, diminished potential empathy with civilians caught in a civil war and then genocide. This facilitated the easy suspicion of questionable loyalty to the RPF cause. The colonial structures that influenced the RPF ideologies of national unity and anticolonialism presents somewhat of a paradox, still rife in Rwanda today.¹³⁶ On the one hand the political agenda and legitimacy of the RPF was, and is, founded on *all* being united as Kinyarwanda speakers, not as Hutu and Tutsi. On the other hand, Hutus, read as collaborators in the script of RPF exile culture, were systematically targeted as *genocidaires*. That most Rwandans were treated with distrust and suspicion only compounded the incidence of civilian casualties in the RPF offensive, seizure of power, and actions against refugees. In parallel to post-colonial violence in Rwanda, Zaïre underwent the same, much less understood changes.

Regionalization of Genocide and Shifting Power

Many view the decay of the state under Mobutu, the wily but aging kleptocrat, as the birth the Congo Wars. It is, however, the relation between rebellion and the state that speaks to the ruptures that ended Mobutuism. The Zaïrean state itself served as a leading factor of violence in the east.¹³⁷ While the state provided a platform for continued crisis, it was the successive changes in power relationships that created an environment of marginalization in eastern Zaïre and ultimately genocidal attacks back into Rwanda on Tutsi populations and Rwandan refugees. These developments came first

with the arrival of the refugee exodus and armed element of ex-FAR and the Interahamwe, and second with the infiltration of the RPA and the formation of the AFDL. These power shifts regionalized, reproduced, and perpetuated violence across Zaïre. With the RPF across the border in Rwanda closing in on militia and FAR strongholds, these groups fled west into Zaïre, compelling civilians to join them.¹³⁸ Out of the million people in this exodus, the refugees entering into North Kivu through Goma numbered up to 850,000, those entering South Kivu, through Bukavu and Uvira were, respectively, up to 300,000 and 62,000. Within these refugees were up to 25,000 ex-FAR and up to 40,000 Interahamwe and other militias; these armed groups were mostly concentrated in North Kivu.¹³⁹

Violence in the Kivus was not a unique occurrence; it was sporadic and spread throughout Zaïre. Where it did occur, it was a result of conflicts around the CNS spilling over into mass violence, particularly in the Katanga province. Between 1992 and 1993, more than five thousand people were killed and a further 1.3 million people would become internally displaced in this province alone.¹⁴⁰ The identity evolution for Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge in the Kivus led to violence that would escalate into a ripe ground zero for the future arrival of opposing Rwandan groups in two successive waves (1994 and 1996). Histories vary on the relevance and importance of this period, with some tending to focus on the arrival of the Rwandan refugees and armed groups in 1994 as the immediate starting point that led to massive violence and the threat of genocide. The 1996 arrival brought violence against Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge and in defense of these maligned groups.¹⁴¹ The 1994 arrival had a profound impact. It was this organized violence against Banyarwanda, as reaggregated under the ex-FAR and Interahamwe, that precipitated the AFDL. This meant that the AFDL's subsequent drive against these groups targeted those previously opposed to Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge legitimacy and, in some cases, their existence in Zaïre.

In 1993, Hunde, Nande, and Nyanga communal groups in North Kivu formed local militias, Mai-Mai, and gangs of looters, *bagirima*. Human Rights Watch reports estimated that from March to July, 6,000 died and 250,000 were displaced;¹⁴² Emizet Kisangani's count differs little on those internally displaced (200,000), but estimates that up to 16,000 were killed during this conflict. The setting for violence in North Kivu continued to revolve around growing population density and conflict over agricultural land.¹⁴³ The impact of the CNS enforcement of the 1981 Citizenship Law

also contributed. Organized groups of Nande, Hunde, and Nyanga lobbied officials for the expulsion of Banyarwanda no longer deemed legal residents of Zaïre. Judiciary and police were stacked with autochthonous political representatives. These were paired with the removal of Banyarwanda from civic or political positions.¹⁴⁴ Provocation for communal attacks then started coming from the local authorities. In March, the Nande governor of North Kivu, Jean-Pierre Kalumbo, publicly called for the “extermination of Banyarwanda,” then in Walikale the vice governor similarly stoked the flames of violence against Banyarwanda in his locality. Both incidents led to spikes of violence against Hutu Banyarwanda.¹⁴⁵ While Governor Kalumbo was removed from his post later in the summer, other forms of state intervention from Kinshasa only exacerbated tensions, notably with the arrival of the Forces Armées Zaïroises (FAZ) in July.¹⁴⁶ These soldiers engaged in competing alliances against locally opposed groups and proceeded to increase the scale of looting and civilian displacement.¹⁴⁷ Despite valiant efforts to negotiate and create intergroup settlement on the key issues of land and citizenship by local intermediaries and international NGOs, these conflicts, at best, were consciously ignored, only to be revived by the destructive crisis of an incoming wave of exiled Rwandans.¹⁴⁸

Hutu Banyarwanda, the majority section of Kinyarwanda speakers in North Kivu, established a political organization of *Mutuelle des Agriculteurs des Virunga* (MAGRIVI) in the late 1980s.¹⁴⁹ With the escalation of violence against them in 1993, MAGRIVI produced localized militias of its own and engaged in counterattacks against various Mai-Mai groups.¹⁵⁰ In both Rutshuru and Lubero, areas that were once a mix of Nyanga, Hunde, and Hutu became siloed into single ethnicities because of violence in 1993.¹⁵¹ Attacks against the Tutsi minority by allied Hutu and Hunde groups also began between March and July. MAGRIVI’s links to the Habyarimana government, and its growing Hutu ranks, typified this shift from anti-Banyarwanda violence to anti-Tutsi violence.¹⁵² Habyarimana attempted to use MAGRIVI and other Hutu Banyarwanda militias to prevent the leak of young Tutsi recruits across the border into the RPF, yet in the process they succeeded in increasing the incentive to flee into the arms of the RPF.¹⁵³ Although MAGRIVI was a predominantly Hutu group at its inception and during the period of collusion with Rwandan Hutu forces, it did during 1993 serve as a strategic ally for Tutsi Goma-based elites in conflict with the Hunde, especially in Masisi.¹⁵⁴

At this point the Banyamulenge in South Kivu did not experience the same level of anti-Tutsi and general violence as those in North Kivu because

of lower population density and less localized political tension, the arrival of the 1993 Burundian refugees brought Hutu/Tutsi political conflict with them. In the streets of the urban center of Uvira, Banyamulenge were stoned and threatened with further violence, usually instigated by Burundian Hutus.¹⁵⁵ The level of political organization among the Banyamulenge minority offered some resilience, and with the arrival of the Rwandan exodus, it became an impetus for armed organization.

The Rwandan multitude had a massive, detrimental effect on local environmental, economic, and political relations. The now ex-FAR and Interahamwe had mobilized Hutu civilians to leave Rwanda, dragging them further into a continuance of conflict. Many had already experienced RPF violence or had heard rumors of such and were prepared to flee under this alleged protection. Protection, however, was not the priority for these armed actors. Refugees became currency for Great Lakes region Hutu-aligned political actors to spend in the international community. Mobutu was also keen to cash in these new chips in his gamble for perpetual power while standing by Rwandan Hutu allies, intending to show Kagame and the RPF their place.¹⁵⁶

This wager was gobbled up by the UN Security Council, which approved the French-led Operation Turquoise, which lasted from June to August of 1994. During this time the French “aided and abetted” the rearming and reorganization of Hutu elites within the refugee camps spread across the border.¹⁵⁷ The French patrolled the outside of the zone, without interfering with the regrouping of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe inside it. Arms shipments originating in France, South Africa, and Zaïre were easily redirected from Kigali to Goma. By 1995, this accumulation of weaponry resulted in a sizable collection of artillery, helicopters, armored vehicles, and thousands of light weapons.¹⁵⁸ Mobutu, ever the opportunist, seized his moment as arbitrator with one hand, and with the other supported the building of a Hutu Power redoubt in the Kivus.¹⁵⁹

MAGRIVI also sought advantage from the arrival of the Rwandan exodus. Bolstered by their better-armed and organized allies in the ex-FAR and Interahamwe, locals relaunched their anti-Tutsi campaign, escalating casualties and displacement beyond that of 1993. This is where the first shift of power took effect. From July 1994 to March 1995, a further 200,000 Banyarwanda Tutsi fled North Kivu, albeit with some seeking opportunity in the new RPF-led Rwanda.¹⁶⁰ In the coming months alliances along the nodes of ideology, opportunity for enrichment, and revenge saw the alignment of Hutu Banyarwanda and Burundian groups in North and South Kivu, both

with and against the dominantly allied Hutu forces (both Rwandan and Congolese).¹⁶¹

Consequently, Banyarwanda Tutsi and Banyamulenge came under increased attack. Up and down the populated areas of North and South Kivu these groups were targeted by mixtures of ex-FAR, Interahamwe, local Hutu militias, and FAZ troops, in turn leading to the buildup of the AFDL/RPA invasion. The spreading of extremist Hutu propaganda also fueled violence, further displacement, and forced removal of Tutsis into Rwanda. It was claimed that due to the rise of the RPF there were now distinct entities of Hutuland and Tutsiland, respectively in eastern Zaïre and Rwanda.¹⁶² From 1995 to 1996, this narrative became a self-fulfilling prophecy: up to 33,000 Zaïreans were killed and another 370,000 displaced.¹⁶³ UN investigations revealed that in North Kivu, specifically Goma and into Rutshuru, Banyarwanda Tutsi property was looted, with people forced across the border into Rwanda, and massacres of dozens at a time became a monthly occurrence into late 1996.¹⁶⁴ This shift in power further demonstrates the performance of genocide narrative identity. Hutu Power actors, with a range of ideological and political commitment, saw a failure in their attempt to remove the Tutsi hegemonic threat by July 1994. Occupation and redoubt from eastern Zaïre gave new life to an otherwise defeated movement. The threat of genocide against Hutus was yet again possible to extinguish.

In South Kivu, local authorities started enforcing citizenship laws and instigating violence against Banyamulenge in 1995.¹⁶⁵ In Uvira, during October and November, property was systematically seized, and the familiar rhetoric of Banyamulenge as the foreigner escalated. Hutu Power militants, local militias, and FAZ soldiers harassed and attacked Banyamulenge civilians.¹⁶⁶ On two separate occasions in the Fizi zone during September 1996, Banyamulenge were rounded up, the men were separated from the women and children, tied together, and drowned in Lake Tanganyika by Babembe militias and FAZ soldiers. One survivor of these incidents reported the following: "It was midnight and they came to take all of the men, and the women were put apart, with two young boys. . . . They took the men on the river and far from the shore they pushed them over into the water, everyone from a boat that was full. They took all the other young boys, refilled the boat and went another time to push them overboard."¹⁶⁷ Such attacks by local militias and FAZ troops began to escalate in relation to the growing armed resistance of the Banyamulenge.

A clear example of this trend in domestic politics is the so-called Vangu

Report. Submitted to parliament in 1995, it was a chief propaganda piece for the swelling anti-Banyarwanda bloc. The purpose of the report was to establish legitimate but exclusive claims to citizenship in the Kivus, consequently ruling out Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge rights to national belonging. According to Lars Huening, the commission's "analysis of the situation in the Kivus was informed by strong mythico-historical visions that entailed a profound reinterpretation of Zaïre's past."¹⁶⁸ The favored story was one of a pure precolonial past betrayed by colonial and neocolonial invaders, alleging an existential threat to the whole of Zaïre and recommending the expulsion of perceived foreigners. National and local Kivu news media, largely without hesitation, reproduced the claims of the Vangu Report, further feeding into the instability of the eastern provinces.¹⁶⁹ With a tragic irony, these violence-prone movements in the east adopted the legacy of colonial politicization of ethnicity.

Ex-FAR and Interahamwe cross-border raids, supported by recruitment in the camps and a reliable supply of arms and sustenance tied together with a growing violence against Banyarwanda up and down eastern Zaïre, led to a trickle of new recruits into the RPF. Active recruitment of RPF soldiers in Zaïre can be dated back to the late 1980s, in connection with the failure of the first offensive in the Rwandan civil war, with political cells established in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi as well as in the Kivus.¹⁷⁰ During the escalation of tensions around the CNS in North Kivu, many Catholic and Protestant leaders within the Banyarwanda community began recruiting for the RPF in response to the civil war across the border. This level of recruitment also contributed to localized spikes in tension between Hutus and Tutsis experiencing the oppression of Hunde violence and exclusion.¹⁷¹

Many of the Banyarwanda recruited by the RPF during the early 1990s, seeing their families' and communities' dire situation, returned as early as 1995 to stoke the fire for a new recruitment drive. Past Banyamulenge recruits from South Kivu also returned to arm and train their communities with RPF weapons.¹⁷² Returnees were propelled by their experiences during the civil war and genocide in Rwanda. The Rwandan government's interpretation of events in North and South Kivu as a continuance of the Rwandan genocide provided a moral ideology for this group.¹⁷³ Was the departure of Banyamulenge soldiers in 1990 and 1991 an expression of solidarity or a prescient move on the part of young men to gain training and weapons for their own liberation in Congo?¹⁷⁴ Undoubtedly, the motivations were varied, but as MAGRIVI grew more belligerent in response to a growing stream of RPF

recruits, more Tutsi began seeking out the RPF. I return to this question in the next chapter.

As the violence of 1993 and 1995–96 escalated, one can clearly see the spiraling impact of Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge choosing sides. Caught in the state's rejection through the divisiveness of the CNS and then in the shift of power relations and subsequent violence of the arrival of armed Hutu extremists, it was not difficult for any Kinyarwanda-speaking Tutsi to assume the worst about their situation. Hope in terms of future opportunity and protecting those at home in Zaïre was seen in the RPF's haven for Tutsi. These events laid the ground work for the AFDL rebellion to be seen by many eastern Congo communities, particularly those aligning with the Rwandan *genocidaire* forces, as a Tutsi-led invasion.¹⁷⁵

The decision to overthrow Mobutu and forcefully take their rights to citizenship and traditional lands was not one made singularly by the Banyarwanda or Banyamulenge. It was the RPF's securitization and militarization of domestic and foreign affairs that led to this second shift of power and the total collapse of eastern Zaïre. Faced with the fracturing of northwest Rwanda due to ex-FAR/ Interahamwe incursions and mine planting and the possible destabilization of Burundi, courtesy of its own Hutu militant insurgents, Great Lakes-wide Tutsi elites perceived their survival to be at stake. This turned the emerging Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge resistance in the staging area of these insurgencies into the ideal ground zero for an offensive against anti-Tutsi forces. To consider all Tutsis everywhere in the Great Lakes as a homogeneous block is misleading. Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda sought to reassert their rights and security within Zaïre, and the RPF sought to impose its own Rwanda onto the survivors of the genocide, considering any not standing with them to be as guilty as those who fled. The marriage of these interests in a massive, ambitious cross-border military operation would be a product of violence experienced by Tutsis on both sides of the Great Lakes. The colonial politicization of ethnicity, deemed as heresy by the RPF, would continue to inform the political identification of security threats and enemies in the Kivus and beyond. These threats, while solidifying around the security agenda of the RPF government, were deeply rooted in the existential fate of Tutsis as perceived by the RPF, its Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda, and other allies. Conditions in early 1990s eastern Zaïre and the 1994 Rwandan genocide reinforced this crisis-inducing logic.

Among the groups that formed the AFDL were a variety of smaller clusters of political and militia organizations. Deogratias Bugera's Alliance

démocratique du peuples (ADP) typified the above recruitment interactions between the sympathetic Zaïreans and the RPF. Many of the ADP's fighters were former RPF soldiers from the civil war and genocide in Rwanda, retrained in Rwanda in 1995, and returned in 1996 as a well-armed 2,500-strong force containing a significant number of RPA officers.¹⁷⁶ Bugera, a Banyarwanda Tutsi architect and political operative from North Kivu, had been involved in RPF recruitment dating back to 1993, sending truckloads of young men and funds raised by the community for the cause in Rwanda.¹⁷⁷ He also facilitated RPA incursions into North Kivu as early as 1995.

Another constituent group of the AFDL was the Mouvement Révolutionnaire pour Libération du Zaïre (MRLZ), led by former RPF soldier Anselme Masasu Nindaga, originally from Bukavu.¹⁷⁸ Also included were the Conseil National de Résistance pour la Démocratie (CNRD), a mix of eastern Congolese soldiers led by a Simba War-era veteran André Kisase Ngandu, with about three hundred Libyan-trained Congolese nationals, and Kabila's tiny Parti de la Révolution Populaire (PRP).¹⁷⁹ By 1997, Kabila had added twenty-five thousand *kadogos*, or child soldiers, ranging from twelve to eighteen years old; this number was a result of the establishment of camps throughout AFDL/RPA territory in the early months of the war.¹⁸⁰ Conditions in these camps were brutal for young recruits, who were desensitized by executing prisoners and training with live ammunition.¹⁸¹ The bulk of AFDL forces had arrived from Rwanda and the RPF. They had experienced the onset of collapse in eastern Zaïre and the violent marginalization of the early 1990s as disenfranchised and persecuted Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge. A UNICEF survey reported that among AFDL soldiers interviewed in 1997 Bukavu, 57 percent had enlisted due to a total lack of economic opportunity elsewhere. During 1996, Kabila promised \$100 a month to new recruits.¹⁸² One young recruit claimed, "I had no future in Bukavu. They were offering me a future."¹⁸³

Soldiers confirmed the AFDL's composite constitution of groups and significant RPA officer presence. Banyamulenge recruits, regardless of when they joined the RPF, made up the southern front contingent and were involved in the early incursions during the summer of 1996. Participants confirmed that the more numerous contingent of historic Banyarwanda recruits from North Kivu made up the northern front, which moved from Goma across to Kisangani, then on to Kinshasa by the summer of 1997.¹⁸⁴

Similarities and differences exist between the participation in the AFDL of Banyarwanda Tutsi and Banyamulenge soldiers. Regarding Banyarwandan participation in armed groups since the early 1990s, land scarcity and access, along with marginalization, were central motivations.¹⁸⁵

Kabila was installed as a supposedly easily directed figurehead of the so-called Banyamulenge rebellion. He was a “neutral” candidate between those Kagame and Museveni considered their first choices to lead the AFDL.¹⁸⁶ Kabila’s selection was then a final product of negotiation that followed Kagame’s decision to invade in the first half of 1996.¹⁸⁷ The final additions to the coming war came with military contingents from Uganda and Burundi. What became clear was that the AFDL had two purposes: first, overthrow Mobutu and install Kabila in Kinshasa, and second, to deal with the Rwandan Hutu refugees and armed groups all classified with the same *genocidaire* guilt. To ensure the second purpose was achieved, a then lesser-known early 1990s Rwandan RPF soldier, James Kabarebe, was selected as the military head, coordinating the RPA officers that filled the ranks of the AFDL.¹⁸⁸ At the end of the war Kagame publicized the key involvement of Rwandan forces in the AFDL, stating three important objectives: “dismantle the camps,” “destroy the structure” of armed Hutu groups in eastern Zaïre by “dealing with them here or scattering them,” and disposing of Mobutu as head of state.¹⁸⁹

Incursions into North and South Kivu involved the deployment of six thousand soldiers, backed by a line of heavy artillery on the Rwanda border. On September 22, RPA artillery opened fire on a FAZ base in Bukavu. The AFDL/RPA seized another base in Rutshuru and had taken both Bukavu and Goma by early November.¹⁹⁰ FAZ, and ex-FAR and Interahamwe, resistance was ineffective in the face of swift pincer movements, mortar and artillery fire, and pre-assault infiltration of targets.¹⁹¹ Following the initial attack on the Mugunga camp in November, between 500,000 and 800,000 refugees fled back toward Rwanda.¹⁹² This mass return came at a crucial juncture as the UN Security Council debated a joint French-Canadian led Multinational Intervention Force (MNF) to protect the return of civilians and deliver humanitarian aid.¹⁹³ The debating waned, eased by US platitudes, reassuring the Security Council that only 200,000 refugees remained, and that it was more than likely that these were the guilty ones.¹⁹⁴ Scripted by Kagame himself, the UN stood back and played into the hands of Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi elites.¹⁹⁵ The consideration of a political resolution of the refu-

gee crisis, topped with the failure to prevent the ravages of crisis in the early months of the camps, arrived too late to overcome the claims of the RPF-backed AFDL and its allies.¹⁹⁶

The immediate, enduring legacy of what happened on the ground in Mugunga, and the mass fleeing of refugees back across the border, would reveal a pattern for how the AFDL/RPA would achieve its aims. As the camp was surrounded, the international press was escorted from the area, and mortar fire commenced on November 13. Bloated by successive displacements from attacks on nearby camps, the population of Mugunga had exceeded its original capacity.¹⁹⁷ For instance, at the nearby entrance to the national park near Mount Nyiragongo camp, males were separated out from the population and executed; this was one example of the many instances of targeted massacre.¹⁹⁸ Survivors from earlier attacks on the Kahino and Katale camps faced orders to return to Rwanda or die by the hands of the AFDL/RPA.¹⁹⁹ After bombarding Mugunga with mortars, AFDL/RPA troops reportedly entered and fired indiscriminately on refugees. The latter then formed into a column from the camp and headed in the direction of Rwanda.²⁰⁰ Attacks continued in the coming week and occurred north-west toward Sake as some other refugees attempted to escape westward, and were massacred by AFDL/RPA using machetes and knives. Others fled toward Lac Vert and were separated out according to sex, with the males drowned in the lake or shot in the head. Mass graves in the area surrounding Mugunga were widely reported.²⁰¹

As the FAZ faded, and the ex-FAR and Interahamwe retreated or took refuge in more remote parts of the eastern Zaïre, the AFDL/RPA advanced on the trail of refugees that spread northwest from Goma and Bukavu. This invasion completed the second power shift, turning the world created by the marginalization of the early 1990s upside down, whereby Kinyarwanda speakers were emboldened by the opportunity to regain their fortunes. In North Kivu, the AFDL established a provincial government, removing power from authorities that had been trusted with distribution of land and placing this in the hands of the new Goma-centered government.²⁰² Despite mirroring the RPF attempts in Rwanda to preserve a multiethnic political leadership, loyal Tutsi AFDL/RPA appointees were installed in areas of military and security significance.²⁰³ This change of relationships gave AFDL/RPA actors power over life and death in the east.²⁰⁴ While the AFDL/RPA was not explicitly colonizing settlements, they were engaging in a massive, security-driven project that totally redistributed power in the Kivus. This

level of control, established following the immediate seizure of Goma and Bukavu and the camps north of Goma, enabled the perpetration of the violence against Rwandan refugees. A similar, short-lived political monopoly in South Kivu, in the hands of mostly Banyamulenge actors, has to this day shaped the relations of land and indigeneity. I reflect on this in chapter 6 on the theme of Minembwe as a Banyamulenge heartland.

As refugees spread northwest from the Kivus, many of those fleeing from South Kivu did not reach any further than Kindu, Maniema; in the north, where the majority of fleeing refugees were, some reached as far as Kinshasa and across the border into Congo-Brazzaville and the Central African Republic.²⁰⁵ Nearly 10,000 of them died as a result of disease and starvation. It estimated that 233,000 refugees were directly or indirectly killed by the AFDL/RPA onslaught against the camps and hiding places throughout Zaïre.²⁰⁶ Massacres were followed by erasing evidence of killing sites with the removal of bodies into mass graves.²⁰⁷ As a brief example, in January 1997 the occupants of the Kabakita camps were expelled, unknown numbers were killed on the road leading from the camps, and the fleeing FAZ, ex-FAR, and Interahamwe were captured. A group of refugees surviving this encounter had gathered in February on a river bridge outside of Shabunda, the nearest major town. The refugees were discovered by the AFDL/RPA on February 5 and killed. Local Congolese civilians, pressed into service, dumped the bodies in the rivers. Further escapees were tracked down and either taken in to the forest in groups of fifty to one hundred or back to the Kabakita sites and executed. East of Shabunda, in the locality of Kigulube, RPA repeated their tactics from operations in eastern Rwanda of using promises of supplies and safe return to Rwanda. This lured more refugees from the Kabakita camps to their deaths.²⁰⁸

Further north, the area between Kisangani and Mbandaka, at a distance exceeding one thousand kilometers from the center of Zaïre toward its western border, was littered with massacre sites. The AFDL/RPA was able to coordinate refugee locations using intelligence gleaned from aid workers, allowing units to set up roadblocks and surround fleeing groups. AFDL/RPA soldiers would identify Kinyarwanda speakers to target refugees by calling out in other languages for people to get on the ground.²⁰⁹ Almost halfway along this massive stretch it was reported that about two thousand refugees found themselves cornered in Boende, Equateur province, following the defeat of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe that had led them deep into Zaïre. Massacres of refugees in the Boende area started in April and continued

until May.²¹⁰ Many were shot as they tried to board boats; others drowned as they attempted to escape. Survivors of this group were then attacked again two days later as they successfully crossed the river but were shot at from the bank of the river. From May to July, diminishing groups of less than a dozen at a time were then hunted down, or brought out of hiding with promises of protection and safety by the AFDL/RPA. As soon as they revealed themselves, they were shot. In late April, refugees hiding in a village near Boende were bound together, wrapped in plastic sheets, and set alight.²¹¹ Of the hundreds that reached Mbandaka in an attempt to cross the Congo River, most were killed in the city center itself, around municipal buildings, the airport, and the docks.²¹²

Conclusion: Impacts of Genocide

To understand the process of violence that washed through from Rwanda into Zaïre, it is foremost that a crisis of state structures and power relations occurred in the Kivus. The potency of the chaos of democratization in Zaïre and the swelling of anti-Tutsi sentiment, however, is grounded in the rebellions and state relations dating back to conflicts of independence. Despite promising gains in representation at the national level, Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda were excluded from the state, embedding a logic of rebellion as a relation to the state. As discussed in more depth through the voices of individual soldiers, the RPF both in 1990 and again in 1996 offered a trusted alternative to this relation: rebellion not for revising the state, but rebellion to redesign the state, embedding claims to power. This process was facilitated by 1990s shifts in power that turned eastern Zaïre upside down both in 1994 and 1996.

Banyamulenge marginalization was a ground zero for where colonial past and the Postcolony met, reproducing classification saturated in violence, seeing them as foreigners in their own country. Colonial notions of indigenous legitimacy became fodder for Mobutu's continued power grabs and fatally shaped the growing tensions in North Kivu, and to some extent South Kivu. The denial of citizenship and land rights, both in terms of empowering localized anti-Banyarwanda sentiment, drove the groups' insecurity and turned them toward the RPF/RPA. This fomented a domestic situation that resulted in the deaths of thousands, with hundreds of thousands being displaced as early as 1993. The AFDL campaign was systemati-

cally violent using earlier RPF tactics. It targeted Rwandan refugees, deemed a threat to Rwanda and RPF hegemony, as well as hundreds of Congolese Hutu, or Banyarwanda Hutu in North Kivu.²¹³

It was the shifts of power, brought about by the arrival of the 1994 Rwandan exodus and the 1996 AFDL/RPA invasion, that catalyzed these conflicts into massive violence, genocide, and the collapse of Zaïre. While groups such as MAGRIVI were already reflecting the Hutu-Tutsi conflict alignment of the Rwandan genocide, it was the 1994 summer arrival of the refugees, the ex-FAR and Interahamwe, that proved to be a massive escalation. The influx of weapons and a political agenda of regional destabilization, combined with the humanitarian crisis and straining of local resources, turned out to be a significant and existential security threat to the Tutsi dominance in both Rwanda and Burundi. This prompted the second shift of power with the invasion in October 1996. Even according to Kagame himself, the motives for such a military operation were manifold. Participation of Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge infused most with a dire perspective, shaped by the violence of the earlier 1990s and involvement in the RPF's activities in the civil war and genocide. The slow trickle of recruits from 1990 onwards would return home and engage in a brutal hunt of more than 200,000 Hutu refugees. I pick up these various threads from recruitment to violence and massacre in the following two chapters. Genocide narrative identity was performed at the heart of the collapse in Zaïre. It is this journey for Banyamulenge soldiers, armed and disarmed, outlaw and just, that I turn to next.

3

Brotherhood, Genocide, and Liberation

If you don't give your blood to your country, the dogs will drink it for free.

—RUGIRA¹

Rugira was an active FARDC officer when I met him in Bukavu in 2017. He left his home in 1993 to join the RPF's liberation struggle in Rwanda. He described himself as a *kadogo*, or a soldier boy, at the age of eighteen leaving home and family in the Hauts Plateaux. His journey began when he was approached by RPF operatives. He knew of the war through brothers and cousins who had gone before. He witnessed the brutality of the Rwandan civil war and genocide. "The affect is to me to see the brother, friends, and people that have died or killed. The fathers, the children, the mother, the people we know being . . . taking the children, a child from the womb. That's what really, that affected me and I think it will never go away. It was, that was the first time to see the people dying to that extent. And I was still a youth, or still young back then."² Rugira, featured in the book's introduction, saw in his reflections on the past the parallels between the precarity of the Banyamulenge history in eastern Zaïre with that of the desire of refugee Tutsi in Uganda to return to Rwanda. The struggle for liberation and survival was a common one, forged in the exposure to the visceral, material realities of the Rwandan civil war and genocide.

This chapter returns to the history told in the prior chapter and layers it with the personal experiences of Banyamulenge soldiers. I tell how soldiers experienced RPF networks of recruitment and departure from South Kivu,

training in various camps in or around Rwanda, experiences in the civil war and genocide, and then their role in Rwandan nation building. This period saw the early conceptualization of and first encounter with the *genocidaire*. After making the lengthy, voluntary journey to RPF training facilities, these young men were broken down and formed into violent actors. Exposure to fighting in the civil war and genocide became a transformative tool in training these cohorts. Through the removal of corpses or direct combat with Interahamwe or FAR actors, Banyamulenge increasingly identified themselves in the context of the *genocidaire* Other. These soldiers then went on to fill specialist roles in the Rwandan judiciary, police, intelligence, commando operations, and border guards. They joined in the construction of a new nation-state. Nevertheless, they agitated for a return to South Kivu to defend their communities and families from the growing ex-FAR and Interahamwe insurgency leading up to 1996.

To frame this chapter, I pull from the story of Bosco Ntaganda as a Banyarwanda RPF peer to Banyamulenge soldiers. This is not an equation of experiences, but a mirroring of relational journeys with genocide as experience and perception. As this violent set of social relations is encountered and reinterpreted by these actors, movement through a genocide narrative identity begins. The journey of these soldiers is both unique in each participant's own peculiarities, but also similar to that of other violent actors in the region and in some cases universally. This chapter is divided into several sections. It uses soldier accounts to highlight experiential and narrative networks for Banyamulenge soldiers, including the key plot points of leaving South Kivu to join the RPF, training in RPF-run camps, exposure to genocide in Rwanda, the promise of returning home similarly ending a genocide, expectation of another genocide, the return as AFDL soldiers, and a conclusion discussing these seminal plot points and setting the stage for future decades of participation in conflict.

Reflections of these narratives already exist in discussions about this period and the impact of the Congo Wars. An archetypal participant of this multidirectional conflict is commonly found in Bosco Ntaganda. Popularly, he has become known as "the Terminator" since starting as a soldier with the RPF during the Rwandan civil war and genocide.³ This Western pop culture imagery conjures a caricature of a perpetrator that kills sociopathically, robotically: as an inhuman. This moniker was an extension of his radio call sign since his early RPF days, noting aspiring masculine performative power. Such imagery ignores any narrative that might yield an understand-

ing about basic biographical and historical questions of who, what, when, where, or perhaps even why. The complexities of Ntaganda's life encapsulated in these other identities are lost.

Ntaganda attempted to assert his personal narrative in his own words during his unsworn statement to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on September 3, 2015, rebutting the charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

I know that the allegations against me, as reported in the press, are not beneficial to me. I have been described as the Terminator, as an infamous killer, but that is not me. I had that reputation not because I did any such thing, but it was because of the hatred against Rwandans. . . . I am a soldier and I was trained by Ugandan and Rwandan military experts. I, myself, have trained a large number of soldiers. I am a seasoned instructor. I have always respected military tactics and strategies and I have always considered discipline as the foundation of my service. . . . And I know that since 1990 and in 1994 I was fighting and I was one of those who put an end to the Rwandan genocide.⁴

Ntaganda's career began as he left North Kivu at seventeen years old to join the RPF in 1990.⁵ Liberation and ending the genocide were his stated motivations, supported by an ethic of military discipline. According to Ntaganda, this guiding set of principles remained with him through the period in which he was accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the northeast province of Ituri from 2002 to 2003. To Ntaganda, the identities ascribed to him outside of his own framing misconstrue his professionalism. Varied reports, witnesses, and evidence give a contrasting view of the Terminator wading through successive multidirectional conflicts in the Great Lakes region, and at different times they appear to converge with genocidal violence.

Following Ntaganda's participation in the 1994 RPF victory, he remained in the new Rwandan army, eventually joining the AFDL march to another RPF victory in Kinshasa.⁶ He was present during massacres of Rwandan refugees.⁷ The Terminator's journey is similar to that of many other soldiers who joined the RPF in the early 1990s and then were again at arms from 1996 to 1997 in Zaïre. Involvement in these foundational conflicts is often described as Ntaganda described it, as being one of those who put an end to the Rwandan genocide or in reaction to "an announcement to kill all Tutsis."⁸

As a response to genocidal threat, this journey of brotherhood and liberation is the plot to which the Banyamulenge RPF/AFDL soldiers pinned their narratives.⁹ Regardless of their present security or perception of threat to community, Ntaganda and countless other combatants began and solidified their military careers and shaped their identities during this period. The pieces of Ntaganda's narrative and journey in the 1990s only shed a little light on the marginalization within which Congolese Tutsi or Banyamulenge RPF soldiers were situated. This pattern can be seen from the commencement of his career to more recent activity in North Kivu. In his courtroom recitation, he demonstrates the production of a genocide narrative identity. He viewed any violence through a Landu-esque frame of historically vindicated threats against the Tutsi.

Ntaganda indeed shares many narrative plot points with the Banyamulenge that joined the RPF in the 1990s and then went on to conquer in Zaïre as part of the AFDL. Crucially, this contingent was the backbone of the AFDL, with a mandate to coerce the return of refugees or erase them. No single participant of this research considered himself a perpetrator. In fact, many said they had not even been present in the camps or claimed that refugees were unharmed and protected in their safe return to Rwanda. Those camp inhabitants who did not return found themselves hunted by two columns of AFDL/RPA soldiers (including Banyarwandan and Banyamulenge). These soldiers were indeed participants in the perpetration of genocide.

The narratives of these soldiers reveal a journey of persecution, forced removal, opportunity, violent military training, liberation, ending a genocide, and the continued threat of genocide. Their march from the Kivus to Kinshasa also placed participants at the camps that were affected and under the command of those leading the erasure of Rwandan refugees. The caricature of Ntaganda, however, obscures these journeys and narratives. Further hidden are the self-perceptions and identifications of such actors. Beyond the binary of perpetrator or victim, other layers are present. This dichotomy is apparent in the many descriptions given about Ntaganda by himself and others. Foremost among these, and in his language, is that he was a soldier and not the Terminator.

Existing records of participants who traversed with the RPF and the AFDL are limited and do not always offer a full biographical account of this kind of initiation into an early military career. Both Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge, outside of my interviews, narrate a journey of brutal training, oftentimes abduction and forced participation, and killing alongside the Rwandans.¹⁰

Most recounted having to engage in killing refugees with the punishment of death for not doing so.¹¹ One particular account retells the situation of Tutsis in the region. This former child soldier reflected on the necessary duty of communal defense against threat, and even against themselves:

We Tutsi have many problems. We will do anything to protect our community, and it is true that many people want to destroy us. But there are also many manipulators in the Tutsi community, who will use that fear in their own interest. "Oh, we must fight or the Hutu will kill us! Oh, take up your guns or Kabila will exterminate us!" But you discover later that it isn't true. . . . There, too, there are opportunists who use the Tutsi to mobilize people. So we are stuck in the middle, between extremists.¹²

Motives and strategies for the protection of these communities varied from genuine to manipulative. Articulations of threat by family members of existing RPF network members intersected with these elements, giving these perceived dangers considerable potency. Genocide narrative identity is key to this articulation. The RPF focused on these problems, at least in the 1990s, through a specific lens. The fate of Rwandan Tutsi, Banyarwanda, and Banyamulenge in eastern Zaïre became closely thought of and linked through this network of contacts, propaganda, support, and recruitment. RPF narratives were likewise shared and adopted through these networks.

Of import was the emergence of networks that acted to propel soldiers physically and relationally. These networks facilitated the Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge's adoption of the RPF's cause increasingly as their own. In this way it was the narrative network created by the RPF, more than most other factors, that shaped the genocide narrative identity still being deployed by Banyamulenge soldiers in Congo. These narratives helped create a set of possibilities and choices that led these soldiers, under Rwandan leadership, into multiple wars and the attacks on refugees cast as *genocidaires*. I address these questions and show how brotherhood, genocide, and liberation shaped identities in this period.

Leaving with Brothers: Early RPF Recruitment

While each soldier described himself as Banyamulenge, often with familial or heritage-based relations with Rwanda, they regarded their Banyam-

ulenge identity within a central tension. There was a simultaneous (dis) connection to Zaïre, layered with a Tutsi identification to Rwanda and the RPF. The latter also had its own dark side, with many feeling a sense of bitter divorce from Rwanda resulting from the dismantling of the AFDL by Kabila and subsequent conflicts, which I address in more detail in chapter 5. The brotherhood and liberation desires of early 1990s Banyamulenge recruits coalesced with the regional security designs of the RPF and its allies. They were embedded in the First Congo War and its atrocities, committed in their name. The accounts of both political actors and soldiers were deeply rooted in a sense of disadvantage, thus they used a genocide narrative identity as a lens for viewing the past. The Rwandan genocide and the mass exodus of Rwandan *genocidaire* forces and refugees further compounded this process. These personal chronicles show the interaction of genocide narrative identity in a setting of multidirectional conflict.

Speaking with Rugira on separate occasions about why he joined the RPF, and then subsequent armed groups, he offered a lengthy narrative on current Banyamulenge insecurity. After speaking about his role, as a trainer in the RPF training wing and his own RPF liberation-ideology training, it was the need to fight as a zero-sum calculation that stood out. The country he belonged to had a fluidity; it was changeable. An expression of identity. It was a product of the journey that Rugira and his generation of Banyamulenge young men took, as they heeded the call of the RPF in the early 1990s.¹³

Central to the RPF's chain of support were *umuryango* as localized nodes in their network of recruitment and fundraising. Many Banyamulenge were integral to these cells as both recruiters and fundraisers, not just actual enlistees.¹⁴ Budagu, operating as an RPF recruiter and fundraiser in Uvira, linked this mission with the saving role of the RPF. "It was the rebels' [RPF] vision to liberate Tutsis who had been persecuted in Rwanda and other parts of the region. Their mission was to reunite Tutsis who had spread throughout the entire region, wandering in the wilderness for many years like sheep without a shepherd."¹⁵

Moise offers this synopsis highlighting the consequences of recruitment.

Lots of our children went to Rwanda to join RPF, but there were no meetings. They had other propaganda [networks] go to teach the Banyarwanda Tutsis in Uvira, in Uganda, in Tanzania, in Burundi, in Kenya. They didn't come all the way to [Minembwe]. . . . The youth they were unemployed. All of them. They all went away and joined the *inkotanyi*.

After they captured [Kigali], these other tribes that we fought during the Mulelists, they said these people [the RPF] they have an agenda or a program to come back and fight with us. The atmosphere became very bad among the tribes again. . . . It became even more worse than it was before. When they've captured Kigali, they went to live in Kigali. . . . A lot of youth, a lot of young people Banyamulenge, they fought in Kigali and were soldiers already in RPF.¹⁶

Youth joined, according to Moise, for opportunity, and they remained in Rwanda before returning to Zaïre to liberate the country from Mobutu. This early involvement led to further antagonism between localized groups, against Babembe and Bafuliro ("we fought with them during the Mulelists"). There are, however, some inconsistencies in Moise's account when contrasting it against that of Rugira and other soldiers. In fact, the RPF's extensive early 1990s network of fundraising and recruitment spread throughout the Great Lakes region, especially in both North and South Kivu.

Rugira's journey began in early 1993 when *abakadas*, RPF cadres, came to gather donations and recruits for the civil war.¹⁷ Rugira, like many others in the early 1990s, went as a volunteer. He was "sensitized" by the *abakadas*, who would frame the Rwandan conflict as a regional issue.¹⁸ Rugira recounts the interaction with these cadres: "We went as volunteers. Volunteers are hearing that your families . . . , your tribes are attacked, Rwanda's problems [are yours too], let's go . . . they were people who were in charge of sensitizing us, they were the ones that were assisting us, that were driving us to places. They came and recruited us."¹⁹ Alexis, who joined later in 1994, also said of the *abakada*, "Those people came before, during the war. They came down and showed the Banyamulenge how the Tutsi in Rwanda are persecuted. That motivated them, and moved a lot of them, to go into the RPF."²⁰ This active network contextualized the Rwandan conflict and presented opportunity and empowerment to these would-be soldiers. The deployment of RPF narratives of their just cause in Rwanda applying to all Tutsis was reinforced by their appeal to anticolonialism.²¹

In addition to the ground network orchestrated by the *abakada*, RPF radio Muhabura also promoted the work of sensitizing Banyamulenge youth to join the RPF.²²

That radio was said [to be] in Rwanda but, but the fact is that radio was in the mountains of Muhabura. They were all there saying, broadcasting

that people should go back to Rwanda, and there was no other way, [but] to go and fight. Because the government of Habyarimana had already put in place discrimination. Even though Rwanda was based on ethnicity of which these people are speaking the same language, now they were saying that all Tutsis should be killed. Therefore, although you are a Tutsi, but a Congolese, that motivated you to feel like you needed to intervene, where your Tutsi brothers are.²³

For Pierre, this radio broadcast indicated the regional nature of the threat against all Tutsi, or Tutsi brothers as described by Rugira (“your families . . . , your tribes”). Augustin, burdened with a lifetime of war and now injury, nostalgically reminisced about the radio broadcast he heard: “I could feel they were talking to me . . . we listened to what they said about being young and courageous.”²⁴ In our second conversation Augustin began to softly sing, “The fighting will continue until Rwanda is liberated, even if two die, three will continue, those who are men will liberate the country . . . *kidogo* [*kadogo*] they have moved from the city into the forest.”²⁵ In his memory they were singing to him, calling him into action.²⁶ Augustin’s retelling of this song was accentuated by his smiles of remembrance and laughter. It was a rare moment for someone beset by life-changing injuries and isolation from a homeland he had fought to defend.

Budagu, who was tempted but decided not to leave his family and run off with the RPF, supported recruitment drives and fundraising at various youth clubs, or *amatorero* groups across eastern Congo. His involvement was both exciting and dangerous for a teenage boy. “Like a fire which is set on dry land, and catches like a flash of light, the movement grew bigger and bigger, until it became a blazing fire that consumed the region.”²⁷ One of the club fundraisers in 1992 held a particular memory. In Uvira, during the warmth of May that night it was decided to raise money on the anniversary of Bob Marley’s death, connecting the voice of Afro-liberation to its newest warriors. “Meatballs, Sambusa, Africa donuts, and peanuts” were sold to the backdrop of thumbing reggae beats, and Rwandans girls from Bujumbura were brought in to ease the donations from those present. Hundreds attended, wondering whether or not Bob Marley was actually a Tutsi. The beers flowed, as did the willingness of recruits to sign up using the raised funds to make the journey to RPF training camps. The group was quietly gathered after the event, briefed on the route, issued immigration papers, and given a crash course of RPF ideology, soundtracked by Bob Marley’s melodies of “suffering, freedom and liberty.”²⁸

The next morning Budagu waved off the recruits, among them his cousin. "I hugged each one of them as I said goodbye, and together, we soberly cried. . . . There were many I would never see again after that day." Budagu wondered why it was that he never joined, often thinking to himself after such club events that "*maybe tomorrow, I will leave and join the army.*"²⁹ He did, however, consider it a matter of fate: "I also learned that you cannot fight against your destiny."³⁰ . . . We are here now because of what our creator, God, meant us to be." The RPF would eventually graduate Budagu from fundraiser and recruiter to soldier when the genocidal threat returned in 1996.

Rugira made little distinction between family members, Banyamulenge neighbors who had already left to fight, and Rwandan and Ugandan refugees returning as part of the RPF. "So, yeah, that our brothers, or the neighbors had gone to support our brother, our Tutsi brothers. It made us to feel more willing to go and support Rwandese although we never knew what a Tutsi was or that there was a country where they lived."³¹ Like Rugira, many others also felt this pull, as it was framed by the RPF's narrative network, embracing their local context of perceived discrimination. Patience noted the following,

PATIENCE: Going to the RPF was caused by two things: the first thing was that there was a lot of discrimination down here in Congo. We knew we had to work on getting more power during the Zaïre era. Secondly, it also felt like we should join [RPF] so that we can be able to help those refugees that have been chased from their own country and to be able to reintegrate back to their own country.

INTERVIEWER: Why was it important to help the refugees?

PATIENCE: It was a general problem because it was about the identity of Tutsis. If one Tutsi [has] a problem, then, and there has been a lot of injustice, then if it will reflect on many of us who are living during that time.³²

The need to defend the Rwandan Tutsi seemed to coalesce with the need for security at home in the face of growing marginalization and discrimination. Affinity with Rwandan refugees returning from Uganda presented young recruits a path to overcome the condition of the Postcolony's precarity.

Georges was twenty-two years old when he left Zaïre. Having had family members that had preceded him into the RPF, he and his cousin decided their time had come. They were motivated by heroic stories of contemporary

freedom fighters, those who had inspired the RPF. “we saw news of leaders like Savimbi, Garang, and Museveni.”³³ Were these people heroes? “What interested us why they joined movement. What interested us was their intervention. We thought to join RPF to find our own liberation training.”³⁴

Matthias presents a more nuanced picture of an emerging closed loop of perception and narrative:

We said we must stop this, we needed to do something about it. And at some point, we [also] felt insecure. . . . It’s kind of in a way of saying that there’s more confusion in the way that [the conflict] was framed and said the Tutsi of this side [in Zaïre] look alike physically, that is what made [us] go and fight. Without forgetting the RPF that was going down to sensitize the youth, they would be sensitized by the Rwandans. The Banyamulenge that were friends to the Rwandans, they also were massively persecuted, and labelled as the same group. That’s how the youth embraced the path of RPF.³⁵

Again, he reflects on the ascribed Banyamulenge-Tutsi equivalency. RPF *abakada* portrayals of the conflict fed into Banyamulenge senses of their marginalization, connecting them via ascribed identities to persecuted Tutsi in Rwanda. For these young recruits it became increasingly difficult to see where their own narratives ended and where RPF narratives began. Pierre saw a Tutsi identity as fixed, recognizing the Banyamulenge as part of this wide regional group,

Those people that were dying [in Rwanda], they were killed because they’re Tutsis. In Congo, and we were a minority and just Tutsis that were living . . . near Masisi. I mean if you are not stupid and ignorant you have to think about it. And you do not create yourself. . . . I just found myself with this identity, my father and my mother, they coupled and I was born. I am this way. And if you are born and you know that there is a problem ahead, you have to use all means you’ll have to defend it, if it is even to die, you can die, but you are defending it, you are fighting for it.³⁶

This fatalistic approach to identity connects the crucial strands at the beginning of a coalescing soldier’s journey around genocide narrative identity. Identity, although characterized by Pierre as having some permanence, was indeed the product of these factors, themselves shaped by the relation to and experiences of postcolonial violence and genocidal processes.

Soldiers expressed some conflict with their parents, who felt they were losing a generation to what they saw as a foreign war. Many saw Rwanda's civil war as nothing to do with the Banyamulenge, but a few had most likely been in favor of and adopted RPF narratives through existing networks. Pierre noted that his parents were already mourning his death and that of his fellow recruits before his departure.³⁷ He credited his generation with foresight of the increasing dangers ahead, again further markers of the RPF narratives about the potential regionalization of the conflict. "If you see a lot of youth, they are more intelligent than old people. Because for them [the parents] just to hear that it was in Rwanda, they didn't know that these things that were taking place in Rwanda could have an impact on them as well. But, the youth, we could see that."³⁸ Augustin left when he was twenty-one years old. He had finished school, completed the national exam, and recently married. He left without telling any family members. He had attempted to take up traditional roles tending and selling cattle at the market, but he decided it was time to go. Hearing news of the violence against Tutsi on the Muhabura was enough to offer an alternative path to the one his life was taking: "it was very hard; people could not understand."³⁹

The lack of awareness about threats faced was more pronounced in these young men when compared with the presumed view of their parents. Alphonse recalled that, generally, parents "did not feel good about it. But they didn't know what was really happening. We never asked for consent from them. We kind of escaped."⁴⁰ When Alphonse was pressed on this divide and how older generations must have responded to the *abakada* messages, he stated,

Our parents were not very much concerned about the Rwandans because they felt that they do not belong to them. They thought it was not their war, so they felt they should not be part of it. But the young people, they had that energy. That zeal to go and join these people, to help those people and overcome or overpower the government. We could not have prepared our parents for us going to go fight with the regime of Habyarimana. Well, they were less-informed of what was happening. They didn't know Rwanda. They didn't know what was happening.⁴¹

The divergence in views was put down to a lack of awareness of his community's precarity. If they had heard the messages, they lacked the willingness to appreciate the connections to their own situation. Crucially, it was the empowerment of knowledge given to these young men ("They didn't

know what was happening.”) via RPF narratives that created such a shift in self-awareness. Georges had anticipated the same response from his parents. Like Augustin, though, he was recently married and had a child and was one year away from finishing senior schooling. A parent’s response would only be that he “was just going there to die.”⁴²

Janvier followed in the footsteps of his peers and elder brothers. He made several failed attempts at entering the RPF transport network to get to a training camp in Rwanda. In his case, he was encouraged by his father, who saw the promise of return and empowerment for the Banyamulenge. His father would often speak to the family about the historic connection between self-defense and survival for their community. If the fight was now in Rwanda, then this is where they would learn to survive. He adds,

My father would come and speak to us and say, “You [young] people, you just sit, sleeping in, and staying close to your mothers. Where is your future?” So he never hid it, he was speaking in public. Time after time, we were hearing the same thing, it therefore starts becoming part of you and you would see Banyamulenge being shot. You see some of your people being beaten and being kidnapped and taken. So all of those things would stir that desire in you.⁴³

Again, the cause of a regional conflict expressed at home in South Kivu was a compelling plot point. His reflections also indicate a masculine rite of passage encouraged by his father. This parental support was uncommon among participants. Many political operatives who agitated and recruited on behalf of the AFDL would have been part of earlier pre-1994 RPF networks, such as those run by Bugera in North Kivu. It is likely that these elders or parents, who were in favor of recruitment and direct support, especially in financial terms, were part of these networks. For some, the journey would include providing funding up front. Patience, one whose parents did not approve, stole a cow from his uncle to cover the costs of the journey. He was convinced that in the end his uncle would understand the need for this sacrifice.⁴⁴

The clandestine RPF journey to training camps went through Burundi, Tanzania, and Uganda, arriving in eastern Rwanda.⁴⁵ Balthazar left in a small group, only to be caught by Zaïrean authorities and returned home. His second attempt managed to get him over the border in 1992, “I was twenty-two. We went through Uvira. We were arrested, and were turned back to a

prison where we were jailed for a few days and later on, we went back to our homes. That was the attempt when the first group made it through.”⁴⁶ One of Janvier’s three separate attempts involved his arrest and ransom by FAZ soldiers (paid by his parents). The final attempt saw him through Bujumbura to Tanzania in 1993.⁴⁷ Following the exodus of Rwandans into Zaïre in 1994, this journey became increasingly dangerous, where potential recruits risked more than just being picked up by pliable FAZ or local police. After selling his uncle’s cow, Patience was able to join a covert transport network:

In 1994, during those months, Rwanda had already been captured. What we did, there were a lot of Rwandans that were already fleeing the country to Congo, there were lots of camps around, there were Interahamwe, ex-FAR, so to avoid that, as we could also be targets to them, we were all loaded in trucks and covered so that nobody could know. . . . We have in Uvira a man who used to have a lot of cars, and his cars were ready for transportation. This guy was assigned to take people to Rwanda. We went through Hauts Plateaux then we passed through Uvira . . . to the training ground.⁴⁸

These transport networks involved coordination throughout the region, demonstrating the RPF’s commitment to recruitment in the Kivus. Rugira was eighteen in the summer of 1993 when he also made the circuitous route around Rwanda, to be assigned to a camp under the RPF training wing. He confirmed that many left before him, as early as 1991.⁴⁹

Jean, also eighteen, described a version of leaving to join the RPF as his only remaining option. Following the theft of his father’s whole cattle herd, he reflected the following: “Life kind of stopped. You feel like there is no other objective. You’re not anticipating any kind of life. You think ‘let’s go there.’ You don’t have a hope for life, sometimes you try to look to the other area even when you think you cannot get life. That’s how I went to the army; nobody told me to go.”⁵⁰ Prior to his departure in 1994, his three older brothers left, again creating an impression and sense of duty to follow these older siblings as an obligation to family.

Opportunity in the face of persecution increased following the capture of Rwanda, where Banyamulenge youths could obtain military training and possibly even an education. Georges knew as well that staying meant living in a country where education would not provide opportunities for employment, pointing to the banning of Banyamulenge parliamentary candidates

in recent years. He posed the reflective question, “Where is it going to take us? We understood that if we could go in the RPF, then a new government could help change come about.”⁵¹ The RPF held a promise of personal and national liberation.

Training “those who put an end to the Rwandan genocide”

Upon arrival at the training camp, not all were inducted into the training program, which included rigorous physical and combat training as well as RPF political indoctrination. After months of manual labor, Janvier recalled the induction as a violent process intended to instill fear and discipline from the point of entry:

We were told to come and meet at a playing field. What I can remember is that I saw the instructors cutting sticks. We were all beaten from morning until evening. Then after that, that changed us. Because we were living as—if you are hungry, you go look for food—but then, it changed us, and we started to change our perceptions and the way we were thinking about life. A lot of people were taken to the hospital. A lot. That was the introduction.⁵²

While Janvier’s harrowing introduction took place in an RPF facility in Tanzania, most (including Rugira, Patience, and Pierre) found themselves in the Gashora training camp sometime after it was captured by the RPF in 1994. Patience also attested to the severe beatings that would form the day-to-day business of Gashora. Called out of bed at 3 a.m., they would be forced to run to collect firewood and return by 7 a.m. sharp. Those that did not return suffered “heavy” consequences,

PATIENCE: We were expected to reach there, the training ground, at 7. So those that arrived, there would be food already cooked.

INTERVIEWER: What if you didn’t get back by 7 a.m.? Did they still give you food?

PATIENCE: They punish you. They punish you seriously. . . . They would cane you. Your arm will have lots of stripes, they seriously caned you. Or make you roll in the mud or they will make you sleep with a load on your back. Just heavy, very heavy punishment.⁵³

This violence, although not intentionally connected to the masculinity previously instilled in Janvier by his father, connects violent masculine experience and identity typical of many armed actors.⁵⁴

Here, within the training wing, young Banyamulenge men were reduced, in their familial affiliations and worldly aspirations, to compliant and willing instruments in the hands of the RPF. Pierre described this as the engendering of a “virgin mind.”

They were teaching us the techniques or war and ideology of a soldier. To take away [thoughts] you had from home, maybe your parents, houses and cars and everything, so they want to take that out of you . . . , so you can be fresh, and as if you are from streets. . . . And then after it will be accompanied with canes, beating. . . . In fact, they do that so what you had before should be taken from you. The spirits of the civilian should be taken away, washed away. They may find that you have some problems or hard times, and they may decide maybe to terminate your life. Maybe they would tell you to go and eliminate this one. Just go and kill that one. They take away those things that you come with, so that you now have a virgin mind.⁵⁵

Pierre narrated complex and conflicting statements that I address below. This newfound military discipline would likely be tested with brutality and demonstrations of a capacity for lethal violence.⁵⁶

Georges’s experience of three months of intensive training left him with a sense of conformity and social hierarchy amid the Rwandans. He described being given a “new” version of everything: “you live a different life in a guerilla movement.”⁵⁷ He remembers being referred to as “*mutu*,” a pejorative term signaling his use of Kinyarwanda in an odd accent. His trainer did not take him as Rwandan and questioned “what are these Congolese doing here?” He continued, reflecting back to being in Congo, “When we were in Congo, they called us Rwandans. When we went there, we thought we would be welcomed as brothers. But the Rwandans called us Congolese. We were the ones who decided who we were.”⁵⁸ Objecting to this senior officer about the pejorative identification, Georges believes, put him on the wrong side of Rwandan officers, which led to a discorded future relationship.

A mind devoid of other attachments was a central output of this process. Pierre continues on the theme of discipline: “The soldier cannot serve tribalism. Now I’m talking about a soldier who has been well trained. A soldier

that has been very well trained cannot have any sort of tribalism in his mind. Although you may know that these are the people that killed your relatives or your family, you are obliged to protect him, and you forgive him.”⁵⁹ The RPF was keen to establish its public narrative of post-ethnic claims to unity and legitimacy.⁶⁰ As discussed earlier, efforts were made to build a Rwandan coalition, a Kinyarwanda nationhood.⁶¹ “Tribalism” as a reified postcolonial framing was seen as nonprogressive and limiting to the overall cause of liberation. Rising above indiscriminate killing was indicative of this mission, yet mandated killing would be crucial to establishing the new order.

A former Rwandan RPF soldier also demonstrated this distinction between legitimate and tribal violence. Of regular soldiers he said, “We don’t kill innocent people, regular RPA are not supposed to kill people.” Conversely, technicians were appointed through the DMI to do the “dirty jobs” of targeted assassinations and the execution of RPF opposition.⁶² Augustin started earning his credentials as an intelligence operative infiltrating Hutu communal leadership in the new RPF, on account of “RPF thinking I looked like a Hutu.”⁶³ Stationed in western Rwanda, he had already worked his way through various displacement camps screening people for potential involvement in massacres or Hutu Power sympathies. After recalling witnessing some of the fighting and killings around Kibeho in 1995, he recalled how in one western town local officials were called together by the RPF officers and killed. One official he knew in particular and often shared a beer with was killed in his car as it was burned by assailants. Augustin continued, “I was working as a judicial police officer as well, so I could hear about those cases. I feared to go into those. The (RPF) ensured they had killed senior leaders, leaving only the local population and farmers . . . that strategy was coming from the top.”⁶⁴ In this narrative twist, Augustin and many other officers from the reconstruction period witnessed and displayed their complicity on the one hand and created distance from RPF “revenge” violence on the other. The latter also acted as a simultaneous explanation for why such killings were occurring after the genocide was over. Such narrative distancing is evidenced in the next chapter’s discussion of killings in the refugee camps.

Up to the point of AFDL mobilization, in the period between finishing their training and the conclusion of the genocide in 1994, many returned to formal education and employment under the new Rwandan state. All participants who were recruits at this stage remained in Rwanda. Others went on to fill advanced military roles, furthering their journey into how this period would shape their lives and responses to the pending threat of genocide in

eastern Congo. Pierre was one of the Banyamulenge selected out of the rank and file to engage in DMI commando training. After his time at Gashora, he was selected and sent to the Gako training wing immediately east of Kigali. Here he would receive instruction from Israeli-trained RPF officers.⁶⁵

Similarly, Alphonse was also selected for DMI training. Although reluctant to share details of his DMI duties, he did confirm that many Banyamulenge were chosen to perform these roles because they were “trustworthy” and were perceived to have ethnic solidarity with Tutsis.⁶⁶ Rukema was selected out of his unit following the genocide and trained to serve as a police officer for the judiciary. This meant serving arrest warrants and documenting those identified as “*genocidaires*.”⁶⁷ Both Augustin and Georges also served in the DMI during the reconstruction period in the areas of overseeing new recruits and military discipline investigations.⁶⁸ Augustin received legal training and acted as the judicial police witnessing the commission and impact of acts of “revenge for the genocide,” including several public officials in Gisenyi between 1994 and 1995.⁶⁹ During the interim period of the mid-1990s, he witnessed the uneven hand of RPF justice. “When we were arresting the *genocidaires*, we had something which was important to RPF. RPF would teach us not to be angry so that you can kill people instead of maybe to bring them to justice. Because some soldiers, which maybe I cannot name them, when they were arriving where many people had been killed, . . . they told me that ‘this one is a *genocidaire*. Instead of bringing him to court we will kill him.’”⁷⁰ Beyond the training camp, in these new roles supporting the establishment of the state, recruits were embedded into the RPF as a means of dealing with adversaries.

Rugira was selected from among the rank and file to work as a political commissar in the training wing and then in an AFDL training camp in Fizi.⁷¹ During this time, he performed his prior anticolonial RPF political training focusing on imperialism as the root of all evil in the Great Lakes region. His role would then become integral as he educated new recruits for the AFDL, indoctrinating them with the principles of “revolution, liberation, and social class,” and that only with the correct ideology could a country’s natural wealth be utilized for the benefit of all.⁷² The Pan-Africanist elements of the training he delivered replicated that which he had received about “the politics of how to better get on with the rest of Africa. How they liberated other countries, how the genocide that took place [compared to the] the Nazis [targeting] the Israelites, and [also] the Apartheid [in South Africa].”⁷³ Direct parallels to Israel and its fight against its own *genocidaire* nemesis was

a frequent theme throughout interviews. Respect for the militarization and responsiveness of Israeli politicians and the Israeli Defense Force was an admired quality among participants.⁷⁴

Working in this department, up to the time of the 1996 invasion, Rugira saw ideological training as crucial in fostering the right kind of movement to protect his people. "We came [back] to a country where people were not happy. When we took over the country, [I] was working in the department of patriotism, teaching people to love the country, work for the country, and fight for the country, . . . so that there is nothing compared to your country. You may not have worth but as long as you have identity, the country, you are rich."⁷⁵ Rugira highlighted the evolution of his own self-identification, leaving Minembwe to "support Tutsi brothers" and remaining in Rwanda, until circumstances entailed a liberation of Zaïre, as a Congolese. Identity was indeed key, but where and what immediate identification one was attached to was fluid for these young men. It was contingent on circumstantial performance. In a later interview, Rugira would go on to express deep resentment against Rwandans for destabilizing the Congo and looting its natural wealth for their own national interest.⁷⁶ The chapter epigraph featured his comment, "if you don't give your blood to your country, the dogs will drink it for free."⁷⁷ This sentiment, if applied back into Rugira's narrative, demonstrates the essential connection of performance to belonging and identities. Response to threat was a zero-sum game, the rules of which were informed by this RPF training.

Political education given by the RPF to these young recruits carrying narrative contexts of doubtful nationality and postcolonial marginalization was formative in a soldier's relational journey of identity formation.⁷⁸ Rugira's experience here makes up the substance of narratives utilized and embedded by the RPF. Popular buy-in to national unity was necessitated by the existential threat of genocide. The broader genocide narrative identity was woven into the fabric of the state, its army, and these Banyamulenge recruits.

Rooted in the RPF's historical narrative was their interpretation of the ills of colonialism and the distortion of the past still present in colonized histories. Balthazar commented on his training that

We were given political education and we were taught how the kingdoms were established in Rwanda and that whatever else people were teaching them were lies. They told us how colonists came to Rwanda

and how they [Rwandans] were treated, and that ideology was just creating conflict among themselves. All these ideologies were brought by the Westerners. It is the [Habyarimana] regime that embraced these ideologies and then used it to separate people.⁷⁹

This resonated with young Banyamulenge, who still saw themselves as victims of this same historical travesty. Mamdani refers to colonialism's "*greater crime was to politicize indigeneity in the first place*."⁸⁰ The dynamic tension of the Postcolony is the multidirectional violence and the identity categories that undergird it. For many actors in this setting there is a simultaneous adopting of Postcolony identities and eschewing of others, around the poles of settler, native, and indigenous. This strongly held RPF perspective formed a central pillar in the party's worldview, and not without its own reification of identity using the Other in a genocide narrative identity relation with the *genocidaire*.

Exposure to Genocide in the Making of a Country

Identification of the *genocidaire* took place in a variety of ways for these recruits, but mostly revolved around the genocide of 1994. Those who fought during the first half of 1994 witnessed firsthand the resultant devastation. Gatete, who arrived in Rwanda in 1991, fought through the civil war and was present at the capture of Kigali in July 1994. As with many who were wounded, Gatete's narrative was inscribed on his body with the circle of scar tissue from a gunshot wound he had received in July near Kigali in Rebero and from another injury that left him "lame."⁸¹ He added that upon entering ex-FAR and Interahamwe-held areas he witnessed death. "I saw a lot of people piled [up], dead, a lot of corpses, dead people. Piled in houses. I'd move into a house, and find a family, the mother, who had been starved and died, and the little child was at her back, who had just died because of hunger. I saw her die myself."⁸² Georges recalled the display of infants trying to breastfeed from their dead mothers, pregnant women with wombs cut open, and latrines with bodies piling out of them: "what we saw, what happened in Rwanda could not be allowed to happen in any other country."⁸³

At the age of eighteen, Rugira expressed a familial identification with those killed by the Interahamwe: "The effect on me to see the brothers, friends, and people that have died or killed? . . . Taking a child from its

mother's womb. That is what really affected me and I think it will never go away. It was my first time to see people dying at that extent. And I was still a youth back then."⁸⁴ Matthias also described how upon entering one house he found a mutilated child and mother. "The killing was beyond human convention. I saw a lady who had been pregnant, they made holes here [left thigh] and holes here [right thigh], they took her eyes, ears, and they joined them. They had taken [the baby] out and removed it, and pushed the rest of it through the mother's sex organ, and it goes through the vagina of the mother, so they put them together."⁸⁵ Matthias concurred there was a deep and lasting impact on all soldiers who had witnessed such violence. Matthias went on to refer to what he saw as the propensity of soldiers to engage in revenge killings. The issue is addressed in the following chapter.

The relational impact of this exposure was profound in shaping identities, especially in the context of this viscerally presented existential threat. Janvier further described this linkage:

Like in the place where we were at, our training field in Gashora. There were only corpses, dead bodies that were everywhere in the mountains and the hills. If you go to fetch water all you'd see was bodies of people everywhere. We used that water later on, but we had to take those corpses, those dead bodies and bury them. . . . How could a person kill others to this extent because of it? And you start thinking what it is that you can do. I am fighting with you and that person, the other person who is there who does not know the cause of the war, he now becomes a victim, children, women. The fact is you cannot-, there's no way that you cannot be affected with that.⁸⁶

Like Janvier, many others would be placed on duty to remove and dispose of corpses, embedding a formative and bodily way of demarcating victims. Jean also described the dual sense of devastation and loss, offering a fertile ground for the interpretive power of RPF ideology and training.

We would go and remove the corpses or the bodies of people. Children that had families, children that were left after their parents were killed. We would take those children and put them in army barracks. The UN and international organizations would come and try to find their families. It made me very, very sad, that a person could be killed just because of how he looked. That made me feel like I need to protect everyone wherever I will be, and I have the capability to do so.⁸⁷

Most placed in their conceptual narrative of how these sights and experiences were interpreted through the lens of their own community's persecution and, at this point, soon to be pending threat of genocide: they "felt the need to stop this so it cannot happen again."⁸⁸

In addition to witnessing this on the battlefield, training centers like Gashora were equipped with video players and televisions to show fresh recruits what genocide looked like. This approach utilized a specific process of defining the victim and the 1994 genocide. Pierre notes that "you would see on television some skulls of people that were killed."⁸⁹ Adding context, he describes the following, emphasizing this universal front against genocide.

They would bring a television and would show us people that were killed, they would even show us those actual killings on televisions. You know people that were dug out from holes, I witnessed that myself. But when we are training, they only bring a television and we see people being killed and people are running are shouting. . . . That ideology that was put in us it was that these things that took place during the Habyarimana regime should not take place anywhere else.⁹⁰

By ensuring recruits were exposed by video, combat, or corpse removal, the impact of genocide was purposefully embedded into their training. This RPF narrative allowed for the emergence of a definition of genocide that tied together *jus ad bellum* and prevention. The morality of the RPF cause was defined by relating dead victims and the guilty *genocidaire* to the Banyamulenge recruit.

This period of reconstruction provided continued grounds for RPF recruitment from Banyamulenge young men, especially those who migrated to Rwanda to look for opportunity, employment, and belonging. Siboyintore decided to leave the "chaos" of Congo in December 1994 to make the hazardous border crossing. Once there he connected with old friends and relatives who were now battle-tested RPF soldiers. Seeing one particular friend now in a uniform and recalling thinking at the time, "wow, he looks amazing" inspired Siboyintore to enlist in the RPF.⁹¹ His experience fell in line with many before the genocide, and those afterwards joining the AFDL. The training was brutal. He spent most of the seven months barefoot eating boiled maize. His legs swelled, but he survived. Many other trainees did not, including a cousin who had signed up at the same time.⁹²

RPF engineered socialization is reflected in the Rwandan military prac-

tice of *ingando*.⁹³ This three-phase process starts with combined intensive military drills and political education. Second, “joint deployments” would be used to integrate disparate recruits from across the Great Lakes region. In the case of 1994, this often meant managing internally displaced populations, targeting identified enemies of the RPF, and leading national reconstruction following the genocide, including the removal of corpses. Third, trained soldiers would be sent back to their communities to promote the political messages and RPF national ideology.⁹⁴ Many of those coming to Rwanda for the first time from Uganda or eastern Zaïre would remain in Rwanda, often living in Kigali to take up employment or education.⁹⁵ Marco Jowell’s reading of the RPF, and the current Rwandan Defense Force (RDF), describes an institution that seeks to promote integration among its soldiers through shared experience and a strong political narrative. For early Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge recruits from, respectively, North and South Kivu, this resulted in a relational network. This was where those marginalized in Zaïre would find a political identity, giving a frame of reference crafted by the RPF. It was grounded in the regional threat to Tutsi existence and empowerment in the face of such a challenge.⁹⁶ It is further apparent that within this structure of discipline and punishment, the RPF recruitment networks may have manipulated previously disparate groups.⁹⁷

Yet some Banyamulenge soldiers during the period of reconstruction in Rwanda leading up to the AFDL offensive were being given second-class status. Georges noted how rounds of promotions in this period were rarely extended to the hundreds of early 1990s Banyamulenge recruits. What he identified retrospectively was the scooping up of most positions by the Ugandan diaspora Tutsis. Nicolas Kibinda was the only one of two to benefit, making it to lieutenant and second lieutenant. For him he saw it as “not just a matter of trust, but of control.”⁹⁸ Georges remained in Rwanda working in the Ministry of Defense’s finance section from the post-genocide period up into 1998. This mistrust foreshadows the breakdown addressed in chapter 5.

The Promise of Return

Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja argues that the pro-RPF Banyamulenge youth were being used by Kigali “in an expedient manner for purely political ends or pecuniary advantage” and that their own allegiances were not aligned with the RPF’s.⁹⁹ This may be accurate in some cases, as participants

demonstrated an adoption of RPF narratives and cause, as discussed above. However, this allegiance was expressed as more of an alignment with the promise of return to Zaïre and defense of their home communities against perceived anti-Tutsi threats. Among the variety of above motivations, it is the genocide narrative identity within which most young Banyamulenge RPF recruits situated themselves. This promise of return was vital in the participants' narratives, but exactly when this promise of intent to return germinated is difficult to identify. In some cases, this was discouraged by RPF trainers and commanders when raised by Banyamulenge recruits. For others there is debate about whether or not this was an original intent when leaving South Kivu in the first place, whereas some adamantly claimed this was the case from their departure point in the early 1990s.

As a result of Janvier's logistics role as a secretary to an operations officer, his narrative offers a longer view of this particular plot point.¹⁰⁰ He recounted the following discussion with his trainer in Gashora: "We were feeling that our parents may even die before we come to save them. We were talking to the teachers, the instructors we were telling them, that they should train us hard and don't give us any kind of training they feel is not needed, and therefore they should give us equipment so that we can go back and support our parents."¹⁰¹ Despite the transactional appearance of this comment, those who shared this retrospective also saw an urgent need to return and protect their families. Some went as far as adopting the broader RPF narrative of liberation. Rugira, as a political instructor, embraced this ideological perspective and placed the promise of return in this context. Speaking about the impact of the ideological training he received, and would later give, he states, "It started giving us the hope that we can also liberate our people. And we are very few, but we feel we should go, we are to go back and sensitize other people, other tribes and other Congolese to join us, so that we can overthrow the dictatorship government and start a government that will be of all tribes."¹⁰² Jean spoke of a tacit agreement or understanding between the Banyamulenge recruits and their Rwandan trainers, again promoting the notion of liberation, regionally, and the reciprocal nature of Rwanda passing on this practice to Banyarwanda in Zaïre. "It was in the agreement we had before we joined the army. Because when we were with Rwandese, they came from Uganda, they also came with Ugandans, the Ugandans helped them. After they helped them, the Ugandans went back. They say that the Congolese we are the one, and they may give us support. That's how we know we had a mutual agreement."¹⁰³

For some participants this promise of return was implied by the RPF's rise to power. The relationship between the Ugandan NRA and the RPF was an example of a type of rolling liberation throughout the Great Lakes region, bound by shared trouble and regional ethnic identity. Alphonse believed that "Museveni, the Ugandans, had to help them to go and overthrow the government. You see Kagame, those people are Tutsis, the people of their tribe. They came to sensitize us so then we have to go and help them."¹⁰⁴ This sent a clear message, articulated by Rukema, that there was "the hope to come back. That's what I'm telling you. After helping the RPF to catch power in Rwanda, they would also help us to come back and protect our area."¹⁰⁵

Rugira again emphasizes this point, reflecting on the years he spent in Rwanda, seeing the end of the genocide in 1994 up to 1996: "And once they have taken the country, they told us it's time to come back and take over this Congolese, Mobutu regime that he has ruled for thirty-two years, to finish his dictatorship. They said, 'since you have assisted us, we will also assist you to go back.'"¹⁰⁶ While there is some coherence here about a promise of return, although fractured across these narratives and framed through the lens of each participant's own situation between 1994 and 1996, some still viewed this promise of return with skepticism. Alexis confirmed that no Banyamulenge recruit left Zaïre based on this promise and that the Rwandan recruiters did not use this as a lure.¹⁰⁷

Pessimistically, Gatete noted the following, reflecting on his own injured state and current unemployment: "I knew that, I felt that, having gone into the military in Rwanda, I would come back to my home and have security. That never happened."¹⁰⁸ Yet he did also note, despite his resignation, that the hope was to join the RPF and replicate their success. "The cause is that in here, I was not a Congolese. We were denied that, we lacked security, and there were our brother refugees, Tutsis, which were in Uganda, who also did not have rights to go to Rwanda. So, I felt that I should go, join them, in order to bring about peace in Rwanda, which would eventually come back and also provide security and secure our parents."¹⁰⁹ This phrasing combined marginalization and a common regional Tutsis cause. The ascription of ethnicity is reflected on ("I was not a Congolese") and used as an ordering principle of identity. Emphasis is given to the events that followed his enlistment in the RPF, offering performative meaning to who he sought to become, someone who would bring back peace and security.

Based on this wider view in Gatete's narrative, insecurity was perceived

by many as a permanent state and perhaps exacerbated by a history of failed action. Balthazar attributed the eventual return under the AFDL to a personal motivation to save the families in his home village. Connecting this with his witnessing of the genocide in Rwanda and his perspective of the marginality he had come from in Zaïre, he reflected that "It came from my own desire, but seeing all of that maybe enhanced the desire that I had. But I was thinking about it as I was sympathetic to [Rwanda]. But initially I had a desire to go because I grew up seeing all these things happening."¹¹⁰ This salient comment articulates the key connections these young soldiers made across the plot points they both brought with them from Zaïre and those to which the RPF connected them. This weaving of narratives created a networked understanding of the regional threat faced by Great Lakes' Tutsi.

Despite Rukema's earlier stated solidarity, he realized, as he agitated his Rwandan superiors in 1995 to deliver on this promise, that things were not as he had hoped. Speaking with his Banyamulenge colleagues during that year, he asked them, "What do you think if today we go back to Zaïre and we are led by RPF officers? It is not ourselves who will be prepared to go back. Do you think we will gain something from that war? That war which we are not prepared for? The war which we do not know their [RPF] interests they have to go to Zaïre?"¹¹¹ This view draws out a theme far more common in reflections about current security and the now deteriorated Banyamulenge soldier relationship with Rwanda and the RPF. For Rukema, there was a misplaced faith in those whom he had considered brothers,

Even to think that they can protect the Tutsis, it was not, at that time we would not think about it because we know that all of us, we are Tutsi. The Rwandans are Tutsi, we are Tutsi. We are thinking that we are the same. That we are thinking about, which was not in their mind. What we are thinking, the Banyamulenge, we are thinking that we and RPF, the Tutsis from Rwanda, are the same, which was not in their mind of the RPF. We will feel as brothers, which was not the same to their side.¹¹²

This reflects to some extent the initial comments by Nzungu-Ntalaja, that Banyamulenge, along with Banyarwanda from North Kivu, were mere pawns in the hands of the RPF. The picture here is more complex and is indeed shaped by individual soldiers' experience with their Rwandan brothers and their current situation. For Rukema, despite growing distrust, a bond of solidarity was realized and common narratives were reworked, articulating the

reasons for their shared persecution and articulating the remedy. Such retroactive judgments are inevitable in narrative analysis, but this indicates a distinct network between brotherhood and liberation to stop genocide.

Janvier's narrative continues to detail the process by which the promise of return materialized into action. Following the taunting of his RPF instructors and increasing stories of how the Interahamwe were threatening his community, he and some fellow soldiers even considered escaping in 1995.¹¹³ In his new position, and despite the discouragement from his immediate superior, Janvier gained access to and networked with other Banyamulenge officers. This brought him into contact with a Lieutenant Nicolas Kibinda. Although he was killed in the first fighting of 1996, Nicolas was remembered specifically by Pierre, Rukema, Siboyintore, and Ikiyaga as a key Banyamulenge officer.¹¹⁴ In April 1996, Janvier and other Banyamulenge officers began networking through Nicolas, connecting to DMI operatives, running supplies and reconnaissance missions back and forth across the border. Rugira was also involved in these operations, and they referred to themselves as the "mafia."¹¹⁵ In September of that same year, "They used the shortcut . . . so that they could come to the Hauts Plateaux. They would come with us, we were young, having guns in our coats. We were the mafia you know. We had the look, we appeared to be Banyarwanda."¹¹⁶ Other participants also recall involvement in such operations, some even adding that this was a key purpose in their original recruitment, that the Rwandans needed their local knowledge and understanding of the FAZ in order to eventually attack Zaïre.¹¹⁷

Janvier and this RPF Banyamulenge cohort, after a period of formal organization under the DMI, then were taken to Cyangugu, at the Rwandan border, to be met by a group of Rwandan officers, including James Kabarebe and Caesar Kayizari, who were respectively first and second in command of the AFDL forces.¹¹⁸ Here two companies of Banyamulenge were organized with RPF officers and supplied with guns. Janvier recalled, "They told us that these guns were given to support our parents, 'We will give you people to escort you. We will give you soldiers who will go with you to support and guide you. After we reach there, then we will come back. And you will fight on your own; you will fight for yourselves like we fought for ourselves here.' We were very happy."¹¹⁹ According to Philip Roessler and Harry Verhoeven, these first units were part of the core of six thousand Congolese Tutsi forming the backbone of the AFDL. It was also clear at this stage that the strategic purpose for the invasion, and consequently the promise of return, was to

dismantle the refugee camps and force a return of Rwandans back into the new order of the RPF.¹²⁰

During the summer months of 1996, Janvier and his company ran covert reconnaissance operations until the larger forces joined them as part of the AFDL, moving from Bukavu to Uvira and Fizi. During this time, his company would come under the command of various Rwandan, RPF commanders, including Eric Murokore and Alexis Kagame. Upon reaching Hauts Plateaux in September, Janvier and his unit commenced the renewed work of recruitment among the families of their home villages. "After the meeting was held by the parents and civilians, they said, they decided that, in every family it's only one boy who should remain in the family. The rest should join the army. All those boys that were given to the military were sensitized by them."¹²¹ This was not a new recruitment drive. It was part of an ongoing use of established RPF networks throughout both North and South Kivu. Both Umwami and Eugene, as political operatives, further described how recruitment of young Banyamulenge men steadily continued from 1990 into 1996, when the rebellion arrived at their doorstep.¹²² I return to these clandestine mafia operations as well as the role Nicolas took in the following chapter.

"We Were Expecting Another Genocide"

This was the description Christian, a soldier, articulated during the ratcheting up of tensions leading to South Kivu deputy governor Lwasi Ngabo Lwabanji's removal order. His announcement made on October 8, 1996, stated, "I demand the population in the highlands to descend to the shores of the lake. We will consider everybody who stays in the Hauts Plateaux as rebels."¹²³ In the moments following this announcement, a journalist stopped Lwabanji and asked for a deadline on this ultimatum, to which he hastily uttered one week, and then hustled off to meet with provincial military leaders.¹²⁴

This announcement had massive repercussions on soldiers' narratives and shaped the current *longue durée* of conflict in eastern Congo. A year earlier a memorandum circulated among South Kivu officials recognizing Banyamulenge as noncitizens of Congo, taking a lead from the parliamentary rejection of citizenship claims.¹²⁵ By October the AFDL and RPA invasion of key places in eastern Zaïre was already well underway. This statement was

undoubtedly recognized as a relevant step in escalation and defense against invasion. For Christian, and many of the other interviewed participants, this moment constituted the visible point that rises out from the undercurrent of genocidal processes. In his full comment, Christian noted “as the Tutsis here were massacred during the genocide [in Rwanda], we were expecting another genocide which had been announced by the governor in the South Kivu province.”¹²⁶ This moment saw the realization of decades of postcolonial Banyamulenge precarity.

As discussed in the prior chapter, the crisis of 1994’s Rwandan exodus into Zaïre ushered in changes of power relations. These constituted a reinforcing of participant narratives. Mugenzi, another political operative, summarized this impact: “The Interahamwe and ex-FAR had started to kill the Banyamulenge already and they started to shoot their houses in our town and killed some people already so if nothing could have been done, they could have killed all of us.”¹²⁷ The perception of this emerging alignment of militaries and militias embodied plot points about threat. Jean recalled the destructive nature of the Rwandans’ arrival in mid-1994:

It was when they fled from Rwanda, when they were living here. They wanted to carry the genocide to our people. Because they look at us in the image of the RPF soldiers. . . . They joined together with the Mobutu soldiers, the ex-FAR, Interahamwe, were telling the soldiers that the Tutsis will chase them. Then therefore, they will tarnish our image in that way. There was nothing that would have stopped them from killing us, they would have gone ahead and killed people here.¹²⁸

The potency of the Rwandan *genocidaire* is that this was an articulation of genocide as an outcome and reality. Olivier also noted the collaboration of Mobutu, ex-FAR and the Interahamwe,¹²⁹ the latter two “telling the government that it was these Tutsis who chased us,” claiming a conflation of Banyamulenge as a group with the RPF.¹³⁰ While indeed Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge were present in the RPF, these ascriptions were based on RPF training and exposure to genocide and the present threat, as it was seen through a genocide narrative identity. Olivier further stated that “without the Rwandan invasion they [ex-FAR and Interahamwe] would have continued the genocide.”¹³¹

A conspiracy of foes aligned in such a cause was a recurrent theme and plot point at this stage of the narratives. Eleazar described this anti-Tutsi

front as an infiltration of the minds of Congolese youth, tipping them over the edge of persecution into genocide by ex-FAR and Interahamwe “sensitization.”¹³² The perceived connections between the FAZ and the ex-FAR/Interahamwe seemed ubiquitous to Banyamulenge in the mid-1990s.¹³³ Eugene also recounts the benefit and relationship of a well-armed and uniformed set of Rwandan forces allying themselves with existing, marauding FAZ units: “For them when they ran to here, they came with everything. . . . Remember that it was the military that had all the weapons, so they all came with it. And I remember during that time. Ex-FAR had very fabulous uniforms and they would come here and maybe exchange them or serve them to Mobutu soldiers because they were very nice. . . . They were the ones that were fighting for Mobutu almost everywhere.”¹³⁴

The FAZ and various ethnic militias, including Hunde and Nande in North Kivu and Bafuliro and Babembe in South Kivu, were perceived to be collaborating with the Interahamwe and ex-FAR.¹³⁵ Eleazar labeled this growing organization of force as a “campaign of intoxication.” This campaign was purposefully executed when these Rwandan forces amplified existing “discrimination” of Tutsis and took advantage of this emergent power relation.¹³⁶ Janvier added that the Rwandan military groups were roaming across the Kivus “sensitizing” local militias, and especially Banyarwanda Hutu, to join the effort against the Tutsis.¹³⁷ Indicative of this observation is a documented occurrence of ex-FAR/Interahamwe recruits going to Congolese Hutu groups in February 1996, in the Masisi area of North Kivu. Following these rounds of recruitment, action against local Tutsi populations, in the forms of hostage taking and direct violence, increased. In one case, a Masisi village was surrounded to contain the population, and those trying to escape or going to work in their field were killed by recruited Congolese Hutus.¹³⁸

In South Kivu, Eugene pointed to a series of killings in Baraka orchestrated by this nexus of foes, who in this case were the FAZ and local Babembe militias:

The Zairean people were supporting Mobutu, because Mobutu was the closest friend to Habyarimana. They were intimate friends. Therefore, what proves they were preparing a genocide is the war began in a place called Bibokoboko in Moyen Plateaux, there in a place called Baraka. Then Babembe told the Banyamulenge they should flee toward them and be rescued by them, by Babembe. All of them that managed or

decided to run toward them, all of them were killed. A lot of them were killed in villages and places.¹³⁹

These moments were plot point connections between Mobutu and Habyarimana (posthumously), and their perceived forces on the ground. This easily linked explanation by participants made this narrative portable and usable in understanding what was an inherently complex and varied conflict. Among some of the South Kivu advance parties was Bonte, who apparently deserted his post upon hearing of a reported massacre near his home area. He confronted a Babembe roadblock and pushed on to find 220 Banyamulenge hiding in the forest. He arrived into Rugezi, near Minembwe,

I found that they had already killed 87 people. And that is where I found my father. He was also killed among those people. I found that they have killed 16 from my own family. Some who survived, I helped them. I found my mother; she was still alive. I found the wife of my elder brother. And some of the children also survived. I took them with me in a place called Rugezi. When I reached there, I settled them and then I returned to my battalion.¹⁴⁰

Bonte's dispassionate recitation of this incident indicated a level of acceptance and numbness to the conflict that had now engulfed his home. This soldier demonstrated a hardness and acceptance of the genocide that was upon his community, embodied by a missing finger.

Attacks by FAZ and Babembe militia in September, around Baraka and Lueba, resulted in killings of hundreds of Banyamulenge, men, women, and children of all ages, many of whom were also raped prior to their execution. Some were burned alive in locked buildings, others exploded with grenades and some attacked with knives and machetes.¹⁴¹ I asked Eugene for an explanation of why this group was targeted and the connections of Zairean allegiances to Habyarimana and the ex-FAR/ Interahamwe. He sensed this increase was due to ethnic affiliation and the shifts of power that had been emerging since the exodus of 1994. Rwandan elements "influenced all these other tribes" and promoted "revenge" for RPF actions in Rwanda.¹⁴²

From mid-1995 into 1996, violence across both North and South Kivu continued to align in this period. By midsummer, according to a North Kivu census, 250,000 Tutsi Banyarwanda had become internally displaced and 16,000 had fled to Rwanda.¹⁴³ A prominent example of this can be found in

the Bukombo attack in March 1996, in the Rutshuru zone of North Kivu. A grouping of Banyarwanda Hutu and ex-FAR/ Interahamwe approached the town, looting and burning Tutsi homes; eleven were murdered on March 4. In the following weeks, attacks on Tutsi intensified and saw the coalescing of local militias around Rwandan elements, targeting Tutsis in Rutshuru and Masisi in the same summer.¹⁴⁴ On May 12, the ex-FAR/ Interahamwe forces surrounded the Mokoto monastery, where monks had sheltered up to a thousand Congolese Tutsi. Hundreds fled, adding to the internal displacement of thousands in the province. A hundred were killed, many of whom were burned in the monastery buildings or cut to pieces by the militias.¹⁴⁵

Throughout South Kivu, similar violence proliferated in 1996, as discussed in chapter 5. Attacks by a conglomeration of FAZ units, Babembe militias, ex-FAR/ Interahamwe, and Burundian Hutu armed groups spiked in September of 1996. Attacks ranged from Bukavu down along the border and shore of Lake Kivu into Fizi.¹⁴⁶ Leonard recounted a relative's beheading in Uvira as part of a growing campaign of violence against Banyamulenge. He described how Banyamulenge were targeted on the streets, or when traveling outside of their home communities, particularly when traveling on the road between Uvira and Bukavu. Many were dragged from vehicles when allegedly spotted by those wishing them harm: "There are those that were beheaded and then they would hang his head alongside the road. . . . I've seen the corpses. . . . One of them, he was married to another lady of our community in Uvira. . . . He was beheaded and his head was hung on trunk of a tree and they were all singing that 'look we have killed a Banyarwanda.'" ¹⁴⁷ Targeting individuals because of ascribed identities, such violence was an escalation of decades of tension, living in the margins of Zairian society, and now an imminent existential threat. Leonard situated these attacks in a larger emerging, coordinated effort to target Banyamulenge.¹⁴⁸

The killing of hundreds of Banyamulenge during the summer of 1996 was reported internationally.¹⁴⁹ Concurrent was the forced expulsion of nine hundred Banyamulenge into Cyangugu and Cibitoke.¹⁵⁰ Removals often precipitated direct violence and murder. These occurrences provided a context, via fractured intelligence reports, to the Banyamulenge officers waiting in Rwanda or already over the border performing reconnaissance. Many civilians were targeted on the basis of suspected collaboration with the RPF.¹⁵¹ While individual cases are hard to verify, it is clear from the above narratives that this collaboration was indeed taking place up and down the border area. Yet for these young RPF, and later AFDL, soldiers, their per-

ception of an all-out attack against their people and homes was apparent. Gatete captured this with a clear-cut and demanding assessment: "We were told [by the RPF] that the Interahamwe are also killing people here. They say that these people, when they were here, maybe encountered Tutsi Banyamulenge, Banyarwanda around here. They would be killed immediately. So, we felt that we should come down and protect these people from the ex-FAR."¹⁵² The RPF would utilize the continued threat against a regional community and reinforce plot points generated by Banyamulenge soldiers. This was based on their initial reason for leaving South Kivu: the RPF narratives presented to them during their time in Rwanda and the promise of return.

Many soldiers' narratives of their engagement with military forces and objectives going into October and November 1996 noted the discovery of plans to kill every Banyamulenge. Christian referred to this as a "fixed date" when the Banyamulenge would all be killed.¹⁵³ Eugene notes how in September a discussion with local leaders yielded the following revelation: "These other tribes, from us they don't keep secrets. If they know there is going to be something happening, they will come and tell you. They were holding meetings. In that place I mentioned called Kamombo, they were chiefs for the posts. Then, after the meetings, some of them would come and tell us their plans or some of their plans. And also, they were influenced by Interahamwe that fled Rwanda."¹⁵⁴ The presence of the Interahamwe was enough to promote an apparent spreading of this message that Banyamulenge were to be targeted, much as Tutsi were in 1994 Rwanda. Matthias's recollection of these plans had a real and symbolic meaning.

I'm sure that the Banyamulenge could have been killed, all of them. And that we know. We know, and I just say I know and say that as myself, because I was among them and I saw a document that demonstrated how they would go about the attack. . . . A small book in the camps where they planned to carry out their attacks. Attacks all the way from Goma all the way to Kalima [in Maniema]. They call that side, that land as Hutu land. The land of Hutus. The decision was to clear out all the Tutsis that were in that area.¹⁵⁵

Whether this was a discarded propaganda tract or actual map for the domination of the east, it served as a clear validation for Banyamulenge soldiers as they marched forward.¹⁵⁶

Patience also identified Kamombo as a location where physical plans were discovered following the invasion in late 1996. This description below also shares the view most participants held, that despite the escalating violence, the total removal and destruction of their community was interrupted.¹⁵⁷ This threat was validated by Patience when he stated,

In a way, they had not yet started to kill them, but when we came in, we saw all the evidence. They had a map and the techniques that they were using and everything was recorded on their paper and they had documents on how they would execute all the Tutsi and Banyamulenge here. . . . Yeah, I saw those papers myself. I witnessed that . . . [in] Kamombo, that is where we were able to find the papers and agenda plans on how they will go to Minembwe and terminate our families.¹⁵⁸

The parties involved in this proposed destruction in Minembwe appear nebulous, and again most participants referred back to an emergent conspiracy of Rwandan and Zaïrean armed elements.¹⁵⁹ Feeding their narratives on a personal, local, and larger regional level, these soldiers were poised and prepared to act in defense of home and family.

The impact of the exodus and intensification of violence in South Kivu in September provided a crucial backdrop to Lwabanji's declaration as a military response to the rebels. This salient moment featured in many of the narratives as a tipping point, further bolstering a conspiratorial threat of genocide. Many of the reconstructions of this event follow the descriptions outlined by Bernard. "The governor of South Kivu, he announced on air, that all Banyamulenge should be killed or driven back to Rwanda. During that time after he had declared that on air, the Congolese were furious to kill us or push us back to Rwanda."¹⁶⁰ This was a clear threat to life that Bernard and others recalled. Some narratives mix varied elements, including the above initial recounting of Lwabanji's words by news reports at the time. Christian further elaborated on the precise consequences, introducing a threat of firebombing Minembwe:

[Lwabanji] gave an ultimatum to leave the mountains and go in Rwanda. As they were Tutsis, the Tutsis were fighting here, he said, "go back to your home" and he said, "if you are not going within six days, if you are not going within six days, I am coming with the jet who will burn your

mountains, will burn you within your mountains.” It was an ultimatum. He asked them to leave Zaïre within six days otherwise, he will come with jet or plane and will bomb us, burn us.¹⁶¹

This dire accusation conjured images of mass killing by air, in Christian’s case literally invoking the Six-Day War in the Middle East. To emphasize the coalescence of this narrative point, linkages formed to citizenship and the claim that Banyamulenge were merely Rwandan immigrants who had now outstayed their welcome. Eleazar noted the following: “Now in . . . 1996, the vice governor of South Kivu here, he gave the ultimatum, he gave the ultimatum of seven days. That they should leave the country, the natural place where they are born. Leave Congo and go to Rwanda.”¹⁶² Leonard described a previously noted connection with reference to the Tutsi *morphologie* that was the basis of the targeting of Banyamulenge.¹⁶³ Thierry further suggested that a route was planned for Banyamulenge to return to Rwanda from Minembwe, or “straight to Ethiopia,” referencing a Hamitic trope.¹⁶⁴

In considering this articulation of genocide, Bernard prompted a lengthy discussion in his interview about how the word “genocide” was being used and what exactly it referred to. At first, he sought to make a clear distinction between what had happened in 1994 Rwanda and the ongoing conflict in Congo. “What happened in Rwanda is a genocide but what took place in Congo was a war, so there are people who say they just dramatize the situation but the fact is it cannot be compared to what happened in Rwanda.”¹⁶⁵ Use of genocide was a purposeful framing in order to distinguish the severity of the conflict, but in Bernard’s mind such was unwarranted. Then, intrigued by the discussion, he sought to clarify if we were talking about genocide in Congo, was it about the Banyamulenge or the Banyarwanda, meaning those who had arrived in the exodus of 1994? I clarified that we were talking about the threat perceived by the Banyamulenge: what he saw as the threat to his community. This clarity drew an instant association of violence against Banyamulenge with the 1994 genocide. “For Banyamulenge it is absolutely similar to what took place in Rwanda, the Banyamulenge were hunted from caves and everywhere and the orders come from above, from the high officials . . . who were Congolese.”¹⁶⁶ This comment, developing his earlier statement, offers a glimpse of RPF narratives received in training, leveraging popular notions of genocide as highly structured and top-down organized killing.

Embedded in this perception of impending genocide was an entrenchment of marginality: Banyamulenge soldiers interpreted their increasing exclusion through an emerging genocide narrative identity. This narrative was performed through taking action against the *genocidaire*. Gustav joined the RPF because of these temporally marked perceptions. He had a promising academic career ahead of him, having managed to pass through exams necessary to study medicine in Belgium.¹⁶⁷ His educational opportunities were sufficient enough not to be drawn away by the RPF prior to 1996; he felt, "I must sit for the national exam. I did this in April [1994]. They [the RPF] took power in July; it was useless for me to go during the military when the war had already ended."¹⁶⁸ It was not until April 1996 that he found himself imprisoned in Uvira by local authorities as part of a round-up of Banyamulenge and taken to the Rwandan border at Kamanyola. It was there that guards fired upon the group of prisoners: "the order was given that they should kill all of us."¹⁶⁹ Gustav, with a few survivors, was then freed to escape into Rwanda. After two days in a refugee camp somewhere near Bugarama, he sought out enlistment in the RPF. Considering why he joined when he did, compared to those that left in mid-1994, after the war was over in Rwanda, he noted,

No one will tell you why they have gone, it was like an adventure. I had a future of going to school and pursuing much more education, and then went to a country that has already faced genocide, but I was captured. There was no point for me to go. . . . Because of the Rwandan refugees that were in Zaïre, they were armed, and had their own weapons. Therefore me, being, looking like them [the Tutsi], you could not feel free in your own country. . . . It was total insecurity. They had every kind of weapon with them.¹⁷⁰

Gustav was pushed from his home, taken from a promising career and finally confronted with the insecurity facing the Banyamulenge. Others had left at varying times before, and in his mind, some had left for the excitement and opportunity held for a Tutsi in post-genocide Rwanda. When his path to education was firmly shut and he found himself in a refugee camp, he joined the fight to protect and preserve this regionally shared Tutsi identity against the threat coming from the camps.

The AFDL: "Soldiers without Frontiers"

The RPF's violent methods extended into RPF-run training camps in eastern Zaïre, following the arrival of the Rwandan and Banyamulenge recruiters in middle to late 1996. Ikiyaga, a young AFDL recruit, recalled, "It was . . . brutal, it was hard, and whoever would try to escape, they were shot dead."¹⁷¹ Training involved live ammunition and the sexually humiliating subjugation of young recruits, forced to ejaculate into holes in the dirt of the training ground.¹⁷² Ikiyaga was fifteen years old when he was recruited in April 1996 from his Hauts Plateaux home.¹⁷³ "The Banyamulenge people that went to support Rwanda, they went, they came back. They came down with Banyarwanda. So, they gave what we call *kipindi*, a speech, or told the families, if you have two or three boys, you should give up two."¹⁷⁴ Ikiyaga's account of the rise of the AFDL attributed the purpose of the return of these Banyamulenge soldiers to the liberation of Congo from under Mobutu's reign. The specificity of the promise of return for older RPF Banyamulenge recruits fades into the motivational soup of plot points. It seems that the protection of family and kin in South Kivu quickly merged into the overarching RPF narrative of liberation and political identity for their Tutsi brothers in Congo. This entailed the removal of an existential threat posed by the myriad of forces threatening another genocide and allying with FAZ and various local militias.

The AFDL emerged in this increasingly tense context. Each constituent military and political group possessed its own agenda, many with ties to their own regional sponsor. Despite references of Banyamulenge and other AFDL troops being "soldiers without frontiers," or "rebels without borders," it was in fact the borders that brought these disparate groups together.¹⁷⁵ For those Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda, the AFDL represented a twofold response. First was in the short term with the arrival of the exodus of Rwandans in 1994 and the burgeoning threat of genocide in 1996. Second was in the Postcolony. As discussed above these responses were articulated in the RPF narrative, capturing the conflict dynamics and actors for Banyamulenge soldiers. It was then undergirded by the visceral identification of genocide and the imperative of halting it at any cost.

Growing up in Kidote in the north end of the Hauts Plateaux, Olivier shared a similar sense of being disconnected from his home: "even though we were in Congo, we were not accepted as Congolese."¹⁷⁶ In late 1996, RPF recruiters came to his village; "they came to us secretly telling us we could

join.” The covert nature of recruitment at this time fueled growing animosity against Tutsi communities, where militias and the FAZ were increasingly working across the Kivus with Rwandan *genocidaires* in targeting these perceived pro-RPF populations. Conversely, Olivier and others were increasingly drawn to the RPF in this flow of escalation. He went to an AFDL training camp in the Lamera area, where during this four-month period trainees died and others contracted malaria.¹⁷⁷ This story is echoed throughout other recruits of this period, those preparing to liberate the country. Many were also abducted and forced into fighting for the AFDL. In Sandra Uwiringiyimana’s account she recalls her teenage brother going missing in late 1996 from their home in Uvira, later turning up several months later in Bukavu as a battle-hardened, traumatized *kadogo*.¹⁷⁸ By the point of the full-scale invasion in late 1996, AFDL troops had grown from an estimate of two thousand from existing constituent groups to six thousand, including new recruits trained by the RPF in Rwanda and Congo.¹⁷⁹

Frank, now living in the UK-based diaspora, similar to many others picking up arms for the first time, was sixteen years old when he and five friends joined the AFDL. Three of them died during the first war. They were joined in training by many coming from recruitment drives from universities in Rwanda and Burundi. For Frank and his friends, they were offered an opportunity to prove they belonged in Congo despite being “treated as foreign people.” For them the training at the hands of RPF officers, both Rwandan and Banyamulenge, was brutal but “told us we would not be discriminated against, and would be treated as Congolese” if they win the war.¹⁸⁰

During the summer of 1996, Rwandan military officials worked with Banyamulenge colleagues, long-term soldiers now officers, to recruit others like Frank out of educational institutions. Ntung documents how he fled to Rwanda to continue school, under the assumption that after 1994 “Rwanda was the safest place for Tutsi because the RPF had taken control.”¹⁸¹ In 1994, while his brother and close friend ran away to join the RPF, he remained in Uvira and volunteered as an RPF informant, likely as a result of horrific stories about trainees being killed or starved.¹⁸² Ntung and his childhood friend Budagu were reunited in Butare at the university as they continued their studies. Under the umbrella of the DMI, seasoned RPF cadres went from advertising opportunity and promoting enlistment to emptying schools and colleges.¹⁸³ This was especially acute in Butare, where many Banyamulenge school children had fled Uvira and Bukavu to finish their education in relative peace and security. Banyamulenge officers, such as Nicolas and

Ntung's cousin Ndoli, would increasingly visit in the summer of 1996 raising awareness and recruiting.¹⁸⁴

Budagu believed, as did many, that the genocide of 1994 had simply been displaced into eastern Congo. "There was substantial fear of genocide being prepared against the Banyamulenge and Tutsis around Congo. The security for the Banyamulenge in Congo had deteriorated so rapidly that a military action was urgently needed."¹⁸⁵ In Butare at the time, Budagu stood in the audience of students gathered by RPF operatives in the basement of the university. In these meetings, stories were told that made their way from the Plateaux to Butare informing this grim view. One night, earlier in 1996, he and other students were gathered in a similar fashion: "all Banyamulenge students in campus were called to assemble in the auditorium's basement. . . . The message was straightforward: we had to attack the Congo, and rescue our families that were facing imminent danger of being exterminated by Interahamwe and the Congolese government."¹⁸⁶ The assembled students were told by the officers that they would return to collect them for training and then deployment into Congo in several weeks' time.¹⁸⁷

Heritier, like Ntung and Budagu, was studying in Butare. One of his cousins had also joined the RPF earlier in 1992. He was taken by the RPF in the summer of 1996 to undergo several months of training, so that they would be "ready to go and fight Mobutu."¹⁸⁸ To him the RPF "military system" was one of total compliance with the threat of death. "You must do it [what they order], their system, no one could contest it, they were killing us."¹⁸⁹ Mustafa noted that during this early period of the war, while most Banyamulenge were recruited, some were "taken by force and beaten" by the RPF to fill the ranks of the AFDL.¹⁹⁰

Mustafa entered the AFDL voluntarily in September 1996. He "decided to join and fight for my rights," and felt vindicated by Lwabanji's removal order given only weeks later.¹⁹¹ Approached by Banyamulenge RPF soldiers during the covert incursions into Hauts Plateaux, he was then taken to the Luberizi training camp. Much like others before him, the necessity of boots on the ground for the Congo invasion further superseded any recognition of humanity. Mustafa described the weeks in training as "horrible." The induction was the "most scary thing I have ever experienced." He was forced with fellow recruits to dig a huge pit, which was then filled with water they carried from a nearby well. They were ordered to stand in the water-filled pit, now surrounded by RPF trainers; "they beat us and would not let us out until one of us died."¹⁹² Two hours later a recruit fell and drowned, and

they were let out of the pit. Within this first week of training, he met Nicolas, “a skinny and tall guy, lighter skin, very intelligent person.”¹⁹³ The lieutenant went on to lecture them all that they should not “keep secret either their sadness at the Babembe telling us they will kill us, or happiness that we are coming to save our families.”¹⁹⁴ The need to save Tutsis in Congo outweighed the evident burden of the violent training and the further fracturing of eastern Congo communities. Mustafa, who now supports refugees coming into the United States, was in his words “very much changed” by this experience. He was taken from a situation of no employment opportunity and little education and put at the frontline of a war of survival for his community. Propaganda in the camp told him that he had been oppressed by Mobutu and that other Congolese had stolen their property from them: “even if you have been in Congo for two hundred years, [they see] you are Tutsi, we needed to unite.”¹⁹⁵

Perceptions of the wider issue of persecution and existential threat against Tutsis regionally were common. Rugira, for example, described his family’s presence in Congo going back some generations, but then also connected with a broader regional ethnic identity as experiencing difficulty: “our people or tribes have been going through hard times because of those countries. Then the country, I mean Congo; people were not considering us as people from here.”¹⁹⁶ Throughout the long journey many had taken since the early 1990s, there is a fluidity of belonging and identities. Rugira, as well as others, considered himself as Congolese but had a familial affiliation with “Tutsi brothers.” This shared, regional sense of identity was shaped by the existential threats faced, whether in Minembwe or Kigali. Patience’s comment earlier in the chapter reinforces this idea: “If one Tutsi [has] a problem . . . it will reflect on many of us who are living during that time.”¹⁹⁷ This regional identity combined many soldiers’ changing self-perception with a popularly ascribed Tutsi identity. Therefore, it was the AFDL, engineered by Kigali and Kampala, that was the vehicle for the performance of genocide narrative identity. As much as chants of liberty and freedom accompanied the AFDL rallies across the country, and as Kabila swelled the ranks of this conglomerate of rebels, the motivations and objectives were varied.¹⁹⁸

Participants’ reasons for the formation of the AFDL ranged accordingly: “defend their family against the ex-FAR, the Hutu militias, and others,”¹⁹⁹ “it gave us nationality, it gave us power,”²⁰⁰ or to “bring about the liberation of the country.”²⁰¹ By virtue of his nascent political training and teaching, Rugira expressed his reasons succinctly, overlapping Kagame’s own words

as mentioned in the prior chapter. “One of the objectives was to overthrow the government, one was to bring peace in the country, to bring poor people to love the country. And the other thing was also to chase away the Interahamwe that were received by Mobutu and were living close to the borders of Rwanda.”²⁰² The AFDL’s purposes, and even its success, were looked upon by participants with mixed views, again pointing narratives toward the theme of continued insecurity and relational identities.²⁰³ Many were convinced, though, of its potency in halting the impending genocide of the Banyamulenge, although perhaps not permanently.

The promise of return was fulfilled, but along this soldier’s journey from the cattle-grazing hills of South Kivu to training camps like Gashora and back again, genocide was a recurrent theme. Use of “genocide” was an appeal to authenticity of threat, an association of belonging in a regional brotherhood, an authoritative claim on suffering. Not all considered this claim as valid. As a Rwandan and former RPF and AFDL soldier, Kalisa McDowell’s reflection on his Banyamulenge colleagues was that the claim of existential threat was doubtful. When asked about whether or not the AFDL was about stopping another genocide, he said, “I have heard many people talking about genocide, Mobutu was not for genocide, this is stupid. When you want to make your case, you bring something big, you bring something you don’t understand. The genocide wasn’t Laurent Nkunda; he was following his bosses. This word genocide is like a business in the Great Lakes. If I profited from that I would use it.”²⁰⁴ Referring jointly to the long-term threat articulated by the likes of Nkunda and Ntaganda against Tutsi in eastern Congo in the 2000s, as well as that against the Banyamulenge in the 1990s, it was a more complex affair, but not one captured by the term “genocide.” His interpretation of the escalation of violence in 1996 and the Lwabanji order as “responses to recruitment and threat of invasion. . . . A big mistake by Mobutu”²⁰⁵ The subjectivity of genocide is crucial to the formation of perceptions and identities around the soldier’s journey.

Conclusion: “The Congolese Looked at Us as Strangers”

If they were strangers in their own land, then who were the Banyamulenge soldiers that left home to seek opportunity, belonging, power, and support for a domestic cause? Participants’ narratives and plot points untangle this contested notion of belonging. This cohort’s early adult frame of reference

was that of their parent's experiences, or their own childhood recollection of marginalization under Mobutu. Framed by exclusion from and absence of political representation, the RPF offered a multifaceted lifeline. From 1990 to 1994, Banyamulenge left to join the fight against those who would become labeled *genocidaires* targeting their regional family. Soldiers brought into the RPF identities already ascribed as Rwandan. This participation produced a subscribed Rwandan connection. This included the performance of military training, ideological education, and witnessing of genocide. The promise of return developed in response to the emergence of anti-Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge violence respectively in North and South Kivu following the 1994 exodus. This promise of self-defense, engaging in a conflict viewed by the community as at least questionable, echoed from involvement in both the Mulelist Rebellion and the ANC up to the RPF and AFDL. Generations of Banyamulenge saw peace and security as an outcome of this essential involvement in conflict and in some cases a zero-sum arrangement. Overall, the perceived reoccurrence of genocide in 1996 germinated from the moments that these soldiers began their journey east to RPF training camps.

Soldiers' narratives generate a set of self-commentaries and identifications as they moved through experiences of genocide. As Banyamulenge soldiers journeyed through these events, they cast themselves performatively as Rwandan, RPF, Congolese, AFDL, demonstrating a mixture of ascribed identities as well as their own self-framings. These often created a subjectivity of identities. Genocide narrative identity compelled soldiers to interpret their situatedness. In the Zaïrean Postcolony, political representation and the question of nationality provided ample grounds for the RPF to sow conceptions not only of where Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda belonged as part of a genocide narrative identity. RPF narratives identified emerging expectations of who belonged where and how that belonging was enforced, shaping brotherhood, liberation, and genocide.

The gaze RPF recruits were trained to use in viewing the *genocidaire* was framed by these exposures. Crucially, the intersubjective element of this dynamic is where the gaze is returned, either through captive ex-FAR/ Interahamwe or through the empty eyes of the dead. These interactions ironically brought to life and gave added contextual meaning to the Postcolony brought from Zaïre and the reinterpretation of such by the RPF. In seeing the *genocidaire* and the dead, they started to sense who they were in reference to their own narrative capacity.²⁰⁶ This social actor understanding of themselves and the *genocidaire* was reinforced by the witnessing of genocide

in Rwanda and was later contextualized in the genocide narrative identity connected to both the Zaïre of the past and in its mid-1990s present. The shifts of power, discussed in the previous chapter, solidified relations not only between anti-Tutsi forces in eastern Zaïre, but also in the RPF-framed perceptions of the *genocidaire*. As Ntaganda noted, these were some of the ones that stopped the Rwandan genocide, and in so doing identified the mobility of the *genocidaire* ascription.

Networks, structuring the physical and relational journey of the soldier, shaped identities and provided constraints and choices for young Banyamulenge. The robust RPF networks, developed throughout North and South Kivu, provided a connection and ultimately an antecedent cause to perform a genocide narrative identity. Like Ntaganda, they would become soldiers, not only professionals with a code but also rebels with a just cause. The networks that propelled these recruits into Rwanda fed, clothed, beat, and armed them. Soldiers were educated within the framing of RPF anti-colonialism and they formed the *genocidaire* in both concrete terms if they fought in 1994 Rwanda, or indirectly through the exposure to corpses in mass cleanup operations.²⁰⁷ These were not passive acts of national reconstruction, but performative relations to the *genocidaire*, attempts at clearly defining perpetrator and victim by using an RPF narrative.

What then did it mean to be a Tutsi for the Banyamulenge recruits? The answer should reveal the limitation and liberation of such ethnic ascriptions and subscriptions. These young men, who grew up ascribed as Rwandans, embraced this identity out of desperation, opportunity for improved life chances, seeking belonging. But this identification was a parallel alongside other identities, especially in the retrospective narratives of these soldiers. Had Rwanda not pursued its own citizens into Zaïre, it is quite likely these recruits may have remained in Rwanda, pursuing long-term employment or education. Siboyintore, now a one-handed survivor of war, came to Rwanda for education. When joining the RPF post-genocide, he recalled that those who had done so at this time had no idea they would be returning to Congo.

In a similar fashion to the many Ugandan-born RPF recruits that descended in the early 1990s into Rwanda, participation in multidirectional violence was not predetermined. Joining the RPF did not set these Banyamulenge on a predestined path, but provided networks and narratives to take up and continue an RPF journey. It was a journey involving not only trends and uses of violence, but also specific understandings of the latter. The crucial role of the RPF in this period was that it constructed a geno-

cide narrative identity with deep contextual connections to marginality in Zaïre. The inception and development of the *genocidaire* by the Banyamulenge ordered their moral and existential universes. It would prove to be fatal for many combatants, engaging them in decades of armed conflict. It also would facilitate the destruction of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees ascribed as *genocidaires*.

4

Refugees and *Genocidaires*

“BULLETS DID NOT SELECT”

We couldn't create influence, as the others were retaliating against their own people who had killed their brothers. We couldn't say no.

—CHRISTIAN¹

Joël Karekezi's 2018 film *La Miséricorde de la Jungle* captures the multidirectional nature of the attacks on the refugee camps during the First Congo War. These attacks were not isolated massacres or acts of revenge, but part of the long durée of RPF violence, astride a war of liberation, the 1994 genocide, and both Congo Wars. In a moment of quiet, the two lost RPA soldiers, Private Faustin and Sargent Xavier, ponder the legacy of such connections, turning to the personal.

SERGEANT XAVIER: Now they'll hunt us down. We're forced to stay in the jungle. Do you remember, the last time you saw your father, your family?

PRIVATE FAUSTIN: I saw them taken by men and boys from my village. I was hiding in the bushes, I didn't quite get what was going on.

S.X.: My father was also a patriot. He died at the liberation. I was afraid, his death would remain unpunished.

P.F.: Are you still afraid, Sergeant?

S.X.: Our families' assassins, I walked right over them the most vulnerable too, women, children, babies. Too weak, starved, sick, not being able to tell them apart the guilty, the innocent. That's why children

will always have the right to hate us. This will not end, that's what scares me.²

These parallel reflections consider the connections between the loss of family in 1994 and the destruction of the refugee camps in 1996. The realization came that the *genocidaires* of 1994 encountered in the camps of 1996 turned out to be the weak and vulnerable refugees. Banyamulenge soldiers similarly experienced this multidirectional violence, yet they position themselves as unwilling agents of the targeting, removal, and destruction of *genocidaires*. Christian's caveat in this chapter's epigraph of the limited agency of Banyamulenge soldiers needs to be read alongside the reflections of Xavier and Faustin in Karekezi's film. The 1996–97 attacks on the refugee camps in many ways sit at a key intersection of layers of multidirectional violence.

This chapter reconstructs the First Congo War and the escalation leading up to it. The RPA-led AFDL march into the refugee camps is described and analyzed using the perceptions of Banyamulenge soldiers and other sources. Refugees were scattered, repatriated, and, increasingly during the course of the war, shot in the process or simply corralled for execution. Rwandan, Banyamulenge, and North Kivu Banyarwanda soldiers led and drove these actions. The 1994 mass exodus of Rwandan armed and civilian actors became a series of thresholds making violent removal increasingly permissible. I retrace the two-pronged movement of the RPA-led AFDL across Zaïre, in the north from Goma, and then south from Kamanyola. The first section follows Nicolas, the RPF, and other Banyamulenge soldiers in the early incursions from 1995 into the summer of 1996. Soldier narratives describe how refugees in this early phase were understood to be carriers of “bad ideology,” spreading the threat of genocide. The next section addresses the context around the attacks on the Mugunga camp in November 1996 and soldiers' perceptions of refugees around the dismantling of the camp. This event catalyzed a threshold and plot points, leading world leaders to further turn away from a situation that Kagame had convinced the UN should be handled by the RPF. The final section charts the RPA/AFDL march across Congo, with soldier narrations of how bullets account for an abstraction of agency. The chapter concludes with insights into 1990s' RPF and Banyamulenge soldier violence.

An overview of this period and the progression of the 1996 invasion is important to note. The earliest rumblings of the invasion date back to the 1995 and arise in tandem with increasing camp-based attacks back across the

border into Rwanda, as well as increasing attacks on Banyamulenge in South Kivu and other Tutsi in eastern Congo. Many of these events were addressed in chapter 2: the toxic fallout of the democratization, formal revoking of Banyamulenge citizenship in Congo, growing violence up and down Lake Kivu, displacement into border areas and Rwanda, and an increase in the numbers of willing recruits joining the RPF.

Kigali was now growing not only its Congolese rebellion through the expansion of recruitment but also through the political façade in Kabila and the conglomeration of rebels willing to sign up for the AFDL. The invasion began with the summer incursions by Banyamulenge troops moving quietly between the border and Hauts and Moyen Plateaux gathering intelligence and soldiers. August 1996 saw the commencement of formal fighting between what would become AFDL troops, the Rwandan Hutu militias and ex-FAR, local militias, and the disarrayed FAZ. The remainder of 1996 saw fierce combat and violent emptying of the refugee camps up and down the border. The emptying of Mugunga was crucial: Kagame successfully presented to the international community the argument that those who had returned to Rwanda were the refugees and those who remained were the *genocidaires*. Furthermore, he sold to the UN Security Council the tidy option of rejecting a suggested multinational intervention force, allowing the AFDL to do the work of routing out the *genocidaires* and replacing Mobutu.

After Mugunga, two fronts emerged where camps were closed down through a well-tested combination of rockets and bullets. Banyamulenge soldiers concentrated in the front down Lake Tanganyika, splitting off toward Shabunda and Kindu in February 1997. Units then progressed toward major cities like Lubumbashi and Mbuji-Mayi. Many flowed from South Kivu to join the battles and camp removal in Kisangani. The second, northern front pushed from Goma westward to the Kisangani rendezvous point in March. After clearing the area of *genocidaires*, the AFDL/RPA moved westward, following the trail of refugees and makeshift camps to Boende and Mbandaka before the triumphal May arrival in Kinshasa.

Another crucial starting caveat for this chapter is the reality that not all refugee deaths since the massive arrival of the summer of 1994 were direct killings. Death rates resulting from disease and starvation in the camps, and then on the run across Congo, were significant. The soldiers often explained the deaths of refugees through the absence of resources. This was a result of the chronic lack of relief for refugees, but also as a strategic cordoning

off, keeping aid agencies out of areas where camp clearing operations were being pursued. From the summer of 1994, these sites were marked by death resulting from diarrheal diseases like cholera and dysentery.

In the camps around Goma within the first months of the arrival of the exodus, mortality rates during July and August 1994 shot up to somewhere between 28 to 45 percent daily, resulting in 48,374 deaths.³ Mortality rates improved following this period, but disease continued to mark the refugee experience, especially for those on the run after the forced closure of Mugunga.⁴ A survey of surviving refugees near Brazzaville offers stark data about those who had survived. Most were female and young and had started their journey in the Kivu camps. Based on the sample, 20 percent died, 60 percent were missing, and the remaining 20 percent reached the border in the summer of 1997.⁵ The calculated mortality of the journey across Congo first reached a peak in November 1996 and then doubled in May 1997.⁶ These findings indicate higher mortality rates because of increasingly hostile conditions. The further across Congo refugees ventured around and after the turning point of Mugunga, the more likely their deaths became. These deaths increasingly resulted from an environment where execution and disease were frequent occurrences. In this horrific period from 1996 to 1997, camps in and around Kisangani also saw similar suffering. Here the mortality rate reached as high as 90 percent.⁷

From 1994 to 1996, of the one million refugees in eastern Congo, approximately half returned to Rwanda after the Mugunga camp attack. This population was of combined Burundian and Rwandan refugees in areas of Congo bordering these states. The westward flight from refugee camps dismantled along the border in the early months of the war included around 340,000, according to UN estimates.⁸ The best figure, so far, on the number of refugees that died at the hands of the AFDL is 233,000. Survivors mostly arrived across the border near Brazzaville, others south into Tanzania and Zambia.

The Rwandan government's response to potential claims of genocide contrasts with the body of information attesting to the obliteration of refugees. These arguments weigh in favor of "collateral damage" or a more passive version of "starvation and disease" as the most likely causes of death.⁹ This view does not of course consider the relational perspectives used in this research or a close examination of the lethal impact of blocking or preventing aid from reaching the camps. Fein's concept of genocide by attrition is helpful here in bridging the legal and sociological perspectives on this matter. Using UNCG's article 2(c) focus on creating conditions of life

that bring about destruction of the group, Fein identifies that “hunger and diseases attributable to starvation and poor living conditions” result in the same “genocidal outcomes” as direct killing.¹⁰ Genocide by attrition may also apply to these circumstances where people are forcibly removed from dwellings, denied access to food, ideologically classified as outside the protection of the state, and attacked as security threats.¹¹ Classifying such methods of population control and eradication as indirect or collateral damage only obfuscates reasonably foreseeable consequences.¹² While not a comprehensive review of this potentially expansive and under-researched area of this case study, this is another distinct element of the genocidal process at work because of the conditions set and perpetuated by the AFDL/RPA.

Kibinba's Insurgency on Genocidaire Ideology

The AFDL's war began formally with the Lemera Declaration on October 18.¹³ The planning and covert action started much sooner. From the summer of 1996 onwards, in tandem with early AFDL recruitment, Banyamulenge vanguard groups were led by Nicolas from the Rwanda-Congo border into the Hauts Plateaux and back on various occasions. This led in part to two perceptions, one ascribed and another subscribed. First that it was a Banyamulenge war. Indeed, it was their war, but not exclusively. The AFDL was an assemblage of various parties, but those already losing family and community from 1995 into 1996 were the Banyamulenge. To be sure, Banyarwanda in North Kivu were facing similar losses, but there was a totalizing character to the growing violence in South Kivu. Second, soldiers themselves saw this conflict as a fight against extinction. Their recalled agitation for the “promise of return” was realized in Nicolas's summer missions. There can be no doubt as to who was directing the overall war. The RPA had not only prepared politically and militarily for 1996, they had accumulated a Congolese fighting force that was ready to eliminate the *genocidaire* threat. A threat not only pushing past the border from North Kivu into northwest Rwanda, but now rife throughout South Kivu.¹⁴ This was the moment the liberators had been trained for, and the *genocidaires* were in plain sight. It was well promoted that the refugee camps were brimming with a poisonous ideology, weapons, and hate.

An earlier signifier of the violence of the AFDL campaign came with the covert attack on Birava. This small town is located on the picturesque shores

of Lake Kivu, just north of Bukavu. Since the summer of 1994, however, it had been home to one of many Rwandan and Burundian refugee camps along the Congolese border. On April 11, 1995, the RPA launched mortars from the adjacent, tiny island of Ibindja, landing in the refugee camp. A group of one hundred soldiers then followed the missiles with gunfire, grenades, and knives, killing at least thirty people and wounding around a hundred.¹⁵ The camp was then deserted by the nine thousand inhabitants, who sought out refuge in other nearby camps.¹⁶ This attack was followed up with a similar attack on Mugunga later that month. Both were responses to the growing cross-border attacks by Interahamwe and ex-FAR elements.¹⁷ Other incidents would occur where dawn raids on camps would yield no reported killing, but a forced return. On February 16, 1996, in Bukavu, the Nyangazi camp was emptied by RPA soldiers.¹⁸ Actions by FAZ soldiers who violently cleared camps, forcing a return to Rwanda, set a dangerous precedent for this approach, one that the RPA would willingly follow. FAZ camp closures only pushed refugees farther west into Congo, or to other camps, swelling the size of these many temporary cities along the border. Fears of likely imprisonment or death were only made more tangible by the Kibeho massacre around this same time.¹⁹ News reporting is unclear as to whether Banyamulenge RPA soldiers were present. Given the extensive DMI, commando, and other roles filled after 1994, and valued local knowledge, participation in raiding parties was highly likely.

Nicolas's group, as advance scouts for the RPA, led covert missions into South Kivu during 1996, before the main late summer infiltration. His objective was to gather intelligence on camp and FAZ locations, recruit more people, and disperse weapons.²⁰ This was the first time he had returned since leaving Congo many years earlier and starting a new life in Bujumbura before being recruited by the RPF in 1990. He was now returning as a liberator with the backing of the RPF. The locations he and his small units traveled to during 1996 are uncertain. During this time, however, three things are known. More attacks on camps were carried out, RPA troop infiltrations and recruitment continued, and attacks against civilians in South Kivu, including Banyamulenge, increased.

Between Bukavu and Uvira, both Plateaux areas became a ground zero for the earliest camp clearing. The Runingu camp was the first that year to be attacked. In April 1996, a year after Birava, what was believed to be Banyamulenge and other RPA soldiers attacked the camp at Runingu while en route deeper into Uvira and Fizi territories, killing between eight and ten refugees.

Nicolas's group returned again with increased Rwandan support in August and then finally in October to the dwindling Runingu camp. In August came the artillery, at which time the camp was shelled on the believable claim of the presence of armed *genocidaires*. Refugees and combatants dispersed and were chased into the mountains.²¹ In the final AFDL/RPA attack on Runingu, it was again shelled before soldiers marched on foot through the camp shooting at refugees. Six hundred died in this camp between October and December 1996.²²

Nicolas and his covert band of fewer than thirty soldiers were likely to have led an attack in June 1996 on the Kibumba medical facility for medical supplies.²³ The summer proceeded with distributing weapons into mobilized Banyamulenge populations, along with supporting the sensitization and recruitment of more young men from the Plateaux areas, as noted in the previous chapter.²⁴ Nicolas's group was in fact the first of four groups that summer, well-remembered by most soldiers from the period. The meticulous recollection of almost every soldier denoted the crucial opportunity of liberating Congo and protecting families in South Kivu.²⁵ Simultaneously, it symbolized the ready sacrifice that was squandered by the double betrayal at the hands of Rwandan RPF brothers and leaders and Congolese neighbors and politicians. I return to this crucial aspect of betweenness for Banyamulenge soldiers in the next chapter.

Kamanyola, as a border crossing point, would become a crucial place of engagement with *genocidaires* for AFDL/RPA. This town sits on the Congo-Rwanda-Burundi border and therefore a strategic launching point for the rebels. Not only was its refugee camp a frequent target, much like Runingu, it was also a site of FAZ attacks on Banyamulenge. Between September 21 and 23 more than a dozen people were shot, including a community leader, a group of deportees waiting to cross to Rwanda, and another group accused of being RPA recruits.²⁶ The arrival of all four advance groups was likely connected to these killings as part of the ongoing early fighting and retributive attacks against communal groups seen to be allied with one or another major actor in this summer prelude.

The group following Nicolas's was led by Rugazura and Gukunzi. Janvier recalled being part of this group in his first crossing back into Congo after joining the RPF years earlier. Their number was half that of Nicolas's first group, and it arrived in mid-August. After safely crossing without attracting attention near the border, they merged with Nicolas's force in Hauts Plateaux.²⁷ The third group arrived home in Congo during late August,

led by FAZ defector Matthias Bigiritsibo and Banyamulenge RPF soldier Ndori. Siboyintore, a part of this group, noted how he and his comrades were first deployed in Cyangugu near a tea plantation. A short while later, in early August, they were ushered into a series of twelve trucks. They were driven by Rwandan officers into Burundi. "I was looking out a small hole [in the truck], I told everyone that I saw the sign 'Welcome to Burundi' as we drove at night."²⁸ This group of freshly trained RPF troops arrived not only with a gun and a box of bullets each, but now as soldiers. Siboyintore noted that there was a distinct political dimension to their new belonging, with a "promise to liberate Congo."²⁹ With this networked knowledge and weapons from Rwanda, Siboyintore and his group waded across the Ruzizi River in late August. They immediately encountered the embattled refugee camp at Runingu. From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. they pushed through this resistance as "the Interahamwe attacked us."³⁰ As the fighting continued the RPA sent shells flying through the sky into the camp at believed Interahamwe positions. Around this time on August 31, a fourth group fell into a deadly encounter with FAZ and Interahamwe forces.³¹

The fourth, more numerous group in early October, marked not only the increase in ADFL/RPA forces but the burgeoning of attacks on refugee camps from the Ruzizi border into South Kivu. Here Nicolas gathered his groups together with Murokore. The summer insurgency force now numbered in the hundreds, well-armed and situated in an outpost, prepared to support the coming invasion in the following weeks.

Attacks on suspected *genocidaires* continued in the name of military necessity or gathering supplies. In early October, when more troops poured over the border, back in the Plateaux areas an attack on the Lemera hospital was carried out. Vanguard units entered the hospital and killed thirty-seven patients and staff members, presumed guilty of harboring the enemy, and "ransacked the hospital."³² On the same day, and not far from the hospital in Oliver's home area of Kidote, fifty people were killed by similar units. Bodies were later discovered in a mass grave nearby, with indications that some had been forced to dig their own graves before being shot and that others already dead were thrown in. Among their number were two neighboring Babembe chiefs, demarcating for many in this group the beginning of the war.³³ These events are but two examples of escalation and reciprocal attacks on Banyamulenge communities in the area. Prior to this in late September, following skirmishes with RPF-led units, evacuated residents of the Bibogobogo area were attacked by Babembe militias and FAZ troops, killing three hun-

dred Banyamulenge civilians. Many of the women were raped prior to their deaths.³⁴ Within days of the Lamera and Kidote attacks, Lwabanji's removal order was announced and, subsequently, hundreds of Banyamulenge in Bukavu were massacred. This included the targeting of family members of Banyamulenge FAZ officers who, like Bigiritsibo, were identified as defectors to the AFDL.³⁵

Throughout October AFDL soldiers conducted various attacks on civilians across the safe zone Nicolas and his insurgents had established in the Plateaux areas down to the lake cities of Uvira and Fizi. This violence appears to have had a range of motivations from reprisals to Mai Mai attacks, civilians deemed to be connected to these attacks, or people simply not following the orders of the new authorities. What is clear is that the killing of civilians was performed with the aim of establishing control across these deeper parts of South Kivu. An example demonstrates these logics on a local level. One of the first strikes in Mwenga zone came weeks earlier in mid-September when the two Babembe local chiefs were killed. Later in October, not far from Minembwe in the Abala-Ngulube village, congregants of a Babembe church were locked into their house of worship and burned alive. These civilians had previously been asked to leave their village following a Mai Mai attack days earlier. Noncompliance with new military rule came with the punishment of death.³⁶ Local militias associated with anti-Tutsi views and violence were seen as embedded in their communities and as reflections of them. The pending threat of Banyamulenge removal only heightened tensions.

Because of the networks already situating many RPA/AFDL soldiers, association with "bad ideology" underpinned the identification of the *genocidaire*.³⁷ Socialization into violence personalized by past feelings of shame and inadequacy led to identification of civilians as the Other. This perpetrator-victim-centered relation made the targeting of civilians for extreme violence increasingly likely.³⁸ The bodies of Banyamulenge had already been ascribed as Tutsi and therefore targeted for genocidal violence, or in Gustav's words, "The people that were living in Rwanda, the soldiers and people, they fled in this side . . . which created insecurity for those living in those borders and then people that lived in Congo with [Tutsi] morphology. The Banyamulenge, we were victims [more] than others."³⁹ Such physical ascriptions were inverted back to those marked as having bad ideology. What made earlier RPF framing so potent were the post-genocide-era visceral, graphic connections through the clearing of bodies, and now in combat against or detention of the *genocidaire*. In a binary sense, there was good ideology that led

to national liberation and freedom from colonial oppression, and there was bad ideology that replicated colonial labels and “The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda.”⁴⁰

In the words of Amartya Sen, soldiers expressed the *genocidaire* label as a charged attribution of actors in the camps, carriers of bad ideology in violent places.⁴¹ Matthias reflected genocide narrative identity in this ascription with layering of prior experience and current narratives of insecurity. “The Hutu that were in Rwanda and then came to Congo already had in mind that they have to kill all of the Tutsis. It was there in their mind. The Banyamulenge had one hundred percent of a reason to defend themselves. . . . They [the Hutu] wanted to destroy their enemies in Congo.”⁴² Matthias went on to further the logic of this existential threat: “Bad ideology must be eliminated; immediate action should be taken to eradicate it, and eradicate hate from the Congolese population.”⁴³ Such a commission to remove this kind of ideology was widely supported and was fostered by the Rwandan training and post-genocide interactions.

For many, bad ideology was connected to the hatred with which the Banyamulenge felt when identified as Tutsi. Soldiers spoke of how this bad ideology had contaminated the population. Patience’s examination of bad ideology demonstrates the connections: “The Hutus that already have fled here, and they knew that they had run away after the genocide in Rwanda. Although it was not all of them that did it, all of them had a bad ideology to hate Tutsis. Because of their ideologies, they continued to lie to other people, other citizens, to run away from the soldiers because they were told that those that have killed their people will come back and kill them too.”⁴⁴ Regardless of actual perpetration, those who had fled marked themselves with a measure of culpability, carriers of a system of thought that was inherently genocidal. The assumed impact of this ideology spread and affected Congolese citizens now exposed.

This description of what the Rwandans’ brought with them after their arrival in mid-1994 is demonstrated in the previous chapter. Some labeled this as sensitization, others as intoxication.⁴⁵ Mugenzi re-emphasized the scale of this threat, and the reach of bad ideology. Speaking about the period around Lwabanji’s removal order, he claimed, “They had prepared troops to invade our villages and they started approaching some people by telling them bad ideology so that they kill us. So, it was certain that if nothing was done, we could have been exterminated.”⁴⁶ The logical response to such an insipid threat was to remove the ideology. The ascription of the refugees,

ex-FAR/Interahamwe, and those Congolese seen as their allies meant that ideology became embodied in these actors.

Nicolas's summer insurgency was not only a logistical mission. Based on the reconstruction of the movements of these four groups, led according to most soldiers by Nicolas, these units were integral to the early attacks on refugee camps. Their mission was not limited to AFDL recruitment, securing an outpost, or even gathering supplies from hospitals, but also covered executing the life and death objective of removing the *genocidaire*. There are two salient points that arise out of the latter characterization or charged attribution. First, a networked narrative of the *genocidaire* arose out of the soldiers' own relational identity. The subscribed, relational identities of Banyamulenge soldiers in the RPF provided a social space and categorization that embodied the pending genocidal threat following the arrival of the exodus and continuing up to the 1996 invasion. Networked narrations of responsibility for prior massacres framed the dynamics of violence in the moment. Whether or not presumed guilty or seen as responsible parties, refugees were dealt with in a lethally reciprocal manner.⁴⁷ AFDL/RPA soldiers performed their genocide narrative identity, but in doing so conceived of camp inhabitants in their own marginality to the extreme point of obliterating many of them.

Second, the narratives of participants presented in this section on eliminating ideology and in the later one on the indiscriminate nature of bullets, revisits the dichotomy of AFDL/RPA violence. On the one hand, the training mandated that murdering civilians was prohibited ("we don't kill innocent people"). On the other, carriers of bad ideology had to be removed. At first, this seemed straightforward enough when thousands willingly returned to Rwanda or were terrorized into so doing. The magnitude of the wave of returnees, up to and including Mugunga, provided grounding for an increasing logic of guilt. This logic also followed Rwandans back into Rwanda, where many reported being harassed, imprisoned, and tortured.⁴⁸ Those who fled into Zaïre embodied bad ideology and were perceived as exponentially less innocent as the campaign progressed. AFDL/RPA soldiers, including veteran and recent Banyamulenge recruits, were situated within the violence of the camps and engaged in systematic attacks and their own perceived vulnerability on a frontline filled with *genocidaires*. As such, they increasingly turned from indiscriminate to selective violence when encountering the *genocidaire*. Explanations of what happened to refugees are indeed varied. Although most ventured down the southern axis,

avoiding the more well-known and reported killings from Kisangani to Mbandaka, none accounted specifically or personally for the violence experienced by the 100,000 refugees on their route toward Shabunda and Kindu.

Mugunga: A Refugee Turning Point

After the Mugunga camp was emptied in November, the refugees who stayed in Congo fled inwards: 170,000 toward Kisangani and 100,000 southwards to Shabunda. About 100,000 remained embedded in the hills of Masisi and Walikale. The armed and organized ex-FAR/ Interahamwe fighters spread themselves across the country, some among these refugees, others making their way north toward sanctuary in Sudan.⁴⁹ The logic of remaining in Zaïre versus returning was one intersected by experience with and rumor of past RPF violence. For those who repatriated at gunpoint prior to November, this confirmed RPF violence. Shelters were summarily dismantled, light arms fire was used indiscriminately, and camps were surrounded. At this point the AFDL/RPA only let refugees escape toward the border.⁵⁰ The methods deployed by the RPF trained forces to disperse, isolate, select, and kill suspected collaborators and *genocidaires* in Zaïre echoed those of civil-war-era and post-genocide Rwanda.

The sudden, violent attack on Mugunga reinforced these dangers of returning. The fighting that occurred in Mugunga was a result of the concentration of soldiers in the camp.⁵¹ Participants often characterized Mugunga as the place where both the refugee and ex-FAR/ Interahamwe gathered. This implied that those who stayed after this point accumulated and deepened their complicity in the *genocidaire* agenda. Gatete confirmed, "It was the Interahamwe, the ones who were soldiers, the ones who resisted, that refused to go back. So, they ran with their wives toward Kisangani."⁵² Other soldiers, when asked about what was intended by the RPF in the camps, claimed to have no knowledge of what happened.

Although some indicated rumor or knowledge of the massacres, they were coy in that acknowledgment, to whatever degree it was given. Moise noted the following when asked about what the RPA did in the camps: "That is more political. I don't know how to say it. If you want me to say that they did a genocide that, I cannot say. I cannot say it because I did not see it. If you go to Tingi-Tingi, there is a camp, the camp of Mugunga there were almost about a million refugees. . . . We understand that they had been suf-

fering, but saying that was genocide? That there was a genocide there, I do not know.”⁵³ This response was typical. Both political actor and soldier alike positioned themselves away from the rumor or even possible recollection of massacres. Many claimed that these things only happened on the northern front (at the hands of Banyarwanda). Thierry further adds, when asked more directly about international UN reports on the attacks, “The RPF wanted so much to bring back the civilians and have them join them rather than killing them. Secondly, the *inkotanyi* that were supporting the AFDL, they didn’t have any jealousy or envy of anything, or feeling to revenge to anyone in Congo.”⁵⁴ The rehabilitation of RPF acts, those the Banyamulenge were partners in, was common in both soldiers and political actors. Thierry continued, “In my opinion they wanted everyone to go back and eventually they did. I didn’t see anything that could make the *inkotanyi* kill anyone in 1996. Nevertheless, in war there will be one killing the other or if guns shoot, a lot of people are killed.”⁵⁵ On the one hand all refugees as innocents returned, rightly to Rwanda, as they had nothing to fear. The disclaimer of the uneven, arbitrary brutality of warfare is used as a catch-all for any violence involved in the return of refugees. Given the weight of evidence of the massacres on both the northern and southern axes, such a seeming generalization is crucial in how Banyamulenge actors narrowly frame this past.

Following initial victories against their opponents in South Kivu, Rugira recalled how the Interahamwe were chased northward to Mugunga. In his view—one shared by others—the north was seen as more hospitable to these enemy forces. “As they were running toward the north, a lot of them were dying on the way and some of them were killed, but others were also infiltrating with other civilians.”⁵⁶ North Kivu for many participants was considered a *genocidaire* haven as a “lot of Hutu people that live there and Interahamwe also went to Hutu tribes there.”⁵⁷ They were seen as being able to blend in with the existing Hutu population and the broader Congolese population.

What made Mugunga a further turning point was Kagame’s success at the UN in staving off and removing the possibility of MNF deployment. Rudasingwa, as chief diplomat in the United States at the time, claimed there was a conscious “political calculation” at work in preventing this intervention.⁵⁸ Comparing the situation to the stalemate prior to the 1994 genocide, this agenda was to “prevent an increase in UN presence, as this would freeze the military situation and retain Arusha”; allowing UN involvement would “block the [RPF] political agenda.”⁵⁹ The Rwandan ambassador to the

UN expressed this strategy by likening the proposed MNF to the failed Operation Turquoise. The only likely outcomes, he claimed, would be a further propping up of Mobutu's regime and another free pass for the ex-FAR/ Interahamwe to escape justice.⁶⁰

Rudasingwa followed Kigali's talking points advancing the theory of the refugees as ex-FAR/ Interahamwe hostages. This notion was reinforced by the apparent liberation of Mugunga. Mugunga's growth in population leading up to November 1996 was a result of the violent emptying of surrounding camps, resonating with a fear of AFDL/RPA tactics. Routes from surrounding camps all now led to Mugunga. On November 13 it was surrounded by the AFDL/RPA and bombarded with artillery. Two days later, troops entered on foot and directed the camp inhabitants at gunpoint back to Goma and across the border.⁶¹ This carefully timed reversal of the 1994 summer exodus occurred just prior to the pending UN Security Council Resolution 1080 to establish the MNF.⁶² But with Mugunga, the largest camp at the time, now supposedly emptied, Kigali's allies were able to dissuade the Security Council of the necessity of "Operation Assurance" by early December.⁶³ The refugees-as-hostages thesis confirmed the approach of the AFDL/RPA of dealing with the guilty who remained.⁶⁴ In the words of the AFDL commander on the ground, James Kabarebe, "It was like a wave, a mass of people moving. It was very fascinating. And to me it was a very big achievement, because we had done what the UN had failed to do."⁶⁵ By carefully building a case with allies against the intervention, the AFDL/RPA was able to maintain control of the West's perception of the conflict and construct a convincing reality on the ground.⁶⁶ To a degree, this representation of refugees as *genocidaire* hostages removed a measure of agency from these camp inhabitants. They were subjects of a genocide narrative identity and therefore the *genocidaire*. This was a crucial accomplishment for the continued Othering of this group. The acceptance of hostage characterization up to November allowed for the remaining refugees and armed actors to be lumped together as *genocidaires*.⁶⁷ Despite claims that violence simply got out of hand after Mugunga, there was a distinct drive toward total control of the situation and continual use of massacres to drive out refugees.⁶⁸

A question to consider is why refugees accepted return to Rwanda as a viable option? In the words of Beatrice Umutesi, some chose to return during 1995 and 1996 as the only viable option given the impoverished and violent conditions of the camps. Being confronted with the choice of selling

humanitarian supplied food to pay for return was a real consideration. Age was also a factor; younger inhabitants saw continuing to fight against the RPF and secure a forced return as a preference.⁶⁹ The Zaïrean government was also involved in forcible returns and voluntary return negotiations facilitated by UNHCR in areas across the Kivus, adding to the difficult choices facing refugees.⁷⁰

How did soldiers and political actors account for the remaining refugees? Amani gave the view that accusations of the AFDL or the RPA killing refugees are hard to answer due to a flippant banality: "Any war is a war."⁷¹ Within the hostile environment "thousands" more died as a result of "famine and poor conditions."⁷² Some claimed not to have seen any refugees during the course of combat from 1996 to 1997.⁷³ Heritier, who was recruited out of Butare into the AFDL, noted how the proximity of the camps to the border was a huge threat. When the Interahamwe got into Congo they "mixed with Mobutu's people, they had the same purpose."⁷⁴ Others, such as Ikiyaga, clearly stated that the ex-FAR/ Interahamwe were specifically targeted. "Yes, we came down here to hunt for them. Those that resisted, they were killed. And those that surrendered, they were captured and taken back."⁷⁵ Balthazar made a similar comment on the context of war. Those who remained in the field of battle were classified as the enemy, "It is a war. It is nothing less. The Interahamwe were there, but most of the people were Interahamwe and ex-FAR."⁷⁶ It was understood that if the ex-FAR/Interahamwe were found, they "would be put to death."⁷⁷ This commentary demonstrates the qualified acknowledgment by some participants of refugee deaths in the course of combat, omitting any further detail.

Admission of refugee deaths at the hands of the AFDL was also redirected toward the Rwandans. Leonard described this dynamic: "It was not the Congolese; it's the RPA that attacked and killed the Rwandese refugees. And these refugees were also mixed with the ex-FAR."⁷⁸ Given the command structures and the interconnectedness of Banyamulenge in the RPA, it was continually unclear how and when motivations and involvement could be differentiated. Janvier described an example of such violence against the *genocidaire*, where one RPA soldier exacted revenge on a captured foe,

That soldier, he came, after he had seen that we had captured them alive, he had a bayonet, a knife, and he stabbed one Interahamwe. After he had done that, he licked the blood on his knife. Then I asked him, "Why did you do that?" He said that he [the Interahamwe soldier] is from Rwanda

and they have killed his father, his mother, and everyone. There was total destruction of everything. The soldier said, "Now you are telling me that I should let them go?" I remember that he was arrested and taken.⁷⁹

This description typifies the way in which revenge was seen deployed as a factor in soldiers' narratives. It positions violence away from a systemic character to an ad hoc one, complementing the RPF explanations of such random acts of violence. Matthias offers this explanation of how revenge motivated such incidents:

These young soldiers in RPF saw their parents being killed. They went back to their village and find that everyone was killed. They had killed everyone. Some killed themselves; others went and killed others, as revenge. Also, after revenging, they would come and kill themselves too. It was inevitable that something happened of course, there were errors and mistakes that we cannot help from happening, even here in Congo; there were some serious problems as the AFDL was moving forward. . . . In general, in war, any kind of war is not good.⁸⁰

Acts of revenge within the war add a vague quality to these descriptions. This leans into the genocide narrative identity, showing how experiences of genocide were used to interpret and explain violence. Matthias went on to refer to "errors" on other occasions to explain why accusations were made about the killings of ex-FAR/Interahamwe and refugees: "There were people that were captured and those that were not captured, I think the officers of RPF were, who were having that mindset and running off and chasing them somewhere, maybe they made some errors, and that happens in war."⁸¹ Within the context of war many participants considered this to be inevitable, yet a special circumstance was granted in this case because of the past genocide (in 1994) and its continued threat.

Christian also attributed the possibility of revenge attacks, described by participants as isolated and punished, to a level of education and awareness of international norms. Many Banyamulenge, he believed, did not get involved in massacres of refugees. This was only done by "uneducated people" who "committed human rights abuses by killing people."⁸² He claimed that "There was some Banyamulenge and some Rwandese who were not educated and they were at the top, but there were few officers. Most of the top officers who did the massacres were Rwandese and uneducated. Some

Banyamulenge were educated but were very few and didn't have command. They couldn't create influence, as the others were retaliating against their own people who had killed their brothers. We couldn't say no."⁸³

The position crafted for and by Banyamulenge soldiers was one caught between violent forces but not knowingly transgressing international law. Many participants claimed they were "only privates"⁸⁴ and lacked the ability to prevent such atrocities.⁸⁵ Christian further acknowledged the danger in doing so. This explanation of atrocities from Christian typifies the problematic nature of Banyamulenge positioning as passive actors. It was demonstrated in the previous chapter how many Banyamulenge, especially those who joined around the 1991 to early 1994 period walked the same footsteps and had the similar post-basic training development in commando operations, logistics, intelligence, and policing as their Zaïrean Banyarwanda and Rwandan compatriots. Because they formed the backbone of the first waves of the AFDL, as Nicolas and his vanguard did, it is difficult to relegate their roles to mere untrained foot soldiers.

Where killings of refugees were considered ad hoc, avoiding retaliatory attacks was seen as interrupting a process of grieving. Again, Christian emphasizes the Rwandan-RPF revenge dynamic: "They were killing the people who had killed their brothers and had fled to Congo. . . . As we were advancing, we captured them and then the RPA brought some here and some killed them. The Rwandese were committing such abuses as a kind of retaliation. It was not organized. It was some Rwandese soldiers who retaliated against the militias who killed their brothers in Rwanda."⁸⁶ Given Christian's earlier visceral description of pending destruction against the Banyamulenge in 1996 and that many considered the 1996 intervention too late, it is equally problematic that Rwandans' motives are made unique and the multidirectional element is excluded.⁸⁷ This is especially the case when many established a deep social bond and shared plight with, in Rugira's words, their "Tutsi brothers." Bernard's comparison of 1994 Rwanda to 1996 South Kivu ("absolutely similar to what took place in Rwanda"), and Bonte's discovery of the massacre of his family after returning, point toward a similar tragic experience by the same *genocidaire*. Furthermore, a revenge thesis obfuscates the systematic value of violence.

Genocide narrative identity was deployed to frame any admissions of attacks. Martin recalled what happened in some camps: "Most of them [the refugees] were killed. A lot of them were killed when they came from Rwanda. The Tutsis that were here, the Banyamulenge and others were

afraid that they would come to kill us as well. So, when these attacks were carried out, it is known that most of them were killed.”⁸⁸ Such narratives formed a zero-sum scenario. Here Martin confirms the resulting implication: kill or be killed.

The capture and release of ex-FAR/Interahamwe and refugees was prominent in participants’ retelling of these events. This process entailed handing Rwandans over to RPA officers or international agencies.⁸⁹ Like many, Patience recalled, “By then, the Rwandan soldiers [ex-FAR] were many. So, we handed them over to the [RPA], and put them in the trucks and drove them to Rwanda. We were also working with the UNHCR, and other international NGOs, assisting the refugees to go back to Rwanda.”⁹⁰ The rounding up and pursuit of refugees added an equally dangerous measure to the atmosphere of structural and direct violence on the ground. To cast this process as purely humanitarian would be misleading at best.

The sensitization of returning refugees by convincing them to come back to Rwanda and reintegrate into society was also crucial in this plot point. Many, like Matthias, attested to this element of the process. “Those that were captured were taken back to Rwanda to be reformed, and reintegrated back into society. Reform them and reintegrate them.”⁹¹ Such comments provide a veneer of legitimacy to the actions of the AFDL/RPA. Again, Banyamulenge soldiers were cast as operating within the bounds of international norms while excesses were happening around them. Even if their encountering of the *genocidaire* was limited to handing refugees over to the RPA, such acts increasingly resulted in refugees being erased and not returned home.

Mugunga in November as an idea and event turned out to be central to the AFDL/RPA strategy to remove the *genocidaire* problem before embarking on the journey to Kinshasa. As seen already, the early summer attacks on camps, and later ones from November 1996 onwards, show that the violent clearing of refugee and therefore *genocidaire* spaces was not a matter of escalation, but one of strategic timing. When the world was watching Mugunga and an intervention was being considered, RPF leadership turned a potential intrusion of their regional operations into a *carte blanche*. Genocide narrative identities of Banyamulenge soldiers followed suit with the RPF ascription of refugees as innocent based on their willingness to return and guilt shown in their flight deeper into Congo. Any violence spilling out from these abstractions was explained as “any war is a war.”

Bullets to Kinshasa

Recalling the invasion of Goma in October 1996, Bugera reminisced on the united front of the AFDL: "We went through Gisenyi to enter the city of Goma. I remember it was night-time, about 10 p.m. We were with the Rwandan officers. We were with James Kabarebe. I remember we were in line like soldiers. It was raining. They were young soldiers who were ahead of us, and then behind we had a Rwandan soldier alongside a Congolese politician . . . in line."⁹² On October 31, the AFDL/RPA made the triumphant march across the urban border of Gisenyi/Goma.⁹³ The southern front was already well underway, with many border camps emptied and destroyed. Prior to the northern invasion, but similar to the southern front, some clandestine military activity had taken place in the latter part of the summer.⁹⁴ Significant here were the preliminary attacks on refugee camps around Goma. The entrance into Goma demonstrated a juxtaposition within the AFDL. Officially it was a well-publicized popular front against the corruption embodied by Mobutu and armed elements among the camp inhabitants. Behind the patchwork of opposition groups, it was an RPF machine poised to violently dismantle camps and obliterate *genocidaire* occupants.

North of Goma, into the Rutshuru area, bookended by the Virunga National Park's southern portion and Lake Edward, attacks on camps and areas of anti-Tutsi violence resulted in mass graves that would later be discovered. It is possible that the earliest of these incursions into Zaïre came via the Ugandan border. In Bunagana in early June 1996, RPA and Ugandan soldiers, supported by local Tutsi Banyarwanda, killed between twenty-eight and thirty-six Hutu Banyarwanda.⁹⁵ Attacks on the Hutu population accompanied attacks on camps and those Zaïrean citizens considered to be aiding the *genocidaire*.⁹⁶ In step with removing themselves from massacres of refugees, soldiers characterized their North Kivu compatriots as more willing to kill refugees, making associations with well-known figures of both Nkunda and Ntaganda as warlords.⁹⁷

The camps in Kibumba and Katala were foremost in this northern area of Rutshuru. Around October 25, the RPA's 7th Battalion bombarded both the localities of Kibumba and Bihumba with artillery stationed at the border. These two hundred thousand camp inhabitants soon fled south despite additional FAZ support being flown in from Lubumbashi.⁹⁸ It is likely that between late October and January, thousands were killed by bombardments,

gunfire, or *agafani*.⁹⁹ Around this same date, the camp in Katale received similar treatment. Mass graves were found in the area of the camp, and bodies were found dumped in the latrines on the site, preserving the fact that inhabitants were executed with a bullet to the head.¹⁰⁰

Screening stations were then established by the AFDL/RPA. Checkpoints spread across the Rutshuru and Masisi areas, controlling humanitarian access to the areas at various times from October 1996 into April 1997.¹⁰¹ The attacks on Kibumba, Katale, and later in Sake, all occurring within this growing network of AFDL/RPA control, drew fleeing refugees into Mugunga.¹⁰² It was from this point on that the refugee population, comprising those fleeing from both North and South Kivu camps, split into those returning in large numbers and those scattering west. The remainder of this section follows those who fled westward seeking refuge in forests and eventually across Zaïre's western border into Brazzaville.

From the southern tip of North Kivu northwards, a triangular area cornered on the east by Masisi and on the west by Walikale forms the next zone of attacks, which occurred from November into December.¹⁰³ Refugees fled northwest toward Lubutu and the Tingi-Tingi camp. The violence in this area is largely characterized as being carried out with a variety of cold weapons, involving extremely bloody encounters for both the refugees and the AFDL/RPA soldiers.¹⁰⁴ The events in Hombo around December 9 demonstrate this pattern.

Prior to December, the Hombo camp had been the recipient of 250,000 refugees from Bukavu camps. Due to their more than eighty-kilometer march, trapped inside the web of AFDL/RPA humanitarian blockades, many arrived starved and diseased. Between 480 and 960 died each day.¹⁰⁵ The camp was then attacked around December 9. Several hundred people, including women and children, were shot escaping via a bridge crossing the Lowa River.¹⁰⁶ The AFDL/RPA then fanned out into the area to find any additional refugees who had avoided these initial attacks. One group was found and locked into a building and burned alive. Refugees in another group, after being assembled on the pretense of repatriation to Rwanda, were raped and then executed.¹⁰⁷ Within a few kilometers of Hombo, another group cornered by the AFDL/RPA was bludgeoned to death with hammers and thrown into the Lowa River. Again, this group was gathered on the premise of repatriation.¹⁰⁸

Instances of sexual violence were not a common feature of the attacks on refugees, but they did occur.¹⁰⁹ Amnesty International reported that

both FAZ and AFDL/RPA soldiers in this period engaged in acts of sexual violence, including rape and beatings. It is noted generally that FAZ acts of sexual violence were part of a use of force, in the same way as looting was an attempt to maintain local power.¹¹⁰ The AFDL/RPA deployed sexual violence in the context of camp clearing and their encounters with the *genocidaire*.¹¹¹ Presumably, this was with mixed motivation, but chiefly the purpose was to terrorize the population into submission, erasing their social power.

AFDL/RPA forces arriving by plane to Kisangani in April counteracted refugees' westwards movement. By December, Tingi-Tingi had been recognized as a growing camp. Combined with nearby Amisi camp, there were 170,000 inhabitants.¹¹² By January they were dying at a rate of 120 a day due to malaria, malnutrition, and later cholera.¹¹³ Prior to the AFDL/RPA shower of mortars on March 2, two thousand had managed to escape through a UN airlift, and dozens had already been killed in the area as smaller camps were picked off by the soldiers.¹¹⁴ For some time before this date until the beginning of April, humanitarian organizations had been blocked from the camps.¹¹⁵ The bombardment commenced, followed by soldiers entering into Tingi-Tingi on foot, spraying bullets at those not fast enough to run.¹¹⁶ Prior to the attacks, some had attempted to escape via the Lubutu Bridge, but they were also confronted and scattered by shelling and light weapons fire.¹¹⁷ News footage from March 5 shows a mostly deserted camp, burned out buildings, and a collection of light weapons and ammunition presumably left by fleeing ex-FAR/Interahamwe.¹¹⁸ The Lubutu Red Cross buried in mass graves those who had been shot by indiscriminate fire and stabbed with knives.¹¹⁹

Tingi-Tingi resonated with many participants, some claiming to know a little, others noting a family member or colleague that was present in the AFDL/RPA ranks at the time. For Augustin this was a watershed moment of the height of violence undertaken by "Rwandan troops." These events made anything in the second war "not as bad as the first."¹²⁰ Eugene's brother, who was present in the Banyamulenge ranks of the AFDL at Tingi-Tingi. Eugene notes the problem that it presented:

It was a refugee camp that was also hosting militaries, soldiers. When the RPF attacked them, they were resisting and there was fighting. A thousand people died there. You see in refugee camps, the civilians also died. Children and women also died. They fell victim, because ex-FAR was using civilians in their war, and it was a military camp that was assisted

by UNHCR. It was impossible to separate soldiers from civilians. They would just go and fight them.¹²¹

The challenge of differentiation is a key component. Combatants and civilians can be distinguishable, but the environment of the camp as a violent place limits the capacity to actively recognize any distinction. This dynamic invited a shared fate to refugee and armed actor alike. Tingi-Tingi as a space became a mark of distinction between what Banyarwanda and Rwandans in the north were deemed capable of and what the Banyamulenge considered themselves constrained to participate in, albeit unwillingly.¹²²

Matthias goes a step further in acknowledgment, but cautiously points toward a lack of discipline as a factor for the massacres around Tingi-Tingi. "It is true that in war, these things do happen, but for me personally I did not really see that. . . . Nobody has ever given out a briefing of what really happened. And also, we captured those people and released the civilians but the institution [the AFDL] was terrible. The discipline of soldiers in RPF, of which I am aware, was difficult."¹²³ It is this observation that prefaces Matthias's earlier comments on his own exposure to genocide while in Rwanda in 1994, where he saw a woman and child mutilated. The connection is how soldiers who witnessed or fought in the RPF during the 1994 genocide. "If you see me as Tutsi who had seen genocide and killing in Rwanda, this is not a joke, it's something we saw. It's literal; we can describe what we saw. It was horrible. Myself I still have images that I have failed to remove from my head of what the Interahamwe did. This thing has never been done in the world, not even Hitler did such a thing."¹²⁴ This background framed camps like Tingi-Tingi for AFDL/RPA soldiers operating with a genocide narrative identity.

Similarly, Christian also presented Tingi-Tingi in the larger context of the war; "those people [refugees] ran away because there was a militia, Interahamwe, they were pushed by the RPF. They reached a certain place called Tingi-Tingi. They [the RPF] took people, put them in the road, and pretended to bring them back to Rwanda. Those people killed people in Rwanda. Tutsis in Rwanda. And then RPF took them and assaulted them in a massacre."¹²⁵ Those who had been compelled by the *genocidaires* to leave became attached to them, again because of the association of genocide in Rwanda. Soldiers understood the threat embodied in the camps and responded as trained by the RPF. Civilian status was superfluous to the goal of removing the ex-FAR/Interahamwe presence from the region.

After the obliteration of Tingi-Tingi, those refugees that were able to

flee moved north; many encountered further death and disease, with some being evacuated. After the reopening of the Kisangani area to humanitarian organizations following the closure of Kasese in late April, the postponed UN airlift finally took forty-five thousand Rwandan refugees back home.¹²⁶ At this time, Kabila issued an order: the AFDL would not be held responsible for the safety of any refugees remaining after sixty days. This threat was later retracted, yet the pursuit continued across Oriental and Equateur provinces.¹²⁷ The day after this order was given, the UN leveled accusations that Kabila was intentionally or unintentionally overseeing the slaughter of thousands of refugees. Kofi Annan described the situation as a “slow extermination” where refugees were being directly killed or aid was being withheld through AFDL blockades.¹²⁸ Sadako Ogata, UN high commissioner for refugees, toured the camps around Kisangani and issued a call for investigation of possible massacres and other abuses of human rights.¹²⁹

Various massacres continued west of Kisangani, including those at Biaro, Bengamisma, and Ubundu, from March into late 1997. These attacks involved the deaths of dozens to hundreds at any one time, and in many cases the bodies were disposed of into mass graves or the Congo River.¹³⁰ Concurrently, some groups had made their way as far west as Boende, hundreds of kilometers from Kisangani. It is from this location in March through May that the final large-scale killings of refugees still on the run took place.

Boende, a port town along the Tshuapa River, saw the gathering of some two thousand refugees, many waiting for transport by boat further west.¹³¹ From December through April, groups of fifty to two hundred arrived, containing refugees with ex-FAR/Interahamwe. The AFDL/RPA came to the area mid-April and fought off the remaining armed elements in the groups at Boende. Then on April 22, after the latter had fled, the AFDL/RPA commenced shooting those waiting for their river transport, with many drowning as they tried to escape.¹³² One account notes that a group of thirty refugees were tied together and crushed under the wheel of a transport vehicle.¹³³ Killings of refugees in this area continued further north in the locality of Lofonda, where unknown numbers were lured out of hiding with promises of repatriation, but instead were tightly wrapped in plastic sheeting and burned alive.¹³⁴ Those that made it farther west to the Lolo area, where the Tshuapa River and the main road converged, were killed as they sought refuge in these smaller villages.¹³⁵ It is likely that these attacks were carried out by soldiers who had raced ahead of some of the refugees, travelling in jeeps or land cruisers.¹³⁶

When the AFDL/RPA arrived in Mbandaka, the ex-FAR/Interahamwe had already fled. Upon arrival on May 13, soldiers asked local residents where the refugees were hiding, and in response they pointed toward the harbor.¹³⁷ Bullets were sprayed over the dock to force them out of hiding, and more people drowned trying to escape. Soldiers lined up along the water's edge, shooting those attempting to swim away. Later that afternoon, refugees were then taken by the soldiers in several small groups and beaten to death with clubs and sticks.¹³⁸ Other attacks happened simultaneously around Mbandaka. That same week, in nearby Wendji, refugees were trapped by AFDL/RPA arriving from the south and those already present in the village. Upon arrival at the camp, they opened fire on those inhabitants still present.¹³⁹ The hundreds killed here were buried in mass graves around the camp.¹⁴⁰

Reports confirmed a similar presence of graves around Mbandaka, containing somewhere from five hundred to two thousand of those who had been killed.¹⁴¹ Of those cornered by the AFDL/RPA, thirteen thousand were evacuated out of Mbandaka around May 22, and more than ten thousand that were able to cross the Congo River were settled in to camps in and around Brazzaville.¹⁴² A June report to the UN Security Council summarized these later episodes as being clear-cut examples of violence targeting refugees. "To some extent the return was voluntary, since many genuine refugees had been prevented from returning by the military elements in the camps. However, it also is clear that, at some times and in some areas, the attacks on former camp populations which fled westward into the interior of Zaïre were not intended to force them to return, but simply to eliminate them."¹⁴³

The pattern of violence that continued on this northern front distinctly mirrored the uniformity of attacks on camps and refugees in the south. Camps were often besieged with mortar fire, followed by gunfire on the ground as the AFDL/RPA entered. The plot point of Tingi-Tingi, in terms of narrative and geography, demonstrated an ongoing effort to prevent the spread of *genocidaires*, obliterating those not fast enough to outrun their advance and encirclement of camps. The hundreds of kilometers covered and coordination required for a campaign like this evidences a level of commitment to a course of action. As AFDL/RPA increasingly encountered disease- and starvation-laden camp inhabitants, it is also apparent that the degree of safety given to any person found in the camps, or on the roads between them, was either limited or completely nonexistent.

Camps encountered on the southern front, while smaller in scale, were sites of similarly organized violent expulsion and execution. Banyamulenge

soldiers on this front abstracted violence in their narratives through a continuance of the theme of messy warfare, but also in the arbitrary nature of their bullets. These weapons became objects that limited their own agency and culpability. After assembling at the border near Bugarama, at the southwest tip of Rwanda, around October 20, 1996, Banyamulenge units made their way across the Ruzizi River. Rukema recalled the night of the crossing: "The river is somewhat wide and it's deep. So, when crossing we were maybe 1,000 or 2,000, it took us the whole night and the day. After crossing, we reached the place called Wegera. We started fighting on the same day. We fought the whole day. Maybe around 2 a.m. in the night we stopped and the next morning we started fighting again, but then we divided [our battalion]." ¹⁴⁴ Jean recalled the immediate firefight with the FAZ that occurred when crossing: "They did not resist because they were fearful. They had a fear and just ran away. They fled from us. We shot them as they ran from us. They could not support themselves." ¹⁴⁵ The forces that crossed here divided north toward Bukavu, and then south toward Uvira; the latter was captured by October 24. Within days, they would reach as far south as Kalemie in the zone of Fizi. The AFDL/RPA would then arc southwest toward Lubumbashi, capturing this city on April 9, 1997. ¹⁴⁶

The AFDL/RPA southern front proceeded with little resistance, yet faced the dilemmas of encountering the *genocidaire* in the violent places of the refugee camps. For many, including Patience, Kamanyola had been the site of escape from South Kivu to join the RPF. He was nineteen years old when he left family and uncertainty in Hauts Plateaux. Since that point, he had reidentified himself as an *inkotanyi* and had witnessed the violence of genocide. These signifiers and identities of the 1994 genocide, embedded through RPF training, shaped a genocide narrative identity in the ordering of their own actions and the justification for targeting *genocidaires*. ¹⁴⁷

As described by Jean, those crossing at Kamanyola were immediately confronted with the camp in town. ¹⁴⁸ Only a month earlier, both a Banyamulenge community leader and more than a dozen people that had gathered at the border to flee toward Rwanda had been executed by FAZ troops. ¹⁴⁹ On October 20, AFDL/RPA soldiers entered the camp and shot at the inhabitants. The bodies were then dumped into the latrine pits. ¹⁵⁰ AFDL/RPA checkpoints allowed for consolidated control over movement in the area. In the process of doing so, refugees were stopped with Swahili greetings and those that replied with a Rwandan accent were shot on the roadside. Local inhabitants were then forced into burying the bodies. These refugees were

fleeing the dismantled Kamanyola camp toward Bukavu. In all, 648 refugees were killed in these attacks.¹⁵¹

Targeted violence continued as these units spread south. In the village and nearby camp of Lubarika on October 21, thirty refugees were burned alive in a locked house, and the general camp inhabitants were prevented from fleeing. These attacks both occurred following the defeat and flight of the FAZ soldiers in the village.¹⁵² A few kilometers further south on the main road, the camps around Kanganiro were shelled, which was followed by soldiers on foot shooting at refugees.¹⁵³ Returning to Rukema's account, after attacks on the camps in Kanganiro, soldiers arrived at Wegera. After defeating the FAZ, fifty-one local residents accused of helping refugees were killed by AFDL/RPA troops.¹⁵⁴ On October 21 and 22, the next major camp was attacked at Luberizi. One witness described how the camp was cordoned off during the night, with the refugees awaking to soldiers' gunfire around 7 a.m.¹⁵⁵ After mortar fire, soldiers entered, indiscriminately killing at least sixty refugees. At this point, camps like Luberizi had received refugees fleeing from earlier attacks. Those who had survived Luberizi and Wegera, who were caught around October 28, were gathered by AFDL/RPA soldiers on the pretext of repatriation to Rwanda. They were then taken to the ravine at Rushima and shot.¹⁵⁶ In most of these instances throughout the month, between Kamanyola and Uvira, local residents dug the needed mass graves. Rukema reports that in Luberizi his unit met with others who had crossed from Chibitoke, and the additional troop numbers made such operations possible.¹⁵⁷ Attacks demonstrated immediate turns toward more targeted violence after entering a camp. At the camp in Kibogoye, refugees were separated by sex, and the men were taken back to a Luberizi church, where they were shot or stabbed with bayonets. Again, refugees were rounded up on the pretense of repatriation.¹⁵⁸

Troops then crossed the border at Cyanguu into Bukavu, and further south from Kamanyola, and others crossed from Cibitoke, Burundi, as early as September.¹⁵⁹ Here soldiers offer insight into the command structure within the ranks of the AFDL and the extent of the RPA involvement. At the time of crossing from Chibitoke, most fell under the leadership of RPA Lieutenant Colonel Eric Murokore.¹⁶⁰ Janvier, Rukema and Patience all recall being under Murokore at one point or another.¹⁶¹ RPA Lieutenant Colonel John Butera also accompanied Murokore at this time, under the senior leadership of RPA Colonel Caesar Kayizari as part of the RPA 157th Mobile Battalion.¹⁶² Also accompanying this battalion was DMI Captain Joaquim Habi-

mana, overseeing a team of eleven operatives, receiving orders from Karake Karenzi and Kayumba Nyamwasa.¹⁶³ Alphonse also notes the presence of RPA General Kayonga, leading another group of three thousand AFDL soldiers, again mostly Banyamulenge.¹⁶⁴ It is also crucial to repeat here that many of the soldiers I spoke with served at one time or another in the DMI, making them eligible, trusted, and trained for RPA-led special operations on this front.

RPA Lieutenant Colonel Alexis Kagame, who reported to Kabarebe, led the group crossing via Cyangugu. Under Alexis Kagame's command was the RPA 101st Battalion. They then joined the southwest progression toward the key strategic objectives of Lubumbashi and eventually Kinshasa.¹⁶⁵ Janvier acknowledged that this group also contained a further one to two thousand RPA-trained Banyamulenge soldiers.¹⁶⁶ The group proceeded into Bukavu after a day of shelling from Cyangugu around October 28. A Rwandan officer on the ground, interviewed by an Associated Press reporter, stated, "We were forced to retaliate, we retaliated by two means—one by shelling them using mortars and anti-aircraft and when they resisted we sent a force to destabilize them and push them far from where they could really affect us and (far from) where they could continue harassing our population."¹⁶⁷ Many of the refugee camps along the border were fortified and under the command of ex-FAR General Gratien Kabiligi. Some fortifications included heavy weapons installations; the ex-FAR were still defeated within days of the rebellion entering Bukavu.¹⁶⁸

Many participants recalled the joining of Murokore and Alexis Kagame's forces in Uvira around the time the city fell on October 24.¹⁶⁹ Following the slow leak of escaping refugees, FAZ, ex-FAR/Interahamwe, the AFDL/RPA quickly took the city with the same systematic combination of mortar and small arms fire. Residents of the city described the littering of corpses on the streets and on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. Thousands more took to the road out of Uvira, fleeing the liberator's violence toward Tanzania and Zambia.¹⁷⁰ Due to the advance presence of many Banyamulenge units of the AFDL/RPA, a catchment area was set up between Uvira at least sixty kilometers south to Mboko. Here AFDL/RPA screening roadblocks turned around escaping Uvira residents and refugees. Many were shot as they attempted to board boats bound for Tanzania or as they tried to swim to shore after one of the boats had sunk.¹⁷¹ In addition to those that had arrived in Tanzania, and the twenty-four thousand who were repatriated back to Rwanda by late 1996, many fled north toward Goma or Kisangani, or west toward the town

of Shabunda.¹⁷² As in the north and west of Congo, many of the repatriations occurred under the threat of violence.

The roadblock system established from south of Uvira, northward to Bukavu, and then west to Shabunda not only allowed for the screening of refugees, but also for the similar control of humanitarian workers and information in the area.¹⁷³ The AFDL ensured that workers in these areas of South Kivu had a facilitator accompanying them to glean information about camp locations and further control the movements of such workers.¹⁷⁴ Attacks continued into November. On a road heading southwest out of Bukavu in both directions between late October and January, AFDL/RPA soldiers killed hundreds of refugees. Temporary camp accommodation was destroyed and those not fast enough to evade the soldiers were shot or stabbed.¹⁷⁵ Further into the Kahuzi Biega National Park, the Chimunga camp was attacked, where AFDL/RPA soldiers killed anywhere from five hundred to eight hundred inhabitants around November 18.¹⁷⁶ Refugees were gathered in the camp on the pretense of registration, receiving aid, and safe repatriation. Mass graves were later found in this area where local residents had been enlisted in the disposal of bodies. An eyewitness reported that after being assembled, the refugees were fired upon with machine guns and grenade launchers.¹⁷⁷

Approximately 52,500 refugees made it to Shabunda around December.¹⁷⁸ From this point and up to the spring of 1997, thousands were driven northwest into Maniema and Oriental provinces. After the February 5 attack on the town, 28,000 were accounted for in Kalima (120 kilometers west of Shabunda), leaving just under half of the December figure missing.¹⁷⁹ Like other large camps on main arterial roads, Shabunda had accumulated its thousands of temporary residents from attacks on others camps in the preceding weeks and months.¹⁸⁰ The area between Wangulu and Shabunda contained several mass graves, some dug by local residents, others still guarded by AFDL personnel, in early 1997. Remains would later be cleared from the main roads, often leaving refugee belongings and roadside mass graves.¹⁸¹ Other reports further confirm attacks on hundreds in the area surrounding Shabunda in February, including the localities of Kigulube, Mwpe, and Katchungu.¹⁸²

One well-documented incident near Shabunda, leaving human remains, was at the Ulindi Bridge. Similar to the bridge over the Ruzizi River at Cyangu-gu/Bukavu, it is composed of a metal frame, planked with one hundred meters of crisscrossing, weathered wooden slats. The bridge was in such a

state of disrepair that it swayed as people crossed.¹⁸³ The broad Ulindi River moves fast underneath, covering a rocky bed. On the day Shabunda fell, February 5, AFDL/RPA soldiers chased refugees west from their camps to this bridge on the other side of Shabunda. The FAZ soldiers that were present forced their way onto a departing Red Cross plane, threatening the workers on board.¹⁸⁴ Those able to run made it to the bridge around 10 a.m., but were followed by AFDL/RPA soldiers. The shooting began before troops returned to destroy the camps, limiting the options for the inhabitants and killing some of those left behind.¹⁸⁵ Those that died either by drowning in the river from jumping, being thrown from the bridge, or shot were buried by local residents pressed into service by the AFDL/RPA.¹⁸⁶ In all, five hundred refugees died at the Ulindi Bridge that day, including at least two hundred refugee children who had fled with them.¹⁸⁷ Soldiers then led captured survivors back toward the camp, where they were executed the following day.¹⁸⁸

Alphonse, who was DMI-trained between 1994 and 1996, recalls being present in both Shabunda and Kindu. When asked about these locations he would not give any further information about when he was there and what he did.¹⁸⁹ Considering the integral involvement of the DMI in the AFDL, it was possible that Alphonse was present at attacks in the area of Kalima from February to March, which also involved DMI Captain Habimana and his crew of eleven operatives.¹⁹⁰ According to a Rwandan former soldier and dissident, they were specifically trained for these operations, as part of the DMI and Network Commando. If soldiers were present in the camps, they were sent with "one order: make sure they [the refugees] enter Rwanda, if not you kill them."¹⁹¹ Limited attacks on refugees were reported around Kindu in March, not at the scale from Bukavu to Shabunda.¹⁹² Other soldiers with specialized training recalled being flown between cities in the south, from Lubumbashi and Mbuji Mayi in April, and then onto Kinshasa in July.¹⁹³ Although not reflected in the narratives, the route followed by Banyamulenge soldiers was not as free from abuses as they attempted to convince me it was. Following the emptying of camps around Shabunda, inhabitants then fled further northward toward Kasese, Maniema province.

Of the thousands heading toward Kisangani, most were aware of its transport links and increased possibility of aid or rescue. On April 17, AFDL/RPA units landed in Kisangani and headed south toward Kasese, in Maniema province, increasing the pressure on refugees to turn back from the main city.¹⁹⁴ The UN proposed airlift for inhabitants at Kasese was opposed by the AFDL, who demanded the refugees be repatriated on foot.¹⁹⁵ At this

point, the two ad hoc camps had swelled to fifty thousand inhabitants; mortality rates were soaring to more than a hundred a day because of disease and exhaustion.¹⁹⁶ As the AFDL/RPA arrived on April 20, they banned all aid agencies from the area and attempted to entice out any armed elements with offers to join the ranks of the rebellion.¹⁹⁷ Local residents, at the encouragement of the AFDL/RPA, attacked and looted the camp in an effort to push the inhabitants back further from Kisangani.¹⁹⁸ On the morning of April 22, the soldiers awoke inhabitants, including the thousands unable to move due to extreme ill health, and forced them onto the road again at gunpoint. Most sources indicated that two hundred were shot at this point.¹⁹⁹ Those able to march onwards were stopped after several hours of walking and asked to prepare food. Shortly thereafter, the soldiers again opened fire on the amassed refugees.²⁰⁰ Local villagers were then pressed into service using shovels and bulldozers to bury the bodies around the village of Kasese and its camps.²⁰¹

The southern campaign, where most of the soldiers from the 1996 border crossings to Lubumbashi and Kinshasa went, involved a concentration of killings in South Kivu, into Maniema. Movements of the AFDL/RPA indicate a clear command structure of RPA officers and Banyamulenge soldiers, with varying experience and specialties, some enlisting as early as 1991 and some as late as 1996. It is likely those such as Nicolas, Janvier, Alphonse, Augustin, and others who received commando and intelligence training blurred the lines between Rwandan officers and Banyamulenge as self-proclaimed privates. A pattern of violence in approaching camps and once inside them also emerges on this front. Mortars were used to scatter and terrorize the camps, dwellings were destroyed, and indiscriminate fire was used upon entry. Selective violence was then used increasingly as AFDL/RPA moved the front further forward. While repatriation was certainly an aim, it was forced at gunpoint, with both casualties and executions. Yet the less willing refugees were to return, and the more they fled in the opposite direction of Kagame's Rwanda, the more their fates were sealed: death in the camps or the roads between them.

The experience on this front and the explanations of classifications of who is a legitimate refugee in the genocide narrative identity was captured by Gustav when he was asked about who they were fighting:

They [the *genocidaires*] were moving down to Fizi and Uvira, it was the ex-FAR and the Interahamwe we were fighting with. . . . The ex-FAR,

the military, the Interahamwe that committed genocide in Rwanda. Not with the refugees, not with the population that were refugees, it was not the case. We were the military, we were not monitoring them . . . it was the ex-FAR and those Interahamwe that had a lot of weapons, that had [more] force than the military people of Zaïre. They wanted to fight. They were friends, they recruited a lot of ex-FAR. We consider Rwanda fought that war, almost in every place.²⁰²

I asked to clarify, "Am I right if I am understanding you correctly, you encountered Interahamwe, ex-FAR, some of the Zaïrean soldiers, did you not see any of the refugees?" His reply was no. The presence of civilians beyond Mugunga was impossible and characterized through a genocide narrative identity as only the enemy.

Disease and starvation were less significant on this front, as many refugees up to the end of 1996 had previously accessed limited supplies, especially when fleeing two year-long residences in the border area of South Kivu. When the refugees reached Shabunda and locations in Maniema, this factor became more relevant. What is clear is that from the early attacks on places like Kamanyola and Wegera, these camps were increasingly approached as places of violence, viewed through threats and vulnerability of AFDL/RPA experience over the previous several years. Bullets did indeed go before the soldiers, yet it is difficult to accept indiscriminate fire as unpurposeful; it was at the very least being used to force repatriation. Soldiers' performativity in this southern campaign indicates a range of tactics aimed at removing bad ideology as it was embodied in ex-FAR, Interahamwe, and the refugees. These ascribed *genocidaires* were increasingly pushed to the limits of survival and expendability. It was purposeful as both an expression of frontline and existential vulnerability as well as a part of the overall strategic priority of removing the *genocidaire*.

My reconstruction of both north and south fronts reveals an environment where the killing of civilians was seen as an unavoidable, purposeful part of the campaign. While unwilling or unable to recount interactions with refugees in significant detail, a consistent narrative theme from 1996 to 1997 was the notion that within warfare their bullets did not choose their targets. Packaged within this generalized disclaimer was the conundrum of how persons were differentiated as these soldiers moved in and out of the camps and encountered the *genocidaire*. Many presented this as a simple practical challenge. Alphonse stated that despite being able to triangulate sources

and information about locations of refugees and armed actors, when both groups began to flee this task became very difficult.²⁰³ Siboyintore noted that as civilians the Interahamwe were armed by Mobutu's government; "you know even though they were civilians, you would not notice, you could not differentiate."²⁰⁴ What was certain is that these threats would be dealt with; "most of the time, Rwandan soldiers attacked by ex-FAR and Interahamwe would go into refugees camps and follow them."²⁰⁵ The implied silence of what happens next and the sudden distancing between "Rwandan" and Banyamulenge RPF soldiers as these points in descriptions of the war again highlight violence unspoken by most of the soldiers.

Proximity to ex-FAR/Interahamwe was often cited as a reason for civilian deaths. Although differentiation was likely difficult, there was a clear element of guilt by association for being found in the camps. Balthazar acknowledged that he felt detached from the challenge of separation. "When you are a private in the army, a young soldier, it is quite hard to differentiate who is who, but all of them were soldiers and we called them Interahamwe; it was a just name they were given during liberation in Rwanda, but in fact all of them were soldiers."²⁰⁶ As noted by Gatete about the Kisangani area ("ones who were soldiers, the ones who resisted, that refused to go back"), there was an emergent logic, linked to Sen's charged attribution. This view is documented in the Mapping Report and other field investigations. In the words of a 1997 UN report seeking to confirm this framing, "Moreover, the rebels [AFDL] view the refugees as enemies, on the assumption that they are all armed, and this makes it undesirable, or at least unsafe, to aid. Even aid is interpreted as support for the extremist refugees."²⁰⁷ An unnamed AFDL/RPA commander between March and April 1997 commented that "all ex-FAR and Interahamwe had to be eliminated—it is unfortunate if they are using women and children as a shield. . . . All those in the forest are considered to be the enemy."²⁰⁸ The Rwandan UN ambassador claimed that by February 1997 there were no more refugees and about only forty thousand Interahamwe still in Zaïre.²⁰⁹ Such logic was simultaneously used to limit access to NGOs and scrutiny of AFDL/RPA held areas. It reinforced the dire conditions of life that resulted in the deaths of camp inhabitants.

After Mugunga and the mass returns of refugees, the longer Rwandans remained in the camps or with the armed elements inside them, the greater their perceived complicity. Alphonse reinforced this problem and how it could not be resolved: "The truly original [refugees] some of them reported themselves back to Rwanda. Some have mining companies here. They got

married to people here. They look alike. . . . You cannot identify them. Some threw away their military uniforms and put on normal attire. They are now very rich people here. When we were attacking, it was a war. We didn't have time to distinguish people. They had arms. How could we do that?"²¹⁰ The ability to blend with local populations was again part of the perceived likelihood of conspiracy described in the previous chapter. If ex-FAR/Interahamwe were able to shed uniform and arms, which participants cited as key distinguishing features, then what remained were the accumulated ascriptions of who appeared Hutu in the heat of battle. Ikiyaga described that "if we see he has a gun, then we can shoot that one."²¹¹ Patience also noted the association and thereby blanketing of complicity: "You know when there is a war, many died or happened to die during the war, even Interahamwe. . . . If you look at the history of Interahamwe, they were not soldiers, they were just civilians. It was them who grouped themselves and start killing others—these militias."²¹² The Interahamwe were defined by their perceived past actions, again layered by these soldiers' exposure to genocide in Rwanda.²¹³ The status of militia, soldier, or civilian was less relevant than the constructed connections of genocide narrative identity. They were considered Interahamwe for two reasons: the lived experience of exposure to genocide of AFDL/RPA, and, where and when the refugees were found. This encounter came at a crucial layering of genocide narrative identity for Banyamulenge participants.²¹⁴

In some respects, the bullets of these liberators became the embodiment of selective and, eventually, mass killing in the camps. In this interpretation of weapons, agency is detached from the actor. Amani observed, "When the RPF was facing the *genocidaire*, the bullets did not select."²¹⁵ After successive encounters and undoubtedly the capture and return of some civilians, those remaining tied themselves to the fate of the *genocidaire*. "Because they were mixed, the Interahamwe in the camps, the bullets, they do not choose. So, after the group came, we captured and killed some of the people there, and they surrendered. . . . They started to go, the Interahamwe and the civilians." Ikiyaga reproduced this logic: "it's only those people that were leaving with the Interahamwe and the ex-FAR when the soldiers are shooting, and a bullet could not select who it hits. So, in that case, there were a lot killed."²¹⁶ Gustav echoed this further when asked directly about accounts of massacres: "If I said that they [the refugees] were not killed, that would be just hypocritical. There were thousands of Rwandese refugees that were there so we can't say all of them went back; neither can we say that they

did assimilate themselves in neighboring countries. But we can definitely say that there were some that were killed, and others that went to different places.”²¹⁷ Although a generalization, this response further confirms the potential for refugees to have blended or returned, but clearly recognizes the fate of many as it is documented in such reports and soldier accounts.

The practice of entering larger camps, like Mugunga, with the firing of light weapons is broadly documented. What is significant here is the narrativized use of indiscriminate bullets as a misdirection of agency: a result of the frontline combat and violence of the camps, responsibility for these deaths was detached by the bullet that did not select. The problem of indiscriminate fire in this type of environment is common in a variety of civil war cases.²¹⁸ This classification increasingly defined the campaign after the closure of the initial camps and the early dispersal of ex-FAR/Interahamwe forces. While escalating violence in hostile places can help develop an understanding of high death tolls, it is not a singular explanation.²¹⁹

The closer to perceived vulnerability to the *genocidaire*, the easier it became for soldiers to use indiscriminate violence. The camps were viewed by the RPA/AFDL as violent places where the *genocidaire* was located. Indiscriminate fire occurred in this scenario because of the place and its occupants. The bullets of the RPA/AFDL liberators did not select because their purpose was to eliminate the genocidal threat shaped in a genocide narrative identity.

Conclusion: Refugees as Genocidaires

A pattern of violence emerges that not only indicates when and how refugees were marked for death as *genocidaires*, but a performativity of genocide narrative identity in ending another episode of the 1994 genocide. Regardless of the front Banyamulenge soldiers were on, it is possible to see from these massacres, the control of humanitarian aid, cordoning off areas to humanitarian organizations, and relentless pursuit that they continued their journey alongside RPA comrades in earnest. The identification of bad ideology justified the targeting of civilians in refugee camps. Participation in this violence was then interpreted through the disconnection of agency in bullets that did not select their victims, yet simultaneously deeply personal in protecting their people.

According to Banyamulenge soldiers, it was mostly the Rwandan RPF

soldiers or Tutsi Banyarwanda that engaged in ad hoc attacks of revenge, framed as a lack of discipline or an overwhelming drive to exact their own justice. Witness and survivor accounts, along with reams of humanitarian and journalist reporting, document a series of massacres that were purposeful in removing a threat in a systematic, planned manner. The camps themselves took on a meaning as a place where inhabitants symbolized the ideology identified in RPF training as diametrically opposed to liberation and empowerment of the both Rwandan and Congolese peoples. The *genocidaire* was a physical, ideational embodiment of a contamination of bad ideology that was perceived as spreading in the Kivus because of the 1994 genocide and the exodus from Rwanda.²²⁰

There is a key question that should be raised at the end of this account of the northern and southern fronts: what was the intended purpose of AFDL/RPF violence? As discussed at various points throughout this book, RPF-related violence has been classified in many different ways: targeted assassinations, revenge killings, undisciplined chaos, coercive, and highly organized. In many ways, these characteristics link to early RPF violence during the Rwandan civil war and genocide. The outcome of the violence was partly to scatter *genocidaires* away from the border, but also to corral the population back under Rwandan control. Distance from the border dictated the practicality of returning refugees as opposed to obliterating them. This is where the camps further from Mugunga (in both its meaning as the last place with legitimate refugees and its closeness to the border) resulted in the organized killing: forced repatriation through this use of terror or the creation of unbearable conditions. Those resisting, by so doing, expressed their complicity and were obliterated. Regaining control against the *genocidaire* threat gave value to the death of a refugee as a *genocidaire*. Yet, as I have accounted for, violence was not escalatory. Since the summer of 1995, camps were constantly attacked in a repeated manner.

The claim of revenge killing is a consistent mischaracterization of symbolic violence and is more appropriately considered an attempt at dealing with loss, pain, or suffering. Such deployment of violence brings relief and the kind of closure tacitly advocated, or at least understood, by some participants.²²¹ Self-reinforcing uses of violent processes and past humiliation are assertions of power.²²² In some ways, this converges with the transgressive or undisciplined actor approach to genocide, as a psychological release beyond social norms and limits.²²³ Given the trajectory of RPF violence and the highly structured nature of the 1996 and 1997 attacks, the transgressive

view does not fit. Additionally, the framing of killings as revenge misdirects analysis away from the consistent nature of camp attacks and the production of violence as the AFDL/RPA moved from east to west.

The genocide narrative identity nurtured in training camps throughout the 1990s, for both the RPF and AFDL, was performed in the violence of the refugee camps between 1996 and 1997. Banyamulenge soldiers, faced with a closer to home reoccurrence of the 1994 genocide in South Kivu, by the same actors, deployed the identification of “bad ideology,” and in their narratives relied on the bullets that did not select to create distance with these acts of organized violence against refugees attributed as *genocidaires*. The agency of soldiers on the southern front in particular was boxed into their narratives of RPF control. Christian’s words in the epigraph again highlight the contradictions around Banyamulenge positioning within the RPA/AFDL but do not explain the participation of soldiers in eliminating the *genocidaire*. Reports on the First Congo War and my interviews with soldiers leave the hard truth not yet fully encountered by Banyamulenge communities more broadly: the destruction of the camps and the killings of refugees could not have happened without their participation. Such participation should be seen as part of the broader liberation and as direct involvement in the violence itself. If a war is a war, in Amani’s words, then the fighting that Banyamulenge soldiers were training for was at once pre-emptive, reactive, and driven by a victim-centered narrative to stop the continuance of genocide. Matthias summed up the urgency of the situation: “If we had waited [in 1996] worse would have happened, even a year, what do you think would have happened?”²²⁴ The 1996–97 episode sits at the center of the Banyamulenge story precisely because of its underdressed nature both for the community and in groups in the wider region. It has become a story where the guilty and innocent are lost, and giving some the right to hate, without end.

Intambara Itagira Iherezo

CONNECTING GATUMBA AND GUMINO

It is not the first or last massacre committed against our people . . . what would stop them? This is not only a matter of a 2004 massacre, but it's also the future of our people that are still living those conditions, still being killed.

—SANDRA UWIRINGIYIMANA¹

Gumino . . . was to protect the people, the Banyamulenge that were there, and then also provide justice for them.

—MARTIN²

On the night of August 13, 2004, young boys in a refugee camp just inside the Burundian border with Congo returned from a football game to their families and UN tents. The Gatumba refugee camp was home to a significant Banyamulenge enclave. That night's violence changed forever the lives of the refugees and still reverberates across Banyamulenge narratives. Around 9 p.m. drumming was followed by flaming torches burning tents, machete slashes, and bullets tearing through bodies. That night, 166 Banyamulenge died, with almost as many wounded. Survivors fled further into the region and across the globe to the United States. Most will likely never return to their homes in South Kivu.

The Gatumba massacre is a chief plot point of the late 1990s to 2010s period of violence. In this period, Banyamulenge soldiers found themselves fighting in a multidirectional set of conflicts against both Rwandan and Congolese actors. Alongside this massacre, a prominent feature in most soldier narratives, is the empowerment of Banyamulenge in orga-

nized self-defense groups, or *gumino*, meaning “let’s stay here.”³ Taken together, Gatumba and *gumino* form a tight pairing of plot points that speak to the entanglements of agency, violence, and the multidirectional nature of Great Lakes’ genocides. Soldiers saw themselves in a proverbial “damned if you do and damned if you don’t” situation: protect the community through participation in armed groups, or disavow violent conflict only to see people die, defenseless in a UN camp. Furthermore, continued pursuit of Banyamulenge communities by varied Congolese armed actors was justified by the latter with presumptions of collective guilt for past and future crimes. Taken together, these narrative elements constitute a pairing of the Banyamulenge experience and a wider history of *intambara itagira iherezo*, or a war without end.

This chapter concentrates on the plot points of Gatumba and *gumino* by looking at the period from the Second Congo War (1998–2003) to the 2010s. I show that these two plot points need to be deeply contextualized in the development of a continuous conflict in order to be understood historically and in how they construct a genocide narrative identity. The chapter is divided into three sections, offering continuity from the end of the First Congo War into the Second and the late 2010s. I frame this continuity as a regional *intambara itagira iherezo* affecting all Congolese, but also as a narrower perception of the historical and contemporary struggle of Banyamulenge belonging in Congo. The first section addresses the breakdown of relations within the AFDL and between Banyamulenge soldiers and their Rwandan brothers. The second section situates Gatumba as a historical event, plot point, and communal memory. My analysis includes interviews with survivors of this attack and how it is memorialized by Banyamulenge groups today. The third section discusses *gumino* as a practice of self-defense that is likewise embedded in soldier narratives and the continuity of the *intambara itagira iherezo*. Through pairing these plot points, the loss of Gatumba with its symbolism of continual genocide and the claims of self-defense are weaved together in soldier and diaspora entrenchments of genocide narrative identity. The following chapter addresses the three most recent years of this conflict, from 2017 to 2022, that made up the ever-present background to the interviews I conducted.

Before coming to the three sections of this chapter, a historical background is needed to offer continuity with what has been read so far. The Second Congo War came with the falling apart of not only the AFDL and regional Rwandan-Ugandan-Congolese-Burundian coalition, but of the

relationship between Banyamulenge community leaders and soldiers with the RPF itself. These breakdowns resulted in large part from the pileup of individual states' national security priorities that created the AFDL in the first place, as discussed in chapter 3. It turned out that the promise of Pan-African unity in the Great Lakes disintegrated into a bitterness that was baked into the AFDL. The claimed hyperbole of "saving" the Banyamulenge and Tutsi Banyarwanda from an anti-Tutsi genocide in eastern Congo started to crack when RPF figures attempted and failed to resettle en masse the South Kivu population of Banyamulenge villages. This proposal was rejected and then followed by the suspicious disappearances and killing of leading soldiers like Nicolas. RPF imprisonment of disloyal, rebellious Banyamulenge widened this crack. The breakdown of Kinshasa-Kigali axis came when Kabila established autonomy through alliances with anti-Tutsi forces in the east and Katangan factions in the south. Mounting international pressure for someone in the AFDL to explain the fate of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees was compounding stressed relations between the victors in Kinshasa. Kabila had not yet mastered Kagame's art of denial and offered investigators space to work in Congo under heavily restricted terms. Fatally for Kabila, and millions of Congolese, the financial rescue of Mobutu's ruined economy depended on international cooperation.⁴

Tensions were worsened by Hutu insurgency and RPA counterinsurgency in Rwanda during 1997. This included another wave of genocidal attacks from a forty-thousand-strong contingent of Armée de Libération du Rwanda (ALiR), soon to be known as the FDLR, involved in the targeting of Congolese Tutsi the year before. Similarly, the RPA struck back with force as it had done in the refugee camps several months earlier. The brutal counterinsurgency campaign overseen by then RPA commander Kayumba Nyamwasa included a spate of political killings and targeting of civilians reminiscent of RPF violence in the summer of 1994.⁵ In line with the region's multidirectional violence, members of the insurgency were believed to be recruited from Tingi-Tingi, where months earlier the AFDL/RPA had obliterated this camp of Hutu refugees outside Kisangani in Congo.⁶ Although individual acts of indiscipline by RPA troops were prosecuted by the government, the overall feel of the counterinsurgency was one of total warfare, destroying banana plantations and exacting extrajudicial military justice on suspected *genocidaire* and presumed accomplices.⁷ As a further indictment of the supposed 1996–1997 neutralization of *genocidaire*-filled refugee camps and the hunting of the same across the Congo, this substantial, material threat to

Rwanda retained its presence in the east as attested to by these attacks.⁸ To this day the FDLR has remained a threat, albeit a complex but diminishing one at the time of this writing.⁹ Once more we see the patterns of RPF civilian targeting on the basis of presumed political and ethnic affiliation with an existential enemy. This trajectory would continue in RCD practices during the Second Congo War.

The Second Congo War came on the heels of this continued fighting and Kabila's betrayal of Rwandan security priorities by supporting the ALiR. When Rwanda pushed back via Kabarebe's complaints to Kabila, the latter ordered all Rwandan allies to leave the Congo in August 1998. Kabarebe marched back to Kigali and regathered Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge contingents in the east to launch the RCD. What followed was one of the most brutal periods of Congolese history. Any hopes of post-Mobutu stability were shattered as the RCD and new Congolese army went to war.¹⁰ Infamously, the IRC reported in 2008 that 5.4 million Congolese had died as a result of the war.¹¹ The catalyst of continued conflict came with the fracturing of the RCD and popular anti-Tutsi mobilization of Mai Mai groups against foreign invasion.¹² Consequently, many Congolese hold Tutsi as a specter of Rwandan invasion evidenced by 1996, 1998, and subsequent sponsored groups. Many Banyamulenge soldiers, often in the absence of options, found themselves in the ranks of the RCD in the east, or Jean Pierre Bemba's Mouvement de Libération du Congo (MLC) in the north. Furthermore, the pressure through regional involvement made this second war more internationally contested from across Africa than the first.¹³ Notably, this included the re-engagement of Burundi and Uganda and the embedding of their armies, proxies, and rebel groups in the east that still contribute to current destabilization. This time around, Angola, Chad, Libya, Namibia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe invested in earnest to prop up Kabila and prevent a second attempt at regime change by Kigali.

During the RCD period, those Banyamulenge soldiers who did not mutiny early on against their Rwandan commanders were involved in massacres as a response to Mai Mai assaults or attacks on populations suspected of supporting pro-Kabila groups across the Kivus. Throughout the Hauts Plateaux and the Ruzizi Plain, as noted in chapter 4, multiple small-scale massacres targeted the refugees spread out across the area after the closure of the border camps in the First War. During the Second War, similar violence was carried out. A significant example is from Makobola, in Fizi territory, not more than a day's travel from Uvira. From December 30, 1998, over

the following days, at least eight hundred civilians were killed after Mai Mai groups had left the area and allegedly in retaliation for their killing of RCD commanders earlier in the week. Even earlier that week the same contingent of RCD soldiers, overseen by Pacifique Masunzu, a longtime Banyamulenge RPF soldier, raped and killed civilians in Kasika suspected of hosting Mai Mai soldiers. This incident reflects the multidirectional nature of these massacres, where Banyamulenge soldiers filled the ranks and also populated the targeted areas along with other Congolese groups such as the Babembe population in Makobola.¹⁴ A comparable attack happened in Mwenga zone in and around the village of Kasika, in August toward the beginning of the rebellion. More than a thousand civilians were massacred, women were raped with cold weapons, and homes were burned.¹⁵ Also victims in this attack were local tribal leaders and Catholic nuns and priests.¹⁶ It is possible that Banyamulenge RCD soldiers stationed in the area went to negotiate with local leaders and were ambushed. Following the arrival of Rwandan-led RCD reinforcements, the area was attacked in full force, again demonstrating the lethality of retaliatory attacks.¹⁷ The memory of events like Makobola, nationally and locally, feed into the stereotype of Congolese Tutsi as exploitive and as the authors of massacres throughout recent history.¹⁸

Crucially, Banyamulenge soldiers found themselves caught between the pressures of longtime allies and a new political order in Kinshasa, one that continued decades-long exclusion through new association with *genocidaires* at best, and ethnopolitical targeting at worst. Notwithstanding the 2001 assassination of Kabila and the South African-brokered 2002 Sun City Accords, the Second War mutated into an *intambara itagira iherezho*. Political power was divided between the multipresidential offices and launched the long-term rule of Joseph Kabila, the son of Laurent. Kabila junior took the reins of power when Kabila senior was assassinated by one of his *kadogo* bodyguards, most likely in retaliation for political executions of leading AFDL figures.¹⁹ Processes of transitional justice buckled under the weight of leading governmental figures' past involvement in atrocities, and demobilization and reintegration have failed to break a cycle of rebel groups developing in the east.²⁰ These include the splintering of RCD factions (RCD-Goma, RCD-Kisangani, and RCD-Mouvement de Libération, RCD-National, and Union des Patriotes Congolais) into the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple (CNDP) and then Mouvement du 23 mars (M23).²¹ Mai Mai groups continued to proliferate, especially in South Kivu, with the likes of the Yakutumba conglomeration. They have been agents targeting Banyam-

ulenge civilian populations since the earliest days of the Second War.²² The fragmentation of armed groups in Congo is at the root of the parallel dysfunction of the state, not as a tragedy, but as the farce of a military bourgeoisie drawing legitimacy from a broken system.²³

Banyamulenge soldiers, in addition to involvement in the RCD and its later iterations, emerged as sole participants in successive mutinous groups, such as the Forces Républicaines Fédéralistes (FRF) and the recent loose alliance of *gumino* and Twirwaneho groups. These incarnations of Banyamulenge soldiering are addressed in the next chapter. Among many key figures mentioned is the recent presumed figurehead of the Twirwaneho movement, long-time mutineer and former FARDC colonel Michel Rukunda, who went by the nom de guerre “Makanika” (mechanic). Like many Banyamulenge soldiers, he followed a similar trajectory from the early 1990s RPF into the AFDL and various rebel movements. What is essential to note here is that these groups exist in a multidirectional exchange of violence that includes competition over land use and ownership, claims to local political authority, access to social goods and mobility, leveraging natural resources, breakdown of traditional means of conflict resolution, subverting of traditional taxation and exchange, and sporadic massacre of civilians intermingled with massive displacement.²⁴ This chapter reflects the narrative of Banyamulenge soldiers and interviewed diaspora community members on the ongoing *genocidaire* threat within *intambara itagira iherezo*.

Of Things to Come: The Butare Plan and Disappearing Soldiers

I first met with Alphonse in a garden adjacent to a grocery store in the Gombe area of Kinshasa. There were preparations for a wedding going on across the lawn, with rows of plastic chairs and loudspeakers already blasting music. Like most, it was Alphonse’s preliminary condition to meet publicly first, to assess the research and researcher, and to then meet privately to discuss his truth. Our meetings offered insight into the precarious lives of Banyamulenge FARDC officers stationed in Kinshasa. Most lived away from family and were sharing a long-term hotel room with colleagues. While they benefited from an occasional personal bodyguard driver and a car, Alphonse argued the impoverished nature of his situation. I asked him what he thought the future held for his children after he had spent a few decades in the military. He replied, “It is a future deceived. I am disappointed. Disap-

pointed, hoping that things would have changed. That we would improve. That things would get better, but look at me. I am a colonel and I have a salary of \$105 dollars per month, a colonel. I have no house, no wife, no medical insurance, the children do not go to school. There is nothing. We are desperate. We are disappointed.”²⁵ There were many issues to unpack in his complaint, not least the unfulfilled promises of peace and security.²⁶

As the conversation moved toward his reflections on the failure of their liberation movement, Alphonse turned toward, or rather turned on, Rwanda. “The Rwandans have 1,000 ways to exploit Congo. . . . They tried all they can to take us to Rwanda, to take us from here, but they failed.”²⁷ His reference to taking Banyamulenge to Rwanda was a recurrent theme across most of my interviews and even in published Banyamulenge biographies. Most pointed toward an alleged RPF plan to uproot these communities from the Plateaux to Rwanda. This memory represented not only the first fracture within their brotherhood, but also a supplementary plot point for threat and distrust, alongside attacks on soldiers in the leadup to and in the wake of Laurent Kabila’s expulsion of his Tutsi allies. The double betrayal by Kigali and Kinshasa was the beginning of the *intambara itagira iherezho*. This section assesses the moments of collapse between Kabila and his Rwandan/Ugandan sponsors, and internally between the Banyamulenge soldiers and their Rwandan brothers. I highlight the emergence of distance resulting from the RPF’s attempt to relocate Banyamulenge villages into Rwanda, as signaled by Alphonse, and the numerous experiences of Banyamulenge soldiers being targeted in a wave of anti-Tutsi violence bound up in the cleansing of the AFDL from the political scene in Kinshasa.

Several soldiers equated the breakdown of the AFDL with the lack of protection for Banyamulenge across Congo. At this crucial turning point, Rwandan security forces, those who had recruited, trained, bled, and died with early Banyamulenge recruits, were seen as turning against their brothers in Congo. The gathering of Banyamulenge communal leaders by the RPA in Butare, in December 1996, is shrouded in some mystery. Here it was proposed that Banyamulenge villages relocate to Rwanda. This proposal, however, does receive mention in most accounts of this period. Ntung, a former RPF political operative, offers a moderate view of this betrayal as merely a disappointment.²⁸ The RPF presented a plan that on its face removed the Banyamulenge out of the theater of operations, joining thousands of Congolese Tutsi that had fled to Rwandan camps prior to the invasion. He concludes that “The new Rwandan government was willing to offer a safe

haven for refugees, but did not want to be involved in protecting communities over its border.”²⁹ The issue of protection is a central thread running through the RPF narrative, as well as those of Kigali-sponsored actors such as Nkunda. The protection desired by Banyamulenge soldiers and community leaders was not the kind being offered by Kigali but was aligned with the instrumentalization of this Tutsi minority in larger, Congolese Banyarwanda politics and rebel mobilizations.

The broader suspicions associated with the removal were explained by the soldiers as an attempt by the RPF to later return Banyamulenge refugees mixed with Rwandan and other Tutsi diaspora members to claim control of South Kivu for annexation. Georges, for example, claimed that “they want us to be part of Rwanda, and use Banyamulenge to go into Congo claiming to fight for us, taking our resources.”³⁰ Additionally, it was around this time that many Banyamulenge soldiers reported being seen with suspicion. This included targeting those deemed to be noncompliant with RPF orders, such as the likes of Nicolas, who was perceived as a rising star by his peers. It seems most likely that the RPF high command saw Banyamulenge communities as an extension of the Tutsi diaspora from whom they had recruited heavily in the previous several years. The Ugandan wing of Tutsi diaspora and RPF leaders saw no incongruence in gathering Tutsis in one place. This was especially the case with the threat of more of the same violence creeping out of the refugee camps across the border, even after the 1994 genocide.³¹

The RPF’s own Ugandan refugee experience and seizure of power facilitated this justification of gathering Tutsis in one place. From 1994 onwards many Banyamulenge soldiers and civilians sought refuge in cities like Butare and Kigali as a new homeland, including young students looking to complete schooling in safety. The RPF government willingly received this influx of hopeful young life as such.³² Additionally, and as of 2021, there are 77,712 Congolese refugees in Rwanda, including thousands of Banyamulenge refugees living in an unintegrated limbo across three camps.³³ Identity boundaries erased by this centralization emerged, especially as the benefits of being in Rwanda during the mid-1990s did not translate into security in the Hauts Plateaux. Retrospectively, it is easy to recognize this attempt to gather Tutsi as a distancing measure from Kigali’s now recognized overreach.

Both Moise and Janvier recounted how at this relocation proposal meeting RPA military officials Alexis Kagame, Charles Kayonga, and Eric Murokore assembled in Butare. The gathered Banyamulenge leaders were presented an offer of resettlement to the community from areas of South

Kivu to Rwanda. After hours of threats and pressure from the Rwandans, the Banyamulenge refused to give up their homes. Moise, who attended the conference in Butare, described the threat of violence: "Deporting people to another country is another form of genocide. If you do that, you will again do the very same genocide that Hutus did to Tutsis. We separated. We were angry."³⁴ This failed negotiation had started the souring of the alliance with the Rwandans. By the time Kinshasa was reached, things had already begun to fall apart. Janvier recounted how Murokore arrested and near-forcibly removed Banyamulenge clergy and elders. Many also blamed Murokore for overseeing the death of Nicolas.

From that December the alliance held together up until the taking of Kinshasa and the clearing of the refugee camps. What is signified by this breakage is crucial to note. In Moise's account, following the Butare meeting, he recalled,

From then they started to mistreat a lot of our children that were among the soldiers of RPF. A guy or a soldier who was a hero who was fighting or could ensure his ability to be a hero, he would go in front and be killed. The ones who had big grades, big rank, they would demote him. They would remove the grades. They would give him work to do that did not have any rank. Because if you are given work without them expecting to give you rank, it is easy to replace you and give it to somebody else. They captured Kinshasa in a very bad atmosphere among us and them.³⁵

In Moise's reflection the RPF was now merging into the bulk of conspiratorial actors looking to harm the community, worst of all, those who had sacrificed so much for the RPF vision of liberation in both Congo and Rwanda.

Moise here pointed to Nicolas's death around this same period of late 1996, referencing him in those words "a hero, he would go in front and be killed." His death was thus situated in this plot point of tragedy and betrayal. From the end of 1996 into the present, Banyamulenge elites and many of the soldiers I spoke with were keen to distance themselves from Rwanda. Late 1996 was a useful moment in this retrospective exercise of political agency. Distancing served the purpose of reinforcing belonging in Congo as disappointment for Ntung, or anger for Moise. RPF separation, politically and in terms of actual combat, only became more apparent as the FRF opposed the Rwandan-backed RCD in South Kivu in the 2000s and is addressed later in the chapter. The death of Nicolas, from the Banyamulenge perspective, was

an embodiment of this separation. His death became linked not only to the deaths of other leading AFDL figures, but also with the targeting of Banyamulenge soldiers gathered in training camps in the orbit of Kinshasa. Creating distance from the RPF became blurred with a sense of abandonment among most soldier narratives. Georges, for example, emphasized the threat Nicolas was to the RPF as a “commander”; “he would have been able to frustrate their order, he wanted to do things properly, he was an opposition to the Rwandans taking resources from Congo.”³⁶ The loss of this leading figure and the post hoc meaning will be addressed in chapter 6 in the context of how both the diaspora and *gumino* groups fought on. As a result of Nicolas’s death, the execution of soldiers in 1998, and the rejection of Kigali’s support, events started to weave together in a political drive to create a distinct movement and claim to local and national power. The latter would be accompanied by ongoing Banyamulenge arguments for their belonging in Congo, not Rwanda.

Janvier was a rare example of a soldier who visibly expressed emotion when reciting traumatic memories. He broke down at the mention of Nicolas. “After he died, there came a very bad spirit on me, something of, something between the Banyarwanda soldiers and the Banyamulenge soldiers.”³⁷ In this moment he embodied the schism with Rwanda and the symbolism of Nicolas’s death. Heritier, who followed Nicolas as a fresh recruit out of Butare in 1996, added to his description of the Rwandan military system: “no one can contest it, they were killing us, we went ahead of Nicolas, and the Mai Mai were not there, Nicolas was with Murokore, we had suspected it at the time, but they killed him.”³⁸ A few participants blamed his death on Congolese militants, yet most soldiers attested to them having already left the immediate area.

Further blows from the dismantling of the AFDL came with the deaths of two of its founding members: Kisase Ngandu and Masasu Nindaga. These two were seen as non-Kabila-aligned and therefore more trusted in the eyes of many Banyamulenge political actors and soldiers. Rukema gave a detailed secondhand account from eyewitnesses about the assassination of Ngandu. A simple car bomb orchestrated by RPA network commandos was used to finish off this troublesome AFDL founder and Kabila rival in early 1997.³⁹ Augustin, who served in the presidential guard for Kabila at this time, had access to Ngandu. He found the difference between the two men stark. Ngandu was the “visionary, honest man,” with Kabila hating Ngandu’s public presence and charisma.⁴⁰ Ngandu’s assassination, according to

Augustin, implicated the Rwandans while simultaneously working through a Banyamulenge patsy to execute the plan.⁴¹ Nindaga was another figure with close association to Congolese Tutsi, and he was executed after a string of arrests and imprisonments, starting in November 1997, as Kabila consolidated his power.⁴² He was allegedly guilty of collaborating with Rwanda and fomenting unrest in the Kivus. Following his execution in November 2000, as ordered by Kabila, *kadogo* considered loyal to Nindaga were also rounded up and executed.⁴³ It is widely held that this state violence motivated the assassination of Kabila in January 2001.⁴⁴ Nindaga's end would have a profound impact on many Banyamulenge peers within the new Congolese army. Both deaths were foreshadowed by Nicolas's own demise, and they likewise represented the severing of political influence and protection previously guaranteed by membership in the AFDL coalition.

The AFDL's success was crowned with installing Kabila as the new president, who in actuality declared this office for himself at a May 1997 press conference in Lubumbashi. Many soldiers I spoke with arrived in Kinshasa around the summer of 1997 feeling a sense of victory. Some claimed vacant homes or those of relatives since occupied by squatters. Siboyintore remembered proudly walking down the street in his uniform, personally fulfilling that early, life-changing impression of a friend in RPF uniform back in 1994. He was hugged and celebrated by city residents as they bought him a beer and kebab. "You are our comrade," they said.⁴⁵ Banyamulenge soldiers, however, were increasingly wary of treatment within the new Congolese army and the continued presence of Rwandan overseers. Their first mutiny was inspired by Nindaga's death, orders for redeployment beyond South Kivu, and the fact that the issue of citizenship was still unaddressed.⁴⁶ Muller Ruhimbika, a Banyamulenge and AFDL political actor, along with officers Eric Ruhimbore and Venant Bisogo and three hundred other soldiers, mutinied, declaring their control of the Bwegera-Lemera area south of Bukavu.⁴⁷ Despite being quelled personally by Kabarebe, this short-term rebellion created the sense of capability and capacity for Banyamulenge to strike out on their own for the first time. Increasing tensions in South Kivu only added to the shifting alliances in Kinshasa, backdropped by Rwandan struggles to stem the tide of *genocidaire* insurgency into northwestern Rwanda. It took only a little more time for Kabila to realize he did not need the Rwandans or Congolese Tutsi after all.⁴⁸

Rugira, in our first meeting, retold how he and other Banyamulenge soldiers were specifically targeted and hunted down by the new Kabila regime

after Kabarebe and the other Rwandan officers were told to leave in July 1998.⁴⁹ In August 1998, when further mutiny broke out in Goma, precipitating the Second Congo War, Congolese officers stationed at the Kamina training camp were shot.⁵⁰ Rugira recalled, “Banyamulenge that were in the army during that time, all of them were massacred. All of them were killed. That included students attending university and [those] in military training in a place called Kamina. They were studying, they were going through officer [training].”⁵¹ In this incident at least one hundred Tutsi officers were shot on August 5, just days after other mutinies in Kinshasa. The officers were disarmed, taken to a large hangar, and shot. Many of the bodies were buried or burned.⁵² Kinshasa’s streets became riddled with armed groups and soldiers committing widespread violence against those deemed to be Tutsi and supporting the rebels emerging in the east. What emerged was the antithesis of Siboyintore’s walk of victory. Neighborhoods were scoured, homes were burned, civilians were raped and shot. Violence masquerading as counterinsurgency was spurred on by hate speech from Kabila’s new political clique, reviving long-held anti-Tutsi rhetoric to remove them as a “virus, a mosquito and filth.”⁵³ Kabila himself in late July proclaimed, “The aim is to erase the enemy, otherwise we will become slaves to these little Tutsis.”⁵⁴

Violent mutiny and fighting between the new rebels and the new state military fed into the multidirectional nature as well as perception. After crushing opposition from the military, Banyamulenge and RPF soldiers in the new RCD assembled and disarmed captured combatants. The *kadogos* of the RCD and AFDL veterans were ordered to shoot the 138 captives as they were laid out on the runway of Kavumu airport, north of Bukavu.⁵⁵ Distance from Kinshasa and Rwandan officers’ directions demarcated who killed, who died, and how quickly at the start of the Second War.

While the mutiny was underway in the East, Alphonse, Balthazar, and Thierry, all noted the attack in Kinshasa as a clear betrayal by Kabila and his new Katangan allies.⁵⁶ The Kinshasa military barracks of Kokolo and Tshatshi are exemplary plot points of the Second War’s earlier phase. At this point, soldiers from the east were arrested, disarmed, and shot.⁵⁷ Ikiyaga was among the soldiers who were able to escape, and eventually he rejoined the Rwandans and the RCD for another sweep on Kinshasa.⁵⁸ He was led, with a few hundred others, out of the Tshatshi barracks by Banyamulenge officer Malik Kijenge. Tipped off by a superior officer that he was about to be arrested, Kijenge mobilized a group of more than five hundred Banyamulenge soldiers in Tshatshi while Kabila was a few miles downtown preaching anti-Tutsi

propaganda to a mob.⁵⁹ Kijege was able to use lines of communication with comrades around the country to fight a path out of Kinshasa and meet up with other groups of Banyamulenge soldiers fleeing the capital.⁶⁰

Many joined RCD as a matter of necessity, which in retrospect was seen as the only option, while others were simply ordered to do so by the Rwandans. Location, in late 1998, was a key factor. Siboyintore was one of the fortunate few in Kinshasa who was asked to return to Rwanda by his commanding officer at the time, before AFDL relations fell apart and Tutsi were targeted across the city. He stated that “our fellow Congolese were attacking us, we had no other choice . . . wherever the RCD was there was security.”⁶¹ Fleeing toward the Rwandans and this new movement, after the failure of the promise to return and Congolese liberation, reveals another logic of recourse to violence integral to a genocide narrative identity.

Heritier was in the less-prepared group fleeing the Kokolo military camp. At the time of Kabila’s order for all foreign troops to leave, Heritier was stationed in the Nsele region military camp for postwar training. He sensed prior to this announcement that “other Congolese didn’t believe in us, they saw only difference.”⁶² When the announcement for foreign troops to leave came, it had the ring of conspiracy; Kabila had a plan to kill them.⁶³ There were other Banyamulenge with Heritier in Nsele, so they decided to escape toward Kinshasa, where they could reunite with others in Kokolo. After leaving on foot, they happened across Bugera driving around shuttling Congolese Tutsi soldiers to safety. With a larger group of around one hundred, they fled again from Kokolo into the jungle, disconnected from those fleeing Tshatshi.

Heritier reached the Kitona airfield at the Angola border after a month of being hunted and losing around ten comrades to ambushes. Here the RPA was waiting with more mutinied soldiers and a commandeered passenger plane from Goma. Despite being “rescued,” Heritier knew this was not the end. He spent the remainder of the war fighting in northern Congo as part of the MLC, “to fight for our country, we had to do so.”⁶⁴ The unit he oversaw was filled with other Congolese whom he knew were plotting to get rid of him. So why continue with the military? There were three reasons: it was better to lose your life with other soldiers than to go back and be killed with civilians; the solidarity with others in the army was comforting; and, finally, there was nowhere else to go.

Trapped in a rebellion for the purpose of survival, he concluded, “Who else was going to fight for us?”⁶⁵ Heritier spent his time in the MLC and then Congolese national military through the end of the Second Congo War and

integration into the FARDC, finding himself back in the Nsele camp. When Gatumba happened in 2004, he heard about it through rumors spread by other Banyamulenge officers. "I don't know why they kill us," he remembers thinking at the time. "Even the in MLC, they say they have to kill us, wherever you are you are unsafe."⁶⁶ For the Banyamulenge, death was a collective punishment for a litany of crimes and foreign collaboration with the Rwandans. Four years later, realizing he had only a uniform and a hollow rank without commensurate pay, he fled to Uganda via Goma to seek out education and eventually to join family in the United States. Escape from Congo became an increasingly desirable option, especially after what would happen in Gatumba and the opening up of resettlement to the Global North.

Forced or reluctant participation in the RCD resulted in further facing off against neighbors and brothers. Frank remembered how, like many, he was always watching over his shoulder for potentially treacherous comrades. During the Second War he was drawn into a skirmish targeting the Banyamulenge officer he was guarding. "My Bafuliro friend and I were escorting my boss, he was my best friend, the same age."⁶⁷ The group started taking fire from a Bafuliro group of soldiers, and one of Frank's comrades was shot in the head. The group quickly dispersed. Frank and his friend both reached for a fallen gun, not knowing if the other was the assailant. They eventually backed away, running in opposite directions. Years later they met with old friends in a bar. They confessed to each other the urge those many years ago to pick up the gun and shoot the other. Frank's old friend broke down; "he could not stop crying, 'Frank, I apologize. The time we were attacked, my mind said to shoot, because you would probably kill me, as the Bafuliro had killed your comrade.' My mind told me to kill him, as he would kill me."⁶⁸ This brief exchange of memory vividly represents how interpersonal violence animates a fight or flight for survival. While most soldiers saw neighboring groups as a whole block, deeper connections with childhood friends often punctuated the narrative of conspiracy, lumping neighboring groups with *genocidaires*. Reinforcing the idea of the latter, however, were symbolic moments like Gatumba that haunt memory and uphold a genocide narrative identity.

Gatumba: The Past as Present

Diane was eleven years old when she was shot in the back at Gatumba in 2004. Prior to this, her childhood was one filled with memories that made

her smile as we discussed them in her well-heated Texas apartment. We had met a few times before, where I had gleaned parts of her story, but now she had agreed to share the whole thing. Her family had moved from Hauts Plateaux to Uvira when she was still a baby in 1993. Living in the ebb and flow of conflict became second nature. "After war, you forget about it ever happening."⁶⁹ She had been to Gatumba the year before, in 2003, as a result of fighting in Uvira.⁷⁰ After a couple of weeks of sleeping out in the open, her family returned to their home. When the fighting came again early in the following year, they returned to the Burundian border town of Gatumba; this time the UN had set up large tents. Diane had lived there with other relatives for several months establishing a new sense of normality. Then came the attack on August 13. Both Diane and her mother were shot. Her family escaped through a rip in the tent, bleeding from gunshots, fleeing into the bush. She had survived the attack on Gatumba, as well as multiple risky surgeries to remove the bullet lodged in her rib cage. Eventually, they found their way to the United States through a refugee resettlement program bringing them to Texas. After seventeen years, Diane had finally started telling her story.

The attack on the Gatumba camp in Burundi became an underwriter of Banyamulenge genocide narrative identity. The massacre assumed the role of memory gatekeeper, acting as a measurement of violence against Banyamulenge. This camp was composed largely of Congolese refugees, of which around 800 were Banyamulenge refugees.⁷¹ The deaths of 166 people, most of them Banyamulenge, were the only ones believed to have occurred in a crowded camp of over a thousand people.⁷² The targeted nature of this violence is attested to by many Banyamulenge as well as by international reporting on the incident.⁷³ Christian, Eleazar, and Umwami promised to provide me with the names of those killed in the attack. This was offered in the hope that I could report it to politicians or international agencies to raise the profile of their injustice. During the violence, Gatete recalled how his cousin survived Gatumba, implying it was a genocide. "Although they say it was a massacre, that's not true. There is a debate that is going on that is defining genocide and massacre. Because in this case, it was a specific ethnic group."⁷⁴ The targeting of a specific group, for Gatete, signaled genocide. In Umwami's account, there were indeed 166 that died and hundreds that were injured. Who was to blame? Echoing RPF narratives, it was the international community that had allowed this to happen. His further effort to explain resorted to similar tropes and narratives of insecurity raised by other



Gatumba massacre site memorial, Burundi (2023).
(Photograph by Christopher P. Davey.)

political actors. “It is just the hate. They just wanted to finish us. That’s why they wanted to wipe all of us out. It is just the hate that they have. I see the Burundais and Tanzanians are [their] close friends and a lot of FDLR are already in these countries; so, when they see us with this morphology, with the look of Tutsis, the hate multiplies.”⁷⁵ Matthias, in speaking about the Gatumba massacre, showed me photos on his phone, shared around his social media accounts, of alleged FDLR soldiers stockpiling weapons in the Congolese forest. The *genocidaire* was indeed alive and well. The connection between Gatumba and contemporary violence against the Banyamulenge was prevalent for soldiers, as well as within the refugee diaspora, including both former soldiers and Gatumba survivors.

The unfolding of *intambara itagira iherezo* deepens the story of Gatumba. Despite the Second Congo War officially ending with the Sun City agreement in South Africa, Rwandan aligned, anti-Kabila groups continued to ebb back into conflict in several overlapping but sometimes distinct rebel movements. A 2004 Rwandan-backed rebellion led by Nkunda and Jules Mutebusi involved an attack on the city of Bukavu and then on Uvira following earlier fighting with the Congolese national army in North Kivu.⁷⁶ Nkunda allegedly launched this rebellion in an attempt to bolster severely diminished RCD influence.⁷⁷ Similar to Nkunda, Mutebusi had a career going back through the RCD and AFDL to the RPF. But unlike Nkunda, who was originally from North Kivu, Mutebusi was from Hauts Plateaux and Banyamulenge. Mutebusi was also allegedly mutinying in response to the death

sentences of RCD colleagues and a subsequent massacre of Tutsi in Bukavu in February 2004, resurrecting again the narrative of anti-Tutsi genocide in Congo.⁷⁸ Typical of this larger conflict, actions by the Nkunda-Mutebusi group and other real or perceived Tutsi-Rwanda-aligned armed groups were followed by anti-Tutsi targeting, both locally and throughout the country.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the flow of Congolese Tutsi, and particularly Banyamulenge refugees began again during this spillover from a war presumably ended. Of the thirty thousand fleeing these areas, some passed into Burundi and the UN-protected Gatumba camp.⁸⁰ Ironically, Nkunda and Mutebusi's narrative around why the capturing of Bukavu and other locations was necessary was grounded in the impending anti-Tutsi threat, one only made worse by their fighting.⁸¹ Alphonse and other soldiers considered these figures to be "extremists," which only made matters worse for the community and Congolese Tutsis as a whole.⁸² At that time, Mutebusi claimed to be saving his own ethnic population and other Congolese Tutsi from a "government [that] has ordered the killing of the people. . . . There were plans for genocide against them; we made it possible for them to escape."⁸³ Mutebusi's allegiance to Nkunda during this time, in retrospect, earned skepticism of his motives from Banyamulenge soldiers. This was particularly the case with those current FARDC officers and past FRF loyalists.

Even if taken at face value, Mutebusi's claim of prevention was at best wholly ignorant of the regional dynamics Banyamulenge and other Congolese refugees were being thrown into. At worst it was again a fig leaf for larger political goals and resistance to the new national situation, post-Sun City. Burundi itself, from 1993 to 2005, was in the throes of a civil war involving the Forces nationales de libération (FNL), who are believed to be the main perpetrators of the Gatumba massacre. This group, during the last years of the war, had engaged in various attacks on civilians including one in the capital of Bujumbura a year earlier, leaving three hundred people dead, with more violence perpetrated into 2005. The FNL was willing to use massacre as a way of pushing the government toward more favorable power sharing.⁸⁴ Although the UN was taking over and expanded the African Union mission earlier in May 2004, its foothold in the Gatumba area was not sufficient to prevent this surprise surge of cross-border violence.⁸⁵

Most of the Banyamulenge inhabitants of Gatumba had fled the areas around Bukavu and Uvira during the summer. Much of the Banyamulenge population of Uvira had arrived from the Hauts Plateaux following the AFDL's securing of these areas in late 1996. Many took up the abandoned

homes left behind by those fleeing the war.⁸⁶ Those who had not left earlier in 2004 were attacked at the border by militias targeting Tutsi and looking for loot.⁸⁷ Within the camp, they were housed in one particular section across the river from other refugees due to limited space in the camp. It is believed that embedded within these refugees fleeing into Burundi and the Gatumba camp, there were several of Mutebusi's fighters, stoking local Mai Mai groups and Burundian anti-Tutsi factions' suspicions of a new launch point for another Nkunda and Mutebusi attack into South Kivu.⁸⁸ Also among the refugees were former RCD-Goma fighters and political actors, like Diane's father. It is possible that despite the reported absence of weapons in the camp and the presence of a heavy civilian population, there were political motivations behind refugee leaders' resistance to being repatriated or moved further into Burundi away from the border.⁸⁹ Given past experience, many expected to simply return home back across the border after the fighting had died down. It should be noted that given this situation and recent history, Tutsi were erroneously deemed to be militarized: men, women, and children were combatants.

Uniformed and plain-clothes actors took up positions around the camp during the daylight hours of August 13. The attackers, armed with machetes and guns, specifically targeted the Banyamulenge side of the camp. Many survivors recall hearing the booming of drums, rallying people to the work of killing. Loud prayers were offered, asking for God's blessing in the work of removing the enemy. Tents and temporary dwellings were burned, killing those inside, others were dragged out of these shelters and mutilated. The belongings of the refugees were burned or looted by the women in the attacking group.⁹⁰ Various survivor accounts of this incident attest to the symbolic impact of this violence.⁹¹ Many of the combatants were FNL child soldiers, dragging their seemingly oversized guns behind them.⁹² While much is unclear about the nuances of this FNL attack, the intent of the massacre was not to kill everyone. Instead, it was a political act of performing popular anti-Tutsi violence. Additionally, it is believed that elements of Rwandan Hutu rebels that had recently integrated with the FNL were present. The claimed motivation for the attack was an act of revenge for past killings committed by Banyamulenge against Hutu and Congolese peoples since 1996.⁹³ A statement issued by FNL spokesperson Pasteur Habimana within days of the attack relayed a broad claim of Banyamulenge complicity by ethnic association. "We attacked the military camp of Gatumba, the Banyamulenge gave a hand to their Tutsi brothers of the army. . . . We destroyed

the headquarters of the Banyamulenge. . . . They were preparing also to attack the DRC.”⁹⁴

Diane remembered with somber clarity the events of August 13. The boys in the camp had returned from playing football in the early evening. Parents and elders had gathered around dusk, as they always did at a campfire, to discuss the events of the day and talk politics. When her father returned it was around 9:15 p.m. They heard gunshots from a distance. “It’s probably just someone stealing a cow,” her father said. He left to investigate, leaving Diane, her sister, and mother in the tent. Shortly afterwards, they saw one of the other tent occupants, a grandmother in her eighties, stumble in, with blood seeping through her clothes, calmly relaying she had been shot. Then the screaming began. Bullets ripped through the sides and roof of the tent, hitting Diane first and then her mother three times in the leg. As they looked to the tent opening, they could see a mother with her baby, dead, and the assailants approaching behind her. Diane, her sister, and mother lay frozen until a knife coursed through the wall of the UN tent, a stranger beckoning them out and into the bush. They moved as fast as they could while bleeding from the gunshots. As they fled, they saw another young woman shot in the face and a former soldier whose prosthetic legs had been forcibly removed by assailants. Anyone who had turned around to go back to find family or kin were killed. Gathering with another group hiding in the trees and brush, they waited. Rejoined by her father, they fled to the road where Burundian police took Diane and her mother and others that were seriously injured to the local hospital.⁹⁵

Following months of hospitalization and more time in refugee camps, they returned to Uvira without her father, who, fearing for his life, stayed in Bujumbura. He had also stayed to help build the memorial that still stands near what once was a refugee camp. Eventually, in 2006 the process of resettlement to the United States began. They were among the first of hundreds of Banyamulenge families to leave, finally finding a sense of long-term, personal security, now far from home.⁹⁶ The escape of Banyamulenge from the region and immediate conflict, which was believed to be far from over after the summer of 2004, was made possible by Boston-based NGO Refuge Point. Following the massacre, Sasha Chanoff, an international aid worker, received pictures of the massacre aftermath and immediately set about a year-long process of facilitating a UN-sponsored resettlement program for Gatumba survivors and relatives to enter the United States. According to Chanoff, this was likely the largest influx of refugees justified by a single incident.⁹⁷

In mid-description of this carnage and rescue, Diane paused and added, “They had planned this, and our people are innocent, they would not have assumed this would happen.” I asked her if there was anything else important for me to know, and she added, “We don’t want sympathy . . . but it kills people from the inside [not to talk about it].” Why had she then waited seventeen years to tell her story?

I talked about it once and then it was a group . . . we were talking to our friends when there was a memorial they asked me about it and I try to say it but they won’t get it unless maybe you were there and you know so since then I was like maybe it’s better I try not to, because I get emotional and it takes time for me to let it go to move on faster because I’m that kind of person who likes to keep on moving, but since, like since August it was hard for me to not think about things a lot.⁹⁸

Diane’s August memorial event experiences are a struggle because of how she carries her trauma. Most Gatumba survivors, as with many living after a massacre, deal with the inner struggle of speaking their past violence as a witness, and a push back against perpetration, as well as dealing with the psychological realities of trauma, stress, and anxiety.⁹⁹

Today there stands a mass grave where the remains of the 166 people were bagged up by Burundian and UN officials the next day for later burial by the survivors.¹⁰⁰ The creation of this plot point is apparent in most Banyamulenge narratives, under the theme of genocidal violence. It is this narrative that underscores the continued genocide narrative identity through the perceived threat of genocide, as well as a similarly reasoned engagement in ongoing armed conflict in South Kivu. Many like Diane were children at the time, unaware of the deeper political context of the attack. This apparent silence is further leaned into by older and younger survivors favoring a simplified narrative of a massacre within a Banyamulenge genocide, seeing only part of the *intambara itagira iherezo* context.

The Banyamulenge diaspora across the African Great Lakes region and the Global North congregate annually to hear the testimony of massacre survivors and retell this narrative. Supported by diaspora groups like the GRSF and the wider ethnic organization MPA, the week around August 13 is an engine for the underwriting of memory, (re)producing perceptions of current violence, and the implacability of injustice. Gatumba becomes a totalizing lens for group trauma and activism, fixing the past as present.

I attended the seventeenth memorial in Dallas, Texas, in 2021. Here I first met Diane and other survivors. After missing 2020 due to high COVID rates in the United States, the 2021 memorial brought together hundreds from Banyamulenge diaspora groups across the United States: Arizona, New York, Texas, Minnesota, South Dakota, Maine, and Massachusetts. The first memorial event consisted of a smaller evening local service at a Banyamulenge church in the Fort Worth suburbs, with a larger event at the Fort Worth Convention Center the following day. The Friday service was preceded by a meeting of community leaders, where my progress with survivor interviews was shared and discussed in the context of how it could change the political situation and chances of survival for the community in South Kivu. The conversation raised the frustration of the Gatumba survivors in the room: what was the value of replaying their testimonies of massacre through my research, international media, or at the UN, if justice was not even on the horizon? And exactly how would my research contribute to justice for Gatumba? Eventually, across the memorial weekend two central questions connecting the past with the present reverberated: Why is this happening, and what can be done?¹⁰¹

The service that Friday night saw survivors take the church's stage. The event started with singing accompanied by soft acoustic guitar playing. The performers, Banyamulenge teens, stopped to introduce the evening: "Tonight it's going to be a lot of worship and time to reflect to remember the relationships that we had with them and to remember the people that they were in order to honor them and to seek justice for ourselves because remembering is justice."¹⁰² A succession of survivors came forward to offer their witness of Gatumba. Diane stepped forward, inviting her survivor peers onto the stage with her. For many young people who were just children at the time of the attack, like Diane, giving this testimony is a rite of passage. Coming of age for survivors means publicly recounting their brush with death and the murder of loved ones. Survivors wonder aloud when justice will be done, who will remember their siblings, friends, parents, and relatives that died? Diane gave her account and identified those on the stage, huddling in solidarity, who were with her at the time, in the tent, in the bush, and the hospitals for many months following.¹⁰³ The service proceeded with more singing. Embracing survivors on stage comforted each other from the pain of remembrance. Pastors offered prayers of deliverance. Finally, 166 candles with accompanying victim name cards were handed out to the front sections of the congregation. With lit candles in hand, the names of the dead

were recited. It was one of several moments I had experienced during this research that deeply impacted me; the earlier questions of the community elders sank deep. What was the role of my voice as a researcher, and where were the boundaries of scholarship and advocacy?¹⁰⁴

The next day, the entrance to the Fort Worth convention hall was fronted by a table containing the dozens of family photos of victims and survivors and last night's name cards listing the victims of this attack. Three blank name cards represented the infants who were lost in the attack on the camp. To this day, no one can remember their names. I had been invited to speak at this larger meeting on the topic of achieving justice. I spoke about the divergences of retributive and restorative justice, and what a model of conflict transformation could look like for Gatumba memorialization, as well as the diaspora's broader role in conflict as enablers of violence through single-victim narratives or as peacebuilders and advocates for negotiation and dialogue.¹⁰⁵ This message earned a flat reception on the whole. I sensed a feeling of disappointment for not doing what was anticipated that another speaker, Gregory Stanton, the founder of Genocide Watch, was going to do: validate the Banyamulenge experience into the formula of the Ten Stages of Genocide.¹⁰⁶ I was supposed to endorse a clear narrative of genocide as past and present.

Further survivor testimonies were offered, including that of child survivor Espoir Nindeba. He did not share the usual testimony of violence and victimhood, but of the power of education and positive change for the future. "The people you lost should be your motivation . . . we have to save our people . . . let us get courage, get educated . . . because nobody can save you, unless you save yourself. It is going to take all of us to save where we are from."¹⁰⁷ This message, as breakout as it was, was not however the most electrifying one at the memorial. A parade of Banyamulenge pastors, community notables, and an MPA board member spoke emotively about what was essentially a narrower version of *intambara itagira iherezo* and its ongoing memory. As speakers we assembled on the stage, forming a panel in front of the gathered hundreds. In response to questions about strategies for dealing with present violence in South Kivu, Freddy Kaniki—a Second War survivor and now pastor and medical professional here in the United States—responded that "We will never live in a Congo that doesn't have other tribes; we have to live together, that has to sink in. . . . We don't have to defend ourselves, because the government has that responsibility."¹⁰⁸ He cited international instruments and norms, such as the Responsibility to Protect, to

support this position. Advocacy, presenting their case to the White House, etc. held the key. Inevitably I was asked by a Banyamulenge lawyer whether or not I saw violence against the Banyamulenge as genocide or not. Did I see the intent to destroy the group by a coalition of actors working in planned coherence to do so? I responded that while we might see genocide across the Banyamulenge experience, more could be accomplished politically and socially if this history was not seen in isolation, but taken together as a whole across the Congo and the region. This response was unsatisfactory to my questioner. He wanted to hear a narrative from me that would tick the boxes of the UN definition and secure a public acknowledgment of genocide by an outsider academic.

The overwhelming sense I had from the panel was members of the community felt that framing the violence as genocide would enable a higher level of engagement from the UN, the “international community.” The final word went to the MPA representative, emphasizing the need to “fight for our country.” The visible body language of the room became more engaged. A follow-up question came: “How should we fight?” Up to this point, fighting meant getting educated, preserving a way of life, but it became clear in this moment that arming to defend the community was the only way. Kaniki answered as well that surely, “there are some fighting there now, we would probably be doing the same if we were there.” Espoir’s call to action in seeking justice and empowering community through education was powerful but diminished when faced with such militarism. There were no easy answers to the questions of why is this was happening and what can be done.¹⁰⁹

The final day centered on a commemorative football match and a church service back again in the suburb of Fort Worth. The tears of the last two days’ testimonies had faded and the joy of Pentecostal worship had overtaken the congregation. The chapel was filled beyond its usual capacity with visitors and relatives from across the country. Their promise of Jesus’s deliverance rang loud and clear. The trauma of the past and its constant retelling was not far away. Diane and her fellow survivors were invited back onto the stage. A group of pastors surrounded them and prayed over them feverishly. Honoring and recognizing them as a rising generation, future leaders, and hoped-for peacemakers. The preservation of massacre memory served here as traumatized maintenance of culture, identity, and tradition.¹¹⁰ This group was admonished, alongside those born in the United States, to remember Gatumba and keep sacred their way of life. As the praying continued, more

of the younger, US-born teens joined the stage, one wearing a black hoodie. On the rear of the hoodie, in bright green text, was a list of years cited by most Banyamulenge narratives as moments of genocide, amalgamated with the targeting of Tutsi in other parts of the region: 1964, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2019. Following each year was a repetition of the phrase “never again,” concluded by the popular diaspora social media hashtag #SaveMulenge. Green is a color of choice for activists, representing the lush homeland of Minembwe.¹¹¹ This narrative-laden snapshot of memory contextualizes Gatumba, in this perspective, as an essential part of *intambara itagira iherezo* specifically targeting the Banyamulenge, taken from their land.¹¹²

The reverberations of Gatumba are of making the past present, enabling many in Banyamulenge communities to frame this as part of a genocide covering a period of more than thirty years. Speaking to this connection, one diaspora member emphatically claimed that Banyamulenge are “giving up everything we are: our land . . . who will accept us and not kill us in the same way?”¹¹³ This comment inclusively referred to the perceived failure of mandated UN forces to protect Banyamulenge, either internally displaced or refugees, in both Gatumba and more recently. The parallel between Gatumba and displacement in Hauts Plateaux since 2017 is a clear and present danger. The following chapter picks up on the most recent period from 2017 to the time of writing, where many see a replication of displacement and attacks on UN-protected camps.

Justice for Gatumba is elusive. A 2014 attempted tribunal of FNL leader Agathon Rwaswa was permanently shelved to ensure smooth elections in Burundi. Undoubtedly, this revelation prompted the comments by author and Gatumba survivor Sandra Uwiringiyimana in this chapter’s epigraph. In her reflective personal account, *How Dare the Sun Rise*, she documents losing her youngest sister in Gatumba. Everyone else in the immediate family survived. The explanation given of why is a common one held by many Gatumba survivors. “The people who shot the bullets were part of a cycle of hate that they had been taught since they were born. Hate killed my sister, and I didn’t want to be part of that cycle.”¹¹⁴ Banyamulenge community leaders across the diaspora have mobilized legal representatives to work toward court action in the DRC and again in Burundi.¹¹⁵ The questions of why this is happening, and what can be done, are often asked in earnest. Other times, they are an invitation to channel the past as present through a narrative bounded by Gatumba. Voices within Banyamulenge communi-

ties, particularly the diaspora and present and former soldiers, reframe these questions into a single call to action: fight!

Gumino: Resistance against Everyone

If fighting is central to the Banyamulenge response to these questions of what and why, then how has it been done since parting ways with the RPF? When Matthias showed me the several online social media posts about *genocidaires* in South Kivu still seeking to kill his people, he rounded off on a positive note: *Gumino!* His eyes lit up after the heavy recitation of the suffering of soldiers and the community alike. Even though the “spirit of genocide is still in the region . . . [officers are] deserting, leaving paid army posts, from Kinshasa to return back to South Kivu, to join movements like *gumino*.”¹¹⁶ There was a sense of nostalgia for the good old days—if there ever were any—where he and his comrades were leaving the everyday to do something exceptional for the community. The real fight, according to Matthias, was not in Kinshasa behind his desk, but in the mountains fighting the last of the *genocidaires*. As Martin described, in the chapter epigraph, *gumino*’s purpose was to provide protection and justice.

Gumino and Twirwaneho are not a homogeneous block of Banyamulenge self-defense units, but a shifting set of fighters, interests, and alliances. They are recruited in some cases locally and are not heavily armed, and other instances recruited regionally across the Great Lakes, heavily armed, taking in FARDC deserters as their commanders. *Gumino* consists of a series of rebellious desertions since RCD times. It has provided an alternative platform to the performance of genocide narrative identity, where the FARDC or self-proclaimed protectors of the Banyamulenge, like Nkunda, were just not up to the job. This succession of armed groups as communal self-defense mobilizations has resulted in a resistance against everyone, from regional rebel groups like the FDLR, to the FARDC, Mai Mai, even the Rwandans. In the words of Alphonse, through *gumino*-style actions, the Banyamulenge soldiers have become the last line of defense for the whole Congo, not just their own; “we are the ones that are working as the barrier for them to enter Congo.”¹¹⁷ “Them” are the *genocidaires*, an array of rebels and killers. It became a fight against everyone else.

Gumino, as a traditional idea of communal self-defense for Banyamu-

lenge communities, is not a new concept. Cattle herders picking up arms has often been a recourse, particularly during times of destabilizing conflict and warfare. As discussed in chapter 2, this practice saw independent Banyamulenge emergence at a national level. They were no longer state collaborators. Although many parents in the early 1990s were reluctant to send their sons off with RPF *abakadas*, many relented or turned a blind eye, sensing the value of mobilization and protecting the greater Tutsi whole through masculine pursuits of soldiery.¹¹⁸ It was not until after the First Congo War and the subsequent breakdown of Rwandan and Congolese relations that the first militarized *gumino* emerged, drawing mutinous national military or RCD soldiers. There is an important distinction to be made between cattle herders taking greater measures to protect their cattle by fighting off raiders and the filling of *gumino* ranks with trained soldiers, or at least the deployment of military training and weapons. This distinction is apparent in the present variants of *gumino* and Twirwaneho, which is discussed further in the next chapter.

Following the February 1998 Bewgera-Lemera mutiny, several of the soldiers interviewed in this book were imprisoned for continued, open insubordination against Rwanda “babysitting.”¹¹⁹ Ntanyoma offers a rare personal reflection on this period:

I was in jail when the rumors began propelling of the possibility of new hostilities and a second Congo war, around the time of the Bwegera-Lemera mutiny. I was incarcerated from my arrest on March 26 till August 2, 1998, my arrest was linked to a campaign aiming to denounce RPA-Banyamulenge collaboration taking the pace of babysitting. I was charged and sentenced to death. My position at the time was that the Banyamulenge military needed more freedom from the RPA to deal with specifically Congolese complexities.¹²⁰

These complexities were those same motivating factors behind the February mutiny: exclusion from citizenship and diminished positions within the new national army.

Rukema, one of the most vocal of those speaking against his former Rwandan overseers, taking his protests directly to Murokore at one point in 1996, was later arrested and jailed in various locations between Bukavu and Kigali.¹²¹ After his release, Rukema participated in a direct attack against for-

mer AFDL and Rwandan colleagues during March 1998, with only a group of thirty Banyamulenge soldiers, including among them Mekanika.¹²² They were arrested and again Rukema was imprisoned. He offered this explanation of his arrest and motivation for rebellion:

It is a plot Kabila brought against our people. Even if you don't say exactly what you will do, but you know what is planned . . . against our people. It's to kill Banyamulenge, because it started in 1996. We [were then in] 1998. We are still repeating the same war. . . . From that day we did not fight with Banyarwanda up to now: no more fighting on the wrong side. From that day until now we haven't fought alongside Banyarwanda.¹²³

Like many other Banyamulenge soldiers who had pushed back against Rwandan military control in the east, they were released at the advent of the Second Congo War in August 1998. The foot soldiers of liberation were again called to arms.

During the outbreak of rebellion against Kabila in 1998, the location of the soldier often determined which group he joined, fleeing Kinshasa or other barracks and training camps. Some, like Heritier, Jean, Matthias, and Rugira, happened to find themselves in the MLC largely as a result of the route they took out of Kinshasa in mid-1998.¹²⁴ Those in the east, or incarcerated in Rwandan jails, formed the ranks of the RCD. As discussed earlier, joining the RCD for most Banyamulenge soldiers was seen as not a matter of choice, but of desperation. Augustin recalled, "the person we helped into power, Kabila, announced to kill all Banyamulenge, joining the RCD was the only choice."¹²⁵ The RCD itself was another tool in the hands of the Rwandans to achieve what the AFDL had not, a sympathetic, pliable leadership in Kinshasa. Georges, who was mild-mannered and soft-spoken, clearly harbored a resentment against the RPF, who first put a gun in his hands back in 1992. They "put hatred of us into the Congolese" and "sabotaged" relations, placing deployments of Banyamulenge officers in harm's way and commanding units who would kill them. He went as far as to affirm that "If Rwanda had not started the second war, we had some influential positions in the Congo, the Congolese were seeing us as Congolese."¹²⁶ This narrative flurry of distancing from the RPF at once highlights simultaneously diminishing agency for Banyamulenge soldiers, as well as accountability for both vindictive Congolese and Rwandan actors. This severity of perspective was

common among soldiers in the diaspora. They were safely removed from their former borderlands home between Congo and Rwanda and empowered to make grander claims against the authors of their misfortune.

Despite many being funneled into Rwandan- and Ugandan-aligned rebel groups (like the RCD or MLC, respectively) the Banyamulenge were already brewing their own resistance alongside the armed rejections of external control in early 1998. After the step-down from February, Muller, along with several other former AFDL Banyamulenge politicians, including former 1980s political activist Joseph Mutambo, assembled in Bujumbura in June 1998 to establish the FRF. The intention here was to seek a middle ground of security and independence, with a federalization proposal removing reliance on Rwanda while establishing recognized autonomy from Kinshasa.¹²⁷ Hauts Plateaux could become a state within a state. The FRF also brought in earlier mutiny veterans Bisogo and Makanika.¹²⁸ While it took some months and further distancing from the RCD, the FRF became militarized and the most significant expression of *gumino* to date. The tradition of communal self-defense gained a militarized context with Masunzu's expansion of *gumino* into the FRF during the 2000s, followed by a later fracture and splintering.

Masunzu's life, like many others, was a catchment of the threads of Banyamulenge soldiering, from RPF to AFDL, Congolese army, and RCD. He was another veteran of the early 1998 rejection of Rwandan oversight.¹²⁹ Aligned with the FRF since its founding, he mutinied from the RCD in January 2002, to the great displeasure of even Banyamulenge leaders within that same movement.¹³⁰ Masunzu left RCD and began in earnest to turn Banyamulenge reticence toward Rwanda and the RCD into an armed resistance. Martin recalled also leaving RCD to join Masunzu: "the very same people wanted to massacre or to kill the Tutsis. So, we had to start defending ourselves, and that is why the General Masunzu had to come and recruit us, so that we can defend our territory."¹³¹ Who these "very same people" were became murkier at this point. Others, like Makanika, also joined Masunzu's ranks. The FRF as a movement was not a pan-Banyamulenge one. What was certain was that for a moment Minembwe became a place held and defended by an independent Banyamulenge force led by Masunzu. In reality, all Masunzu had done was to seize control over a newly created territory. Earlier in 1999, the RCD had pulled together the municipality of Minembwe, creating a political space out of previously shared lands with Bafuliro, Bembe, and other groups.¹³² Masunzu's heyday crystalized the association

made by so-called autochthonous groups between *gumino*, or exclusive Banyamulenge fighter groups. Despite not actually creating Minembwe, Masunzu and the mobilization of an independent force on the part of Banyamulenge political actors added to popular anti-Tutsi sentiment of a perceived Rwandan invasion and balkanization of eastern Congo.¹³³

Eventually, Masunzu's FRF fell apart as a result of a few factors. First, the RCD—led, of course, by the Rwandans—stormed the Hauts Plateaux with heavy weapons and troops numbers more than double the FRF's meager five hundred soldiers. They were led by the more reliable Banyamulenge, Mutebusi, prior to his own mutiny with Nkunda in 2004.¹³⁴ Rugira and Alphonse both recall looking up to swarming helicopters and seeing their former brothers shower them with bullets.¹³⁵ This explosion of violence behind RCD lines in 2002 saw international pressure for withdrawal, which concluded fighting that had lasted only months. In the end, FRF control over Minembwe was lost, although the group itself had staved off military submission. Overlapping with the Sun City accords that brought the larger war to another pause, Masunzu was enticed into the new FARDC with the promise of the rank of general. This came after three more years of service, with eventual command over the 112th Brigade in South Kivu. The FRF split in this moment. Masunzu retained some of his troops in his new brigade, and long-term FRF and rebellious Banyamulenge officers, such as Makanika, rejected this move as a selling out. These FRF and subsequent *gumino* movements continued Masunzu's reliance on the Bijombo forest as a place of refuge and redoubt. No other FRF officers, as a result of Masunzu's incorporation into FARDC, obtained the security of a higher rank. None of the original FRF political demands first articulated in Bujumbura in 1998 were realized.¹³⁶

Rugira, Alphonse, and Ikiyaga joined Masunzu for the same reasons as Martin. Others had a less adoring view of Masunzu.¹³⁷ Augustin, who interacted with Masunzu throughout the years until the former's defection to Twirwaneho in 2019, viewed Masunzu's move into the FARDC as opportunism that turned to betrayal: "When he was in the FRF, he had a genuine stand, but he did not have much money, when he entered the government he got that money and started working for his own political interests."¹³⁸ He had the privilege to protect his own family and removed them out of Hauts Plateaux. Augustin concluded that those with positive views weren't close enough to see this treacherous turn, and furthermore that "those who say good things about him haven't experienced pain as a result of his actions. What he did will not be forgotten."¹³⁹ Mustafa was injured as a fighter with

the RCD while guarding a displacement camp populated with mostly Banyamulenge families in South Kivu. His unit was attacked, he was shot, and his commander was decapitated. The assailants, whom he believed to be a mix of civilians and Mai Mai, declared mockingly, “we have killed Kagame and all the Tutsi.” His unit leader’s head was then placed on display outside the displacement camp.¹⁴⁰ Upon reflection of this period where the FRF had positioned itself as the sole hope of the community, as *gumino*, staying there to fight, Masunzu was considered to be the traitor. “It didn’t make any sense,” Mustafa remembered. “He refused to care about his people, fighting for his own protection.”¹⁴¹ In Mustafa’s retelling of his own decision to escape the military following an injury, and living in a refugee camp after 2004, Masunzu was taking up his new role in FARDC in the aftermath of relatives and kin being slaughtered in Gatumba. Many of the problems for his people could be traced back to failed Rwandan involvement. “Rwanda never gave Congo freedom.”¹⁴²

Integration into FARDC, at various points from the Sun City agreement onwards, was further alienating for most of the soldiers. Many were officers at this stage, faced with new other Congolese recruits associating them with Rwanda and the RCD, as well as subsequent rebel movements. Integration was viewed by most as a nonchoice, the only option, but also as a condescension. Augustin recalled of this period, as an officer at this point: “the decision was made for us, but we had a calling within us, ready to face any obstacle. We saw a big difference in the officers and soldiers who were undisciplined. What kind of army were we in?”¹⁴³ This was an unruly army that Augustin saw as “wanting to fight us, not fight for their country.”¹⁴⁴

Into the rest of the 2000s, subsequent iterations of the FRF continued to operate in the hilly areas of South Kivu, like Bijombo, as distinct groups but merging in times of need. One group led by Mekanika, and another by Bisogo, known as the Group of 47, eventually came together as part of a transition from the FRF into a more political than military entity.¹⁴⁵ This move was largely facilitated by Masunzu and given the blessing of Kinshasa.¹⁴⁶ By the end of the decade most were reintegrated with their higher rebel ranks as part of Masunzu’s 112th, covering an area from Bukavu down into Hauts Plateaux.¹⁴⁷ Notwithstanding, this group was symbolic of the honesty and necessity of resorting to arms to protect the community where either Kinshasa or Kigali either refused to act or were guilty of fostering insecurity. While some FRF elements dragged out their resistance through continued rebel group activities, skirmishes against Masunzu, and looting mining

operations, most were brought into the FARDC fold by 2011 with promises of cash and recognized ranks.¹⁴⁸

Many of these soldiers still persist today within the FARDC as ranking officers. The one holdout, however, was Richard Sebanyana, also known as Tawimbi. Like many, he had a background in the RPF and AFDL, but then left the Rwandans as early as 1997 to set up an early iteration of *gumino*. He was imprisoned along with other Banyamulenge insubordinates in late 1998. Being jailed for involvement in rebel movements, either by the RCD government or by Kinshasa authorities, was a regular occurrence for Tawimbi.¹⁴⁹ After oscillating in and out of later groups including the FRF and the Group of 47, Tawimbi re-established his *gumino* in 2011 as the Mouvement populaire pour le changement du Congo (MPCC), demanding “reconciliation” and cooperation with other groups where the government and the FRF had failed.¹⁵⁰ He combined with longtime colleagues Alexis Nyamusaraba and Mugaza Semahurunge. Following cooperation with FARDC against M23 and other groups in South Kivu, Tawimbi’s group finally began the process of FARDC reintegration, with the usual promised perks.¹⁵¹ Overall, Tawimbi’s successive adventures failed. After his last defection in 2018, he was eventually arrested later that year and handed over to Rwandan custody, allegedly as part of a deal with Kigali to respect the rigged results of the 2018 Congolese elections.¹⁵² Aside from a long career of rejecting RPF influence, Tawimbi had played host in Bijombo to Nyamwasa’s Rwandan National Congress (RNC), moving him from the nuisance to terrorist column in Kigali’s calculations. His rebel footprint had reinforced several devastating “truths.” There is a persistent perceived need for continued resistance by Banyamulenge soldiers against foreign influence. Neighboring groups continued to see any iteration of *gumino* as an ethnic block, enabling the broader targeting of Banyamulenge villages, cattle, and suspected sympathizers.¹⁵³ Together, these competing truths create for Banyamulenge soldiers and their wider communities, including the diaspora, a security vacuum. The state is seen as absent but increasingly complicit into 2019 and beyond, with violence worsening in Hauts Plateaux.¹⁵⁴ Continued fighting in *intambara itagira iherezo* was both logical and necessary.

Perpetual insecurity and mobilization narratives were reflected in the individual’s own material circumstance at the point of interview. Those like Gatete, Alphonse, and Balthazar had pessimistic outlooks and saw insecurity as an existential, economic, and social issue. Their own un/underemployment and lack of resources bled into narratives about the past.¹⁵⁵ Some

participants like Matthias and Rukema shared similar views of insecurity but had fared better in material circumstances, and they had faith in the FARDC that paid their salaries. Many, as a result of successive reintegration into the army and length of service, had acquired significant rank but were without commissions or livable pay like Alphonse.¹⁵⁶ Participants largely accepted a framing of Rwanda as predatory, while they still sought to preserve the legacy of the RPF as a liberationist force.¹⁵⁷ The soldiers' view of memory is discussed further in chapter 7.

Like tandem movements, both the militarization of the Banyamulenge and the threats making such actions necessary seemed to rise and fall as part of a fatalistic ebb and flow. Being Banyamulenge meant being a Tutsi and living under a *genocidaire* threat. Now they were stranded in a margin between both Kigali and Kinshasa. This margin is politically and geographically also populated by other rebel movements, often willing to ally with and against *gumino* groups. The Congolese conflicts of the past decades, since the mobilization of this generation in the early 1990s, offered opportunities and necessities that according to these soldiers were elusive at best.

Conclusion: Narrating Intambara Itagira Iherezo

Intambara itagira iherezo is at once an array of violent conflicts spilling out of two Congolese wars, as well as a Banyamulenge narrative tool explaining a narrower continuance of genocide against the group. The breakdown and betrayal of the AFDL signaled not only another rupture with the (new) Congolese state, but with Rwandan brothers. This disintegration led to Banyamulenge participation in a multiplicity of groups, including the Congolese army, RCD and its iterations, MLC, the FRF, and later *gumino* rebellions. In parallel came the tragedy that many sought to avoid through continued mobilization: Gatumba. This event occurred as a consequence of the messy context of war in Congo and Burundi, and despite claimed acts of protection by Nkunda and Mutebusi, 166 almost exclusively Banyamulenge refugees were slaughtered in manner reminiscent of the Rwandan genocide of 1994, as well as other massacres across the *intambara itagira iherezo*. This chapter's flow has reflected the interruption of Gatumba as a narrative plot point amidst continued fighting by discussing Banyamulenge mobilization on either side of 2004. Whether *gumino* or Twirwaneho, Banyamulenge soldiers have successively attempted to push back against not only the state,

but almost every other group deemed to be failing to achieve protection and justice. Indeed, the entangling of refugee victimization and the continuance of RPF liberationism is articulated by Rukundwa: “Jesus, a *rescapé* of the massacre, who grew up in a refugee camp and in a displaced location, turns into a ‘liberated liberator’, and a comforter.”¹⁵⁸ Banyamulenge soldiers saw themselves through a prism of their own collective experiences as survivors, refugees, displaced, and perpetual liberationists. They could yet be saviors of their people.

The Gatumba massacre is the zenith of the late 1990s to 2010s as a period of violence where Banyamulenge soldiers found themselves fighting in a multidirectional set of conflicts against both Congolese and Rwandan actors. Alongside this massacre, a prominent feature in most soldier narratives, is the empowerment of Banyamulenge in organized self-defense groups, or *gumino*. Taken together, Gatumba and *gumino* form a tight pairing of plot points that speak to the entanglements of agency, violence, and the layered nature of experiences of genocide. Many soldiers see themselves caught between protecting the community through participation in armed groups and disavowing violent conflict, only to see people die like they did in Gatumba. Taken together, these narrative elements constitute tight pairing of the Banyamulenge experience and a wider history of an *intambara itagira iherezo*, or a war without end. Through a narrative pairing of these plot points, the loss of Gatumba and symbolism of continual genocide and the claims of self-defense are woven together in soldier and diaspora entrenchments of genocide narrative identity.

The tight pairing of Gatumba and *gumino* are stitched together to not only create, but also to perpetuate, genocide narrative identity and empower its performers. What role then should political context play in an accounting of massacre or even genocide? Returning to the black hoodie at the memorial we see how, using the lens of genocide narrative identity, Gatumba acts as gatekeeper, with all its visceral reality and survivor accounts, and presents an apolitical account of victimhood. Silenced in the hoodie’s listing of “never again” is the seized, represented motivation for *gumino*. This is *intambara itagira iherezo* in its Gatumba-*gumino* iteration. Missing, and as represented in this book’s critical retelling of Banyamulenge soldier narrative identity, is the broader, deeper context of *intambara itagira iherezo* offering an account of the layered complexities of participation in violence. Genocide narrative identity facilitates this narrow narrative of experiences of genocide.

Reframing the Gatumba survivors’ questions: What links Gatumba and

gumino in a genocide narrative identity? How does this relate to the questions raised at the memorial of why violence is happening and what can be done about it? There is simultaneity in these questions: they are at once reinforcing and earnest. How can victims' situatedness within a conflict be addressed without indirectly engaging in victim blaming? A genocide narrative identity holds this kind of question hostage. I return to the question of victim-blaming in the conclusion of the book. It is clear that the targeting of human beings is perpetuated through communal punishment and discrimination. As I attempted to share at the memorial, albeit with little success, memory can be transparent and inclusive in order to work together with conflict transformation and restorative justice. Gatumba-motivated *gumino* fighting works in the opposite direction of this constructive trajectory.

The Gatumba massacre was the kind of event that reinforced a perceived duty of *gumino* groups. This expression of existential threat warranted the need for youth to pursue the defense of their community through taking up arms. For those who have remained in the FARDC, it is continued service that distinguishes their performance and sense of belonging. Rugira described the Banyamulenge presence in ministerial positions and in the higher ranks of the FARDC. He noted that "For us, to be in the army in Congo, it is by the service of the Banyamulenge youth to be encouraged to fight in order to be who they are today. . . . It doesn't only help us, but it also helps other people or countries that are undergoing the same problems."¹⁵⁹ Engagement in fighting against Banyamulenge foes, in his mind, came from both within the halls of power and without. I tried contacting Alphonse again after seeing rumors he might have mutinied from Kinshasa in 2020 to join Makanika. The rumors turned out to be false, yet he added, in clarifying that he was still with FARDC, "In the military there is no choice. . . . I'm not kidding, because I'm not independent."¹⁶⁰

6

Minembwe

THE HEART OF SELF-DEFENSE

What we can add is that you can speak on our behalf to the international community so that they can look after taking into consideration the problem of our people. Our lives are in danger. . . . We cannot be secure wherever we are because we are still persecuted. The tendency of the people we live with is to wipe us from the map of Africa.

—UMWAMI¹

Our blood that has been shed is the fertilizer for the peace of our people.

—AUGUSTIN²

I again found myself in Texas with the diaspora. It was the memorial of Nicolas Kibinda, organized by family members now living as settled refugees in the United States. Families had traveled from all over the country. Speakers included notable pastors, an apostle for the diaspora community, family members, former military comrades, and MPA leaders. Nicolas's memory had become that of a martyr, and his "work" was yet unfinished: to bring "peace to the country."³ He was the model Banyamulenge soldier. One Kibinda relative, an elder in the US diaspora, put it this way: "we thank people like Nicolas who fight for the country, those who take up the gun . . . those who fight in righteousness. If we had Nicolas in the Congo now, I promise you we would have peace." Counted among the righteous here were leading Banyamulenge figures in Congo, like Mekanika, who are "despised" by fellow Congolese but continue to fight. This relative concluded by proclaiming, "People want to despise [our] soldiers . . . we are here to finish Nicolas's work, and to the youth, I say wake up! In the same way Nicolas died, people

are dying in the same way. We will have peace in the Congo; it will not come from anyone else, we have to fight for it.” As with comments made from the pulpit at the Gatumba memorial, the meanings of “fight” as a call to action varied. Many concur with the validity or zero-sum logic of violent fighting for survival. Again: do or die, or don’t and die. Advocated action ran the gamut of community organizing, campaigning for justice, supporting people and fighters back home, and becoming a soldier. I heard the echo of Rugira: “if you don’t give your blood to your country, the dogs will drink it for free.” This chapter shows that a trajectory of the *intambara itagira iherezo* is one where Banyamulenge soldiers and political actors see fighting as the only road to winning peace for themselves. The highest currency is thus placed on the ability and capacity for communal self-defense. These efforts have been increasingly militarized by Banyamulenge FARDC defectors, making the claimed homeland of Minembwe the heart of this self-defense.

I trace Banyamulenge soldiers as they retell the recent conflict in South Kivu, as of this writing. Since 2017, fighting has replaced the persistence of dialogue, negotiations, and political bargaining.⁴ Within Congo’s news media, there is a narrative that portrays the east as being a zone of endemic conflict, where killing is business as usual.⁵ An equally troubling but often more violent narrative is that of accusations of balkanization, mentioned in the previous chapter. As with much of Congolese political language, the latter often acts as an accompaniment or precursor to the denial of Banyamulenge Congolese identity and nationality. This narrative frames Banyamulenge as foreigners seeking to break apart eastern Congo.⁶ At the heart of this upsurge is the territory of Minembwe and the continual issues of land ownership, protection by and from the state, and the unfinished business of the political aims for federalism made in Bujumbura in 1998 at the founding of the FRF.

Increasing attention has been paid to the victimization of Banyamulenge in this current phase of the conflict without comparative analysis of the role of increasingly militarized resistance to the state in Twirwaneho. It is with this group and Mekanika that this chapter is concerned. I review the recruitment of soldiers from this community since 2017. In tandem I discuss the perspectives and roles of the US and Kenyan diasporas in cocreating this newest layer in genocide narrative identity. I include interviews with soldiers from Twirwaneho, including FARDC deserters and first-time South Kivu recruits, now in refuge in Kenya, as well as observations from my interactions with the diaspora in both locations. The chapter is rounded off with

a biographical sketch of Soni (who will be briefly introduced below), or the last soldier, as a Banyamulenge refugee in Nairobi turned soldier who died in January 2021 at the hands of the FARDC. His story demonstrates a few of the material realities of a genocide narrative identity.

An Old Genocide Calls and Twirwaneho Answers

I first encountered Ntwali during a Nairobi funeral of a recently killed Twirwaneho soldier in South Kivu. Ntwali's former comrade, Soni, had died after leaving the safety of Kenya to follow in his brother's and father's footsteps in fighting for the community. Ntwali rounded off the service admonishing that justice for Soni would only be found by taking up arms in defense of Minembwe and the homes of their parents. I met later with Ntwali and understood again how a schoolchild could go from keeping cattle with his father to fighting off *genocidaires* and Mai Mai soldiers in the hills and forests of South Kivu. This section addresses the emergence of an organized coherent resistance to Banyamulenge extinction through Twirwaneho, the mutiny of key Banyamulenge FARDC officers to join this fight, and the boys and civilians, students and herders turned soldiers that make up their ranks.

On the ground in this remote, contested highlands of South Kivu, there are localized Banyamulenge *gumino* groups rested on a legacy of self-protection. Foremost is Twirwaneho, increasingly led by Makanika. In a 2020 interview, he claimed self-defense as necessity given the absence of the state. "I did not join *gumino* or any other armed group in the DRC. I left to provide protection to thousands of our people whom the DRC government has abandoned to be killed by the Mai Mai and RED-Tabara [Résistance pour un État de droit] rebels."⁷ Presented here in brief is the public face of Twirwaneho. It is not another rebel group, but an exception to the rule of armed groups. They seek to protect civilians in the face of state incompetence and anti-Tutsi forces run amok. Following Makanika are a small handful of several FARDC officers and at least twenty soldiers.⁸ The ranks are filled with young men from the diaspora, returning home as soldiers from the Great Lakes region, and those from the local Banyamulenge communities.⁹ Other officers, such as Augustin, include those who have cycled through participation in former rebel groups, including FRF veterans, as well as past RCD factions. The RPF sits at the root of more seasoned participants' experience in this new group.

One of these prominent defectors, Colonel Charles Sematama, reiterated the justified exceptionality of the Twirwaneho cause in a 2021 interview. “There will be several defections within the FARDC, because the president does not keep his promises. My Banyamulenge brothers continue to be killed.”¹⁰ Sematama refers here to the efforts by the current president, Félix Tshisekedi, to support Banyamulenge Congolese citizenship, but without sufficient efforts in changing the security situation in the east. While Twirwaneho originated as a local self-defense group in both Plateaux areas protecting cattle and villages against raiders, they have under Makanika and the likes of Sematama become the primary fighting force of the community.¹¹

Attacks between armed groups, the military, and civilians in the area oscillate between Twirwaneho, Mai Mai militias, the FARDC, RED-Tabara, and other smaller groups, including *gumino* forces aligned with Makanika. This interaction is integral to ongoing violence in South Kivu around local fighting between Mai Mai groups and Banyamulenge *gumino* groups such as Twirwaneho. Mai Mai groups that are present are not always unified, and they include factions of Biloze Bishambuke, Yakutumba, and Raia Mutomboki, but often collaborate with RED-Tabara, each other, and the FARDC.¹²

RED-Tabara, alongside Mai Mai groups, are seen as the new and chief *genocidaires* in the genocide narrative identity of Banyamulenge soldiers. RED-Tabara is a Burundian antiregime rebel group. This organization functions as many foreign groups do in eastern Congo: they fight to live off the Congolese population in the hope of gaining political currency back home. The group numbered around three hundred fighters in 2021, and are based in the Uvira territory.¹³ They resort to insurgent-like attacks, engaging in firefights with the regime’s youth wing across the border near Bujumbura.¹⁴ RED-Tabara were identified in 2016 as a group supported by Rwanda, receiving arms and training from Kigali.¹⁵ Most Banyamulenge soldiers and diaspora members I spoke with attested to this, also mentioning UN reporting or the confessions of captured RED-Tabara soldiers. MONUSCO soldiers swing in and out of attacked areas but with little impact, only to document and support some protection of civilians in displacement camps. This violence is largely motivated around long-standing ideologies about the belonging of Banyamulenge and proposed increased political representation for this part of the province.¹⁶

Makanika appeared earlier in this story with brothers who rejected the AFDL and RCD forming the FRF; he could be cast as a serial mutineer. According to Georges, “he decided to take responsibility, he has been a brave leader,” leaving in 2019 for the same reasons he had done previously

in joining a *gumino* and the FRE, rejecting the government for not hearing grievances for “the injustices and violations.”¹⁷ Georges added, “I agree with them, they are fighting for our rights, against those doing ethnic cleansing against us.”¹⁸ As noted at the Kibinda memorial, in the eyes of many, Makanika has assumed the mantle of Nicolas in defending the community.

The violent actions undertaken by Twirwaneho have increasingly included militarily organized counterattacks against FARDC and the re seizure of cattle believed to have been stolen from the community across both Plateaux. One incident that stands out in this array of armed activities is the attack on Kipupu in July 2020. After the militarization of Twirwaneho earlier that year, and in the area in Moyen Plateaux held by the group, fighting escalated around the village of Kipupu. Several Bafuliro and Babembe villages were attacked by Twirwaneho forces. Homes were burned, cattle were looted, civilians were killed, and more than a dozen women and girls were raped.¹⁹ Depending on the source, the number killed across this two-day period ranges from as low as 15, to 43, and up to 220.²⁰ Similar to other incidents, but different in its magnitude, the attack on Kipupu came amid engagement with Mai Mai militias in Makanika’s stronghold. Certainly, more reminiscent of AFDL and RCD attacks in the 1990s, this event drew international attention because of the prevailing Tutsi-perpetrator trope, whereas most fighting typically goes unnoticed. The failure of both the FARDC and MONUSCO to respond was significant for all sides.²¹ Both security forces arrived at least a week after the attack.²²

What this event underscores, and what emerged from the following narratives, was a perception and material reality of the state. During this recent conflict phase, power in Kinshasa held a shallow grip in eastern Congo, but especially in South Kivu. Descriptions of “state capture”²³ or “mediated statehood”²⁴ all point to a phenomenon where the state has interests in governance but lacks the ability to do so in frontier areas. According to Timothy Raeymaekers, this is “expropriation of state sovereignty by groups and organizations that are in direct competition with the state and its administration.”²⁵ Twirwaneho rejects the power of the state and actively competes against it. This drive for a localized unconditional surrender and local security is apparent, if not a fig leaf for beneficial integration. The only “state,” therefore, is the one able to issue rewards for successful rebellion, as it did for Masunzu, or some mixture of guarantees of security in Minembwe and beyond. As this chapter’s soldiers tell, peace is a one-way road forged through violent rebellion.

Augustin’s story speaks to this fatalistic drive. His life was paradigmatic

of the lifelong FARDC soldier leaving a long career of loyalty behind in order to organize and direct Twirwaneho. During 2016, he was continuing his longstanding role in military intelligence. As he traveled around South Kivu he documented the escalating impact of armed groups, both domestic and foreign. Of particular concern were the Mai Mai groups and the RED-Tabara, as they appeared to be targeting Banyamulenge communities across South Kivu. He investigated these reports, sifting to some degree fact from fiction through eyewitnesses and colleagues' intelligence, sending to his superiors details of what he labeled as targeted attacks. He attempted to influence those senior officers he deemed to be sympathetic, including Masunzu. The latter, however, would not listen. Indeed, Augustin's own negative views of Masunzu were shaped by a lack of faith in this traitor. Masunzu told Augustin not to worry after each visit lasting several hours. These entreaties continued into 2019.²⁶

Core to Augustin's narrative, as it was to many FARDC deserters, was the grievance of a lack of promotions. This was echoed by Twirwaneho soldiers young and old: the lifelong narratives of more seasoned soldiers not being promoted was taken as evidence of discrimination and control of Banyamulenge in the FARDC. Augustin had spent the previous ten years stuck at the same rank, notwithstanding continued work in the intelligence services and loyalty throughout two decades. For some this was Masunzu's real betrayal. Masunzu took the security and promised promotion to general without being able to provide the same to his followers or to those long-term mutineers and FARDC loyalists in the Banyamulenge community. When directly asked about the lack of promotion as a factor for leaving the FARDC, Augustin turned to his self-sacrifice in defending his people. "In me I knew there was a high probability of being shot and injured, but it was for a good reason: to not sit and watch our people being killed."²⁷

After being granted a request for leave, he departed Uvira with a small group of prepared porters and bodyguards. He sent his family to Kenya for their own protection, without telling them where he was going or if they would see each other again. He made his way via car, motorcycle, and on foot toward Minembwe to seek out Twirwaneho units. He arrived into the thick of fighting during January 2020, where he secured needed weapons and found a ragtag grouping of Twirwaneho fighters. Here he reunited with Makanika, and they worked together to establish a defensive zone in the Moyen Plateaux. Then the training began. "First we started with patriotism, how to use a gun, the need to use it in specific ways, as Twirwaneho we are

here to fight for all communities.”²⁸ He described how before they arrived these fighters were an “undisciplined” mob, drinking, firing their weapons in the air, and disorganized.²⁹ Lining them up for parade, he took away the booze and jailed the drunks. This group ranged in age starting from early to late twenties upwards, numbering around 400. The training could now begin in earnest. I heard in Augustin’s description an echo of the traumatic but exciting period of learning to fight for a cause that most older soldiers like him had experienced with the RPF in the early 1990s. Now the situation was different; the war was much closer to home, and genocide was a threat plainly seen by most soldiers. A new generation of Banyamulenge soldiers would be trained to see and articulate the destruction of their people, just as Augustin and Mekanika had done decades before.

Ntwali, who offered the dramatic final words at Soni’s funeral, had a typical rural Banyamulenge upbringing. He had worked his way through modest schooling in the area, and used his time outside of school to tend cattle with his father in the Rurambo area. “We grew up with family, it was a happy life, my parents had so many cows near to the school, life was good.”³⁰ Despite this idyllic setting, he was aware of relatives’ FARDC service, even though they had never attained ranks that matched their level of commitment. “What made me sad, those family with military service, the army they served who had higher ranks, leading provinces, those who had been enriching themselves, they [FARDC] had forgotten the families of fallen comrades.” Banyamulenge soldiers had been left behind, compared to the advancement of other long-term colleagues, and those who had died in service left behind destitute families. It was apparent that the narratives of long-serving FARDC mutineers like Mekanika and Augustin had been acquired by other soldiers fighting in this period. Communal self-defense was embedded with the old grievances launching the earliest rebellions against both Congo and Rwanda: representation in power structures like the army, and the perceived connections to security back home.

In contrast to Ntwali, who was just starting his adult life, Gahigi was running a successful business and had a family, when much of this life was destroyed by the fighting that worsened in 2017. Similarly, Gahigi recalled an idyllic upbringing in the Mwenga area. Born in 1991, he remembered playing “games about cows,” where he and his friends would pretend to be cattle of different types using sticks as horns, and would “fight like bulls.”³¹ He graduated secondary school and continued to help his father in tending their herd. He witnessed the theft of neighbors’ cattle, noting how “it

was causing some harm. . . . When you are born and grow up seeing cows around, it's part of life, its wealth for us that is being taken away by someone who has not worked for it."³² Creeping in were intersections of class and labor present in the region. Gahigi connected the earliest collective memories of violence against the Banyamulenge with the present ones he saw. "As I was growing up, I could see cows being raided, but this started in the 1960s . . . it was in that time all the villages were destroyed. They are repeating the same strategies in between then and now it has been full of war."³³ Cattle were the key to one's livelihood and reaching stages of adulthood: buying land, building a home, getting married, obtaining medicine or medical treatment, all this was possible through selling cattle. Speaking as voice for their persecutors, he added, "today we have taken the cows, tomorrow we come to burn your homes."³⁴ Livestock, especially cows, are symbolic throughout life, connotating both innocence and its loss. The preservation of cattle was associated with the good life, and the theft and looting of cattle was an omen of destruction.

In 2014, after finishing school, Gahigi moved to Hauts Plateaux. His enterprise expanded from the cattle trade to veterinary medicine and then general merchandise purchased from Bukavu and Bujumbura to be sold in Hauts Plateaux. In 2017, fighting came closer to home in Ndondo back in the Moyen Plateaux. As this got worse in 2019, Gahigi joined with other residents of the area to go into destroyed Banyamulenge villages to gather the remaining cattle, rescue survivors, and bury the bodies of the dead. This attack served as a mobilizing event for a growing Twirwaneho. After this point, Gahigi increasingly left his work to fight alongside Twirwaneho. These events occurred in late February in several villages throughout the Fizi territory. On February 27, soldiers from a recently formed local coalition of Mai Mai groups targeted a *gumino* soldier who was believed to have raped a woman in one of these villages. That same day, *gumino* and Twirwaneho soldiers attacked these villages in response, leaving soldier casualties on all sides, with a handful of burned homes and civilian deaths. This short chain of events is typical of the escalating violence portrayed by Gahigi.³⁵

Ntwali left school when this fighting intensified around his home in 2019. The family home was destroyed. His mother and sisters fled to a Ugandan refugee camp, and he remained behind with his father to guard their cattle. Then the cows were raided and confiscated by Mai Mai soldiers supported by the FARDC. Ntwali and his father fled, getting as far as Bukavu, where Ntwali parted ways with his father and returned to seek out a Twir-

waneho camp and volunteer to fight. He had met these soldiers before and knew who they were and where to find them. Ultimately, he had decided against seeking the safety of refugee camps: "I refused to go to a refugee camp, instead I could go and fight for our peace."³⁶ At this point it was 2020 and Twirwaneho appeared to be pushing the enemy back with the recent capture of Kamombo.

Ntwali left Bukavu with four other young Banyamulenge men ranging from their teens to mid-twenties. Three of them had come from Rwanda and one from Burundi. They had known each other from before while living and attending school in the Rurambo area. In Kamombo, where they stayed for several months, they found Mekanika and a group of now five to six hundred Twirwaneho soldiers drawn from the surrounding area. "We were civilians, no uniform, we arrived just in the way we had come."³⁷ Like other Twirwaneho soldiers I met in Nairobi, they were adamant on the armed civilian, community defender label. As articulated by Mekanika, they were neither rebels or soldiers. In Ntwali's words, "Twirwaneho is not an armed group, you know I was seeing myself as a civilian who decided to come and protect my community, we had no training." He described how at first he had nothing but a spear to fight with, but recaptured cows that had been seized by Mai Mai.³⁸

What is the wider rationale for fighting in Twirwaneho and similar Banyamulenge population armed groups? For most soldiers I spoke with who were involved in the group, the reasoning has not changed much since early mutineers and FRF political actors agreed on the need for controlling their own territorial security through federalism. Now a new generation is being reared in this logic, buttressed by the need to fight. Gahigi generalized that "what happens in Congo it is the government who are responsible, but they are not responsible for their whole territory."³⁹ He relayed that in this situation, when discrimination turns violent and the community is faced with armed groups attacking them, "the government does nothing . . . when that happens the government has failed in its responsibility."⁴⁰ Necessity is a justification for Twirwaneho across many of the narratives. Gahigi continued, "you know taking arms in Twirwaneho it is not an adventure, not an armed group, it is like those old men in the 1960s, they took up their bows all because the government did nothing."⁴¹ He affirmed that they were the ones who "saved lives."⁴² These explanations stood in contrast to Gustav's critique of adventurism in his generation of recruits, where he was robbed of an opportunity for a life and education outside of central Africa.

This fighting force was assembled from most, if not all, able-bodied men. Self-defense of the community came naturally. Some had past military experience, others had none. Protecting villages at risk came first, followed by offensive protection through ambushes of opposing forces' positions, or villages perceived to be allied with Mai Mai groups, and even FARDC positions. Gahigi claimed, "When there is insecurity, we make sure security is there for people, guarding villages from far away and ambushing [the attackers]."⁴³

The tension between Twirwaneho as an increasingly coordinated fighting force and not being an armed group grew in my mind as I met three young Banyamulenge men. The trio, as I refer to them, patrolled the dirt roads of Nairobi's outdoor markets selling mobile phone accessories and other electrical goods they had purchased in bulk from a local supplier. Their stories intersected as we sat to talk in a breezy, secluded hotel lounge. With every question they looked to each other as if silently corroborating their stories. They had come to Nairobi following months of fighting. After joining Twirwaneho when their schools no longer opened and their elders could not protect them, they became tired of fighting.⁴⁴

The trio had grown up together in the Moyon Plateaux. They understood the conflict in 2019 as worsening, repeating a typical soldier narrative of not wanting to be "sitting waiting for our parents to be killed."⁴⁵ They knew that the government had failed, as "war came by surprise . . . the more killings became worse, shooting became necessary . . . the way I see it, it was ethnic war, or conflict, but it was planned to end our existence"⁴⁶ They described themselves as self-motivated joiners and Twirwaneho as spontaneous but organized. They gathered weapons from fallen FARDC or Mai Mai soldiers. One recalled taking guns from those they had killed: "that is what happens when you kill and take, if you don't, you become a victim." One of the trio described, with a smile, how "we simply bought a gun from a FARDC soldier for \$100."⁴⁷ Like Gahigi, they described themselves as armed civilian gendarmes, yet "things started to change when we have a military face."⁴⁸ They were not formally trained at first, but learned from experience and what the village would teach them. They joined Twirwaneho under Mekanika around the fourth year of secondary school.⁴⁹

Explanations for the deterioration of communal relations and the need to fight were frank and were reflective of the trio's observation of how susceptible to genocide ideology those neighboring groups possessing "low IQ" are.⁵⁰ How did they see the end of the war? It could end at any time, but

it could get worse. "God knows when it will end, we must persevere."⁵¹ In order to stay safe, the Banyamulenge "need to buy more weapons . . . for it to end, we need more power to fight the enemy . . . our union is a force to come together to fight, we are the force."⁵²

They all left for Kenya within a year of each other after more than a year of fighting. The first of the trio explained he was tired. "I wanted peace of mind . . . if I am rested enough, I will go back . . . even this is a peaceful place, but in me I do not have peace." What about the family left behind in Moyo Plateaux? "You know it is hard for them to accept it, it is not easy to understand, personally you need time to rest." Was it that joining Twirwaneho offered empowerment in protecting the community as well as a route out into a better life? What had they gained from fighting? Much like the generation prior to them, who left to seek out new lives and power with the RPF, these young men were propelled into masculine adulthood as it was framed by the call to stand with other men as soldiers. They are now equipped to encounter the *genocidaire* in their interactions with the enemy Other, just as new RPF and AFDL soldiers were more than twenty years ago. These young men paradoxically bristled with a confidence of their combat experience and burdened with seeing warfare up front too soon and too personally.

As we left the trio near their accommodation with relatives, my Banyamulenge field assistant asked, "Is there a law against child soldiers?" I listed briefly a range of international statutes and conventions that deal with this issue, including recent ICC cases that put the recruitment of child soldiers at the forefront of the prosecution's case. After some thought, and in agreement with the comments of soldiers on this topic, my assistant was relieved. His assessment that these then boys had armed themselves with no one stopping them, even moving away from home to fight offered some exception to the rule of child soldiers. Despite disavowals by many participants regarding the organized nature of Twirwaneho, at least in their own accounts these boys felt moved by a genocide narrative identity. They felt compelled to fight in a force that benefits from their labor as "civilian self-defense" that happened to be organized by mutinous FARDC soldiers resorting to guerrilla attacks on life and property in order to protect their perceived constituents and control of territory. As Twirwaneho coalesced in this period, funds were increasingly exacted through illegal taxation and reliance on new soldiers as young as twelve. Those who refused to fight were ostracized or even executed.⁵³

Notwithstanding the trio's short, almost year-long stint with Twir-

waneho, others persisted for longer. Ntwali eventually found his own gun and continued to fight with Twirwaneho. In July 2020, he remembered the first enemy he killed. He spoke softly, reminding me that this was an intersection of his agency and the death of another human being. "They attacked us from behind and we fought back. It was a happiness for us that we had captured a place we had taken. [We] stood to defend ourselves."⁵⁴ Around this time, he recalled how two of his original group, one who had come from Rwanda and the other from Burundi, had died in the fighting. He had spent much of his time engaging in ambushes across the territory held by the FARDC.⁵⁵

How did these Twirwaneho soldiers see themselves in relation to the enemy? How had a genocide narrative identity shaped their participation? Ntwali descried why he fought by referencing the menacing coalition of armed actors, RED-Tabara, various Mai Mai groups, and the FARDC, against a backdrop of those "continuing to call us foreigners."⁵⁶ He added, "we came [to Congo] before some of those Congolese who have not been here as long as us."⁵⁷ Here he explicitly referenced residence prior to the Berlin Conference of 1885 as a popular marker of indigeneity often used against the Banyamulenge.⁵⁸ He keenly advocated the breaking up of Congo, something most seasoned soldiers would only hint at or defer to claims for federalism. Like the mutineer narratives, he declared, "With how big the Congo is, the FARDC is not in control and can't respond to armed groups. Balkanization of the country can allow it to control itself."⁵⁹ This would prevent "the killings going on against us, ordinary people may not understand, but what we see is a balkanization . . . it might be a good solution, it may end some conflicts in the region."⁶⁰

Most soldiers who now live in Nairobi had been shot and severely injured in their engagements with enemy combatants. Ntwali, around December 2020, not even a year after his joining Twirwaneho, was shot through the stomach and bicep. These injuries created long-term nerve damage, giving Ntwali a limp arm and staggered walk with his injured leg. He was taken to Mikenge hospital and then airlifted by MONSUCO helicopter to Bukavu and then onto Kigali. He spent three months in recovery before finding his way to join relatives and seek more affordable treatment in Nairobi. Still not working, he seeks out money to pay for the \$11 weekly treatments. "If I am recovered, I can join my comrades."⁶¹

Gahigi was likewise injured, on three separate occasions, during fierce fighting in 2019. The third time, he left with other soldiers from a church

service to push enemy fighters back. Peppered with bullets from his neck down to his shoulder and arm, he was left by his comrades, who thought he was dead. Lying on the ground, Gahigi regained consciousness, staggered, and fell back to the ground. Mai Mai troops approached him, leaving him with the one thought: “now I am going to die.”⁶² Numbness spread over his body. His would-be executioners took his phone, weapon, and other effects and left him for dead. Gahigi opened his eyes and from the hill he lay on he surveyed, for what he thought was the last time, the flowing green hills dipping out of the forest. He awoke two weeks later in Goma after a Red Cross plane had airlifted him. By February 2020, Gahigi, with his wife and children, made it to Nairobi for further treatment.⁶³

Speaking with me in Nairobi, Gahigi stood by the necessity of communal self-defense through Twirwaneho as a result of FARDC and government complicity in genocide. “At first the FARDC didn’t show any involvement, it was dormant. As things got worse the FARDC showed its true colors . . . through their soldiers we can clearly see they are the ones killing us, creating a corridor [for the Mai Mai].”⁶⁴ The fight had to continue until the government or the “international community will come to stop the genocide.”⁶⁵ He then posed rhetorical questions, speaking of his family and the community he sought to protect: “What is their suffering? Is there a way to assist these persons? To get back what has been lost?”⁶⁶ He likewise concluded, mockingly, that the international community would not come to their rescue, and that only they as Twirwaneho could “help bring sustainable peace.”⁶⁷

This determination is evident in increased fighting from 2017 onwards, but it is also an expression of Banyamulenge soldiers distancing themselves from the RPF through divides in memory and politics. This distance was discussed in chapter 5, here in this chapter as soldiers assessed the roots of their contemporary problems, and also later in the weaponizing of memory in chapter 7. Especially relevant is the political context during the time of fieldwork, where Rwanda has been seen to not only abandon Banyamulenge but to sponsor Burundi rebels, RED-Tabara, who are actively aligned with Mai Mai groups targeting Banyamulenge villages.

For Augustin the fighting continued after Twirwaneho had been gathered and organized in the Moyen Plateaux. They encountered and imprisoned many Mai Mai soldiers and, he claimed, Burundian RED-Tabara soldiers. He participated in the successful capturing of Rurambo, where Ntwali and Gahigi were also present. During this time recruits were coming from various places, like Ntwali, and others from Kenya. Augustin was confident that there

were not any children among his troops and that he had sent away those he deemed to be too young. About those who came from Kenya, he said, incredulously, it was “hard to manage them, they had an unclear mentality, undisciplined . . . those who came from Kenya, you asked them why they had left, they had no reason and didn’t understand why they were fighting.”⁶⁸

Augustin’s life-defining adventure with Twirwaneho ended abruptly during the summer of 2021 when fighting with FARDC troops in the Kamombo area. FARDC forces were accompanied by Mai Mai and RED-Tabara soldiers. All parties had been involved in a several-day-long exchange of gunfire pushing each other back and forth over their current territories. Augustin was shot in the neck and face, destroying his jaw and esophagus and impacting sight in one of his eyes. As he fell the tall grass enveloped him. “I could feel I was going down to hell, while the enemy advanced.”⁶⁹ He had the presence of mind to switch off his radio and lay still, waiting for the possibility of rescue. Two advancing groups of Mai Mai soldiers passed by, the first taking his weapons and the second crawling past him. Augustin was found in enough time to be stretchered off to the main area of Kamombo, then on to Bujumbura and Nairobi for treatment. “I accepted God’s plan for how I was, this is what God wants. I didn’t regret it, I knew [that by] joining Twirwaneho something like this would happen.”⁷⁰ His final reflections displayed a sense of heroism and necessity in their fight. I asked him especially how this current conflict might end. He said, “The current killings . . . it is obvious it has an end, what makes a man to stand is not a little thing, but a big thing. Our blood that had been shed it is the fertilizer for peace for our people. Eventually victory will come to our side. . . . Blood is not shed in vain. It is because those who are fighting will be defeated, because our resistance will not desist. . . . For us it is about sustainable peace.”⁷¹ Echoing Gahigi, the kind of peace destined to emerge from their sacrifice was a victory of force, perpetuated by Banyamulenge guaranteeing their own security. It was in their hands, the hands of the new generation of *gumino* fighters, as well as in God’s hands. I thought of Nicolas’s memorial and how it had been stated that if only he was present in the Congo today this would be the kind of peace won by the heroes the community yearns for and celebrates. In Nicholas’s shadow, it seemed that Makanika’s Twirwaneho was the ideal torch bearer.

Soldiers who shared these perspectives from the safety and community support of the Nairobi area had constructed a firm genocide narrative identity, situated in both the past and the conflict-ridden present. Enemies were present on all sides, *genocidaires* between Congo and Rwanda. Not only did they see themselves caught between the two and attacked, but

all were attempting to remove them for their own purposes of eradicating the power and resistance of the Banyamulenge. Such a genocide narrative identity was multidirectional. It sees “The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda” and an ongoing willingness to loot and kill to capture and destroy Banyamulenge wealth. Parties to this free-for-all ranged from the RED-Tabara, trained by the Rwandans, to the Mai Mai, supported by and in collusion with the FARDC.

Two further events stood out as plot points in the genocide narrative identity of currently active soldiers and the diaspora. First is the murder of Major Joseph Kaminzobe, which became not only an example of FARDC complicity, but also a lightning rod for the diaspora. The second is the attack by Mai Mai militias on the Bibogobogo area facilitated by the FARDC and largely ignored by MONUSCO.

Gahigi was a nephew to Kaminzobe. He highlighted the already very public, videoed details of this death I had already seen as they immediately surfaced in 2021. Kaminzobe was brutally murdered in a public execution, one that played out as a response to local fighting in the Lweba area. While accompanying his commanding officer for medical treatment, Kaminzobe was dragged from the makeshift ambulance and then stoned, set on fire, and eaten by the mob’s instigators.⁷² Gahigi, like many Banyamulenge, was deeply alarmed by this execution of his uncle, a standing FARDC officer from their community. In both the diaspora and soldier narratives, this attack emblemized a genocide narrative identity, a visceral expression of intent to destroy. Gahigi noted at length the nature of this genocide, as it destroyed his uncle. “Banyamulenge are human beings, not food for others. But there are those who have stood to make us food for others. They started by eating our cows and goods, what’s remaining to eat is us. Now Banyamulenge are becoming food for others, this is not just killing.”⁷³ His reflections returned as others had done to the contagious nature of such violence, underscored by the fact that Kaminzobe was among officers of the national army that did not protect him. Were they even safe here in Nairobi? What about in America? “It could happen anywhere,” he said, resigning himself.⁷⁴

Could there be a planned genocide of Banyamulenge officers within the FARDC? Augustin offered a summary of strategic attempts by the FARDC to slowly eliminate Banyamulenge through a two-pronged approach. First, wherever there is combat Banyamulenge are sent in as a first wave to places such as Beni and across Ituri, meaning that they are the first ones to die. Second, no new Banyamulenge recruits were being brought into FARDC, which enabled FARDC to “remove this [older] generation, weed them out,

cleans[e] them from the army.”⁷⁵ Such a strategy “thus makes it easier, without resistance, to move against Banyamulenge.”⁷⁶

Augustin’s swirl of conspiracy against the community was compounded by the closer relationship between the FARDC and various Mai Mai groups. The situation at the time of this interview was such that many Banyamulenge men in the Plateaux had taken up arms in defense of their community, necessarily pitting them against the government, curtailing their recruitment. Blaming old Congolese hatred and Rwandan control and greed are layered explanations weaved over time but deployed in the present to understand violence free of Banyamulenge agency. The intersection of these two explanations is the abuse by Rwanda of the Banyamulenge, “causing us to be seen as the enemy of all Congo.”⁷⁷ Kaminzobe’s death further signified this FARDC conspiracy, as a decades-long trajectory of abuse by brothers and allies.

Months earlier in Bibogobogo, a site of previous massacres in Congolese history since the 1990s, was another occurrence of multidirectional violence. As mentioned earlier in chapter 4, during the escalation of mid-1996, three hundred Banyamulenge civilians were killed here by FAZ and collaborating forces in an attempt to forcibly remove this population as alleged foreigners, but also as active RPF collaborators. Fast forward to October 2021, across two days Mai Mai Bismabuke, believed to be part of the Yakutumba coalition, along with RED-Tabara rebels, burned two villages in the area, including Methodist churches. Reports vary regarding the death toll, with some claiming that up to several dozen Banyamulenge civilians were killed. In addition, cattle were looted and abductions took place. Also reported were claims by the attackers that they were combating the presence of Twirwaneho, with whom they had engaged in the days previous to this massacre.⁷⁸ It was further possible that Twirwaneho had bases of operation amid civilian areas.⁷⁹ Significantly, the residents of these two villages were not protected by Twirwaneho and evacuated themselves on foot several miles to Baraka, where they were taunted as foreigners and assaulted with thrown objects.⁸⁰

Approximately 1,200—mostly women, children, and the elderly—made up the evacuation column into Baraka.⁸¹ Several of this group were interviewed by local news media and MPA informants. One elderly man described the attack:

We don’t know how many people were killed nor do we know where they are. They burned twelve of our village [homes], kidnapped people

and took them to be slaughtered in the forest using a machete. The reason they are killing us is solely based on ethnic hate. I have not chosen the way I look, God created me this way, I can't change that, they themselves cannot change their physical appearance. We don't have any *gumino* soldier here in Bibogobogo, and the government military have few soldiers here. We are now in Baraka; we were received well by MON-USCO but at night we were attacked by people who live around here. They threw stones at our people, injured very many, took our cows, and belongings. We really don't know what the government thinks and why they are not protecting us. Look over there we are surrounded by thousands of people who want to stone us to death. We hate no one. We are Congolese citizens; all we are asking [for] is peace and security.⁸²

Relaying this situation, this elder echoed plot points reaching back into the first rebellion of the 1960s: theft of cattle, targeting based on appearance, lack of a government to protect people, and enemies all around. Certainly, in the moment of violence such realities are pressing and demand security guarantees. There is a distinct pattern and materiality of this violence. Similarly entangled in this singular attack is the backdrop of reciprocal attacks between armed groups like the Mai Mai and Twirwaneho, around civilians, whom all sides rely on both as support and targets of attack.⁸³ It is apparent, at this point, that across generations armed mobilization feeds this pattern.⁸⁴

It is crucial to note that such events from 2017 into the new decade could fill an entire book, as much as they have already produced thousands of social media posts and dozens of international organization and news reports.⁸⁵ Much more could be written, and the soldiers I spoke to were keen to recite these current events in their genocide narrative identity. Now I turn my attention to the diaspora as a central piece of the networks that have evolved out of the liberation and rebellions of the 1990s and their subsequent wars. This diaspora is born of war, like many others globally, and as such has transmitted the same genocide narrative identity into their relations and intergenerational perpetuation of memory.

The Diaspora Fights Back: "From Monument to Movement"

"If we don't defend ourselves we will be seen as weak and vulnerable."⁸⁶ These are the words of Ishimwe, a Banyamulenge activist in Nairobi. This is a common refrain from the Banyamulenge diaspora, which makes absolute

the need for self-defense. Many in the diaspora left home as a result of a connection directly to Gatumba as a survivor or indirectly as a family member of a survivor. Others, like Mustafa, Heritier, and similar former soldiers fled the military in Congo when given the opportunity for a new life. *Intambara itagira iherezo* and its connection of Gatumba and *gumino* are personal for many diaspora adults. From a safe distance, the past and present dangers facing the community are reflected on in political discussions around the Gatumba memorials or at other community events such as Nicolas's memorial. These narrative threads are ever-present in Sunday sermons and social media feeds of diaspora members.

Paul Gitwaza, a Banyamulenge megachurch apostle and regular fixture at most US-based diaspora events, implies the politics of loss and liberation across his appearances. This lengthy excerpt from a YouTube-broadcast service ties together these elements in the quest for deliverance.

We are going to pray to put an end to the conflict, an end to the death, an end to the displacement in that nation. Let us pray. . . . Oh God the great God of power, the mighty God, the God who heals, the God who works, we pray for the nation of Banyamulenge, who are being oppressed by the power of pharaoh, the power that is above them, we stand to raise your angel Lord, so do your miracle, we are cursed with sudden deaths, with killings . . . we call upon your peace, we call upon your miracles, we call upon your glory, we call upon your angels to save and redeem to put an end of the angel of death, to take up the sword, to take over from the people, the people of promise, remember your prayer oh God, remember your promises.⁸⁷

The prayer builds with the intensity and rapturous feeling of most of the concluding language of Sunday services that I observed. The intensity can be overwhelming, and the pleas are inevitably palpable. He repeats the often-present theme of Moses's liberation of the Israelites from Egypt. If God was to be employed, then His people are required in equal measure to do their part. Diaspora religious worship, particularly in the Christian Pentecostal tradition, offers a space for narrative construction linking spiritual kingdoms to political and social issues of concern for the community.⁸⁸ In the Banyamulenge context, genocide is increasingly a frame in the diaspora for religious/political narratives. In turn the use of arms for self-defense in a long tradition of antistate violence answers the problem posed by Chris-

tian pacifist traditions.⁸⁹ For the Banyamulenge diaspora, populated in many cases by soldiers and political actors with their families, the fight against genocide takes on spiritual as a *jus ad bellum* weight.

Much of what is argued in this book indicates an active agency on the part of Banyamulenge soldiers, political actors, refugees, and community leaders in seeking the justice and peace envisioned, differently but in many ways broadly as a collective vision. What then is the role of the diaspora in this broader vision? The diaspora actively makes ongoing narrative connections to “genocide” in what many refer to as “our country,” meaning Minembwe, supporting—in different ways—community defenders like Mekanika as a new Nicolas. This effort, intended or not, depoliticizes and simplifies concurrent *gumino* and Twirwaneho involvement in perpetual conflict. The local is unhinged through translation into a transnational context.

The diaspora’s role came to life in Kenya, where my journey for this book took a further stop. During my time in Nairobi and its surrounding neighborhoods, I found the corners of the city and its outlying rural areas where Banyamulenge communities had found a new place. One particular rural area outside of the bustling city almost seemed like a “little Minembwe.” Newly built gray-stone bricked homes spread out over grassy plains, with a small herd of cows being pushed along a dirt road. Mountains spread over one horizon, with a train line blocking the other, as a reminder that the city is not far away and that this was still not the Kivus.

I first met Augustin in his home amidst this quiet with the occasional roar of a passing passenger train taking tourists to Mombasa. As detailed earlier, he was recovering from injuries sustained in recent fighting in South Kivu leading Twirwaneho. Augustin was a rare soldier. Like most he had joined the RPF as a young man, seeking hope and opportunity. His career had spanned across both Congo Wars, in rebel groups and the FARDC. The scars on his body, you might think, were a result of these years in soldiering. Yet these were the ones he gained alongside this newest generation of Banyamulenge soldiers. The unconditional peace he advocated for was dependent on the surrendering of bodies. The diaspora increasingly provides this human material now for a decades-long fight for liberation, a fight that in the general disintegration of militarized activity in Congo is about survival, subsistence, and power. Soni, whose story ends this chapter, exemplifies such new recruits that are pulled into this conflict.

Ishimwe, a youth activist leader and social media warrior for Banyamulenge causes, described how he attended a recruitment meeting prior to

2019 in Nairobi. Twirwaneho recruiters arranged an “information session” where updates about the current conflict in the Plateaux areas were given. Ishimwe was not swayed, but the several others who attended were keen, and they quietly disappeared in the following weeks.⁹⁰ He was, however, forthright about the diaspora’s role. The MPA sent money for supplies and medical treatment for Mekanika and his men, but they can and should provide more, like bulletproof vests and ammunition. “They are killed because they run out of bullets. If we defend ourselves, they will fear us and peace follows.”⁹¹ There was something about the relative distance from Nairobi to Congo that made many diaspora persons, soldier, activist, or any other community member, frank and more militaristic in their support for Mekanika. This narrative in the United States, for many, was obscured by the risks of speaking openly and jeopardizing one’s status in that country. Refugee status in Kenya was easier to come by for many, than that in the United States. Social media accounts claiming to be a voice for the community use messages and symbols to affirm the identity of a Twirwaneho Banyamulenge self-defense group. One particular image, the source of which is unknown, centers on a fist gesturing resistance covered in the Congolese flag affirming the union of Twirwaneho and Banyamulenge identities, stating “I am Banyamulenge, I am Twirwaneho.”

Controversially, French reporters led a story on the alleged funding by MPA actors and subsidiary organizations of Twirwaneho, alongside the relief aid the diaspora generates.⁹² I read through this report, hearing the words of Ishimwe and speakers the Gatumba memorial in 2021, recognizing many of the named funders in the article. This claimed leak of a joint Kinshasa and US Federal Bureau of Investigation examination highlighted the networks of funding funneling money raised by the diaspora through key individuals, most of whom took to Twitter that same day to denounce the article as hate speech. While it is highly likely that this funding was sent to buy bullets or body armor, it is crucial to note the discriminatory, anti-Tutsi context of Kinshasa political actors in singling out one element of its diaspora, while one certainly could not rule out other Congolese refugees in the Global North doing the same. In the months following this report, UN experts further independently confirmed that Twirwaneho funding originated from the diaspora alongside humanitarian aid.⁹³

For those with financial resources, like Apostle Gitwaza, a public platform is often used to promote the political unity of retaining Minembwe as “our country”; according to him, it is a homeland to be defended. Gitwaza left the Uvira territory for university in Kisangani and then Kenya, where he most



Twirwaneho social media meme from 2022

likely was spared the path of many of his peers. He then came to Rwanda in 1995 to build a series of ministries.⁹⁴ The Texas memorial denoted the right of inheritance from Nicolas to contemporaries like Makanika to defend their country. Gitwaza was one of the biggest names to take the stage that evening outside of the prerecorded message from notable Banyamulenge figure and government minister Moise Nyarugabo.⁹⁵ The apostle's remarks were entitled "From Monument to Movement." He centered around the questions of how family, friends, and the community were to manage their grief after all these years, only amplified by the loss and upheaval of *intambara itagira iherezo*, as well as the intensity of the current conflict displacing more in the Plateaux areas from 2019 into 2022.

The phrase I encountered throughout that night was one I had heard on multiple occasions: “our country.” I heard it at MPA youth conferences and memorials, and I saw it in social media warfare undertaken by the diaspora. What was the impact on other conflict-affected communities in South Kivu and the diaspora? One does not need to look far online to see from other Congolese voices a resentment toward Banyamulenge simplified victim narratives that do not acknowledge past violence, as discussed throughout this book.

Allies are crucial in any conflict. Notably players in the diaspora, those moving in high-profile community leadership and in academic circles like Ntanyoma and Ntung—both respectively former RPF soldier and political actor, now researchers—have sought out organizations to support the cause. The MPA, Ntanyoma, and Gregory Stanton’s Genocide Watch (GW) form a crucial set of nodes in this narrative network. Ntanyoma, parallel to the increases in violence, worked with GW to compose a few pieces on the latter’s website across 2020 and 2021.⁹⁶ GW relied solely on Ntanyoma’s sources and perspective, replicating many of the historic FRF grievances and obfuscating the role of Banyamulenge armed actors in the region. Campaigning across the diaspora was prominent in this period, as discussed earlier, by Banyamulenge groups in North America and Europe. The narrative of the conflict oscillated around “ethnic cleansing.” This was not definitive enough for GW, who reportedly pushed MPA into an exclusively “genocide” narrative.⁹⁷ Intellectually, this fits with Ntanyoma’s work on “slow genocide.”⁹⁸

In GW’s framing, Banyamulenge, as of 2021, were at the stage of “extermination” and “denial.”⁹⁹ This two-pronged rhetorical device paints an absolute victimhood of this single population in South Kivu, without tracing the agencies and agendas of the myriad of parties involved. A joint letter to governments willing to listen cited recent violence, including the “lynching” of Kaminzobe, as “a pattern of calculated and systematic attacks.”¹⁰⁰ The letter’s policy recommendations focus primarily on the Kinshasa government, MONUSCO, the UN, and the EU to do more to provide relief, “stronger partnership,” and “appropriate measures to curb hate speech.” The letter, as with other GW content, is devoid of the local political dimensions and the motivations of soldiers in fighting for a better place in the violent constellation of Congolese military actors.¹⁰¹ The complication of GW relying solely on a single perspective, and often a single voice, burdens the community with speaking unitarily about the violence in South Kivu. This narrowly conceived sensationalist activism strips away the political and necessarily

messy elements of the conflict(s) and parties at play, including a diaspora-supported Twirwaneho.

In this situation a genocide narrative identity is taken from the organic and RPF-informed experiences of old 1990s soldiers and is officiated by actors distanced from the violence itself. It became an exclusivist tool in constructing a victimhood drained of agency. The recommendations made are by no means erroneous: aid and greater coordination between partners on all levels is essential in addressing the conflict. Localized politics, however, are eviscerated in this kind of quick campaigning. The warning signs proliferate when squeezing conflicts into a stages of genocide model.¹⁰² The forward-facing dangers of a genocide narrative identity as related to these ways of thinking about conflict, seeing all war crimes and crimes against humanity as genocide and all conflicts as being resolvable by state-level actors, will be returned to in the concluding chapter. This problem, though, underscores the need to push beyond identity binaries by seeing social actors in a multidirectional conflict.

Back in Dallas, Apostle Gitwaza analogized Nicolas's life to that of Absalom, the rebellious son of King David from the Old Testament. He stood to fight injustice by killing a half-brother for the rape of his virgin sister. Absalom had indeed been raised to fight for the kingdom and sought to protect it. He was turned upon by David's general Joab and stabbed in a moment of vulnerability.¹⁰³ Nicolas, Gitwaza continued, was as Absalom a "son of God" and would be remembered through his family, but he was also raised like "Lazarus"; "God clears our curses [with] hope."¹⁰⁴ The treacherous role of the RPF was veiled in this commentary, alongside the perpetuating need for recourse to violent action, emphasizing the need for fighters to the cause. I turn to this view of treachery in the next chapter.

Soni: The Last Solider

The funeral where I met Ntwali was for a Banyamulenge young man who had come to Nairobi from South Kivu and returned home as a soldier.¹⁰⁵ It was evident that *gumino* and Twirwaneho networks had reached this far north out of Congo. Augustin encountered with disbelief the naivety of these wandering young men from Nairobi looking for adventure. The so-called "Android" appendage of Twirwaneho in the late 2010s was a handful of young Banyamulenge men from Kenya using mobile phones to

coordinate their efforts in the Plateaux regions.¹⁰⁶ Siboyintore and Olivier described how young men leave the security of Kenya without telling their families. Siboyintore now lives and works in Nairobi, missing an arm he lost as a CNDP soldier.¹⁰⁷ He noted about these young men, “For me, they [are the] spirit of fighting or sacrificing themselves so they can protect their parents, those being killed.”¹⁰⁸ Soni in many ways was just another young man at the crossroads of adulthood, responsibility, and confrontation of the genocide of his people.

In the early days of my time in Nairobi, my field assistant and I were traveling to and from interviews when I could see he was disturbed by a WhatsApp message. Soni, his cousin, had died in FARDC-Twirwaneho fighting the day before and word was slowly spreading through the family. The Congolese army had killed his cousin. It was believed that Twirwaneho had responded to a contingent of FARDC soldiers harassing civilians by trying to push them out of the area. I let the silence resume. Later that day I asked him, “Would you ever leave to fight?” He replied, “If I had, I would have left a long time ago.”¹⁰⁹

Later that day, we visited the home of Soni’s sister and her husband. A wake was in progress. I was reluctant to come in, knowing the personal nature of the event and grief that must have been present. No, it was important for me to witness this, my field assistant asserted. Outside the house, on the outskirts of Nairobi on the Masai plains of little Minembwe, men lined up in plastic chairs. The women and an elder or two sat inside in the sparsely furnished living room. Relatives were quiet and spoke in hushed voices. Greetings came and went with people as they entered and left. Suddenly, the loud weeping of Soni’s sister was heard as my field assistant found her in the other room. This set off the crying of a child in another room. After a good while, a pastor entered and sat for a few minutes. She rose up to pray for the family of the deceased, asking God to be with those that have lost their son, saying that even though he had died he had not died in vain, he died like a man, fighting for us. “If God has taken him, there is nothing we can do, we shall meet again.”¹¹⁰

Soni was born in June 1994, in the twilight of the Rwandan genocide. His father had been recruited into the AFDL and died during fighting in late 1996. After completing schooling in Congo, Soni came to Kenya in 2015. He participated actively in the diaspora community and, like many, was involved in his local congregation. His employment was gainful, taking

him back and forth between Nairobi and the southern border, selling commercial goods. He was in his early twenties and planning to get married. Seemingly out of the blue, in 2019 Soni crossed the border to Uganda and then Congo. He called his family and said, “you won’t find me; I have gone back home to Rurambo to see my parents and you can’t stop me.” According to some accounts, it was believed his brother had become involved in the conflict and had been arrested or killed by security forces in South Kivu. Those who remembered Soni recalled with a tacit understanding that he had left to “protect his community” and “fight for his people.” Discussing with my field assistant on another occasion, getting an update on how the family was handling their loss, he noted that if he had told anyone it would have made it impossible to go, as they would all declare, “you know you’re going to die.” The killing in South Kivu touched the hearts of young people to act, he asserted.

At the invitation of my field assistant and Soni’s family in Nairobi, I attended the funeral service. The church itself was hidden away like many in Nairobi’s dense urban sprawl, only found through the sounds of worship, down a dirt road scarred by steady traffic and heavy rains. At the funeral, another of Soni’s cousins gave me a black T-shirt; on the center of the shirt was a recent image of the deceased. I wore it under my suit jacket, like others attending the funeral. The service brought together various sides of the family, pastors, and friends who had known and loved Soni. The first pastor to speak extolled the virtues of wisdom in knowing when to rely on using violence to guarantee security. The latter contained a formula: “if a person has wisdom he will know when and where to use force for his security.”

The hymns that followed proclaiming Jesus’s victory over death through the resurrection. The next pastor rose and cited Paul’s words to Timothy in the New Testament about being “a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”¹¹¹ He drew parallels between the training, courage, patriotism, armor, and readiness of Paul’s “good soldier” and those like Soni fighting for their community. He concluded, “I can be a soldier of Christ and do what he wants. Our brother who went to take our place, now he is gone we have to stay strong. He went to find justice for his family in his country. It is very sad to lose a man like that, God can comfort us, he knows the beginning and the end.” Family and friends lauded Soni’s virtues of sacrifice and moral character, a young man who died the “death of a hero.” His personal pastor and close friend ended

the liturgy with a final word on seeking justice. After describing how the FARDC were responsible for this tragedy, he said, "Let us all go and fight this injustice. To end this injustice, the only way to end this injustice is for the sons of Mulenge to stand and fight, that's why I say he was a hero."

At this juncture the funeral was set to end as the chapel was scheduled for use by another congregation waiting outside. The leading pastor was pulled aside by one of the family members seeking to raise one last speaker to the microphone. Enter Ntwali. From the front row of the congregation, he awkwardly stood and made wide, limping strides with his wounded leg up to the stage. Hushed whispers backgrounded Ntwali's slow deliberate movements. Taking the microphone, Ntwali described how he met Soni as a Twirwaneho comrade. Although standing with one side of his body almost folding in on itself, he described with piercing eyes how Soni saved his life early on in their time together. He quickly concluded, "Those who killed Soni are all over the valleys and hills, you have talked about justice, but the only way to get justice is to go and join those that are fighting." The reverberating celebrations of those willing to fight and the cost being paid for the Twirwaneho defense of their communities was made tangible by the recounting of Soni's death and by Ntwali's own partially crumpled body. It was clear that his words carried a deadly sincerity, more so perhaps than the pastors speaking from the relative safety of Nairobi or the wider diaspora. As Ntwali had underscored in our own conversation after this first meeting, he was waiting to heal so he could return.¹¹²

In what way is Soni the last Banyamulenge soldier? He was, in fact, one of hundreds either leaving schooling, family, employment, unemployment, or cattle herding to join the latest generation of Banyamulenge soldiers. Just like his comrade Ntwali, the trio, and even Augustin, he had been equipped with memory by an evolving interpretation of a genocide. This shaped how he saw himself, his community, and the enemy they face. A genocide narrative identity provided a compact set of tools for this interpretation and subsequent empowerment to do something about it. It is this action that seems to be itself a social act happening in perpetuity, from one generation of Banyamulenge to the next. The seeds of seeing genocide, implanted by the RPF, have continued to grow, and to kill. So Soni is not the last of the soldiers, sons, brothers, fathers, or cousins to die in the performance of genocide narrative identity. He is a tragic archetype, the last kind of soldier produced by seemingly unending conflict in South Kivu and his community's participation in it.

Conclusion: A Fighting Future

One of the hardest questions backgrounding the research and writing of this book was: Where did a soldier's journey begin and end? That Banyamulenge have a reputation for wearing their history as a marker of identity only made this problem more compelling. How was the narrative of these soldiers' experiences with genocide to be demarcated? How was I to shape and reconstruct such broad narratives? Perhaps most challenging: How was I to represent views where it was increasingly clear that silence about their violent actions formed a substance of the narrative?

Prior to attending the Gatumba memorial in Dallas, I visited the Holocaust and Human Rights Museum. It is a site of transition between exclusive and broader stories around mass violence in the twentieth century.¹¹³ Throughout the permanent Holocaust exhibit I was confronted with what many soldiers had wanted me to see: the necessary violence of survival. The partisans of World War II offer a similar archetypal heroism: resisters in the face of annihilation. The Twirwaneho soldiers I spoke with, whose efforts were applauded in the diaspora, saw themselves as modern-day Bielski brothers, fighting for their people among their people.¹¹⁴ Who was I to judge the survival of a group under threat? I realized that perhaps this was indeed the connection demanded by my participants, but also by a dominant Holocaust narrative. Yet, as attested to by partisan chroniclers, redemptive violence does not exist in a vacuum and has its own political context and consequences.¹¹⁵

This association was further cemented by an image of arrested Banyamulenge men, who may or may not have been Twirwaneho soldiers, gathered and standing barefoot in a neck deep pit.¹¹⁶ The intention of the image was to correlate, without context, a visceral, visual link to Jews executed in pits. Even though Minembwe is not the 1940s Eastern Front, and the Mai Mai and FARDC are not the Einsatzgruppen, I found myself wondering what the limits of scholarship are in understanding an ongoing conflict that fundamentally was not mine. At what point, however, do noncommunity researchers become small actors in such conflicts?¹¹⁷

The silence of Banyamulenge soldiers on their involvement in the attacks on the 1990s camps was to be expected. Now that my own conceptual narrative has been formed, however, this absence is conspicuous. What was missing from my own narrative of this journey is the current state or aftermath of the collapse of the AFDL. Participants were all too keen to

describe how they had subsequently been chased out of the new, liberated Congo by Kabila and his Katangan and regional allies. In Gatete's words, insecurity persisted even after being hailed as liberators. "They could call us revolutionary. We felt like we had brought about peace in this country, in this region. Definitely that's not the case, because we still have a sense of insecurity."¹¹⁸ In a way, this was the story that many participants wanted me to tell. It should be retold, as Umwami stated above, because the *genocidaire* still lives on in their enemies.

Nicolas's memorial concluded with MPA notable Rose Mapendo extolling the actions of those still laying down their lives in the Congo for the Banyamulenge.¹¹⁹ Mapendo lost several immediate family members during the beginning of the Second War in Mbuji Mayi, where she was arrested and imprisoned in the advance on the mineral-rich area.¹²⁰ The evening ended with Mapendo, the MPA representative that night, honoring the sacrifice of Banyamulenge soldiers and the mothers who still sacrifice their sons. Rose declared, "the blood of our sons is in the Congo . . . even if the country is emptied, we need to go back. The people are the country, we need to fight for the country. How is it that we can become slaves?"¹²¹ Again, I was confronted with the multiple meanings of country, belonging, and nation. How Minembwe fits into the larger whole of these conflicts, expulsions, serial militarization, is at the heart of the matter. Indeed, at the heart of claims for self-defense.

Would Nicolas have become another ranked colonel in the FARDC, marginalized within his own army? Or perhaps another target for anti-Tutsi violence within this same army? Certainly, his status as a martyr precluded such musings for his community. It may well be the case that if he had survived, then he would have become mired in successive rebellions and violence and fallen into obscurity along with his colleagues, become another underpaid FARDC colonel, or become an exile in Rwanda or even in the United States. Regardless, his memory served as the main character in the genocide narrative identity constructed across the community, a hero in the fight against the *genocidaire* in both Congo and Rwanda, and a victim of the double-cross by Rwandans who were once considered brothers. If Soni can be described as the last soldier, then Nicolas was the first: the mold in which martyrs are cast. The Rwandan brothers' narrative began a genocide narrative identity networked from the older Augustin to the younger trio. Transnational brotherhood became modified to be wary of Kigali, and it spread throughout the diaspora. Genocide and liberation became nostalgically linked and

interpreted in the present. Peace would come, in this schema and dictated by Augustin, as the blood fertilizes the soil of South Kivu. As addressed in the next chapter, the use of atrocity memory for military victory between Congo and Rwanda, has become increasingly frequent and exclusive.

Through this uncertainty are the harsh realities of Congolese politics and still unresolved ideas about belonging. Worse so, many wish to resolve them with the exclusion of the so-called foreigners in South Kivu by remaking Congo without them. Underpinning this ebb and flow of an *intambara itagira iherezo* is the capture of the Congolese state where neighboring countries and parties within its own borders seek to mediate the state's absence or lack of authority through their own interventions. Furthermore, the emergence of a lifelong career of soldiering in the FARDC, or without in Mai Mai or Twirwaneho, only yields the fruits of escalation if one participates in perpetuating state absence. Fight against the state in order to gain a power in the state. Banyamulenge soldiers decry the absence of the state and fight against it for control of autonomous security. The entanglements of victimhood and self-defense are the edifice of competition among elites, military and armed groups, all tussling for a piece of crumbling state legitimacy.

Aegis of Atrocity

About her shoulders she flung the tasseled aegis, fraught with terror, all about which Rout is set as a crown, and therein is Strife, therein Valor, and therein Onset, that maketh the blood run cold, and therein is the head of the dread monster, the Gorgon, dread and awful, a portent of Zeus that beareth the aegis.

—HOMER¹

As I made my way through a full but sparsely constructed Bukavu chapel on the shore of Lake Kivu, I felt all eyes (not for the first time) fall on me, a *muzungu*.² The building was precariously embedded into the hill sloping down to the water's edge, with paneless windows and wooden benches on a dusty floor. Rugira had extended an invitation for me to join him at the service, where, as a military officer, he had pride of place on the rostrum. It was a Banyamulenge service, specifically for the community in this corner of the city. The words of the aging preacher, following lengthy liberation-flavored hymns and dancing, connected the challenges of violence, narrative, and memory. With a wiry gait, he paced up and down his platform. Turning to point across the congregation with an accusatory finger, he spoke of how they as Banyamulenge found themselves tied to Rwanda's shaping of the past.

A proverb says to remember is killing. Our brothers keep remembering things that I cannot talk about. They meet in their memorials, but cannot talk about things that truly happened. It is as if you are hanging yourself. So, it is better to come and find a solution as brothers, or we will have a problem. They commemorate tomorrow, but do not prevent the whole situation from repeating.³

In his view, Rwandans (“our brothers”) had fatally bound themselves to the past through hollow memorialization: memory without truth. As Tutsi, the Banyamulenge were also captive to this practice and its perpetuation of conflict. Rugira seemed to regret bringing me along to the service, privately censuring the preacher for speaking so recklessly as we drove away. Despite Rugira’s response and the context underpinning it, the preacher’s judgment was a salient one: memory is a weapon that brings violence on the wielder, and its allies, and the intended foe. For the RPF, this weapon shields their actions and narratives from reproach.

One of Zeus’s gifts to his children was a shield of protection, or aegis, used in battle against their enemies. The aegis was arrayed with the head of a gorgon, a previously vanquished monster. This representation of violence was carried before Zeus’s chosen children as they went into war. The notion of terror is operationalized for the protective benefit of the possessor; terror was represented by the gorgon’s head.⁴ Memory became a weapon. This is the weapon critiqued by the preacher. The RPF operationalized the memory of terror in the 1994 genocide as a weapon to divert criticisms of their own violent labors, as well as a shield for battle, as they did in 1996 and continued to do so thereafter to varying degrees.⁵ It is imperative that the material reality represented by the RPF aegis is accepted: a Rwandan genocide of mass proportions that killed at least half a million Tutsi and a minority of Hutu. What has been done with this memory is what shapes the betweenness of Congo and Rwanda today.

In Rwandan tradition, the military is the *ingabo z’u Rwanda*, or shield of the nation. It was believed by RPF leaders that their iteration of this tradition was the antidote to a militarily administered genocide and a devastating legacy of colonialism. The RPF was the way forward as a socially, nationally grounded, and representative military.⁶ The failure of the RPF came early on in its tenure with the breakdown of the coalition, the killing of Hutu minister Seth Sendashonga, and the massacre at Kibeho.⁷ The shield of the nation, in its increasingly rigid articulation of history, became a protection for itself and the state it has absorbed. Enveloped in this militarized sovereignty is an RPF genocide narrative that does not include the systematic nature of RPF violence at home and abroad. Disarming this aegis suggests the deployment of a truth and reconciliation commission, offering a retelling of Rwandans’ stories more inclusively. The trapped position of Banyamulenge soldiers, and even those targeted in ongoing violence, could be liberated by sisters and brothers coming to a solution.

One of the questions deflected by this aegis is: How do we label and

trace the violence of the RPF from the 1990s onwards? The organized, targeted RPF violence during the civil war and genocide, discussed in chapter 2, does not necessarily meet classifications of genocide. What is shown in this book, through the experience of Banyamulenge soldiers, is the movement toward genocidal destruction of refugees in 1996 to 1997. How does one affirm the genocide of 1994 while drawing attention to and understanding the violence of the RPF and its purpose? The aegis displaces examination of these questions, prohibiting a fuller, more complex analysis of the landscape of genocidal violence and thus truth and reconciliation in its aftermath.

The stories laid out in this book seek to answer this problem of selective memory. They document the impact of the Rwandan civil war and 1994 genocide, focusing on the mobilized communities of the Banyamulenge in South Kivu. They also tell of the formation of genocide narrative identity through the eyes of these soldiers. Inevitably this collection adds to other scholarly critical perspectives of RPF/A, AFDL, RCD (and so on) actions, since their arrival to power and rise in Western esteem. What should we make of this use of memory and narrative? This question is especially pertinent when thinking about the violence committed in the name of protecting the Tutsi population in Rwanda and across the Great Lakes region. This chapter builds on earlier discussion of RPF memory. The double genocide theory, outlined in chapter 1, does not address the evolution of RPF violence into the genocidal attacks of 1996. The problems of retelling this period are discussed through the "terror of history." More precisely, this is about how memory can perpetuate conflict through narrative identity. How memory is used by societies before, during, and after a conflict can (re)construct the past for the purposes of war and peace. It is the case of the RPF, and the Banyamulenge, that memory is more often than not put in the service of justifying continual recourse to violence. Banyamulenge soldiers entered into the RPF's emerging world of violent identity making through the civil war, 1994 genocide, and post-genocide conflict and atrocities in eastern Congo. Consequently, this narrative is now theirs too, yet any benefits of the aegis are limited for those beyond the security of Rwanda. As raised in the previous chapter, I further trace attempts by political actors in Banyamulenge communities to replicate the exceptionalism of the aegis. Genocide narrative identity therefore not only captures Banyamulenge soldier identity formation, but that of the RPF and the entanglements of these groups. Although the identities of these groups emerged in symbiosis together, they have become estranged mirrors of each other.

The Terror of History

Rwandan academic and journalist Olivier Nyirubugara, in his lucid tracing of memory and forgetting in Rwanda, stakes out the material and discursive uses of the RPF aegis. Rwandans who do not publicly acknowledge the genocide in line with the government's narrative have limited connection to public memorials and commemorative spaces.⁸ How do these uses of the past, be it physical memorial spaces or speech from state officials, become so owned by or captive to a particular narrative? Dirk Moses describes such politicization of memory and genocide as the "terror of history," that "locks groups into escalatory mechanisms of post-traumatic reality out of which it is difficult to escape."⁹ Trauma becomes the fuel of political violence. The RPF, trained in Ugandan civil conflict, institutionally solidified in the Rwandan civil war and genocide, responded to crisis *through* their traumatized memory. This claim is not about a singular, repetitive deployment of a "genocide guilt card," but controlling policy and state practices of violence through selected trauma.¹⁰

Preservation of the RPF's legacy as liberators and an anti-genocide force, as it is annually commemorated, was important to Banyamulenge soldiers. This group still perceives and feels the effects of a hollow AFDL victory and failure to secure peace in their time. In Gatete's earlier words, insecurity persisted even after they were hailed as liberators in 1997. Despite subscribing to the RPF narrative, and due to their present break from Kigali, many Banyamulenge soldiers retain a complex, enduring connection and pessimism about their former trainers and commanders.

Many, like Rugira, took this alternative approach to RPF memory and legacy. "The reason [for Rwandan involvement in Congo] was to come later: steal the wealth of others, while they were commanders that directed people here. Therefore, they stole everything. . . if Rwanda is good today, you can see how, the cleanliness, the skyscrapers that are there. It is about 26 years since the genocide; it is not their money they are accumulating, it is from the gold and things they stole here."¹¹ If RPF memory was an aegis to those who wielded it, it certainly is a fickle instrument. It is carefully curated, protecting the RPF, and, in this view, materially benefiting the wielder. This shield of memory is inherently connected to the continued subscription of official Rwandan narratives. Despite Rugira's censuring of the old preacher, it seemed that he, in the end, would agree with the message, if not the public delivery. This demonstrated the power of the aegis: criticism was to be made

in private only.¹² Banyamulenge soldiers continue to fight the fight the RPF recruited them for, to create a safe place for persecuted people, whether in Congo or Rwanda. Since the Second Congo War, however, they have done this increasingly on their own, outside of the protection of Rwanda's material power or their aegis.¹³

Georges made a more cynical connection to Rwanda. In linking his own witnessing of mangled bodies in 1994 Rwanda, he then said, "We regret our support to them [the RPF]. We feel like we did nothing, how could they come against us? We did really feel bad; the Kigali regime is working against us. They are in Congo [against] us, supporting those armed groups, it is very sad . . . just watching what is a genocide, to which the world is silent."¹⁴ As is increasingly the case into the 2020s Banyamulenge soldiers identify a genocide taking place in South Kivu, laying the blame at the feet of those who once stood in unity with them.

The existential threat represented by the mid-1990s shifts of power in Zaïre, with the arrival of the Hutu exodus in the east, presented a scenario that was responded to with similar structures of organized violence against civilians, as they did during the civil war, genocide, and post-genocide in Rwanda. Moses continues, "Radical political action becomes an automatic reflex in these circumstances. . . . The terror of history is refracted through ideologically interpolated subjects and groups in specific times and territories, and operates in various modalities under a general structure of traumatic repetition."¹⁵ Here the Tutsi, Banyarwanda, and Banyamulenge marginalization and crises experienced in eastern Zaïre and Rwanda culminated in the framing of threats to Tutsi identity as well as RPF political hegemony. Persistence of the FDLR, or at least the idea of *genocidaires* lurking in the Congolese mountains, is a core facet of the aegis. These elements are foundational to the genocide narrative identity expressed by Banyamulenge soldiers.¹⁶

Post-genocide Rwanda's merging of victim to perpetrator societies serves as a chief example. The *longue durée* of Rwandan, even Great Lakes history demonstrates how this simplification of identity categories is the misleading tip of an iceberg of multidirectional violence. Collective memory enables power relations and utilizing historic grievances for the benefit of the dominant party. Societies mix memory and violence in an undoubtedly productive relationship, one focused on specific audiences, be they idealized citizens or political constituencies.¹⁷ This is true for identity and the perpetuation of official narratives in particular. David Rieff makes the bold,

audacious claim that “collective memory can deform a society.”¹⁸ In situations where atrocity has shaped society, such as Rwanda, he argues the following: “When collective memory condemns communities to feel the pain of their historical wounds and the bitterness of their historical grievances—and all communities have such wounds, whether at a given point in history they are oppressors or the oppressed—it is not the duty to remember but a duty to forget that should be honored.”¹⁹ Aside from the underestimated, transformative power of forgetting such atrocity, it is the nurturing development of subaltern identities and perpetuation of violence that is most compelling in the case of the aegis. The subaltern self-perception shows through in victimhood and atrocity as justifications for pre-emptive violence against the threatening Other.²⁰ Recognizing these dynamics of forgetting and remembering may also help temper what is precisely included and excluded in memory regimes like the aegis.

One might go even further to identify at the root of the aegis, both its development and use in Rwanda, a Tutsi refugee elite, now consolidated under Kagame and RPF high command. While RPF memory is victim-centered, enshrining the genocide at the core of its power relations from the local to the global, it is more structured around the idea of victimhood and their singular narrative of the genocide. Research with survivors often indicates, where they feel comfortable to assert their voice, that those (who were in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide) that survived were viewed with suspicion since the moment of liberation.²¹ Social and economic conditions of survivors further narrows inclusion into the power circling the RPF state.²² Rwandan survivors of “The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda” are indeed protected by the aegis as much as they are simultaneously held hostage by the narrative, whereas survivors of RPF violence, whether during the civil war and immediately after it, or the Zaïrean camps, are not covered by the aegis. Those reformed through post-genocide processes of buy-in, from the elite former-*genocidaire* level to those who passed through *ingando* camps, become beneficiaries as they adopt the RPF story.²³ It must be noted that many survivors in Rwanda work locally on reconciliation within the framework of the government’s narrative and institutions.²⁴ The aegis works to maintain the exclusivity of identity and victimhood, reminding all what memory and violence is acceptable or indeed dangerous to speak of. How then are collective memory and related moral obligations impacted in the aegis?

Collective memory and commemoration of trauma does not always

yield a redemptive power or a peace dividend. This is most popularly recalled by the refrain “Never Again” of anti-genocide activism, or the “lest we forget” of British World War I memorialization. While forgetfulness might be inevitable in the long term, exhortations against absolute evil have done little to prevent similar atrocities.²⁵ In addition to memory not yielding the peacebuilding or transformative effect hoped for from the often banal lessons of history, preservation of violent memory has damaged our capacity to record history in a way that approaches objectivity. An example is that of the moral and legal framing of the crime of denialism: to outlaw the denial of a given genocide. While the well-intentioned necessity of recognition of atrocity is a component of reconciliation processes, it is the formation of specific narratives and politically authorized versions of history that is ahistorical. This creates alignments of power around acceptance of these particular versions.²⁶

This cautioning of the long-term damage of remembrance and collective memory yields a potent call to action. Further, it demonstrates in some extreme cases how narratives and officially sanctioned memory can create fertile ground for enacting, justifying, or covering atrocity. In Israel and the former Yugoslavia, the immense baggage of collective memory is used to interpret present threats through the lens of past subaltern oppression.²⁷ Yet Rieff gives short shrift to the “duty of memory,” dismissing the latter as too victim-centered. It is in fact this perspective that offers a fuller account of the process of utilizing memory in power relationships.²⁸ As argued by Kerry Whigham, collective memory as a process contains distinct possibilities to not only deal with the past in a more representative way for survivors, but also to prevent mass atrocity.²⁹ I return to the potential of this in the conclusion.

The duty of memory for many conveys a moral obligation and attention to inequitable power relations.³⁰ This duty is to build history through the Other’s memory. Reversing this mechanism is how the abuse of memory emerges: dominant memory constructs history at the expense of the Other. The intersection of identity and memory creates a threefold problematic: one, identity is increasingly framed as fixed characters in place of more relational identities; two, interaction with the Other is increasingly adversarial; and three, traumatic collective memory politically grounds nations.³¹ Founding narratives are a violent product of a process where memory births a history that creates more violence to justify or fit versions of the past. As in Gatete’s earlier comment, the contemporary effects of Banyamulenge

adoption of RPF narratives is a view of perpetuating ethnic identity conflict. Seeing discrimination or violence against the Banyamulenge, and Banyarwanda in North Kivu for that matter, as connected to genocide ideology and the work of *genocidaires* propagates a view of a one-dimensional conflict. The aegis in this way becomes a totalizing type of memory. This mode of ascribing identity in genocide precludes constructive dialogue and peace-building, and even provides a continued platform for rebellion against the Congolese state.

Ideology in this scenario is constructed around a subaltern, threatened identity. This formation of ideas answers a basic human need to be identified and make memory.³² Ideology, or a violent founding narrative, can then be wielded in a power relation. Memory is abused in many ways: it oppresses, subjugates, or even obliterates the Other. According to Ricoeur, “imposed memory is armed with a history that is itself ‘authorized,’ the official history, the history publicly learned and celebrated.”³³ The practice of “forced memorization” becomes an Orwellian tool of state discipline.³⁴ Despite the rigidity of identity that is placed upon social actors, there is an apparent structure of narrative; “the characters of the narrative are emplotted at the same time the story is told . . . [and] contribute to modelling the identity of the protagonists of the action as it molds the contours of the action itself.”³⁵ Returning to Ricoeur’s notion of emplotment, what is described here is a model of RPF construction of a genocide narrative identity that results in a power relationship with its loyal, disciplined subjects, and those identified as state enemies.³⁶ This is the process that yields the dividends experienced by the RPF: formation of a post-genocide narrative acting as a shield for atrocity.

The terror of history describes this utilization of memory within a specific power relation as casting critical doubt on the humanitarian, cosmopolitan benefits of victim-centered memorialization.³⁷ A group that embeds itself in such memory produces a history and a present from a place of imminent threat and existential destruction.³⁸ In doing so the past is related to through redemptive violence that appeals to culturally embedded tropes or novel projects of group construction. Trauma, shame, and threat combine in a lethal political cocktail that drives a group almost deterministically toward increasingly violent responses.³⁹ The destination, which can be seen in Rwanda and was attempted by the AFDL in eastern DRC, is a formation of a nation-state that is coherently unified around a genocide narrative identity. This condition includes a mindset where a continual state of emergency perpetuates unity by always pointing to the enemy at the gates.⁴⁰

This notion of unity provides little room for difference and is a product of the severe situation and necessity of maintaining the power derived from the narrative.

Founding narratives can be exclusionary when based on historic, antagonist power relations that are “inherently antagonistic and zero-sum.”⁴¹ The relation in this scenario potentially tips into genocidal when the situation with the enemy is perceived as increasingly “uncontainable and unwinnable.”⁴² The adversary is seen as equally threatening and intractable in their positions and aims. A subaltern relation also permeates this kind of founding narrative. The enemy group is the antagonist of ideological stories about identity, threat, and the absolute need to deliver the perceived vulnerable group.⁴³ In this model, the RPF interpreted and acted on the threat to the Rwandan state and Banyarwanda Tutsi and Banyamulenge in eastern Zaïre. The targeting of the refugee population across the expanse of Zaïre, from the Kivus to Mbandaka, occurred not only through this process but was reinforced by past experience with genocide in Rwanda and violence against Banyamulenge populations in 1996 South Kivu especially. The founding narrative in this case developed in an evolving nonlinear path, building momentum toward escalating violence.

The inheritance of RPF-memorialized history, and the interpretation of colonialism as the root of all Rwanda’s ills, shaped Banyamulenge RPF training and post-genocide narratives. Going all the way back to the late 1980s, the Rwandan Alliance for National Unity, the first iteration of the RPF in Uganda, division in Rwanda was considered to be a result of extreme Hutu politics and Belgian colonial conspiracy.⁴⁴ Formation of the narrative gathered more around loyalty in the name of unity and less around an inclusive society. Although the first months of the new Rwanda in 1995 were hallmarked by symbols of collaborative power sharing and cooperation, this soon crumbled. Distinct practices around this narrative became tools for the orderly discipline of the populace as early as 1995. DMI networks of *abakadas* used these narratives to influence an emerging justice system.⁴⁵ As with the Banyamulenge, from the recruitment of the new RPA to returnee screening camps in 1996, care was taken with political education and reinforcement of the narrative of unity and the necessity of military response to threat.⁴⁶ The development of a historical, precolonial founding myth built on their standard of unity. Rwanda was rejuvenated and the RPF defended it as the best alternative to genocide.⁴⁷

The period of normalization from the 1990s into the next decade saw

political education, military responses to threats, and national unity, using the selective memory of a past Tutsi Kingdom, to shape a post-genocide narrative for the new Rwanda.⁴⁸ Subsequently, this period was followed by inscribing on state practices a merging of specific survivor and perpetrator identities, and scripted memorialization of the 1994 genocide. This shift is seen through how the 1996 memorial of the genocide involved the disinterring of the dead for ceremonial reburial. In contradiction to traditional Rwandan concepts of leaving the dead undisturbed, the RPF-led proceedings also underscored the distinction between survivors/victims and perpetrators, increasingly seen as respectively Tutsi and Hutu.⁴⁹ National-level mourning consumed local-level mourning, which, depending on the area, paid respects to all the victims of civil war and genocide. Rhetoric against the Catholic Church as collaborators and perpetrators, along with the international community, further centralized memorialization in the hands of the RPF state.⁵⁰ Such efforts selectively crafted a controlled memory space, a space sheltered by and in turn vital to the aegis.

Legislation and Memorialization

In the period of growing stability that followed RPF consolidation of power in the late 1990s, additional state-level elements of the aegis came into being. Rwanda's journey to becoming a unified coherent state, under the RPF's genocide narrative identity of selective belonging, became further realized in the 2000s. These included laws passed under the labels of prohibitions against divisionism and sectarianism, banning genocide ideology and identification of ethnicity.

RPF narratives became protected by law, since 2003, with the banning of "Genocide Ideology" and "Discrimination and Sectarianism."⁵¹ This endowed the government with further powers beyond memorialization and political education and socialization, bestowing a set of tools for state discipline.⁵² The National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) embodied the institutional preservation of memory as the gatekeeper of "The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda" and a network of memorials across the country.⁵³

Genocide memorials were largely grassroots in the late 1990s. Established and set up by survivors of violence in a given village, these have steadily been co-opted by state bodies, replacing survivors with centrally

appointed guides.⁵⁴ With the advent of the CNLG and other state institutions, including now the Ministry for Unity and Civic Engagement along with the construction of the national museum, the maintenance and oversight of memorials shifted toward the returnee elite and in some cases away from survivor control, at least in the many smaller, localized memorials.⁵⁵

Transitional justice processes between the locally enacted Gacaca courts and the national courts have resulted in thousands of prosecutions. The assessment of these efforts, however, remains mixed among both global observers and Rwandans themselves.⁵⁶ Transitional justice dealt with initial mass incarceration rates carving a path from the more oppressive violence of the state to a more legitimized violent state. While it may be argued that this is part of a perceived reality for security in targeting deniers or carriers of genocide ideology,⁵⁷ the RPF uses the memory of the past to shape a controlled present and future, retaining the legacy of the party through state organs. Doing so has solidified the Ugandan-born returnees' place as hands at the wheel of the RPF high command and therefore the state, entrenching a social-economic hierarchy based on relation to the genocide within the RPF narrative.⁵⁸ The hierarchy itself trades in the commodification of the genocide, allowing outsiders access on the basis of acquiescence to this currency, repeating Kagame's strategy in dealing with the UN from the mid-1990s refugee crisis.⁵⁹

Through my observations of the Gatumba memorial and other Banyamulenge practices of memorialization, and above all in various soldiers' voices, it is clear that there is an attempt (by the Banyamulenge) to build their own aegis, on an albeit-decentralized diaspora level. Tapping into the hierarchy of suffering by replicating Holocaust memory becomes as a pro forma, applying the stages of genocide for the legitimacy of their victimhood. This selectively earns allies in the Global North, but it does little to integrate their past into a history of multidirectional violence within other Congolese communities, creating instead their own aegis of exclusion, one lacking the state-bound compliance-producing power of the Rwandan equivalent. The aegis adaptation is seen in Banyamulenge and others' responses to the Mapping Report.

Navigating/Deflecting the Mapping Report

This aegis is always relied on as challenges to the RPF legacy arise. During September 2005, the FARDC 5th Brigade discovered mass graves around

Rutshuru (North Kivu), namely in Mugogo and Bunagana.⁶⁰ MONUC staff in the area, already confronted with numerous reports of massacres and mass graves, decided to investigate.⁶¹ Following the initial site visit, including interviews with local residents, a description emerged of how, in the Mugogo market, alleged *genocidaires* and claimed local supporters were publicly executed with a spray of bullets and hammers taken to their heads. Evidence points toward AFDL/RPA soldiers carrying out this execution in late 1996. Those killed numbered in the hundreds, perhaps even more than a thousand, and were mostly local Banyarwanda Hutu.⁶² It is this very conundrum of messily identified “perpetrators” and “victims” in the decade covered by the Mapping Report that is hard to parse as a result of the Rwandan aegis. The complex patterns of violence lurking beneath the RPF’s politicized narrative blocked investigations such as this from following its trail of evidence to a more complete exploration, let alone leading to some form of transitional justice. Instead, we are left with a half-realized analysis, resulting from prior investigations and fieldwork spurred by the Mugogo discovery. It is no surprise then that the Mapping Report utilizes these actor categories in such rigid and conflicting ways. The report’s introduction, quoted at the beginning of this book, bears repeating here: “In some cases, victims became perpetrators, while perpetrators were themselves sometimes subjected to serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, in a cycle of violence that has not yet abated.”⁶³ Disappointingly, this statement, published in 2010, still reverberates a whole decade later, when the persistent patterns and structures of violence are largely unexplained in their multidirectional context.

The Mapping Report documents more than a hundred separate incidents, including the possibility of “tens of thousands” killed by AFDL/RPA forces.⁶⁴ It describes the massacres relayed in this book as attacks on “children, women, elderly people and the sick, who posed no threat to the attacking forces.”⁶⁵ The report makes the significant claim that such attacks targeted “Hutus” as a distinct ethnic group, in a fixed geographical area, without any discrimination of culpability in the 1994 genocide.⁶⁶ The findings are summarized with this dramatic but tentative statement: “The apparently systematic and widespread nature of the attacks, which targeted very large numbers of Rwandan Hutu refugees and members of the Hutu civilian population, resulting in their death, reveal a number of damning elements that, if they were proven before a competent court, could be clas-

sified as crimes of genocide.”⁶⁷ Because of the moral and political weight behind the notion of genocide, this claim is often pushed out of context. OHCHR’s work here is too often mischaracterized as an authoritative classification, not a first attempt at documenting the violence as it was intended to be.⁶⁸

The pressure to subdue the report came swiftly following its draft release in 2010. Foremost was Kigali’s threat to withdraw its involvement in peacekeeping forces from Darfur. Museveni followed suit in condemning the report and calling for it not to be released.⁶⁹ Kigali’s official rebuttals on the Mapping Report range from its failure to recognize the unprecedented nature of the 1994 genocide to the absence of UN intervention during the 1990s, with critiques of the verifiability of the data, as well as the legal weakness of the possible genocide claim of Rwandan refugees.⁷⁰ The official comments end with the call for a rejection of the “double genocide theory.” It states that the report seeks to “compare the alleged deaths of at most ‘several tens of thousands, all nationalities combined’ during a decade of war to the murder of one million unarmed civilians in one hundred days, [it] only succeeds in trivializing genocide . . . personal bias is exposed and, in this context, the countless flaws in The Draft Mapping Report cannot seriously be considered as purely unintentional.”⁷¹ Scale is positioned as the dominant feature of would-be genocide.

Furthermore, they claim, what is alleged by the Mapping Report, within the messy context of prolonged war, just does not add up. The Rwandan response continues: the report attempts to replicate the violence of 1994 with a crude switching of roles, making Tutsis perpetrators and Hutus victims.⁷² Here, again, the aegis is deployed, in this instance redirecting examination of densely layered instances of genocide narrative identities to a more straightforward rejection of moral equivalency of 1996–1997 with 1994. The missing piece of the puzzle persists: How do we classify the violence against identified threats in Zaïre during the 1996–1997 period, and how did RPF violence evolve during the 1990s? What are the connections to anti-Tutsi violence and the violence that is waged in the name of fighting the *genocidaire*? Addressing these questions is central to seeking data and characterization of the proposed definition of these events as refugee genocide.

For Banyamulenge political actors and observers, the Mapping Report represents a similar double standard. The atrocities of the past have been

captured in this document, yet these acts of violence, especially those targeting their communities in South Kivu, continue into the present without much fanfare. This double standard is embodied in Denis Mukwege. The Nobel Prize-winning gynecologist takes to the airwaves and to social media to condemn endemic violence and join with many Congolese activists to call for the implementation of the Report, as well as the naming of those complicit in the killings it documents. He did this in speaking out against the Kipupu massacre discussed in the previous chapter, as well as again in 2021 through his Twitter account following the attacks in Bibogobogo: “There is an urgent need to ensure the protection of civilians in the Hauts Plateaux of #SouthKivu. Clashes between armed groups must imperatively end. #TransitionalJustice will establish the diff. [sic] scales of responsibility in the face of these crimes that plague our communities.”⁷³ Pithily, the MPA replied, “too little too late.”⁷⁴

While the diaspora does not speak for all Banyamulenge, their views go a long way in shaping the international depiction of the conflict, as well as throughout the rest of the Banyamulenge communities across South Kivu and Congo. Augustin, being one of the few soldiers I spoke with who was more familiar with the report as a result of his RPA and FARDC intelligence roles, saw clearly the connection with Mukwege’s failings. According to him, the Mapping Report was a result of conspiratorial collaboration between public figures like Mukwege and Banyamulenge enemies in the Congo: “they went out and fabricated things.”⁷⁵ He continued, “Mukwege is just as any other Congolese, like [Justin] Bitakwira, who are extremists, who hate us for nothing. All of it was a result of hatred for us.”⁷⁶ He claimed that the *genocidaires*, feeding the population with hate for their own personal gain, were the authors of the report.

Luc Henkinbrant, one of the key authors of the report, told me about the difficulties in moving forward with the many recommendations it makes. With the original data held hostage in a vault in Geneva, Henkinbrant frustratedly described the whole report likewise locked up. “The problem is that this report was put in the fridge and we are very few, to speak about it even today. Very few people talk about it, and even the High Commissioner himself is not speaking about it. We are putting pressure on him to try, because this is only a part of the investigation.”⁷⁷ One of the major deflections of the aegis was the chilling effect it had on this report as a pathway to justice.

Aegis Dividends

In addition to quelling the Mapping Report, the dividends of Rwanda's specific construction of memory as an aegis of atrocity are twofold: tacit approval of military involvement in eastern DRC and international acceptance of "The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda" label. This first dividend unfolded for the RPF through the framing of mass violence as an acceptable response to the existential threats against Banyamulenge and other Tutsi in eastern Zaïre. Increasing incursions by the *genocidaire* forces across the border in North Kivu added legitimacy and pressure. The decision to overthrow Mobutu and forcefully take back citizenship rights and traditional lands was not one made singularly by the Banyarwanda or the Banyamulenge. The RPF's militarization of foreign affairs are accompanied by this aegis.⁷⁸ This arrangement continues into the 2020s with iterations of Rwandan-backed armed groups, having held sway in eastern Congo through fomenting chaos and subverting old enemies like the FDLR and RNC.⁷⁹ With narrow exceptions, major international donor states have accepted this weaponization of memory.

Since the AFDL, the government in Kigali has enjoyed relative freedom to oscillate between overt or covert military involvement in Congo. Exceptions came around the international response to the M23 in 2013, where donors, chiefly the United Kingdom and the United States, calculated that the support of Ntaganda was a step too far.⁸⁰ In recent years, Kigali is believed to still use rebel groups to conduct proxy warfare and enforce its interests. As of this writing the most recent iteration of the M23 increased its territorial control under the protection and support of Kigali. I return to this episode in the conclusion.

As Gatete and Rugira's views attested, these dividends of memory have not reached those who were the first fighters of the RPF. Fealty to the party and state has successfully restricted these dividends. The unpopularity of Kagame among Banyamulenge soldiers and others, as a result of RED-Tabara connections and the targeting of prominent activists, limits access to the aegis. It even turns Kigali's shield against former brothers in arms. This tension bears out in other ways. The notion that the aegis can be used to enable the RPF to fight its wars beyond its borders is well understood and increasingly declared by many Banyamulenge. A music video by community artist Gallas decries the meddling and oppression of his people by

Kagame and includes a quote from a Rwandan officer. "As we have already said those [military] jobs will be fulfilled abroad because Rwanda is a small country and we cannot afford to let those bombs come here. Over there we have large countries, our problems will be solved there. . . . But if you want us to start on Mount Kigali . . . it's like fighting in our own living room."⁸¹ These tensions, however, do not diminish the apparent currency of applying the aegis in their own context. The acceptance of RPF narratives around the genocide and their own violence, the former subsuming the latter in "The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda" conception, is a node of power. As discussed in chapter 1, the mobilization of "double genocide" is politically salient for both the Hutu Power movement in its current state and for the RPF regime. It is the latter that is able to marshal international aid and justice around its cause, ensuring its enemies are branded *genocidaires* and deniers.

What is apparent is that while many Banyamulenge soldiers, political actors, and diaspora leaders have disavowed Kigali politically, the traces of a soldier's journey into Rwanda dating back to the early 1990s and the utilization of the aegis are evident. As discussed in the previous chapter, Twirwaneho justifies continued violent conflict as self-defense against extermination. The *genocidaire* is yet to be defeated and is alive and well, not necessarily in the ghosts of the FDLR, but in the perceived coalition of enemies from various Mai Mai groups, RED-Tabara, and even the FARDC. The threat of another Gatumba, continued "The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda," and replays of the mass violence on the upheaval between the shifting power relations between 1994 and 1996 are ever present in the genocide narrative identity cultivated by the RPF and embedded in Banyamulenge soldiers' narratives.

The pursuit of justice for RPF crimes is elusive. Legal action consistently butts up against the aegis. For example, despite DMI head Karenzi Karake's London arrest in 2015 under the order of the Spanish case for RPF crimes, he was released by the Crown Prosecution Service due to limits of the warrant in the United Kingdom.⁸² Karake's arrest drew international criticism, legal support from Kigali's allies in London, and demonstrations from expatriate Rwandans outside the court. This brief incident denotes the difficulty in exploring accusations as a result of the aegis surrounding RPF high command.⁸³

An inverse example of the aegis's power is seen in the killing of former Rwandan intelligence official and RPF royalty Patrick Kareyega. The inquest

into his death was hampered by multiple roadblocks in South Africa, with deniability extended from most of the international community to Kigali.⁸⁴ Even the relative safety of Kenya was often threatened by the looming reach of Kigali. My research assistant in Nairobi recounted how in 2021 a Banyamulenge political activist who regularly spoke out against Rwandan influence in South Kivu through RED-Tabara, and was a local supporter and agent of Twirwaneho, was cornered in a bar by two assailants. Speaking in Kinyarwanda, they ordered that the room be emptied, then shot the activist point blank in the head.⁸⁵ Other locations in Nairobi were sites we had to steer clear of as regular listening posts for Rwandan informants. While I was always confronted by the subjective reality of the world Banyamulenge actors inhabited, the fears for safety were potent and a driving force for the security concerns of most soldiers. Those excluded or exiled from the aegis are denied its protection and, in this case, even seek to bring it down by political or violent means.

Another case of aegis power prominent in soldier and diaspora narratives is the death of Banyamulenge activist and lawyer Ntwari Bukuru. He was a regular critic of Kigali's ongoing role in destabilizing eastern Congo, especially through sponsoring RED-Tabara, and made frequent media appearances. He called out Rwanda's involvement in a "plot to exterminate" his community.⁸⁶ According to Bukuru's family, he was compelled into a car, driven to a business district in Kigali, taken up to the fourth floor, and pushed to his death by an unknown assailant. The Rwandan Bureau of Investigation quickly reacted to rumors of foul play and insisted the evidence pointed to suicide.⁸⁷ Notwithstanding the divergent accounts and the regular practices of the RPF in silencing critics, this death added momentum to Banyamulenge genocide narrative identity, and their perception of uses of the aegis turned against them.

Such dividends of RPF memorialization only serve to reinforce this aegis. Despite the emergent tide of Rwandan dissident voices, or the release of alleged *genocidaires*, a seismic shift in power would need to occur to allow for a reconciliatory assessment of Rwanda's past.⁸⁸ What remains is how genocide should be conceived of where memory can become abused and utilized as an aegis of atrocity. In many ways these anecdotes are often the substance of many soldier narratives about the violence of the aegis. The RPF is willing to protect its legacy and memory at all costs. Bukuru's death itself seems to have been included in this cost and was foretold by the preacher that I witnessed in Bukavu a few years earlier.

Conclusion: Not Untold but Retold

RPF violence and memory is about mobilization in the fight against the *genocidaire*. Increasingly the aegis of atrocity enables political control in the region, especially in Congo itself. Critical analysis has to go beyond the narrative enshrined and protected by RPF memory. This includes highlighting the violence that served as a refiner's fire, in turn structuring responses to threats coming from a crisis-ridden Congo. Vacillating arguments made by ideologically driven researchers and writers, or assessments written in praise of the RPF, create an impasse for further research and debate. They miss both the important process of destructive connections across AFDL and RPF/A practices in Rwanda and Zaïre/Congo, and are therefore unable to push analysis beyond the prevalent conceptualizations of genocide. The atrocity making up the RPF's aegis turns out to be both that which they have enshrined in memory as well as that threatened by the state against existential, unwinnable enemies. Here the specific RPF version of a genocide narrative identity manifests not only in its construction of history, but also in its deployment as the aegis.

The controversial lyrics of Kizito Mihigo's song "Igishobanuro Cy'urupfu," or the Meaning of Death, speak to the central problem of the aegis. He sings, "Even though genocide orphaned me. But let it not make me lose empathy for others. Their lives too, were brutally taken, but not qualified as genocide. Those brothers and sisters, they, too, are humans I pray for them, those brothers and sisters."⁸⁹ Simultaneously, we hear in these lyrics the limitations of focusing on only "The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda" victims, found specifically within the RPF genocide narrative identity. The question of representation raised in Mihigo's lyrics, however, is a further casualty of the aegis. Mihigo was an orphaned genocide survivor and was arrested for this song. He and others were released as part of a mass pardoning by Kagame in 2018.⁹⁰

The key to disarming the aegis is not dramatic untold stories of Rwanda. These are, after all, inscribed into the memory of those currently excluded from the state's narrative. It is in fact a retelling of the Rwandan story about what should come next. A diversity of stories being told together not separately is crucial to any retelling. Mihigo's song, although much maligned by the government, is demonstrative of a more shared, messier, multidirectional story. Memory may well be more inclusive when freed from the bonds of hierarchical suffering. A collection published by a group of diaspora sur-

vivors of various Rwandan conflicts, including the 1994 genocide, sits on the outside of the aegis and is deemed with contempt.⁹¹ Published under the proverb *ribara uwariraye*, this collection, like another Mihigo song by the same name, underscores the exclusion and potency of silenced voices. This proverb indicates the power of witness testimony of those who have experienced the night. Mihigo's lyrics can be read through the injunction for continued, broader reconciliation. "Because we have known divisions, we are the ones who will witness unity. Because we are hated, we will be witnesses of love. . . . Even though history is bad, we will tell it as it is. History, no matter how sad it is, we will name it, because it is from all of us, because it is our foundation for the future."⁹² In 2020, Mihigo died in police custody following an attempt to exit Rwanda illegally. He was likely another victim of weaponized memory.

Narratives are key for the cohesion of any state, and many states use theirs as a weapon; Rwanda is not unique in this sense.⁹³ Parallels have been drawn in this book to a variety of anecdotally similar cases, such as Israel, and even to the Banyamulenge diaspora and political actors' own attempts to lay claim to a shield adorned with vanquished foes as a warning to current ones. Revisionism, in principle, is not the enemy of Rwanda's future. How this is done is the crucial question, one that still rightly occupies the thoughts of many historians and teachers within the country itself.⁹⁴ Being able to parse remnants of Hutu Power ideology from shades of dissent labeled as genocide ideology, and hold violent actors accountable, is crucial for the future. The aggressive consolidation of power in the long term leads to more of the same, as does the continued use of the aegis to maintain control at home and regionally through silencing every critic as a denier of the genocide. Perhaps only a future regime in Kigali would ever consider prosecuting crimes dating back to the civil war. Given the high value placed on the legacy and reputation of the RPF as an institution, even many RPF dissidents would be hesitant to do this.⁹⁵ Attempts at prosecuting Kagame, or any others, have fallen flat because of the status quo enjoyed by the RPF. The dividends of RPF memory only serve to reinforce this privilege. Despite the emergent tide of Rwandan dissident voices, or the release of alleged *genocidaires*, a radical shift in power would need to occur for further reconciliatory assessment of Rwanda's past.

Disarming of the aegis and its harm both at home and regionally is perhaps best done through a form of truth and reconciliation, using Rwanda's independent judiciary and civil society to negotiate an amnesty route for

past crimes, including RPF ones. In many ways the Mapping Report offers an early blueprint for such a commission. The bargain here requires a weighting of justice against leaders instead of footsoldiers in the 1994 genocide and a long-term illiberal regime that has repressed dissent. This might be a foundation for future steps forward in Rwandan democracy.

Inclusive narratives that more fully support a given state's diversity are an advocated path for conflict transformation and genocide prevention.⁹⁶ The need for transcending the disciplinary boundaries of these fields is key to preventing mass violence in the long term.⁹⁷ Having identified some of the networks and nodes of conflict-supporting narratives, it is tempting to advocate a straightforward reversal of these into narratives for peace. Pursuit of peace education in a postconflict period, even where mass violence has been a feature, is a growing practice subject to much debate.⁹⁸ The power of peace-oriented education that liberates and empowers offers a promise of transforming relationships.⁹⁹ Constructing such narratives and education, however, is a long-term endeavor fraught with contentious processes.¹⁰⁰ Adam Curle's notion of "awareness" demonstrates that an interaction of perceptions of the past and attempts to fashion a vision of the future are always going to be problematic.¹⁰¹ Attempts at this in Congo have been overburdened and aborted due to an unsettled political landscape and too many meddling actors with conflicting interests.¹⁰² Truth commissions require a host of supporting political and economic measures, but they can offer substance to the construction of conflict-specific peace education and narratives.¹⁰³

The Bukavu preacher had caught hold of a compelling thread, an aegis of atrocity that propagates violence against the wielder and foe alike. For Banyamulenge soldiers this aegis no longer offered protection, so, following their training and the genocide narrative identity, they have sought to fashion their own. By not subscribing to the cyclical interpretation of conflict reported in the Mapping Report, further questions could then be opened up about the future of the Banyamulenge and other conflicting groups and perceptions in the region. It would be naive to suggest that the RPF, their North Kivu proxies (think M23), or even Twirwaneho have exclusive rights to a genocide narrative identity, or even the mobilization of violent memory as an aegis. But the narrative networks that have informed the genocide narrative identity of these groups, particularly the Banyamulenge, in turn drive a willingness to use violence in self-defense against perceived oblivion. As discussed in chapter 3, this logic is traceable back to the early training days of

the RPF. The peace dividends of an aegis-quelling truth and reconciliation commission for Banyamulenge communities, and their soldiers' participation in the violence of the RPF state, would go a long way to filling in the gaps of both Congo Wars, as discussed in the Mapping Report. The fractured mirror in which Banyamulenge soldiers see themselves and their pasts is a product of their time as liberators alongside the RPF. Notwithstanding the distance sought by many members of this community between themselves and the RPF, replicating the power of the RPF's aegis is not a tool for peace. A commission would demonstrate as much.

There is a compelling case for forgetting atrocity instead of memorializing it or allowing it to become fodder for the terror of history, framing the future through the past. After a review of the varied conversations I have had with participants, this option seems unlikely to be chosen by the embattled generation of soldiers who still sense threat and insecurity around them. Any attempt at dealing with a genocide of Rwandan refugees rests with future political actors and future regimes in both Kinshasa and Kigali.¹⁰⁴ Further distinction between forgetting, forgiveness, and reconciliation must also be brought to bear. Questions about engaging with the past constructively, although inevitably difficult, must be answered.¹⁰⁵

What then of local peace and narrative construction? If a relational approach is used, attention can be focused on delivering and facilitating learning that reaches those close to but not yet incorporated into existing conflict narrative identities. Reaching out to a new generation of Banyamulenge young people, and intercepting the transmission of existing narrative identities, could create avenues for peace education.¹⁰⁶ For John Paul Lederach, this means making a space-specific social interaction. Lederach is worth quoting at length here:

This is the challenge of restorying: It continuously requires a creative act. To restory is not to repeat the past, attempt to recreate it exactly as it was, nor act as if it did not exist. It does not ignore the generational future nor does it position itself to control it. Embracing the paradox of relationship in the present, the capacity to restory imagines both the past and the future and provides space for the narrative voice to create. As such, the art of imaging the past that lies before us holds close the deep belief that the creative act is possible.¹⁰⁷

The performative process of restorying, or constructing new meaning from old narratives, can build transformative connections to the past, and the future offers this kind of holistic approach. If the process of narrative identity formation can build networks and create social collectivities, then positive or peace-oriented configurations are possible.¹⁰⁸ The potential of a truth and reconciliation mechanism holds great promise for a country like Rwanda, even the wider Great Lakes region.

Conclusion

UNAVOIDABLE GENOCIDE?

I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now.

—WILFRED OWEN¹

How will your research bring justice and peace?

—GAHIGI²

Gahigi, who had lost much in the current conflict in South Kivu, asked me before our interview began, “How will your research bring justice and peace?” This is always a hard individual question to answer, as it reckons, rightly so, with the legitimacy of academic research. It forces the producers of the latter to confront their power and relation to violence. I find myself swimming around my own reflections of what I have witnessed of a Banyamulenge genocide narrative identity. Specific points of reflection included my experiences with Gatumba survivors, attended memorials, hearing wounded soldiers with their trauma and broken bodies. These are especially challenging when capped with the earnestness and defiance of those like Gahigi asking this question. In this concluding chapter I attempt to answer this question by reviewing the argument of this book. I outline paths forward as well as demarcating the dangers of genocide narrative identities.

Throughout this book I establish the concept of genocide narrative identity as a way of sensing social actors, who must be seen in a subjective

relation to atrocity, particularly in settings of multidirectional conflicts. This book, using Banyamulenge soldiers' voices, among others including political actors and diaspora members, charts the multidirectional violence of genocidal episodes, from Rwanda 1994, regionally in 1996, the refugee camps from 1996–1997, and ongoing ebbs and flows of violence after the Second War was settled but never really ended. The postcolonial context of these events creates relational narrative identities that themselves have been reproduced over time through an era of central African kingdoms to colonialism, independence, and experiments with authoritarianism. In retelling these stories, using the soldiers' gaze, I have incorporated their truths and given weight to the subjectivity of these interactions with violence.

Genocide is essentially relational and produces social actor identities. The narratives of Banyamulenge soldiers reveal a concept of genocide narrative identity in this schema. This approach to genocide proposes people are first considered social actors before applying more interconnected labels of perpetrator or victim. The notion of who the Banyamulenge are is increasingly being framed by their genocide narrative identity. Generally, Banyamulenge soldiers are seen varyingly as perpetrators and victims by differing parties. Therefore, seeing social actors in their environments does not erase such labels, but allows for greater sense making in multidirectional conflict. As discussed later, genocide narrative identity has the promise to seal trauma collectively, but also has the potential to fracture future reconciliation and prolong conflict. A genocide narrative identity layers in the complexities of perpetrator and victim experiences and perspectives, adding to existing scholarship about how this type of violence is as productive as it is destructive. In the postcolonial African context of the Great Lakes region, such identities are ascribed and subscribed. Structure and agency interplay in the negotiation of threat and belonging, the effect of which intensifies when actors and groups are exposed to multiple cases of genocide. The impact of these conclusions is discussed, suggesting how we could develop our thinking about genocide. Such a change should shift our conflict narratives and atrocity remembrance.

This book aimed to change the way the region and its genocides are perceived. A regional, multidirectional view can show how genocides, in their degrees of being perceived and experienced, impact conflicts, even the likes of Congo's unending war. Integral to this book have been the relations between genocide narrative identities, aegises of atrocity, and seeing the layering of social actor experiences. These show how actors actively make

worlds of conflict and peace. A past genocide may not be completely deterministic of another,³ yet it provides essential memory material for another. This has been the direct experience of many in the Congo, especially Banyamulenge. Social actors in perpetration, victimhood, or survival oscillate around these layers of genocide. The 1994 genocide profoundly shapes the region, with devastating impacts on those like the Banyamulenge caught between Congo and Rwanda. Victims do not simply become perpetrators in layers of mass violence, or vice versa, but they tell and perform narratives that create such social worlds.

Genocide narrative identity reveals the process of how narrative identity is shaped by episodes of genocide. Genocide is the social destruction of groups, and in the case of the Banyamulenge soldiers, experiences and uses of genocide are simultaneously ongoing and subjective. For the social actor-soldiers I encountered, genocide was interacted with in Rwanda, endowing them as liberators: genocide was witnessed and embedded in the act of ending it. Within two years, the same genocidal forces remobilized anti-Tutsi sentiment, forcibly removing and killing Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda across eastern Congo. Finally, and ongoing in the current republic, is the continuance of *intambara itagira iherezo* as an ebb and flow conflict in South Kivu persisting with this same devastating effect. Threaded throughout a genocide narrative identity shown in this book are the narrative networks constructed over time by the RPF, which have then been adapted and integrated into Banyamulenge narratives. The evidence of these are in the varying plot points charting this book's retelling of these stories: postcolonial nationality and citizenship, rebellions, identification as Tutsi, participation in the RPF, the 1994 genocide, a promise of return, both Congo Wars, *gumino*, Gatumba, and the rise of Twirwaneho. Such are woven together in a genocide narrative identity, obscuring the realities of multidirectional conflict.

The role Banyamulenge soldiers have taken in the region has been foundational. It was integral to both the RPF's capturing of state power in Rwanda, and then in confronting enemies and executing regime change in Zaïre. Subsequently, they have played an active role in the ongoing dynamics of rebellion against state power in pursuit of belonging in Congo. This continues today through Twirwaneho. Such participation in conflict fulfills the community's drive for self-defense while doubling down on instability in the east. I address the futures of this scenario later in the conclusion.

While the Banyamulenge community is indeed a target of hate speech, forced removals, destruction of property, and targeted killings, this violence

is part of a whole, a series of multidirectional violence in eastern Congo. This book has highlighted one cross-section of the multidirectional nature through the narrative of Banyamulenge soldiers. Experiences of genocide include the destruction of *genocidaires* as perpetrators. Arguably, the desire or willingness to resort to this kind of violence is still present for many in the logics of participation in armed groups. These interactions with genocide, from the RPF into the present, crystalized the figure of the *genocidaire*. As the refugee camps were cleared and as Banyamulenge have encountered countless combatant and civilian populations, the formulation of the *genocidaire* has been ever present. Thus, a genocide narrative identity captures the victimization within the RPF paradigm of anti-Tutsi violence, but also, in the necessity of fending off genocidal enemies, genocide becomes an all-encompassing framing for intercommunal relations. Banyamulenge identity, since its 1960s articulation, is an assertion of belonging in Congo. The flow of *intambara itagira iherezo* and growth of diaspora influence have relied on a genocide narrative identity to reinforce this belonging. A Banyamulenge and Rwandan aegis that protects genocide narrative identities, however, perpetuates violence.

In this sense, genocide narrative identity becomes a wedge in especially regional peacebuilding, reconciliation, and communal, dynamic noncompetitive memory. Genocide may indeed be the material condition of violent relations facing the Banyamulenge in South Kivu and beyond, but this does not always make it a paradigm for reconciliation or peace. In a revision of Augustin's words, the spilling of the community's blood actually becomes a fertilizer for further conflict, not for peace. Any (negative) peace achieved through force cycles the use of armed conflict back around into future intercommunal grievances. This kind of action can make genocide increasingly likely to persist in both experience and perception.

More linear or perpetrator/victim elements of genocide narrative identity find amplification in organizations that trade in the language of genocide, as discussed in the prior chapter.⁴ Understanding how social actors sense violence from an individual to a communal scale and beyond, is essential to reconciliation of varying forms, as it is to types of justice. The articulation of genocide as a process by Lemkin gave form and content to destructions ongoing for centuries. Alongside the articulation of crimes against humanity in moral as well as legal terms, these concepts allow groups to speak their pain and to search for accountability. At face value this is what Banyamulenge and other groups' genocide narrative identity allows us to observe:

what violence a targeted groups sees. I do not presume as a scholar to gate-keep mobilizations of genocide as a label. This raises the question of whose role this is, if anyone's, beyond a legal courtroom setting. Indeed, implied in the genocide narrative identity for some is denying genocide across a series of multidirectional conflicts; for some a logic of only one genocide between Congo and Rwanda is plausible or even moral.

Inherent in this language is the limited logic that Global North policy-makers are triggered to react and step in.⁵ For the Banyamulenge, a genocide narrative identity widens the gap between anticipating top-down solutions and the capability of enacting peace from the bottom up, outside of the use of force. In many tragic ways this language of genocide as a currency is poorly valued at best and is already well-spent in Congo as well as in the continual reinforcement of the aegis of atrocity. The activist language of genocide for Banyamulenge groups gives voice to a layered set of experiences and exposures to genocide. It lacks, however, the following two crucial elements. First is the need for direct engagement with the multidirectional nature of the Congo conflict over time as the wider Banyamulenge soldiers' journey. Second is the need for a critical perspective of the relations in genocide between social actors. Genocide narrative identity shows these shortcomings in how a community evolves over time, particularly its collective adaptation to individual member experiences from soldiers to refugees, who then relate to civilians on the ground being removed from their homes and killed.

In this case, evidence points toward processes of social group destruction, with traceable hate speech to shape the latter. In tension with this conclusion, though, an overarching design of intent to genocide is harder to plot, despite its presence as multiple narrative plot points throughout this book, such as the plans seen by Janvier and others in 1996 or the coordinated effort of Rwandan officials to displace the community or sponsor RED-Tabara for that same purpose. The lived experiences of the community are theirs to conceptualize and define, as is their Congolese identity. The consequences of such, however, are manifold and hold potential for either peace or violence.

As a lens, genocide narrative identity germinates seeds of future violence, as seen in the reproduction and performance of RPF-incepted narratives of threat and the *genocidaire* Other, reminding us that genocide as a set of relations is inherently subjective. Accepting the evidence of genocide in the present should not preclude the effectiveness and transformative nature

of a myriad of alternatives to seeing genocide at every turn. Within a multidirectional conflict this can consume a group's identity and its production, as I observed in elements of Gatumba memorials and in the repurposing of RPF training into the present by Twirwaneho leadership.

Thinking about genocide and mass atrocity prevention in this context raises complex challenges, especially given the problematic nature of genocide narrative identity and anti-genocide activism laid out in this book. Hugo Slim's discussion of the do-no-harm principle in this field is a pressing intervention that helps to address the challenges I have discussed.⁶ Preventing this kind of violence is often about more than just staying out of participation in harm, but how to get involved and support social world cocreation for resilience or empower agency and social relations to stop harm. This includes multilevel capacity-building from the local to the state and regional levels for peace, attention to and centering of local dialogue, creating memory and historical narrative that is representative, and using varied approaches to justice.⁷ As I have shown and as has been attested to by Banyamulenge soldiers, refugees, activists, and political actors, these efforts have been practiced to varying degrees with wide-ranging results. The view I have taken of social actors in this book connects firmly with the acknowledgment that restorative justice offers recognition of the multidirectional nature of participation in violence since the early 1990s in the Great Lakes region. Despite humanity's intentions in the twentieth century, human rights and the justice oriented around these principles, are not universal.⁸ They are necessarily aspirational, as is the quest to rid societies, structures, and economies of mass atrocities, including genocide.

Enacting human security and long-term peacemaking in the Congo is the subject of much thinking, work, success, and frustration by a variety of actors. The most convincing approaches are holistic, with collaboration across a range of parties from the local to the global. Success in Congo is largely the result of grassroots-generated activity.⁹ I argue that this equally applies to the Banyamulenge, notwithstanding the continued assembly of Global North allies pushing the cessation of a genocide. This kind of agenda, without seeing the violence as many experience and represent it, hampers peacebuilding. This book's interventional framing of multidirectional conflict does not replace genocide or other forms of mass violence. It is intended to be an accompanying tool to understand complexity and the layering of cases of genocide. This layering generates a genocide narrative identity, which must be seen within its multidirectional context. This relation is cru-

cial to transitional justice mechanisms, mass atrocity research, and reconciliatory peacebuilding.

To address the above dichotomies, I turn now to paths forward and then end on the dangers of a genocide narrative identity. These threads are in part inconclusive and raise further unanswered questions. Such an approach, while unorthodox in academic environments where one is expected to birth a monopoly of answers, provides open doors at the end of this book. In the end, after all, this is not my story as much as it is the community's story. It is a story that belongs to the community's coming generation in Congo and the diaspora. As described by Whigham, wounds and scars in collective memory have an active relation to the "resonant violence" of the past,¹⁰ which may, particularly in our case, be perpetuating into the present. Wounds represent the ongoing nurturing of past violence, as in the example of the aegis of atrocity. Scars, alternatively, allow for healing to take place, but in line with the transformative relations of the duty of memory, and not forgetting as advocated by Rieff. Whigham states,

In case of genocide and resonant violence, hate and pain work to isolate and unify, shape and break apart certain groups. In the presence of these forces, it becomes the unfair burden of the groups most negatively impacted by violence to determine how to alter that negative affect in a way that does not negate the fact that it exists or has existed, but that disallows it from performing its continued acts of violence in the present and the future.¹¹

Genocide narrative identity in itself does not determine practices like the open-wound mobilizations of an aegis do. Likewise, it does not entail a straight path to restorative justice. Oscillations between, around, and through the outcomes of genocide narrative identity are contingent on the very human nature of relations in and after conflict. Presently, for many Banyamulenge, genocide narrative identity results, and strategically so, in a continuation of conflict. Force is used to achieve a sense of security. How then does this form of sensing violence yield peacemaking?

The power of a diaspora is massively underrated when it comes to peacebuilding, just as much as its power to fuel and even fund conflict is. In this setting I met many young people in the diaspora, like Espoir, who saw the potency of education in creating change back home. The accumulation of knowledge feeds a genocide narrative identity: knowing what genocide is

for the community often means understanding their history and anticipation of presumed international action. I met many others pursuing education and practice in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, antithetical to Augustin's seasoned bloody, battle cry. A powerful example here would be the efforts by Gatumba Refugee Survivors Foundation members to engage with other Congolese diaspora groups, envisioning a shared memorial and call for justice and providing spaces for healing within the community. During 2022 and 2023 dialogues were held between conflicting groups in the Congolese diaspora in Indianapolis, the first of their kind. Although brought together through the support of the locally based, international Crane Center, representatives from different Congolese communities in the area assembled and set an agenda for a series of conversations, including finding ways to talk about conflict back home and the role of the diaspora.¹²

A further example is found in a diaspora facilitation with South Kivu impact. New Hope Ministries, led by Alexis Ruhumuriza, raised funding for and built the New Hope Reconciliation Center in Minembwe. Alexis came to the United States in connection with community resettlement, and lost both his grandparents in a massacre targeting Banyamulenge in the summer of 1996. Akin to other dialogue efforts in the area, this center is run by a council of community representatives across ethnic identities. This center has been used on occasion to temporarily house and feed those displaced by fighting. Alexis described to me the promise he and his local team saw in bridging gaps and providing for communities impacted by conflict in Hauts Plateaux. He also described the skepticism of diaspora members asking "why do you feed the people who are killing us?," referring to members of other groups provided shelter in the center.¹³ At the crux of this effort was diaspora and white US-congregant-driven funding precipitated by the dilemma of Banyamulenge communities back home. This work, however, goes further in trying to seek what Alexis described as "equity, peaceful reconciliation with collaborative, critical impact."¹⁴ Alexis's story, like those of many other community members and Congolese, begins in a similar way, with displacement and suffering, but it has continued with resilient peacebuilding.

Emphasis on survival as a dimension of narrative identity also permeated out of these observations of peacebuilding. Diana's words to me in describing her trauma underscored that sympathy wasn't needed. What stood in its place? A sense of solidarity, community care, opening discourse on mental health, and building futures alongside the memory of violence, not without it. Possible unity and prevention of future violence comes in the kind of

remembering that creates open solidarity, not the kind that reinforces the more conflict-promoting practices of genocide narrative identity, or even the aegis. If this book's concept is about how the stories of genocide shape who we are, then a peacebuilding transformation would include where these stories could lead and what kind of peace and justice is fostered. Many in the community are asking these questions, albeit as a minority voice.

Is the hidden nature of this critical approach a result of soldiers being centered in the community, particularly in the diaspora? Furthermore, is my own focus on soldiering and violence equally capable of displacing peacebuilding narratives? I encountered several actors across the generations of soldiers who did not share the aegis-like viewpoint of redemptive violence. Frank's central memory of the First War period was of his own reconciliation with a childhood friend. This was a real-life parallel of the war poet Wilfred Owen's imagined encounter of former enemies. Mustafa's cynicism of the likes of Masunzu, controversial hero-protectors of the community, saw through the military bourgeoisie competition for power among those benefiting from rebellion. He abandoned soldiering and sought out a new life, unlike Ntwali, and is unwilling to return to fight. He seeks community building through peaceful means as an advocate for refugees and resettlement in the United States. The Banyamulenge are no more militarized a community than many others in eastern Congo. But the persistence of a genocide narrative identity and deployments of memory in aegis-like fashion make it easier to deny the legitimacy of dialogue and other restorative justice mechanisms. Although soldiering and participation in armed conflict are near the heart of the community, this relation is not definitive of the whole.

There are of course certain dangers linked to continued uses of a genocide narrative identity. In conclusion, I mention three here: balkanization and federalism, genocide as a roadblock to peace, and self-defense in the face of mass atrocity. A hot topic of political discussion, and one that seeds conspiracy theories and has bearing on identity and belonging, is that of balkanization. This deeply historical issue around borders is quintessentially postcolonial.¹⁵ Anti-Tutsi public discourse in Congo frequently frames Tutsi as aspiring separatists, seeking to conspire with Kigali in the creation of a greater Rwanda, or an independent Kivu.¹⁶ As ever with such short-handed politicking, the nuances of debates around federalism are lost. The original political cause of the FRF itself, in federalism and decentralizing power away from Kinshasa, is turned into an anti-Tutsi trope.¹⁷ As seen throughout

soldiers' stories in this book, however, Tutsi do not inhabit an ideological monolith. While elements of the M23 remain loyal to outside support from Kigali and Kampala and have stronger political ties, great distance has been marked out by Banyamulenge actors between Minembwe and Kigali. This distance starts with the killing of Nicolas Kibinda and continues with the recent sponsoring of RED-Tabara.¹⁸

Recent UN reporting does indicate, however, a pending further fracture within the community in favor of the M23. The group itself is not exclusively Tutsi, although like its forebears it aims to prevent genocide against this particular group in Congo. The M23 grievances around failed promises of refugee return and increased security appeal to many outside of the Congolese Tutsi groups in the east.¹⁹ There is evidence, however, of rare Banyamulenge FARDC defections to the M23, as well as increased cooperation and interaction between Twirwaneho and M23.²⁰ This situation worsened in 2025 with the reported killing of Makanika by a FARDC drone, but also likely a result of alleged Twirwaneho in-fighting.²¹ Uses of genocide narrative identities in Congo and Rwanda's aegis of atrocity, in a setting of heightened militarism in the east, promise to further justify inflaming this conflict.

Various soldiers and political actors I spoke with continued to see federalism or, even in a minority, the breaking up of colonially conceived Congo as the only route to security. Participation in the RPF, AFDL, RCD, and even down to Twirwaneho speaks to how this localization of power and security might be brought about. This is not a uniform view. Federalism in Congo does not resolve the broader issue of reconciliation and living with neighbors where multidirectional conflict is largely unaddressed, or in many cases brutally politicized by nationalist populism.²² Moreover, this option, when seriously considered, can solidify ethnic politics where territory is gained by armed groups. Rwanda's persistent regional presence, in its funding, support, and even participation in armed groups, raises even thornier questions about how Kigali would respond to independence in eastern Congo, where it already sees bad governance as endemic and hospitable to the *genocidaire* and intervenes on this basis. As I completed this book, massive uncertainty remains around the future of the current Kigali-backed M23 occupation of large parts of North and South Kivu.

The second dangerous outcome of genocide narrative identity is the use of the notion of genocide in building peace and the myriad of steps that can be taken in this endeavor. It is important to underscore that Congo, even Rwanda for that matter, are far from being peace deserts. As indicated above

and in relevant literature,²³ peace and reconciliation between communities experiencing multidirectional conflict happens where violence is disrupted and peace is increasingly conceived of as everyday.²⁴ I have discussed extensively the way in which Banyamulenge actors and allies persist in a genocide framing of the long history of Banyamulenge experience, Gatumba, or even the upsurge in conflict since 2017. I think again here of the black hoodie from the 2021 memorial, along with its green text emblazoning a litany of atrocities against Tutsi. It is worth restating that much of what the Banyamulenge have experienced in eastern Congo's history is the destruction of a social group. But where does this label take the future of the conflict?

Genocide as a legal, moral concept is a powerful activist tool. Unfortunately, examples of where it leads to neoliberal implementations abound. These range from European intervention in Libya, the United States in Iraq, to Russia in Ukraine, or even in the RPF's own deployments of an aegis of atrocity (to provocatively name a few). The term has currency on the international stage, and this is the gamble of much Global South and diaspora activism, among whom the Banyamulenge may count themselves. The term comes with a cargo ship load of colonial and political baggage. This book's task was not to determine what is genocide and what is not, but to reflect the narratives and outcomes of doing so by soldiers and others in the community. The impact of the strategic mobilization of genocide as told in this book entrenches a positionality for Banyamulenge, and other Congolese Tutsi, that exceptionalizes their experience of violence. Beyond being a consistent complaint of other Congolese (plus their diasporas) activists, this practice does serious harm to the earlier mentioned ability to scar, to relate to the memory of violence of other Congolese, and fundamentally so to address perpetration of the soldiers in this book. As social actors in multidirectional conflict, victims, survivors, and perpetrators abound as relational, narrative identities. Framing a community's suffering, without this context, creates another kind of distance between neighbors in eastern Congo. Indeed, the unaddressed memory of past violence, particularly around atrocities during both Congo Wars, creates a cycle of silence around episodes of genocide without seeing the whole. The past, even experiences of genocide, can prevent further violence when it is used to work toward unity, solidarity, and repair.

The final dangerous outcome is in the earlier discussed relation between self-defense and mass atrocity. To what extent is this a moral response as well as a replicator of mass violence? This is one of the harder questions I

have encountered directly from soldiers or as I stood in museums, at memorials, or in libraries engaging with heroic defeats of authoritarian regimes by use of force. I felt this question as someone who has never had to defend my family, community, or friends from direct violence. This kind of oppressive politics is only one element of the broader whole between Congo and Rwanda. Where the state is incapacitated or captured by dysfunction of militarized competition for power, what choice is there but to take up arms against oppressors? It is easy to fall back to Mudimbe's articulation of Landu's positionality, lost in the fog of war, agentless. "I have no part to play in strategies and tactics. . . . I was in truth drifting between tides. Armed and disarmed, outlaw and just man at once."

Fundamentally, this is a false dichotomy and the wrong question to ask. If one reads deeper into Mudimbe's words, the need for the concept of social actors can be seen in order to reclaim agency and sense conflicts through narrative.²⁵ Doing so allows the narrative to be exposed and interwoven into a greater whole, a representative past. In the case of the soldiers I spoke with, their participation was driven through a nexus of factors, which varied across each person. From Soni's personal connection to the suffering of his family members, Rugira's embracing of ideas and opportunity, or Gustav's removal of opportunity, each had their reasons. The framing of these explanations is embedded, though, in the RPF's networked narrative, which still persists in the militarization of *gumino* in groups like Twirwaneho under officers formerly of the RPF. What does it matter that social actors engage in perpetration or, in Ntaganda's words, "fight to end the genocide"?

This perpetuates, either as politics or morality, a singular approach to stopping mass violence. Militarization of communal self-defense in the ways documented in this book do not stop genocide. The armed rebellion of Nkunda and Mutebusi did not stop violence against Tutsi; it in fact led to displacement and continued fighting that resulted in Gatumba. Likewise, Twirwaneho, more recently, stacks up attacks against the FARDC and its erratic Mai Mai allies, only to prolong conflict, resulting in lethal displacement of people from Bibogobogo or stoking anti-Tutsi sentiment that contributed to the lynching of Kaminzobe. Certainly, then, standing back and doing nothing feeds into the logic that propelled many soldiers. The tools available to those isolated in the Plateaux areas are limited. The zero-sum logic of Rugira, however, only drives a genocide narrative identity that brings dangerous consequences, more often than not for civilians on all sides.

Where then is the justice and peace as a result of this research? This

book collates and retells the stories bound together in a genocide narrative identity centered in just one Congolese community. A community between the historic tides of Congo and Rwanda. Excavating identity through their narratives offers a view to violence seldom used in genocide studies, with its proclivity toward dividing victim voices and perpetrator documentation. Embracing the subjectivity of narrative identity opens a view to the similar subjectivity of multidirectional violence in conflict, even what my participants considered as unavoidable genocide. Seeing, hearing, and starting to connect narratives in creation of collective memory is at the start of the journey toward the new social worlds more filled with justice and peace. We must critically comprehend genocide as a label to see both its potential and peril in seeking such present and future transformations.

Appendix

CORE PARTICIPANTS

Participants: Soldiers

Name (alphabetical)	RPF/A Start Year (pre/post- genocide)	Congolese Army Service (Yes/No)	Place of Interview
Alexis	Post	N	DRC
Alphonse	Pre	Y	DRC
Augustin*	Pre	Y	Kenya
Balthazar	Post	Y	DRC
Bonte	Pre	Y	DRC
Christian	Pre	Y	Remote interview
Gahigi*	N/A	N	
Gatete	Pre	Y	DRC
Georges	Pre	Y	Kenya
Gustav	Post	Y	DRC
Heritier	Post	Y	USA
Ikiyaga	N/A	Y	DRC
Janvier	Pre	Y	DRC
Jean	Post	Y	DRC
Joseph	Post	Y	DRC
Martin	Post	Y	DRC
Matthias	Pre	Y	DRC
Mustafa	Post	Y	USA

Ntwali*	N/A	N	Kenya
Olivier	Post	Y	Kenya
Patience	Post	Y	DRC
Pierre	Pre	Y	DRC
Rugira	Pre	Y	DRC
Rukema	Post	Y	DRC
Siboyintore	Pre	Y	Kenya
"Trio"*	N/A	N	Kenya
UK group (Phillipe, Frank, and unnamed two others)	Mixed	Y	UK

* Twirwaneho soldiers

Participants: Political Operatives

Name	Country Interviewed
Bernard	Remote interview
Claude	DRC
Edward	Remote interview
Eleazar	DRC
Eugene	DRC
Ishimwe	Kenya
Leonard	DRC
Moise	DRC
Mugenzi	DRC
Theogene	USA
Thierry	Remote interview
Umwami	DRC

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Primarily responsible for my success is my spouse Karin and our children, Arthur, Stella, Clara, and Rose. Thanks to the warm, nurturing environment of our home, I have been gifted the motivation and persistence to keep this project going. Ever my partner in all things, Karin has helped me work through the frustration inherent in this project. My extended family, including my parents and grandparents, provided a childhood where I was able to explore a curiosity for history. This was fostered by my grandfathers each dragging me around from bus to train to witness the story of a nation. My grandmothers told me stories of their survival of warfare during the Blitz of World War II. Their companionship and lifelong resilience drives me to keep having deep conversations with new friends.

Our family's journey throughout the research for this project has given us multiple homes and communities. Some were faith-based in our church congregations across Yorkshire, Massachusetts, Utah, and New York. Others were professional, including my several academic and other roles: West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, University of Bradford, MENCAP, Utah Valley University, Brigham Young University, Clark University, and Binghamton University. Many friends, students, and colleagues helped evolve my thinking over time. Of particular mention here are Emily Dew, David Harris, Fiona Macaulay, Michael Minch, Joel Selway, Sophie Hayes, MK Speth, Dan Raleigh, Keasha Buchana, Lucy Williams, Elizabeth Topolosky, and Nicole Toedtli. Charlie Scheidt sponsored my visiting position

at Clark and took the time to share research interests and hear about my work. My other family, at Education for Global Peace, has helped me consider how to answer the crucial question of how to turn understandings of violence into peacebuilding. Colleagues who have lent their minds to the refinement of this book have been incredibly insightful. This includes the community of the BYU-sponsored Rocky Mountain African History workshop, a small but perfectly formed writing group with Elizabeth Blake and Spencer Trickler. Various colleagues have offered insight into this manuscript as I moved it toward publication. These include Nicole Fox, Ken MacLean, and Claudine Kuradusenge-McLeod, as well as the reviewers of the full manuscript.

The support of the team at the University of Michigan Press has made the publication of this book a success. Where other publishers had been unwilling to engage in the challenging themes of this book, the series editors, Daniel Rothbart and Karina Korostelina, accepted the manuscript and became strong advocates for it. From copy editing, to publicity and overall guidance, I am indebted to Madison Allums, Kevin Rennells, and Drew Bryan.

This book would have been impossible in many ways without several collaborators and partners within the Banyamulenge communities in Congo, Rwanda, Kenya, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Despite our disagreements, they have helped me navigate the field of my research as well as how we live and find hope during and after suffering. Of special note here is Rukumbuzi Delphin Ntanyoma, who willingly opened his network to me as a new researcher, engaging in many conversations about his community. Alex Mvuka Ntung offered on-the-spot insight and perspective in both personal and intellectual ways. Jean Paul Iranzi helped me see his community through the eyes of younger people impacted by conflict. Kimararungu Cadeau Héritier and his family provided me with an adventure in Nairobi, navigated courtesy of his cousin Alexis Mugisha, with probably the best chicken and chips of my life. The family of Nicolas Kibinda also welcomed me and provided insight into this community hero's life. GRSF has been especially inclusive opening their doors to me on many occasions. "Madame President" Esperance Mfurakazi is a leader beyond reproach; as a survivor, mother, daughter, and organizer she, like many women in the community, are model peacebuilders.

Finally, the soldiers I have been in conversation with since 2016 have above all shaped my understanding of the ideas presented in this book. They showed me the blurred lines between perpetrator and victim, while being grounded in what it means to be human. They embodied the fragility of the moral agency many in the Global North do not have to encounter: What would you do to protect your family?

Notes

Prologue

1. Eugene, interview in Bukavu, November 2017.
2. Janvier, interview in Goma, November 2017.

Introduction

1. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1993–2003*, August 2010, 1.
2. All participants have been assigned pseudonyms at their request.
3. For more discussion of multidirectional violence see, Christopher P. Davey, “Investigating Multidirectional Violence in Eastern Congo: Owning ‘Genocide’ and Pre-Judicial Atrocity,” *Journal of Perpetrator Research* 6, no. 2 (2024): 69–104.
4. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (Routledge, 1987), 197–221.
5. Due to the appellative transition of this country, the label Congo will be used for general purposes, but chronological references will be made to “Zaire” from 1971 to July 1997, and then the “Democratic Republic of the Congo” (DRC) from July 1997 onwards. The first war is typically characterized as starting in the summer of 1996 with the formation of the AFDL through to the arrival of Laurent D. Kabila in Kinshasa in May of 1997. Filip Reyntjens, *The Great African War: Congo and Regional Geopolitics, 1996–2006* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 47, 57; Jason Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The Collapse of the Congo and the Great War of Africa* (Public Affairs, 2012), 165–68.
6. David Van Reybrouck, *Congo: The Epic History of a People* (Fourth Estate, 2014), 242–45, 284–310.
7. The titles Rwandan Patriotic Front and Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) will be used to refer to specific elements. RPF will refer to both the rebellion movement from 1990 to 1994, as well as the past and present political organization. The RPA refers to the military of the new Rwandan state post-1994. These will be used in con-

nection with the AFDL, chiefly during the 1996 to 1997 period when the AFDL and RPA were temporarily merged together, with RPA officers leading the AFDL.

8. Omar Shahabudin McDoom, *The Path to Genocide in Rwanda: Security, Opportunity, and Authority in an Ethnocratic State* (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 371–73.

9. Here I refer to processes of Othering in a postcolonial setting of violence.

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14. Damien Short, *Redefining Genocide: Settler Colonialism, Social Death and Eco-cide* (Zed Books, 2016); A. Dirk Moses, *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

15. Brian Cheyette, “Appropriating Primo Levi,” in *Cambridge Companion to Primo Levi*, ed. Robert Gordon (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 68.

16. Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (Simon & Schuster, 1988), 36.

17. Kerry Whigham, *Resonant Violence: Affect, Memory, Activism in Post-Genocide Societies* (Rutgers University Press, 2022), 18–19.

18. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 39. *Sonderkommando* and *capos* were the prisoners who were pressed or socially pressured into serving as part of the camp structure and production of violence, including the removal of human remains in the crematoriums of extermination camps.

19. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 42.

20. Benjamin Meiches, *The Politics of Annihilation: A Genealogy of Genocide* (University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 8–11; Moses, *The Problems of Genocide*, 25–28.

21. Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya* (Owl Books, 2005); Karen E. Smith, “The UK and ‘genocide’ in Biafra,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 16, no. 2–3 (2014): 247–62.

22. Key examples include Max Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force: Identity, Nationalism, and Memory in Balkan Community* (Cornell University Press, 2016); Karl Jacoby, *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History* (Penguin, 2009); Timothy Williams, *The Complexity of Evil: Perpetration and Genocide* (Rutgers University Press, 2020).

23. Emizet F. Kisangani, “The Massacre of Refugees in Congo: A Case of UN Peacekeeping Failure and International Law,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 38, no. 2 (2000): 178–79.

24. Ngabo, interview in Kigali, May 2017.
25. Howard French, *A Continent for the Taking* (Vintage Books, 2005), 128–29; Felix Mukwiza Ndahinda, “The Bemba-Banyamulenge Case before the ICC: From Individual to Collective Criminal Responsibility,” *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 7 (2013): 476–96.
26. Ngabo, interview, 2017.
27. Jean Migabo Kalere, “Genocide in African Great Lakes States,” *International Criminal Law Review* 5 (2005): 463; Omar Shahabudin McDoom, “War and Genocide in Africa’s Great Lakes since Independence,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, ed. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford University Press, 2010), 550–75; Claude Sengenya and Ephrem Rugiririza, “DRC: Is There Genocide in Ituri?” JusticeInfo.net, January 23, 2020, accessed on June 2, 2022, from <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/43611-drc-is-there-genocide-in-ituri.html>
28. North Kivu peers, also heavily recruited from 1987 to 1994, provided hundreds of soldiers, who circulated from the RPF into the AFDL, and then the RCD and CNDP. See Jason Stearns, *The War That Doesn’t Say Its Name: The Unending Conflict in the Congo* (Princeton University Press, 2022), 149.
29. Nadeem Aslam, *The Wasted Vigil* (Knopf Double Publishing, 2008), 319.
30. Throughout the book I use the local, Francophone labels for the Hauts (High), and Moyen (Middle) plateau.
31. I typically refer to communities when speaking of broader Banyamulenge populations, which include those in the highlands and cities of South Kivu, other cities in Congo, diasporas regionally in the Great Lakes, plus those living in the Global North. Despite the dispersed nature of these communities, family and clan ties and social media keep them connected and maintain a group consciousness. Therefore, at points I do reflect participants’ articulation of a single community in my narrative.
32. Interview by phone, January 2018.
33. French, *A Continent for the Taking*, 125–29.
34. Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton University Press, 2002), 234–63; Koen Vlasenroot, “Citizenship, Identity Formation & Conflict in South Kivu: The Case of the Banyamulenge,” *Review of African Political Economy* 29, no. 93/94 (2002): 499–515; Bucyalimwe Mararo, “Land, Power, and Ethnic Conflict in Masisi (Congo-Kinshasa), 1940s–1994,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 30, no. 3 (1997): 503–38.
35. Mahmood Mamdani, “African States, Citizenship and War: A Case Study,” *International Affairs* 78, no. 3 (2002): 494–95.
36. Timothy Longman, “Forced to Flee: Violence Against the Tutsis in Zaïre,” *Human Rights Watch/Africa, Federation Internationale des ligues des droits de l’homme* 8, no. 2 (July 1996): 5; Stephen Jackson, “Of ‘Doubtful Nationality’: Political Manipulation of Citizenship in the D. R. Congo,” *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 5 (2007): 484; Jean-Claude Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge: Violences ethniques et gestion de*

l'identitaire au Kivu (Editions L'Harmattan, 1997), 78–79; Gillian Mathys, *Fractured Pasts in Lake Kivu's Borderlands: Conflicts, Connections and Mobility in Central Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2025).

37. Jackson, "Of 'Doubtful Nationality,'" 422; Mamdani, "African States, Citizenship and War," 502.

38. Thomas Turner, *The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth and Reality* (Zed Books, 2007), 79–82.

39. Anthony Court, "The Banyamulenge of South Kivu: The 'Nationality Question,'" *African Studies* 72, no. 3 (2013): 424.

40. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 239–40.

41. Mathys, *Fractured Pasts in Lake Kivu's Borderlands*.

42. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 160–62.

43. Jackson, "Of 'Doubtful Nationality,'" 484–85.

44. Some sources indicate Bisengimana was born over the border in Rwanda and migrated to Congo. Jackson, "Of 'Doubtful Nationality,'" 485; Vlassenroot, "Citizenship, Identity Formation & Conflict in South Kivu," 505; Emizet F. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 1960–2010* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012), 65–92; Jason Stearns, "From CNDP to M23: The Evolution of an Armed Movement in Eastern Congo," *Usalama Project* (Rift Valley Institute, 2012), 12.

45. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 248–49; Court, "The Banyamulenge of South Kivu," 425; Judith Verweijen and Koen Vlassenroot, "Armed Mobilization and the Nexus of Territory, Identity, and Authority: The Contested Territorial Aspirations of the Banyamulenge in Eastern DR Congo," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 33, no. 2 (2015): 194–96.

46. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 249, 254.

47. Judith Verweijen, "From Autochthony to Violence? Discursive and Coercive Socio Practices of the Mai-Mai in Fizi, Eastern DR Congo," *African Studies Review* 58, no. 2 (2015): 159–60.

48. Kasper Hoffman, "Ethnogovernmentality: The Making of Ethnic Territories and Subjects in Eastern DR Congo," *Geoforum* 119 (2021): 260–61.

49. Court, "The Banyamulenge of South Kivu," 423; Koen Vlassenroot and Chris Huggins, "Land, Migration and Conflict in Eastern D.R. Congo," *Eco-Conflicts* 3, no. 4 (October 2004): 2.

50. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 2002, 241–42.

51. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 122.

52. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 122; Gérard Prunier, *Africa's World War: Congo, The Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 50; Mararo, "Land, Power, and Ethnic Conflict in Masisi," 507–18.

53. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 123; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 244.

54. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 244.

55. Court, “The Banyamulenge of South Kivu,” 429.
56. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (Zed Books, 2003), 185–87.
57. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 26–27.
58. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 26–27; Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge*, 63–64.
59. Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge*, 27–28; Solange G. Fontana, “Between War and Peace: North Kivu’s Ambivalent Ethnic Associations” (paper presented at the Congo Research Network conference, *Congolese Studies: Past, Present and Future*, Oxford, UK, March 2018).
60. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 2.
61. Crawford Young, “The End of the Post-Colonial State in Africa? Reflections on Changing African Political Dynamics,” *African Affairs* 103, no. 410 (January 2004): 24–25.
62. Young, “The End of the Post-Colonial State in Africa?” 24–25.
63. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 14.
64. *Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative*, “Loi No. 04-024 du 12 novembre 2004 relative à la nationalité congolaise, November 12, 2004, accessed on July 18, 2022, from <http://citizenshiprightsafrika.org/loi-no-04024-relative-a-la-nationalite-congolaise/>; “Constitution de la Republique Democratique du Congo 2006,” February 1, 2006, accessed on July 18, 2022, from <http://citizenshiprightsafrika.org/constitution-de-la-republique-democratique-du-congo-2006/>

Chapter 1

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2. Moise, interview in Bukavu, November 2017.
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4. Veena Das, et al., *Violence and Subjectivity* (University of California Press, 2000); Felix Mukwiza Ndahinda, “Collective Victimization and Subjectivity in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 23, no. 2 (2016): 137–78.
5. Eva van Roekel, “Getting Close with Perpetrators in Argentina,” in *Researching Perpetrators of Genocide*, ed. Kjell Anderson and Erin Jessee (University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), 126; Katarzyna Jasko, et al., “Social Context Moderates the Effects of Quest for Significance on Violent Extremism,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 118, no. 6 (2020): 1180–82.
6. Claudine A. Kuradusenge-McLeod, *Narratives of Victimhood and Perpetration:*

The Struggle of Bosnian and Rwandan Diaspora Communities in the United States (Peter Lang, 2021), 204–5.

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10. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 88–89.

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12. Kuradusenge-McLeod, *Narratives of Victimhood and Perpetration*, 176.

13. This thought is rhythmic with Sherry Ortner’s similar relational conception, “history makes people, but people make history,” see Ortner, *New Jersey Dreaming: Capital, Culture, and the Class of ’58* (Duke University Press, 2003), 277.

14. Anna Hedlund, “‘There Was No Genocide in Rwanda’: History, Politics, and Exile Identity among Rwandan Rebels in the Eastern Congo Conflict,” *Conflict and Society: Advances in Research* 1 (2015): 26–27; Hans Romkema, “The End in Sight? Opportunities for the Disarmament and Repatriation of the FDLR in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” *World Bank*, report no. 50263 (2009).

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Henry Theriault and Elisa von Joeden-Forgey (Routledge, 2017), 169–71; Christopher Black, “The Rwandan Patriotic Front’s Bloody Record and the History of UN Cover-Ups,” *MROnline*, September 12, 2010, https://mronline.org/2010/09/12/the-rwandan-patriotic-fronts-bloody-record-and-the-history-of-un-cover-ups/#_edn11

20. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 2–3; Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (Basic Books, 2012); Rene Lemarchand, “Rwanda: The State of the Research,” *Mass Violence and Resistance Network*, June 25, 2018, accessed on September 30, 2020, from <https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/rwanda-state-research.html>

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22. Commentator, “The Spanish Indictment of High-ranking Rwandan Officials,” *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 6, no. 5 (2008): 1003–11; Judi Rever, “Spanish Court Revives War Crimes Indictment against 40 Rwandan Army Officers,” *The Eagle*, July 17, 2017, <https://eagle.co.ug/2017/07/17/spain-revives-war-crimes-in-dictment-40-rwandan-army-officers.html>; Judi Rever, *In Praise of Blood: The Crimes of the Rwandan Patriotic Front* (Random House, 2018), 5–6.

23. Rever, *In Praise of Blood*, 229–30. The most recent edition published by Max Milo contains more than a hundred pages of this unseen ICTR documentation, see Judi Rever, *Rwanda: l’Éloge du Sang* (Max Milo Editions, 2020).

24. Correspondence, October 8, 2019, accessed on October 25, 2019, from <https://openletter294551678.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/open-letter-en-v1.3.pdf>

25. Note here Rene Lemarchand’s characterization of Rever’s research: “No other analyst has done a more commendable job of interviewing defectors and former RPF operatives. Few other professional journalists have been willing to take the same risks, and go to such lengths in conducting interviews and collecting data.” See Lemarchand, “Rwanda: The State of the Research.”

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143. Georges Budagu Makoko, *Ladder to the Moon: A Journey from Congo to America*, ed. Vivien Kooper (Dog Ear Publishing, 2013).

144. Alex Mvuka Ntung, with Chris Sanderson, *Not My Worst Day: A Personal Journey Through Violence in the Great Lakes Region of Africa* (Ears Press, 2013).

145. Both memoirs show the propulsion into refugee life and taking up residence in the Global North. Each published in 2013, they demonstrate an act of solidarity for Budagu and Ntung as childhood friends.

146. See the appendix table overviewing pseudonyms, RPF joining timeline, Congolese military service, and Twirwaneho participation.

147. These communities are centered in the following areas: United Kingdom: York, Manchester, London; United States: Phoenix, AZ; Dallas, TX; Portland, ME.

148. Connor Clerke, “Navigating Migration: Conflict, Displacement and a Growing Congolese Diaspora In Africa,” *Rift Valley Institute*, July 17, 2018, accessed on Feb-

ruary 4, 2022, from <https://riftvalley.net/news/navigating-migration-conflict-displacement-and-growing-congolese-diaspora-africa>

149. See more here, <https://commons.clarku.edu/gatumba/>

150. Caroline Riessman, *Narrative Analysis* (SAGE, 1993), 2, 8.

151. Somers, “The Narrative Constitution of Identity,” 606–11; Steph Lawler, “Narrative in Social Research,” in *Qualitative Research in Action*, edited by Tim May (SAGE, 2002): 242.

152. Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), 140–48.

153. Erin Jessee and Kjell Anderson, “Conclusion,” in *Researching Perpetrators of Genocide*, ed. Kjell Anderson and Erin Jessee (University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), 202–3.

154. Alexander Vorbrugg, “Ethnographies of slow violence: Epistemological alliances in fieldwork and narrating ruins,” *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, October 16 (2019).

155. Jessee and Anderson, “Conclusion,” 201; Davey, “Investigating Multidirectional Violence in Eastern Congo,” 92–96.

156. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 88–89; Devresse and Scalia, “From a Perpetrators to a Respondents Approach,” 177–80.

157. Paul Ricoeur, “Life in Quest of Narrative,” in *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood (Routledge, 1992), 22.

158. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 140–41.

159. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 147–48.

160. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 140.

161. Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 140–41.

162. Simon Turner, “Times of Violence: The Shifting Temporalities of Long-Term Ethnographic Engagement with Burundi,” *Conflict and Society: Advances in Research* 7 (2021): 143–59.

163. Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 488.

Chapter 2

1. V. Y. Mudimbe, *Between Tides*, trans. Stephen Becker (Simon & Schuster, 1991).

2. Mudimbe, *Between Tides*, 13, 61.

3. Achille Mbembé, *On the Postcolony* (University of California Press, 2001), 102.

4. Stearns, “Banyamulenge: Insurgency and Exclusion in the Mountains of South Kivu,” *Usalama Project/Rift Valley Institute* (2013): 16, accessed on April 13, 2018, from <http://riftvalley.net/publication/banyamulenge#.WtCMENTwYdU>

5. This rebellion evolved and waned over time and was known by many names, including the Kwilu rebellion, named after Mulele’s home region in southeast Congo. See Emery Kalema, “Scars, Marked Bodies, and Suffering: The Mulele ‘Rebellion’ in Postcolonial Congo,” *Journal of Modern African History* 59, no. 2 (2018): 264.

6. Alexander Cook, “Chinese Uhuru: Maoism and the Congo Crisis,” *Positions* 27, no. 4 (2019): 587–88.
7. Moise, interview in Bukavu, November 2017; Eleazar, interview in Bukavu, November 2017; Vlassenroot, “Citizenship, Identity Formation & Conflict in South Kivu,” 503. While the rebellion in the east started losing in 1965, the Mulele movement continued to struggle until Mulele’s execution in 1968.
8. Moise, interview, 2017.
9. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 62–63; Che Guevara noted, disappointedly, when accompanying rebels through the Congolese forests, including Congolese Tutsi, or “Rwandans,” that Maoism, or any form of socialism, was not reflected or embedded in the ground troops, see Ernesto “Che” Guevara, *The African Dream: The Diaries of the Revolutionary War in the Congo* (Harvill Press, 2000); Van Reybrouck, *Congo*, 411–12; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 2002, 258; Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila*, 129, 242–43; Justine Brabant, “Qu’où nous laisse combattre, et la guerre finira”: *Avec les combattants du Kivu* (La Découverte, 2016), 80–85; Judith Verweijen, “Everyday Violence and Mai Mai Militias in Eastern DRC,” in *Everyday Resistance, Peacebuilding and State-making: Insights from “Africa’s World War,”* ed. Marta Iniguez de Heredia (Manchester University Press, 2017), 127–52; Ludo De Witte, “The Suppression of the Congo Rebellions and the Rise of Mobutu, 1963–5,” *International History Review* 39, no. 1 (2017): 107–25.
10. Catherine Boone, *Property and Political Order in Africa: Land Rights and the Structure of Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 169, 288; Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge*, 62.
11. Vlassenroot, “Citizenship, Identity Formation & Conflict in South Kivu,” 504; Stearns, “Banyamulenge,” 16.
12. Vlassenroot, “Citizenship, Identity Formation & Conflict in South Kivu,” 505–6; Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 86; Joshua Castillo, “The Power of Language and Language of Power: Sociolinguistic Methods and Social Histories of Language and Political Power in Mobutu’s Congo-Zaire (1965–1997),” *History in Africa* 50 (2023): 7–39.
13. Scholars have further verified the use of the Banyamulenge label in reconstructions of early and modern histories of Congo, citing Mulenge hills as a traditional homeland of Rwandan kingdom era migrants. See Jacques Depelchin, “From Pre-Capitalism to Imperialism: A History of Social and Economic Formations in Eastern Zaire (Uvira Zone, c. 1800–1965),” (PhD thesis, Stanford University, 1974).
14. Andrew Woolford and Wanda Hounslow, “Symbiotic Victimization and Destruction: Law and Human/Other-Than-Human Relationality in Genocide,” in *Genocide and Victimology*, ed. Yarin Eski (Routledge, 2020), 85–101.
15. Moise, interview, 2017.
16. Moise, interview, 2017.
17. Thierry, interview, Kigali, December 2017.
18. Stearns, “Banyamulenge,” 16.

19. Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge*, 80.
20. Bonte, interview, Kinshasa, July 2018.
21. Moise, interview, 2017.
22. Moise, interview, 2017.
23. Moise, interview, 2017.
24. This will be addressed in the next chapter through accounts from Edward, Ikiyaga, Rugira, and Rukema, some of whom barely survived attacks on barracks in Kamina, Katanga, and also in the city of Kinshasa, where the Congolese army had arrested and corralled Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda soldiers during the early phases of the Second Congo War. See also Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 295, 398.
25. Moise, interview, 2017.
26. Lazare Sebitereko Rukundwa, “Justice and Righteousness in Matthean Theology and its Relevance to the Banyamulenge Community: A Postcolonial Reading” (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, November 2005), 297.
27. Francois Viljoen, “The Matthean Community within a Jewish Religious Society,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 72, no. 4 (2016): 1–2.
28. It is important to note that at the time of writing Rukundwa was imprisoned by the Congolese movement on suspicion of recruiting for Banyamulenge-aligned militias. This context is further discussed in chapter 6. For his own account see here, Lazare Sebitereko Rukundwa, “I’m a Political Prisoner in Congo. My Ministry Is Thriving,” *Christianity Today*, May 21, 2024, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2024/may-web-only/im-political-prisoner-in-congo-my-ministry-is-thriving.html>
29. Fieldnotes, November 2017.
30. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 69.
31. Amani, interview in Bukavu, November 2017.
32. Eugene, first interview in Bukavu, November 2017.
33. Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge*, 84–85.
34. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 71, note 154.
35. Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 87.
36. Ruhimbika, *Les Banyamulenge (Congo-Zaïre) Entre Deux Guerres*, 17, 24.
37. Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 87. Insights into Mutambo’s life are courtesy of my Kenyan collaborator and guide Heritier.
38. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 2002, 224.
39. Vambe and Zegeye, “Racializing Ethnicity and Ethnicizing Racism,” 785.
40. Georges, first interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
41. Georges, interview, 2022.
42. Eleazar, interview, 2017; Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 63.
43. Leonard, first interview in Bukavu, 2017.
44. Another informant clarified these villages as south of the Minembwe and respectively known as Kwirumba and Igisanya.
45. Balthazar, interview in Bukavu, November 2017.

46. Rukundwa, *Justice and Righteousness in Matthean Theology and its Relevance to the Banyamulenge Community*, 143; IRIN, “The Conflict in South Kivu, Zaïre,” *UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs*, October 9, 1996, accessed on April 16, 2018, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/irin-briefing-conflict-south-kivu-Zaïre>. Another soldier noted that during elections in 1980s the polling stations were burned as a result of Banyamulenge candidates being removed from the ballot. Gustav, interview, Kinshasa, July 2018.

47. Edward, interview in Kigali, May 2017.

48. Janvier, interview in Goma, November 2017.

49. Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 121; Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Democratic Republic of Congo: Relations between Congolese Tutsis of Rwandan Origin and Members of Other Ethnic Groups in Kinshasa, Including Mixed Marriages, Relations in the Workplace and Social Relations in General, from 1996 to the Present*, June 30, 1999, RDC32198E, accessed on May 11, 2018, from <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad7618.html>

50. Janvier, interview, 2017.

51. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 78–80.

52. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 78–80.

53. Leonard, first interview, 2017.

54. Leonard, first interview, 2017.

55. Leonard, first interview, 2017.

56. Moise, interview, 2017.

57. Thierry, interviewed in Kigali, December 2017.

58. Umwami, interview in Bukavu, November 2017.

59. Joseph, interview in Bukavu, November 2017.

60. Lars-Christopher Huening, “Making Use of the Past: The Rwandaphone Questions and the ‘Balkanization’ of the Congo,” *Review of African Political Economy* 40, no. 135 (2013): 24–26.

61. Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 88; Koen Vlassenroot, “South Kivu: Identity, Territory, and Power in the Eastern Congo,” *Rift Valley Institute*, Usalama Project (2013): 33.

62. Scott, *Laurent Nkunda et la rébellion du Kivu*, 76.

63. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 59–60; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 371.

64. Gustav, interview in Kinshasa, July 2018.

65. Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, 4–33.

66. Matthias, interview, Kinshasa, July 2018.

67. Eleazar, interview, 2017. Another participant offered a similar explanation about the integration of former-ex-FAR and now FDLR soldiers into the FARDC on account of their similar, or Hutu/Congolese appearance. Martin, interviewed in Goma, November 2017.

68. Leonard, first interview, 2017. This removal order will be discussed in greater detail below.

69. Patience, interview in Bukavu, November 2017.
70. Umwami, interview, 2017.
71. Leonard, interview, 2017.
72. Court, “The Banyamulenge of South Kivu,” 434.
73. This Kinyarwanda phrase was used by most participants to describe the RPF, meaning “fierce fighters.” This valorizing label features in formal party narratives (see <http://www.rpfinkotanyi.rw/index.php?id=371>) and is celebrated in the recent documentary of the same name, *Inkotanyi*, directed by Christophe Cotteret, *Wrong Men*, 2017.
74. Christopher C. Taylor, “Visions of the ‘Oppressor’ in Rwanda’s Pre-Genocidal Media,” in *Genocides by the Oppressed: Subaltern Genocide in Theory and Practice*, ed. Nicholas A. Robins and Adam Jones (Indiana University Press, 2009), 122–37; Peter Uvin, “Prejudice, Crisis, and Genocide in Rwanda,” *African Studies Review* 40, no. 2 (September, 1997): 91–115; McDoom, *The Path to Genocide in Rwanda*, 20–21, 84–92.
75. Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story,” 69–71.
76. Reyntjens, *L’Afrique des Grands Lacs en crise, Rwanda, Burundi: 1988–1994* (Karthala, 1994), 205.
77. Reyntjens, *L’Afrique des Grands Lacs en crise*, 14, 39–44.
78. Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, 43.
79. Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, 48; Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story,” 149.
80. Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story,” 155.
81. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, 2nd ed. (C Hurst & Co., 1998), 253.
82. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 261.
83. Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story,” 163.
84. Straus *The Order of Genocide*, 73–74; Philip Verwimp, “Machetes and Firearms: The Organization of Massacres in Rwanda,” *Journal of Peace Research* 43, no. 1 (2006): 18–19.
85. See this forum of articles: “Calculating Mortality in the Rwandan Genocide,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 22, no. 1 (2020): 72–141. Various authors here address the number of those killed during the genocide as between 500,000 to 600,000. This does not include the numbers of those killed by the RPF in Rwanda during the 1990s.
86. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 21.
87. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 20.
88. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 553–55.
89. Alan J. Kuperman, “Provoking Genocide: A Revised History of the Rwandan Patriotic Front,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, no. 4 (2004): 70–72.
90. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 189.
91. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 188, 192.
92. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 188; Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story,” 540.
93. Rever, *In Praise of Blood*, 107–10.

94. Des Forges, "Leave None to Tell the Story", 535–537; Prunier, *Africa's World War*, 7.
95. Des Forges, "Leave None to Tell the Story", 542; Médecins Sans Frontières, "The Violence of the New Rwandan Regime 1994–1995," in *MSF Speaks Out* (April 2014): 14–29.
96. Linda Melvern, *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 260–62; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 146.
97. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 212–13; Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 75–78, 136.
98. Ruzibiza, *Rwanda l'histoire secrète*, 42, 68.
99. *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, Sumario 3120008—D. Madrid. February 6, 2008, 51; Rever, *In Praise of Blood*, 65.
100. *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 50; Kalisa McDowell, second interview by phone, March 2018.
101. *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 51; Rever, *In Praise of Blood*, 67.
102. *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 53, 82; Rever, *In Praise of Blood*, 142, 221.
103. *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 44–45.
104. Rever, "Spanish Court Revives Case Kagame's Military Entourage," *Foreign Policy Journal*, July 14, 2017.
105. Michael Dorsey, "Violence and Power-Building in Post-genocide Rwanda," in *Politics of Identity and Economics of Conflict in the Great Lakes Region*, ed. Ruddy Doom and Jan Gorus (VUB University Press, 2000), 322.
106. Mamdani, "African States, Citizenship and War," 498.
107. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 204.
108. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 187.
109. Robert Gersony, "Prospects for Early Repatriation of Rwandan Refugees Currently in Burundi, Tanzania and Zaïre," *Summary of UNHCR Presentation Before Commission of Experts*, UNHCR, October 11, 1994, 9.
110. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 131–32.
111. Des Forges, "Leave None to Tell the Story", 555. It should be noted that the unofficial text of the report's findings states a lower figure of 5,000 to 10,000 from April to July, see Gersony, "Prospects for Early Repatriation," 8. These larger figures have, however, been given credibility through noted authors such as Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 16, and Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 27.
112. Gersony, "Prospects for Early Repatriation," 4–6.
113. Rever, *In Praise of Blood*, 73–80; Médecins Sans Frontières, "The Violence of the New Rwandan Regime 1994–1995," 39, 108–109.
114. James K. Gasana, *Rwanda: du parti-Etat a l'Etat garnison* (L'Harmattan, 2002); *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 5, 7, 10–13.

115. Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story”, 557.
116. Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story”, 546.
117. Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story”, 542; Rever, *In Praise of Blood*, 73–80; Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4’ Audiencia Nacional, 12.
118. Kuperman, “Provoking Genocide,” 74; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 2002, 192; and Bruce D. Jones, “The Arusha Peace Process,” in *The Path of a Genocide: Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaïre*, ed. Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke (Transaction, 1999), 141.
119. Judi Rever, “What the United Nations Knows about Rwanda’s Powerful Spy Chief,” *Foreign Policy Journal*, July 3, 2015, <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2015/07/03/what-the-united-nations-knows-about-rwandas-powerful-spy-chief/>
120. Human Rights Watch, “‘We Will Force you to Confess’: Torture and Unlawful Military Detention in Rwanda,” October 10, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/10/10/we-will-force-you-confess/torture-and-unlawful-military-detention-rwanda>
121. Kuperman, “Provoking Genocide,” 82; Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 4, 18.
122. Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story”, 542; Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 17.
123. Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story”, 543.
124. Gersony, “Prospects for Early Repatriation,” 12–13.
125. Alison Des Forges and Eric Gillet, “Rwanda: The Crisis Continues,” *Human Rights Watch* 7, no. 1 (April 1995): 4–6.
126. Des Forges and Gillet, “Rwanda: The Crisis Continues,” 4–6; Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 11.
127. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Violence of the New Rwandan Regime 1994–1995,” 85, 88.
128. Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story”, 550.
129. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 11, Des Forges and Gillet, “Rwanda: The Crisis Continues,” 13.
130. Patrick de Saint-Exupéry, *La Traversée—Une odyssée au coeur de l’Afrique* (ARENES, 2021), 33–34.
131. Paul Jordan, “Witness to Genocide—A Personal Account of the 1995 Kibeho Massacre,” *Anzac Day*, 1998, accessed on October 21, 2014, from <http://main.anzacd.org.au/witness-to-genocide-a-personal-account-of-the-1995-kibeho-massacre>
132. Jordan, “Witness to Genocide”; Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 41; Yonekawa, *Post-Genocide Rwandan Refugees*, 55–57.
133. Odom, “Guerrillas from the Mist,” 9.
134. David Newbury, “Returning Refugees: Four Historic Patterns of ‘Coming Home’ to Rwanda,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47, no. 2 (2005): 278–83; Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 38; Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, 85, 93; Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Cornell University Press, 2002), 167, 181; Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?* 199.
135. Gahima, *Transitional Justice in Rwanda*, 227.

136. Kuradusenge, "Denied Victimhood and Contested Narratives," 62–63; Potier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda*, 109–29.
137. Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila*, 214.
138. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*; Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (Pan Macmillan, 2000); David Newbury, "Convergent Catastrophes in Central Africa," *Journal of the International Institute* 4, no. 2 (1997): 573–76.
139. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 28. Additional estimates summarized by Fiona Terry count ex-FAR between 30,000 and 50,000, and militias between 10,000 and 50,000. This includes 1994 estimates given to the UN Security Council in November, see Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, 159.
140. Michael Deibert, *The Democratic Republic of Congo: Between Hope and Despair* (Zed Books, 2013), 40; Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge*, 65.
141. Reyntjens and Lemarchand, "Mass Murder in Eastern Congo," 22.
142. Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge*, 66.
143. Prunier, *Africa's World War*, 50–51; Vlassenroot and Huggins, "Land, Migration and Conflict in Eastern D.R. Congo," 1–4.
144. Longman, "Forced to Flee," 6.
145. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 58.
146. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 60.
147. Longman, "Forced to Flee," 3.
148. Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 16.
149. Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge*, 62.
150. Longman, "Forced to Flee," 3.
151. Longman, "Forced to Flee," 9.
152. Prunier, *Africa's World War*, 50; Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 118, 125; Denis Tull, *The Reconfiguration of Political Order in Africa: A Case Study of North Kivu (DR Congo)* (GIGA-Hamburg, 2005), 181, 185–86.
153. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 60.
154. Mararo, "Land, Power, and Ethnic Conflict in Masisi," 535.
155. Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 88.
156. Prunier, *Africa's World War*, 53–54.
157. Kathi Austin, "Rearming with Impunity," *Human Rights Watch/Africa* 7, no. 4 (May 1995): 1; Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, 162–63.
158. "Rwanda: Arming the Perpetrators of Genocide," *Amnesty International* (June 1995): 2–4.
159. Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, 183; Ndacyayisenga, *Dying to Live*, 31.
160. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 60.
161. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 60; Tuner, *The Congo Wars*, 88–89; Prunier, *Africa's World War*, 56.
162. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 28; Vlassenroot and Huggins, "Land, Migration and Conflict in Eastern D.R. Congo," 3; UNESCO, 1996, 11.

163. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 2. During this period, around August 1995, the FAZ was under pressure respond to the crisis, but without coordination from UNHCR forcibly repatriated 13,000 Rwandan refugees up and down the border area. See “UN Efforts in Vain as Hutus Refuse to Return,” *Associated Press*, August 26, 1995, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/fb933dae9ef2644b5a4806042b57c304>. See also, “Zaire Troops Step Up Expulsion of Rwanda Refugees,” *New York Times*, August 23, 1995, <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/08/23/world/Zaire-troops-step-up-expulsion-of-rwanda-refugees.html>; Niwese, *Le Peuple Rwandais un pied dans la tombe*, 80.
164. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 61–63.
165. Willame, *Banyarwanda et Banyamulenge*, 89.
166. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 72–75.
167. Timothy Longman and Alison Des Forges, “Attacked by All Sides,” *Human Rights Watch* 9, no. 1 (March 1997): 7.
168. Huenig, “Making Use of the Past,” 25; Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), 55–58.
169. Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 26.
170. Vlassenroot, “Citizenship, Identity Formation & Conflict in South Kivu,” 508–509; Dorsey, “Violence and Power-Building in Post-genocide Rwanda,” 332.
171. Mararo, “Land, Power, and Ethnic Conflict in Masisi,” 532–33.
172. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 52.
173. Dorsey, “Violence and Power-Building in Post-genocide Rwanda,” 339–40.
174. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 52.
175. Kasper Hoffmann, “The Past in the Present: Ethnicity, Conflict and Politics in Eastern Congo,” *Insecure Livelihoods Series*, May 26, 2022, https://www.gicnetwork.be/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/13_GIC_The-Past-in-the-Present_WEB.pdf
176. Tom Cooper, *Great Lakes Holocaust: The First Congo War, 1996–1997*, *Africa@War Series*. Vol. 3. (Hellion and Company, 2013), 23.
177. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 72–73.
178. Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 105; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 178.
179. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 102–3; “Uncertain Course: Transition and Human Rights Violations in the Congo,” *Human Rights Watch* (December 1, 1997): 16–17; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 168–69.
180. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 131; Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 122. Cooper cites this figure as closer to 10,000 that were internally recruited and trained by the AFDL; see Cooper, *Great Lakes Holocaust*, 24.
181. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 147–48; Reyntjens and Lemarchand, “Mass Murder in Eastern Congo,” 23–24.
182. Olivier, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.

183. Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 132; Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 144; Nzita, *If My Life As a Child Soldier Could Be Told*, 213.

184. Rukema, second interview in Kinshasa, July 2018; Christian, interview in Kigali, November 2017. An unverified and anonymous radio interview with a former RPF, then AFDL Tutsi Banyarwanda soldier gives a broad account of the violence against the refugees, how such attacks were carried out, and how the RPA command structure ran these operations. The interview was published with support of the RNC. It was further added that those from North and South Kivu were trusted above others by the Rwandan leadership to carry out DMI operations, camp clearings, and executions. Accessed on January 26, 2018, from <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/radioitahuka/2013/02/11/kuki-paul-kagame-akunda-kwica-abatavuga-rumwe-nawe>.

185. Vlassenroot and Huggins, “Land, Migration and Conflict in Eastern D.R. Congo,” 1; “Mapping Conflict Motives: M23,” *International Peace and Information Service* (Antwerp, November 2012), 3.

186. Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 107; French, *A Continent for the Taking*, 214–15; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 66–67.

187. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 115–16.

188. Cooper, *Great Lakes Holocaust*, 37.

189. John Pomfret, “Rwandans Led Revolt in Congo,” *Washington Post*, July 9, 1997, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/congo/stories/070997.htm?noredirect=on>

190. Cooper, *Great Lakes Holocaust*, 38; OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 93–94.

191. Cooper, *Great Lakes Holocaust*, 38.

192. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 61; Longman, “Forced to Flee,” 1. In fact it was later established that about 600,000 had returned at this point; see Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 122–23; Kisangani, “The Massacre of Refugees in Congo,” 168. An attempt had been by the FAZ, earlier in the year, to clear Mugunga, dispersing Rwandan Hutus into the local communities where their actions varied from settling to looting.

193. Reyntjens and Lemarchand, “Mass Murder in Eastern Congo,” 24.

194. Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, 172–73; Campbell, “What Is Kabila hiding?” 52–53; French, *A Continent for the Taking*, 212.

195. Winter, “Lancing the Boil,” 126–27, 131.

196. Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, 170–72.

197. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 120.

198. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 95.

199. Longman and Des Forges, “Attacked by All Sides,” 12.

200. Longman and Des Forges, “Attacked by All Sides,” 14.

201. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 96–97.

202. Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 126.

203. Campbell. “What Is Kabila Hiding?” 41.

204. Achielle Mbembé, “Necropolitics,” *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 25.
205. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 90; Reyntjens and Lemarchand, “Mass Murder in Eastern Congo,” 30.
206. Kisangani, “The Massacre of Refugees in Congo,” 178.
207. Kisangani, “The Massacre of Refugees in Congo,” 181.
208. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 89–90.
209. Campbell, “What Is Kabila Hiding?,” 21–22.
210. “Deadly Alliances in the Congolese Forests,” *Amnesty International* (December 1997): 13.
211. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 114–116.
212. Campbell, “What Is Kabila Hiding?,” 21; OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 117.
213. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 118–19, 124–30, 132–33.

Chapter 3

1. Rugira, second interview in Bukavu, November 2017. This chapter is adapted from Christopher P. Davey, “A Soldier’s Journey: Banyamulenge Narratives of Genocide,” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36, no. 23–24 (2021): 12548–575.
2. Rugira, first interview, 2017.
3. Rift Valley Institute (RVI), “Strongman of the Eastern DRC: A Profile of Bosco Ntaganda,” *Rift Valley Institute Briefing*, March 12, 2013, accessed on April 5, 2018, from <http://riftvalley.net/publication/strongman-eastern-drc#full>; McDowell, second interview, March 2018.
4. *The Prosecutor v. Bosco Ntaganda, Trial Hearing*, September 3, 2015, accessed on April 5, 2018, from <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/record.aspx?docNo=ICC-01/04-02/06-T-24-ENG>
5. Ntaganda, although born in northwest Rwanda, fled to Masisi and grew up there until joining the RPF; see Penny Dale, “Profile: Bosco Ntaganda, the Congolese ‘Terminator,’” *BBC News*, August 28, 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17689131>
6. Alphonse, a 1991 Banyamulenge recruit into the RPF, recalled meeting Ntaganda as a trainer during this period, noting his expertise and knowledge, Alphonse, second interview, Kinshasa, July 2018.
7. McDowell, first interview by phone, March 2018.
8. *The Prosecutor v. Bosco Ntaganda*.
9. This plot against which many of these narratives hang is captured in Joris’s fictionalized account of the Banyamulenge soldier who embarks on a similar journey from Haut Plateaux to Rwanda and back again.
10. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 349, note 1; Nzita, *If My Life As a Child Soldier Could Be Told*, note 84; Van Reybrouck, *Congo*, 416, 418; Joelle Sabella, “DRC: Child Protection—The Story of a Demobilized Child—History of Congo,”

MONUC, November 16, 2004, accessed on April 12, 2018, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/rdc-protection-de-lenfance-histoire-dun-enfant-d%C3%A9mobilis%C3%A9-histoire>.

11. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 75–78, 136; Sabella, “DRC.”

12. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 79.

13. As to how many left their homes in South Kivu was hard for participants to identify. The clearest estimate was that about a thousand Banyamulenge left to join the RPF between 1990 and 1994, Alphonse, second interview, 2018; Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 344, note 17.

14. Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 156. *Umuryango* in Kinyarwanda translates as family, further conveying the sense of Tutsi solidarity across borders.

15. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 121.

16. Moise, interview, 2017.

17. Rugira, first interview, 2017.

18. Andrea Purdeková, *Making Ubumwe: Power, State and Camps in Rwanda's Unity-Building Project* (Berghahn Books, 2015), 108.

19. Rugira, first interview, 2017. The phrase *sensibiliser*, or in French *sensibiliser*, conveys the raising of awareness or convincing persons to a point of view.

20. Alexis, interview in Bukavu, November 2017.

21. Filip Reyntjens, “(Re-)imagining a Reluctant Post-genocide Society: The Rwandan Patriotic Front's Ideology and Practice,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 18, no. 1 (2016): 69.

22. Gatete, interview in Bukavu, November 2017. Bonte also recalled hearing about the conflict more generally via BBC, RFI, and Tanzanian stations; interview in Kinshasa, July 2018.

23. Pierre, interview in Bukavu, November 2017. The location of the Muhabura Mountain sits on the borders between Rwanda and Uganda and is part of the Virunga Mountains; in Kinyarwanda the word Muhabura means “guide.” In the early 1990s, the station itself was viewed by RPF soldiers and civilian listeners alike to be heavily propaganda-based, promoting the party's anticolonial narrative. See Darryl Li, “Echoes of Violence: Considerations on Radio and Genocide in Rwanda,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 6, no 1 (2004): 12–16.

24. Augustin, second interview, 2022.

25. Augustin, second interview, 2022.

26. Benjamin Chemouni and Assumpta Mugiraneza, “Ideology and Interests in the Rwandan Patriotic Front: Singing the Struggle in Pre-Genocide Rwanda,” *African Affairs* 119, no. 474 (January 2020): 115–40.

27. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 122.

28. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 122–23.

29. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 124, italics original.

30. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 124.

31. Rugira, first interview, 2017.

32. Patience, interview, 2017.

33. Georges, first interview, 2022.
34. Georges, first interview, 2022.
35. Matthias, interview, 2018.
36. Pierre, interview, 2017.
37. Pierre, interview, 2017.
38. Pierre, interview, 2017.
39. Augustin, second interview, 2022.
40. Alphonse, first interview in Kinshasa, July 2018.
41. Alphonse, first interview, 2018.
42. Georges, first interview, 2022
43. Janvier, interview, 2017.
44. Patience, interview, 2017.
45. Gatete, Pierre, Leonard, interviews, 2017. Early 1990–1991 recruits recalled receiving initial training in Uganda, near the southern border, Alphonse and Bonte, interviews, 2018.
46. Balthazar, interview, 2017.
47. Janvier, interview, 2017.
48. Patience, interview, 2017.
49. Rugira, first interview, 2017.
50. Jean, interview in Bukavu, November 2017.
51. Georges, first interview, 2022.
52. Janvier, interview, 2017.
53. Patience, interview, 2017.
54. Davey, “‘I need to protect everyone’: Exploring Banyamulenge Violent Masculinity,” *Journal of African Military History* 6, no. 2 (2022): 107–41.
55. Pierre, interview, 2017.
56. In interviews with McDowell, he also describes use of disciplinary torture and beatings to instill compliance, second interview by phone March 2018; Marco Jowell, “Cohesion through Socialization: Liberation, Tradition and Modernity in the Forging of the Rwanda Defense Force (RDF),” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 2 (2014): 284.
57. Georges, first interview, 2022.
58. Georges, first interview, 2022.
59. Pierre, interview, 2017.
60. Li, “Echoes of Violence,” 15–16.
61. Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force*, 272.
62. McDowell, second interview, 2018; Rever, *In Praise of Blood*, 60–67.
63. Augustin, second interview, 2022.
64. Augustin, second interview, 2022.
65. Pierre, interview, 2017; Jowell, “Cohesion through Socialization,” 288; Shahrharyan M. Khan, *The Shallow Graves of Rwanda* (I. B. Tauris, 2000), 159–62; Gilad Atzmon, “The Rwandan Genocide: The Israeli Connection,” *Dissent Voice*, April 16, 2016, accessed on September 13, 2018, from <https://dissidentvoice.org/2016/04/the>

-rwanda-genocide-the-israeli-connection/; Yonekawa, *Post-Genocide Rwandan Refugees*, 57–58.

66. Alphonse, second interview, 2018.

67. Rukema, second interview, 2018.

68. Georges, first interview, 2022; Augustin, second interview in Nairobi, January 2022.

69. Augustin, second interview, 2022.

70. Augustin, second interview, 2022.

71. Rugira, first interview, 2017.

72. Rugira, first interview, 2017.

73. Rugira, first interview, 2017; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 31, 87.

74. When exploring this element of the narratives in one of many subsequent conversations with Eugene, he expressed how Israel acted with decisiveness against its enemies, using strong military response in all cases; Eugene, first interview, 2017. Comparisons between Rwanda and Israel were allegedly emerging around Kigali's palpable frustration toward the UN debate on the MNF. See Winter, "Lancing the Boil," 119, and Colin M. Waugh, *Paul Kagame and Rwanda: Power, Genocide and the Rwandan Patriotic Front* (McFarland, 2004), 99.

75. Waugh, *Paul Kagame and Rwanda*, 99.

76. Rugira, third interview in Bukavu, November 2017.

77. Tellingly this is an oft quoted line from tradition Rwandan court poetry; see Frank Rusagara, *Resilience of a Nation: A History of the Military in Rwanda* (Fountain Publishers Rwanda, 2009), 6; Paul Magnarella, "The UN Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda Concludes Its First Case: A Monumental Step Towards Truth," *African Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1998): 40–41.

78. Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force*, 53–54.

79. Balthazar, interview, 2017.

80. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 2002, 14.

81. Gatete, interview, 2017. In addition to Gatete, Pierre, Joseph, and Janvier all took time to reveal their bodily scarring to me in the course of the interview. These markers acted as fixed points inscribed on their bodies, hinging their narratives and identities. This observation came upon reflection and discussion with colleague Emery Kalema, see Kalema, "Scars, Marked Bodies, and Suffering," 263–282.

82. Gatete, interview, 2017.

83. Georges, first interview, 2022.

84. Rugira, first interview, 2017.

85. Matthias, interview, 2018.

86. Javier, interview, 2017.

87. Jean, interview, 2017.

88. Patience, interview, 2017.

89. Pierre, interview, 2017.

90. Pierre, interview, 2017.

91. Siboyintore, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
92. Siboyintore, interview, 2022.
93. Chi Adanna Mgbako, “Ingando Solidarity Camps: Reconciliation and Political Indoctrination in Post-Genocide Rwanda,” *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 18, no. 201 (2005): 201–24; Purdeková, *Making Ubumwe*, 174–202.
94. Jowell, “Cohesion through Socialization,” 283, 286.
95. Ngabo, interview in Kigali, May 2017.
96. Jowell, “Cohesion through Socialization,” 281; Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force*, 186.
97. Jowell, “Cohesion through Socialization,” 282.
98. Georges, first interview, 2022.
99. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, “Crisis in the Great Lakes Region,” in *Reflections on the Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, series 4, ed. Ibbo Mandaza (1999), 6.
100. Janvier, interview, 2017.
101. Janvier, interview, 2017.
102. Rugira, first interview 2017.
103. Jean, interview, 2017.
104. Alphonse, first interview, 2018.
105. Alphonse, first interview, 2018.
106. Rugira, first interview, 2017.
107. Alexis, interview, 2017.
108. Gatete, interview, 2017.
109. Gatete, interview, 2017.
110. Balthazar, interview, 2017.
111. Rukema, first interview, 2018.
112. Rukema, first interview, 2018.
113. Janvier, interview, 2017.
114. Janvier interview, 2017; Pierre, interview, 2017; Ikiyaga, interview, 2017. Rukema in particular asserted, as others implied, that in fact it was the RPA that was responsible for his death, not the supposed Mai-Mai or FAZ soldiers in the Uvira area. He pinned this assassination on General Eric Murokore, working under Caesar Kayizari in the South Kivu front. The death signaled one of few moments in the consciousness of Banyamulenge soldiers of the divide between themselves and their Rwanda brothers. See Rukema, first interview, 2018.
115. Rugira, first interview 2017.
116. Rugira, first interview 2017.
117. Patience, interview, 2017; Eugene, interview, 2017.
118. Janvier, interview, 2017; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 186–187.
119. Janvier, interview, 2017.
120. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 187–88; French, *A Continent for the Taking*, 192; Cooper, *Great Lakes Holocaust*, 37.
121. Janvier, interview, 2017.

122. Eugene, interview, 2017; Umwami, interview, 2017.
123. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 58; IRIN Update on the conflict in South Kivu, Zaïre, *UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs*, October 11, 1996, accessed on May 2, 2018, from http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Hornet/irin_101196.html; James C. McKinley Jr., “Zaïre War Breeds a Human Catastrophe,” *New York Times*, October 26, 1996, <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/10/26/world/Zaïre-war-breeds-a-human-catastrophe.html>
124. McKinley, “Zaïre War Breeds a Human Catastrophe.”
125. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 72.
126. Christian, interview, 2017.
127. Mugenzi, interview by phone in Kigali, December 2017.
128. Jean, interview, 2017.
129. For the interactions between these forces in the prewar FAZ military operations in Kimia and Mbata, see United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General’s Investigative Team*; Longman, “Forced to Flee,” 24, 28.
130. Olivier, interview, 2022.
131. Olivier, interview, 2022.
132. Eleazar, interview, 2017.
133. Perception is muddled with tangible events. Mobutu’s relationship with Habyarimana was significant and long-term. An event of note is the deployment of several hundred Division Spéciale Présidentielle into northern Rwanda to counter the October RPF invasion. This undoubtedly reinforced the local view of Mobutu’s disposition against Tutsis in favor of the Rwandan regime. Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, 157.
134. Eugene, interview, 2017.
135. Human Rights Watch, reporting from the time, documented the flow of weapons into the camps first under the protection of Operation Turquoise, and then with the more active support of the FAZ, in establishing military bases, recruitment, and the international supply of arms into the hands of ex-FAR/ Interahamwe. See Austin, “Rearming with Impunity,” 1–20.
136. Eleazar, interview, 2017.
137. Janvier, interview, 2017.
138. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 11.
139. Eugene, interview, 2017.
140. Bonte, interview, 2018.
141. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 74–75.
142. Eugene, interview, 2017.
143. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 184; Longman, “Forced to Flee,” 1; IRIN, “Situation Report on Masisi and Rutshuru, North Kivu, Zaïre,” UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, May 10, 1996, accessed on March 2, 2015, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/situation-report-masisi-and-rutshuru-north-kivu-Zaïre>

144. Longman, “Forced to Flee,” 13–14.
145. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Violence of the New Rwandan Regime 1994–1995,” 12–13; Longman, “Forced to Flee,” 16.
146. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 73–76; Longman and Des Forges, “Attacked by All Sides,” 8–9; IRIN, “Zaire: Briefing on the Conflict in South Kivu, Zaire and Its Regional Implications,” *UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs*, October 7, 1996, accessed on May 4, 2018, from http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Hornet/irin_10796.html; Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 91; Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 100; Alexis, interview, 2017; Ikiyaga, interview, 2017.
147. Leonard, first interview, 2017.
148. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 77; French, *A Continent for the Taking*, 122–23, 130.
149. As an example see Chris McGreal, “Reaping the Whirlwind of Indifference,” *Mail and Guardian*, November 1, 1996, <https://mg.co.za/article/1996-11-01-reaping-the-whirlwind-of-indifference>; “Zaire Refugee Camps Site of New Ethnic Killing,” CNN, World News Story Page, October 13, 1996, <http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9610/13/Zaire/index.html>; Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, “Conflicts in Eastern Zaire,” November 19, 1996, https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Urgent_Action/apic_12106.html
150. Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 90; Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaire-Congo: 1996–1997,” 16.
151. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 74.
152. Gatete, interview, 2017.
153. Christian, interview, 2017.
154. Eugene, interview, 2017.
155. Matthias, interview, 2018.
156. Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, 180.
157. By October 18, 1996, the FAZ around Uvira had started combing operations against Banyamulenge or other perceived Tutsi groups in the areas. This was followed by a large demonstration in Bukavu calling for the removal of Banyamulenge and punishment of those who had sold land to them in the past. See Jean Helene, “In Zaire, the Army Launches a Raking Operation against Hutus Living in the East of the Country,” *Le Monde*, September 20, 1996, <https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1996/09/20/au-Zaire-l-armee-lance-une-operation-de-ratissage-contre-les-hutus-installes-dans-l-est-du>
158. Patience, interview, 2017.
159. Christian, interview, 2017; Leonard, interview, 2017.
160. Bernard, interview, 2017; James Kabarebe also recalls, “The governor of South Kivu based in Bukavu made a declaration on the radio that he was giving only six days to the whole group of Tutsi living in South Kivu specifically in the Mulenge area, to leave the country or be killed within six days.” In Jihan El-Tahri, *L’Afrique en morceaux* (Canal Horizons, 2000).
161. Christian, interview, 2017.

162. Eleazar, interview, 2017.
163. Leonard, interview, 2017.
164. Thierry, interview, 2017; Huenig, “Making Use of the Past,” 25. Some participants accepted and used this trope as an explanation of why Banyamulenge were targeted: it was because they originated from this area, Rukema, second interview, 2018, Moise, interview, 2017, Rugira, second interview, 2017, and Eleazar, interview, 2017.
165. Bernard, interview, 2017.
166. Bernard, interview, 2017.
167. Gustav, interview, 2018.
168. Gustav, interview, 2018.
169. Gustav, interview, 2018.
170. Gustav, interview, 2018.
171. Ikiyaga, interview, 2017.
172. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 148.
173. Ikiyaga, interview, 2017.
174. Ikiyaga, interview, 2017.
175. The section quotation, “soldiers without frontiers,” is taken from UN, E/CN.4/1998/65, 14; Idean Salehyan, *Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2009), 145–64.
176. Olivier, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
177. Olivier, interview, 2022.
178. Uwiringiyimana and Pesta, *How Dare the Sun Rise*, 23, 43.
179. Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 48; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 187–88.
180. Frank, interview by phone, September 2020.
181. Ntung, *Not My Worst Day*, 181.
182. Ntung, *Not My Worst Day*, 175–77.
183. Janvier, interview, 2017.
184. Ntung, *Not My Worst Day*, 216–19.
185. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 176.
186. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 177 (italics mine).
187. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 177. As with other accounts, personal involvement in the AFDL and the war formed a significant gap in Budagu’s narrative.
188. Heritier, interview in Texas, November 2021.
189. Heritier, interview, 2021.
190. Mustafa, interview in Arizona, July 2020.
191. Mustafa, interview, 2020.
192. Mustafa, interview, 2020.
193. Mustafa, interview, 2020.
194. Mustafa, interview, 2020.
195. Mustafa, interview, 2020.

196. Rugira, second interview, 2017. Thierry also echoed this regional sentiment of Tutsi troubles, comparing the events of Banyamulenge persecution leading up to 1996 with that of the persecution faced in the 1960s. Thierry, interview, 2017.

197. Patience, interview, 2017; Moise, with an added level of dramatization, described Banyamulenge and Tutsi as “the eternal refugees. Eternal refugees forever all over the world,” Moise, interview, 2017.

198. “Zaire—Rebel Leader Addresses New Recruits,” Associated Press, February 9, 1997, accessed on May 4, 2018, from <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/1ff35c18806685b15fa721ceeb44fcb4>; “Zaire: Uvira: Young Soldiers Join Rebel Army of Kabila,” Associated Press, February 13, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/db32568c43a86fe429b265ced89f5391>

199. Eleazar, interview, 2017.

200. Eugene, interview, 2017.

201. Janvier, interview, 2017.

202. Rugira, first interview, 2017.

203. Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 73–74.

204. McDowell, second interview, 2018.

205. McDowell, second interview, 2018.

206. D. C. Gill, *How We Are Changed by War: A Study of Letters and Diaries from Colonial Conflicts to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Routledge, 2010), 72–74, 269–70.

207. Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force*, 91, 231–32.

Chapter 4

1. Christian, first interview, 2017.

2. Joël Karekezi, *La Miséricorde de la Jungle* (2018).

3. Goma Epidemiology Group, “Public Health Impact of Rwandan Refugee Crisis: What Happened in Goma, Zaire, in July, 1994?” *The Lancet* 345 (February 11, 1995): 340–41.

4. Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, 74–76; James McKinley Jr., “Machetes, Axes and Rebel Guns: Refugees Tell of Attacks in Zaire,” *New York Times*, April 30, 1997, <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/04/30/world/machetes-axes-and-rebel-guns-refugees-tell-of-attacks-in-Zaire.html>; Dianne Stewart, “Eyewitness— The Stench of Disease and Death . . . Engulfed Us . . .,” *Refugee Magazine* 110 (December 1, 1997) (UNHCR): (accessed January 15, 2015), <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/publications/refugeemag/3b695ee616/refugees-magazine-issue-110-crisis-great-lakes-eyewitness-stench-disease.html>

5. Pierre Nabeth, et al., “Acts of Violence Against Rwandan Refugees,” *The Lancet* 350 (November 29, 1997): 1635.

6. Nabeth, et al., “Acts of Violence Against Rwandan Refugees,” 1635.

7. United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Joint Mission Charged with Investigating Allegations of Massacres*, 14–15.

8. Dominique Legros, Christophe Paquet, and Pierre Nabeth, "The Evolution of Mortality among Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre Between 1994 and 1997," in *Forced Migration & Mortality: National Research Council (US) Roundtable on the Demography of Forced Migration*, ed. H. E. Reed and C. B. Keely (National Academies Press, 2001), 52–53.
9. Oswald Rutagengwa, "Rwandan Refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Application of International Humanitarian Law During the Congo Wars" (LLM Diss., University of Pretoria), 19–26, accessed on November 27, 2017, from <https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/27995/dissertation.pdf?sequence=1>
10. Helen Fein, "Genocide by Attrition 1939–1993: The Warsaw Ghetto, Cambodia, and Sudan: Links Between Human Rights, Health and Mass Death," *Health and Human Rights* 2, no. 2 (1997): 12.
11. Samuel Totten, *Genocide by Attrition: the Nuba Mountains of Sudan* (Transaction Publishers, 2015), 9–10, 98.
12. James Tyner, "Famine, Violence, and the Intentional Politics of Letting Die," *Political Geography* 62 (January 2018): 199–200; Frank E. Sysyn and Henry C. Theriault, eds., *Starvation and Genocide*, in *Genocide Studies International* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 1–104.
13. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *From Zaïre to the Democratic Republic of the Congo* (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2004), 13.
14. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 184
15. Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, 77–78.
16. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 80; "31 Rwandans are Slain," *New York Times*, April 13, 1995.
17. UNHCR, *State of the World's Refugees 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 254.
18. "World News Briefs: Zaïrian Troops Surround 2d Rwandan Refugee Site," *New York Times*, February 17, 1996; "Zaïre Steps Up Pressure on Rwandans to go Home," *New York Times*, February 15, 1996.
19. "Get Out, Maybe: Rwandan Refugees," *The Economist*, February 17, 1996.
20. Rukumbuzi Delphin Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'* (L'Harmattan, 2019), 48; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 188.
21. Siboyintore, interview, 2022; Heritier, interview, 2021.
22. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 80.
23. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General's Investigative Team*, 44.
24. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 188.
25. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 178–79; Ntung, *Not My Worst Day*, 218–19.
26. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 73–74.
27. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 49–50.

28. Siboyintore, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
29. Siboyintore, 2022.
30. Siboyintore, 2022.
31. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 49–50.
32. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General's Investigative Team*, 45; United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Report on the Mission Carried out at the Request of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 39; UNCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 134.
33. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 134.
34. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 74.
35. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 75–76.
36. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 135.
37. As will be noted in detail below, this phrase was explicitly used by Matthias, Mugenzi, and Patience, but *genocidaire* ideology was referenced by most participants.
38. Mitton, *Rebels in a Rotten State*, 136–39.
39. Gustav, interview, 2018.
40. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Rugira's own discussion of ideology as a trainer exemplifies this binary paradigm. Rugira, first interview, 2017.
41. Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence* (Penguin, 2006), 7.
42. Matthias, interview, 2018.
43. Matthias, interview, 2018.
44. Patience, interview, 2017.
45. Eleazar, interview, 2017; Eugene, interview, 2017; Alphonse, first interview, 2018.
46. Mugenzi, interview, 2017.
47. Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force*, 186–191.
48. Erin Jessee, "Seeing Monsters, Hearing Victims," in *Researching Perpetrators of Genocide*, ed. Kjell Anderson and Erin Jessee (University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), 79; Yonekawa, *Post-Genocide Rwandan Refugees*, 67–71.
49. Prunier, *Africa's World War*, 143.
50. "Zaire: Transition, War and Human Rights," *Human Rights Watch* 9, no. 2 (A) (April 1997): 26–28.
51. According to witnesses cited in the Spanish indictment, present at the Mugunga camp at this time was the RPA's 21st Battalion led by Major Gashayija Bagirigomwa. See *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 132.
52. Gatete, interview, 2017.
53. Moise, interview, 2017.
54. Thierry, interview, 2017.
55. Thierry, interview, 2017.
56. Rugira, second interview, 2017.
57. Rugira, second interview, 2017.
58. Rudasingwa, interview, 2018.

59. Rudasingwa, interview, 2018.
60. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 203–4.
61. Cooper, *Great Lakes Holocaust*, 40.
62. Simon Massey, “Operation Assurance: The Greatest Intervention That Never Happened,” *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, February 15, 1998, accessed on August 31, 2018, from https://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/123#N_34_
63. Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 86; National Security Council, *Briefing Memo for Ad Hoc Interagency on Eastern Zaïre*, November 2, 1996, 21001.
64. This view is evidenced in a US House of Representatives hearing December 4, 1996. See Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, *Refugees in Eastern Zaïre and Rwanda*, 104th Con., 2nd sess., 1996. H. Rep., 2–3, 54, 86–95; and, United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Joint Mission Charged with Investigating Allegations of Massacres*, 12. This view is further replicated in Waugh’s book. Refugees were physically prevented from returning right up to 1996, until in the case of Mugunga, they did so “of their own accord.” See Waugh, *Paul Kagame and Rwanda*, 104, 111.
65. El-Tahri, *L’Afrique en morceaux*.
66. Robert Gribbin, *In the Aftermath of Genocide: The US Role in Rwanda* (iUniverse, 2005), 181.
67. Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, 173–76; Ndacyayisenga, *Dying to Live*, 80; Pierre Laine, “Zaïre and Rwanda: From Worst to Worst,” *Le Monde*, November 1, 1996, https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1996/11/01/Zaïre-et-rwanda-du-pire-au-pire_3751832_1819218.html?xtmc=Zaïre&xtcr=40
68. Jonathan Beloff, *Foreign Policy in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Elite Perceptions of Global Engagement* (Routledge, 2021), 23–24.
69. Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, 93–94.
70. Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, 98, 100.
71. Amani, interview, 2017; Jean, interview, 2017.
72. Amani, interview, 2017.
73. Gustav, interview, 2017.
74. Heritier, interview, 2021.
75. Ikiyaga, interview, 2017.
76. Balthazar, interview, 2017.
77. Bernard, interview, 2017.
78. Leonard, interview, 2017.
79. Janvier, interview, 2017; Bernard, interview, 2017.
80. Matthias, interview, 2018.
81. Matthias, interview, 2018.
82. Christian, interview, 2017.
83. Christian, interview, 2017.
84. Bernard, interview, 2017; Pierre, interview, 2017; Alphonse, first interview, 2018.

85. This dynamic of being in a less active role in a complex conflict is explored elsewhere. See Maček, “Perpetrators among Ourselves,” 98–99.

86. Christian, interview, 2017.

87. Patience, interview, 2017; Janvier, interview, 2017.

88. Martin, interview in Goma, November 2017.

89. Pierre, interview, 2017; Rugira, first interview, 2017.

90. Patience, interview, 2017.

91. Matthias, interview, 2018

92. El-Tahri, *L’Afrique en morceaux*.

93. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 232.

94. Cooper, *Great Lakes Holocaust*, 37.

95. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 119–20; Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 80–88, and Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 163–70.

96. These attacks on Banyarwanda Hutu were concentrated from October to November 1996, and involved hundreds of deaths, and many of them were connected to attempts to control and retaliate for the violence against Tutsis that emerged after 1994. See OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 120–26.

97. Rugira, first interview, 2017; Rukema, second interview, 2018; Alphonse, first interview, 2018.

98. “Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre Are Subjected to Repeated Attacks on Heavy Weapons,” *Le Monde*, October 29, 1996, https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1996/10/29/les-refugies-rwandais-au-Zaïre-sont-soumis-a-des-attaques-repetees-a-l-arme-lourde_374; Frederic Fritscher, “In Kivu, a War That Does Not Say Its Name since Early September,” *Le Monde*, November 2, 1996, https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1996/11/02/au-kivu-une-guerre-qui-ne-dit-pas-son-nom-depuis-debut-septembre_3752340_1819218.h; “Rwandans Attack Refugee Camp in Zaïre,” *Associated Press*, October 27, 1996, <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/rwandans-attack-refugee-camp-Zaïre>; *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4’ Audiencia Nacional*, 135. A witness in the Spanish case further identifies leaders and troops from the RPA’s Third and Fifth Battalions also in the North Kivu area around this time; see *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4’ Audiencia Nacional*, 132.

99. *Agafani* or *agafuni* is small RPF-issued gardening implement used like a hoe or hammer. United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Report on the Mission Carried Out at the Request of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 4, 8; “At Least 5,000 Dead in Zaïre in the Goma Region,” *Le Monde*, December 13, 1996, https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1996/12/13/au-moins-5-000-morts-au-Zaïre-dans-la-region-de-goma_3740916_1819218.html?xtmc=z

100. “Amnesty International’s Memorandum to the UN Security Council: Appeal for a Commission of Inquiry to Investigate Reports of Atrocities in Eastern Zaïre,” *Amnesty International*, March 24, 1997, 3; “Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre Are Subjected to Repeated Attacks on Heavy Weapons,” *Le Monde*, October 29, 1996, <https://abonnes>

es.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1996/10/29/les-refugies-rwandais-au-Zaïre-sont-soumis-a-des-attaques-repetees-a-l-arme-lourde_374

101. United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Joint Mission Charged with Investigating Allegations of Massacres*, 14. The AFDL/RPA used humanitarian workers to glean information about refugee locations under the pretense of repatriation.

102. “Amnesty International’s Memorandum to the UN Security Council: Appeal for a Commission of Inquiry to Investigate Reports of Atrocities in Eastern Zaïre,” *Amnesty International*, March 24, 1997, 12; United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Report on the Mission Carried out at the Request of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 5.

103. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General’s Investigative Team*, 40, 42.

104. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 97–102.

105. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 37.

106. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 100; Ruhorahoza, *Terminus Mbandaka*, 26–27; Ndacyayisenga, *Dying to Live*, 63.

107. Ndacyayisenga, *Dying to Live*, 63.

108. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 100.

109. Other Mapping Report recorded instances of rape include that of both refugees and Zaïrian citizens; see OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 98–99, 124–25, 139–40.

110. Ndacyayisenga, *Dying to Live*, 65.

111. “Deadly Alliances in the Congolese Forests,” *Amnesty International*, 21–23.

112. Médecins Sans Frontières, “Forced Flight: A Brutal Strategy of Elimination in Eastern Zaïre,” May 16, 1997, 2; Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, 153; Ruhorahoza, *Terminus Mbandaka*, 31.

113. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 73–77.

114. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 133–34; OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 103.

115. Médecins Sans Frontières, *Reconstruction Report: Bukavu-Shabunda (South Kivu, Zaïre)*, April 16, 1997, 2.

116. James McKinley and Howard French, “Hidden Horrors: A Special Report; Uncovering the Guilty Footprints Along Zaïre’s Long Trail of Death,” *New York Times*, November 14, 1997, <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/11/14/world/hidden-horrors-special-report-uncovering-guilty-footprints-along-Zaïre-s-long.html>. The Mapping Report posits March 1 as the commencement of the attacks. See OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 103; Ndacyayisenga, *Dying to Live*, 92.

117. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 104; Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, 160.

118. “Refugees Abandon Tingi-Tingi Camp.” *Associated Press*, June 3, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/56066a1eb6427c8310ab9350b195ab38>

119. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 103.
120. Augustin, second interview, 2022.
121. Eugene, interview, 2017.
122. Maček, “Perpetrators among Ourselves,” 92–93.
123. Matthias, interview, 2018.
124. Matthias, interview, 2018.
125. Christian, interview, 2017.
126. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 146; Kisangani, “The Massacre of Refugees in Congo,” 177.
127. David Fox, “Kabila Gives UN 60 Days to Get Hutus out of Zaïre,” *Irish Times*, April 28, 1997, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/kabila-gives-un-60-days-to-get-hutus-out-of-Zaïre-1.66663>; French, *A Continent for the Taking*, 213.
128. Barbara Crossette, “U.N. Says It Has Evidence of Killing of Rwanda Refugees,” *New York Times*, April 29, 1997, <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/04/29/world/un-says-it-has-evidence-of-killing-of-rwanda-refugees.htm>
129. French, *A Continent for the Taking*, 140–41, 144–45; United Nations, “Press Briefing by UNHCR on Eastern Zaïre,” May 7, 1997, <https://www.un.org/press/en/1997/19970507.unhcr7.may.html>; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 272–79; Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 91–93; Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 157–61.
130. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 105–14; Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 135; United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General’s Investigative Team*, 42; Donald G. McNeil Jr., “Reports Point to Mass Killing of Refugees in Congo,” *New York Times*, May 27, 1997, <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/05/27/world/reports-point-to-mass-killing-of-refugees-in-congo.html>
131. “Deadly Alliances in the Congolese Forests,” *Amnesty International*, 13; United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General’s Investigative Team*, 52; Ruhorahoza, *Terminus Mbandaka*, 68–69.
132. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 114.
133. Ndacyayisenga, *Dying to Live*, 110.
134. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 115.
135. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 115.
136. Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, 187. The Spanish indictment reports that 101st, 157th, and 59th RPA battalions, including the DMI contingent lead by Habimana, all converged on Mbandaka. If this is accurate it no doubt enabled the AFDL/RPA to surround these localities, preventing the escape of thousands of refugees, as discussed below. See *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4’ Audiencia Nacional*, 133.
137. Robert Block, “Congo Villagers Describe Horrific Killings of Refugees—Kabila Denies Massacre of Rwandans, But Citizens and Aides Say Otherwise,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 6, 1997, 2–3; Campbell, “What Is Kabila Hiding?” 21; French, *A Continent for the Taking*, 221.

138. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 117; Block, “Congo Villagers Describe Horrific Killings of Refugees,” 2–3; United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Joint Mission Charged with Investigating Allegations of Massacres*, 13–14; John Pomfret, “Massacres Were a Weapon in Congo’s Civil War,” *Washington Post*, June 11, 1997, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1997/06/11/mass-acres-were-a-weapon-in-congos-civil-war/d108200d-90f7-4ee9-8331-e0be34b9ea79/?utm_term=.af0bf4400623

139. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 116; Ndacyayisenga, *Dying to Live*, 114–15.

140. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General’s Investigative Team*, 19.

141. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 117, Block, “Congo Villagers Describe Horrific Killings of Refugees,” 3; United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General’s Investigative Team*, 19.

142. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 117–18.

143. United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General’s Investigative Team*, 25.

144. Rukema, first interview, 2018.

145. Jean, interview, 2017; OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 86.

146. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 231, 242.

147. Patience, interview, 2017.

148. Heritier also described being present at the Kamanyola crossing.

149. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 73–74.

150. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 86.

151. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 86; United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General’s Investigative Team*, 36–37.

152. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 82.

153. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 81; “Zaïre: Hidden from Scrutiny: Human Rights Abuses in Eastern Zaïre” *Amnesty International*, December 20, 1996, 4.

154. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 134–35.

155. “Zaïre: Hidden from Scrutiny,” *Amnesty International*, December 20, 1996, 4.

156. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 84.

157. Rukema, first interview, 2018.

158. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 84.

159. Patience, interview, 2017.

160. A Spanish case implicated Murokore in the June 1994 killing of Catholic priests in Gakurazo, second to Ibingira, who received orders from Kagame. *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4’ Audiencia Nacional*, 116. The case also notes a summary of charges against Murokore; see *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4’ Audiencia Nacional*, 172.

161. Janvier, interview, 2017; Patience, interview, 2018, Rukema, first interview, 2018.
162. *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 128. Also according the Spanish indictment, the 157th Battalion (including Murokore and Lieutenant John Butera) was present at subsequent massacres: Bukavu, Numbi, Walikale, Tingi-Tingi, Ubundu, Bokungu, Boende, and Mbandaka. See *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 133.
163. *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 178.
164. Alphonse, first interview, 2018; *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 170–71.
165. Cooper, *Great Lakes Holocaust*, 37; *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4' Audiencia Nacional*, 133.
166. Janvier, interview, 2017.
167. “Rwanda: Military Claim Group of Commandos Crossed in Zaïre,” *Associated Press*, October 30, 1996, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/e2ab2b3f1f9610806dce02223f9d5afb>
168. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 192–93.
169. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 231; Cooper, *Great Lakes Holocaust*, 39; Alphonse, first interview, 2018; Gatete, interview, 2017; Janvier, interview, 2017; Jean, interview, 2017; Matthias, interview, 2018; Patience, interview, 2017; Pierre, interview, 2017; Rugira, second interview, 2017; Rukema, first interview, 2018.
170. John Pomfret, “In Congo, Revenge Became Rebellion,” *Washington Post*, July 6, 1997, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1997/07/06/in-congo-revenge-became-rebellion/ce8eddc8-c02b-4b8a-a9d3-902c3f45f7d1/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8c8314b020b5; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 192–93; Turner, *The Congo Wars*, 91; “Zaïre: Hidden from Scrutiny,” *Amnesty International*, 4; Kisangani, “The Massacre of Refugees in Congo,” 175.
171. “Zaïre: Hidden from Scrutiny,” *Amnesty International*, 6; OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 135.
172. Kisangani, “The Massacre of Refugees in Congo,” 178; Ndacyayisenga, *Dying to Live*, 45, 53; OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 87; “Amnesty International’s memorandum to the UN Security Council,” *Amnesty International*, 5; Niwese, interview, 96; Umutesi’s account replays the journey of groups of refugees from Bukavu via the INERA camp in Kashusha; see Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter*, 103–5.
173. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 104.
174. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 104.
175. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 86–87.
176. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 87.
177. “Zaïre: Amnesty Says Killings, Torture and Arbitrary Arrests Persist,” *Amnesty*

International, December 3, 1996, accessed on September 18, 2018, from http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Urgent_Action/apic_121096.html; Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 137; Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 57–58.

178. This figure is a portion of the initial estimated one hundred thousand that moved west from Bukavu. See MSF, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 69.

179. Kisangani, “The Massacre of Refugees in Congo,” 176.

180. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 89.

181. Médecins Sans Frontières, *Reconstruction Report*, 7–9.

182. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 89–91; “Deadly Alliances in the Congolese Forests,” *Amnesty International*, 9.

183. *Le Genocide des Refugies Hutu Rwandais et Burundais a l'est et dans les Forets Equatoriales du Zaïre (RDC) Par L'Armee Patriotique Rwandaise (APR) du General Paul Kagame*, MDR, accessed on September 20, 2017, from <http://www.mdrwi.org/rapports%20et%20doc/genocide%20hutu%20au%20Zaïre.pdf>

184. Ruairidh Nicoll, “The DRC’s Hidden Massacre,” *Mail and Guardian*, September 2, 2007, <https://mg.co.za/article/2007-09-02-the-drcs-hidden-massacre>

185. Nicoll, “The DRC’s Hidden Massacre.”

186. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 89.

187. Nicoll, “The DRC’s Hidden Massacre.”

188. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 89–90; according to Amnesty International, five refugees were killed on the bridge a week prior to this attack with knives, presumably in an attempt to prevent these and others from crossing the river deeper into Zaïre; see “Deadly Alliances in the Congolese Forests,” *Amnesty International*, 10.

189. Alphonse, second interview, 2018.

190. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 104; *Juzgado Central De Instrucción No. 4’ Audiencia Nacional*, 129.

191. McDowell, second interview, 2018.

192. Reportedly, approximately two hundred refugees were killed in this area. See OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 104.

193. Bonte, interview, 2018; Alphonse, second interview, 2018; Rugira, second interview, 2017.

194. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 108. The following events in Kasese took place after the clearing and executions at Tingi-Tingi; these will be discussed in the next section.

195. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 108.

196. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 107–8; Pomfret, “Massacres Were a Weapon in Congo’s Civil War”; Thomas Sonitel, “Near Kisangani, Rwandan Refugees at the End of Hell . . .,” *Le Monde*, April 12, 1997, https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1997/04/12/pres-de-kisangani-les-refugies-rwandais-au-bout-de-l-enfer_3763129_1819218.html

197. Niwese estimates three thousand people took up this offer; see Niwese, *Le Peuple Rwandais un pied dans la tombe*, 153.
198. Pomfret, “Massacres Were a Weapon in Congo’s Civil War”; OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 108.
199. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 109.
200. Niwese, *Le Peuple Rwandais un pied dans la tombe*, 161–62.
201. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 109; Pomfret, “Massacres Were a Weapon in Congo’s Civil War.”
202. Gustav, interview, 2018.
203. Alphonse, second interview, 2018.
204. Siboyintore, interview, 2022.
205. Siboyintore, interview, 2022.
206. Balthazar, interview, 2017.
207. United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Report on the Mission Carried out at the Request of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 12.
208. Médecins Sans Frontières, *Reconstruction Report*, 1.
209. Médecins Sans Frontières, “The Hunting and Killing of Rwandan Refugees in Zaïre-Congo: 1996–1997,” 81.
210. Alphonse, first interview, 2018.
211. Some stated they relied on military uniform or weapons to distinguish enemy combatants, Ikiyaga, interview, 2017; Christian, interview, 2017; Matthias, interview, 2018.
212. Patience, interview, 2017.
213. Théophile Ruhorahoza noted how a Jesuit priest in Bukavu was executed by the AFDL for comments defending Rwandan refugees and opposing this charged attribution. “He was against the globalization of more than one million refugees under the ‘genocidal’ label. This earned him a savage assassination even before the massacre of the refugees he defended.” See Ruhorahoza, *Terminus Mbandaka*, 18.
214. A similar description is picked up by Howard French from Congolese human rights investigator Guillaume Ngefa. “You can call it a war, if you like, because there is some combat, and yet anyone who follows the itinerary of the rebels knows that this is a campaign to exterminate the Hutu refugees. The Tutsi thesis is that all of these people are Interahamwe, and now, those who suffered a genocide are committing one in their turn.” French, *A Continent for the Taking*, 193.
215. Amani, interview, 2017.
216. Ikiyaga, interview, 2017.
217. Gustav, interview, 2018.
218. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 85.
219. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 89–91.
220. Mitton, *Rebels in a Rotten State*, 213.
221. Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force*, 234, 238–39.
222. Mitton, *Rebels in a Rotten State*, 125.

223. Dan Stone, “Genocide as Transgression,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 7, no. 1 (2004): 53–58.
224. Matthias, interview, 2018.

Chapter 5

1. “Gatumba Massacre Anniversary, Historic Drinking Fountain & Cycling for ALS,” WXXI News, August 7, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bip3m0Xbpuc&ab_channel=WXXINews
2. Martin, interview, 2017.
3. A response to Rwandan efforts to relocate the community and to localize self-defense as opposed to participating in Rwandan-led national insurgency, *gumino* is also described to mean “we have to stay here,” as well as linking into the political slogan “we won’t leave this land.” See Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the ‘Banyamulenge Military’*, 64.
4. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 275–79.
5. Africa Rights, *The Insurgency in the Northwest*, 1998, 26–28.
6. Africa Rights, *The Insurgency in the Northwest*, 51.
7. Africa Rights, *The Insurgency in the Northwest*, 283–84, 405–9.
8. Africa Rights, *The Insurgency in the Northwest*, 37–38.
9. This assessment of the FDLR is addressed in the next chapter. Stanis Bukera, “Congo Army Kills Leader of Splinter Hutu Militias Group,” *Reuters*, November 10, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-congo-security/congo-army-kills-leader-of-splinter-hutu-militia-group-idUSKBN1XKODI>; “Congolese Army Overwhelmed,” *Kivu Security Tracker*, Monthly Report, January 2020, <https://kivusecurity.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/reports/31/KST%20Report%20January%202020.pdf>; Beloff, *Foreign Policy in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 105–6.
10. The Congolese Armed Forces rebranded in 2004 as *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) after the war settlement and peace deal.
11. “IRC Study Shows Congo’s Neglected Crisis Leaves 5.4 Million Dead,” Reliefweb, January 22, 2008, <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/irc-study-shows-congos-neglected-crisis-leaves-54-million-dead>; “Africa’s Great War,” *The Economist*, July 6, 2002.
12. Brabant, “*Qu’on nous laisse combattre, et la guerre finira*,” 64.
13. Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 201–7; Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 209–23; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 367–402.
14. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 178, 267–68; Brabant, “*Qu’on nous laisse combattre, et la guerre finira*,” 60–62; Vlassenroot, “Citizenship, Identity Formation & Conflict in South Kivu,” 512; “Casualties of War: Civilians, Rule of Law, and Democratic Freedoms,” *Human Rights Watch* 11, no. 1(a) (February 1999). It was reported that several RCD soldiers were sentenced to death by court martial following this massacre; see “Rebels Sentenced to Death for Makobola Massacre,” *The New*

Humanitarian, February 23, 1999, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/5312/drc-rebels-sentenced-death-makobola-massacre>; Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 82–83.

15. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 176–77.

16. Floribert Kasingufu, “Two Conflicts, One Village: The Case of Kasika,” *Peace Insight*, May 27, 2010, <https://www.peaceinsight.org/en/articles/two-conflicts-one-village-the-case-of-kasika/?location=dr-congo&theme=>

17. “Casualties of War: Civilians, Rule of Law, and Democratic Freedoms,” Human Rights Watch.

18. As an example, this stereotype was both addressed and used in Koli Jean Bofane, *Congo Inc.: Bismarck's Testament* (Indiana University Press, 2014), 171–75.

19. Prunier, *Africa's World War*, 250–54.

20. Vlassenroot, Mudinga, and Musamba, “Navigating Social Spaces: Armed Mobilization and Circular Return,” 4.

21. Both Siboyintore and Olivier recall being “ordered” by the Rwandans to join the CNDP and were later integrated into the FARDC in 2009. Christoph Vogel offers a visualized overview of these factions; see <https://suluhu.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/genealogy.jpg>, accessed June 20, 2024.

22. Verweijen, “Everyday Violence and Mai Mai Militias in Eastern DRC,” 131.

23. Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 96–103; Peter Schouten, “Violence and Fragmentation in Congo's Political Marketplace,” *Conflict Research Programme*, March 2021, 20–33.

24. Manapo Tebello Mokose and Hussein Solomon, “How the War Economy Centered in the Eastern Region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Is Fueling the Conflict in the Great Lakes Region (1998–2016),” *ActaAcademia* 48, no. 2 (2016): 127–46; Verweijen et al, “Mayhem in the Mountains,” 20–49.

25. Alphonse, interview, 2018.

26. Soldiers being integrated into the FARDC without a link to a strong elite network find themselves lacking in this process, while those with networks then find themselves joining a bloated officer corps. See Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 47.

27. Alphonse, interview, 2018. Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 47. This phrase has currency in that other soldiers interviewed in the Kenya and US-based diaspora also used it in reference to the insidious nature of attempted Rwandan control over their community.

28. Ntung, *Not My Worst Day*, 229.

29. Ntung, *Not My Worst Day*, 229.

30. Georges, first interview, 2022.

31. Vlassenroot, “Citizenship, Identity Formation & Conflict in South Kivu,” 510. Vlassenroot notes additional entreaties made by the RPF high command to visiting Banyamulenge leaders in Kigali.

32. Budagu, *Ladder to the Moon*, 121, 168–174; Ntung, *Not My Worst Day*, 240; Stearns, “Banyamulenge,” 21.

33. UNHCR Rwanda Congolese Population Dashboard, August 2021, accessed on November 30, 2021, from <https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Rwanda-Congolese%20Population-August%202021.pdf>; International Refugee Right Initiative, “Shadow of Return: The Dilemmas of Congolese Refugees in Rwanda,” Citizenship and Displacement in The Great Lakes Region, Working Paper 6, July 2011, accessed on November 2, 2018, from <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53b3dc834.html>

34. Moise, interview, 2017.

35. Moise, interview, 2017.

36. Georges, second interview, 2022.

37. Janvier, interview, 2017.

38. Heritier, interview, 2021.

39. Rukema, second interview, 2018; McDowell, second interview, 2018; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 215–17.

40. Augustin, first interview, 2022.

41. Augustin, first interview, 2022.

42. “How Kabila Lost His Way: The Performance of Laurent Désiré Kabila’s Government,” *International Crisis Group*, ICG Democratic Republic of Congo Report no. 3, May 21, 1999, accessed on January 15, 2022, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/angola/how-kabila-lost-his-way-performance-laurent-d%C3%A9sir%C3%A9-kabilas-government>

43. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 252–53. Prunier also discusses how this wave of violence against Nindaga’s perceived followers sparked the assassination of Kabila himself on January 16, 2001; see also Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 252–53.

44. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 250–54.

45. Siboyintore, interview, 2022.

46. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 300–301.

47. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the ‘Banyamulenge Military’*, 58–59. For more on notable Banyamulenge soldier and officer Ruhimbore, see *Council of the European Union*, “COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2019/2109 of December 9, 2019 Amending Decision 2010/788/CFSP Concerning Restrictive Measures against the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” *Official Journal of European Union* 318, December 10, 2019, 319; Sonia Rolley, “DRC: Violence in Kasia: Chapter two: The Army’s Response: Proof in Pictures,” *RFI*, accessed on January 5, 2020 from <https://webdoc.rfi.fr/rdc-kasai-violence-kamwina-nsapu-onu/chap-02/index.html>

48. Olivier and Siboyintore noted how Kabarebe at this time attempted to entice Banyamulenge soldiers back to Rwanda, leading them to suspect him of preemptively trying to upset the new order under Kabila. Both claimed that as a result of theirs and others’ refusal, Kabarebe was sent out to show Kabila “how bad we are, telling them that these (Banyamulenge) are fellow Rwandans and not Congolese,” Olivier and Siboyintore, interviews, 2022.

49. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 347.

50. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 295; Rugira, first interview, 2017.

51. Rugira, interview, 2017.
52. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 160–61.
53. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 154–59.
54. Ludo Martens, *Kabila et la révolution congolaise: panafricanisme ou néocolonialisme?*, Volume 1 (EPO, 2002), 420.
55. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 174; Ambroise Bulambo Katambu, *Mourir au Kivu: Du génocide Tutsi aux massacres dans l'Est du Congo-RDC* (Editions L'Harmattan, 2001), 64.
56. Balthazar, interview, 2017; Thierry, interview, 2017; Alphonse, interview, 2018.
57. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 154–59.
58. Ikiyaga, interview, 2017. In Jouris's *The Rebel's Hour* she recounts this escape through the book's muse, 137–41.
59. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 184–85, 193.
60. Heritier, interview, 2021; Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 371–72.
61. Siboyintore, interview, 2022.
62. Heritier, interview, 2021.
63. Roessler and Verhoeven, *Why Comrades Go to War*, 372.
64. Heritier, interview, 2021.
65. Heritier, interview, 2021.
66. Heritier, interview, 2021. A self-published account of group of Banyamulenge veterans retells of their time in the MLC operating in both Congo and the Central African Republic. Bana-Ekanga, *Inkovu-Z'ibihe* (March 2021).
67. Frank, interview, 2020.
68. Frank, interview, 2020.
69. Diane, interview in Texas, USA, November 2021. This account mirrors those of a dozen other Gatumba survivors interviewed from 2020 to 2021.
70. Uwiringiyimana and Pesto, *How Dare the Sun Rise*, 42.
71. HRW, "Burundi: The Gatumba Massacre War Crimes and Political Agendas," September 2004, 9; Uwiringiyimana and Pesta, *How Dare the Sun Rise*, 86. Human Rights Watch estimated that around five hundred internally displaced Burundians were also present and unharmed on the night of the attack.
72. HRW reports that possibly fourteen of the dead were Babembe, yet still likely RCD-Goma sympathizers. See "Burundi: The Gatumba Massacre War Crimes and Political Agendas," Human Rights Watch, September 2004, 15.
73. United Nations Security Council, "Joint Report of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Operation in Burundi and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights into the Gatumba Massacre," S/2004/821, October 5, 2004, 4; "Burundi: The Gatumba Massacre War Crimes and Political Agendas," Human Rights Watch, 1, 16.
74. Gatete, interview, 2017.
75. Umwami, interview, 2017.

76. Prunier, *Africa's World War*, 297–98; Rory Carroll, “New Warlord Opens Congo’s Old Wounds,” *Guardian*, July 10, 2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/jul/11/congo.rorycarroll>

77. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 322–23.

78. Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 136–37.

79. Thomas Turner, “The Nth Congo War—and Preventing N+1,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, November 5, 2007, accessed on September 4, 2020, from <https://www.csis.org/analysis/nth-congo-war-%E2%80%93-and-preventing-n1>

80. “DRC: 1,618 Refugees Gain Entry Back Home,” *The New Humanitarian*, October 12, 2004, <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/drc-1618-refugees-gain-entry-back-home>

81. Turner, *The Congo Wars*; Reyntjens, *The Great African War*, 212.

82. Alphonse, second interview, 2018.

83. Carroll, “New Warlord Opens Congo’s Old Wounds,” 2004; Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 159.

84. Lemarchand, *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa*, 171; David E. Cunningham, *Barriers to Peace in Civil War* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 156; *World Report 2005*, Human Rights Watch, 101–3.

85. Emily Paddon Rhoads, “The United Nations in the Great Lakes Region,” in *War and Peace in Africa's Great Lakes Region*, ed. Gilbert M. Khadiagala (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 122–26.

86. Uwiringiyimana and Pesta, *How Dare the Sun Rise*, 30.

87. Uwiringiyimana and Pesta, *How Dare the Sun Rise*, 60–64.

88. “Burundi: The Gatumba Massacre War Crimes and Political Agendas,” Human Rights Watch, 10–11. Interviews with diaspora member, who was in a neighboring camp at the time, confirmed the likely presence of RCD-Goma fighters in the camp. Interview, Arizona, USA, July 2020. Nkunda continued to seek open conflict as a recourse to gaining influence in the east. See Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 130–31.

89. “Burundi: The Gatumba Massacre War Crimes and Political Agendas,” Human Rights Watch, 11–12.

90. “Burundi: The Gatumba Massacre War Crimes and Political Agendas,” Human Rights Watch, 14–15.

91. “Gatumba Massacre: Survivors Want an End to Impunity,” *RFI*, August 14, 2014, accessed on September 6, 2020, from <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20140814-burundi-gatumba-survivants-veulent-fin-impunite-banyamulengue-fnl-rwasa>; Kati Parella, “Genocide Survivors—15 Years Later: Interview with Richard & Olivier Mandevu of Gatumba Survivors,” *Fire Magazine*, 2019, <https://thefiremagazine.com/genocide-survivors-15-years-later/>; Nina Bernstein, “Safe From Persecution, Still Bearing Its Scars,” *New York Times*, August 5, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/05/nyregion/05refugees.html>

92. “Burundi: The Gatumba Massacre War Crimes and Political Agendas,” Human Rights Watch, 14.

93. “Burundi: The Gatumba Massacre War Crimes and Political Agendas,” Human Rights Watch, 8, 20–21; Brabant, “*Qu’on nous laisse combattre, et la guerre finira*,” 187.

94. “Burundi killers ‘ready for tribunal,’” *Al Jazeera*, August 21, 2004, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2004/8/21/burundi-killers-ready-for-tribunal>

95. Diane, interview in Texas, USA, November 2021. Based on multiple other interviews with survivors, Diane’s account differs little in terms of the details of the attack.

96. Diane, interview, 2021.

97. Sasha Chanoff, interview by phone, November 2021.

98. Diane, interview, 2021.

99. Maria Koinova, “Diaspora Coalition-Building for Genocide Recognition: Armenians, Assyrians and Kurds,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42, no. 11 (2019): 1890–1910; Camilla Orjuela, “Remembering Genocide in the Diaspora: Place and Materiality in the Commemoration of Atrocities in Rwanda and Sri Lanka,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26, no. 5 (2020): 439–53.

100. Uwiringiyimana and Pesta, *How Dare the Sun Rise*, 86.

101. Historically the Gatumba memorial has always followed a similar pattern of testimonials from gathered survivors and imagery of violence; see Uwiringiyimana and Pesta, *How Dare the Sun Rise*, 184–86.

102. Field observations, Fort Worth, Texas, USA, August 13, 2021.

103. See the video of the memorial, *La Voix du Grand Kivu, Gatumba 17th Memorial—Dallas Fort Worth 2021*, August 13, 2021, accessed September 4, 2021, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1D3XbDXr_I&ab_channel=LAVOIXDUGRANDKIVU

104. Fieldnotes, November 2021.

105. Kuradusenge-McLeod, *Narratives of Victimhood and Perpetration*, 241.

106. Stanton in the end was unable to attend the event in Fort Worth, yet a similar presentation was given by a member of Genocide Watch at the online UK memorial, see minute mark 57:40, *CONTINUATION OF THE MACABRE PLAN AND DENIAL OF JUSTICE AGAINST THE BANYAMULENGE*, Umurage TV & Radio, August 10, 2021, accessed on September 3, 2021, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8WEvXz6DQk&t=1997s&ab_channel=UMURAGETV%26RADIO; Gregory Stanton, “The 10 Stages of Genocide,” *Genocide Watch*, 1998, accessed on September 15, 2015, from <http://genocidewatch.net/genocide-2/8-stages-of-genocide/>

107. Fort Worth, Texas, fieldnotes, August 2021.

108. Fort Worth, Texas, fieldnotes, August 2021.

109. Dallas, Texas, fieldnotes, November 2021.

110. Kuradusenge-McLeod, *Narratives of Victimhood and Perpetration*, 136–37.

111. See the most tweets as of September 29, 2021: https://twitter.com/search?q=%23savemulenge&src=typeahead_click&f=live

112. Fieldnotes, November 2021. One of the initiators of the two social media campaigns spoke at the MPA Youth Conference in Austin 2021, a Banyamulenge

young woman in Canada, citing how the campaign generated thousands of dollars of relief sent to displaced persons' camps in Hauts Plateaux. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDzB9cT4zlU&ab_channel=MahoroPeaceAssociation. Her remarks concluded by quoting the oft-repeated phrase from Zora Neale Hurston's book *Their Eyes Were Watching God*: "If you are silent about your pain, they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it" (Amistad, 2006).

113. Interview, Arizona, USA, July 2020.
114. Uwiringiyimana and Pesta, *How Dare the Sun Rise*, 190.
115. This is discussed further in chapter 6.
116. Matthias, interview, 2018.
117. Alphonse, interview, 2018.
118. Davey, "I need to protect everyone," 107–141.
119. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 68.
120. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 68.
121. Rukema, second interview, 2018.
122. Rukema, second interview, 2018.
123. Rukema, second interview, 2018.
124. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 76.
125. Augustin, first interview, 2022.
126. Georges, second interview, 2022.
127. Stearns, "Banyamulenge," 23; Georges, second interview, 2022; Christian, second interview, 2017.
128. Verweijen, "Guest Blog: The FRF Armed Group."
129. Georges recounts Masunzu's credentials through his early arrest by the Rwandans for insubordination in the late 1990s, second interview, 2022.
130. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 82–84.
131. Martin, interview, 2018.
132. Verweijen et al, "Mayhem in the Mountains," 24–25.
133. Huening, "Making Use of the Past," 13–31; "'Balkanization,' Regional Tensions or State Weakness: The Real Threats to Stability in the Kivus," *Kivu Security Tracker*, February 3, 2020, accessed on December 1, 2021, from <https://blog.kivusecurity.org/balkanization-regional-tensions-or-state-weakness-the-real-threats-to-stability-in-the-kivus/>; Godefroid Muzalia and Thierry Rukata, "The 'Balkanization' of the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Heated Debates and Conspiracy Theories in Greater Kivu Area," *The Insecure Livelihoods Series*, December 2022.
134. Georges, second interview 2022.
135. Rugira, interview, 2017; Alphonse, interview, 2018.
136. Stearns, "Banyamulenge," 28.
137. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 90–91.
138. Augustin, third interview, 2022.
139. Augustin, third interview, 2022.
140. Mustafa, interview, 2020.
141. Mustafa, interview, 2020.

142. Mustafa, interview, 2020.
143. Augustin, first interview, 2022.
144. Augustin, first interview, 2022.
145. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 94; Georges, second interview, 2022.
146. Verweijen, "Guest Blog,"; Stearns, "Banyamulenge," 31–33.
147. Verweijen, "Guest Blog,"; IRIN, "DRC: IRIN Interview with Banyamulenge Leader on Fighting in Minembwe," May 3, 2002, accessed on November 2, 2018, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/burundi/drc-irin-interview-banyamulenge-leader-fighting-minembwe>
148. Stearns, "Banyamulenge," 37; Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 91.
149. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 108–11.
150. Verweijen et al, "Mayhem in the Mountains," 42.
151. Ntanyoma, *Behind the Scenes of the 'Banyamulenge Military'*, 111–12; Stearns, "Banyamulenge," 40–41.
152. Verweijen et al, "Mayhem in the Mountains," 62.
153. Judith Verweijen and Justine Brabant, "Cows and Guns: Cattle-Related Conflict and Armed Violence in Fizi and Itombwe, Eastern DR Congo," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 55, no. 1 (2017): 16–17.
154. Rukumbuzi Delphin Ntanyoma, "Expressive Violence and the Slow Genocide of the Banyamulenge of South Kivu," *Ethnicities* (2021): 3.
155. Gatete, interview, 2017; Balthazar, interview, 2017; Alphonse, interview, 2018.
156. Matthias, interview, 2018; Rukema, second interview, 2018.
157. Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda*, 82, 148–50.
158. Rukundwa obtained a PhD in theology from University of Pretoria and has worked at various central African and US institutions. He now leads the Eber-Ezer University of Minembwe, established in 2000 following the RCD establishment of the Minembwe territory. Rukundwa, *Justice and Righteousness in Matthean Theology and its Relevance to the Banyamulenge Community*, 244.
159. Rugira, second interview, November 2017, Bukavu.
160. Alphonse, personal correspondence, November 2021.

Chapter 6

1. Umwami, interview, 2017.
2. Augustin, third interview, Nairobi, January 2022.
3. Quotations from this paragraph are taken from the memorial fieldnotes in Dallas, Texas, USA, November 2021.
4. Arguably this trajectory is part of an upwards trend of mobilization since 2005, see Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 101.
5. Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 109.

6. Felix Mukwiza Ndahinda and Aggée Shyaka Mugabe, “Streaming Hate: Exploring the Harm of Anti-Banyamulenge and Anti-Tutsi Hate Speech on Congolese Social Media,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, May 19, 2022.

7. Sully Mugabi, “Another Congolese Colonel Defects from the Army,” *Chimpreports*, January 21, 2021, <https://chimpreports.com/another-congolese-colonel-defects-from-army/>

8. ACCORD—Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation, *Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Situation of the Banyamulenge (2020 to March 2022)*, April 2022, 11.

9. Interview with the author by phone, February 2021, Nairobi.

10. “DRC: A Deserting Army Officer Warns of Defections in the Ranks of the FARDC,” *Kinshasa Times*, March 14, 2021, <http://www.kt.cd/rdc-un-officier-deserteur-de-larmee-alerte-sur-les-defections-dans-le-rang-des-fardc/>

11. ACCORD, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 11.

12. Judith Verweijen, “From Autochthony to Violence? Discursive and Coercive Socio Practices of the Mai-Mai in Fizi, Eastern DR Congo,” *African Studies Review* 58, no. 2 (2015): 165–67; Verweijen, “Everyday Violence and Mai Mai Militias,” 127–52; United Nations Security Council, “Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” S/2021/560, June 10, 2021, 282.

13. This number is decreased by 500–750 in 2019 as a result of combined actions of the FARDC and its allies to limit the presence of the group. The group has been responsible for displacing tens of thousands in the Uvira territory since 2018. See United Nations Security Council, “Final Report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” S/2019/469, June 7, 2019, 20; Jordan Anderson, “Burundi’s Newest, Biggest Rebel Group,” *African Arguments*, October 3, 2017, <https://africanarguments.org/2017/10/burundi-newest-biggest-rebel-group/>

14. “Burundi Rebel Group Claims Attacks in New Offensive,” Voice of America, September 18, 2020, https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_burundi-rebel-group-claims-attacks-new-offensive/6196061.html

15. “Averting Proxy Wars in the Eastern DR Congo and Great Lakes,” International Crisis Group, Crisis Group Africa Briefing 150, Nairobi/Brussels (January 23, 2020): 5; Clement Uwiringiyimana, “Rwanda Dismisses U.N. experts’ Charge That It Aided Burundi Rebels,” *Reuters*, May 13, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-burundi-rwanda-president/rwanda-dismisses-u-n-experts-charge-that-it-aided-burundi-rebels-idUSKCN0Y41SO>

16. Judith Verweijen, “Why Violence in the South Kivu Highlands Is Not ‘Ethnic’ (And Other Misconceptions About the Crisis),” *Kivu Security Tracker*, August 31, 2020, <https://blog.kivusecurity.org/why-violence-in-the-south-kivu-highlands-is-not-ethnic-and-other-misconceptions-about-the-crisis/>

17. Georges, second interview, 2022.

18. Georges, second interview, 2022.

19. ACLED, May 17, 2022, ID 17890.

20. ACLED, May 17, 2022, ID 17890; Jena-Yves Kamale, “Fighting between Armed Groups in Eastern Congo Kills Dozens,” July 18, 2020, Associated Press, accessed on November 5, 2020, from <https://apnews.com/article/d1babf281cb9e1202694021a1fce74cc>; Justin Mwamba, “South Kivu: Massacre of 220 People in Kipupu, the Army Called to Redouble Its Ardor,” *Actualite.cd*, July 20, 2020, <https://actualite.cd/2020/07/20/sud-kivu-massacre-de-220-personnes-kipupu-larmee-appellee-redoubler-dardeur>; United Nations Security Council, “United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” S/2020/919, September 21, 2020, 4.

21. Jean-Yves Kamale, “Congo Communities Slam Army, UN for Failing to Stop Massacre,” *Washington Post*, July 27, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/congo-communities-slam-army-un-for-failing-to-stop-massacre/2020/07/27/ce99eb0e-d022-11ea-826b-cc394d824e35_story.html

22. “DRC: Uncertain Assessment, But Certain Emotion after an Attack in South Kivu,” *RFI*, July 27, 2020, accessed on November 5, 2020, from <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20200727-rdc-bilan-%C3%A9motion-certaine-massacre-sud-kivu>

23. Stearns, *The War That Doesn't Say Its Name*, 64–67.

24. Timothy Raeymaekers, *Violent Capitalism and Hybrid Identity in Eastern Congo* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 126–28.

25. Raeymaekers, *Violent Capitalism and Hybrid Identity in Eastern Congo*, 138.

26. Augustin, third interview, 2022.

27. Augustin, third interview, 2022.

28. Augustin, third interview, 2022.

29. Augustin, third interview, 2022.

30. Nwtali, interview, Nairobi, January 2022.

31. Gahigi, interview, Nairobi, January 2022.

32. Gahigi, interview, 2022.

33. Gahigi, interview, 2022.

34. Gahigi, interview, 2022.

35. Gahigi, interview, 2022.

36. Ntwali, interview, 2022.

37. Ntwali, interview, 2022.

38. Ntwali, interview, 2022.

39. Gahigi, interview, 2022.

40. Gahigi, interview, 2022.

41. Gahigi, interview, 2022.

42. Gahigi, interview, 2022.

43. Gahigi, interview, 2022.

44. In an effort to offer additional confidentiality to these three young men, I did not assign them individual pseudonyms, and I refer to their experience as a collective one. While these three “boys,” as my field assistant referred to them as, were all over eighteen years old at the point of interview, they were speaking to me about childhood soldiering in Twirwaneho.

45. Trio, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
46. Trio, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
47. Trio, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
48. Trio, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
49. Trio, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
50. Trio, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
51. Trio, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
52. Trio, interview in Nairobi, January 2022.
53. United Nations Security Council, “Final Report of the Congo Group of Experts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” S/2023/431, June 13, 2023, 34–35.
54. Ntwali, interview, 2022.
55. Ntwali, interview, 2022.
56. Ntwali, interview, 2022.
57. Ntwali, interview, 2022.
58. Ntwali, interview, 2022.
59. Ntwali, interview, 2022.
60. Ntwali, interview, 2022.
61. Ntwali, interview, 2022.
62. Gahigi, interview, 2022.
63. Gahigi, interview, 2022.
64. Gahigi, interview, 2022.
65. Gahigi, interview, 2022.
66. Gahigi, interview, 2022.
67. Gahigi, interview, 2022.
68. Augustin, third interview, 2022; UNSC, “Final report of the Congo Group of Experts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” S/2023/431, 33–34.
69. Augustin, third interview, 2022.
70. Augustin, third interview, 2022.
71. Augustin, third interview, 2022.
72. Lubunga Lavoix, “RDC-Fizi : un officier de l’armée lynché puis brûlé vif par des manifestants en colère contre l’insécurité,” *Actualite.cd*, December 10, 2021, <https://actualite.cd/2021/12/10/rdc-fizi-un-officier-de-larmee-lynche-puis-brule-vif-par-des-manifestants-en-colere>
73. Gahigi, 2022.
74. Gahigi, 2022.
75. Augustin, first interview, 2022.
76. Augustin, first interview, 2022.
77. Georges, first interview, 2022.
78. ACLED, May 17, 2022, IDs 22813, 22819, 22821, 22824. Bibogobogo is also spelt Bibokoboko by some Kinyamulenge speakers.
79. “Uvira: A Civilian Killed in Fighting between Mai-Mai and Twirwaneho in Bibokoboko,” *Radio Okapi*, October 14, 2021, <https://www.radiookapi.net/2021/10>

/14/actualite/securite/uvira-un-civil-tue-dans-des-combats-entre-mai-mai-et-twirwaneho

80. “South Kivu: Bibokoboko Villages Occupied by Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke and Yakutumba,” *Radio Okapi*, October 15, 2021, <https://www.radiookapi.net/2021/10/19/actualite/securite/sud-kivu-des-villages-de-bibokoboko-occupes-par-des-mai-mai-biloze>

81. ACCORD, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 29.

82. “Bibokoboko: Au cours des 3 derniers jours, 12 villages de Banyamulenge incendiés, témoignage,” KIVU TIMES, October 15, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edPYHH-ftKU&ab_channel=KIVUTIMES

83. As of mid-2022 many residents of the Bibogobogo area have been able to return to their homes in protected convoys. According to a field contact these returns were facilitated by the FARDC, with claims of payment by the diaspora and relatives in Kinshasa. In localities where FARDC has little presence due to Mai Mai and Twirwaneho fighting, the latter facilitated returns.

84. Verweijen and Vlassenroot, “Armed Mobilisation and the Nexus of Territory, Identity, and Authority,” 191–212.

85. Although devoid of the multidirectional context described in this chapter, see the following accounting of Banyamulenge targeting: Innocent Nteziryayo, “Update Report: Anti-Banyamulenge Attacks, DR Congo,” *GenocideWatch*, May 17, 2023, <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/report-on-anti-banyamulenge-attacks-in-dr-congo>

86. Ishimwe, first interview, Nairobi, January 2022.

87. *GOD Save BANYAMULENGE by Dr. Apostle Paul GITWAZA/ Ongoing Genocide in Minembwe*. . . Imurenge Amateka TV, May 3, 2021, accessed on May 6, 2022, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gy21PuQwdZs&ab_channel=ImurengeAmatekaTV

88. Rafael Cazarin, “Pentecostalism and a Global Community of Sentiment: The Cases of Nigerian and Congolese Pastors in Diaspora,” in *Forging African Communities*, ed. Oliver Bakewell and Loren B. Landau (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 262, 265–66, 272; David Garbin, “Regrounding the Sacred: Transnational Religion, Place Making and the Politics of Diaspora among the Congolese in London and Atlanta,” *Global Networks* 14, no. 3 (2014): 378.

89. Rukundwa, *Justice and Righteousness in Matthean Theology and its Relevance to the Banyamulenge Community*, 297, 303.

90. Ishimwe, second interview, Nairobi, January, 2022.

91. Ishimwe, second interview, 2022.

92. Olivier Liffra and Antoine Rolland, “From Texas to South Kivu’s Highlands, Mahoro Peace Association’s Complex Channels Finance Militia,” *Africa Intelligence*, January 16, 2023, <https://www.africaintelligence.com/central-africa/2023/01/16/from-texas-to-south-kivu-s-highlands-mahoro-peace-association-s-complex-channels-finance-militia,109902191-ge0>

93. United Nations Security Council, “Final Report of the Congo Group of

Experts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” 35–36. See the formal reply by an affiliated organization to MPA: “Accusations of Funding Militias in South Kivu Are False, a Product of Anti-Banyamulenge Bias—Banyamulenge Diaspora,” *Modern Ghana*, June 20, 2023, <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1238442/accusations-of-funding-militias-in-south-kivu.html?s=03>. To date this claimed leak of a Kinshasa-FBI investigation has not been substantiated by subsequent reporting.

94. Rutayisire Patience, “Apostle Gitwaza Says He Refused Flyer’s Career over Pacifying Rwandan after Genocide,” August 1, 2019, accessed on June 9, 2022, from <https://eng.inyarwanda.com/inkuru/91554/apotre-gitwaza-says-he-refused-flyers-career-over-pacifying-rwanda-after-genocide-91554.html>; “Paul Gitwaza,” *EverybodyWiki*, August 11, 2020, accessed on June 9, 2022, from https://en.everybodywiki.com/Paul_Gitwaza

95. IJAMBO RY’UBUTWARI BWA GENERAL NICOLAS KIBINDA RYATANZWE NA Dep Me. Moise NYARUGABO, Imurenge TV, November 9, 2021, accessed on November 15, 2021, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xo3HaUl6_Qk&ab_channel=IMURENGETV

96. Rukumbuzi Delphin Ntanyoma, “Genocide Warning: The Vulnerability of Banyamulenge ‘Invaders,’” *Genocide Watch*, November 2019, accessed May 5, 2022, from <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/genocide-warning-the-vulnerability-of-banyamulenge-invaders>; Thomas Shacklock, “Genocide Emergency: The Banyamulenge of the DRC,” *Genocide Watch*, September 3, 2021, accessed on May 5, 2022, from <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/genocide-emergency-the-banyamulenge-of-the-drc>; “Joint NGO Open Letter of Concern to Governments of Mass Atrocities Committed against the Banyamulenge in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” Crane Center, December 22, 2021, accessed May 5, 2022, from <https://crane prevention.org/2021/12/22/joint-drc-statement/>; Genocide Watch, Rukumbuzi Delphin Ntanyoma, Thomas Shacklock, “Hate Speech and Genocide in Minembwe, D.R. Congo,” *Genocide Watch*, March 1, 2021, accessed on May 5, 2022, from <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/hate-speech-and-genocide-in-minembwe-d-r-congo>. This content was also replicated into USHMM; see Rukumbuzi Delphin Ntanyoma, “Democratic Republic of Congo: Rising Concern about the Banyamulenge’s Situation,” Announcements and Recent Analysis, *USHMM*, July 22, 2021, accessed on May 5, 2022, from <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/blog/democratic-republic-of-congo-rising-concern-banyamulenge>

97. This observation is from conversations with a US-based lawyer supporting the MPA and community efforts to raise the profile of Banyamulenge victimhood.

98. Ntanyoma, “Expressive Violence and the Slow Genocide of the Banyamulenge of South Kivu.”

99. Genocide Watch, Ntanyoma, and Shacklock, “Hate Speech and Genocide in Minembwe,” 2021.

100. “Joint NGO Open Letter of Concern to Governments of Mass Atrocities Committed Against the Banyamulenge in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” Crane Center, 2021.

101. Similar letters were penned in this same period to US congressional representatives, who wrote in support of the persecution of the Congolese “Christian minority,” creating further distance between diaspora campaigning and South Kivu realities.

102. Sheri P. Rosenberg, “Genocide Is a Process, Not an Event,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 7, no. 1 (2012): 18; Henry Theriault, “An Open Letter to Members of the International Association of Genocide Scholars,” *Armenian Weekly*, November 4, 2020, <https://armenianweekly.com/2020/11/04/an-open-letter-to-members-of-the-international-association-of-genocide-scholars/>

103. 2 Samuel 18, KJV.

104. Nicolas Kibinda memorial fieldnotes, November 2021.

105. Soni’s story is used with his real name and with the permission of the family.

106. Verweijen et al, “Mayhem in the Mountains,” 69; Ishimwe, second interview, 2022.

107. While few in number, some Banyamulenge soldiers were compelled or opted to join Nkunda’s group. See Stearns, *The War That Doesn’t Say Its Name*, 160.

108. Siboyintore, interview, 2022.

109. Nairobi, Kenya, fieldnotes, January 2022.

110. Nairobi, Kenya, fieldnotes, January 2022. The descriptions of the wake, funeral, and Soni’s life are derived from fieldnotes.

111. 2 Timothy 2:3–4, KJV.

112. A similar soldier’s funeral in Indiana, USA, was used by former RCD soldiers to promote Twirwaneho and its funding, where attendees were directly pressured into donating at least \$20 per family. United Nations Security Council, “Final Report of the Congo Group of Experts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” S/2023/431 (June 13, 2023), 228–31.

113. The museum’s literature states a dedication to “teaching the history of the Holocaust and advancing human rights to combat prejudice, hatred, and indifference,” fieldnotes, August 2021.

114. James M. Glass, *Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust: Moral Uses of Violence and Will* (Palgrave MacMillian, 2004), 55–78; Allan Levine, *Fugitives of the Forest* (Stoddart, 1998), 256, 296–97.

115. Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 2012; Anika Walke, *Pioneers and Partisans: An Oral History of Nazi Genocide in Belorussia* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

116. See example of earlier posting of this image on September 10, 2021: <https://twitter.com/AlexMuragizi/status/1436563817027325955>

117. Miren Larrea, “We Are Not Third Parties: Exploring Conflict between Action Researchers and Stakeholders as the Engine of Transformation,” *Action Research* 19, no. 1 (2021): 110–25.

118. Gatete, interview, 2017.

119. Rose Mapendo’s story is shared in a documentary film; see Beth Davenport and Elizabeth Mandel, *Pushing the Elephant* (Arts Engine, Inc. and ITVS, 2011).

120. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 164; “DRC—Making a Killing,” *Amnesty International*, October 22, 2002, 8.
121. Nicolas Kibinda memorial fieldnotes, November, 2021.

Chapter 7

1. Homer, *Iliad* 5:734–744, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0134:book=5:card=711&highlight=aegis%2Cgorgon>
2. Mzungu, or muzungu, is the Swahili for a white person.
3. Fieldnotes, November 2017.
4. Homer, *Iliad* 2:229, 240–45, 447.
5. Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 7–8, 12–14.
6. Rusagara, *Resilience of a Nation*, 192.
7. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 42–46, 468; Cyrus Reed, “Exile, Reform, and the Rise of the Rwandan Patriotic Front,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 34, no. 3 (1996): 499.
8. Olivier Nyirubugara, *Complexities and Dangers of Remembering and Forgetting in Rwanda* (Sidestone Press, 2013), 48–52.
9. A. Dirk Moses, “Genocide and the Terror of History,” *Parallax* 17, no. 4 (2011): 100; Kuradusenge-McLeod, *Narratives of Victimhood and Perpetration*, 147.
10. Beloff, *Foreign Policy in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 3–5, 212.
11. Rugira, third interview, 2017.
12. My anecdotal conversations with Rwandan friends and colleagues living or working abroad further reinforces this private space for critique. For further discussion of public/private transcripts in Rwanda, see Begley, *Resolved to Fight the Ideology of Genocide and All of its Manifestations*.
13. Stearns, *The War That Doesn’t Say Its Name*, 87–89, 162.
14. Georges, first interview, 2022.
15. Moses, “Genocide and the Terror of History,” 101.
16. Rothberg also refers to this as “multidirectional memory”; *Multidirectional Memory*, 2–12.
17. Andrea Pető, “From Murders to Victims,” in *Researching Perpetrators of Genocide*, ed. Kjell Anderson and Erin Jessee (University of Wisconsin Press, 2020), 168.
18. David Rieff, *In Praise of Forgetting: Historical Memory and Its Ironies* (Yale University Press, 2016), 139.
19. Rieff, *In Praise of Forgetting*, 121.
20. Rieff, *In Praise of Forgetting*, 118.
21. Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 53; Jennie Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us: Women, Memory, and Silence in Rwanda* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 86.
22. Nicole Fox, *After Genocide: Memory and Reconciliation in Rwanda* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2021), 47, 93.

23. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters*, 15–21; Susan Thomson, *Rwanda: From Genocide to Precarious Peace* (Yale University Press, 2018), 136–37, 170–71.
24. Fox, *After Genocide*, 113–29; Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us*, 167–92.
25. Nigel Biggar, ed., *Burying the Past: Making Peace and Doing Justice after Civil Conflict* (Georgetown University Press, 2003), 309–12; Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force*, 263.
26. Martin Shaw, “The Holocaust and Genocide: Loose Talk and Action,” *Open Democracy*, March 21, 2012, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/martin-shaw/holocaust-and-genocide-loose-talk-bad-action>
27. Rieff, *In Praise of Forgetting*, 81–84, 96–97, 139–40.
28. Rieff, *In Praise of Forgetting*, 56.
29. Kerry Whigham, “Remembering to Prevent: The Preventive Capacity of Public Memory,” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 11, no. 2 (2017): 53–71.
30. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), 89.
31. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 81; Sen, *Identity and Violence*, 7.
32. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 83.
33. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 85.
34. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 85.
35. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 85.
36. Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*, 57–58, 63–67.
37. Lea David, *The Past Can’t Heal Us: The Dangers of Mandating Memory in the Name of Human Rights* (Cambridge University Press, 220), 182.
38. Moses, “Genocide and the Terror of History,” 90–91.
39. Mitton, *Rebels in a Rotten State*, 176–78; Walter Wink, “Facing the Myth of Redemptive Violence,” *Transforming Politics and Belief*, November 15, 2014, http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/cpt/article_060823wink.shtml
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41. Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*, 58.
42. Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*, 20.
43. Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations*, 28.
44. Prunier, *Africa’s World War*, 124. An example of this narrative can be seen in Rusagara, *Resilience of a Nation*.
45. Dorsey, “Violence and Power-Building in Post-Genocide Rwanda,” 320–325.
46. Dorsey, “Violence and Power-Building in Post-Genocide Rwanda,” 334; Jowell, “Cohesion through Socialization,” 283.
47. Jowell, “Cohesion through Socialization,” 280, 283–84.
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49. Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us*, 97–99; Fox, *After Genocide*, 190, note 27; Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 8–9.
50. Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 100.
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52. Filip Reyntjens, “Rwanda, Ten Years On: From Genocide to Dictatorship,” *African Affairs* 103, no. 411 (2004): 177–210.
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67. OHCHR, *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 281.
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84. Wrong, *Do Not Disturb*, 403–16.

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89. Kizito Mihigo, *Igisobanuro Cy’urupfu*, March 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcGC3eFuDac>

90. “Victoire Ingabire: Rwanda frees 2,000 people including opposition figure,” *BBC*.

91. Ribara Uwariraye, *Survivors Uncensored: 100+ Testimonies from Survivors of the Rwandan Genocide as well as Pre- and Post Genocide Rwanda; Inspiring Stories of Resilience and Humanity* (Ribara Uwariraye, 2022); “Deniers of Genocide against the Tutsi on a Battle to Call Themselves Genocide Survivors and Discovering a New Genocide which Did Not Happen,” *CNLG*, 25 July 2020, accessed on July 13, 2022, from https://cnlg.gov.rw/index.php?id=87&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=4216&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&cHash=88a4973c8db84a670b0672adf0f04d33

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93. Fox, *After Genocide*, 135, 138.

94. S. Garnett Russell, *Becoming Rwandan: Education, Reconciliation, and the Making of a Post-Genocide Citizen* (Rutgers University Press, 2019), 76–80.

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Conclusion

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11. Whigham, *Resonant Violence*, 174.
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13. Alexis Ruhumuriza, interview by phone, June 2023.
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18. Yet alliances occur ad hoc across these lines, with the possibility of Twirwaneho and M23 connections. See United Nations Security Council, “Final Report of the Group of Experts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” S/2023/431 (June 13, 2023), 31–33.
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23. Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us*, 167–92; Fox, *After Genocide*, 113–29.

24. Mac Ginty, *Everyday Peace*, 3–11.

25. A powerful example of this is also seen in Wariinga, the chief protagonist in Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Devil on the Cross* (Penguin Random House, 2017).

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