

Position Paper TimeMUN 2025

Committee: Historical Security Council

Country: United Kingdom

Topic: Conflict in Rwanda

“In 1994, there was no hope, only darkness. Today, light radiates from this place. How did it happen? Rwanda became a family again.” – *Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda.*

Background

At the end of April 1994, the Rwandan death toll was estimated at 200,000 people¹. Rwanda, just like many other nations around the world, experienced the horrific injustices of colonial rule, one that favored one specific group over the other. The Belgian and German colonial rules over Rwanda favored the Tutsis over the Hutus by granting the Tutsis political and social privileges, while marginalizing the Hutus². Consequently, this policy caused a deep crack in Rwanda's community. It institutionalized ethnic distinctions between the groups and produced deep resentment among the Hutu population.

After Rwanda gained independence in 1962,³ power shifted to the Hutu majority, which led to discrimination against the Tutsis; they were excluded from education and employment opportunities. The revolution forced hundreds if not thousands of Tutsis into exile.⁴ Forced to leave their homeland, the exiled Tutsis formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which invaded Rwanda in 1990, and sparked the civil war. Peace efforts, such as the Arusha Accords⁵ were made, but tensions remained intense. The last straw was the assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana in April 1994.

Moreover, this conflict signifies how deep the wounds of colonialism are, and how the Western world's actions and interference derailed Rwanda's future and tore apart the lives of thousands. The Gikondo Massacre, for instance, took place on April 9, 1994, just 3 days after the assassination of the president. It was under the supervision of the Hutu presidential guard. Shattering glass everywhere, soldiers entered a church, a worshiped place of community and peace, and began murdering individuals after checking each person's identity card. UN observers were monitoring the Arusha Accords on behalf of the UNAMIR when the attack started. However, no outer military powers intervened.

United Kingdom's Position

After World War II, the United Kingdom's colonial agenda significantly declined. By the mid-1960s, over 20 British colonies had achieved independence, and the imperial influence had largely diminished. In 1994, the United Kingdom was fully aware of the dangerous condition of Rwanda and has taken part in discussions on the matter, especially in the context

¹ <https://museeholocauste.ca/en/resources-training/the-genocide-against-the-tutsi-in-rwanda/>

² <https://mondediplo.com/2021/06/11rwanda>

³ <https://cla.umn.edu/chgs/holocaust-genocide-education/resource-guides/rwanda>

⁴ <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/1994-rwandan-genocide-facts>

⁵ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arusha_Accords_\(Rwanda\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arusha_Accords_(Rwanda))

of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda, as a P5 member of the UNSC. However, the UK has not taken part in the mission and stands firmly against any foreign military intervention in the conflict.

The involvement of external powers in Africa is what caused this conflict to begin with. If we keep stabbing the wound with the same knife, it will only keep on bleeding. On April 25th, 1994, the UK ambassador warned other nations that there was “no point in promising what we could not deliver.” The UK is aware that foreign military intervention in the conflict is a catastrophic solution. It threatens to deepen the wounds, extend the violence, and prioritize foreign interests over lives.

Solutions

The UK, as a strong supporter of democracy and sovereignty, strongly opposes repeating history and would like to propose initiatives that will ensure the safety of the people, both internally and externally. We aim to:

- Acquire financial aid from member states which will support the establishment, expansion, and maintenance of refugee camps in neighboring countries;
- Allocate resources for necessities like food, water, sanitation, and shelter;
- Offer logistical assistance, such as transportation to deliver aid quickly;
- Use our negotiation tools to negotiate with neighboring nations to keep their borders open for refugees;
- Establish programs for rebuilding infrastructure, schools, or hospitals within Rwanda;
- Suggest mediation support for reconciliation processes between Hutus and Tutsis;
- Advocate for international assistance to support Rwanda and other nations in addressing transitional justice and rebuilding efforts;
- Resist calls for reckless military involvement and advocate against it.

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Topic: Bosnia 1994

“I don’t like seeing any lines drawn across Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is like cutting through living tissue. It bleeds.” -*Haris Silajdžić, Bosnian Prime Minister*⁶.

Background

Sarajevo, a place that was once a symbol of multicultural harmony, one in which Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks could live together, is now torn apart by war and is standing in the footsteps of the most atrocious conflict in Europe since World War II. After the end of the Second World War, a few nations joined to form the Republic of Yugoslavia, hoping to help liberate the country from German rule between 1944-1945. Supersession of nationalism combined with Josip Broz Tito’s leadership helped to keep the ethnic tensions in check. However, his death in 1980 ignited the flames of ethnic friction. Consequently, his death led to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. Many republics in Yugoslavia demanded independence, which triggered the breakup of Yugoslavia.

Accordingly, Bosnia and Herzegovina gained independence in 1992, which was rejected by Bosnian Serbs. Its declaration of independence led to almost immediate opposition from the Serbs. The Siege of Sarajevo was the *grand* opening of what would become the current conflict. The Bosnian Serb forces, supported by the Yugoslav People’s Army, besieged the capital, marking the start of a brutal battle. Following the siege, they declared their republic, *Republika Srpska*, aiming to unify Serb-dominated areas, to prevent Bosnia’s independence.

There are not enough words to describe the horrors imposed by this conflict; mass displacement, individuals forced to escape their homes, and individuals being murdered or sent to concentration camps. One example is the *Ahimići Massacre*, in which 116 civilians, ranging from a three-month-old to an 82-year-old, were killed by Croatian Defense Council Fighters. The village was attacked at the same time as more than seven other villages, and the massacre is referred to as *48 hours of ashes and Blood*.⁷

United Kingdom’s Position

The United Kingdom fully understands that military intervention in the conflict may cause further issues and is therefore reluctant to continue military involvement. Prime Minister John Major’s government was hesitant to commit British forces to direct military engagement⁸. During *the Siege of Groažde* in April 1994, the United Kingdom’s priority shifted to evacuating its troops, as a part of Operation Screwdriver, a decision that wasn’t simple, but was crucial, as reinforcing the town’s defenses would have risked escalating the conflict and leading to more harm.

However, it is crucial to mention that the United Kingdom is not completely opposed to intervening in the conflict. The UK, as an active member of NATO, is a keen supporter of

⁶ <https://prestonm.com/bosnia-quotes/>

⁷ <https://www.forumzfd.de/en/ahmici-48-hours-ashes-and-blood>

⁸ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP94-33/RP94-33.pdf>

initiatives such as the February 1994 airstrikes ultimatum. Furthermore, it is actively involved in the United Nations Protection Force, the UNPROFOR, and British troops are deployed to escort aid and provide support to the region. Moreover, the United Kingdom has participated in peace discussions, such as one hosted on the HMS Invincible⁹, and additionally showcased support for the Vance-Owen plan.

Solutions

For these reasons, the United Kingdom wants to continue supporting humanitarian efforts, backing NATO's actions, and ensuring no further escalation of military involvement to ensure de-intensifying of the conflict. We offer a multi-faceted approach which will:

- Support diplomatic efforts to end the war by promoting international peace negotiations, hosted by the UK, which will attempt to mediate between parties;
- Establish a rotating system for peacekeepers to ensure the safety and well-being of troops and other peacekeeping missions;
- Strengthen the UNPROFOR's mandate through resource allocation, logistical aid, and other humanitarian efforts;
- Further expanding evacuation corridors and "safe zones", while strengthening the protection, led by the UN or NATO;
- Imposing sanctions against parties who violate ceasefire or other agreements, or commit illegal atrocities;

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⁹ <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205022930>

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