

Orphans

of the
**RWANDA
GENOCIDE**





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in partnership with the

**Association des Orphelins Chefs
de Menages (AOCM), Rwanda**

Association of Orphan Heads of Households

photographs by

Jerry Berndt

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IT WAS THE OPENING DAY of an international conference on 20th Century genocides and several hundred scholars, as well as a number of survivors of these genocides, were gathered in the historic Hôtel des Mille Collines in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda.

My wife, Lorna, had already shared with conference participants the experience of her father, a survivor of the Armenian genocide, when we noticed a small group of well-dressed young adults sitting in the audience. We introduced ourselves during the lunch break and discovered that they were the officers of an organization of Rwandan orphans—Association des Orphelins Chefs de Menages (AOCM)—who were heading households of their surviving siblings. They were among the lucky few who survived in 1994 when at least 800,000 Tutsi were killed by Hutu extremists in a period of 100 days.

There was an instant bond between these young adults and Lorna, whose father had lost seven of his family members in 1915. They wanted to know how her father had coped with this tragedy and what affect it had on Lorna, the daughter of a survivor. These questions appropriately fit with the title of the conference, which was “Life after Death.” Collectively as conference participants, we were struggling with the fact that the 20th Century was one of the bloodiest periods of human history. What are the causes of genocide? How can genocide be prevented? And what is our obligation to survivors?

This last question hit both of us especially hard when we returned home to California a week later. We could not get out of our minds the images we witnessed in Rwanda. On the fourth day of the conference we visited a genocide memorial in Murambi, several hours drive from Kigali. Lorna and I were sandwiched in the back seat of a van with Napthal, President of AOCM, and immediately in front of us was Claudine, Vice President of the organization.

C’ÉTAIT LE JOUR DE L’OUVERTURE
C’était le jour de l’ouverture d’une conférence internationale sur les génocides du 20^{ème} siècle qui se tenait à Kigali, capitale du Rwanda. Plusieurs centaines de chercheurs, ainsi que quelques survivants des différents génocides, étaient réunis au célèbre Hôtel des Mille Collines. Mon épouse Lorna avait déjà fait part de l’expérience de son père, qui avait survécu au génocide arménien, quand nous avons remarqué un petit groupe de jeunes gens bien habillés, assis dans le public. Lors du déjeuner, nous nous sommes présentés et ils nous ont dit être les responsables d’une organisation rwandaise, L’Association des Orphelins Chefs de Ménages (AOCM). Après le génocide, ces orphelins étaient devenus les chefs de foyers « recomposés » avec les membres de leur famille encore vivants. Ils étaient parmi les rares qui avaient eu la chance de survivre quand en 1994, sur une période de 100 jours, 800 000 Tutsis au moins avaient été tués par des extrémistes hutus.

L’empathie fut immédiate entre ces jeunes adultes et Lorna dont le père avait perdu sept de ses proches en 1915. Ils voulaient savoir comment son père avait fait face à cette tragédie, quel impact cela avait eu sur elle, la fille d’un survivant. Leurs questions faisaient profondément écho à l’intitulé de la conférence, *La vie après la mort*. Pour l’ensemble des participants, une vérité s’imposait : le 20^{ème} siècle avait été l’un des plus sanglants de l’Histoire. Quelles étaient les causes des génocides ? Comment les empêcher ? Et quelles étaient nos obligations vis à vis des survivants ?

De retour en Californie, une semaine plus tard, cette dernière question nous poursuivit. Comme certaines images du Rwanda, qui s’accrochaient à notre mémoire. Le 4^{ème} jour de la conférence, nous nous étions rendus au mémorial de Murambi, à quelques heures de route de Kigali, en compagnie de Naphtal, président d’AOCM, et Claudine, vice-présidente.

Ni Lorna ni moi n’étions en aucune façon préparés à ce que nous allions découvrir. Une école entière avait été

transformée en lieu de témoignage permanent des massacres perpétrés par les militants du Pouvoir Hutu. Salle après salle, des restes des squelettes étaient disposés sur des tables, côte à côte, tête-bêche. Des os d’enfants, des crânes d’adultes brisés. On pouvait même distinguer les tendons d’Achille des victimes, que leurs attaquants avaient sectionnés, leur interdisant la fuite, et les assurant qu’ils reviendraient finir le travail.

We were not prepared for what we witnessed at this memorial site. An entire school had been transformed into a permanent testimony to the massive killing by Hutu Power militants. In classroom after classroom, the skeletal remains of bodies were laid out on tables, side-by-side and end-to-end. There were the bones of small children, the crushed skulls of adults, and one could even see the cut Achilles tendons on victims who had been immobilized so that their attackers could return to finish them off.

ON APRIL 6, 1994, the plane carrying Rwanda’s President Habyarimana was shot down as it approached the Kigali airport. Within hours, government soldiers and extremist Hutu were killing Tutsi and moderate Hutu. The local radio station began broadcasting names, addresses and even license plate numbers of targeted victims. Roadblocks were set up. Individuals carrying Tutsi identification cards were killed on the spot. To this day it is unknown whether Hutu Power advocates shot down the plane or whether it was the result of action by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

By April 10, France, Belgium and the United States evacuated their citizens and the US Embassy in Kigali was closed. On April 18, the International Committee of the Red Cross reported that “tens of thousands” of Tutsi had been killed. On April 21, the United Nations Security Council reduced the size of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Rwanda from 2,500 to 270, in spite of the fact that Major General Romeo Dallaire, the UN Commander in Rwanda, had sent a cable to his superiors on January 11, stating that he believed plans for genocide were well underway.

This is a genocide that could have been prevented, but there was no political will by the international community to do so. Echoing through the minds of officials in the US and the

transformée en lieu de témoignage permanent des massacres perpétrés par les militants du Pouvoir Hutu. Salle après salle, des restes des squelettes étaient disposés sur des tables, côte à côte, tête-bêche. Des os d’enfants, des crânes d’adultes brisés. On pouvait même distinguer les tendons d’Achille des victimes, que leurs attaquants avaient sectionnés, leur interdisant la fuite, et les assurant qu’ils reviendraient finir le travail.

Le 6 AVRIL 1994, l’avion qui transportait le président rwandais Habyarimana était abattu alors qu’il approchait de l’aéroport de Kigali. En l’espace de quelques heures, les soldats de l’armée régulière et les extrémistes hutus avaient commencé à tuer Tutsis et Hutus modérés. La station de radio locale diffusait les noms, les adresses et même les plaques d’immatriculation des futures cibles à abattre. Des barrages furent érigés. Les individus arrêtés en possession de cartes d’identité tutsis étaient liquidés sur le champ. Aujourd’hui encore, on ne sait pas avec certitude si ce sont les partisans du Pouvoir Hutu qui abattirent l’avion présidentiel ou des membres du Front Patriotique Rwandais (FPR).

Au 10 avril, la France, la Belgique et les Etats-Unis avaient évacué leurs ressortissants et l’ambassade américaine à Kigali fermé ses portes. Le 18 avril, le Comité International de la Croix Rouge rapportait que des « dizaines de milliers » de Tutsis avaient été tués. Le 21 avril, le Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies réduisait le contingent de la force de maintien de la paix présente au Rwanda de 2 500 à 270. Et ce malgré le fait que, dès le 11 janvier, le général Roméo Dallaire, commandant les forces des Nations Unies au Rwanda, ait envoyé à ses supérieurs un câble déclarant que, selon lui, un génocide était bel et bien planifié.

Ce génocide aurait pu être évité, mais la communauté internationale n’en avait pas la volonté politique. Les officiels américains et l’ONU étaient hantés par le souvenir de la tentative d’intervention en Somalie en 1993, qui s’était soldée par la

United Nations was the memory of the attempt to intervene in Somalia in 1993, when two dozen Pakistani peacekeepers were killed, along with 18 Americans. Consequently, one of the first acts by Hutu militants was to kill 10 Belgian United Nations soldiers. They knew that this act would put the foreign powers on the run.

United Nations officials and individuals in the US State Department were careful to avoid the word “genocide,” because that would obligate them to take action. It was only in retrospect, after 85 percent of the Tutsi population had perished, that President Clinton and other heads of state acknowledged their complicity in Rwanda. But I’m not sure that their apologies offered much comfort to the survivors, such as the members of AOCM, who had seen their parents slaughtered like animals, their homes burned to the ground, and their mothers and sisters sexually violated.

If the watchword for the international community was guilt, the feeling that dominated Lorna’s consciousness was empathy. In the faces of the AOCM members Lorna could see her father. He had survived in 1915 as a result of missionaries and members of international aid organizations gathering up orphans at the end of World War I.

DURING THE WEEK OF THE CONFERENCE we became very close to some of the AOCM officers. Claudine invited us to her home where she was caring for 10 siblings and children of relatives. By the dim light of a lantern we heard her story which was so painful that at one point she asked the children to leave. We also interviewed Napthal. He had lost everyone in the genocide, but now was supporting several neighbor children who were in school.

As we struggled with our response to these orphans, an idea gradually began to emerge. Perhaps we could work

mort de 12 casques bleus pakistanais et 18 Américains. En bonne logique, l’un des premiers actes perpétrés par les militants hutus fut de tuer 12 casques bleus belges. Une façon efficace de faire fuir les puissances étrangères...

Les officiels des Nations Unies et les membres du département d’Etat américain firent très attention à ne jamais employer le mot *génocide*, qui les aurait contraint à intervenir. Et c’est seulement *rétrospectivement*, alors que 85 % de la population tutsie avait péri, que le président Clinton et d’autres chefs d’états reconnurent leur complicité dans ce qui s’était passé au Rwanda. Je ne suis pas sûr que leurs excuses publiques soient d’un grand confort pour les survivants comme ceux d’AOCM, qui virent leurs parents abattus comme des animaux, leurs maisons réduites en cendres et leurs mères et sœurs violées.

Si, pour la communauté internationale, culpabilité était le nouveau mot d’ordre, dans l’esprit de Lorna, le sentiment prédominant était empathie. Dans les visages des orphelins d’AOCM, c’était son père qu’elle reconnaissait. En 1915, il avait survécu grâce à l’intervention de missionnaires et d’organisations d’aide internationales, qui avaient rassemblé les orphelins à la fin de la première guerre mondiale.

LORS DE LA CONFÉRENCE, des liens forts se sont tissés avec certains responsables d’AOCM. Claudine nous invita dans sa maison où elle prenait soin de 10 personnes, frères, sœurs, enfants d’autres membres de sa famille. A la lueur d’une lanterne, nous avons écouté son histoire, si douloureuse qu’à un certain moment, elle demanda aux enfants de quitter la pièce. Nous avons aussi interviewé Naphtal. Il avait perdu tous les siens pendant le génocide et, aujourd’hui, subvenait aux besoins de plusieurs enfants de son quartier qui étaient scolarisés.

Alors que nous réfléchissions à une réponse adéquate aux besoins des orphelins, une idée finit par émerger. Peut-être pourrions-nous travailler avec les

with the leadership of AOCM to document their experience of the genocide, as well as their current needs. In 1993 we published a book entitled *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide* (University of California Press), and it occurred to us that the methodology of this research project might easily be adapted to the Rwandan context. So we sent an e-mail to the AOCM office in Kigali, and a few days later we received a response from Naphtal. The officers had discussed the idea with their membership and they were ready to move forward.

IN MAY 2002, Lorna and I landed at the Kigali airport burdened with tape recorders, tapes, and enough cash to launch the project. The officers of AOCM had already lined up a research team of five university students who, themselves, were orphans heading households. In addition, they had identified a project manager and someone who could translate the tapes into English from Kinyarwanda.

For the next week we worked intensively together, first constructing an interview guide, then training the team that would do the interviews, and, finally, working with the researchers as they practiced interviewing one another. At every point we assured them that this was their project, not ours. Our only role was advisory and to secure funding for the project. Thus, they were the ones who decided that the target goal should be 100 interviews, that they would first transcribe all of the interviews into Kinyarwanda, and then translate them into English. And it was their decision to give a small gift equivalent to \$10 in food or local currency to each person that they interviewed.

Their target goal was to finish the project in three months. Instead, it took eight months, primarily because of the laborious task of transcribing and translating the interviews. But

dirigeants d’AOCM pour documenter leur expérience du génocide et leurs besoins actuels. En 1993, nous avons publié un livre intitulé « Survivors : An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide » (University of California Press) et il nous apparut que la méthodologie employée pour ce projet de recherche pouvait probablement être aisément transposée au contexte rwandais. Nous envoyâmes un mail au bureau d’AOCM à Kigali. Quelques jours plus tard, nous recevions la réponse de Naphtal. Le projet avait été débattu et ils étaient prêts à démarrer.

EN MAI 2002, Lorna et moi étions de retour à Kigali, munis d’un stock de magnétophones et de cassettes et avec suffisamment d’argent pour mettre le projet sur des rails. Les cadres d’AOCM avaient déjà sélectionné une équipe de recherche composée de cinq étudiants de l’université, eux-mêmes orphelins chefs de foyers. Ils avaient aussi désigné un directeur de projet et quelqu’un qui traduirait les entretiens du Kinyarwandais en anglais.

Pendant une semaine, nous avons travaillé d’arrache-pied ensemble. Il fallait construire un protocole d’interview, puis former l’équipe aux techniques de l’interview, ensuite les suivre dans leur pratique, les chercheurs s’interviewant entre eux. A chaque étape, nous les avons assuré que ce projet était le leur et non le nôtre. Notre rôle était de conseiller et de sécuriser le financement du projet. Ce sont donc eux qui décidèrent qu’il y aurait 100 interviews, qu’ils transcriraient en Kinyarwandais avant de les traduire en anglais. C’était également leur choix de faire un petit don, l’équivalent de 10 dollars en nourriture ou en monnaie locale, à chaque personne qu’ils intervieweraient.

Leur objectif était de finir le projet en trois mois. En fait, il en fallut huit, essentiellement à cause du temps consacré aux transcriptions et à la traduction. Le projet est désormais achevé et il s’agit de l’un des recueils d’histoire orale les plus systématiques existant actuellement. Peut-être ce qui suit, extrait de centaines de pages d’entretiens, permettra-t-il d’ouvrir les

the project is now completed and it is one of the most systematic oral history archives available. Perhaps a summary excerpt drawn from the hundreds of pages of interview transcripts will open a window to the experience of AOCM members.

IN AN HOUR LONG INTERVIEW, a young woman in her 20s recounted step-by-step what happened to her family and relatives. On April 11 her father was killed, so she fled to a neighboring town where she had relatives. Along the way she witnessed people being killed with machetes, including the scene at one roadblock where people were literally being cut into pieces. When she reached her grandfather’s house, she discovered that some of her relatives had already been killed and so she hid in a sorghum plantation. Around 6 p.m. she saw her grandfather’s neighbor coming and watched him being beaten with a *ntampongano*, a wooden weapon with nails in it. The Hutu neighbors objected to burying the body near his house, fearing that it would smell, and so they threw it in the plantation, near to where this teenage girl was hiding.

Fearing she might be discovered, that night she went to a swamp and stayed there for the better part of a week, sometimes momentarily submerging herself in water to avoid discovery. On May 25, she said that the “killers” came with their dogs and found her. For a brief period she was sheltered by a former Hutu teacher who took pity on her, but when she resisted the sexual advances of the husband, he forced her to leave. The rest of her story is almost too painful to recite. She subsequently witnessed an aunt giving birth to twin children at a roadblock. The infants were killed, followed by the aunt. She overheard the killers say that they did not want to allow any of the cockroaches to live, including infants—they might join the RPF in the future. This teenage girl was spared, because they could not ascertain her ethnic identity—revealing the care that they were

yeux sur ce qu’ont vécu les membres d’AOCM.

DANS UNE INTERVIEW D’UNE HEURE, une jeune femme d’une vingtaine d’années raconte, étape par étape, ce qui est arrivé à sa famille et ses proches. Le 11 avril, son père est tué. Elle fuit dans une bourgade proche où elle a de la famille. En chemin, elle voit des gens tués à la machette et, à un barrage, littéralement découpés en morceaux. Quand elle parvient à la maison de son grand-père, elle découvre que certains de ses proches ont déjà été tués. Elle se cache alors dans un champ de sorgho. Vers six heures du soir, le voisin de son grand-père arrive et est frappé à coups de ntampongano, une massue hérissée de clous. Par crainte des odeurs, les voisins hutus refusent que son cadavre soit enterré près de leur maison, et le balacent dans le champ, tout près de là où se cache l’adolescente.

Craignant d’être découverte, elle se rend cette nuit-là dans un marais et y restera presque toute la semaine, s’immergeant parfois complètement dans l’eau pour qu’on ne la repère pas. Le 25 mai, les tueurs et leurs chiens la trouvent. Pendant une courte période, elle est hébergée par une ancienne professeur hutu qui prend pitié d’elle, mais elle doit partir quand elle refuse de céder aux avances de l’époux de celle-ci. La suite de son histoire est presque trop douloureuse pour être racontée. A un barrage, elle verra une tante donner naissance à deux jumeaux qui seront ensuite tués, puis leur mère. Elle entend les tueurs dire qu’il ne faut épargner aucun « cafard », y compris les enfants, parce qu’ils pourraient plus tard rejoindre les rangs du FPR... L’adolescente fut épargnée, parce qu’ils n’arrivaient pas à être certains de son origine ethnique, démontrant là le soin qu’ils prenaient à s’attaquer uniquement aux Tutsis. Mais peut-être est-ce seulement une excuse. Après tout, le chef militaire qui contrôlait le barrage l’emmena chez lui où il la viola de façon répétée.

C’EST UNE HISTOIRE PARMI D’AUTRES, parmi la centaine d’histoires

taking to kill only Tutsi. But perhaps this was only an excuse, because the military leader overseeing the roadblock took her to his house and raped her repeatedly.

THIS IS BUT ONE STORY from the one hundred interviews that were done as part of the AOCM oral history project. We do not have the space to summarize other accounts, although you will find excerpts throughout this report. But a few statistics from the database are noteworthy.

One of the most startling generalizations is that only 35 percent of the family members of the orphans who were interviewed survived the genocide, and this is undoubtedly a higher percentage than in the country as a whole, since the interviews were done with survivors. In some areas, almost everyone was killed. Another striking statistic is that 79 of the 100 orphans who were interviewed said that their houses were destroyed during the genocide and that their current shelter is unpredictable and precarious. In addition, fully one quarter of our interviewees said that they were wounded or physically handicapped during the genocide, including a number of individuals who were left for dead by the killers.

IN JANUARY 2004, we returned to Rwanda with Jerry Berndt, a Paris-based photographer with whom we have worked on other projects. Shortly after our arrival we went to Kibuye where 18 of the orphans who had been interviewed for the project met us. Subsequently, we visited a housing project where 34 homes had recently been completed through a grant given to AOCM. The rest of our time was spent in the homes of survivors of the genocide, including some of the women who are members of AVEGA, an association of widows with whom we are doing another oral history project. In addition, we visited a memorial site in Nyamata, where 10,000 people had been

recueillies dans le cadre du projet d’histoire orale d’AOCM. La place manque ici pour évoquer même brièvement d’autres expériences, mais vous en trouverez des extraits dans ce rapport. Quelques statistiques valent cependant qu’on s’y arrête.

L’une des statistiques surprenantes tirée du projet est que seulement 35 % des membres des familles des orphelins interviewés ont survécu au génocide. Ce pourcentage est terrible, mais ramené à l’échelle du pays, il est en fait élevé, puisque dans certaines régions presque tous les Tutsis furent éliminés. Une autre statistique notable est que 79 orphelins sur les 100 disent que leurs maisons furent détruites et que leur mode d’habitation actuel est imprévisible et précaire. Enfin, un bon quart d’entre eux disent qu’ils ont été blessés ou physiquement handicapés. Certains, à l’époque, furent en fait laissés pour mort par leurs assassins.

EN JANVIER 2004, nous sommes retournés au Rwanda avec Jerry Berndt, un photographe basé à Paris avec qui nous avons déjà collaboré sur d’autres projets. Peu après notre arrivée, nous sommes allés à Kibuye où nous attendaient 18 orphelins. 34 maisons avaient pu être construites récemment, grâce à une bourse accordée à AOCM. Durant notre séjour, nous avons rencontré d’autres survivants, chez eux, et des femmes membres d’AVEGA, une association de veuves avec qui nous avons mis sur pied un autre projet de recueil d’histoire orale. Enfin, nous nous sommes rendus au Mémorial de Nyamata, où 10 000 personnes avaient été tuées à l’intérieur de l’église et dans le jardin qui l’entourait. Une nappe pleine de sang reposait encore sur l’autel à la mémoire de ceux qui avaient péri. On voyait le ciel à travers le toit transpercé par les explosions de grenade. Dans une pièce adjacente, des os avaient été exhumés récemment dans le cadre des Gacaca, les tribunaux villageois.

Notre rencontre avec les orphelins chefs de famille de Kibuye nous a permis de mettre un visage sur les témoignages que nous avons encore relus dans l’avion

killed in a church and its surrounding courtyard. A bloodied cloth was still draped on the altar as a memorial to those who had died; in addition, there were holes in the roof from exploding grenades; and in a side room were recently exhumed bones that had been dug up as a result of the village justice “Gacaca” trials currently taking place.

Meeting these orphans in Kibuye was a sobering experience. They were so young! While we had read all of the transcripts before returning to Rwanda, nevertheless putting faces to stories was somehow shocking. One girl was only 14 years of age, making her only four at the time of the genocide. Most of the orphans heading households, however, were in their late teens. It seemed so unfair that they were burdened with being parents. They should be playing, thinking of starting families of their own, not worrying about their next meal.

In the interviews orphans were asked about their current needs. Many of them pointed to the desire for education and their struggle to pay for school supplies and school uniforms. The transparency of their desires became evident when one young man kept asking us for something that we could not quite understand. What he wanted was a French-English dictionary, which Lorna fortunately had in her purse and gave to him. Tragically, some of these orphans had abandoned the prospect of further education for themselves, so that they could send their children to school.

Although Jerry Berndt interacted lightheartedly with many of the kids and young adults that he photographed, his actual pictures reveal a profound sadness, a preoccupation, even depression, in many of these orphan parents. And rightly so. They witnessed their parents being killed in front of them, sometimes beheaded. More than one child said that they sought comfort by lying next to a dead parent after the killers had left their home. These children survived by hiding in the bush, run-

qui nous ramenait au Rwanda. Mais le rapprochement des deux est aussi terrible. Ils sont si jeunes. L’une a 14 ans, soit 4 ans en 1994. La plupart d’entre eux ont autour de vingt ans. Il semble tellement injuste qu’ils se retrouvent noyés sous les responsabilités parentales alors qu’ils devraient jouer, penser à fonder une famille, et non se demander de quoi le prochain repas sera fait.

Lors des entretiens, les orphelins ont évoqué ce dont ils ont besoin, ce qui leur manque. Beaucoup d’entre eux ont fait part de leur désir d’apprendre, des problèmes rencontrés pour payer les fournitures et les uniformes scolaires. Une histoire illustre bien la transparence de leurs désirs. Un jeune homme nous demandait quelque chose que nous ne parvenions pas à comprendre. Il voulait en fait un dictionnaire français-anglais. Lorna en avait un dans son sac et s’empressa de le lui donner. Le plus tragique est que certains de ces orphelins ont abandonné tout projet d’éducation pour eux afin de pouvoir envoyer à l’école les enfants dont ils s’occupent.

Entre Jerry Berndt et ceux qu’il photographiait, la gaieté était souvent présente. Mais ses photographies n’en reflètent pas moins une tristesse profonde, une préoccupation, une forme de dépression à l’œuvre chez beaucoup de ces orphelins parents. Il n’y a que trop de raisons à cela. Leurs propres parents ont été tués devant eux, parfois décapités. Plus d’un a raconté avoir cherché un réconfort, allongé aux côtés d’un parent mort, après que les tueurs aient quitté la maison. Ces enfant survécurent en se cachant dans la forêt, en fuyant d’une ville à l’autre ou, pour certains, en se faufilant entre les jambes des bourreaux qui pénétraient dans les églises pour y massacrer tous ceux qui y avaient cherché refuge.

AUSSI TRAGIQUES QUE SOIENT LEURS HISTOIRES, les responsables d’AOCM forment un groupe de jeunes adultes impressionnants, d’une maturité incroyable. Ils font face à leur souffrance en servant les autres, et ce faisant, soula-

ning from one town to another, or, in one case, fleeing through the legs of attackers who entered a church to kill everyone who had sought refuge there.

HOWEVER TRAGIC THE STORIES ARE of these orphans, the officers of AOCM are a heroic group of young adults, mostly in their mid to late 20s, with incredible maturity. They are dealing with their personal pain by serving others and in this process they are healing themselves. They are the future of a unified Rwanda and a model to young adults throughout the world. They could use, however, a helping hand from those of us with resources. A several room house with a tin roof costs \$3,000 (US dollars). School uniforms cost \$8.30. Exercise books for the year cost \$6.00. It pained us to see one child writing with chalk on an interior door of his house because he lacked paper.

The Association des Orphelins Chefs de Menages was created August 20, 2000. Currently they have over 1300 members, and each member has approximately 3 children for whom they are caring. The objectives of the organization are very straight forward:

- they seek to create a spirit of solidarity among orphans like themselves who are heading households;
- they try to find solutions to the problems of their members, including educational and medical needs;
- they support their members in finding and creating employment;
- they educate their members about the genocide, its causes, and the politics of denial.

While they are members of IBUKA—the genocide commemoration group that sponsored the conference we attended—AOCM is a self-supporting organization. Currently,

gent leur malheur. Ils incarnent le futur d’un Rwanda unifié et un modèle pour les jeunes adultes du monde entier. Mais ils pourraient aussi faire bon usage de l’aide que certains d’entre nous plus privilégiés seraient disposés à apporter. Une maison de plusieurs pièces avec un toit en tôle coûte 3 000 US\$. Un uniforme d’écolier 8,30\$. Les livres scolaires pour une année 6\$. Comment ne pas être bouleversé quand on voit un enfant écrire à la craie sur la porte de sa maison parce qu’il n’a pas de papier ?

L’Association des Orphelins Chefs de Ménage a été créée en août 2000. Elle compte plus de 1 300 membres, chacun ayant à sa charge environ trois enfants. Les objectifs de l’association sont très directs :

- Ils cherchent à créer un esprit de solidarité entre orphelins chefs de famille.
- Ils essaient de trouver des solutions à leurs problèmes, y compris pour les questions médicales et scolaires.
- Ils soutiennent leurs membres dans la recherche et la création d’emploi.
- Ils éduquent leurs membres sur le génocide, ses causes et la politique de déni.

Bien qu’elle soit membre de IBUKA — le groupe de commémoration du génocide organisateur de la conférence à laquelle nous avons assisté — AOCM s’autofinance. Pour le moment, aucun de ses responsables n’est salarié. Ils sont motivés par leur passé commun et le besoin de se soutenir mutuellement.

Vu de l’extérieur, le potentiel d’AOCM à augmenter sa capacité organisationnelle nous semble évident. Ses responsables et ses membres voient grand. L’éducation est leur première préoccupation, suivie de près par la construction de logements pour ceux dont les maisons ont été détruites. Ensuite, il y a la bataille juridique pour pouvoir garder les terres qui appartenaient à leurs parents.

La culpabilité et l’auto flagellation internationales ne sont productives que si elles amènent à faire acte. Ce génocide aurait pu être évité. La source du conflit

none of the officers are salaried. Instead, they are driven by the common burden of their past and the need to parent each other.

As outsiders, we see the potential for AOCM’s organizational capacity to be expanded. The officers and members have big dreams. Foremost on their list is the education of their members, closely followed by building housing for those whose homes were destroyed. And then there is the legal struggle to maintain the property that was owned by their parents.

International guilt and breast-beating are not productive unless they lead to action. This is a genocide that could have been prevented. The source of the conflict dates back to intervention by Colonial powers that pitted one ethnic group against another, and, more recently, failed to see their self-interest in the region, since Rwanda does not possess oil or occupy a strategic location for military action. But does every activity of human beings need to be guided by self-interest? Some of the most rewarding moments of human existence are when people come together in partnerships to help one another.

What has consistently impressed us about AOCM is that they are not sitting around waiting for a handout. They are addressing the needs of their members within the limits of their own resources. But they could use our assistance. The leadership is in place, and they have members throughout Rwanda. What they need is a helping hand as they rebuild family structures that were shattered by the genocide. These orphans need a network of surrogate parents who will partner with them as they make their way in a complex world.

— Donald E. Miller
University of Southern California

remonte à l’intervention des pouvoirs coloniaux qui montèrent les groupes ethniques les uns contre les autres et, plus récemment, échouèrent à voir un quelconque intérêt pour eux dans la région. Le Rwanda n’avait pas de pétrole, et d’un point de vue militaire, sa position ne présentait pas d’intérêt stratégique... Mais est ce que toutes les actions humaines doivent être guidées par l’intérêt personnel ? Certains des plus grands moments de l’existence naissent de l’alliance de personnes qui décident de s’entraider.

Ce qui nous a constamment impressionné chez AOCM est qu’ils ne sont pas là assis à tendre la main. Ils répondent déjà aux besoins de leur communauté dans les limites de leurs ressources. Le leadership existe, et les membres sont présents sur tout le territoire. Mais notre assistance serait la bienvenue. Ces orphelins ont besoin qu’on les aide à reconstruire des structures familiales dévastées par le génocide. Ils ont besoin de parents d’adoption sur qui s’appuyer pour aller de l’avant dans un monde complexe.

— Donald E. Miller
University of Southern California





Official Name:	Republic of Rwanda
Population:	7,312,000
Location:	Central Africa, east of Democratic Republic of the Congo
Geographic coordinates:	2 00 S, 30 00 E
Capital City:	Kigali
Land Area:	24,950 sq km (9,633 sq miles), slightly smaller than Maryland
Terrain:	mostly grassy uplands and hills; relief is mountainous with altitude declining from west to east
Lowest/highest point:	Rusizi River 950m/Volcan Karisimbi 4,519m
Climate:	temperate—two rainy seasons (February to April, November to January); mild in mountains with frost and snow possible
Languages:	Kinyarwanda, French, local dialects
Official Currency:	Rwanda Franc
Religions:	Catholic, traditional beliefs

PHOTOGRAPHER

JERRY BERNDT grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His photographs appear in major magazines in Europe and the United States. He has received a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship for his book, *Missing Persons*. He has taught photography at the Art Institute of Boston and the University of Massachusetts. His photographs are included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York City; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts; The Museum of Fine Art, Houston, Texas; the International Center of Photography, New York City; and the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, France. Berndt has collaborated with Donald and Lorna Touryan Miller on several projects, including *Armenia: Portraits of Survival and Hope*, (University of California Press, 2003). Berndt lives in Paris, France, with his wife and son.

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PHOTOGRAPHE

Jerry Berndt est né à Milwaukee (Wisconsin) et vit aujourd’hui à Paris avec sa femme et son fils. Ses photographies ont été publiées dans la plupart des grands magazines aux Etats-Unis et en Europe. Il a reçu une bourse du National Endowment for the Arts pour son livre « *Missing Persons* », sur les sans-abris américains. Il a enseigné à l’Art Institute de Boston et à l’Université du Massachusetts. Ses photographies figurent dans les collections du Museum Of Modern Art de New York, Museum of Fine Arts de Boston, Museum of Fine Arts de Houston, San Diego Museum of Photography, International Center of Photography de New York et, en France, de la Bibliothèque Nationale et des Galeries Photo de la Fnac. Il a collaboré avec Donald et Lorna Miller sur différents projets, dont « *Armenia : Portraits of Survival and Hope* » (University of California Press, 2003).

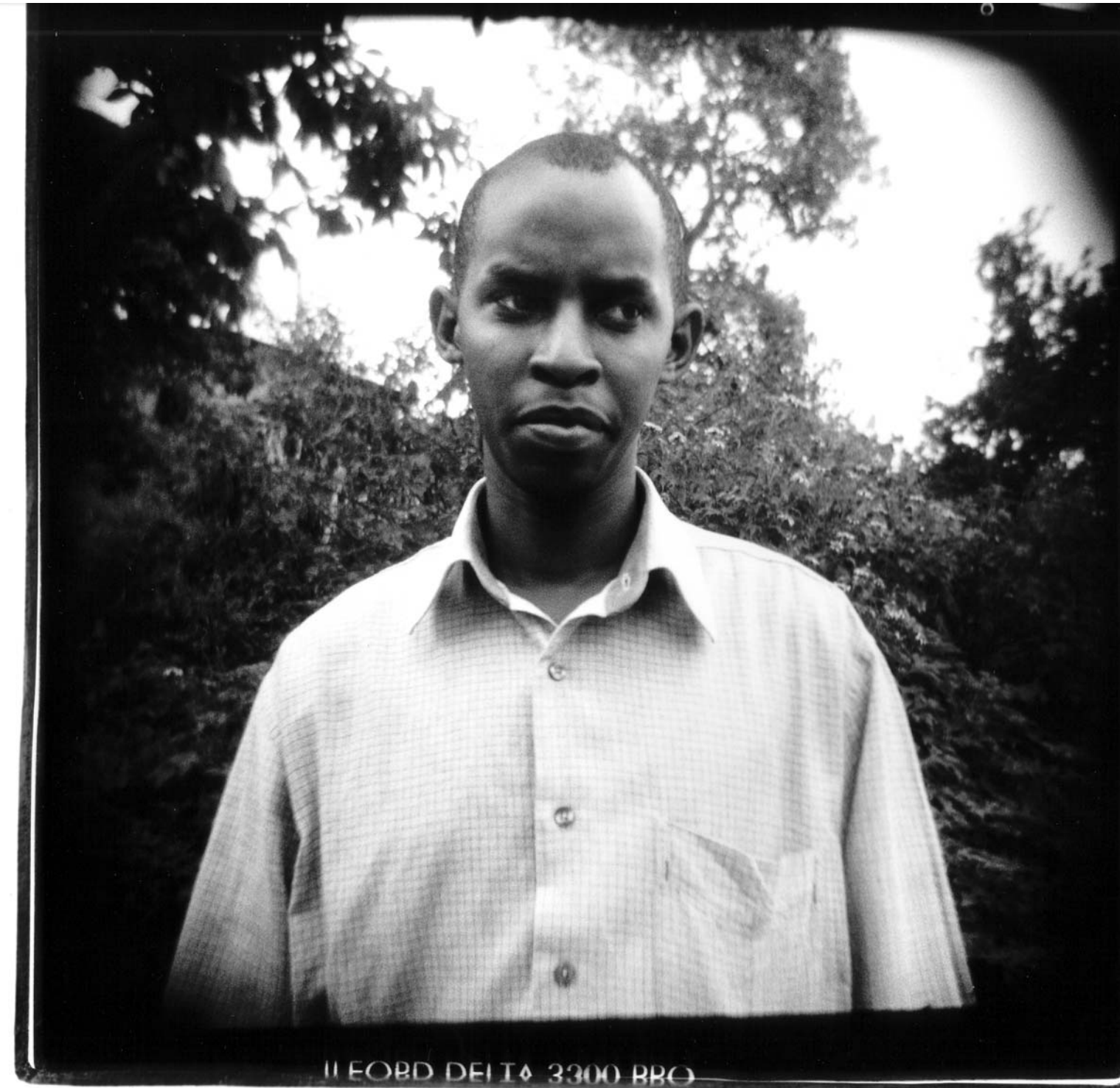
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JE SUIS UN

ORPHELIN

**DU
GÉNOCIDE
RWANDA**





A: I am from Kibuye, the former Bwakira commune currently known as Budaha district.

Q: Where were you staying before the genocide?
A: In Gishyita District.

Q:What is your birthplace?
A:Kicukiro, Kigali city.

A: We were staying at Gisozi (Kigali-city) but currently I am staying in Rwamagana.

A: I am from Bisesero (Kibuye) but now residing in Rusumo district (Kibungo).

A: At Kanombe Kigali rural.

A: From Butare, Nyabisindu district, Kibingo sector.

A: I am from Kibuye province, Gishyita sector, precisely in Rutura.

A: from Rusenyi district.

A: Kanzenze district, Kigali rural province.

A: From Rusatira district.

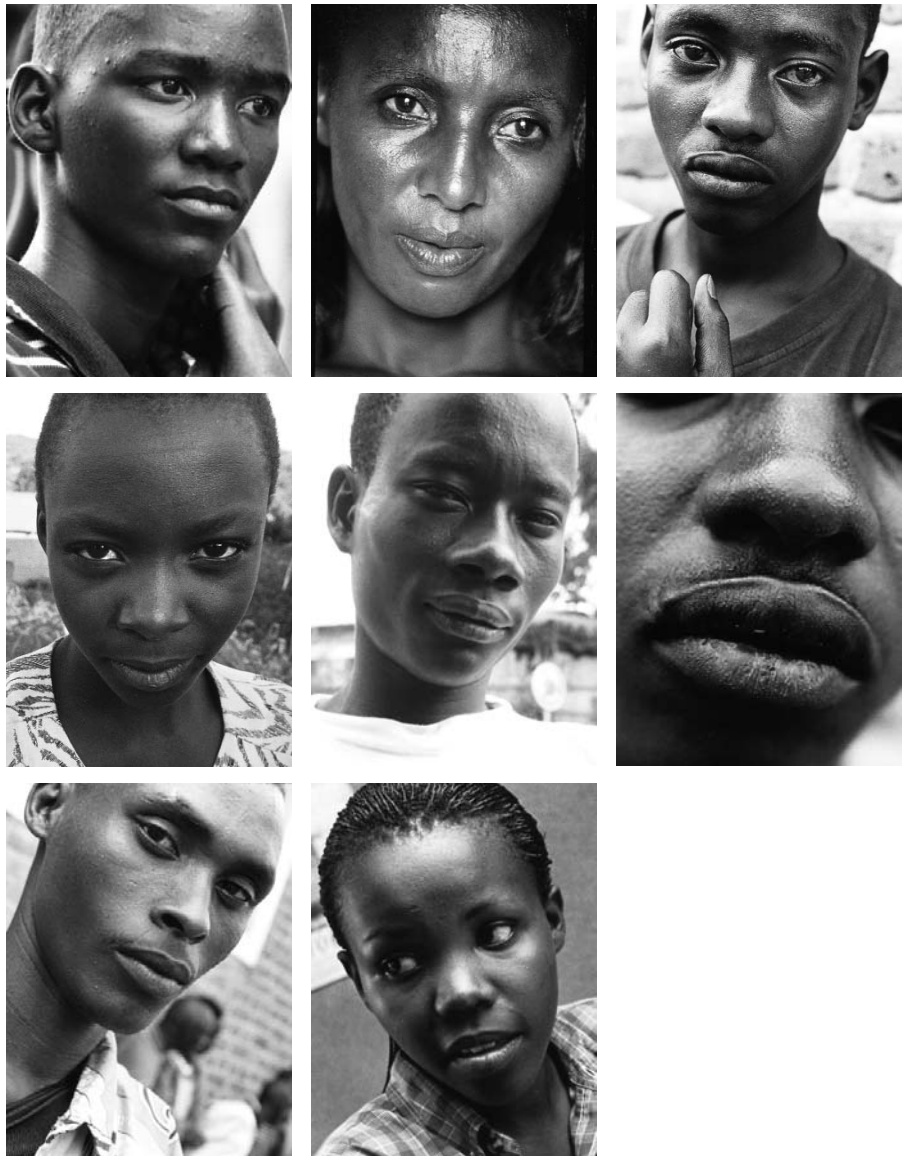
A: Biryogo.

Q: Can you introduce yourself to us?
A: I am called NSABIMANA Pascal from Rusenyi.

Q: Where were you during the genocide?

A: In Nzige.

je m'appelle Mukantwari



A: I am called MUKANTWARI.

Q: Can you introduce yourself?
A: Kayiranga.

Q: What is your name?
A: Sezirahiga.

Q: Can you introduce yourself please?

A: My name is Ndayisenga.

A: My name is Nyirarugira.

A: I am called Uwimbabazi.

Q: How old are you?
A: 21 years.

Q: What is your occupation?
A: I am a farmer.

Q: Can you introduce yourself?
A: I am called Hategekimana.

Q: How old are you?
A: 17 years old.

Q: What is your occupation?
A: I am a student.

Q: Can you, please, introduce yourself?
A: My name is Mukamukomeza. I am 15 years old and I am a pupil.

Q: Can you introduce yourself?
A: I am called HITAYEZU. I am 35 years old. I am a student in Electronics.

Q: What is your name?
A: I am called Nikuze. I am 13 years old.

Q: What's your name?
A: Mukankaka.

Q: What is your name?
A: My name is Mukeshimana.



notre seul péché était d’être tutsi. nous étions isolés.

A: Our schoolmaster used to tell Hutus to stand on their side and Tutsis on our side and he used to write it down. We didn’t know what it meant. We only understood later.

Q: Did you notice anything showing that a genocide was being prepared?

A: Our neighbors were very angry with us, with every Tutsi.

Q: How good were your relations in your schools with your schoolmates?

A: Not good at all. They used to call us “inyenzi,” meaning a small insect to tell that we were related to the RPA.

A: Our neighbors and officials used to call us “Inyangarwanda” (people who hate Rwanda).

Q: Before April 1994, did you suffer harassment by teachers and classmates?

A: I remember one day when I was in the 5th year of my primary school, our teacher asked Tutsis to put up their hands. Since that day, our classmates changed their attitudes towards us. ...there was a big distance between us.

A: In our school they used to give us low marks and when you would ask what happened, there was no answer for that.

A: Another thing is that we were isolated from studies.

A: Before the genocide there was an obvious hatred between our Hutus neighbors and us. They used to wait for my brothers in order to beat them.

A: Our neighbors showed us clearly that they hated us in 1990. Earlier they could pretend that there was no problem. They would kill or harm our cows, beat children when they would go to fetch water...

Q: Were there signs that genocide was being prepared?

A: Yes. During the period from 1990-1994, we were seriously harassed. We no more felt worthy of being Rwandans, we couldn’t sow and hope to harvest, or have a livestock and be sure to enjoy its product — not at all. If we spent a whole night without any problem, we praised God for that. People used to have meetings, first in secret, then openly. Our neighbors were always ready to kill us. It was well known that they were getting trained and had weapons like “ubuhiri,” axes, and small worn out hoes.

Q: Did you see any training of killers at your place?

A: Yes I saw that in Gishyita district, Gishyita sector, Rwaramba. They had “impiri,” saying in that way they would escape the “inkotanyi.” They used to cut trees with their machetes saying it was in the same way that they would cut the “inyenzi,” meaning the Tutsi.

Q: How were your relations with your neighbors prior to the genocide?

A: I remember when papa told us that even though we were playing with the other children, they didn’t love us. One day when I played with our coordinator’s child, she told me that she loved me, but the only problem was that I was an “inkotanyi” and a “ Tutsi.”

A: In 1994 we started seeing even our good friends keeping away from us for the only reason of being Tutsis.

A: Our only sin was being Tutsi.



AT 8:30 ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 6, 1994, THE MYSTÈRE FALCON JET CARRYING THE PRESIDENT OF RWANDA WAS SHOT DOWN AS IT WAS RETURNING TO KIGALI AIRPORT. THE PLANE CRASHED INTO THE GROUNDS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. ALL ABOARD WERE KILLED, INCLUDING BURUNDI'S PRESIDENT CYPRIEN NTARYAMIRA, THE FRENCH AIR CREW, AND SEVERAL SENIOR MEMBERS OF HABYARIMANA'S STAFF. — *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*, Organization of African Unity, 2000 (hereafter cited as OAU Report)



A: The local radio was broadcasting nothing but hatred messages.

Q: What about signs through newspapers or radio broadcasts?

A: On the radio I listened to songs I was not used to, like “zinga akarago ugende,” meaning *pack your things and leave*.

A: I also remember radio RTLM singing “ Let’s exterminate the Tutsis, yes let’s exterminate them.”

A: In the newspapers every wrong thing done was attributed to Tutsis.

A: On the radio, the national radio was broadcasting only religion music whereas RTLM was telling Hutus to be awake, to know that the “enemy” was very near to them.

A: Signs were there. I recall President Habyarimana once saying that when a forest has grown up it has to be thinned out. By this he was meaning that genocide had to be done.

Q: Were there indications that a genocide was about to happen?

A: Yes, it was obvious because in newspapers like Kangura and Radio like RTLM they encouraged people and taught them to kill. Because of what we saw in that period, it created in us a spirit of fear.

A: Once, at the time of the Arusha peace talks, there was a column in the Kangura magazine, it was published by Ngeze. It said, “There is only one enemy. That is a Tutsi. Therefore the majority have to stand up and fight against him.”

A: Our classmates used to bring guns and grenades in the classes. Our teachers and officials did nothing to stop that or to protect us. They encouraged them.

A: My parents used to tell us that we were about to die, and that Hutus wanted to kill us just like in 1959. There was no hope for us to live. So, we were psychologically prepared that anytime we would be killed.

A: On party meeting days, there were normal people doing very low business, like carrying people on bicycles who had grenades.

A: In a group of interahamwe known as “Zulus,” everybody had a gun. One day clothed as civilian, another day as a soldier.

Q: How did you know about the crashing down of the president’s plane?

A: I heard it on the radio and I immediately understood that we were going to die.

A: When Habyarimana died, people came to our home asking us if we knew why he had been killed. But they had intended to rape my elder sister. They had a grenade and many things with which to threaten us. They wanted to put my sister in one room but we shouted. Then the Habyarimana soldiers came thinking it was the RPA who had reached that place, but we had already fled.

A: Hutus used to tell Tutsis that they would kill them one day. And it happened. They not only killed them but also wiped them out.

nos parents disaient que nous allions mourir.



...THE ARMY AND MILITIAS TRACKED PEOPLE DOWN WHEREVER THEY WERE, FROM ONE END OF RWANDA TO THE OTHER. ...BOTH RADIO STATION RTLMC AND RADIO RWANDA PASSED ON INSTRUCTIONS TO THE FORCES ABOUT WHERE TO SET UP BARRIERS AND CARRY OUT SEARCHES....THE CONSTANT INDUCEMENT TO KILL TUTSI AND THE PERSISTENT CLAIMS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS WINNING THE WAR HELPED TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE THAT CONVINCED MANY ORDINARY HUTU TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GENOCIDE. — OAU Report

Q: What was your age when the genocide started?

A: I was 12 years old.

Q: Where were you when President Habyarimana’s plane was shot?

A: I was at Gikondo Magerwa (Karambo) with my two sisters but we knew about his death in the morning when our neighbors came and asked us why we are sleeping.

Q: What happened after that?

A: When they told us about the president’s death, we directly understood that we would die.

Q: Did you witness killing?

A: Yes, I saw many people being killed and houses being burned.

Q: Did they not kill you because they were kind to you or what?

A: They thought that we were dead. They were in hurry because they had many people to kill that day.

Q: Were there people who could have protected you?

A: Yes, I condemn those who participated in the killing. They were our neighbors, friends and husbands of our sisters. They could have informed us about the plans or at least hide us even one night. But they didn’t.

Q: Did anyone in your family participate in the killing of a family member?

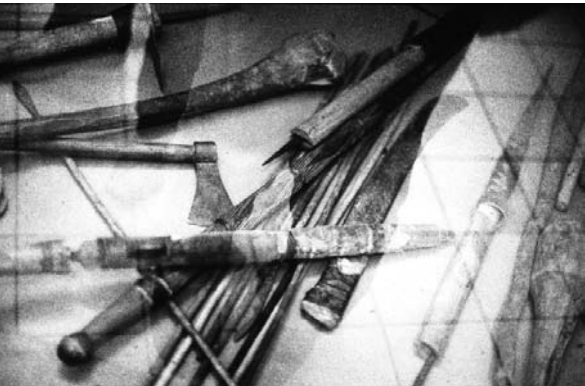
A: Yes, there is my cousin’s husband who participated in the killing. He killed his own wife and mother of his children.

A. My father was cut in pieces. All were killed in front of me.

Q: Due to all you have seen—your mother’s death, being raped — have you ever thought of committing suicide?

A: Well, I reached a point where I really wished I could die but nobody was killing me. Then afterwards I dropped the idea. Until now this situation persists.

A: They took mummy and cut her in the bush and beat her with those traditional wooden weapons. She died there. Late in the evening I went to see her. I saw where she was laying. I lay near her and called to see if she was still alive but she was dead.



Q: Did the killings start immediately after President Habyarimana’s death?

A: Yes. Our cows were cut into pieces that same day by our neighbors. On the next day my grandmother (on my father’s side) was killed. My mother and siblings fled to the church where my mother was killed and my siblings. My father had fled to another place where he was killed too. In brief, I am the only survivor of my family.

Q: Can you tell me the killings that you personally saw?

A: There is one lady in Rubona who was taken from where she was hiding, cut into pieces then thrown in the river. I also saw my uncle and my cousin who were taken from their hiding places. They were cut, then thrown in a toilet. A cousin of mine was not yet dead. She spent 3 days in that toilet before she died.

A: In the beginning the interahamwe came home, destroyed our house, took our cows, cut them and ate them. We fled to the church, they brought a caterpillar (a kind of tractor), which tilled where we were. By God’s grace I escaped.

Q: How did you escape?

A: We tried to fight by throwing them stones. But they were throwing grenades to us while we were throwing stones. I was hosted by one of our neighbors. I stayed with him until the end of the genocide. He was a Hutu. But those I left were killed.

A: ...once people had fled to a church, and they were safe. So, people thought that it would be the same. They fled in the Nyange church, ...a priest in that parish sent for a tractor, which destroyed the church on them.

Q: Were you forced to kill?

A: It happened to some of my family members. For example, one man was asked to kill his brother on the roadblock.

A: There is one child who was brought to me and I was asked to kill him as a sign that I was a Hutu otherwise I would show that I was a Tutsi. I told them I was not able to. So they give me a cup full of pepper mixed with water and asked me to pour it in his eyes. I did it, then they told me that I was one of them.

A: Since the interahamwe used to “work” by day and “rest” by night, we also could make food at that “rest” time, but if for any reason they could come, we had to leave that food and flee.

A: The interahamwe started killing. We fled towards some hyacinth, they followed us and killed my two parents and my siblings. My mother was beheaded, she was buried half only. I stayed in hyacinth and I survived.

A: They took us in prison and told us that they will think about our case. We met many people in that prison but they used to come and pick some of us for slaughter. During the night I thought good to tear up my identity card because it was in my shoes and I thought that they would come and check us. I put the pieces in a dustbin. So, we spent the night praying while they continued to pick some. Around 6 am, the soldiers changed their groups. New soldiers came and asked us why we were there and we told them that we were Hutus but from another place and that we came in Nyanza due to the war. So, they released us.... My brother, and I, we thought to go to our brother-in-law’s house, but on the way we crossed a roadblock. They asked us where were we going and we told them our experience of that last night. So, they checked us to see if we were not Tutsis and if we didn’t carry guns. They also beat us to see how we would react.

Q: What did you do to defend yourself?

A: Practically, I did nothing. My brother and I we pretended to be Hutus.

A: There was a man with whom we were hiding. I was in the sorghum plants, he was near by in the reeds. The killers came, beat him up, but didn’t kill him. They dug a pit and buried him in it leaving his head out. He didn’t die immediately but died after a week.

Are there people who could protected you but didn’t?

A: Yes, like a man called Yohana (John) who was a family friend. He used to tell us that if anything happened, he would not betray us, but he did.

Q: Did you witness family members’ death ?

A: Yes, I saw killers taking my two cousins and killing them. I saw many bad things they have done but girls were killed in a very bad way.

Q: Can you tell me your experiences from the time the president’s plane was shot till the end of the genocide?

A: We learned that the president’s plane was shot on Wednesday morning. Almost immediately we saw people with machetes saying they would finish or exterminate others. After a while they started burning. My father told us to wait and see how it would end. All Tutsis started to be together, then we heard bullets bursting. We went to the parish, but before this we went to the district office. The interahamwe let us gather and be many so that they could kill us.... When we were many they started killing us with machetes and other weapons. They started shooting. Seeing this, those of us who were still alive, fled to the parish. The priest received us and we closed the door. The interahamwe were not able to get in. They threw grenades.... Later on they used the back portion of their guns.... They got inside and killed people. My whole family was there except my father who was able to get out, after his back was cut.... We were there among the corpses.... Then when the interahamwe came we just fled, then I found myself alone. I had lost my friend.

A: Yes, the army, policemen and gendarmes were there and they had guns. Instead of defending people, they gave reinforcement to killers and many others came from Nyanza in the last days of the genocide to assist them.

Q: Please carry on telling me.

A: I kept on hiding but people were being taken slowly, slowly. Some were taken to Ngororero in buses, then another round, etc.

Q: Were you rescued from Kayumba? Who rescued you?

A: We were many people from different places. The RPA reached us in the beginning of June. There was a man who had hidden us in some rubbish there. He was the one to see the inkotanyi. He first feared, then he came to call us. When we saw them, they asked us if there was any family member still alive. Actually we were 2 children, we said “no”.

Q: How did you reconnect with your surviving sister?

A: When we met we hugged each other then wept. The first thing she asked was “where is Mummy?” I said I don’t know, we went to look for her but we couldn’t find her.

Q: Have you tried to defend yourself?

A: No. Only God protected me.

A: So I went to their banana plantation. During the night, killers came. They didn’t see me but I left the place. I spent three days under the tree, on the third day my wound was infected and caterpillars were there. Then I thought good to come out and be killed because my dad and mum as well as my siblings were already killed and myself seriously wounded.

Q: What are the killings that you personally witnessed?

A: There was one pregnant woman. She couldn’t hide under the bed as we used to do in very difficult times. So, they took her, pierced her belly by swords, removed the child then killed her and left her on the hill.

Q: Did they have weapons?

A: They were wearing African clothes (ibitenge) with grenades and those military swords. They had some traditional weapons which were called “ntampongano y’umwanzi” which means “no pity for the enemies”.

A: Our identity cards, we either cut them into pieces or swallow them so that the word “Tutsi” marked on them would not be seen. We hoped to survive or receive mercy in such a way. We would even tell lies in order to survive. I personally told them, when they were about to kill me, that I was from Kigarama and that only my mother was a Tutsi but my father was a Hutu. It was just to try to save my life.

Q: What about your mother?

A: I don’t know about my mother’s death but I know that my sister was killed along with our last born she was carrying on her back.

A: You know I have no words to tell you what I personally saw. It is beyond my understanding. People were laying down as banana trees on the roads. Some were not completely dead; they were in mortal agony, others with some parts cut. It was horrible. They killed with very much nastiness and strength.

Q: Where did you and many die?

A: My brother was killed at the parish where my father was burned in the house.

Q: Did you witness how your neighbors were killed ?

A: Yes. All were killed in front of me. There is one instance when they asked me to jump one corpse to see if I was not afraid. I saw two men who were tied together and thrown in the river, one man fled to his family in-law who were Hutus but they refused to give him refuge. He was later on thrown in the river too. Two children were thrown against a wall and died on the spot. Another lady who was pregnant but was operated (saying she was pregnant of a “serpent”). I know of a girl who was beautiful. Due to her beauty she was raped for a week and later killed and thrown in a pit, another one is still alive but suffers AIDS.

Q: Well, can you now tell me in details your experiences of the genocide?

A: After learning that Habyarimana had been killed; we were all at home except my two sisters. I had gone to look after our goats. When I came back, the people started harassing me, telling me that I had no right to walk through the road. I reported this to my family. They told me not to move anymore. At around 1:00 p.m. we heard that a certain person from Gishyita had been cut into pieces. Hearing that, my father decided to sell our belongings so that we could flee easily. After 3 days, the genocide reached our place too. Our neighbors were killed but we had fled. Two days later my father and my older brother were also killed. This went on in such a way that within 2 weeks I had lost everybody in my family. I fell in a small pit around there, which is the reason they didn’t kill me.

A: The genocide started after the president’s plane was shot down. It was on Wednesday. We fled to the church at Murangara. Interahamwe came and killed people. We again fled and were scattered. My father was killed somewhere just near the church. My mother, my younger sister and I went to hide in the jungle with many other people. The interahamwe again came and killed people. They threw them in the Lake Kivu. I heard them dying and crying because I was hiding very close to the place. I continued to flee. Then French soldiers took us children to an orphanage.

A: People were told to sit down on the roadblocks and then cut into pieces with machetes. On 13th when I reached Bicumbi, I was tired because I went by foot and I was sick. I found my grandfather and some of my family members already killed. But, by chance I met my cousin in sorghum plantation where I went to hide myself. And whenever, it would rain we thanked the lord because they could not kill in the rain. But around 6:00 pm we saw our grandfather’s neighbor coming and immediately they beat him with a wooden weapon called “ntampongano” (which means “no pity for our enemies”) which had nails in it. They said that they had to bury him near by but one of them told them not to bury him near his house because he could smell bad. Then they threw near my feet but they didn’t see me. I ran and found an animal hole, I entered in.

A: It was my first time to see people killing each other, to see someone killing his fellow being by a machette. I started moving forward but it was full of corps, I had to jump over the dead bodies. I decided to hide myself. Even there, where I used to hide they could come and find me but fortunately they couldn’t recognize me since I was on another hill far from our place. However, I was beaten. This went on until around May 1994. People were really no more, houses were demolished. I lived in a sorghum plantation, living on sorghum and unboiled sweet potatoes. Completing one full day was a source of joy for me. I continued to hide there with my fellow girls. Habyarimana’s soldiers came and took those girls for a while. They raped them.

Q: On your way to Burundi, did you witness killings?

A: I saw people killing others by swords and spears and I saw many corpses on the way. In fact, it was horrible.



Q: Who assisted your survival?

A: No one.

THE FOLLOWING MEANS OF KILLING WERE IDENTIFIED BY PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS: MACHETES, MASSUES (CLUBS STUDDED WITH NAILS), SMALL AXES, KNIVES, GRENADES, GUNS, AND FRAGMENTATION GRENADES. THE GENOCIDAIRES BEAT PEOPLE TO DEATH, AMPUTATED LIMBS, BURIED VICTIMS ALIVE, DROWNED, OR RAPED AND KILLED LATER. MANY VICTIMS HAD BOTH THEIR ACHILLES TENDONS CUT WITH MACHETES IN ORDER TO IMMOBILIZE THEM SO THEY COULD BE FINISHED OFF AT ANOTHER TIME. — OAU Report

*mes parents ne sont
plus de ce monde*



A: My parents were preparing me a good future but now they are no more.

A: I recall that Dad had harvested sorghum and given them to Mummy to cook them for us. But the killers scattered us before we could even eat.

Q: How old was your father?

A: He was 43 years old.

A: He was a teacher in a secondary school. He was a holder of baccalaureate.

A: I recall my father telling me if we didn't meet on earth we would meet in heaven and he asked me to have faith in God. He liked to pray.

Q: What was your mother's name and age?

A: Dusabe. She was 38 years old.

A: We were not poor but according to the standard of the village, it was medium. We lacked nothing.

A: She was a business woman.

A: I want to work hard because my mother used to do so. She liked to pray and to work. And was loved by many.

Q: What did they say to you at the last moment?

A: My mother told me this, "Kayihura, my son, you have to save your own life now because the situation is getting worse." These are the last words my mother told me.

Q: What were your last experiences of your mother and father?

A: My father told us that we would be killed, but for those who could survive, we should love each other and be courageous.

A: Before leaving, my father called my sisters and me and told us that he was not sure he would return home, but he wished us to be in peace, to have a good life, and to be serious in our everyday life.

Q: Did your parents offer advice?

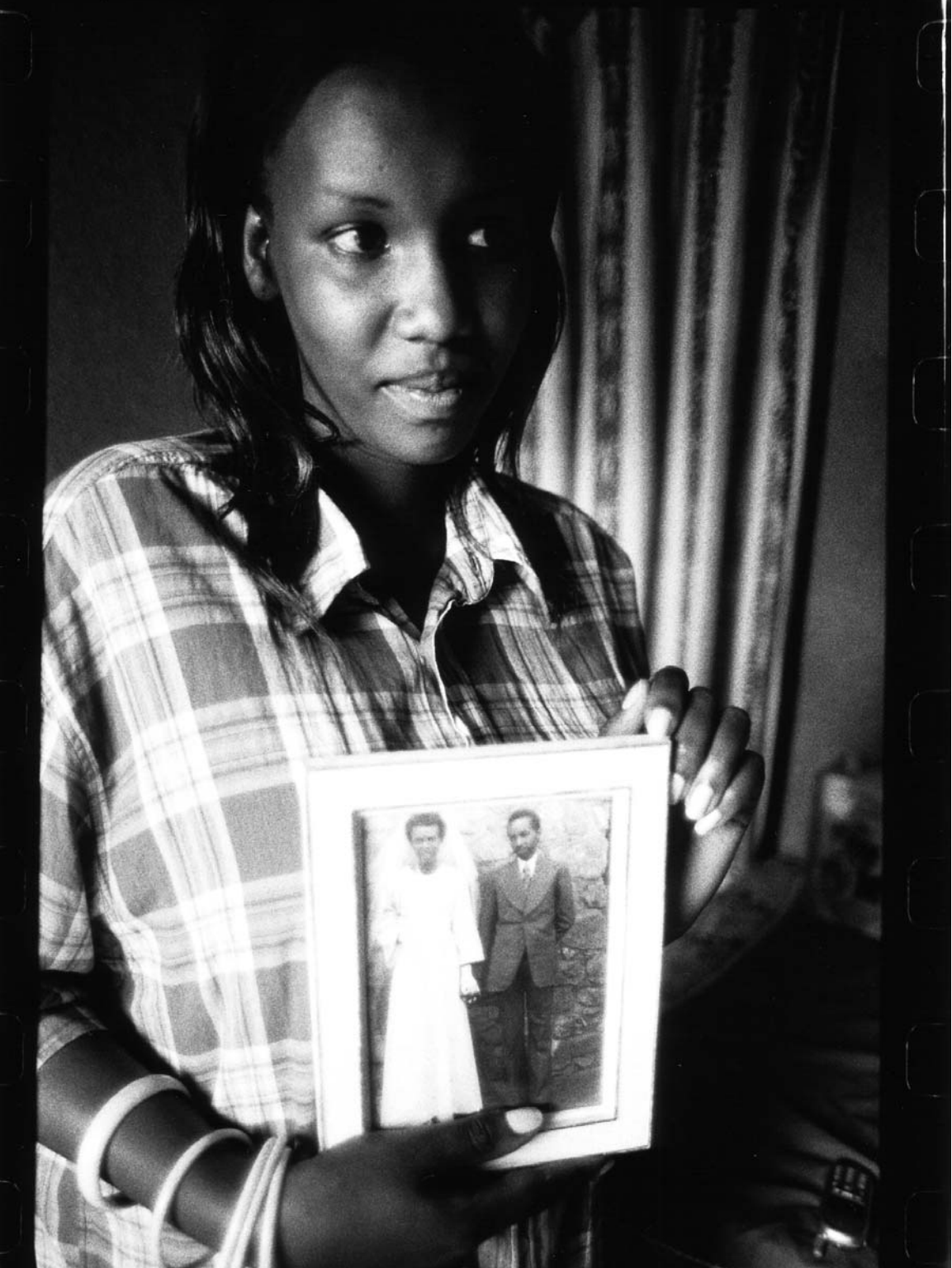
A: Yes, I remember one day, my father told me to respect everyone because I didn't know what the future would bring for us. My mother told me also to be strong and courageous whenever troubles come. And now when I am in trouble, I remember what she told me.

A: At times I dream of my parents telling me to be courageous, I think it is real but when I open my eyes I don't find them.

Q: What are the last memories that you have of your parents before they died?

A: I have the memory of my father harvesting maize for us, whereas the memory I have of my mother is her way of looking after us.

A: They loved me so much.



A: Can you imagine how we are lonely? We had a big family.

Q: How many siblings do you have? Are they alive?

A: I had 7 siblings and all of them are no more.

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?

A: I had three.

Q: Can you describe in details your experiences during the genocide till its end?

A: The genocide started practically and systematically after the president's plane was shot down. We fled to Bisesero. The killers (interahamwe) were after us. Some were from Mubuga, others from Mpemba, Rwamatamu and Rubazo. On April 7th, 1994, the first attack took place in which my mother was killed. A certain man led it. The situation went on like that until April 14th, when there was a strong interahamwe attack from Bugarama. They killed people reaching almost 20,000 in number. This continued till the 20th of April. Then my father died on May 15th. I was left with my younger siblings who also died one by one until I found myself remaining alone. I went to stay with my aunt who also was alone. We spent some days together at a place called Rwirambo. She was also killed later by interahamwe. I decided to go to my uncle who was staying at Jurwe. On June 15th, I was shot. Since there was no medical care in that period I kept on suffering from that injury. After a while we started hearing that the French army was about to come. They reached us on the 27th of June. The genocide slowed down and those who were hunting us stopped.

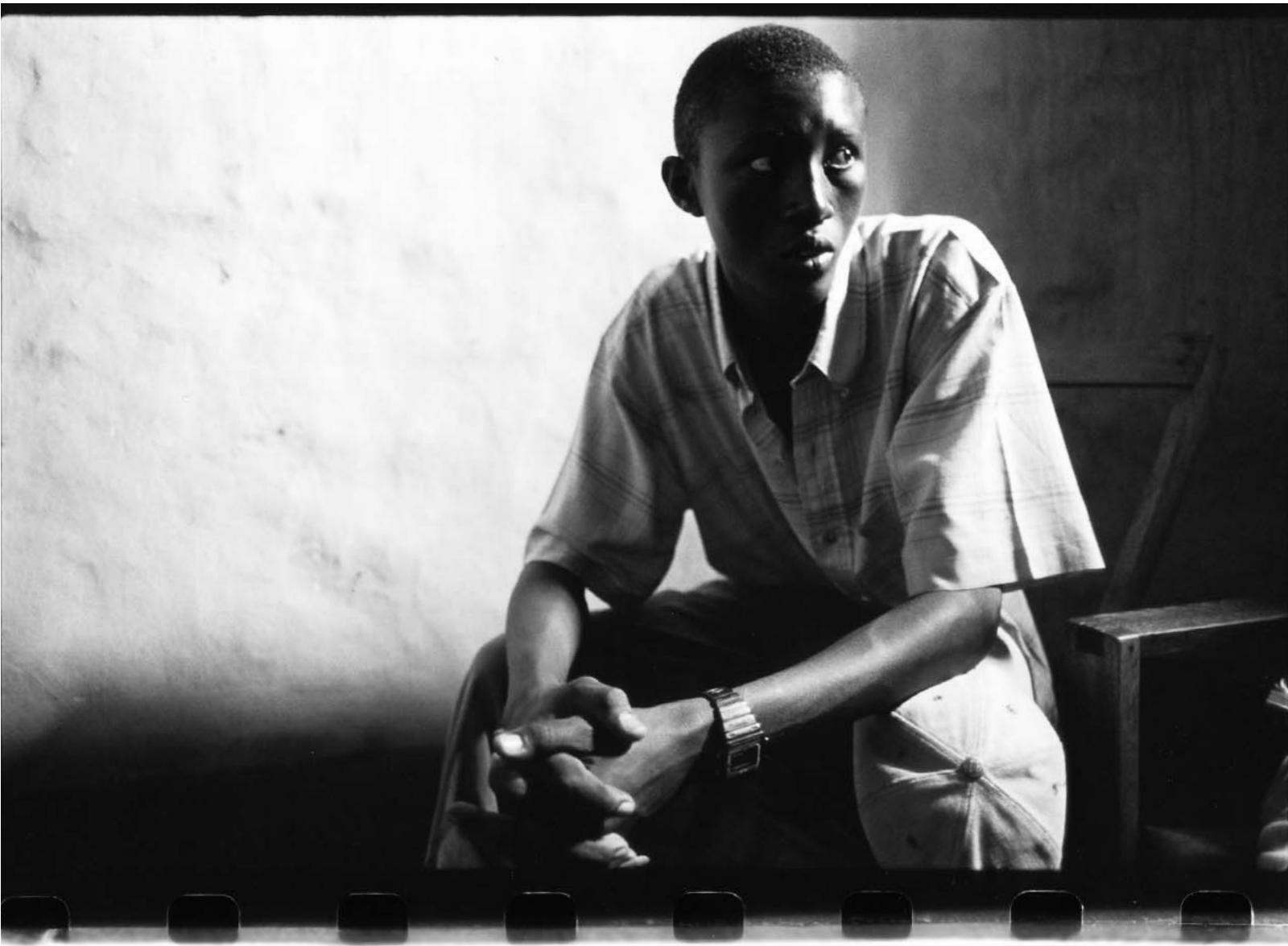
Q: What memories of your siblings do you have ?


A: We used to sit together in the evening and talk. We used to pray and study.

A: Our parents used to encourage us in our studies and whenever we succeeded they used to buy us clothes.

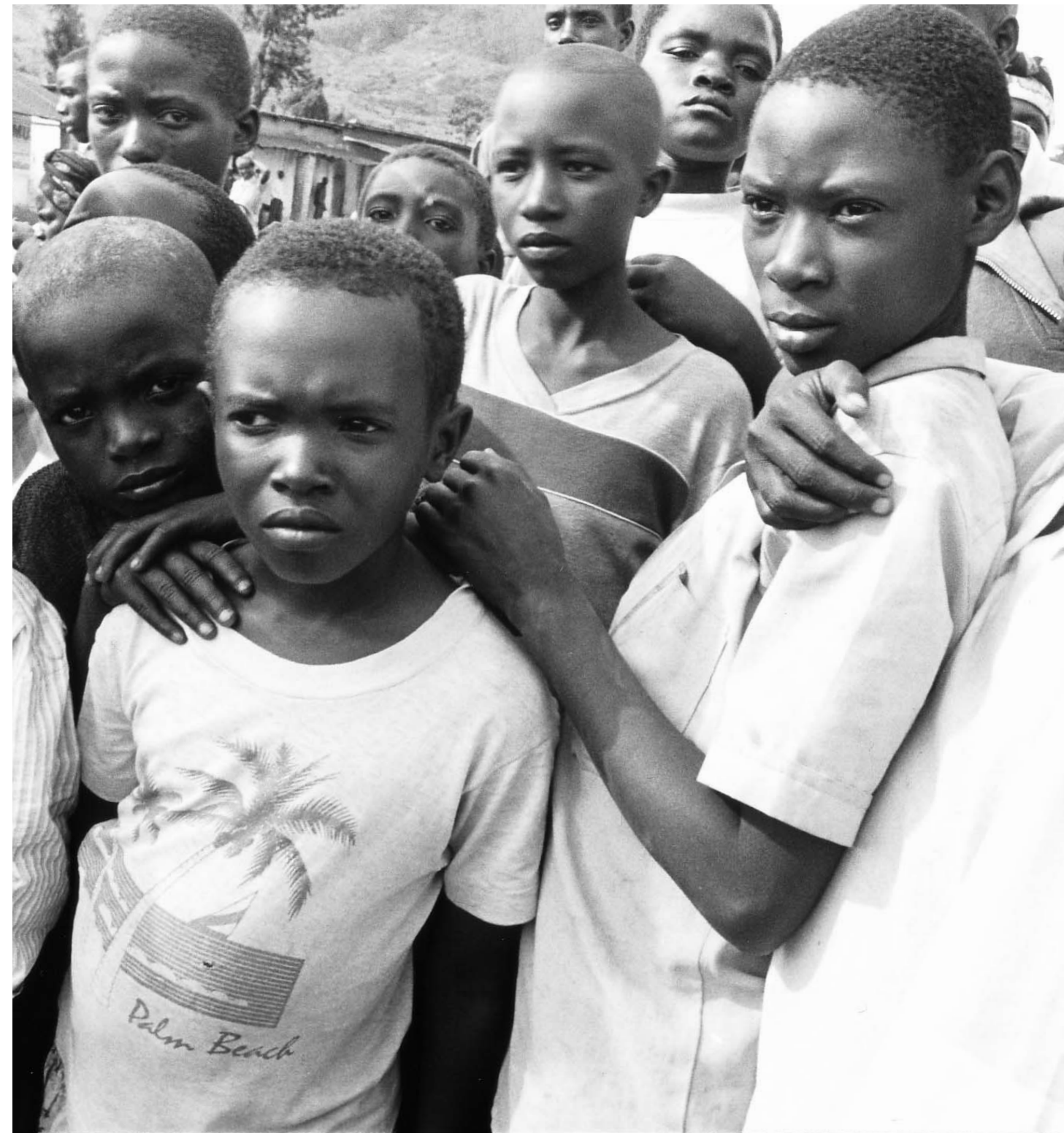
A: In our home, we were always cared for as small children. Like the way they welcomed us home from school. They were very kind with our neighbors. When I think that now I can't say that I am going home, my heart grieves.

A: In total I've lost 31 family members.

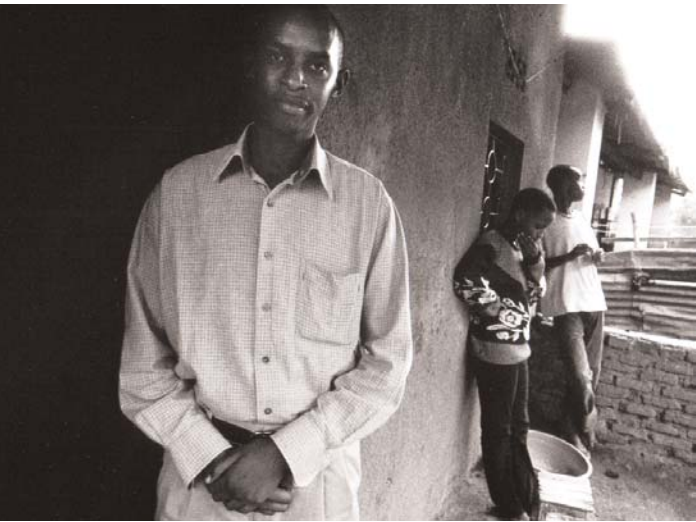


A large, high-contrast, black and white close-up of a person's face, focusing on the eyes and mouth. The person has a somber expression. The text is overlaid on the right side of the face.

A: Do you realize the weight of living
with someone who killed your family?
Now I am an orphan,
I take care of myself and my brethren.
We have no food today. I am meeting
people who have killed my parents,
they look down on me. How can I not
suffer from trauma?



je suis un orphelin devenu
chef de famille



Q: How did you react to being the head of the family?
A: I had no other choice. I was supposed to be taken care of but I am now taking care of others.

A: I had 6 children in my charge and I had only 12 years.

A: The source of my all problems is that we have no parents. And the pity is that I became an orphan heading a household while I was still very young.

Q: What was your experience of being a parent that was heading a household?
A: I had no other way, so I received it. It was my duty to be father and mother in that household. Even I still needed them but it was like that.

A: After the death of my parents, I told myself I have to help my brothers, they will eat what I eat and live as I live because they don't have those who were supposed to look after them.

A: When I think that now I have nothing, I am grieved. In our family we were not very rich but we had enough. And now it is very difficult to get money to go to school, sometimes I find myself alone at home and pass the night alone. Above all that, I look after my siblings when I need to be looked after too.

A: ...parents ...you are sure they love you but now it is hard to find people who can really love you.

Q: How do you deal with these problems?
A: I try to play with other children so that I don't get time to think about the genocide.

Q: Do friends help you?
A: My friends have the same problems as me so I don't expect anything from them.

Q: How did you comfort the other children?
A: I just told them that the dead were dead but we had to struggle for life. I told them that I would do my best for us to live.

A: When I think about my dear ones who passed away, a song arises in me. I sing it, it is a grief song.

A: When I see other children with their parents, especially their mother, I really grieve.

Q: What are the problems related to being an orphan?
A: I always grieve because I lost my parents. Of course, I cannot bring them back but if they were alive I would not be facing such difficulties. I thought that without my parents I could do nothing and I could not live.

Q: What are the difficulties that you find due to your responsibilities?
A: It is stressful in the sense that everything is on your head, yet you are very young and you were supposed to be doing other activities. Now we have no shelter, I am jobless, we don't eat nice food, it is difficult to get medical care, but we live by God's grace.

NOT LONG AFTER THE GENOCIDE, HALF OF ALL REMAINING HOUSEHOLDS WERE HEADED BY WOMEN. BY 1999, 34% OF HOUSEHOLDS WERE STILL HEADED BY WOMEN OR MINORS (USUALLY FEMALE), AN INCREASE OF 50% OVER THE PRE-GENOCIDE PERIOD. THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THOSE WOMEN HAD BEEN WIDOWED BY THE WAR OR THE GENOCIDE. — OAU Report



A: Memorials should be built, well kept and equipped with many genocide related items and the names of those who died in the genocide.

Q: What do you think should be done in remembrance of the victims?

A: We should always remember them and pray for them. We should write books on them, visit where they have been buried.

Q: What do you think should be done to respond to the April 1994 genocide?

A: All the truth must be revealed. Things must be written in books so that the genocide would never be forgotten. People must be buried in a good way. Photos should be shown to show how our dears ones were killed.

A: They should put songs of mourning on the local radio in order to remember our beloved who were killed.


A: We have to tell to our children what happened, the bones must be well kept and everybody, even those from very far must see that, so that the genocide will never happen again.

A: I think memorial houses should be built up, books written, churches in which people died should be used as memorials, weapons used to kill people during the genocide should be put in those memorials. All this in order to help people never forget what they have been through and let our next generations know that.



...IF THE MOST CONSERVATIVE FIGURE IS USED, IT STILL MEANS THAT OVER THREE-QUARTERS OF THE ENTIRE POPULATION REGISTERED AS TUTSI WERE SYSTEMATICALLY KILLED IN JUST OVER 100 DAYS. — OAU Report





A: It is not easy to head a family yet
you are yourself an orphan
without means, no land you can till,
and no livestock you can sell. No house,
no job... it is very difficult.



A: We eat when it is available, otherwise we have to be patient.

Q: What problems are you experiencing now?

A: It is difficult to find food; sometimes I spend the night without eating.

A: Many are the difficulties but mostly getting food, knowing that I am responsible for everything and I suffer from asthma.

Q: What are your problems as the head of a household?

A: It is difficult for me to satisfy all my children's needs because I am jobless. It is not easy to find a job these days. Money for rent and to find food are my biggest problems.

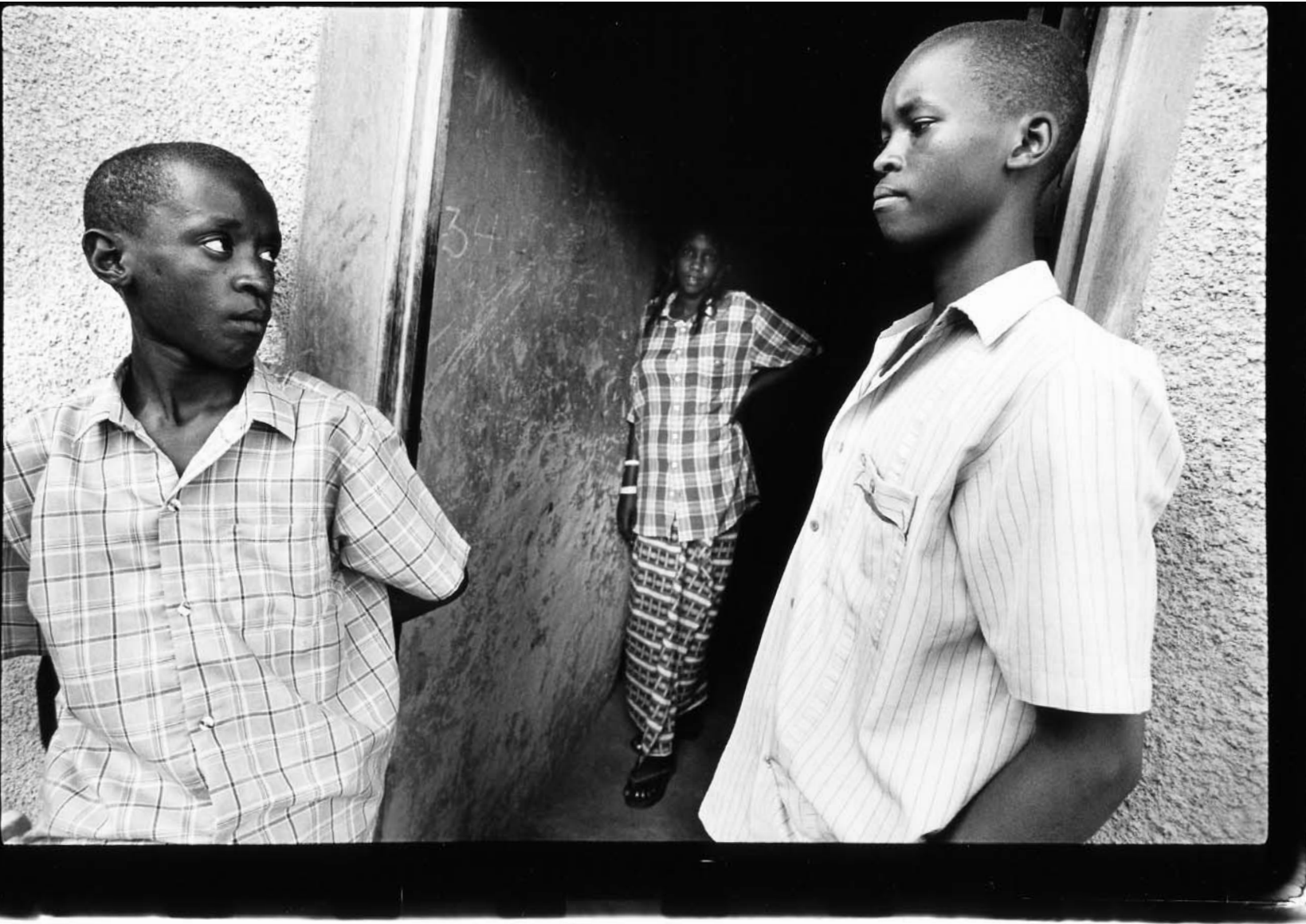
Q: What problems are you experiencing now?

A: When I don't have food, I feel very much depressed.

Q: How big is the family you are responsible for?

A: I take care of 4 children and myself the 5th.





A: My problem was that I was left alone. I didn't know where I would live after the genocide. When I thought about all that, I became desperate and wished to die.

Q: Was your house destroyed?

A: They took out the roof and destroyed the house. I saw my neighbors doing that, cutting our sorghum plantation and banana trees.

A: Yes and our banana plantation burned. From where I was hiding I could see our place being destroyed and burned.

Q: Were the household items stolen?

A: Our home was completely destroyed. All our goods were stolen; our neighbors stole them.

A: I even saw people wearing Daddy's clothes.

Q: Where do you stay since your house has been destroyed?

A: I stay with some other children. We are just there taking care of ourselves. We don't have enough means to meet our needs.

Q: What problems do you face since the genocide?

A: Mainly our problems are related to poverty and schooling. Another problem is that our house still needs more repairs. We are living a miserable life.

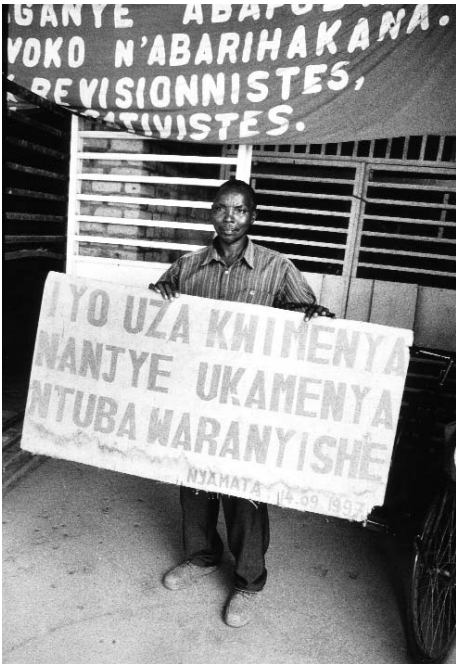
A: The main problem is that of comparing your actual situation to your former one. You compare as you move from one house to the other with what you used to have. Some are very bad. You really don't digest that very easily.

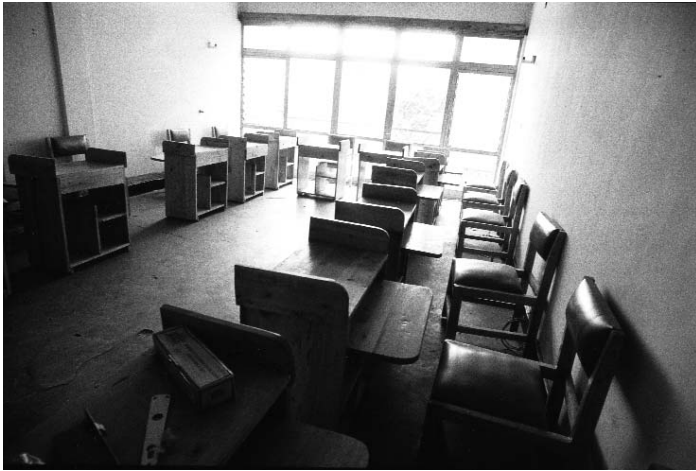
Q: What can be done in order to respond to the genocide?

A: Survivors should be more assisted. Especially, with their problem of shelter. Many of the survivors have no houses and they had to come to the cities, but they have no money to satisfy their needs in the cities.

Q: How hopeful or fearful are you about the future of Rwanda?

A: I am fearful about all these children scattered in the street.





A: I have income problems. To get clothes for my children, it is a problem. When I see that I am of no help to them, I become desperate. And then my children do too. If any of them fall sick, I have no money to take him to the hospital, I have nothing in my house to sell to get money. I didn't dream of becoming a parent in my life but it happened to be the truth! If we could have our parents we would have no problems. Actually I am unable to return to school because I have no one to stay at home with my children or anywhere to leave them. How would they get food? Even though I could get someone to pay my school fees, I could not get school materials. I think if I could get a job according to my level, I could do it.

A: I am jobless due to lack of education. I have no one to give me advice.

A: Many people who were of big help in this country were killed, such as the educated, professors and the like.

Q: What are your problems concerning schooling?

A: If I could get someone to assist my children and to help me to resume my professional training, it would be better.

Q: Now can you go back to school?

A: Now it is impossible.... Who would take care of my problems if ever I go back to school?

A: FARG helps some in their studies but how can you study without eating or sleeping.

Q: What are the problems that you face?

A: I find difficulties in getting school materials, transport means and shoes.

Q: Do you have a job?

A: I have no job and when I think to go back to Kibuye, it becomes a big problem because I have no money to start a new project.

Q: From where do you get your income?

A: We have no income.

Q: Do you express your thoughts through songs or poetry?

A: No, due to my illiteracy.



FOR THE GENERAL POPULATION: 50.5% OF WOMEN ARE ILLITERATE, ...[AND] 43.6% OF MEN.

MANY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION FACILITIES WERE DESTROYED DURING THE GENOCIDE. OVER THREE-QUARTERS OF NEARLY 1,800 PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND SOME 100 SECONDARY SCHOOLS WERE PHYSICALLY DAMAGED.

— OAU Report

A: I am jobless. That means I have no money to take care of all our needs.

A: How can I contribute towards the restoration of the country before I restore myself?

Q: What are the biggest challenges facing Rwanda?

A: These are related to economy because in the genocide everything had been destroyed, we have started life again from nowhere.

Q: What particular problems do you come across as an orphan?

A: When you know that you have parents, you can do savings for your future and think about your own family but now it is almost impossible. I work to provide for myself and if I get a chance to have more, I directly give it to my fellow orphans who have nothing. I hope you see how stressful that is.

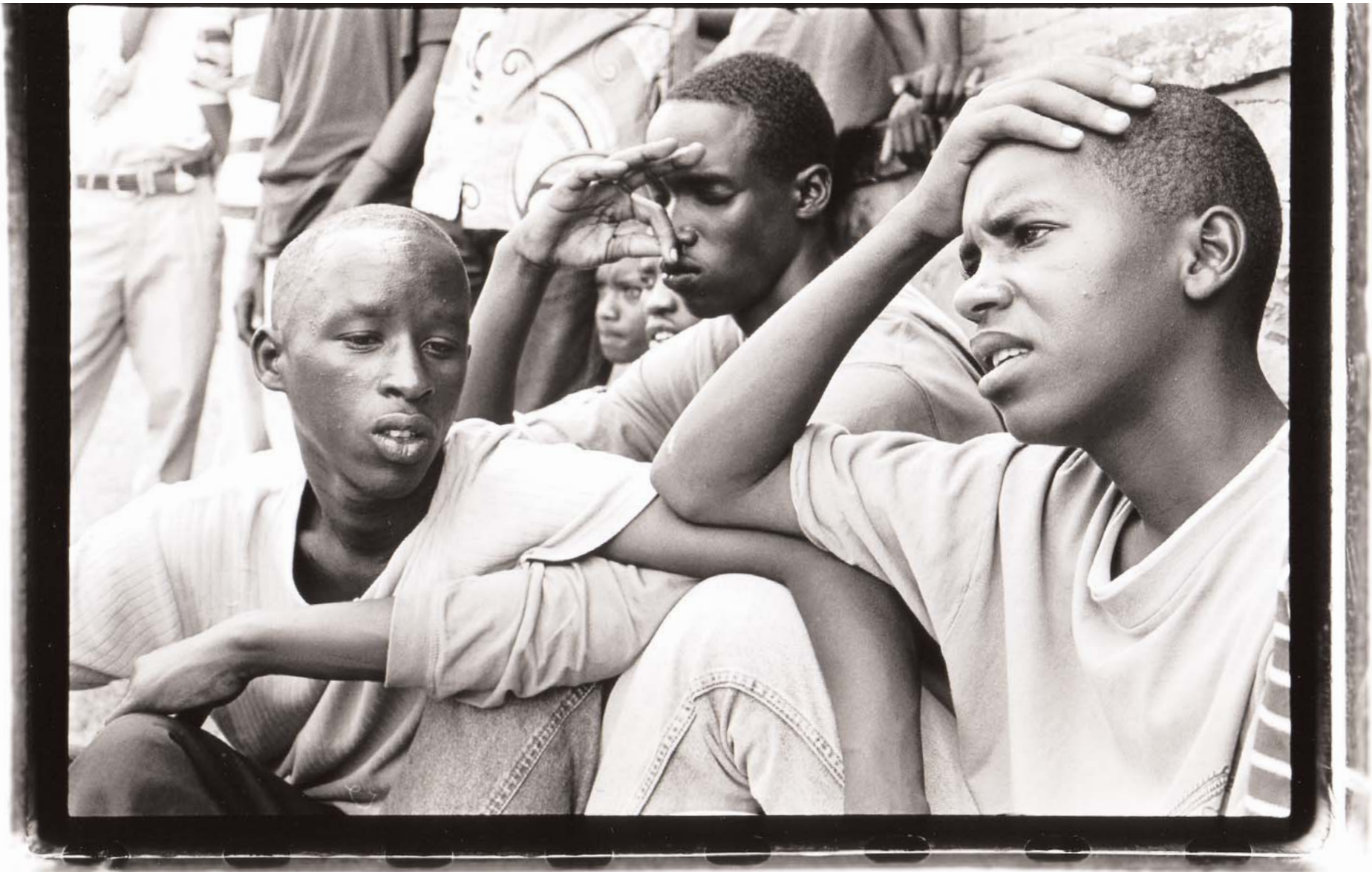
A: As far as the economy is concerned, Rwanda has a lot of people and among them those who work are fewer than those who don't work. Many of them are physically disabled and old. The youth has nothing to do. Another problem added to those is the lack of family planning. Poverty is rising.

Q: What are the biggest challenges facing Rwanda in the area of economy and reconciliation?

A: We still have problems; even among our leaders there are people who are not "innocent" but have "dipped" in the atrocities. The economy? We have a problem with high taxes.

A: The currency has lost its value.

A: The problems of Rwanda are many. First of all is reconciliation between the killer and the survivor, secondly is the lack of manpower due to all those people who died, thirdly is the national wealth which has been lost through destruction of houses and infrastructure, flora and fauna, fourthly is the problem of depression.



A: In the area of economy, people have the land but they have no harvest because the soil has become unfertile, which is a source of poverty.

A: Many people are discouraged, they have no motives to work and this touches the economy of our country.

Q: What are your personal goals for your education, job or contribution to society?

A: I want to work in order to support myself. If I could get someone to give me money, I could start a small business and support myself. I have to provide. Now it is too late to study.

Q: How fearful are you about the future of Rwanda?

A: I am fearful that in coming days many people will be jobless.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

A: It is difficult to plan for the future when even the present is uncertain. But if I could get a job, I would plan.

Q: What are your wishes for the child you are taking care of?

A: That I get enough means to let the child grow up.



A: I eat by God’s grace, I live on a daily basis, many people are dying because they aren’t offered medical treatment... We are not in good health. We need medical care as often as possible.

Q: What are the medical consequences of the genocide?
A: Some have AIDS, others are physically disabled. My aunt suffers AIDS, another one died in 2000. My two cousins are suffering mental break-downs while the other has a broken chest. Myself, I suffer an everlasting headache while those who have been amputated are many.

A: Since the day I was raped, I feel there is something wrong in my belly and wish I could get medical treatment. I have absolutely no income.

A: Many are suffering from disabilities or even malaria. Sickness, AIDS due to rape, poverty. Pitiful life conditions.

A: Some have stomachache; myself I have injuries on my head and arm. I also know of people who have been beaten in their heads so much so that it is obvious that they will never be useful for anything. Others got their arms beaten so much so that they are curved.

Q: Are there people in your family or among your acquaintances who got AIDS during the genocide?
A: My sister died recently of AIDS encountered during genocide. My brother also has died because he married a wife who has been raped and got AIDS during genocide, the wife also died.

A: I know of a girl who was held as a sex slave by an interahamwe who left her after their defeat. She is still alive, suffering from AIDS encountered during that period.

Q: What about you? Do you have AIDS?
A: I don't know. I had undergone a test but was afraid to collect the results.

Q: Did you have injuries?
A: As wounds were not well treated, we have problems due to that.

A: Once, they passed me by and due to weakness I just fell down. The interahamwe came and beat “impiri” on my back, so much so, I still suffer from that pain now. I can’t do anything due to that pain.

Q: Do you get treatment for that injury on your head?
A: Well the doctor told me he would not operate because it was dangerous, even death could occur. He told me it would decrease as I grew up. I am seeing the opposite because it is creating sight problems.



...ALMOST ALL FEMALES WHO SURVIVED THE GENOCIDE WERE DIRECT VICTIMS OF RAPE OR OTHER SEXUAL VIOLENCE, OR WERE PROFOUNDLY AFFECTED BY IT. THE FACT THAT MOST SURVIVORS REPORTED THE BELIEF THAT RAPE WAS THE NORM FOR VIRTUALLY ALL WOMEN DURING THE GENOCIDE IS SIGNIFICANT IN ITSELF. IT IMPLIES THAT MOST WOMEN HAVE CHOSEN TO REMAIN SILENT ABOUT THEIR ORDEALS, ALMOST A COLLECTIVE DECISION OF THE WOMEN OF RWANDA NOT TO SEEK JUSTICE FOR THAT PARTICULAR VIOLATION. — OAU Report

A: Reconciliation is complex: The survivors don't want to forgive and the killers don't want to ask for forgiveness.

Q: What are the challenges for justice?

A: Everybody sees his fellow as a killer on one hand or an accuser on the other hand.

A: The genocide was the result of what politicians and the elite have done. They reaped division, this resulted in conflict between Hutus and Tutsis which gave birth to the genocide. After the genocide the consequences are on the perpetrators of the genocide.

A: ...the survivors are suffering while the killers are enjoying life.

A: Those who killed my parents are those who will judge others.... With this I feel fearful.

A: People are psychologically and physically wounded and there is mistrust between people.

Q: What are your thoughts towards those who killed your people?

A: I can't tell lies. In my heart I can't forgive such people. Maybe they will be forgiven by justice if even they are found.

A: I am fearful of these "Gacaca" jurisdictions, especially of the insecurity which will follow the people who accuse the guilty.

A: He is ashamed of what he did and whenever we meet, he tries to show me that he feels sorry for me. Once he wanted to give me money but I refused. He refused to hide us while I was his student and my father was a pastor. So how can I have good relations with him?

Q: Are you able to forgive those who participated in the killing?

A: I don't know if we could find a punishment for those people. They did bad things, very bad. They are not worthy to be forgiven. But in order to build our society we have to forgive them.

A: If they ask me for forgiveness, I can forgive. But in the present situation, they are angry with me as if I am the one who killed their people.

A: They should find those who killed our families; those who destroyed our houses or stole our items and they should pay us back.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

A: I think everything will depend on justice because as long as the killers will not be judged, they will feel innocent and will again kill.

Q: What are your expectations for justice?

A: It is not easy to reconcile an orphan with one who had killed his whole family.



A: Everybody is dead, I am alone. I am really hopeless due to the loss of my parents. My schoolmates tell me about their parents giving them gifts or nice food or the director asks us to bring our parents and it makes me very depressed. I feel I will be forever grieved.

Q: Depression?

A: I always have problems of isolation, or better, loneliness.

Q: Did you wish to be killed because of what you had experienced?

A: During the genocide I didn't wish so but now when I cross many difficulties I think about it and wish so.

Q: Do you have any problem with fear or anxiety?

A: I am fearful that what happened in the past will happen again.

A: I am fearful of an eventual war because of those people both inside and outside the country who still have segregating thoughts, which makes people live a fearful life.

A: I have fear. I feel like the killers want to kill me but I don't know where I am. This takes at least one day. I dream that the killers are cutting me. At times I feel sorrow in my heart, I become angry and don't talk to anyone. I do not even eat.

Q: Do you find that you are angry?

A: I have anger when I think about the death of my parents and I have bad thoughts about those people. Yes, I have anger.

A: I am afraid when I am alone. Therefore, I like to be with many people, like in stadiums. Anger and anxiety is my life only. I dream of killers killing me, I sweat the whole night.

A: When I see other people gathered with their family members, discussing their problems, and when I see myself alone in my house, I miss my family and remember them.



A: I dream about the genocide when I am sick. I always dream of people over me wanting to kill me, I try to run and then I become awake. But fear goes on.

Q: Tell me about your dreams.

A: It is like a videocassette of the whole genocide in my head. Now if I don't sleep, I wake up in the morning with a big headache because I think of many things. All the dead people, pondering where they could have reached, what they could have achieved.

Q: Do you have nightmares?

A: Many times in my dreams, I see people with machetes behind me and by chance the morning comes.

A: There is not even a single night where I don't have bad dreams. When I don't have nightmares it means I didn't sleep at all. My situation instead of improving is deteriorating.

A: Every night I pass perhaps four hours without sleeping, every time I ask God where do I live and why, I don't know even if I am a human being. I always dream of my father and my siblings, as if I were in a swamp and something is running after me.

Q: Do you pray?

A: No, since my family was killed in the church I have no courage to go there and pray.

Q: Do you express your thoughts through songs, poetry or drawing?

A: I have a song, " Ndabibuka" (I remember them). And I have a drama, "intimba y'ibyahise" (anxiety of the past events).

A: When I have my problems, which keep me isolated, I sing anxious songs.

A: Enough is enough;
we need peace and no
other genocide.

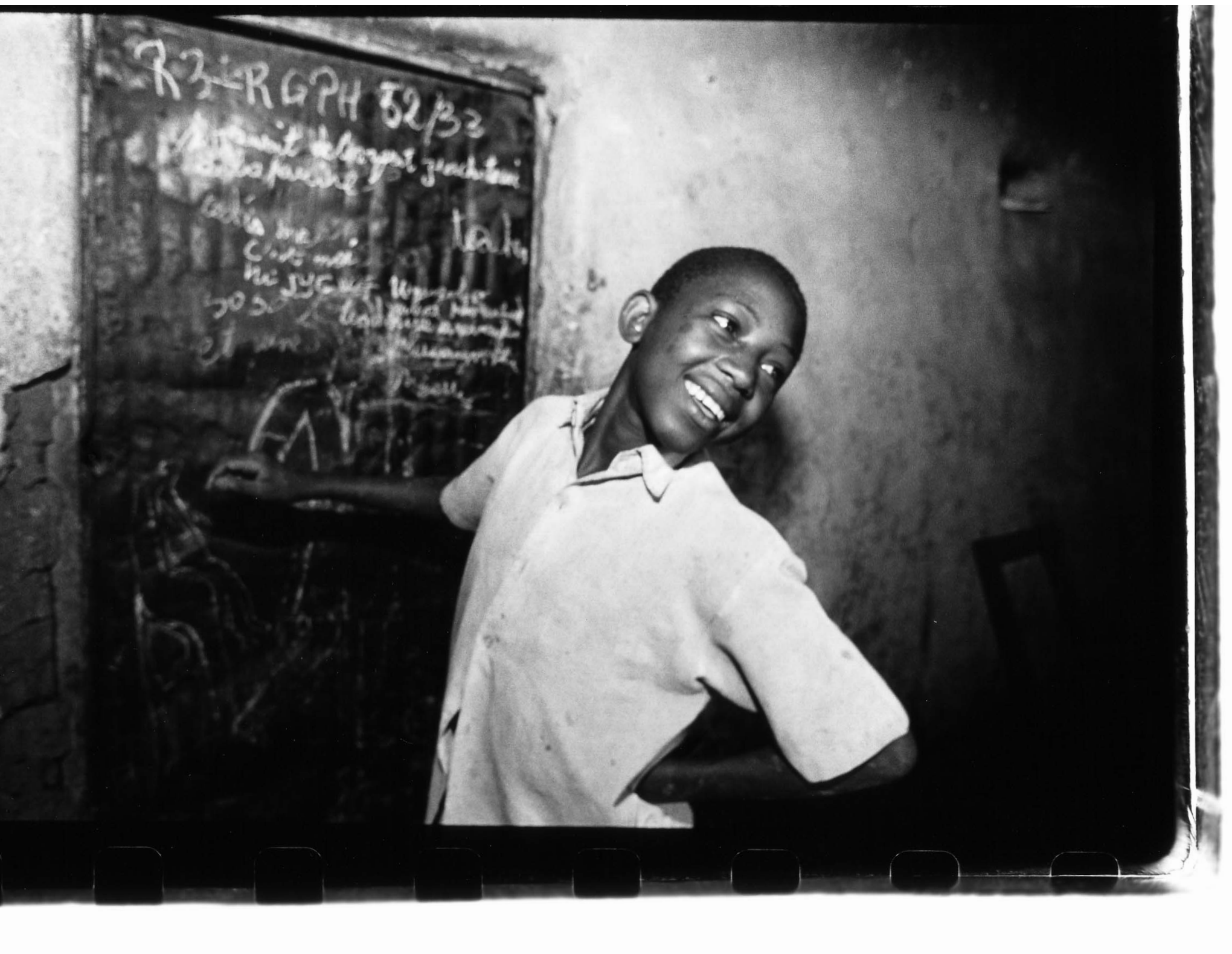


Q: Would you like to say anything more?

A: I think it is over. I chose to look forward.

A: My advice is to tell Rwandan people to know that we are one; we should live together in harmony, respecting one another.





A: I want to study well, be autonomous and help my family. I want to be a honest and hardworking person.

A: I want to study through the university degree and become a government official so that I may see justice for those who are wronged.

Q: What are your future plans in connection with your studies?

A: I want to study music or any other good thing. As far as a job is concerned, I would like to be a journalist on the radio where I can use what I have studied to give my contribution to the improvement of our society.

A: If I find help I can pursue my studies. I will contribute towards the construction of my country in denouncing those who did the genocide. Also I have plans of going to my former place to construct a house so that I can care for our land.

Q: What are your personal goals for your future? in your education and contribution to society ?

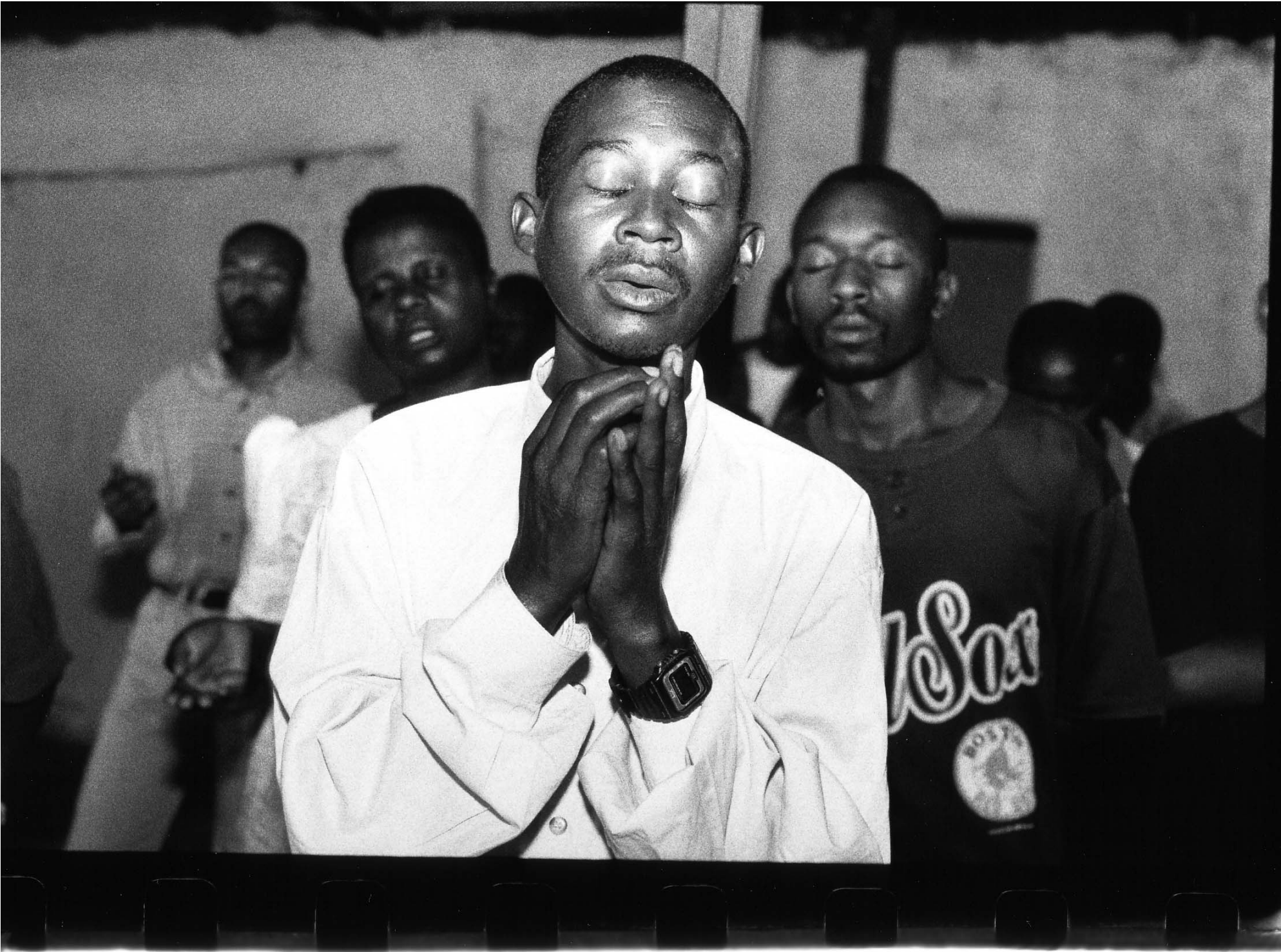
A: I want to study at least up to the bachelor's level. Only then would I be able to take care of myself. In contribution to the society, I will give advice to my countrymates and, if possible, help some to pay their school fees and medical fees.

Q: What do you wish for the survivors?

A: To live a good life and to study so that they may be useful.

la religion
comme soutien

- A: When I hear the word of God I forget about all evil thoughts.
- Q: How helpful is your religion?**
A: It helps me to be courageous and not to isolate myself. When I pray I feel my heart cooling and maybe I could forgive those people.
- Q: Do you pray?**
A: Yes I have to, because it is God who kept and keeps me. I love God and praise him for what he has done for me.
- Q: Does religion help you?**
A: I am a Roman Catholic. My religion doesn't help me. On the contrary, there are times I want to leave it, especially when I remember how people fled to the church and were slaughtered inside.
- A: God knows what happened to us. In this way, I say let me leave this to God who will surely help me to see my family again.
- Q: Does religion help you?**
A: I entrust my life to the Lord because he protected me through all the difficulties.
- Q: Where do you go for prayers?**
A: I just get inside my room. I tell God that he is the one who made everything and he knows why, therefore I ask power and solution from him.
- Q: Can you forgive those who killed your family?**
A: There is nothing that can bring back my family. God's will was that I stay alone. I can forgive them because there is nothing else I can do. Not forgiving them will not bring back my family and won't give me peace; so it is better to forgive them.
- A: If they tell me how they killed my people and ask for forgiveness, as the Bible tells us to forgive, I can forgive them.
- Q: Does religion help you in coping with trauma?**
A: When I pray I feel relieved. It helps to know that Jesus is the father of the fatherless.
- Q: How did you comfort those who survived in your family?**
A: I told them that as God allowed us to survive. He would also allow us to live.

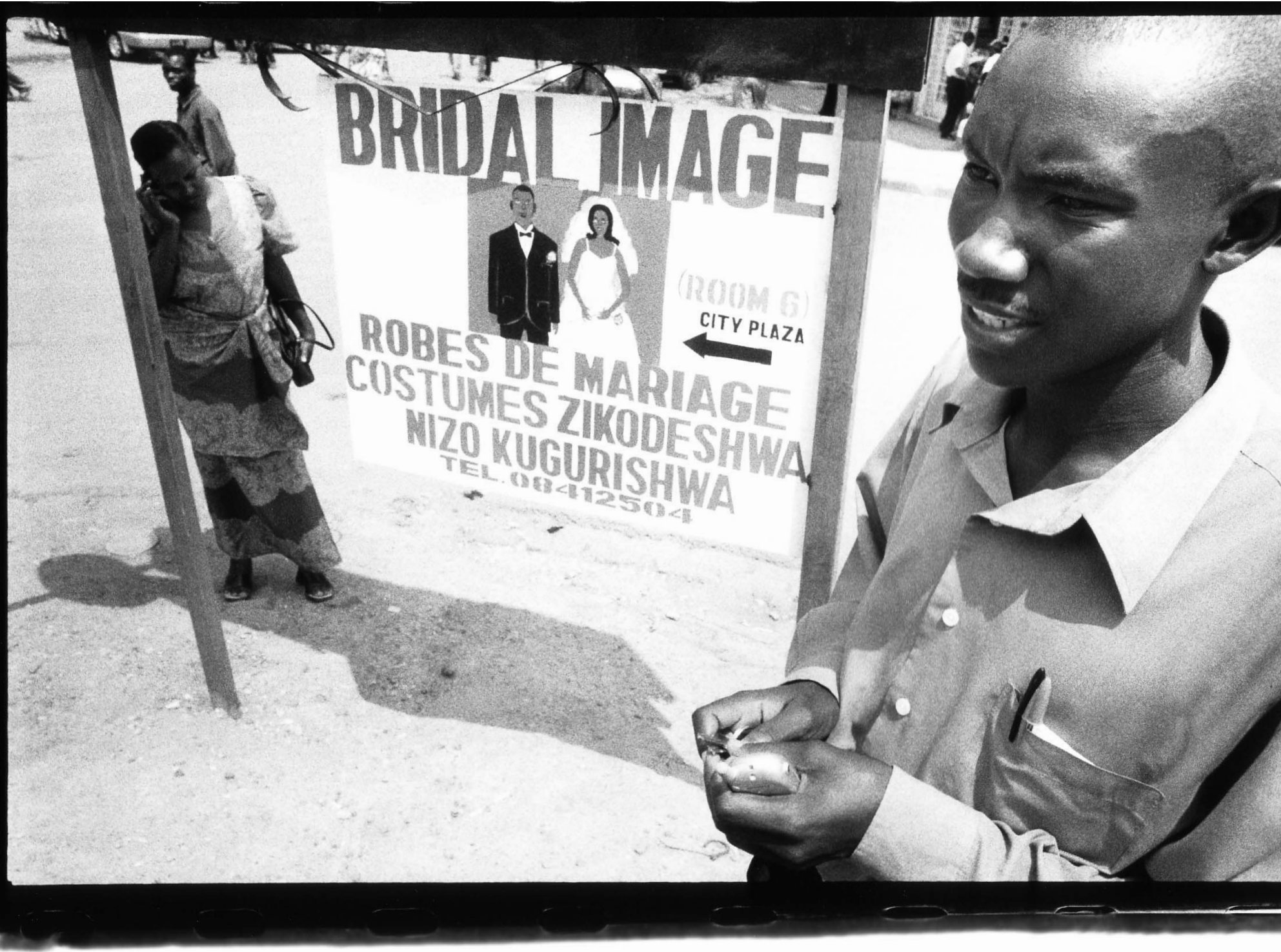


Q: What are your plans for the future? About studies, job or contribution to the society?

A: I plan to build a house at our former place and get married there. As for studies, I can only join schools after my cousins have completed their studies. I would like to have a good job, which would be to teach people to leave behind segregation in order to avoid the atrocities which occurred in our country.

Q: What are your goals for the future?

A: As you can see, I am not young. By God's grace, if my children could study well and grow, I would take a wife and have a family.



MASS KILLINGS OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OCCURRED IN RWANDA, INCLUDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN, OLD AND YOUNG, WHO WERE PURSUED AND KILLED AT PLACES WHERE THEY SOUGHT REFUGE: PREFECTURES, COMMUNE OFFICES, SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, AND STADIUMS...20,000 PEOPLE DIED IN CYAHINDA PARISH; AT LEAST 35,000 WERE KILLED IN THE PARISH OF KARAMA... — OAU Report



BECAUSE 95% OF RWANDA IS RURAL, AGRICULTURE IS BY FAR THE LARGEST ECONOMIC SECTOR, AND WOMEN PRODUCE UP TO 70% OF THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION... — OAU Report

Q: What about your job?

A: Should I find a job, I will be responsible, marry, have children and bring them up.

Q: What are your goals for your country?

A: I wish my country to develop and especially for it to have security. The security is the foundation of all. I also wish people to study and get jobs.

Q: Can you give any sign of economic development?

A: Yes! Technology, internet, computers, more schools and universities.

Q: What are your wishes for your country?

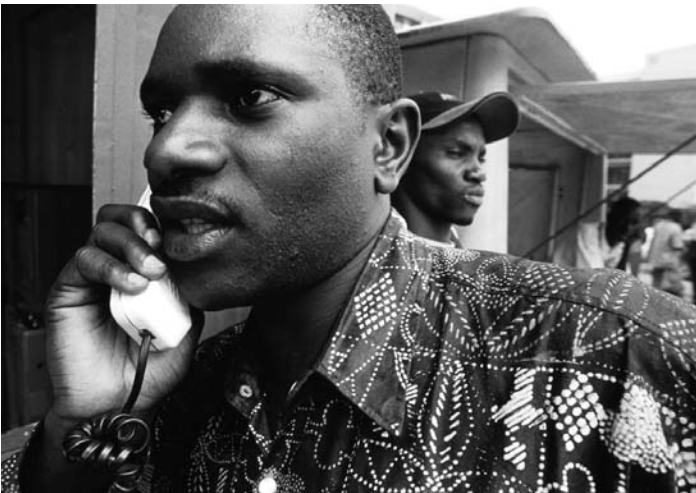
A: I wish that it may continue on its way. Since my birth, I have never seen such development in my country, nor such security. Besides this, I wish that the government may assist people. I see worthy people working hard, trying their best to get through to some better things.

A: I want to study up to the university level, find a job, and work with all my might to contribute to the development of my country. Perhaps I will become a government official and work for my country.

A: I have plans to study and get a job, then work towards the construction of the nation. We should be able to give a firm education to our offspring so that they will not do what has happened to us.

Q: What have we not asked that you would like to say?

A: I want to say that it is time for us Rwandan people to go forward, leaders and led alike and live together in harmony.



que justice soit faite

A: My contribution to society is to tell the truth, especially in the “Gacaca” trials (grass root system of justice).

Q: What do you expect from justice?

A: I expect rest and peace from justice.

A: If they want to, they will judge the guilty. For “Gacaca” we should go from Kigali to our former places, show those who killed our families, if they are willing to ask for forgiveness it will be possible to reach reconciliation.

Q: What are the biggest challenges facing Rwanda since the genocide?

A: Some of those who engaged in the genocide do not want to repent because of the hardening of their hearts. The national commission of unity and reconciliation should make people understand the importance of “Gacaca” and reconciliation. Then our country will have peace.

Q: What are your goals for the future?

A: My goal is to see the killers punished and live in peace with those who didn't kill. But they should be punished in order to show them that we are human beings.

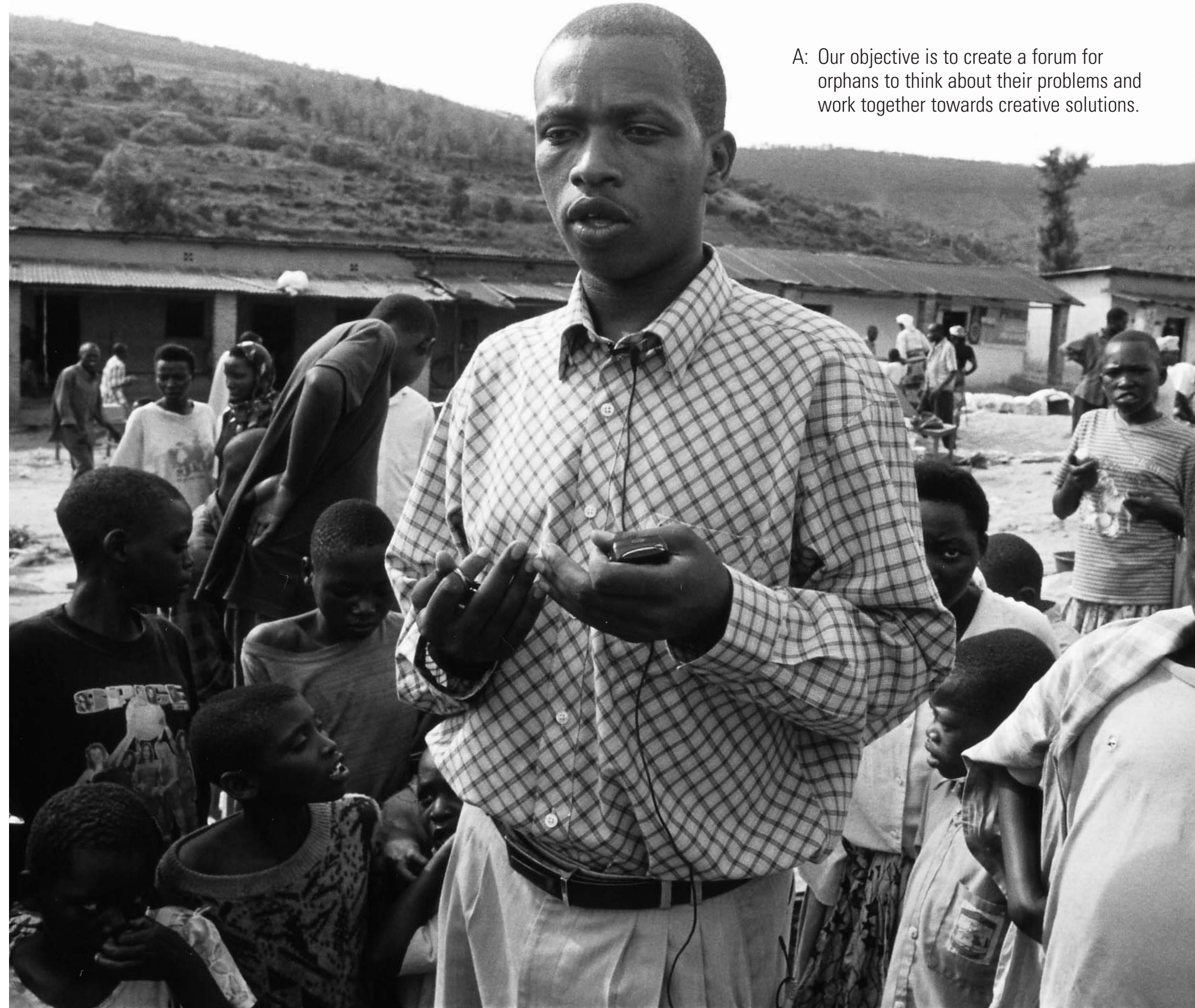
Q: What are your personal goals in the future?

A: My goal is to say all the truth and to work for justice so that what happened would never happen again.

Q: What are your wishes for your country?

A: That my country work in transparency, eradicate division and restore reconciliation.





A: Our objective is to create a forum for orphans to think about their problems and work together towards creative solutions.



Q: How helpful is AOCM to you?

A: It is helpful in giving me company, bringing us out of isolation, sharing our burdens. Maybe my anger and anxiety will vanish and I will live in peace.

A: It is a place we gather as orphans who have the same problems. We are still weak financially but we have good objectives. I hope we become stronger and make our problems known to the government and international community.

A: I have no problems in working with others. We can be together in organizations like AOCM to develop our nation. I have hope for good justice and patriotism.

Q: How is AOCM helpful to you personally?

A: The fact of bringing us together as orphans is very helpful. In so meeting we can share our problems and find a solution.

A: AOCM may help me in paying my fares to and from school, getting my school materials and a house of our own.

Q: How do they help?

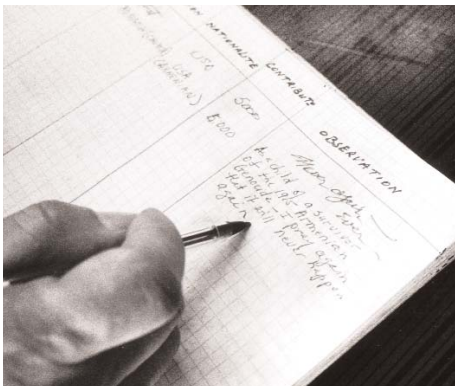
A: AOCM pays my school fees. It helps me so much. When we have meetings for the association (AOCM), I feel comforted because we share our ideas and problems.

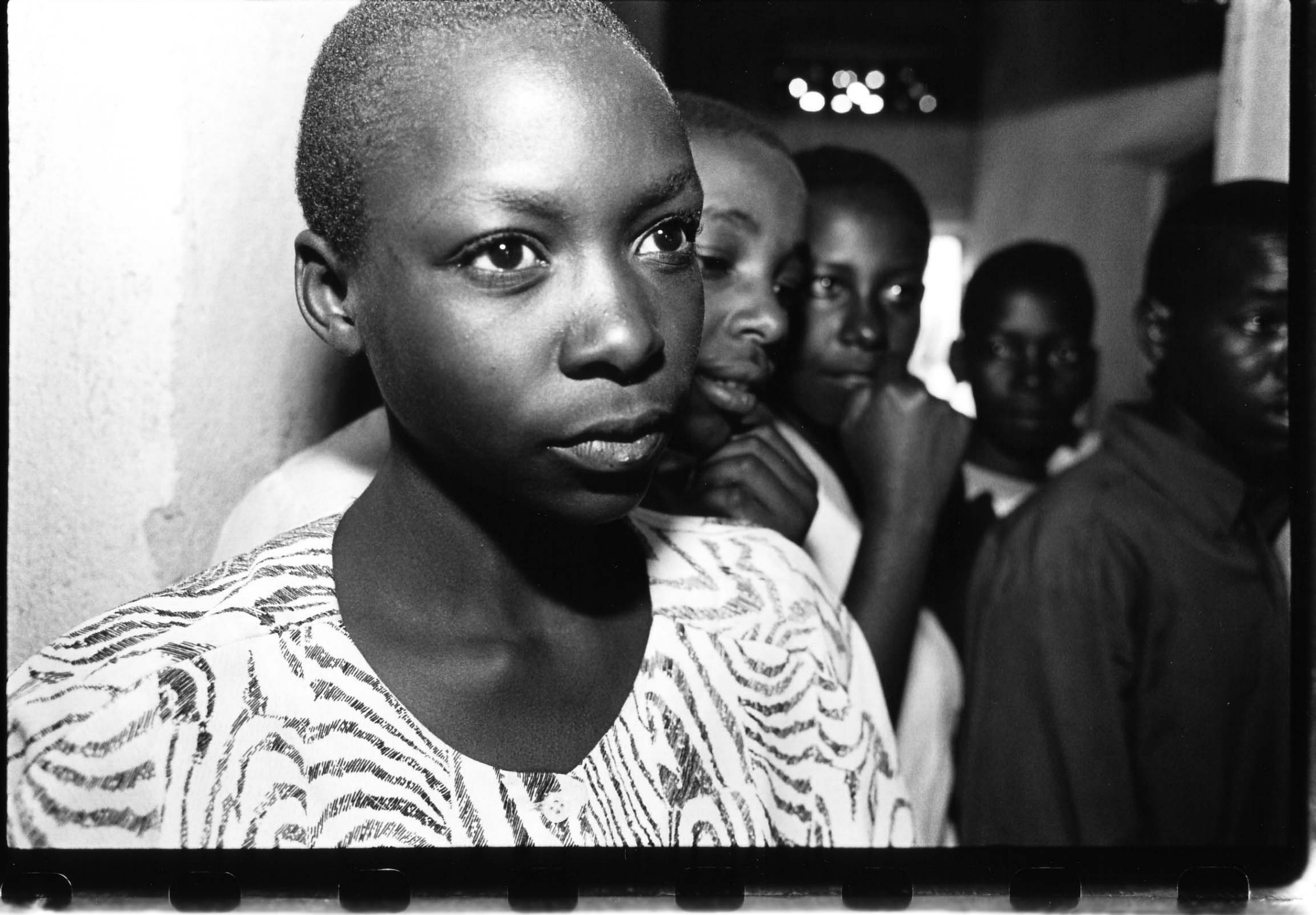
A: I am doing textiles and confection training. AOCM is paying for me.

Q: What are your plans for studies, job and contribution toward the society?

A: I will study and work at the same time, marry and give birth to children. Even now I am contributing towards the construction of the society in advising orphans in AOCM. I hope to go forward in that contribution.

A: When I see how our young people – our youth – are eager to build the nation and how they participate in the unity, I feel hopeful because I think in the future things will change.





Q: What are your wishes for your country?

A: That they rehabilitate the nation and its people's heart. Briefly, my wish is that Rwanda becomes again "beautiful Rwanda."



Q: What are your goals for the future?

A: I will do my job with integrity in order to give my contribution to rebuild my society.

A: Since I am an artist and I like to compose, my contribution to society will be teaching people to follow their culture and to always have their morale high through song.

A: I will do my job with integrity. I will give my contribution to rebuild my society by working hard and with honesty.

A: I want to help... by teaching love to my country mates. We need to love each other.

Q: What are your goals for orphans in general?

A: I wish them to do their best and to think for their future, to put down their war related thoughts.

A: Yes. My message is to ask survivors to have solidarity.

Q: What have we not asked that you would like to add?

A: We should struggle for life, be peacemakers and tell the truth.

A: Many disabled people; people's hearts are hurt...

Q: What have we not asked that you would like to say?

A: It is not possible to say everything.

Q: Be courageous.



Q: What have we not asked that you would like to add?

A: We talked about many things but please do remember us and help us.



You may assist this orphan association by sending your tax-deductible donation to:

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