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NAME OF WITNESS: .....

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1993**

**I. PARTICIPANTS**

- Augustin Bizimana, Minister of Defence, Chairman
- Col. BEMS Théoneste Bagosora, *Directeur de Cabinet*
- Col. BEM Déogratias Nsabimana, Chief of Staff, Rwandan Army
- Col. BEM Augustin Ndindiliyimana, Chief of Staff, National *Gendarmerie*
- Col. BEM Athanase Gasake, *DIRAJ* (Department of Administrative and Legal Matters)
- Lt. Colonel Laurent Rutayisire, *DIRSE* (Department of External Security)
- Lt. Colonel Murasampongo, G1, Staff Headquarters, Rwandan Army
- Lt. Colonel BEM Ephrem Rwabalinda, G3, Staff Headquarters, Rwandan Army
- Major Rwarakabije, G3, Staff Headquarters, National *Gendarmerie*
- Major BAM Gakara, G1, Staff Headquarters, National *Gendarmerie*

**II. AGENDA**

- Presentation of the Arusha Peace Accords.
- Observations on document entitled "Process of Integration and Demobilization".

**III. PROGRESSION OF THE MEETING**

**a. State of affairs**

**1. Minister's Introductory Remarks**

The newly appointed Minister of Defence opened the meeting, which was convened the day following the signing of the Arusha Peace Accords by the Government of Rwanda and RPF-*INKOTANYI*.

According to the Minister, people should not be fooled by the serene atmosphere which reigned during the signing of the text of the Accord in Arusha and more than ever before, our soldiers should be warned to be more vigilant even though it was becoming more and more evident that both parties are committed to the search for peace.

The Minister also commented on the documents entitled "The Process of Integration and Demobilization of the RAF" and "Demobilization Process" which the *Directeur de Cabinet* had availed participants as part of the working documents for the meeting.

**2. Remarks by the *Directeur de Cabinet***

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The *Directeur de Cabinet* read and commented on the two documents mentioned above and underscored that their contents had to be taken into account by all parties since the Ministry did not have the powers to modify them.

(*Illegible*) to start on 15 August 1993, and this situation, according to him, called on all parties to be clear and direct.

Given that the issue at stake was to determine which of the high military commands would lead our forces and in what manner, the *Directeur de Cabinet* recommended that the current Government communicate to the RPF well in advance the names of the various members of the Army High Command (*HCCA*) and the National *Gendarmerie* High Command (*CCGN*) to be appointed to these posts by the broad-based government. It was also underlined that the broad-based transitional government would be responsible for the integration and demobilization of the forces.

However, the integration and demobilization process, which involved the creation of "Assembly Points" and camps, would once again highlight the financial problems given the nature and volume of activities to be realized.

In this regard, the *Directeur de Cabinet* made the following observations but stressed that they were not in any manner whatsoever exhaustive:

- a. The choice of the sites for the assembly points shall be made in consultation with both parties (RAF and RPF);
- b. Provisional military camps will have to be set up to be used as assembly points and it will be necessary to provide tents as well as material for erecting concrete structures (to serve as depots for weapons, ammunition and food, ...). The structures, which will be built only after the arrival of the International Neutral Force on the ground, should house more or less 40,000 men;
- c. From the above, it was obvious that devoting only a month to these activities was very OPTIMISTIC;
- d. As part of confidence building activities, some senior Rwandan officers shall meet their RPF counterparts for lectures on reconciliation and forgiveness;
- e. It is necessary to appoint, as soon as possible, instructors to lecture on the harmonization of the various military techniques (Rules of Discipline, other military regulations, *REEI*, *EPS*, Civic Education, weapons, tactics, etc.) in line with the already drawn up timetable which remained unchanged.

... [*Illegible*] draw the attention to efficiency and CAUTION, which should be observed by all in this domain.

In conclusion, the *Directeur de Cabinet* once again called for caution in reading the chapter on "Demobilization and Integration" and underscored that RPF had been reluctant about the prior disarming of the soldiers to be demobilized. This, he posited,

seemed to show that RPF had no confidence in the logic of peace and revealed its tendency to aggressive atavism, a trait that would remain for a long time.

According to the *Directeur de Cabinet*, the Rwandan party should learn this lesson and be aware that an early demobilization process could mean that approximately 28,000 demobilized soldiers henceforth hostile to the RAF would be under its responsibility and the situation would be worse if the hostilities resumed.

### 3. Remarks by the Chief of Staff, National Gendarmerie

Commenting on the criteria for demobilization, the Chief of Staff of the National *Gendarmerie* opined that "Language, ethnic grouping and region" should not be considered but rather "COMPETENCE", which was a criterion less affected by sentimental overtones.

According to the Chief of Staff, the soldiers to be demobilized should be chosen per category and specialty to ensure that the resulting pyramid structure was more or less respected. In that regard, any discrepancy would be rectified by bringing the concerned individuals to undergo the appropriate tests (physical, intellectual, etc.).

Given the diversity of the criteria to be taken into account before demobilization, and considering also the objectivity that should characterize them, the meeting was of the view that the current government should without delay:

- 1) finalize the criteria for demobilization;
- 2) set up the demobilization commission.

### 4. Remarks by the Director of External Security

In his presentation, the Director of External Security highlighted the recommendations made by the speakers before him, especially on the demobilization process, which, according to him, should be phased out and prescriptive. He informed the meeting of the activities to be undertaken by the *Gendarmerie* as part of the demobilization process.

## CONCLUSION I

Before giving the floor to participants, the Minister highlighted the various activities to be undertaken immediately and in the short term. These were:

- a. - establishment of a joint RAF-RPF commission to be operational from 15 August 1993 and charged with *[illegible]*;
- b. - staff matters: ask the Government to set up the Army High Command (*HCCA*) and the National *Gendarmerie* High Command (*CCGN*) and to expedite the handling of other dossiers relating to military personnel;

- c. – establishment of a Demobilization Commission which will draw up its operational criteria for approval. As regards the harmonization of techniques for the benefit of both parties (RAF and RPF), a team will be set up as soon as possible to propose a revised statute to the *Inkotanyi*.

There is also a need to consider the costs involved in the setting up of assembly points and camps and the meeting also learnt that according to recent information, the American Government had no plans to provide assistance in cash for the demobilization process. Consequently, the Government should contact other donors.

## B. REMARKS BY PARTICIPANTS

Participants then took the floor to add on to what the previous speakers had said. Their remarks could be summarized as follows:

### 1. Chief of Staff, Rwandan Army

According to the Chief of Staff, the country found itself in a situation of uncertainty and ambivalence, caught between war and peace. He also heavily criticized the report of the Head of the Military Observer Group (MOG) of Rwanda and concluded that the country should not be fooled and deluded by the peace accords and the transient atmosphere of calm. He noted once again the deplorable state of the Army's logistics and concluded that even if the country was resolutely aiming for peace, the Army should ensure that the soldiers, who were not given supplies on a regular basis, were not compromised.

### 2. Chief of Staff of the National Gendarmerie

For the Chief of Staff, it was normal that the meeting focuses first and foremost on security matters. Yes, indeed, security after demobilization! According to him, some considerations and advice should be a prelude to this situation.

- a. It is necessary to know the exact number of the force's staff to avoid a similar situation where, through passive ignorance, it had been estimated that the *Gendarmerie* was made up of 6,100 men whilst the actual number was 5,200. ... [illegible] ...
- c. The Chief of Staff also stated that the "Demobilization" process should be seen as loss of employment for the demobilized soldiers and should be treated as such in a direct way.

According to him, the integration of the demobilized soldiers in the production circuits was not safe, or at least automatic, meaning that activities to be undertaken in favour of the demobilized soldiers should be incorporated

in the general policy activities of the country as in the case of the displaced persons.

In the same vein, the problem of the disabled ex-servicemen, widows and orphans should also be discussed.

In conclusion, the Chief of Staff suggested that to appoint those who will remain in the future integrated army, it is necessary first of all to make a list of posts allocated to RAF and to fill them afterwards, in line with the categories and grades of the soldiers. In the same vein, the Ministry of Defence should set up a commission in charge of "Demobilization" as soon as possible, whose tasks would include matters of SECURITY after the demobilization.

3. G3, Staff Headquarters, Rwandan Army

The G3, Staff Headquarters, Rwandan Army recommended:

- a. The establishment of a commission to look into urgent activities to be undertaken.
- b. The current Government should take decisions immediately.
- c. The creation of assembly points and camps should be studied well before and recognized by all parties.
- d. The Staff Headquarters of the Rwandan Army should cease to operate from the premises of the Army High Command.

Given the technical nature of the above observations, the G3, Staff Headquarters, Rwandan Army suggested that the Ministry of Defence should recommend solutions to the Government.

Taking charge of RPF would require that the Rwandan party be informed of important data such as the actual number of RPF soldiers, those to be demobilized as well as those who will remain, etc.

G1, Staff Headquarters, National Gendarmerie

According to the G1, Staff Headquarters National *Gendarmerie*, the meeting should discuss how to safeguard the *Gendarmerie's* archives upon the arrival of the RPF. It is necessary to provide other buildings where the Staff Headquarters would work from, and, why not, we could also nurse a "HIDDEN AGENDA".

5. G3 Staff Headquarters, National Gendarmerie

This participant deplored the fact that on a daily basis, soldiers in active service or those who had been dismissed were involved in acts of banditry. He opined that one of the reasons for such behaviour was the fact that the soldiers had no faith anymore in the future and tried to make their lot better in their own way.

After debating on several issues, the meeting came up with the following recommendations:

- a. It is necessary to spell out in detail the activities to be undertaken to enable the person charged with executing them to have ample time to do so efficiently.
- b. The security measures should be conceived in such a manner that they would not impede the emerging peace process and not serve as a motive of suspicion by RPF which could use this as a pretext to resume hostilities and take over power by force.
- c. There was need to establish a "Think Tank" which would be responsible, in particular, for the successful implementation of the Demobilization and Integration process, which henceforth should be functional and permanent.
- d. The various staff headquarters are better placed and informed to make proposals concerning the future members of the Rwandan Army High Command (*HCCA*) and the National *Gendarmerie* High Command (*CCGN*) that will come from the Rwandan party.
- e. The Senior Military Commanders should ensure that their men have confidence in them by resolving their problems in a regular and equitable manner.

... [*Illegible*] only the Ministry of Defence (problems of the widows, the disabled, promotions, etc.).

The Director of Administrative and Legal Matters is scheduled to meet with the Director of the Rwandan Social Security Fund (*CSR*) and he should discuss the matter with him for a quick and clear solution.

6. The war was waged without the creation of a think tank to advise the RAF high command on POLITICAL and MILITARY matters. There is need to do away with this old practice to avoid falling into the RPF quagmire.

## CONCLUSION II

The Minister responded to the questions raised by the participants during the meeting.

According to him, issues dealing with staff matters were being resolved gradually and in that regard, some dossiers had already been submitted to the Prime Minister for appropriate action.

He also called on the meeting to submit the dossiers of the soldiers in one block with a view to seeking a global solution, at least for the dossiers that present the same characteristics.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is necessary to set up, as soon as possible, the following commissions to be charged with considering and developing the various points raised in the meeting:
  - Commission charged with drawing up the criteria for Demobilization and Integration;
  - Commission responsible for staff matters (disputes to be resolved);
  - Commission charged with drawing up a joint RAF-RPF training programme.
2. Apart from the above commissions, a co-ordinating body should be set up comprising members who had been to ARUSHA and/or KINIHIRA.
3. A weekly meeting should be held at the Ministry of Defence to examine and provide guidelines for the work of the commissions.
4. As regards the demobilization process, the G1, Staff Headquarters, National *Gendarmerie*, recommended the need to identify the technical criteria for such an exercise already but that it was incumbent on the Government to decide on the final criteria.

However, he added, it was the responsibility of the technical department of the Ministry of Defence to guide the Government by providing it with the necessary support.

... [*Illegible*] should be avoided because it could lead to more complex problems.

The Minister however acknowledged that even though these criteria should not be given preference over the others, they could be considered within a CONSULTATIVE framework.

Since the various issues raised had been recorded in the minutes of the Rwandan Army Staff Headquarters meeting presided over by Lt. Colonel BEM Rwabalinda, the Chief of Staff of the Rwandan Army suggested that they should be mentioned and that future meetings would supplement them, provide the necessary guidelines or rectify them. (See document enclosed as an annex).

### GENERAL CONCLUSION

The meeting closed with the recommendation that ALL THE MILITARY DOSSIERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE RELATING TO STAFF MATTERS,

SHOULD BE DEALT WITH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE RPF.

The problems essentially relate to:

- Staff matters (grades, miscellaneous regularizations,...);
- Widows and orphans;
- War disabled;
- Accommodation for officers;
- Management of transportation and fuel;
- Management of ammunition and weapons;
- Medical care;
- Security issues after demobilization;
- Disengagement of some soldiers for the rear;
- Promotions and commissioning within the RAF;
- Certificates at the Military Academy, *ESM*;
- Custody of our archives after the arrival of RPF;
- Inventory of the existing commissions to avoid unnecessary loss of energy and under-employment of some officers;
- ... [*Illegible*] joint RAF-RPF training programme is with immediate effect;
- the expanded commission to study the criteria for demobilization and integration should be set up immediately;
- the commission in charge of administrative matters should be set up as soon as possible to accelerate and avail the results within the required timeframe, that is 10 to 15 days.

The meeting closed at 6.30 p.m. on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1993.

Rapporteur

[signed]

Sub-Lt. Isidore Bwanakweli  
*DISEC* Officer

Chairman

[signed]

Augustin Bizimana  
Minister of Defence

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