

community contributed substantially to the democratic transition, and the Security Council agreed to send a Special Representative and a small peacekeeping force under Chapter VI rules to monitor the border with Uganda and the transition to democratic elections. There was a feeling of sense of relief and optimism that Rwanda was heading for a textbook political reconciliation.

Then followed a period of intense rumours and political controversy. The first stages of political transition had taken place. President Habyarimana seemed to be dragging his feet about implementing the accords; the French soldiers had still not left the country and there were rumours of a military coup. By January 1994, the country was plunged into a constitutional crisis. Not only was the President resisting implementing the accords, but his term of office had expired and there was technically a constitutional vacuum. Violence was escalating and opposition figures were targeted for assassination. Rwanda's human rights organizations were fingering death squads supported by the youth wings of the MRND and CDR parties, tasked with killing the regime's political opponents and disrupting opposition meetings. What is interesting is that nobody predicted an organized genocide. There seemed to be a widespread agreement that the primary targets were Hutu opposition figures and not the Tutsi, even when the situation began to deteriorate further. The latter, although concerned with the worsening situation, did not see themselves as being in real danger or as targets of genocide. There was over time a fairly gradual ratcheting up of the violence, so much so there seemed to be a growing tolerance to it, even by the expatriates. This may help to explain why people did not react more vigorously to what was happening around them.

Although the media, particularly Radio Mille Collines, started spreading anti-Tutsi propaganda, so many lies were told that it was hard to take any of it seriously. To have done so would have been like relying on the *National Enquirer* to determine a country's policy on outer space. The international community discounted virtually everything printed or said in public by politicians, and instead relied on their private comments, which were invariably more moderate.

Through all this, the international community "kept its eyes on the prize", the Arusha Accords. Major efforts were made by diplomats to get the government of national unity up and running. Some observers think that it was the President's final acceptance, in the face of intense donor pressure, of the need to implement the accords in full that sealed his fate; a victim of the death machine he himself had set up. And it is worth noting that, in the background, was a very similar reconciliation process underway in South Africa, which led to a successful government of national unity. If it could work in South Africa, surely it could work in Rwanda. In addition, there was a parallel crisis in Burundi, triggered by the coup in October 1993. Many of the policymakers in Kigali were also immersed in the Burundi issues and UN agencies in Kigali were focusing on Burundian refugees in Rwanda and displaced persons in Northern Burundi. If one had asked regional leaders which was the most dangerous crisis, all would have said Burundi.