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Candidate session number

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Examination session (May or November)

MAY

Year

2013

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: PEACE & CONFLICT STUDIES

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: Too Little Too Late: A Study on the Failure
of the United Nations During the Rwandan Genocide of
1994.

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

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Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

's two-year adventure with her Extended Essay has been a voyage of discovery both personal and intellectual. She was so taken by the subject of the Rwandan Genocide that she persuaded her family to accompany her to Rwanda to see for herself, where she was astonished to discover how much the country appeared to have recovered from the darkest period of its history.

On the intellectual front, I discovered the hard way the distinction between narrative and analysis. I awarded her a "D" for her first draft, which forced her to tear apart her whole essay and begin again. She went back to the first principles of Peace and Conflict studies by examining theories of conflict, genocide, and peacekeeping and seeing how all three played out in the context of the Rwandan Genocide. I still feel that she has read a richer literature on peacekeeping than she has referenced, but overall, we both feel that her final essay is a much more rounded piece of work.

In retrospect, she feels she might have narrowed the broad focus of her Essay to concentrate on one aspect of the Genocide such as the role of the international media. She emerges from the experience, however, convinced that she has learned a lot and that she is well-prepared for university.

This declaration must be signed by the supervisor; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent 4.5 hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature:

Date:

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Criteria	Achievement level					
	Examiner 1	maximum	Examiner 2	maximum	Examiner 3	
A research question	2	2		2		
B introduction	2	2		2		
C investigation	4	4		4		
D knowledge and understanding	4	4		4		
E reasoned argument	4	4		4		
F analysis and evaluation	3	4		4		
G use of subject language	3	4		4		
H conclusion	2	2		2		
I formal presentation	3	4		4		
J abstract	2	2		2		
K holistic judgment	4	4		4		
Total out of 36	33					

Too Little, Too Late:
A Study on the Failure of the United Nations During the
Rwandan Genocide of 1994

To what extent could the United Nations have prevented or decreased the enormity
of the Rwandan genocide of 1994?

Candidate:
Candidate Number:
School:
Subject: Peace and Conflict Studies
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Abstract

Over 800 000 lives were lost in the Rwandan genocide of 1994. It is now known that many complex historical factors at play led to the genocide, and it was not a spontaneous event in that year. Yet, the peacekeeping mission on the ground, the UN and the international community failed to act appropriately to prevent significant loss of life. At a minimum, actions by the UN and in particular the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) should have dramatically reduced the scale of the genocide. This will be addressed as the question, "To what extent could the United Nations have prevented or decreased the enormity of the Rwandan genocide of 1994?" is answered.

This study will examine the underlying conflict that led to the development of the genocide, identify the characteristics that qualify the conflict as a genocide, and examine the role of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in its failure to stop the killing. UNAMIR faced several challenges, and the peacekeepers on the ground made numerous pleas to the UN offices in New York for more leeway and added resources. Yet, the organization failed to act in time to prevent the atrocities.

The lessons learned from Rwandan genocide should lead to some changes in the way the UN deals with potential crimes against humanity in order to ensure that such a disaster never happens again. Recommendations for changes include the need for a "rapid response" unit and the expanded role of the international media as these were failures that could have been avoided, which would have definitely helped reduce the scale of the genocide.

Word Count: 267

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“To what extent could the United Nations have prevented or decreased the enormity of the Rwandan genocide of 1994?”

Introduction

The Rwandan genocide of 1994 can be considered as one of the greatest failures of the United Nations (UN) in its history, as more than 800,000 innocent Rwandan men, women, and children were brutally murdered (“UNAMIR—Rwanda Background”). After months of civil and political turmoil in Rwanda, conflict seemed imminent, yet still the UN failed to affect any real change or provide any significant resources for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in order to attain peace in the region. The Rwandan mission did not receive the same amount of attention from the UN as other missions occurring at the same time, and it was due to this lack of attention from the UN, a lack of resources and a lack of trained personnel that contributed to the scope of the horrific genocide.

However, as with many historical events, perhaps something valuable can be learned from disaster. The actual composition and preparation of the peacekeepers themselves, the decision-making and resolution-writing powers of the UN, and the cooperation of foreign governments to work with peacekeeping missions were all significant factors in affecting the course of the genocide. It is for this reason that the question must be asked, to what extent could the United Nations have prevented or decreased the enormity of the Rwandan genocide of 1994?

In order to effectively address the question, one must first examine the most significant factors that contributed to the failure in Rwanda. This would include considerations of the political and ethnic situation in Rwanda pre-genocide, as well as the UN mandate and the actions of UNAMIR. (LaRose-Edwards, Dangerfield, Weekes 2-

11) It is these failures that have forced the UN to reconsider and amend the work of peacekeepers today.

Nearly two decades have passed since the atrocities of 1994. One would wonder how a country and a people could heal after such an event. However, my trip to Rwanda in March of 2012 helped me to understand that the country is indeed working towards reconciliation. I was surprised and thrilled to see that the streets are beautifully paved, the infrastructure is excellent, and the economy is working to diversify, especially as compared to neighbouring nations. Discussions with locals and journalists in the area helped me to understand that the country is working towards healing in a meaningful way as the government and the people confront the underlying issues of the genocide, and want to make sure that what is now considered to be a national scourge will never be repeated.

Rwanda Prior to 1994

The small Central African nation of Rwanda was originally colonized by Germany in 1884, placed under the League of Nations from 1916 to 1918, and then came under Belgian trusteeship in 1918. (Ruanda-Urundi: AD 1887-1914) With Belgian colonization came a period under which the Rwandan population operated in a feudalist system with the minority Tutsis at the pinnacle. (Watson 3) From the time of colonization, despite representing only 14 percent of the population, the Tutsis dominated the country's power structure until the late 1950's. However, with independence after 1964, the majority Hutus eventually gained control of the country as part of a social revolution. (Watson 4-5) The ensuing ethnic violence at the time resulted in a large-scale exodus of Tutsis to neighboring countries, such as Burundi, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In 1973, Major General Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu, came to power in a coup and a relative calm soon followed. ("UNAMIR--Rwanda Background") However, over time, Tutsi refugees in neighboring countries sought to return to Rwanda and an ongoing border war carried on for close to two decades. An economic crisis in 1986 that hurt the price of coffee and tin, Rwanda's two largest exports, led to further political instability in the nation and renewed border strife from Rwandan refugees living mainly in Uganda. ("Rwanda—Economy") In 1990, a major offensive was launched by the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), Tutsi exiles from Uganda who had been serving in the Ugandan Army. ("Rwanda Civil War") At the same time, the Rwandan economy continued to perform poorly and the World Bank and donor nations threatened to pull funding if Habyarimana, who was still in power, did not agree to a peace settlement. (Dallaire 48) Between 1990 and 1992, a number of ceasefires occurred with the most significant one being signed at Arusha, Tanzania on 22 July 1992. ("UNAMIR—Rwanda Background")

The Arusha Peace Accord in reality consisted of two agreements. The first dealt with the integration of the two armed forces from the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and Rwandan Government Forces (RGF) respectively. ("Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front") The second accord involved the political and civilian power sharing that would occur with the full implementation of the pact, ("Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front") In hindsight it is now apparent that Habyarimana was not committed to the accords and had signed in part to placate the international donor community which was threatening to cut funding to his government. (Dallaire 48) He was also trying to ensure that enough time was available to allow his political and military supporters to become better organized. Rwandan moderates and many diplomats were aware of Habyarimana's motives and thus a UN peacekeeping presence was seen as critical to the success of the Arusha accords. Against this backdrop UNAMIR was deployed to assist in the implementation of the Arusha Accords. (Dallaire 123)

At first, UNAMIR's work in Rwanda ran smoothly. Both the Rwandan Government and the RPF cooperated with UNAMIR and on 10 December 1993, both parties issued a joint declaration of their continued dedication to the implementation of the Arusha Accords. (Dallaire 123) By 30 December 1993, most aspects of phase one of the Accords establishment plan had been achieved and neither the UN Security Council nor UNAMIR had any reason to believe these groups were untrustworthy. However, the absence of a transitional government and Transitional National Assembly slowly began to result in a state of tension and insecurity. In January and February of 1994, there were sporadic riots and killings in Rwanda--early indications of what would later transpire. However, UNAMIR was generally able to retain control over Kigali and maintain the ceasefire agreement. ("UNAMIR—Rwanda Background") UNAMIR continued to prepare for phases two and three.

Everything changed on 6 April 1994. On that day, the plane carrying Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana was shot out of the sky near Kigali, Rwanda. This incident caused severe disorder within Rwanda not only politically, but also socially. Two groups, the Presidential Guard and the Interahamwe militia, appeared to be at the center of the uproar and appeared to be executing a well-crafted plan to kill innocent Tutsi people in the days that followed. What had started with small-scale riots and the killing of a few had quickly turned into major ethnic clashes and genocide. More than 800 000 innocent Rwandan men, women, and children were brutally murdered. People were killed with machetes, women were raped, and children were left as orphans. UNAMIR's inability to control the situation on the ground had resulted in what we now understand is one of the worst genocides in world history.

The Conflict

In order to understand the full impact of the Rwandan genocide, it is important to first understand how it fits into the broader theoretical context of conflict, and is best defined using the criteria of Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist. Specifically his models of conflict, expressed through triangles, help to demonstrate the distinct elements that define conflict, and help one to understand the underlying complexities. (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall 11)

“Galtung sees conflict as a dynamic process in which structure, attitudes and behaviour are constantly changing and influencing one another. As the dynamic develops, it becomes a manifest conflict formation, as parties’ interests clash or the relationship they are in becomes oppressive.” (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall 11) Galtung writes that that all three components must be present in order for conflict to be identified.

The first component, contradictions, can be defined as the most basic causes of conflict, or the incompatibility of the perceived goals of each party. In Rwanda, throughout their rule, Belgian colonial authorities chose to elevate the Tutsi minority to a position of superiority relative to the Hutu majority. (Watson 4-5) The two most negative side-effects of these Belgian directives were first, the imposition of racial stereotyping as a central part of Rwandan society, and second, the creation of bitter adversarial relationships between the Tutsis and Hutus, who had coexisted peacefully prior to colonization. (Ruanda-Urundi: AD 1887-1914). The attitudes component represents various parties “conceptions and misconceptions” (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall 11) of one another; essentially, the relationships between the parties. Both parties were mistrustful of each other, and viewed their own race as superior. Dr. Oche, a senior research fellow at the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, states that in Rwanda there was a clear case of ethnic rivalry, domination and exploitation. (Agada, 27) The final component, behaviours, considers the actual acts of

conflict, the violence or threats that make up the danger of the conflict. In Rwanda, there had been a history of deadly clashes and ethnic strife between the parties for many years.

Galtung's second triangle helps to understand the different types of violence. (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall 11) Direct violence is that which affects people in the most targeted way. In Rwanda, an example of direct violence would be civilians being murdered by other people. Galtung argues that this sort of violence can be altered through changing "conflict behaviours" (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall 11) which in Rwanda would have entailed stopping the Hutus from directly murdering the Tutsis. This also affects the other type of violence, structural violence. An example of this in Rwanda would be orphans dying of malnutrition or hunger because their parents had been killed or could no longer care for them. To combat this type of violence, the direct violence must be eliminated and in so doing, the parameters for this violence will also be eliminated (the causes of structural violence). (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall 11) The last type of violence, the cultural violence, is the justifications for whatever other kinds of violence are occurring in a conflict. This is perhaps the most difficult to change as it involves changing attitudes, not behaviours. This violence also takes the longest to change as it often offsets deeply rooted values of parties. In the case of Rwanda, this would have been the long-established prejudicial attitude of the Hutus that the Tutsis were an arrogant race and needed to be eliminated.

Defining Genocide

While the UN was hesitant to declare the killing in Rwanda a genocide initially, it is now understood that what happened in Rwanda can be defined as such. There is an international legal definition of genocide that was developed at the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide by the 3rd UN General Assembly. ("Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide") Genocide is

defined as the extermination of an entire group of people, whether it is religious, racial, or ethnic. An excerpt from the UN definition (Article II) states that a genocide is a conflict where any one of the following events occur:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
 - (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
 - (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
 - (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
 - (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.
- (UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide)

The UN states that a conflict becomes a genocide if any one of these situations occur. In the case of Rwanda, A, B, and C occurred and to a certain extent E with the exodus of refugees to other countries. By this definition, the conflict was in fact a genocide as these actions were inflicted upon the Tutsis by the Hutus.

Gregory Stanton outlined a framework of genocide that included eight stages, these being classification, symbolization, stigmatization, dehumanization, organization, polarization and increased inequality, preparation and extreme victimization. (Whitehorn) Scholar Dr. Alan Whitehorn would further argue that genocide is "not just an accident of history or bad luck. Genocide is a result of ill will by a powerful group, which has the means of state-sanctioned mass killing". (Whitehorn) It is clear that what happened in Rwanda in 1994 was the final act in a series of events and longstanding attitudes that had been unfolding and developing since the end of colonization by the Belgians and the rise of the Hutus to positions of power in the government. Longstanding inequities and prejudices had led to bitter adversarial relationships between the Hutus and the Tutsis. What occurred was not a random act of violence, but rather a planned and orchestrated event on a grand scale.



An image of the mass graves at the Rwandan Genocide Memorial in Kigali, Rwanda, *taken by the author, March 2012*

The Peacekeeping Force

The UN peacekeeping force that responded to the crisis was guided by the three basic principles that have defined UN peacekeeping operations, those being consent of the parties, impartiality, and the non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. (“United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines”) UNAMIR, the specific mission, was established by Security Council resolution 872 on 5 October 1993 to help implement the Arusha Peace Agreement. (“UNAMIR”) According to the UN, UNAMIR’s mandate was like that of most UN peacekeeping missions and was limited to the following:

To assist in ensuring the security of the capital city of Kigali; monitor the ceasefire agreement, including establishment of an expanded demilitarized zone and demobilization procedures; monitor the security situation during the final period of the transitional Government’s mandate leading up to elections; assist with mine-clearance; and assist in the coordination of humanitarian assistance in conjunction with relief operations. (“UNAMIR—Rwanda Background”)

The mandate for the mission was formed utilizing Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, which limited the mission to using peaceful means to complete their

objective. ("Charter, United Nations, Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression") UNAMIR was headed by Canadian General Roméo Dallaire and the advanced party landed in Kigali in late October 1993 and was operational by 1 November 1993. ("UNAMIR—Rwanda Background") Deployment of the UNAMIR battalion in Kigali, which consisted of troops from Belgium, Bangladesh, Ghana and Tunisia primarily, was completed by early December of 1993. ("UNAMIR—Rwanda Background")

UNAMIR was formed at a time when the UN had already been under considerable stress. The two highest profile missions of the 1990s prior to UNAMIR had been in the former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) and Somalia (UNOSOM I and II) and both had been costly in terms of human lives and money. ("Post Cold-War Surge") Thus, participation in new UN missions was a low priority for many nations including the USA and Canada and one could argue that the UN itself wasn't particularly interested in being drawn into another "civil war." (Dallaire 298) Few countries were willing to meaningfully commit to UNAMIR.

Analysis: The Failure of UNAMIR

When the first UNAMIR troops, arrived in Kigali in October 1993 they had a clear but limiting mandate, and the plan was for the mission to "end following national elections and the installation of a new government in Rwanda." ("UNAMIR—Rwanda Background") Its work to support the Arusha Accords was to occur through four stages. The establishment of the accords should have taken less than eighteen months, but it is clear from what transpired that the mission was flawed from the start, and resulted in failure.

UNAMIR tried valiantly to control the situation on the ground, and worked to alert the UN of the deteriorating situation and to warn of the pending violence.

However, its mandate from the UN simply did not provide any leeway to get further involved in the conflict, and the forces on the ground were severely lacking in resources. (“UNAMIR—Rwanda Background”) Despite several letters and telegrams by Force Commander Dallaire to the UN offices to warn the Security Council of the deteriorating situation in Rwanda and to request personnel and resources, his pleas remained unanswered. (Dallaire 123)

Although many UN missions are underfunded and lack sufficient support, it has never affected a mission so greatly as it did in Rwanda. While the UN may have suspected in advance that UNAMIR was not going to receive all of the resources that had been promised, there was no viable means to ensure compliance. Because funding for missions occurs on a volunteer basis, the resources of UNAMIR could have only arrived if it was a priority of donor nations to send them. (Dorn) While the UN could make promises for resources, it was incumbent on member nations to follow through and the context at the time suggests that peacekeeping nations were already stretched thin.

Not only did Dallaire not receive his reinforcements, but many of his resources were taken away. The UN’s rigid budget and attention to other missions caused Dallaire to receive very little support. Much of his machinery and artillery was broken or unusable. (Dallaire 174) Additionally, the personnel strength of UNAMIR gradually decreased from 2548 personnel on 5 October 1993, to an unreasonable 270 military personnel on 21 April 1994. (“UNAMIR—Rwanda Background”) The Belgian government withdrew its contingent from the UNAMIR peacekeeping force after the death of its peacekeepers, which was another harsh blow to the mission, as it was already understaffed. It was only at this point, in May of 1994, that the UN Security Council finally authorized and sent more soldiers to Rwanda. Unfortunately by this point, it was simply too little, too late.

A further debilitating problem on the ground concerned the composition of the force itself. The official languages in Rwanda are English, French, and Kinyarwanda. (CIA—The World Factbook) Many of the peacekeepers and UN civilian workers could only speak either English or French (or sometimes neither). (Dallaire 218) Thus, in trying to work, and even to answer phones, workers had to translate between languages. (Dallaire 218) This resulted in numerous instances of messages and information being communicated incorrectly which added to the confusion on the ground and in getting accurate information back to the UN. Ideally, every person involved with UNAMIR would have been bilingual in English and French. However, again UNAMIR had no choice but to use the troops that had been offered and was not in a position to be able to demand specific linguistic criteria for the soldiers.

Further, many troops were not ready for combat. The Bangladeshi contingent was particularly useless as its peacekeepers were scared, poorly trained, and poorly equipped. They had not brought any equipment with them. (Dallaire 123-124) Instead of being able to focus on the task at hand, the personnel of UNAMIR had to worry about feeding and housing sometimes thousands of men and had to face situations with ill-equipped and poorly trained soldiers. The effect of this situation could have been prevented however, if the UN had ensured that peacekeepers brought the promised supplies. Many of these contingents were from developing nations however, so the resources they promised likely could not have been realistic and this should have been recognized as such.

However most significant was that the mission lacked a serious political sponsor. The Rwandan mission was not given a lot of attention at the UN Headquarters and it seemed to “slip through the cracks.” As the situation deteriorated in Rwanda, little to no action occurred in New York despite repeated written warnings from Dallaire. (Dallaire 131-132, 166-167, 208) This stemmed from two things: a lack of attention from the Secretary General of the UN, Boutros Boutros Ghali, and a lack of ability to effectively

communicate what was happening on the ground in order to appropriately identify the situation as a genocide, and to therefore affect change. This second issue was attempted, however obviously the messages were never strongly received, as they were never acted upon. There had been warning signs of pending genocide since early January of 1994 and these warnings became more prevalent over the course of the year leading up to the assassination of President Habyarimana. (Dallaire 330) However, at the time, officials avoided the use of the word "genocide" as there was general confusion because of other conflicts occurring at the same time in Africa, and it would have incited a legal obligation to respond using Chapter VII of the Charter of the UN rather than Chapter VI. (Dallaire 419)

Once the UN finally declared genocide, the first priority became the evacuation of foreigners and non-essential UN personnel, rather than working to establish and maintain peace on the ground in Kigali. (Dallaire 150) Embassies, corporations, and families were sending requests directly to the UN requesting the evacuation of their citizens, coworkers, and family members and this was a huge distraction for the mission on the ground. A rapid response team from the UN to deal with the expanded priorities could have helped to better manage the crisis as it unfolded.

However, there was no "rapid response" mechanism in the UN. In a crisis such as Rwanda, when there was a time component to the emergency, the UN simply could not come to a consensus and make decisions quickly enough to affect change. This also contributed to the lack of control achieved in Kigali, as Dallaire could not divert from his original mandate, and he had to watch thousands of innocent people die as his mission could not physically intervene. The implementation of a rapid response unit at the UN would have significantly enhanced the ability of a large bureaucratic institution to be more nimble in situations of extreme violence endangering human life.

After this initial stage, the second priority of the UN was to avoid being drawn in to a civil conflict even further. This problem could have been avoided if there was more foreign media in Rwanda. Very few messages, aside from the reports from Dallaire, were issued from Kigali. In hindsight, if foreign press members had been present for the outbreak of genocide, word would have emerged sooner and pressure from the international community would have forced the UN to react more quickly and effectively. It can be argued that an expanded presence in Rwanda would have alerted the world sooner to the atrocities that were unfolding, and forced the UN to act more meaningfully had CNN or the BBC been active on the ground. Although it wasn't possible at the time, one wonders what role modern social networking could have had in helping the world, and the UN, to better understand the situation on the ground.

Conclusion

It is apparent that UNAMIR was plagued by many significant problems and faced an inability to create meaningful change. While most of the problems could perhaps have been predicted given more time and study, mostly they were not easily preventable given the pressures of the time. However, most important was the failure of the UN to champion the mission and to recognize the crisis as genocide. Earlier recognition could have lessened the extreme extent of it by getting more peacekeepers and supports in place quickly, with a stronger mandate to physically intervene.

History has shown us that what unfolded in 1994 was not a spontaneous event, but rather a process that had been unfolding and developing for many years. It seems that the outbreak of genocide was inevitable because of longstanding feuds and civil issues in the country. It is unlikely that the UN or any organization could have completely stopped or reversed the momentum that led to the killing of so many because of the complexities of the political, social and ethnic situation at the time. However, the toll on human lives could have been greatly reduced had the United



Nations and UNAMIR acted more effectively and taken a more significant role in stopping the conflict behaviours and direct violence at the time. Changing the underlying social and political fabric that led to the genocide would have to be left to the country and governmental reconciliation.

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