

Glossary

atrocities

Extremely cruel and brutal acts that cause harm.

Butare

A city in the southern province of Rwanda, close to the Burundian border, where the Seminega family lived in 1994 at the start of the genocide.

cockroach

An insulting label that was used as propaganda by Hutu Power supporters to make Tutsi seem less than human.

colonial

A colony is an area, or a population, that is controlled by another country. Belgium exercised colonial control over Rwanda, starting in 1916, until Rwanda became an independent country in 1962.

deprivation

The denial or lack of something that is considered a basic human need: such as food, clothing, shelter and /or education.

despot

A ruler who has absolute power and rules in a way that is cruel and unfair.

diaspora

A group of people who are forced to live outside the area where they, or their ancestors, had lived for a long time.

ethnic/ethnicity

A term that is used to define a group of people with a shared culture. This can include their language, social customs, religion, music, food, geographic region and/or way of life. It is often used interchangeably to refer to race.

exile

When a person or a group of people are forced to leave their homeland and go live in a foreign place, without the possibility of returning.

extremist

A person or group of people that hold extreme opinions and encourage extreme action.

génocidaire

A person who takes part in supporting or committing acts of genocide.

genocide

The systematic and deliberate killing of people belonging to a specific racial, political or cultural group.

Hutu

The majority of the population in Rwanda. They were mostly farmers and did manual labor. Physically, they are shorter, stocky and dark-skinned with wide facial features.

Hutu Power

A racist movement supported by Hutu extremists. They taught that Hutu are superior to Tutsi and that all Tutsi must be eliminated.

Ibyitso

In Kinyarwanda the word literally means “a relay,” “an intermediary,” “a resting place,” or “a communication point.” A label that was applied to those that were accused of providing information to the RPF.

indoctrination

To teach a person to fully accept the ideas, beliefs and opinions of a particular group, and to ignore all other beliefs.

Inkotanyi

A Kinyarwanda word that was used to designate the RPF.

Interahamwe

A word in Kinyarwanda meaning “those who attack together.” It came to be applied to the Rwandan Hutu civilian youth militia that were instrumental in carrying out the genocide.

Kinyarwanda

The language spoken in Rwanda.

machete

A large heavy knife that is typically used for cutting plants and can be used as a weapon.

maelstrom

A situation where there are a lot of confused emotions and activities.

marginalize

To make an individual or group of people within a society powerless and unimportant.

militia

A group of people who are organized, trained and armed like soldiers, but are not part of the military armed forces of a country.

propaganda

The deliberate spreading of ideas or statements that are often false or exaggerated, for the purpose of helping or injuring a person or a group of people.

RPF

Rwandan Patriotic Front or Tutsi rebel army, formed by Tutsi living in exile.

RTLM

“*La Radio Télévision Libre des Milles Collines*” or Thousand Hills Radio and Television. The extremist Hutu Power radio station that served to spread anti-Tutsi propaganda.

Save

A village in the southern province of Rwanda where the Seminega family was hidden in a goat shack.

Shyanda

A small community where local government buildings were temporarily used as a survivors' camp.

supremacist

A person who believes and promotes the idea that one group of people is superior to all others and they should dominate.

Tutsi

Related to the royal line. They were cattle herders and landowners who accumulated wealth and political power. Physically, they are tall, thin and light-skinned with fine facial features.

Twa

The minority of the population. They were hunter-gatherers, lived in the forests and were skilled basket makers and potters. Physically, they are the shortest and have the darkest skin with wide noses.

uburetwa

Forced, un-paid labor imposed by the Belgian colonial authorities. Tutsi were often used to supervise the Hutu workers.

zealots

People who are intensely or excessively devoted to a cause, and try to convince others to have those same feelings.