



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

September 24, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: The U.S. Response to the Burundi Tragedy

Between April 29 and the end of July, serious ethnic violence flared in Burundi. The United States during this period, both in Burundi and outside, made strong efforts to awaken African and international concern and to encourage relief to those affected.

What Actually Happened

Elements of the majority Hutu ethnic group plotted to overthrow the minority Tutsi regime. The Hutus struck in various localities on April 29, killing several thousand Tutsis. The Tutsi army with superior firepower quickly mastered the Hutu dissidents. A wave of reprisals followed, resulting in the deaths of more than 100,000 Hutus, and approximately 60,000 Hutu refugees in neighboring Rwanda, Zaire and Tanzania. (Burundi has a population of 3.6 million.)

Some of the killing was spontaneous with Tutsis attacking their Hutu neighbors. A great deal of the killing, however, was done by the government in a calculated manner designed to eliminate present and future Hutu leadership. The Tutsis clearly gave vent to their deepest fears of being eliminated as an ethnic group. Tutsis in Burundi have long been afraid of the kind of Hutu revolt which destroyed the Tutsis of Rwanda in 1959.

One of our major concerns was the safety of 150 U.S. missionaries who chose to stay with their parishoners, most of whom were Hutus. Despite the

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E.O. 12958, Sect. 3.6

By thm/bw NARA, Date 11/29/99

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E.O. 12958, as amended
April 21, 2005

... and so, we favor our reader
with a translation.


K -

This is one of the most cynical, callous reactions of a great government to a terrible human tragedy I have ever seen. When Paks try to put down a rebellion in East Pakistan, the world screams. When Indians kill a few thousand Paks, no one cares. Biafra stirs us because of Catholics; the Israeli Olympics because of Jews; the North Vietnam bombings ~~stir us~~ because of Communist leanings in our establishment. But when 100,000 (one-third of all the people of a black country) are murdered, we say and do nothing because we must not make blacks look bad (except, of course, when Catholic blacks are killed).

I do not buy this double standard. Tell the weak sisters in the African Bureau of State to give a recommendation as to how we can at least show moral outrage. And let's begin by calling back our Ambassador immediately for consultation. Under no circumstances will I appoint a new Ambassador to present credentials to these butchers.

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*I do not buy this
kind of standard - till
the work is done in the system
of the government*

There is no evidence that the PRC or USSR have played any role in Burundi, or that they seek to profit from the situation.

The outlook for the future seems bleak. Reconciliation between the Hutus and Tutsis seems impossible, and it is hard to imagine a stable situation before the majority Hutus prevail, as they have in neighboring Rwanda.

Our own interests in Burundi are microscopic (we buy some coffee). We have 150 citizens there, mostly missionaries. There has never been any threat to the safety of Europeans, whose protection the Burundi Government assured to avoid outside intervention.

It is present US policy to give humanitarian assistance to Burundi if we can assure its distribution to all the population. Otherwise, we are assisting refugees outside the country.

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H-
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Communist leaning in our establishment
But when 100,000 (1/3 of all the people of a black
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*Look what we must get made blank
because we must get what Catholic blacks are killed*

*outgoing Babu begin by
calling for our withdrawal for immortality for
small film. and why we should
not be in Burundi for 20 years*

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DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES