

Sexual Violence During The 1994 Genocide Of Tutsis In Rwanda

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CARINE'S STORY

- Carine was in her twenties when she was raped by men who were dragging bodies into a pit from a mass killing, they just committed within a school
- She suffered two wounds from a machete attack on her face that still affects her to this day from the male assailants during her rape
- Carine tried to fight, but after being raped with sticks and trees and being attacked and bitten by another group, she wanted to die
- Carine's rapes resulted in a pregnancy in which she had no love for her child while her family wanted Carine to give up the child
- Carine received therapy and counseling from international groups to cope with the long-standing trauma from the sexual violence

Sexual Violence During the Genocide

- These acts of violence and systematic rape towards Tutsi women were directed by Hutu leaders at both local and national levels, aiming to further their goals during the genocide.
- Hutu perpetrators who knowingly had HIV would rape women to spread the disease, causing a delayed death for Tutsi women.
- During sexual assault, Hutu perpetrators would mutilate parts on women that looked "Tutsi" such as long fingers or noses.
- Tutsi women faced rape, rape with objects such as sharp sticks, gang rape, sexual mutilation, sexual slavery and murder by Hutu extremists.



Carine a survivor of sexual violence during the Rwandan Genocide with her son who was a result of sexual violence.

Statistics

- Over 800,000 Tutsis are estimated to have been killed in just 100 days during the genocide
- Between 150,000- 250,000 women were estimated to have been victims of sexual violence
- In 1994, Rwanda had over 7 million people out of which 85% of the population were of Hutu ethnicity, 14% of the population were of Tutsi ethnicity and 1% of the population were of the Twa ethnicity

Abstract: Genocidal Context of Rape

The 1994 Genocide in Rwanda devastated the Tutsi community. Both Hutus and the Rwandan National Guard used sexual violence as a form of a genocidal tactic to destroy the Tutsi community. Hutu perpetrators degrade Tutsi women and terrorize the Tutsi community, leaving women with physiological trauma and unwanted pregnancies. Hutu perpetrators also used rape to dehumanize and weaken the Tutsi community and to further their political goals during the genocide. The sexual violence was worsened by the negative stigma surrounding rape in Rwanda and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The general public in Rwanda looked down upon unmarried and pregnant women. This led Tutsi women to either induce dangerous self managed abortions, abandon or kill their babies that were conceived through rape. Organizations such as Pro-Femme and the Association of Genocide Widows provide medical and psychological help to Tutsi women, as they campaign and advocate on their behalf. Even with this assistance, Tutsis are still trying to rebuild their community and find peace three decades after the genocide.

THE AFTERMATH

- Since abortion is illegal in Rwanda, many survivors attempted at home abortions which would result in severe medical consequences
- Tutsi women would often abandon babies conceived through rape, or even kill them, as they served as a reminder to their past trauma.
- Counseling has been an important part in helping Tutsi women overcome and accept the trauma that occurred during the genocide.
- Organizations such as the ProFemmes organization and The Foundation of Rwanda Programme have given Tutsi survivors of rape an outlet for comfort, peace, and community.

RAPE STIGMA IN RWANDA

- In Rwandan society, rape carries a heavy social stigma.
- Should a Rwandan woman choose to publicly speak out about rape, it could likely be seen as an embarrassment to her family.
- Due to this stigma, many Tutsi women did not seek out medical treatment for sexual violence they had been subjected
- When Tutsi women survivors of rape would speak out, they were often not respected and were compared to prostitutes by different citizens for the rapes committed against them and which left them suffering in silence.