

## **Box 10: Minutes from the impromptu meeting of officers of the high command of the FAR on the night of 6-7 April 1994**

The reconstruction of this meeting based on testimonies by several of its participating members<sup>1</sup> results in the following account of the course of the night:

“During the thirty minutes that followed the attack, Major Gérard Ntamagezo, holding a permanence at the headquarters, warned the duty officer at the Ministry of Defense, Lieutenant Colonel Cyprien Kayumba, who inquired the facts to Colonel Félicien Muberuka, commander of the Kanombe camp and commander of operations for the city of Kigali. The latter confirmed that the presidential plane had exploded and that a team had gone to research on site.

Alone at the Minadef, Cyprien Kayumba unsuccessfully tried to reach Colonel Bagosora at home. He then went to the headquarters, where he found Major Gerard Ntamagezo, Lieutenant-Colonel Emmanuel Kanyandekwe, Colonel Joseph Murasompongo and Lieutenant-Colonel Jean-Bosco Ruhorahoza. Soon after came General Augustin Ndindiliyimana<sup>2</sup>, followed by Major Nzuwonemeye.

As the group entered the General Staff meeting room, Colonel Théoneste Bagosora arrived next, followed by Lieutenant-Colonels Augustin Rwamanywa, Paul Rwarakabije and Jean-Marie Vianney Ndahimana. Around 10 pm, the heads of Unamir, General Roméo Dallaire and Colonel Luc Marchal, presented themselves, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Ephrem Rwabalinda, liaison officer with Unamir. Colonel Balthazar Ndengeyinka joined the group soon after learning that such a meeting was held at the headquarters. Interspersed with moves and more or less rapid appearances of some of its members (Colonels Félicien Muberuka and Léonidas Rusatira), the meeting ended around 3-4 am.

Several officers then went home to change and prepare before resuming their duty. Gerard Ntamagezo, Emmanuel Kanyandekwe and Jean-Bosco Ruhorahoza alone remained at the headquarters. Cyprien Kayumba returned as soon as 5:30 am, after hearing from Gerard Ntamagezo of the first shots fired in the city center and in Kimihurura, where the Presidential Guard was installed. These shots supposedly came from the Presidential Guard unit protecting the presidential residence (located below Saint Michael's Cathedral), which would have moved to the nearby home of Prime Minister in order to prevent her from reaching Radio Rwanda where she aimed at recording an official statement<sup>3</sup>. Among the shooting, a shot of an armored vehicle (probably of the Presidential Guard) would have been clearly identified<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Especially from a note prepared, focused and read by Lt. Col. Cyprien Kayumba.

<sup>2</sup> The latter arriver around 9 pm. Taking note of the absence of Colonel Bagosora, he asked to join him on his radio network. Bagosora arrived in the next ten minutes (testimony of Augustin Ndindiliyimana collected by Filip Reyntjens, Brussels, 8 March 1995).

<sup>3</sup> “The next day [7 April], very early in the morning, I received another phone call from the First Minister, Mrs. Uwilingiyimana, telling me she was having troubles reaching the radio station for a public statement on the accident. She also told me that she was trying to summon a Council of Ministers, that we were to meet soon after and that I was to remain tuned, as she would call me back. She never did. » (testimony of Justin Mugenzi, Bizimungu *et alii* trial, ICTR, 8 November 2005, p. 44).

<sup>4</sup> See also the testimony of Colonel Balthazar Ndengeyinka before the Brussels Court of Assizes judging Major Bernard Ntuyahaga: “Then the witness said he left around 4 am, once ensuring a duty officer on the phone. He lived close to the ESM at the corner of Avenues Paul VI and Nyarugunga. Around 5 am, he was awakened by gunshots and phoned the duty officer, Cyprien Kayumba, who allegedly informed him as follows: “It is we who

Around 6:00 to 6:30, the shots broadened with the launching of massacres organized by the Presidential Guard. Cyprien Kayumba then contacted Théoneste Bagosora to alert him. Several officers present that night came back to get information from the headquarters. Colonel Bagosora organized a briefing to debate of the PG issue and orders an action.

Cyprien Kayumba, officer in duty “summoned everyone at 7 am for Staff briefing”. The group decided to seek the “Recce” battalion, in charge of the protection of sensitive sites, “to counter these elements.” Several officers stopped by to inquire at the Headquarters before taking their service at 7 am at Minadef. Some succeeded, others were prevented by fire shots. All sought to learn more about the events. General Ndindiliyimana arrived at the end of the briefing, but Colonel Bagosora informed of the measures taken to control the situation.”