

### **Box 3: Ghosts of the 1980 coup d'état**

Before the 1 October, 1990 attack, the first blow dealt on President Habyarimana was General Secretary Alexis Kanyarengwe, former n° 2 man of the Committee for Peace and National Unity rallying the RPF. In 1987, on the recommendation of Charles Shamukiga (Tutsi, Byumba), honorary Consul of Luxemburg, and the contractor Damien Sebera (Tutsi, Butare), Alexis Kanyarengwe was contacted by Fred Rwigyema's envoys, who persuaded him to collaborate with the RPF in gestation. In mid-September 1990, Aloysia Inyumba, member of the RPF Central Committee and a pro-RPF trader named Kalimba, were dispatched to Dar es-Salaam to request him to travel to Kampala. Alexis Kanyarengwe personally informed Juvenal Habyarimana who didn't react to the news. Kanyarengwe thus answered favorably to the requests and was then appointed Vice-President of the RPF, deputy to Fred Rwigyema, on 28 September, 1990, two days before the first RPF attack. After the suspicious death of Fred Rwigyema, Paul Kagame who was then trying to impose himself as leader of the rebellion inducted him, with the endorsement of President Museveni, as the President of the movement on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1990. This appointment of President Habyarimana's implacable rival to head the Tutsi rebellion, despite his notoriety as an ethnic activist, was a stunning blow to the President of Rwanda, who saw the specter of a coalition of high-ranking Officers assembling traitors from the 1980 coup d'état.

That scenario turned into a nightmare when, during its 23 January, 1991 offensive, the RPF snatched two of the most infamous political prisoners of the Second Republic from the Ruhengeri prison. i.e. Major Théoneste Lizinde (Hutu, *Gisenyi*) and Commander Stanislas Biseruka (Hutu, *Gisenyi*), also arrested and imprisoned during the "Lizinde affair" in 1980. In July, 1991, three months after their release, the three Officers were recruited into the Rwandan Patriotic Army Headquarters (RPA), implemented since January in Byumba, where Lizinde resumed his intelligence activities as Adviser to «Chairman» Paul Kagame (See Annex 3). By admitting Kanyarengwe and Lizinde into its ranks, the RPF re-introduced into the national political game a potential for such deadly destabilization that it took on an irrational dimension that reached its peak when the Protocol to the Arusha Accord on the Army (signed in August 1993 and which included the sharing of positions in the General Staff of the new Rwandan Army) (re)admitted the two felons into the RPF quotas.

It will be noted that another Gisenyi Hutu personality, Pasteur Bizimungu, former General Manager of Électrogaz, was so incensed by the patronage system that he went on exile to Uganda in August, 1990, before promptly joining the RPF and playing a major role in the RPF delegation to the negotiations. Those defections raised many questions notably among the Tutsi population that had been disoriented by the turn the war and the alliances formed were taking. They undeniably reinforced the Tutsi inside militants' preventions towards the RPF, and prompted them, initially at least, to engage in internal opposition parties.