

Letter to supervisor

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Date: 5 December 2024

Professor Doctor Andreas Eckert,
Berlin / Germany.

Dear Professor Eckert,

I had promised to send you an email with the text of my oral presentation at the DAAD midterm event of our program German Colonial Rule (GCR) of 13 November 2024 at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin with some personal comments, but I finally decided to write you a more formal letter.

I'm doing this to give you an overview of the event and my performance because you were absent, hoping that for similar events to come, you can be with us. I have indeed learned with great joy that the administrative court has overturned the decision of Humboldt University to suspend you. So, I hope that you will be reinstated very soon in your role as my supervisor.¹ My report will be limited to the circumstances which surrounded my presentation: a small incident which preceded it; the reactions it provoked; as well as my personal reflections.

As you can notice on the event program in the attachment, my presentation was the penultimate of the day. I had already taken a seat in the middle and my colleague who was to give her presentation after me in another seat on the far left of the table. A lady from the Foreign Office who was assisting in the projection of the PowerPoint documents had already displayed the cover page of my presentation and I was about to speak when suddenly, one of your DAAD German supervisory colleagues addressed a few words in German to the moderator. The latter immediately politely asked me to exchange places with my colleague so that she could make her presentation before mine. We complied, but personally, I did not directly understand the reasons for this change.

It was only moments later that I began to understand, seeing a gentleman walk in and take a seat next to the German professor who had asked for my presentation to wait. The gentleman in question had introduced himself to me earlier during the coffee break as being the head of the desk comprising Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at the Federal Foreign Office. I then told him that in October I had

¹ The writing of my letter began on 19 November 2024. After a long interruption, it was resumed and completed on 3 and 4 December 2024. During this interruption, I received correspondence from the faculty indicating to me that '*for your doctorate: You can choose whether you would like to continue your doctorate with Prof. Eckert as supervisor and reviewer of your dissertation again*'.

sent a petition relating to the conflict in the DRC to world leaders through their diplomatic representations in New York, and I told myself that it must certainly have already landed on his desk. He told me he hadn't received it. My colleague finished her presentation and we exchanged places again so that I could do mine (see the text of my presentation below, **appendix 1**). The reactions that followed my presentation constitute another important moment that should be briefly recounted to you.

My DAAD international supervisor, Professor Joseph Gahama was the first to speak. He noted that the first chapter of my thesis will be very important in understanding the cause of violence and conflict in our region, and of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994. He recommended me to analyze colonial racialism by placing it in epistemological and historical perspective. He thus evoked the ideology of races in the writings of authors such as Hegel, Darwin, and De Gobineau. He also pointed out that we often forget that it was in the 1930s, when Nazism was at its peak in Germany and fascism in Italy, that the populations of our region were classified into distinct races, and that it was not until the 1960s that institutionalized racism ended in the United States of America.

Professor Gahama's intervention was followed by three others: that of my colleague (doctoral student) Philemon Mtoi from Tanzania; that of my other post-doctoral colleague Reymond N. Budi from Cameroon; and finally, that of the German professor who had asked that my presentation wait. Mr. Budi would later confirm to me that it was his supervisor. Mr. Mtoi asked me if my thesis was not more likely to validate and encourage fighting between ethnic groups after colonization. Mr. Budi for his part indicated in an even more peremptory tone that the mention of anti-Tutsi racism in my presentation suggested that I am myself a Mututsi who takes the side of his ethnic group and that consequently, there was no professionalism in my thesis. My response to the two colleagues was that it was a misconception to believe that there is fighting between ethnic groups in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region of Africa. Rather, there exists a racist and genocidal ideology that we can objectify, analyze, combat and eradicate so that there can be peace in our region. I added that reasonable and ethical people do the same analysis as myself; that Bahutu colleagues in Rwanda and even Congolese in Kinshasa make the same analysis as me, and that it was a base judgment to consider me as someone who takes the side of an ethnic group.

With the German professor, the exchange was longer: he declared in his first intervention that if there was a subject so much researched in recent years on the African continent, it was the genocide in Rwanda, thus suggesting that my research topic was perhaps a bit of too much! I responded that it was true that the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda had given rise to abundant production in different fields of research, but that none had until now dealt with the racist and genocidal ideology of colonial inspiration as the main cause of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and of the violence and instability throughout the Great Lakes region as I intended to do in my thesis.

He then objected to me that I was straying from the scope of our GCR program. I replied to him that when I submitted my application with my research proposal in response to the call for applications of DAAD for the

GCR program, I had expressly requested to be authorized to explore the colonial (and even neocolonial) phenomenon in Rwanda in its whole.

He finally suggested that I could, for example, have limited my thesis on the role of Missionaries of Africa (aka White Fathers) in this ideology, especially since in my presentation I mentioned some of their archives, which until now were little known to the public. I responded to him that the racist and genocidal ideology of colonial inspiration in our region is a phenomenon that needs to be studied in its entirety to try to have a more complete understanding rather than studying it by compartmentalization. I reminded him that Rwanda had been colonized by the Germans, then by Belgium, with European missionaries of several nationalities; and that the racist and genocidal ideology that they had created and implemented had flourished after independence until the genocide against the Tutsi of 1994 in which another European power, France, had been involved; and that this ideology had even spread throughout the entire region. I added that even my new DAAD co-supervisor Professor Doctor Ulrike Lindner who happened to be the moderator of my presentation session had suggested to me in the past that I limit my research to Rwanda, but I told her that the racist and genocidal ideology that I study had regional ramifications which themselves continue to have spiraling effects on Rwanda.

At the beginning of my exchange with the German professor, I noticed that the gentleman in charge of the desk including Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC at the Foreign Office was energetically waving his arms in a sign of support for the professor seated next to him, and certainly a protest against the content of my presentation. But as I continued to respond to the professor and explain to him, I think he calmed down because I didn't notice him anymore.

The reaction of this official as well as that of the professor and my two colleagues to my presentation inspired me to make a certain number of reflections. The first is that evoking the racist and genocidal anti-Tutsi ideology of colonial inspiration as the cause of the genocide in Rwanda and of the violence and instability in the Great Lakes region disturbs, and that many people still react spontaneously and sometimes violently by wanting to silence such analysis. The questions from the professor and my colleagues were, in my opinion, ideologically motivated rather than being inspired by academic wisdom. The attitude of the official from the Federal Foreign Office also seemed strange to me, and I wonder more and more whether I should revise my initial judgment that *'the Minister of State's address'* at the launch event of the GCR program on 17 October 2022 was *'powerful and sincere'*. I sent her a letter (see **appendix 2**) in view of a round table that she was organizing on *'addressing the colonial past'* to draw her attention to *'the racist and genocidal ideology of colonial inspiration which is responsible for violence and instability in the Great Lakes region of Africa'* as one of the topics so far underexposed or quite simply never addressed in the debate, but I was surprised to see that the subject was not mentioned even once during the round table which lasted two and a half hours or even

mentioned on the list of *'the most important topics and fields of action for coming to grips with the colonial past'* established following the online survey carried out with her letter of invitation.²

The second reflection is my determination to continue research and gradually share the results despite resistance and hostilities, hoping to contribute to a better understanding of the major challenges of our region and perhaps also, to one day put an end to the suffering of the populations. And on this point, I would like to share with you an exchange that I had with my son Victor after the publication of my petition to world leaders on the conflict in the DRC³, and these will be the final words.

Victor:

'Hello dad,

I tried to read your article even though it is long and I found it reliable because it contains facts that people can double-check and confirm, and it is clear about the problem in the DRC.

*But I saw that there seems to be a disagreement with the German ambassador to the DRC. Have you first assessed the consequences this could bring to you?'*⁴

Me:

'Hello Victor,

Thank you so much!

What the German ambassador to DRC said was wrong, and when I am going to expose lies, I do not first look at the consequences.

*The first obligation is to serve the truth, and for the rest, entrust myself to the protection of God. And even if there are consequences, I prefer to bear them rather than suppress the truth when it can free many people.'*⁵

Best regards!

Privat.

² The meeting convened by the Minister of State was under Chatham House Rule which stipulates that *'participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed'*. However, you can say *'within a report what you said at a meeting under the Rule if you wish to do so'*. The letter to the Minister of State was my contribution to the round table *'in preparation for the event'* as requested in her invitation letter. I am therefore authorized to publish it.

³ See Privat Rutazibwa, *'Petition for the dissolution of the United Nations and the prosecution of certain personalities and their associates for the crime of genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo'*, 21 October 2024, *AfricArxiv*. <https://doi.org/10.60763/africarxiv/1583>.

⁴ Victor Rutazibwa, email message in Kinyarwanda of 5 November 2024.

⁵ Privat Rutazibwa, email message in Kinyarwanda of 6 November 2024.

Appendix 1.

**'NOT ALL WHITE PEOPLE ARE BAD':
RACIALISM AND GENOCIDE OF THE WEST IN
RWANDA SINCE COLONIZATION**

State of progress and overview of the doctoral research project

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Presentation at the midterm event of the programme 'New Perspectives on German Colonial Rule – A Scholarship Programme for Cooperative Research', 13 November 2024 at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin [[oral presentation](#)]

State of progress of the research project

As shown in the PowerPoint document (content in yellow below), my thesis will be composed of a general introduction, five chapters and a general conclusion. For the moment, a good part of the draft of the general introduction is available. I have also already published four articles whose content corresponds roughly to chapters three, four and five. Some elements of these published articles will also be incorporated into chapters one and two. The Doctoral Degree Regulations of our faculty allow to submit a thesis with published and unpublished parts, and I took steps with my department to obtain the necessary clarifications and authorizations.

Progress of thesis work as of October 2024

Thesis title

**“Not all White people Are Bad”:
Racialism and Genocide of the West in Rwanda since Colonization**

General Introduction

There is a 21-page draft

Chapter one

Colonization of Africa and colonial racism in Rwanda

Parts of articles 1, 2 and 4 apply here

Chapter Two

Hamitic Hypothesis in Rwanda and its application to society in colonial time

Parts of articles 1, 2 and 4 apply here

Chapter three

Birth of the ideology of Hutu supremacy towards the end of colonization: the beginning of the genocide against the Tutsi

Article 1.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369428158> The genocide against the Tutsi the establishment of the genocidal policies since 1959

Chapter four

Hutu supremacy ideology and its instrumentalization as discrimination and genocide against the Tutsi from independence to 1994

Article 2.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378032542> RWANDA HOW THE POST-INDEPENDENCE REGIMES FROM 1962 TO 1994 WERE NEO-COLONIAL RACIST AND GENOCIDAL

Chapter five

Anti-Tutsi racism in the region (and in the world) from 1959 to date

Article 3.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371860650> Discussing the causes and context of wars and conflict involving the Banyarwanda from the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

Article 4.

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385133535> Petition for the dissolution of the United Nations and the prosecution of certain personalities and their associates for the crime of genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo/stats

General conclusion

Overview of the research topic

The topic of my doctoral research is about **colonial racialism and its consequences in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region of Africa**. My presentation at the launch event of this program in October 2022 mainly focused on the object of the research, the methodology and the state of research on the subject. At the second workshop of the GCR program in November last year in Bonn, I spoke about work in the archives, fieldwork in Rwanda and other activities carried out up to that date. Today I will provide an overview of some elements of the content.⁶

Western knowledge production on Africa and Rwanda created the Hamitic hypothesis, the Hutu supremacy ideology and the anti-Tutsi racism whose false postulates resulted into discrimination, political violence and genocide, and continue to negatively influence the perception and policies on Rwanda and the Great Lakes region of Africa at large where they continue to fuel violence.

At first contact with the Great Lakes region, the Europeans implemented the Hamitic hypothesis which *'states that everything of value ever found in Africa was brought there by the Hamites, allegedly a branch of the Caucasian race'*.⁷ According to the first explorers and missionaries, *'it was in Urundi and mainly in Ruanda'* that the Hamites identified to the Batutsi *'gave their full measure and founded empires bearing a particular mark'*.⁸

Africa was therefore *'a continent which knew empire builders at a time when large areas of Europe stagnated in the Dark Ages'* as Edith Sanders recalls.⁹ But since modern racism established a hierarchy between the races, such achievement and other traces of 'civilization' could not be the work of the Blacks. The authors were the Hamites, of the 'Caucasian race', therefore of white and foreign origin. And it is here that

⁶ This overview largely includes extracts from the author's last publication (Privat Rutazibwa, 'Petition for the dissolution of the United Nations and the prosecution of certain personalities and their associates for the crime of genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo'. (2024). *AfricArxiv*. <https://doi.org/10.60763/africarxiv/1583>), formally citing other sources only.

⁷ Edith R. Sanders, 'The Hamitic Hypothesis; Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective', *The Journal of African History* 10, 4 (1969), pp. 521-532.

⁸ Louis de Lacger (du clergé d'Albi), *Ruanda. Première partie. Le Ruanda ancien* (Kabgayi, 1959), p. 58.

⁹ Sanders, 'The Hamitic Hypothesis', p. 531.

the first attempt is made to delegitimize traditional Rwandan power, wrongly identified as exclusively Tutsi, therefore Hamite and of foreign origin.

However, while being of the 'Caucasian race', the Batutsi nevertheless remained Black, therefore an integral part of the 'white man's burden', and had to be civilized by the White colonizers and missionaries. It is at this level that the ambiguities and tensions appear in the relations between Westerners on the one hand and traditional Rwandan power and the Batutsi in general with whom it is wrongly conflated on the other hand. These ambiguities and tensions are at the origin of a problematic collaboration and a muted anti-Tutsi racism which attempted a new delegitimization of traditional Rwandan power by accusing it of being an oppressive power of the Tutsi minority on the Hutu majority, and sometimes, displayed a clear desire to destroy this power and the Batutsi with whom it is generally identified.¹⁰

Some representatives of Germany whose protectorate over Rwanda started in 1897 were considering to 'destroy the power of the Watusi' in the beginning,¹¹ but had to quickly temper this violent hostility against traditional power and the Batutsi by simple opportunism because they were very poor in personnel and therefore measured the importance of having a strong indigenous power in Rwanda for the effectiveness of their indirect rule. The Belgian colonial administration under the mandate of the League of Nations after the defeat of Germany in the First World War and later under the trusteeship of the United Nations maintained this policy in broad terms, further ethnicizing the indigenous administration in favor of a few Batutsi. But the hatred and anti-Tutsi racism of Europeans did not disappear.

It was at the beginning of the 1950s and especially between 1959 and 1963 that hatred and anti-Tutsi racism of the Westerners resurfaced with great intensity and this time, with genocidal violence. If in the initial period, anti-Tutsi racism associated with the Hamitic ideology served the attempt to delegitimize and destroy Rwandan traditional power that the Westerners had found in place, in the years 1951-1963, it will serve the project of delegitimization and destruction of Rwandan nationalists who were demanding independence, all against a backdrop of genocide supervised by the Belgian colonial administration against the Batutsi as a group, once again improperly identified with political actors that the colonizers and Catholic missionaries did not want.¹²

In their propaganda, missionaries and colonialists presented the nationalists as Tutsi wishing to maintain minority and oppressive rule. The overall strategy aimed to prolong, if not colonial rule, in any case the influence of the colonial power, missionaries and settlers after nominal independence, by relying on the number, -the Hutu majority- according to a very particular interpretation of democracy, and in the name of a so-called social justice. The latent anti-Tutsi racism described above in the first phase of colonization under the triumph of the Hamitic ideology which officially exalted the Mututsi, was now expressed in a blatant manner under the triumph of the new ideology of Hutu supremacy, as a violent and genocidal anti-Tutsi racism.

The article titled 'The genocide against the Tutsi: the establishment of the genocidal policies since 1959' published in 2023 shows that 'Belgian colonial administration started the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1959' and calls into question the ethics of researchers and other writers who have since then imposed the narrative of a so-called social revolution in Rwanda. 'Many authors have proliferated in the ideological wake of the "Rwandan revolution" to this day, and they made and still make the apology for this genocide. History will simply remember them as criminal scholars.'¹³ The Catholic missionaries of Africa (aka White Fathers) had a decisive influence during this period as revealed by sources (some of their archives and Rwandan oral testimonies) which until now were little known to the public. Extensive quotations from a number of them can be found in the document titled 'Petition for the dissolution of the United Nations and the prosecution of certain personalities and their associates for the crime of genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo' published in October this year.¹⁴

¹⁰ See Privat Rutazibwa, 'Rwanda: how the post-independence regimes from 1962 to 1994 were neo-colonial, racist and genocidal'. *AfricArxiv*. (2024). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10628654>.

¹¹ Copie de la lettre du Docteur Richard Randt du 7 juin 1899 à Mgr Gerboin, A.G.M. Afr., N° 100164-100165; in Stefaan Minnaert, *Premier Voyage de Mgr Hirth au Rwanda (de novembre 1899 à février 1900)*. *Contribution à l'étude de la fondation de l'église catholique au Rwanda* (Editions rwandaises, Kigali, 2006), p. 511.

¹² For the genocidal role of Belgian colonial rule in Rwanda, see two previous articles: Privat Rutazibwa, 'The genocide against the Tutsi: the establishment of the genocidal policies since 1959'. (2023). <https://doi.org/10.21428/3b2160cd.f58c1e1a>; and Rutazibwa, 'Rwanda: how the post-independence regimes'.

¹³ See Rutazibwa, 'The genocide against the Tutsi'.

¹⁴ See Privat Rutazibwa, 'Petition for the dissolution'.

At the first contact with Rwandan society, the Europeans decreed that Bahutu, Batwa and Batutsi were three distinct races and that power was in the hands of the minority Batutsi alone, who would have acquired it as conquerors from abroad and having reduced the majority Bahutu in slavery. Speaking of the myth of origins, Father Alphonse Brard, the French White Father who founded the first Catholic mission in Rwanda in 1900 explains:

It is also to Kihanga [Gihanga] that we trace the origin of the three races which inhabit Rwanda. ... As we see, the blacks, who reason little, resorted to the fable to explain their origin which they assumed to be common, although it clearly appears that there are three absolutely distinct races.

... the Batwa are the first inhabitants of Rwanda, ... The Bahutu upon their arrival in Rwanda subjugated the Batwa and enjoyed their conquest until the appearance of the Batutsi. ... Since then, the Bahutu have been the slaves of the Batutsi.¹⁵

Racist propaganda took up and amplified this false perception towards the end of Belgian colonization. Regarding social relations and the exercise of power before and at the beginning of colonization in Rwanda, the anthropologist Jan Czekanowsky observed during his research in 1907 that Rwandan society was structured into four social classes based on wealth and not on ethnicity; that *'there are a truly significant number of Bahutu'* in the echelons of power; and that *'the institution of slavery does not play a role'* in Rwanda.¹⁶ Belgian priest and historian Stefaan Minnaert, former archivist of the White Fathers in Rome but currently a diocesan priest in Belgium, also made the following observation in 2008:

Once settled in Rwanda... the White Fathers see that there are poor and rich people among the Bahutu and the Batutsi. In their writings, they maintain confusion about the mass of the population and the political elite. They designate this mass (composed of poor Tutsi and Hutu) by the term "the Bahutu"; and the political and economic elite (composed of wealthy Tutsi and Hutu), by the term "the Batutsi".¹⁷

Father Alphonse Brard himself recognizes that the poor Batutsi are by far the most numerous, even if he persists in the error of considering that the ruling class and the middle class are made up solely of Batutsi.

Among the Batutsi the ruling class and the middle class are the few, the poor class is by far the most numerous. ... In the poor class we no longer meet the pure kitusi type: ... The great Batutsi chiefs despise their poor brothers, they let them work like the Bahutu, they do not live with them, do not ally with them. They leave them in the same rank as the vanquished race.¹⁸

Rwandan sources also demonstrate, with examples sometimes surprising for minds formatted with divisive ideologies of Western origin, that Rwandan society was truly well integrated, particularly in the institutions of power. Hamitic ideology with its irreducible differences in the physical and moral traits of different components of Rwandan society had indeed greatly exalted the Batutsi and created among the Bahutu the self-contempt which pushed some to pass themselves off as Batutsi, a phenomenon called Kwihutura. Likewise, the ideology of Hutu supremacy resulting from the 'Rwandan revolution' exalted the Muhutu and exercised violence and discrimination against the Mututsi so that some Batutsi who remained in Rwanda took identity cards bearing the label 'Hutu' to try to escape persecution and access certain rights. The examples we are going to see show that before colonization, Banyarwanda from different groups felt valued and could enjoy great consideration without having to change their 'ethnic' identity.

We thus learn that *'Chief Bisangwa'* was a *'Hutu raised at Court'*.¹⁹ Bisangwa was the commander of the *Ingangura-rugo* warriors, the royal guard and one of the main elite units under King Kigeli IV Rwabugili,

¹⁵ Lettre du Père Brard du 8 février 1902 à Monseigneur Livinhac, A.G.M. Afr.,02/1 et N° 098523, in Stefaan Minnaert, *Le Rwanda vu par le père Brard (1898-1906). Contribution à l'histoire de l'évangélisation du Rwanda. Ecrits et rapports du fondateur de la mission catholique de Save* (Kigali, 2021), pp. 93-94 ; 96, 97.

¹⁶ Jan Czekanowski, *Forschungen im Nil-Kongo-Zwischengebiet, vol. 1, Ethnographie, Zwischengebiet Mpororo, Ruanda* (Klinkhardt & Biermann, Leipzig, 1917). Excerpts translated into English by Bachmann Klaus, *Every day life in early colonial Rwanda. Insights from German and Polish sources* (Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2020), pp. 63-64.

¹⁷ Stefaan Minnaert, 'Les Pères Blancs et la société rwandaise durant l'époque coloniale allemande (1900-1916) : une rencontre entre cultures et religions', in Paul Rutayisire, Jean-Philippe Schreiber et Déo Byanafashe, *Les religions au Rwanda : défis, convergences et compétitions* (Editions de l'UNR, Butare, 2009), pp. 53-101, p. 67-68.

¹⁸ Lettre du Père Brard du 8 février 1902 In Minnaert, *Le Rwanda vu par le père Brard*, pp. 99-100.

¹⁹ Gamaliel Mbonimana, *L'instauration d'un royaume chrétien au Rwanda (1900-1931)*, (Université Catholique de Louvain, thèse de doctorat en Histoire contemporaine, 1981), p. X.

the last independent king of Rwanda. Rwandan historian Alexis Kagame recounts his heroic end during the expedition in July 1896 against the Belgian soldiers of the Congo Free State (known by its French acronym EIC) who had invaded Rwanda and settled in Shangi in Kinyaga chieftaincy.²⁰ The conversation between Chief Bisangwa and Prince Muhigirwa, son of Rwabugiri, is a moving episode where this famous leader demonstrates bravery, a sense of honor and loyalty that defies even a prince. Chief Bisangwa was replaced by his little brother Sehene to command the *Ingangura-rugo*.²¹

Kagame recounts another no less moving episode during the battle for the succession of Rucunshu between King Mibambwe IV Rutalindwa, successor designated and enthroned by King Rwabugili, and the camp of the future king Yuhi III Musinga. This time it involves a Mutwa, Semunkima, a brave and prominent member of the royal guard, whose loyalty and sense of honor recall those of Chief Bisangwa.

The Rwandan historian, usually very discreet about the 'ethnic' identity of historical figures, also mentions the famous Seruteganya, a very influential Hutu official at the court of Rwabugili, falsely accused of being the lover and even of having made the queen mother Murorunkwere pregnant. An intrigue which will end in a tragedy in which the queen mother, Seruteganya, and his four sons will perish.

More detailed accounts of these historical figures and others can also be found in the published petition relating to the UN.²²

This latest document aimed to draw the attention of world leaders to the fact that there has been a genocide in the DRC, and that the conflict in the east of this country is fueled by a racist ideology of colonial inspiration implemented first in Rwanda where the ideologues of Kinshasa draw their slogans and postulates from the genocidal propaganda of the 1990s and of the period 1959-1963, as well as from the clichés of Hamitic ideology.

The petition observes that UN official documents including the 41 reports produced between July 2004 and June 2024 by the 'UN Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo' established by resolution 1533 (2004) of 12 March 2004 have not provided world leaders with credible information on the conflict in eastern DRC. Instead, they clearly embraced and promoted the conspiracy theories of racist anti-Tutsi ideology, as this petition shows.

This is what I wanted to share with you today. But there are quite a few other interesting things that those who can will be able to find in the published documents. The rest is in the thesis to come!

Thank you!

²⁰ Alexis Kagame, *Un abrégé de l'histoire du Rwanda de 1853 à 1972*. (Tome II) (Editions universitaires, Butare, 1975), p. 112.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

²² See Rutazibwa, 'Petition for the dissolution', pp. 101-106.

Appendix 2.

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Date: 16 November 2024

Excellency Katja Keul,
Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office
Werderscher Markt 1, 10117 Berlin

Dear Minister of State,

Thank you for the invitation to take part in the round table on “Addressing the colonial past – a dialogue with civil society” scheduled for 25 November 2024.

I opened the link in the invitation to give *‘further suggestions and feedback in preparation for the event’*, but the proposed format seemed very summary and unsatisfactory to allow me to express my suggestions to you, and this is the reason why I have chosen to send you this letter with the hope that it can be of some use *‘In the spirit of true exchange’* that you want in the invitation letter.

Let me first introduce myself: I am Privat Rutazibwa, from Rwanda and one of the scholarship holders of the DAAD "German Colonial Rule" (GCR) program supported by the Federal Foreign Office, and I give thanks to God and am very grateful to the German government and people.

I will start from the main questions that the roundtable will focus on to give my suggestions:

1. *What are, from a civil society perspective, the most important topics and fields of action for coming to grips with the colonial past?*

My observation is that the debate and actions aimed at addressing the colonial past have so far been limited to questions of provenance and restitution of artifacts and human remains; apologies (and compensation?) for the genocide in today Namibia; apologies for other cases of violence in today Tanzania, Cameroon; and research initiatives like the GCR involving researchers from former colonies.

This is already appreciable and courageous when I compare with the timidity and heaviness of other European powers or Western institutions with a colonial or neocolonial past in Rwanda, namely Belgium and the Catholic Church (through the Society of Missionaries of Africa also known as the White Fathers) involved in the first genocide against the Tutsi from 1959; France and its support for the regime which committed genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 though some steps have been taken under President Emmanuel Macron; and the United Nations (UN) which still exercised its trusteeship over Rwanda through Belgium during the first genocide against the Tutsi, and which led a peacekeeping operation (UNAMIR) during the last genocide against the Tutsi.

But there is an extremely important topic that is ignored: the racist and genocidal ideology responsible for violence and instability in the Great Lakes region of Africa. This ideology is clearly of colonial inspiration and neocolonial instrumentalization. Western knowledge production about Africa and Rwanda gave birth to Hamitic ideology, Hutu supremacy ideology and anti-Tutsi racism which are different facets of this same racist and genocidal ideology. Anti-Tutsi racism is underlying and transversal to Hamitic ideology and Hutu supremacy ideology, and it goes beyond their respective periods of influence (colonial for the first, and post-independence until 1994 for the second) to project itself to the current period, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The topic of my doctoral research is precisely about colonial racialism and its consequences in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region of Africa. My thesis project is titled: “‘Not all White people Are Bad’: Racialism and Genocide of the West in Rwanda since Colonization’. While submitting my research proposal to the GCR program, I asked to be able to broaden the scope of my research from German colonial rule to the entire colonial and even neocolonial phenomenon in Rwanda which involved other actors after Germany, in emphasizing the racist ideology which has marked the different phases of the contemporary history of Rwanda and the region. But my research and communications on racist and genocidal ideology in Rwanda and the region began in 1993.

2. *How can civil society and policymakers work together to address the colonial past, and how can civilian actors’ expertise be better integrated into foreign policy?*

As far as I am concerned, I always make myself available for conferences, training seminars or talk shows in the media whenever I am asked by a ministry or any other institution in Rwanda to share my knowledge. Since the start of my doctoral research within the framework of the GCR, I had the opportunity to deliver four presentations in different settings that later developed into published articles. Their topics are directly related to the research problem of my doctoral thesis.

On 14 December 2022, I delivered a presentation titled ‘Origin and causes of armed conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo’ to more than 300 youths from all provinces of Rwanda and the diaspora gathered for the fifth annual youth seminar jointly organized by the Ministry of Unity and Civic Engagement and that of Youth and Culture in Musanze in the Northern province. On 21 March 2023, I gave a talk to deputies, members of the “parliamentary special committee that has a program of activities aimed at exploring and identifying the role of colonial history in the problems in the region, especially the problems in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), that also have an impact on the relations between Rwanda and the DRC”. The two presentations resulted in the publication in June 2023 of the article whose link follows: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371860650_Discussing_the_causes_and_context_of_wars_and_conflict_involving_the_Banyarwanda_from_the_Eastern_Democratic_Republic_of_Congo

On 20 December 2022, I delivered a presentation titled ‘The genocide against the Tutsi: the establishment of the genocidal policies since 1959’ during a workshop co-organized by the Paris-based organization Memorial de la Shoah in Kigali. Here is the link to the subsequent article published in January 2023: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369428158_The_genocide_against_the_Tutsi_the_establishment_of_the_genocidal_policies_since_1959

At a Paris international colloquium jointly organized by French and Rwandan teams of researchers, I delivered on 11 September 2023 at Sorbonne University, a presentation titled: ‘Rwanda: how the post-independence regimes from 1962 to 1994 were neo-colonial, racist and genocidal’. A subsequent article with the same title was published in February 2024: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378032542_RWANDA_HOW_THE_POST-INDEPENDENCE_REGIMES_FROM_1962TO_1994_WERE_NEO-COLONIAL_RACIST_AND_GENOCIDAL

In addition to these publications following presentations, I published a document in the form of a petition to world leaders in October 2024 whose link follows: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385133535_Petition_for_the_dissolution_of_the_United_Nations_and_the_prosecution_of_certain_personalities_and_their_associates_for_the_crime_of_genocide_in_the_Democratic_Republic_of_Congo/stats

The idea came to me after seeing atrocious images of people being killed by inflicting indescribable suffering and humiliation; others who are burned alive and whose flesh is eaten; and still others whose heads are cut off and displayed as a trophy, simply because these people are Batutsi (see Petition, pages 4-7).

As I state in the introductory summary to the petition, these *‘images of extreme violence in the first subsection of this petition are not clashes between rival African tribes as presented by Western media and so-called*

researchers. They are the consequence of this ideology coming from the West and implemented in a radical way in Rwanda - before spreading to the entire region - by the Belgian colonial administration and the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), during the first genocide against the Tutsi from 1959 as this is shown by unpublished documents cited in this petition.'

And I concluded the first section of the document with the following: '*At the beginning of this petition, I mentioned with disapproval the comments of the German ambassador in Kinshasa on the conflict in the east of the DRC after his audience with the Congolese minister of defense on 7 March 2024. While concluding, I would like to quote this time an excerpt from the common-sense speech given on 17 October 2022 by German Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office Katja Keul at the conference "New Perspectives on German Colonial Rule - A Scholarship Programme for Cooperative Research"*':

"Colonial rule left deep wounds in many countries, especially in Africa, ... It has caused or aggravated numerous conflicts, global inequalities and regional instabilities that we are seeing today. For a long time, Europeans regarded Africa as a continent of crises and poverty. But let's be honest. Many of the conflicts that do indeed exist on the continent are the direct result of European colonialism. ... Colonialism was a system of injustice. And this system was upheld by individuals and state entities. We have ignored this chapter of our history for far too long. As a society. As a government. And also as the Federal Foreign Office".

I personally appreciated the Minister of State's address as powerful and sincere. But I will appreciate more if her vision applies concretely to the conflict in the DRC and if it truly permeates Germany's foreign policy on Rwanda and the Great Lakes region. Germany should even, in my opinion, given its historical role in the convening of the Berlin Conference (and incidentally, one of the three European colonial and neocolonial powers in Rwanda, but fortunately the least harmful as it left without committing genocide) and drawing on its experience of dealing with its colonial past with today's Namibia, consider an initiative to coordinate reflection and action of reparation with regard to Rwanda, involving all Western countries and Western organizations having played a role in the tragic colonial and neocolonial history of Rwanda, namely Germany, Belgium, France, the Roman Catholic Church and the organization that will have replaced the UN. Rwanda does not need to demand this reparation. It has rebuilt itself and will rebuild itself with or without it. On the other hand, these Western countries and organizations need to take this action for their own redemption' (Petition, pp. 14-15).

3. *To what extent do colonial continuities have an impact on bilateral and international cooperation, and what do you believe must be done so that these can be overcome?*

The racist and genocidal ideology of colonial inspiration not only drives the Kinshasa regime, but also deeply influences certain African countries and the UN which have decided to side militarily with the regime of President Tshisekedi. This ideology also shines through very clearly in the narrative of UN experts as well as so-called Western researchers on the conflict in the DRC as the petition demonstrates (see Petition pp. 13-19; 61-75; 112-114).

I petitioned the world leaders as a researcher, and the strength of the document '*does not lie in a multitude of signatures, but in in-depth research, precise references and deliberately long quotations*' (see abstract of the Petition). I consider that "*Hate propaganda permanently targeting the same human group is already an attack aimed at its extermination*", and *a single murder resulting from this racist ideology is already genocide*' (Petition, p. 7). The petition shows that that genocide in DRC is planned at the highest level of the state, with Congolese President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi declaring in December 2023 that '*our army ... has been infiltrated for a long time*'; that the integration of Batutsi from a previous rebellion '*was bringing the enemy into the army*', and that '*Today we are starting to eliminate them little by little*' (Petition p. 13).

The petition calls on world leaders to open their eyes '*to this horrible ignominy: the armies of the United Nations, South Africa, Tanzania, Burundi and Malawi lending a hand to the FARDC and the Wazalendo militias of an openly genocidal Tshisekedi regime determined to gradually exterminate the Batutsi and assimilated populations as shown in the speeches and images above. The armies of the United Nations, South Africa, Tanzania, Burundi and Malawi in coalition with the FARDC, the Wazalendo militias and the European*

mercenaries of the genocidal Tshisekedi regime to fight the M23, an organization "fighting for their own survival, for their people's survival, for their communities that have been uprooted and asked to leave Congo because they are not Congolese enough" (see Petition, p. 18).

What must be done is justice. The petition recommends, among other things, the criminal prosecution of personalities involved in this genocide in the DRC as well as their associates; and the pure and simple suppression of the United Nations which has become in the DRC not only a disgrace, but much worse: complicit in a genocide and therefore a danger for humanity.

Sincerely,

Privat Rutazibwa, researcher.