

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS FROM

DEFYING GENOCIDE

Produced by the Committee on Conscience of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

ETHNICITY IN RWANDA—Rwanda has two major social groups, the Hutu and Tutsi, and one smaller group, the Twa. Approximately 85 percent of the country is Hutu, 14 percent Tutsi, and 1 percent Twa. More information on this subject is available in the film’s classroom guide.

GENOCIDE—As codified in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group as such: (a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

GISIMBA MEMORIAL CENTRE—An orphanage based in Kigali, Rwanda, that housed some 65 orphans in April 1994. When extremist leaders of Rwanda’s Hutu majority began a campaign to exterminate the Tutsi minority and moderate Hutu leaders, Damas Gisimba opened the orphanage’s doors to people fleeing the genocide. He took in close to 400 people—Tutsi children and adults as well as vulnerable Hutu. As the numbers of people under his protection increased, Gisimba struggled to find adequate food, water, and hiding places, while risking his life to forestall attacks on the orphanage by armed militias. Because of Gisimba’s efforts, most of those he sheltered survived Rwanda’s genocide.

INTERAHAMWE—A militia group whose name means “those who attack together,” it was created to increase and organize civilian participation in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

KIGALI—The capital city of Rwanda.

RWANDAN PATRIOTIC FRONT (RPF)—An armed rebel movement composed mainly of Rwandan Tutsis who had lived in exile in surrounding countries since the 1960s, its objective was to gain political control in Rwanda.

UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR RWANDA (UNAMIR)—Established by vote of the Security Council on October 5, 1993, this peacekeeping mission was headed by Canadian general Roméo Dallaire. Originally established to help implement the Arusha Peace Agreement signed by the Rwandan parties on August 4, 1993, UNAMIR’s mandate was to assist in ensuring the security of the capital city of Kigali; to monitor the cease-fire agreement, including establishment of an expanded demilitarized zone and demobilization procedures; to monitor the security situation during the final period of the transitional government’s mandate leading up to elections; to assist with mine clearance; and to assist in the coordination of humanitarian assistance activities in conjunction with relief operations. The mandate was amended when fighting broke out in April 1994, further amended as the situation deteriorated, and changed yet again to deal with the aftermath of the genocide. The mission ended in March 1996. See http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unamir_p.htm for more information.

For additional information, visit ushmm.org/conscience/defying-genocide.

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