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Abstract

This research fills a gap in the existing literature on the First Congo War by adding a micro-perspective to the debate on the 1994-1996 refugee crisis in Eastern-Zaïre and the subsequent AFDL campaign against the Rwandan Hutu refugees. It tries to come to the nature of this history of refugees and conflict by both distilling concrete structures and patterns within the acts of the different local actors involved and by analysing the mentalities that lay behind these acts. It argues that the refugee camps in Eastern-Zaïre between July 1994 and November 1996 were imported cities from Rwanda, wherein the refugees lived under the same military and governmental authority as in Rwanda but wherein they were also trapped in the same thoughts. Furthermore, this study argues that the AFDL attacks against refugees followed a clear pattern and structure, although it also distinguishes a process of radicalisation within these attacks. With regards to the mentality of the AFDL leadership and its regular soldiers, this study concludes that the AFDL gave no value to the life of the refugees and framed all killings into the military narrative of the fight against the dreaded génocidaires.

Introduction

Between 15 and 18 November 1996, 500.000 Rwandan refugees coming from the Mugunga refugee camp, near Goma in Eastern-Zaïre, crossed the border back to their home country. Their return to Rwanda was almost as impressive as their exodus two years before, when between 13-17 July 1994, approximately 850.000 refugees crossed the Zaïrean border at the same border post. Back then, the Rwanda genocide had just ended with the victory of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) over the genocidal Forces Armée Rwandaises (FAR). As a result, a total of 1.2 million Rwandan Hutus (who were fearing reprisals of the RPF) fled to Zaïre (adding the 350.000 refugees who fled to South-Kivu to the previously mentioned 850.000), another 700.000 crossed the border with Tanzania. In Goma, several refugee camps were hastily build by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Most notable were the Mugunga, Kibumba, Katale and Kahindo camps. These camps each housed between 150.000 and 200.000 refugees and were accompanied by some other smaller camps in the region. While in Tanzania, the political and socio-economic circumstances were so that the influx of refugees could be fairly well managed, the political situation in two Kivu
provinces had actually been a volatile element throughout Congo’s history. In fact, a fragile peace agreement between local militias belonging to the different ethnic groups (Hunde, Nande, Hutu and Tutsi) in North-Kivu had just been reached in February 1994. Needless to say, the Kivu provinces were nowhere near ready to accommodate 1.2 million refugees. Moreover, the crux was that ex-FAR soldiers, members of the notorious Interahamwe, old Rwandan Bourgemesters and other génocidaires were among the Rwandan refugees in the Kivus. The Northwestern part of Rwanda being the historical breeding ground of Hutu extremism, their logical choice had been to flee to Zaire.

In the camps in Eastern-Zaïre, the génocidaires reigned freely. As the camps were set up along old Rwandan prefectures and the génocidaires had managed to retain a part of their arms, they managed to still control many of their constituents. Furthermore, they attacked both the Zairean local population in the Kivus and went on cross border raids into Rwanda. For two years, the United Nations (UN) Security Council was not able to come to an agreement on what to do with the refugees in Eastern Zaïre. Furthermore, the Zairean State itself was incapable of providing security themselves. The new Rwandan RPF government took the matter in its own hands and instigated what came to be known as the First Congo War in October 1996. The RPF set up a coalition of Congolese rebel groups (the Alliance des Forces Democratique pour la Libération du Congo, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo, also AFDL) under the leadership of Laurent-Desiré Kabila and supplied the coalition with logistic but also far reaching military support. On 15 November 1996, the AFDL attacked Mugunga. Subsequently, 500,000 refugees forcibly returned home but many others fled further westward. The AFDL continued its campaign, fighting both the Forces Armée Zaïroise (FAZ, the Zairean Armed Forces) and the ex-FAR/ Interahamwe, while furthermore attacking the camps the refugees set up along the way. On 25 May 1997, the AFDL captured Kinshasa (the Zairean capital) and overthrew the Zairean president Mobutu Sese Seko.

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1 The attentive reader may have already noticed my use of both Congo and Zaïre when speaking of the Central African country. Throughout this thesis, I will use the official name of the country at the time of speaking, which means I will use the term Zaïre for all events between 1971 and May 1997 and I will use Congo for all other timeframes as well as when speaking about the country in general terms.
The attacks on refugees during the AFDL campaign form a dark chapter in Rwandan and Congolese history. Although exact estimates are impossible, most scholars and human rights researchers place the numbers of refugee casualties around 200,000. This figure includes both AFDL massacres and death by starvation or disease. The AFDL campaign has become the ‘elephant in the room’, that is not addressed in present day Rwanda. The historical narrative on Rwanda’s post-independence history, is namely tailored to the image of Tutsi’s being the victims, and Hutu’s the perpetrators. Within this black and white perpetrator/victim narrative, there is no room for the refugee victims. The notion of a RPF (in this regard in the form of their proxy agent the AFDL) that is also capable of committing war crimes of some sort, has not found any ground in the Rwandan public debate. As we shall see later on, the RPF government immediately framed all Hutu refugees still at large in Eastern-Zaïre after October 1996 to be génocidaires. This is a position it still holds to this day. The actual story is however much more complex, and it is to this complexity that this study wants to do justice. It wants to do justice to both the complexity of the history of the refugees camps, as well as of the AFDL campaign.

With this in mind, I will try to come to the nature, the dynamics, let’s say the on the ground story of both the refugee camps in the Kivus and of the AFDL campaign against the roaming refugees. In doing so, this research fills a gap in the existing literature on the First Congo War by positing itself in the tradition of microstudies in the fields of history and genocide studies. Indeed, although a number of renowned scholars of the Great Lakes Region have published works on the topic, most works try to provide an extensive and all-encompassing overview of the incredibly complex civil war. Most notably are the works of Gérard Prunier, Phillip Reyntjes, Thomas Turner, René Lemarchand and the edited volume of Howard Adelman & Golvind Rao. With a decades long involvement and study of the Great Lakes Region, Prunier, Reyntjes and Lemarchand have written various academic articles and books about Rwanda and Burundi and in recent years have turned their focus to Congo. Through their experience in the region, the link between the Rwandan genocide and the civil war in Congo is very well formulated. Furthermore, the three complement each other in


respect of Prunier being a historian by profession, while Reyntjes and Lemarchand tend more to law and political science. The works of Turner and Adelman & Rao lay at the intersection between history and the study of humanitarian action. In sum, the historiography on the civil war in Congo is thus definitely very extensive, but the debate has only taken place on the macro level. It is still far from complete.

Much can however be gained from in depth researches into specific events or places. The complexity of the conflict can then be reduced to the specifics of that situation. Especially with regards to the First Congo War, the micro level could contribute significantly to our understanding of the overly complex conflict that has been dubbed ‘Africa’s world war’. The need for a more local understanding of the Congolese civil war is further advanced by the very little media coverage that was allowed in the area. Without the ‘CNN effect’, our image of the conflict is mostly stuck in the incomprehensibleness of a conflict deep in the forests of central-Africa. A micro level study could therefore create a better understanding of the dynamics at play, it can concretize our understanding of conflict in Eastern Congo.

Luckily, David van Reybrouck and Jason Stearns have already cleared the path into more personal, interview based, on the ground histories of Congo. I am especially indebted to van Reybrouck, as his work played a key role in my fascination for Congo. Nonetheless, my intentions are different and my temporal scope is much more particular. This work will go deeper into the nature, into the mentalities, of the different actors of the conflict in Eastern-Zaïre. At the basis of this study, stands the work of the École des Annales, their Histoires de mentalité and especially the works of Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie. His Montaillou: Village Occitan de 1294 à 1324, is the dream of every micro historian and his methodology, wherein he distils the life, practices and mentalities of the Montaillou villagers from the reports made during the inquisition tribunal against the supposed heretics in the Pyrenean village, has been a great source of inspiration. Furthermore, this study is greatly

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6 Prunier, *Africa’s World War*.
9 Van Reybrouck actually covers the whole history of Congo from Stanley and Livinstone’s expeditions in the 1870s until the present day.
influenced by the micro-turn in genocide studies, wherein the focus has been to understand the mentalities of victims, perpetrators or bystanders before, during and after episodes of violent conflict. I am indeed advocating for a similar turn in the study of the Congolese civil wars. Both the microstudies in history and in genocide studies, namely stem from a similar wish to go away from the political and diplomatic ‘history of big men’ and come to an understanding of the people actually involved and affected by the historical event at hand.

Central to this study, will be the microanalysis of both the history of the refugee camps, as well as of the AFDL campaign (all taking place between July 1994 and May 1997). Herein, I will ask two main questions. Firstly, I want to know what concrete role the different local actors had. I want to know what structure, what characteristics their acts had and what evolution or process they went through. Secondly, I will ask a more abstract question into the mentality of the different actors involved. Here, I want to know what reasoning, what ideology, or which world vision laid behind their acts.

However, this study will start by giving the reader an insight into the regional history of migration and conflict in the Great Lakes Region. René Lemarchand for example states that any true understanding of the Congolese civil war must take into account the Longue Durée dimension of the history of the Great Lakes. Every period of the region’s history, has had its share of migrations, conflicts and subsequent refugees. As I will put forth in this first chapter of this study, we can actually distinguish a cycle composed of conflicts, refugee flows, refugees organising themselves in diaspora communities, who then again start a new conflict. At the centre of this cycle of migration and conflict, has been the troubled history of Rwanda. Therefore keeping the focus on refugee flows from Rwanda, the first part of this thesis will thus provide the reader with the necessary context. This contextualisation is no less than essential for us to go deeper into the subsequent microanalyses. The existence of refugee or migrant populations has namely been a given fact throughout the regions history.

The second part of this study will analyse the story of the Mugunga refugee camp between July 1994 and November 1996 (when it was attacked by the AFDL) at the hand of the beforementioned two main questions. Mugunga was the camp where the old genocidal government of Rwanda had taken refuge, along with many members of the ex-Forces Armées Rwandaise (FAR) and the Interahamwe militia. For the purpose of this study, writing a

microhistory of Mugunga provides us a unique opportunity to look into the dynamics between the génocidaires and the ‘ordinary’ refugee population. But it also gives us a chance to see the impact of both kinds of refugees on the local Zairean population. It indeed provides us with the best base to study both the acts and the mentalities behind these acts of the different actors involved. To date, such a study has not yet been done and I believe greatly in its added value for our understanding of this place and period in time. More importantly, this microstudy of Mugunga will contribute to the empirical base for further and better informed studies of mass violence in the Great Lakes Region. It would indeed be meaningless to analyse the AFDL campaign and the First Congo War without already having an in-depth understanding of what directly preceded it.

For the third and last part of this thesis, I will in turn make three microstudies of attacks against refugees during the AFDL campaign. This second phase of the refugee crisis, is better understood by adding a comparative element to the analysis. I will look into the attacks on the Mugunga, Tingi-Tingi and Kasese camps, as they are exemplary for three different phases of the AFDL campaign. Mugunga forms the crux of the first attacks against the Kivu refugee camps to force as many refugees as possible back to Rwanda. Tingi-Tingi was the main camp where refugees from North- and South-Kivu came together, while the war between the ex-FAR/FAZ against the AFDL was still raging on. Finally, Kasese is exemplary for the last phase of the campaign. A phase wherein it was already clear the ex-FAR/FAZ were no match for the AFDL, where Kisangani had already been captured and all ex-FAR leaders were already long gone into exile. By analysing these three attacks in a comparative manner, we can look into the nature of the campaign, how it evolved, if there was a systematic character to the attacks and we can go deeper into the mentalities of both the AFDL soldiers and their leadership. In both the microstudies of the Mugunga refugee camp and of the AFDL campaign, I will answer the two main questions in the sub-conclusion and the end of each part. In the overall conclusion, I will then summarize the most important themes and observations and subsequently tie them into the broader regional history of conflict and migration.

12 With the term ordinary refugees, which I will use often, I mean the refugee population that was not directly involved in any armed forces, or could be linked directly to the refugee leaders (who had been government officials before and during the genocide).
13 Kisangani is the third largest city of Congo, and the regional capital of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. From a military perspective, it had been clear that if the AFDL would capture Kisangani, the country’s capital Kinshasha would be a mere formality.
In order to come to my conclusions, I will make use of a variety of sources. The first part, being a regional history, will be based on existing literature but will combine works written on Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. For the second a third parts, I will however need to go beyond academic literature. Here, keys sources are the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) mapping report into crimes committed in Congo between 1993 and 2003, and the Medecins Sans Frontières Speaks Out documents on both the refugees in the Kivu camps and the AFDL campaign. I have however also used a variety of other UN reports, reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, newspaper articles, video footage, personal interviews with aid workers and still a fair share of what the existing literature on the conflict had to offer. My relationship to the accounts written by survivors of the AFDL campaign now in exile, has been a difficult one. Due to the highly politicised nature of the debate on the AFDL campaign in Rwanda, these accounts often have a clear political goal. Therefore, I have decided not to make use of these survivors accounts. This does however not apply for testimonies that were recorded on the spot, as they could not have been affected by for example time or legal knowledge.

A number of people have given me indispensable support in completing this work. I am particularly thankful for my thesis supervisor Thijs Bouwknegt for his guidance, for my father Henk for his contagious love for Congo, for my girlfriend Marlies for her support and for all others that had to listen to me ramble on about my beloved topic throughout the process.

Part I: A Regional History of Migration and Conflict in the Great Lakes Region

The story of the refugee crisis in the Kivus (where we will come to later), was in many ways unprecedented in the Great Lakes Region. This largely has to do with the sheer number of the Rwandan refugees, their composition and the tragic ending of the crisis. However, when we take a closer look, we can see that the events from 1994-1997 actually fit a pattern within the regional history of the Great Lakes. Indeed, the history of the region is marred with conflicts over migration, refugees fleeing instances of mass violence within their own country and diaspora groups organising themselves in rebel groups, all with Rwanda at its centre. I shall thus make a chronological analysis of migration and conflict in the Great Lakes Region, subsequently placing the events of 1994-1997 into the broader historical developments of the region as a whole and of Rwanda and Eastern-Congo in particular. This is quite essential. The refugee crisis in the 1990s did not happen in a vacuum.

1. Pre-colonial and colonial migrations

Before looking at the interconnectedness of migration and conflict in the Great Lakes Region, it is firstly important to look at what actually formed the precolonial borders of the region and its inhabitants. The region is firstly situated in Central-Africa, and its name relates to the lakes of the Rift Valley. In most accounts, the Great Lakes Region is nowadays composed of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda (and sometimes Tanzania). After the famous ‘Bantu migration’ around the beginning of the Christian calendar, the Great Lakes Region distinguished itself by the common Bantu language that was developed. This linguistic zone roughly covers the southern half of Uganda, the upper north-western part of Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and the border regions of South- and North-Kivu. Herein, Kinyarwanda and Kirundi resemble each other the most, basically being different dialects, whereas they are less strongly related to for example Hunde or Nande in North-Kivu, or the Ugandan languages.  

Already in precolonial times, local conflicts already led to migrations of certain local groups. In the second half of the 19th century, a group of Rwandan Tutsi for example settled around Mulenge in South Kivu after an internal power struggle over the succession of the

Rwandan Mwami’s (king) around 1880. These Banyamulenge (a group name they adopted later on) would come to play a central role in the conflict in the Kivus during the 1990s. Besides these migrations of a more political nature, there was also a variety of for example Kinyarwanda speaking minorities in Uganda, Congo or Tanzania. There were Tutsi’s living as cattle herders among the local population in North-Kivu, but there was also a large minority of Tutsi’s in Western Uganda.

The colonial powers engraved the snapshot of what they saw as the local power structures into law, a decision with disastrous consequences. Of importance in the context of migration and conflict are the concept of indigeneity and the structure of the colonial rule. In Rwanda and Burundi, the concept of indigeneity was used in such a way that all cultural and ethnic diversity among the various clans was brushed away, making only a distinction between the indigenous and inferior Hutu and the Hamitic, or settler Tutsi. In line with this racist belief, but also out of the sheer political practicality of making use of the Tutsi nobility, the ‘migrant’ Tutsi’s were entrusted with the dominion over the majority Hutu’s. The colonial administration in Rwanda engraved the Hutu/Tutsi divide into law, up to the introduction of ethnicity based identity cards in 1933. In Congo however, the Belgians took a different approach to indigeneity. As opposed to the almost direct rule of the Tutsi over the Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi, everyone living in Congo at the time of colonization was seen as indigenous. It was on this basis that an indirect colonial rule was implemented, a system best described as one of divide and rule. The Belgians devised a constantly changing network of chefferies (local chiefdoms) through which they controlled dissident chiefs by taking away their chefferie. The colonizers could thus control the different ethnicities by giving and taking away their political representation. In sum, although there are large differences within the

19 Mamdani, When Victims Become Killers, 162.
20 Within the racist colonial discourse, the ’Hamitic hypothesis’ is essential to understand the Hutu/ Tutsi divide in Rwanda and Burundi. This hypothesis claimed that the Tutsi were decedents of Ham, the banned son of the biblical Noah. The Tutsi were thus decedents of the Caucasian race, and all civilization in central Africa could be attributed to them, as opposed to the inferior Bantu’s.
implementation of this concept of indigeneity, indigeneity did always determine political power.

Although in the early days of Belgium colonialism before the First World War, everyone living in Congo was seen as indigenous, the link between indigeneity and political rule would have a lasting effect on the position of migrants and refugees in Congolese law. The consequences would soon be felt. After Belgium had officially acquired the rule over Rwanda and Burundi in 1922 as a UN mandate territory, it initiated a policy of labour migration from Rwanda to North-Kivu in particular. Rwanda’s new rulers, had just discovered the vast mining possibilities in the adjacent North-Kivu, while it was also very fertile for farming and quite suitable for white settlers due to the absence of the deadly Tsetse fly. The authorities were in desperate need of labour forces and the densely populated Rwanda had plenty.23 At first, migration was voluntary and the policies also gave the possibility for migration to Uganda or Tanzania, a choice often preferred by Rwandans.24

Therefore, the labour shortage in North-Kivu had not diminished by 1937, also due to the vast increase of European settlers who needed labourers for their plantations. The Belgian authorities therefore established the Mission d’Immigration des Banywarwanda (MIB), which was to oversee the whole process of Rwandan immigration to north-Kivu. The MIB bought land from local chiefs for the migrants to settle, it set the salaries for plantation workers and even brokered a deal with the Rwandan Mwami to supply a certain number of his subjects. After the MIB had bought a large chunk of land off the Mwami of Masisi (a commune in North-Kivu were a lot of Europeans had settled to start a coffee plantation) a large number of immigrants were settled in this largely Hunde community.25 Indeed, at the time of independence, approximately 85,000 Rwandans had migrated to Masisi alone, this accounted for more than half of the population.26 Furthermore, the migrants that arrived after 1937, were not supposed to return to Rwanda, they had to permanently resettle. They were granted their

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25 Masisi is a region with which the reader will acquire a large familiarity at the end of this study. This particular area has indeed flared up into ethnic violence numerous times, and in 1994 the Mugunga camp was situated right at the border of Masisi. It thus made for a recipe for disaster.

own native authority, or *chefferie*, next to the existing Hunde authorities. The Hunde locals were not amused and united themselves on a ‘indigenous’ narrative. They would not let Rwandans control their native territory.  

27 Mahmood Mamdami, a Ugandan political scientist, has indeed pointed to the destructive effect of the colonial policy to define political power by ethnicity.  

In the case of Eastern Congo, this policy segregated migrants and locals into two parallel societies, thus paving the way for future conflict. After years of pressure of the Hunde community, the Rwandan native authority in Masisi was disbanded in 1957, just before independence.  

In contrast, in South-Kivu, the before mentioned group pre-colonial Tutsi migrants were seen as indigenous by the Belgians. They were integrated within the native authority of their broader region, as these Tutsi’s were a relatively small ethnic group in South-Kivu. It is presumably around this time that they started to identify as ‘Banyamulenge’ thus also claiming their indigeneity.  

After a reshuffle of *chefferies* in 1933, the Banyamulenge were however split up into three different *chefferies*, marking the beginning of another battle for political recognition for Banyarwanda living in the Kivus.  

As we have seen throughout this section, the colonial era and its policies *vis à vis* migrants already laid the basis for future tensions. Fate had it that the labour migrants from the colonial era, would only be the first big wave of Rwandan migrants, the second wave came directly with independence.  

2. *The false promise of independence: political power struggles and the first wave of war refugees*  

The struggle for independence and its immediate aftermath had a great impact on the Great Lakes Region. In none of the countries discussed here, was the path to independence without conflict. As would often be the case, events in Rwanda were a catalyst for conflicts in the broader region. The Rwandan independence movement was namely fought along ethnic lines, as the majority Hutu party, the *Parti du Mouvement de l’Émancipation des Bahutus*  

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(PARMEHUTU) envisaged a ‘Hutu social revolution’ which called for a double liberation of the Hutu from both the Tutsi and the Bazungu (the whites).32

Throughout the decolonisation process, local violence between Hutu’s and Tutsi’s kept occurring, where after the Tutsi’s were often forced to flee. Especially in the North, where there were nearly no Tutsi’s before colonisation and the Belgians therefore sent them there in the 1920s to govern the Hutu peasants, the violence was severe. Between 1959 and 1964, approximately 330,000 Rwandan Tutsi’s fled to Uganda, Burundi, Congo and Tanzania.33 From Uganda and Burundi, some of the Tutsi refugees organised themselves, as Inyenzi, and started to launch cross border raids into Rwanda. These were afterwards met with reprisals by the Rwandan government against the local Tutsi population in Rwanda itself.34 After a group of Tutsi exiles launched an ill-prepared attack against the southern town of Bugesera in December 1963, a severe repression of the Rwandan government triggered the death of an estimated 10,000 Tutsi’s, among them almost all Tutsi politicians still in Rwanda.35

The influx of the Rwandan refugees greatly influenced the national politics of their host countries. In Burundi, where to about 200,000 Rwandans had fled, the consequences were immense.36 Although in contrast to Rwanda, the independence movement in Burundi had not been fought along ethnic lines, Jean-Pierre Chrétien, Collete Braeckman and René Lemarchand all see the sudden construction of an ethnic political identity in Burundi during the years of 1962-1965 as a direct result of the influx of the Rwandan refugees.37 The solely Tutsi regime that eventually came to power in Burundi in 1965 and stayed on until 1993, was characterized by severe repression against the Hutu opposition.38 However, the Rwandan Tutsi refugees in Burundi did not receive a warm welcome. They were not allowed to own

33 Prunier, The Rwanda Crisis, 62.
35 Prunier, The Rwanda Crisis, 56.
36 Ibidem, 62.
38 Chrétien, The Great Lakes of Africa, 315 ; Braeckman, Terreur Africaine, 138-139.
farming land, and had to settle in the urban area of the capital city Bujumbura. They were however not discriminated by law (since they were Tutsi’s) and managed to form a class of vendors and businessmen.

In Uganda, were between 50,000 and 70,000 Rwandan Tutsi had to settle, the refugees were housed in seven camps in western Uganda. Here, most of them would remain until after the Rwandan genocide, meanwhile outgrowing the camps as their numbers multiplied. Uganda now housed groups of pre-colonial settler Tutsi’s, mostly Hutu colonial era labour migrants, and now a large chunk of post-1959 Tutsi refugees. They were however all greeted with resentment from the part of Milton Obote, who had become the first president of independent Uganda in 1962. Obote painted the Ugandan opposition as being ‘infected’ by the Rwandese immigrants, obliged the refugees to hand in all their possessions at arrival and forbade them to live anywhere else than in the designated refugee camps. ‘Harbouring refugees’ became a serious felony. In 1969, Obote even banned all foreigners from public office and in the same year ordered a census of all ethnic Banyarwanda.

Only a relatively small portion of the post-independence Rwandan refugees fled to Congo, just around 20,000. But during the crisis of post-independence in Congo, the influx of Rwandan refugees ignited already existing tensions between the local population and the colonial era migrants in North-Kivu. An in depth analysis of the post-independence years of Congo, unfortunately lies beyond the scope of this thesis. It is however imperative to note that Congo resided in a state of chaos, with very little central authority. In the context of the regional history of the Great Lakes Region, the ‘Simba rebellion’ (a local rebellion that started in Katanga in 1964 but soon spread to South-Kivu) is of utmost importance. In South-Kivu many local groups would either join or fight against these Simba rebels, all in

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40 Prunier, The Rwanda Crisis, 64.
41 Mamdani, When Victims Become Killers, 168.
44 Prunier, The Rwanda Crisis, 62.
46 Katanga is the rich mining province in the South-East of Congo which played a large role in the post-independence power struggles in Congo. The province namely tried to split off from the larger Congo, and although that effort failed in 1963, it remained instable for some years after.
search of political recognition in post-independence Congo. One of the local groups that fought against the Simba rebels, was the beforementioned Banyamulenge (the Tutsi’s who had migrated to South-Kivu in the 19th century). This decision however had grave consequences for their relationship with the other local groups who had supported the rebellion. After the rebellion, the Banyamulenge were furthermore awarded local governmental positions for their loyalty to the Congolese state, which was by then run by Marshall Mobutu Sese Seko (who had become the Congolese president in 1965). Throughout the long reign of Mobutu, the tensions that arose as a consequence of the Simba rebellion, would not go away in South-Kivu.47

Meanwhile, the chaos of post-independence Congo also aggravated the tensions between the different ethnic groups in Masisi, North-Kivu. The conflict in Masisi revolved around land ownership, namely the land where the Rwandan labour migrants were allocated by the colonial administration. As the ‘indigenous’ Hunde felt threatened by the now majority of Rwandans in Masisi, they made use of the country wide power vacuum to reclaim the land inhabited by the Rwandans. In 1963, the Banyarwanda however revolted. This ‘Kanyarwanda war’ only ended when in 1965 the Congolese army sided with the Hunde and broke the united Hutu and Tutsi uprising.48

3. Life in exile and the continuous struggle for political recognition: the 1970s and 80s

The only country where Rwandan migrants and refugees had settled in relative peace, was Tanzania. Here, the abundance of open land gave the Tutsi refugees coming from Rwanda an ideal opportunity to live a life as cattle herders.49 But after Tanzania became the main destination for Hutu refugees coming from Burundi after 1972, it was increasingly drawn into the political arena of the Great Lakes Region.50 The catalyst had been a local rebellion against the solely Tutsi government in April 1972, which was put down with great force by the

50 Lemarchand, Burundi, 104.
Burundian army. The latter went on a country wide purge against all Hutu intellectuals/opposition members in Burundi, killing 100.000-300.000. The Hutu opposition members that could, fled to neighbouring countries. 100.000 of them settled in refugee camps in Tanzania, hoping to someday return to Burundi.\footnote{Lemarchand, \textit{Burundi}, 89-90, 93, 96-97; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, ‘The Recurring Violence in Burundi’, \textit{The Recurring Great Lakes Crisis}, Jean-Pierre Chrétien & Richard Banegas ed. (London: Hurst &Co., 2008), 36-37, 39, 47-49.}

In these refugee camps, the Hutu opposition in exile formed two separate political movements, Palipehutu and Frolina. Palipehutu was founded in 1980 in the refugee camp of Mishamo and based itself on a very strong anti-Tutsi sentiment. It constructed a historical narrative in which the Tutsi’s had invaded Burundi, had always oppressed the Hutu and now had to be chased out of the country.\footnote{Lemarchand, \textit{Burundi}, 144-145 ; Braeckman, \textit{Terreur Africaine}, 142-143.} In an interesting comparative study between the refugees in the Mishamo camp and other Burundian refugees living in a township of Kigoma along the Tanganyika lake, Liisa Malkki found that Palipehutu had actually completely indulged the whole camp into their anti-Tutsi propaganda. The refugees that had settled in the township, did in fact not have the same extremist ideas.\footnote{Liisa Malkki, \textit{Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania}, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 2-3.} Malkki’s observations are essential to understand the dynamics inside a refugee camp. With regards to the analysis of the Mugunga camp in the next part of this study, they will indeed be key.

Besides the Burundian Hutu in exile in Tanzania, the Rwandan Tutsi refugees in Uganda also organised themselves in the 1980s. During the Ugandan Bush War of 1981-1986, a number of Rwandan Tutsi refugees had joined the forces of rebel leader Yoweri Museveni. Among them were Fred Rugyema (Hutu) and Paul Kagame (Tutsi), the two later leaders of the RPF.\footnote{Ogenga Otunnu, ‘An Historical Analysis of the Invasion by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPA)’, \textit{The Path of a Genocide}, Adelman & Suhrke ed., 31 ; Mamdani, \textit{When Victims Become Killers}, 165-166, 168-169; Prunier, \textit{The Rwanda Crisis}, 67-69.} During the Bush War, Obote (who had been ousted by Idi Amin in 1972 but came back to power in 1980) returned to his old trick of denouncing his enemies as being infected by Rwandans. Between 1982 and 1985, Rwandan refugees were forced to resettle in the old refugee camps, which they had just slowly left to live a life within the local communities. Approximately 75,000 Rwandan refugees were forcibly relocated to the dreadful refugee camps. This was a catalyst for many more refugees to join the forces of Museveni, who started to gain ground. When Museveni overthrew Obote in 1986, 20\% of his
army was comprised of Rwandan refugees. Museveni awarded his loyal companions with key positions within his army and government. Rugyema had risen to the position of minister of defence, while Kagame became the head of Museveni’s intelligence service. Fighting however continued in the east and north of Uganda and the negative popular perception of the Banyarwanda increasingly became a burden for Museveni. He started to remove his old friends from the highest positions, after which the return to Rwanda became their new goal. In 1987 they formed the *Rwandan Patriotic Front* (RPF) and after a couple of half-hearted negotiations about the return of refugees with the Habyarimana (the then president of Rwanda) regime in Rwanda, they turned to the armed invasion of Rwanda in October 1990.

In post-independence Congo (or Zaïre from 1971 onwards), hope and despair also followed each other for the Banyarwanda migrants and refugees. At first, the Mobutu regime had been quite favourable for them. This had indeed already been true for the Banyamulenge as they had helped Mobutu defeat the Simba’s. Additionally, when from 1967 until 1977 Barthélémy Bisengimana (himself a 1959 Tutsi refugee) was Mobutu’s *chef de cabinet*, all Banyarwanda came to enjoy a relatively protected status. Bisengimana is said to have largely influenced Mobutu to set up the 1972 citizenship decree, in which all Banyarwanda and Barundi living in Zaïre at that moment, were given citizenship. The decree was however signed at a time when the Kivus were again facing a new influx of refugees, this time from Burundi. The other ethnic groups in the Kivus felt threatened, as the decree provided Banyarwanda and Barundi property rights, through which the wealthier Tutsi refugees from 1959-1964 managed to acquire huge chunks of land. Herein, they were largely helped by the clientelist network set up by Bisengimana, bribing their way into land ownership.

While the migrants and refugees thus enjoyed a great deal of political power and economic wealth, their privileged position also led to further tensions with the ‘indigenous’ groups in both Kivu provinces. When Mobutu ousted Bisengimana in 1977, these groups united to have the 1972 decree revoked. After severe pressure, the decree was indeed revoked and in 1981 a law was passed in which only people with an ancestral lineage in Congo that

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55 Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 175.
57 Jackson, ‘Sons of Which Soil?’, 104-105; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 243-244.
dated back to 1885 (the time of Belgian colonization), could qualify as citizens. A new citizenship crisis emerged and during the 1980s all Banyarwanda’s were slowly moved out of the state apparatus. Furthermore, with the new 1981 citizenship law in hand, the local Hunde and Nande in North-Kivu reclaimed the land the Banyarwanda had bought and tried to distort their businesses. For young Banyarwanda in the Kivus, this also meant their chances of success and their access to land were non-existent. When the RPF invaded Rwanda in the 1990s, many Tutsi’s from the Kivus joined their fight. They had lost the hope to build a future for themselves in Zaïre.

Moreover, this whole episode in which the Banyarwanda and Barundi first came to form the political and economic elite of the two Kivu provinces through the 1972 citizenship decree, and afterward lost their privileged position due to the 1981 which took away their indigenous status, really is key to understand the tensions that already existed in the Kivus when the 1,2 million Hutu refugees flowed into Eastern-Congo in mid-1994.

4. The region explodes: civil wars in Rwanda, Burundi and the Kivus

After the fall of communism in the early 1990s, many African states were pressured to develop into multi-party democracies. So too were the countries in the Great Lakes Region. However, the reforms also brought old tensions to a boil. As Mobutu tried to stay into the good graces of France (in order for them not to cut their development aid) while postponing democratic reforms, he dispatched a sizable contingent along with the French intervention in Rwanda in October 1990, which was set up to halt the RPF. The French had immediately backed the Rwanda president Juvénal Habyarimana when the RPF invaded, fearing the demise of a part of ‘la Françafrique’ at the hands of the English speaking rebels. Having lived in Uganda all their lives, most RPF soldiers had indeed never learned French. The decision by the French and Mobutu to back Habyarimana, would still play a role during the refugee crisis of 1994-1997. For the RPF, any French intervention in Zaïre during the refugee crisis of 1994-1996 was out of the question.

59 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 50 ; Mararo, ‘Land, Power, and Ethnic Conflict in Masisi’, 529.
60 Mararo, ‘Land, Power, and Ethnic Conflict in Masisi’, 529.
61 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 50.
62 ‘la Françafrique’ is the name of the French influence zone in Africa.
63 Prunier, The Rwanda Crisis, 101-102 ; Des Forges, Leave None to Tell the Story, 55.
64 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 32-33.
Habyarimana, Mobutu, but also Pierre Buyoya in Burundi, all introduced some measure of political reform. Habyarimana could quite easily postpone most reforms as he was fighting a civil war and was not asked for much by his French backers. In Zaire, Mobutu had at first favoured reforms that aimed to create internal opposition within his party. In doing so, he set up a country wide National Conference in 1991, wherein citizens could voice their concern with Mobutu’s Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution (Popular Movement of the Revolution, MPR) party. Before the conference could be held in the Kivus however, a census was held to determine who was allowed to participate. Through the 1981 citizenship law, the Banyarwanda were all excluded. Furthermore, the census was used to purge the complete civil administration from all Banyarwanda.65

Meanwhile, not only the RPF was recruiting in the Kivus, but so was Habyarimana’s government. In 1990, the Hutu’s of North-Kivu had namely formed the Mutuelle Agricole de Virunga (MAGRIVI), a supposedly agricultural cooperative. It was however a guise under which they created a politico-military organisation to counter the RPF’s influence in the Kivus. Habyarimana’s government armed and supported MAGRIVI, encouraged them to use force against suspected RPF members and also recruited them into the government army. As more and more Banyarwanda thus decided to fight in the Rwandese civil war, for the other ethnic groups in the Kivus, this was further proof they were foreigners.66 It was again in Masisi, where now 70% of the population was Banyarwanda,67 that a new wave of anti-Banyarwanda violence erupted. When local groups of young Hunde and Nande men attacked both Hutu and Tutsi peasants in March 1993, they started a war that would last for 5 months and would cost the lives of 14,000, mostly Rwandan, men and women. Mobutu did send in his ill-paid army to stop the killings, but their almost systematic rape and plundering merely aggravated the situation.68 Eventually, Mobutu himself came to the region, and in November peace negotiations finally started.69 A shaky peace agreement was signed in February 1994, which actually gave the local Tutsi’s most political power.70 These were the Tutsi’s who had

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65 Mamdani, When Victims Become Killers, 245 ; Prunier, Africa’s World War, 50 ; Kisangani, Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 178-179 .
66 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 50 ; Turner, The Congo Wars, 118.
67 Kisangani, Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 177.
lost their land after the 1981 citizenship law, and they now took the opportunity to reclaim what they had lost.\textsuperscript{71} The Masisi war of 1993 furthermore displaced 250,000 people from all different ethnicities.\textsuperscript{72} It must by now also be clear that the Rwandan civil war did not only take place on Rwandan soil. As the above shows, the civil war in North-Kivu was intrinsically linked to the war in Rwanda. Furthermore, the peace agreement was signed no more than 5 months before North-Kivu would have to settle approximately 850,000 new Rwandan Hutu refugees. North-Kivu was obviously not ready for such an event.

For a complete understanding of especially the composition of the refugees in the camps that were set up in North- and South-Kivu in mid-1994, it is also important to take into account the events in Burundi in the early 1990s. Although Buyoya (the Burundian president) had led Burundi to be the first in the region to hold free elections in June 1993, the Rwandan civil war further aggravated the ethnic tensions that surrounded these elections. When the elections of 1993 brought Melchior Ndadaye (a Hutu) to power and Buyoya orderly stepped down, the (all Tutsi) army generals feared the worst and assassinated Ndadaye 21 October 1993.\textsuperscript{73} The assassination of Ndadaye spurred a wave of violence against Tutsi’s in Burundi, which was immediately followed by the army’s now well-known formula of blind repression of all Hutu’s. Between 30,000 and 100,000 people, both Hutu and Tutsi, lost their lives in the months that followed and 700,000 Burundians fled to Rwanda, Tanzania and South-Kivu. The Burundian refugees that fled to Rwanda, were predominantly Hutu and would afterward join their fellow Hutu’s in their flight after the genocide.\textsuperscript{74}

The role of the assassination of Ndadaye on the eventual Rwandan genocide, cannot be underestimated. It was huge in aggravating ethnic tensions and was one of the most reoccurring themes in anti-Tutsi propaganda.\textsuperscript{75} A peace deal was just brokered in Arusha in August 1993, while at the same time extremists within Habyarimana’s MNRD were gaining ground. On 6 April 1994, Habyarimana’s plane was shot down above Kigali and a few days later, the genocide started. It would last until the capture of Kigali by the RPF on 4 July of that same year. Within the scope of 3 months, approximately 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu had lost their lives.\textsuperscript{76} The Rwandan genocide also triggered a huge flow of refugees, but

\textsuperscript{71} Mararo, ‘Land, Power, and Ethnic Conflict in Masisi’, 536.
\textsuperscript{72} Vlassenroot & Raeymakers, \textit{Conflict and Social Transformation in Eastern DR Congo}, 91.
\textsuperscript{73} Lemarchand, \textit{Burundi}, 153-154, 178.
\textsuperscript{74} Lemarchand, \textit{The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa}, 146-147.
\textsuperscript{75} Des Forges, \textit{Leave None to Tell the Story}, 178 ; Prunier, \textit{The Rwanda Crisis}, 198.
\textsuperscript{76} Prunier, \textit{The Rwanda Crisis}, 213-214.
interestingly, the largest flows of refugees consisted of Hutu’s and not, as one might expect, of Tutsi’s. For Tutsi’s, escape had been hardly possible, while for the majority Hutu’s that fled the advancing RPF, it was easier to find refuge within the areas still controlled by the MNRD. There were two of these Hutu refugee flows. The first started mid-May, when the RPF started to gain ground in the north and east of Rwanda. As these areas were traditionally populated by disproportionately many Hutu’s, many fled to nearby Tanzania. At the end of June, the largest of the Tanzanian refugee camps, Benaco, inhabited 400,000, largely Hutu, refugees. Among these refugees were also many of the former local authorities, who most certainly had a hand in the genocide. Dramatically, the camp was structured along the existing local power structures. The local leaders thus acted as spokespersons for the group. This had been a standard procedure, as in most refugee camps, all refugees had been the victims of a violent regime. In this case however, the local leaders were often génocidaires and were holding their constituents hostage by both arms and words. Most refugees were still under the influence of the genocidal ideology of their leaders. The Benaco camp was indeed a very clear precedent for what would happen in the Kivus a few months later.

The largest flow of refugees, however occurred not during, but after the genocide. Key herein, was the decision by the French government to send a humanitarian operation to Rwanda in mid-June 1994. The ‘operation turquoise’ was backed by a UN resolution, but was marred with controversy from the beginning. An intervention by Habyarimana’s old friends was namely not much appreciated by the RPF, nor did it have a large support within the international community. The French troops were thus only deployed in the south and west of Rwanda, which the RPF did not yet control. Here, the French troops established ‘safe zones’, to protect the civilian population.

Imperative to note is that the mission’s headquarters were in Goma, North-Kivu. During the month that followed, the troops tried to shake off their image of being pro-government forces, which was especially difficult after they were welcomed as saviours by the Rwandan regime’s forces and the notorious Interahamwe. Many Hutu’s, both local authorities and ordinary civilians, fled to French controlled area as they were fearing the

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78 Medecins Sans Frontières, Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaïre and Tanzania, 11-12.
80 Prunier, The Rwanda Crisis, 289, 291-292.
81 Ibidem, 297-292.
advancing RPF forces, just as others had fled to Tanzania before. When the RPF eventually captured Kigali, the old Rwandan government crossed the Zairean border at Goma on 13 July. The FAR (the Rwandan army before and during the genocide) was allowed to cross the border with all their weapons, ammunition, trucks and even two helicopters.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{82} Des Forger, \textit{Leave None to Tell the Story}, 685-688.
Part II: The Mugunga refugee camp.

At first, the 850,000 refugees who crossed the border between Gisenyi in Rwanda and Goma in Zaïre between 13 and 17 July 1994 had simply scattered throughout Goma. In the weeks that followed, they were eventually settled in several, often hastily built, camps. Most notable were the camps of Kibumba, Katale, Kahindo and Mugunga. These all accommodated between 150,000 and 200,000 refugees. Here, I will tell the story of the Mugunga camp, as it best exemplifies the complexities of the histories of these camps. Mugunga was namely the camp where the old genocidal government of Rwanda had taken refuge, along with many members of the ex-Forces Armées Rwandaise (FAR) and the Interahamwe militia. The latter two could however also be found in other camps, but were disproportionately represented in Mugunga. In short, the refugee crisis that tormented the region, but also the international community, between July 1994 and November 1996, was largely the crisis of Mugunga.

This part of the thesis will thus analyse the refugee crisis from July 1994 until November 1996 through the history of the Mugunga refugee camp. Herein, I will take a chronological approach, although I will also make frequent excursions into some of the overarching themes that characterise the history of the camp.

1. 1994: Feeding the Perpetrators of the genocide?

As the refugees flowed into Goma, there was no-one there able to provide assistance except for the French ‘Turquoise’ soldiers. Aid organisations had never given much priority to North-Kivu, all the equipment, personnel and emergency food had to be quickly flown in. Managing one of the largest sudden influxes of refugees that had ever taken place was no easy task indeed, a task that was further complicated by the large military presence among the refugees. The Zairean army (Forces Armées Zaïroises, FAZ) was given the lead in disarming the ex-Far troops, in which they were assisted by the French military. While the city of Goma was completely overflown by the 850,000 refugees and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was setting up the camps the refugees would have to settle, a highly chaotic disarmament process began. The French reported that they had handed over the weapons they had collected to the FAZ, a questionable decision indeed,

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83 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 48-49.
84 Médecins Sans Frontières, Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaïre and Tanzania, 24.
given the corruptive nature of the Zairean troops. The FAZ forces themselves, were also not very secure in their disarmament efforts. Acting without a systematic effort to track down all the arms in the city, it turned out to be a disaster. The FAZ have for example been reported to have taken away the guns from the ex-FAR soldiers, but not the ammunition. Nowhere near all weapons were confiscated, as especially the higher up ex-FAR members could keep their military vehicles, the goods they had looted on the way to the border and their more light calibre guns. After the worldwide news coverage had lost its interest in the camps at the end of August, the FAZ as a result did not even bother to disarm the new refugees. When no one was watching, the FAZ proved to be most unreliable. At a later stage, the FAZ would simply sell back the weapons they had confiscated in those early days.

In contrast to the privileged reception of the ex-FAR officers and personnel, the ordinary refugees did not get a warm welcome from the Zairean troops at the border. In fact, the ill-paid Zairean troops looted the belongings of people crossing the border. They stole their cars, cattle, chickens, basically everything they had brought with them. Deprived from their belongings, they were settled in the hastily built camps from 18 July onwards. It was thus that just ten kilometre outside of Goma, the Mugunga refugee camp was established on the volcanic rocks of the nearby Nyiaragongo volcano. However, a cholera outbreak immediately complicated the whole situation. It proved to be particularly difficult to build latrines in the rocky surface around Goma and the availability of clean drinking water was nowhere near enough. By August, 80,000 refugees in North-Kivu had lost their lives due to the cholera outbreak, but from then on it started to stabilise.

When the dust of the cholera epidemic settled down, the uncanny amount of donor money that had been raised to help stop it, was now being questioned by the western media. It suddenly became clear that the perpetrators of the genocide were the ones who profited the

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87 Human Rights Watch, ‘Rearming with impunity’.
88 Idem.
most from the food aid. Had we been feeding the perpetrators of the genocide? Just as in the Benaco camp in Tanzania (where the first flow of Hutu refugees had settled in June 1994), Mugunga had namely been organised along old local government structures. It was indeed the local administrators who had played a very dubious role during the genocide, who were at the head of the refugee organisations with whom the UNHCR had to negotiate. Even more alarming, was the large military presence in the camps. The disarmament process had been a mess and the UNHCR did not have a peacekeeping force. The ex-FAR soldiers and the Interahamwe took advantage and quickly gained control over the camps. This situation was especially poignant in Mugunga. Here, it was estimated that around 20,000 ex-FAR soldiers had grouped and the UNHCR estimated that 80 percent of the young men in Mugunga were affiliated with the Interahamwe. The ex-FAR and Interahamwe distorted the food distribution, they claimed much of it for themselves and oversaw the distribution process with a list of names. The ex-FAR and Interahamwe in fact controlled 40 to 60 percent of the humanitarian aid in Mugunga. Here, we can thus see how the military power the ex-FAR and Interahamwe could still exercise due to the failed disarmament process, allowed them to take control of the most valuable resource available in the camp, the food distribution. This gave the ex-FAR a position of power, which they abused to the fullest. As they controlled the food distribution, they also controlled the refugees who were dependent on it.

The UNHCR responded by creating a separate camp for the ex-FAR, in an attempt to separate the ordinary refugees from the genocide perpetrators. This would become the Lac Vert camp, that laid just outside Mugunga. Now disguised in civilian clothing, the ex-FAR however kept going to the daily food distribution in the Mugunga camp and were actually quite well established in their new headquarters. A New York Times reporter who visited Lac Vert in 1995, described the way the ex-FAR had transformed the camp into a military base outside the jurisdiction and help of the UNHCR. They had assembled their busses, military vehicles and army tents, and even had a special bus where they kept the archives they had

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94 Ibidem, 19.
95 Medecins Sans Frontières, Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaïre and Tanzania, 32.
96 Idem.
taken with them from Kigali. HRW furthermore laid their eyes on the grenade and ammunition caches the ex-FAR had stored in Lac Vert. On top of this all, the camp housed a communications centre, from which the ex-FAR kept contact with the Interahamwe in the other camps. The ex-FAR members also just kept going back and forth to Mugunga to forcibly take a share of the food distribution. General Augustin Bizimungu, one of the alleged major architects of the Rwandan genocide (he was indeed found guilty of several cases of genocide by the International Criminal Court for Rwanda), was interviewed in Lac Vert in August 1994. He said ‘we’re resting, we’re reorganising. But we don’t expect to resume fighting. This is the time for negotiations.’ His major weapon in the negotiations, became the 850,000 refugees he and his men kept hostage in the camps.

It was the ex-FAR’s priority to keep the refugees in the camp and distort any attempt of repatriation. If the repatriation efforts would namely succeed, they would find themselves arrested in Rwanda. Furthermore, there was no better hiding place than a refugee camp. The ex-FAR attempts to control the refugee population had three main characteristics. The first two are essential to understand the concrete structure of the camp and the ex-FAR, and the third has a great explanatory value for our study of mentalities. The before mentioned armed presence at the food distribution, was the first tool to control the refugees. A more soft power policy, had however been the use of the Bourgemesters, who could easily control the same constituents they had had in Rwanda, only now in their own little area of the camp. These Bourgemesters in fact allowed the ex-FAR to not only keep the same military structure of the old Rwandan government, but also its administrative structure. Mugunga was no less than an imported city from Rwanda. Looking at the ideological side of the camp’s structure, further control was exercised through the propaganda campaign against the ‘RPF agents’ that had supposedly infiltrated the camp. The genocidal newspaper Kangura kept publishing after the genocide, now from Kenya, and was distributed in the camps. Furthermore, Radio Milles Collines was now broadcasted from the Lac Vert camp and buzzed through the

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98 Human Rights Watch, ‘Rearming with impunity’.
100 Medecins Sans Frontières, *Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaïre and Tanzania*, 32.
speakers in all North-Kivu camps. But the propaganda did not stop at these old means from the genocide period. Another issue was the fact that some extremists had mistakenly been hired by some aid organisations and UNHCR. When the international official would be gone, they would counter all announcements made by the UNHCR personnel. The most widespread way of propaganda and also the most difficult to counter, was however the use of tracts. As this was a very cheap and easy way to get their message out, the ex-FAR would disperse messages such as: ‘Of all those the UNCHR had repatriated, not one is still alive … The Tutsi have taken over the Hutu’s belongings and those who dare to speak out are massacred mercilessly.’ Jean-Pierre Godding, who researched the situation in the camps in 1996, characterised the ex-FAR propaganda as being a ‘reign of rumours’. For the refugees, it was practically impossible to get any information besides the rumours and propaganda of the ex-FAR. All letters to and from family members in Rwanda were intercepted by the Rwandan army (RPF) at the border, stating ‘security reasons’. Eventually, Radio Rwanda (controlled by the new Rwandan government) could also be received in the camps, but its broadcasts weren’t very positive vis a vis the refugees. The refugees were thus living in isolation and could easily be manipulated. Not only was the military and administrative structure of the old Rwandan regime still in place, so to was its impact on the minds at thoughts of its constituents.

Furthermore, the ones that could actually see through the rumours spread by the ex-FAR, were at risk of being denounced as ‘RPF agents’. During the month of August 1994, the first reports started coming out of suspected ‘RPF agents’ that had been harassed or even killed. On 25 August, an alleged RPF spy was followed into an official medical facility in Mugunga. The personnel had no choice but to hand him over to the angry mob, the victim was immediately killed in front of their eyes. Such incidents, often not in full sight of the aid organisations, happened on a daily basis during the months of August and September 1994. Furthermore, the UNCHR had to cancel a repatriation operation scheduled to leave Mugunga

103 Medecins Sans Frontières, Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaïre and Tanzania, 25.  
107 Ibïdem, 81-82.  
109 Idem.
on 17 August. The ex-FAR had spread rumours that the ones returning were RPF spies that had to be killed.\textsuperscript{110}

In this swiftly deteriorating situation, the French ‘Operation Turquoise’ in Rwanda came to an end at the end of August. As the French troops left Rwanda (although some 500 remained in Goma until October) they spurred a new exodus out of what was left of the French humanitarian zone in Rwanda, which caused an estimated 100,000 to flee to South-Kivu.\textsuperscript{111} But the decision also had a substantial impact on the already dramatic security situation of the camps. Although their mandate had confined them to outside the camps, the French did sustain a relative amount of security in Goma. In light of this development, the UNHCR declared the camps to be in a ‘virtual state of war’ on 25 August.\textsuperscript{112}

The end of August was also roughly the time when most of the international press began to lose interest in the camps. The ‘virtual state of war’ in which the camps resided, was not expected to change much in the next few months.\textsuperscript{113} The cholera epidemic and the military presence of the ex-FAR and \textit{Interahamwe}, seemed to be sufficiently reported. But behind these more visible developments that happened inside the camps, the presence of the 850,000 refugees also had its impact on the local population and environment. Let us not forget the explosive relationship between migrants, refugees and locals, that had characterized the Kivus since the 1930s. Firstly, accommodating 850,000 refugees would have also worked disruptive even had there not been \textit{génocidaires} among them. Having a very small scale local economy, the arrival of refugees for example had a huge impact on the prices of basic commodities. The price of a kilo potatoes had quadrupled within a month after the refugees arrival, while a bottle of beer now cost more than 6 times the original price.\textsuperscript{114} Furthermore, the refugee also had a large environmental impact on the camps’ surroundings. Mugunga was located at the border of Virunga national park, known for its silverback gorilla’s. This meant that many refugees, as they were all used to cooking on charcoal, went into the confines of the national park to cut down trees. The ex-FAR soldiers then turned it into an almost industrial sized production, selling the charcoal in the markets of Goma. Combined with the poaching of the Virunga wildlife, the ex-FAR had no trouble getting by.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{110} Medecins Sans Frontieres, \textit{Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaïre and Tanzania}, 36.
\bibitem{112} Medecins Sans Frontieres, \textit{Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaïre and Tanzania}, 38.
\bibitem{113} Ibidem, 39.
\end{thebibliography}
It was also quite impossible to have any different kind of economic activity, the volcanic surface in and around Mugunga for example made it impossible to produce agricultural products.115

Meanwhile, the ex-FAR and Interahamwe had rested, they had reorganised, they had taken control of the camps, and had now discreetly started rearming and resuming their military training. Indeed, according to HRW, arms shipments from private arm dealers to the ex-FAR kept flying into Goma during the months of July and August, all under the watchful eye of the Zairean army. The Lac Vert camp had given them the opportunity for military training, which they did in the forest surrounding the camp.116 From the end of August on, the Interahamwe increasingly made incursions throughout North-Kivu, especially in Masisi and Rutshuru,117 in which they attacked Zairean Tutsi’s, stealing their cattle and intimidating them to return to Ethiopia.118 The Interahamwe killed or severely injured their victims with guns, machetes and nail-studded clubs, making no distinction between men or woman. The Rutshuru region was mainly destabilised by the Kibumba, Katala and Kahindo camps in the north of Goma, Masisi was just 50 kilometres west of Mugunga. The special rapporteur for Zaïre, Roberto Garréton, concluded that these acts were aimed at ethnic cleansing, especially after analysing the role of MAGRIVI, the Hutu peasant organisation that had also fought in the Masisi war of 1993. Indeed, MAGRIVI seemed to play an essential role in locating the Tutsi’s living in North-Kivu, but they were also directly armed and recruited by the Interahamwe.119

The Zairean population was also affected by these Interahamwe raids as their cattle was stolen and their houses plundered. In response to the Interahamwe violence, they had again organised themselves into local militias, calling themselves ‘Mai-Mai’ (‘water’ in Swahili) and ideologically harking back to the Simba’s of the 1960s. The Mai-Mai militias indeed made use of the same practices and rituals which they believed would make them impermeable to bullets. It is important to note that the Mai-Mai were not one entity, they

116 Human Rights Watch, ‘Rearming with impunity’.
117 Rutshuru is a region bordering Rwanda about 80 kilometres north of Goma, that also had its share of violent conflict in the past.
118 This relates to extremist Hutu propaganda wherein the Tutsi’s were thought to have invaded Rwanda from Ethiopia, afterwards oppressing the ‘indigenous’ Hutu’s forever after.
were local civil defence units which in principle had no relation with the other groups except for their name.\textsuperscript{120} No less than a year after the peace-agreement had ended the war in Masisi, the ethnic war had resumed in all intensity at the end of 1994, now between the Mai-Mai and the ex-FAR/\textit{Interahamwe}.

For the international community, the key to all problems in North-Kivu was refugee repatriation. At the end of 1994, the dialogue on repatriation was however still in a deadlock, and not only because of the ex-FAR and \textit{Interahamwe} efforts to keep the refugees put. Indeed, the situation in the country of repatriation now also became problematic. In October, the UNHCR had meant to publish the findings of their special rapporteur Robert Gersony, who had investigated the prospects for repatriation to Rwanda. As it contained shocking allegations of RPF retaliations against Hutu civilians in Rwanda, the USA tried to discredit the report in order to help their new ally. This tactic actually worked and the report was never officially published.\textsuperscript{121} The Gersony report did eventually find its way to the public and indeed tells a shocking tale. It concludes that between April (in the liberated areas of the RPF) and August (when the Gersony team ended its investigation), a monthly 10,000 Hutu civilians had indiscriminately been killed by the RPF in a systematic manner.\textsuperscript{122} The concerns about repatriation were definitely grounded in reality, but as the French increasingly played the anti-RPF card, the security council got deadlocked between France and the USA. This situation was further complicated by the RPF’s critique on Mobutu. According to Kagame, the then vice-president, Mobutu’s men actively helped the ex-FAR in North-Kivu, which to a certain extent was indeed true.\textsuperscript{123} With France supporting Mobutu and the USA supporting Kagame, a solution seemed further away than ever.\textsuperscript{124} On 30 November, the Security Council postponed indefinitely Secretary General Boutros Ghali’s proposal to create an international force to restore security in the camps.\textsuperscript{125} Moreover, there was also the international community’s wish to separate the ‘bullies’ from the ordinary refugees in the camps. After a regional conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 1995, the Zairean authorities accepted a

\textsuperscript{121} Prunier, \textit{Africa’s World War}, 31.
\textsuperscript{123} Prunier, \textit{Africa’s World War}, 56-57.
\textsuperscript{124} ibidem, 32-33.
\textsuperscript{125} Medecins Sans Frontières, \textit{Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaïre and Tanzania}, 70.
proposal to increasingly try to arrest the intimidators in the camps. These measures would however not be implemented until mid-December 1995, and I will thus return to them later.

2. 1995: War and Peace In and Outside of the Refugee Camps

The life in the camps practically remained unchanged at the beginning of 1995 and therefore it gives me the opportunity to zoom in to the camp life of the ordinary refugees in Mugunga. With a population of around 200,000 inhabitants, Mugunga was simply a city in its own right. The refugees lived under the blue UNHCR sheets that were given to them at arrival. With these sheets of 6 by 4 metres, combined with branches from trees in the camp’s vicinity, the refugees had built their homes. The UNHCR had built the necessary sanitation blocks and had set up a radio broadcaster in order to provide the refugees with information on food distribution or health and hygiene issues. Later on, the radio was also used to urge the refugees to repatriate and counter the propaganda of the ex-FAR.

As I have mentioned before, the refugees had at first collected the needed charcoal for their cooking from the adjacent national park. The reports on the devastating impact this had on the local environment, had spurred the UNHCR to give out a certain ration of wood to every family, next to the existing food rations. With just the UNHCR rations to live by and plenty of time on their hands, the refugees had furthermore created quite a bustling life and economy in the camps. Indeed, the refugees had sought to create an income for themselves by setting up restaurants, bars, movie theatres, barbers, or bicycle taxi companies. Although it was controlled by the ex-FAR, the central market was the centre of it all. The ex-FAR acted as a mafia demanding taxes and also using the market place to sell the food they had confiscated during the distribution process. Moreover, prostitution was widespread in the camps, posing a very serious HIV risk to its inhabitants. Several NGO’s helped the refugees to set up their commercial activities, providing them with micro-financing, but also employing them in the social services, the hospitals and the schools. Additionally, the sprawling sea of blue UNCHR tents was also the home of for example schools, churches and

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129 Medecins Sans Frontières, Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaïre and Tanzania, 79.
130 Lorch, ‘Mugunga Journal’.
dispensaries that were set up by the refugees themselves. Exemplary for the refugees’ inventiveness were the ‘écoles sur la pierre’ (schools on the rocks). These schools were set up by groups of parents from October 1994 on. They would organise the schools and recruit teachers from the refugee population itself. The children would then sit down on any of the many rocks in place. After a few months, a couple of NGO’s had picked up on these initiatives and starting providing the schools with pens, notebooks and teachers’ guides. Additionally, refugees also sought work outside of the camp, where they could sometimes be employed by local Zairians in agriculture or construction work. The refugees earning a living outside the camps, either as an employee or with a small business, were however subject to discrimination by the local population. In July 1995, special taxes were imposed to limit the commercial activities of refugees in Goma. Overall, the refugees were thus still living in a precarious security situation off of mainly UNHCR food rations, but their inventiveness had allowed them to survive, both by creating a little additional income and by countering the deadly spell of boredom.

A new political organisation that fought for the plight of the refugees was set up in Mugunga in April 1995. The Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Retour des Réfugiés (RDR), was composed of both an international and a local constituent. The international part was led by ‘clean’ politicians who had been in exile in Europe, but the local branch in Mugunga was quickly seized by the ex-FAR. General Augustin Bizimungu’s immediate recognition of the RDR, was already the first nail in its coffin. Despite the ex-FAR’s support for and influence on the RDR, the UNHCR, desperate for new camp leadership, did try to dialogue with the RDR. The story of the RDR however shows how the ex-FAR and the Bourgemesters kept a tight grip on the camps at all time. They would not allow any organisation other than themselves represent the refugees. They were indeed the only authority. Actually having a dialogue with the ordinary refugees time and again proved to be impossible.

Meanwhile, the best the UN could do to improve the security situation in the camps, was to establish a Zairean police force, also in April 1995. The Zairean Camp Security Operation (ZCSO), was composed of Mobutu’s elite forces, who were paid and clothed by

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133 Ibidem, 37.
135 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 29; J.P Godding, Réfugiés Rwandais au Zaïre, 41.
the UN. Now receiving a regular pay, the same forces that had mainly been plundering instead of restoring order during the Masisi war of 1993, proved to be quite capable of providing a certain level of security in the camps. They were furthermore tasked with escorting to the border the refugees who wished to return. For many refugees, life thus improved. The food distributions could be done in orderly fashion, and the many NGO’s now actually enjoyed an accurate level of security to provide healthcare or schooling. The security mandate of the ZCSO was however limited to the refugee camps only, it did not incorporate any action against the ex-FAR within their own Lac Vert camp and it did not do anything for the civilian population of the Kivus. In fact, the Zairean soldiers continued their plundering activities when and where the international community was not watching. The establishment of the ZCSO was the most the international community could agree upon, but it proved to be narrow minded, it only dealt with one part of the crisis. The crisis was namely much broader than the camps themselves, it encompassed the whole of North-Kivu. The citizens of North-Kivu were thus left without adequate protection against the Interahamwe (or the FAZ for that matter), a fact that certainly explains the local support for the Mai-Mai militias.

Coming back to Mugunga, the goal of the ZCSO had been to free the ordinary refugees from the political and military grip of their leaders and stimulate repatriation, but events in Rwanda again complicated these efforts. On 22 April 1995, the RPF had attacked an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Kibeho, in the South of Rwanda. Kibeho was first set up by the French during their ‘operation turquoise’ and housed around 150.000 Hutu’s who had fled the RPF and sought refuge with the French. A year after the start of the genocide, the RPF was however getting increasingly annoyed at the IDP situation. After the dust around the Gersony report had settled, they finally thought they could move into action in April 1995. RPF soldiers surrounded Kibeho for a few days, threatening they would attacks if the refugees would not go home. They eventually opened fire on the 22 April, killing an approximated 5000 refugees. The Kibeho massacre set a dangerous precedent for what would happen one and a half year later in the Kivus, but is also key in understanding why the ZCSO could only have a very little impact on repatriation efforts. In the enclosed

surroundings of the refugee camp, were the ‘reign of rumours’ allowed ex-FAR and Bourgemesters alike to control their constituents, the stories of RPF war crimes (as outlined in the before mentioned Gersony report), but also these new stories and afterward exaggerated rumours of the Kibeho massacre, the arbitrary arrests, the thousands of Hutu’s in prison awaiting trial, and the retaliation killings by the RPF in rural areas, did more to keep the refugees in the camps of North-Kivu from repatriating then any ex-FAR military presence could ever have done.  

However, it actually wasn’t all bad for the refugees returning to Rwanda. A returnee from Mugunga, interviewed by Amnesty International in 1995, for example found his old home was now inhabited by a 1959 refugee who had returned. However, after four days, he had reclaimed his home with the help of the local authorities.

In August 1995, Mobutu made a bold move and announced he would gradually expel the refugees before 1 January 1996. Until now, around 200,000 of the 1.2 million refugees in the Kivus had decided to return home, but after the Kibeho attack it had somewhat halted. With his move, Mobutu tried to reclaim his position at the negotiation table, showing that any solution indeed also needed Zairean cooperation. On 19 August, the FAZ scheduled the first repatriation out of the Mugunga camp. The FAZ soldiers tried to forcibly repatriate 9,000 refugees in just four days. They were taken to the border and handed over to the Rwandan authorities. With the FAZ soldiers taking advantage of the situation to pillage and loot the camps themselves, the consequences were disastrous. Many of the camps inhabitants in fact chose to flee the camp and seek shelter with the local Hutu’s living in the area, primarily in Masisi. For the ex-FAR and Interahamwe, the resulting chaos was both an opportunity to augment their border raids on Rwanda, but also to start a new round of ethnic cleansing in the area, only this time they increasingly targeted Hunde and Nande people as well. As the cross border raids were strongly countered by the RPF and eventually diminished by the end of 1995, the precarious security situation in North-Kivu opened up a new goal for the Hutu leaders. The idea to create a ‘Hutu land’ in North-Kivu gained in strength, and the Interahamwe from Mugunga hit hard in the Walikale and Masisi regions. Here, they burned the houses of Nande, Hunde and Tutsi civilians. They would often kill the

138 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 37-38.
139 After the RPF had ended the genocide and had taken control of Rwanda, many Tutsi refugees who had left Rwanda in 1959 (during the war of independence, see chapter 2 of part I) came back to their mother country.
141 Ibidem, 56.
143 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 56.
men and steal the cattle.\textsuperscript{144} Especially vulnerable were the communities that formed a minority in the Hutu dominated areas. Indeed, one such large scale attack happened on 17 November 1995. Hutu militiamen men from the Mugunga camp attacked the Hunde village of Mutobo in Masisi, killing 40 civilians and a handful of Mai-Mai. Among them was however the Hunde chief. The Mai-Mai retaliated and killed 30 local Hutu’s on their turn. In sum, the \textit{Interahamwe’s} attempt to create a ‘Hutu land’ can indeed be seen as acts of ethnic cleansing. They aimed at chasing out or killing all non-Hutu’s who were living in the area. At the end of 1995, Masisi counted several newly ethnically homogenous areas.\textsuperscript{145}

In the meantime, the FAZ kept playing a dubious role. They in fact did not do much to protect their civilians and their efforts were more focussed on countering the Mai-Mai, than countering the \textit{Interahamwe}. In December 1995, the FAZ burned a large part of the Masisi main town (along with its public buildings) to the ground in retaliation for Mai-Mai attacks a week earlier. The \textit{Interahamwe} were even said to have helped the FAZ soldiers during this operation.\textsuperscript{146} It is this alliance between the ex-FAR and \textit{Interahamwe} on the one hand, and the FAZ on the other, that truly brought tensions to a boil in North-Kivu. It could of course not be made public, and in the camps the measures to arrest the intimidators were still being implemented by the ZSCO contingent. However, when the ZSCO tried to arrest a group of twelve intimidators in Mugunga, a violent mob attacked and threatened UNHCR personnel, after which the mission had to be aborted. Between December 1995 and September 1996, only 41 ‘intimidators’ were arrested in all the North-Kivu camps combined.\textsuperscript{147}

3. 1996: Escalation Into a Full Blown War

Throughout the first half of 1996, the FAZ’s actions increasingly drove the already tense relationship between Mobutu and Kagame further to the edge. In fact, the FAZ was implementing a policy of forced emigration of Zairean Tutsi’s. The Zairean soldiers would expel Tutsi’s from their homes, drive them to the border and afterwards pillage their homes. Mobutu’s support of the ex-FAR’s ethnic cleansing campaign increasingly became clear.\textsuperscript{148}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{144} Garreton, ‘Addendum 1’, 107.
\item \textsuperscript{145} UNOHCHR, ‘Report of the Mapping exercise’, 61.
\item \textsuperscript{146} Ibidem, 63.
\item \textsuperscript{147} Degni-Segui, ‘Report of the Situation of Human Rights in Rwanda’, 113.
\item \textsuperscript{148} UNOHCHR, ‘Report of the Mapping exercise’, 62.
\end{itemize}
On 10 April, the FAZ drove 950 Zairean Tutsi from all around North-Kivu to the border at Goma, even charging them for their service.  

With the *Interahamwe* and Mai-Mai militias fighting each other back and forth, and the town of Sake, that laid at just 10 kilometres from Mugunga, as a new epicentre of violence, the area around Mugunga was at war and the UNHCR became desperate in their measures to promote repatriation. In March 1996, it was decided to end all social and economic activities in the camps, as well as to reduce the daily food rations from 2,000 to 1,500 calories. The schools, the bars, the shops and the churches all had to close. The inventiveness of the refugees now seemed to become a burden. It was thought that these measures would encourage the refugees to return, they had to understand that their stay in North-Kivu was only temporary. Except for the anger of the refugees and the violation of the refugee children’s right to education, the measures however did not have any effect. The FAZ, on their turn, launched a large scale operation to counter the Mai-Mai rebel groups in North-Kivu. Within this operation Mbata (‘slap’ in Lingala), the FAZ committed numerous war crimes. It torched, bombed and looted entire villages, making no distinction between rebels and civilians and killing hundreds. The *Interahamwe* took advantage of the chaos to launch a few attacks of their own. Telling is the attack on the Mokoto monastery near Masisi on 12 May 1996. Here, a few hundred Zairean Tutsi’s and Hunde had sought refuge. The *Interahamwe* not only killed, but also dismembered many of its victims at Mokoto. Outside the monastery, it had left burnt corpses as a warning sign for what was still to come. The estimated deaths vary between a couple dozen and over 700. At the end of operation Mbata in early July 1996, two years after the arrival of the refugees, we can clearly see the devastating impact the crisis had on life in north-Kivu. An estimated 70 to 100,000 people had lost their lives and next to the 850,000 refugees from Rwanda, another 100 to 300,000 local Congolese had been displaced. 80 percent of all livestock had been pillaged and public services were next to non-existent.

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154 UNOHCHR, ‘Report of the Mapping exercise’, 64;
Let us now shortly shift our attention to South-Kivu, were a similar development was occurring. Only here, one of the local rebel groups had been formed by the Banyamulenge, the Tutsi pastoralist who arrived in South-Kivu before the Belgian colonisation. This actually meant, that in the tense local political context of South-Kivu, the majority of ‘indigenous’ Zairians sided with the FAZ, thus creating a single front against the Banyamulenge. As the violence against the Banyamulenge intensified, Kagame however came to their rescue. The RPF trained and armed Banyamulenge rebels and infiltrated its own troops within their ranks. Indeed, Kagame had found the perfect cover to intervene in Eastern Zaïre. In July 1996, the ‘Banyamulenge rebellion’ thus started. In the following months, massacres of both Banyamulenge and Bembe followed each other in sequences of retaliation after retaliation. Kagame then went on to broaden his local coalition and thus formed the Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo (AFDL). The leader of this new alliance of anti-Mobutu rebel groups, became Laurent-Désiré Kabila, who had once been one of the key figures of the ‘Simba rebellion’. With the troubled history of the Banyamulenge and the Simba’s now forgotten, the AFDL prepared for an all-out war.155

4. Sub-Conclusion

In the next part of this study, I shall go deeper into the AFDL and its subsequent campaign against the refugees that evolved into the First Congo War. For now, let us first return to the main research questions to properly conclude this part of the thesis. As set out in the introduction, it has been my aim to analyse both the concrete role and characteristics of the different local actors and the mentality that lay behind their acts.

The main actor within this microhistory of the Mugunga refugee camp, has been the ex-FAR and their Interahamwe helpers. From the beginning, they kept the camp and its inhabitants in a tight grip thanks to their military presence. Indeed, as they had managed to retain a chunk of their arms and ammunition, they even had a military ‘headquarters’ at Lac Vert, where they also trained their men. The continuous failure of the international community and the Zairean army to separate the ‘bullies’ from the ordinary refugees, allowed the ex-FAR to keep their military power. In Mugunga we have seen aid workers being threatened and ‘RPF spies’ being killed. The military grip of the ex-FAR furthermore made

them into a mafia-like organisation, disturbing the food distribution, demanding taxes from ordinary refugees, up to the point of demanding taxes from the UNHCR. The role of the Bourgemesters must also not be underestimated. Thanks to them, not only the military structure of the old Rwandan government could be kept in place, but also its administrative structure. As the camps were set up along the lines of the prefectures were the refugees came from, the Bourgemesters could keep a close eye on their constituents.

Mugunga grew to be an imported city from Rwanda, with all its old structures still in place. The structure of the camp, however not only had consequences for the refugees inside the camps, it also had large consequences for the relationship between the refugees and the local Zairean population. At first, the local population had welcomed the refugees in a relatively positive way, there wasn’t any direct conflict. But the impact of close to 1 million refugees could not long be neglected, especially if we take into account the long history of inter-ethnic tensions between the Hunde, the Nande and the Banyarwanda. The refugees dislodged the region environmentally with illegal logging and poaching and economically due to sharp rise in commodity prices. More importantly, the fact that some people in the ‘imported city’ could actually live a better life than the locals themselves, while furthermore plundering the area, had its effects on the views vis a vis the entire refugee population. When the Interahamwe and their local MAGRIVI constituents started creating their ‘Hutu land’ in Masisi, the Congolese population furthermore came to the conclusion that the ones who were supposed to protect them, the FAZ, had no interest in doing so. While the ZCSO eventually provided the refugees and the international aid workers with security in the camps, the war raged on outside of the camps. Time and again, the FAZ simply worked for whoever could pay them. If no one did, they would go out plundering. For the local Zairean population, this meant they had to take the matter into their own hands.

The alliance between the FAZ and the ex-FAR is therefore key to understand the constantly deteriorating security situation in the Kivus. Indeed, Gérard Prunier for example points to the steady diminishment of ex-FAR attacks on Rwanda until they completely stopped in October 1995. The ex-FAR was no match for the now US trained RPF and came to the realisation that North-Kivu would have to become their permanent home. Luckily for

them, the FAZ gave them the freedom to do as they pleased. In our history of Mugunga, we have additionally seen that in many attacks by Interahamwe men on local villages, the FAZ helped. But we have also seen how the FAZ itself set fire to whole villages of its own citizens to get to the Mai-Mai. In absence of any lawfulness or central authority, the Mai-Mai, inspired by traditional sorcery through which they thought to be impermeable to bullets, were the only ones who actually protected the local Zairean population. It was the interplay between the FAZ and the ex-FAR that created the conditions for a renewed civil war in North-Kivu.

Turning to the question of mentalities, it is mainly the question into the mentality of what I have dubbed the ‘ordinary refugees’. The ex-FAR and Interahamwe in the camps obviously still believed in the ideology of the former Rwandan regime. The attempt to create a ‘Hutu land’ in Masisi is just one example. The FAZ’s ideology can easily be summarized into ‘whoever pays more wins’ and the local Zairean population were on the one hand scarred by the history of ethnic conflict and on the other had had their livelihood deeply infringed. When it comes to the ordinary refugees however, it is quite essential to dig deeper into their thoughts and reasoning to stay in the camps. Namely, did they only stay in the camps by force due to the military presence of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe, or is there more to it? In order to come to this deeper layer, Liisa Malkki’s study of the Hutu refugees living in Tanzanian camps in the 1970s provides us the appropriate framework. For Malkki, the differences in ideology and views of the past between refugees living in the townships of the Tanzanian city of Kigoma and the refugees living in a refugee camp, were striking. The better integrated refugees in the city, had a much more nuanced understanding of past and present Burundi than their counterparts living in the camp. Indeed, the rebel organisation PALIPEHUTU that had formed in the camp, had indulged its population in the well-known extremist Hutu rhetoric of the Tutsi as eternal oppressors of the Hutu people. This concept of the refugee camp as a closed entity in which information can easily be controlled and where the refugees remain trapped in their old life and thoughts, is also key to understand the camps in Eastern Congo. We have seen how the ‘reign of rumours’, fuelled by events in Rwanda itself, had kept the repatriation of refugees to an incredible low. Indeed, when Jean-Pierre Godding interviewed several refugees about their views on the RPF in 1996, he found that all shared a similar understanding of the new Rwandan regime. It was a foreign army that

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had invaded Rwanda, they had now taken the refugees’ homes and if said refugees would return, they would be victims of arbitrary arrests. Many observers and historians, myself included, have in this respect called the refugees ‘hostages’ of the ex-FAR. But this has been in absence of a better word. ‘Hostage’ namely emphasises the military force through which the ex-FAR could keep the refugees put. But hostages are aware of their captivity and hostages can be liberated by force. The ‘reign of rumours’ however worked in such a way that in the closed environment of the refugee camp, regardless of the support for the génocidaires and their ideology, returning to Rwanda was just not a viable option for many refugees.

159 J.P Goddin, Réfugiés Rwandais au Zaïre, 83.
Part III: The AFDL campaign against the Hutu refugees in Eastern Zaïre

In this part, we will follow the journey that many of the Mugunga refugees made between November 1996 and May 1997. Some refugees were eventually located as far as the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), 2000 km from their original camps in the Kivus. An estimated 200,000 to 230,000 of their fellow refugees had gone missing. In order to shed light on this journey which has from the beginning been marred in controversy and haziness, I will again apply a local/micro level analysis. For this part however, it does not suffice to use only one micro analysis of a refugee camp along the way west into Congo. Here, it is essential to highlight certain patterns, or maybe certain inconsistencies, that can thus illustrate the nature of the AFDL campaign against the ex-FAR and Interahamwe. A more comparative approach, is therefore key. Without it, I would be at risk of generalising certain aspects of the campaign. After first introducing the AFDL, I will secondly complete the history of Mugunga by also going into its violent end. Afterwards, I will make a micro-analysis of both the make-shift refugee camps of Tingi-Tingi and of Kasese. Both these camps were attacked by the AFDL at different phases within their campaign, and are therefore very helpful to analyse the evolution of both the campaign itself and of the soldiers who executed it.

1. The AFDL: a portrait

The main actor of this part of my study, is the AFDL. Therefore, it is wise to first paint a portrait of the AFDL for the reader to keep in mind throughout my analysis of the First Congo War that will follow. As explained in the previous part, the origins of the AFDL lay in the ‘Banyamulenge rebellion’, that started in July 1996. The Banyamulenge (who were Tutsi’s) felt increasingly threatened by the attacks they suffered from not only the Interahamwe, but also from the FAZ and the local rebel groups. As many Banyamulenge had served in the RPA before and during the Rwandan genocide, the new Rwandan regime thought it was their duty to protect their fellow Tutsi’s. Both Banyamulenge and other RPA

160 In Emizet Kisangani, ‘The massacre of the refugees in Congo: a Case of UN Peacekeeping Failure and Internal Law’, The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 38, no. 2 (2000), Emizet Kisangani comes to a death toll of 230,000. In The Great African War, Phillip Reyntjes upholds Kisangani’s estimate, and in Africa’s World War, Gérard Prunier comes to the slightly different figure of 213,400. However, the numbers game is quite difficult in this particular context, as this part will clearly illustrate. Therfore, the UNOHCR mapping report, has refrained from estimating the total number of victims.
soldiers infiltrated within the Banyamulenge rebel group, with arms and ammunition from Rwanda.\textsuperscript{161}

As the ‘Banyamulenge rebellion’ progressed, the RPF leadership however thought it would be wise to broaden their coalition to also incorporate ‘indigenous’ Congolese rebel groups. Only with enough local support would it be possible to get rid of the refugee camps, and topple Mobutu. Thus came into being the \textit{Alliance des Forces Democratique pour la Libération du Congo} (the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo, AFDL). It was officially formed in Kigali, Rwanda, on 18 October 1996, and was composed of the Banyamulenge rebels and four local groups from South-Kivu and Katanga (the province south of South-Kivu) that had been lifelong opponents of Mobutu. Laurent-Desiré Kabila was appointed as the official spokesperson of the AFDL, which indeed gave the AFDL the appearance of being a local rebellion.\textsuperscript{162}

However, Kabila could do nothing without his foreign backers. These were mainly Rwanda and Uganda, but Burundi also chipped in. Of great importance was also Angola’s involvement from February 1997, which was the final nail in Mobutu coffin. Throughout the First Congo War, the foreign backers supplied the AFDL with weapons and logistic support, but it did not end there. At the beginning (in the months of October until December), the majority of AFDL soldiers were in fact Kinyarwanda speakers (thus being local Congolese Tutsi’s such as the Banyamulenge, actual Rwandan soldiers and a few Burundian soldiers). Furthermore, there were also contingents of Ugandan or Burundian soldiers among these early AFDL troops. As the war evolved and the local coalition against Mobutu broadened, the foreign share of AFDL soldiers also diminished. For example, the Katangese Tigers (a rebel group from the southern Zairean province of Katanga that had fought alongside the Angolan government during the Angolan civil war) joined the AFDL after Angola joined the anti-Mobutu alliance in February 1997.\textsuperscript{163} Gérard Prunier estimates that in the last phases of the war, the AFDL was composed of one third Eastern-Zairians (for example Kabila’s troops),


\textsuperscript{163} Ibidem, 70-71.
one third Zairians from the diaspora (the Katangese Tigers from Angola, but also many Zairians who had been exiled in Eastern-Africa) and one third Kinyarwanda speakers.\footnote{164}

At the top of the AFDL military command, was James Kabarebe. Kabarebe had been the commander of Paul Kagame’s personal bodyguard and was one of his closest confidants. Moreover, after Kabarebe was first appointed as the Chief of Staff of the Congolese army after Kabila came to power, he went on to become the Chief of Staff of the Rwandan army, and is the current Rwandan minister of Defence.\footnote{165} A little bit further down the line, most high up officers of the AFDL were Zairean. In practice however, de \textit{de-facto} commanders were actually lower ranked Rwandan officers.\footnote{166}

2. ‘Liberating’ the Refugees: the Attack on Mugunga

When the AFDL offensive started early October in Uvira (near lake Tanganyika in South-Kivu), its strategy was immediately clear. The AFDL would not only attack the major cities, it actually gave a greater priority to attacking the refugee camps. Killing or even burning alive all suspected \textit{Interahamwe} or ex-FAR members, the AFDL went from camp to camp. Afterwards, the bodies were sometimes dumped in latrines, but most often survivors or local civilians had to quickly dig mass graves.\footnote{167} This is a pattern we shall see time and again.

While the AFDL captured the town of Uvira and made further headway into South-Kivu to the capital of Bukavu, a contingent of the RPF attacked the camps of Katale and Kibumba in North-Kivu on 25 and 26 October. These attacks were executed using heavy weaponry and mortars. Eventually, nearly all inhabitants of Kibumba fled to Mugunga, while the refugees of Katale scattered throughout the Virunga national park before also joining their peers in Mugunga. After the dust had settled, aid workers buried 4,006 bodies in Kibumba and 970 in Katale.\footnote{168} The actual number of victims remains unknown, especially because little is known (but many rumours exist) of what happened in Virunga with the Katale

\footnote{165}Prunier, \textit{Africa’s World War}, 175.
refugees. Survivors spoke of the systematic separation of the sexes and the subsequent killing of adult males.169

The Mugunga camp suddenly had to welcome another 200,000 to 300,000 inhabitants on its rocky soil, while the AFDL was nearing the camp. Tensions between new and old Mugunga inhabitants immediately arose, which led to severe difficulties in the already difficult aid distribution process.170 As the AFDL captured Goma on 1 November 1996 (causing 2,754 civilian deaths, half of them Zairean),171 artillery fire struck Mugunga. Aid workers had to evacuate and were even denied access to the city of Goma itself.172 Thus began the two weeks of what we could call the ‘siege of Mugunga’. With the help of local Mai-Mai groups, the AFDL managed to surround Mugunga, making an escape impossible. Those who tried, were shot.173

Except for several guided tours the AFDL organised around town, no international press or observers were allowed into Goma during the two weeks of the siege. On 11 November, aid organisations were finally granted access to Goma, but were ordered by the AFDL to leave the supplies for the Mugunga refugees in the local stadium. The AFDL would deliver the food supplies to Mugunga themselves.174 On the macro level, a UN intervention to set up humanitarian corridors for the refugees to return, was slowly taking shape. However, while the UN security council was debating on the final resolution on 14 and 15 November, the AFDL entered Mugunga.175 The attack began with an 6 hour long indiscriminate artillery fire from the hills surrounding the camp, making it impossible to determine the amount of casualties. The ex-FAR and Interahamwe then broke through the AFDL/Mai-Mai corridor near Sake (the town 10 kilometres west of Mugunga), as they tried to flee in the direction of Masisi. They took several hundreds of refugees with them, using some of them as human shields. This tactic would become an ex-FAR trademark in the months to come.176 Regardless, the AFDL fired at them indiscriminately with heavy weapons and machine guns. A few days later, a mass grave containing hundreds of victims was indeed found near

169 UNOHCHR, ‘Report of the Mapping exercise’, 95
175 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 120.
The artillery fire, the machine guns, all seem to be a clear sign of the direct involvement of the Rwandan and Ugandan military, the AFDL could not have gotten their hands on such weaponry without foreign backing. In the overall attack on Mugunga, the estimates are that between 3,000 and 10,000 people lost their lives.\textsuperscript{178}

There were those who fled and there was the majority that was still in Mugunga when the AFDL ordered them to return to Rwanda. As massive as the exodus of Hutu refugees out of Rwanda had been 2.5 years before, even more impressive was their return, all coming from this one single camp. Exhausted and nearly starved to death in the last two weeks, this was not the sight of a people who felt liberated, the refugees’ future was still very much unclear.\textsuperscript{179} In this scene, we can find further proof of the inappropriateness of the word hostage when describing the refugees in the Kivus. Not only the armed presence of the ex-FAR and \textit{Interahamwe} had namely kept them in the camps in North-Kivu, so to had their fear for the RPF. In Mugunga, half of the refugees at the time of the attack, had already experienced the AFDL attacks on Kibumba and Katale, they had just been besieged and denied humanitarian aid for two weeks and they had just been shot at for six straight hours. The fear that the refugees had developed for the RPF, thus seemed to be grounded in reality. Following this logic, it is not surprising that a large portion of the refugees followed the ex-FAR and \textit{Interahamwe} on their trip westward. But then again, how much thinking does one do when one is shot at from all sides? Like a Mugunga survivor indicated when he was interviewed by MsF a few months later in the Tingi-Tingi camp: ‘\textit{Les gens ne savaient pas où ils allaient, ils se contentaient de courir devant eux}’ (People did not know where they were going, they just ran straight ahead).\textsuperscript{180}

For the RPF, it was however crystal-clear; all refugees still in Zaïre were \textit{génocidaires}. This is a narrative the RPF holds to this day, and is a clear sign of what the intentions of the RPF leadership were. Through this narrative, the AFDL campaign was framed as being of pure military nature, it was a simply a war against the ex-FAR and the

FAZ. They quickly received backing for this claim by the US Military intelligence service, who had deduced from satellite images that a group of approximately 100,000 ex-FAR, *Interahamwe* and families were situated around Masisi and Walikale, and 160,000 ‘normal refugees’ were situated halfway up lake Kivu. This total of 260,000 refugees, was a couple hundred thousand short of UNHCR’s estimate of 600,000 to 700,000 refugees still on the run.\(^{181}\) The US military had however only flown in a 100 kilometre radius over Lake Kivu and later numbers would indeed prove them wrong. But for now, the UN Security Council was happy not to send the humanitarian intervention that was still in the pipeline and the AFDL went on the offensive. Going westwards from Mugunga, one inevitably passes through Masisi, and the events there would mark the sombre beginning of a, for some refugees, 2,000 kilometre journey through the Congolese rainforest. What exactly happened remains difficult to ascertain. The areas of Masisi, Rutshuru and Walikale, where hermitically sealed off by AFDL troops until March 1997. No international observers or aid workers were allowed to enter the area. Until refugees started arriving at the abandoned airstrip of Tingi-Tingi (400 kilometres further westward) from 17 December on, nobody could access them.\(^{182}\) From the many interviews the UN mapping report team held,\(^{183}\) a clear pattern is nonetheless visible. The AFDL would track down and then shoot indiscriminately at groups of refugees they encountered in the forest. Afterwards, they would try to lure them out, stating they would let the survivors go back to Rwanda. This would however prove to be a false promise. Another tactic was to simply attack makeshift refugee camps. Here, the AFDL would surround the camps and shoot at all refugees. A dozen of these massacres are known, of which the death toll would often run in the hundreds.\(^{184}\)

We must also not forget where we are at these events took place, namely in Masisi. The Mai-Mai indeed continued their support of the AFDL and took advantage of the situation to also attack the Hutu dominated villages in the area. The AFDL furthermore held public town meetings, where they would propagate their claim that all refugees still in the area were *génocidaires*. Within this propaganda, the refugees were ‘pigs’ that had to be killed. With these town meetings, the AFDL secured support for their actions, and could afterwards hire

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183 This team of 20 international and national Congolese observers from the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights, designed the report already mentioned as the ‘UNOHCHR, ‘Report of the Mapping exercise’.
locals to dig mass graves, or create burning stacks to burn the corpses. Furthermore, the AFDL would urge the local population to help their soldiers remove any signs of massacres. This mainly entailed removing bodies at the side of the road, or cleaning up clothes and personal belongings that were left behind. A group of international observers actually witnessed this first hand when they investigated the area in March 1997. Through these actions, the AFDL made the local populations accomplices in their crimes, and what better way to ensure these men and women would afterward keep their mouths shut? The hunts on the remaining refugees in Masisi, presumably continued until May 1997.185

3. *The Tingi-Tingi camp*

For the refugees, Tingi-Tingi, 400 kilometres north-west of Mugunga, became the first place where they could rest and regain strength. Just before Tingi-Tingi, two flows of refugees, one coming from Bukavu and the other Goma, had joined. They were heading for Kisangani, the second city of Zaïre, where they hoped to find refuge.186 But Kisangani was still 250 km away, and the exhausted refugees settled for the airstrip of Tingi-Tingi. They did so on the instigation of the FAZ, who wanted to launch a counteroffensive from the region. The FAZ believed that any further movement from the refugees, would hinder their military operation.187

The humanitarian aid organisations hasted to the site, but the logistics were not easy. In the meantime, the refugees built huts from trees and leaves, and dug their own latrines. When the aid workers arrived, they found a camp which was again set up according to Rwandan prefectures. The old Burgomasters and the *Interahamwe* had certainly not left their hostages by themselves.188 It indeed seemed like Mugunga all over again. However, one aid worker who interviewed the refugees about their journey since they left the camps, noted that the refugees spoke more freely than in Goma, as one interviewee even criticised the manipulative (ex-FAR) camp leaders.189

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The *Interahamwe* mainly used Tingi-Tingi as a recruitment and training base, but the largest number of génocidaires had settled in Amisi, 70 kilometres east and closer to the front. From there, they wanted to launch a counteroffensive with the FAZ, who provided them with ammunition, arms and uniforms. On the other hand, the AFDL was hesitating whether to continue or not. After the initial ‘success’ of the Kivu operations, there had been some conflicts between the RPA and AFDL leadership. While they were sorting out their quarrels, the refugees thus had a few months of respite. Especially because when fighting resumed, the ex-FAR and FAZ at least had some fighting power.

Back in Tingi-Tingi, the estimates were that around 100,000 refugees had gathered there by January 1997. In contrast with the image we know of Mugunga and the other Goma camps, it was actually remarkable that this time around the camp was not covered by a blue sea of UNHCR plastic sheets. This was exemplary for the refugees’ situation in Tingi-Tingi. The aid was forcibly, but also willingly due to the risk of creating a new permanent camp, kept to a minimum. All supplies had to come from Kisangani, to which the roads were in a poor state. The supplies thus had to come by air, but the FAZ preferred to use the landing strip at Tingi-Tingi for military cargo. The humanitarian situation deteriorated quickly and by mid-January 20 refugees died each day as a result of malnutrition and poor hygiene. Half of them were children under five.

The *Interahamwe* however had less of a hard time surviving. They could continue plundering the cattle and crops of the local populations, while other times mingling in the refugee population of the camp. The relationship between the local population and the refugees, had again become very tense. From late January the AFDL had decided to push through, knowing that if they would capture Kisangani, Kinshasa would just be a formality. Heavy fighting broke out at the border between North-Kivu and Maniema (in which Tingi-Tingi was situated), at the bridge over the Osso. This battle lasted for three weeks, until the AFDL forces finally took the Amisi camp, where most ex-FAR had settled, on 7 February.

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196 Ibidem, 74.
Most refugees from the Amisi camp then escaped to Tingi-Tingi, which became the new ex-FAR headquarters.197

With the war front nearing, the attention shifted from the humanitarian condition of the refugees, back to the more political dimension of the crisis. Still little was known about the scale of the AFDL massacres in North-Kivu, but there had been enough rumours. At the international level, all talks were still in a deadlock, and both Mobutu and Kagame refused to work towards any repatriation efforts.198 It was in this context, that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata visited the Tingi-Tingi camp on 8 February 1997, as the Amisi refugees were arriving. Ogata urged the refugees to go home, but they, at their turn, asked for her to resign.199 A journalist of Le Monde remarked that although he could talk about repatriation with some of the refugees, others were still controlled by the ex-FAR. The propaganda machine had still been working, as many refugees quickly hastened to protest Ogata’s arrival after several young men with guns had ordered them to do so.200 Ogata’s visit had not woken up the world, the AFDL was closing in, and aid workers again had to evacuate. The AFDL dealt the FAZ and ex-FAR troops a major blow at Mukwanyama, just 18 kilometres from Tingi-Tingi, a few days after Ogata’s visit. The defeat at Mukwanyama was a turning point in the crisis. From then on, fighting between the ex-FAR and the AFDL was limited to small scale skirmishes. The counteroffensive had failed, and now more than ever, it was clear that the ex-FAR and their FAZ allies were no match for the RPF supported AFDL. At least for the ex-FAR leaders, the war was over, and they sought a way out of Zaïre. With the kind help of the FAZ, they chartered a commercial aircraft that landed specially at Tingi-Tingi, with the destination Nairobi. All ex-FAR and Interahamwe members that could afford the 800 dollar ticket, flew to Nairobi. All others scattered throughout Zaïre.201

When the AFDL attacked the Tingi-Tingi camp on the morning of 1 March 1997, most Interahamwe had thus already taken a head start. The other Tingi-Tingi refugees, had less time to prepare. They heard the AFDL was only 10 kilometres away on the morning of 28 February and was about to attack the camp. MsF estimated that the 30.000 refugees in their feeding facilities and hospitals were too weak to survive the walk. Many of them were

198 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 146.
children. In line with the now familiar blueprint, the AFDL closed down the entire area during and after the attack. Humanitarian organisations were only allowed back in the area two weeks later (and for just a few hours a week), on 12 March. Thanks to a multitude of sources, a clear picture of what happened in Tingi-Tingi on 28 February 1997 and the following days, nonetheless emerges.

After hearing about the approaching AFDL, and after the few aid workers that were still in the camp had evacuated, the refugees planned to leave in small groups, preferably travelling during the night. 100,000 refugees would indeed be too easy of a target during the day. When night had fallen, those refugees who were still somehow able to, fled through the forest towards Kisangani. Presumably a few hundred sick, dying or unaccompanied minors were still in the camp when the AFDL arrived. Volunteers of the Local Red Cross organisation, buried them in several mass graves a few days later. The victims had mostly been killed by knives. One of the few survivors, who was hiding in the bushes, said he clearly heard the soldiers speak Kinyarwanda.

The escape of the other refugees, also turned into disaster quickly. On the roads towards Kisangani, at the town of Lubutu, just 7 kilometres from Tingi-Tingi, there was a bottle neck at the bridge over the Lubilanga river. At the same time, the AFDL opened fire on the rear of the column of refugees, who’s strategy of fleeing in small groups had not proven possible. In the ensuing panic, the AFDL shot indiscriminately at the refugees, who at their turn trampled over their fellow refugees or simply jumped into the river as a last resort. Following a now familiar pattern of creating local complicity, the AFDL ordered the people of Lubutu to bury the victims on the following day. Most of the bodies were however thrown into the river. The death toll at the Lubutu bridge, presumably runs into the hundreds. The vast majority of the victims were women and children (where in North-Kivu women and children had often been spared).

But it did not end here. Like previously mentioned, the AFDL closed down the entire area surrounding Tingi-Tingi, and would not let any humanitarian organisation in. On 12


203 Ibidem, 95.
March, 11 days after the first attack, a joint mission of several organisations was finally granted permission. They found around 2000 refugees still wandering around the camp, all in very poor health. The AFDL only granted aid workers several hours a week of access to the refugees, under strict supervision and military escort. Permission to land on the Tingi-Tingi airstrip was continuously denied. During the three week period between 12 March and 2 April (when the AFDL closed Tingi-Tingi and airlifted the remainder of refugees to a transit camp near Kisangani), another 216 refugees died for need of food and medical attention.

Outside of the corridor which was thus partially accessible for international observers, the AFDL would still search for any remaining refugees. One mass grave was for example found in Golgatha, three kilometres from Lubutu. It was to Golgatha that the AFDL would bring the refugees it apprehended, especially in the 11 days of the full lockdown, and would then execute them. Just as the AFDL had previously done in North-Kivu, the events at Golgatha come to show the AFDL again made a large effort to track down all refugees who remained in the area. These hunts for refugees started to fit a pattern.

4. Radicalisation at Kasese

During the month of March 1997, more details emerged about the massacres committed by the AFDL. Several aid workers and priests told their story in western media, and MsF came with an investigative report about the situation in Masisi and Shabunda (one of the main massacre sites in South-Kivu). This spurred a new momentum in the repatriation discussion, but in the meantime the refugees remained trapped in Eastern-Zaïre.

Indeed, after the fall of Tingi-Tingi, the refugees had no choice but to continue towards Kisangani with the AFDL on their heels. The ex-FAR and Interahamwe that were still among them, pillaged villages, raped women and killed civilians they fought were pro-AFDL. This trail of destruction they left behind, would afterwards play into the hands of the AFDL, who did not have to do much convincing when it came to explaining the evil nature of the refugees to the local population. At Ubundu, 100 kilometres south of Kisangani,

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212 Prunier, Africa’s World War, 124.
a split occurred within the refugee group. While the main bunch continued towards their predetermined goal, it was observed that a group consisting mostly of ex-FAR and Interahamwe actually went westwards towards Opala. Kisangani was about to fall into AFDL hands (which happened on 15 March), so for the ex-FAR it would be unwise to actually go there. Reportedly, there were still some Interahamwe members in the Kisangani camps I will analyse hereafter, but their leaders had long gone, just as well as the largest proportion of their fellow génocidaires.

The refugee flow towards Kisangani was scattered along the Kisangani-Ubundu railway line, where they had to set up several camps at the end of March. The AFDL was now in full control of the Kisangani area, and would not allow the refugees to come within a 25 kilometres radius of the city. At the 25 km border, approximately 50,000 of the 80,000 refugees in the area, had gathered in two camps around the village of Kasese. 20 kilometers further south, the others were stationed in the Biaro camp. Although I will focus on the Kasese camps, the story of Biaro is fairly similar, if not identical.

The Kasese camps were officially set up on 28 March, after humanitarian organisations had been granted access to the area the day before. After weeks of negotiating, the humanitarian organisations were allowed to run a train along the Kisangani-Ubundu line, to assess the situation. At that point, they namely did not know where the refugees were exactly situated. They found the refugees suffering from malnutrition, diarrhoea, malaria, and severe foot and leg wounds. At the back of the column, things were even worse. There they found the bodies of all who had not been able to keep up, as AFDL regiments had been on their heels. Once the camps were set up, the troubles were certainly not over for the refugees. The AFDL only granted aid organisations several hours of access to the camp each day. This wasn’t nearly enough even if it only were to make a start in treating the many refugees. It indeed took the aid workers weeks to properly set up their facilities and to for example set up a separate cholera camp in Kasese. Of the 50,000 refugees in Kasese during the month of April 1997, 60 died each day. In the meantime, the international community tried to pressure Kabila and Kagame to facilitate the repatriation of the refugees in the

216 Idem.
Kisangani area.\textsuperscript{219} This did work to a certain extent, on 16 April an agreement was in fact signed,\textsuperscript{220} but the situation on the ground was different. There, Kabila (who had flown to Kisangani just after its fall) continuously postponed any implementation of the repatriation plan. Furthermore, the AFDL broadcasted negative messages about the refugees’ health on local radio stations. These messages would use data from the cholera situation in Kasese, to spread rumours about health risks for the local population in case of refugee repatriation.\textsuperscript{221}

Below the surface, something was cooking. From 17 April onwards, aid workers noticed a stronger military presence in Kisangani. For example, at Kisangani airport 400 heavily armed men of the RPA special forces had newly been deployed.\textsuperscript{222} Furthermore, MsF aid workers noticed that the AFDL soldiers who escorted them to the camps during their daily visits were now Rwandan, while they had previously been escorted by Kantangese soldiers (Katanga being the Southern mining province where Kabila had a strong backing). The RPA had indeed augmented its military detachment to the AFDL.\textsuperscript{223} On the 18 April, humanitarian organisations were denied access to Kasese and Biaro, on the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} they were allowed back in but their time was restricted to just two hours. On the 21\textsuperscript{st}, the camps and their wider area were again completely shut off.\textsuperscript{224} The catalyst event, had been the death of 6 local Kasese villagers on 20 April. Who actually killed the 6 villagers remains unknown, but the AFDL clearly encouraged the villagers in believing it was the refugees who were to blame. When a train full of aid supplies was stopped by AFDL soldiers in the evening of 20 April, villagers attacked and looted the train while visibly encouraged by the present AFDL soldiers.\textsuperscript{225}

On 23 April, international observers and aid organisations were finally allowed to visit the camp, under strict military escort. Although the visit was quickly aborted due to nearby gunshots, one fact was clear. All refugees had disappeared from the camp, including the 2,000 people in the dispensaries and the 9,000 children.\textsuperscript{226} After the visit, the AFDL did

\textsuperscript{220} Idem.
\textsuperscript{223} Medecins sans Frontières, ‘Forced Flight’, 6.
not allow access the Kasese area again until 28 April. Thanks to interviews with survivors, local villagers and the testimony of a lost aid worker, there has however emerged a clear and coherent picture of the attacks on Kasese.

On the morning of 21 April, the villagers’ rage from the previous day was redirected towards the Kasese camp. The AFDL had come to village the night before and had encouraged the locals to attack the refugee camp. The villagers attacked the camp with machetes and axes, but the few Interahamwe soldiers still among the refugees fired back. Here we can see that at the attack on Kasese, the role of the local population expanded to such a point that they were not only used to clear the evidence (which we shall see just below), but were also made accomplice in the act of killing itself. This is especially poignant since these local Zairians did not have a troubled history with Rwandan migrants.

However, the villagers’ attack was aborted and the AFDL took the matter into their own hands. A train carrying the special forces that had arrived a few days before, left Kisangani for Kasese the same day. The next morning, these AFDL units surrounded the camp and opened fire. There were also some local villagers among the attackers, who would lead the refugees into the AFDL ambush. The attack lasted between 7 and 12 hours, after which the AFDL tracked the remaining refugees down for several days. Among the victims, many women and children were to be found. All accounts speak of indiscriminate killings. While at Tingi-Tingi, the killings had also been indiscriminate of age or gender, the Kasese attack shows this was not a onetime feat.

When the international observers visited the deserted camp on 23 April, the search process for survivors was still clearly underway. Following the now familiar blueprint, the AFDL tracked down the small groups of refugees still in the area. At the same time, the AFDL hired the local population to dig graves, or burn the bodies of the victims. A bulldozer

229 As Kisangani lays at almost 700 kilometres from the Rwandan border, the Rwandan refugee flows had never went this far inland before.
232 ‘Zaire- Refugees disappear from camp’, AP archive.
from a Kisangani based construction company was spotted in the area, as well as AFDL soldiers driving a truck full of wood (presumably for making burning stacks). A local MsF driver, who went into the area to pick up his truck on 23 April, passed by the Kasese camp where he saw the villagers burying victims, while looting the goods the refugees had left behind. Before the driver was quickly sent away by an AFDL soldier, he estimated he saw around 500 bodies about to be buried. A reporter who went along with the visit to Kasese later on that same day, saw soldiers picking up cartridges and machetes, and he saw piles of wood being brought along a dirt road closely guarded by AFDL troops.

In their search for survivors, the AFDL directed the refugees south again, in an attempt not to let them approach Kisangani. After the Biaro camp was also attacked, the area south of Biaro would be inaccessible until 19 May. In the meantime, Kabila finally agreed to repatriation and new transit camps were set up near the Kisangani airport. The refugees that had come out of the forest after aid organisations reopened the Kasese camp after 28 April, were transported to the transit camp and would fly back to Rwanda within 60 days. The train ride to the transit camp, however cost the lives of another 91 refugees, as they were cramped up in the wagons by the AFDL soldiers.

After the Kasese and Biaro episode, many refugees thus returned home. Others, mainly the group that split off near Ubundu but also some survivors of Kasese and Biaro, continued towards Congo-Brazzaville. There, another massacre took place at Mbandaka on 13 May 1997. On 17 May, the AFDL took Kinshasa.

5. Sub-Conclusion

In the previous sections, I have guided the reader through the route many Hutu refugees living in the Mugunga camp took until most of the survivors were finally repatriated from Kisangani back to Rwanda. Here, I will now take a comparative approach to analyse the characteristics of the AFDL campaign in Eastern-Zaïre, as well as the mentality of the AFDL soldiers. First, let me stress that the AFDL attacks on Mugunga, Tingi-Tingi and Kasese,

238 Reyntjes, The Great African War, 95; Prunier, Africa’s World War, 148-149.
were not unique events within the AFDL campaign. However, they are representative for three different phases of the campaign. Mugunga forms the crux of the first attacks against the Kivu refugee camps to force as many refugees as possible back to Rwanda. Tingi-Tingi was the main camp where refugees from North- and South-Kivu came together, while the war between the ex-FAR/FAZ against the AFDL was still raging on. Finally, Kasese is exemplary for the last phase of the campaign. A phase wherein it was already clear the ex-FAR/FAZ were not match for the AFDL, where Kisangani had already fallen and all ex-FAR leaders were already long gone into exile.

As has been the case throughout this study, my analysis will lean on two pillars. First, I will analyse the more concrete elements of the campaign itself. This is where I will draw some conclusions about how the attacks were conducted, how systematic these elements were and how the campaign evolved. Secondly, I will analyse the attacks from a more abstract, theoretical perspective. This is where I will look into the ‘mentality’, or ideology, of the AFDL and its soldiers to then come to the reasoning behind the attacks.

Let us start by discussing the similarities between the three attacks on the refugee camps. The lead up to the attacks is a clear one. From the ‘siege of Mugunga’, to the forced evacuation of aid workers from Tingi-Tingi, to the weeks (and especially the last few days) leading up to the attack on Kasese, the AFDL had a tactic to withhold humanitarian assistance. It led Kofi Annan, the then Secretary General of the UN, to claim during the days of the attacks on Kasese, that ‘You can kill by shooting or by starvation. Killing by starvation is what is going on’.239 This tactic of killing by starvation, is not unique in history. In his study on Russian prisoners of war during world war II in Ukraine, Karel Berkhoff for example concludes that the German policy to insufficiently feed the POW’s while there was a good harvest and to reject the local population’s attempts to feed the POW’s, constituted a ‘genocidal massacre’. The German soldiers who were keeping the POW’s captive, in fact had nothing but contempt for their Soviet prisoners. To the Nazi’s, the Soviets were namely less

239 ‘UN: Secretary General Annan’s Reaction to Rebel’s Control in Zaïre’, AP Archive, accessed 25-09-2016, http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/UN-SECRETARY-GENERAL-ANNAN-S-REACTION-TO-REBELS-CONTROL-IN-ZAIRE/c08cc47570e2bd939bb04d52a46c93?query=kasese&current=20&orderBy=Relevance&hits=24&referer=search%2fsearch%3fstart%3d%26end%3d%26allFilters%3d%26query%3dkasese%26advsearchStartDateFilter%3d%26advsearchEndDateFilter%3d%26searchFilterHSDFormat%3dAll%26searchFilterDigitized%3dAll%26searchFilterColorFormat%3dAll%26searchFilteraspectratioFormat%3dAll&allFilters=&productType=IncludedProducts&page=1&b=a46c93.
than human. Especially at Kasese, where the refugees were in fact held captive by the AFDL, the AFDL’s decision to withhold humanitarian assistance, while aid organisations were continuously pressuring the same AFDL for access to the refugees, could be seen in the same light. Already taking an advance on the study of mentalities, the AFDL’s withholding of humanitarian aid is proof that it gave very little value to the lives of the refugees.

The eventual attacks themselves, also followed a clear pattern. First, the AFDL would surround the camps, after which it would shoot at the refugees with both light and heavy weaponry. The refugees would then scatter in several directions and run into an AFDL ambush. The soldiers killed the wounded refugees with machetes and axes and would finally hunt down the survivors. We have seen that these hunts would last several weeks or even months in the case of North-Kivu. Time and again, the AFDL shut off the area of the massacre to carry out the hunts and dispose of the evidence. Both the attacks themselves, as well as the aftermath, however also needed the support of the local population. In North-Kivu, the support of the Mai-Mai groups was indeed crucial in carrying out the attacks. In Tingi-Tingi less so, but in Kasese we have seen a very obvious attempt to involve the local population not only in the aftermath but also in the killings themselves. Throughout the campaign, local town meetings where the AFDL would propagate their truth, were a common feature. The involvement of the local Congolese was essential for two reasons. Firstly, especially for the disposal of evidence, a helping hand was much needed. This had to be done quickly and most soldiers were still involved in the hunt. But secondly, a crucial notion I have put forward in this study is that the AFDL made the local population complicit in the massacres. Through this complicity, the local villagers would afterwards hold their mouth shut when international observers would try to gather evidence.

Besides the similarities between the three attacks, we can also distinguish a process of radicalisation within the AFDL campaign. During the attacks in North- and South-Kivu, and in the Virunga National Park in particular, men and women were mostly separated. In Tingi-Tingi and Kasese, this was no longer the case. Indeed, as the Interahamwe and ex-FAR mostly preceded the other refugees in their flight westwards, the physically weaker refugees (children, women and elderly) became the primary victim groups. Furthermore, the presence

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241 This notion is also supported by Filip Reyntjes, who comes to a similar conclusion in: Reyntjes, The Great African War, 97.
of the special RPA forces in Kasese also points to this same process of radicalisation. As repatriation came closer, it seems the AFDL wanted to give one last blow.

Before turning to the second pillar of this comparative analysis, a few remarks also have to be made regarding the question of authority. Although the RPF/ RPA’s involvement in the AFDL campaign has ceased to be a secret for a while now, it remains difficult to ascertain the level of involvement of Rwandan officers in the massacres. We do know that James Kabarebe (and other Rwandan de-facto commanders of the AFDL) had a large influence on the strategic level as the commander of the AFDL, especially since Kabila spent most his time in Lumumbashi, Katanga. Kabarebe was certainly personally involved, but there is no evidence of him being present at the actual attacks. He has been indicted by a Spanish court for his role in the attacks on among others Mugunga and Kasese, but a trial has not taken place. Kabarebe also spoke quite openly about his experience as AFDL commander in a documentary, but did not mention the refugees. The UN mapping report furthermore collected some testimonies of RPA officials being present at the Kasese attack, but the evidence is meagre. An actual perpetrator perspective is obviously missing from any analysis of the AFDL attacks on the refugee camps.

Nonetheless, we can in fact distil the mentality of the AFDL leadership and footsoldiers from the events analysed throughout this study. With regards to the AFDL leadership, it is actually important to look at the intentions of the RPF leadership. The RPF was indeed the instigator of the whole operation, so let us start with their reasoning behind the campaign. The preposition is simple, the RPA had been fighting a war against their long-time enemies, the (ex-)FAR and Interahamwe. After the (ex-)FAR and Interahamwe had committed the genocide in Rwanda, they had lived in refugee camps bordering Rwanda for two years, while continuously trying to restart a civil war. They had to be dealt with once and for all and after the AFDL had attacked the Kivu camps in October and November 1996, all refugees who were still in Zaïre were génocidaires who knew they would be punished if they would return to Rwanda. The RPF narrative will thus always entail that the entire

243 ICTR, ICTR/ERSPS/06/08/169/Rm, 135.
AFDL campaign was of a pure military nature. In this narrative, all civilian killings are isolated incidents that unfortunately happen during wartime. By framing the attacks against refugees into this military frame, the RPF and the AFDL managed to gain the support of both the local Congolese population and several international allies. But it also served another purpose. Namely, the framing of civilian killings into a military narrative, is an often seen phenomenon during violent conflict. It allows the common (on the ground) perpetrators of mass violence against civilians to justify their acts as being in service of a military goal and it allows them to dehumanize their victims. In the case at hand, it allowed the AFDL soldiers to fire indiscriminately at the refugee camps, but more importantly it allowed them to also track down and execute the survivors. This process of tracking down the refugees, is quite crucial to understand the mentality of the AFDL soldiers. In his seminal work on ordinary perpetrators in the Holocaust, Christopher Browning has for example pointed to the ‘Jew hunts’ that were carried out in the forests of Poland, as being key to understand the mentality of the Nazi perpetrators. In these ‘Jew hunts’, the animosity of the large scale roundups was missing, they were in fact direct and personal confrontations. Extrapolated to the context of the AFDL campaign in Eastern-Zaïre, the hunts on survivors, for weeks or even months after the attacks, thus form a key component. It is from these hunts that we can derive the persistence in the mentality of the perpetrators. Indeed, for the AFDL all refugees were génocidaires.

This all is not to say there was actually no military side to the campaign, because there certainly was. We must not forget that, although their numbers diminished over time, there was always an Interahamwe presence amongst the refugees. They were there in Mugunga, they were there in Tingi-Tingi and there were still some génocidaires among the Kasese refugees. I will thus not argue that the AFDL’s campaign in Eastern-Zaïre did not evolve out of an actual security threat, or out of the quite well grounded frustration of having the perpetrators of the genocide living right next door. I will also not argue that the AFDL acted out of sheer hate against the Hutu people. But within the military campaign to once and for all solve the question of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe at large, the AFDL was relentless.

Pomfret, ‘Rwandans Led Revolt in Congo’.
247 Rwanda had even just seen this same phenomenon as all Tutsi’s were framed as being RPA soldiers during the Rwandan genocide. Or even how the ex-FAR framed repatriation minded refugees in Mugunga into the military narrative of being RPA spies.
and in fact gave no value to the lives of the refugees. It made no distinction between unarmed and armed refugees and radicalised in eventually killing men, women and children alike. The AFDL had dehumanized all Rwandan refugees in Eastern-Zaïre, in order to fulfil its military goal. This dehumanization was however instrumental, the RPF leadership needed the AFDL soldiers to think of all refugees as guilty, as *génocidaires*. Only then could they end the cycle of refugee conflicts in the Great Lakes Region of Africa that was already 50 years in the making.
Conclusion

This study has provided an in depth analysis of the 1994-1996 refugee crisis in Eastern-Zaïre and the subsequent First Congo War. In the first part, I have explained how refugee flows have often been at the root of conflicts between ‘migrant’ and ‘indigenous’ groups of people the Great Lakes Region’s. The parentheses there are with a clear goal, as the definition and composition of these groups have often been subject to change. Exemplary has been the continuous struggle for political rights the Banyarwanda living in North- and South-Kivu have been through since they first came to Eastern-Congo before, during and after the Belgium colonisation. As political power was linked to indigeneity, the tensions that arose from the political struggle time and again divided the local citizens along ethnic lines. More broadly speaking, it is an understatement to say that many (especially Rwandan and Burundian) men and women in the Great Lakes Region, have had their lives and minds deeply influenced by the fact they were once considered the ‘other’, the ‘nonindigenous’. As Liisa Malkki’s study of Burundian Hutu refugees living in Tanzania in the 1970s has showed us, the environment wherein refugees lived (be that a city or the closed environment of a refugee camp) had another large influence on their views and realities.

The conflicts that arose out of the diaspora of refugees in the Great Lakes Region, often bore a regional character. With the large amount of migrants living in each of Rwanda’s bordering states, the Rwandan civil war and the genocide that followed, were not exempt from this rule. For example, when Zairean Tutsi’s joined the RPF and Zairean Hutu’s organised themselves in the supposedly agricultural cooperative MAGRIVI (which was in actual fact just another rebel group), the local Eastern-Zaïrean conflict over indigeneity and political power had again flared up just months before North- and South-Kivu would have to accommodate 1.2 million Rwandan Hutu refugees.

With this influx of refugees I had come to the crux of my thesis, namely the 1994-1996 refugee crisis in Eastern-Zaïre and the First Congo War. Herein, it has been my goal to come to nature of the conflict and the local actors involved. I have been guided by two main questions, which have served to grasp the complexities of the history at hand. The first has been a question into the structures, dynamics and evolution of the acts of the local actors. The second has been a question into the mentalities of the local actors involved, it has been an exercise to understand the reasoning that laid behind certain acts.

In line with my first main question, I have analysed the Mugunga camp, the different local actors and their influence in and outside of the camp. Here I have argued that the ex-
FAR held a tight grip on the camp and its population through both hard and soft power. The weapons the soldiers had managed to keep when they fled into Zaïre, the absence of a structured attempt to rid the ex-FAR from it weapons and the failure to separate the ‘bullies’ from the mass of the refugee population, all led to the ex-FAR being the most organised military entity in the North-Kivu province. Besides this example of hard power, the ex-FAR could also control the refugees through the Bourgemesters and the fact the camp was structured along old local government structures. Having the same neighbours as in Rwanda, it was impossible for the refugees to hide from the peer pressure and the local control. Big Brother was always watching.

To get a complete picture of the refugee crisis of 1994-1996, we cannot however stop our analysis of local actors at the ex-FAR. Essential is also the role of the Zairean Army, the FAZ. The historical alliance between the FAZ and the (ex-) FAR, did namely not stop after the genocide. Although a portion of the FAZ did eventually provide security inside the camps after it was recruited by the UN, it sided with the ex-FAR and Interahamwe in the civil war that was raging on outside of the camps. The local Zairians, who had already been severely affected by the arrival of the 800,000 refugees in North-Kivu (illegal poaching, dramatic rise in commodity prices), now also had to fight against both the ex-FAR/ Interahamwe and their own national army. Their anger was eventually directed against the ‘other’.

More importantly still, I have tried to come to the mentality of (mainly) the what I have dubbed ‘ordinary’ refugees. In order to namely understand the crucial decision of many refugees to flee from the AFDL (the self-proclaimed ‘liberators’ of the refugees), we must understand the thoughts and minds of the ordinary refugees that lived in the imported city of Mugunga. It is here that Liisa Malkki’s idea of the closed environment of the refugee camp again comes into play. The very nature of the refugee camp, allowed the génocidaires to keep the image of the enemy RPF intact. Just as was the case with the Burundian Hutu refugees in the 1970s in Tanzania, the closed surroundings of the refugee camp kept its inhabitants trapped in their old life and thoughts. Herein, the ‘reign of rumours’ was of greater significance than the old ways of propaganda (radio and newspaper) the ex-FAR did also still use. Through tracts and plain mouth to mouth communication, the rumours about returnees, RPF war crimes (as outlined in the Gersony report) and the Kibeho massacre, found an attentive audience. The return to Rwanda was feared by many refugees. They were more than just hostages by military force.

This same return was still feared when the AFDL attacked Mugunga on 15 November 1996. Although many of Mugunga’s inhabitants returned home, another great number fled
further westward into Zaïre. Beginning with the attacks on Mugunga, I have made an in-depth analysis of the AFDL campaign against these refugees that fled westwards. Herein, I have made a comparative analysis of three main attacks (Mugunga, Tingi-Tingi and Kasese) within the AFDL campaign, in order to come to the concrete structure, dynamics and evolution of the campaign. This comparative analysis has furthermore guided me in explaining the reasoning behind the AFDL campaign through both an analysis of the ideology of the AFDL leadership as well as of the mentality of the AFDL foot soldiers.

I have argued that the AFDL attacks against refugees and their aftermath, followed a clear pattern and structure. The AFDL would first ‘besiege’ the refugee camps, denying the refugees access to humanitarian aid. During the attack, the AFDL would surround the camp and subsequently fire indiscriminately on the crowd. As a result, the refugees would scatter in all directions, where they would find an AFDL ambush waiting for them. After the attack, the AFDL would keep the area closed off from the outside world (international observers and aid workers) to both track down and kill the survivors and to bury or burn the victims. For the latter, the AFDL made ample use of the local Zairean population. The AFDL held local town meetings to gather support for their actions, and afterward hired the local population to dig mass graves, create burning stacks to burn the corpses, and remove the personal belongings of the victims from the roadsides. At Kasese, the AFDL even incorporated the local population into the attack itself. Thus the AFDL made the local Zairians accomplices in their acts, which proved key in getting rid of the evidence and for keeping the mouths of these witnesses shut. However, besides the similarities between the attacks (and thus the pattern), there has also been a process of radicalisation within the AFDL campaign. I have backed this claim by pointing to the evolution of the attacks into also killing women and children and by the presence of RPA special forces at the time of the Kasese attack. The longer the campaign lasted (and the more concrete talks of repatriation got), the more the AFDL wanted to make a quick end to it.

Now coming to the explanatory value of the mentality and ideology of the AFDL leadership and its foot soldiers, I have argued that the RPF leadership (which was the de-facto leadership of the AFDL) framed the AFDL campaign into a pure military narrative. This narrative was based on the presumption that all refugees still in Zaïre after the attack on Mugunga, where génocidaires. Through this narrative, the RPF/ AFDL managed to keep its foreign allies (mainly the US) happy and it could gather local support. More importantly, the military narrative allowed AFDL foot soldiers to kill indiscriminately of age or gender, as all refugees were seen as the military enemy. As further proof, I have argued that the
withholding of humanitarian assistance and the ‘hunts’ for survivors of the attacks, point to the dehumanisation of the refugees in the eyes of both the AFDL leadership and its foot soldiers. The mentality of the AFDL soldiers was so that they gave no value to lives of the refugees, they were less than human. They were simply génocidaires.

Although it aspired to do so, the AFDL campaign eventually did not end the cycle of refugees and conflicts in the Great Lakes Region. The ex-FAR/Interahamwe forces remodelled themselves into the guerrilla rebel group Forces Democratique Pour la Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and became an active force throughout the Congolese civil war and beyond. They are however far from the only one. The events analysed in this work, have been the catalyst for the seemingly definite destabilisation of Congo. The pallet of rebel groups active in Eastern-Congo has become even broader than its number of foreign backers. Especially when the second Congo War broke out after Kabila cut the ties to his Ugandan and Rwandan backers in August 1998 after UN investigations into the attacks against refugees, it seemed as if every African state at least backed one rebel group in Eastern-Congo. The Congolese civil war still lingers on in North-Kivu and so does the Mugunga camp. Now the home of around 70,000 internally displaced Congolese, the story of the Mugunga camp has become the story of Congo.

249 Kisangani, ‘The massacre of the refugees in Congo’, 170. These investigations actually led the ‘Garreton reports’ I have much used in this study.

250 Prunier, Africa’s World War, xxxi-xxxii.

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