



World AIMS Global Learning Teacher Notes

Subject: Rwanda Genocide	Topic: Holocaust Memorial Day	Teaching Set: Secondary (although sensitivity may be needed with younger students)
Context: Historical background of the Rwandan Genocide		
Teacher Notes: <p>January 27th marks Holocaust Memorial Day every year. This particular date is chosen as it marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau the most notorious of all the Nazi Death camps. Yet Holocaust Memorial Day asks us not only to focus on the genocide of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis but also to reflect on other genocides that have occurred since, to remind us that unfortunately genocide is still very much a part of modern day life. 2014 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda. So for HMD 2014, World AIMS have decided to focus in on this horrific event, probably the bleakest moment of Africa's most recent past. What teachers sometimes feel anxious about when delivering topics of such a sensitive nature is that they feel they do not know enough about the actual event to effectively and accurately inform their students. Therefore written below is a very brief synopsis for staff to familiarise themselves with the events in Rwanda which may help with the delivery of the materials.</p> <p>The genocide in Rwanda lasted for approximately 100 days between April and June 1994. During this time, it is estimated that over 800,000 Rwandans were killed. The majority of those killed were Tutsis and the majority of the violence was carried out by the Hutus. It was by far the largest genocide in Africa in modern time.</p> <p>Tension between these two ethnic groups is not new to Rwanda. The two groups are actually very similar following many of the same traditions, speaking the same language etc but Tutsis are often taller and thinner than Hutus and some say that Tutsi origins lay in Ethiopia.</p> <p>When Belgian colonists arrived in Rwanda in 1916, they produced identity cards which classified people according to their ethnicity, and the Belgians believed Tutsi to be superior to Hutu and as a result the Tutsis enjoyed better opportunities and benefit. This led to growing resentment by the Hutu which culminated in a series of riots in 1959 which saw over 20,000 Tutsis killed and many more were forced to flee to the neighbouring countries of Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda. When Rwanda gained independence in 1962, the Hutus took control of government and as the years went on, the Tutsis were portrayed as scapegoats for all crises within Rwanda. Leading up to the genocide the economic situation worsened and the Hutu President, Juvenal Habyarimana began to</p>		

lose popularity. Tutsi rebels outside of Rwanda formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) led by Paul Kagame. Their aim was to overthrow the president and return to their homeland. This increased tensions within Rwanda. Then on 6th April 1994, the Rwandan President was killed when his plane (also carrying the President of Burundi) was shot down. It is still not known to this day who was behind this attack although current Tutsi President Paul Kagame has been blamed by some.

Following the President's murder, a retribution campaign began swiftly. The Presidential Guard immediately murdered political opposition leaders and this in turn led to the beginning on the slaughter of the Tutsis and some moderate Hutus. Organisers of the slaughter included military, politicians and businessman but others soon joined. Organised gangs of soldiers used machetes to destroy groups of Tutsis wherever they found them. An unofficial militia group was formed on the back of a successful propaganda campaign and had over 30,000 members. Ordinary citizens were encourage or forced to join in with the massacre, murdering Tutsi neighbours, and they were often offered incentives such as money, food or land. After the assassination, the RPF renewed their assault on government forces and in July they captured Kigali, the Rwandan capital. The government collapsed and the RPF declared a ceasefire. This then caused over two million Hutus to flee from Rwanda to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo.) Many of these refugees have since been implicated into the massacres. There remains as large presence of Hutu militia within the DRC and this has led to years of conflict since causing an estimated five million deaths. There is also a Congolese Tutsi rebel group who also refuse to lay down arms for the fear the risk of genocide if they do. The fighting still continues.

Let us know what you think!

If you use this resource in anyway, please let us know how you got on and how the students engaged with it. Email any responses to the admin@methodisteducation.co.uk