

Minutes of hearing of Dr Charles Zirimwabagabo.

International Rogatory Commission

carried out in Rwanda from 05 June to

24 June 1995 – File no 57/95

Composition

- ❖ Damien VANDERSMEERSCH
- ❖ VER ELST REUL
- ❖ Michel WATERPLAS
- ❖ Michel STASSIN
- ❖ Francoise MOIJENS

In our presence, Mr Athnase DUSHIMILIMANA proceeded with the hearing of MR GABRIEL NKUBIBIZA, the minutes of which are drawn up within the framework of the execution of the rogatory commission.

We left MUGANZA at 14.45 hours and took the road to return to Butare and then to KIGALI. In the meantime, we telephoned the company that employed Jean-Bosco SEMINEGA where we left a message to contact us.

Saturday 10 June 1995

In the morning we proceeded with the drafting of these minutes and we remained in the cooperation premises to prepare various copies of documents.

Around midday, we met Mr DERAEDT, a Belgian investigator employed by the International Court who proposed that we meet the deputy public prosecutor RACOTOMANANA. A further meeting would be fixed for that purpose.

And 12.30, we met Captain Emmanuel BAYINGANA, director of the documentation service at the police headquarters, who we had already met during our previous rogatory commission. He undertook to carry out certain searches within the framework of our files.

At 15.00 hours, we left with Janvier RUTSINDINTWARI, the replacement for the investigator, in order to find the current residence of Mr Tharcisse SEMINEGA. The hearings of the latter and his daughter are the subject of different minutes drafted within the execution of the rogatory commissions.

Sunday 11 June 1995

At 09.00 hours, the rogatory commission team headed for Gisenyi after having found 2nd Lt John KARANGWA who is in charge of escorting us (especially through the roadblocks).

We arrived at Gisenyi at 12.45 hours.

At 14.00 hours, we met Dr Charles ZILNWABAGABO, prefect of Gisenyi. During a meeting which he did not wish to see take the form of a hearing, he informed us of the following:

“Before the events, I stayed in Paris from 8 January to 4 April 1994. I was in Kigali on 6 April and only arrived at Gisenyi on 20 April, the date from which I carried out the functions of prefect. When I was appointed prefect I could not refuse.

Alfonse HIGANIRO was at Gisenyi during this period. I saw him several times. He attended meetings of the MRND-CDR. I was personally a witness to that.

There were a lot of refugees from the presidential entourage at Gisenyi. I saw HIGANIRO active with other members of the MRND, known for their extremism. I saw them all together.

Once I saw his wife at the Meridien in the company of other extremists.

I personally helped people who were hidden in the cathedral of Nyumbo (?), who were dying of hunger. I took them food without the knowledge of their guards but they were eliminated despite everything afterwards. I myself was threatened because I had fed them. Nevertheless there were police there to guard them but they said they could do nothing. I immediately asked the public prosecutor of the Republic to open an inquiry but that could not take place as a result of other events. I wanted to take down the road blocks and I learned that, during a meeting, HIGANIRO had said he was opposed to it. I nevertheless succeeded in getting rid of some roadblocks for some time.

As regards Celestin RWAGAFILITA, he came to my house on 12 July. He was accompanied by soldiers and Interahamwes. He claimed that he was in charge of protecting administration personnel but I think he was actually charged with killing me. RWAGAFILITA told me to make the people flee to Zaire. He told me to give orders in this sense to the population. I refused to oblige. With his troops, RWAGAFILITA made the people flee to Zaire. He wanted to make them flee in the name of the government. He said he was charged with security by the government when normally he was retired. I knew that it was an extremist from Kibungo who prevented the other parties from establishing themselves there.

The sadness in this country is that all the parties are split into Power extremists on one side and on the other side, the others who do not agree. The extremist wings of the different parties have grouped themselves together.

As regards Theoneste BAGOSORA, I regard him as the brains, the engine of the events. By myself I had drawn up a list of people who I held responsible: BAGOSORA was at the top of it. During the months of May and June 1994, I met certain ministers who explained to me what had happened on the night of 6 to 7 April 1994. They told me that it was BAGOSORA himself who had chosen them and who came to find them. It was the same for the interim president. It was BAGOSORA with the interim government who encouraged the massacres. I myself was a witness on 6 April at 20.00 hours to the fact that the G.P took over the KINHURURA quarter in Kigali. That was unusual. You could feel that something was being prepared.

BIKINDI was an extremist. He had written extremist songs. I had seen him several times in Kigali at MRND meetings.