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## Hutu-Tutsi Conflict in Burundi: A Critical Exploration of Factors

**Dr. Mpawenimana Abdallah Saidi**

Vice Principal, Baseerah International School, Shah Alam, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Oladimeji Talibu**

Ph.D. Candidate, School of International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia

### **Abstract:**

*The scenario of genocidal war that broke out in 1994 in Burundi and Rwanda is the worst of its kind that ever happened on the African continent. The war broke out between the two major ethnic groups, Hutu and Tutsi, in Rwanda and Burundi which led to the death of over 800,000 people in both countries. The failure of the international community, the regional body and the East African Community, to instantaneously intervene to prevent the genocide war has been given scholarly attention by scholars whereas the main factors behind the outbreak of the war have not been properly delved into. Given the currency of the issue in the East African region, the article examines those factors that have given rise to the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi. It seeks to provide an analytical framework upon which the conflict can be understood. In this way, the article presents Burundi as a case study. It is believed that understanding Burundi scenario can shed light on those factors that led to the war in both Burundi and Rwanda. In doing this, we rely on existing works and documents of which we employed content analysis to critically interpret.*

**Keywords:** Burundi, Hutu, Tutsi, geography, economics, politics

### **1. Introduction**

Burundi and Rwanda are neighbouring agrarian countries that share similar history, language and ethnic composition. They have been centres of widespread violence between the Hutu and the Tutsi ethnic groups over a long period of time. There is a close relationship in the dynamics of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi and Rwanda. This conflict is attributed to unequal access to national resources and discrimination designed by the colonialists and implemented by the elites who are in the position of power. This article investigates the historical background and the causes of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi and its consequences for peace and development in East Africa. Burundi are East African Community (EAC) member countries whose political history and government are closely related in terms of ethnic composition, population and leadership. A meaningful understanding of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict requires one to understand the geo-ethnic composition of Burundi as one the factors that causes conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis in the East African region.

#### *1.1. Ethnic Composition in Burundi*

Burundi is a small landlocked country which shares borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the west, Rwanda in the north, and Tanzania in the east. Burundi is also an EAC member state. The pre-colonial Burundian set up was mainly built on the institution of kingship. But, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the wave of colonialism swept across the world, the Burundi kingdom began to disintegrate when the power of the king considerably weakened as a result of its annexation to German East African colonial administration. Both the Germans and Belgians consolidated their administration in Burundi through alliance with the king. The ethnic composition of Burundi is not different from that of Rwanda. The Hutus constitute the majority (85 per cent) while the Tutsis (14 per cent) are the minority. The Twa ethnic group constitutes the remaining 1 per cent of Burundi's population (Lunn, 2006). The Tutsis regard the Hutus and Twas as inferior citizens. It is interesting to know that these three ethnic groups share a common language and social background but the Tutsis have dominated the state and politics since the beginning of the century. The Twas were the original inhabitants of Burundi who lived as hunter-gatherers. In around 1000 AD the Tutsis migrated from the south and settled in Burundi and Rwanda. Gahama (2002) notes that the Hutus, Tutsis and Twas "lived harmoniously for a very long time sharing the same language, same culture, worshipping the same *Imana*(God), paying allegiance to the same *mwami* (king) since the 17<sup>th</sup> century and maintaining very close relations with strong bonds of solidarity, inviting each other to share beer, providing mutual assistance on farms as well as building bonds based on marriage ties, etc." The early societal institutions among these ethnic groups such as *Ganwa* (literally meaning descendants of the Burundian royal family) corresponded to the royal family containing the *Bahutu* as well as *Batutsi*. The visible

differences were socio-political in nature rather than “ethnic” or cultural. In other words, conflict among these ethnic groups was rooted in the discontent with oppressive leadership and not ethnicity.

The institution of kingship was the centre of power in the pre-colonial period in Burundi. The aristocratic class is made up of both the Hutus and the Tutsis. The dissatisfaction with the king’s ruler stemmed from power struggles expressed in different manners and for reasons other than “ethnocentrism” and against external enemies (Prunier, 1995). Though conflicts did not take place, there were cultural traditions and ways to bring the system back to normalcy, like *kubandwa* native religion with *Imana* (god) as the supreme and the *Bashingantahe* Courts.

### 1.2. *The Causes of Hutu-Tutsi Conflict in Burundi*

The causes of Hutu-Tutsi conflict which has plunged Burundi into constant civil wars for many years are similar to those factors that sparked off the conflict in Rwanda. These are colonialism, political and economic factors.

### 1.3. *Political Factors*

The Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi like in Rwanda was partly caused by imbalances in political power between Hutu and Tutsi. The Tutsi dominated the Burundian armed forces and this imbalance in political structure reflected unjust distribution of economic power due to unequal distribution of resources and wealth between them and the Hutus (Barltrop, 2008). When Burundi gained independence from its colonial master Belgium in July 1962, the Tutsis enjoyed a substantial control over the Hutus as a result of the support and favour they received from the colonial administration. In an effort to maintain the status quo after independence, the Tutsis were not interested in democratisation of any sort in the country because it was a threat to their monopoly over political power as it would bring in the Hutus who were numerically superior. The Hutus waged a civil war in 1965 against the Tutsi-dominated government and the Tutsi quickly responded by killing the Hutu political leaders and those in the armed forces. This marked the beginning of full scale Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi.

After independence in 1962, Burundi experienced a series of conflicts which were political and ethnic in nature in 1965, 1969, 1972, 1991 and 1993 (Oketch and Polzer (2002: 94). In these conflicts/wars thousands of lives were lost in Burundi. For example in 1972 the government at the time massacred 150,000 educated Hutus in clear breach of international humanitarian law. Villages were attacked, civilians targeted and ambushed, despicable crimes were perpetrated against women and girls, lootings were rampant and people were held for ransom (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza, 2000).

In general terms, crimes were committed against humanity. Citizens were denied their fundamental rights such as freedom to access public services as the conflicts paralysed many sectors within the state machinery and generally in the country. The situation created corruption and other vices making it unnecessarily difficult for the government to function. The conflict and war-like environment widened inequalities among the conflicting parties and it escalated the frustration of many people. Therefore, the conflicts in Burundi since independence have been shaped by the fear of the outbreak of ethnic genocide by Tutsis as the majority Hutus fundamentally continued to be oppressed and exploited by minority Tutsis regarding control over political power, the army and many other political and economic fields (Ngaruko & Nkurunziza, 2000).

The Hutus were discriminated against in terms of political opportunities and entry into the national armed forces. In the post-independence period, a particular ethnic group dominated leadership positions in the country. For example, President Michele Micombero, who ruled from 1966-1976; President Jean Batiste Bagaza, who overthrew him and ruled from 1976-1986; and President Pierre Buyoya, who later overthrew Bagaza and ruled from 1986-1993, were all from the minority Tutsi ethnic group. Although their regimes were relatively peaceful, there were complaints that governance had become an exclusive preserve of a family since these leaders held power for three decades. This resulted in political agitations that Burundi had become a family dynasty and this ill-feeling fuelled tension in the country. In 1990, a conflict broke out resulting in several deaths and many refugees who fled to Rwanda. The Hutus attacked the Northern provinces of Cibitoke and Kayanza and massacred the Tutsis in 1991 (Ngaruko & Nkurunziza, 2000). The Party for Liberation of the Hutu People planned the attack in the 1980s in a revolt against maltreatment and the oppressive Tutsi regime. After the attack in the northern areas, the Hutu formed themselves into rebel groups such as People’s Army, which operated in the Kamenge region of the country. The rebel activities claimed many innocent lives, including democratically elected President Melchoir Ndadaye. The rebels made many parts of the country unsafe.

In 1993, there was a bloodbath during which many Hutus lost their lives and this forced them to develop an armed military movement known as the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD) (Kara, 2010: 149). The FDD received support from a predominantly Hutu political party, the *Front pour la Democratie au Burundi* (FRODEBU) – Front for Democracy in Burundi in 1993. The party played an important role in highlighting the Tutsis’ mistreatment of Hutus and supported the FDD armed resistance financially (Ibid.). The National Council for the Defense of Democracy became a political wing of FDD. It intensified its activities and later in 2001, the National Council of Patriots (FDD-CNP) as a sub-group of FDD was formed. In addition to the two wings of FDD—the CNDD-FDD and FDD-CNP led by Kabura—created another armed opposition group known as Forces for National Liberation (FNL) (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza, 2005: 52).

The episode of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict surfaced because of unsolved issues of poor governance which prompted the Hutu to rebel against the Tutsi (Ibid: 38). It was clear that poor governance is a prominent source of grievance by the people. The political and military organisation had deprived the Hutus the opportunity to gain access to government institutions and only favoured the minority Tutsis who controlled key government positions. The development drove the Hutus to fight for their rightful positions in the country. The Burundi army did not restrict its interaction with the public as it sought military campaigns and conscripted people who were placed in camps. The Tutsi dominated army moved people from their homes in rural Bujumbura to counter-attack the Hutu rebels. This

move increased tension between these ethnic groups and the crises was quickly transformed into a civil war. Security became tense leading to huge displacements of population as well as stagnating economic activities. Scholars such as Toft (2003) suggest that ethnic rebels cannot mobilise unless they are territorially concentrated in a particular area or region and/or have a territorial base in a neighbouring country. This implies that there is a greater likelihood of conflict between hostile groups if there is greater opportunity for those groups in an ethnic conflict to mobilise for violence. An opportunity must be available for a group or groups to perpetuate genocide the way it happened in Burundi and Rwanda. Kaufman and Clark (2009) stress that genocide can be caused by a process built in mass hostility, chauvinist political mobilisation and security dilemma that interact to create a spiral of escalation. It can safely be argued that the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi is in part as a result of political opportunity which provided enough political space to mobilise without facing effective repression and territorial base.

The Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi can also be attributed to the incidence of intensity of protest behaviour that was prominent among the elitist and autocratic leaders. In such situation, Kiyoteru (2004) argues that the already militarised ethnic groups escalated the conflict in trying to strengthen their ethnic boundaries and closed chances for possible negotiations. The autocratic tendencies exhibited by the elite and their autocratic leaders caused hostile feelings of each ethnic group towards the other which incited violence. The Tutsis used the state machinery to drive the majority Hutu rebels from state privileges and antagonism boiled up as the Hutus were mounting pressure to get access to state resources. The development is suggestive of Harold Laswell's conception of politics as "who gets what, where, when and how" that the exploitation of power struggle between the Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi to get the lion share of the national cake nurtured the conflict. Hibou (1999) suggested that "in Burundi, the struggle for gaining the control of the most important powerful offices in the country is one of the key factors that has led to the development of the civil war in the country". The hostile war-like situation scaling from ethnic hatred whetted by power struggles compelled President Buyoya to sign a decree on 17 April, 1993. The 1993 decree is also a turning point in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi. The decree set June 1993 for Burundi's first multi-party democratic elections. In the election, the Hutu majority voted for their own Mechoir Ndadaye, a candidate of the Democratic Front political party who became the first Hutu head of state. This development did not go down well with the Tutsis, who stage-managed demonstrations and created a fragile political environment for the newly elected Hutu President. On 29 June 1993, legislative elections were held and Sylvie Kinigi, a Tutsi was brought in as Prime Minister to balance the government. But even then, on October 21 the Tutsis attempted a coup which forced Kinigi to seek refuge in the French Embassy after President Ndadaye had been killed in the process. The failure of the attempted coup sparked off violence in which thousands of Hutus and Tutsis were killed and their villages burnt to the ground.

When the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) party won the election in June 1993, refugees who had sought political asylum in neighbouring countries such as Tanzania as far back as 1972 returned. Their return was poorly handled by the newly elected government, and they were caught in the dilemma between the necessity of returning to the refugees what the former regime had denied them and the fear of the Tutsis that they would be losers. The fears of the Tutsis losing their privileges had manifested in this *coup d'état* and the assassination of President Ndadaye on October 31, 1993. The death of President Ndadaye created anger and fear of a repeat of the 1972 incident among the Hutu population. This was the beginning of the civil war in which thousands of people lost their lives. In an effort to prevent future occurrence of such a nasty experience, a commission of inquiry appointed by the UN was set up in 1996. This commission concluded its task and revealed that "acts of genocide had been instigated by FRODEBU functionaries and their leaders" (Hara, 2005). The age-old hatred between the Hutus and Tutsis led to outbreak of Hutu-Tutsi bloody power struggles in 1993. Oketch and Polzer (2002: 94) specifically point out that the underlying fundamental cause of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict is the age-long repression and exploitation of the majority Hutu by the minority Tutsi who controlled a centralised state administration. The assassination of President Ndadaye ignited catastrophic outbreak of violence which resulted in the killings of Tutsi minority by Hutus on a large scale. In January 1994 a power sharing agreement was negotiated between the two warring parties i.e. the Unity for National Progress, Burundi (UPRONA) a Tutsi dominated political party which had stayed in power since independence and FRODEBU the Hutu dominated political party which had won the 1993 democratic election which brought Cyprien Ntaryamira, a Hutu candidate of FRODEBU party to political prominence (Hara, 2005). Also, the 1993 assassination of President Ndadaye and subsequent massacre that swept across the country witnessed many killings and displacement of people. Dupont (1997) observes that:

There was expression of discontent felt by Tutsi-Bahima in the army and political circles (who) disagreed totally with the reconciliation policies of clan member Buyoya and his successor Ndadaye. They wanted to put a stop to the planned inclusion of even more Hutu and other Tutsi in public administration, the schools and armed forces and judicial system, realising that this would inevitably lead to further erosion of Bahima monopoly of power.

Thus, when President Ndadaye was assassinated, the army and Tutsi elites did not immediately take the political lead in the country, but slowly manipulated and consolidated their position by 1996. While the democratically elected system formally remained in place, it was consistently undermined by UPRONA and the army. In such scenario, FRODEBU attempted to restore order and democratic institutional governance in Burundi after bitter experiences in 1993 of the coup attempt which resulted in widespread violence in the country. In addition, the replacement of Ntaryamira Ndadaye, who died alongside Rwanda's President Juvenal Habyarimana in a plane crash allegedly shot down in 1994, with an interim President Ntaryamira, created a renewed power vacuum and weakened the Hutu influence as genocide claimed thousands of lives in the neighbouring country, Rwanda (Barltrop 2008). This incident had great impact on different fronts. One it set off genocide in Rwanda in which Tutsis were massacred by the Hutus forcing several thousands to flee to the neighbouring countries of Tanzania and DRC. Two, it made the situation in Burundi more vulnerable to political turmoil; and three there emerged open extreme hatred between the Hutus and Tutsis. It can be argued that this development created anxiety among the leaders in East Africa who feared that the situation in Rwanda and Burundi if not managed properly could lead to regional war with wider political ramifications.

When the conflict heightened, thousands of people sought refuge in Tanzania. According to Hara (2005), there were about 280,000 permanently displaced persons in Burundi living in 226 registered camps in Tanzania. Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, who had succeeded President Ntaryamira came up with a power sharing agreement with Tutsi political opposition in late 1994 but it was rejected by the interior Minister, Leonard Nyangoma, who left Burundi to form a militia group with the aim of defeating the Burundian armed forces (Bartrop, 2004:12). He thus launched a civil war in the country and the situation deteriorated to the extent that it brought in Tanzanian President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, who mediated and convinced the warring parties, particularly President Ntibantunganya, that only a neutral military from the East African region could be deployed in Burundi to restore peace. The Burundian army disagreed with this plan and war broke out which resulted in the ouster of President Ndayizeye and Major Pierre Buyoya became the new President (www.globalsecurity.org/).

The disagreement with the plan suggested by Nyerere resulted in the overthrow of President Ntibantunganya in a military coup in 1996 and Buyoya was installed by the armed forces. This was met by economic sanctions on Burundi by regional heads of states. These sanctions were enforced in order to speed up the process of negotiations. They were used and meant to be a weapon to curtail anyone planning to overthrow the new government. But sanctions increased pressure on the government to comply; from different corners they affected the business community and special interest groups in the civil society. This was, however, in line with the expectations of the regional heads of states. In addition, aid to Burundi was frozen in order to bring the government to the negotiating table. The regime headed by Major Buyoya abrogated the 1992 Constitution and the 1994 Convention of Government. Major Buyoya held power in conjunction with the Tutsi-dominated established army. The regime promulgated a decree in September 1996 that replaced the Constitution during the transition period. This plunged Burundi into serious economic crisis and the Burundian elite aggravated the situation by their struggle for political power to bestow patronage on their supporters. This bred insurmountable mutual hatred, distrust and power competition leading to bitter relations between Hutu and Tutsi.

Another contributing factor to the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi was the easy accessibility and supply of weapons which led to the rise of numerous armed groups. In the 1972 genocide, in which about 150,000 Hutus were killed, Burundi witnessed the influx of weapons which manifested a new wave in the 1993-1994 weapon circulation and were used to pursue the interest of each ethnic group. An estimated 50,000-100,000 people lost their lives; several thousands, mainly Hutus fled their home; an estimated 400,000 fled to Rwanda, 250,000 to Tanzania and 60,000 to Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) formerly Zaire, while many became internally displaced (Bartrop, 2004: 17).

#### 1.4. Economic Factors

Another reason that cannot be ignored when talking about the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi is the highly skewed distribution of resources among the population in the country. Before the arrival of the colonialists in Burundi, people lived on subsistence agriculture and the social and political structures of Burundi were sufficiently sound in providing the needs of its people. According to Nicayenzi, there were five institutional set-ups in the Burundian society, which provided a sense of social cohesion: the *Mwami* (king) — was a source of life and unity for the society; he was directly connected with *Imana* and awarded favours in the form of land, cows, riches, etc., which are distributed evenly to all his subjects for serving as official intermediaries to *Imana*— God, Creator of all; *Mupfumuan Kiranga*— intermediaries between Burundians and *Imana*; *Mushingantahe*— guardian and protector of peace and justice for Burundians, selected by the local population for his wisdom; and *Twiyungungaye* or common faith and destiny — communal work, collective needs; responding to one *Mwami* on earth while honouring one *Imana* in the heavens (Herisse, 2006). This arrangement provided equal socio-economic and political opportunities.

The established colonial rule altered the social setting and replaced it with a socio-economic and political setting geared towards serving its home government (Reyntjens, 1996). The Belgian colonial rule did not pay attention to equal distribution of resources. It was more interested in extracting raw materials to support its economy. This way, the colonial government encouraged sharp distinction between the rulers and the ruled which undermined the pre-colonial setting which allowed circulation of economic power among the people. This development did not change after independence; rather those who took over power used the existing structure to further their interests (Mazrui, 1993) which created tension between those in control and those who were denied access, particularly the Hutus.

The army and the state expropriated a huge part of the national resource allocation leaving the agricultural sector as the main employer of the majority of population who happened to be Hutus. The Hutus engaged mainly in subsistence agriculture which is one of the main sources of foreign exchange income to the state through the sale of coffee, tea and cotton. The government controlled the process of exporting agricultural outputs and this resulted in the growth of Hutu rebel groups on coffee plantations not with the intention of taking over the plantation but as a way of trying to weaken the government's income which benefited the Tutsi minority. For example, Imbo region was a strong battlefield between the Hutu rebels and the minority Tutsi government to gain control over it. Cars were burnt down to discourage drivers from taking goods to other places. The Hutu in this region had lost their land to a few Tutsi individuals after the 1963 rain flood which affected their land (Lemarchand, 1996: 150). The fighting between the two groups reduced the supply of agricultural produce from this region.

The biggest blow came when the minority Tutsi elite failed to gain the trust and confidence of the farmers in the Imbo region not to provide the Hutu rebels with food and shelter, a service the majority Hutu farmers were willing to offer to the rebels. Thus, although the Tutsis control almost 90 per cent of the entire economy, the Hutu rebels managed to get hold of the Tutsi's cows and other national economic valuables for their survival in their 10 years' forest war. The most interesting part that bred conflict is that the structurally poor regions depended on remittances from rich, productive areas to support corruption and segregation activities in the government.

The inability of the Tutsis to extend the most needed goods and services to the Hutus made them feel dissatisfied and they mounted demonstrations demanding for implementation of fair government.

### *1.5. Education*

Education was the gate-pass to Burundian government positions, but was limited to a few, particularly the Tutsis. Like in Rwanda, Ngarukoand Nkurunziza (2005) illustrate that investment in educational infrastructure was regionally skewed to benefit a few, particularly the provincial origins of the ruling elite and the capital. This made the majority Hutus from the north including the Tutsis living there to be marginalized in education and the Tutsis became better off than the majority Hutus in the country. Mwakikagile, Godfrey (2012) notes that,

In Burundi there were two categories of schools, i.e. one for the children of the Tutsi chiefs, another for the Hutu children. The Hutu were taught and provided with knowledge that prepared them for agriculture, and the Tutsi were prepared to govern. It is like this today in Burundi. The Tanzanians also have schools for themselves where they learn the social rights-for example, the politics of the country. For the Hutu it is the metiers like mechanics, construction and carpentry, these are their chosen schools for us, technical schools....

This educational segregation led to tension between the two ethnic groups as the majority Hutus were subjected to marginalisation without course to redress it by the Tutsis. Decisions regarding the agricultural sector dominated by Hutus were given low priority to weaken the Hutus further because they were deprived of privileged considerations.

Though in the pre-colonial period, ethnic divisions in Burundi were not hostile, the Burundi ethnic identity introduced by the colonialists as mentioned earlier in this thesis played an important role in recruitment and deployment in state institutions even in the post-independence era and became a source of Hutu-Tutsi conflict. This is because the practice of ethnic identification in the process of government services and jobs proved ethnically a divisive factor and a source of tension between the ethnic groups resulting in conflict which was later to manifest into violence with ethnic connotations. This was because ethnic identity determined the individual's life and brightened his or her chances to access resources and employment in state institutions. The practice resulted in an unfair environment in socio-economic and political status which created existential fear and mistrust since fair competition was curtailed. Besides, the Tutsi minority were even favoured against the majority Hutu as those educated with leadership potential among them were excluded.

Ethnicity has been the backbone to the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi. Many reasons can be traced in this direction. Since independence as stated earlier, the Tutsi minority dominated leadership but the overthrow of President Ntibantunganya who was a Hutu by Major Buyoya, a Tutsi was accompanied by hostility. Subsequently, rebel groups emerged based on ethnic foundation and this escalated the bitter relationship between the Hutu and Tutsi with each group targeting the massacre of members of the other group. The Tutsi who had refuge in Burundi sought their Burundian Tutsi counterpart to lend them assistance to restore the fallen Tutsi fortune in Rwanda to show their commitment a Tutsi refugee assassinated the Burundi Prime Minister Pierre Ngendandume (Lemarchand,1999: 89-105).

### *1.6. Geography*

The Hutu-Tutsi conflict is not merely a product of ethnic contention as discussed above. Some pundits have traced the conflict to geographical factors. During the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi, geographical considerations played an instrumental role stemming from strong Hutu perceptions that they were marginalised and their area neglected in terms of development. Thus, they wanted to have control over the core areas of the state as the Tutsis have in the south (McDougall, 2003). This feeling arose as a result of the failure of the Tutsis to distribute national resources with fairness. The southern provinces were favoured with rent-seeking activities such as access to the state, financial institutions, construction companies, import and export firms all of which were hardly located in areas of the dominant Hutus. In other words, the southern part was privileged with good job positions compared to the rest of the country. This suggests that all lucrative jobs went to those from the south and it has been argued that coming from this part (southern) of Burundi in one way or another meant high status and pride. It was in that regard, that the Hutus wished also to similar assets within their geographical area for not getting opportunities in the south. The Hutu-Tutsi conflict did not begin suddenly but it has been ongoing for a very long period, particularly from the colonial days when the Tutsis were designated as superior to the Hutu. A number of events ranging from demonstrations to massacres were unfolding as the relationship between these two ethnic groups continued to turn hostile. The Table below presents a summary of the main events in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Rwanda and Burundi.

Events	Sequence of events	Scale and scope of violence
1963-4 Local massacre	An attack by Tutsi exiles was stymied by Rwandan army after the rebel forces near Kigali. The government responds by ordering massacres of Tutsi, targeting politicians.	10,000-13,000 Tutsi killed 150,000 Tutsi refugees
1972 Burundi Genocide	After failed coup attempt by Hutu politicians, Hutu unrest erupted in Nyanza Lac and Rumonge (south), Cankuzo (east) and Bujumbura (capital), during which rebels killed Tutsi and Hutu detractors. The Tutsi-dominated army and Tutsi civilians eliminate Hutu, targeting educated elite.	
1988 Burundi	Elections that failed to produce a change in political authority prompted Hutu unrest. Tension was highest in Marangara and Ntega where army patrols sparked violence against Tutsi. The army responded by massacring Hutu civilians.	20,000 Hutu killed in Marangara and Ntega 50,000 Tutsi refugees.

*Table 1: Key Events in the Hutu-Tutsi Conflict in Rwanda and Burundi*

## 2. Conclusion

There is a complex web of forces that have greatly contributed to the Hutu-Tutsi conflict and its associated consequences in East Africa. A critical examination of the discussions, however, categorises the factors that shape the Hutu-Tutsi conflict into socio-economic, political and cultural dimensions. These forces could be seen in the image of segregation policies that prevented the majority Hutus from accessing state institutions and resources. It is worth noting that the Tutsis, who are basically pastoralists, occupied key and superior socio-economic and political positions compared to the Hutus. This sparked off the struggle between the two ethnic groups. The most noticeable similarity in the conflict between the Hutu-Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi is that at one point it resulted in genocide in both countries. Many people lost their lives and several others became refugees in neighbouring countries. It can be observed from the discussion above that the factors that caused conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi are similar encompassing socio-economic and political fields. The Tutsis, who had initially been favoured by the colonialists, were unwilling to accept power shift from their domain because the government, elite and Tutsi dominated army have become accustomed to great wealth and political influence which they were not ready to lose. The minority Tutsis were out to defend their position by maintaining the status quo which gave them an edge to deprive the majority Hutus of opportunities that would empower them in the socio-economic and political fields. On the other hand, the Hutus felt they were being maltreated and denied their rights. Therefore, it can be inferred that exclusion of majority Hutus from socio-economic and political power and opportunities created the structural basis for conflict. From the general assessment of the causes of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict, one can invariably conclude that the colonial masters drew the architectural design of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict but the construction was effected by the Africans (Hutu and Tutsi) themselves.

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