

THE DISMANTLING OF THE RWANDAN POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN EXILE

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Résumé

Après les élections de 2003 au Rwanda, l'opposition en exil a commencé à se disloquer. Les résultats des élections présidentielles et parlementaires ont scellé le sort du paysage politique rwandais pour Paul Kagame et le Front patriotique rwandais. L'opposition intérieure a été contrainte au silence par la force et a été ou stoppée ou bien radicalisée. La demande de l'opposition pour un «dialogue inter-Rwandais» n'a pas été entendue par Kigali. Kagame et sa clique ont bien senti que l'opposition, quelle qu'elle soit, n'est pas assez efficace pour pouvoir les défier. Le régime en place n'a donc pas ressenti le besoin de dialoguer avec les membres de l'opposition.

L'opposition extérieure a été rongée par des luttes intestines de pouvoir. Aux rivalités internes se sont ajoutés des conflits entre les différents mouvements de l'opposition. Des luttes entre les dirigeants de l'opposition ont sapé la puissance de l'opposition tandis que les figures politiques importantes de l'opposition se sont retirées de la scène politique en exil. La Concertation permanente de l'opposition démocratique rwandaise, laquelle rassemble la grande majorité de l'opposition en exil, a été suspendue depuis la fin de 2003. Au milieu de l'année 2004, les rivalités ethniques et régionales ont resurgi. Le clivage nord-sud a blessé les Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR). Le désaccord ethnique a mené à la rupture de la plus grande alliance en exil, l'ADRN-*Igihango*. La méfiance entre Tutsi et Hutu n'a jamais été surmontée. Les Tutsi et les Hutu modérés accusent les FDLR d'avoir comme objectif une «victoire militaire» pour restaurer le pouvoir Hutu au Rwanda. D'un autre côté, beaucoup de Hutu sont frustrés que les Tutsi monopolisent la «victimisation». Les FDLR accusent les Tutsi de ne pas vouloir un changement fondamental du régime. La fuite du rapport Bruguière a donné le coup de grâce à l'opposition. Elle a conduit à la séparation entre les Hutu et les Tutsi et a remonté à la surface les arguments révisionnistes du génocide rwandais.

La communauté internationale hésite à mettre la pression sur le régime gouvernemental afin d'ouvrir l'espace politique. Bien que les facteurs de sympathie et de culpabilité envers le régime suite au génocide régressent, la communauté internationale n'est pas bien disposée envers l'opposition exilée. L'opposition est morcelée et peu légitime.

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the 2003 elections in Rwanda the opposition in exile has begun to dismantle itself. The Presidential and Parliamentary electoral results have sealed the Rwandan political space for Paul Kagame and the Rwandan Patriotic Front. The external opposition has been shut out more forcibly and has either been suspended or been radicalised.

The exiled opposition's demands for an «inter-Rwandese dialogue» have found a deaf ear at Kigali. The opposition demands to be recognised and to engage in dialogue with other representatives of political society, with civil society and with peasant organisations. Through inter-Rwandese dialogue, it aspires to develop the appropriate institutions that would secure consensual

democracy. Kigali rejects the dialogue as uncalled for. Moreover it denies special security guarantees to exiled opposition members and claims that they may only engage in politics in the Rwandan interior.

At the same time, Kigali has continued to play upon the «genocide credit»¹ to disrepute its opponents. Rwandan armed rebels are still at large in the Great Lakes region. Kigali denies them a *political* dialogue alleging that they are *génocidaires* and a threat to the Rwandan population. It only recognises the *security* aspect of the rebels' presence in the region. Kigali has, therefore, persistently bypassed the rebel group's political leadership and its partners who have been calling for dialogue. Instead, Kigali appears to have well-placed agents who are breaking the military *and* the political opposition found outside of the country.

2. ELECTORAL TENSIONS

At the time of the 2003 elections the Rwandan political opposition in exile was composed of three alliances alongside some smaller movements. The Union of Rwandese Democratic Forces (UFDR), a mainly Hutu alliance, grouped the Republican Rally for Democracy (RDR) and the Democratic Forces for Resistance (FRD). The RDR had been formed in Mugunga, North Kivu in 1995. It stemmed from the former Rwandan government and had included ex-FAR and *Interahamwe* among its members. Until the destruction of the Rwandan refugee camps in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by the Rwandan Patriotic Army (APR) during the first Congolese war, the RDR had an armed wing with the aim of invading Rwanda. However, in 1998 it shifted to a political trajectory and dissociated itself from the genocide. 'Moderate' Hutus who had come from the post-genocide political class had founded the FRD in 1996. It includes some Tutsi in its ranks. The Alliance for Democracy and National Reconciliation (ADRN-*Igihango*) united an umbrella of Tutsi, among them genocide survivors and former elements of the APR, with Hutu elements that have been linked with the genocidal ex-FAR and *Interahamwe* militias. The politico-military Rwandan Democratic Liberation Forces (FDLR), created in Nasho in May 2000, joined forces with the Rwandan Alliance for the Renaissance of the Nation (ARENA), formed by personalities mainly coming from the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), and with the monarchist *Nation-Imbaga*. The latter two had both been created in 2001. The Rwanda Democratic Alliance (ADR) merged the Hutu African Democratic Congress (CDA) with the Movement for Peace and Democracy (MPD), which grouped Tutsi APR deserters. In October 2002 the Permanent Consultation of the Rwandan Democratic Opposition (CPODR) was set up by the ADRN-*Igihango* and the

¹ See REYNTJENS, F. in this *Annuaire*.

UFDR. The CPODR offered a consultative forum where the opposition could communicate its points of view and to discuss possible solutions to the problems facing the opposition and the Rwandan society at large. It had been a significant step towards the consolidation, hence strengthening, of the opposition in exile. It was also important for the process of elite reconciliation.²

In January 2003 the Permanent Consultation of the Rwandan Opposition had appealed to Kigali to postpone the electoral process.³ Kigali ignored the calls of the opposition, but by the end of April 2003 the RDR and some months later the ADR toyed with the idea of producing a leader who could run for the Presidency. The problem of ideological discord among the various exiled movements, however, impeded a single leadership.

The UFDR was plagued by disagreements on strategy between its component organisations. The RDR had remained firm in its objective to regain power,⁴ feeling the pressure of time. The FRD, on the other hand, was hostile to an engagement in a flawed electoral process. It felt that the time was not right to re-enter the Rwandan political scene. The National Electoral Commission established in May 2003 would not have permitted the RDR's participation. Nevertheless, the cracks in the UFDR alliance had surfaced.

Former Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu had decided to run for the Rwandan Presidency. Despite having distanced himself from the exiled opposition movements in 2002⁵, in 2003 he was making efforts to gain support for his candidacy. Twagiramungu ran as an independent candidate in the elections, as his political party, the MDR, had been banned in Rwanda in May 2003. Most exiled movements were opposed to his participation in the elections. They felt that his candidacy would 'legitimise' the elections. The political diaspora had been pressing the international community not to fund the elections and felt that it would have been a discrepancy to support Twagiramungu.

Faustin Twagiramungu's presence in Rwanda highlighted the errors of the Rwandan system.⁶ However, the overwhelming victory of Kagame over

² For more information on the Rwandan opposition movements in exile see RAFTI, M., "The Rwandan Political Opposition in Exile: A Valid Interlocutor vis-à-vis Kigali?", *IDPM-UA Discussion Paper I-2004*, Antwerp, April 2004.

³ CPODR, *The CPODR proposes to the Kigali government to postpone the current constitutional and electoral process*, Brussels, 9th January 2003.

⁴ Although the RDR *per se* had never been in power in Rwanda, many of its members come from the MRND, which had ruled Rwanda from 1973 until 1994.

⁵ Twagiramungu had co-founded the FRD with former Interior Minister Seth Sendashonga. From 1998 to 2002 he was President of the UFDR alliance.

⁶ Twagiramungu claims to have participated in the elections for this very purpose. (Interview with Faustin Twagiramungu, 19th April 2004.) The Head of the EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) to Rwanda, Colette Flesch, reported the harassment and arrests of Twagiramungu's supporters and campaign managers, who were forced to denounce him.

Twagiramungu – 95% vis-à-vis 3.6% – put the latter’s political career in serious jeopardy, while Kagame used the outcome to claim that *there is no political opposition*. The international community congratulated Kagame, indicating an unwillingness to acknowledge that there is a real problem in the Rwandan interior. Kigali’s persistence to shut the opposition out of the Rwandan political scene has increased the possibility of a military destabilisation of Rwanda as a means to force Kigali to the negotiating table. On the other hand, some members of the opposition mused over the idea of joining forces with elements of the regime to overthrow Kagame. Until the end of 2003 members of the *Igihango* alliance were purportedly in contact with Kayumba Nyamwasa⁷ for this purpose.⁸ This eventually led to a conflict in *Igihango* between ARENA and the FDLR.

3. WANING OF THE OPPOSITION IN EXILE

The Rwandan movements in exile have faced many problems largely due to personality struggles, which gave way to extensive power struggles. Whereas some opponents of Kigali are committed to *acting* as an opposition, others have been absorbed by their potential individual role in the opposition. As such, several complications have arisen for the overall Rwandan opposition in exile.

3.1. Suspension of the Permanent Consultation of the Rwandese Democratic Opposition

In July 2003 the ADR had attempted to launch a new movement, the ‘Rwandan National Congress’ (CNR). This set in motion the first of a series of power struggles that continue to plague the Rwandan external opposition. The project began by overtures of the ADR to the UFDR, particularly to the RDR within the latter alliance. It revolved around two options. The first was a ‘parliament-in-exile’ and the second a ‘super-party’ around minimal political objectives that would be highly integrated and co-ordinated. This had merely served to induce infighting in the existing alliances. The CNR posed an antagonistic structure to the CPODR. *Igihango* was hesitant to join the movement. The concurrent existence of the CNR and the CPODR was impossible, as it would involve an overlap of membership. The ADR was

Twagiramungu himself was under the close scrutiny of the Department of Military Intelligence. See EU EOM to Rwanda, *Déclaration préliminaire des élections présidentielles*, Kigali, 27th August 2003. Twagiramungu was the only candidate who could threaten Kagame, but his campaign was riddled with obstacles.

⁷ See REYNTJENS, F. in this *Annuaire*.

⁸ Interview made on 3rd May 2004. The source does not wish to be disclosed.

obdurately opposed to joining the existing platform, though. Its intransigence was viewed with suspicion by the other organisations.

The UFDR explicitly stated its commitment to the CPODR. However, on 25th August 2003 Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza, who had favoured the creation of the CNR, resigned from the Presidency of the alliance. This left the UFDR in a state of suspension, as Umuhiza had not also ceded the Presidency of the RDR. According to the UFDR *Collaboration Charter* the Presidency of the UFDR was to be held by the RDR until April 2004. By consequence, the CPODR was also suspended. The UFDR problems were overcome in March 2004 when Umuhiza re-assumed the Presidency of the alliance.⁹ Nevertheless, the CPODR is still suspended owing to the FDLR and *Igihango* crises.¹⁰

3.2. Fragmentation of the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda

The Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda have increasingly been facing difficulties since the end of 2002.¹¹ The problems were accentuated in 2003 with numerous accusations against the Abacunguzi¹² Combatants Forces (FOCA), the armed wing of the FDLR, voiced by MONUC and the Rwandan government. Kigali persistently treated the issue of the FDLR troops as one of security, hence of a military rather than of a political nature, and refused to engage in dialogue with the political wing of the FDLR. The political wing was also facing problems, as the Executive Committee was not functioning well. FDLR leadership is scattered. The political leadership is found mainly in Europe and North America. The FOCA was, therefore, distanced from the politicians and was calling for a more robust political leadership.

3.2.1. *The Beginning of the Leadership Debate*

⁹ Telephone communication with Jean de Dieu Tulikumana.

¹⁰ See below.

¹¹ On 30th July 2002 Rwanda and the DRC signed the Pretoria Accords under the 'third-party' supervision of the United Nations and the government of South Africa. The accords called for the withdrawal and *unconditional repatriation* of all Rwandan troops from the DRC within ninety days and the collaboration of the DRC government to track down and disarm the ex-FAR and *Interahamwe* within the territory under its control. The FDLR rejected the agreement as a ploy by Kigali and in so doing, lost the patronage of Kabila. Rwanda, on the other hand, withdrew the bulk of its troops in September 2002, which put the Congolese government on the spot. In an attempt to save face, Kabila banned the FDLR rebels and called its leaders *personae non gratae*. In another ploy to save face, the Congolese Armed Forces provided intelligence for a South African operation that attacked a demobilised FDLR brigade at a military base in Kamina, trying to force the troops back to Rwanda on November 1st 2002. They killed the ostensible Commander of the brigade, Colonel Ndanda and, according to the FDLR, 437 combatants. For more information see RAFTI, M., *op. cit.*, pp.17-19.

¹² I.e. the liberators of Rwanda.

The question of overcoming the structural problems facing the organisation was a key issue at the FDLR Congress that was held in Amsterdam on 27th-28th September 2003.¹³ Nevertheless, a more acute problem of authority emerged at the Congress. FDLR President Ignace Murwanashyaka had been on mission in Africa since August and was absent from the Congress.¹⁴ This sparked an ongoing leadership debate. Murwanashyaka was accused of a lack of leadership by the bulk of the Congress members.¹⁵ Yet the Congress had to seek a way of ousting an individual member of the Executive Committee without dissolving the Committee as a whole.¹⁶ It thus decided to take the matter to the Council of Elders. The Council was set up in Europe, in order to facilitate regular consultations and a speedy decision.¹⁷

A new Executive Committee was decided at the Congress,¹⁸ which was found objectionable by Murwanashyaka. Murwanashyaka found in place a bloc that he felt would marginalize him and place Kanyamibwa and Higiroy at the head of the organisation.¹⁹

Events unrolled unfavourably for Ignace Murwanashyaka. On 14th November 2003 FOCA Commander General Paul Rwarakabije returned to Rwanda with 100 combatants, following negotiations with Kigali.²⁰ André Bizimana, a top liaison officer, followed in Rwarakabije's steps, returning from Tanzania. Kigali appeared triumphant and forecast a mass return of

¹³ Interview with Christophe Hakizabera, 1st May 2004.

¹⁴ Félicien Kanyamibwa and Jean Marie Vianney Higiroy claim that Murwanashyaka had informed them at the last minute that he would be unable to return on time and had asked Higiroy as Vice-President to preside over the Congress. Murwanashyaka, however, claims that he was intentionally excluded from the Congress.

¹⁵ Interview with Félicien Kanyamibwa, Jean Marie Vianney Higiroy and Augustin Dukuze, 25th May 2004.

¹⁶ Interview made on 4th May 2004. The source does not wish to be disclosed.

¹⁷ Among the six comprising the Council of Elders was Marie-Goretti Abayizigira, Justice and Human rights Commissioner, who was subsequently accused of plotting with Kanyamibwa and Higiroy to remove Murwanashyaka from the Presidency.

¹⁸ Two new members were nominated – Bonaventure Hakizimana was appointed Finance Commissioner and Jean Pierre Kamanzi was appointed President of the Local Committee for Northern Europe – and Alexis Nshimiyimana, was re-appointed in the Executive Committee, assuming the new post of Commissioner for Inter-Rwandese Dialogue. See FDLR, *Communiqué SE/N°1/OCT/2003 portant mesures sur les organes des FDLR*, Washington, 12th October 2003.

¹⁹ Interview with Christophe Hakizabera.

²⁰ Félicien Miganda alias Pasteur Kenge, an envoy of Kabila in the FDLR, was in contact with Colonel Patrick Karegeya. Kenge then allegedly brought Rwarakabije in contact with Kigali. (Interviews made on 3rd May and 4th May 2004.) The Rwandan government claims that no Congolese intermediaries were used but that Kigali intelligence had traced the telephone calls of Rwarakabije and other FOCA members and directly contacted them. (Interview with Patrick Karegeya made by telephone, 28th May 2004.)

combatants, while the organisation was taken aback. Accusations were mounted against the obliviousness of the political leadership.²¹ This was especially embarrassing for Murwanashyaka, who had been in the region just a few weeks ahead of the General's defection. In order to protect the leadership from the turn of events, the head of the FDLR had to be temporarily changed. Vice-President Jean Marie Vianney Higiroy was, therefore, nominated *ad interim* President.²²

3.2.2. *The Emergence of two Blocs*

The FOCA High Command immediately installed Vice-Commander Silvestre Mudacumura, alias Radja, as the new General to succeed Paul Rwarakabije.²³ On 21st November FOCA Spokesman Wenceslas Nizeyimana, alias Kit, denounced Rwarakabije on BBC Radio, calling attention to the fact that few *abacunguzi* returned with him. On the same day General Mudacumura sent a message against Higiroy's appointment as interim President. Higiroy reassured the High Commander that elections to appoint a permanent President would be held within two months.²⁴ This intensified the leadership debate and triggered a race for the allegiance of the army.

Two FDLR blocs came to light thereafter – one led by Ignace Murwanashyaka and External affairs Commissioner Christophe Hakizabera²⁵ and another led by Jean Marie Vianney Higiroy and Félicien Kanyamibwa with the support of the Spokesman Augustin Dukuze. The two blocs seemingly assumed a regional character. In the beginning of 2004 squabbling between the two camps dwindled into a «*kiga vs. nduga*»²⁶ row. Higiroy, Kanyamibwa, Dukuze and the three new members of the Executive Committee who were

²¹ Murwanashyaka had been in contact with Rwarakabije until 8th November 2003, while FDLR Executive Secretary Kanyamibwa had contacted him just the day before his departure, on 13th November. Yet the leadership claimed to have been unaware of Rwarakabije's plan to defect.

²² FDLR, *Communiqué SE/N°1/NOV/2003 portant nomination du Président Intérimaire des FDLR*, 17th November 2003. Higiroy had not been in contact with Rwarakabije. The interim period was to end within two months.

²³ See *Annex to the Letter sent by the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council*, New York, 10th December 2003. Mudacumura had been the Commander of Habyarimana's Presidential Guard until 1991.

²⁴ Interview with Jacques Byilingiro, 29th May 2004.

²⁵ Hakizabera had been among those who had suggested that Higiroy become *ad interim* President on 17th November. (Interview with Christophe Hakizabera.) Nonetheless on 21st November he launched accusations of manipulations and misinformation against Higiroy and Kanyamibwa and pledged his support for Murwanashyaka. The 'Higiroy bloc' now accuses Hakizabera of having aspired to become acting President, which is why he had wanted to remove Murwanashyaka for an interim period. (Interview with Félicien Kanyamibwa made by telephone, 18th April 2004; with Bonaventure Hakizimana, 2nd May 2004; and with Jacques Byilingiro.)

²⁶ The *kiga* are the northern and the *nduga* the southern Rwandese.

nominated in September all come from the North. Murwanashyaka and Hakizabera, on the other hand, come from the South. Nevertheless, the *kiganduga* conflict is obscured by the support of northerners for Murwanashyaka.²⁷

The debate has now taken the form of an open conflict. Each bloc has been vying for the support of the FOCA, by mounting accusations against the other. Accusations have mainly pertained to colluding with Rwarakabije and disregarding the High Command. The Higiroy bloc has charged Murwanashyaka of having collaborated with the governor of North Kivu, Eugène Serufuli, and with Kigali agents Pasteur Kenge and Pasteur Jeannot to the detriment of the *abacunguzi* combatants. It alleges that Murwanashyaka had also talked with APR Colonel Patrick Karegeya and had, hence, been informed of Rwarakabije's plans to defect.²⁸ Conversely, Hakizabera has been accusing the Higiroy bloc of remaining in contact with Rwarakabije²⁹ and is by implication untrustworthy.

On January 20th 2004 the FOCA High Command communicated its opposition to the continuation of the interim period and stated its support for Ignace Murwanashyaka. Nonetheless, within a few days Higiroy was allegedly confirmed President of the FDLR.³⁰ The Murwanashyaka faction maintained that a «putsch» had taken place and that the procedure followed was improper, particularly as the FOCA High Command was not consulted.³¹ As such, the High Command continued to send messages in support of Murwanashyaka until 18th April.³²

²⁷ These include the President of the FDLR Local Committee for Germany, Félicien Barabwiriza, the Commissioner for Social Affairs, Straton Musoni and members of the Local Committee for Belgium.

²⁸ Interview with Jacques Byilingiro. Hakizabera had also allegedly been involved in the affair. They claim that he had put Murwanashyaka in contact with Karegeya via another FDLR member who is in contact with Kigali. The Higiroy bloc also claims that Murwanashyaka had expressed his *approval* of Rwarakabije's return. (Interview with Félicien Kanyamibwa, Jean Marie Vianney Higiroy and Augustin Dukuze.) Also see FDLR, "Aperçu sommaire des résolutions du Congrès des FDLR tenu à Amsterdam du 22 au 23 Mai 2004", *Communiqué PP N°3/MAY/04*, Amsterdam, 23rd May 2004.

²⁹ Interview with Christophe Hakizabera. Another hypothesis has implicated *both* Murwanashyaka and Kanyamibwa in consenting to General Rwarakabije's defection, assuming that he would be followed by the bulk of the FDLR combatants. The two would thus return to Kigali as the leaders of the opposition in exile. (Interview made on 3rd May 2004. The source does not wish to be disclosed.)

³⁰ FDLR, *Communiqué SE/N°1/JAN/2004 portant confirmation du Président des FDLR*, 26th January 2004. Hakizabera claims that the attempt to install Higiroy as President aimed to block an investigation into Rwarakabije's defection, as it would likely incriminate Kanyamibwa.

³¹ Interviews with Christophe Hakizabera and with Anastase Munyandekwe, 1st May 2004.

³² Jacques Byilingiro attributes the messages of the FOCA High Command to manoeuvres by General Mudacumura, who supports Murwanashyaka. He claims that Mudacumura is trying to control the army on behalf of Murwanashyaka.

The FDLR conflict culminated in two parallel meetings by the two factions at the end of May 2004. The Higiroy bloc held a Congress in Amsterdam between 22nd and 23rd May. All Regional and Local Committees except for that of Germany were represented at the Congress. The Directors Committee was also purportedly represented, while a FOCA representative allegedly participated by teleconference from Kinshasa.³³ The Congress “suspended” Murwanashyaka from the organisation for misappropriation of funds and for collaborating with Kigali. It also ‘suspended’ two members of the Executive Committee – Hakizabera and Deputy Commissioner for Political Mobilisation Munyandekwe – and a new Committee was elected.³⁴ It decided that the President would be elected every two years, instead of every five. Furthermore, it decided that the Second Vice-President, *not* the High Commander, should have the power to convoke the FOCA High Command. The army would thus be politically controlled.³⁵ An extraordinary meeting presided over by Ignace Murwanashyaka was concurrently held. On 22nd May the FDLR Directors Committee, with the absence of Higiroy, Kanyamibwa and Dukuze, met in Brussels.³⁶ FOCA liaison officer “Dose” allegedly gave the army’s approval of the meeting.³⁷ The meeting concluded with the “suspension” of Kanyamibwa, Higiroy, Dukuze and Abayizigira for «*illegally organising a meeting in Holland [...] for undermining the unity of the FDLR and for sabotaging the fight for the liberation [of Rwanda]*».³⁸

Each bloc has communicated its decisions to the FOCA High Command. The High Command communicated its «*staunch support of*

³³ Interview with Félicien Kanyamibwa, Jean Marie Vianney Higiroy and Augustin Dukuze and interview with Jacques Byilingiro. Byilingiro asserts that several officers of the FOCA High Command, though not the Commander, supported the Congress. However, the Murwanashyaka faction claims that Gaston Iyamuremye, who allegedly participated in the Congress from the field, did not in fact represent the FOCA High Command. (Interview made on 29th May 2004. The source does not wish to be disclosed.)

³⁴ Higiroy was confirmed as President; Marie-Goretti Abayizigira was appointed Vice-President; Major-General Gaston Iyamuremye was appointed Second Vice-President; Félicien Kanyamibwa remained Secretary-General; Dany Kara was appointed Deputy Secretary-General; Bonaventure Hakizimana retained the post of Finance Commissioner; Jacques Byilingiro was appointed External Relations Commissioner; Alexis Nshimiyimana retained the post of Political Affairs and Inter-Rwandese Dialogue Commissioner; and Augustin Dukuze retained the post of Spokesman and Information Commissioner.

³⁵ Interview with Jacques Byilingiro. This aims to minimise General Mudacumura’s control of the army, as he supports Murwanashyaka. Paradoxically it would place Major-General Gaston Iyamuremye in a politically stronger position than the High Commander.

³⁶ Ignace Murwanashyaka, Christophe Hakizabera, André Sabatware, Claudia Akimana, Charles Nkurunziza, Jean Marie Vianney Ndahimana and Emmanuel Ruzidana participated in the meeting.

³⁷ Interview made on 29th May 2004.

³⁸ FDLR, *Note du Président à tous les abacunguzi N°1/05/04*, Bonn, 29th May 2004.

Ignace Murwanashyaka as FDLR President» in a telegraph dated 29th May.³⁹ All the same, the Higiroy bloc claims that it is still waiting for a response to the Congress communication, which has been sent to Brazzaville for decoding before it can reach FOCA headquarters.⁴⁰

3.2.3. *The Combatants vis-à-vis Kigali*

While the FDLR political leadership has been immersed in a power struggle, the FOCA are facing myriad problems. International pressure against the Hutu rebels has been growing due to the peace process in the DRC. On 16th October 2003 Kinshasa re-iterated its ban on the FDLR and its determination to oust them from the country.⁴¹ Kigali has unremittingly vilified the FOCA as *génocidaires*, which constrains the international community from lending any support to them. After the repatriation of Paul Rwarakabije Kigali had proclaimed the dismantling of the FDLR. The predicted mass defection of combatants never came about, though. Kigali attributed this to the obstruction of the voluntary repatriation of combatants by the FDLR leadership.⁴² These allegations are stretching the international community's impatience against the combatants.⁴³

³⁹ FOCA High Command, "Message du Haute Commandement FOCA pour tous les abacunguzi", *ADMIN/INT/OPS/POL/04/929*, 29th May 2004.

⁴⁰ Interview with Jacques Byilingiro.

⁴¹ Nevertheless, Kigali has claimed over and over again that Kabila continued to support the FDLR and that the ban merely paid lip-service to the international community. FPR Spokesman Servilien Sebasoni claims that the French have pressured Kabila into supporting the elements that are opposing Kigali. (Interview with Servilien Sebasoni, 7th May 2004.) There are allegations that Kabila continues to support the FDLR, as he does not yet have a staunch army to fight Rwanda. It is said that a group of RCD deserters led by Patrick Masuzu is being armed by Kabila and is working with the FOCA with the aim of breaking the RCD in the Kivus. (Interview made on 24th May 2004. The source does not wish to be disclosed.) However, the replacement of Rwarakabije by Gaston Mudacumura as FOCA High Commander makes it unlikely that Kabila would sponsor the FOCA. Mudacumura, rather than Colonel Ndanda, had in effect been in Command at Kamina when the demobilised FDLR brigade was attacked in 2002. He had re-armed and fled with his troops. (Interview made on 3rd May 2004.)

⁴² See *Letter from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council*, New York, 10th December 2003; and see "DRC-Rwanda: Hutu rebels accuse leaders of barring their repatriation", *IRIN*, Goma, 30th April 2004. The FOCA reject such allegations and claim that those combatants who wish to be repatriated are given permission to contact MONUC. (Interview with a FOCA liaison officer in South Kivu made by telephone, 11th May 2004.) Also see FDLR, "The FDLR refute assertions made by the MONUC regarding the Forces Combattantes Abacunguzi (FOCA)", *Press Release PP/N°02/JAN/04*, 30th January 2004.

⁴³ At the end of 2003 MONUC had threatened to end the voluntary nature of the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) programme. See "DRC: Kabila orders ex-FAR and Interahamwe out of the country", *IRIN*, Kinshasa, 17th October 2003.

The FOCA were accused of a cross-border insurgency from the DRC during the 2004 genocide commemorations.⁴⁴ Kigali claims that the FOCA has been trying to attack Rwanda since April but has been pushed back into the DRC by the Rwandan Defence Forces (FDR).⁴⁵ Notwithstanding the fact that the FOCA cannot overpower the FDR and so poses no threat to the regime, Kigali claims that it is a threat to the Rwandan population.⁴⁶ This was another blow to FDLR credibility as the FOCA proclaims a desire for a peaceful resolution of the Rwandan crisis.⁴⁷ The FDLR position remains ambiguous in this respect. It has been engaged in fighting against various armed factions in the Kivu provinces of the DRC and justifies its actions on an alleged 'right to self-defence.' The FOCA claims that it is being attacked by the FDR, by the Kigali-backed Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) and by a brigade of the Congolese Armed Forces (FAC) led by Colonel Jules Mutebutsi.⁴⁸ The fighting in the DRC has exasperated MONUC, which is now threatening to use force to disarm the FOCA.⁴⁹ The situation is, therefore, deteriorating for the FOCA. Kigali is adamantly opposed to embarking upon negotiations with the FDLR and the international community is disinclined to pressure Kigali to do so.

Furthermore, Rwarakabije's defection may have served to demoralise the combatants. Rwarakabije has been contacting combatants, urging them to abandon the FOCA and repatriate.⁵⁰ At the same time, agents of the Rwandan and Congolese authorities, including Pasteur Kenge, are allegedly trying to

⁴⁴ "Burundi-DRC-Rwanda: Rwanda deploys Troops Along Border With Burundi, DRC", *IRIN*, Kigali, 26th April 2004.

⁴⁵ The APR was renamed FDR.

⁴⁶ Interview with the Rwandan Ambassador to the Benelux countries Kayitana, 14th May 2004. Kayitana maintains that despite the fact that many combatants are not génocidaires, they hold a genocidal ideology. Allegedly in anticipation of a FOCA invasion the FDR deployed on the border with Burundi and the DRC. On 21st April MONUC reported the presence of Rwandan troops *inside* the DRC, even though MONUC had not verified the allegations that the FOCA were preparing an incursion into Rwanda. See *IRIN*, Kigali, 26th April 2004. Kigali denies its presence in the DRC. It claims that MONUC has mistaken Congolese Rwandophones for Rwandans. It contends that the FDLR are fighting with the Rwandan satellite RCD and with local defence forces of the Kivus, which have many Banyamulenge among their ranks. (Interviews with Servilien Sebasoni and Ambassador Kayitana.)

⁴⁷ The FDLR upholds a commitment to an inter-Rwandese one, even though it proclaims that it has the military capacity to fight Kigali.

⁴⁸ They claim to have been attacked in Uvira from Rumere and Ruzizi in April. (Interview with FOCA liaison officer in South Kivu.) Also see FOCA, «FOCA/FDLR dénoncent la chasse à l'homme menée par l'APR et ses allies contre les réfugiés rwandaise et la population autochtone de l'est de la RDC sous le silence de la communauté internationale», *Communiqué N°02/PP-FOCA/2004*, 4th May 2004; and FDLR, «Tel qu'annoncé dernièrement, l'armée du gouvernement de Kigali (APR) se redéploie à l'est de la République du Congo (RDC)», *Communiqué de Presse PP/N°03/PAR/04*, April 2004.

⁴⁹ "Rwanda: UN mission threatens action on Hutu rebels", *IRIN*, Kigali, 26th May 2004

⁵⁰ Interview with Jacques Byilingiro.

demoralise FDLR troops in order to drive them back to Rwanda.⁵¹ Rwarakabije, who has joined the Rwandan Defence Forces, may be used by Kigali to infiltrate FOCA positions,⁵² which may have further demoralised the combatants. The leadership strife was also daunting,⁵³ particularly as political leaders were accused of having been involved in Rwarakabije's desertion.

3.3 Ethnic Separation

Developments in the Rwandan opposition in exile in 2004 were akin to ethnic separation. The Movement for Peace and Democracy (MPD), which grouped a number of Tutsi former APR soldiers under the leadership of FPR founding member Alphonse Furuma, effectively withdrew from the Rwanda Democratic Alliance (ADR) in January. Captain Frank Tega was the sole MPD member who remained in the alliance.⁵⁴ The departure of former APR high-ranking officers notwithstanding, the break-up of the *Igihango* alliance is of greater consequence for the exiled opposition. The departure and subsequent dissolution of Tutsi-led ARENA from *Igihango* in favour of the creation of another movement ended an encouraging venture towards ethnic reconciliation and the politicisation of the Rwandan crisis.

3.3.1. *An Alliance Built on Distrust*

The question of the armed forces of the opposition had been a major point of contention in the ADRN-*Igihango* alliance. Before the alliance had been launched there had been talk of an ARENA army in Uganda and the *Ingabo z'Umwami*⁵⁵ under the command of *Nation-Imbaga*, in addition to the

⁵¹ Interview made on 4th May 2004.

⁵² Ambassador Kayitana asserts that Rwarakabije has given substantial information on the FOCA positions in the DRC but the Rwandan Defence Forces cannot enter the DRC to crush them, due to the Pretoria Accords. (Interview with Ambassador Kayitana.)

⁵³ The FOCA had been calling upon the political leadership to resolve its problems long before the September 2003 Congress. It has since been communicating its request to keep the leadership unified and to put an end to the regional conflict within the FDLR political wing. (Interview made on 4th May 2004.) Rwarakabije had allegedly defected because the political leadership was doing little for the FOCA. (Interview made on 24th May 2004.) Rwarakabije had in fact claimed that *there was no other choice but to return*. See, "Le retour du guerrier", *La Jeune Afrique, L'Intelligent*, Kigali, 8th February 2004.

⁵⁴ Another Tutsi ex-APR Major Gérard Ntashamaje, former *Imbaga* member, has also remained in the movement. (Telephone communication with Gérard Ntashamaje.) Also see ADR-Isangano, "Maj. Alphonse Furuma is no longer the First Vice-President of ADR-Isangano", *Press Release 006/04*, Brussels, 1st February 2004.

⁵⁵ I.e. the King's Army.

FOCA.⁵⁶ *Imbaga* was quick to clarify that it did not have an army but ARENA was purportedly vague, claiming that it had soldiers in Uganda.⁵⁷ In effect, ARENA merely had APR deserters who were not militarily engaged among its members. According to ARENA, during negotiations with the FDLR in the DRC, Valens Kajeguhakwa had proclaimed that ARENA had soldiers. The FDLR thus presumed that ARENA would support its armed struggle against Kigali.⁵⁸

In August 2003 *Igihango* began a process of transformation, which aimed to reinforce the alliance. Part of the process would have been the assimilation of the FDLR army into the alliance. A Defence Commission was accordingly created.⁵⁹ This was followed by a Memorandum dated 22nd September, in which Augustin Kamongi and Joseph Ndahimana⁶⁰ appealed to the FDLR to submit its army to the guidance of the alliance.⁶¹ ARENA and *Nation-Imbaga* felt that *Igihango* would be better placed to negotiate the problem of the combatants in the Great Lakes region than the FDLR on its own.⁶² They also felt that an uncontrolled FOCA was an embarrassment for *Igihango*. The FDLR conceded on the basis that all military elements of the alliance would come together.⁶³ Seeing how ARENA had no armed wing and effectually no soldiers, the FOCA never came under the wing of *Igihango*.

The FDLR leadership regarded the insistence on the 'absorption' of its army by *Igihango* with scepticism. It believed that its allies were trying to neutralise the FDLR.⁶⁴ A conflict broke out within the alliance between ARENA and the FDLR, revolving around an ongoing dispute between Christophe Hakizabera and Deus Kagiraneza.⁶⁵ Following its Congress in

⁵⁶ Interview with Félicien Kanyamibwa. Kanyamibwa asserts that when Valens Kajeguhakwa brought the three movements together, they had all claimed to have an army.

⁵⁷ Interview with Alexis Nshimiyimana made by telephone, 27th May 2004.

⁵⁸ Interview with Gérard Karangwa, 30th April 2004.

⁵⁹ Félicien Kanyamibwa filled the post of Defence Commissioner. ADRN-Igihango, "Igihango se restructure et se réorganise", *Communiqué*, Brussels, 23rd August 2003.

⁶⁰ President of ARENA and Secretary-General of *Nation-Imbaga* respectively.

⁶¹ ARENA & Nation-Imbaga, *Mémorandum sur le renforcement et une meilleure intégration des activités au sein de l'Alliance Igihango*, 22nd September 2003.

⁶² Interview with Gérard Karangwa. The fact that the FOCA has not ceased to be militarily active has caused problems for the alliance, which has upheld its commitment to a *political* solution to the inter-Rwandese conflict. ARENA and *Imbaga* had more political credibility, as non-military movements.

⁶³ Interview with Bonaventure Hakizimana.

⁶⁴ Interview with Jacques Byilingiro.

⁶⁵ In October 2002 Deus Kagiraneza had travelled to Uganda on an ARENA mission. In Uganda he met with a group of APR deserters led by Abdul Ruzibiza, whom he claims were ARENA members. According to the FDLR, Kagiraneza had delivered a message from Kamongi that «*the FDLR are génocidaires*». Allegedly, certain soldiers in Uganda communicated the message to Christophe Hakizabera, which Abdul Ruzibiza confirmed on his arrival in Europe. (Interview with Félicien Kanyamibwa.) Kagiraneza dismissed the allegations

September, the FDLR began to demand the removal of Deus Kagiraneza from the Executive Committee of *Igihango*.⁶⁶ ARENA expressed its confidence in Kagiraneza during its December Congress⁶⁷ and the first cracks in the alliance appeared. The distrust among the parties of the alliance became evident. The FDLR was suspicious of the motives of former FPR members. It considered some of them Kigali infiltrators of the opposition, rather than a true opposition, and it feared a Tutsi take-over of its army. ARENA may in fact have considered joining forces with the FDLR in *Igihango* in order to gain access to suspected genocidal elements in the FDLR. Delivering those indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal to justice would possibly have given *Igihango* the credibility to negotiate with Kigali. The FDLR blocked any access to its army, though. For the FDLR *Igihango* offered political credibility. It never abandoned its objective of an ‘armed liberation struggle’. Its partners accused it of following its own agenda⁶⁸ and of seeking a Hutu «military victory», which would leave the Rwandese crisis unresolved.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the FDLR refutes prioritising an armed struggle.⁷⁰

The mistrust within the alliance was magnified by the leak of Judge Bruguière’s report in March 2004 and with Abdul Ruzibiza’s testimony. FDLR revisionism transpired following the incrimination of the FPR in the downing of Juvenal Habyarimana’s aeroplane and the allegations of its overall role in provoking the genocide. The FDLR began to focus on FPR crimes from 1990 onwards. Its partners were wary of attempts to downplay the genocide, while former FPR members were displeased with the accusations against the FPR. The Bruguière report also incriminated Kayumba Nyamwasa in the so-called «commando network», which had allegedly shot down the aeroplane. This cut short the aspirations of those *Igihango* members who had toyed with the idea of a coup against Kagame in collusion with Kayumba.

The FDLR had been involved in bringing Abdul Ruzibiza in contact with the French authorities, in order to testify for the Bruguière investigation against Paul Kagame and the FPR. ARENA accused Christophe Hakizabera of «kidnapping» Ruzibiza, supposedly an ARENA member. It denounced the

as a fabrication by Christophe Hakizabera.

⁶⁶ *Nation-Imbaga*, with the exception of Déo Mushayidi agreed but ARENA refused the demand. *Imbaga* had generally been acting as a balancing force in the alliance, even though it was the weakest of the three parties.

⁶⁷ ARENA, *Communiqué*, Washington, 20th December 2003.

⁶⁸ One speculation is that *Igihango* was a smoke screen for the FDLR, which wanted to use a *Tutsi spokesman*, i.e. Déo Mushayidi, to defend its activities. (Interview made on 3rd May 2004.)

⁶⁹ See MUSONERA, V. & NDAHIMANA, J., *Pour Une Alliance Forte et Crédible*, Brussels, 2nd May 2004.

⁷⁰ Interview with Félicien Kanyamibwa.

disregard shown by the FDLR towards ARENA. The Hakizabera-Kagiraneza and by extension the ARENA-FDLR conflict subsequently took on a new dimension. Coupled with what was perceived as the imminent dismantling of the FDLR due to the defection of Rwarakabije and the infighting of the FDLR, *Nation-Imbaga* and ARENA decided to shift *Igihango* in the direction of a fusion.

3.3.2. *Attempts at Integration Result in the Disintegration of Igihango*

The three constituent organisations had constantly blocked the functioning of the *Igihango* alliance. The beginning of 2004 saw an effort to find a way out of the deadlock. On 31st January Ndahimana and Kamongi wrote a Communiqué calling for the fusion of the organisations and announcing that individuals who were not members of one of the three organisations could join *Igihango*. This was immediately rejected by the FDLR. It protested that a fusion was premature, pointing to the absence of trust and to divisions within the alliance. Instead, the FDLR asked for an evaluation of *Igihango* before taking any steps ahead. The FDLR also refused the admittance of non-party members to *Igihango*; it was to remain an alliance of organisations.⁷¹

All the same, *Nation-Imbaga* and ARENA did not give up their undertaking to fuse the three movements. They began an effort to shift the FDLR position in favour of their project. The FDLR, represented by the 'Higiro bloc', gave the impression that the FDLR could consent.⁷² *Nation-Imbaga* and ARENA thus began to formulate the new project for *Igihango* with the input of ex-FAR Colonel Vénant Musonera.⁷³ By 13th March the 'National Democratic Pact' (PDN-*Igihango*) was proposed. A draft manifesto and a proposed Executive Committee were put forward. However, the Executive Committee included no member of the FDLR. Allegedly all members of the *Igihango* alliance had been invited to participate in the set-up of the PDN and could thus agree to their inclusion in the Executive Committee⁷⁴ but much of the debate had begun months ahead without the involvement of the FDLR. The FDLR had been caught up in its internal conflict and had only half-heartedly participated in *Igihango*.⁷⁵ The FDLR

⁷¹ Letter from Jean Marie Vianney Higiro to Augustin Kamongi and Joseph Ndahimana, dated 5th February 2004.

⁷² Interview with Joseph Ndahimana, 30th March 2004.

⁷³ Musonera had been one of 9 high-ranking FAR who had signed the *Kigeme Declaration* of 6th July 1994, denouncing the genocide and asking for peace and reconstruction. Musonera does not belong to a political organisation but he has been working closely with *Nation-Imbaga*.

⁷⁴ Interview with Gérard Karangwa.

⁷⁵ The FDLR affirms that the purpose of the meeting of 13th March had been to *discuss the feasibility* of a fusion. Instead, it was faced with a completed project, which it was expected to

retorted by way of a public condemnation of Augustin Kamongi. Kamongi was accused of trying to impose his will without the agreement of the *Igihango* Executive Committee.⁷⁶ This precipitated the tear in the alliance.

On 18th March 2004 the PDN-*Igihango* emerged without the FDLR.⁷⁷ Although the conclusion and launching of the movement was set for 21st March,⁷⁸ the main proponents of the movement pushed ahead, publishing the draft Executive Committee without consulting each of those involved. As a result, Joseph Ndahimana and Vénant Musonera withdrew in protest.⁷⁹ A boisterous conflict between the ADRN-*Igihango* and the PDN-*Igihango* ensued.⁸⁰

The ADRN-*Igihango* was severely weakened. ARENA had dissolved in favour of the PDN, leaving the FDLR with a semblance of *Nation-Imbaga* in the alliance.⁸¹ The *Igihango* alliance is now solely Hutu, while the *Igihango* party is ethnically mixed, though for the most part Tutsi. The PDN-*Igihango* nears a reproduction of ARENA,⁸² with the addition of members who are new to the external opposition. Among the new members are Tutsi who had

sign. (Interview with Félicien Kanyamibwa.)

⁷⁶ FDLR, *Les Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) rejettent la décision unilatérale de Monsieur Augustin Kamongi, Président d'ARENA, de dissoudre l'Alliance Igihango*, 15th March 2004.

⁷⁷ PDN-*Igihango*, *Déclaration de Presse*, Brussels, 18th March 2004.

⁷⁸ A final meeting was set for 21st March whereby the PDN manifesto and Executive Committee would be finalised. (Interview with Vénant Musonera, 5th April 2004.)

⁷⁹ Interviews with Joseph Ndahimana, 30th March, and with Vénant Musonera, 5th April 2004. Musonera was to be the PDN's Second Vice-President, responsible for Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Social Reinsertion of Combatants and Ndahimana was to be the Secretary responsible for Political Mobilisation, for Relations with other Organisations and for Relations with Civil Society.

⁸⁰ Members of ADRN-*Igihango* issued public declarations against the PDN. See for example ADRN-*Igihango*, "Mise au point de l'alliance ADRN-*Igihango* au sujet du parti «PDN-*Igihango*»", *Déclaration de Presse VP/03/04*, 23rd March 2004; and NDAHIMANA, J., "Je dénonce une acte d'escroquerie morale", *Communiqué de Presse*, 18th March 2004.

⁸¹ *Nation-Imbaga* has been disintegrating mainly on account of the ADRN-*Igihango*. Founding member Gérard Ntashamaje had already left *Imbaga* to join the ADR in 2001, as he felt that the monarchist cause was futile. When the ADRN-*Igihango* was being set up most Tutsi members of *Imbaga* withdrew, as they were unwilling to work with the FDLR. Rather than strengthen the party by recruiting new members, *Imbaga* chose to invest its efforts in reinforcing the alliance. In so doing, it left the movement in virtual suspension. Déo Mushayidi, another founding member, left for the PDN. *Imbaga* is currently composed of Joseph Ndahimana and Charles Karemano. Former *Imbaga* members are still in contact with the movement, though, and would join the monarchy debate, if it were to become a matter of dialogue with Kigali. (Interview with Joseph Ndahimana, 5th May 2004.)

⁸² As a member of the ADRN, ARENA had retained its strength, owing to a clash with the breakaway group of Alexander Kimenyi, AMAHORO. AMAHORO had split away from ARENA because of the ADRN-*Igihango*. ARENA had sought to reinforce itself in relation to AMAHORO, by recruiting new members. As such, it was able to 'sponsor' the PDN.

purportedly been unwilling to work with the FDLR.⁸³ The PDN maintains that it is determined to further the principles of *Igihango*⁸⁴ – to end to ethnic and regional cleavages and the criminality of the Rwandan State through consensual institutions. As such, it has kept the name *Igihango*, despite the objections of its former allies. The movement has called upon «*all Rwandan democrats who share its objectives*» to enter the «*democratic pact.*»⁸⁵ The PDN is still at an embryonic stage. The Executive Committee is merely provisional and consists of the founding members of the movement.⁸⁶ It stresses the need for a political resolution to the Rwandan conflict; for national reconciliation; for truth and justice; and for peace in the region of the Great Lakes. The latter entails the rehabilitation and reinsertion of combatants into Rwandan society. To this end, it expresses a readiness to reach out to the DRC government to help in the voluntary disarmament and repatriation of Rwandan combatants on Congolese ground.⁸⁷

Despite the PDN's thorough and ambitious programme, the co-existence of an *Igihango* party and an alliance is discouraging for the opposition. The exiled political scene has staged yet another reshuffling of the opponents of the regime. The international community may have become weary of the constant changes and of the lack of unity and purpose among the Rwandan movements.

3.3.3. *Further Fragmentation*

Nation-Imbaga had been caught between the ARENA-FDLR squabbling before the launching of the PDN. After the PDN was created *Imbaga* was trapped in the alliance with a divided and obscure FDLR. It had long since been acting as a balancing force in *Igihango*. It now felt obliged to remain with the FDLR. On the one hand, *Imbaga* upholds that Kigali can only be pressurised to the negotiating table by means of a military destabilisation.

⁸³ The FDLR contends that ARENA had decided to launch the PDN in order to *exclude* the FDLR. (Interview with Félicien Kanyamibwa.) According to Joseph Ndahimana, many Tutsi who had not belonged to a political organisation had told former ADRN-*Igihango* President Augustin Kamongi that they would join *Igihango* if the FDLR were to be excluded. (Interview with Joseph Ndahimana, 14th April 2004.) PDN member Jean Marie Nkusi also confirms that he had been unwilling to join *Igihango* while the FDLR had been part of the alliance, though he refutes that the PDN had been designed with the intent of excluding the FDLR. (Interview with Jean Marie Nkusi, 7th April 2004.)

⁸⁴ The PDN leadership asserts that *Igihango* has failed as an alliance but will continue as a party in order to achieve its avowed objectives. (Interview with Déo Mushayidi, 1st April 2004.)

⁸⁵ *Igihango* translates from Kinyarwanda as «*a pact sealed in blood*». The PDN claims to have evolved from «*a pact of parties*» to «*a citizens' pact*».

⁸⁶ A Congress will be held within a year from the date of its launching. By then its members aspire to expand the membership of the organisation. See PDN-*Igihango*, *Déclaration de Presse*, Brussels, 18th March 2004.

⁸⁷ PDN-*Igihango*, *L'Adhésion au PDN-Igihango*, 18th March 2004.

The FDLR has the capacity to do so, owing to its armed wing. On the other hand, *Imbaga* is trying to hold back the FDLR from achieving a «*military victory*», by which it could *seize* power and exclude the Tutsi anew. It feels that if the FDLR were isolated it would become more radical, to the detriment of the Rwandan opposition. *Imbaga* and Vénant Musonera are, therefore, trying to secure a declaration from the FDLR leaders against a full-scale war and a «*military victory*».⁸⁸

Imbaga can currently only exist within the alliance. Similarly, ADRN-*Igihango* depends on *Imbaga* to continue to exist. The FDLR still needs the political credibility offered by the ADRN-*Igihango*. It has consistently refuted accusations of having military ambitions by reference to *Igihango appeals for an inclusive inter-Rwandese dialogue*. The two FDLR blocs have also tried to prolong the life of the alliance in their attempts to assert themselves over the other bloc. After the departure of key figures from the ADRN Executive Committee a new Committee was set up for an interim period. As the Vice-President, Félicien Kanyamibwa became *ad interim* President.⁸⁹ The ‘Higiro bloc’ has been using Kanyamibwa’s position to manipulate the alliance so as to rise as the ‘real’ FDLR leadership.⁹⁰ *Nation-Imbaga* is becoming impatient with the FDLR’s manoeuvres. It is pressing the two blocs to resolve their conflict so that the alliance may progress. *Imbaga* also continues to insist upon the need to draw non-party members into the ADRN and to reinforce the alliance.⁹¹ Nonetheless, the ADRN is on the brink of suspension. *Imbaga* may conclusively break up the alliance⁹² as it is unlikely that the FDLR on its own will be able to find new partners in *Igihango*.

3.4 Departure of Political Personalities

The Rwandan external opposition has witnessed the departure of important figures. The ADRN-*Igihango* mediator, Valens Kajeguhakwa, had bowed out of the political scene in 2002 following his marginalisation by members of the alliance.⁹³ After his defeat in the 2003 Presidential elections,

⁸⁸ Interview with Joseph Ndahimana, 5th May 2004. Also see MUSONERA, V. & NDAHIMANA, J., *op. cit.*; and MUSONERA, V. & NDAHIMANA, J., *Mise au point sur l’avenir de notre organisation politique*, Brussels, 27th May 2004.

⁸⁹ ADRN-*Igihango*, *Examen rétrospectif et perspectives d’avenir d’Igihango à l’occasion du deuxième anniversaire de sa création*, Brussels, 27th March 2004.

⁹⁰ At a meeting in Brussels on 24th May 2004 an FDLR delegation led by Higiro and Kanyamibwa tried to persuade *Imbaga* to end the interim period, leaving in place the interim Executive Committee. The only change would be the replacement of Hakizabera by Byilingiro as External Relations Commissioner.

⁹¹ MUSONERA, V. & NDAHIMANA, J., *op. cit.*, 27th May 2004.

⁹² Telephone communication with Joseph Ndahimana.

⁹³ See RAFTI, M., *op. cit.*, pp.24-26.

Faustin Twagiramungu has stated his disinclination to play an active opposition role in exile. Twagiramungu claims that it is virtually impossible to oppose Kigali from abroad. It would only be possible with the support of the international community. Yet, unless the various movements form a common front against Kigali, the international community is unlikely to take the opposition seriously.⁹⁴

In the beginning of 2004 former APR Majors Alphonse Furuma, Michael Mupende and Frank Bizimungu departed from the ADR-*Isangano*. Following the dissolution of ARENA in March, former Speaker of the National Assembly Joseph Sebarenzi made known his withdrawal from the opposition, after having been inactive for some time. Sebarenzi had signified the intra-Tutsi conflict in Kigali, specifically the drift of the FPR from genocide survivors, when he fled Kigali in 2000.⁹⁵ The retreat of these personalities could be an indication of fatigue or even post-electoral resignation.

On the other hand, the surfacing of former Prime Minister Pierre Céléstin Rwigema as Vice-President of the PDN⁹⁶ could offer a boost to the opposition. Rwigema had been acquitted of genocide charges by the US justice system, after his flight from Rwanda. His active involvement henceforth in the Rwandan opposition in exile could potentially point to the falsity of many of the accusations Kigali has used over the years to discredit its opponents.

4. CONCLUSION

The Rwandan opposition in exile has been consumed by power struggles. Internal rivalries within political movements have alternated with conflicts between movements. Personality clashes have sapped the strength of the opposition, while important political figures have withdrawn from the exiled political scene. Frictions within the UFDR first brought the Permanent Consultation of the Rwandan Democratic Opposition to a standstill. The current crisis in *Igihango* has prolonged the suspension of the consultation procedure.

⁹⁴ Interview with Faustin Twagiramungu.

⁹⁵ Sebarenzi had been aligned with the genocide survivors. In January 2000 he had challenged the FPR's line on the genocide and had been forced to resign from his post. For more information see REYNTJENS, F., "Chronique Politique du Rwanda et du Burundi, 1999-2000", *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Annuaire 1999-2000*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2000, pp.97-98.

⁹⁶ Rwigema was until recently on the sidelines of the opposition. He was a member of ARENA but he was not active at the level of the ADRN-*Igihango*.

The breakdown of the *Igihango* alliance has pointed to a seeming failure of elite reconciliation. *Igihango* had been a promising project that brought together Rwandans from both ends of the ethnic and regional spectrum. All the same, ethnic and regional rivalries surfaced by mid-2004. The internal FDLR row set off a *kiga-nduga* divide. The ARENA-FDLR clash and subsequently the schism of the PDN from the *Igihango* alliance have triggered an ethnic wrangle. Accusations against the FDLR of being an extremist Hutu movement have abounded. The PDN accuses the FDLR of wanting to change the regime merely for being Tutsi-led. The Tutsi and 'moderate' Hutu stress the need for consensual democracy and minority guarantees. From this standpoint the PDN and *Nation-Imbaga* fear that the FDLR will try to use its combatants to invade Rwanda with the aim of seizing power for the Hutu majority, excluding again the minority ethnic groups. Conversely many Hutu are frustrated with what they perceive as a Tutsi monopolisation of 'victimhood'. The FDLR in particular accuses the Tutsi-dominated PDN of wanting to change the Head of State alone and to maintain the Tutsi-led regime. The leak of the Bruguière report was the final nail in the external opposition's coffin. It brought about the separation of Hutu and Tutsi and re-surfaced the revisionist argument of the Rwandan genocide.

The 2003 electoral results emboldened Kagame's clique. It sensed that no opposition was efficacious enough to challenge the regime. Hence it felt no need for a political dialogue with its opponents found outside Rwanda. In fact, the regime has well-placed agents who have created problems for the external opposition. It has secured the return of the *abacunguzi* combatants' Commander Paul Rwarakabije and a number of high-ranking officers. No mass defection of combatants ensued. Yet Rwarakabije's desertion aggravated the internal FDLR conflict. It divided the political leadership and brought the armed wing of the organisation at odds with the political wing for doing little for the combatants.

Elements of the opposition are contemplating a military destabilisation of Rwanda in order to force the regime to negotiate with the opposition. Still others may be contemplating a full-scale invasion. A victory over the FDR is unlikely, though. The FDR appears to be stronger than the existing armed forces of the opposition. All the same, the presence of the *abacunguzi* combatants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is menacing for the Congolese and Rwandan populations. It also continues to present Kigali with the 'security threat posed by armed rebel groups' assertion to 'justify' its presence in the DRC.

Whereas the FPR has secured a strong grip over the Rwandan political space, the external opposition is losing touch with the Rwandan interior. It cannot function aptly outside of Rwanda. Yet *no real* opposition is permitted inside the country. It is unlikely that any clandestine activity against

the regime is taking place in the interior. As such, the external opposition cannot have a substantial support network in Rwanda. The opposition in exile can only operate through declarations mainly over the Internet. It lacks the funds to go beyond this approach. The best tool at hand is to press foreign governments to force Kigali in the direction of a political opening. However, the international community is not well-disposed to the Rwandan external opposition. Although the sympathy and guilt factors felt by the international community towards the regime due to the genocide may be waning, the opposition is not strong enough to manifest the ongoing Rwandan tribulation. It is in pieces – there is no common front to present unity of purpose – and as such it is unconvincing. The picture has thus become even more reassuring for the FPR-led regime.

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