



Where is Exiled Former Rwandan Journalist Cassien Ntamuhanga?

By Odiedo Stephen



The last time eyewitnesses saw former Rwandan journalist and activist Cassien Ntamuhanga alive was on the 23rd of May 2021 when he was arrested by agents of the Mozambique National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC). On arrival in Mozambique, Ntamuhanga had asked for asylum and refugee status because of persecution back home in Rwanda and, therefore, according to international humanitarian law, he was a protected person in Mozambique—at least until his request for asylum was heard and determined by the competent authority in Mozambique. Those protections included protection from arrest and refoulement—forced repatriation back to Rwanda, his country of origin, which he had fled because of persecution.

Ntamuhanga was first taken to the Inhaca Island Police station before being transferred to Maputo. He had been living on Inhaca Island since he fled Rwanda in 2017. At the time of Ntamuhanga's arrest, a man in civilian clothing who had accompanied the policemen who arrested him was heard speaking to him in Kinyarwanda. The SERNIC, Mozambique's police service and the embassy of Rwanda in Maputo have all denied any knowledge of the "alleged" arrest of Cassien Ntamuhanga although several eyewitnesses in Inhaca have confirmed having witnessed the arrest.

As of this writing, the whereabouts of Cassien Ntamuhanga are unknown. The fact of the matter is that the last time Cassien Ntamuhanga was seen in public he was under the custody of men in the

uniform of the Mozambique police service and SERNIC. The arrest of Cassien Ntamuhanga, former Rwandan journalist and critic of the Rwanda government has rung alarm bells because his disappearance, which has been denied by both Mozambique and Rwanda police, falls into a pattern of such disappearances of Rwandans in Rwanda or in exile only for their bodies to be found days later.

Both SERNIC and Mozambique's police service have denied holding Ntamuhanga in custody. Ntamuhanga had fled Rwanda after escaping from custody after he and Kizito Mihigo had been arrested and charged with treason. Both had been arrested in 2014 and charged with plotting terror attacks against Rwanda and plotting to overthrow the Rwandan government. These very serious charges had been brought against Ntamuhanga and Mihigo by the Rwanda prosecutor. At the trial of the two, the Rwandan court sentenced Kizito Mihigo to twenty-five years in jail on a verdict of treason and terrorism against the state. Ntamuhanga, who was accused of terrorism, inciting disaffection against the government of Rwanda and for genocide denial, was convicted and sentenced to twenty-five years in prison in 2015. In 2017, Cassien Ntamuhanga escaped from prison and fled to Mozambique from Rwanda.

On the 6th of May 2021, Cassien Ntamuhanga was tried in absentia in Rwanda and handed a 25-year prison sentence for facilitating terrorist activities and for financing from abroad the making of bombs to be exploded in Rwanda. At Cassien's trial, his alleged accomplice told the court that Ntamuhanga had paid the accomplice to make bombs to be used to overthrow the government of Rwanda. And then, on 23rd May 2021, Cassien Ntamuhanga disappeared.

Uzabe Intwari

"Be a hero, my child

I love you and through that

I love Rwanda

That's why I am dedicating it to you

Be a hero,

Be important for Rwanda"

Uzabe Intwari, Be a Hero, is a song Kizito Mihigo sung in 2019 urging peace and reconciliation. Rwandans admiringly called him *Inuma*, the Dove, because of his courageous campaign for peaceful coexistence and reconciliation among all Rwandans. A year after he sang this song, Kizito Mihigo hung himself with a bedsheet from the window of a police cell that has no windows.

To win us with honest trifles, then to betray us in deepest consequence

Given the disappearances of Rwandans in Rwanda and abroad, a deeper look at the disappearance of Cassien Ntamuhanga demands of us that all voices speak up and refuse to be silent any longer following this latest disappearance. For, in the end, even Macbeth had to listen when the cries of Scotland's many widows demanded of King Macbeth an accounting. There is an aptness in seeing events in Rwanda through the frame of Shakespeare's Scottish play. For Shakespeare's play is very much the needed journey into the psyche of the repressive and coercive Rwandan state. Here are the events that precede General Macbeth's accession to the throne of Scotland, which at the time

was fighting both a Civil War and an Invasion by a foreign army (Norwegian).

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As Macbeth, the Thane of Glamis, and Banquo his fellow general, walk from the latest battlefield in the Civil War in Scotland, three witches hail Macbeth with the titles of Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cowdor and King hereafter. And then immediately afterwards, news comes that King Duncun has invested Macbeth with the titles and dignities of Thane of Cowdor, the rebel who General Macbeth had just recently killed on the field of battle. After this surprising news, Banquo comments on how startled and deeply disturbed Macbeth looks—when what the Witches had just told Macbeth is nothing but good news on his fortunate new stature. But Macbeth looks reflectively at Banquo and reminds him that the witches who have made him (Macbeth) the Thane of Cowdor had also prophesied that Banquo would be the father of many Kings who would go on to rule Scotland although he (Banquo) himself would never be King—the Witches had called Banquo lesser than Macbeth yet greater. And then, reflecting on Macbeth’s rapid change of fortune, Banquo warns:

But 'tis strange,
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence. (Act I Scene 3, Macbeth by William Shakespeare)

Shortly thereafter Macbeth invites King Duncun to his estate and there murders the King and seizes the throne. The promises given to Macbeth by the instruments of darkness have been fulfilled—Macbeth is now the King of Scotland and among his first acts is to murder Banquo whose son Fleance barely escapes his father’s assassins to join the growing force of opposition to the King in exile. In his palace, Macbeth the new King of Scotland finds the Ghost of Banquo haunting his every waking moment. And so “to make assurance double sure” as Macbeth says, he goes back to the Witches for prophecies of the future and to learn how to protect his throne from the fate that had befallen his predecessor, King Duncan.

At his second encounter with the Witches, the Weird Sisters warn Macbeth to beware of Macduff, a Scottish nobleman and leader of the opposition against his (Macbeth’s) increasingly repressive rule. The Witches further advise Macbeth to harshly stamp out all dissenting voices without fear of any consequences because none of woman born shall ever harm Macbeth—his power and that of the state of which he is the head is proof against any and all opposition and conspirators because Macbeth “shall never be vanquished until great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come”—an impossible proposition because no forest can walk up the hill to attack Macbeth’s well defended castle at Dunsinane. Macbeth builds a formidable intelligence service and sends them out to spy against opponents at home and abroad. And so he can boast that:

“There’s not one of them but in his house I have a servant fee’d” (Act I Scene 3)

As in Rwanda, so in repressive and authoritarian Scotland; Macbeth has good reason for the fact that his trust in his well-educated and highly trained state intelligence service is absolute, justified. Yet his wife is driven insane and then to death by the unwashable sight of King Duncan’s blood on her hands. Macbeth finds that in spite of all his powers of command over the state, he cannot command a calm and stoic forbearance in his partner in crime. What drives Lady Macbeth insane and kills her is the fact that she cannot wash away the haunting blood of King Duncun from her

hands that she keeps obsessively washing. And it is from the moment of these scenes of dread unknown to Scotland inside his own home and marriage that Macbeth discovers that the power that the instruments of darkness had put in his hands is power, yes, but also, to his horror he discovers that it is a power against which his own humanity is helpless. It is a horror that Macbeth cannot even share with anyone else outside of his inner circle. And to his greatest horror, this same dread turns the power that he had craved so much into but ashes in the soul.

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And thus, the instruments of darkness begin their work of betraying Macbeth “in deepest consequence”. In the end, after all his trust in their dark powers, the Instruments of darkness that he had embraced forsake him when indeed great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill comes. The forces which will liberate Scotland from Macbeth’s dictatorship have arrived led by Macduff—he that was “none of woman born” because he was ripped prematurely from his dead mother’s womb. Having assassinated Scotland’s leader, King Duncan, Macbeth finds that the only way to assure his security is through more bloodshed. This in spite of the warning that the Weird Sisters had given him: security is mortal’s chiefest enemy. In his quest for will-o’-the-wisp security, Macbeth embarks on an endless campaign of repression and assassination world without end.

Poignantly, Macbeth will have to watch helplessly as the horrors of his Faustian bargain destroy the mind of his steely iron lady, Lady Macbeth. The only security for him now is to remain in power forever, but mortals are mortal—or, as Lennox sardonically puts it, men must not walk too late—or else when they die violently, the fearful son fled into exile might find himself ever so rightly, ever so easily, accused of being the murderer of his luckless father.

The original sin

Right from the assassination of Seth Sendashonga in exile in Kenya in 1998, to this latest outrage—the forced disappearance of Cassien Ntamuhanga on 23rd May 2021—there is a context that Rwandans silently acknowledge but which the rest of the world may need to understand because the violence that these exiled Rwandans are subjected to reflects the situation, the larger context of violence and impunity, that birthed post-genocide Rwanda. And it is that context that the rest of the world needs to understand given the indifferent silence coming out of Rwanda on the disappearance of Cassien Ntamuhanga just as has happened when other Rwandans have met a tragic end either within Rwanda or abroad.

Much like Scotland in the grip of murderous King Macbeth, Rwanda is in the grip of a murderous regime at whose head is a ruler haunted by the assassination of Rwanda’s president Juvenal Habyarimana. Rwanda will only know peace when the true facts of the death of President Habyarimana are publicly investigated and accounted for in Rwanda by all Rwandans. There is a divinity hedges the person of the King, the Bard of Avon once said—the assassination of the president is no small matter to be swept aside because Rwanda must move on past the genocide. In the meantime, as in Scotland after the murder of King Duncan, Rwanda and Rwandans continue to pay the terrible price of that death that has never been acknowledged, never been investigated, never been accounted for.

The assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana is Rwanda’s Original Sin, which unless acknowledged and expiated, there is never going to be any peace for the current powerholders in Rwanda, however many more Rwandans are assassinated in the name of national security. Until the

assassination of President Habyarimana is publicly investigated and accounted for in Rwanda, the death of the President is the terrible cross that every Rwandan must bear. Yet the assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana was not a horrific aberration, it did not come out of the blue. There is a precedent, and that precedent is the haunting, poignant figure of Fred Rwigyema, the leader of the Rwanda Patriotic Front until his assassination in Uganda just before the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) began its last major incursion into Rwanda that would set the stage for the terrible last phase of the civil war and the genocide that followed as inevitably as night follows day.

Fred Gisa Rwigyema. Magnanimous Rwigyema—for his superlative battlefield tactics and treatment of outpaced and outmanoeuvred opponents in northern Uganda, he was gratefully nicknamed the god of war by those he had defeated on the battlefield. In Africa's vicious counterinsurgency operations, it is very rare for such accolades to be bestowed upon the victorious government's battlefield general by those he has just defeated. It is indeed a rare accolade by rebels to a government soldier anywhere in Africa. General Fred Rwigyema was that rare African General who earned battlefield honours from his defeated opponents. And there is more: for General Fred Rwigyema was a soldier's soldier—even apart from the fact that he was that rare soldier whom his defeated enemy was always happy to surrender arms to.

Macbeth finds that in spite of all his powers of command over the state, he cannot command a calm and stoic forbearance in his partner in crime.

Fred Rwigyema's vision of the RPF was of the RPF as a movement for all Rwandans. All. General Fred Rwigyema's vision of Rwanda was of a country where all Rwandans would find a place as Tutsi, Hutu and Ba'Twa—and still find the space to live together as Rwandans. Rwanda first and always. That was the vision of General Fred Rwigyema—and it was the reason why Hutus joined the RPF without any doubts as to the motives of the rebel army. The General's vision was the reason why the Ba'Twa, who are always so afraid of the latest turn of national events in Rwanda—formed the formidable, silent and unseen backbone of his intelligence service. After witnessing and hearing of his storied counterinsurgency campaigns in northern Uganda, the Ba'Twa had embraced the General with open arms, for General Fred Rwigyema's RPF were all Rwandans fighting for a better day for their country. Their return to Rwanda from exile was anticipated with joy and love for Rwanda. And in Rwanda, the return of General Fred Rwigyema was as eagerly anticipated by the Rwandans in the north who had heard of the General's reputation for magnanimity, especially in the north of Uganda where he had led a fabled counterinsurgency war against the remnants of the Obote regime.

Counterinsurgency warfare is scorched earth war, war to the knife, war to the death. And yet, General Fred Rwigyema executed counterinsurgency operations in northern Uganda that left the locals full of admiration for this soldier-statesman. On the 1st of October 1990, the RPF invaded Rwanda from Uganda. And on the 2nd of October, General Fred Rwigyema was dead. Shot dead accidentally, according to later RPF reports. If the assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana triggered the Rwanda genocide, the death of General Fred Rwigyema on the second day of the invasion of Rwanda by his motivated RPF was a tragedy whose cost Rwandans would not discover for decades. Like Banquo's Ghost upending national events in Macbeth's Scotland, General Fred Rwigyema's enigmatic smile haunts Rwandans wherever they go. The haunting vision of a Rwanda that acknowledges Hutu as Hutu, Tutsi as Tutsi, Ba'Twa as proudly Ba'Twa—and still forges these three into the supple bladed steel of a proud and stable Rwanda. O General Fred Rwigyema. What a vision. And what a tragedy. For that vision of a Rwanda of the three proud nations (Hutu, Tutsi, Twa) died on the second day of the invasion that General Fred Rwigyema intended would rid Rwanda of ethnic supremacy once and for all time.

In General Fred Rwigyema one sees the Rwanda that could have been. And in his death, one sees the prologue to all the horrors that would afflict Rwanda and her neighbours in the decades to come. The death of General Fred Rwigyema was a loss with which the African Great Lakes Region is only now beginning to reckon. The cost of the General's death has been too high for this region. Yet in this poignant loss there is a hard lesson for the Great Lakes Region: our perennial instability and its terrible toll in blood and treasure always springs from that same place where the adulation of General Rwigyema springs from: we in the Great Lakes Region are always greatly enamoured of charismatic leaders, not institutions. When such a great leader passes from the scene prematurely or in the fullness of a life well lived, we are always left bereft. The lesson, as ever, is a poignant one: in our failure to cultivate viable, lasting national institutions, we have left ourselves and our countries open to the vagaries of capricious fate. Get a charismatic leader of vision and magnanimity like President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and the nation reaps big in terms of stability. Get a charismatic leader of capricious intent like Iddi Amin and suffer the cost in lives lost and spend decades trying in vain to repair the irreparable damage. And even when the visionary leader comes, his departure is always a catastrophe to the nation because his successors feel called upon to knock down his legacy—just for the sheer pleasure of boy-like cruelty, malice and revenge.

In General Fred Rwigyema one begins to understand the driven vindictiveness, the unquenchable rage that drives the state to expend scarce resources in pursuit of exiles in faraway countries like South Africa, Canada, and Mozambique. Behind every question that Rwandans ask about the horrors that the state is inflicting upon all Rwanda, there is the patient, enigmatic smile of General Fred Rwigyema. Behind the driven insatiable pursuit of the wealth of neighbouring countries, there stands the Ghost of General Fred Rwigyema: quizzical, gentle, aloof, questioning, mocking, never to be appeased by the baubles looted from neighbouring countries in the grip of their own national traumas. And the unaccounted for deaths continue to haunt Rwanda: King Mutara III Rudahigwa, President Grégoire Kayibanda, General Fred Rwigyema, President Juvenal Habyarimana, Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana, Umwamukazi Rosalie—the gathering of the angry and the impatient and the forgiving and the patient ghosts grows ever bigger, the list of their names ever longer.

It is hard to live up to the high standards of the illustrious dead. And so we lash out at those who would, even unintentionally, remind us of their unreachable visions, their rigorously high standards. Self-questioning, consensus seeking, patience, an instinctive empathy for the humanity of the other side: inhumanly high standards. Hence the impatience with that past. Hence the taboo on any talk of involving the old royals in any attempts at reconciliation. And, please, whatever you do, do not mention the monarchy. And please, whatever you do, do not mention the foundational covenant which, for the sacred stability of the land, the illustrious Gihanga, founder-hero, made with Rwanda. And please, whatever you do, do not talk of reconciliation. Reconciling with whom? Reconciling for what? And, hence the taboo on the mentioning of that name, Fred Rwigyema, in the hearing of the leader.

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Yet that self-mocking smile accompanies us everywhere we go. We see the ineradicable face in every face in the crowd. So we lash out at any idealist young man, woman who reminds us of that enigmatic presence who sits ever so patiently at the head of the dinner table every evening. Is it the Ghost of Banquo? Or is it the Ghost of that troublesome Fred Rwigyema and his nostalgias for a bygone time? We lash out at any questioner whose patriotism is instantly questioned—because they were not there when we were fighting for all this. What do they know? And so we lash out, single them out. Crush them. One by one—or all at once. For we live a charmed life—and we have this

divine cachet to turn these naïfs into meat for the crocodiles. So we make them our training partners even if they are unwilling and they pay in blood—pay like Sewell, that naïf who faced General Macbeth in the naive innocence of callow youth and paid with his life; let every callow opponent come forth one and all. Just so that we can give the intelligence apparatus some live fire practice. And there is a kind of glee, a kind of insane greed for violence in the heart of the state when yet one more opponent is discovered and state resources are mobilized against him. Then, at the presidential intelligence headquarters, one notices an increased tempo in affairs, a quickening of pace, a tighter, happier smile, a sense of the blood beating faster in the heart, the pulse ticking steadily at the temple. Like an eager Macbeth putting on his armour gleefully, greedily even, before the time of battle arrives, these Rwandans now in the grip of a fate they no longer control, are driven to put on a greater show of national purpose. Even when the enemy threat is no longer a more restrained Congo or a wiser Uganda but a lonely exiled Cassien Ntamuhanga, heartsick for the fabled hills of his beloved Rwanda.

That famed Rwigyema sense of proportion, that calm sense of perspective, that lucky coup d'oeil that Fred was so famed for in the midst of a developing crisis—that is all gone now. It is all about hunting down lone Rwandans in foreign lands and caning domestic servants. So we lash out. And the language gets more intemperate, more brazen too; even as a distraught family mourns the murder of Patrick Karegeya, the head of state can warn the other exiles that, for them too, it is but a matter of time. And there is no need for any pretence anymore at consultation, at listening to the other side's view: the other ones whom General Fred Rwigyema would always listen to so patiently. So what of them? Who needs them? Rwanda does not need them. We are all Rwandans here. General Fred Rwigyema's vision of a Rwanda of Hutu, Tutsi, Twa? No need. We are all Rwandans here so do not ask me whether I am Tutsi or what have you. And so we lash out. And the remembrance days get longer, the memorials more lavish, more obscene, more outrageous each year. *Kwibuka*: lest we forget—and naïfs like young Sewell standing gangly and callow before Macbeth with a sword in his right hand—these naïfs did not even know what there was that so needed to be forgotten in the first place. They did not even know that we lead a charmed life. So their questioning, their ridiculous demands for an accounting are all a naive tilting at windmills. And so young Sewell falls to the General's sword without even seeing where the blow that cut off his life came from. They cannot see me coming: I am as the leopard, the eagle, the silent running predator. I will come at them out of left field.

In this journey of anguished self-examination at the disappearance of Cassien Ntamuhanga, one knows that wherever Cassien Ntamuhanga is, as the strong Christian that he is, were he able to reach out, he would ask that the Church in Rwanda pray for him. So once again, the Church finds itself called upon to intervene for the sake of Rwanda on the side of the beleaguered individual whose life forever stands forfeit because the state is yet to address the value of the life of the Rwandan. Only the Church can help Rwandans to retrace the path towards the sacredness of life. As the Church in Rwanda stood with Rwandans when Rwanda descended into the abyss, some clergy, unfortunately, walked with them that pushed Rwanda unto the abyss of the damned. The sacredness of the life of every Rwandan—leader or ordinary faithful— is a call in which all of us still look to the Church. Only the Church has the stature to stand with the ordinary Rwandan against the might of the unaccountable Rwandan state. Only the Church will help Rwandans to rediscover the sacredness, the cherished value of human life in Rwanda. For without that reverent realisation of the sacredness and the worth of each Rwandan's life, all life is forfeit in Rwanda, and if the sacredness of life in Rwanda is forfeit, then Rwanda itself is forfeit.

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Mwami Mutara III Rudahigwa's unexplained death in Bujumbura would set the stage for the deaths to come in Rwanda. The death of the king while on a visit to Burundi planted the seeds of the rancour that corrodes Rwanda's national psyche to this day. Allegations of his poisoning by Belgian authorities have persisted to this day. The unexplained death of the king robs Rwanda of stability because whenever followers of another assassinated leader demand an investigation, their demands are blithely ignored because of the precedent set by Rwanda's failure to judicially investigate the death of Mwami Rudahigwa and thus give his followers closure. His followers' calls for an investigation have always been ignored by the successive rulers who have come to power in Rwanda since the revolution of 1959. Yet any Rwandan leader who ignores the calls to investigate the king's unexplained death is giving hostages to fortune. "There's such divinity doth hedge the person of a King" (Act IV Scene 5, Hamlet by William Shakespeare). No Rwandan leader has ever acknowledged the need to investigate the death of King Mutara III Rudahigwa - and the followers of the current leaders have been equally silent about the King's unexplained death abroad. As for King Mutara III Rudahigwa's followers, the death of the King on the 25th of July 1959 is an occasion for such deep mourning that you would think the king has just died this past July.

So what happens when your leader, in his turn, dies an unexplained or an unnatural death—which tends to be the special end Rwanda inflicts on its leaders? Whenever his followers gather to commemorate the life of King Rudahigwa, the current occupant of state house Kigali should look back to the fate that overtook his predecessors who blithely ignored the pained call for closure by King Rudahigwa's followers. It is a call that has been ignored every year by each subsequent ruler of Rwanda. The meaning of this act is deafeningly loud, for when a ruler deems the life of his predecessor to be without worth, he speaks urgently, insistently, imperiously, to the future. And such a leader will not value the life of any of the citizens from whom he expects due regard as the leader. The stability of Rwanda is anchored in the sacredness of each individual's life. When the ruler forfeits the life of but one of his subjects, his is forfeit. It is the unresolved end to the life of King Rudahigwa that has made the life of each subsequent Rwandan leader such a fraught life. And the fragility of the life of the leader is at the foundational roots of the instability that has rotted the core of the Rwandan state.

Like Banquo's Ghost upending national events in Macbeth's Scotland, General Fred Rwigyema's enigmatic smile haunts Rwandans wherever they go.

All Rwandans have mocked and excoriated the ceremonial that surrounded the life of the King. But as Rwanda continues to pay this very high price in instability, the unappeased presence of His Majesty King Mutara III Rudahigwa waits out there in Nyanza. The unspeakable crimes perpetrated by the monarchy against Rwandans in the past have precluded any mention of the monarchy in the national non-discourse in Rwanda. Rwandans, like the son who rejects the name his father gave him, have the right to try to reject their monarchical heritage; yet they will fail in this—as they have failed in the past. And the cost of failure is this periodic decent into the abyss because the unrestrained Rwandan state does not recognize any right to life, liberty or life's pursuits. Any call for accountability, for restraint when it comes to the king, is immediately dismissed out of hand as an unrealistic attempt at returning the monarchy to power. As genocide denial, even. Yet the continued dismissal of the King's followers' call for justice is but a measure of how fragile the new normal in Rwanda is. The call for an accounting for the fate of the king is a call for justice; the decision on the fate of the monarchy in Rwanda was the prerogative of Rwandans—and they did exercise it. In embracing the state with its arrogant lack of restraint when it comes to the fate of the king, Rwandans continually signal to the state that it can continue on its unrestrained, unaccountable path—even though that road is guaranteed to lead all Rwanda into the abyss.

The life of the individual is only as sacred as the life of the leader is; the life of the leader is only as sacred as the life of the individual is. Cassien Ntamuhanga's life is as sacred as is the life of Rwanda's leader; and the converse is also absolutely true. The fate of Grégoire Kayibanda, Rwanda's first President, speaks to the urgent need to reckon with the fate of the king. When President Grégoire Kayibanda was overthrown, he was placed under house arrest and starved to death. There has been no attempt to atone for this terrible tragedy for Rwanda. President Kayibanda was Rwanda's president and the worth of a Rwandan hinges on the worth that Rwanda places on the life of President Kayibanda. Atonement is overdue here and Rwanda stares deep into the abyss as each day it ignores the harrowing fate that his successors visited upon President Kayibanda. For the leader of the nation to starve to death is for the nation to starve to death. Rwanda needs to raise its voice for and speak the name of President Grégoire Kayibanda for the sake of the nation's continued good health and stability. Rwandans must act with restraint towards their leaders if they expect Rwanda to act with wise restraint and forbearance towards each Rwandan. It must be a living nightmare to be the leader of a country where you live with the horrific knowledge that the citizens who call you excellency starved your predecessor to death. It is the kind of history that does not bode well for an enlightened and forbearing leadership.

Perhaps the unpredictable quicksilver character of Rwandan leadership (which is glossed over as Rwandan leader-order) is learnt from the nightmare mirror that is the fate of President Kayibanda. And yet Rwanda continues to ignore the roaring voice of this quintessence of the Rwandan psyche. President Kayibanda's cold unconcern at the rampaging mobs who executed the seed-genocide of his reign was but a harbinger of things to come for Rwanda. In the shrieking ghost of President Kayibanda one hears the shrieking cries of the dying and the howling roars of the marauding mobs. His reign was but a rehearsal for the Rwanda that would be. He stands present there in the Rwandan national psyche together with the roaring mobs of his reign dancing to bloodcurdling songs while the dying shriek the name of Grégoire Kayibanda in all their despair.

Rwanda's failed rendezvous with President Grégoire Kayibanda and his traumatic reign is Rwanda's failed rendezvous with fate. It is a failure of national nerve that means that each generation of Rwandans cruelly kicks this overdue reckoning down the road to the next generation—their own children. It is a cruel father who points the vengeful ghosts of his own forefathers in the direction of his toddler son. *Mama ni mama, angali mvi*, your mother is your mother even if she is whitehaired. Mercurial President Grégoire Kayibanda belongs in the Rwandan national arena as surely as the thousand hills belong to Rwanda. Of course, it does not follow that just because he stands present in the national psyche Rwanda will do right by President Grégoire Kayibanda. Yet the price Rwanda has already paid for its amnesia over Rwanda's first president is a price very few nations are willing to pay. Yet Rwandans seem ever ready for their periodic plunge into the abyss. Is it stoicism? Or is it a national death wish? A stoicism that makes you hand over the fate of your daughters into the hands of your worst enemies? A death wish that plays Rwandan roulette with the lives of other peoples' sons? There is a mercurial side to the Rwandan psyche that mirrors the quicksilver Rwandaness of President Grégoire Kayibanda.

Even as a distraught family mourns the murder of Patrick Karegeya, the head of state can warn the other exiles that, for them too, it is but a matter of time.

The assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana through the mid-air shooting of his plane over Kigali on the 6th of April 1994 as he returned from the Arusha peace talks together with Burundian head of state Cyprien Ntaryamira is as harrowing as anything that the unaccountable Rwandan state is capable of inflicting upon Rwandans. After decades riding the roller coaster that is Rwandan leadership, Rwanda sent this favourite son for African Union-mediated peace talks in Arusha,

Tanzania beginning in 1992. At first, these talks looked like the usual game of Rwandan roulette. That appeared to be the forgone conclusion regarding the Arusha peace talks—until Kinani took to them in earnest. And, suddenly, a vision of the future of Rwanda peeps through the communiqués from Arusha that takes your breath away. Suddenly, in Arusha, this African strongman looks his rebel opponents in the eye and calls them Rwandans. Yes, Rwandans. Men whose fathers and mothers and siblings he had locked out of Rwanda forever when he had famously declared that Rwanda is full and cannot accommodate any other person in the name of returnees. And suddenly, out there in Arusha, the armed opposition looks at President Juvenal Habyarimana and in him they see their leader, the President of Rwanda. And suddenly, not so suddenly, out there in Arusha, a vision, a vista of a Rwanda of all Rwandans opens out before the astonished gaze of all Rwandans and the watchful international community. In the annals of peace talks and peace-making, the Arusha peace talks rank right up there with the treaties that established the post-war European system after the Second World War. Alas, Rwanda. Alas, President Juvenal Habyarimana.

Alas, Africa. These moments in Arusha are as supernal as the vision that the future shows Macbeth, and that he spectacularly misapprehends. If ever there was a moment when all Rwandans looked into the future of Rwanda—and there saw a Rwanda at peace with itself—it was at these peace talks in Arusha. And like a Macbeth convinced of his special place in Scotland's fate, the protagonists in Arusha each misapprehend and misinterpret the vision of the future that, for a moment, Rwanda had shown them. The extremists on both sides rush to claim centre stage—and two shrieking surface-to-air missiles curve the bloody signature to the Arusha peace talks over Kigali's beautiful night skies that tragic April evening. The vision in Arusha vanishes and like a Macbeth vowed to put all opponents to the sword—babes in their mothers' arms and all—from Arusha a terrible note is sounded for the first time when there in Arusha a vow is made to return to Rwanda and execute "the Apocalypse".

President Juvenal Habyarimana returned with the signed peace document aboard the presidential Dassault Falcon. But that evening the presidential plane would never land at Kigali International Airport. Those two shrieking surface-to-air missiles raced for the presidential plane—two fiery javelins streaking over Kigali's darkening evening skies. And the presidential plane exploded into a ball of flame and crashed into the grounds of state house Kigali, Rwanda. On board were the presidents of two countries—Rwanda and Burundi. The Apocalypse had claimed its first victims. And as the genocide gathered pace and the RPF forces fanned out of the north and roared for the east and the south in a race against time to save the lives of doomed Rwandans, the shattered former government forces raced westwards towards Zaire and with them they carried the remains of slain President Juvenal Habyarimana. Eventually they would give the president's remains a haunting hasty ceremonial Hindu burial at Ndjili Airport in Congo ex-Zaire.

The anguish that the death of President Juvenal Habyarimana has occasioned Rwanda and the whole of the Great Lakes Region is incalculable. As sure as the sun will rise tomorrow, Rwanda will not know peace as long as President Juvenal Habyarimana's mortal remains are not returned to Rwanda and accorded the burial honours the president deserves. Any attempt at a lasting peace in Rwanda is doomed to fail as long as the president's name remains but a silent, unspeakable, unspoken, tabooed name even as Rwanda's national discourse gathers pace abroad. Of course, within Rwanda you cannot at present talk of any credible national discourse. Much like Macbeth's Scotland where any mention of slain King Duncun was taboo, within Rwanda any mention of President Juvenal Habyarimana is fraught with danger. Yet Kinani stands there waiting for that national discourse to reach and start being heard within Rwanda—waiting, waiting, a dark, enigmatic, brooding presence. In the imposed amnesia over President Juvenal Habyarimana's fate, Rwanda dances on the edge of the abyss. Rwanda is a country on the razor's edge, and only in an honest reckoning with the fate it has meted out against its leaders is there a glimmer of a possible pathway to the future. For

Rwandans deeply crave peace. And yet, the man who brought Rwanda peace languishes unmourned in the outer darkness out there in exile and at the shadowy edge of the Rwandan national psyche. For Rwanda, the road to peace must pass through President Juvenal Habyarimana's mausoleum right there in Kigali, Rwanda—whenever it is in future that Rwandans will decide to build that mausoleum to Kinani, Rwanda's President Juvenal Habyarimana. When that day of reverence for the lives of the leaders of Rwanda comes, then citizens like Cassien Ntamuhanga will walk freely in Rwanda knowing that their lives, too, are sacrosanct under law.

Only the Church has the stature to stand with the ordinary Rwandan against the might of the unaccountable Rwandan state.

No Rwandan leader has ever paid a higher price while in power as Agathe Uwilingiyimana paid while in office as Rwanda's premier. A patriot who embraced the vision of a Rwanda in which all Rwandans would have an equal space as of right, Premier Agathe paid a price that no leader should ever be asked to pay for the sake of his or her country. Yet, illustrious stateswoman that she was, Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana stoically rose above her personal tragedy to serve Rwanda faithfully to the very end. When you look at Premier Uwilingiyimana, it is Simonides' epitaph for King Leonidas and the valiant three hundred which immediately comes to mind: "O, Stranger passing by, go tell the Spartans that here obedient to their commands we lie." Stoic courage against impossible odds: Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Courage over and above the call of duty: Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Fidelity to one's oath even when the price already paid and yet to be paid is an impossible one: Illustrious Agathe Uwilingiyimana. To stand at one's station to the last hour and even if there was yet a glimmer of escape, refusing to take it so as to stand with those who had no one to offer them any escape: stalwart Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Like the fierce lioness standing between her cubs and death, to stand between your loved ones and catastrophe knowing full well that it means that your life is forfeit: Stateswoman Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Teacher of a nation. Mwalimu we are ever so sorry. And even after Rwanda visited a traumatic horror upon her, she still served Rwanda as its leader. And even when, on the second day of the Apocalypse, the genocidaires came for her, she came forth to face them. Alone. Unarmed. Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana, Rwanda's leader. Words cannot speak fully to the true measure of Agathe Uwilingiyimana's leadership in Rwanda.

And yet, even after the horrors it inflicted on this stalwart leader, Rwanda and the United Nations still dare to call Rwanda's national catastrophe the Genocide Against the Tutsis. As for the United Nations, that august body has a long tradition of abandoning Rwanda at the country's hour of need. The latest being the tepid response it has made over the forced disappearance of Cassien Ntamuhanga. As for Rwandans, their silence even as Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana's memory suffers this treacherous *damnatio memoriae*, the message is as plain as day: until the day that Rwanda will choose to atone for the national wrong it has done to the premier, Rwanda will not know true peace. And yet it is unthinkable that Rwanda will ever abandon its obscene and self-serving "Genocide Against the Tutsis" to mourn all Tutsis who died in the Genocide and all Rwandans who died defending Tutsis. It is an impossible thought—yet in its unthinkableness is the harbinger of Rwanda's future. Rwanda must punish all those who committed atrocities against Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana to the full extent of the law. Only then can Rwanda expect to deserve the full measure of its claim to sovereign statehood. The Rwandan will only get the full measure of his or her rights when Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana is accorded these same rights posthumously. "O, Stranger passing by, go tell the Spartans that here obedient to their commands we lie."

When President Grégoire Kayibanda was overthrown, he was placed under house arrest

and starved to death.

The full measure of the national treasure that Rwanda expends in pursuit of perceived enemies like Cassien Ntamuhanga beyond the borders of Rwanda is the same full measure that Rwanda must expend to accord Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana justice if Rwanda expects to know peace. No individual Rwandan can claim safety so long as Rwanda refuses to atone for its atrocities against Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana. Rwanda will not find atonement until Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana is accorded the full measure of justice and redress by Rwanda. The harrowing fate that has overtaken Cassien Ntamuhanga is the fate that Rwanda reserves for each Rwandan so long as there is only silence when it comes to Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana. "O, Stranger passing by, go tell the Spartans that here obedient to their commands we lie." The lesson is that Rwanda must treat its leaders with wise restraint and utmost dignity and honour. To be the leader of a nation is a thing of great honour and reverence. Once appointed to office, a leader is a person that all Rwanda must honour and revere unconditionally.

The caveats Rwanda puts on the honour and regard due its leaders is the unwitting curse that each generation of Rwandans just picks up unthinkingly on the journey towards the latest iteration of the national catastrophe. The fate that befell Rwanda for its cavalier show of disrespect towards Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana is the reason why the aged, like the leader, were sacrosanct beings in Rwandan culture. The hand that Rwanda lifted to strike at the Premier is the curse that led Rwanda unto the abyss. Them that the gods would damn they first make proud. Even as Rwanda walked into the Apocalypse, the anticipation and the eagerness of Rwandans was the one noteworthy fact that observers noted of Rwanda's national mood at that time. And the fact that even now there is no move in Rwanda towards redress for the wrongs a reckless nation inflicted on this gracious leader, that fact alone, is enough of a riposte unto them that claim the mantle of Rwanda's infallible leaders. "O, Stranger passing by, go tell the Spartans that here obedient to their commands we lie." It is Rwandans who will convince their leaders that the life of a leader is a sacrosanct treasure, that the life of an ordinary Rwandan like Cassien Ntamuhanga is a sacrosanct treasure.

The genocide raced right across Rwanda in all its fury that April of 1994 and, finally, the mass slaughter reached Butare, Southern Rwanda, where Umwamikazi (Queen) Rosalie Gicanda had been banished to internal exile ever since Rwanda chased her out of the royal palace in Nyanza after the Rwanda Revolution of 1959. Rosalie Gicanda became Rwanda's Queen in 1942. In 1959, King Mutara III Rudahigwa died in questionable circumstances in Bujumbura, Burundi, and in the same year, the Rwanda Revolution abolished the Rwanda monarchy. Speaking in Cape Town, South Africa, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan used the phrase "wind of change" to describe the epochal political changes that were sweeping through Africa in the 1960s. In Rwanda, the Revolution is called *Muyaga*, the wind of destruction, because it destroyed the structure of Rwandan society that was anchored in the balance of power between the Hutu, the Tutsi, and the Twa, with the monarchy as the arbiter between the different sectors of Rwandan society.

With the monarchy—the shield that stood between Rwanda and the abyss—removed, Rwanda now begun its bloody race to the bottom that would culminate in the Rwanda genocide of 1994. When in 1962 Rwanda stripped Umwamikazi Rosalie of her titles and hounded her out of the royal palace, the Queen stoically settled to a quiet life in Butare in the hope of protecting her subjects from retaliation by the murderous mobs that periodically targeted her for vilification and persecution. Throughout the decades of internal exile and banishment in Butare, Queen Rosalie Gicanda kept her head down and avoided any public pronouncements that would lead to further pogroms against the remnant of her subjects who still lived in Rwanda after the revolution.

Rwanda's failed rendezvous with President Grégoire Kayibanda and his traumatic reign is Rwanda's failed rendezvous with fate.

Banished from the royal palace, stripped of all her titles after the abolition of the monarchy in 1962—for Rwanda that was not enough. A campaign of sustained vilification selected Queen Rosalie to be Rwanda's *bête noire* in the years after *Muyaga*. On the 20th of April 1994, a detachment of the Rwanda intelligence service arrested the Queen and her small retinue and murdered them near the Rwanda National Museum. One little girl survived to speak of the murder of revered Queen Rosalie Gicanda. The assassination of Umwamikazi Rosalie Gicanda in the Rwanda genocide is a curse that Rwanda will struggle for decades to expiate. Full atonement for the death of the Queen is the only way for Rwanda to protect the lives of all Rwandans from the vagaries of a lawless and unaccountable state. As long as Rwanda does not recognize the sacredness of the life and person of Umwamikazi Rosalie, Rwanda cannot begin to even accept that atonement for this horrific crime is overdue. And yet, Rwanda will never accept that, in assassinating Umwamikazi Rosalie Rwanda, Rwanda damned itself. And in that refusal to recognize the fateful crime against revered Umwamikazi Rosalie, Rwanda walks with an albatross round its own neck. Indeed, there are sections of Rwandan society where these words of abiding sorrow at the fate of the Queen instantly meet with violent rejection. Until all Rwanda embraces the true symbolic meaning of the role of Umwamikazi Rosalie in the life and future of Rwanda, Rwanda will continue to stare at the abyss. The sheer rage that Rwanda still fans against the Queen, that is the seductive siren song of the abyss to which Rwanda is still listening with eager attention. Rwanda is still courting the abyss, Rwanda is still stoking the flames of a new genocide because Rwanda has adamantly refused to atone for the ills committed against this great African stateswoman, Umwamikazi Rosalie.

Gentle, gracious and stoic in her decades of sorrow in the wilderness, Umwamikazi Rosalie never accepted the continual offers to go into exile. The calls for the queen to flee Rwanda grew insistent once those two surface-to-air missiles had brought down President Juvenal Habyarimana's plane. Even as the genocide approached Butare, the queen refused the many insistent and desperate offers of safe passage for her out of Rwanda. Umwamikazi Rosalie stayed in Butare to the bitter end. Stoically, the Queen stayed with her subjects who were being slaughtered in the Rwanda genocide. And in Butare the genocide came with an especial fury because Butare is not only the spiritual heart of Catholicism in Rwanda. Butare, this beautiful city of soaring plainsong is also the mystical heartland of Rwanda as a nation and of Rwandans as a people. Butare of high learning and philosophical debates, Butare the spiritual home of Rwanda And so, in this chronical of tears and abiding sorrow, Queen Rosalie saw it fitting that, here in Butare of religious visions and soaring plainchant, she would stand to the bitter end.

Much like Macbeth's Scotland where any mention of slain King Duncun was taboo, within Rwanda any mention of President Juvenal Habyarimana is fraught with danger.

The debt the Rwanda owes Umwamikazi Rosalie is the very survival of Rwanda as a nation now and into the future. In her decades-long persecution and suffering, Umwamikazi Rosalie is Rwanda's curse. In her stoic acceptance and forgiveness of Rwanda's atrocities against her, Umwamikazi Rosalie is Rwanda's possibility of future blessings and prosperity and peace. Yet there are sections of Rwandan society that would pluck up and burn to cinders the black marble of her mausoleum in Rwanda. Rwanda's rejection of the Queen, Rwanda's fury against Rosalie Gicanda, that is the measure of Rwanda's damnation. As we seek for even a whispered word about the whereabouts of Cassien Ntamuhanga, Rwanda must acknowledge the roots of its cavalier disregard for the rule of law, due process, rights of the accused and the value of the life of each Rwandan. The roots of

Rwanda's lawless lie in Rwanda's horrific persecution of Umwamikazi Rosalie. Every Rwandan hopes for safety and the chance for prosperity for themselves and for their loved ones. Every year on the 4th of July, Rwandans celebrate Liberation Day and declare anew their aspirations for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. There, in the person of Rosalie of Splendour, there in the person of persecuted, excoriated and exiled Umwamikazi Rosalie, there in the person of Queen Rosalie, is every Rwandan's claim to the right to safety, life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—even if they violently reject the Queen.

What will the United Nations ever tell the Premier?

In the above reprise of Cassien Ntamuhanga's fate against the backdrop of Shakespeare's "Scottish" play, there speaks to us an urgent message because ever since the Rwanda genocide, the hounding of Rwandans like Cassien Ntamuhanga by the state is a totalitarian horror that has engulfed not only Rwandans within but also those abroad. Cassien Ntamuhanga's targeting by the Rwandan state finds strong resonance in King Macbeth's Scotland. In post-genocide Rwanda, opponents of the RPF powerholders face jail and assassination both inside and outside Rwanda. And like Macbeth boasted, the president of Rwanda has boasted that Rwanda has one of the best intelligence services in the world—resourceful enough to strike at Rwanda's "enemies" anywhere in the world. And with this we come to the harrowing events that have overtaken the life of Cassien Ntamuhanga, the former Rwandan journalist who was arrested in Inhaca, near Maputo, Mozambique.

It is Rwandans who will convince their leaders that the life of a leader is a sacrosanct treasure, that the life of an ordinary Rwandan like Cassien Ntamuhanga is a sacrosanct treasure.

Cassien Ntamuhanga has not been seen in public since his abduction—and abduction is the right legal term here because ever since his arrest, state officials in Mozambique and in Rwanda have denied any knowledge of his whereabouts. For its part, the government of Mozambique must publicly state the whereabouts of Cassien Ntamuhanga, for he had applied for refugee status in that country. And the government of Rwanda must tell the world of the whereabouts of Cassien Ntamuhanga given previous patterns of forced disappearance and murder or attempted murder of Rwandans living outside the country. At least one Kinyarwanda-speaking foreigner was present at the moment of Cassien Ntamuhanga's arrest in Inhaca. The forced disappearance of former journalist Cassien Ntamuhanga must be the urgent concern of all Africans and humanity concerned for peace and reconciliation in Rwanda—and for peace and stability in the countries neighbouring Rwanda. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees must tell the world of the whereabouts of Cassien Ntamuhanga as he had applied for refugee status in Mozambique at the time of his disappearance. By virtue of his refugee application in Mozambique, Cassien Ntamuhanga had automatically acquired the legal protection of the UNHCR. Even before the determination of his refugee application, the UNHCR owed Cassien Ntamuhanga a moral duty of care. Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, must intervene in Cassien Ntamuhanga's case and demand that the latter be handed back into the care of the UNHCR because seeking asylum and safe refuge abroad is a basic right of all persecuted persons fleeing their country of birth. As an applicant for refugee status in Mozambique, Cassien Ntamuhanga is legally protected from repatriation to Rwanda and, setting aside the fact that the two countries do not have an extradition treaty, Mozambique cannot legally deport Cassien Ntamuhanga back to Rwanda. If Cassien Ntamuhanga ends up in Rwanda through a forced repatriation, Mozambique—and the UNHCR—would be in serious breach of international treaties governing the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

As for the United Nations, that august body has a long tradition of abandoning Rwanda at the country's hour of need.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances needs to take up the case of Cassien Ntamuhanga because failing to intervene in this case will see Rwanda sink further into repression to the detriment of all Rwandans' efforts at reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. Further, the case of Cassien Ntamuhanga is urgent to all because peace in Rwanda is vital for the whole Great Lakes Region. As past wars have proven, when Rwanda descends into anarchy, the whole of East and Central Africa pays an inhuman price in lives lost and livelihoods destroyed. This is a special call to the Commonwealth because had it not been for the global health crisis occasioned by COVID-19, Rwanda would have been handed the chairmanship of the Commonwealth in 2021. The Commonwealth bears a moral responsibility and a duty of care towards events in Rwanda and thus this appeal to the Right Honourable Patricia Scotland, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth to convene an urgent meeting with Rwandan authorities and get answers on the whereabouts of Cassien Ntamuhanga. Having invited Rwanda into the august body, the Commonwealth needs to impress upon Rwanda the need for it to abide by the Commonwealth values of adherence to due process rights, accountable government, political pluralism and, above all else, respect for human rights.

This call on the international community to intervene is made without being blind to the fact that the Rwanda government has worked hard to convince the world of the justice and rightness of its position—witness the successful Rwandan efforts to rewrite the narrative on the Rwanda Genocide. For years, the Rwandan government wanted the world to see the genocide as targeting the Tutsi population only. In the end, in 2017, Rwanda finally convinced the United Nations to change the designation of the Rwanda genocide to the Genocide Against the Tutsi. This is a great disservice to those non-Tutsi Rwandans who died because of their opposition to the genocide and to the genocide ideology. The name change is a great disservice to illustrious Agathe Uwilingiyimana, the valiant Rwandan leader who paid a very high price indeed for her patriotism to Rwanda. Even before the genocide, Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana and her family paid horrifically for her love of Rwanda and her courageous decision to stand by the vision of a Rwanda that stands for inclusivity and respect for the rule of law. During the genocide, many Rwandans who opposed the killings were targeted and killed together with the Tutsis whom they sought to protect from harm. What can the international community tell Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana who lost her life in the genocide now that the United Nations has agreed to call it the Genocide Against the Tutsis? Rwanda now quotes the United Nations to justify the erasure of dead Rwandans from the record by calling it the Genocide Against the Tutsis. What can the United Nations tell Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and the Hutus and the Twa who were killed because they opposed the genocide? The Twa lost a very large number of men, women and children to the genocide so what can the United Nations tell them of their loss now that the murders which took place are only the Genocide Against the Tutsis? Or are the lives of Hutus who died protecting Tutsis from the slaughter not worth a bullet as the genocidaires told these valiant Hutus before killing them too? What of the Twa? Does the United Nations General Assembly not consider their lives worth a bullet just as the genocidaires had said? Are the lives of these Hutus and Twa not worth honouring through remembrance? Is the United Nations agreeing now with the genocidaires who prophetically boasted that by the time they would be through with their "work" of mass murder, there would be none left to tell the tragic stories of their victims? Is the United Nations now in agreement with this horrific boast of the genocidaires? It is a terrible irony that the United Nations, which abandoned these Rwandans at their hour of greatest need, has now abandoned them in death too. It is a case of rubbing salt into the wound. It is a horrific travesty of all the values that the United Nations claims to stand for. Thus, it is absolutely no wonder that the UNHCR has failed Cassien Ntamuhanga just as it failed Rwandans at the start of

the genocide by evacuating foreign nationals and leaving Rwandans to the tender mercies of the Interahamwe. Cassien Ntamuhanga is in the hands of the Rwandan security services. There can be no doubt about that. The only urgent thing remaining to be done is for the Rwandans to be pressured to produce Cassien Ntamuhanga in open court to answer to lawful charges—if any.

When remembering the dead is an act of high treason

The pattern of events surrounding Cassien Ntamuhanga's forced disappearance mirrors and is closely intertwined with the story of gospel singer Kizito Mihigo. Before detailing the events surrounding Ntamuhanga's disappearance, it is important to first recall the events surrounding the tragic end of Kizito Mihigo. In 2014, the Rwanda government arrested Kizito Mihigo and charged him with conspiracy to kill the president, plotting against the state, complicity in terrorist acts and murder. The Rwanda government then banned *Igisobanuro cy'Urupfu* and all of Kizito Mihigo's songs. Kizito's song *Igisobanuro cy'Urupfu* had urged reconciliation among Rwandans but it had also urged the remembrance of all of Rwandans who had died in 1994—both Tutsi and Hutu. At the end of his trial in 2015, Kizito Mihigo was sentenced to ten years in prison for planning to kill the president of Rwanda and for conspiring against the government of Rwanda.

The assassination of Umwamikazi Rosalie Gicanda in the Rwanda genocide is a curse that Rwanda will struggle for decades to expiate.

After Kizito Mihigo's conviction and jailing, he was pardoned by President Paul Kagame in 2018 but was rearrested in February 2020. On 17th February 2020, the Rwanda Bureau of Investigations announced that Kizito had hanged himself in his cell in Remera Prison, Kigali, Rwanda. In interviews before his death, Kizito said that the charges against him arose from his songs—*especially Igisobanuro cy'Urupfu*—that urged Rwandan reconciliation. Kizito Mihigo's mission of peace and reconciliation urged Rwandans to look towards forgiveness and remembrance of all of Rwanda's dead. This message of remembrance of all of Rwanda's dead during the Rwanda genocide—both Hutu and Tutsi—struck a raw nerve within the Rwanda government of President Paul Kagame. The Rwanda government condemned the song *Igisobanuro cy'Urupfu*, *The Meaning of Death*, as an act of genocide denial because in his song, Kizito Mihigo had equated the deaths of the Tutsis who died in the genocide to the deaths of Hutus who allegedly died in revenge killings in Rwanda and in the Congo where Hutu soldiers, militia and civilians had all fled to after participating in the mass slaughter of Tutsis, moderate Hutus and Ba'Twa. Singing in remembrance of the Tutsi victims of the Rwanda genocide and at the same time singing in memory and remembrance of the Hutus who died in revenge killings after the genocide was seen as an unforgivable act of moral equivalence—and an act of genocide denial. In Rwanda, the charge of genocide denial carries a heavy penalty.

Now, Cassien Ntamuhanga, Kizito Mihigo's co-presenter on Radio Amazing Grace and co-accused in the 2014 trial in Rwanda, is missing, last seen in Maputo, Mozambique in the company of Mozambique's security agents and at least one Rwandan-speaking stranger. As *Al Jazeera* says in its flagship programme "Inside Story", "Rwanda is often portrayed as a shining example of what can be achieved in Africa." One thing that post-genocide Rwanda has shown that it can achieve is the kidnap, forced disappearance and murder of government critics in foreign countries in America, Europe, the Arab world and extensively throughout Africa. Now Cassien Ntamuhanga's forced disappearance has once again shown that Rwanda is a shining example of what the African state can achieve once it sets its mind to the task. Because Cassien Ntamuhanga had applied for refugee status in Mozambique, it is urgent and vitally important that the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees speaks out and demands to know from the Rwandan and Mozambique government of his whereabouts. The office of the Special Rapporteur on forced disappearance and torture, Houri es

Slami must stand with Rwandans and call for the immediate release of Cassien Ntamuhanga as the initial step towards restoring the latter's human rights. Protecting the rights of Cassien Ntamuhanga and according him protection as a refugee in Mozambique is a difficult but noble task. This is vitally important because in spite of his long tenure, President Paul Kagame will one day surely vacate office. And when that time comes, he will want to leave Rwanda in the hands of a man whose respect for the rule of law and the constitution is unwavering. A basic principle in jurisprudence is that the ruler must make laws that he would be happy to see executed, implemented by his own worst enemy. The whole of Rwanda must strive for this principal to be included in Rwanda's stymied process of reconciliation and peace with justice.

Rwanda must acknowledge the roots of its cavalier disregard for the rule of law, due process, rights of the accused and the value of the life of each Rwandan.

If the international community is unable or unwilling to call Rwanda to account, then Rwandans from all sectors of the nation must be willing to initiate this process of reconciliation. Every Rwandan has a state—and a stake in the stability of that state. Speaking out against abuse Rwandans will be entrenching the culture of accountability. And it is only through a constant and sustained engagement with the state through the accountability institutions of Rwanda (the courts, the national assembly, the church, etc.) that the rights of all Rwandans and the rights of the individual will be protected in a sustained, sustainable Rwanda that is ready to protect the rights of the individual. Protecting the rights of the individual Rwandan is the only guarantee that the state and Rwanda itself will survive the looming transition from the leadership of the current Rwandan president.

In the meantime, the president lives like a man under siege. And the future stretches ahead of the president as a barren wasteland of empty tomorrows and more tomorrows. The sense of futility and entrapment is the reason why the long gone despised African dictators constantly changed their countries' constitutions—all in search of the elixir of immortality that would make them life president in fact and not just on paper in those constitutions that in their hearts they despised so heartily even as they rewrote them to anchor their desire for immortality on paper. Like a terrible fever, the desire of the African ruler for immortality has caught up with the current crop of progressive African leaders. As the darlings of the western world, these African leaders can do no wrong—the *New York Times* once admiringly characterised President Paul Kagame as the world's favourite dictator. Like the Weird Sisters whom Macbeth encountered on his way to the throne through a sea of blood, western media loves these African rulers and their authoritarian crackdown on the very institutions that brought them to power in Africa.

Like the Scotland led by Macbeth, the African state is a graveyard for the opponents of the regime who are prosecuted and persecuted under the war on terrorism clauses that were written into these African constitutions at speed. Their sense of futility is the reason why the leadership lashes out at exiled opponents and neighbouring states—if only for the giddy excitement and sense of national purpose. In the meantime, Rwandans and neighbouring states suffer the consequences of the leaders' constant attempts to justify their actions to the ever-smiling Ghost of Fred Rwigyema and the enigmatic dark presence of the president who is waiting ever so patiently for an accounting of Rwanda's role in his assassination. Thus, in the meantime, Rwanda feels justified in trying a singer and a journalist under the terrorism clauses of the amended Rwandan laws. We lash out.

The Renaissance Africans

For Rwanda, and for Africa, the tragedy is that after the admired "African Renaissance" presidents

have violently killed and silenced the legitimate opposition to their rule, there remains no middle ground in Rwanda just as there remains no legitimate dissent in many of the African countries led by these African Renaissance leaders. In Rwanda, as elsewhere in Africa, what now stands between the ruler in state house and immortality is the armed opposition in exile and underground. The current powerholders will easily dismiss this discredited and exiled force as genocidaires and effete intellectuals. Yet Rwanda's powerholders must remember that they, too, were once discredited and despised exiles. The lesson is taught over and over again every time a Rwandan seeks reform in Rwandan society only to be confronted with the charge of treason and genocide denial. Every time legitimate dissent is delegitimized in this manner, the message gets across to all Rwandans: the illusion of freedom is just that. The message gets across that there is no real freedom in spite of the beautifully written statutes. When moderate reformers like Kizito Mihigo, Cassien Ntamuhanga, Andre Kagwa Rwitsereka, Seth Sendashonga, Patrick Karegeya are killed or exiled or abducted and disappeared or murdered in exile; when the legitimate opposition—Victoire Ingabire Muhoza, Diane Rwigara, Fred Barafinda—is discredited and criminalised, the message gets across that in Rwanda freedom of speech, assembly, the right to choose one's own leaders, these are not human rights, these are crimes. Eventually the legitimate opposition will be eliminated in Rwanda. Eventually the legitimate voices of dissent will all be criminalised, murdered, silenced.

As past wars have proven, when Rwanda descends into anarchy, the whole of East and Central Africa pays an inhuman price in lives lost and livelihoods destroyed.

Then what? The next lesson is there in the past of the RPF powerholders themselves, in their childhoods as stateless exiles and as despised foreigners: once all legitimate dissent is either killed or driven into exile, it transforms. The years of exclusion drive underground all alternative voices and there they become transformed into an armed rebel force. Discredited as they are, insignificant in number as they are, mocked and laughed at by the Rwandan president as they are, many Rwandans are starting to listen keenly to the message of the exiled opposition like the Rwanda National Congress. And the RNC itself is working hard to reach out to all sections of Rwanda society. Rwandans in exile learnt the message from the RPF powerholders: it is always a work of the long haul, a work of generations. This patience, this willingness to take the long view is the one asset that the Rwandan president does not have. Hence his constant intemperate outbursts against the liberal opposition. It was a shock to the whole world when the president openly boasted that he is ready to hunt down opponents even abroad when, after the assassination of Patrick Karegeya, Rwanda's former head of the external intelligence service in South Africa. The president said, "Whoever betrays the country will pay the price, I assure you," and on another occasion, "You cannot betray Rwanda and not get punished for it," and "Any person still alive who may be plotting against Rwanda, whoever they are, will pay the price. . . Whoever it is, it is a matter of time." It was with a feeling of horror that the world listened to the president telling the world after the death in police custody of Kizito Mihigo that he is not a singer. It was with a feeling of dread and deep anguish that the family of Assinapol Rwigara pleaded with the police to allow them access to him as he struggled within the wreckage of his car in that 4th of February 2015 road accident from which the police took him alive only to announce that he had died of his injuries.

Leaders like Karegeya and Mihigo are the moderate forces in Rwanda. Eliminating them leaves a vacuum that extremists from both sides are only too glad to fill. Looked at against the background of the exile and the return of the current powerholders in Rwanda, the current Rwandan exiles are making baby steps. Eventually they will grow and walk and start to run for the hunger for the return; in this world there is nothing more powerful than this in the mind of the exile. This hunger for the return home is a force that the current powerholders in Rwanda know well. Perhaps they no longer understand the power that sustained them for decades as despised exiles and refugees until the call

of home pulled them back into the fray in Rwanda.

The sustainable long-term route for all Rwandans can only be the route of dialogue that is inclusive of all sectors of Rwandan society, whether they are living inside or outside Rwanda. Rwanda cannot survive yet another cataclysm, even though the powerholders in Kigali are ever orchestrating “incidents” in neighbouring countries with the aim of provoking yet another major regional conflagration. The current leadership of Rwanda came to power through a catastrophic regional crisis in the Great Lakes region triggered by an apocalyptic implosion in Rwanda. As a result of this origin, the current leaders in Rwanda are fatally wedded to the idea that in a crisis they thrive, that in a crisis they are the masters of the strategic long game. Hence the eagerness from Kigali for continual crises in the Great Lakes Region. Hence the periodic irruption of lawless groups like the M23 Movement in Eastern Congo. What the leaders in Kigali have not learnt is that the Great Lakes Region has learnt the bitter lesson that the Rwandan strongmen have been teaching it.

What can the United Nations tell Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and the Hutus and the Twa who were killed because they opposed the genocide?

Rwanda will continue to engineer provocations in the region, but as the M23 experience showed, the region is learning how to call the RPF’s bluff. It has been a bitter lesson learnt the hard way – but the region must not forget this lesson. The RPF adventurists must be mustered through a combination of regional containment and the nurturing of a viable alternative culture within Rwanda, a culture of inclusiveness and non-supremacist acceptance of all Rwandans. The hard lesson that Rwanda has taught the Great Lakes region is that East and Central Africa cannot survive another Rwandan Apocalypse. It is urgent that Africans and the international community intervene in Rwanda to support and sustain the legitimate opposition for that is the only sustainable route out for Rwanda. This is why the RPF’s policy of rendition or assassinations of its opponents abroad—which is a policy that the RPF has executed right from the beginning of its accession to power in 1994 (Seth Sendashonga’s assassination in 1998 as the noted tragic case example)—is an unlawful policy that the international community must counter and contain.

Containing Rwanda’s external aggression and adventurism is a cost effective alternative to reacting to another regional cataclysm ignited by Rwanda. External aggression, renditions and assassinations abroad, this part of Rwanda’s foreign policy must be challenged by the international community.

As a refugee fleeing persecution in Rwanda, the United Nations failed to protect Seth Sendashonga in Nairobi in 1998. Looking back one can see that Seth Sendashonga’s assassination in Nairobi was a tragic missed opportunity for all. The RPF’s self-justifying reaction to the death of Seth Sendashonga set the stage for all the subsequent assassinations abroad. There is a terrible poignancy to the fate of Seth Sendashonga after he fell out with the RPF powerholders. Had the international community challenged the assassination of Seth Sendashonga more aggressively, more collectively, the assassinations that followed that of Seth Sendashonga would have been harder to execute for the RPF powerholders. The indifference to Seth Sendashonga’s fate signalled to the RPF that it could get away with murder but the international community will find that one day it will have to make a start somewhere; at some point, the international community will have to draw a red line against the RPF’s policy of assassinations inside Rwanda and abroad. This is why the disappearance of Cassien Ntamuhanga must be a red line for all peoples inside and outside Rwanda. Through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the international community has the structure in place to challenge these forced disappearances and assassinations.

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Of all the nations that have a moral obligation towards Cassien Ntamuhanga, Belgium—which lost ten soldiers through savage torture while they were protecting Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana—deserves to take centre stage in the pursuit of justice for Cassien Ntamuhanga. Belgium spent decades in the pursuit of justice for its valiant soldiers who met a tragic fate while protecting Premier Agathe Uwilingiyimana after Rwanda abandoned her. The deaths of these Belgian soldiers was a tragedy of its own kind; they were the only ones who died while defending Rwandans. Belgium owes these valiant soldiers the honour of continued engagement with Rwanda in order to nurture the culture of respect for the worth of the individual.

Throughout the centuries of persecution in exile, Israel has always found one or two who would with honour stand with the House of Israel. Out of a profound gratitude for the courageous ones who have succoured Israel in Exile, Israel designated a special honour for them by designating them “the Righteous Among the Nations”. One hopes that one day, in the not too distant future, Rwanda too may enrol these courageous Belgian soldiers and recognize them as “The Righteous Among the Nations” who have succoured Rwandans when they have suffered persecution in Rwanda or, like Cassien Ntamuhanga, abroad.

Above all others, however, it is the United Kingdom which has both the moral and the strategic imperatives to intervene to thwart this policy of assassinations both inside and outside Rwanda that is a documented continual breach of international norms by the RPF powerholders. Through targeted sanctions against the leaders who bear direct responsibility for this murderous policy, the Rwandan state must be made to realise the high cost of assassinations and political repression of the legitimate opposition. Only through such targeted sanctions will the Rwanda government realise the very high cost that comes with extra-judicial killings in Rwanda and abroad. The disappearance of Cassien Ntamuhanga can so easily turn into the death of yet another Rwandan in police custody. Cassien Ntamuhanga deserves better than the indifferent silence with which Rwanda has greeted his disappearance. Rwanda knows the whereabouts of Cassien Ntamuhanga. Rwanda must be compelled to produce Cassien Ntamuhanga in public, safe and well—as safe and as well as he was on that 23rd May 2021 when he was arrested in Inhaca by that combined force of officers in Mozambique police uniform, the SERNIC and Kinyarwanda speaking strangers.

And you all know, security is mortals' chiefest enemy - (Act III Scene V, Macbeth)

There is a deeper lesson here as well on Rwanda's search for that elusive will-o'-the-wisp called security. Just as Macbeth, in a vain bid to assure his own security in power, killed all opponents and drove the rest into exile, so has president Kagame killed opponents and driven the rest into a terrible exile in order to assure his own hold on power. Yet, as the Weird Sisters warned Macbeth, security is mortal's chiefest enemy. The driving ambition for security is what drove all African dictators to embrace murder and repression. It is the drive, the spiritual hunger in the soul, which drove Macbeth one more time to make a Faustian bargain with “the instruments of darkness”. Yet when Macbeth is shown the vision that his heart demands that the three Weird Sisters show him, his heart breaks at what he sees: the Weird Sisters show Macbeth a vision of a long line of Kings of Scotland ruling far into the centuries to come—all descended from the bloodline of his hated slain enemy, Banquo.

A basic principle in jurisprudence is that the ruler must make laws that he would be happy to see executed, implemented by his own worst enemy.

The deeper lesson is that in the longer term the violent powerholders in Rwanda have no future in the Rwanda to come. Rwanda will survive its current turmoil just as it survived its descent into the abyss in the Apocalypse, the name that the genocidaires called their genocidal attempt to wipe out the Tutsi race, their Hutu opponents, and the Ba'Twa. In the reckoning with the Rwanda genocide, the world always forgets the near annihilation of the precarious Ba'Twa. And therein is fate's trump—always. For the fact that the Ba'Twa lost ten thousand of their number from a population of merely thirty thousand in 1994 speaks of the catastrophe staring all Rwanda in the face in future should Rwanda fail to reckon with the genocide which overtook the Ba'Twa.

The future of Rwanda is out of the hands of Rwanda's current powerholders. Try as they might, rewrite constitutions as they have, jail opponents at home and assassinate critics abroad as they have, the ruling powerholders in Rwanda are helpless against the tide of time which Macbeth saw only as one bloody red tide. Rwanda will not descend into another apocalypse. Rwanda will not descend into yet another genocide—even though that is the card that the current powerholders in Rwanda are holding over a cowed and silent Rwanda. For feared dictator Macbeth, when it was that mysterious time for the great Birnam Wood to move against high Dunsinane, it seemed impossibly against the laws of physics. And yet. And yet the King still felt that he had a trump card up his sleeve that he could play: the prophecy of the Weird Sisters that none of woman born could kill or dethrone Macbeth.

This is the constant refrain that autocratic African Renaissance leaders always repeat to their countrymen, that without them their countries would have sunk into the abyss never to rise again. Against their silent African subjects, these enlightened African despots always brandish their impeccable credentials. It is no accident that in the military academies of the world, current and future elites study Paul Kagame's military campaigns under the admiring rubric of "the world's greatest living general". At West Point, Sandhurst, Saint Cyr and points East, General Kagame's campaigns are the high point of graduate and postgraduate work in military school. Yet the world's greatest living General forgot the caution which fate speaks to him above. It is a warning arising from an instinctive people's touch that General Rwigyema worked like a charm: national strategy is more than winning battles as Von Clausewitz repeatedly insists. Strategy is what you do with the battle, and that means hour two after you have defeated your opponent. General Rwigyema knew how to win over defeated enemies to the cause of nation building.

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The Rwanda now celebrated at Saint Cyr is an armed camp where any spark can set alight the powder keg. There is no way in which Rwanda can be viable before President Juvenal Habyarimana's death is thoroughly investigated in public in Rwanda and a reckoning made. There is no way that Rwanda will know peace while the remains of President Habyarimana languish abroad. The president is all of a piece with the national catastrophe of Rwanda—but in the name of all that is sacred, President Habyarimana was the President of Rwanda. He was the President. The failure to bring closure for Rwanda on the death of the president has plunged Rwanda into deeper trauma. Hence the quick resort to assassinations. Hence the quick resort to violence—it is the enigmatic dark presence of the president demanding an accounting by all Rwandans. Failing to account for the president's death only legitimizes the next set of genocidaires intent on seizing power in Rwanda. Even as the Renaissance Men are fêted abroad, back home in Rwanda they are buying up whole armouries for the genocidaires waiting in the darkened corners of Rwanda's psyche.

As they are fêted abroad, back home in Rwanda, back home in Africa, this has created an aura of

invincibility around these African Renaissance statesmen. This admiration on the world stage directly translates into oracular infallibility at home. He is the president, he is the one the world is lauding, feting, not some dead name in a long ago battlefield, not some forbidden name whose charred remains came down on a fiery aeroplane. He is the one. He, not some singer because He is not a singer. He, not some obscure journalist who fled abroad. He. Because of their stature on the world stage, these African statesmen have the cachet of Macbeth; none of woman born shall ever harm them. These African Renaissance leaders are protected by the best security in the world, the best health care that money can buy, the best education from the most prestigious universities and academies in the world. These leaders are African Immortals but the people they rule with an iron fist can disappear without trace, without any consequence to the leaders. As Cassien Ntamuhanga has disappeared without any consequences for the rulers in Rwanda and in Mozambique.

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That aura of invincibility that surrounds African Renaissance leaders is even more palpable around these Rwandan powerholders—but with a fateful twist. The current Rwandan leaders are wrapped in the special aura of the Rwanda genocide even as the genocide itself has become contested ground between the Rwandan government and the survivors. Survivors are especially distressed at the way in which the genocide has become a strategic political tool of the government: the insistence by the government that the remains of the genocide dead must remain on continuous display even when survivors want the remains of their loved ones back so that the survivors can accord their dead honoured burial. Insidiously, these survivors have themselves found the charge of genocide denial being levelled against them. As a journalist, Cassien Ntamuhanga found himself grappling with this deeply traumatic dilemma. Those at Radio Amazing Grace where Cassien Ntamuhanga once worked have not hesitated to condemn the Rwandan government on this matter on the charge of “heathen practices”. On this contested ground, even the remains of the dead of the genocide have now been weaponized. A deeply Christian man, Cassien Ntamuhanga grappled with this matter to the day he fled Rwanda. To grapple with this extremely sensitive matter does not take away from the historic role that the RPF played in saving the remnant of the Tutsis and rescuing Hutus from the grip of the genocidal ideology of the Habyarimana MRND government.

Looked at against the background of the exile and the return of the current powerholders in Rwanda, the current Rwandan exiles are making baby steps.

When it comes to this matter, the deep and abiding distress and moral dilemma of the Rwandan survivors of the genocide is palpable. The treatment of the remains of the victims of the genocide is an explosive matter in Rwanda and it has split families down the middle—just like the genocide itself tore families apart. With sensitivity and compassion, Cassien Ntamuhanga had struggled with this matter for years as a survivor and as a journalist on the frontline of reportage in post-genocide Rwanda. It was a poignant turn of events for Cassien Ntamuhanga when his activism on behalf of survivors and memorialising the dead was turned by the state into a charge of destabilizing Rwanda, terrorism, inciting disaffection against the government of Rwanda and for genocide denial. It is ironic that a man who had grappled deeply and sensitively with the issue of the remains of the genocide dead should now find himself facing these charges.

In raising the charge of genocide denial against Cassien Ntamuhanga the state had driven a burning sword right into the heart of the survivors' activism. And Cassien Ntamuhanga was now facing the

spurious charge of genocide denial. In a Rwanda where authority is sacrosanct, there was going to be no questioning of the charge of genocide denier against Cassien Ntamuhanga. In a deeply hierarchical society where respect for authority is deeply ingrained, the fact of the charge of genocide denial against Cassien Ntamuhanga was itself enough to sow the seeds of doubt even among those who had stood side by side with him in the long years of fighting for the memories of the genocide dead. For Kizito Mihigo this matter would lead directly to his death when he composed *Igisobanuro cy'Urupfu*, his meditation on the meaning of the deaths of Rwandans in the genocide and in its apocalyptic aftermath in Congo ex-Zaire. For Cassien Ntamuhanga it would lead to a 25-year prison sentence until his escape from prison and from Rwanda. Cassien Ntamuhanga's activism would lead, in absentia, to another 25-year prison sentence in 2021.

Their bodies turned into a fiercely contested battleground, the remains of the victims of the Rwanda Genocide had been weaponised. Speak of honoured burial at your peril: genocide denier. The dead will not know peace while the leadership still has need of them: the world must not be left to forget, never mind the fact that memory cannot be commanded at gunpoint. Such talk is genocide denial, a high crime in this Rwanda. Cassien Ntamuhanga is a victim of this existential fight for the right to craft and tell the official narrative of who is a Rwandan and what colours the national team wears. Contested ground: even all of Kizito Mihigo's songs were banned and banished from Rwanda's airwaves. Cassien Ntamuhanga found his way out of Rwanda with state agents hot on his trail. Now he has joined the ranks of "the disappeared" in Rwanda. May Cassien Ntamuhanga's family reach him soon. And when his family finds him, may Cassien Ntamuhanga be found safe and well.

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