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Translated 1992 speech of Leon Mugesera



On November 22, 1992, Leon Mugesera made what has come to be considered the rally call for genocide against Tutsis. The speech was made a ruling party conference of the MRND party. As he fights to stay in Canada, we bring you an English version as translated by renowned linguist Prof Thomas KAMANZI (RIP) who did the translation on behalf of the Canadian High Court. Read the full speech below:

Long life to our movement . . .

Long life to President Habyarimana . . .

Long life to ourselves, the militants of the movement at this meeting.

[1] Militants of our movement, as we are all met here, I think you will understand the meaning of the word I will say to you. I will talk to you on only four points. Recently, I told you that we rejected contempt. We are still rejecting it. I will not go back over that.

[2] When I consider the huge crowd of us all met here, it is clear that I should omit speaking to you about the first point for discussion, as I was going to tell you to beware of kicks by the dying M.D.R. That is the first point. The second point on which I would like us to exchange ideas is that we should not allow ourselves to be invaded, whether here where we are or inside the country. That is the second point. The third point I would like to discuss with you is also an important point, namely the way we should act so as to protect ourselves against traitors and those who would like to harm us. I would like to end on the way in which we must act.

View video of the 1992 speech

[3] The first point I would like to submit to you, therefore, is this important point I would like to draw to your attention. As M.D.R., P.L., F.P.R. and the famous party known as P.S.D. and even the P.D.C. are very busy nowadays, you should know what they are doing, and they are busy trying to injure the President of the Republic, namely, the President of our movement, but they will not succeed. They are working against us, the militants: you should know the reason why all this is happening: in fact, when someone is going to die, it is because he is already ill!

[4] The thief Twagiramungu appeared on the radio as party president, and he had asked to do so, so he could speak against the C.D.R. However, the latter struck him down. After he was struck down, in all taxis everywhere in Kigali, militants of the M.D.R., P.S.D. and accomplices of the Inyenzi were profoundly humiliated, so they were almost dead! Even Twagiramungu himself completely disappeared. He did not even show up at the office where he was working! I assure you that this man's party is covered with shame: everyone was afraid and they nearly died!

[5] So, since this party and those who share its views are accomplices of the Inyenzi, one of them named Murego on arrival in Kibungo stood up to say [TRANSLATION] "We are descended from Bahutus and are in fact Bahutus". The reply to him was [TRANSLATION] "Can you lose your brothers by death! Tell us, who do you get these statements about Bahutus from?" They were so angry they nearly died!

[6] That was when the Prime Minister named, they say, I don't know whether I should say Nsengashitani (I beg Satan) or (Nseng) Iyaremye (I beg the Creator), headed for Cyangugu to prevent the Bahutus defending themselves against the Batutsis who were laying mines against them. You heard this on the radio. Then we laughed at him, you heard him yourselves, and he lost his head, he and all the militants in his party, and those of the other parties who shared his views. This is when these people had just suffered such a reverse . . . you yourselves heard that the president of our party, His Excellency Major-General Habyarimana Juvénal, spoke when he arrived in Ruhengeri. The "Invincible" put himself solemnly forward, while the others disappeared underground! In their

excitement, these people were nearly dead from excitement, as they learned that everyone, including even those who were claiming to be from other parties, were leaving them to come back to our party, as a result of our leader's speech.

[7] Their kicks would threaten the most sensible person. Nevertheless, in view of our numbers, I realize there are so many of us that they could not find where to give the kicks: they are wasting their time!

[8] That is the first point. The M.D.R. and the parties who share its views are collapsing. Avoid their kicks. As I noted, you will not even have a scratch!

[9] The second point I have decided to discuss with you is that you should not let yourselves be invaded. At all costs, you will leave here taking these words with you, that you should not let yourselves be invaded. Tell me, if you as a man, a mother or father, who are here, if someone comes one day to move into your yard and defecate there, will you really allow him to come again? It is out of the question. You should know that the first important thing . . . you have seen our brothers from Gitarama here. Their flags – I distributed them when I was working at our party's headquarters. People flew them everywhere in Gitarama.

But when you come from Kigali, and you continue on into Kibilira, there are no more M.R.N.D. flags to be seen: they have been taken down! In any case, you understand yourselves, the priests have taught us good things: our movement is also a movement for peace. However, we have to know that, for our peace, there is no way to have it but to defend ourselves. Some have quoted the following saying: [TRANSLATION] "Those who seek peace always make ready for war".

Thus, in our prefecture of Gisenyi, this is the fourth or fifth time I am speaking about it, there are those who have acted first. It says in the Gospel that if someone strikes you on one cheek, you should turn the other cheek. I tell you that the Gospel has changed in our movement: if someone strikes you on one cheek, you hit them twice on one cheek and they collapse on the ground and will never be able to recover! So here, never again will what they call their flag, what they call their cap, even what they call their militant, come to our soil to speak: I mean throughout Gisenyi, from one end to the other!

[10] (A proverb) says: [TRANSLATION] "Hyenas eat others, but when you go to eat them they are bitter"! They should know that one man is as good as another, our yard (party) will not let itself be invaded either. There is no question of allowing ourselves to be invaded, let me tell you. There is also something else I would like to talk to you about, concerning "not being invaded", and which you must reject, as these are dreadful things. Our elder Munyandamutsa has just told you what the situation is in the following words: [TRANSLATION] "Our inspectors, currently 59 throughout the country, have just been driven out. In our prefecture of Gisenyi there are eight. Tell me, dear parents gathered here, have you ever seen, I do not know if she is still a mother, have you ever seen this woman who heads the Ministry of Education, come herself to find out if your children have left the house to go and study or go back to school? Have you not heard that she said that from now on no one will go back to school? – and now she is attacking teachers! I wanted to draw to your attention that she called them to Kigali to tell them that she never wanted to hear anyone say again that an education inspector had joined a political party.

They answered: "First leave your party, because you yourself are a Minister and you are in a political party, and then we will follow your example". She is still there! You have also heard on the radio that nowadays she is even insulting our President! Have you ever heard a mother insulting people in public? So what I would like to tell you here, and this is the truth, there is no doubt, to say it would be this or that, there might be among them people who have behaved flippantly. Have you heard that they are persecuted for membership in the M.R.N.D.? They are persecuted for membership in the M.R.N.D. Frankly, will you allow them to invade us to take the M.R.N.D. away from us and to take our men?

[11] I am asking you to take two very important actions. The first is to write to this shameless woman who is issuing insults publicly and on the airwaves of our radio to all Rwandans. I want you to write her to tell her that these teachers, who are ours, are irreproachable in their conduct and standards, and that they are looking after our children with care; these teachers must continue to educate our children and she must mend her ways. That is the first action I am asking you to take. Then, you would all sign together: paper will not be wanting. If you wait a few days and get no reply, only about

seven days, as you will send the letter to someone who will take it to its destination, so he will know she has received it, if seven days go by without a reply, and she takes the liberty of arranging for someone else to replace the existing inspectors, you can be sure, if she thinks there is anyone who will come to replace them (the inspectors), for anyone who comes . . . the place where the Minister is from is the place known as Nyaruhengeri, at the border with Burundi, (exactly) at Butari, you will ask this man to get moving, with his travelling provisions on his head, and be inspector at Nyaruhengeri.

[12] Let everyone whom she has appointed be there, let them go to Nyaruhengeri to look after the education of her children. As for ours, they will continue to be educated by our own people. This is another important point on which we must take decisions: we cannot let ourselves be invaded: this is forbidden!

[13] Something else which may be called [TRANSLATION] "not allowing ourselves to be invaded" in the country, you know people they call "Inyenzis" (cockroaches), no longer call them "Inkotanyi" (tough fighters), as they are actually "Inyenzis". These people called Inyenzis are now on their way to attack us.

[14] Major-General Habyarimana Juvénal, helped by Colonel Serubuga, whom you have seen here, and who was his assistant in the army at the time we were attacked, have (both) got up and gone to work. They have driven back the "Inyenzis" at the border, where they had arrived. Here again, I will make you laugh! In the meantime these people had arrived who were seeking power. After getting it, they headed for Brussels. On arrival in Brussels, note that this was the M.D.R., P.L. and P.S.D., they agreed to deliver the Byumba prefectorate at any cost. That was the first thing. They planned together to discourage our soldiers at any cost. You have heard what the Prime Minister said in person. He said they (the soldiers) were going down to the marshes (to farm) when the war was at its height! It was at that point that people who had low morale abandoned their positions and the "Inyenzis" occupied them.

The Inyenzis descended on Byumba and they (the government soldiers) ransacked the shops of our merchants in Byumba, Ruhengeri and Gisenyi. The government will have to compensate them as it had created this situation. It was not one of our merchants (who created it), as they were not even asking for credit! Why credit! So those are the people who pushed us into allowing ourselves to be invaded. The punishment for such people is nothing but: [TRANSLATION] "Any person who demoralizes the country's armed forces on the front will be liable to the death penalty". That is prescribed by law. Why would such a person not be killed? Nsengiyaremye must be taken to court and sentenced. The law is there and it is in writing. He must be sentenced to death, as it states. Do not be frightened by the fact that he is Prime Minister. You have recently heard it said on the radio that even French Ministers can sometimes be taken to court! Any person who gives up any part of the national territory, even the smallest piece, in wartime will be liable to death. Twagiramungu said it on the radio and the C.D.R. dealt with him on the radio. The militants in his (party) then lost their heads – can you believe that? I would draw to your attention the fact that this man who gave up Byumba on the radio while all of us Rwandans, and all foreign countries, were listening to him, this man will suffer death. It is in writing: ask the judges, they will show you where it is, I am not lying to you! Any person who gives up even the smallest piece of Rwanda will be liable to the death penalty; so what is this individual waiting for?

[15] You know what it is, dear friends, "not letting ourselves be invaded", or you know it. You know there are "Inyenzis" in the country who have taken the opportunity of sending their children to the front, to go and help the "Inkotanyis". That is something you intend to speak about yourselves. You know that yesterday I came back from Nshili in Gikongoro at the Burundi border, travelling through Butare. Everywhere people told me of the number of young people who had gone. They said to me [TRANSLATION] "Where they are going, and who is taking them . . . why are they are not arrested as well as their families?" So I will tell you now, it is written in the law, in the book of the Penal Code: [TRANSLATION] "Every person who recruits soldiers by seeking them in the population, seeking young persons everywhere whom they will give to the foreign armed forces attacking the Republic, shall be liable to death". It is in writing.

[16] Why do they not arrest these parents who have sent away their children and why do they not exterminate them? Why do they not arrest the people taking them away and why do they not exterminate all of them? Are we really waiting till they come to exterminate us?

[17] I should like to tell you that we are now asking that these people be placed on a list and be taken to court to be tried in our presence. If they (the judges) refuse, it is written in the Constitution that "ubutabera buberabaturage". In English, this means that [TRANSLATION] "JUSTICE IS RENDERED IN THE PEOPLE'S NAME". If justice therefore is no longer serving the people, as written in our Constitution which we voted for ourselves, this means that at that point we who also make up the population whom it is supposed to serve, we must do something ourselves to exterminate this rabble. I tell you in all truth, as it says in the Gospel, "When you allow a serpent biting you to remain attached to you with your agreement, you are the one who will suffer".

[18] I have to tell you that a day and a night ago – I do not know if it is exactly in Kigali, a small group of men armed with pistols entered a cabaret and demanded that cards be shown. They separated the M.D.R. people. You will imagine, those from the P.L. they separated, and even the others who pass for Christians were placed on one side. When an M.R.N.D. member showed his card, he was immediately shot; I am not lying to you, they even tell you on the radio; they shot this man and disappeared into the Kigali marshes to escape, after saying they were "Inkotanyis". So tell me, these young people who acquire our identity cards, then they come back armed with guns on behalf of the "Inyenzis" or their accomplices to shoot us! – I do not think we are going to allow them to shoot us! Let no more local representatives of the M.D.R. live in this commune or in this prefecture, because they are accomplices! The representatives of those parties who collaborate with the "Inyenzis", those who represent them . . . I am telling you, and I am not lying, it is . . . they only want to exterminate us.

They only want to exterminate us: they have no other aim. We must tell them the truth. I am not hiding anything at all from them. That is in fact the aim they are pursuing. I would tell you, therefore, that the representatives of those parties collaborating with the "Inyenzis", namely the M.D.R., P.L., P.S.D., P.D.C. and other splinter groups you run into here and there, who are connected and who are only wandering about, all these parties and their representatives must go to live in Kayanzi with Nsengiyaremye: in that way we will know where the people we are at war with are.

[19] My brothers, militants of our movement, what I am telling you is no joke, I am actually telling you the complete truth, so that if one day someone attacks you with a gun, you will not come to tell us that we who represent the party did not warn you of it! So now, I am telling you so you will know. If anyone sends a child to the "Inyenzis", let him go back with his family and his wife while there is still time, as the time has come when we will also be defending ourselves, so that . . . we will never agree to die because the law refuses to act!

[20] I am telling you that on the day the demonstrations were held, Thursday, they beat our men, who had to take refuge in the church at the bottom of the Rond-Point. These so-called Christians from the P.D.C. pursued them and went into the church to beat them. Others fled into the Centre Culturel Français. I should like to tell you that they began killing them. That is actually what happened! They attacked the homes and killed people. Now, anyone who they hear is a member of the M.R.N.D. is beaten and killed by them; that is how things are. Let these people who represent their parties in our prefecture go and live with the "Inyenzis", we will not allow people living among us to shoot us when they are at our sides!

[21] There is another important point I would like to talk to you about so that we do not go on allowing ourselves to be invaded: you will hear mention of the Arusha discussions. I will not speak about this at length as the representative of the (Movement's) Secretary General will speak about it in greater detail. However, what I will tell you is that the delegates you will hear are in Arusha do not represent Rwanda. They do not represent all of Rwanda, I tell you that as a fact.

The delegates from Rwanda, who are said to be from Rwanda, are led by an "Inyenzi", who is there to discuss with "Inyenzis", as it says in a song you hear from time to time, where it states [TRANSLATION] "He is God born of God". In the same way, they are [TRANSLATION] "Inyenzis born of Inyenzis, who speak for Inyenzis".

As to what they are going to say in Arusha, it is exactly what these "Inyenzi" accomplices living here went to Brussels to say. They are going to work in Arusha so everything would be attributed to Rwanda, while there was nothing not from Brussels that happened there! Even what came from Rwanda did not entirely come from our government: it was a Brussels affair which they put on their heads to take with them to Arusha! So it was one "Inyenzi" dealing with another! As for what they call

"discussions", we are not against discussions. I have to tell you that they do not come from Rwanda: they are "Inyenzis" who conduct discussions with "Inyenzis", and you must know that once and for all! In any case, we will never accept these things which come from there!

[22] Another point I have talked to you about is that we must defend ourselves. I spoke about this briefly. However, I am telling you that we must wake up! Someone whispered in my ear a moment ago that it was not only the parents who must wake up as well as the teachers about the famous problem for inspectors. Even people who do not have children in school should also support them, as they will have one tomorrow or they had one yesterday. Let us all wake up and sign!

[23] The second point I wish to speak to you about is the following: we have nine Ministers in the present government. Just as they rose up to drive out our inspectors, relying on their Ministry, as they rose up to drive out teachers from secondary schools . . . a few days ago, you have heard that the famous woman was going around the schools. She had no other reason for going there but to drive out the inspectors and teachers who were there and who were not in her party. You have heard what happened in Minitrape: it was not just a diversion, they even went after our workers! You have heard what happened at the radio, and the Byumba program that was cancelled. You have heard how all this happened. I have to tell you that we must ask our Ministers that they too, there are people working for their parties and who are in our Ministries . . . For example, you have heard mention of the Militant-Minister Ngirabatware, who is not present here because the country has given him an important mission. I visited his Ministry on Thursday.

There was a little handful of people there, I am not exaggerating because I am in the M.R.N.D., (a handful of) some people from the M.R.N.D., those who were there were exclusively "Inyenzis" belonging to the P.L. and the M.D.R.! Those are the ones who are in the Planning Ministry! You will understand that if this Minister said: [TRANSLATION] "If you touch our inspectors, I will also liquidate yours", what would happen? Our Ministers would also shake the bag so the vermin who were with them would disappear and go into their Ministries.

[24] One important thing which I am asking all those who are working and are in the M.R.N.D.: "Unite!" People in charge of finances, like the others working in that area, let them bring money so we can use it. The same applies to persons working on their own account. The M.N.R.D. have given them money to help them and support them so they can live as men. As they intend to cut our necks, let them bring (money) so [\[1\]](#)!

Remember that the basis of our Movement is the cell, that the basis of our Movement is the sector and the Commune. He (the President) told you that a tree which has branches and leaves but no roots dies. Our roots are fundamentally there. Unite again, of course you are no longer paid, members of our cells, come together. If anyone penetrates a cell, watch him and crush him: if he is an accomplice do not let him get away! Yes, he must no longer get away!

[25] Recently, I told someone who came to brag to me that he belonged to the P.L. – I told him [TRANSLATION] "The mistake we made in 1959, when I was still a child, is to let you leave". I asked him if he had not heard of the story of the Falashas, who returned home to Israel from Ethiopia? He replied that he knew nothing about it! I told him [TRANSLATION] "So don't you know how to listen or read? I am telling you that your home is in Ethiopia, that we will send you by the Nyabarongo so you can get there quickly".

[26] What I am telling you is, we have to rise up, we must really rise up. I will end with an important thing. Yesterday I was in Nshili, you learned that the Barundis slandered us, I went to find out the truth. Before I went there, people told me that I would not come back. That I would die there. I replied [TRANSLATION] "If I die, I will not be the first victim to be sacrificed". In Nshili they fired the mayor who was there before, apparently on the pretext that he was old! – that he began working in 1960! I saw him yesterday, and he was still a young man! – but because he was in the M.N.R.D., he left! They wanted to put in a thief; that didn't work either. When they put in an honest man, they (the public) refused him! Now, this commune known as Nshili is administered by a consultant who also has no idea what to do! At this place called Nshili, we have armed forces of the country who are guarding the border. There are people known as the J.D.R. for the good reason that our national soldiers are disciplined and do not shoot anyone, especially they would not shoot a Rwandan, unless he was an "Inyenzi", these soldiers did not know that everyone in the M.D.R. had become "Inyenzis"! They did not know it! They surrounded them and arrested our police, so that a citizen who was not in our party

personally told me [TRANSLATION] "What I want is for them to hold elections so we can elect a mayor. Otherwise, before he comes, let us provisionally put back the person who was there before because from the state things are in, he will not be able to put people on the right path again".

[27] Dear relations, dear brothers, I would like to say something important to you: elections must be held, we must all vote. As you are now all together here, has anyone scratched anyone else? They talk of security. They say we cannot vote. Are we not going to mass on Sunday? Did you not come here to the meeting? In the M.R.N.D., did you not elect the incumbents at all levels? Even those who say this, did they not do the same thing? Did they not vote? On the pretext they suggest, there is no reason preventing us from voting on security grounds, because those who are going about the country and the troubles which have occurred, it is those who provoke them. That is the word I would say to you: they are all misleading us: even here where we are, we can vote.

[28] Second, they are relying on the war refugees in Byumba. I should tell you that no one went to ask those people if they did not want to vote. They told me personally that they previously had lazy counsellors, that even some of their mayors were lazy. Since the Ministry which gives them what they live on is supervised by an "Inkotanyi", or rather by the "Inyenzi" Lando, he chose people known as "Inyenzis" and their accomplices who are in this country, and gave them the job of taking food supplies to those people. Instead of taking it to them there, they sold it so they could buy ammunition which they gave to the "Inyenzis" who have been shooting us! I should tell you that they said [TRANSLATION] "They shoot us from behind and you shoot us from in front by sending us this rabble to bring us food supplies". I had no answer to give them, and they went on [TRANSLATION] "What we want, they said, is that from ourselves, we can elect incumbents, advisors, cell leaders, a mayor; we can know he is with us here in the camp, he protects us, he gets us food supplies". You will understand that what I was told by these men and women who fled in such circumstances as you hear about from time to time, on all sides, was that they also wanted elections: the whole country wants elections so that they will be led by good people as was always the case. Believe me, what we should all do, that is what we should do, we should call for elections. So in order to conclude, I would remind you of all the important things I have just spoken to you about: the most essential is that we should not allow ourselves to be invaded, lest the very persons who are collapsing take away some of you. Do not be afraid, know that anyone whose neck you do not cut is the one who will cut your neck. Let me tell you, these people should begin leaving while there is still time and go and live with their people, or even go to the "Inyenzis", instead of living among us and keeping their guns, so that when we are asleep they can shoot us. Let them pack their bags, let them get going, so that no one will return here to talk and no one will bring scraps claiming to be flags!

[29] Another important point is that we must all rise, we must rise as one man . . . if anyone touches one of ours, he must find nowhere to go. Our inspectors are going nowhere. Those whom they have placed will set out for Nyaruhengeri, to Minister Agathe's home, to look after the education of her children! Let her keep them! I will end with one important thing: elections. Thank you for listening to me and I also thank you for your courage, in your arms and in your hearts. I know you are men, you are young women, fathers and mothers of families, who will not allow yourselves to be invaded, who will reject contempt.

May your lives be long!

Long life to President Habyarimana . . .

Long life and prosperity to you . . .