# **CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS APRIL 1994-JANUARY 1996**

The main purpose of this chronology is to help the reader by reconstructing MSF's actions and public statements in regional and international news reports of the period. It is intended as a tool for this specific document, and not as an academic reference.

International	Rwanda	MSF
1994	<b>Beginning April 6</b> Genocide launched against Rwandan	

genocide also killed.

Tutsis; Rwandan Hutus opposed to the

#### May 1

Human Rights Watch publishes **report** on Rwandan genocide. One section addresses "abuses by the Rwandan Patriotic Front" (RPF).

#### May 23

Amnesty International publishes **report** on the genocide. One section addresses "deliberate and arbitrary murders carried out by the RPF and its supporters."

#### June 18

France announces its intention to address the UN Security Council regarding a 'targeted military intervention for humanitarian ends in Rwanda, codenamed 'Operation Turquoise', with or without the support of other countries.

#### June 22

Security Council Resolution 929 authorizes "Operation Turquoise" on the basis of Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter: "protection of civilian populations and humanitarian aid."

#### June 23-early July

Under precarious conditions, RPF carries out forced transfer of 50,000-100,000 residents of the Gitarama-Butare region to the Bugesera.

#### May

MSF Belgium initiates program in Byumba (RPF zone in northeastern Rwanda) – team witnesses RPF exerting heavy pressure on the population.

#### June 3

MSF Belgium opens program in Nyamata (Bugesera).

#### June 6

MSF Holland initiates program based in Kigali's King Faisal hospital to treat prisoners.

#### June 17

MSF France Press Conference: "You can't stop genocide with doctors". Press packet includes statements from Burundian refugees in Rwanda about abuses committed by RPF soldiers.

#### June 23-early July 1994

MSF asked to provide medical assistance during population transfer but RPF hinders activities – MSF Belgium communications director is there with the team.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
1994			June 24 MSF Belgium Press Release "35,000 Civilians Evacuated After Tension Increases South of Gitarama." June 28 MSF Belgium begins work with displaced persons at Rilima hospital.
			<b>July 1</b> <b>MSF Belgium Press Release:</b> "Rwanda: Massive Population Displacement to Bugesera."

#### July 3

U.N. authorizes France to establish "safe humanitarian zone" in southwestern Rwanda (Cyangugu, Gikongoro, Kibuye).

#### July 4

RPF takes Kigali and Butare - Hutus begin massive exodus, heading to northwestern Rwanda (Ruhengeri, Gysenyi) where interim government is located.

#### July 6

Rwandan national unity government formed.

#### July 4-10

MSF Belgium, France and Holland conduct evaluation mission in the "Zone Turquoise," around Gikongoro: MSF France and Holland agree to joint program; MSF Holland later withdraws.

#### July 7

Sitrep from MSF Belgium coordinator: RPF neglects the population and manipulates humanitarian organizations.

#### July 9

"Report on RPF incidents" delivered to MSF Belgium headquarters: MSF Belgium coordinator summarizes RPF abuses.

## July 11

Article by MSF Belgium communications director in *Le Soir* opposes Operation Turquoise.

#### July 12

MSF France launches program in southwestern Rwanda (Zone Turquoise).

#### July 14

RPF takes Ruhengeri. Interim Rwandan government flees to Zone Turquoise.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
1994		<b>July 14-17</b> 500,000-800,000 Rwandans settle near Goma, Zaire.	July 19 MSF Belgium Press Conference and Press Release: "MSF Belgium Demands the Refugees' Return to Rwanda" – MSF Holland takes the same position.
		<b>July 22</b> Rwandan government calls on refugees to return: "Those who did not participate in the massacres have nothing to fear."	
			<b>July 29 and 30</b> RPA lays siege to Rilima hospital seeking to arrest Hutu staff (former ICRC) — in Kampala, MSF Belgium coordinator notifies Dutch foreign minister about RPF abuses.
			<b>Early August</b> Prisoners disappear from MSF Holland program at King Faisal hospital in Kigali.
			August 4 MSF Press Conference in Goma: President of MSF France says he's afraid that people repatriating to Rwanda are being abused but has no proof; states the refugees are too weak and the risks too great for them to return to Rwanda.
		August 5 Operation Turquoise spokesperson reports Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) abuses against displaced persons.	
		<b>August 6</b> Rwandan defense minister denies statements by Operation Turquoise spokesperson.	
			August 10 MSF Belgium Press Conference update on operations and finances, "call for human rights monitoring in Rwanda," - decision of international board of directors to lobby for more human rights observers in Rwanda and to send MSF volunteers to gather information on human rights violations in Rwanda,

Zaire and Tanzania.

Article by MSF Belgium president

August 11

	International	Rwanda	MSF
1994	return of refugees and displaced persons to Rwanda - UNHCR cancels mass return scheduled for 16 August .	<b>August 13</b> Hutus flee Zone Turquoise for Bukavu following announcement that French troops will leave Zone Turquoise.	appears in <i>Le Soir</i> (Belgium): appeal to human rights organizations.
	August 17 Statements by Burundian refugees victimized by RPF abuses published in <i>Le Monde</i> (France).		
			August 19 MSF Belgium and MSF France Press Releases: "French Troops Depart Rwanda, Leaving Chaos in Their Wake."
			August 20-September 5 MSF's legal advisor in Rwanda — report on the catastrophic state of the legal system.
		<b>August 21</b> Last French soldiers leave the Zone Turquoise.	
		<b>August 22</b> Rwandan interior minister admits in the press that acts of revenge and disappearances are continuing.	
		<b>September 5</b> RPF begins deploying 2,000 troops in cities of Gikongoro, Kibuye and Cyangugu.	
	<b>September 7</b> Publication of Human Rights Watch <b>report</b> on serious human rights violations by RPF troops during June and July. Humanitarian organizations tell the newspaper <i>Le Monde</i> that these actions "probably" occurred but prefer to remain silent to protect their programs in Rwanda — first descriptions of prison conditions in international press.		<b>September 7</b> ICRC transfers first five prisoners from Gitarama prison to the Kabgayi hospital where MSF France is working.
	<b>September 12</b> In Brussels, Faustin Twagiramungu,		
	former Rwandan Prime minister, says that conditions required for refugees to return to Rwanda are "far from being satisfied."		

## Rwanda

MSF

## 1994 September 16-17

According to UNAMIR, there are more than 2 million internally-displaced people inside Rwanda.

#### September 23

UNHCR announces it is not encouraging Rwandan refugees to return home "based on reports of violence being carried out there" (Gersony report, not distributed) – U.N. Secretary-general requests further investigation.

## September 24

UNAMIR denies having information regarding killings committed by APR soldiers.

#### September 27

U.N. Secretary-General calls for halt to publication of information regarding risks facing refugees returning to Rwanda.

## October 3, 1994

U.N. Security Council adopts **report** from the U.N. commission establishing that genocide was committed against Rwandan Tutsis - discussion in conjunction with the General Assembly on information in the Gersony report regarding RPF massacres. September 24 UNAMIR-supervised

UNAMIR-supervised Operation Homeward begins repatriation of internally displaced persons from Gikongoro to their communes.

#### **Early October**

Former MSF Belgium coordinator in Rwanda delivers detailed **report** on RPF abuses he witnessed in Byumba and Bugesera between May and September 1994 to the Dutch foreign minister.

#### October 6

Rwandan authorities take total control of the former "safe humanitarian zone" in southwestern Rwanda - When questioned by UN commission on possible RPF massacres, Rwandan authorities refer to individual, uncontrolled acts of revenge -Rwandan president calls for international tribunal to try crimes against humanity.

#### **1994** October 24

UNHCR, Zaire and Rwanda sign agreement on refugee repatriation.

#### October 28

Rwandan government calls for limiting jurisdiction of an international tribunal on genocide and war crimes to acts prior to the RPF's coming to power in July, thus excluding war crimes committed subsequently by the new regime.

#### **Early November**

'Concerns about Rwanda in October 1994' **working paper** by Belgian researcher Filip Reyntjens, back from Rwanda.

#### November 8

U.N. Security Council passes Resolution 955 creating international criminal tribunal for Rwanda.

#### November 10 and 11

RPA soldiers open fire on the Musange refugee camp (north of Gikongoro) leaving 14 dead and seven wounded.

Rwanda

#### December 9

U.N. asks Rwandan government to suspend camp closure operations and authorize first-aid stations.

#### **December 9**

The Gikongoro prefect announces that Rukondo, Cyanika and Kibeho camps to be closed.

#### December 13 and 14

RPA and UNAMIR undertake "Operation Hope" (leaders arrested and weapons confiscated) in Kibeho and Ndago camps.

#### **December 18**

Rwandan government announces it will give up plan to close camps in the former "safe humanitarian zone".

## Mid-October:

**Articles** in the French press by MSF members criticize U.N.'s lack of resolution, without mention of RPF violence.

#### October 28

Information on abuses by the new Rwandan regime reported to MSF France board of directors by an administrator returned from Rwanda; discussion of MSF's dilemma--"trapped in the framework of genocide."

#### November 10

**Distribution of MSF Holland report**, "Breaking the Cycle," describing the situation in Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania.

#### November 14

MSF International, MSF U.S. and MSF Great Britain Press Release: MSF withdraws from Rwandan refugee camps in Bukavu, south of Kivu (Zaire).

#### December 6

RPA carries out forced closure of Kaduha displaced persons camp (Gikongoro region) in full view of MSF France team — displaced persons flee to Kibeho camp.

#### December

MSF conducts **survey** in the camps with alarming results — returning refugees face arrest, torture, abuse and killings.

#### **Mid-December**

MSF Belgium wants to take over medical care from ICRC in Kigali and Butare prisons; debates the issue with MSF France. 137

## MSF

International	Rwanda	MSF	
1994	<b>December 30</b> Rwandan government suspends ACF activities throughout Rwanda.		
1995		January 6 and 7 MSF France doctor conducts forensic examination after RPA attacks Buzanze camp. January 30-February 7 MSF legal advisor in Rwanda - MSF France team in Gitarama decides to draft a report with data on hospitalized prisoners and mortality rates in prison. Collaboration with ICRC and MSF Belgium. March 9 Debate among operational sections regarding repatriation of refugees and displaced persons to Rwandan communes:	
	<b>First week of April</b> Displaced persons driven by the RPA	MSF Belgium supports informing refugees, MSF France opposes encouraging repatriation. Early April: Report on Gitarama prisoners' state	
	from the region's small camps gather in Kibeho. April 7 Ceremonies in commemoration of the beginning of the genocide.	of health presented to Rwandan authorities.	
		<b>April 11</b> MSF operational sections' programme managers decide to create a position for international information officer in Rwanda.	
		<b>April 13</b> MSF France team finds Rwamiko camp ransacked — 5,000 displaced persons flee to Kibeho.	
	<b>April 14</b> RPA reinforces troops around Kibeho camp.		
		<b>April 15</b> MSF team learns that RPA has ordered that camp is no longer to receive food deliveries.	
		<b>April 18</b> MSF team discovers that Kibeho camp has been ransacked and that displaced	

International	Rwanda	MSF
1995		persons have gathered around UNAMIR buildings, school and hospital — MSF team treats wounded in the hospital — MSF head of mission in Kigali notifies press in Kigali.
	<b>April 19</b> 2,500 RPA soldiers fire on crowd gathered near the Kibeho hospital – RPA cuts off water delivery system.	<b>April 19</b> Humanitarian organizations forbidden to provide aid to thousands of people crammed into small outside area in precarious conditions — MSF and OXFAM logisticians install several water tanks.
	<b>April 20</b> Displaced persons gather in an even smaller area — denied access to water tanks installed by MSF and OXFAM.	April 20 MSF team delayed at checkpoint, RPA hampers team's works — 6 p.m.: on leaving the camp, the team sees soldiers arrive — radio operator hears gunfire — MSF Belgium, MSF France, MSF US and MSF International Press Release: "Médecins Sans Frontières Calls for Displaced Persons' Camps in Rwanda to be Maintained Temporarily."
		<b>April 21:</b> Following shooting, MSF team discovers 21 bodies and tries, unsuccessfully, to alert authorities to risks of epidemic

#### April 22

RPA fires into crowd of displaced persons with heavy weapons.

#### April 23

UNAMIR spokesperson announces to the press that RPA has killed several thousand displaced persons — Zambian UNAMIR commander accuses RPA of firing heavy weapons — he is evacuated immediately after receiving death threats.

#### April 23

Survivors leave the massacre site under RPA threat — 2,000 displaced persons still entrenched in central buildings — RPA issues ultimatum before bombing — Rwandan justice minister visits to calm RPA — defense minister and Rwanda president visit, latter says 300 victims were crushed during riot Following shooting, MSF team discovers 21 bodies and tries, unsuccessfully, to alert authorities to risks of epidemic — **MSF France Press Release:** "Close to 200,000 People Gathered Around Displaced Persons' Camps in southeastern Rwanda Prepare to Spend their Fifth Day in the Open" — MSF France delivers this message in a letter to the U.N. department of humanitarian affairs and the UNHCR.

### April 22

RPA refuses MSF international team entry to Kibeho hospital — team walks across thousands of corpses, tries to treat wounded, present for several rounds of firing and evacuated by UNAMIR — **MSF Press Release:** "Thousands of Victims in Kibeho: MSF Denounces Killings."

#### April 23

Kibeho: Thousands of corpses disappear — MSF team forbidden access to the hospital, treats wounded in UNAMIR barracks, evacuates infants from the hospital and buries dead in a ditch — RPA hinders evacuation of wounded to Butare — Butare: MSF and ICRC teams prevented from working and from 139

	International	Rwanda	MSF
1995		— in Brussels, Rwandan Prime Minister regrets heavy loss of life and announces investigation into the responsibility of Rwandan soldiers.	transferring wounded to hospitals. <b>MSF</b> <b>Belgium Press Release:</b> "Forced March for Kibeho's 100,000 Displaced Persons: Tens of Thousands of People Collapse en Route — MSF Angered by UNAMIR's Inability to Protect Civilians," <b>MSF</b> <b>USA Press Release:</b> "5,000 to 8,000 Killed in the Kibeho Camp, Many of the 80,000 Displaced Persons Sent on Forced March Suffer Exhaustion."
	<b>April 24</b> Australian military spokesperson announces that UNAMIR counted 4,000 bodies the morning after the Kibeho massacre Three hours later, the UNAMIR commander in Kigali puts the number at 2,000 — announcement that direct aid to Rwanda is suspended.	<b>April 24</b> Rwandan president accuses Hutu militias of responsibility for the massacre and blames international community for not separating victims from innocent people — RPA bombing ultimatum is pushed back and then called off.	April 24 MSF team mobilizes U.N., embassies and international agencies to notify them of RPA ultimatum — MSF Belgium Press Release: "MSF Demands Free Access to Victims of Kibeho Massacre" — MSF France Press Release: "After This Weekend's Carnage, Displaced Persons Still Face Tragic Situation," MSF UK Press Release: "Rwandan Army Still Preventing Assistance From Reaching Kibeho Victims: MSF Condemns RPA Attacks on Kibeho and UN's Failure to

#### April 25

Belgian government suspends bilateral aid to Rwanda — UN acknowledges it was not informed of the Kibeho evacuation and confirms official death toll at 2,000.

### April 27

U.N. secretary general asks that force not be used against displaced persons entrenched in Kibeho — U.N. security council condemns "death sentence" carried out against civilians and asks secretary general to make a report.

#### April 26

Kibeho: witnesses observe RPA transfer of corpses and exhumation of bodies from latrines during the night.

#### April 27

Rwandan government Press Conference in Kibeho: exhumation of 300 official victims — MSF accused of providing false data — NGOs accused of supporting militias in displaced persons' camp announcement of creation of an international "independent" investigative commission.

#### April 28 Warning by MSF information officer

Protect Civilians in Rwanda."

## April 25

MSF Press Conference in Kigali: statements from volunteers on the Kibeho massacre — "timely" interruption of satellite link during CNN discussion among president of MSF Holland, UN representative to Rwanda and Rwandan ambassador to the U.S.

#### April 26

MSF team denied access to Kibeho several NGOS experience security incidents — MSF team leaks news of "corpses in latrines" — invitation from MSF team to a "meeting with the Rwandan head of state" in Kibeho the next day — MSF lobbies embassies .

#### April 27

During the Press Conference, the MSF representative maintains that the team saw thousands of corpses.

## Rwanda

## MSF

## 1995

## April 30

Rwandan government commits to not use force against displaced persons remaining in Kibeho.

## May 1

According to Agence France-Presse, a report by Australian blue helmets accuses RPA of disinterring and removing corpses from Kibeho to hide truth about number of victims from April 22 massacre.

## May 2

UNAMIR denies it is source of AFP report that RPA has surreptitiously removed corpses but does not contradict the information.

#### May 8

First meeting of the independent investigative commission established at Rwandan government request.

#### May 9

Last displaced persons leave Kibeho camp — independent investigative commission visits Kibeho site.

# in Rwanda: proof of massacres is disappearing very quickly.

## April 30

On **Radio Rwand**a, minister of rehabilitation accuses MSF France of providing false information .

## May 1

MSF heads of mission and programme managers from Belgium, France, Holland, Switzerland and Spain meet in Kigali to evaluate space available for MSF intervention with Rwandan population — MSF Belgium announces a project in jails and children's prison — MSF targeted during demonstration in Kigali against international community's position on Kibeho events

## May 2

MSF given access to Kibeho — groups of displaced persons leave the camp.

## May 16

MSF presents its **report** on Kibeho events to Rwandan authorities and independent investigative commission.

## May 17

MSF decides to write a second, more thorough **report** on Kibeho events sections disagree over MSF Belgium's participation in construction of a juvenile prison — letter from Rwandan minister of social rehabilitation to MSF France asking that it adhere to its "strict humanitarian purpose."

## May 18

Independent investigative commission on Kibeho events presents its report to Rwandan government .

## Rwanda

## 1995 May 20

Independent investigative commission's **report** on Kibeho events is published: unable to determine precise number of victims; RPA excesses; international community and NGOs unable to effectively aid displaced persons to evacuate camp quickly.

## May 23

MSF France responds to minister of rehabilitation: "advocacy on behalf of the populations' fate is central to the physician's vocation."

#### May 25

MSF's report on Kibeho events is published

### May 26

**Letter** from MSF to U.N. Security Council president and UNAMIR commander regarding UNAMIR's attitude during Kibeho events.

#### June 22

Rwandan journalists attack MSF communications officer during a seminar in Kigali.

#### June 29

**MSF France Press Release:** "Catastrophic Mortality Rates Among Prisoners in Gitarama, Rwanda."

#### July 5 and 6

MSF Press Conferences in Brussels, Nairobi and Paris on health status of prisoners in Gitarama — Press Release from all MSF sections: "Catastrophic Death Rates in Gitarama Prison: MSF Calls for Immediate Transfer of Prisoners to Other Detention Facilities"

## July 7

MSF France signs registration with authorities in Rwanda.

#### July 27

"Deadlock in the Rwandan Refugee Crisis," a **report by MSF Holland** on the repatriation of Rwandan refugees from camps in Zaire and Tanzania is published. Part of the report addresses Kibeho massacre and Rwandan prisons.

## Rwanda

1995

#### August 3

Rwandan president's office announces series of measures to improve prison conditions.

#### August 30

Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu and Interior Minister Seth Sendashonga dismissed after calling role of armed forces in continuing insecurity into question.

#### November 8

Rwandan defense minister Paul Kagame tells Belgian daily newspaper, Le Soir, that soldiers who committed mistakes have been punished.

#### November 8

MSF France sends letter to health minister regarding shooting attack by RPA against health centre in Gikongoro prefecture.

#### **December 6**

Rwandan government announces it will expel 39 NGOs, including MSF France and MSF Switzerland — **MSF France Press Release:** "French and Swiss Sections of Médecins Sans Frontières Have Been Expelled from Rwanda Without Explanation."

#### December 7

MSF France Press Release: "MSF Requests Official Explanation of its Expulsion from Rwanda" — MSF UK Press Release: "MSF Calls for Meeting with Rwandan Government Regarding its Expulsion" — MSF International Press Release: "MSF Calls for Meeting with Rwandan Government Regarding its Expulsion."

#### **December 9**

French-German TV chain Arte broadcasts **film** by a member of MSF France board of directors showing catastrophic conditions in the Rwandan prisons from which the organization has been expelled .

#### December 12

Bank accounts belonging to MSF France and other NGOs are blocked and their phone service cut off.

#### December 19

Meeting between Philippe Biberson and Doris Schopper of MSF and Mr. Mazimhaka, Rwandan Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration who promised to give explanations.

#### **December 9**

Rwandan government announces that NGOs have seven days in which to leave Rwanda and must leave all their supplies in the country.

#### December 18

European Parliament passes resolution calling on Kigali government to reconsider decision to expel 38 NGOs. MSF Speaks Out

International	Rwanda	MSF
1995		<b>December 22</b> Last MSF France volunteers leave Rwanda — <b>MSF France Press Release:</b> "Three MSF France Volunteers are Expelled".
1996		January 3 MSF Press Conference in Nairobi: denounces theft of supplies by RPA - MSF France Press Conference in Paris: denounces authoritarian moves within Rwandan government — Reuters news agency wrongly picks up comments of MSF programme manager (comparing Rwandan prisons to Auschwitz) January 4
		Other MSF sections react negatively after Reuters picks up MSF France comments.
1997		Dutch authorities criticize MSF Holland for "irresponsibility" at the time of the Kibeho events.