

Research Article

Problems and achievements of the Ethiopian peacekeeping mission in Rwanda

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Abstract: *The Transitional Government of Ethiopia deployed a battalion force in Rwanda under the mission of UNAMIR. This force deployed in the south western part of Rwanda successfully accomplished its mission. Beyond the mandate authorized by the Security Council the Ethiopian contingent in Rwanda participated in humanitarian support in their respective sector. However, problems emanating from internal problems of the battalion and the Ministry of National Defense, the situations in Rwanda, and the UN Headquarter and UNAMIR, challenged the performance of the Ethiopian contingent. Therefore, this paper provides a short historical account on problems and challenges of the Ethiopian peacekeeping contingent in Rwanda. Materials from the Ministry of National Defense of Ethiopia and the digital archives of UNO were used in the preparation of this paper. In addition books and articles are used to fill the gaps of the archival materials. Some veterans of the Rwanda mission have also been interviewed.*

Key Words: *Ethiopia, Peace-Keeping, Rwanda, and UNAMIR*

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1. Introduction

Prior to 1994 genocide the total population of Rwanda was estimated more than 7 million people which were divided into three ethnic groups. These were the Hutus ethnic groups who covered approximately 85% of the population, the majority of who were farmers. The second ethnic groups were the Tutsis constituted 14% of the Rwanda population. The majority of Tutsi were pastoralists and the last were ethnic groups composed of 1% of the total population. The Hutu and Tutsi people with common culture and language are belong to central Africa's Banyarwanda

people. While the Hutu ethnic groups are numerically superior the Tutsis were politically dominant. “¹

After three years of war between the Rwandan government and Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the conflicting parties signed the Arusha agreement in Tanzania on 4 August 1993. In this agreement, the Rwanda government negotiated to establish a broad-based multi-party transitional government that would last for twenty-two months, up to the coming 1995 election.² In addition, the conflicting parties agreed on the deployment of a Neutral International Force (NIF). The responsibilities of the NIF were to support the implementation of the agreement. Supporting disengagement, disarmament, demobilization, and the integration of the armed forces were the main mandates of the international force based on the Arusha Accord.³ The Security Council had authorized a peacekeeping mission called United Nations Assistant Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), on 5 October 1993, following the Arusha agreement signed between the Rwanda Government and Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).⁴

On 6 April 1994 an aircraft carrying President Habyarimana of Rwanda, his Chief of Staff and President Ntaryamira of Burundi was shot down when approaching Kigali Airport and all were killed.⁵ Following these incident the Rwandan Government Forces including the Presidential Guard, the gendarmerie, and *Interahamwe*, set road blocks.⁶ According to the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the assassination of the Burundi and Rwanda presidents who were ethnically Tutsi and Hutu, respectively, was an orchestrated act that dragged both ethnic groups into conflict. This event was followed by a mass killing targeting the Tutsis and to some extent moderate Hutu.⁷

¹Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *The United Nations and Rwanda, 1993-1996*, (Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, 1996), p. 7.

²Turid Laegreid, “U.N. Peacekeeping in Rwanda” in Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire*, (2017, Routledge New York), P. 231.

³United Nations Document (UND), S/1999/1257, Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, (16 December 1999), p.6; Boutros Boutros-Ghali, pp. 23-24.

⁴UN Document, S/RES/872/1993, Resolution 872(1993), (5 October 1993).

⁵Turid Laegreid, P. 235.

⁶ UN Document, S/1999/1257, Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, (16 December 1999), p. 15.

⁷Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *The United Nations and Rwanda, 1993-1996*, (Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, 1996), pp. 37-38.

Though the perpetrators of the air crash were not identified, the Hutu extremists used this as a pretext for the genocide committed for almost one hundred days. The opening of the genocide began with the assassination of Prime Minister Agatha Uwilingiyamana of Rwanda, prominent opposition political party leaders, both moderate Hutu and Tutsi, and ten Belgian peacekeepers. The assassination extended to claiming the lives of politicians, journalists, civil servants, and lawyers. It soon developed into mass slaughtering of civilians. This ethnic based genocide had claimed the lives of around 800,000 people in Rwanda.⁸

The UN peacekeeping mission, UNAMIR was unable to prevent the Rwandan genocide. The weak mandate of UNAMIR gave time of preparation for the Hutu extremists. At the time of the genocide, the UNAMIR was unable to protect its own soldiers let alone civilians. The attack of the Rwandan soldiers on the Belgium contingents for instance was such failure of UNAMIR.⁹ UNAMIR was deployed to facilitate the implementation of the Arusha Accord. However, its mandate, manpower, and equipment were not sufficient to prevent the event that transpired after April 6 1994. According to Dallaire, the Force Commander of UNAMIR, UNAMIR was a peacekeeping mission which was not trained, armed and staffed in a capacity for military intervention. That was why UNAMIR was unable to intervene to save the Belgian troops.¹⁰

The international community carried out various debates on the future of UNAMIR.¹¹ The UN Secretary-General provided three options on the future of UNAMIR to the Security Council. These were, expanding UNAMIR mandate of peace enforcement, downsizing the force strength of UNAMIR to 270 troops or, failing this, complete withdrawal of UNAMIR from Rwanda.¹² The Security Council approved the second alternative in its resolution 912(1994) on 21 April 1994.¹³ However, with an increase of the mass atrocity and the pressure from the international community, nearly after a month on 17 May 1994, the Security Council revised the Mandate of UNAMIR and strengthened the force to 5,500 troops. Creating safe conditions for the displaced people and providing safe humanitarian aid were among the mandates of UNAMIR

⁸Turid Laegreid, P. 235.

⁹Michael Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide: the United Nations and Rwanda*, (Cornell University press, Ithaca and London, 2002), pp. 98-99.

¹⁰UN Document, S/1999/1257, Report of the Independent Inquiry..., p. 17.

¹¹ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, pp. 40-41; Turid Laegreid, P. 236.

¹²UN Document, S/1994/470, Special Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda,(20 April 1994);Turid Laegreid, Pp. 241-242; Boutros Boutros-Ghali, pp. 43-44.

¹³Turid Laegreid, P. 243; Boutros Boutros-Ghali, pp. 43-44.

II based on the new resolution, S/Res/918/1994.¹⁴ It was after this that the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) decided to contribute contingents for UNAMIR II. This mission was the first for the Transitional Government of Ethiopia. Of course Ethiopia had participated in the UN authorized missions in Korea and Congo in the 1950s and 1960s respectively. However, this trend was interrupted during the period of the Derg regime.

This paper tries to identify the major problems and achievements of the Ethiopian peacekeeping force in Rwanda. This study, therefore, sheds new light on the experience, problems, and achievements of Ethiopia in the maintenance of international peace and security. The study will also fill some gaps in the existing literature. It is supposed to provide an important clue for historians, political analysts, military strategists, and scholars alike who are interested to do further study on UNAMIR and the Ethiopian Participation. This study will also be essential to the Ministry of National Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in general and military experts, army commanders as well as foreign policy and international relation experts. The study will be helpful for further research in the area of peacekeeping history and strategic studies. Methodologically the main sources of data used in the preparation of this paper were archival materials from Ministry of National Defense and the UN Digital library. Oral information from veterans of the Rwanda peacekeeping mission is used extensively. In addition secondary sources both published and unpublished are used in the study. The information drawn from authentic and credible sources were arranged, interpreted and analyzed so as to identify the significant problems and achievements of the Ethiopian peacekeeping mission in Rwanda from 1994 to 1995.

2. The Ethiopian Response to the Rwandan Genocide

Convincing member countries to contribute troops and materials was the main burden of UN Secretariats. The Secretary-General confirmed that member states were unenthusiastic to contribute contingents and materials. Boutros-Ghali tried to convince African countries to take the lion's share to solve the problem of Rwanda. As a result, most African nations expressed

¹⁴UN Document, S/RES/918 (1994), Resolution 918 (1994), (17 May 1994); Turid Laegreid, P. 245.

their readiness to contribute troops as long as the western powers were ready to offer financial and material supplies.¹⁵

Based on the request of the UN Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the OAU encouraged African states to play crucial role in the maintenance of peace and security in Rwanda. To convince potential troop contributing countries, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh visited many African states including Ethiopia.¹⁶ Complying with the request of the Secretary-Generals of the OAU and the UN the Transitional Government of Ethiopia agreed to deploy fully equipped motorized infantry battalion to Rwanda.¹⁷

The first Ethiopian Battalion, the Guna battalion, was deployed to Rwanda on 21 August 1994 and performed its mandate up to 15 April 1995. The second Ethiopian Battalion, Wogagen Battalion received the sector from Guna Battalion on 15 April 1995. Wogagen Battalion departed before it finished its six month mandate following the Security Council resolution to downsize the man power of UNAMIR.¹⁸ The Ethiopian contingent in UNAMIR was organized into headquarter, logistic company, three infantry companies, and a motorized company. The total man power of the battalion was 800 of which 42 were in the Sector Headquarter, 144 in the logistic company, 414 in the infantry companies, and 150 in the motorized company. The manpower distribution of this force was 1 Colonel, 3 Lieutenant Colonels, 6 Majors, 13 Captains, and 40 Lieutenants; Non Commissioned and other ranks included 40 Sergeants, 78 Corporals, and 568 Privates; and 6 civilian Physicians.¹⁹ In addition four Staff Officers;

¹⁵UN Document, S/1994/518, Letter Dated 29 April 1994 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council, (29 April 1994); Turid Laegreid, P. 244.

¹⁶UN Document, Series S-1062, Box 0004, File 0002, Acc 1998/0282, Confidential Outgoing Code Cables 8 May-8 June 1994: Africa's Positive Response to the Secretary General's Appeal for the Strengthening of UNAMIR's Force, to Annan/Goulding from Booh-Booh, (3 June 1994).

¹⁷UN Document, S/1994/728, Letter Dated 19 June 1994 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council, (20 June 1994).

¹⁸MOND, Folder No.አስ/4100, the Logistic and Financial Report of the two Ethiopian Battalions in the UN Mission in Rwanda, Ref.No.ጥደ/አ/13/ጥደ01/02/88, (22/1/88 E.C).

¹⁹MOND, Folder No.ጥደ/546, Vehicles, Equipment Supplies and Transport Service Provided to the Ethiopian Battalions in Rwanda by the Ministry of National Defense of Ethiopia, Ref.No.TGE-M4/AT35/S/9/9/94, (28 October 1994).

Lieutenant Colonel Getachew Tefera, Commander Tesfaye Tadesse, Major Senay Nega and Captain Dessalegn Gebire Medihin were deployed to the UNAMIR Headquarter in Kigali.²⁰

The Ethiopian battalion was deployed in the south western part of Rwanda which was demarcated as Sector 4C by UNAMIR. In the course of the genocide the French humanitarian operation in Rwanda, Operation Turquoise, demarcated this sector as a Protected Humanitarian Zone. This region was bordered by Burundi and Zaire. The majority of Rwandan refugees flow through this sector and most of the camps of the internally displaced persons were found in this region. The majority armed groups suspected of perpetuating the Rwanda genocide had either moved into this region or were in the border of the neighboring Zaire.²¹ As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, this region, where the ex-governmental forces, militia and extremists have sought refuge in the humanitarian protected zone under the Operation Turquoise was the most explosive sector. In addition, this sector was one of the transits where refugees returned from Zaire.²² So, the Ethiopian contingent of the peacekeeping mission took this very daunting task.

3. Problems of the Ethiopian Battalion

The peacekeeping mission of the Ethiopian contingent in Rwanda was challenged by different problems coming from internal weakness both within the battalion and the Ministry of National Defense, the bureaucracy of UNAMIR Headquarter and UN Peacekeeping Department, and from the situations in Rwanda. A report of the Ethiopian Staff Officers in UNAMIR Headquarter identified disciplinary problems like improper uniform wearing, lack of proper observance of military ranks failing; language problem; shortage of professional engineers, physicians, military police and others; the availability of the Ethiopian military uniform in the hands of Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), the military wing of RPF; and absence of liaison officer of the Ethiopian battalion in the UNAMIR Headquarter were the problems of the Ethiopian contingent in Rwanda.²³

²⁰MOND, Folder No. ል.ገ/5873, Members of the Wogagen Battalion to Receive Certificate from the Honorable Gust of the Day, (27/12/1987 E.C); MOND. Folder No, ጠኤታ/537, Daily Situation Of UNAMIR Coordination Office, (25 August 1986 E.C).

²¹MOND, Folder No. አስ/4040, Experiences from the international peacekeeping mission in Rwanda, (No Date).

²²UN Document, S/1994/924, Report of the Secretary General on the Situation in Rwanda, (3 August 1994).

²³ MOND, File No. አስ/ጠገ/5862, A short Report of the Ethiopian Staff Officers in UNAMIR Headquarter, (No date).

The problems of the Ethiopian battalion in Rwanda emanated from the lack of experience of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia in peacekeeping operations as well as the guerilla background of the contingent.²⁴ The Ethiopian contingent in Rwanda was recruited from the army of the EPRDF which was an insurgent combatant in the Ethiopian civil war. This army was not a professional regular army. Of course, in the preparation period one of the trainings given to the Guna battalion was focused on abandoning the guerrilla tradition and transforming the force into regular army.²⁵ However, this training given for a short period was not enough to dissociate the Ethiopian contingent in Rwanda from its guerrilla tradition. According to my informants, some of the disciplinary problems like irregular uniform wearing, failure to show respect for their superior higher military rank, and failure to give attention to ceremonial issues were the most commonly observed ones.²⁶ Haile Araya stated that “there were comments from the UNAMIR HQ that [emphasized that] Ethiopian troops were not giving due attention to visits by senior commanders, not giving proper salutes, and making it difficult to distinguish officers from soldiers by using the same mess and recreational facilities.”²⁷ Most of these problems were clearly evident in the Guna Battalion. Taking lessons from the Guna Battalion these problems were given due attention in the preparation of the Wogagen Battalion that replaced the Guna Battalion and improvements observed during its deployment.

Language problem was a serious challenge to the Ethiopian contingent’s ability to communicate with the local people, relief workers and UNAMIR Headquarter. In the preparation of the first battalion English language proficiency was given due attention in the selection of troops. However, the language mostly spoken in Rwanda was French. Moreover, the recruited troops’ English language proficiency was poor.²⁸ Considering the problem faced by the first battalion, in the deployment of the Wogagen Battalion four language translators were assigned for the battalion.²⁹ Though it was not enough compared with the size of the contingent and the sector, the assignment of translators simplified the language problem of the battalion.

²⁴ Haile Araya Amdemichael, “East African Crisis Response: Shaping Ethiopian Peace Force for Better Participation in Future Peace Operations,” (Naval Postgraduate School: Monterey, MA Thesis December 2006), p. 55.

²⁵ Informants, General Alemshet Degifie, Brigadier General Hailu Gonfa, Colonel Abebe Alemu.

²⁶ Informants, General Almshet Degifie, Brigadier General Hailu Gonfa, Colonel Abebe Alemu.

²⁷ Haile Araya Amdemichael, p. 55.

²⁸ Informant, Colonel Abebe Alemu.

²⁹ MOND, Folder No. አስ/ወ. 7/5873, Members of the Wogagen Battalion to Receive Certificate from the Honorable Gust of the Day, (27/12/1987).

Resource management was the other basic problem of the Ethiopian contingent in Rwanda. The logistic supply unit did not register and document the contingent owned equipment. The logistic company never kept receipts nor registered the equipment or carried an inventory in the course of the mission. This documentation problem was one of the reasons for the differences between the Ethiopian government and the UN Headquarter. There was a difference between the lists of equipment of the Ethiopian government taken during the deployment period and at its departure.³⁰ There was no survey of resources carried out at the time of rotation between the Guna and Wogagen battalions in mid April 1995. This made it difficult to make appropriate reimbursements of the Ethiopian expense.³¹

One of the significant challenges faced by the Ethiopian Battalion was the failure of the UN to supply the requested and promised equipment. According to a letter to the Ethiopian Permanent Mission in UN Headquarter, the Guna Battalion performed its duties successfully within three weeks after it takeover of the sector from France. The force calmed the region, won the trust of the local community, and closely worked with the local people and RPA for better security. However, the delay of the UN to deliver equipment requested by the Ethiopian government hampered the proper operations of the force.³²

The Ethiopian Battalion also faced problems that were related to the UNAMIR Headquarters. The UNAMIR Headquarters logistic unit was not organized that well to facilitate the logistic supply. Delaying the delivery of requested logistics including tents, vehicles, spare parts and food supply were the most frequently observed problem. Because of the absence of UN standard bakery in the Ethiopian Sector Headquarter at Cyangugu, the Ethiopian battalion had to bring bread from Kigali, 291 kms away.³³ Besides, the Ethiopian troops were not familiar with food

³⁰MOND, Folder No.አሰ/4056, Memo, (No date).

³¹MOND, Folder No.አሰ/4100, the Logistic and Financial Report of the two Ethiopian Battalion in the UN Mission in Rwanda, Ref.No. ሞ5/አገፍ/ፖ01/02/88, (22/1/88 E.C).

³² MOND.Folder No, ጠኤታ/537, About Performance of the Ethiopian Battalion in Rwanda, Ref. No.ሞ1.2/አጠ4/ተ/1/9/87, (03 September 1987 E.C).

³³MOND, Folder No.አሰ/4100, the Logistic and Financial Report of the two Ethiopian Battalion in the UN Mission in Rwanda, Ref.No. ሞ5/አገፍ/ፖ01/02/88, (22/1/88 E.C).

items supplied by the UN. As a result, at the beginning the UN supplied food was not properly utilized.³⁴

Challenges relating to conditions in Rwanda included weather, misunderstanding of the local people on the Ethiopian contingent, and the movement of armed groups in the sector and neighboring countries. Heavy rainfall, land slide and the dense forest of the region were environmental challenges that hampered the transportation and operations of the Ethiopian battalion. Bad weather condition and the poor road infrastructure hampered the Ethiopian battalion's effort to transport displaced persons.³⁵

At the beginning, the Hutu ethnic groups in the sector portrayed the Ethiopian contingent as an ally and supporter of the Tutsi ethnic groups. So they were in doubt on the impartiality of the Ethiopian battalion because they considered the Tutsi clans as relatives of the Ethiopians. This idea was raised before the deployment of the Ethiopian battalion by the officers of UNAMIR. The Bangladeshi officer Colonel Moen, Chief Operations Officer of UNAMIR, shared his reservation to Dallaire that the Hutu ethnic groups may be reluctant to accept the Ethiopian peacekeeping force considering the Tutsi ethnic groups hereditarily relation with Ethiopia. This idea was widely circulated in Rwanda though it was not the position of the Rwandan provisional government and Rwandan Government Forces (RGF).³⁶

As a result, in the transition between the French Force and the Ethiopian mission there was a mass movement of people to the neighboring Zaire. The flow of the people to Zaire and Burundi from and through South Western Rwanda increased immensely immediately following the withdrawal of the French Force and the deployment of the Ethiopian Battalion. The Interim Prefectural Committee (IPC) established by the French Force to administer the Humanitarian Protection Zone in collaboration with NGOs and humanitarian organizations tried to convince the refugees.³⁷ Members of Former Rwandan Government Forces (FRGF), *Iterahamwe*, and the

³⁴MOND, Folder No.ጠኤታ/537, For the Honorable Minister Special Office Concerning the situation of Rwanda, Ref. No.ጠ-1.2/አጠ3/ፆ/1/10/87, date 21 October 1987 E.C.

³⁵Informants, General Alemshet Degifie, Brigadier General Hailu Gonfa, Colonel Abebe Alemu; MOND, Folder No.አሰ/4726, daily sitrep for 14 November 1994, to Annan from Shaharyar Kahan, (15 November 1994).

³⁶Romeo Dallaire (L/General), *Shake Hands with the Devil: the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003), p. 393.

³⁷UN Document, Series S-1062, Box 0070, File 0005, Acc 1998/0283, Sector Commanders Conferences 11 January-20 October 1995: Information on Progress of Activities Meeting With SRSG, (11 January 1995).

militia suspected of perpetuating the genocide were mixed with the refugees and internally displaced persons. These groups used the civilians in the refugee camps as human shield and urged the people to leave Rwanda to the neighboring countries. They prevented the integration of the internally displaced persons and the return of refugees to Rwanda.³⁸ They were under the protection of their former ally France. That is why they fled to Zaire and Burundi immediately following the departure of the French Force.

Gradually the misperception of the people began to change following the social interaction of the Ethiopian contingent. Following the dialogue between the Ethiopian contingents and the local people the mass flow of the people decreased.³⁹ However, the Former Rwandan Government Forces (FRGF) continued to view the Ethiopian contingent as an ally and supporter of the Tutsi ethnic groups. FRGF considered the Ethiopian contingent as the second enemy next to RPA.⁴⁰

Banditry movement in the dense forest of Nyungwe endangered the delivery of logistic for the Ethiopian battalion in Cyangugu. Particularly Convoys of the Brown and Root Company that carried bread from Kigali was escorted by troops within their respective sector. The Ethiopian battalion escorted from Gikongoro to Cyangugu through the Nyungwe forest and back to Gikongoro.⁴¹ The legacies of Operation Turquoise were also another challenge for the Ethiopian battalion. France had strong relation with the Former Rwandan Government Forces. As a result 209 armed ex-Gendarmes were assigned for civil security role by the Force Commander of France in the Humanitarian Protection Zone. These groups in collaboration with their allies became potential security threat in Sector 4C.⁴²

Cross border military attacks was another problem faced by the Ethiopian battalion. These military attacks targeted civilians and their property in the sector. The armed groups' looted cattle, food, money and other personal belongings. Increasing attacks of armed groups crossing the border of Zaire in Kimembe, Kangano, Gafunso, Kirambo, and Nyamashe areas of Sector 4C

³⁸UN Document, Series S-1062, Box 0072, File 0004, Acc 1998/0283, Operations Correspondence 27 April 1994-6 January 1995: Security Instructions - OP RETOUR, (28 December 1994).

³⁹MOND, Folder No. ጠ/537, the Situation of the Ethiopian Force in Rwanda), Ref. No. ጠ.2/ሰ/ጠ/1/9/87, (3 September 1987 E.C).

⁴⁰MOND, Folder No. ጠ/537, the Situation in Rwanda, Ref. No. ጠ.2/ሰ/ጠ/10/87 (21 October 1987 E.C).

⁴¹MOND, Folder No. ሰ/ጠ/4164, Provision of Escorts for Brown and Root Convoys, (11 February 1995).

⁴²UN Document, Series S-1062, Box 0007, File 0004, Acc 1998/0282, Confidential Outgoing Correspondence Rwanda 29 March-31 October 1994: Civil Security in Sector 4, to His Excellency Mr Pasteur Bizimungu President of the Republic of Rwanda from Shaharyar M. Khan, (25 Aug 1994).

forced the Ethiopian battalion to redeploy its force along the shores of Lake Kivu. In addition, the Ethiopian battalion started minor boat patrol on Lake Kivu to prevent such attack. It also deployed its night vision resources on Ijwi Island to cover the coastal areas in the sector.⁴³ in addition, nearly one million mines were planted in Rwanda during the civil war.⁴⁴ The continuous explosion of these mines caused loss of life and property and physical injury on the local community and the Ethiopian contingent.

4. Achievements of the Ethiopian Battalion

Despite the many problems that challenged the performance of the Ethiopian peacekeeping mission in Rwanda there were remarkable achievements by the Ethiopian battalion. In addition to its mandate authorized for UNAMIR the Ethiopian contingent recorded successful achievements in humanitarian affairs as well. Mr. Kofi Annan, the Under Secretary General of the UN Peacekeeping Operation, visited the Ethiopian Battalion on 21 September 1994 and acknowledged the strong performance of the Ethiopian Battalion within a short period of time.⁴⁵

In the three camps of Internally Displaced Peoples in Sector 4C-Murur, Narovash, and Bugarama there were around 24,000 displaced persons when the Ethiopian battalion was deployed to the sector. However, by mid-November there were only 168 displaced persons left, some owing to poor health. The Guna battalion escorted the displaced persons who came from other sectors to their respective sectors and returned the displaced persons within the sector to their homes.⁴⁶

From December 13 to 14 1994, UNAMIR coordinated a joint operation to disarm the bandits in Sector 3A particularly in Butarie and the surrounding area which was the sector of Malawi Battalion. In this operation UNAMIR disarmed 810 machetes, 280 hatchets, 214 daggers, 58 javelins and 16 arrows and captured 47 suspected criminals. In this operation two companies from the Guna Battalion participated and disarmed 507 machetes, 280 hatchets, 190 daggers, and

⁴³UN Document, S/1995/107, Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNAMIR, (6 February 1995).

⁴⁴UN Document, S/1994/1344, Progress Report of the Secretary-General on UNAMIR, (25 November 1994).

⁴⁵MOND.Folder No, ጠኤታ/537, Dayly situation of UNAMIR II, Ref. No. 022/87, (12/01/1987 E.C).

⁴⁶MOND.Folder No, ጠኤታ/537, Dayly situation of UNAMIR II, Ref. No. 036/87, (12/03/1987 E.C); Dayly situation of UNAMIR II, Ref. No. 037/87, (19/03/1987 E.C).

57 javelins and captured 18 suspected criminals. These two companies took the lion's share of the joint operation.⁴⁷

In March 1995 Rwanda in general and Sector 4C in particular were sufficiently calmed and schools became functional. Primary school leaving exams were given throughout Rwanda. In the exam given on 20 March 1995, the Ethiopian battalion escorted invigilators to all exam centers and kept the security of the exam. The exam in the sector was concluded without any security threat.⁴⁸ On July 3, 1995, a meeting of the Civil Police (CIVPOL) Commission meeting with Heads of Divisions and Police Monitoring Teams held at CIVPOL Headquarter in the region of Cyangugu (where the Ethiopian peacekeeping force was deployed) reported that, the banditry movement in the sector was significantly decreased.⁴⁹ In its one year service the Ethiopian battalion supported the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes. It gave transport service by its own vehicles for nearly 50,000 returnee refugee.⁵⁰

Beyond its authorized missions the Ethiopian battalion participated in humanitarian activities. Supporting the local peasants was started early in its deployment. A week after hand-over of the sector, 300 Ethiopian troops participated in cultivating the land of the local peasants.⁵¹ This event helped to bring smooth relation with the local people and minimized the suspicion that the Ethiopian contingent was there to support the Tutsi ethnic groups against the Hutu.

Members of the Ethiopian battalion tried to support the local community in rebuilding houses in the community and restoring refugees and displaced persons. The medical unit of the battalion gave medical service for the local community. With the financial contribution of members of the battalion the Ethiopian force supported orphanages in the sector. In addition, the Ethiopian force donated clothes for refugee children returning from Zaire.⁵² Furthermore, they supported the local farmers around Cyangugu in cultivating and harvesting their crops. For example, on 14 November 1994, 50 troops from the Ethiopian battalion cultivated the land of the local

⁴⁷MOND.Folder No, ጠኤታ/537, Dayly situation of UNAMIR II, Ref. No. 039/87, (07/04/1987 E.C).

⁴⁸MOND.Folder No, ጠኤታ/537, Dayly situation of UNAMIR II, Ref. No. 050/87, (13/07/1987 E.C).

⁴⁹UN Document, Series S-1060, Box 0001, File 0001, Acc 1998/0281 , Correspondence-Internal, (16 Feb-26 Augu 1995).

⁵⁰Informants, General Alemshet Degifie, Brigadier General Hailu Gonfa, Colonel Abebe Alemu.

⁵¹MOND.Folder No, ጠኤታ/537, Daily Situation of UNAMIR coordination Office, (25 August 1986 E.C).

⁵²MOND, Folder No.አ ስ/4040, Experiences from the International Peacekeeping in Rwanda; MOND, Folder No.አ ስ/ 4728, Daily INFOSUM for 29 April 1995, (30 April 1995).

farmers.⁵³ Another report stated that in May 1995 the Ethiopian battalion supported the local farmers to plough their farms and collect their coffee product in their respective Area of Orders (AORs).⁵⁴

Such reports confirmed that the Ethiopian peacekeeping force in Rwanda had established harmonious social relation with the local people. This means that the peace and security of the region was sufficiently restored and the peacekeeping mission was able to shift its attention in the region from security issue to the economic recovery of the local people. For instance, in a weekly security meeting held with representatives of military observers of Sector 4C, Human Rights Field Officer (HRFOR) and NGOs on 08 May 1995, the participants confirmed that the efforts of the Ethiopian contingent minimized the act of banditry in the Nyamasheke sub-sector.⁵⁵ In previous months most of the local people were forced to leave their homes and spend the nights near the camps of orphanages, Military Observers, in the Sub-sector Headquarters and the Headquarters of RPA fearing the armed banditry that moved in the sector. The bandits used to terrorize the local communities using boats along Lake Kivu and crossing the border of Zaire.⁵⁶

The Ethiopian contingent cleared roads for the safe passage of vehicles. For example, on 14 March 1995, the mission cleared 70m road closed by landslide following heavy rain in the region. This contribution of the Ethiopian battalion facilitated the passage of relief carrying vehicles to the site of Bugarama.⁵⁷ These humanitarian supports of the force brought trust and friendship to the Ethiopian battalion from the Rwandan people.⁵⁸

⁵³MOND, Folder No.ħ ñ /4726, daily sitrep for 14 November 1994, to Annan from Shaharyar Kahan, 15 November 1994.

⁵⁴MOND, Folder No.ħ ñ / 4728, Daily INFOSUM for 20 May 1995, 21 May 1995; Daily INFOSUM for 18 May 1995, 19 May 1995; Daily INFOSUM for 10 May 1995, 11 May 1995; Daily INFOSUM for 08 May 1995, 9 May 1995.

⁵⁵MOND, Folder No.ħ ñ / 4728, Daily INFOSUM for 08 May 1995, 9 May 1995.

⁵⁶MOND, Folder No.ħ ñ / 4728, Daily INFOSUM for 19 April 1995, 20 April 1995; Daily INFOSUM for 17 April 1995, 18 April 1995; INFOSUM for 16 April 1995, 17 April 1995.

⁵⁷MOND, Folder No.ħ ñ /4729, daily sitrep for 14 March 1995, to Annan from Shaharyar Kahan, 15 March 1995.

⁵⁸MOND, Folder No.ħ ñ /4040, Experiences from the International Peacekeeping in Rwanda.

5. Conclusion

Ethiopian participation in the maintenance of international peace and security was resumed in 1994 after 30 years. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia deployed a battalion force to Rwanda. This mission was the first for the Transitional Government of Ethiopia. The guerrilla tradition of the forces, lack of experience, language problem and poor resource management were the weakness of the Ethiopian battalions in Rwanda. On the other hand, the logistic supply problem of UNAMIR, the banditry attacks in the sector, and the miss information disseminated among the Rwanda people regarding the Ethiopian contingent were external challenges faced by the Ethiopian contingent. In addition the weather conditions, land slide and the dense forest of Rwanda challenged the transportation and operations of the Ethiopian battalion.

Within these environments the Ethiopian battalion was able to successfully maintain peace and security in Rwanda in general and Sector 4C in particular. The two battalions protected the security of the sector and facilitated the safe passage of humanitarian assistance. The mission was successful in protecting the camps of displaced persons. The mission also facilitated resettlement of the displaced persons to their homes in the sector and escorted refugees and internally displaced persons from other sectors to their respective sector. More than this, the battalion transported refugees and displaced persons using its vehicles. Beyond these, the Ethiopian battalion was known for its humanitarian support for orphanages, poor people and local peasants. This humanitarian assistance improved the forces interaction with the local community and was important for the image building of Ethiopia in general and the two battalions in particular.

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Informants

No.	Name	Date and Place of Interview	Remark
1	Abebe Alemu (Colonel)	Addis Ababa 20 July 2022	Head of Staff Communication of the Guna Battalion
2	Alemshet Degifie (General)	Addiss Ababa 15 July 2022	The Force Commander of Wogagen Battalion that deployed to Rwanda replacing the Guna Battalion
3	Hailu Gonfa (Brigadier General)	Addis Ababa 14 July 2022	Head of Administrative and Finance Department of GunaBatalion
4	Dr. Tekeda Alemu (Ambassador)	Addis Ababa 19 July 2022	The ex-Deputy State Minister for Ministry of Foreign Affairs and The Ethiopian Permanent Representative for UN
