



Summary of Results:
Fugitive Tracking Investigation of Protais MPIRANYA

Background

1. Protais MPIRANYA was born on 30 May 1956 in Shaki Cell, Giciye Commune, in Gisenyi Prefecture, Rwanda. Born under the name Protais LIZAHANANDE, he later took on the name of his deceased brother Mathias MPIRANYA. MPIRANYA joined the Rwandan *École Supérieure Militaire* in 1979 and completed four years of Officer training. In April 1993, he was appointed Commander of the Presidential Guard Battalion (PG) of the *Forces Armées Rwandaises* (FAR), responsible for President Juvénal HABYARIMANA's security.

1994: Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

2. MPIRANYA was indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 2000 for having instructed, supervised, encouraged, and assisted the crimes carried out by the PG. He was charged with eight counts of genocide and complicity in genocide, murder, extermination, rape, persecution, other inhumane acts as crimes against humanity, and murder as a violation of the Geneva Conventions.
3. In the evening of 6 April 1994, the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda began when President HABYARIMANA's plane was shot down. Extremist Hutu leaders took steps to take control of the Rwandan Government and incite their followers against Tutsi civilians. The PG, commanded by MPIRANYA, played a key role. In the hours that followed, the PG initiated an organised strike against prominent opposition figures in order to prevent the implementation of a Broad-Based Transitional Government, and to eliminate key individuals who called for calm and who could have prevented the Genocide against the Tutsi.
4. In the early hours of 7 April 1994, elements of the PG under the command of MPIRANYA assassinated Prime Minister Agathe UWILINGIYIMANA, before detaining and murdering ten Belgian peacekeepers who were guarding her residence. The PG also assassinated Faustin RUCOGOZA, member of the *Mouvement Démocratique Républicain* and Minister of Information; Félicien NGANGO, Vice-President of the *Parti Social Démocrate* (PSD); Landouald NDASINGWA, Vice-Chairman of the *Parti Libéral* and Minister of Labour and Community Affairs; Joseph KAVARUGANDA, President of the Constitutional Court; and Frédéric NZAMURAMBAHO, Chairman of the PSD and Minister of Agriculture.
5. In the days and weeks which followed, *Interahamwe* militias killed Tutsi civilians in collaboration with PG soldiers and others. PG soldiers also erected roadblocks across Kigali to stop and kill Tutsis, and raped Tutsi women and children together with the *Interahamwe*.



1994-1998: Flight from Rwanda

6. In early July 1994, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took control of Rwanda. Entire units of defeated Hutu FAR forces fled into neighbouring Zaire together with the Interim Government and alongside an exodus of civilian Hutu refugees. MPIRANYA crossed into Zaire with other officers of the PG and the FAR in July 1994.
7. In September 1994, MPIRANYA obtained passports for himself and his family, and they travelled to Yaoundé in Cameroon in early October 1994, where many of those responsible for the genocide had sought safe haven. In March 1996, following the arrest of Théoneste BAGOSORA in Cameroon, MPIRANYA fled before Cameroonian authorities searched his house. He subsequently travelled between Zaire—soon after renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)—the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic (CAR), and Cameroon, where his family remained.

1998-2002: Second Congo War

8. In 1998, the Second Congo War began, between the DRC Government, supported by Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, and Chad, and Congolese opposition forces, supported by Rwanda and Uganda. Determined to overthrow the Rwandan government and regain power, many of those responsible for the genocide and former members of the ex-FAR joined the conflict as allies of the DRC Government. In around late 1998, this Rwandan Hutu force—which soon became known as the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR)—was recruited from those who gathered in various refugee camps in the DRC, CAR, Republic of Congo, and other locations.
9. MPIRANYA returned to the DRC at the same time to join the fight against the Rwandan Government. As a high-ranking ex-FAR Officer, he was designated Commander of the FDLR's Horizon Brigade. He acquired fake identity papers, adopted the name Alain HIRWA, and became known as 'Commander Alain'. He was very popular with his troops and his Brigade was revered on the battlefield for its effectiveness.
10. Between 1998 and 2002, MPIRANYA's Horizon Brigade operated extensively with the Zimbabwean Defence Forces (ZDF) in the DRC. Deployed together and involved in violent battles in the northern Kasai and northern Katanga provinces, the ZDF and the Horizon Brigade defended strategic locations on the way to Kinshasa and Lubumbashi, including Mbuji-Mayi, Pweto, Kamina, and Kabinda. They also worked closely together to protect the diamond mines in Mbuji-Mayi.
11. As one of the key belligerents in the conflict and a significant supporter of the FDLR, the ZDF provided logistical support, weapons and ammunition to the Horizon Brigade. MPIRANYA, as a high-ranking and well-regarded Commander, liaised with the ZDF leadership, coordinated with ZDF units, conducted joint operations with them, and established a close rapport with senior Zimbabwean officers. On at least one occasion, he travelled to Zimbabwe on behalf of the FDLR to receive military assistance.

2002-2006: Flight to Zimbabwe

12. Amidst mounting international pressure to end the conflict, a peace agreement was signed in July 2002 in South Africa, whereby all foreign forces agreed to withdraw their troops. The FDLR, whose leadership publicly opposed the agreement and wished to continue its fight against the Rwandan Government, was declared undesirable in the DRC, which led to clashes between the DRC's armed forces and FDLR troops. The Executive Secretary of the FDLR and MPIRANYA's direct superior,



Tharcisse RENZAHU, was arrested in late September 2002 and transferred to the ICTR. That same month, the ICTR publicly issued an Indictment and Arrest Warrant against MPIRANYA.

13. Fearing capture as one of the most prominent ICTR fugitives, MPIRANYA fled to Zimbabwe in late 2002. Zimbabwean officials facilitated his entry into Zimbabwe, and MPIRANYA facilitated the safe passage of his closest associates into Zimbabwe as well. His wife and daughters left Cameroon for Kinshasa, after which he facilitated their move to Zimbabwe, from where they were later able to leave for the United Kingdom (UK). MPIRANYA's sister-in-law similarly left the DRC for Zimbabwe accompanied by one of MPIRANYA's closest Brigade associates, while other trusted FDLR subordinates also traveled to Zimbabwe to seek safe haven.
14. For four years, MPIRANYA was able to avoid arrest and find some refuge in Zimbabwe, where he resided in a reasonably affluent area of Harare. He continued FDLR activities and associating with FDLR supporters, including receiving a false Ugandan passport—in the name James KAKULE—at the same time as other FDLR officials. He also continued his engagement with ZDF officials. He took part in a local business venture with his sister-in-law, while his wife visited him twice, in 2003 and 2004, bringing his daughters to see their father on the second occasion.
15. Nonetheless, his status as an international fugitive had significant impact. His movements were severely constrained, and he was increasingly forced to rely on a small network of his most trusted associates. As a fugitive, he lost the prestige and authority he had previously enjoyed. The final years of his life were marked by anxiety and fear that his location would be discovered and that he would be tried for his crimes, like many other Rwandan former officials indicted for their roles in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

2006 – Present: Death and Concealment

16. In the second half of 2006, MPIRANYA fell seriously ill from pulmonary tuberculosis and was admitted to the West End Hospital in Harare under the alias Ndume SAMBAO. He underwent a bilateral pleural effusion in September 2006 but, despite treatment, died on 5 October 2006.
17. After his death, MPIRANYA's associates organised his funeral while his wife travelled to Harare from the UK to attend. On 17 October 2006, a private ceremony was held at a funeral home in Harare, attended only by his family and associates. He was subsequently buried in a cemetery outside of Harare under the name Ndume SAMBAO.
18. Since October 2006, MPIRANYA's family and associates have gone to great lengths to conceal his death and place of burial. They have repeatedly provided false statements to investigators, and coached those who knew of MPIRANYA's presence and death in Harare to lie if questioned. His tombstone was purposefully designed to thwart its discovery as MPIRANYA's final resting place. These efforts—which continue to the present—obstructed investigations and prevented identification of MPIRANYA's remains until earlier this year.