



But at some point around New Year 1997 the evidence started to point in a different direction, after three informants from the current Rwandan government claimed they had been part of a secret commando-operation team, which had shot down the plane.

The three soldiers were in 1994 part of the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) which stopped the massacres by driving the Hutu extremists into exile and then took power in Rwanda.

They claimed the leader of the RPF, Major General Paul Kagame, Rwanda's current Minister of Defence and strongman, had been behind the downing of the plane.

Suddenly the investigation turned deadly serious.

When the investigators were facing the decisive breakthrough in the investigation they contacted Carla Del Ponte's predecessor Louise Arbour at the Tribunal's head office in the Hague. Louise Arbour was very interested in this information, several investigators tell Aktuel.

But when an investigator flew to the Hague to personally hand over a memoranda about the case, she made a U-turn and closed the investigation. Why Arbour closed the investigation remains unclear, but a former investigator has told Aktuel, that Arbour had been threatened by the Rwandan government not to open an investigation into RPF war crimes.

A few months later one of the investigators wrote a report about the case at the UN headquarters in New York. The report was shelved, but in March this year revealed by the Canadian paper National Post.

This has made Chief Prosecutor Del Ponte demand that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan hand over the report.

Del Ponte denies to have had any prior knowledge of the investigation. "I have no information, no documents, nothing. I read about it for the first time in the Canadian press," she says.

If it is the RPF that shot down the plane, the history of the Genocide must be rewritten.

Although it will not alter Hutu extremists' responsibility for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, it will put the RPF in a completely different light. RPF has so far been considered in the West as the victims and as those, who stopped the Genocide.

"[The RPF] knew that they planned the massacres," says Colonel Luc Marchal, who was second-in-command of the UN-troops in Rwanda and during the months before the Genocide had daily contact with both sides in the conflict.

Besides the excellent level of the RPF intelligence networks Colonel Marchal points to the Hate-propaganda spread through media controlled by the Hutu extremists. "They made no secret of their intentions," he says.

The RPF, he says, also knew that the extremists were just looking for an excuse to execute their plans.

But why kill the Hutu President and thereby provide the best of reasons for

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the extremists to commence the slaughter of Tutsis?

Militarily, the RPF knew they were more than a match for the government army of Habyarimana, Marchal says. "They knew very well what the result [of a war] would be," he says.

Despite being militarily superior, however, observers agree that for political reasons the RPF could not be seen as having unilaterally re-started the war and run over the country. But if the enemy government massacred civilians it would make it very hard indeed for the international community to oppose an RPF conquest of the country.

And the RPF did not care much for the Tutsis inside Rwanda, Marchal says.

The RPF consisted predominantly of exile-Rwandese, who had fled Rwanda during previous pogroms on Tutsis. The Tutsis who remained in Rwanda, he says, "were considered as collaborators by the RPF", since they had not joined the fight against Juvénal Habyarimana's Hutu dictatorship.

If indeed the RPF shot down the plane, rather than being the victim of the Hutu militias, the RPF entered into an unholy alliance with the murderers, while the Tutsis inside Rwanda therefore constituted nothing more than a bargaining chip for the rebel movement.

And the chip - denoting almost a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus inside Rwanda - was sacrificed on the alter of power.

Should this be true, it therefore seriously shatters the notion that the conflict in the tiny Central African country is about Hutus and Tutsis fighting for power.

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#### RWANDAN GOVERNMENT SUSPECTED OF WAR CRIMES

One of the darlings of the West in Central Africa, Rwandas Defence Minister, risks indictment for crimes against humanity.

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By Gunnar Willum og Bjørn Willum

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THE HAGUE - The Chief Prosecutor at the UN war crimes tribunal in the Hague reveals in an exclusive interview with Aktuelt, that she has started an investigation into war crimes committed by the Rwandan government.

It is estimated that almost a million people were killed during the Genocide in Rwanda in 1994 when Hutu extremist politicians used militias to try and exterminate all their political Hutu opponents and the Tutsi ethnic minority.

The massacres first stopped when the Tutsi-dominated exile-movement the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) defeated the extremists. But during the last

couple of years it has emerged that the RPF massacred tens of thousands of innocent Hutus while seizing power in Rwanda.

It is those crimes which the Tribunal has now begun investigating.

Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte says that she two weeks ago received material from human rights organizations to be used in the investigation, which commenced in December of last year.

While dozens of suspected top-people among the Hutu extremists have so far been arrested and indicted for Genocide or other crimes against humanity, the UN Tribunal has still not prosecuted the responsible persons from the RPF-led government.

But this will happen, Del Ponte assures *Aktuelt*, though she declines to say when and who she will indict as the first suspects. "How could we indict anyone, if we made our inquiries in the press," she says.

But observers agree that the extremely well disciplined RPF army as well as the extent of the massacres indicate that they could not have happened without the knowledge or consent of the army leadership.

Carla Del Ponte's decision therefore resembles stepping into a political hornets' nest.

This is so as it is the duty of the Tribunal to go after the chief responsible. "The summit of the pyramid first," as a former senior official of the Tribunal explains.

And this means that the leader of the RPF forces, Major General Paul Kagame, Rwanda's current Minister of Defence and Rwandan strongman, will be among the prime suspects.

But since the Genocide Paul Kagame has become somewhat of a darling of the West and in particular the United States, which has made him one of her most important allies in Central Africa.

Investigators at the Tribunal have told *Aktuelt* that an investigation of the RPF can be extremely dangerous.

A source told *Aktuelt* in February that the team working on the RPF-massacres was "completely sealed off from the other investigators in Kigali. The measures they take to keep this under wraps bear witness to how scared they are. The other investigators are not even supposed to know about it," the person said.

But Del Ponte denies that the investigation of the RPF is taking place secretly, and says that she already in December informed the Rwandan government about the decision.

"[But] none of our investigation teams work in the open. "How could we indict anyone, if we made our inquiries in the press," she says.

Del Ponte, who took office in September, says that she has not been threatened by the RPF and denies being afraid of the consequences of the prosecution.