

The Rwandan genocide began on April 6, 1994. It lasted 100 days, and by its end, over 800,000 Rwandans, mostly Tutsis and moderate Hutus, were dead. Although the genocide was initiated when a plane carrying President Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu, was shot down just outside of Kigali, tensions between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority had been building for years. Before European colonization, Hutus and Tutsis may have merely represented different castes of the same Banyarwanda people, with Tutsis associated with the monarchy. Under German and Belgian rule, Tutsis were favored for positions in government and the division between the two groups was solidified through identification cards as the European colonizers used a divide-and-rule strategy. After the revolt against colonial powers in 1959, led by the Hutus, many Tutsis left the country and the ones who remained were relegated to secondary status. Beginning in 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a group of exiled Tutsis, began to occupy positions at the border of the country and the Rwandan Civil War began.

The music of Simon Bikindi and the radio station RTLMC played a significant role in the perpetration of the genocide. Bikindi's music drew on both modern and traditional influences and contained incendiary lyrics that promoted Hutu power. In particular, his use of the inanga, a traditional Rwandan instrument, appealed to a wide range of Rwandan listeners. Bikindi is now serving a prison sentence for inciting genocide.

Sophie Nzayisenga, the artist of "Inaganji," is also an inanga player. In fact, her father, Kirusu Thomas, was the last court musician of the mwami, the Tutsi royalty. She learned the inanga from him, and now performs across the country and has apprentices who she teaches the art of this traditional Rwandan instrument. In her music, Nzayisenga uses the inanga to bring reconciliation. Her songs call for all Rwandans to come together and celebrate their country and their common nationality. "Inanji" relates to themes of conflict, reconciliation, and creating a national identity, all of which are explored in *Rhythm of Change*.

Cate Paxton