

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

RESEARCH PROJECT

RESEARCH TOPIC:

W THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: A CASE
STUDY OF RWANDA AND BURUNDI
1990-2000

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree to any university

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25/10/2002
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This dissertation has been submitted to the university with our approval as university supervisors

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DEDICATION

**To my Loving Husband
Johnson Kigamba Kiniti**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe this accomplishment to God, his grace and favour that gave me the strength and confidence to complete my research project.

Special thanks to my husband Johnson Kiniti who has compassionately supported me throughout. Without his support and encouragement, enduring many sleepless nights, this research would not have been possible. I am also grateful to my son Kelvin for accommodating my long absences and quality time sacrificed.

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Abstract

This study focuses on the media's role in conflict management. It examines various views by scholars on their perception of the media's contribution in conflict management. What comes out clearly is that the media is an important factor for good and for ill in conflict management as it plays the roles of both an agent for or against conflict and its resolution.

The Rwanda and Burundi conflicts in the year 1990-2000 are the case study of this research. The research examines in particular the radio as the most powerful medium in most of African countries where the majority of the people are illiterate and too poor to afford television. It concludes that the radio was the major media outlet during the conflicts and in particular the National Radio Rwanda as well as the Radio Television Libres des Mille Collines(RTML).

The research also reveals that there are serious misgivings by the society over the behaviour of the media outlets particularly during conflicts due to their role in escalation and expects the media to be part and parcel of conflict resolutions by creating an environment of peaceful co-existence. In this a number of recommendations have been suggested on what the media should do to play the positive role.

The study also brings out the fact that media as an active actor in conflict management is a young phenomenon and its intervention in conflict however is still in its adolescence. This has been revealed by the lack in depth research in this field as well as lack of synergy between conflict managers and the media managers. The study therefore recommends that the media's role therefore needs to be established and integrated in conflict management strategies both at the regional level as well as internationally.

In conclusion the study brings out the fact that if concrete measures and strategies are put in place by the conflict managers as well as by the international community on how media should act in conflict situations, the media can be an effective tool for sending messages about peace, democracy, ethnic tolerance and methods of alternative conflict resolution. On the other hand if these measures are not affected, the media will continuously contribute to the worsening of existing tensions between and within countries by whipping up nationalistic feelings and ethnic hatred leading to a repeat of the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

List of Abbreviation

ADFL	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo
ADL	Rwandese Association for the Defence of Human Rights and Civil Liberties
AU	African Unity (formerly OAU)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNDD)	Conseil National pour Defense de la Democratie (National Council for Democratic Defense)
CNN	Cable News Network
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire)
EAC	East African Community
EU	European Union
FBIS	Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FDD	Defense dela Democratie (Democrtratic Defense)
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IRIN	Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa
MDR,	Mouvement Republicain Democrate (Democratic Republican Movement)
MRND	National Revolutionary Movement for Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PL	Parti Liberal (Liberal Party)
PSD	Parti Sociale Democrate(Social Democratic Party)
RPA	Rwadese Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
RTLTM	Radio Television Libres des Mille Collines
SCG	Search for Common Ground

UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VOA	Voice of America

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
List of Abbreviations.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	ix

Chapter One: The role of the Media in Conflict Management

Introduction.....	1
The Problem.....	4
Objectives.	6
Justification.....	6
Literature Review.....	9
Theoretical Framework.....	17
Hypothesis.....	19
Methodology.....	19

Chapter Two: An overview of Conflict in Rwanda , Burundi and the Role of the Media in International System

Introduction.....	21
Similarity in Rwanda and Burundi Conflicts.....	22
Background of Rwanda and Burundi Conflict.....	24
Overview of the Media as an actor in International System.....	31
International Response to Rwanda and Burundi conflict.....	36

Chapter Three: Media: A Tool for Escalation and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Burundi Conflicts 1990-2000

Introduction.....	42
Background.....	43
The Radio: Voice of Campaign in Rwanda and Burundi Conflicts.....	44
The Power of Hate Media: Radio Television Libres des Milles Collines..	48
Radio Rutomorangingo(Radio that tells the truth).....	58

Journalists accused and charged with incitement.....	61
Peace Media: A tool for Reconciliation.....	.68

Chapter Four: Critical Analyses of the media in Conflict Management

Introduction.....	72
Use of Media as a tool for Conflict Escalation.....	75
Monitoring and Jamming Hate Media.....	78
Peace Media :Countering Hate Media.....	81
Specialised training for Journalists in Conflict Management.....	84
Journalistic Code of Ethics.....	85
Media as an agent of peace.....	.87

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Introduction.....	97
Promotion of Peaceful co-existence.....	98
Conflict Escalation.....	100
Young phenomenon.....	102

Bibliography.....	104
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Chapter One

The Role of The Media in Conflict Management

1.0 Introduction:

"Conflict is omnipresent in modern life and one sixth of humanity is currently engaged in political or military strife."¹ According to Groom, conflict is not an unmitigated disaster for humankind but on the contrary, if there was no conflict, then we would all be dead, either literally or metaphorically. He further argues that conflict is the spur to learning, and the great characteristic of humankind is the ability to understand complex phenomena and to master them in such a way that one can put such learning about phenomena into use, for good or for ill.²

These conflicts present a challenge to the society and frequently involve external powers who are sometimes called to intervene or out of their own personal motives do get involved with the conflict for their own interests. Since regional conflicts involve serious stakes for the parties and carry with them the danger of transcending the original actors and becoming no longer regional, Zartman says that they deserve serious attention.³

For the purpose of this study, mass media includes the printed word and pictures namely: newspaper, magazines, television and radio. There are other forms of media not

¹Hannes Siebert, 'Debunking the Big O' in Melissa Baumann(ed) *Media and Conflict: Track Two*. vol 7 No. 4 December (1998) p.3

²A.J.R. Groom, *Approaches to Conflict and Cooperation in international Relations: Lessons from theory for practice*

<http://www.ukc.ac.uk/politics/publications/journals/kentpapers/groom1.html>

³Zartman, I.W., 'Conflict and Resolution: Contest, Cost and Change' in I.W.Zartman(ed), *Resolving Regional Conflicts: International Perspectives*, (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1991) p. 12.

covered by this study which have been named as the alternative media which includes posters, leaflets, newsletters, songs, and drama. These have been used together with the mass media in articulating issues to the society. Mass media is the focus on this particular study .

The media's role in conflicts management has been analysed by various writers. Some researchers hold the view that the media has the power to encourage conflict and violence while others admit that the media can assist in conciliation of warring parties. There are also others who argue that the media is out to make enormous business during conflict.

According to Taylor, "War, to put it quite bluntly, is good for the media business and despite the excessive costs of sending foreign correspondents to distant lands based in expensive hotels using up expensive satellite equipment and air time, armed conflict between two or more warring partners is precisely the type of event on which the media thrives".⁴

Other writers assert that there is no single cause of conflicts. For instance, Mwangiru argues that "conflicts at whatever level have many different causes which are as diverse as the conflicts, and the parties to them".⁵ In his view causes of conflict are essentially a question of the motives and reasons for conflict and there is no mono-causes of conflict⁶ With this in mind, one cannot avoid asking what more can be done in the common interest to reduce and prevent such conflict and the sufferings that accompanies it.

⁴Taylor M. Philip, 'War and Media' (keynote address delivered at a Conference on Military-Media Relations at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in 1995).

⁵M.Mwangiru, *Conflict: Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management*, (Nairobi: Watermark Publications, 2000) p. 4

⁶Ibid, p. 5

Conflicts are part of everyday life and as Reljic argues, 'it makes as much sense to wish to suppress conflict as it does to try halt the ageing process. He further argues that conflict is neither good nor bad, but is part of every social interaction, in marriage just as in diplomatic relations.⁷ The real issue facing the conflict manager is how conflicts should be managed.

This study focuses on The Great Lakes countries which include Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo(DRC), Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda. Uganda has been considered to be in the core of the Great Lakes conflict system while Kenya and Sudan on the periphery of that system. The international media and political attention turned to the Great Lakes region conflict in 1994 during the genocide in Rwanda and since then, these conflicts have spread into Burundi and the neighbouring countries. The crisis in the Great Lakes are interrelated and in essence political and their impacts are regional. Though a number of peace making efforts have been undertaken since 1993 by the United Nations in Burundi and Rwanda and by the then Organisation of African Unity(OAU), which is now African Unity(AU), the European Union(EU) and individual countries throughout the region, the conflicts in this region are still a major challenge to sustenance of peace in the region.

This first chapter of the study examines the problem in regard to the media, and reviews the literature available on the media and conflict with a view to identifying the gaps that needs to be filled by this research. It is followed by the justification of this study having identified the issue that needs to be addressed.

⁷Dusan Reljic, *Media and Conflicts in the Transcaucasus: The European Institute for the Media* (<http://www.internews.ru/books/transcaucasus/5.html>)

1.2 The Problem

While the ending of the Cold War has ceased confrontations between the superpowers, international stability has eroded in many other parts of the world. The case of intra-state conflicts have increased greatly to which the international community appears to have no adequate response. These intra-state conflicts have become a defining characteristic of the modern-post cold war world. Africa has experienced more of this internal conflicts than any other continent resulting in the trend towards "Afro-pessimism", the view that holds that Africa is doomed to remain in a state of ever-increasing conflict, making development and democratization almost an impossibility⁸.

The media's role in these intra and inter state in conflicts is often misconstrued. Many people assume that the media coverage has an undefined yet pivotal role in conflict management. Likewise the role of the media in conflict management is often assumed at conferences and seminars without question or any clear understanding of what this role is all about. In most cases, there is an undefined rush to judgment without a rigorous analysis.⁹

Conflict has been said to be endemic in society and an important ingredient in the society. Mwangi points out that of all the issues that cry for attention in the Post-Cold War era, that of how internal conflicts can be managed effectively is one of the most

⁸Donna Kipps, Seminar paper on 'African Media Reporting Conflict and Conciliation'
<http://journ.ru.ac.za/amd/conflict.htm>

⁹*Strategic Survey* International Institute for Strategic Business Studies (IISS).(London: Oxford University Press, 1996).

pressing, if not the dominant challenge.¹⁰ In situations where the media is dealing with conflict cases, the issues become more complex since the media has the power to help alleviate or escalate the situation by internationalizing an internal conflict.

Through internationalization of conflict, the previously 'internal' conflict becomes endowed with many international characteristics which render it no longer purely internal. This is well illustrated by the loss of life (including genocide) and violations of human rights which occur in internal conflicts such as those in Somalia, Rwanda, and Burundi. giving rise to international concern, since human rights are now considered to be an international and even universal concern.¹¹

The typical scenario of the media in conflicts is biased analysis of events hence acting as inciters of violence especially in the case of the Rwandan genocide which transcended the national boundaries. The media has often therefore singled out for escalating conflicts as has been experienced in also many parts of the world. With the rise of these protracted conflicts which affects greatly on regional and national security, it is crucial and urgent that the conflict managers in the region understand how media they operates to be in a position to use it as a tool for reconciliation nationally as well as at the international level.

¹⁰M Mwangi, 'Conflict and Peace Management in the Horn of Africa', Paper presented at the International Resource Group conference, Kenya; Mombasa November 6-9, 1996

¹¹ Ibid.

1.3 Objective of the study:

The broad objective of the study is to examine the role played by the media in conflict management

1.4 Specific Objective:

Critically examine the contribution made by the media in conflict management, establish the role played by the media in the great lakes conflict and seek to identify the appropriate timing of media intervention in conflict situation

1.5 Justification:

There is no doubt that the rapid development of telecommunications and media technologies has changed the very nature of the media and both have become an integral and important parts of events taking place. Information is a key component of power, power to change social, political and economical conditions for good or ill. In this age of almost universal dissemination by the electronic media, the use of the media as an instrument promoting the aims of the conflicting parties takes on a much more significant role than was the case in earlier conflicts. Often now, there are literally only moments between an event happening and its being reported in the media.

The need to give more attention to the role of the media in the management of conflict need therefore not be over emphasized. This issue is important because it raises a further question whether the media is an actor in the transformations that occur in the prosecution of the diplomacy of conflict management.

In regard to decision making on conflict situations by the leaders, Reljic argues that the power of the electronic media especially TV, increases the pressure on political decision-makers to act. Images of suffering and dead bodies lead politicians to take public stands along the lines of "the world must stand up against this".¹²

The media has become an important transnational actor in the world issues. It links the world instantly. In such cases as the Gulf war, break up of Soviet Union, fall of Berlin wall, conflicts in the Horn of Africa, Middle East, The Great Lakes have been all played - out in the glare of the world media. It is therefore important to note that intervention in conflict takes cognizance of the process of internalization where the media plays a prominent role.

In the great lakes conflict system, what has happened in the past particularly in Rwanda is likely to repeat itself. If the conditions that led and fuelled the genocide are not removed, genocide will re-occur in many other parts of the world. The setting up of tribunals, active involvement of the international community, without Africans finding solutions for its own mess in regard to protracted conflicts will not lead to a lasting solution.

Yet as Havernmans has indicated, using the media to defuse tension and prevent the outbreak of violence is a young phenomenon. The value of mobilizing newspapers, radio,

¹²Dusan Reljic, *Media and conflicts in the Transcaucasus*
(<http://www.internews.ru/books/transcaucasus/12.html>)

television and other media is the quest for peace and has not been thoroughly evaluated. This is evident from the literature reviewed in that concrete and comprehensive literature is lacking.

On the other hand though efforts to mobilise the media for peace are taking place at varying levels, of all the actors that are to be convinced of the necessity and potential of the media's role in conflict prevention, the most important group is the media itself. This is because the honest perception of journalist themselves is that media is supposed to stand on the sidelines, watch, analyse, report what is happening without becoming part of the action or solution.

In spite of the various measures that have been put in place to manage conflict in societies, conflict still predominates in the world states. This has clearly been demonstrated by numerous interstate wars among nation states. Various important studies have been carried out on conflict, conflict management and specifically on the actors in conflict management but the escalating number of conflicts at interpersonal, national and international level, calls for further research on the role played by media.

Further research would contribute to usable documentation in coming up with a model for programs in conflict management. Development of a model on best practices in reporting conflict would come in handy by providing concrete examples of coverage that are worthy of emulation. There is a strong case therefore in carrying out this research and coming up with concrete and comprehensive recommendations to not only the

conflict managers in the use of the media as a tool for conflict management but also to the media itself to take up the responsibility as an actor in both internal and conflict management. This study therefore seeks to make an academic contribution to conflict management by enriching the understanding of media as an important actor in conflicts.

1.6 Literature Review

This section covers literature review on conflict and media. It focuses on only the scholars who have researched and written information on the media involvement in inter and intrastate conflicts. It is not divided into any sub sections as it only reviews the literature on various roles the media has played in conflict situations.

Defining the media as a means of communication which stands between events, projected or actual and the people, Hudson and Stanier writing on war and the media argue that the impact of the media on conflict can be traced back to the beginning of recorded history, and that the manner in which the news of war has reached its audiences has evolved remarkably over the past 150 years. In their view, war is among the most horrific of activities pursued by mankind and that under the cloak of military splendour and the prospects of glory, war is cruel, bloody and destructive. According to them, war reporting however makes brilliant news, offers excitement, anxiety and horror and sometimes despair¹³.

¹³M. Hudson and J. Stanier, *The War and the Media: A Random Searchlight*, Thrupp: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1997 p.1

In their conclusion, Hudson and Stainer note that the influence of the media is not direct. It is the perception that politicians have of its effect that can have considerable repercussions on the onset, course and ending of war. They note that eighty per cent of politicians in the world live in constant fear of what the media might say and that this fear becomes almost an obsession during times of armed conflict¹⁴.

On the other hand, Siebert argues that in most conflicts, the media becomes the only medium of communication between warring parties in the absence of formal or informal negotiations processes. He further notes that during the negotiations process, the media becomes a channel for opinion and information sharing between the negotiations and their constituencies. Siebert also points out that during the post-agreement phase of conflicts, the media forms a critical part of monitoring such agreements which he calls conventional watching role providing a forum for ongoing dialogue as well as becoming a critical tool to help ensure long-term accountability from leaders to the people¹⁵.

Galtung looks at conflict as reported by the media in either low road or high road. The low road Galtung argues is dominant in the media and sees conflict as a battle. According to him, the "reporting model is that of a military command who advances, capitulates short of their goals and losses are counted in terms of numbers killed or wounded and material gain. On the other hand, he notes that the high road is the road

¹⁵See Hannes Siebert, 'Debunking the Big O' in *Melissa Baumann(ed) Media and Conflict: Track Two*. vol 7 No. 4 December (1998) p.3

of peace media and focuses on conflict transformation. Good reporting on conflict according to him is not a compromise rather it favours peace journalism and opposes war journalism.¹⁶

According to Lippmann, the advent and proliferation of information communication technology has nurtured the role of news media in conflict management and has in turn expanded the scope and the role of the media in the internationalization of internal conflicts. Public opinion resulting from what Lippmann calls 'trustworthy' pictures erected in the mind of a variety of actors by media reports of world events has helped to internationalize conflicts that would have otherwise gone without the diplomatic intervention of the international community.¹⁷

Manoff on the other hand argues that it is of critical importance that the international community explore the potential of the media to prevent conflict, precisely because "taken together the diverse mass media technologies, institutions, professional, norms and practices constitute one of the most powerful forces now shaping the lives of individual and the fate of the peoples and nations". He further points out that the media constitute a major potential which help prevent and moderate social violence and begs to be discussed, evaluated and where appropriate mobilized. Manoff outlines potential media roles in the prevention and management of conflict including channeling

¹⁶See Johan Galtung, 'The high road and low road' in Melissa Baumann(ed) *Media and Conflict: Track two vol 7 No. 4 December (1998) pp.7-8*

¹⁷Lippman, W., *Public Opinion*, New York: Pelican 1943. Also see Kunczik, M., *Images of Nations and International relations*, Bonn: Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung, 1990)

communication between parties, educating confidence building, countering misperceptions, analysing conflict identifying the interests underlying the issues, framing and defining the conflict as well as solution building.¹⁸

Mwagiru writing on internationalization of Internal conflict, points out that the media has been an important internationalizing agent of internal conflict. According to him, the evolution and development of the electronic media especially, has had profound effects on the development of conflict and its internationalization. Mwagiru further argues that in terms of conflict, the media immediately internationalizes an internal conflict. He cites the case of conflicts in Burundi and Rwanda which have become known as they unfold, as does a famine in Sudan or elsewhere which has important effects because it prompts the demand for action, including intervention.¹⁹

Summarizing the role of the media, O'Hefreman argues that mass media informs people about wars, disasters, high jackings and elections around the world, often within hours of the event. In providing this near-instant notification of what is going on globally, the mass media serve distinct roles as rapid information sources. According to him, policy makers use the media for immediate useful information, they also use the media in the early stages of an issue to make decisions, that are often the only source of policy information in crisis situations.²⁰

¹⁸R. K. Manoff, 'Potential media roles in conflict prevention and management' in *Melissa Baumann(ed) Media and Conflict: Track Two*. vol 7 No. 4 December (1998) p.11

¹⁹M. Mwagiru, *Conflict : Theories, Processes and Institutions of Management* (Nairobi: Watermark Publications, 2000) pp 66-67

²⁰ Patrick, O'Herferman, *Mass Media and American Foreign Policy: Insider Perspectives on the Global Journalism and the Foreign Policy Process* (Norwood: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1991) p.38

Hieber argues that conflict is omnipresent in modern life and one sixth of humanity is currently engaged in political or military strife. In recent years, media has emerged as an essential tool in combating the tragic effects of war on civilians by providing them with long-term and sometimes life-saving social support through the mechanism of information. He further argues that there is a general consensus that media can play a significant role in conflict situations, not only in provoking hate and killing, but also in promoting conflict resolution, management and reconciliation.²¹

Hieber looks at media intervention in conflict in two broad categories; the traditional journalism which seeks to report conflicts for a general audience in a manner aimed at promoting peace rather than inflaming existing tensions and the second seeks to focus on media designed for specific audiences with pre-determined agenda.²²

In Weaver's view, "The idea that television can in some way prevent conflicts has emerged as a result of the effect that television images have on the conduct of foreign policy." He draws an example from the Bosnia conflict whereby media attention played a major role in preventing the complete defeat of the Sarajevo government forces. Weaver further argues that Media effort is not guaranteed to influence conflict. He

²¹Loretta Hieber, 'Media as intervention' Track two vol 7 No. 4 December (1998)
http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/two/7_4/p16_intervention.html

²²ibid

further questions what would happen if there are no guarantees, and should the media still make every effort to stop wars. Weaver points out that the media can play a part in preventing or influencing conflicts by producing fair and accurate reports that inform the audience, otherwise the media can have no role in trying to prevent or stop conflicts, but only in fighting them on behalf of one side against another.²³

Matic argues that broadcast media has played an important role in fomenting war in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and other conflict regions. According to him, absolute control over the media is often manipulated to spread hate and destructive propaganda and as a result conflicts multiply and become more brutal, but just as media may contribute to the outbreak of conflicts, so may they help to prevent or resolve them. He cites the most successful example of the use of broadcast media, in this case radio, to bring peace in the wake of conflict and help revive normal life, being found in Cambodia whereby the United Nations in line with its peacekeeping.²⁴

Additionally Gowing the role of the media in conflict is a topic that often conjures up two negative images. One is of nationalistic propaganda aimed at heightening tensions among ethnic and religious groups, which serves as a catalyst for violence, as was the case in Bosnia and Rwanda and the other image is of CNN quickly rushing to the scene of conflict to provide the world graphic and comprehensive reporting and quickly

²³Tim Weaver, *'The End of War: Can Television Stop it'* in Melissa Baumann(ed) *Media and Conflict: Track Two* vol 7 No. 4 December (1998) p.21

²⁴Veran Matic, *Media and Security*, Radio B92
(<http://www.medienhilfe.ch/Projekte/FRY/Belgrade/B92/verandia.htm>)

leaving once the bloodshed is over. He argues that like the misplaced assumptions of the power of the CNN factor in conflict management, most people readily assume that there is, or must be, a direct cause-and-effect relationship between media coverage and the chances for either preventing, preempting, or limiting a conflict and the emotions created by vivid, gruesome TV images add weight to this assumption. ²⁵

Gowing is also quick to point out that the evidence suggests otherwise because on the other hand, conflicts are now predominantly of a sub state and intrastate nature in what are described as "sick state" cases. He is of the view that rarely is there media coverage of a conflict that is about to explode. It is war, and the images of fighting, that catalyses TV coverage, in particular, and not the vaguer possibility of a conflict breaking out at some indefinable moment . He concludes that when it comes to prevention, media coverage is usually too late to help. ²⁶

Taylor argues that in wartime, the media in fact serve a variety of roles. He notes that with information, they can convey a sense of the fighting to a public divorced from its actual horrors or, with entertainment, they can provide a sense of relief or escape to a public more directly involved, such as, in a blockade or bombing campaign. ²⁷

According to Taylor, 40 minutes isn't enough which war and the media interact directly

²⁵Nik Gowing, 'Media Coverage: Help or Hinderance In conflict Prevention' 1997 (<http://www.ccpdc.org/pubs/media/media.htm>)

²⁶Ibid

²⁷. Philip Taylor M, 'War and Media' op cit

in the form of war reporting and its wider impact. According to him, this is because the very processes, by which war reports are gathered at source, packaged by journalists and disseminated to a wider audience are subject to a wide spectrum of influences ranging from battlefield censorship to broadcasting standards of taste and decency in the newsrooms far beyond it. Taylor also notes that in between, they are subjected to such fundamental factors as where they are allowed to be physically located, self-censorship, the means by which information is communicated from the war zone to the outside world, deception and misinformation campaigns, official information policy and propaganda.²⁸

According to Hamilton the mass media have a tremendous potential to contribute to inter-ethnic and interracial understanding and bridge-building by practicing objective, fact-based reporting that avoids stereotyping or stirring up rumours. He argues that too often, however, the media play a more negative role, feeding the violence by highlighting differences, promoting stereotypes, emphasizing extremism, exacerbating tensions, minimizing constructive initiatives, and simply ignoring whole communities. Hamilton gives an example of the years leading up to the breakup of Yugoslavia whereby propaganda campaigns waged by government-controlled Serbia TV and Radio forged a consensus of nationalism and twisted moral justification for the carnage of the Bosnian War.³³

³²Nwuneli, Onura and Olatunji Dare. The Coverage of Angolan Crisis in the Nigerian Press'. Unilag Communication Review, Vol. 1 No.1,pp20-23

³³Denise Hamilton, 'How to Conduct a Multi-Ethnic Team Reporting Project' New York: Center for War, Peace, and the News Media 1997

After critically analyzing the literature above, it is evident that a number of scholars have researched on the issue of conflict management concentrating more on the causes of conflict and giving suggestions on how to resolve in particular ethnic conflict. There is little evidence of thorough concentration on effective ways that conflict managers could make good use the existing literature on how to use the media in conflict management.. According to the literature available many writers acknowledge that the media has a positive and negative role, but there exists no literature on the depth of this role. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by identifying specific ways in which the media can be effectively utilized in contributing to the conflict management process.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The main theoretical concepts to be used in the development of the argument in this research is derived from the realist and conflict research paradigms.

Conflict research paradigm aims at establishing legitimized relationships in the society, which are self-sustaining. The paradigm argues that conflictual behaviour arises from the actors perception of their environment and therefore, to resolve conflicts, one has therefore to manipulate the environment that generates conflicts. This paradigm only considers a conflict resolved when the post-conflict relationship is legitimized and self-sustaining. It also argues that conflicts should be resolved without the imposition of conditions on the parties to the conflict, which results to relationships being established based on the understanding and acceptance of the parties about their relationship.

The conflict research paradigm also approaches conflict from the perspective of negotiation and analysis through which the parties can resolve their differences. This paradigm will guide in analysing how the media can be part and parcel in manipulating the societal environment to create conditions of peace. It will also be the basis of argument on the media playing apposite role in negotiations and supporting the warring parties resolve their differences through positive reporting. This paradigm will also guide in finding out how post- conflict relationships can be established and legitimised through media support without relying on the international community in resolving intrastate conflicts.

The second theory that guides this study is the realism theory, which argues that the international system has no common authority and no central government endowed with means of coercion. Its structure is anarchical and the dominant idea is that of power and its manipulation. Realists assume that the international system is characterised by a high degree of instability due to the lack of an overall sovereign power to constrain the behavior of the states and the notion of balance of power has been and remains crucial to the operation of the international system. The writers chiefly associated with realism include among others Reinhold Niebuhr, Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, Walter Lippman, George Schwarzenberger, Martin Wrigth and Raymond Aron.³⁴ According to the realists, conflict is based on the level of state and is primarily an inter-state play and that any conflict has to do with struggle for power and domination.

Based on this, this research will look at the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi as a result of struggle for power and dominion among the Tutsi and Hutus. To sustain the level

playing ground whereby there exists a balance of power, the study will evaluate how the media can play the role of supporting and sustaining this balance of power for peaceful coexistence among the two major ethnic groups in Rwanda and Burundi.

1.8 Hypothesis

1. The media greatly contributes in conflict management and is a necessary player in conflict resolutions
2. The media is an agent of escalation of conflicts and a threat to international peace if not checked.

1.9 Methodology:

This study has five chapters covering the overview back ground information on Rwanda and Burundi conflicts from 1990-2000 as well as how the international community as one of the actors in conflict management responded and failed to resolve to the conflict.. It also gives an in-depth research on use of the media in the two countries conflict emphasizing more on the role of the radio in manipulating the environment as well as in legitimizing the relationship in both countries during the and after the conflicts. Chapter two and three forms the basis of critical analysis in chapter four while the last chapter covers the conclusion and recommendations.

³⁴See Hull, Hedley, " *The theory of International Politics 1919-1969*" in Porter, B (ed), 1972 Oxford: Oxford University Press p.23

1.9.1 Primary Sources

This study will use both primary and secondary data. The primary sources will include formal and informal interviews. These will involve interviews with the media houses both local and international that are based in Nairobi as well as the practitioners. Visits will be made to organizations that deal with conflict management issues e.g the UN offices in Nairobi, UN tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, East African Community (EAC) and the Centre for Conflict Research in Nairobi, whereby information will be gathered.

1.9.2 Secondary sources

A substantial amount of literature on conflict management and the role the media plays is available as soft copies on the internet as books, periodicals such as journals, daily newspapers, pamphlets, audio visual materials and posters. This study will also rely on these materials that are available in local University Libraries specifically University of Nairobi, Private Universities such as the United States International University-Africa Catholic University of Eastern Africa and Daystar University.

Chapter Two

2.0 An Overview of Conflict in Rwanda, Burundi and the Role of the Media in International System

2.1 Introduction

Chapter one gave an overview of the study in terms of the problem to be investigated justification, objectives of the study, the literature review and the methodology of the study. According to the various writers reviewed, media is one of the key actors in conflict management, needs to be investigated and its place established for effective handling of both intra and inter-state conflicts. This is for the simple reason that media outlets are among the prominent forces that shape public opinion and thus form the decision either to contain or escalate ethnic conflict.

Majority of the various writers reviewed in chapter one raise their concerns on the destructive part the media plays in exacerbating conflicts. The role of the media particularly in Rwanda is greatly cited as an example of the catastrophic damage that can be wrought by irresponsible reporting which sets the stage of violent conflicts. Chapter two examines in brief the background and similarity of the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi as well as an overview of the attempted international community response to the conflict. It also gives a broad and general overview of the media as an actor in the international system issues.

2.2 Background: Similarity in Rwanda and Burundi conflicts

2.2.1 General Introduction on Conflicts:

Regional Conflicts present a challenge for the maintenance of world order and the resolution and management of international political issues. They frequently involve external powers and sometimes superpowers are called to intervene or they bring themselves into the conflict for their own perceived interests in the parties or in the outcomes. Since regional conflicts involve serious stakes for the parties and carry with them the danger of transcending the original actors and becoming no longer regional, they deserve serious attention ¹

Many people and institutions consider conflict to be an inherently negative dynamic. In much of the academic and policy literature, the term 'conflict' refers to situations of mass violence. This perspective is understandable in the light of the destruction wrought by armed hostilities, but it is analytically misleading. The reality is that social and political conflict is inevitable, normal and ubiquitous in all societies, which comprise diverse groups. Whether ethnicity, religion, politics or class defines the groups, they have different needs, interests, values and access to power and resources.

¹Zartman, I.W., 'Conflict and Resolution: Contest, Cost and Change' in I.W.Zartman(ed), *Resolving Regional Conflicts: International Perspectives*, Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1991 pp 11-12.

These differences necessarily generate competition and conflict. There are no single causes of these regional conflicts. At whatever level, conflicts have many different causes and these causes are as diverse as the conflicts and the parties to them²

In Africa four related but conceptually distinct issues have been identified as being responsible for conflict. These include Identity which relates to how the individual sees himself in relation to socially, politically and territorially delineated groups. Participation denoting how well an individual considers his access to political and economic decision making, while distribution referring to the level of perceived fairness and justice in the sharing of resources such as land, financial and educational opportunities is the third cause. Legitimacy is the fourth cause and refers to perceptions of the rightness of the rules governing political competition³. These causes overlap and can often reinforce each other.

The United Nations has noted the following economic causes of conflicts particularly in Africa; A hostile international economic environment and African vulnerability to the changes in external conditions, external debts burden, shift from global economy based on the exploitation of natural resources

²M.Mwagiru, *Conflict: Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management*, (Nairobi: Watermark Publications, 2000)p. 4

³ M.H. Ross, *The Management of Conflict: Interpretations and Interests in Comparative perspective*, (New Haven: Yale University press, 1993)

to one based on exploitation of knowledge and information. The declining national incomes accompanied by reduction in social spending food insecurity and increasing poverty and economic inequities as well as poor economic performance are also other causes.⁴

2.2.2. Rwanda and Burundi conflict

Rwanda and Burundi have shared a history of similar conflict that has resulted in massive deaths and internal refuge flows on a large scale. Both share many characteristics such as size, geography, language, culture, economy and historical experience. They have a similar population of similar groups which can be broken down as 85 percent Hutu, 14 percent Tutsi and 1 percent Twa. ⁵ Since gaining independence in the early 1960s, Rwanda has been controlled by the majority Hutus, while in Burundi Tutsi maintained their status as the dominant minority. The primary blame for genocide in Rwanda has been with the Hutus elites while in Burundi the blame rests on the extremists Tutsi elites.

Hutu leaders in Rwanda and Tutsi leaders in Burundi, both at the national as well as local level have skillfully exploited inter-group tensions and violence in

⁴G. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of genocide, 1959-1994*,(Kampala Fountain Publishers, 1995

⁵ United Nations Association Bulletin, 3 September 1996

the neighbouring state in order to justify their methods of political monopoly (dictatorship), physical exclusion (provoking refugee flows) and physical elimination. The politicians in both countries have employed an effective nightmare vision, which runs something like 'look across the border and see what will happen to us (Hutus in Rwanda, Tutsi in Burundi) if we lose power and they takeover'.⁶

In the early days, both Hutus and Tutsi had different genetic pools, but similar lifestyles and intermarriage promoted generic resemblance overtime. Though Hutus are described as short, squat, broad featured, with darker skin while Tutsi are depicted as tall, lighter-skinned, with long necks and narrow noses, more of European appearance, the great mass of people is in between hence difficult to distinguish who is who⁷. In Rwanda both tribes speak Kinyarwanda, which is closely related to the Kirundi, the language spoken by both the Tutsi and Hutus in Burundi. But in both countries the two major tribes perceive themselves as distinct and competitive.

Since 1994, Rwanda has been linked with genocide and its neighbour Burundi has also been associated with a high and continuing level of violence. The tragedy of both lies in population pressures and the use of ethnicity as an

⁶Mike Davis, Report on Hutus and Tutsi in Burundi . 1998

<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidem/mar/Burundi.htm>

⁷Ibid

Instrument of political mobilization. (Evans pp19) Polarisation of the two main ethnic groups-the Hutu and the Tutsi, dating back from the period of prior to Rwanda's independence in July 1962 and from the 1960's in Burundi. From the late 1950s onwards, the political elite in both Rwanda and Burundi used ethnicity in their struggle for power and state resources.⁸ They also used violence as a means of promoting ethnic group consciousness.

Since the late 1960's, ethnic tension in Burundi has been high, and the Hutu and Tutsi systematically demonized each other further with each violent episode. The Tutsi fostered the fear that the demographic majority would murder the minority, what they termed as the "Hutu Peril" The Hutu for their part believed that the Tutsi would attempt to restore numerical balance by killing the Hutu⁹ From 1970 onwards, each new episode in the history of Hutu-Tutsi violence strengthened the negative perception, however distorted, each side had of the other.

In the case of Rwanda, it has experienced Africa's worst attempted genocide in modern times and is still recovering from the shock. The country has been beset by ethnic tension associated with the traditionally unequal relationship between

⁸Steve Utterwulge, 'Rwanda Protracted Social Conflict: Considering the subjective perspective in conflict resolution strategies'. *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution* Issue 2:3/ August 1999

⁹*Rwanda; Death, despair and Defiance*, African rights rev.ed. 1995,pp34-35

the dominant Tutsi minority and the majority Hutus. The civil war in Rwanda began in 1990 with an invasion of Tutsi rebels from Uganda who had organized themselves into the Rwanda Patriotic Front(RPF) and were the sons and daughters of Tutsi exiles who had been chased from Rwanda in 1959.

In 1993, under international pressure, the government of President Habyarimana and the RPF rebel movement had negotiations in Arusha, Tanzania and signed an Accord which provided for the establishment of a broad-based transitional government, the repatriation of refugees, the integration of all military forces into one national army and the holding of democratic elections. The implementation of this accord was to be carried out by the UN force (UNAMIR) which had been deployed to Rwanda but the extremist in the Hutu refused to accept the formulated power sharing proposal and prepared the genocidal plan to eliminate all of the RPF potential supporters¹⁰.

The most notorious of these wars began in April 1994 in Rwanda with the shooting down of the plane carrying President Juvenal Habyarimana near the capital Kigali of which the Hutus alleged that it was the work of the Tutsi rebels. This therefore triggered what appeared to be a coordinated attempt by Hutus to eliminate the Tutsi population.

¹⁰*Rwanda; Death, despair and Defiance*, African rights rev.ed. 1995,pp34-35

On the night of 6 April 1994, as Rwadese proverb goes "Imana yirirwa ahandi igataha i Rwanda" meaning that God spends the day elsewhere, but always comes back to spend the night in Rwanda" many Tutsi and Hutu did not see God but the devil's darkness as the killing machine started in Rwanda. It ended a few months later, but not before up to 800,000 people had been killed¹, a tragedy that shook the whole world by its brutality and speed and by the sheer number of people killed and fleeing as well as the large number of people who participated in the genocide.

After this some two million Hutus fled to the present Democratic Republic of Congo and regrouped themselves in refugee camps. In November 1996, a then Zairean rebel army forcibly evacuated the refugee camps in then Zaire, and most of the refugees returned to Rwanda. Some however including the militia members who led the genocide, fled deeper into then Zaire, and efforts to send them back to Rwanda continues even today. There have been instances of renewed violence with the return of Hutu refugees, many of whom were responsible for the genocide.

The conflict in Rwanda can therefore be interpreted as a power struggle along predominantly ethnic lines between the majority Hutus and the minority Tutsi. The root of this conflict lies to a great extent in the colonial era when the Belgian

authorities exacerbated ethnic divisions. They did this by perceiving the Tutsi minority as aristocratic people with natural aptitude for ruling and nominated large number of Tutsi to leading positions within the administration while the majority Hutus were perceived as a class of workers and farmers.

According to the RPF, there is no significant difference between the Hutus and the Tutsi, they are both Banyarwanda, speaking the same language, sharing the same culture and territory but driven apart by the colonial divisive politics of colonial rule and the indoctrination of extremists. On the other hand, behind the ethnic strife, lies a conflict between the elites over access to the country's scarce resources, which are mostly accessible to those who control state power. Also this conflict is also to a large extent about access to the land, housing and jobs. This supports the concern that was raised by the steering committee for joint evaluation of emergency assistance to Rwanda arguing that 'If the world community cannot learn from Rwanda, it cannot learn at all'.¹¹

The principal problem in Burundi is the ethnic conflict between the majority Hutus and the minority Tutsi who have historically held power and still control the military.

¹¹The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience by the Steering Committee for Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda by the Danish Foreign Ministry, 1996. p 60

The ethnic clashes are fuelled by a continuing power struggle between Hutu and Tutsi political elites who are trying to secure access to scarce economic resources through control of state power.

The violent ethnic confrontation of 1993 is seen as the starting point of the current phase in Burundi's civil war. In response to the installation of a Hutu majority government, brought to power by the first democratic elections earlier that year, elements in the Tutsi-led army staged an attempted coup in October 1993. Their attempt failed, but they killed the democratically elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye and many other senior Hutu members of government. The events triggered ethnic massacres of Tutsis by Hutus in revenge while the Tutsi army killed many Hutus in retaliation. At least 100,000 people were killed, among them many children and elderly, often slaughtered in an extremely brutal way.¹²

The spiraling violence and the diminishing influence of the government, which was run by moderate Hutus and Tutsis, triggered a bloodless coup d'etat in July 1996, bringing Major Paul Buyoya to power. Since Buyoya's take-over, the intensity of the conflict has decreased.¹³

¹²Mike Davis, *Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi* op cit

¹³Griggs R.A., *The Great Lakes conflict: Strategies for building long term peace*, 1997

While the conflict between the Burundian army and rebel movements continued although violence considerably diminished in 1998 and 1999, massacres still occur.

2.3 Overview of the Media as an Actor in International System

Media today is far more intrusive than ever before and has indeed complicated the business of relations at international system as well as relations between nations states. It scrutinizes every tentative idea, every proposal aimed at teasing the other side and forces public responses from different political formations within the country and from across the border. Media power is a reality that cannot be wished away and that political leaders have come to terms with the new media realities in the rough and tumble of domestic politics.¹³ The international system should therefore recognise the new media imperative.

Media, particularly the television, has the capacity to influence the formulation and conduct of both internal and international policy decisions. The media news is described as a potent new factor in the manner in which states develop and implement their international relations. Advocates of the new role of the media suggest that the media rather than governments have become the new decision

¹³C. Raja Mohan- Media and foreign policy-Online edition of India's National Newspaper, Monday July, 2001

makers in an area long thought to be particularly inaccessible to non-governmental influences.

A practical example in the international arena is the major role the media information has played, even dominantly in U.S. foreign policy during the Kosovo conflict. In 1992 until 1995 Presidents Bush and Clinton did not believe the war in Bosnia threatened U.S. interests sufficiently to send in U.S. ground troops. But the continuous coverage of carnage and humanitarian suffering ensured that the US had to deal with the conflict nonetheless¹⁴.

Similarly, when organized violence broke out following East Timor's referendum on independence, it was not perceived initially as a major issue on the administration's agenda. Television images and journalists questioning the administration's policy ensured that it was on the White House agenda.

Nonetheless, today's media-rich world has not replaced the need for strong diplomatic leadership but if anything it has reinforced that need. Neither does the media replace confidential diplomacy but rather compliment it. Leaders in Washington may get news of a crisis first from CNN rather than embassy cables

¹⁴Warren P. Strobel; *The Media: Influencing Foreign Policy in the information Age*
http://www.usembassy.state.gov/posts/ja4/wwvhforpol_804.html

but diplomats are still necessary to provide detailed political reporting from foreign lands. Foreign policy makers routinely use the news media to deliver messages to foreign leaders, particularly during crises when diplomatic contact with an adversary may be cut off.

In times of international crisis, it is not unusual for the media of states, whatever their private reservations, to lend broad support to the policies of their governments and thus play a role in building societal support for whatever measures their governments opt to take to resolve the crisis. Though this is the case, there is also a strong feeling especially by government official that media reporting does not bring out the true picture of issues. The former British secretary Rifkind had this to say; "In complex conflicts, it is difficult within the constraints in which journalists operate to portray a balanced picture which properly represents all the factors in a conflict"¹⁵ It is no wonder then that most government officials treat media news with considerable caution if not with skepticism.

The former U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns was of the same view when he highlighted that the challenge for them in government is to balance the need to feed what he called "beast of television" against the more

¹⁵Nick Gowing, Media Coverage: Help or Hindrance in Conflict Prevention , <http://www.ccpdc.org/pubs/media/media.htm>)

natural and wise human instinct to reflect before speaking.¹⁶

The Internet and other recent technological advances have clearly affected how decisions affecting international systems are made. The rapid transmission of information through the media with means that officials must make decisions and state policies publicly, more rapidly than they might have planned. Telling the media and the public to wait for answers is always an option but usually one that makes officials be portrayed as unprepared

The media has also influenced heavily gender setting in the international arena. The recent US bombing in September 11th 2001 and the decision made thereafter to bomb Afghanistan received heavy media coverage which woeed many states in stating their stand for or against the US. The heavy coverage of hostages, hijackings, assassinations and bombings in the Middle East during the last quarter of 1985 clearly elevated the issue of terrorism on the agenda for public debate and thereby helped to determine the degree of attention that the Government paid to the formulation of policies designed to counteract terrorism domestically and internationally. Similarly, in 1987-88, the extensive, graphic coverage of the protestants in Gaza and the West Bank and of Israel's reported "iron fist" response elevated the issue of Israel policy on the Canadian political

¹⁶Nicholas Burns, Havard International Journal of Press/Politics, Vol. 1, No.4, Fall 1996, p.12).

agenda, just as it occurred during the 1982 war in Lebanon¹⁷. Both Private diplomatic and public responses to Israel behaviour were called for as a result of the scope and character of the coverage it received.

International public opinion is also heavily affected by media coverage. The nature of media's coverage of the Middle East arguably had an impact on public opinion and public mood, and in turn, had some effect on policymaking decision. The late 1985 portrayal of radical Palestinians and their allies as perpetrators or sponsors of violent actions influenced the public's perception of these actors in such a way that it facilitated the Canadian Government's participation in the economic sanctions organized by the U.S. against Libya in January 1986 as well as its rather oblique support of the subsequent U.S. naval and their attacks on that country¹⁸.

In International Conflict Management, the media is an important diplomatic player in conflicts as well as potentially influential player in diverse conflict management process. In order for the media to consolidate this role, it must be accepted that the media does not operate in a vacuum and therefore cannot be disinterested player especially in cases where there is loss of life as well as

¹⁷Choquet, M.(1984).Canadian mass media and the Middle East. In Tareq Ismael (ed), *Canadian Arab relations, policy and perspectives*, Ottawa: Jerusalem International Publishing House. pp.75-85

¹⁸B.E Burton and T.A. Keenleyside" *Of Mice and Monsignors: The Press and Canadian Policy towards the Middle East*
<http://www.cjc-online.ca/cjc/Backissues/16.3/burton.html>

destruction of communities. It is thus a moral issue that the media contribute to the conflict and peace management process by bringing in that moral perspective to bear on those engaged in the conflict and its managers¹⁹

It is therefore a valid argument that the media is an important actor in diplomacy, foreign policy and conflicts which are all interrelated and can no longer be restricted to national borders. It makes the interaction between domestic politics and diplomacy no longer poles apart as had been argued by Morgenthau. Media causes the necessary linkages and what was previously perceived as domestic or internal matters becomes an issue of international importance instantly. In recent times the issue of the world, as a global village has been made possible by the media communication.

2.4 International Response to Rwanda and Burundi conflict

Van Eck researching on the Great Lakes region notes that the so-called international community in Many African conflicts has at best been ham-handed and at worst been totally counter-productive. In most cases the national interests of the intervening western countries and not the interests of the people of the country in the country in the conflict have determined the nature of the

¹⁹Makumi Mwangi: Images of conflict: The media and the Diplomacy of Peace management

Intervention²⁰. It is no wonder that the attempt by the international community to resolve conflicts in Africa is littered with dismal failures. In many cases these failed interventions have left in their wake consequences that have made the conflicts even more intractable and difficult to solve.

Although the conflicts within Burundi and Rwanda and later Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), provoked major international concern, they were difficult for outsiders to understand and even more difficult for them to deal with. The West was shocked by reports of human-rights abuses that escalated into massacres genocide and mass migration. The Hutu Genocide in Rwanda and the killing in Burundi exceeded the mortality rate of any other conflict (Cambodia apart) since the second world war.²¹

International actors had very thin structures and agents on the ground in both Burundi and Rwanda. Various accounts suggest that information was often limited and contradictory. There was no international or regional intervention force that would have gotten into grips with the reality on the ground.

²⁰Jan Van Eck, *Trends, Characteristics and Alternative ways of resolving conflicts*, Paper presented a conference on the Great Lakes Crisis, arranged by the Centre for Policy Studies, February, 1999.

²¹Evans, Glynne *Responding to Crisis in the African Great Lakes*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1997)p7

As in Rwanda and Burundi, efforts to create a peacekeeping force faltered more than once. The belligerents showed open hostility. The only actual intervention was by France in Burundi, but to evacuate foreign Nationals.

In Rwanda, the French had 2,500 troops awaiting a proposed 5,500-man UN force to land which never did. Even then the French troops created safe corridors to filter the rump Rwanda army and militia to safety in Zaire. This action provoked the Rwanda Patriotic Front who saw the French as supporting the vanquished villains of the former government²². A number of peace making efforts have been undertaken since 1993 by the United Nations in Burundi and Rwanda and by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the European Union and individual countries throughout the region.

Burundi being a former Belgian colony within French sphere of influence had impinged little on Western consciousness before 1988. Apart from Belgium, France and the United States, few countries had diplomatic representation in Burundi. The assassination of President Ndadaye in 1993 and the scale and level of the subsequent killings and refugee outflows caused outrage in the US and Europe. US development aid and military assistance were suspended and the

²²Time International, The perils of Peace, July 18,1994

coup leaders and National Council of Public Safety were held responsible for the safety of all the prisoners they had taken. Europe followed the US lead. France, in whose embassy the remnants of the Hutu government took refuge, suspended military and economic aid on 23 October although it did not withdraw its military advisory training team until 1996. The only country that is still involved in Democratic republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi is Belgium though has a policy of maintaining influence from a distance.²³

Some international responses are also realised from the United Nations Assistance missions. In the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda in 1993, countries like Belgium , Canada France supplied their troops. But like any other developed country's assistance to the third world, Canada has been accused of being interested in the democratic republic of Congo natural wealth such as gold, colbat, diamond reserves and forests. For France the major accusation is being a Hutus ally by providing them with military equipment. A strategic humanitarian Coordination in the Great Lakes Region 1996-1997 report showed that the International political response to the crisis ranged from permissive, passive to partial. As has been the case in response to civil war and genocide in Rwanda in 1994, humanitarian action was the principle form of international response.²⁴

²³Evans, Glynne Responding to Crisis in the African Great Lakes op.cit

²⁴The United Nation Office of the coordination of Humanitarian Affair op. cit.

Between 1994 and 1997, key players in the African Great lakes appeared to lose confidence in the West's commitment to help find solutions to their problems²⁵. Guilt over the genocide in Rwanda provoked a huge outpouring of humanitarian assistance rather than any political creativity in addressing the problem of the refugee camps and fundamental instability. Western media was fickle and too often prompted by media interest, lapsing when the pictures were absent from the television screens.

In summary, What comes out very clearly is that though time to time there appears to be continuous international special envoys into the great lake region conflict, there is very little or no coordination done but self-interest are pursued. A good example is that in the 1990's. Western countries used formidable pressure to encourage African States to 'democratise'. The result has been rigged elections and conspicuous hypocrisy of extra regional actors.

The crisis in the Great Lakes are interrelated, in essence political and their implication are regional. Thus any outside political initiative must be crafted for the entire region. As Africa is being called upon to manage its own conflicts, and this trend will continue in the face of ever decreasing resources, it is therefore of paramount importance to understand and take full advantage of the media as one of the important actors in the regional conflicts since the African leaders

would be looked upon to provide an African solution to what is an African problem.

²⁵ R.A., Griggs, *The Great Lakes conflict: Strategies for building long term peace*, 1997 unpublished work

Chapter Three

3.0 Media: A Tool for Escalation and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Burundi Conflicts 1990-2000

3.1 Introduction

Chapter two gave a broad and general overview of the media as an actor in international system issues as well as an overview of the Burundi and Rwanda conflicts. It is evident from chapter two that the media had a stake in the Rwandan and Burundian conflict which deserves thorough investigation with a view to coming up with concrete recommendations for the conflict managers.

Chapter three therefore examines the negative and positive involvement of the media in Rwanda and Burundi conflict by analyzing the activities carried out by the various local and international media from 1990-2000 in regard to the conflict. More specifically it will dwell more on the misuse of the radio stations in the two countries as well as providing an insight to the dysfunctional role played by individual journalists in the conflict. The chapter constitutes information that forms major part of the critical analysis in chapter four that will prove or disapprove the hypothesis on whether media does escalate conflicts hence a threat to international peace or it is necessary player in conflict resolution on the other hand.

3.2 Background

To be more effective in conflict management there is a need to broaden the approach which integrates as many actors as possible. Nowadays, more often than in the past, the media particularly the electronic media are instrumental in setting off and sustaining wars and conflicts. As experience around the world has shown, journalists locally or internationally spend most of their time describing and analyzing the behaviour of individuals and groups in conflict hence have substantial influence on conflict and conflict resolution processes through their action and inaction.

Conflict and the media go hand in hand as media outlets in various parts of the world have actively contributed to the worsening of existing tensions between and within countries by whipping up nationalistic feelings and ethnic hatred.¹ Obvious example is the great impact the media had in supporting and fuelling in particular Rwandan conflict to a great extent, and in Burundi. Infact the commonest reference in analyzing media in conflicts in Africa focuses more often than not on the media acting as an inciter of violence in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In spite of this, media intervention does not belong yet to the established set of tools used for prevention or resolution of conflicts or in

¹ **Hate or Opposition Radio?**, Media Network, 30th October 2000
<http://www.rnw.nl/realradio/dossiers/html/definitions.html>

peacekeeping operations unlike military or humanitarian interventions.² This could be as a result of the fact that media interventions tend to come as a reaction to crises rather than as an instrument to pre-empt or prevent them. It is unfortunate then that despite early warnings of the dysfunctional role the media was playing in Rwanda during the ethnic conflict, the international media realised when it was too late having given the media a field day in inciting and fuelling the conflicts.

According to a report on the international response to conflict and Genocide, the steering committee for the joint evaluation of emergency assistance to Rwanda noted that the international media played a mixed role in Rwanda crisis. While the media was a major factor in generating worldwide humanitarian relief support for the refugees, distorted reporting on events leading to the genocide itself was a contributing factor to the failure of the international community to take more effective action to stem the genocide³

In regard to the international media in Burundi, from 1993 through 1996, the prolonged blood shedding in Burundi illustrated the illogical and inconsistent nature of the media's role in conflict⁴. During these three years a combination of

²Hate Radio, Radio Netherlands, 30th October 2000

<http://www.rnw.nl/realradio/dossiers/html/conclusion.html>

³Abstract from the International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience, op.cit. p 66

international editorial indifference and the physical dangers of visiting Burundi meant there was virtually no international media coverage of the violence, while other stories elsewhere in the world took precedence in the media. This was a failure by the international community in responding swiftly to the crisis that spilled over to a great region of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa.

The effect of media coverage on focusing international response was limited and marginal in Burundi. The international print press and TV were virtually silent despite constant level of killings and the many warnings in NGO reports of increasing violence. The UN Association asked in September 1996, "Why so little international media coverage of events in Burundi? How many Burundians have to be murdered before the story becomes newsworthy? It is difficult to believe in claims that we live in an era of global communications when none of the major TV channels appears even to have sent a camera crew to Burundi⁵

The question that arises is whether the media truly plays such a pivotal role in inciting violence and if they do, if this is really intentional or negligence. On the other hand the question whether the media outlets are used as tools in political power games or they are responsible for the escalation of conflicts and violence as they are made to seem. This because the media has been portrayed as scape goats by the governments and external critics.

⁵United Nations Association Bulletin, 3 September 1996

3.3.1 The Radio: Voice of Campaign in Rwanda and Burundi Conflicts

Radio is the most powerful medium in most of African countries where the majority of the people are illiterate and too poor to afford television. The power of the radio in the village life cannot be over-estimated. All over the world, the radio has proven to be a powerful and versatile tool. The radio has the ability to mobilize and influence large numbers of people, and can therefore be an appropriate tool for the exacerbation of conflict and also on the other hand be used more constructively to exert pressure on political groups and to popularize notions of tolerance and co-existence.

Nowhere in the world, was the radio used as insidiously as in Rwanda. There, the now deposed Hutu government utilized official and unofficial radio sources to incite and carry out the 1994 genocide, in which an estimated eight hundred thousand people, mostly the Tutsi were killed. Before the war, Rwanda had only one radio station—the National Radio Rwanda. In 1991, some 29 percent of all households had a radio, but by the start of the genocide the number of radio sets was much higher⁶ In some areas the government is said to have distributed radios free to local authorities before the genocide and they may have done so after the killing began as well.⁷

⁶In urban areas, the figure was far higher, 58.7 percent, while in rural areas 27.3 percent of households owned radios. *Recensement general de la population et de l'habitat au 15 aout 1991, Kigali Service National de Recensement, July 1993, p.31*

⁷Human Rights watch/FIDH interview, Brussels, February 15, 1997; Chretien et al, *Rwanda, Les Medias* pp57,74)

One foreign religious sister who traveled from Kibuye to Butare during the height of the genocide reported that she had seen new radios at every one of the dozens of barriers where she had been stopped *en route*.⁸ In March 1992, Radio Rwanda warned that Hutu leaders in Bugesera were going to be murdered by the Tutsi, which was false information meant to spur the Hutu massacres of Tutsi. Due to pressure following the establishment of the coalition government in April 1992, the MDR, PL and PSD insisted on a new direction of the Radio Rwanda out of which Ferdinand Nahimana was removed from the post the Rwanda officer of Information in which capacity he had supervised Radio Rwanda and was replaced by Jean-Marie Vianney Higiro to steer the radio towards a more nonpartisan stance.

By 1993, Radio Rwanda had agreed to include the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) among political parties participating in its broadcasts, although the decision had not been implemented by the time the genocide began⁹ The control of information by the government was vital because this enabled it to not only convince the people that they were in danger if they did not eliminate the threat but also made sure they were in control of any information that was going to the international community.

⁸Human Rights watch/FIDH interview, Brussels, February 6, 1996.

⁹Jean-Marie Vianney Higiro, " *Distorsions et Omissions dans l'ouvrage Rwanda, les medias du genocide*" Dialogue, no. 190, avril-mai 1996, p.166)

Soon after the start of the war, the RPF established its own station, Radio Muhabura, but its signal did not reach throughout the country. At first many Rwandans were afraid to listen to it, but its audience grew steadily during 1992 and 1993. Although it glorified the RPF, it did so in a nationalistic rather than an ethnic context, consistent with the general RPF emphasis on minimizing differences between Hutu and Tutsi.

With the new director at Radio Rwanda and the Radio Muhabura of the RPF increasingly strong, Hutu hard-liners decided to create their own station which was incorporated in April 1993 and named as Radio Television Libres des Mille Collines(RTLM) Which began broadcasting in August 1993.

3.3.2 The Power of Hate Media: Radio Television Libres des Mille Collines

Broadly speaking, hate media refers to media outlets that promotes hatred based on the race, ethnicity, gender or religion. They make expressions, which is often an incitement to violence and encourages violent activities as well as tension. Hate media more than often distorts the truth thus giving people inaccurate information on which to base their decisions. Since hate media gives expressions that incites people to violence, hate media can kill and maim.

Being in a position to predict consequences of action is a strength humans use to prevent past mistakes from recurring but it is incredible the case of Rwanda that

many people did not foresee the genocide which turned into rivers of Rwanda red with blood of more than half a million people while the warnings were in black and white. As early as 1990, private radio stations and newspapers had begun stroking the flames of ethnic hatred which four years later engulfed Rwanda.

RTML operated in Rwanda in 1993 and 1994 and was one of the most terrifying examples of how radio can be used to stir up hatred, violence and massacres. It was used as a means of inciting and directing Hutu civilians to carry out acts of genocide against the Tutsis. Its broadcasts appealed to listeners because of the station's highly irreverent tone using the most effective combination for successful communication in a well-thought out mixture of entertainment and "desired outcome" programming-exactly is what Radio Mille Collines was very popular of , the fact is that this radio played a crucial role in alerting the internal community to the dangers of hate-media.¹⁰

The hate radio, Radio Mille Collines had systematically laid the ground work for mass slaughter from the moment it was licensed in July 1993. RTLM was launched in 1993, backed by family members of the Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana - whose death in a plane crash triggered the genocide. RTLM was founded by leading Hutu extremists in the Rwandese Government in response

¹⁰International Monitor Institute, *Rwanda Media analysis: Radio as a Weapon for Genocide*, <http://www.imisite.org/africa.php>

to reforms that had allowed moderates to take positions in the administration, including the Ministry of Information, which controlled Radio Rwanda, the official governmental station. Although established as a jointly funded stock company, the station was essentially the tool of Hutu extremists from the government, military and business communities.

It is believed that the station was created to avoid key clauses of the 1993 Arusha Peace Accords which barred the Rwandan government and the RPF from inciting to violence, promoting discrimination based on ethnicity, or issuing propaganda inciting people to hate. The programs were relayed to all parts of the country via a network of transmitters owned and operated by the government's Radio Rwanda. RTLM took up many of the same themes, sometimes in the same words, that were being popularized in the written press. Hassan Ngeze, the editor of Kanguru¹¹ welcomed the arrival of the new ally "in the fight to defend the republic". Before long, RTML was displacing Kanguru and other journals at in Rwanda.

One of the more chilling RTLM broadcasts took place only days before President Habyarimana's assassination on April 6, 1994 after signing an agreement further limiting his regime's hold on power which has come to be known as the August

¹¹Kanguru newspaper was published in Rwanda between 1990-1994 and is said to have ran anti-Tutsi diatribes including the famous Hutu Ten commandments

1993 Arusha Accord, which is said to have displeased the more extremist members of his government. Less than a week before President Habyarimana's flight home, Noel Hitimana, one of RTLM's famous broadcasters, went on the air and gave a rambling monologue that in hindsight gave numerous hints of what was to come. He relayed a warning from a Zulu militia group centered in Nyakabanda-Remera stating that "the Belgians have been hanging out with the *Inyenzi* (cockroaches) ¹² but they do not scare us because they are UN employees". We will confront them ... let them be warned." Although a threat issued against the Belgian presence in Rwanda was nothing unusual on RTLM, in this case, however, ten Belgian soldiers, part of the UNAMIR force, were brutally executed by Rwandan soldiers only days later ¹³.

When the genocide began, Radio Rwanda was asked to join the RTLM principles and it was at that point that its director Higiro fled the country as he had been targeted for death by RTLM broadcasts and was replaced by Jean-baptiste Bamwanga, a journalist fired from Radio Rwanda in 1992 for his role in inciting the massacre of Tutsi in Bugesera. ¹⁴

¹²The term *Inyenzi* meaning cockroaches referred to Tutsi and had a negative, even abusive, connotation, It was widely used by extremist media, by those who had refused to accept the Arusha Peace Accords and those who wanted to exterminate the Tutsi, in whole or in part. It was often contained in RTLM broadcasts, a radio which, was anti-Tutsi in its broadcastings by UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

¹³International Monitor Institute" *Rwanda Media analysis: radio as a weapon for genocide* op cit

¹⁴Chretien et al., *Rwanda, Les Medias*, p.68 op. cit.

At that time, RTLM and the Radio Rwanda collaborated to deliver a single message about the need to exterminate the "enemy"¹⁵

Kanyamibwa, a Tutsi now living in Nairobi Kenya detests the RTML. He argues that this media incited public ethnic tension. According to him RTML was a tool for the genocidal regime to kill Tutsi. He also points out that the RTML worked hand in hand with government regime who aired ethnic propaganda inciting Hutus against Tutsi through deliberate programmes, music, dance and drama.²⁰

RTLM was an anti-Tutsi radio station aimed at convincing the Hutus that all their problems were caused by the Tutsis. After Habyarimana was killed when his plane was shot down in April 1994, the radio called for a "final war" to "exterminate the cockroaches." It played a role in organising militias, broadcast lists of people to be killed and, above all, incited hatred, "In truth, all Tutsis will perish. They will vanish from this country ... They are disappearing little by little thanks to the weapons hitting them, but also because they are being killed like rats."¹⁶

Throughout the genocide, RTLM continued its informal, spontaneous style, with announcers recounting what they had seen on their walks around Kigali. The radio made the war immediate for people distant from the front:

¹⁵Jean-Marie Vianney Higiho, " Distortions et Omissions dans l'ouvrage Rwanda, les medias du genocide" Dialogue, no. 190, avril-mai 1996, p.171

¹⁶An interview with Joseph Kanyamibwa, a Tutsi and former member of RPF, now living in Nairobi, Kenya

listeners could hear the explosions of mortars being shot at RTLM. So lively was the wit of the announcers that even wounded RPF soldiers listened to RTLM from their hospital beds. The station carried not just the rhetoric of politicians but also the voice of the ordinary people who took time off from their work on the barriers to say hello to their families back home. The consistency of the message, delivered by the man in the street as well as by ministers and political leaders, increased its impact on listeners.¹⁷

The announcers replayed all the now familiar messages of hate: the inherent differences between Hutu and Tutsi, the numerical superiority of the Hutu, the cleverness of the Tutsi in infiltration, their cruelty, their cohesiveness, their intention to restore past repression, the risk they posed to the gains of the 1959 revolution, and, above all, their plan to exterminate the Hutu. Such messages concluded with calls to action, like the following by Kantano Habimana: "Fight them with the weapons that you have at hand, you have arrows, you have spears, go after them, blood flows in their veins as it does in yours..." One RTLM announcer promised that a "shining day" would dawn when there would be not a single Inyenzi left in the country and the word could be forgotten.¹⁸

The eight employees hired by RTLM had all worked for Radio Rwanda in its earlier, more extremist incarnation and were members of prominent extremist

¹⁷Sezibera Saverini, RTLM broadcast, May 15-May 30, 1994

¹⁸Chrétien et al., *Rwanda, Les médias*, pp. 193, 304 op.cit.

political groups.¹⁹ That RTLM was actively inciting genocide was made even clearer after the April 1994 plane crash, when the station began to play an active role in airing messages on the mass killings.

RTLM broadcasts organized roadblocks and read lists of names of "enemies," who were tracked down and executed by militias. According to the broadcasts, a person who did not have his identity card "should be arrested and may lose his head."²⁰ Specific vehicles, such as a red van allegedly "full of accomplices," were identified, together with license numbers. The red van, which was carrying François Ncunguyinka, a former prefect of Gisenyi prefecture, and his family, was halted at a roadblock and all its passengers were killed.²¹

RTLM broadcasters congratulated their Hutu listeners on their "heroic" efforts and asserted that "RTLM radio is with the people manning the roadblocks." After April 6, RTLM did not mince its words, it told the Hutu population that the "Tutsi need to be killed" , calling on the population to "hunt out the Tutsi" and telling them that "the RPF is coming to kill people, so defend yourselves." It asked the population " who will fill up the half-empty graves?"

¹⁹Joint evaluation of emergency assistance to Rwanda, the international response to conflict and genocide: lessons from the Rwanda experience, report 19(1996).

²⁰ African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance* London 1985,p. 80

²¹ An extract from interview with Loretta Giradet of Media Action International done by Alexandra M. Kaun. Mrs. Giradet has done research on the content of

RTLTM broadcasts, and has done work on analyzing the influence that it had on the 1994 genocide

The station broadcasted a daily stream of anti-Tutsi propaganda, such as referring to the opposition as "traitors who deserved to die" and to Tutsis as "cockroaches and snakes which should be stamped out", or "What are you waiting for? The tombs are empty. Take up your machetes and hack your enemies to pieces"²²

On May 4, 1994, the date of a hearing on Rwanda by the Subcommittee on Africa of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, the U.S. Committee for Refugees issued a statement urging the Government to jam extremist radio broadcasts in Rwanda.²⁴ At the hearing, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose asserted:

One of the things we were looking at very seriously over the weekend was whether we could and should deploy assets of our own to try to shut down or block out transmissions of . . . [RTLTM]. The latest information that we have from our intelligence people is that over the last week, these broadcasts, those virulent broadcasts have ceased".²⁸

Responding to this assertion, Alison des Forges, a historian working with Human Rights Watch-Africa, contended that:

"the station had been knocked out three times, but it has started operating again three times. As of this morning, it was operating. As of yesterday, it was operating. This radio continues to call for killing of the Tutsi. It has set a deadline," she added, a deadline for killing all the Tutsi.²⁹

²² African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance* London 1985, p 80

²³A report by Alexandra M. Kaun, *Education as a Tool for Peace in War-Torn Societies; The case of Rwanda and the African Great lakes, Geneva May 8, 2000*

²⁴The Crisis in Rwanda: Hearings Before the Subcomm. on Africa of the House Comm. on Foreign Affairs, 103d Cong. 15 (1994).

On April 15, its announcers declared, "If you do not want to have Rwandans exterminated . . . stand up, take action . . . without worrying about international opinion."²⁵ The station broadcast a speech by Jean Kambanda, the Prime Minister of the "interim" Hutu Government, asserting that the war against the invading RPF was a "final war," which "must be finished."²⁶

The important role of radio broadcasts in inciting the killings in Rwanda was also covered widely in the Western press. The Washington Post, for example, on April 7 quoted an RTLM broadcast that warned Tutsi in Rwanda, "You cockroaches must know you are made of flesh! We won't let you kill! We will kill you!" On April 19, the Christian Science Monitor quoted the assertion by General Dallaire that radio broadcasts were inciting the killing of Rwandan Tutsi. According to the Associated Press six days later, the UN spokesman in Kigali stated that "Radio RTLM is calling on militias to step up the killing of civilians."²⁷

RTLM nevertheless was known to have a psychological undertone of ethnic intolerance.¹ After the genocide began on April 6th, 1994, RTLM took a more active role in promoting ethnic conflict, regularly broadcasted lists of people who

²⁵The Crisis in Rwanda: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Africa of the House Comm. on Foreign Affairs, 103d Cong. 15 (1994).

²⁶Letter from Senator Edward M. Kennedy to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, June 1, 1994)

²⁷African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance* London 1985, p82 op. cit

were to be killed, knowing that people would act on these demands. Yet despite these unjust and outright wrong accusations and encouragements, the station still attracted multitudes of fascinated listeners, even Tutsis, through its selection of good music and overall confidence. It was also responsible for the mass exodus of refugees into Tanzania and the then Zaire in June and July of 1994 because of its urgent messages for Hutus to leave the country for fear of Tutsi retribution, and through the assurance that good treatment would be given by international aid agencies.²⁸

Even after the RPF was in control of the country and the bulk of the genocide had already taken place, the station continued to have an influence by broadcasting from various mobile transmitters from neighboring countries. After RPF troops drove the provisional government and allied forces out of Kigali in July 1994, they used mobile FM transmitters to broadcast disinformation from inside the French-occupied zone on the border between Rwanda and Zaire causing million of Hutus to flee toward refugee camps where they could be regrouped and recruited as future fighters.

Although RTLM has now been abolished, hate radio is unfortunately still a reality within the Great Lakes region. Whatever arguments, RTLM's role in the massacres and in promoting hatred very vivid in the minds of many.

²⁸McCullum, Hugh, *Death by Radio*. 1998.
<http://ccrweb.ccr.uct.ac.za/two/2/p29.html>

3.3.3 Radio Rutomorangingo(the radio that tells the truth)-

'When Rwanda sneezes, the Congo and Burundi catch a cold'²⁹ Radio Rutomorangingo began in Burundi in 1994 using the same formula as the RTLM by broadcasting anti-Tutsi broadcasts by playing music interspersed with messages to rise up against the Tutsi population. It called on the Hutus to "finish once and for all the Tutsi oppressor" In addition, the radio democracy attempted to divide Tutsi between the bloodthirsty Bahima from Bururi in the South where army leaders originated from and those from other regions by detailing alleged atrocities committed by Tutsi towards other Tutsis. It is also quoted broadcasting such inflammatory statements in 1995 as "All Burundians, make bows and poised arrows, remain alert and fight the Bikomagu (former chief of staff) soldiers.... We shall lead you into victory in the fighting"³⁰

This pro-Hutu/anti-Tutsi station broadcasting in Kirundi and French to Burundi is said to be the mouth piece of the Hutu hardline rebel group Conseil national pour defense de la democratie(CNDD) and was initially based in the forest of southwest Rwanda and northwest Burundi, before finding fairly stable ground in eastern Zaire. There it continued broadcasting until CNDD's armed wing, the Forces pour la defense de la democratie(FDD), lost its rear bases with the

²⁹Special Report on Postgenocidal Reconstruction: Building Peace in Rwanda and Burundi, 15 September 1999, United States Institute for Peace

³⁰United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa(IRIN) report on the hate Media 98.2.26)

advance of Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire(ADFL) in 1996.

The Burundian president in 1994 , Sylvestre Ntibantunganya and political parties condemned divisive and inflammatory broadcasts by Radio Rutomorangongo in September 1994. Ntibantunganya strongly denounced the radio democracy for "inciting hatred". The radio was infact hostile towards Ntibantunganya and his Hutu-dominated ruling FRODEBU party, opposing his attempts to gradually assimilate Hutus into the existing army. It is quoted saying "Ntibantunganya and Jean Minani (FRODEBU leader) think that by misleading people, especially by telling Hutus to join the Bikomagu army, they will have deprived CNDD of its pretext... as long as the government continues to state it will not enter into dialogue with its political opponents, we shall continue to fight"³¹

Ntibantunganya also called on France to condemn the radio and to do everything possible in the areas of Rwanda occupied by its soldiers to search for it and to confiscate its equipment as it was deemed to be dangerous as Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines in Rwanda.

In early November 1995 the director-general of UNESCO, Federico Mayor,

³¹United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs . Op. cit

promised to look at ways of silencing radio stations accused of fanning ethnic hatred in Burundi; this followed an appeal to UNESCO by the Burundian president. Later that month the heads of state of the countries of the Great Lakes region - Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire - meeting for a conference in Cairo expressed their deep concern for the use of radio broadcasts to spread hatred and fear in the region and pledged to take all possible action to terminate the illegal and inflammatory radio broadcasts from one country into another. They appealed to the international community to assist by providing technology to identify the location of mobile transmitters.

Le Carrefour des Idees has been referred to as written hate which analysts says unlike broadcast media, print media leaves a more indelible impression as words can be read over and over again and absorbed. Le Carrefour des Idees was a pro-Tutsi newspaper and was suspended by the authorities in 1996 along with other publications under pressure from Reporteurs Sans Frontieres for headlines such as "They(Hutus) want to roast us on skewers" and also other headlines as "Does the Hutu have a soul?"³²

³²Alexandra M. Kaun, *Education as a Tool for Peace in War-Torn Societies*. op cit.

3.3.4 Journalists accused and charged with Incitement

A number of journalists have been accused and charged for fuelling the conflicts in both Rwanda and Burundi in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha Tanzania. They included: Jean Bosco Barayagwiza, a co-founder of hate media Radio Television Libre Des Mille Collines [RTLM], Omar Serushago who was a radio announcer with RTLM, and Georges Ruggiu of RTLM which is said to have run broadcasts inciting Hutus to massacre Tutsis. Others include Hassan Ngeze, editor of the anti-Tutsi publication Kangura, who was tried jointly with Ferdinand Nahimana, a Kangura founder, on charges of conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, complicity in genocide, and crimes against humanity.³³

Ngeze was the chief editor of Kanguru newspaper published in Rwanda between 1990 and 1994 which ended in March 1994 ahead of the 1994 genocide. Kanguru newspapers is said to have begun attacks on the RPF and on the Tutsi immediately after the October 1990 invasion. It is said to have run anti-Tutsi diatribes including the infamous "Hutu Ten Commandments", depicting Tutsis as sub-humans who should be destroyed³⁴. It published such statements as "Let us learn about the Inkotanyi plans and then let us eliminate

³³African Rights, Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance, op. cit. pp160-180

³⁴The Media Indictment: Wake-up Call <http://www.diplomatiejudiciaire.com>

every last one of them. The Kanguru is said to have been the mouthpiece of the most extreme of Hutu extremists. It was joined by other newspapers and journals that received support from officials and businessmen linked to the regime then. The newspapers were published and sold in the capital, but urban workers who often went home for weekends carried copies of the better-known newspapers out to the hills. In many cases the written word was underscored by cartoons, most of which were so graphic that they could not be misinterpreted.³⁵

During the ICTR, Ngeze was accused of having been responsible for, and exercised control over, the editorial and article content, publication and finances of Kangura. These materials published were said to have been used in the preparation of genocide against Tutsis, incited to kill and/or cause serious bodily or mental harm to Tutsis, and persecuted Tutsis and certain Hutus.³⁶

Further, on a number of occasions during the events, Hassan Ngeze was accused of having made broadcasts over two radio stations in Rwanda : Radio Rwanda and RTLM. On the 7 of April 1994, in the prefecture of Gisenyi, Hassan Ngeze ordered the arrest and the death of a Tutsi woman. On the 21 of April 1994, in the prefecture of Gisenyi, Modeste Tabaro, a member of the Tutsi, was killed at the instigation of Hassan Ngeze. On the 13 of May 1994, in the prefecture of Gisenyi, at a mass grave site in the commune

³⁶ The Media Indictment: Wake-up Call op. cit .

³⁷ Chronicles and reports on International criminal Justice

<http://www.diplomatiejudiciaire.com/UK/Tpiruk/NgezeUK.htm>

commonly known at this time, as the "commune rouge", Hassan Ngeze encouraged members of the interahamwes militias in the killings of tutsi. Between the 6 of April and the 31 of May 1994, in the prefecture of Gisenyi, district Gacuba I, Hassan Ngeze distributed hand grenades to members of the interahamwes militias.³⁸

The indictment of Ferdinand Nahimana, one of the founders and leaders of RTLM, by the prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, makes a stronger case in regard to RTLM role's in the Rwanda Conflict. In part it reads: "The Rwanda Tribunal has charged Nahimana with conspiracy and direct and public incitement to commit genocide, complicity in genocide, and crimes against humanity. Ferdinand Nahimana by himself and/or with others planned, directed and defended the broadcasts made by RTLM . . . knew or had reason to know of the broadcasts and the effects of the broadcasts on the population . . . [and] could have taken reasonable measures to change or prevent the broadcasts, but failed to do so".³⁹

Another Rwandan radio journalist Valerie Bemeriki, was charged with inciting mass killings during the 1994 genocide.⁴⁰ Bemeriki, was a former employee of the RTLM whose comments such as

³⁸Chronicles and reports on International criminal Justice op. cit.

³⁹Indictment, Prosecutor v. Nahimana, Int'l Crim. Trib. for Rwanda, Case ICTR-96 (July 12, 1996) (em-phasis added).

⁴⁰Human Rights/FIDH interview, Brussels, February 15, 1997 Chretien et al., *Rwanda, Les Medias*, p.45)

"Do not kill those inyenzi (cockroaches) with a bullet - cut them to pieces with a machete" were inciting. She has a reputation as a particularly virulent extremist.. During the genocide it is alleged that one of her specialties was to expose the places where Tutsi were thought to be hiding. She is also said to have been giving out the telephone number of RTLM to encourage people to telephone and announce the liquidation of Tutsi who tried to hide. Her name is on a list of the 1,000 people most wanted in connection with their alleged complicity in the genocide.⁴¹

Ananie Nkurunziza commentary on RTLM after 6th April on RTLM has been continuously dedicated to have maintained the war against the Tutsi. He is quoted as having said " The Tutsi killed the President of the Republic, Now it is clear that the population has risen as one again---As far as I can see, it is nothing else but the wish to dominate, thinking that they are special people. Like us, they are not special---Calling the interim government a salvation government, he continued " As the interim government in 1960 prepared and organized elections in 1960, this government should plan elections to avoid falling in the trap of what people call Arusha. And they said we believe in Arusha. Nobody believes in Arusha at all but when they need help they talk about it.⁴²

Nkurunziza is also quoted as having warned his listeners that "we must not think that the French are coming to fight for us ... we fear

⁴¹African Rights, Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance, op. cit. p158

⁴² op. cit. p159

that some people at roadblocks start sleeping when they hear that the French have arrived." In this one can deduce that he did not want the civilian population to believe that the war had ended or that the French troops would participate in the genocide.⁴³

RTLTM broadcaster Kantano Habimana was particularly popular because of his loose and comical style. Habimana, already a well-known journalist by the time he took a position with RTLTM, was also a football fanatic, making him a favorite among younger males. There are reports that troops of the Rwandan Patriotic Fronts (RPF), who were mostly Tutsis, tuned in to Habimana as well. Habimana used his talents for quips and his ability to turn a phrase to great advantage. It was an effective way of delivering messages without overtly stating the terms⁴⁴

George Ruggiu, former radio presenter at the RTLTM pleaded guilty in his trial before the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). He was found guilty of directly and publicly inciting genocide by claiming that the Belgian army was plotting with the Tutsis rebels and received a 12 year prison sentence for each crimes direct and public incitement to genocide and persecution as crime against humanity both of which he admitted.⁴⁵

⁴³International Monitor Institute" Rwanda Media analysis op cit

⁴³op cit.

⁴⁵African Rights, Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance, op. cit. pp159-164

During Ruggiu's trial, he confessed that in March 1994, RTLM journalists received firm specific instructions to use only the expression "inyenzi in place of "inyenzi-inkptanyi . This meant that during his broadcasts he had no right to use the word Tutsi during his broadcasts which he had to replace by the expression "inyenze". He acknowledged that the widespread use of the term "inyenze" conferred the de facto meaning of persons to be killed. Within the context of the civil war, in 1994, the term inyenzi became synonymous with the term Tutsi as 'persons to be killed'.⁴⁶

Ruggiu also admitted that during one broadcast by RTLM on 1 July 1994, he asked the civil population to "remain vigilant" adding that security was not only at work of the army but also of the population which should prevent infiltration by inyenzi. He made public broadcast to the population on several occasions "to go to work" which clearly signified to fight against members of the RPF and their accomplices and later the expression came to mean to go kill the Tutsi and Hutu political opponents of the interim government.⁴⁷ A major aggravating factor the ICTR found was that Ruggiu continued his broadcasts after April 12th 1994 when he was taken round Kigali by the army and saw piles of civilian corpses. The court accused him that even after he became aware that his

⁴⁵*The Prosecutor Demands 20 Years against Georges Ruggiu*, Chronicles and Reports on International Criminal Justice

<http://www.diplomatiejudiciaire.com/UK/Tpiruk?RuggiuUK8.htm>

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Foundation Hironnelle , Hironnelle News Agency in Arusha: International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, News June 1st 2000

broadcasts were contributing to massacres against Tutsi, yet he made deliberate choice to stay in Rwanda and continue your broadcasting⁴⁸.

Ruggiu file during his trial is also full of anti-Belgian sentiments. The Plea Agreement acknowledges, in this respect, that the accused "admits that he broadcast discriminatory and threatening remarks over the radio against the political stance adopted by the Belgian government in Rwanda and the behaviour of UNAMIR, especially the Belgian contingent." During several broadcasts, Ruggiu personally affirmed the direct responsibility of the Belgian contingent of UNAMIR for the death of President Habyarimana. He recognised that these serious allegations were part of a veritable "media war" against UNAMIR and, more particularly, against the Belgian contingent. He also acknowledged having declared that "Belgian missiles shot down the President's plane; Belgium is responsible for the oppression of the Hutus by the Tutsis; in Nyamirambo, three Bazungu (whites) were killed within the RPF ranks. They were not just any Bazungu. They were Belgians".⁴⁹

Independent journalists in Burundi covering the ongoing six-year civil war risk death threats from both sides of the conflict. Still, freelance journalist Agnes Nindorera broadcasts what she sees, despite escalating threats to her life. She

⁴⁸Foundation Hirondelle -Hirondelle News Agency in Arusha: International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, News June 1st 2000

⁴⁹The Prosecutor Demands 20 Years against Georges Ruggiu op cit.

pursues the story of a civil war in which 200,000 people have died, caught in a conflict between Tutsi-dominated Burundian government forces and Hutu rebels. Filing stories each day for Voice of America and Agence France Presse, Nindorera brings the world objective accounts of peace negotiations, the progress of the conflict and, most important, the story of what the war is doing to the people of Burundi.

Nindorera's reports on human rights violations by all factions have generated considerable international attention. But as her reward for more than four years of solid journalism, Nindorera has not had one day of peace. She has been arrested numerous times. Her home has been ransacked, her equipment confiscated by the government, and she has been forced to move to avoid harassment.

In one frightening personal encounter, a high-level government official told Nindorera that she would be shot in the head if she continued to report the news. Undeterred, she continues her work, bringing the war to the world while maintaining the highest professional standards and journalistic integrity.

3.4 Peace Media: A Tool for Reconciliation

Radio Umwizero(Radio Hope) began broadcasting on 19th February 1996, funded by the European Union. It aims at contributing to restoration of peace and national reconciliation by giving greater prominence to actions taken by

youths and local non-governmental organizations in the fields of human rights, economy and reconciliation.. It was set up by Pierre Pradier, secretary-general of the Association pour L'Action Humanitaire and backed by the former French Minister for Humanitarian Affairs Bernard Kouchner. ⁶⁰

In spite of the above objective, the credibility of Radio Umwizero has been seriously compromised by a combination of poor management and ethnic composition of its staff. By September year 2001, With the exception of one Congolese, all original reporters came from single ethnic group, the Tutsis. The station therefore gained quickly a reputation for biased reporting. Nearly 70% of the station's output is in French which is only properly understood by 15-20% of the population⁶¹. As at the time of this study, Radio Umwizero was perceived as essentially a music station, though it does air four and a half hours per week of conflict resolution programming provided by Studio Ijambo.

Studio Ijambo(Wise words) is an independent radio studio, set up in March 1995 after a joint delegation from the Washington-based " Search for Common Ground"(SCG) and Refugees International visited neighbouring Burundi to see what could be done to prevent similar events in Rwanda from occurring in Burundi

⁶⁰*International broadcasters: special programmes and services*, Radio Netherlands Oct. 2000 <http://www.mw.nl/realradio/dossiers/html/bc.html>

⁶¹ Ibid

The aim of Studio Ijambo is to produce high quality reconciliation programmes dedicated to peace and national reconciliation, and credible programmes that promote dialogue among polarized groups. With programmes jointly produced by journalists from both ethnic groups, Studio Ijambo has developed a reputation for credible, unbiased reporting.

According to three surveys conducted since the start of 1999, the studio Ijambo produces news programmes and two biweekly cultural and social awareness magazines, "Amasaganzira", in Kirundi, and "Radio Express", in French. In addition the Studio Ijambo broadcasts a soap Opera that has gained rapid popularity since it began broadcasts in July 1997.

Written in Kirundi by well-known Burundian playwright, " Our Neighbours, Ourselves" is set in one of the rural hill areas and centers around a Hutu and a Tutsi family who live next door to each other. The drama depicts the complexities of the conflict through the relationships between these families. The survey revealed that the soap Opera is listened to by 80-90% of the population.

The surveys also revealed that Studio Ijambo has a major impact on the Youth Sector. They indicate that the youth programme "Sangwe" is listened to by about 30% of the population who reckon that it is a very successful programme in bringing Burundi youth together.

Its programmes are broadcast by the two channels of Burundi National Radio and Television, Radio Umwizero, British Broadcasting Corporation(BBC), Voice of America(VOA), Africa Number one an on Radio Kwizera based in Ngara, Tanzania which broadcasts to the Burundian refugees across the border. . The main broadcaster of Studio Ijambo's programme in 1995-96 was Radio Agatashya, the peace radio broadcasting to Rwandan Refugees from Zaire. The production facility is featured in the Radio Netherlands Television documentary" Lifelines". During this period, Studio Ijambo had a potential audience of 12 million people throughout the great lakes region. Studio Ijambo activities in Burundi have been supported by among other, the USAID, The national Endowment for Democracy, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, International Alert and the Winston Foundation.

Chapter Four

4.0 Critical analysis of the media in conflict management

4.1 Introduction:

One of the theoretical framework that this study is based on is the Conflict research paradigm argument which aims at establishing legitimised relationships in the society which are self sustaining. Based on this, and information derived from the other three chapters, this chapter will critically analyse the media's role in conflicts with a view to proving or disapproving the hypotheses.

Manoff who has written widely on conflict and media argues that conflicts may escalate or explode in part because the parties have no adequate outlets for expression of their grievances and therefore suggests that conflicts should be fought out in the media rather than in the streets"¹. This argument is valid by the fact that there is enormous expectation by the society that the media should help in prevention of conflict as well as promote education and enlightenment on peaceful co-existence. The research reveals that there are serious misgivings by the society over the behaviour of the media outlets particularly during the Rwanda genocide for by acting as propagandists with their weapon of language of hate.

Although freedom of communication is the basic premise for a working democratic society, and a free press the means and prerequisite for attaining it,

¹Robert Karl Manoff, 'Role Plays: Potential Media Roles in Conflict Prevention and Management' , Track Two Vol. 7No. 4 New York, 1998

this freedom has been misused by the media particularly the radio in the Great Lakes region conflict. As a social institution, it is the media's social and moral responsibility to carry out important tasks in the society by disseminating information, debates and critical comments on the society.

The whole complex of duties and rights of journalists derives from this right of the public to know facts and opinions. In their practice, journalists are obligated to defend human rights, dignity and freedom, to respect pluralism of ideas and attitudes, to contribute to strengthening of legal state and, as a democratic part of the general public, to participate in the control of politics². Though the media in democratic society are free, independent, investigative, open to different opinions and acting as indispensable watchdog over authority and institutions, journalists have a moral responsibility to the society they belong to.

In conflict situations Journalists and media houses in general have a right to obtain information but must adhere the laid ethics in regard to reporting of conflicts. They must not violate human rights, incite hate and infringement of lawful rights against people, nations, nationalities, denominations and races, spread libels and disparage anybody.³

²Croatian Journalists Association code of Ethics.

³National Association of Hungarian Journalists codes of Ethics .

Nor should the profession of journalism which is a public institution be used as an instrument to serve anti-social ends, or interests which are not compatible with the profession or be used to the detriment of national and public interest. It entails a high degree of public trust which must be earned and maintained by observing the highest professional and ethical standards.¹³ However, in cases of disasters and national calamity, the mass media should bear in mind that rescue operations for victims and persons in jeopardy take precedence over the public's right to be informed.⁴ They must give priority to saving human lives and shift professional duties to the second place.

Sean McBride Report for UNESCO in 1978 concluded that;

“For the journalists, freedom and responsibility are indivisible. Freedom without responsibility invites distortion and other abuses. But in the absence of freedom there can be no exercise of responsibility...The adoption of codes of ethics at national and in some cases at the regional level is desirable, provided that such codes are prepared and adopted by the professional itself-without governmental interference.”⁵

⁴Nigerian Press Organisation code of Ethics

⁵The MacBride Round Table on Communication: Declaration of Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, Unesco General Conference, Paris, October-November 1978

4.2 Use of media as a tool for Escalation of Conflict

Throughout the world, radio is the most effectively way of spreading ideas and information, for good or for evil. The radio is also an effective tool for sending messages about peace, democracy, ethnic tolerance and methods of alternative conflict resolution. This is because the media embraces other cultural forms such as village theatre, TV soap opera, radio drama or through the use of the internet to get peace compatible messages across.⁵

It is evident from chapter two and three that in the recent past, the radio has often been exploited, used for misinformation and propaganda, manipulate listeners and to promote fear, distrust and violence as well as a channel of peace. In countries where much of the population is illiterate like in Rwanda and Burundi, the power of the radio is particularly obvious. Radio Broadcast is the main medium for mass information and education and best suited in conflict or post -conflict situations because it combines relatively low costs, high flexibility and high impact amidst people who may be mostly illiterate a case in point being Rwanda during the Genocide. In Rwanda and Burundi, those responsible for the conflict used media power to present one-sided views with an aim of deceiving the public.

⁵*The media and peace building, a roundtable consultation organized by the Institute for Media , Policy and Civil society, Vancouver B.C. April 8-9, 1999).*

Based on this research, it is evident that In the 1990s some radio stations in Rwanda and Burundi actively contributed to the worsening of existing tensions between and within countries by whipping up nationalistic feelings and ethnic hatred. Good examples are the prominent roles played by the Radio Rwanda and the RTML in justifying, supporting and sustaining wars, genocides and "ethnic cleansing". According to Ahua, the media certainly played an active role in mobilizing people to violence through hate propaganda.⁶ It is a very powerful weapon and if misused, can be one of the most destructive weapon. Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines(RTML) which operated in Rwanda in 1993 and 1994 was one of the most terrifying examples of how radio can be used to stir up hatred, violence and massacres.

In Rwanda and Burundi, the media's role particularly the radio in disseminating erroneous information or inflammatory propaganda became an issue of great significance. Its interpretive representation of violent events around the region had a wide and powerful impact as it exacerbated tensions. Huband argues that the need to understand whether the world could have intervened in Rwanda was subsumed by the wish to show the visual horror and explain it away with reference to an apparently age-old Hutu/Tutsi conflict.⁷

⁶An interview with Atsen Ahua, former director of URTNA

⁷Mark Huband, in the *Financial Times World Economy Pages in Reporting the World: A Practical Checklist for the Ethical Reporting of Conflicts in the 21st Century* by Jane Lynch, pg 66

Yet there are those who argue that the media misrepresented the facts in Rwanda and Burundi by painting a skewed picture on the crisis. Kintu presenting a statement for the Sub-Committee on Africa in May 1994 argued that though Ugandan troops were fighting side by side with the Rwanda Patriotic Front(RPF), and the fact that Kagame conducted his worldwide propaganda from Kampala using Uganda's radio and TV, very little mention of Uganda has appeared in American media. Kintu further points out that the media reported during the first week of Rwanda genocide that all foreigners including journalists were evacuated from Kigali yet according to Kintu, Museveni sent a team of reporters to follow his troops as they advanced into Rwanda where they were propping up RPF forces.⁸

To support how the world media never gave attention the Rwanda crisis half the attention it was giving to other crisis, Kintu pointed out that:

When RPF massacred over 40,000 Hutus in northern Rwanda in February 1993 and created a million refugees, there was hardly any coverage of the tragedy. In October of 1993, the then elected president of Burundi Ndadaye was murdered with many other government officials, over 200 000 civilians were butchered by soldiers, over a million fled to the neighbourhood as refugees but this was given very minimal media coverage⁹

⁸Remigius Kintu, *The Truth Behind The Rwanda Crisis*: Sub-committee on Africa, Committee on Foreign Affairs, United States House of Representatives, Washington D.C May 04, 1994.

⁹Ibid

To attempt to explain that the genocide was essentially the result of an abuse of political power by a group with the Rwandan ruling elite, and not an age-old tribal conflict, would have clashed with the visual image.¹⁰ This was rarely attempted at all by Televisions and thus the world left Rwanda to its fate the media played a very major role in convincing the US and others that they could do nothing to stop the horror.

Broadly speaking, hate media both in Rwanda and Burundi encouraged violent activities, tension or hatred between races, ethnic or social groups or countries for political goals or by fostering conflict through reporting one-sided and biased views and opinions which resulted to deception. There are various strategies that have emerged from this research that could go along way in countering hate media. These include areas such as: Media interventions through Jamming or Switching off hate media and monitoring, specialization in Journalism training in reporting conflicts, Setting up of Peace media and a Code of Ethics on Reporting Conflicts.

4.3 Jamming or Switching off hate media and monitoring

Media interventions includes jamming or switching off programmes altogether which can be applied either separately or jointly by dealing swiftly and effectively with the offending media.

¹⁰Mark Huband, in the *Financial Times World Economy pages in Reporting the world*. Op. cit, pg 68

Though jamming or taking out hate radio broadcasts may not be desirable and may even require high-level political decisions as it concerns national sovereignty of states involved. These kind of arguments fail when the media directly violates Article 111 (c) of the UN Genocide Convention on direct and public incitement to commit genocide.¹¹

According to Article 19, the London-based International Centre against Censorship which lobbies for Freedom of Expression, hate radio is one of the "outgrowths" of relaxing radio controls in Africa where private stations are constantly springing up. It acknowledges that hate radio can cross the line between freedom of expression and incitement. Points out the role RTLM played in Rwanda by broadcasting lists of people to be tracked down and killed, is unacceptable and according to International Law, it clearly permits external intervention to jam the broadcasts at this stage¹².

The international community in collaboration with governments, media houses both local and international, as well as local organizations must search for ways of addressing human rights abuses. Such one measure would be to monitor, counter and block radio and television broadcasts that incite widespread violence in crisis zones around the world.

¹¹UN Article 11 1(a)on Genocide

¹²Article 19: Broadcasting Genocide)

Metzl, a former United Nations human rights officer argues that limited radio and television jamming in defence of human rights is a potentially effective and low-risk tool for countering dangerous messages inciting people to violence¹³.

Chalk, also supports the idea of radio jamming by the international community. He argues that the perpetrators of genocide and gross violations of human rights have been far more effective in using radio broadcasting to pursue their lethal ends than advocate human rights. He therefore urges the international community to announce that it is monitoring and transcribing hate broadcastings for use in the future prosecution of the offenders if a genocide ensues as well as implement its capacity to jam or destroy transmitters broadcasting hate propaganda when genocides are imminent¹⁴

During the Rwanda genocide, the BBC Monitoring Service and its US government partner the Foreign Broadcast Information Service(FBIS) began locating frequencies and monitoring the then-rebel RPF Radio Muhabura, Radio Rwanda and RTLM as it slowly transformed itself into a clandestine. It was BBC that announced the sudden disappearance of radio Rwanda Muhabura in July 1994 and later revamped pro-RPF Radio Rwanda, the flight of RTML's

¹³Jamie Metzl ,
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Hornet/irin_22698.html

¹⁴Frank Chalk, *Radio Propaganda and Genocide*: MIGS Occasional Paper November 1999, <http://.mw.nl/realradio/dossiers/html/conclusions.html>

broadcasters first to Butare, then to Gisenyi and finally at the RPF consolidated its victory-RTLM's move to Zaire as a pirate radio¹⁵. Such monitoring is recommended as it identifies the trends of hate media to avoid spreading of propaganda and propagating violence.

Monitoring is able to establish the trends and provide information for international decision makers to act upon. During the Rwanda genocide, no action was taken in response to proposals from human rights and humanitarian groups to shut down or jam RTML or radio Rwanda broadcasts. There was no UN or other radio stations to counter the incitement of violence that was channeled through the RTLM and the Radio Rwanda. It would be therefore necessary and appropriate that international watchdogs be set up to carry out such monitoring and be empowered too to carry out the jamming or switching off of such hate media. This research outcome proposes that this could be well done through one of the United Nations bodies.

4.4 Countering Hate Media

Peace media promotes peaceful conditions of life and resolution of conflict, and counters hate media by proposing truthful information, presenting issues fairly and offering alternative sources of information. This led to the international community seek for solutions to deal with the problem of "hate media by

¹⁵ IRIN Report on hate media Nairobi, 26 February 1998

proposing jamming of the radio while others “positive” measures were adopted aimed at broadcasting a message mitigating or nullifying that of hate radio.

In Rwanda and Burundi particularly as discussed in the previous chapters, this has proved to be very effective through the peace radios as opposed to the “hate media”. A practical example is the already discussed in chapter two the Studio Ijambo soap Opera “ Our Neighbours, Ourselves” which centers around a Hutu and a Tutsi family who live next door to each other depicting the complexities of the conflict through the relationships between these families.

Their magazine show “Pillars of Humanity” popularly known as the “Heroes” is a prove that carefully designed dramatic interventions can be used to address cultural attitudes and perceptions. The Studio Ijambo has made significant contributions to the development of culture of peace in Burundi. It has become instrumental in the fight against a recurring source of ethnic tension and rumour-mongering and strengthened the belief of many people on the both sides of the conflicting parties that dialogue is very essential.

The experience of Studio Ijambo in Burundi illustrates that the radio can be a high-impact, low-cost instrument of intervention not only as a reliable source of news and information but also as a vehicle of social and political mobilisation in peace building. This radio programme was set up as a direct response to the

hate propaganda , to support and enhance peace building and strengthen local capacity to manage and resolve conflict in Burundi.

A survey conducted by Hagos for the USAID evaluation, revealed that the Studio Ijambo has had broad impact on inter-ethnic relations, social and political mobilisation, and political elite negotiations⁸. Since then setting up of studio Ijambo, UNESCO, UNHCR and UNICEF, USAID have funded peace radio broadcasts in the Rwanda and Burundi. Such include the African Public Radio in Bujumbura. In August 1994, UNESCO helped the non governmental organization 'Reporters sans frontières' set up 'Agatashya', a humanitarian radio station in Rwanda. Run by a group of independent Rwandan journalists, the station broadcast survival information on drinking water, food and sanitation to more than 1.5 million refugees. It also helped refugees in their search for lost family members. To complete this support, UNESCO, together with the French non governmental organization " Equilibre ", sent some 3.500 radio sets to camps in the Kivu Lake area¹⁶ (former Zaïre).

Peace media have a significant impact on the conflict situation because it reaches a broad public audience. Reconciliation oriented radio and television programme

¹⁶Asgede Hagos: Study on Media Intervention in Peace Building in Burundi-The Studio Ijambo Experience and Impact for USAID 2001

contribute to and building support for efforts to prevent or mitigate conflict and can encounter abuse of the media to incite violence. Peace media can also present issues fairly and make alternative sources of information available. Such peace radio broadcast which are discussed in chapter three of this research need to be encouraged and many more setup not only in the great lakes but in all parts of the world to counter any eminent conflict.

4.5 Specialised training in conflict Management for Journalists:

If journalists are to play a positive role in de-escalating conflicts, they must understand the conflicts at hand. Journalists covering issues like war should be well trained for their work. Just as medical, Environmental, legal, science and business news reporting has grown sophisticated and specialized in recent years so should reporting of war , peace keeping and humanitarian interventions.

The decentralization of global conflict and the prospect of further unrest in the developing world make greater specialisation in reporting conflict a necessity. In particular, journalists reporting conflicts need to be fully conversant in International humanitarian law, the rules of war and the Geneva conventions. In this age of new communications technology, there is also an increasing need for journalists reporting on conflicts to be trained in conflict resolution techniques, so they can better understand their own attitudes towards the conflicts as well as how they could use their influence to help those caught up in it.

In training, there is also the need to sensitize journalists on the need for humanitarian reporting which would make it paramount that the media adopts a positive role which calls for peace and understanding between the warring parties. It is important to train journalists to move beyond traditional and sensationalist conflict coverage to more sophisticated peace reporting. This would entail writing stories which contextualize conflict or examine reconciliation process.¹⁷ Today in various cases, journalists who are not trained in conflict reporting are sent out in the field to cover a conflict situation, and end up aggravating the situation by being insensitive of their moral responsibility to the society at large. This more than often has accelerated the situation which could be avoided if the journalists could undergo training before hand to ensure that the media strengthens a culture of democratic attitudes and tolerance between warring parties.

4.6 Journalistic Code of Ethics: A necessary Tool in Reporting Conflicts

It is a known fact that an ethical codes will never solve all the problems of intolerance in media, but may help journalists focus on their own responsibilities and resolve dilemmas in reporting. They can be used as a checklist and also ensure that journalists adhere to the highest ethical standards, professional

¹⁷The Media and peace building: A round table Consultation organized by the Institute for Media, op.cit

competence and good behavior in carrying out their duties and in this context of reporting conflicts.

As in many codes of ethics, journalists must not violate human rights, incite hate and infringement of lawful rights against people, nations, nationalities, denominations and races, spread libels and disparage anybody. Nor should the profession of journalism which is a public institution be used as an instrument to serve anti-social ends, or interests which are not compatible with the profession or be used to the detriment of national and public interest. It entails a high degree of public trust which must be earned and maintained by observing the highest professional and ethical standards.

4.7 Media as an agent of Peace

The previous chapters reveal that media is in a position to contribute to conflict de-escalation. It shows that in Rwanda, it was only when the television screens showed the massive influx of Hutu refugees to Tanzania in late April 1994 and, in particular, to Zaire in mid-July 1994, was the international donor community galvanized into action. UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movements, military logistic and medical contingents, civil defense and disaster response agencies, and more than 200 NGOs poured into the area. Over the period April to December 1994 approximately US\$ 1.4 billion was allocated by the international community to assist refugees and internally displaced.¹⁸ The response was extraordinary and contained highly commendable efforts and was marked by the courage and commitment shown by personnel from all agencies in extremely difficult and often dangerous situations.

The media can therefore engage in confidence building measures by Identifying the underlying interests of each party to a conflict for the other; Prevent the circulation of incendiary rumours and counteract them when they surface; Identify the core values of disputants, which is often critical to helping them understand their own priorities and those of their opposite number; Identify and

¹⁸Steering Committee for Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance To Rwanda Press Release Geneva, Nairobi, New York, 12 March 1996

explain underlying material and psychological needs of parties to a conflict, clarifying the structural issues that are perceived to be at stake; Frame the issues involved in conflict in such a way that they become more susceptible to management²⁰.

The television has a powerful ability to shape human's perception. It can educate its audience, combat stereotypes, provide models of pro-social behaviour and attitudes. According to a research carried out by two Canadian researchers Julian Roberts and Michelle Grossman on articles appearing in Canadian newspapers and periodicals between 1982 and 1989 to estimate the number of crimes stories pertaining to crime prevention that appeared in the print media, their search revealed that there was a total of 17,562 stories dealing with some aspect of crime prevention and out of this, fewer than one percent dealt with crime prevention .²¹ The argument is to get the media to assume its role in crime prevention.

During mediation, the media performs the role of quasi-mediators. Without formal appointment the media intervenes as third party in conflicts. It is crucial in bringing parties together to discuss their relationships that allow the parties to hear the opponent's perspective and to be heard themselves. Although for

²⁰Robert Karl Manoff, *Role Plays: Potential media roles in conflict prevention and management* op.cit

²¹*The role of the Mass Media*: Department of Justice Canada, Solicitor General Canada, 1996

journalists, more than often, they do not have a goal of helping the parties to resolve their disagreement but rather focus on the parties differences.

However the media encourages communication between conflicting sides. By consciously assuming a role of intermediary among the opposing parties or by actively helping to immediately dispel a rumour or producing stories underlying points of agreement rather than areas of discord, the media plays an important role in helping conflicting parties make initial steps towards resolving their differences.

Baumann & Siebert argues that the media unavoidably, necessarily mediates conflicts. According to them, the media representation define, shape and often exacerbate conflict by stories they choose to cover, by those they omit, by news frame. For example, the media may encourage polarization and extremism by marginalizing certain parties and by only quoting their most extreme members and positions. This mediating effect can be dangerous when journalists are unaware of their power.²² Conflicting parties and intermediaries can help prevent such occurrences by making an effort to explain the issues to reporters in as careful and non-biased way as possible. They should always explain what conflict management processes are in place or are being considered, who is involved and why, how the process is structured and why, and ask for the media's support in giving positive, responsible coverage of these events.

²²Hannes Siebert, 'Debunking the Big O' in Melissa Baumann(ed) Media and Conflict: Track two vol 7 No. 4 December (1998) p.5

Direct appeals can also be made to media's sense of social responsibility. By involving media representatives in efforts to more constructively address a conflict, the media can be shown ways of enhancing their prestige through public service efforts designed to help the community better deal with the difficult and dangerous situations.

On the other hand, when negotiations are held in private, the media can get very suspicious, and will sometimes try to develop stories from rumors about the private meetings-rumors, which may or may not be true. To prevent the spreading of false rumors, Weaver recommends that frequent press releases that explain what is happening in the negotiations and why can help generate positive media coverage. If press releases are impossible as they are with especially sensitive negotiations that need complete privacy explaining to the press why such privacy is needed, and promising a full report at the end can be helpful.²³

A practical example is drawn from the peace media "Studio Ijambo in Burundi, which opened up new channels of communication for those who did not have access to the government owned media and as a result provided a reliable forum for what came out like an indirect dialogue between the parties and ethnic blocs.

²³Tim Weaver, Crossline magazine, March/April 1997

Ahua argues that Studio Ijambo promoted open discussion and also developed specific programs on peace reconciliation, and by doing so it has encouraged people to come to a better understanding of one another and putting behind the hateful and violent past.²⁴ The media can offer better communication and information regarding the adversary. By allowing each side to see the other relatively directly, the media can help to prevent the demonization of the other side. It serves as a communication mechanism when warring parties can't talk to each other.

The media addresses problems of power-inequality and aims at levelling the playing field. The media gives voices to the inarticulate and provides an audience for the unheard. By doing so it establishes networks to circulate information concerning conflict prevention and management activities that have succeeded elsewhere. Provide an outlet for the emotions of parties, the expression of which may be therapeutic in and of itself.

Participating positively in the process of healing, reconciliation, and social reconstruction following conflicts should be media's interest in any conflict situation. It can signal the importance of accords such as the Arusha peace Accord that end conflicts by historicising them as important public occasions in order to embed the resolution process in shared social memories

²⁴Interview with Atsen Ahua

As a watchdog in the society the media is crucial in particular over conflicting parties, by holding them accountable for their actions as well as monitoring on human rights violations. It seeks to confirm official accounts, reveal official deceit, and correct errors of omission. A journalist who witness the commission of a crime is not absolved of the responsibility to report the crime to the proper legal authorities. Hilsum, a reporter for ITN in Britain who covered mass killing of Tutsi in Rwanda, decided to testify before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and argued that 'It was not my responsibility as a journalist, my role as a journalist could even have been compromised by my testifying. But I also have responsibilities as a human being'.²⁵ The importance of being a first-hand witness becomes very crucial. Official sources, even when they agree, may simply be wrong.

The media provides early warning of impending conflicts or potential danger. This is in view of the fact that all conflicts start as misunderstanding or tension between and among a group and if not quickly recognized it can explode to engulf a larger section of the community or nation.

After the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 many analysts suggested that the lack of media attention in the months prior to the killings contributed to the international indifference and inaction. For months hate messages were sent out

²⁵ Lindsey Hilsum, "Rwandan Rebels Advance as French Forces Hang Back," *Guardian*, July 2, 1994.

through the state-owned radio and through the print media but very few journalists chose to cover that story. Later when journalists covered the refugee camps in Goma, it refocused international attention and the world community responded to the refugee plight.²⁶

Supporting international peacekeeping operations in countries where they are active and in countries contributing military contingents is another active role the media plays. The current UN secretary general Koffi Annan argued that "Peace keeping operations depend for their support on widespread public awareness of the conflicts and we are committed to doing everything we can to facilitate the work of the media"²⁷

During negotiations, the media has the power to bring together sectors of our society previously out of touch with each other. It facilitates the focusing and the attention of the international community on a developing conflict, and by doing so bring pressure on the parties to resolve it or on the international community to intervene. It helps parties to negotiating table. A media report can weaken a stronger part or strengthen a weaker party in the eyes of the publics thereby encouraging parties to negotiate.

²⁶ Richard Griggs, *the Great Lakes Conflict: Strategies for Building Long-term Peace*, op. cit

²⁷John C Hammock. and Joel R Charny., "Emergency Response as Morality Play," in Rotberg and Weiss, *From Massacres to Genocide*, 125-126.

Butros Boutros-Ghali pointed out in June 1996 speech in Germany that he regarded the media as working at cross purposes with peace negotiators. He argued that;

“traditionally, the cause of diplomacy has been for conciliation which often requires talks to take place outside the public eye. The cause of media coverage has been for public information. Privacy versus publicity. The press seeks immediacy. Good diplomacy however requires the opposite. The media wants action and drama; diplomats often set that no action may be the safer course for the moment”

It is because of these competing interests that he therefore suggested that conflict mediators tend to be unhappy with crisis news coverage. But the international community with other priorities view the press more favourably.²⁸

Richard Goldstone, the South African judge who served as the first chief prosecutor for the United Nations war crimes tribunals for Rwanda (ICTR) and the former Yugoslavia, declaring upon finishing his term of office that he felt very warm gratitude and appreciation for the attention that the press gave to war. He argued that without the media, there wouldn't have been ad hoc tribunals at all. According to him, the media built up public pressure for them.²⁹

²⁸Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "The United Nations and the Global Communications Revolution" (address to the German United Nations Association and the German Association for Foreign Policy, Bonn, Germany, June 20, 1996

²⁹Richard Goldstone, remarks at a news conference organized by the American Bar Association and the Coalition for International Justice, Washington, D.C., October 2, 1996.

There is much evidence that the media is the fastest educator in contemporary society. It educates parties and communities involved in conflict and thereby change the information environments of disputes, which is critical to the conflict resolution process. As Manoff has argued in the previous chapters, analysing conflict by the media differs from conventional conflict reporting in that the media would self-consciously apply analytical frameworks derived from conflict resolution and related fields to systematically enhance the public understanding of key aspects of the situation as well as the dynamics of the efforts to manage it.³⁰

Like any other developing country, In Rwanda and Burundi, radio is the most productive and cost -effective means for delivering information, where an estimated 85% of the population has access to radios. This is a characteristic of countries where most of the population is illiterate and poor where the power of the radio is particularly important and its potential dangers and benefits greatest. This is one of the reason why the radio was exploited to manipulate listeners and to promote fear, distrust and violence in the Great Lakes region.

³⁰Robert Karl Manoff, *Role Plays: Potential media roles in conflict prevention end management* , Track Two Vol. 7No. 4 NewYork, 1998

Chapter Five

5.0 Conclusion

This research brings out evidently that the media is an important factor for good and for ill in conflict management as it can be an agent for or against conflict and its resolution. Any comprehensive and effective strategy to manage conflicts has no choice but to take the media into consideration. Media is undisputedly one of the major actors in conflict management, an important diplomatic player in conflicts and a potentially influential player in diverse conflict management process. Its power is a reality that cannot be wished away. It's use defines, shapes and often exacerbates conflict by the choice of stories covered, those omitted and sources used. On the other hand, media can deliberately mitigate or prevent conflict.

The media plays an important role in most communities, public policy, national and International conflicts. Depending on the nature and the amount of media coverage, the situation can be made better or worse. Whether the news media are praised or criticized for the reporting of a story depends to a great extent on whose interests are served by the way the story is covered as has been evidenced in the case of the use of the RTLTM in Rwandan conflict. If the media does a good job of presenting issues clearly, from both sides of view, much can be done to correct misunderstanding and avoid escalation borne from rumors and fear. Coverage of moderate, rather than extreme positions is also helpful, as is coverage of attempts to deescalate or resolve the conflict.

Media today is far more intrusive than ever before and has indeed complicated the business of diplomacy and negotiation between nations. It scrutinizes every tentative idea, and forces public responses from different political formations within the country and from across the border.¹ Political leaders have therefore come to terms with the new media realities in the rough and tumble of domestic politics.

5.1 Promotion of peaceful coexistence

The research reveals on one hand that the media has emerged as an essential tool in combating conflicts by providing support through the mechanism of information. It therefore proves one of the hypotheses that the media has a positive role to play in conflict management. It has a responsibility to build peace and it plays an irreplaceable role. It discharges crucial duties by carrying information, debates and critical comments on society and it is for this reason that all journalists and the mass media have a duty to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards. It reflects competing opinions and interests and enables the public to make well-informed choices.

To facilitate this, the media have to strive to eliminating confusing and misleading information disseminated to the public. Journalists have to distinguish between personal opinions, analysis and factual information by

¹C. Raja Mohan, *Media and foreign policy*-Online edition of India's National Newspaper, Monday July, 2001 [http//:Hindu media and foreign policy](http://Hindu media and foreign policy))

giving precise account of the facts.

During conflict, avoiding concentration on what divides the parties, the differences between what they say, want, would go a long way into bringing parties into a reconciliation table. On the other hand they should always try asking questions that may reveal areas of common ground and leading their reports with answers which lead to establishment of peaceful relationships in any society that the media covers.

The media therefore needs to realize their responsibility to the public at large and the various interests in society. They should serve the public interest not personal or specific interests with an objective of promoting a long lasting peaceful environment. This obligation should override any desire to serve information sources or to favor the political elites in the society.

In collection and dissemination of information, journalists have to bear in mind their responsibility to the public in educating citizens and other on matters affecting them and their surroundings, and consistently strive to put ahead of others, matters of public and national interest. They have to at all costs avoid treating a conflict as if it is only going on in the place and at the time that violence is occurring. Instead, they should try to trace the links and consequences for people in other places now and in the future. Questions such as "who are all the people with a stake in the outcome?" "What lessons will

people draw from watching these events unfold as part of a global audience?" should always be in the mind of journalists reporting on conflicts.

5.2 Conflict Escalation

It is also evident from this research that if not checked, the media can be an agent of conflicts escalations and a threat to international peace. This has been well demonstrated by the ominous radio station RTLM and some other Rwandan media which incited genocide against Tutsi people and acted as an instrument of the massacres by conveying orders to Hutu militias. The media can play a very negative role in the fanning of nationalism and ethnic hatred. Occasionally, there occurs misuse of the media by political elites to promote ethnic divisions through subtle messages by applying pressure on the media which they directly or indirectly control. This ends up impacting negatively on international peace due to among other things the spill over effects on the neighbouring countries.

This research also brings out the fact that most blatant cases of media exploitation and propaganda occur in situations such as Rwanda where most media is under the control of the state or ruling elite. It implies that the problems of state ownership and control of media compromise the media which makes the media become directly involved in the conflict and therefore unable to report objectively and constructively .

Therefore, the need for training journalist on covering and reporting conflicts which has been one of the recommendations in this research becomes very necessary. A low level of professionalism, experience, lack of knowledge about ethnic groups among the working journalists contributes to a poor job of covering interethnic relations. Journalists need to learn how to present straight facts and give minorities access to and use of the major media without alienating or inflaming the majority population. This would eliminate the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination or stereotyping based on among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, disability, physical appearance social status religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins. By playing a nonpartisan role, the media would ensure peaceful co-existence and building up of strong relationship within the society, which are self-sustaining.

There is therefore an urgent need for the journalists to develop methods and habits of objective reportage on inter ethnic relations so as to evolve as effective government and society watchdogs. Though common sense and personal moral standards have been the prerequisites for covering conflicts, the urgency to have objective and peace messages being promoted by the media surpasses these self moral standards and emphasizes the need to have set rules and regulations. This also supports the importance of timely media monitoring particularly in conflicts

situations. Careful media monitoring would have significantly early warning signals.

This proves the second hypothesis as evidenced by the case of the hate media in particularly Rwandan conflict. The manner in which a situation is reported can either escalate or de-escalate the situation. Presenting acts of violence, in a manner that glorifies anti-social conduct which is what the RTLM and Radio Rwanda engaged in, can cause havoc not only internally but also internationally through internationalisation of conflicts as detailed in the research.

5.3 Young Phenomenon

This research further reveals that though the media plays a significant role in conflict situations, its intervention in conflict however is still in its adolescence. As a major tool in conflict management, more often than not, it is normally either ignored or its significance not given the preference it ought to receive. That is why much of the literature written on conflict management process do not give an in depth strategy on how to utilize the media in conflict management. Most of the available literature focuses on radio for the simple reason that in many parts of the world where conflicts occur, newspapers and television stations are often the first casualties of war, leaving radio as the most effective means of communication.

As has been noted in chapter two of this research, media intervention does not belong yet to the established set of tools used for prevention or resolution of conflicts or in peacekeeping operations unlike military or humanitarian interventions. The need for the conflict managers to carry out in-depth research on all other types of media outlets and their impact on conflicts should receive urgent attention.

It therefore evident that any effort that is ever going to be successful in conflict resolution and prevention must recognize and take into account the media's position. Its potential should always be paramount in any strategy seeking conflict resolution and prevention. The media should always be viewed as being part and parcel of along term strategy in regard to conflict management in the entire world.

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