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Gendarmerie
Legal detachment
[illeg] military
Palais de Justice
Brussels
02/508.60.11
Minutes no 681
[illeg]
Lechat Jean
In file no. 02 02545
8 of the investigator
in Brussels
Elst Reul
Military Hearing
Brussels
18 May 1994
[illeg]
Brussels

PRO JUSTITIA

Today tenth of May nineteen ninety four at 09.15 hours

We the undersigned Artiges, Guy, Adjutant, OPJ
 Hamelinck Willem 1Mdl – APJ of the gendarmerie

Resident in Brussels- military hearing in civilian clothes

We report that we have heard, at the date and time as above, at the headquarters of the Armed Forces at Evere

Lechat, Jean, Oscar, Auguste
Born in Couvin on 08.08.46
Domiciled at Couvin, Residence Montbard no. 51
ADC – registration A/31072 – CTM Rwanda –
Accounts secretary

who states to us:

“I wish to express myself in French.

As regards the attack against the Rwandan presidential aircraft, I heard nothing beforehand. However on 06.04.94, I went to the airport as I had to wait there for a C 130 expected between 20.30 and 21.00 hours. At around 20.30 hours I was driving on the Nyarutarama road towards the airport (+/- 7 km) and I heard on our radio Doctor Pasuch who announced that an aircraft had been hit by two beams of light, probably missiles. I called Doctor Pasuch and told him that I was arriving there. I was accompanied by Jean-Pierre Duquesnoy, a telephone code clerk at the Belgian Embassy.

On arrival at the airport, I presented myself to the entry service. There I noted that the police guards were particularly nervous. I could not enter and that was around 10 minutes after the call from Doctor Pasuch. I noted that the soldiers of the

Presidential guard were leaving the airport, festooned in cartridges, to occupy the junctions in front of the airport. Normally I only meet police or soldiers of the air Squadron at the airport, so I was surprised to see, 10 minutes after the attack, soldiers loaded with munitions leaving the airport. Throughout the night we were immobilised along the fence by the police, clearly aggressive. Adjutant Cantineau of the 2nd commando and Major Dr Thiry were there like me to meet our C 130, and they were like us blockaded there. Dr Thiry as well as a logistics officer were forced to sit on the ground and they were disarmed (GP).

All these people were in UN uniforms and in UN vehicles.

Given the atmosphere that reigned and with the runway lights out, I contacted our radio operator at Nyarutarama in order that he might warn the C 130 not to land and to turn round. The aircraft circled above Kigali for half an hour before leaving the area.

In the early morning the police and some soldiers told us to leave. They wanted us to leave without the vehicles. After some negotiations we left in a column. The GPs of Dr Thiry and the logistics expert were not returned.

Afterwards we were stopped at the level of "Chez Lando" by a roadblock. They did not want to let us pass. We turned back and met Lt Vermeulen of the 2nd commando with some 15 men. We joined their group and remained there practically the whole day. After various incidents we arrived close to the AMAHORO stadium. There a policeman refused us entry and the crowd surrounded us and threatened to lynch us. The crowd was drunk and apparently under the effects of drugs. Finally we were able to jump over the stadium fences by abandoning our vehicles. In the stadium the Bengladis disarmed us! We stayed there blocked in three or four days in the stadium before being evacuated to the Meridien hotel by going round the large roadblock. From the Meridien we evacuated our families to Nyarutarama. On this occasion we had been under fire and we had been mixed with people from the FPR, who, I have to say, helped us a lot. These people were correct and did not show any anti-Belgian feeling. I pass over the details and after having recovered our families we could get back to the airport. I state here that in discussing with the Rwandans who criticised us Belgians for having killed their president, it was said to me that Radio 1000 Collines had announced it and then RFI (Radio France International).

2nd continuation to Minutes no 681 10.05.94 Brussels Legal Detachment

On the murder of 10 paras I know nothing special. I never listened to Radio 1000 Collines.

In my opinion the Rwandan Army did not have missiles.

For me, the attack could only have been carried out by soldiers of the CDR faction (a hard-line faction)

I have nothing further to add.

(After reading, signs in our information book)

Signature

Duly noted