



**This is the testimony of Denise, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide**



why he decided to come with us. He used his gun when we were in the bushes but his ammunition ran out. He went to the communal bureau to look for others and he met a policeman there who was his cousin. Unfortunately, other policemen recognized him as the one who fought for Tutsis and they killed him.

We thought that the situation was better in Kigali. Together with almost a hundred people, we decided to go to Kigali. When we arrived to Nyabarongo River, there were soldiers who asked us where we were going. We told them we were going to Kigali. They told us to wait a bit so that they could help us to find cars because many cars were using the road. Instead, they called interahamwe with machetes and swords. Many people were killed at that time and thrown in the river. I ran. I do not know why they did not stop me. I went to a bush near the river. One boy came with me.

We stayed in that bush until the end of the day when the interahamwe and the soldiers had gone. We then realized that all the others had died. There was a school near the road. We used to spend the nights in that school. A few hours before morning, we would come back to the bushes. We ate uncooked sweet potatoes that were in the plantation fields around the river. We sometimes heard the Hutu beating the Tutsis with machetes and swords. We knew that because we saw many dead bodies in the evening when we came out. What surprised us was that none of those killed had screamed or asked for mercy. We lived that life for a long time. We never spent a day without eating and though we only ate raw things, we were never sick because of that. It was only after the RPF arrived that we realized that there were about fifty people hiding in the bushes of Cyugaro. We had all lost our families but we were happy because each one thought he was alone in the bushes. My father and five of my brothers and sisters were in those bushes.

I was among the lucky women who escaped rape, but most of my friends were sexually violated, some of them have found out they are HIV positive. I went back to school I am now studying in the last year of secondary school. I was very late in my studies because I was sick many times in these last years. There was a time when I could not



walk. I now have two children, bo