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In April 1994, Rwanda suffered one of the most concentrated acts of genocide in human history. Up to a million people were massacred in just one hundred days. Among those slaughtered were almost all my relatives: fifty members of my family. Only my brother's wife, and her two children, survived. I was lucky. I at least know where they were slain. They were at the house of my grandfather. They had always sought refuge there in times of trouble. But this time, there were no safe sanctuaries. Along with other Tutsi families, they were savagely slaughtered in cold blood.

I was lucky, as at the time of the genocide I was living in the UK. Thus I escaped the massacre and the nightmare that survivors face today. Had I been in Rwanda I would certainly have been killed too.

I can think the only reason I was spared was to help those, like I, who are living a legacy of genocide. I set up a charity Survivors Fund (SURF) (www.survivors-fund.org.uk) to make sense of the genocide, and to support survivors to enable them to rebuild their lives, and a sense of humanity and trust. A vital part of my work is to ensure that as many people as possible hear the voices of survivors. Voices that tell the whole truth, that warn us of what man is capable of, that remind us of the suffering that must never again be permitted to happen to anyone, anywhere in the world. In light of events in Darfur, and other regions around the world, this is more important than ever.

Nearly 15 years after the horrific events, the fatal legacy of the genocide endures and situation of survivors is still bleak. This year, I stepped down as Director of SURF, after dedicating that last 14 years of my life to the cause of survivors, to enable me to reflect on my experience. The challenges ahead for SURF are still great. We are now faced with an explosion of post-genocide trauma among survivors, especially extreme anger, generalized aggression, and in some cases self-destructive tendencies, particularly among young people. Living with the haunted memories of genocide since 1994, continues to have a very significant emotional and psychological impact on the lives of survivors.

My research, which I am currently pursuing as a visiting scholar at the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service, New York University, is focused on three areas:

- The survivors' resilience in the face of heightened memorialisation, and growing trauma
- The effect of releasing prisoners back in the community and lack of justice for survivors
- Exploration of the difficulties and challenges of working with survivors – in particular focusing on the issue of trauma. This will draw on experiences of what has worked, and as importantly, what has not worked, in supporting survivors in Rwanda. I draw on my own experience, in particular of work with the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture, as well as the lessons of trauma recovery that I have identified and am researching further in the USA, Israel and Bosnia.

If you are in a position to contribute to the research, or would like to learn more, then please do not hesitate to contact me at mkb@survivors-fund.org.uk

