



# **Preventing Impending Violence and Genocide in the Central African Republic**

**Private Briefing by the Aegis Trust**

**Written briefing**

**Updated January, 2016**

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Dear friend

Thank you for joining us for the briefing on CAR. This is the first time that Aegis has reached out in this manner. We are deeply concerned about the situation in the Central African Republic and the lack of public awareness.

This written briefing is designed to accompany the live video briefings. A separate document contains FAQs (which will be updated).

The people of the Central African Republic are at grave risk of genocide. As we know with the Holocaust and in Rwanda, genocide does not occur overnight. There are important moments when prevention can be effective.

This is an opportunity to prevent genocide.

It is clear that more is needed and we cannot do this alone. This is why we are reaching out to you.

For further information or how we can help you engage, please contact Glen at [glen.ford@aegistrust.org](mailto:glen.ford@aegistrust.org) or call him on +44 7590 779137

We are awaiting your call.

James

Dr James M. Smith  
Chief Executive Officer

## **TOGETHER WE CAN PREVENT GENOCIDE IN CAR**

**Mark Rhode, Strategic Advisor**

This is the first time Aegis Trust has done this form of live briefing.

**The Central African Republic is on the verge of genocide, and millions of lives are at stake. But if we act now there will be time to intercede and prevent this.**

And this crisis is not just about one country. This violence is likely to spread beyond one country and we cannot let that happen. **Extremist Ideologies, imported from ISIS and Al Queda want to use CAR as a springboard to ignite genocide in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Most people don't know this, which is why we are doing these briefings.**

My name is Mark Rhode and I serve as Strategic Advisor to Aegis Trust. I have spent most of my adult life working with the most recognized International Relief and Development organizations in the world. I've seen the effects of poverty, epidemics and famine. And, I've helped raise billions of dollars to alleviate these humanitarian nightmares.

But, nothing I've seen concerns me more than what you are about to see and hear. And, that's why I'm standing with Aegis Trust – to prevent impending violence and genocide.

Aegis was founded in the wake of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and is the recognized leader in its field. We will now hear from Dr James Smith, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer for the Aegis Trust.

A surgeon by profession, James' life has been dedicated to the prevention of genocide. His family established the first and only Holocaust education centre in the UK, marking its 20 years anniversary in 2015. He founded Aegis in 2000 with a specific focus on prevention, giving up his medical career. In 2004 he created the Kigali Genocide Memorial. This led to the Rwanda peace education programme, which has been incorporated into the Rwandan national curriculum. It is this methodology, led by his Rwandan team that is proposed as the solution.

As someone once described: "Aegis educates people so genocide never occurs." Together, we can prevent genocide.

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## **WE NEED TO ACT OTHERWISE IT WILL BE TOO LATE**

**Dr James M. Smith, Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder**

Thank you Mark. We appreciate the time taken by those attending and reading this briefing to help prevent impending violence in CAR and beyond.

I will be as concise as I can. **Some 6,000 civilians have been murdered to date, including women and children, through cycles of revenge, on both sides of the conflict. Many women have been raped and subject to sexual violence.**

**But there is an even deeper concern that impacts us all. Any hate ideology is dangerous, but in my view radical Islam is the most dangerous movement to emerge in 70 years, since the Nazis.** We have seen this already in CAR. The Iman told me at the height of the crisis that he was contacted by many radical Islamic groups, such as Al Queda, Boka Haram and even the Chechenia Islamists that they wanted to bring revenge on the Christian communities.

So, while currently the problem in CAR is a national and political problem, there are external forces that are seeking to turn this into a regional conflict and where radical Islamist groups would establish roots.

CAR is on the verge of mass atrocities and genocide, millions are at risk. We know that genocide does not develop overnight, there is a predictable pathway that leads to mass murder. **If this is predictable, it is preventable.**

You have heard how Aegis established and now runs the Kigali Genocide Memorial and has been active in Rwanda for over 12 years. Also, my brother, Stephen, and I, together with our parents, are founders of the UK National Holocaust Centre. Both of these events inform our view and actions. The Holocaust did not need to happen, it could have been prevented, and in 1994 the genocide in Rwanda did not need to happen, that could have been prevented.

**In CAR 2016, atrocities and genocide do not need to happen, they can be prevented. But they will happen without a concerted intervention, and we must intervene early. We need to act BEFORE the major violence starts, otherwise it will be too late.**

***“Those who claim to believe in god must also be men and women of peace”***

Much has happened in the past few weeks. Pope Francis visited CAR in November 2015 in an attempt to heal wounds and bring the world’s attention to the impending violence ahead.

I want to read something he said:

***“Those who claim to believe in God must also be men and women of peace. Together we must say NO to hatred, to revenge and to violence, particularly violence that is perpetrated in the name of religion.”***

I would like to invite you to meet Alain Lazaret, who is our Representative in the Central African Republic. Alain is a CAR national. He first worked as an English teacher, and then as a missionary in CAR and in Rwanda.

Alain knows this crisis from a personal point of view. In September 2015, during a recent violent outbreak, he was forced to escape with his family to Rwanda. But he was determined to return to CAR to direct our work. Alain tells us what motivates him to work with Aegis in CAR, despite the risks to his personal safety.

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**WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF GENOCIDE - PEACE EDUCATION WILL PREVENT IT**  
**Alain Lazaret, CAR Country Representative**

I grew up in CAR. To see it tearing itself apart is heart-breaking. We can’t change a country from the outside – we need to be involved on the inside to make a difference.

I’d been in Rwanda two years when I met Aegis and Freddy Mutanguha, Aegis Africa Director and a survivor from Rwanda 1994. **He helped me understand how Rwandans united, came together to rebuild their country.**

This reminded me of the words: “Blessed are the peacemakers.” From this time, I decided and was determined to come back to help heal my country.

In 2014 we organized a round table in Bangui with faith leaders, politicians and victims from both sides. After Freddy had given his testimony about his experience from Rwanda, in a room full of 150 people, a Muslim lady stood up and spoke of her son who was murdered and a Christian lady told how she was raped and her husband killed. **Everyone on both sides was weeping; they realized the effect of violence on both communities.**

**They saw themselves not as enemies, but as survivors together, they hugged each other and were crying. It was a very powerful moment, and the beginning of Aegis' impact in the Central African Republic.**

James Smith and I met with the interim President of CAR, Catherine Samba-Panza. I will never forget what she said: "We want Aegis to help us, I have been to Rwanda and seen what you have done, so everyone can come together to learn about peace and reconciliation." She felt very strongly, and said directly, almost begged saying: "James, please, I am waiting for you, I am here."

**There is so much work to do, but on all sides there is goodwill. People are tired of killing each other. We want to live as we used to, in peace.**

This experience has deeply affected my life. I have moved back to the Central African Republic with my family, my wife and children, even though people told us it was too dangerous. We cannot rebuild our country from the outside. We need to be inside, though there is a risk, to make a difference.

**We are on the verge of genocide, and peace education is needed and can make a difference. I repeat again, we are on the verge of a genocide. Peace education, only peace education can help us and save us.**

Aegis is absolutely instrumental in this. Without exaggerating, I think this is an instrument, a tool to help the Central African Republic heal itself, to bring peace and reconciliation.

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### **WE MUST ACT NOW, BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE**

**Mark Rhode, Strategic Advisor**

Thank you Alain, for sharing your story – and for your courage and commitment to save lives. You are an inspiration to me and many others.

**So, we ask the critical question: 'Can genocide be prevented?'**

We've learned that genocide does not occur overnight. There are steps through which a society regresses before the mass murder begins. It is now that effective prevention strategies can be deployed. We must act now, before it is too late.

This is exactly why Aegis Trust exists.

When James and his brother Stephen started Aegis in 2000, in the aftermath of various genocides of the 1990s, they realized that genocide is not a historic or Jewish issue.

Genocides still occur today, and can impact any population, but they can be prevented.

**Aegis Trust has developed a 3-tier proven model to prevent genocide:**

- **Break the continuum of violence**
- **Educate for sustainable peace**
- **Create jobs and economic opportunity, an alternative to violence**

This model works. If we act now, it will work in Central African Republic and will prevent extremist ideologies from spreading into other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

I would like to introduce Freddy Mutanguha, Aegis' Africa Director, who will share the specific interventions that will prevent genocide in CAR.

Freddy knows the path to genocide as an educator and from first hand experience. Freddy was 18 in 1994 and he lost 80 members of his family, including his parents and 4 of his siblings. He knows how life was immediately before 1994. He never thought that genocide would happen in Rwanda, but it did. He now wants to prevent the same from happening in CAR.

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**HOW DO WE BREAK THE CONTINUUM OF VIOLENCE? WE BRING PEACE  
ADVOCATES FROM RWANDA TO TRAIN PEOPLE TO REPLACE HATRED WITH  
HOPE AND RECONCILIATION**

**Freddy Mutanguha, Aegis Africa Director and survivor of Rwanda 1994**

Thank you Mark. As Mark mentioned, we have three ways to prevent genocide:

- Break the continuum of violence
- Educate for sustainable peace
- Create jobs and economic opportunity as an alternative to violence

You may ask, how do we break the continuum of violence? **We bring peace advocates from, survivors and perpetrators from Rwanda, to CAR to meet with communities, to replace hatred with hope and reconciliation.** These are people from Rwanda that have been able to reconcile with their perpetrators. Today

they are considered as peacemakers in their communities and as role models. We also have training materials to prevent violence. These help to develop knowledge and skills to prevent people from being drawn into violence, and raise awareness of how reconstruction can happen after violence.

**Let me explain how we educate for sustainable peace.** This is not a body of knowledge, but rather is a **participatory process that uses storytelling using role models through exhibitions and testimonies which leads to an understanding of the pathways to violence.** It provides an opportunity to speak about **moral choices** and **common values of humanity.** These teach about **empathy, critical thinking and individual responsibility.** We are convening groups of young people, government leaders and faith leaders to access these lessons. We will combine this with media to combat the propaganda of extremist groups.

**How do we create jobs and economic opportunity?** This is important because **lack of opportunity fuels violence because young people are drawn into the extremist groups through manipulation.** We've established a partnership with **World Vision** and **Microsoft** to bring **micro-finance, vocational training and entrepreneurship** that will create jobs. I want to highlight that a large number of young people in CAR are not employed and they do not have vocational skills. In CAR a little money goes a long way and we can create a major economic impact.

To do all this takes funding. We will not be able to do this without the financial support from friends and partners like you. **During the next 60 days, we have a huge task to raise \$2 million to launch our campaign in CAR.** While this may seem daunting, our Chairman, John Montgomery has good news. I introduce Chair of Aegis Trust, John Montgomery.

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**MY WIFE ANN AND I ARE SO COMMITTED TO THIS CAUSE THAT WE'VE  
DECIDED TO MATCH ANY FINANCIAL DONATION UP TO \$200,000  
John Montgomery, Philanthropist and Aegis Board Chair**

During this Briefing, you have learned about the patterns of violence that lead many to warn against genocide in the Central African Republic. And, you've heard of Aegis Trust's plan to prevent this impending violence.

My name is John Montgomery. I am Chairman of the Board of Aegis Trust. At age 19, I came to an understanding of ending genocide as my life calling.



Serving Aegis Trust is a primary outlet in this lifelong calling, and averting further violence in CAR is in the crosshairs of our work.

**Our solution to prevent genocide can and will work, but only if we act now.**

During the next months, we are making a significant investment into the Central African Republic and we need your help.

We have the opportunity to help save lives in CAR by making a financial contribution.

My wife Ann and I are so committed to this cause that we've decided **to match any financial donation you decide to make up to \$200,000**. That means your gift will have double the impact and may help save twice as many lives. I urge you to join Ann and me in this important mission.

Thank you.

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**A DOLLAR SPENT TO PREVENT HAS A HUGE IMPACT v THE COST  
AFTERWARDS**

**Mark Rhode, Strategic Advisor**

We are so appreciative to have a Board Chair like John, who with his wife is willing to make such an important gift. This briefing is designed to leverage financial resources from friends and partners who share our concern to prevent impending violence in CAR.

**To repeat - every dollar raised through this special offer will be matched** to have double the impact in saving lives in CAR, and a dollar spent to prevent impending genocide has a HUGE impact (versus) the cost to human lives afterwards, not to mention the economic cost of genocide.

We cannot do this alone, and that is why we need you.

People can help in several ways:

- **To make a personal gift**
- **To identify people who may be willing to give**
- **To collaborate with Aegis to help mobilize greater resources**

We look forward to hearing from you.