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English 12: British Literature and Composition

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Rieff, David. "An Age of Genocide: The Far-Reaching Lessons of Rwanda." *New Republic* 29 Jan. 1996: 27-36. *SIRS Researcher*. SIRS Knowledge Source. Salem High School. 24 Mar. 2006 <<http://www.sirs.com>>.

#### Summary of Article

In the article, Rieff asserts that the UN as well as the European nations were informed of the mass killings in the country of Rwanda at least three months before they began but were indifferent and optimistic about the idea; therefore, they allowed the genocide to go on. The UN blamed their indifference on powerlessness. They believed there was nothing they could have done to prevent the genocide from happening. Due to the fact that Rwanda had been at war for many years, even after their independence, many people knew that terror would eventually happen. Leaders of the country made visits to the UN in order to inform them of the problem. The world's lack of enthusiasm as well as concern gave the Hutu tribe of Rwanda a go-ahead in their genocide plan. Lists of names and addresses of each Tutsi member that would be killed were made up and carried out. Millions of Tutsi died as the Hutus fled the country in order to flee the problems they had caused.

#### Reaction to Article

Reading this article allowed me to obtain both knowledge and understanding of the traumatic events that happen all around the world. The author's attitude toward the world's

unresponsiveness is almost identical to my own views of human unawareness. Even though I knew about the ignorance and indifference that society has, I never knew it to cause such tragic events. If the world would have cared about the genocide that was going on in Africa, I believe the issue wouldn't have become as big as it did. When I read about the United Nations not caring about such a drastic problem, I was shocked. How could the leaders of the world not help out their own kind? Society's ignorance is a problem that I believe needs to be fixed or more mass killings will begin until the entire human population has wiped itself out.