



[Consolee Nishimwe](#) was born in Western Province, Rwanda. Her name Consolee means comfort or consolation. She is 33, the age of Christ and was born on September 11th, a date which will always be remembered by Americans. Nishimwe was at home in Rubengera, Kibuye, with her parents and four siblings when the ethnic cleansing started on April 6, 1994 and ended three months later. After many years, a 2002 Rwandan government census indicated that the body count from the [genocide](#) totaled more than 1 million people. Tutsis accounted for 94 percent of those killed.

During the genocide, Nishimwe and her family were forced to leave their home and go into hiding, desperately trying to avoid capture and certain death. Unfortunately, she lost her father Andre, and three young brothers, 18-month-old Bon-Fils (this first name means Good Son), Philbert, 9 and Pascal, 7. They were brutally murdered along with many other close relatives, including her grandparents.

Ms. Consolee Nishimwe is a survivor of the 1994 genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda and lived through the horrors of that ethnic cleansing at age fourteen. She suffered incredible physical and emotional torture for three months. This was later compounded by unspeakable psychological trauma when she contracted [HIV](#) after being [raped](#) during the genocide and robbed of her innocence. In the end, Nishimwe miraculously survived with her mother and younger sister. During her period in hiding, Nishimwe's faith was regularly tested. Over time, she succeeded in discarding the burden of vengeful thoughts for those who were persecuting her, by placing her ultimate destiny in God's hands. Nishimwe is an emblem of stoicism, endurance and fortitude. Her miraculous and inspiring story of survival is a true testament of hope and spirituality triumphing over evil and tragedy. It provides lessons and words of wisdom

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Written by Patricia Turnier

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to readers from all walks of life. Hence, her book

Tested to the Limit

can be of great value to people who have lived through afflictions, as well as to or to those who need strength to overcome their own struggles.

Noteworthy, women have been [raped](#) in wars and civil conflicts for millennia. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), violence against women has been described the most pervasive yet least recognized human rights assault globally. It is only in 2001 that [rape](#) was regarded as a crime against humanity when the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia issued arrest warrants based on the Geneva Conventions and Violations of the Laws or Customs of War. Precisely, it was recognized that Muslim female in Foča (southeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina) were subjected to systematic and widespread gang rape, torture and sexual enslavement by Bosnian Serb soldiers, policemen, and members of paramilitary groups after the takeover of the city in Spring 1992. The arraignment was confirmed by a 2001 verdict by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia which concluded that rape and sexual enslavement are crimes against humanity. This decision challenged the widespread acceptance of rape and sexual enslavement of women as intrinsic parts of wars. This represents a very important step in support of females' rights. It is only in 2008 that the U.N. Security Council adopted resolution 1820, which pointed out that "rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide. This breakthrough related to female issues provides a more powerful tool to fundamentally transform how wars are fought and provides a more potent weapon to prosecute war criminals who assault women.

Nishimwe's book made me realise more than ever that while certain forms of hatred are defined, there is no word in several languages including English, which specifically defines hatred against minors. This would be required because it would be a recognition of the existence of this crime and would serve to highlight its cruelty. Misogyny is hatred of females, misanthropy means odium toward humankind and misandry is the detestation against males.

It is really disheartening to see that there are contemporary and sinister stories à la Anne Frank still happening in the world. Nishimwe was about the same age as her when she was witnessing and experiencing the terrible ethnic cleansing. It seems that humans don't learn from history. During WWII, the German media played an important role in disseminating propaganda against Jewish people, Afro-Germans, gypsies, gays, the [handicapped](#) and others. Circa 50 years later the same occurred in Rwanda, with some radio stations encouraging hatred against the Tutsis. The U.N. Security Council condemned the killings but the organisation did not recognize the situation as genocide, which prohibited it from intervening. The world should never let life revisit the atrociousness that occurred in the past.

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We must assure future generations that the wickedness of racism, Anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination will not be tolerated. We learn in

Tested to The Limit

that during the genocide there were children who were more rational in their thinking and showed compassion for Nishimwe and her family, unlike their parents. The authoress summed this up nicely in the following quote: “that’s why kids are considered angels, and if only our hearts could become as pure as theirs, there would be far less hatred in our world.”

The beauty of *Tested to The Limit* is the fact that the authoress doesn’t identify herself nor the other people based on their ethnic background until its official introduction at school, where the strategy of ethnic division started in her life when she was in the third grade. Moreover, the unshakable spirituality and the resilience of the authoress are inspiring. Given her ordeal, to find the courage to pen her story shows that she lives up to the meaning of her name. What saved her besides her faith is the fact that she has a loving and supportive family, which was bigger before the genocide.

Let’s hope that *Tested to The Limit* will retain the attention of a well-known singer (such as the Grammy Award winner Yolanda Adams did for Rosa Parks) to pay tribute to Nishimwe and to all the women in the world who endured these terrible ordeals which are still ongoing.

Aforementioned, Nishimwe is living with a different kind of war wound, one that was confirmed when physicians diagnosed her as HIV positive. Her innocence was taken away from her at the age of 14, she was a virgin when she was raped. Her aggressor shamelessly left her bloody and unconscious on the ground after the rape. Nishimwe told the media that her assaulter probably thought she was going to die. Noteworthy, many Tutsi females were gang-raped during the Rwandan genocide and some of them subsequently tested HIV positive.

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<http://www.amazon.ca>
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