

5-7-2021

The Rwandan Genocide: A study for policymakers engaged in foreign policy, diplomacy, and international development

Emily A. Milnes

Pepperdine University, emilnes@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/ppr>

Recommended Citation

Milnes, Emily A. (2021) "The Rwandan Genocide: A study for policymakers engaged in foreign policy, diplomacy, and international development," *Pepperdine Policy Review*: Vol. 13, Article 5.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/ppr/vol13/iss1/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Public Policy at Pepperdine Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pepperdine Policy Review by an authorized editor of Pepperdine Digital Commons. For more information, please contact bailey.berry@pepperdine.edu.

“These events grew from a policy aimed at the systematic destruction of a people... We are reminded of the capacity of people everywhere—not just in Rwanda, and certainly not just in Africa—but the capacity for people everywhere to slip into pure evil. We cannot abolish that capacity, but we must never accept it.”
—President Bill Clinton, Kigali, Rwanda (1998)

I. Introduction

Over a period of 100 days between April and mid-July of 1994, the Rwandan genocide claimed the lives of approximately 800,000 Rwandans and caused the displacement of an estimated two million refugees into surrounding nations (UNHCR). The eruption of fear, brutality, and violence as Rwandans massacred Rwandans stemmed from decades of civil war fueled by intractable existential, political, and socioeconomic conflicts between Tutsis and Hutus.

After the genocide ended and the United Nations’ investigative task force began sifting through brutally macheted bodies in churches, stadiums, rivers and roadsides, the international community and policymakers began to ask what they could or should have done differently in international diplomacy to accurately assess the situation and prudentially intervene to prevent the genocide. In addition, Rwanda and the international community began to ask what justice meant for the survivors. The questions are still relevant today.

April 6, 2021, marked the twenty-seventh anniversary of the genocide. Despite steps taken toward reconstruction, the wounds and scars in Rwanda remain. For foreign policymakers and practitioners engaged in diplomatic mediation or international development, Rwanda serves as a sobering case study. This paper will examine the response of the international community in 1994, and analyze when, if ever, an intractable conflict is ripe for an apology (Crocker, Hampson, & Aall). For Tutsi and Hutu survivors, an apology will not restore the nearly 800,000 lives lost, undo the years in exile, or erase the trauma suffered; the task of rebuilding the nation is, therefore, a weighty one in navigating policy and the day-to-day reality of those seeking healing and restoration. This paper will also examine what commitments or enforcement mechanisms must accompany an apology within the context of culture in order for reform to be sustainable in environments where violent conflict involved ethnic tensions, political interests, and socioeconomic challenges.

II. Historical overview of country conditions and the genocide



Figure 1: Map of Rwanda (Source: Central Intelligence Agency)

During the 20th century, the Central African country of Rwanda experienced significant ethnic, political, and socioeconomic turmoil and civil war. The country is highly agrarian, and to this day, most of Rwanda remains rural. In the late nineteenth century, Germany and Belgium colonized Rwanda. While Tutsis and Hutus formed the two main ethnic groups (the Twa are a minority group) and spoke the same language, both German and Belgian colonists unjustifiably favored the Tutsis by giving them access to better opportunities for education and government positions than their Hutu counterparts. In 1933, the distribution of identification cards by European colonists, registering Rwandans as Hutu or Tutsi, their “ethnic identity,” formalized the distinction between the two (Kamola, 2008, p. 64). The identification cards spared Tutsis from forced, hard labor, but did not do the same for Hutus (Kamola, 2008).

By 1962, when Rwanda gained independence, the Tutsis and Hutus had developed mutual hatred and distrust and were fighting each other for social and political power. While France, Egypt, and the United States all had some democratic influence on Rwanda’s new political and economic systems as the country was gaining its footing, the divide between the two ethnic groups continued to widen, and civil war became a regular part of Rwandan life. In 1959 and in 1962, Rwandan Tutsis fled to Uganda as refugees to escape violent uprisings of Hutu Rwandans. Settling in the Luwero triangle, north of the capital of Kampala, they held hopes of one day returning to Rwanda. In Uganda, however, Tutsi refugees faced continued cruelty from both Milton Obote’s and Idi Amin’s dictator regimes. When Uganda’s current-president Museveni led the Ugandan National Resistance Army in an uprising to overthrow Amin’s government in the late 1980s, children of the Rwandan refugees joined the resistance army. At the conclusion of the Ugandan war, they formed the Rwandan Patriotic Forces (RPF) with the hopes of one day returning to their native land and regaining power.

Meanwhile, Rwanda was on a path toward a corrupt one-party state with the Party for the Emancipation of the Hutus extracting public funds, enforcing party-oriented civil service, coinciding with rising poverty, and systemic discrimination shown against Tutsis. During the 1960s, occasional organized massacres became a regime tactic breeding fear throughout the country in an effort to maintain Hutu control. In 1973, universities purged Tutsis. As violence between the two ethnic groups in Rwanda continued, the army’s Hutu chief of staff, Juvénal Habyarimana, staged a *coup d’état* as a tactical performance in appearing to restore order and

unity to Rwanda through his party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development. It soon became apparent, however, that Habyarimana's motive was to gain power. His plan succeeded, and Habyarimana became president of Rwanda, establishing Hutu control in the country. In the years that followed, the Hutu elite grew, while the economic condition of the nation worsened, and the Tutsi minority became more impoverished as they were blamed for the country's deteriorating condition.

In 1990, the Tutsi-RPF staged an offensive in an attempt to gain control. The Habyarimana regime responded by fanning flames of fear and hatred against the Tutsis. In February 1993, the RPF began advancing toward Kigali, but the French government provided troops to intervene on behalf of Habyarimana's government. To assist in peacekeeping efforts during the Arusha Accords (the official peace agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front), the United Nations peacekeeping forces, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) arrived in Rwanda. Their purpose was clear: peacekeeping and not military intervention.

On January 11, 1994, the United Nations (U.N.) force commander in Rwanda, Major General Roméo Dallaire, sent a cable to New York, warning the U.N. that mass killings were allegedly being planned by Habyarimana's regime. General Dallaire requested permission to act after an informant told Dallaire of 1,700 mostly Hutu rebels located outside of the capital of Kigali and trained to kill Tutsis. In response to this cable, Kofi Annan, the head of U.N. peacekeeping, instructed General Dallaire:

Inform the President [of Rwanda] that you have received apparently reliable information concerning the activities of the Interhamwe militia which represents a clear threat to the peace process. You should inform him that these activities include the training and deployment of subversive groups in Kigali as well as the storage and distribution of weapons to these groups (Fisanick, 2004, p. 10).

In hindsight, this response was a mistake; the world would later learn that some of President Habyarimana's own family members were extremists and had helped instigate and plan the genocide.

On April 6, 1994, the plane carrying Rwandan president Habyarimana and Burundian president Cyprien Ntaryamira from a negotiation session in Arusha was shot down outside of the Kigali airport, killing both presidents. In a declassified U.S. Department of State intelligence report dated April 7, an unidentified source informed U.S. ambassador David Rawson that "rogue Hutu elements of the military—possibly the elite presidential guard—were responsible for shooting down the plane" (U.S. Department of State, para 1).

That same day, Radio Mille Collines, a privately-owned radio station with financial ties to Habyarimana and Hutu extremist members of his family, began calling for the killing of Tutsis (Fisanick, p. 21). The hate propaganda continued for weeks, as the radio station called on Hutus to defend Rwanda against the invasion of the "inyenzi," or "cockroaches" (Fisanick, p. 21). Within hours of the president's assassination, mass killings throughout Rwanda began. On April 7, the Rwandan Armed Forces (RAF) and Interhamwe Hutu militia began killing Tutsis and moderate Hutu politicians. The U.N. peacekeeping forces were given an official mandate not to intervene. When ten Belgian soldiers were murdered, the U.N. and Belgium considered removing troops from Rwanda.

On April 8, the Tutsi RPF attempted to liberate 600 of its troops in Kigali. That same day, United States president Bill Clinton issued a statement, saying he was "shocked and deeply saddened...[I] condemn these actions and I call on all parties to cease any such actions

immediately,” and assured the families of U.S. citizens in Rwanda that efforts were being made to secure their safety (PBS Frontline). Between April 9-10, the French, Belgian, and U.S. governments removed their citizens from Rwanda, and on April 14, Belgium withdrew peacekeeping forces. On April 21, the U.N. Security Council voted to reduce its peacekeeping force from 2,500 to 270 (PBS Frontline). On May 3, President Clinton, who was hesitant to act in the wake of the events that had occurred in Somalia, signed a Presidential Decision Directive to review United States peacekeeping policies and programs, limiting U.S. military involvement in international peacekeeping operations (Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-25).

By mid-May, the International Red Cross estimated that over 500,000 Rwandans had been murdered (Fisanick, p. 133). Yet, between May and June of 1994, neither the U.S. government nor any other country issued a clear statement identifying the atrocities as acts of genocide. On May 17, the U.N. agreed to deploy 5,500 troops to Rwanda, but disagreements regarding who was responsible for paying for the costs of deployment delayed the troops. On May 19, the U.N. asked the United States to provide 50 armored personnel carriers, but financial disagreements again delayed action (PBS Frontline).

On June 22, the French government conducted Operation Turquoise by deploying its forces in Rwanda and securing an area. By mid-July, the RPF’s Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) secured Kigali and brought an end to the genocide. The Hutu government fled, along with thousands of Hutu refugees. The RPF then established a government in Kigali (PBS Frontline). Over a period of just 100 days, an estimated 800,000 Rwandans were murdered, in addition to the Rwandans killed by disease and murder in refugee camps (Fisanick).

III. The nature of the Rwandan conflict made it intractable

In *Taming Intractable Conflicts: Mediation in the Hardest Cases*, Crocker, Hampson, & Aall (2004) describe what constitutes an “intractable conflict:”

Intractable conflicts have a number of salient characteristics. In the first place, they are typically long-standing, having lasted for years, possibly decades. As a consequence, they are conflicts where psychological wounds and a sense of grievance and victimization run very deep...Intractable conflicts are also characterized either by frequent bursts of violence or, if there is a temporary cessation of the violence, by a failure by the parties to leave the danger zone of potential renewal of violence (p.7).

The conflict in Rwanda fits these criteria. The conflict was intractable because it was existential. The two main ethnic groups, who were neighbors and families, became pitted against the other through violence and hatred, frequent civil wars, and country expulsion as the Tutsis became refugees in neighboring countries. “To most in the international community, the words ‘Tutsi’ and ‘Hutu’...were synonymous with tribal slaughter” (Fisanick, p. 18)

The conflict in Rwanda was also political. After decades of Tutsis and Hutus vying for power and control over the other, Rwanda’s government had become increasingly corrupt under Habyarimana’s regime. The attempt to merge the Tutsi and Hutu military and reduce the power of the presidency through the Arusha Peace Accord negotiations was the fuse that led to the powder-keg of the genocide lighting and erupting. Today, the Rwandan president is Tutsi.¹

¹ Paul Kigame led the RPF against the Hutu militia during the genocide. Arguably, Rwanda would not exist as a nation today without Kigame’s efforts and warfare conduct (The Economist). After the genocide ended in July 1994, Kigame became vice president of Rwanda, and in 2000, was elected president. His economic reforms are exemplary, and first impressions of Rwanda’s recovery after the genocide seem admirable on the surface. However, *Human*

While slightly more integrated, the government in Rwanda swings back and forth between the two ethnicities with authoritarian governance.

Finally, the conflict in Rwanda was intractable because it was socioeconomic: “One of the most often-cited causes of the conflict is Rwanda’s endemic structural poverty (Fisanick, p. 101). By 1986, coffee exports accounted for 82 percent of Rwanda’s total income (Kamola, p. 67). As the price of coffee plummeted in 1989, however, due to a failure to renegotiate the International Coffee Agreement, political unrest in Rwanda worsened as the Tutsis were blamed for the deteriorating economic conditions. In that setting, the poor became poorer (Kamola). Protecting the vulnerable from violence requires an economy in which security is both available and affordable. For policymakers involved in international development, this is a critical component.

IV. The international community coalition and the types of intervention third parties considered in responding to the events in Rwanda in 1994

Crocker, Hampson, & Aall (2004) identify three types of “substantive rationales” for when states or interstate groupings may wish to intervene or engage in mediation in intractable conflicts: (1) humanitarian reasons; (2) strategic geopolitical reasons; or (3) reasons involving regional security or governance. In 1994, Rwandans committed acts of mass carnage with the specific intent of destroying the other ethnic group. While Western diplomatic efforts, including negotiation and mediation are valid options to consider, specific circumstances—the type of conflict and the stage the conflict is in—must determine whether or not mediation or negotiation are appropriate methods or if there is some other alternative that is more appropriate given the particularities of the situation.

By the time the Arusha Accords were pursued, the plans for genocide were already being developed. Due to the type and stage of the conflict’s development, the window for negotiation and mediation without the leverage of power through greater military presence—not merely peacekeeping—had already closed. Recognizing the conflict as intractable, however, was not a barrier to intervention for humanitarian reasons. The international community recognized this but fell short by delegating the task to the United Nations. When it became apparent that the Interhamwe were slaughtering the Tutsis, rather than immediately respond by sending troops to intervene, the U.N., the Security Council, and democratic countries argued over who was responsible for bearing the costs.

Belgium and France were interested in seeing the ethnic, political, and socioeconomic tensions resolve due to their historical and continued entanglements with Rwanda. The United States did not necessarily have anything at stake in promoting peacebuilding in Rwanda; yet on the international stage, the United States is the most powerful democracy with a Declaration stating, “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,” and held the strongest leverage capabilities. The “Somalia Syndrome” and the ramifications and risks of sending troops in cannot be easily dismissed as a valid reason for the U.S. to weigh carefully its military engagement in Rwanda, but an argument should have

Rights Watch notes that Kigame’s method of an authoritarian, fear-driven government with restrictions on freedom of speech and politics, his state-sponsored media, use of unlawful detention centers, and reports of torture are troubling (Human Rights Watch). President Kigame’s use of authoritarian government is a symptom of an underlying conflict between two groups which the genocide may not have eradicated.

been made that the acts were genocide and not civil war, and therefore demanded earlier international intervention.²

The international community had a duty to stop the Rwandan genocide and assist in reconstruction, and the following paragraphs will explain why. In 1994, there were several options which the international community considered, some of which they implemented: (a) attempt to negotiate or mediate the conflict; (b) ignore the situation; (c) intervene with military presence; or (d) establish criminal tribunals and courts of law:

A. Option one: Negotiation or mediation between the Tutsis and Hutus

One of the challenging tasks in foreign policy is discerning what tools of diplomacy are appropriate and necessary, their window of viability, and who the third parties are who may have political, geographic, or economic interests at stake in resolving the conflict. This author argues that negotiation was not an appropriate tool in Rwanda due to the underlying existential, political, and socioeconomic challenges constituting intractable conflicts. By the time of the Arusha Accords, decades of violence between two ethnic groups marked Rwanda's history. The negotiation approach of focusing on the interests and not positions of both ethnic groups as espoused by some in the field of international diplomacy (Fisher and Ury, 2011) would have only worked if there was also an enforcement mechanism and a strong mediator presence to address the balance of power in the polarized conflict zone (Crocker, Hampson, & Aall, 2004).

Even if there had been an enforcement mechanism and mediator presence, mediation would not have been sufficient for stopping the genocide. The UNAMIR's peacebuilding mandate proved useless in April 1994. During the Arusha Accords, ongoing threats to withdraw the U.N.'s presence in order to force compliance in Rwanda held little leverage because that is exactly what Hutu extremists wanted (PBS Frontline). Due to its history of civil war, ethnic violence in Rwanda was expected, and it is possible that policymakers and governments did not fully realize the seriousness of genocidal intent on the ground or the power-keg of violence that was about to explode. In that setting, mediation in Rwanda would only have worked for a limited purpose and alongside vigorous military enforcement to contain and quell the violence. Only after establishing a military presence and stopping the violence, could Rwandan leaders and the international community analyze whether or not mediation was even possible at that time. Pursuing negotiations or mediation in 1993-1994 without serious enforcement mechanisms or mediators with leverage (such as the United States and a coalition of nations) present was a diplomatic failure.

B. Option two: Ignore or fail to define the escalating situation

Ignoring the escalating situation as simply another civil war was the gravest mistake on the part of the international community. The U.N. secretary-general's special representative in Rwanda at the time of the genocide, Mr. Shaharyar M. Kahn, argued that the international community should have detected the early warning signs and taken preemptive action (Fisanick, p. 67), and that the international community was not without warning since the United States, Belgium, and France were "fielding desperate appeals from Rwandans to maintain a diplomatic presence" (Lynch, 2015). Yet, Rwanda was a country where no one wanted to take the lead but still felt that an institution needed to be present for humanitarian purposes; hence, U.N. involvement: "[t]he United Nations stepped in to help implement the 1993 Arusha [A]ccords, while the Western

² To his credit, Bill Clinton later stated that the failure to intervene in Rwanda was one of his greatest regrets as president of the United States (Lynch, 2015).

powers maintained a hands-off watching brief, and Rwanda became a ward of the system” (Crocker, Hampson, & Aall, p. 61). When the situation in Rwanda began to deteriorate, rather than provide a rapid response specifically tailored to the developing circumstances, the international community withdrew its diplomatic presence and relied on U.N. peacekeeping rather than military intervention. Crocker, Hampson, & Aall (2004) argued that “the U.N. system itself [thereby] created conditions for the wholesale slaughter” (p. 61).

A likely reason why the international community ignored the situation stemmed from the failure to distinguish the killings as *genocide* instead of civil war, which would have carried legal consequences and demanded action. In 1944, Polish lawyer Raphaël Lemkin coined the word, “genocide,” with the Greek prefix “genos” (“race” or “tribe”) and the Latin suffix “cide” (“killing”) (U.N. Office on Genocide Prevention quoting Lemkin). In 1946, the United Nations General Assembly recognized genocide as a crime under international law. The 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide codified genocide as an independent crime and defined genocide in Article II of the Convention as:

- ...any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:
- a. Killing members of the group;
 - b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
 - c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
 - d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
 - e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Legal principles of international law and the prohibition of genocide is a peremptory norm for States that have ratified the Convention. Yet, at the time of the Rwandan genocide, civil war between the Hutus and Tutsis was a regular occurrence in Rwanda, and many argue that the available intelligence coming out of Rwanda was unclear that the violence had evolved into genocide. If the genocide had been labeled what it, in fact, was, the international community could not have ignored it:

If the United Nations, the United States, and other Western nations had admitted at the time that the killings were in fact genocide, then they would have had to commit money and troops to stop them. For this reason, official representatives were extremely careful in using the term. *Genocide is not simply a label but a legal term with legal consequences* (Fisanick, p. 13, emphasis added).

The international media silence on the mass killings occurring in Rwanda is stunning. Most foreign journalists had evacuated the country, and what little media coverage remained focused on Kigali, and not the rural areas where Rwandans were being slaughtered hourly. It was not until the end of the second week that *Human Rights Watch* even raised the prospect of genocide to the U.N. Security Council. *The New York Times* questioned whether the events in Rwanda constituted genocide, which reveals the key role media may have in bringing issues to policymakers who must then decide whether to act or “explain their inaction” (Crocker, Hampson, & Aall, p. 81). Nevertheless, while a combination of possible civil war, the withdrawal of U.S. diplomats and journalists, and the lies of extremists in the Rwandan government may have obscured the genocidal intent driving the killings in Rwanda, there were communications from those on-site, including Dallaire’s cable and individuals with contacts in the country, that provided enough information of the massacre to arguably justify sending military troops to intervene in Rwanda.

C. Option three: Intervene by establishing a military presence to stop the violence

It is this author's argument that military intervention to isolate and stop the violence is the option which the international community should have exercised immediately and failed to do. Without holding the perpetrators accountable, genocidal violence could continue with impunity. In his firsthand account, General Henry Anyidoho, a Ghanaian officer who was serving as the second-highest ranking peacekeeper with the U.N. in Rwanda, said when the diplomatic community left Rwanda, the violence escalated: "*Once the killers knew there was no referee, they had a free hand to do whatever they wanted*" (Lynch, emphasis added).

The United States

When a National Security Council staffer called U.S. ambassador Joyce Leader after her evacuation from Kigali to ask the question, "Short of sending in the troops, what is to be done?," Leader responded, "Send in the troops" (Power, 2001). The events occurring in Rwanda undermined American values, and intervening was low risk to the United States. Nevertheless, the United States' hesitation in pursuing peacekeeping efforts was understandable following recent efforts to provide mediation and reconciliation assistance in Somalia (U.S. Department of State, 2019). While the United States voted in the Security Council to authorize Dallaire and the UNAMIR's presence in Rwanda, U.S. enthusiasm for the U.N efforts was waning, and the country made it clear that it would not send its troops to Rwanda (Power, 2001).

[I]n the words of an April 17 [1994] *Washington Post* editorial, 'The United States has no recognizable national interest in taking a role, certainly not a leading role.' Capitol Hill was quiet. Some in Congress were glad to be free of the expense of another flawed UN mission. Others, including a few members of the Africa subcommittees and the Congressional Black Caucus, eventually appealed tamely for the United States to play a role in ending the violence—but again, they did not dare urge U.S. involvement on the ground, and they did not kick up a public fuss. Members of Congress weren't hearing from their constituents (Fisanick, p. 83).

This decision not to send troops highlights the balance in policy debates between national interests and humanitarian consequences as a critical lesson for policymakers studying Rwanda. There was a legitimate question as to why American troops should intervene as a matter of national interest and economic policy. However, foreign policy assumes that it is in the national interest of the United States to provide leadership and exercise the use of diplomatic power when human rights are threatened around the world for the sake of influencing international decisions that could, ultimately, impact America's own national security and the lives of Americans. In her 2001 article on the Rwandan genocide published in *The Atlantic*, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power argued that, in hindsight, the U.S. could have agreed to the Belgian pleas for U.N. reinforcement before Habyarimana's plane was shot down. President Clinton could have deployed U.S. troops to Rwanda, where they could have either joined the UNAMIR forces or, with the Security Council's backing, U.S. troops could have acted unilaterally, as France did with Operation Turquoise in July of 1994. Power also argued that the United States could have done what it did five years later in Kosovo and acted without the U.N.'s blessing because what appeared to be a genocide was underway. When it was clear that the violence was escalating, humanitarian consequences should have outweighed national interests for U.S. policymakers.

The United Nations commanding general in Rwanda initially claimed that had the United States deployed 5,000 troops in April 1994, the genocide would have been prevented, and this claim has been repeated often by the United States Congress and human rights groups (Kuperman, 2000). In his Foreign Affairs article, *Rwanda in Retrospect*, Alan J. Kuperman (2000) argued that due to lack of information, the earliest that President Clinton could have credibly determined genocide was occurring in Rwanda, thereby prompting U.S. action, was not until the end of April, nearly two weeks after the violence had begun. Rightly or wrongly, Kuperman argued that by the end of April, a significant majority of the slaughter had already occurred (approximately 250,000 Rwandans). Even if President Clinton had sent troops immediately, it would have taken at least one week to respond. By then, Kuperman argued, the vast majority of the murders would have already occurred. Had the United States deployed troops immediately, it would have taken several days to contain the genocide. However, it likely would have made a difference in terms of lives lost; this was a situation where the United States gambled on the wrong side of probability theory in foreign policy.

The United Nations

In an interview with *Frontline*, Iqbal Riza, chief of staff to U.N. secretary-general Kofi Annan, responded to charges that the U.N. did not prevent the genocide despite having advance warning. Riza pointed to the military losses the U.S. had recently suffered in Somalia as one of the main reasons the U.N. did not act. Riza also said, "We have to go by the mandate that we are given by the [U.N.] Security Council" (Fisanick, p. 70). Finally, Riza noted that political will to intervene, which was vital to the international community's response, was lacking:

If the political will had been there, it should have been to strengthen the mission, give it a stronger mandate and try to stop these killings. Instead, the strongest contingent was immediately withdrawn and the Security Council put the decision to reduce this mission to less than 10% of its size (Fisanick, p. 70).

In *The Atlantic*, Power (2001) wrote that "[T]he crisis was treated as a civil war requiring a cease-fire or as a 'peace-keeping problem' requiring a U.N. withdrawal. It was not treated as a genocide demanding instant action." Fisanick quotes Shaharyar M. Kahn, who said:

The lesson of Rwanda is clear: we must build the international political will, as well as an enhanced U.N. capability, for prevention. The U.N. should develop its ability for gathering and analyzing information, for making early warnings and for rapid reaction through deployment of troops as well as diplomatic creative initiatives (p. 62).

It is questionable whether the U.N. had the appropriate leverage and military strength to stop the genocide. The U.N. certainly had opportunity to respond, but resorted to deliberating about financial costs, which seems insignificant in comparison to the loss of human life that followed.

D. Option four: Establish criminal tribunals and courts of law to hold perpetrators accountable (The United Nations' International Tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania)

Following the genocide, the new Tutsi-Rwandan government desired that the international community would help capture war criminals and then turn them over to the Rwandan courts. Instead, the U.N. established a criminal tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania, to prosecute the most prominent génocidaires. While Rwandan courts impose the death penalty, the U.N. criminal

tribunal for Rwanda does not, and it quickly became clear that despite some convictions, the United Nations was failing in bringing justice to Rwanda.

Over the years, the international court has successfully convicted many of the genocide's perpetrators as an act of the international community recognizing the atrocities done. For some Rwandans, however, the sentences have not been harsh enough. In 1997, an internal investigation conducted by the U.N. found that "'not a single administrative area functioned effectively' in the tribunal's administrative branch" (Fisanick, p. 129). When Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, a Hutu extremist and one of the founders of the propaganda-filled Radio Mille Collines, was finally captured in Cameroon in March 1996, he was not sent to Arusha until November 1997. In November of 1999, the U.N. Rwanda tribunal ordered that Barayagwiza be freed for having been detained for so long without being charged (Fisanick, p. 128). As a result, the Rwandan government stopped cooperating with the U.N. criminal tribunal.

The public justice system in Rwanda is not without its own internal challenges and corruption—after the genocide, there were reports in 1998 of defendants being tried without counsel and the execution of 22 convicts in public stadiums to cheering crowds (Fisanick, p. 129). Without accountability, angry retaliation and justice without mercy lies just beneath the surface when the fractures of genocide divide a nation.

V. The lessons of Rwanda for policymakers and international development programs

In March 1998, President Clinton visited Rwanda and spoke at the Kigali airport. In what would become known as the "Clinton apology," he said:

The international community, together with nations in Africa, must bear its share of responsibility for this tragedy, as well. We did not act quickly enough after the killing began. We should not have allowed the refugee camps to become safe haven for the killers. We did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide. We cannot change the past. But we can and must do everything in our power to help you build a future without fear, and full of hope...To that end, I am directing my administration to improve, with the international community, our system for identifying and spotlighting nations in danger of genocidal violence, so that we can assure worldwide awareness of impending threats....Secondly, we must as an international community have the ability to act when genocide threatens...Third, we must work now to remedy the consequences of genocide....Fourth, to help ensure that those who survived in the generations to come never again suffer genocidal violence, nothing is more vital than establishing the rule of law...We will also continue to pursue justice through our strong backing for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda...Fifth, we must make it clear to all those who would commit such acts in the future that they too must answer for their acts, and they will. In Rwanda, we must hold accountable all those who may abuse human rights, whether insurgents or soldiers. Internationally, as we meet here, talks are underway at the United Nations to establish a permanent international criminal court" (Fisanick, pp. 91-94).

The international community's failure to define the killings as genocide and prudentially intervene using appropriate diplomatic measures was a foreign policy failure. The specific circumstances of Rwanda's underlying intractable conflicts meant that negotiation was not a

truly valid option. Negotiation would have had the semblance of establishing peace on the surface, but the façade would not have been realistic nor sustainable because it did not address the underlying existential issues. Instead, when it became clear in January 1994 that plans for ethnic killing were underway, the international community should have intervened at that time by establishing a strong military presence to contain and stop the violence and allow for the international community to then further assess the situation to determine which diplomatic tools were appropriate moving forward given the circumstances and the interests and parties involved. Assessing the situation at that stage would have required close examination of the power balances and the willingness of the parties to mediate and make substantive concessions regarding the existential, political, and socioeconomic conflicts. The international community would have needed to produce a mediator or coalition of mediators holding both leverage capabilities and long-term enforcement capacity (Crocker, Hampson, & Aall).

For policymakers involved in peacebuilding, mediation, or international development, Rwanda also provides lessons on how to move a nation toward reconciliation. Order matters. To ensure that the conditions for genocide do not ripen in Rwanda again, certain safeguards in the public justice system must be established. While the international community has a role in providing safeguards through accountability and international pressure, Rwandans must lead in order for reform to be sustainable. Analyzing the applicability, timing, and culture of an apology also matters in rebuilding the nation. The genocide occurred as a result of Rwandans killing Rwandans. The Rwandans must determine when peacebuilding and reconstruction can wholly begin; any act or pressure from the international community toward reconciliation without justice for the survivors of genocide is premature:

While most international organizations and NGOs list national reconciliation as one of their goals, and even the government has established the National Committee of Unity and Reconciliation, this terminology often falls flat with many Rwandans, particularly with genocide survivors. *In Rwandan culture, reconciliation has a specific meaning that is not necessarily the meaning implied by outsiders using the term. To most Rwandans, reconciliation is something that occurs between two individuals, a process by which the wronged individual physically takes the hand of the person who committed the wrongdoing, and, as an individual, forgives him/her for his/her action.* When speaking of reconciliation, international organizations and NGOs sometimes give the impression that they expect survivors of the genocide to directly forgive the individuals who murdered their families and loved ones, even if this not their intended message. *Genocide survivors speak of the need for justice before reconciliation, for prosecution of the crimes of genocide that took the lives of nearly a million people* (Margalit, 2009, pp. 109-110, emphasis added).

A. Rwanda today: Reconciliation and rebuilding

In April of 2018, I traveled to Kigali, Rwanda, to see where the genocide had occurred. It was the 24th anniversary, and the entire capital city was somber and quiet. Many businesses were closed, and the clean, quiet streets were almost an eerie juxtaposition to the streets I had just left in a neighboring East African country. It was hard to believe that the same manicured streets I was walking on had been streets of slaughter; it seemed unnatural—as though everything had been wiped clean on the surface in an effort to forget.

publicly have either disappeared or have been found dead. Freedom of expression is limited, and pro-government views dominate the print and broadcast media. While many of the people responsible for the genocide have since been brought to justice, the *Human Rights Watch* found in 2020 that detention centers are places of intimidation, ill-treatment, and torture to extract confessions (Human Rights Watch). While the current Tutsi government of Rwanda may view Hutu civic action with suspicion as a result of a Hutu government incubating the genocide, it is important to remember that colonial disenfranchisement of Hutus created the conditions for ethnic hostility. Tutsi leaders must view Hutu participation in governance and civic discourse not as a threat of renewed extremism, but rather as a way to break the cycle of ethnic violence.

Part of bringing justice to survivors and bringing order to a nation to ensure that the horrors of genocide do not occur again must involve strengthening the public justice system to protect the vulnerable from violence. One political party or one ethnic group cannot dominate the public justice system or stifle the other. Implementing reform in the public justice system by removing corruption in government, the judiciary, and the police service, and reforming the laws of Rwanda would allow for freedom of political association and freedom of speech. Removing corruption means that the most vulnerable in Rwanda know that the government and public justice system is blind to ethnicity, and Rwandans are treated equally by the government and governing institutions.

In implementing reform and addressing the underlying intractable conflicts, two things are necessary: (1) the exercise of visionary Rwandan leadership so that change is sustainable; and (2) a mechanism with leverage and power, whether it is a nation, a coalition, or an institution, in place to oversee transition and reform to ensure that Rwandans exercising their rights will not face threats of violence or acts of violence. The challenge with this model is national sovereignty. The leadership of Rwanda is likely to naturally resist submitting to accountability. Rwanda had pressure to negotiate and reform its government structure from a watching international community before. What was lacking in 1993-1994 was the presence of a strong enforcer—the UNAMIR was weakened by its peacebuilding mandate and lack of follow-through. When rumors of plans for mass killings were surfacing, the international coalition should have, at that time, reassessed the situation and sent troops in. Instead, the international community failed to discern the timing, the stage of the conflict, and the wrong tools of diplomacy were used at the wrong time. In looking to the future and exerting international pressure and accountability while applying lessons learned from history, the United States or another democratic nation or coalition of African countries may yet have a role to play in Rwanda. Policymakers and those engaged in international development would do well to study the history, successes and failures of foreign policy in nations marked by ongoing intractable conflict to better understand where gaps lie and how to address challenges for purposes of sustainable reconstruction and reconciliation in Rwanda.

In addition to introducing new reforms to the public justice system as an enforcement mechanism to prevent genocide, the time may also be ripe for an apology, which would give credible weightiness to the reforms as Rwandans lead in building their nation. Joseph Ndereyimana, a Hutu refugee who fled Rwanda after the genocide ended, believes an apology is now finally appropriate: “[i]t is my belief, as a Hutu, that the time has come for us to approach all those Tutsis who survived and apologize: to say sorry for keeping quiet, and for not promoting peace. I believe that only Rwandans are able to find solutions to the problems in their country, because they alone are familiar with the roots of these issues” (Fisanick, pp. 88-89).

While in Rwanda in 2018, I spoke with college-age Rwandans—both Tutsis and Hutus—and it seemed that the next generation wishes to move forward. The international community, and specifically the United States, must examine its response to the Rwandan genocide to determine policies and plans in anticipation of genocide occurring in other troubled regions of the world. The international community must not be caught by surprise as it was by Rwanda. It is imperative that Rwandan leaders, mediators and peacebuilders, and those involved in international development in Rwanda listen to survivors and learn from them. Organizations working with Rwandan's youth may consider investing in pilot projects modeled after the Rotary Club's *Cypress Friendship Program*, pairing Hutu and Tutsi youth and giving them opportunity to share about their life in their country and their experience with the goal of fostering peace as a result of identifying shared interests instead of positions of conflict (Rotarian Action Group for Peace). If the conflict in Rwanda is, in fact, ripe for an apology, if the affected parties do, in fact, want that, the key will be determining how to apologize and institute long-term changes in the public justice system and government that will sustain the apology and ensure that genocide does not terrify and destroy Rwandans again.

Bibliography

- Central Intelligence Agency. (2020, February 25). *Rwanda*. The World FactBook. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/rwanda/>.
- Crocker, C. A., Hampson, F. O., & Aall, P. R. (2004). *Taming Intractable Conflicts: Mediation in the Hardest Cases*. United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Cutts, M. (2000). *The State of the World's Refugees, 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action* (pp. 246–273). essay, UNHCR.
- Cyprus Friendship Program*. Rotarian Action Group for Peace. (2017, May 25). <https://www.rotarianactiongroupforpeace.org/Projects/cyprus-friendship-program>.
- The Declaration of Independence (U.S. 1776).
- Fisanick, C. (2004). *Rwanda Genocide*. Greenhaven Press.
- Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (2011). *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. (B. Patton, Ed.) (3rd). Penguin Books Ltd.
- Kamola, I. (2008). Coffee and Genocide. *Transition*, (99), 54-72. Retrieved February 21, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org.lib.pepperdine.edu/stable/20204261>.
- Kuperman, A. J. (2000). Rwanda in Retrospect. *Foreign Affairs*, 79(1), 94. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20049616>.
- Lang, B. (2017). *Genocide: The Act as Idea* (Ser. Pennsylvania studies in human rights). PENN, University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lemkin, R. (1944). *Axis rule in occupied Europe: Laws of occupation: Analysis of Government: Proposals for Redress*.
- Lynch, C. (2015). Exclusive: Rwanda Revisited. *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/05/rwanda-revisited-genocide-united-states-state-department/>.
- Margalit, A. (2013). *On Compromise and Rotten Compromises*. Princeton University Press.
- Power, S. (2001). Bystanders to Genocide: Why the United States Let the Rwandan Tragedy Happen. *Atlantic Monthly*.
- Presidential Decision Directive 25 - Collection Finding Aid*. Clinton Digital Library. (0AD). <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/51627>.

Public Broadcasting Service. *100 Days of Slaughter | The Triumph of Evil | FRONTLINE*. PBS. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/etc/slaughter.html>.

Rwanda. Human Rights Watch. (2021). <https://www.hrw.org/africa/rwanda>.

The Economist. *Many Africans see Kagame's Rwanda as a model. They are Wrong*. (2017, July 15). <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2017/07/15/many-africans-see-kagames-rwanda-as-a-model-they-are-wrong>.

U.S. Department of State. (1994, 7 April.) *United States Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research SPOT Intelligence Report as of 08:45 EDT April 7, 1994 RWANDA/BURUNDI: Turmoil in Rwanda*. U.S. Department of State. <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB119/Rw4.pdf>.

U.S. Department of State. (2021, January 14). *U.S. Relations with Somalia - United States Department of State*. U.S. Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-somalia/>.

United Nations. *United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/>.

United Nations. *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf.