

## **Background about Paul Rusesabagina and the Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation**

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide. After the Genocide, Paul Rusesabagina and his family had to leave Rwanda for their safety because the current Rwandan leadership under President Paul Kagame, does not take criticism very well.

Paul and his wife Taciana reside part time in Brussels where they have two married daughters and four grandchildren. They also reside in San Antonio, Texas. They have four children in college and graduate school in the U.S.

Paul started his the Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation to care for widows and orphans after the Genocide. Just as Paul had spoken up about the problems with the pre Genocide Rwandan Hutu leadership, he has continued to speak out about the civil rights abuses and crimes against humanity being perpetrated by the President Kagame in Rwanda and the Congo.

A few years ago Kagame's people kicked the Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation (HRRF) out of the country and Paul Rusesabagina focused his efforts on trying to heal a nation and build a sustainable peace in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Today the area is like a simmering volcano and Rusesabagina hopes to get the US to intervene before another war breaks out in Rwanda.

Rusesabagina travels the world to educate people about the Genocide and the need for an internationally sanctioned Truth and Reconciliation process for Rwanda and the Great Lakes region to prevent another war in Rwanda and to stop the violence and atrocities in the Congo. He speaks to governments to advocate to prevent some of the violence and crimes being committed in the region now rather than waiting until more millions are killed. He wants to make the phrase Never Again mean Never Again.

This year for the 20th Anniversary of the Genocide, Paul will be talking to students and others globally to remind them of the horrors of the Genocide and how each of us can work to stop violence and make a difference in our own lives.

One of HRRF's long term goals is to work with the international community to get a real, unbiased Truth and Reconciliation process in Rwanda, not one controlled through one side or the other. In the short term, HRRF will be working with academia and civil society to convene dialogues among Rwandans in the Diaspora in the United States, Canada, Europe and the UK. Dialogues both among Hutu and Tutsi, and also intergenerational dialogues so that young Rwandans can understand the Genocide that their parents have not been able to talk about and try to help prevent another one.

People can join Paul's team and sign up to find out what the Foundation is doing at: [www.hrrfoundation.org](http://www.hrrfoundation.org)

## **Rwanda Twenty Years after the Genocide**

On the surface, some things in Rwanda look very nice. There is a high rate of woman owned businesses and a large number of women in parliament. But if you own a business, you must cooperate with the government. If you are a woman in parliament, you need to be put on the party list to run by President Kagame. There is one party rule.

There is no power sharing and no political space for opposition or discussion. Victoire Ingabire, who came from the Netherlands where she had lived since her student days in 1992, came back to Rwanda to stand for President against Kagame in the last election. She was sentenced to 15 years in jail in Rwanda for her efforts. The Green Party Vice Presidential candidate was found killed and dismembered. President Kagame got more than 95% of the vote. This is democracy in Rwanda.

Plastic bags and plastic shoes are banned from Kigali, the capital city, so the city looks very clean. But the peasants coming in from the country to sell produce and things could only afford to wear plastic shoes and carry plastic bags so now they are shut out of commerce in Kigali.

During the Genocide era, Tutsis and Hutus alike used French as the business language. Doctors, lawyers, teachers all used French. Approximately 4 years ago President Kagame changed the official language to English overnight, so the only people who can get good jobs are the Tutsi who came in to Rwanda from Uganda with President Kagame after the Genocide. True Genocide survivors are mostly barred from the elite jobs.

For the past couple of years, President Kagame has been using his Diplomats abroad as spies and now possibly, killers. On New Year's Eve, Patrick Karegaya, a now Rwandan dissident and former head of Intelligence for Rwanda, was found strangled in a South African hotel. Previously there were two assassination attempts on General Kayumba, a dissident associated with Karegaya. Last week, the South African police caught Rwandan diplomats in the act of trying to attack Kayumba once again and they were expelled from South Africa.

Sweden and Great Britain have both expelled Rwandan diplomats who they believed were spying on, and attempting to harm other Rwandans inside their respective borders.

Probably the most disturbing aspect of the last twenty years is that more than six million people have been killed, others raped and tortured, in the Congo, many by M23 and other militias controlled by President Kagame. Rwanda is one of the largest sellers of the Conflict Minerals which fuel cell phones and laptops, but they do not have them inside the Rwanda borders. They send troops in to Congo to chase Genocidaires who they say are still hiding there, and come back with bags of minerals to sell.

## Frequently Asked Questions for Paul Rusesabagina

1. Why did you write *An Ordinary Man*? What did you want the world to know?
2. In your book, *An Ordinary Man*, you talk about how one person can make a difference. What would you tell young people about the impact that each of them can have in the world?
3. You also talk the power of words in your book. Tell us about the how words can be powerful for good and for evil. Why do you think that words are the most powerful weapons?
4. Did you realize how bad the the tension was between the Hutu's and Tutsi's before the killing? What sparked the Genocide to begin on April 6?
5. Once the killing started, what did you do to keep the people who had taken refuge safe? Did you realize that you where going to end up sheltering and protecting 1,268 during the 100 Days of killing? How did you manage to save those people?
6. During the Genocide, did you think that other countries or the United Nations would come and help you?
7. When the Belgians, the French and the Americans were evacuated, when the journalists left, what did that do to your hope, and the hope of the other people in the country?
8. When did you leave Rwanda and why did you go to Belgium?
9. Have you returned to Rwanda after the end of the genocide? And what was the situation there?
10. During the genocide there was a lack of support from other countries, did they help with the rebuilding of the country?
11. How did you feel when Terry George the director of *Hotel Rwanda*, told you that he wanted to make a movie about your experiences?
12. Did the movie *Hotel Rwanda* tell the real story of what happened during the Genocide?
13. After the movie came out you started the *Hotel Rwanda Rusesabagina Foundation*. In which ways has your Foundation tried to raise awareness about the situation in Rwanda?
14. What is going on in Rwanda, the Congo and the Great Lakes Region of Africa today?