

**Rwanda Today:
When Foreign Aid Hurts More Than It Helps**

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It has been fifteen years since the genocide that devastated Rwanda in 1994, and while the players and sides have changed, the politics sadly remain largely the same. Rwanda is enmeshed in another cycle of repression, with an elite that represents a clear minority engaged in legal and extra-legal policies that impoverish the majority of the people in the country. In addition, this repression and violence flow across borders in the region, particularly into the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as evidenced recently.

Unfortunately for all involved, while foreign aid is crucial for the development of Rwanda and to lift it out of poverty, this same foreign aid is actually perpetuating the crisis. The government rules by and for the elite Tutsis who came out of Uganda in 1994 and their small group of allies. However, aid that flows to that government has the perverse effect of enabling this group to keep control – even when that control actually stems from purposefully limiting the development of the vast majority of the people in the country.

Background:

The civil war that took place in Rwanda between 1990 and 1994 and subsequently spread to the DRC, caused enormous loss in human capital through countless victims (the final toll is generally put at 800,000 between April and July 1994 in Rwanda, and at more than 5 million in the DRC in the years since). The war also damaged or destroyed infrastructure and equipment, as well as public and private buildings. Additionally, productive resources were diverted toward war activities.

The staggering destruction coupled with huge distress of the Rwandan population prompted the international community to scramble to rebuild Rwanda and poured in substantial assistance, in amounts much higher than the average granted to other Sub-Saharan countries. As early as January 1995, the Donors Round Table in Geneva committed a bilateral and multilateral aid of almost \$600 million (US)¹ for Rwanda. Starting in 1997, foreign aid went through two phases of massive increase, first in 2000,

¹ Filip Reyntjens (2004) « Rwanda, ten years on: From genocide to dictatorship », *African Affairs*, 103, 177–210

rising from 16% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1997-1999 to 20% in 2000-2002, and secondly in 2003, rising to 25% of GDP in 2003-2004². From 1995 to 2006, foreign aid to Rwanda totalled \$5,064,210,000 (US)³, with the United Kingdom, the United States, the Netherlands and Belgium being among the most important donors⁴. Today, with foreign assistance reaching \$55 (US) per capita, Rwanda is one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world⁵.

While these large amounts of international aid were meant to help the Rwandan population overcome one of the worst ethnic conflicts of the 20th century, donors overlooked ensuring that policies implemented by the new Rwandan government – made up mostly of former Tutsi rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) who were based in neighboring Uganda - *would not perpetuate the conflict*. As research has indicated, foreign aid – whether humanitarian or developmental - is never neutral before, during or after conflict situations: it creates incentives for peace or war, its size being as important as the way it is distributed amongst the beneficiaries⁶. Incentives for peace include “all purposeful uses of aid that strengthen the dynamics of peace by influencing actors’ behaviour, by strengthening the capacities of parties that favour peace, by changing the relationships between parties to the conflict (ethnic groups, the government and civil society), and by influencing the social and economic environment in which conflict and peace dynamics take place”⁷.

Two factors help explain this questionable approach by donors of not linking assistance to Rwanda with a tighter control of the *ethnic pitfall*, at a time when the country was just coming out of a terrible interethnic war: first, the guilty complex of the international community for not acting to prevent the death of thousands of people. This is often cited as justification for not condemning the RPF crimes, which according to a variety of international sources rise to the level of war crimes and crimes against humanity in many cases. But since RPF actions were largely responsible for ending the immediate crisis, the current Rwandan leaders are often seen as immune to international criticism, even when evidence exists to move forward.

Secondly, signals of openness by the RPF shortly after the 1994 genocide were welcome by all parties. These included appointing Hutus to the highest positions of Prime Minister and President of the Republic, as well as to other key positions in important departments in the first government. Problematically, within a short time after 1994 it became clear

² World Bank (2007), Rwanda, Toward Sustained Growth and Competitiveness, Report no. 37860-Rw, Volume 1, p.5

³ World Bank 's data base

⁴ Netherlands and Sweden suspended aid to Rwanda in 2008, and Canada followed recently (2009)

⁵ UNDP (2008), Turning vision 2020 into reality: From recovery to sustainable human development, p. 52

⁶ Peter Uvin (1999), The influence of aid in situation of violent conflict, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, Providence, RI, USA., p.4

⁷ Ibidem, p.3

that these were simply public relations moves to pacify both internal and external dissent, thus allowing the RPF-led government to consolidate power. Since that time, voices of opposition in the country have been limited and typically silenced completely, but this did *not* lead to changes in aid policy or in foreign relations by the international community.

It is all clear today that this approach by the donor community was seriously ill-advised, and that post-1994 Rwanda simply got off to a botched start: the failure to realize that ethnic conflict did not go away with the genocide and give this proper consideration not only derailed Rwanda from the path to peace, but also seriously jeopardised the fight against poverty.

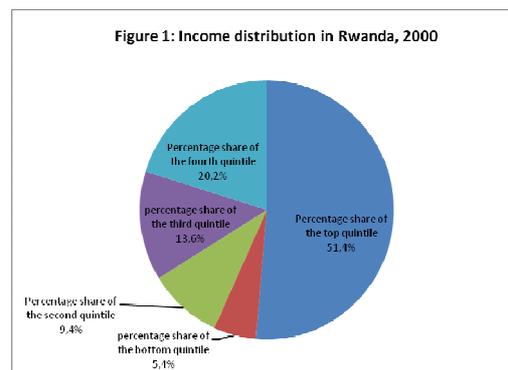
Indeed, data available on the Rwandan economy strongly suggest that the same antagonism between Hutus and Tutsis that has historically stoked the country's ethnic violence prominently lurks beneath the economic policies of the new Tutsi-led RPF government. That is why the high income disparities visible in today's Rwandan economy strangely mirror discriminatory policies towards the Hutu ethnic group. Moreover, as clearly explained in the following sections, there is a striking similarity between the present situation and the situation before the 1960's - when violent inter-ethnic confrontations broke out in 1959 and drove into exile most of today's governing Tutsi elite's parents. As was the case then, today's vast Hutu majority population in Rwanda is only represented by a tiny percentage in the governing elite, *and both official policies and unofficial practices on the part of the government serves to hold Hutus down in poverty.*

Knowing that economic development in any country is severely compromised when a group that comprises the vast majority of a country's citizens has its political power threatened by "progress"⁸, then it must be readily acknowledged that no successful fight against poverty is possible in Rwanda as long as the issue of power sharing between Hutus and Tutsis remains unsettled. Worse yet – as the same causes produce the same effects - the present situation risks a repeat of history and triggering the same interethnic violence as in 1959. The following facts pertaining to the current alarming state of affairs in Rwanda are far from exhaustive, but they are serious enough to warrant that assistance to Rwanda be re-examined before it's too late.

⁸ Karla Hoff and Joseph E. Stiglitz (2000), Modern economic theory and development, in Gerald M. Meir and Joseph E. Stiglitz, Frontiers of development economics: The future in perspective, World bank and Oxford University Press, p.425

The ethnic nature of Rwanda's high and rising income gaps

While Rwanda ranked among low-inequality countries in the mid 80's⁹, today it is in the top 15% of countries with the highest inequality rates, and the gap between rich and poor widens constantly from year to year. In 2000, the percentage share of GDP for the population's richest 20% was 51.4%, while the poorest 20% relied on almost 10 times less, with only 5.4% of GDP¹⁰.



Source: UNDP

The consequences of these income disparities on the majority of the population are disastrous: almost 1/3 of Rwanda's population suffers from nutritional deficiencies, and in some regions such as Bugesera (Southeast), the rate stands at 40%. Life expectancy, which at 44 years old is among the lowest 20 in the world, follows in the same trend.

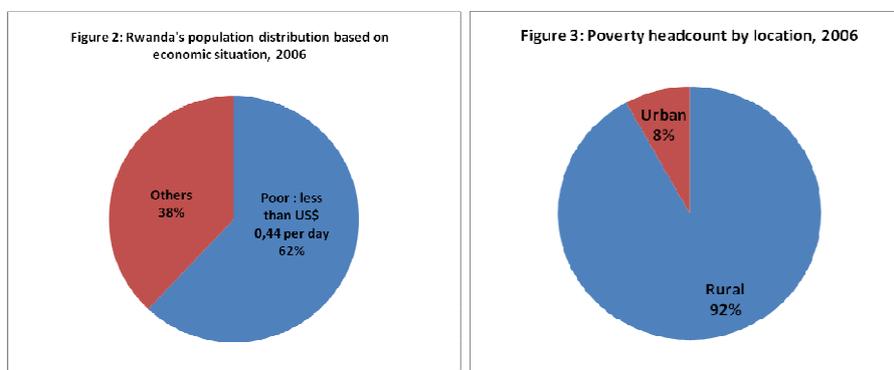
Research has identified two main characteristics of income disparities in Rwanda. On the one hand, poverty mainly hits rural populations. Of the 5.38 million poor in Rwanda in 2006 (62%), 4.98 million lived in rural areas¹¹ on less than \$0.44 (250frw, based on 2006 exchange rates) per day, representing about 92% of the poor nationwide. On the other hand, as most of the Tutsi elite returnees have settled in cities, especially in Kigali, it is mainly Hutus, who make up 84% of the population and live for the most part in rural areas, that are the most stricken by poverty. The contrast of wealth between urban and

⁹ An Ansoms (2007) « Striving for growth, bypassing the poor? A critical review of Rwanda's rural sector policies», *Journal of Modern African Studies* 46 (1):1-32

¹⁰ UNDP (2008), op.cit.

¹¹ Government of Rwanda (2007A). *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008-2012*, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, preliminary draft June 2007 cité par An Ansoms (2007) « Striving for growth, bypassing the poor? A critical review of Rwanda's rural sector policies», *Journal of Modern African Studies* 46 (1):1-32

rural areas, therefore, is another way of illustrating the great income disparities between Hutus and Tutsis¹².



Data source: GOR¹³

Economic analysis identifies various ways in which steep income inequality negatively impacts a country's situation, especially when it comes to economic growth and the fight against poverty¹⁴:

- The poor cannot manage to pay for their children's education, nor can they invest in economic activities given their lack of access to funding sources;
- High inequalities prevent the poor from taking advantage of the positive impact of economic growth;
- Income disparities lead to violence and political instability, both of which in turn lower the level and profitability of investments;
- With a reduced capacity to participate in the political process and public affairs management, the poor have no access to decision-making levers and are thus unable to influence economic policies for their own benefit.

In the case of Rwanda, these negative impacts generated by high income disparities are already visible:

- In rural areas where the majority of the poor resides, 30% of children drop out of school before the end of 4th grade. Likewise, high school enrolment stands at a weak 7.9% in rural areas, compared with 10% nationwide¹⁵.

¹² An Ansoms (2008.06), «A green revolution for Rwanda? The political Economy of Poverty and Agrarian change », Discussion paper, University of Antwerp

¹³ Government of Rwanda (2007A), op.cit.

¹⁴ Khalid Soudi (2007) « Le triangle croissance économique, inégalité, pauvreté : Synthèse des controverses », Les Cahiers du Plan, no. 13, mai-juin

¹⁵ PNUD (2008) op.cit.

- 83% of the medical personnel work in cities and only 17% in the poor, rural areas.
- A child born in a poor family has a 20% chance of dying before the age of five, a proportion twice as high than for a child from a non-poor family.
- Although a 1% growth rate usually reduces by 2 to 3% the proportion of the population living on less than US\$ 1 per day, in Rwanda a growth rate of 1% reduces this proportion by a mere 0.37%¹⁶.
- In 2003, the agricultural sector sustaining the majority of the poor received only 2% of total bank credits, of which 8% amounted to less than US\$ 25 (20 000 frw)¹⁷.
- According to the Global Index of Economic Freedom, political instability is the main obstacle to foreign investment for 2009.

As for the exclusion of the poor from public affairs management, it is demonstrated hereafter by the very low proportion of Hutus currently serving as high-ranking officers in Rwanda's public service.

Discriminatory government economic policies and measures

Despite denials that it does not practice ethnic discrimination, the Rwandan government has excelled at concentrating power, wealth and education in the hands of the Tutsi minority¹⁸. By using the subtle appeal of the new-look, post-1994 Rwandan society and cleverly exploiting the genocide, the RPF government has easily found ways to keep the Hutu majority in poverty.

Indeed, while Rwandans identified themselves before 1994 by their ethnic and local origin, identity in Rwanda currently has taken on three distinct facets: ethnic origin (Hutu, Tutsi, Twa), linguistic affiliation (Francophone or Anglophone) and pre-1994 status (refugee or inside-the-country). But a cross-reading of these categories reveals an interesting finding: while Tutsis are easily represented in each category (Francophones, Anglophones, ex-refugees, inside-Rwanda-in-1994), most of the adults from the Hutu group were living in Rwanda before 1994, and their elite are predominantly French-speaking. Additionally, 84% of Rwanda's population is Hutu,¹⁹ and this group is a

¹⁶ Ansoms, A. (2005). Resurrection after civil war and genocide: growth, poverty and inequality in post-conflict Rwanda, *European journal of development research*, 17 (3), pp. 495-508

¹⁷ Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (SPAT)(2004) cité par An Ansoms (2007), op.cit..

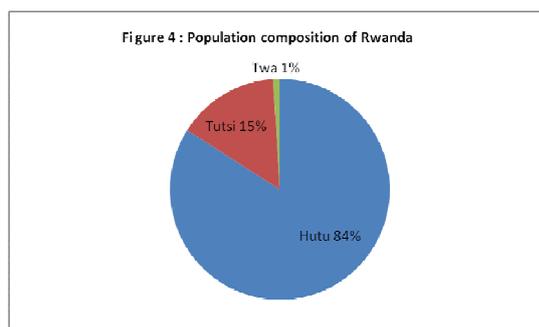
¹⁸ Filip Reyntjens (2004), Rwanda, Ten years on: from genocide to dictatorship, *African Affairs*, 103, 177–210

¹⁹ CIA – The World Factbook, March 5th, 2009

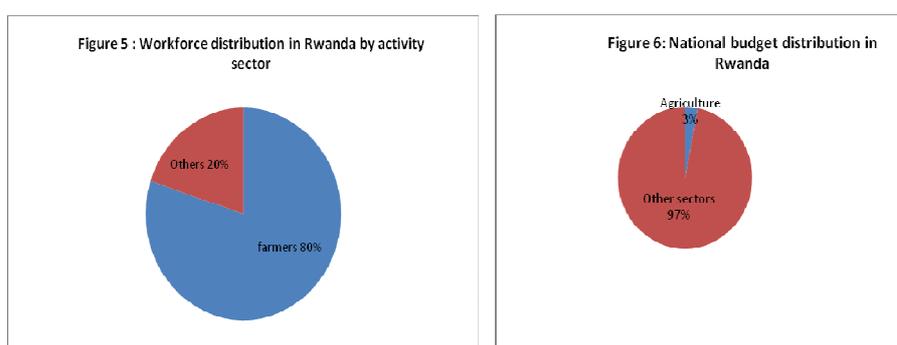
majority in the rural areas that comprise much of the country. Problematically, *ONLY* Tutsis who were living in Rwanda in 1994 are considered survivors, even though most of the Hutus in the country had no part in perpetrating the genocide and in fact were equally victims, whether personally or through the devastating effects of the crisis on the entire country. All of these factors make it crystal clear that the current government's agricultural, linguistic and vulnerable group protection policies *not only* strengthen disparities *but* are not neutral on the matter of ethnicity. Some of these measures and their consequences are presented hereafter.

1. Under-funding of agriculture

Although the Rwandan economy depends mainly on agriculture, which supports 80% of the workforce and produces 42% of the GDP, the agricultural sector receives a mere 3% of the national budget, a far cry from the 10% threshold recommended by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)²⁰. Government spending in Rwanda is clearly oriented away from the majority, and toward those who will help the government maintain its power.



Data Source: CIA - The World Factbook - March 5th, 2009



Data Source: UNDP, 2008

²⁰ UNDP (2008), op.cit.

2. Non-assistance of Hutu survivors

The war that took place in Rwanda from 1990, spreading to the DRC afterwards, culminated in the perpetration of war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide, caused hundreds of thousands of victims in every component of the population, and left many survivors completely impoverished. In 1998, the Rwandan government created the Genocide Survivors Assistance Fund (FARG in its French acronym), with a view to provide education, health care and housing assistance services to genocide survivors. But, because the government considers Tutsis *alone* to be victims of the genocide and doesn't admit that members of its army have possibly committed war crimes and crimes against humanity on the Hutu population, FARG provides assistance *only* to Tutsi survivors. Though FARG-assisted survivors represent only 4% of the population (400 000), they receive a 5% share of the government budget²¹, considerably higher than the 3% allotted to agriculture, which sustains 80% of the workforce – mainly Hutus. Similarly, 47% of social security expenses go to Tutsi survivors while all other vulnerable groups share less than 25%²².

One of the hardest-felt economic impacts of this discrimination between assisted Tutsi and unassisted Hutu survivors is the placing of orphans from both ethnic groups on diametrically opposing success paths for their future, with young Tutsis being afforded easy access to education and a chance to break the poverty cycle, while young Hutus are left with no other future beyond the under-financed agriculture sector.

3. The banning of French in schools and the administration

In October 2008 the Rwandan President, General Paul Kagame, abolished the use of French as a teaching and administrative language. Though building skills and promoting development were some of the reasons put forth in support of this decision²³, most likely the contrary will occur. Not to mention that this decision will bring a negative impact to bear on income disparity and social peace.

To grasp the full impact of this decision on income disparity, it serves to remember that French is the second language of the elite who studied in Rwanda before 1994, a majority of whom are Hutus, while English is the second language of the majority of

²¹ Serge Farnel, « Rwanda: L'association rwandaise des rescapés du génocide de passage dans la capitale française » Agence Rwandaise d'Information (Kigali), 6 juin 2008

²² UNDP (2008) op.cit.

²³ Jonneed Khan, « Le Rwanda remplace le français par l'anglais », La Presse, Montréal, 16 octobre 2008

the ex-Ugandan refugee Tutsi elite currently in power in Rwanda. Replacing French with English introduces a major distortion on the Rwandan labor market that impacts income distribution between the two elites. The implementation of English as the official language reduces the labor demand for educated Francophones while increasing it for Anglophones, thus reducing the income of the French-speaking elite for the benefit of the English-speaking group. Learning English on the go by Francophones will do little to stem income disparity growth since the starting point is not the same for both elites. An example of this might be a Rwandan lawyer who has practiced in French all his life, but suddenly finds that English is the only language accepted in courts and in official documents. This lawyer would quickly find himself out of work, and replaced by an English speaker, who in Rwanda is almost by definition a supporter of the current regime.

Regarding economic growth, the negative effects of this decision will be felt at different levels. First, Rwanda has been a French-speaking country for about a century, and almost all research in all scientific fields is documented in that language. By depriving future generations of the linguistic tool needed to access thousands of scientific records about their country, the decision to abolish French amounts to the squandering of considerable input for human resources training, which will likely slow down economic growth. Second, laid-off qualified French-speaking workers, unable to provide for themselves and their families, will probably find the cost of opportunity for staying in Rwanda very high and choose exile, further contributing to the country's brain drain. And finally, by implying a constitutional change that bypasses proper legal procedures, this decision demonstrates the unpredictable nature of Rwandan leaders, which is a sure-fire source of uncertainty that is harmful to economic growth²⁴.

This decision also carries a major impact on social peace. Not only does it sow the seeds of future conflict between the two afore-mentioned elites, it also discourages thousands of French-speaking Rwandans now in exile from contemplating a peaceful homecoming by drastically devaluing their human capital. Understandably, most of the Hutu refugees have settled in Francophone countries (DRC, Congo-Brazzaville, Central African Republic, West Africa, Belgium, France, and Canada (Québec)). Since it is very unlikely that all these refugees will give up coming back to their homeland, and given this clear signal that they have no place in Rwandan public administration unless they speak English, it is not inconceivable that some of them might unfortunately consider violent means for their return, thus further perpetuating the cycle of elite violence that has historically plagued Rwanda. Additionally, this

²⁴ World Bank (1997) «World development report », New York, Oxford University Press

decision quickly cancels out the voluntary and peaceful repatriation option for Hutu rebels currently fighting in DRC. Finally, like in every country, the inevitable unemployment rise resulting from this decision is a recipe for a hike in the crime rate.

The leading elite do not represent the majority and history repeats itself

Research on the economics of poverty in Rwanda - which has analyzed the genesis of policies clearly unfavorable to the majority of the population - has uncovered a marked disproportion between the ethnic identity of the leading political elite in power since 1994, and the ethnic identity of the majority of Rwandans²⁵.

As a reminder, the population distribution in Rwanda is 84% Hutu, 15% Tutsi and 1% Twa. However, out of 34 high ranking officials at the presidency and in government in 2003, 15 were Hutus and 19 were Tutsis, most of the Tutsis being ex-refugees (only 3 were not).

Relatively speaking, given the fact that Rwanda's population in 2003 was 8,911,990²⁶, the representation rate of Tutsis in government is 7 times higher than that of Hutus, who are 6 times more numerous than Tutsis. Specifically, these data show that ethnic composition at the top tier of public service in Rwanda allows for one Hutu executive per 500,000 Hutus and one Tutsi executive per 70,000 Tutsis.

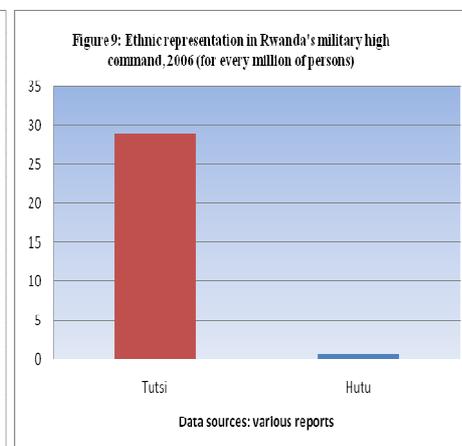
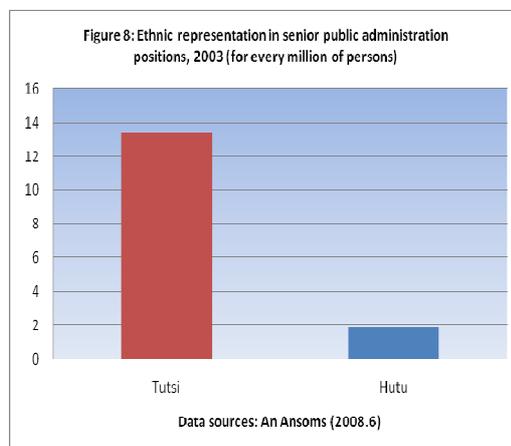
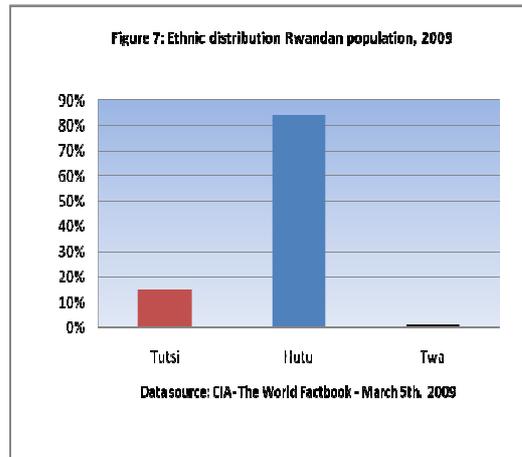
The gap is even wider in the military: of the 46 high officers in the Rwandan army in 2006 (ranked General, Lieutenant-General, Major General, Brigadier General, and Colonel), 5 were Hutus (11%) and 41 were Tutsis (89%), most of the latter being returnees from Uganda. Knowing that the population in Rwanda was 9,464,241 in 2006, this data indicates that ethnic composition of the Rwandan army high command allows for one Hutu senior officer per 1,590,000 Hutus and one Tutsi senior officer per 34 600 Tutsis.

In the area of funding, again the balance tips heavily in favour of the almost exclusively Tutsi military and security forces – same as with the FARG. They receive 10% of development funding, almost twice the share for agriculture²⁷.

²⁵ An Ansoms (2008.06), « A green revolution for Rwanda? The political Economy of Poverty and Agrarian change », Discussion paper, University of Antwerp

²⁶ World bank 's data base

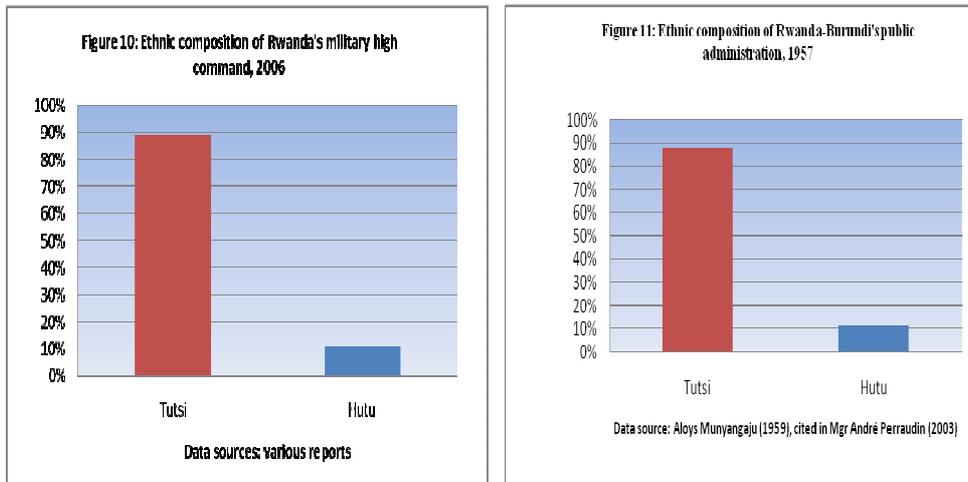
²⁷ UNDP (2008), op.cit. p.54



This current situation in Rwanda regarding ethnic representation in government closely mirrors that which prevailed in on the eve of the social revolution in 1959. In 1957, out of 1 786 public administration positions, 1,577 were held by Tutsis (88%) and only 209 by Hutus (12%)²⁸. The total population at the time being 2,448,000²⁹, it appears that the Tutsi representation rate in government was 46 times higher than the Hutus' — a proportion identical to today's within the Rwandan military high command.

²⁸ Aloys Munyangaju (1959), *L'actualité politique au Rwanda*, cited in Mgr André Perraudin (2003), *Un Évêque au Rwanda. Témoignage*, éditions Saint-Augustin, p.126

²⁹ Jean-Paul Harroy (1984) *Rwanda, souvenir d'un compagnon de la marche du Rwanda vers la démocratie et l'indépendance*, Éditions Hayez, Bruxelles, p.169



The parallel is also striking between the methods used by the Tutsi monarchy before independence, and those presently used by the RPF to monopolize power, as shown by the following examples:

- The denial by King Mutara Rudahigwa in June 1958 of a Hutu-Tutsi ethnic problem, as well as his evasive answer to Hutu leaders seeking a solution at the country's Superior Council, that "division and opposition amidst its people is the direct obstacle to a country's progress"³⁰, are not dissimilar to the current muzzling of the public on the matter by the RPF, through the vague law on "divisionism"³¹.
- The driving of Hutu children out of schools by keeping them in poverty and resorting to "skilful manoeuvres, sometimes even outright moral persecution"³² before independence resembles the present poverty situation forced on a majority of Hutus, and echoes the ill-defined law on "genocide ideology" currently targeting Hutu children and teachers in secondary schools³³. President Kagame's stern statements about Hutu children are perfectly clear: "Children born from parents who committed genocide, and raised in the genocide ideology, are possibly as dangerous as their parents... In any case, regarding them, we have a duty of prevention"³⁴. Thus all Hutus, not just those who perpetrated the genocide, are condemned by the government as potential genocidaires in the

³⁰ Mgr André Perraudin (2003), op.cit. p.167

³¹ Human Rights watch (2008), Law and Reality: Progress in Judicial Reform in Rwanda

³² Bragard Lucie (1959), Vers l'indépendance du Ruanda – Urundi. Les problèmes essentiels, extraits des Dossiers de l'Action sociale Catholique no.8, octobre 1959, pp.21-22 cited in Mgr André Perraudin (2003), op.cit., p.131

³³ Human Rights Watch (2008), op.cit.

³⁴ Jeune Afrique l'intelligent n° 2302 du 20 au 26 février 2005

future. In effect, genocide fears are frequently used as a means of control over the Hutu majority by the minority government.

The urgent need for rethinking international aid policy and fostering the conditions for a peace economy in Rwanda

The facts developed in this paper clearly suggest that interethnic warfare in Rwanda never truly ended, but simply switched grounds: following its military victory, the Tutsi-led RPF marched against its Hutu enemy on economic, political and legal frontlines, aiming to restore the old pre-independence hierarchy. Sector budgets, vulnerable group support initiatives, changes in legal measures, as well as nominations to high public positions have been carried out in discriminatory fashion by the Tutsi-led RPF government. Voices are already rising to suggest that the current process of poor-neighbourhood razing in Kigali amounts to the “Tutsification” of Rwanda’s capital city³⁵. Unfortunately, the international community has made the same mistakes as the former Belgian colonial administration: it has offered unconditional support to the Rwandan authority in power, thus favoring, wilfully or not, one ethnic group over another.

This situation seriously undermines the fight against poverty, which is the primary reason donors contribute such sizeable assistance to Rwanda. International guilt over not preventing the genocide may drive the aid, but its purpose is still development and stability in the country. And this development should flow to *all* citizens, not just the small minority of governing elites.

As mentioned before, threats to the political power of a group hinder the economic development of the entire country. One historical illustration of this problem in the African Great Lakes region is the answer given by former Congolese president, Mobutu Sese Seko to former Rwandan president, Juvénal Habyarimana who was seeking help to push back RPF rebels. President Mobutu admonished President Habyarimana that he had created his own misfortune by ignoring his advice not to build the roads the rebels were using to attack his country; that he, Mobutu, had built no roads and had managed to rule for 30 years.³⁶ In the present case, Rwandan president Paul Kagame considers his power threatened by Hutus, and reacting just like president Mobutu, he maintains them in a state of poverty. Before independence, the Tutsi monarchy had essentially reacted the same way by using clever manipulations to deny Hutus access to education.

³⁵ Andrew Sullivan (2008), Rwanda: a nation with a dark past and tenuous future, The McGill Tribune, 4 mars 2008

³⁶ Jeune Afrique (1991) cited in Robinson (1999:2), «When is a state predatory?», University of California, Berkeley, cited in par Karla Hoff and Joseph E. Stiglitz (2000), op.cit.

Real peace and development are possible in Rwanda, but not within the current framework. What Rwanda needs is a government that is not based on a small group of elites, whether Tutsi or Hutu, using ethnicity as a basis for rule. All groups need to be able to sit at the table of government with an equal voice. The cycle of long-term elite conflict over leadership in the country must be broken. And unfortunately, aid from the international community to one group of elites or another has perpetuated this internal conflict for many years, and continues to perpetuate it now.

There was good news recently on this front, as the governments of the Netherlands and Sweden both suspended non-humanitarian aid to Rwanda. While this was in direct response to Rwanda's involvement in the ongoing conflict in the DRC, it is also a recognition that foreign aid is perpetuating the overall situation. Donors are simply not seeing their contributions used in ways that benefit the people. Instead, they are turned to fund projects that benefit the minority ruling elites, whether by fuelling conflict, or by development that only aids a small group, and leaves the majority impoverished.

However alarming the present situation may be, the international community is still in a position to join these two countries – the Netherlands and Sweden - and avoid the former Belgian administration's second mistake: *failing to intervene in order to forestall the violence outburst of 1959*. This mistake was repeated once already in 1994 when the international community failed to intervene. Rwanda will not be efficient in its fight against poverty, nor will it reach long-term political stability, *until* the interests of the people meet those of the leaders. Consequently, the best way to foster conditions for a peace economy in Rwanda is to help Rwandans sit at the same table and come up with mechanisms that will allow access to power without destruction of the physical and human capital, and encourage leaders to administer this power in the best interests of all components of the Rwandan society.

There is a saying in Kinyarwanda: “the dancers may change, but the music remains the same.” For Rwanda to advance into prosperity for all of its citizens, it is time for the music to change, and the international community is an important element in changing the tune.

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