

# *Beneath the Veneer of Peacebuilding: Insincere Peace Work and International Greenlighting*

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**Abstract** — This research turns a critical eye to peacebuilding in Rwanda, by revealing the negative outcomes of efforts undertaken by Paul Kagame's regime. Evaluation of five key pillars of peacebuilding demonstrates that a veneer of peacebuilding has again put Rwanda on a dangerous trajectory towards civil war. Examining the role of international greenlighting as a causal factor of the Rwandan genocide offers a new framework through which to understand our own complicity and responsibility. This framework, in the current Rwandan context, underscores the importance of interrogating ongoing patterns of greenlighting in the post-conflict period, and how we continue to contribute to conflict in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Middle powers like Canada bear an onus to generate innovative methods of peacebuilding assessment, in order to understand actual impact on the ground. This allows us to see beyond insincere peace work, and points us towards a place of taking action.

**Keywords:** international greenlighting; Rwanda peacebuilding; post-conflict period.

**Résumé** — Le présent article porte un regard critique sur la consolidation de la paix au Rwanda, notamment en discutant des effets négatifs des efforts déployés par le régime de Paul Kagame. L'évaluation de cinq piliers centraux de la consolidation de la paix démontre que les efforts déployés par le régime Kagame ont encore une fois placé le Rwanda sur une trajectoire menant à la guerre civile. En examinant le rôle de l'approbation tacite de la communauté internationale comme étant un facteur causal du génocide au Rwanda, l'auteure propose un nouveau modèle permettant de comprendre notre propre complicité et responsabilité. Dans le contexte actuel du Rwanda, ce modèle met l'accent sur l'importance de questionner les modes d'approbation tacite qui persistent dans la période post-conflit et sur notre contribution continue au conflit dans la région des Grands Lacs en Afrique. Les puissances moyennes, comme le Canada, ont le fardeau de mettre en place des procédés permettant l'évaluation de la consolidation de la paix, et ce, pour comprendre l'impact réel sur le terrain. Ce faisant, nous pourrions aller au-delà des opérations de paix insincères et intervenir efficacement.

**Mots-clés :** approbation tacite de la communauté internationale ; Rwanda ; consolidation de la paix ; période post-conflit.

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## **Introduction**

So much research has been generated regarding the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 that one wonders whether there are any further insights to be had. Our continual return to Rwanda speaks to a paucity of improved approaches to conflict, coupled with an inability to come to terms with the scope of violence. Rwanda haunts, and it should. However, collective guilt mustn't render us paralyzed in the face of concerns in the current Rwandan context.

More than two decades after the Rwandan genocide, questions arise about how we measure peacebuilding success. The case of Rwanda is complicated. Achievements in some respects have seemingly come at the costs of others. Should post-conflict Rwanda should be condemned or used as a template for success in societies emerging from extensive violence? Despite the variance in interpretations, there is a decidedly undemocratic character to the Rwandan regime. What does this mean for our assessment of peacebuilding outcomes in the Rwandan context and beyond? A close examination of key peacebuilding efforts undertaken by the regime reveals a disingenuous approach to peacebuilding, placing RPF ambitions before peace, and endangering the gains that have been made in the post conflict period. Furthermore, international greenlighting driven by Kagame's manipulation of guilt enables a bypass of necessary components of a durable peace. This is important, as only two decades after the genocide, Rwanda is in many ways a precarious state once more.

## **Historical Context**

It is difficult to have certainty about the origin of Hutu and Tutsi peoples in Rwanda. Both groups migrated to Rwanda at some point in the distant past, positioning the Twa as the only ethnic group indigenous to the area (Des Forges, 1999, 31). However, what is clear is that all three groups were present before colonization by Germany in 1897. Anthropologists describe identification as Hutu or Tutsi or Twa as fluid characterizations which "referred to a complex set of social relations that had some of the elements of class, caste, and social status" (Jones, 2001, 18). Social hierarchy emphasized clan membership, and movement between Hutu and Tutsi categories was possible (Jones, 2001, 18). German, and subsequent Belgian colonizers after World War I, favoured the taller, lighter skinned Tutsi people, and gave them administrative roles and power over their Hutu countrymen (Jones, 2001, 17). This facet of the colonial encounter would prove a disastrous contributor to ethnic tensions in Rwanda, particularly because the division became a salient political tool. This is not to say that Rwandan society supported total equality between groups prior to colonization, but it certainly became more polarized thereafter. The Belgian introduction of identity cards proved particularly symbolic of this categorized entrenchment of ethnic difference, as the "creation of this internal discrimination system, which allowed the Tutsi privileged access to the state, to jobs, and to the church, would have a profound impact by creating an ethnic hierarchy" (Jones, 2001, 19).

The transition to independence in 1962 was fraught with violent conflict between Hutu and Tutsi elites, each using ethnicity explicitly as a tool for mobilization (Jones, 2001, 19). Ongoing violence between groups led the Belgians to support a transition to a Hutu

government, framed saliently by the new leaders as the “Hutu Revolution” (Des Forges, 1999, 36). Large numbers of Tutsi living as refugees in surrounding nations conducted incursions into Rwanda over the following decades, fostering a sense among Hutus of a shared struggle against violent Tutsi forces (Des Forges, 1999, 36). Of course, these narratives would be manipulated during the genocide, and prove a strong factor in the dehumanization of entire ethnic groups.

Hutu General Habyarimana would assume power from the Parmehutu in a coup in 1973, and he subsequently placed the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MDNR) at the head of a single-party state (Des Forges, 1999, 37). It would be Habyarimana’s assassination in 1994 which provided the proverbial spark for genocide immediately thereafter.

## Civil War

Habyarimana had been under great pressure to democratize with transition to a multi-party state (Desrosiers, 2011, 435). The political tone in Rwanda was already strained, with high unemployment, worsening economic outlook, and frustration with Habyarimana’s favouring of Hutus from his own clan (Jones, 2001, 26–27). The Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), formed by Tutsi refugees in Uganda in 1987, saw this as a fortuitous moment to pursue a militarized return of refugees to Rwanda, particularly as they were growing concerned about their long term prospects in Uganda (Jones, 2001, 23, 28). The invasion of the RPF in October 1990 would signal the start of the civil war. Bruce Jones (2001) suggests this did considerable damage to the regime’s public image, prompting increased calls for reform (p. 28). He also notes that Hutu elites, known as the akazu, felt a distinct threat to their power (Jones, 2001, 28). This contributed to their subsequent plans to eliminate this threat in the most literal sense possible (Jones, 2001, 28). The next two years were punctuated by a series of failed ceasefires, and an effective military campaign by the RPF made “a strong psychological imprint on the country” (Jones, 31, citing interviews with RPF members).

The Arusha peace negotiations were the regional and international response to the conflict. As described by Jones, the process seemed a rare ideal on the surface (Jones, 2001, 90). He portrays direct communication between opposing groups, which proceeded without the onus of a time limited format (Jones, 2001, 71). All negotiating parties had supportive allied powers built into the process, and they had an excellent facilitator in Mpungwe of Tanzania (Jones, 2001, 70). Rwandan political parties were broadly represented, as well as regional interests (Jones, 2001, 72–74). Second track forums provided unique venues for addressing dissent, and a number of supportive third parties contributed as well (Jones, 2001, 91).

Still, Habyarimana was reluctant to cede any power (Des Forges, 1999, 95). Pivotal successes for the RPF on the battlefield increased pressure upon the Habyarimana government to sign on to the Arusha peace treaty (Jones, 2001, 85). Many of the regime’s supporters expected that the RPF would soon be capable of winning the war, and urged them to settle (Des Forges, 1999, 95). As Des Forges (1999) describes, the ultimatum issued by Rwanda’s largest aid providers, including their stalwart ally France, prompted

acceptance of the terms by Habyarimana (p. 95). Rather than lose massive financial support, he signed the agreement on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1993.

It was a very comprehensive agreement. Terms included a broad power sharing transitional government, military integration, repatriation of refugees, and implementation timelines (Des Forges, 1999, 95). However, the RPF was able to shape the agreement more to their benefit, due to a relatively stronger negotiating position borne of recent military gains (Jones, 2001, 85). They rejected governing with radical Hutu CDR members, and insisted on a 50/50 share of government and holding important military positions (Jones, 2001, 85, 91). This caused alarm even among moderate Hutus, including moderates, including moderates, as this would present a very large power shift, and the Tutsi proportion of the population was considerably below 50% (Jones, 2001, 93).

Consequently, there was a great deal of resistance to the implementation of Arusha. Radicalized Hutu elements and the akazu began to coordinate to defend their positions of power (Des Forges, 1999, 97). The cogs of the United Nations turned very slowly to dispatch the peace keeping mission to supervise the implementation of the Arusha Accord (Des Forges, 1999, 99). In the interim, more radical Hutu elements who were most resistant to the agreement planned and mobilized. The October 1993 assassination of Hutu President Ndadaye of Burundi, by Tutsi military members, unleashed a torrent of ethnic violence, and sent massive numbers of Hutu refugees spilling into Rwanda (Des Forges, 1999, 101). Rwandan Hutus were shaken by what seemed evidence of the deeply harmful intent of the opposing ethnic group (Des Forges, 1999, 101), and this easily jeopardized the implementation of the peace agreement. Des Forges (1999) describes the immediate effects within Rwanda as follows,

The movement known as Hutu Power... the coalition that would make the genocide possible, was built upon the corpse of Ndadaye. The doubts about RPF intentions, sown by the February 1993 attack and fed by the extent of RPF gains at Arusha, ripened following the assassination in Burundi. As one political leader commented during the genocide. "...Who didn't have his eyes opened by what happened in Burundi... where they elected President Ndadaye, who really wanted Hutu and Tutsi to live together, but you know what they did to him...." (p. 103)

Tensions were incredibly high when the understaffed and under-equipped UN peace keeping force, UNAMIR was finally deployed in December 1993. Over the next few months, three key elements of the conflict unfolded. First, Habyarimana continually delayed the implementation of the peace agreement by raising numerous challenges to the terms of the Accords (Des Forges, 1999, 113). Second, radical Hutu elements, or Hutu Power, continued to prepare to eliminate all threats to their power (Des Forges, 1999, 103), by accumulating weapons, military strategies, names of targets, and built facilitating networks across Rwanda (Des Forges, 1999, 97–98). Meanwhile, and most disturbingly, during this period the international community received an unending tidal wave of advance warning about what was to come (Des Forges, 1999, 113). As Des Forges (1999) describes,

As the weeks passed, preparations for renewed conflict increased. The warnings of catastrophe multiplied, some public, like assassinations and riots, some discreet, like confidential letters and coded telegrams, some in the passionate pleas of desperate Rwandans, some in the restrained language of the professional soldier. A Catholic bishop and his clergy in Gisenyi, human rights activists in Kigali, New York, Brussels, Montreal, Ouagadougou, an intelligence analyst in Washington, a military officer in Kigali — all with the same message: act now or many will die. (p. 113)

Finally, with the assassination of Habyarimana on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1994, the Rwandan powder keg erupted. With the execution of the murderous plans of Hutu elites, by July 1994, over 1 million predominantly Tutsi Rwandans had lost their lives in the genocide (Reyntjens, 2004, 177). Tactics often included forcing Tutsi citizens to gather in supposed safe spaces, where they were slaughtered by government sponsored forces. Hutu moderates who supported shared governance with Tutsis were assassinated almost immediately following Habyarimana's death (Longman, 2004, 61). The RPF swiftly undertook military action to eliminate or remove Hutu forces from the country, and assumed control of Rwanda in early July (Reyntjens, 2004, 178). Millions of Rwandans spilled over the borders into surrounding countries (Reyntjens, 2004, 178). This presented a massive and immediate need for humanitarian aid, which, while quickly dispatched, unfortunately provided support to fleeing Hutu militia members (Jones, 2001, 136, 170).

## Causes of the Genocide

Theorists see the causes of the Rwandan genocide in a number of different ways, and certainly the complexity and historicity of the event defy any singular explanation. Scholars note that poverty, inequality and environmental concerns can be seen as playing a role (Jones, 2001, 47). There are, however, a number of key tenets that are crucial to note, in our attempt to distill warnings for the future.

Jones (2001), in his detailed and compelling account of the Arusha peace process, connects the genocide with the failed implementation of the Accord. His argument focuses on the content of the agreement itself, rather than the process (p. 92). He rightfully describes that the terms of the agreement represented too much of a “win” for the RPF (Jones, 2001, 93). The shift in power would have been too drastic, and their radical opposition, the Coalition pour la Defense de la Republique (CDR), had been excluded (Jones, 2001, 93). Antagonizing “spoilers” to the peace process led directly to preparations for genocide, in order to preserve their hold on power (Jones, 2001, 93). He adds that a lack of understanding amongst the international players of the deeper contexts of the conflict (particularly in regards to historical patterns of ethnic manipulation and mobilization) made possible the CDR's disastrous exclusion from the agreement (Jones, 2001, 95–96). This left forces unprepared for their resistance to the terms of Arusha (Jones, 2001, 97). This is a valuable insight, and it is painful that we are only left with a counterfactual “what if” to consider the potential of a process which had so much in its favour. Had the CDR been included, had RPF gains been more in proportion to their population, had resistance been expected... It is reasonable to expect that the outcome of the civil war might have been drastically different.

In *Leave None to Tell the Story*, Alison Des Forges (1999) corrects the initially widely held assumption that the genocide was the result of ethnic tensions between brutally violent groups. Rather, she corrects that it was the political manipulation thereof which enabled the slaughter (p. 6). Hutu elites wielded propaganda presenting a Tutsi threat, and underscored instances of violence in surrounding countries to reinforce concerns about Tutsi intent within Rwanda (Des Forges, 1999, 57). For instance, following the assassination of the Hutu leader of Uganda by Tutsi forces, Hutu elites fuelled fears by perpetuating an image of Tutsis intending to take over Rwanda by force (Des Forges, 1999, 58). This manipulation of ethnic divides speaks to a longstanding pattern within Rwanda, from the late colonial period onward (Desrosiers, 2011, 432). Ways of framing previous, long term struggles between groups, and acts of marginalization, proved salient narratives in attempts to incite fears and violence. Without such a compelling message reinforcing their deepest fears about Tutsi intentions, it is hard to envision that the brutality and extent of the violence would have occurred. What must be noted, though, is that this was undertaken with a political aim from above; the ethnic based concerns were not initially generated by the civilian population (Des Forges, 1999, 6). Regular, everyday life in Rwanda, while not devoid of ethnic tensions, did not impede the groups from living in the same villages, or intermarrying.

Filip Reyntjens (2015), an expert on the Great Lakes Region, suggests three causal factors for the genocide. First, he explains that the instability borne of the transition from a one-party system to a multiparty democracy is part of a nexus of lethal factors (p. 20). This stands to reason: had the Hutu elites had not felt that their power was threatened, they would have had less impetus to prepare to eliminate their opposition. Second, he points to the polarized nature of the ethnic structure in Rwanda (Reyntjens, 2015, 20). While Des Forges (1999) has raised the point that this was largely politically emphasized (p. 6), there has been a lengthy history of distinction between the two groups. Finally, he highlights the monoethnic character of the RPF. This made it easy for the Hutu powers to frame the RPF as a coherent enemy to be feared and eliminated, a central element to genocide (Reyntjens, 2015, 20).

A common way of approaching the responsibility for the Rwandan genocide has been as an international failure to react. Jones (2001) himself suggests that poor coordination at the international level, and a dearth of political will were key contributing factors to the genocide (p. 160), and Des Forges' (1999) documentation of unheeded warnings is overwhelming (p. 113). The delayed and severely under-equipped UNAMIR force is rightfully a focus of condemnation, as a larger contingent with an appropriate mandate might have stopped the slaughter before it could spread beyond Kigali (Jones, 2001, 160). Much of the literature surrounding the genocide indicates that the recall of UN peacekeeping forces was the signal to the Hutu elites that they would be able to proceed unimpeded (Jones, 2001, 120). The reluctance of the international community to refer to the horrors unfolding in Rwanda as a genocide had the deepest impact: it subsequently delayed an international intervention (Des Forges, 1999, 24). This makes clear that the international community's decisions in response to the conflict proved to be a significant causal factor.

It is important to refine this point of responsibility further, and see it through a slightly different lens. There were a number of instances wherein Hutu forces conducted acts of brutality against Tutsis in the months before the genocide. The lack of a response by the international community, despite clear knowledge of these massacres, had a distinct political impact. By deciding not to respond, they “greenlighted” similar, and escalating acts of violence.

Rwanda has long been a heavily aid dependent country, which must foster a positive relationship with international powers in order to survive (Desrosiers, 2011, 437). This is, as mentioned above, how France convinced Habyarimana to sign the Arusha Accord (Des Forges, 1999, 95). There was certainly ample opportunity to condemn acts of violence, or to withhold aid. None was ever taken. In this usage, *Greenlighting*, refers to fully understanding the scope of violence and deciding not to make any statements of condemnation, despite doing there being little personal cost, and having great influence over the perpetrators. The term refers to a decision to license condemnable behaviour by deciding to say nothing, which provides the perpetrator with a “green light” to continue. This concept is important for two reasons. First, from an ethical viewpoint, it speaks to a culpability far beyond passive negligence. There is a direct intentionality to greenlighting which doesn’t necessitate a predictive knowledge of subsequent, genocidal outcome in order to resonate. This certainly provides an apt frame for the failures of the international community in Rwanda. Second, it is vital to keep this concept in mind as we examine the flawed nature of peacebuilding efforts, to which we now turn. A narrative shift to understanding such instances of international implication in conflict as greenlighting can impart a sense of obligation to undertake small speech acts of condemnation that have considerable impact.

## Current Context

The Rwanda left to the RPF forces was in a state of devastation (Reyntjens, 2004, 178). Over a million Rwandan citizens had been killed, millions more were left internally displaced persons, and over two million had fled into surrounding countries (Reyntjens, 2004, 178). Infrastructure, crops, and service provision methods had been destroyed, and many villages were decimated. Despite destruction, Paul Kagame’s regime could boast impressive reconstruction efforts in a relatively short period. Reyntjens refers to “a period of impressive modernization and economic development,” and cites remarkable economic growth rates of 8% (Reyntjens, 2015, 19). In the years since the genocide have also made excellent strides towards meeting Millennium Development Goals (Reyntjens, 2015, 19). Foreign aid has poured into the country to rebuild infrastructure, as well as to provide infrastructure services and housing (Jones, 2001, 136). Many would be quick to suggest that their biggest success has been avoiding a return to conflict, or the “security” component of peacebuilding. So, how we are to think of security in a post conflict context, and measures of peacebuilding success in general? While Kagame’s regime currently exercises extensive control over any resistance in Rwanda, there are many reasons to be concerned about a return to violence, rather than a lasting peace. In a close examination of the pursuit of key peacebuilding elements by the regime, we can see that a disingenuous approach to peacebuilding, which places RPF ambitions before peace, endangers the gains that have been made in the post conflict period. Furthermore, international greenlighting

behaviours, driven by Kagame's manipulation of guilt, enable this avoidance of the necessary components of durable peace.

## **Method**

While there are varying understandings of the pillars of peacebuilding, there are a few fundamental aspects. For the purposes of this work we will consider the following elements: Economy, Statebuilding, Security, Justice and Reconciliation, and Good Governance. After examining each of these in the Rwandan context, the serious nature of the false veneer of peacebuilding will emerge. We will then turn to an assessment of our own role in Rwanda's current descent towards disaster.

## **Economy**

At first glance, economic development seems to have been the clearest peacebuilding achievement of the Kagame regime. Rwanda, posited as a "development darling," is seen as an excellent development partner of geopolitical importance (Matfess, 2015, 187). The surrounding countries in the Great Lakes Region are seen as relatively higher risk countries in which to invest (Matfess, 2015, 187). The apparent stability of the regime is a key element considered by foreign investors and development programs (Matfess, 2015, 187). It also attracts a relatively large amount of foreign aid (Samset, 2011, 271), and has undertaken modernization of its agricultural sector (Samset, 2011, 273). The Rwandan population is framed by the government as hard working and dedicated to improving their recovering nation (Samset, 2011, 272). This has been paired with Rwandan government investments in education and health (Samset, 2011, 273).

However, after examination of the dispersion of wealth in Rwanda, it becomes clear that the high rates of economic growth have not benefited the rural poor majority (Samset, 2011, 272). Despite lessening poverty in a relative sense, the inequality between the urban elites and the rural poor has increased drastically (Samset, 2011, 271–272). While there is some variance across the ethnic divide, neither Tutsi nor Hutu citizens have been excluded from this phenomenon. The investments in education have not been felt across the country equally, and language policies which insist upon instruction in English are to the benefit of old caseload Tutsi returnees, rather than Tutsi survivors and Hutus who speak Kinyarwanda or French (Samuelson, 2010, 205). Most importantly, the agricultural modernization schemes undertaken by the government have had a negative impact upon rural farmers. They now face insufficient land for subsistence, forced use of expensive, "superior" seeds, and a focus on singular crops which leave them at greater risk to fluctuating environmental conditions (Reyntjens, 2015, 29–30).

Clearly the benefits of foreign aid and economic opportunity are experienced primarily by the urban elites. Despite the appearance of success in regards to the economic pillar of peacebuilding, upon closer examination, we discover a scenario that fosters rapidly increasing inequality, desperation, and hence a greater chance of a return to violence.



## Security and Statebuilding

Because of their level of entanglement, in the Rwandan context, it is most appropriate to examine these two elements together. State building refers to the presence of strong institutions in the post conflict context, along with clear structure. In large part, Rwanda's quick recovery can be attributed to a history of a strong state (Purdekova, 2011, 476), which helps hasten a return to state function after conflict. At the time of the genocide, the RPF had a clearly defined hierarchical structure and a strong, disciplined military (Purdekova, 2011, 477). Furthermore, the RPF already had a template for an interim government and rule of law in the terms of the Arusha Accord. (Des Forges, 1999, 95). While the legal system suffered from a lack of lawyers and judges following the genocide, the incorporation of community level traditional mechanisms helped to address this gap, and foreign aid was directed at training new lawyers and rebuilding courts (Zorbas, 2004, 35–36).

This relates very strongly to the Rwandan government's ability to provide security. A strong state and impressive military, as well as a formidable intelligence mechanism, are crucial to security in a post conflict period. However, this is where the divergence between governance and state building comes sharply into view. In order to maintain security and state stability, the Rwandan government has undertaken a long list of repressive measures.

One of the first actions of the new Rwandan government was to significantly change the terms outlined for the transitional government in order to concentrate power into their hands (Reyntjens, 2004, 178). In the name of security, the military has made numerous incursions into surrounding countries, initially in pursuit of Hutu perpetrators who had escaped, and to repatriate Rwandan refugees (Reyntjens, 2004, 204). Not only have they committed massive atrocities against unarmed civilians (Reyntjens, 2004, 194–195), they have also greatly contributed to destabilization in the entire area (Reyntjens, 2004, 204–208). Their interference into the matters of other sovereign states have led to anger and violence directed at Tutsi refugees, and led to reprisal incursions into Rwanda (Reyntjens, 2004, 207). Their involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo, initially for security concerns surrounding Hutu extremists, evolved into a means to ensure access to Congolese resources and supported links to criminalized organizations (Reyntjens, 2004, 206). Rwandan citizens live in a constant state of fear, due to repressive and yet vague laws that could see anyone charged with genocidal ideology for expressing doubts about the state, referring to unofficial views of the genocide, or mentioning one's ethnicity (King, 2010, 301). The permeation of surveillance throughout the Rwandan society only serves to increase tensions and build distrust of the regime (Purdekova, 2011, 489).

While all of this control allows the regime to have a stranglehold on any dissent, it immediately raises concerns about the long term outlook. Domestically, the amount of repression and fear experienced by everyday Rwandan citizens forms a groundwork for subsequent dissent. Recently, even top RPF officials have been leaving the country to coordinate in exile, bemoaning the dictatorial tone of Kagame's rule (Reyntjens, 2015, 25). Some of these alliances are between groups who up until recently sat at opposite sides of the political spectrum, due to the regime's alienation of previous supporters (Reyntjens,

2015, 25). As Kagame's own rise to power suggests, this presents a significant threat to security and state stability, which is entirely counter to the peacebuilding project.

## Justice and Reconciliation

Rwanda's community based approach to justice, the Gacaca court system, is now widely known as an innovative approach to dealing with justice and healing in a post conflict context (Zorbas, 2004, 35–36). Not only is Gacaca seen as a more legitimate form of justice because of its cultural origins and grassroots nature, it has also helped to bridge the gap while the broader justice system is rebuilt (Matfess, 2015, 190). In addition, the international community has created tribunals and international courts to bring charges against main instigators of the genocide (Zorbas, 2004, 33). Nationwide memorialization projects and education have allowed Rwandan citizens to share their experiences and have their suffering recognized (King, 2010, 294). Special solidarity camps, or *ingando*, soon to be mandatory for all Rwandans entering university, help to foster shared understandings of the conflict, and uptake of a shared Rwandan identity (Matfess, 2015, 190).

Unfortunately, these efforts have not had very good outcomes. Many complain that Gacaca courts cannot legitimately serve their purpose, because they are only able to pursue cases against Hutu perpetrators, and not RPF forces (Reyntjens, 2015, 27). In addition, participation is limited to confession and apology only, rather than investigating complicated cases (Reyntjens, 2015, 27). Narratives are limited: only Tutsis may be seen as victims, and Hutus can only be genocidaires (King, 2010, 301). International courts have completed very few cases (Zorbas, 2004, 34), and when there has been any effort to investigate RPF atrocities, the regime applied enough pressure to disable the process (Reyntjens, 2015, 27). Official accounts of the genocide, including museums and textbooks, only allow the expression of Tutsi victimization, and what is presented as a very small number of Hutu who tried to help them (King, 2010, 303). These limited depictions are heavily reinforced by the ideologies put forth by the state run youth solidarity camps (Zorbas, 2004, 39). Of course, this silencing of other accounts of the genocide, including mixed race Rwandans, or those victimized by RPF forces, only serves the official state narrative of the RPF as a heroic, liberating force (Zorbas, 2004, 46). As mentioned above, this lent legitimacy both inside and outside of Rwanda (King, 2010, 293).

The stifling of alternative stories increases tensions by leaving these events unaddressed. As King (2010) explains, "unacknowledged wounds can present an obstacle to peacebuilding in both present and future generations" (p. 293). Avenues to pursue justice are similarly restricted by state sanctioned foreclosure of these narratives (King, 2010, 304). Similar to the economic inequality underlying supposed development achievements, the Rwandan state's avoidance of effective justice and reconciliation feeds discontent, and contributes to grounds for a future revival of conflict (King, 2010, 304). Finally, the impunity borne of not being able to prosecute the extensive war crimes and human rights abuses of the Rwandan government in the time since the genocide undermines the legitimacy of the government (Zorbas, 2004, 41), and builds a foundation for future uprisings.

## Good Governance

To paint a picture of widening political enfranchisement, gender quotas have been incorporated into the constitution (Coffe, 2012, 286), and Hutus have the chance to participate in government. Elections happen at regular intervals, and boast very high voter turnout, which suggests increasing democratization (Matfess, 2015, 186).

It is disappointing that these measures have not generated the outcomes required to support good governance in Rwanda. International election monitors have recorded fraud, including reports of stuffed ballot boxes, unclear counting procedures, and ballots which require a thumbprint of the voter (Reyntjens, 2004, 183). Potential opponents who are not under the regime's control are banned from running, disappear, or have been assassinated (Reyntjens, 2004, 186). Recently, sources have reported that Kagame is considering overturning laws surrounding term limits so that he can run again in the next election (Reyntjens, 2016, 61). As many would suspect, current research demonstrates the strong links between increasing democratization and adherence to term limits (Reyntjens, 2016, 65). Members of the government offer negligible resistance to RPF aims, and an environment of high party discipline leaves members unwilling to offer a dissenting voice (Coffe, 2012, 290). Interviews with women politicians demonstrate that they do not see themselves as having a substantive effect on policy, rendering their incorporation into government as merely symbolic (Coffe, 2012, 290). A previously vital civil society has been silenced by laws that leave funding in the control of the government, and rendering expulsion from the country a very real threat (Reyntjens, 2004, 198). The media has been significantly curtailed by vague genocidal ideology laws, and academic researchers face significant sanctions for publishing work that is critical of the government (Reyntjens, 2004, 197, 202).

This type of censorship has produced a veneer of a stable state (Matfess, 2015, 186–187). This is crucial to the government's aim of attracting foreign investment partners and to maintain their image in the eyes of the international community (Matfess, 2015, 186–187). However, the increasing political disenfranchisement of the Rwandan people and the stifling of dissent foster an increasing level of discontent with the state. This is not a state that is responsive to its people — citizens cannot express their needs, nor can they pursue them. The illusion of democratization, while useful externally, in fact delegitimizes the Rwandan government and ultimately undermines their stability (Reyntjens, 2004, 210). As Reyntjens (2004) explains,

...most Rwandans, who are excluded and know full well that they have been robbed of their civil and political rights, are frustrated, angry and even desperate. Such conditions constitute a fertile breeding ground for more structural violence, which created anger, resentment and frustration and may well eventually again lead to violence. (p. 210)

Having examined each of these crucial pillars, it is clear that the political emphasis of the Rwandan state has been on their own objectives, rather than actually undertaking the hard work of building a positive, enduring peace. Twenty years post conflict, we can no longer rationalize increased state control over the short term. Kagame's regime has

undertaken a campaign to eliminate dissent, concentrated its power, and crafted an outward image which attracts economic development. This is certainly a heartbreaking outcome for a long suffering people. While some might argue that they are not currently contending with a genocide, the most serious ramification of this veneer of peacebuilding is the long term impact. It is not a question of if, but rather, when massive conflict will erupt. A common thread emerging in recent academic literature draws remarkable comparisons between the current government, and the Habyarimana regime (Desrosiers, 2011, 432). Kagame would find this a highly distasteful comparison; yet, domestic repression, emphasis upon attracting foreign investment, and the depiction of Kagame as the benevolent leader takes a page directly out of Habyarimana's guidebook (Desrosiers, 2011, 448–449). With the growing dissatisfaction with the regime, and new alliances being made by Rwandans in exile, it seems increasingly likely that we are destined to see history repeat itself.

## **A Response?**

It would seem as though we now find ourselves in a helpless position. The Kagame regime has authoritarian control over the Rwandan state, and quite a bit of heft internationally. However, if history is about to repeat itself, perhaps a useful tenet can be drawn from our previous examination of our own conduct during the initial conflict. As stated previously, greenlighting refers to an avoidance of expressing dissent, despite a low personal cost of making such a statement, and a high potential impact of doing so. While it is unfortunate enough that we can find examples of international greenlighting during the genocide, it is doubly distressing that the pattern has continued in the aftermath. The unwillingness to apply pressure to the Rwandan government has enabled the Kagame regime's avoidance of crucial aspects of peacebuilding.

A specific pattern of greenlighting involves the international responses to atrocities committed by the RPF. Some have rationalized that in the immediate aftermath of the genocide, international players were left with a choice to either overlook the RPF slaughter of unarmed civilians, or to support the genocidal Hutu forces (Des Forges, 1999, 556). This presented a dilemma: one option was distasteful, while the other was absolutely unforgivable and politically impossible (Des Forges, 1999, 556). However, this doesn't have to preclude simple but possibly effective statements of dissent that could express concern for the civilian population.

In April 1995, the Kibeho camp, home to thousands of internally displaced Rwandans, was subject to attack by the Rwandan military, the RPA (Reyntjens, 2015, 26). Despite the RPF's reports of the number of casualties, Australian peacekeepers reported that four thousand unarmed people had been killed (Reyntjens, 2015, 26). The international community didn't pursue their initial concerns regarding these practices, and the regime therefore grasped that there would be no sanctions for this sort of action (Reyntjens, 2015, 26). Unsurprisingly, within the next year the same military force was responsible for committing far more atrocities. A 2010 report declared that most of the 617 such incidents they investigated between 1993 and 2003 were war crimes, and possibly acts of genocide (Reyntjens, 2015, 26). Reyntjens (2004) details the decision to suppress the UNHCR Gersony report which detailed extensive atrocities committed by the RPF (p. 198). He

insists that the international community has been implicit in the creation of a veritable dictatorship in Rwanda, by failing to push the regime to address rampant and increasing voter fraud with each subsequent election (Reyntjens, 2004, 210). In this way, the international community has greenlighted Kagame's increasing concentration of power, despite the resulting implications for building a long term peace. This demonstrates the consequences of choosing to greenlight such activities, or giving a de facto "go ahead" signal to perpetrators in the wake of initial transgressions. However, there is evidence that a simple dissenting statement can have a restraining impact. The Rwandan government is most certainly attuned to how they are perceived by foreign nations (Desrosiers, 2011, 437), as they are dependent on foreign aid, and therefore the favour of the international community (Desrosiers, 2011, 437).

The increasingly authoritarian tone of the regime has also brought with it a willingness to wield what Reyntjens and others describe as a "moral credit" (Zorbas, 2004, 46). By this he refers to the ability of the Rwandan regime to capitalize upon the intense guilt of the international community's failure to act during the genocide (Reyntjens, 2004, 198). Kagame handily responds to international critiques of his conduct by calling forth this "genocide credit," which retrenches the legitimacy of his regime (Reyntjens, 2004, 199). Reyntjens (2004) relates this to similar behaviours exhibited by the state of Israel when criticized for their treatment of Palestinians (p. 199). He explains that "the 1994 genocide has become an ideological weapon allowing the RPF to acquire and maintain victim status and, as a perceived form of compensation, to enjoy complete immunity" (Reyntjens, 2004, 199). This guilt has proven paralyzing (Reyntjens, 2004, 198), and demonstrates the importance of using a greenlighting lens when taking into account our role in licensing violence and perpetuating conflict. It entrenches a sense of agency that shatters the more comfortable overtone of passive negligence. Should members of the international community begin to see their intentional inaction in this way, they may have more opportunities to curb an increasingly authoritarian regime, and to address some of the current risks to peace in Rwanda.

## **Suggested Approaches**

The study of the Rwandan genocide and the unsatisfying peacebuilding efforts that have followed, make clear the need for new and innovative approaches to international responses to conflict. A suggestion that arises out of this work, and the frequent misinterpretation of Rwandan success, surrounds the ways in which we measure peacebuilding outcomes. Theorist Sherene Razack (2007) has investigated our role as Canadians in how we view our own culpability in the wake of such extensive violence as unfolded in Rwanda (p. 385). She advocates the need to move from a place of outrage to a place of responsibility (Razack, 2007, 376), seeing our actions through the lens of greenlighting is an attempt to do so. However, this premise of taking responsibility can also be applied to how we approach assessment of peacebuilding activities in the post conflict context. It is clear from the Rwandan case that to get past the top down veneer of peacebuilding, measurement needs assess changes in the lived circumstances of regular citizens. Twenty years after the genocide we are given the opportunity to do just that.

In addition, I think a crucial insight about a potential framework can and should be drawn from the recent past. While the international community, and Security Council in particular, were for many reasons slow to respond to the genocide, the temporary members of the Council pushed the permanent members to take action (Des Forges, 1999, 21). In this regard, middle powers are somewhat less entangled than great powers in questions of international influence. As the Czech Republic expressed, Rwanda was not on their list of priorities, but they felt compelled to respond as human beings (Des Forges, 1999, 26). Perhaps it is here that we can find a role for middle powers such as ourselves, in response to the communal guilt borne of our previous inaction. We could take responsibility for conducting assessments of peacebuilding efforts, and for generating new, more relevant approaches to measurement. Efforts such as these, when connected with a responsibility to address greenlighting, offer interesting avenues of investigation.

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