

Passing through the Fire: Rebuilding Rwanda after the 1994 Genocide

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Executive Summary

- I. **Introduction:** On Behalf of the Friends of Rwanda, I was tasked to do an independent, “third party,” current research piece on the country of Rwanda, and the status of development and civil society within the country. The primary goal was an attempt to reconcile the spectrum of narratives that have been recently emerging from the region since the genocide in 1994 into one cohesive discussion of the present circumstances in the country. The genocide claimed the lives of at least 800,000 Rwandans, and the resulting destabilization in the region could be at fault for the loss of upwards of 3 million more.
- II. **Literature review and historical background of Rwanda:** Rwandan is a country of rich heritage. Through multiple sources, both oral and written, this heritage is analyzed and truncated in an attempt to bring to light the reasons behind the genocide, as well as an attempt to put the rest of this work into historical and social context.
- III. **Method:** Analysis of the literature as well as 53 personal interviews with more than 130 individuals were utilized in this work.
- IV. **Findings:** The findings of this project were diverse. They focused on four main categories:
 - Questions of general Rwandan context about ethnicity, society, and religion. As well some discussion of the genocidal ideology, and ways that Rwanda is seen by its neighboring and the rest of the world.
 - A brief section on Rwanda’s development in society and culture since the genocide.
 - A section on governance including the main controversies in the country, a discussion on illiberal democracy, application of policy, and the ways that Rwandans usually express social dissent.
 - The last section describes ways that Rwandans interact with civil society, particularly Human Rights agencies and Nongovernmental organizations. The subheadings include corruption, justice, reconciliation, and freedom of press and speech. It closes with a discussion of alleged atrocities of the RPF who are the majority party in Rwandan government currently.
- V. **Summary and Discussion:** Rwanda has many positive trends at this time, especially considering its history. The cities and infrastructure are growing, as are other capacities in numerous categories. More people are being educated, and represented in government now than before the genocide, and very importantly, most people feel safe and secure. Challenges areas in the country relate to justice, national reconciliation, eradication of corruption, regional instability, and the development of a freer civil society.

** Please note that this work can either be accessed in specific sections, such as Human Rights or Reconciliation or the entire document can be accessed as a whole.*