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RWANDAN GENOCIDE - HOW A LITTLE COUNTRY CAN CHANGE THE WHOLE CONTINENT

Abstract:

The colonial past of Africa has become the reason for numerous bloody civil wars and genocides that often tended to grow from local conflicts to regional ones. The artificial creation of ethnic differences between Hutu and Tutsi by the Belgian colonial administration in Rwanda-Urundi had become the reason for the large-scale bloody massacre in the region of the African Great Lakes in 1994. This paper analyzes the history of the Rwandan genocide, its consequences on the geopolitical framework of the region as well as the modern vector of development of Rwanda.

Key words:

Rwandan genocide, Tutsi, Hutu, RPF, Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) the African World War, the Singapore of Africa

INTRODUCTION: AFRICA – THE POSTCOLONIAL SUFFERING

Africa is often being viewed quite poorly on the world stage. Poverty has covered the considerable part of the territory of the second-largest continent in the world – 31 out of 46 countries entering the UN List of Least Developed Countries are situated in Africa (as of 11 February 2021). It has reached the lowest rate of economic growth in comparison with all other continents and has remained behind from other regions in terms of modernization.

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Country	Year of inclusion	Country	Year of inclusion
Afghanistan	1971	Madagascar	1991
Angola ¹	1994	Malawi	1971
Bangladesh	1975	Mali	1971
Benin	1971	Mauritania	1986
Bhutan ²	1971	Mozambique	1988
Burkina Faso	1971	Myanmar	1987
Burundi	1971	Nepal	1971
Cambodia	1991	Niger	1971
Central African Republic	1975	Rwanda	1971
Chad	1971	São Tomé and Príncipe ³	1982
Comoros	1977	Senegal	2000
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1991	Sierra Leone	1982
Djibouti	1982	Solomon Islands ⁴	1991
Eritrea	1994	Somalia	1971
Ethiopia	1971	South Sudan	2012
Gambia	1975	Sudan	1971
Guinea	1971	Timor-Leste	2003
Guinea-Bissau	1981	Togo	1982
Haiti	1971	Tuvalu	1986
Kiribati	1986	Uganda	1971
Lao People's Democratic Republic	1971	United Republic of Tanzania	1971
Lesotho	1971	Yemen	1971
Liberia	1990	Zambia	1991

Fig. 1: UN List of Least Developed Countries (as of 11 February 2021)

Civil wars, rampant corruption and epidemics have caused an extremely unstable situation in the whole region: «In the resulting chaos, some African countries have become havens for terrorist groups, money laundering, and crime syndicates» (Kissinger 2016).

The political evolution of the African continent has a unique character – all the modern boundaries between states and their national composition have been influenced by the period of colonial rule like nowhere else in the world. During those times, the imperial nations, mainly France and Great Britain, have drawn the administrative borders disregarding any ethnic, religious or tribal features of local character, in order to prevent any consolidated opposition to their colonial administration.

This made the post-colonial Africa have a fragmented character, making the majority of leading scholars refuse to recognize it as a separate civilization (Huntington 2019). Imperial nations have brought elements of Western civilization

in Africa: European languages (English, French, Portuguese), Christianity and even certain democratic mechanisms that, however, have not managed to become functional in the majority of states. The Northern Africa, in its turn, is usually being considered to belong to Islamic civilization. The colonial past and devastating present of this continent made it practically unable to form a distinguished civilization to increase its weight on the international arena. The exceptions, however, are seen in two countries that could be capable to lead Africa towards a more prosperous future – Nigeria and South Africa (Kissinger 2016).

After a long-term colonial pressure, the achievement of independence of the majority of African states has resulted into disruption among African nations, causing bloody civil wars, ethnic conflicts and even genocides that usually tend to grow from local clashes to regional ones.

RWANDA – THE PREMISES FOR THE GENOCIDE



Fig. 2. Geographical position of Rwanda

Rwanda – «the land of a thousand hills» – is a small country situated in Central/Eastern Africa, in the region of the African Great Lakes. It is a landlocked state that is bordered by Uganda on the North, Tanzania on the East, Burundi on the South and Democratic Republic of the Congo – on the West. Even though being a little country, Rwanda has faced a large-scale bloody massacre in 1994 that has completely changed the environment of international relations in the entire region (Ahluwalia 2015).

There is a mistaken judgement that the Rwandan genocide had derived from ethnic reasons and had had long-standing roots of hatred between Hutu and Tutsi – two major ethnicities of the Rwandan society. The historical reality shows, however, that this hatred had been grown artificially by both German and Belgian colonial administrations, and boosted by the newly-established Hutu government since the Rwandan independence in 1962. Being protected by Hutu government officials, the policy of regular pogroms against Tutsi has been promoted on the national level, reaching its peak in 1994 during the Rwandan genocide. Thus, this slaughter has become the «state-sponsored mass murder driven by ideology» (Melson 2003) with a high rate of participation of ordinary Hutu recruited through state propaganda of ethnic hatred. «The Rwandan genocide was the product of a postcolonial state, a racialist ideology, a revolution claiming democratic legitimation, and war – all manifestations of the modern world» (Melson 2003).

Back to the times when the first explorers reached Rwanda and Urundi (nowadays Burundi), they confronted with the reality of culturally and linguistically homogeneous society, which was, however, divided into three groups basing on their occupation – minority Tutsi aristocracy and cattle-breeders, majority Hutu farmers, and Twa – the hunter-gatherers that represented 1% of the Rwandan population. All three patterns of the society shared the same Bantu language, lived in mixed communities with a quite regular practice of mixed marriages (Prunier 1995) which made them more socially unified rather than divided. Even though the nineteenth-century European colonialists tended to promote racial policies and to identify

Tutsi as «extremely tall and thin, and [with] often displaying sharp, angular facial features» (Prunier 1995) and racially superior to Hutu, the real physical difference between them has been noticed as negligible due to numerous «‘mistakes’ [that] were reportedly made during the genocide» (Hintjens 1999), mixed marriages and artificial character of social differences mostly based on self-identification practice as either Tutsi or Hutu, and on the policies promoted by colonial administration. «Although they probably had a common origin, the Tutsi and Hutu were perceived and labeled as distinct tribes and races by the Europeans» (Melson 2003).

Facing a complex social structure of Rwanda-Urundi, the German and then the Belgian colonial administrations did not seem to be capable to reconstruct the existing social order, thus relying on local monarchs called «Mwami». The Tutsi monarchy and aristocracy had ruled over the Hutu peasantry and some parts of Twa hunter-gatherers even before the establishment of the European colonial rule, this position however being empowered by Europeans who tended to put certain racist traits in the social differences between Tutsi and Hutu (Shlenskaya, 2012).

In this regard, the Belgian administration promoted the so-called «Hamitic Hypothesis», according to which the Tutsi were viewed as being originated in Egypt or Ethiopia and conquering Hutu as the inferior tribe of local provenance. Pierre Ryckmans, a Belgian administrator from 1920s, noted: «The Tutsi were meant to reign. Their fine [racial] presence is in itself enough to give them a great prestige vis-a-vis the inferior races which surround [them].... It is not surprising that those good Hutu, less intelligent, more simple, more spontaneous, more trusting have let themselves be enslaved without ever daring to revolt» (Melson 2003). Later on, this «Hamitic Hypothesis» would have become the crucial element of the hatred policy against the Tutsi that had eventually resulted in the massive genocide.

The policy of the Belgian administration was focused on favoring Tutsi population in political, economic and social spheres, treating them as the natural elite of Rwanda and mostly oppressing the Hutu population. For instance, the Belgians initiated the economic policy that forced Hutu to work

for the state without pay. Moreover, in the domain of primary and secondary education, which was under control of Belgian Catholic priests, the access was mostly open to the minority Tutsi population rather than to the Hutu majority. Thus, in 1932, at the Astrida college (now Butare) 45 out of 54 students were Tutsi, while in 1959, 66.1% out of the total number of students also were of Tutsi origins (Melson 2003).

In order to officially differentiate Hutu from Tutsi, the Belgian administration introduced the ethnic classification in the identity documents in 1933-1935 (Shlenskaya 2012). The classification, however, was based on the wealth of the person rather than on his/her origins. Thus, the Belgian administration identified the population that possessed more than ten heads of cattle as Tutsi, while any other person with fewer than ten cattle – as Hutu or Twa, in dependence on their occupation (Hintjens 1999).

The heritage of such colonial policy aimed at dividing and ruling over the population made the previously peaceful and inter-dependent society divided into two polar opposites, one of them righteously hating another. This policy of artificial division of the Rwandan society has become the basic reason for the regular pogroms against Tutsi after independence and, eventually, for the Rwandan genocide.

After the end of World War II, in 1946, Rwanda-Urundi has become the territory under the trusteeship of Belgium. According to the treaty, Belgium was obliged to prepare Rwanda and Burundi for independent existence by introducing democratic institutions and practices into the political structures of these states. In 1947, the governmental Council of Rwanda-Urundi was created in the competence of Belgian authorities together with the representatives of the local population. Since 1952, the new multi-level administrative system was established, offering the local representatives the right to be democratically elected to rule the constituencies. In 1953, basing on the result of elections, the majority of places in the structures on all levels were taken by Hutu (Shlenskaya 2012), which is natural in the state with the majority of the Hutu population.

This has become the reason for shift of the attention of the Belgian authorities to the Hutu population. Since then, the

Hutu-led political movements started to demand the end of Tutsi hegemony and promoted the ideas of «de-tutsization» of Rwanda. Such views were stipulated in the «Bahutu Manifesto» that stayed in the basis of further policy of the Hutu government. Even though focusing on democratization of the state, the Belgians ignored the violent character of the uprising Hutu power. The Manifesto did not call for the equality for all people, rather than promoted the replacement of one system of domination with another (Melson 2003). Instead of tending to diminish the artificial racial differences between Tutsi and Hutu, the latter stood for preservation of ethnic labels in the identity documents. The risk of ethnic persecution of Tutsi was evident – the preservation of these labels indeed offered the opportunity for Hutu assassins to identify Tutsi during the genocide.

Even in 1959, right after the growth of the power of Hutu-led political movements, mostly RDM-Parmehutu (Republican-Democratic Movement Party of the Hutu Emancipation), the tension between Tutsi and Hutu started to grow. The death of the Tutsi Mwami Mutara III after being treated by a Belgian doctor had become the suspicion for the Tutsi population in preparation of the Hutu revolution and aggravated the situation. The clashes among the population during the manifestations resulted in pogroms against Tutsi, causing thousands of people flee to the neighbouring countries. After gaining independence in 1962, the RDM-Parmehutu gained 80% of places in the National Assembly, electing its leader – Grégoire Kayibanda – as the first president of Rwanda. «In this manner the revolution of 1959 transformed Rwanda from a Belgian colony that had utilized a Tutsi elite as a subterfuge for Belgian power into a Hutu ethnocracy dressed up as a populist majoritarian democracy that excluded the “Tutsi race” from the political order» (Melson 2003).

The risks of persecution of Tutsi after the establishment of Hutu government became the reality. The ethnic markers on identity cards offered the possibility to the newly formed government to introduce ethnic quotas in education and economy as well as to execute violence against the Tutsi minority. «From a proud and noble aristocracy, the image of Tutsi has been transformed to a lazy, parasitic and cruel

pastoral 'race', alien conquerors to boot» (Hintjens 1999). The artificially created image of foreigners through the «Hamitic Hypothesis», previously used to protect the right of Tutsi «to reign», has overnight become the justification for the intentions to drive the Tutsi out of Rwanda.

Due to such policy, by 1962 there were already 120,000 refugees fleeing from Rwanda to the neighbouring countries, especially Burundi and Uganda. Just in two years, this number has grown to 336,000 people (Melson 2003). By 1990s, the number of refugees from Rwanda in the neighbouring countries has included around one million people. Later on, the Tutsi diaspora would have played a significant role in the Hutu – Tutsi confrontation on the regional level. However, this was not the only effect of the revolution.

The uprising and revenge policy of the Hutu government in Rwanda against Tutsi population has affected Burundi – the Rwandan neighbour that parallels the social structure of Rwanda due to their common past. Aiming to prevent the Hutu ethnocracy in Burundi, its Tutsi-led army subverted the elections in order to push the Hutu aside from gaining the legal power. In 1972, and repeatedly after, the Burundian authorities performed major operations culminating in massacres against the Hutu. Thus, in 1972 nearly 100,000 Hutu were slaughtered in Burundi (Lemarchand 1996).

The reaction of Rwandan government was immediate – the president Kayibanda and his army chief Juvénal Habyarimana have organized the pogroms against Tutsi in the same year. In July 1973, Juvénal Habyarimana has performed a bloodless coup, proclaiming the Second Republic and establishing a one-party dictatorship system in Rwanda. The only ruling party has become the MRND (Mouvement Révolutionnaire Nationale pour le Développement), having the monopoly for power in the state. Although declaring the principles of democracy and liberalism, the policy of Habyarimana was still mostly focused on favoring Hutu rather than promoting equality.

However, the economic crisis of 1980s has affected the political and economic system of Rwanda, forcing the government to perform certain steps towards democratization under the insistence of foreign partners – Belgium, France, the

United States, etc. Thus, by 1991 the new constitution was adopted, establishing the multi-party system and introducing democratic mechanisms in the internal political environment of Rwanda. Thus, a number of new political parties has appeared: «Le Mouvement Démocratique Républicain» (MDR), «Le Parti Social-Démocrate» (PSD), «Le Parti Démocrate Chrétien» (PDC), and even the «Le Parti Liberal» (PL) that included both Tutsi and Hutu as members (Shlenskaya 2012).

Yet these democratic changes could not offer any potential for fair Tutsi-minority representation in the government structures, the opposition to the rule of Habyarimana started to grow. The Tutsi refugees abroad have started to form political organizations to oppose the Hutu ethnocracy, the most significant of them being the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF, or Front Patriotique Rwandais – FPR), founded in 1987 in Uganda by Paul Kagame. Its goal was to end the ethnic segregation and to cancel the system of identity cards. It called for the repatriation of refugees and start of democratic reforms in Rwanda for consolidation of national unity (Shlenskaya 2012). In 1989-1990, the military wing of RPF – the Rwandan Patriotic Army – was founded.

On October 1, 1990, the civil war in Rwanda has started after the invasion of 10,000 Tutsi from the Rwandan Patriotic Army. The majority of the militias had previously served in the Ugandan army, thus already having military experience and background. By 1992 the army included 12,000 people, and by 1994 – already 25,000 soldiers (Shlenskaya 2012).

The civil war has offered a carte blanche for the Rwandan chauvinist Hutu government to start the campaign of propaganda aimed at dehumanization of Tutsi and spread of ethnic hatred. These were the first steps of preparations of Hutu for the massive genocide of Tutsi. In order to support the aggressive attitude towards the latter, the Hutu government often simulated fake attacks, blaming them on RPF. One of such attacks took place on October 4-5, 1990, when the Rwandan government organized a phony attack on Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, after that initiating massacres of Tutsi population as a response to the RPF attacks. Moreover, such a strategy was used as an instrument of «habituating ordinary people to violence» (Melson 2003). The propaganda machine of

the Habyarimana regime against Tutsi has become so efficient that the majority of ordinary Hutu were ready to start the slaughter as soon as the moment comes.

The confrontation lasted until August 4, 1993, when the ceasefire agreement was signed by the President of Rwanda and the Chairman of the Rwandese Patriotic Front in Arusha, Tanzania (Arusha Peace Agreement, 1993). The Agreement included the following provisions: creation of a mixed provisional government and institutions in terms of 37 days, the organization of free multiparty elections, the creation of a unified army with the guarantee of half of the places for RPF in the officers' corps of Rwanda and 40% in the reorganized army, representation on the key governmental levels, as well as right for repatriation of the Tutsi refugees back to Rwanda. In order to assist in the implementation of the Arusha Accords, the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was sent on October 5, 1993. Its effectivity, however, has been highly criticized – the whole situation was characterized as «when good men do nothing» – due to limitations of the right to use force in the framework of a humanitarian mission. UNAMIR low effectivity in preventing the genocide was also shown through delaying the deployment of troops and even by the reducing the number of peacekeepers right after the genocide had officially started.

THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

Neither the international community nor the Rwandan government could prevent the escalation of the conflict to the scale of genocide. On April 6, 1994, the aircraft of the president Habyarimana, who was returning from the peace negotiations, was shot down by an unknown armed group, the event that became the start of the slaughter against Tutsi in Rwanda conducted by the «Hutu Power» – a radical Hutu elite at the center of the government (Melson 2003) that blamed RPF in the assassination of the president.

In fact, the disputes regarding the part that is guilty of the assassination of the Rwandan president are still active. The official position of the nowadays Rwandan government is that the airplane was shot down by a group of Hutu extremists who

were against peace negotiations with Tutsi militias. The opposite position, particularly supported by nowadays France, states that the assassination happened by the command of Paul Kagame, one of the founders of the RPF (Shlenskaya 2012, Lal 2007) and the actual president of Rwanda.

After the death of Habyarimana, all the Tutsi were declared to be accomplices to RPF, and after the massive mobilization, the Hutu extremists, Interahamwe police and the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) started to perform unprecedented violence against innocent Tutsi civilians. A significant number of ordinary Hutu has also joined the massacres due to active anti-Tutsi state propaganda. In addition, during the genocide, not only Tutsi, but also the representatives of opposition and «moderate» Hutu (those who opposed the genocide) were killed.

The scale of killings was tremendous and «the speed with which people were slaughtered in Rwanda surpassed that of any other genocide in the modern era» (Melson 2003). Only in three months of slaughter an average estimate number of 800,000 people was killed (Armstrong II, Davenport, Stam 2020). Some estimations even reach the number of over one million of victims (Reyntjens 2004).

The scientific community usually divides the reasons that had brought the Rwandan society to the terror of the genocide into three major categories (Hintjens 1999):

- The external influences, both colonial and neo-colonial;
- Domestic causes, including demographic and economic factors;
- Social conformism and obedience of Rwandans to the state propaganda.

It has already been stated that the character of the «ethnic» hatred between Hutu and Tutsi dates back to the colonial period. However, this is not the only example of an *external influence* on the emergence of the Rwandan genocide.

Thus, for instance, France – the closest ally of the Habyarimana regime – offered unconditioned military support to the Hutu-led Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) in order to suppress the RPF guerilla attacks during the 1990-1993 civil war.

The implication of France and its support to the Hutu regime can be explained by its clear geocultural and geopolitical interests in the region. By indirectly influencing the French-speaking territories of Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo), Rwanda and Burundi, France could gain an easier access to the natural wealth of this region and counterweight the influence of Britain and the U.S. in Eastern Africa through English-speaking Uganda and Tanzania.

Thus, in the period of 1990-1993 Rwanda has got significant military support from France through military troops, trainings, equipment and supplies, in spite of the agreement of French non-participation in the Rwandan combat, training or police operations, signed in 1975 (Lal 2007). There is an undisputable documentation that confirms French stream of arms to Rwanda with the direct consent of the French president François Mitterrand (French24 2019).

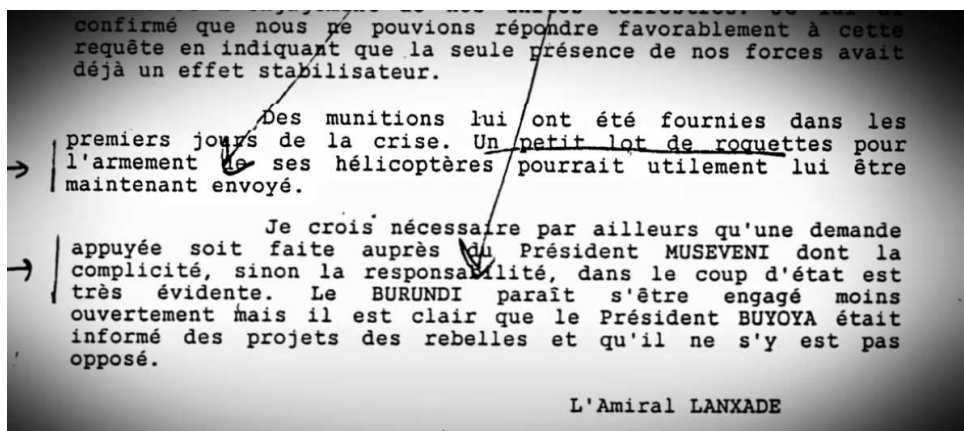


Fig. 3: The letter of the Admiral Lanxade to the President of France, 1990.

Moreover, even despite knowing about the intentions of the Habyarimana regime to «eliminate» Tutsi, France remained blind to violent policies and did not stop its diplomatic and military assistance to the Rwandan Armed Forces even after the clear evidence of the massacres being performed (Krosiak 2008). In the period of 1990-1994, France has deployed three missions to Rwanda – the Operation «Noroît», the Operation «Amaryllis» and the Operation «Turquoise», the latter being performed as the humanitarian mission under the mandate of

the UN. The goal of these missions was to evacuate French nationals and to provide shelter to the victims, helping them escape from the country and avoid the threat of the genocide. It is important to notice that these missions were not intended to stop the genocide itself, even though France has had enough diplomatic, economic and military power to do that. Even though the Operation «Turquoise» managed to save between ten thousand and seventeen thousand lives, it also helped the members and direct perpetrators of the genocide flee the country, some of them living in France till nowadays (Kroslak 2008, French24 2019).

The role of France in the Rwandan crisis remains a subject of disputes till nowadays, due to the fact that the majority of the documents are still sealed in the French archives. However, this question has also become the matter of investigations on the state level – in 2019, under the presidency of Emmanuel Macron, the Research Commission on French Archives Relating to Rwanda and the Tutsi Genocide (1990-1994), also known as the Duclert Commission, was established. In March 2021, the Commission has published its final report, stating that there were numerous contradictions found in the French policy towards Rwanda, confirming that France «remained blind to the preparation of a genocide», however not being able to define France as a direct accomplice to the genocide in Rwanda (Commission de recherche sur les archives françaises relatives au Rwanda et au génocide des Tutsi 2021). Therefore, the report demonstrates the external influence from the part of France that had become an indirect reason for the Rwandan genocide to enter such a large scale.

Along with that, the *domestic causes* of economic crisis and high density of the population – 7,128,000 people on the territory of 26,338 km² in 1989 (Prunier 1995) – have become the reason for the internal social tensions that were heated by the anti-Tutsi state ideology. According to the statistics, the practical density (the population density related to the arable land surface, 18,740 km²) in 1989 reached 380 people per km², a quite impressive number for such a little country like Rwanda.

	<i>Population</i>	<i>Gross density</i>	<i>Practical density</i>
1934	1,595,000	61	85
1950	1,954,000	73	102
1970	3,756,000	143	200
1980	5,257,000	200	281
1989	7,128,000	270	380

Source: Jean-Damascene Nduwayezu, op. cit., p. 98. Gross density means population density in relationship to the total surface of the country, i.e. 26,338 km.², while the practical density reflects the population density related to the arable land surface, i.e. only 18,740 km.².

Fig. 4. Population density in Rwanda (1934-1989)

In such situation, a person in Rwanda could possess only 0.5-0.6 acres of land, which is not enough neither for economic agricultural activity nor for a decent life without risk of hunger. In this regard, the genocide was intended to reduce the scale of density of the Rwandan population and being accepted by the Hutu majority has also had the roots of personal interest for obtaining new arable land surface. Such an approach looks inappropriate in the civilized Western world – however, this was the internal reality of the post-colonial Rwanda. Taken altogether with intense political and ideological propaganda, this resulted into one of the cruelest crimes against humanity in the African history.

From the *ideological perspective*, the Rwandan genocide is usually compared with Holocaust (Melson 2003) and other large-scale massacres based on hatred against certain group of population. It was promoted as the ideology of state – till the very last minute of the «Hutu Power» regime in Rwanda the well-known «Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines» – the «Free Radio and Television of the Thousand Hills» – spread hate propaganda against Tutsi, uncovering their locations, names and personal data and manipulating the Rwandan Hutu population, calling them for violence. The high level of obedience of Rwandans made them believe that all Tutsi were accomplices to RPF and pushed them to kill the ones that were peacefully living with them for decades and centuries.

All the aforementioned categories have to be considered while reviewing the essence of the genocide in Rwanda, none of them being able to be ignored (Hintjens 1999).

By July 4, 1994, Kigali – the capital city of Rwanda – was taken by RPF, bringing the genocide to decline. By August 21, the RPF already controlled the whole territory of the country. Since then, the new provisional government of unity was established – the presidential seat was taken by the moderate Hutu Pasteur Bizimungu, while Paul Kagame – the leader of RPF – was named the vice-president and the minister of defense of Rwanda. According to the Arusha Accords, the seat of Prime minister was given to Faustin Twagiramungu.

The newly established government represented the coalition of all existent political parties, with the exception of the banned Hutu extremist parties MRND and CDR – those that were implicated in the genocide. Proclaiming itself as the government of unity, it canceled the ethnic labeling in the identification cards, setting the main priorities of establishment of the national unity, stabilization of the situation in the country, economic revitalization, creation of democratic institutions, etc. (Shlenskaya 2012). It inherited a devastated country with a destroyed infrastructure, collapsed economy, healthcare and education facilities in ruins, weak judicial and civil service, therefore the main mission was to restore the well-being of Rwanda.

By November 1994, the provisional National Assembly was created with 70 deputy places divided among eight political parties. In May 1995, the new constitution was adopted, setting the term for transitional period till the middle of 1999. By that time, the country had to be ready for free elections and creation of permanent executive and legislative bodies (Shlenskaya 2012).

GEOPOLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE GENOCIDE

Since 1990, Rwanda has become the core of instability in the region of the African Great Lakes. The genocide has initiated a massive flux of refugees, both Tutsi and Hutu, to the neighbouring countries, thus expanding the conflict from the

local scale to the regional one. In the long-term period, the Rwandan genocide would have become the cause for substantial changes on the African continent.

During the mandate of the French humanitarian mission «Turquoise», the so-called «security corridor» was created in the Western part of Rwanda, near the border with Zaire. This route has become the primary path for millions of people trying to escape the country. Only in 1994, almost two million of people moved to Zaire, mostly consisting of Hutu that were afraid of revenge of the new government. Amongst them were the members of the Rwandan Armed Forces and Hutu extremist groups like Interahamwe, consisting of Hutu rebels that have later on formed their opposition armed organizations in exile to fight against RPF regime in Rwanda and the Tutsi population in Zaire, also known as «Banyamulenge» (Shlenskaya 2012).

Thus, the migration crisis following the Rwandan genocide has become the powder keg that has thrown the neighbouring countries, especially Zaire (nowadays D.R. of the Congo), into the period of decades of instability, eventually causing the deadliest conflict worldwide since World War II – the Great African War, also known as the African World War, – the one that killed around 5.4 million people in a decade (Reuters 2008).

The major conflict that is known as the African World War has emerged from a local civil war in Zaire, where the dictatorship of Mobutu was leading a corrupt and devastating state policy. The Tutsi population in the East of Zaire, being oppressed by the recently arrived Hutu extremists that were supported by the Mobutu regime, forced Rwanda to prepare an intervention in Zaire.

Together with the Ugandan army, Rwandan military joined the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila – the biggest opponent of the Mobutu dictatorship in Zaire, this alliance also being supported by the armies of Burundi and Angola. The most important role in the fight against Mobutu regime was played by the Rwandan army.

Even though the initial goal of the Rwandan invasion was based on security concerns in order to stop the activity of Interahamwe, the desire for economic exploitation of the

Congolese natural wealth (gold, diamonds, copper, tin, etc.) mostly concentrated in the Kivu region in the Eastern part of the country has become an important, though never acknowledged, reason (Reyntjens 2004). In addition, the Rwandan Patriotic Army has been numerously accused of performing war crimes through violent attacks against Hutu refugees and Congolese civilians in Eastern Zaire (Human Rights Watch 1997, Amnesty International 1997).

By May 1997, the forces of AFDL have managed to overthrow the Mobutu regime, bringing Kabila to power in Zaire which was later on officially renamed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In a short period after the end of the First Congo War, Kabila proved to be inefficient on his ruling position. Despite gaining military support from Rwanda, Kabila's regime did not perform any measures to oppress the activity of the Army for the Liberation of Rwanda (ALIR) formed from ex-FAR and Interahamwe members. He turned against his allies, removing all the Tutsi from Congolese government and accusing the allied countries of tending to exploit the natural resources of Congo. Such attitude led to the aggressive response from Kabila's former allies, pushing the countries into the Second Congo War that has later on grown into the Great African War.

Refusing to retreat their military troops, Kigali regime justified its military presence in Congo by the fight against Hutu extremists that were hiding from the Rwandan justice, while Kampala regime tended to keep its army in Congo for protection of its borders from Congolese rebels. In fact, the main reason still remained the expansion of territorial influence over the naturally wealthy Kivu region (Sidorova 2013).

In August 1998, the military operations in DRC were initiated by the Rally for Congolese Democracy – a rebel group of Congolese Tutsi supported by Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi – with the goal to overthrow the Kabila's regime. In the following years, the war embraced Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Central African Republic, Congo (Brazzaville), Gabon, Sudan, Zambia and Chad (Sidorova 2013) on different levels – from political to military implication of these countries in the conflict. In addition, an approximate number of 25 rebel

groups was fighting in this war against each other. The majority of the sides were tending to take control over the natural resources of the Eastern Congo, thus the DRC becoming the central battleground within this conflict.

This war has become the reason for the deployment of the largest UN Peacekeeping mission ever in 1999, which is still active till the present moment. The Rwandan participation in the Great African War has officially ended in 2002, after signature of Pretoria Accord. This agreement included the provisions of Rwandan retreat in exchange for Congolese assistance in disarmament of the Hutu extremist groups.

Even though the African World War has officially ended in 2003, it bred internal instability for the following decades. The activity of armed rebel groups against the central Kinshasa government have not yet ceased till the very actual moment. Neither has the activity of the Hutu extremist groups, the most prominent being the FDLR – the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda. A significant importance represents the activity of the Tutsi-led M23 movement which is considered to be supported by Rwandan and Ugandan authorities. The latter, however, deny any implication in the activity of the rebel groups in DRC.

RWANDA AFTER GENOCIDE: THE SINGAPORE OF AFRICA?

Following the end of the genocide, the Rwandan new government started to perform actions targeted to the reformation of the country. Among the very first steps taken was the building of a justice system to prosecute the perpetrators of the genocide.

Since 1994, the process of investigation of the Rwandan genocide was assisted by the United Nations. In this regard, the special commission was created in 1994 in order to investigate the events and estimate the scale of damage brought by the genocide. Later on, in 1995, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda launched its activity that lasted till the official closure in 2015. The Tribunal reviewed only the crimes committed by the former high officials. By 2005, 20 people were condemned for the implication in genocide. In

2009, the former Rwandan minister of justice Agnès Ntamabyaliro was convicted for the life imprisonment; in 2011 – the former general of the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) Augustin Bizimungu was sentenced to 30 years detention (Shlenskaya 2012).

The national justice system, in the period of 1996-2002, also focused on investigation of the crimes performed during the Rwandan genocide. In the mentioned years, around 120,000 people were imprisoned, overwhelming the Rwandan prisons. This pushed the government to adopt a special Gacaca system since 1998. This mechanism represented the community-based instrument to investigate the criminal cases.

According to Gacaca system, approximately 10,000 gacaca jurisdictions were created in each district and province in the country. The jurisdictions consisted of three main bodies: a general assembly (the whole population of the district), a seat (nineteen elected judges) and a coordinating committee (five person chosen to be in charge of administrative matters) (Uvin, Mironko 2003).

By 1999, the transitional term set in Constitution expired, while the expected results of creation of a functional structure of democratic institutions was not achieved. The period was prolonged till 2003, with the previous goals remaining on agenda.

In 2000, major changes in the internal governmental structures were performed (Shlenskaya 2012) – Bernard Makuza was named as the new Prime minister, while Paul Kagame occupied the seat of President of Rwanda, becoming the first Tutsi on this position since independence. The former president Bizimungu left his office, afterwards creating his own opposition political party. In 2004 he was accused of representing a threat for the national security and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. Later on, however, he was released from custody in 2007 with personal apology from the president Kagame.

In 2003, in the framework of a national referendum, a new constitution was adopted. Its primary goal was declared the preservation of the national unity. Moreover, the constitution shaped the rules for further democratic elections

in the country and functioning of state institutions. Rwanda was declared a presidential republic.

In the same year, the first direct elections of the president took place, Paul Kagame receiving more than 95% of votes. On the parliamentary elections, the pro-presidential RPF party won the elections with 75.3% of votes. Along with them, two more parties entered the parliament – the Social-Democratic Party (12.3% of votes) and the Liberal Party (10.6% of votes). Therefore, the number of parties represented in the parliament reduced from eight to three.

Since then, the power in the state is preserved in the hands of Kagame and RPF, them winning the elections for numerous times. In 2015, the constitutional referendum was held in Rwanda to offer the right to Kagame to run for the presidency in 2017, being later on elected with 98.8% of votes in competition with independent candidate Philippe Mpayimana who took 0.7% of votes and Frank Habineza whose percentage reached 0.5% of votes.

During the presidency of Kagame, Rwanda has changed drastically. In 2005, the strategy «Vision 2020» was adopted, being focused on reducing the level of poverty and growth of the quality of life (Shlenskaya 2012). Paul Kagame has declared for numerous times to be viewing Lee Kuan Yew, the former Prime minister of Singapore, as an inspiration in his policy (The New Times Rwanda 2015). Due to that, the Rwanda has got the reputation of the state that is tending to become the «Singapore of Africa» (Reuters 2015).

Singapore, being the seventh safest (Global Peace Index 2020), the third richest (World Bank 2019) and the third least corrupt (Transparency International 2020) country in the world, has managed to grow from a third-world country to one of the major Asian business hubs in less than a lifetime. The Rwandan government, as it was mentioned before, has focused on implementing the model of Singapore in its country in order to significantly boost its economic and social development. Such policy resulted in the significant growth of Rwandan statistics in comparison with its neighbours.

From the perspective of corruption, Rwanda takes 49th position in the ranking, making it the second least corrupt country in Africa (the first being Botswana with the 35th

position) and the least corrupt country in the region of Eastern Africa (Transparency International 2020).

In terms of safety, Rwanda has only 2.5 murders per year for each 100,000 residents, which is quite impressive in comparison with its neighbours: 11.5 in Uganda, 7 in Tanzania, 6 in Burundi and 13.6 in DRC (UNODC 1990-2018).

The economic growth in Rwanda reaches 9.4% per year, being the fastest growing economy in Africa. The data for its neighbours is the following: Uganda – 6.8%, Tanzania – 5.8%, Burundi – 1.8%, DRC – 4.4% (World Bank 2019).

From the perspective of the ease of doing business, Rwanda is located on the 38th position in the ranking, overcoming such countries like Italy (58th), Cyprus (54th), Belgium (46th) and being located close to Switzerland that is situated on the 36th position (World Bank 2019). In this regard, Rwanda is the highest ranked among the mainland African countries, being the most attractive African state for foreign investments.

To achieve this, Rwanda has implemented numerous anti-corruption reforms and reduced bureaucracy during the registration of the new business – registering a firm in Rwanda takes three days and is cheaper than anywhere else in Africa. «Property rights are strengthening as well—the government is giving peasants formal title to their land» (The Economist 2012). Moreover, in order to become closer to an image of an African business hub, Rwanda has launched a \$300 million project of building of the Kigali Convention Center in 2011 (COMESA 2011).

Thus, in 2005, \$7.960 million was invested in Rwanda, this number reaching \$384.461 million in 2019 (World Bank 2019). In this regard, Rwanda could be seen as an example for other African nations in terms of priorities within their national policies.

Despite the aforementioned evidence of the Rwandan fast growth, the actual political regime of Paul Kagame has been facing numerous criticisms, being labeled as oppressive due to severe limitations on the freedom of speech, assembly, and the press. However, these accusations were denied completely by Kagame himself in the framework of his interviews with press (The New Times Rwanda 2015).

The regime of Paul Kagame has been even compared to the one of Habyarimana: both regimes were dependent on a single political party, both of them have manipulated ethnicity and have oppressed the opposition (Reyntjens 2004). Thus, in 2010, the main opponent of Kagame – the ethnic Hutu Victoire Ingabire – was sentenced to imprisonment after being accused of connections with FDLR rebel group. It is important to note that the year 2010 was the electoral one, with three other political parties being close to the president and several opposition critics killed a month prior to the elections (BBC News 2010).

All these factors have significantly influenced the democratic image of Rwanda, placing it on the 130th position in the world with the score of 3.10 in Global Democracy Index (The Economist 2020).

The presented results of the Kagame policy show Rwanda as one of the leading African countries, representing a potential example for the whole continent to revitalize and reboot their internal political and economic systems. Even though being viewed as authoritarian state, it has managed to reach an impressive success in comparison with its neighbours.

SUMMARY

The colonial past of a little state of Rwanda, situated in the Central/ Eastern Africa, in the region of the African Great Lakes, has become the reason for one of the most horrific genocides in human history, with more than 800,000 innocent people slaughtered in the period of three months in 1994.

The genocide has become the core reason for long-term instability in the whole region, causing a major refugee crisis of both Hutu and Tutsi in the neighbouring countries, expanding the conflict on the international scale. This caused two big wars in the neighbouring Zaire-Congo, the last being known as the African World War that has killed around 5.4 million people in the period of 1998-2003, and affected the countries from the whole continent, from South Africa to Sudan and Chad, as well as empowering numerous rebel groups that remain active till nowadays. Thus, the Rwandan genocide has had a major

influence on the geopolitical framework in Africa, especially in the region of the African Great Lakes.

After the devastating genocide, the power in Rwanda has been taken by RPF – the political party of the actual president Paul Kagame. Since 2000, his policy of national unity, promotion of anti-corruption reforms and focus on foreign investments have offered Rwanda the potential to become the «Singapore of Africa», significantly overcoming the scores of the majority of its neighbours and destroying the Western stereotypes of poor and suffering Africa. Even though being viewed as an authoritarian state, Rwanda has developed a potential to become one of the leading countries in Africa in the upcoming years, even in spite of its small surface and landlocked geographical position.

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