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Rwanda 1994: Lessons Learned?

Manfred Eisele

pp. 51–58

Rwanda 1994. The International Community Did Not Learn Many Lessons

Despite explicit hints and cries for help, the international community did nothing to prevent or curtail the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. The former UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations portrays the incidents, describing not only the chronology of the events in 1994, but also the developments of Rwandese history that led to the atrocities. He analyzes the actions and non-actions of the key stakeholders: the UN Security Council, UN Member States like Belgium, France, and the US, and the UN peacekeeping mission UNAMIR. Furthermore, the article assesses the consequences of the French military intervention in June 1994. Lastly, the issue of responsibility both within the UN and in Rwanda is discussed, pointing out how the genocide still affects several countries in the region. The article concludes with an analysis of the lessons learned—and not yet learned.

Wolfgang Schomburg

pp. 59–64

The Rwanda Tribunal's Contribution to Peace. Transnational Criminal Justice Can Be Successful

Bringing the perpetrators of the 1994 Rwandan genocide to justice was a nearly unsurmountable task. The country itself was not able to take it up alone. After having failed to prevent or at least stop the genocide the international community finally established its own criminal tribunal, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), in Arusha, Tanzania. The author, a former judge at the Appeals Chamber of the ICTR, assesses the Tribunal's impact. Despite all difficulties during the lengthy penal proceedings, the Tribunal in general did accomplish its task. The past is now accounted for by undisputable facts, also a valuable protection against any kind of revisionism. For the first time, persons who believed to be untouchable by the judiciary are now held accountable through penal law. Finally, rebuilding the domestic judiciary was supported by the international community—in fruitful cooperation with Rwanda.

Gerrit Kurtz

p. 65

Comment: Preventing Mass Atrocities: Nothing New in the ›New‹ UN Action Plan

The new action plan ›Rights Up Front‹ to prevent mass atrocities of the UN Secretariat remains too timid. The UN Secretariat should rather pass along information about civilian casualties to the Member States which then must pressure

conflict parties to provide humanitarian access and adhere to international law.

Judith Vorrath

pp. 66–70

To Not Forget and Yet Change. Ethnic Identity and Politics in Rwanda and Burundi

Rwanda and Burundi have witnessed severe episodes of mass violence in the 1990s. Thus, they have faced the difficult challenge of resolving conflict, dealing with the past and developing a new political order that makes future violent confrontations less likely. Both countries have tried to overcome ethnic antagonisms and their political mobilization. In Rwanda, ethnic categories have practically been banned from public life in the name of ›nation-building‹ and reconciliation, so references to ethnicity frequently spark political controversy. Burundi followed a different path with the acknowledgement of ethnic identity in the debate and in constitutional quotas. Yet, the role of ethnicity has diminished in Burundian politics. However, in both countries ›new‹ and ›old‹ divisions are very much alive and generally call for an inclusive political set-up.

Ekkehard Griep

p. 71

Comment: More Africa – With More UN. Germany Does Not Tap the Full Potential in Crisis Prevention

Managing violent conflicts in Mali and the Central-African Republic require a strong commitment by the international community. Recent statements by German ministers to increase international engagement point into the right direction: One necessary and visible step would be to send far more German police, civilian workers, and military personnel to UN peacekeeping missions.

Sarah Brockmeier

pp. 72–76

Germany and the Rwandan Genocide: A Missed Chance for Lessons Learned

Germany cannot be proud of its role before and during the genocide in Rwanda 1994: Although German diplomats and aid workers were aware of the looming catastrophe, Germany declined to support the humanitarian effort of the UN mission. Even after the genocide—compared to the United Nations and the United States—German politicians and civil society did not learn much from Germany's inglorious behavior. 20 years after the genocide, the time has come for a stronger German engagement in conflict prevention.