# Twenty years after violence tore it apart, Rwanda prospers

**Group Pink**



Rwandan children listen and pray during a Sunday morning service at the Sainte-Famille Catholic Church, the scene of many killings during the 1994 genocide, in the capital Kigali, Rwanda, on April 6, 2014. Photo: AP Photo/Ben Curtis

*Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as*

*I read:*

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — It's been 20 years since a wave of violence wiped out nearly one million people in the African country of Rwanda. Now, in villages throughout the nation, many who killed their neighbors live side by side with relatives of the dead.

Hutus and Tutsis are the biggest ethnic groups in the country. In 1994, Hutus killed more than 800,000 Tutsis — and even some Hutus. It was one of the worst crimes of the past 100 years.Rwanda had made stunning progress since then.

Courts have allowed many killers to be released from prison. In return, they confess and express regret. A generation of young people who grew up after the mass killings don't see themselves as Hutu or Tutsi. They just see themselves as Rwandans.

**Preventing A Return Of Violence**

Businesses have grown and jobs are more available. The average life span of a Rwandan has doubled since 1994 to more than 60 years. And the number of deaths of children under 5 has dropped. Twenty years ago, 230 out of every 1,000 kids didn't live to see their 5th birthday. Now, that number has dropped to 55 out of every 1,000.

Still, Rwanda has some problems. Lately, human rights groups have criticized President Paul Kagame. He is seen as becoming increasingly strict.

Kagame says that improved education and an end to poverty are the best ways to prevent a return of violence. The government spends more than 40 percent of its yearly money on health and education, says the World Bank.

Despite the positive news from Rwanda, more recent attempts at preventing the killing of an entire group of people, known as genocide, have failed. World leaders vowed that “never again” would a genocide happen like the one in Rwanda.

In 2002, the International Criminal Court was set up. Its purpose is to try individuals for genocide and human rights crimes. And in 2005, a summit of world leaders agreed on the principle of the “responsibility to protect.” This required the international community to move in when civilians are under attack and their governments fail to protect them.

**People Left Unprotected**

But the United Nations still fails to protect people when wars break out.

In the Central African Republic, killings of Muslims by Christians have been taking place for months. A proposed U.N. force to halt the slaughter has yet to be sent.

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Elsewhere in Africa, international intervention has shown mixed success. U.N. troops have been criticized for not preventing attacks on civilians by armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In Sudan, U.N. troops failed to prevent an estimated 10,000 ethnic killings in December. However, the death toll might have been even higher without the U.N. there.

The Rwandan genocide was triggered on April 7, 1994, when a plane carrying Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, was shot down. It is not known who did it.

Kagame had led a rebel group attempting to oust the Habyarimana government since 1990. But after nearly three years of civil war, a peace deal was signed and elections were supposed to follow.The downing of the plane sunk the peace deal. It set off the mass killing of Tutsis by Hutus. They were spurred on by radio shows that called Tutsis “cockroaches” that should be exterminated.

**Neat And Orderly**

Neighbors killed neighbors and entire families were wiped out.

The U.N. did nothing to halt the attacks. It claimed it didn't have the authority to act. European countries did not step in. Bill Clinton, then the U.S. president, has since apologized. Last year, he admitted that as many as 300,000 lives could have been saved had America acted.After three months of fighting, Kagame’s forces drove the Rwandan army from power.

Today Rwanda is improving and businesses are growing. The nation of 11 million is self-sufficient in farming and doesn't need to get food from other countries. Children have more to eat and are now less malnourished.One Saturday a month, all citizens are required to help clean up Rwanda. The country is neat and orderly.

“We must work hard because if we wait for others to develop our country, we will not make progress,” Kagame said last month. Help from other countries "must only come as an addition to our own efforts to better ourselves.”

**Comprehension Questions:**

1. All of the following sentences from the article support the idea that the United Nations still fails to protect people when wars break out EXCEPT:

A. A proposed U.N. force to halt the slaughter has yet to be sent.

B. However, the death toll might have been even higher without the U.N. there.

C. In Sudan, U.N. troops failed to prevent an estimated 10,000 ethnic killings in December.

D. U.N. troops have been criticized for not preventing attacks on civilians by armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

2. Select the paragraph from "Preventing A Return Of Violence" that best supports the main idea of the article.

3. When President Paul Kagame is first introduced, the author uses the moment to show that:

A. Kagame hasn't been able to prevent genocide

B. Kagame doesn't get along with human rights groups

C. though Rwanda is improving, there are still some problems

D. Kagame is trying to improve health and poverty in his country

4. Which of the following best illustrates that Hutus and Tutsis get along better now?

A. Rwanda has made stunning progress since the genocide.

B. One Saturday a month, all citizens are required to help clean up Rwanda.

C. Many who killed their neighbors live side by side with relatives of the dead.

D. Young people who grew up after the mass killings don't see themselves as Hutu or Tutsi.