

# Unconventional Challenges and Nontraditional Roles for Armed Forces

## The Case for Rwanda

BY FRANK K. RUSAGARA

The circumstances of the 1994 Rwandan genocide and its aftermath presented hitherto unconventional challenges to the African nation. The strategies that Rwanda adopted to cope necessitated, among others, nontraditional roles by the military that continue to inform national development. The aftermath of the genocide entailed more than 1 million people dead and an entire population either displaced internally or having fled as refugees. It also entailed a divided society with a collapsed socioeconomic infrastructure. Meanwhile, even as the perpetrators of genocide were defeated, they relocated in the neighboring countries with entire state institutions, including the military, from where they reorganized and attempted an armed return to Rwanda to resume where they stopped with the genocide.

The absence of national institutions was exacerbated by an international community, whose failure to prevent or stop the genocide made them cynical about Rwanda's chance to survive as

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a nation. Add to this the relentless efforts by those who had supported the genocidal regime to assist the remnants of the latter to regroup and recapture state power in order to complete the genocide.<sup>1</sup>

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With a translocated government or state machinery in the former Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC]) to contend with, Rwanda had to embark on building a completely new military institution. This was necessary essentially because the military institution in the previous regime had been characterized by divisiveness and discrimination that had led to it being a sectarian “Hutu-nized” force that would spearhead execution of the genocide.

### Toward Security Sector Transformation

The new broad-based government under the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) conviction was that the military, as an instrument of violence that is monopolized by the state, has a higher social responsibility in facilitating social cohesion. This role could be done in not only the protection of social values from external aggression, but also the enhancement of these values through the prevention of internal destabilization.

Samuel Huntington captures the role of the army succinctly when he notes that “the skill of the physician is diagnosis and treatment, his responsibility is the health of his client. The

skill of the officer is the management of violence; his responsibility is the military security of his client.”<sup>2</sup> This presupposes an officer who understands the collective national interests as opposed to subjective and sectarian interests.

Here, the model used by precolonial Rwandan society, and later applied by what would become the Rwandan Defense Force (RDF), is illustrative. The classic military organization was rooted in society. Thus, there was a symbiotic relationship with the military produced and nurtured by society, and the military in turn storing, propagating, and defending society’s values. In this sense, the tangible elements of the gravity of power (that is, the military) must be in harmony with the intangible elements: the government and people’s will to that government.<sup>3</sup>

As the shield of the nation (*Ingabo z’ u Rwanda*), the military protected all in pursuit of national interests. Notably, the survival of the state was ingrained in its ability to manage instruments of violence at one level, and, on the other, their development for the general good of the society. This, in principle relevant even today, should lead to the nurturing and development of a national leadership at the political and military levels. Such leadership must seek to evolve and invest in the development of the necessary institutional frameworks that must consistently renegotiate the leadership’s relevance with the aspirations of the society. It is in this context that Rwanda, under the RPF, found its defining mission to integrate and reintegrate its people, beginning with the military through the concept of *Ingando*, as we shall see below.

The strategy was to move away from violent chaos to providing a semblance of normalcy and embarking on a multifaceted campaign to build national reconciliation and unity. The most common explanation is that security sector reform is seen largely as an externally

generated and driven concept. Closely related to this is the near absence of local ownership of externally supported reform processes. These arguments have gained ground recently.<sup>4</sup> In this manner, the transition toward peace and security for all may be said to have been a move toward security sector transformation—meaning the processes are locally owned and help develop professional and effective security structures that allow citizens to live safely.

As the single most defining moment in recent Rwandan history, the genocide has informed government policies and shaped political and military thinking. Any consideration or appraisal of the military in Rwanda must therefore inevitably bear context of the genocide. In the aftermath of violent conflict and military interventions, international organizations or coalitions of countries increasingly engage in postconflict reconstruction, and one part of the postconflict agenda is security sector reform<sup>5</sup>—but Rwanda had not only to transform and reconstruct, but also to build a completely new security system.

A security system is essentially broad, going well beyond the armed forces and police to include the civil authorities responsible for oversight and control (for example, parliament, the executive, and the defense ministry), police and gendarmerie, civil society, human rights organizations, and the press.

It is worth noting that a working security system does not guarantee peace. In states where a semblance of peace prevails, the principal actors are the executive and administration, which includes the armed forces and security services. Within the executive in most African countries, the president is designated commander in chief of the armed forces. There are usually ministers responsible for defense, policing, intelligence, and justice, although

sometimes the president may take on these roles or they may be combined, as happened under Rwanda's Juvénal Habyarimana's regime. Habyarimana was the president (commander in chief), chief of general staff, and minister of defense during his tenure (1973–1994).

The relationship between components in the security sector may seem simple, but they are complex in practice and doubly complex in many African environments where weak administrations are dominated by powerful politics of personality and cultural tradition, and where the informal dominates the formal. A simple distinction between the formulation of broad policy direction by the executive and ministry, the interpretation and elaboration of policy by a secretariat, and implementation of policy by the armed forces and security services (including parliamentary and civil society oversight) often does not hold in Africa because much revolves around powerful personalities.

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National experiences of the role of the security sector in Africa vary considerably between countries, shaped by the particularities of national politics and geography. The link between security sector transformation on the one hand, and the attainment of political stability and development on the other, is at best a contingent relationship conditioned by a host of political, economic, social, and institutional factors utterly unique to the country concerned.

## Building Coherence in Immediate Postconflict Rwanda

Rwanda had to devise its own uncompromising modus operandi in its national reconstruction with peace-building interventions laying the foundation. The Tswalu Protocol articulates the principles and guidelines for peace-building missions and identifies 10 measures for improving the effectiveness of peace-building interventions.<sup>6</sup> The Tswalu Protocol is multinational in nature. What is nontraditional and peculiar about Rwanda is that the development of these peace-building methods was nationally led in an effort to achieve operational coherence. Some of the measures are examined below.

**Establishing Coherence.** In Rwanda, there was neither victor nor vanquished. By the very act of genocide, all Rwandans lost. It was up to the country's leadership to turn this around and make a win-win situation for all in order to establish operational coherence at all levels of national life. This remains no mean challenge as the country continues to take stock of its tragedy while trying to heal its body politic and usher in peace and security that will ensure continued development. Edward Azar asserted that "peace is development," and trying to resolve conflict without addressing the question of underdevelopment is futile.<sup>7</sup>

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**Lead Nations.** The Rwandan nation took the lead, and the challenge was to manage and regulate the "swarm" of peace-building partners in the form of international and local

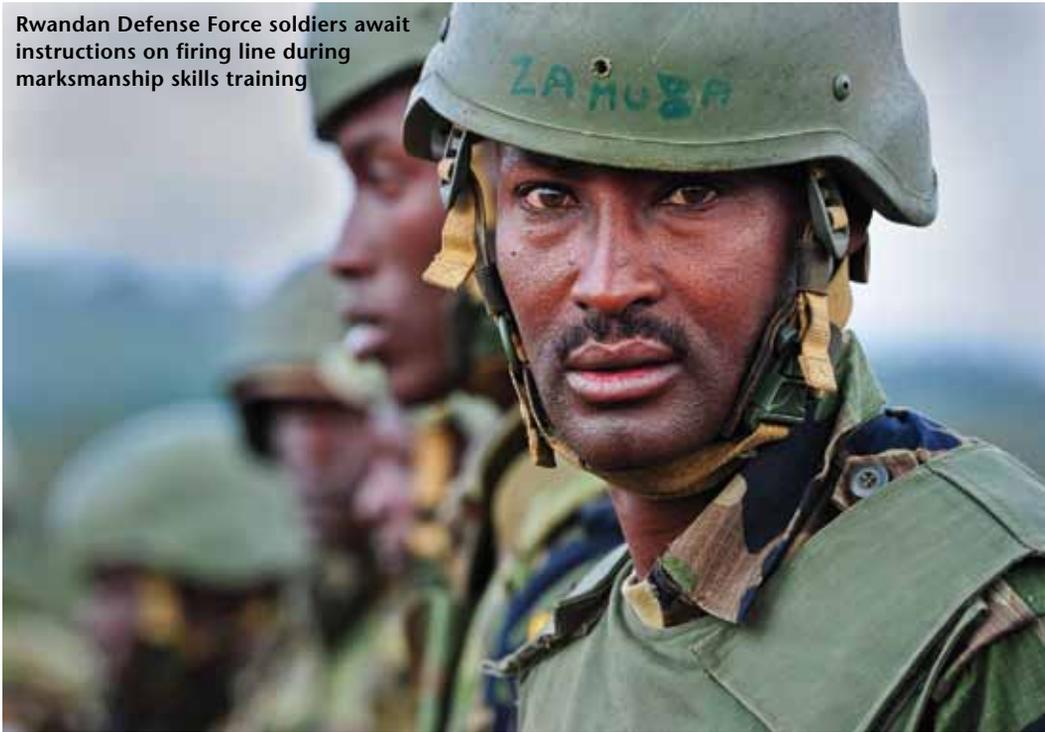
nongovernmental organizations, agencies, and so forth. Rwanda was uncompromising on its role as lead nation to the extent that in 1995–1996, the government had to ask the second United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR II) to wind up and "leave sooner than later." UNAMIR II was only perpetuating dependency on the international community while undermining the government's legitimacy by insisting people remain in displaced persons camps.

**Building Capacity.** Given the near-failed state of Rwanda, the first action was to ensure security by integrating and forming a coherent national defense force. From the ex-combatants and demobilized soldiers, a new police force was formed to take over the national policing duties from the military. The ex-combatants also went on to form the local defense units in their respective areas of origin. Rwanda's security was therefore locally owned. The policy of integrating the military and militia into a coherent force served as a role model for the greater society that had been polarized and divided. With security in place, it was easier to start on building capacity in all the other sectors of the nation.

**Economic Assessment and Aid Focus and Priorities.** As observed, Rwanda was socioeconomically on its knees with the cumulative decline in gross domestic product having passed the 60 percent mark by 1994. Despite this, immediately after the genocide, aid was not forthcoming from the international community until the end of 1996, when donors under the Geneva Conference for Rwanda pledged more than U.S. \$600 million that would be managed under a trust fund by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Unfortunately, UNDP wanted to take over the planning function from the

Rwandan Defense Force soldiers await instructions on firing line during marksmanship skills training

U.S. Air Force (Elizabeth Rissmiller)



government by determining development priorities, which came with conditions to access the funds. Additionally, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) returned from the Congo in 1996–1997 with a hefty balance on its relief account (U.S. \$1.2 billion) that by far exceeded the national budget (U.S. \$500 million) of Rwanda. These UN agencies undermined the legitimacy of the government by having more resources than the national treasury, which they flouted. At one point, cabinet ministers lined up at the UNHCR office seeking funds for their ministerial projects without going through the national treasury. This compromised national priorities in economic development.

**Information and Messaging.** Rwanda has used a strategic messaging campaign as an active participant and partner in peace-building efforts in Africa. Rwanda is currently involved in almost all regional peace initiatives, including the East African Standby Force. The country has participated in peacekeeping in Sudan—in Darfur with the UN and African Union peacekeeping effort—the African Union–UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur, and in Southern Sudan with the UN peacekeeping initiative. Rwanda has also participated in peacekeeping in Comoros as well as in Liberia and Haiti.

**Campaign Plan.** Unrelenting engagement with fellow Africans and the international community for sustainable peace and improved development remains at the core of Rwanda’s foreign policy agenda. Peace-building cannot be assembled elsewhere; it must be a homegrown process. Local ownership is paramount because locals must take full responsibility as they are the primary stakeholders. Rwanda’s military and social integration process has shown that peace-building is a

positive-sum game—there are neither spoilers nor losers. Everybody is a winning stakeholder in the postconflict scenario.

One must build local capacity especially in security and defense in order to usher in peace and development. The capacity built should give us courage to say “no” to what is wrong and defend what is right in the eyes of a paternalistic and patronizing international community.

Misperception of the reality marked the RPF departure from its hope in international intervention and opted for a locally owned peace-building process because the international community, through the UNHCR and UNDP, deliberately created camps and invited Rwandan refugees to Zaire and Burundi, where they had set them up.

The U.S. humanitarian intervention, however, served to confuse the victims of the genocide with the perpetrators and their hostages so that when Tipper Gore, the wife of then U.S. Vice President Al Gore, visited the Goma refugee camps, she erroneously remarked, “I have seen genocide in its face”—not realizing that among the refugees were the perpetrators of the genocide.

Also, the Operation *Turquoise* zone, established by the French government with the tacit support of UN agencies, had been declared a no-go area for the new Government of National Unity. At the same time, the UN threatened to desert Rwanda again so that the country could fail and then realize its need to return to the UN fold. All of it amounted to blackmail and frustration of the nascent peace-building efforts of Rwanda’s government.<sup>8</sup>

### **Military Integration as a Peace-building Strategy**

The Rwandan military had to play the nontraditional role of taking the lead in

peace-building and providing a unifying example to the rest of the society through the concept of Ingando. This would ensure lasting peace through full integration of the ex-military and militia into the new national army. In this sense, the military led the way and provided the example of the effectiveness of peace-building that could be replicated elsewhere.

Basically there are three models of peace-building. The first is the consent model, which is based on comprehensive, negotiated settlement of conflict between two parties conducted under third party supervision. Government forces may absorb guerrilla forces or merge the two warring factions to form a single national force. It is important to note that peace-building is usually conducted after cessation of hostilities, though the security situation may remain fragile.

The second model is complete demobilization, where the government decides to downsize its military through the normal channels of peace-building but does not include former enemy combatants in its forces. Examples include the 1991 Ethiopia demobilization of the former government forces under the Derg after the defeat of Mengistu Haile Mariam.

The third is the coercive model of peace-building, which involves forced disarmament of insurgents and is usually carried out by external intervention under a UN mandate. An example of this is the failed forced disarmament of Somali warring factions in 1993.

### **The Rwandan Model of Peace-building**

Rwanda’s model of peace-building is based on consent, where ex-combatants are fully integrated in the spirit of the 1993 Arusha Peace Agreement between the RPF and government of Rwanda. Protocol III of

the Agreement made possible integration of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) into the *Forces Armées Rwandaises* (FAR).

Unlike in the classic consent model, RDF integration was a *continuous* process—that is, before, during, and after cessation of hostilities. The Rwanda model was effected through the traditional concept of Ingando. The concept draws its theoretical basis from the constructivist school of thought, which stresses the importance of the socially constructed nature of ethnic groups, drawing on Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities.”<sup>9</sup> Proponents point to Rwanda as an example of a social construct or an imagined community since the Tutsi and Hutu distinction was codified by the Belgian Colonial Power in the 1930s on the basis of cattle ownership, physical measurements, and church records. Identity cards were issued on this basis, and these documents played a key role in the genocide of 1994.

*Ingando* in Kinyarwanda (a dialect of the Rwanda-Rundi language) means a military encampment or assembly area where troops traditionally received their final briefing while readying for a military expedition abroad. These briefings included reorganization of the troops and allotment of missions and tasks. In such gatherings, individuals were reminded to subject their interests to the national ideal and give Rwanda their all. This meant that whatever differences one might have had, the national interests always prevailed since the nation of Rwanda is bigger than any one individual and it ensured prosperity for all. That was the idea behind the institution of Ingando.

The objectives of Ingando are to:

- ❖ help the participants (students, grass-root leaders, opinion leaders, teachers,

released prisoners, and so forth) overcome mutual fear and suspicion as well as the temptation for revenge

- ❖ talk about the history of the conflict
- ❖ heal the wounds of hatred
- ❖ accept responsibility for any harm done to each other
- ❖ demystify negative perceptions of each other
- ❖ take collective ownership of the tragedy that resulted from the conflict
- ❖ agree on what the future promises for them.

Ingando employs the concept of problem-solving workshops (PSWs) as a participatory conflict management strategy. These workshops are designed as the best method through which a protracted conflict such as Rwanda’s may find sustainable resolution. PSWs encourage the parties to analyze the conflict, its causes, the parties’ attitudes toward each other, and the postconflict relationship. As John Burton states, the Ingandos as PSWs “are innovative in guiding the translation of discovered shared values into political structures and institutions that will promote their fulfillment.”<sup>10</sup>

The first step in Ingando is to help ex-combatants and the RDF unburden themselves emotionally. This can be achieved by allowing them to talk about the conflict and its history. What the parties feel about the conflict and about each other are important barriers that must first be removed. If the parties are not able to talk about the conflict and their feelings about it, they will never be able to talk about mutual solutions and the future. The command’s challenge is to ensure an atmosphere in which the

parties get to know each other and respect each other's dignity at all times.

The second step is joint military redeployment of the former adversaries. This deployment provides further opportunity for the participants to continue learning about the conflict and further facilitate bonding between the troops through demystification of any differences and misperceptions they may harbor. An example of joint deployment is the war in

participation in Ingando recognizes the dignity and humanity of the participants as equal Rwandans

the DRC in 1998–2002, after about 39,200 were integrated into the RPA. After their tour of duty in the DRC, or while on leave, the break enabled the ex-combatants to return to their communities. While on leave, they influenced their communities with their full integration.

In the third step, the RDF continuously facilitates exploratory dialogue through the office of the Civil-Military Coordination Office (J5) at RDF Headquarters. Participants are encouraged to analyze their conflict as a *mutual* problem. This process includes analyzing why the conflict began; why each party reacted the way it did; and how to come to terms with mutual losses and responsibilities. The J5 ensures that no blame is apportioned. This stage can be emotional, but it is crucial. In the end, this ensures a win-win solution.<sup>11</sup>

The fourth stage occurs when the integrated ex-combatants meet and reevaluate the process. In their testimonies, they may admit to being convinced there is a way out mutually, to have developed doubts about the process, or to have received contradictory reactions from their constituencies about the process.

During the November 2006 International Peace-building Course at the Rwanda Military Academy in Nyakinama, Major General Paul Rwarakabije (ex-commander of the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda), who is now integrated in the RDF and a commissioner in the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, provided an example of successful integration. His testimony was fostered on the conviction that there is always a way out of a conflict—but as long as the psychological barriers persist, the parties are locked into rigid assumptions and postures rooted in history.

Participation in Ingando recognizes the dignity and humanity of the participants as equal Rwandans. Irrespective of their roles in the Rwandan conflict, the Ingando forms the starting point to conflict resolution. Political compromises that can reconcile previously antagonistic ethnic group interests, thereby ending violence, work for civil existence.

Ingandos were initially meant for integrating ex-combatants into the national army and society during and after the Rwandan liberation war. This entailed mixing the ex-FAR and RPA officers and soldiers and gave them an opportunity to talk about the Rwandan conflict. This integration continues. Between 1995 and 1997, a total of 10,500 ex-FAR officers and soldiers were integrated in the RPA, and between 1998 and 2002, a total of 39,200 ex-FAR and militia were integrated in the RPA.

The immediate security dividend from the Rwanda peace-building in 1997 was the transformation of the counterinsurgency strategy into a political and social effort that would break the back of the ex-FAR and militia insurgents operating in and out of the country. The soldiers got integrated and became stakeholders

as responsible citizens and breadwinners for their families.

The peace-building payoffs include promoting stability and initial reconciliation between conflicting parties. In the case of the RDE, the ex-combatants moved from being tools of violence to economic assets—that is, war resources were channeled into socioeconomic ones. The integrated ex-combatants allow for human capital development in their skills and talents, thus providing suitable conditions for societal reconciliation by becoming valuable stakeholders. Peace-building also becomes a facilitator for military professionalism, which enhances effectiveness and healthy civil-military relations and societal reconciliation.

### A New Rwanda Through the RDF

Collective responsibility was the cornerstone of the Rwandan Patriotic Army's philosophy. In a 1996 interview, Paul Kagame explained his strategy for taking command:

*In all my capacities—in the RPF, in the government, in the army—my primary responsibility is to help develop people who can take responsibility indiscriminately. . . . [I]n the RPF we have tried to encourage collective responsibility. I'm not saying there aren't power struggles. But things were deliberately organized in such a way that one can play a very prominent role—be very useful, lead people, be respected, and so on—but at the end of the day, there is an emphasis on collective responsibility, on discussion.*<sup>12</sup>

Discussion was central to RPA success. RPA officers were strictly held accountable for the overall performance of their units. They were expected to know their people and, more

importantly, to care about them. In return, RPA soldiers were expected to trust their officers and provide them with an unwavering commitment to victory. The practical result of this fraternity was RPA's well-developed practice of consensus-based decisionmaking. Through formalized, open discussions that usually took place at dawn, RPA officers at all levels of command entertained the opinions and experiences of soldiers across all ranks before making important decisions.<sup>13</sup> This institutional exchange fostered an extraordinary ethos of responsibility in the RPA and promoted a close and powerful bond between officers and their men.

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The RPA also invested in the skill and intelligence of the many recruits who joined the ranks during the early days of the war. With many of these recruits coming from the global Rwandan diaspora, the RPA rapidly enjoyed an unusually high average standard of education and cultural expertise. With nearly all soldiers educated at the primary level, 50 percent at secondary, and upward of 20 percent receiving university-level instruction, the RPA represented what was described as “probably the best educated guerrilla force the world had ever seen.”<sup>14</sup>

Understanding that the divisive impact of the genocide and the independent manner in which the RPA secured victory would quickly erode legitimacy, the RPA quickly adopted a plan to integrate members of the ex-FAR. Following the principle of consensus that had

brought the RPA so many successes on the battlefield, a reeducation and training program commenced in the fall of 1994 at the Gako integration center south of Kigali.<sup>15</sup>

At this camp, ex-FAR officers who had been vetted against participation in the genocide were paired with an RPA counterpart and exposed to the positive aspects that had brought the RPA so much success. One ex-FAR officer described the integration process as fairly simple due to the fact that everyone involved shared a common history, language (Kinyarwanda), and nationality. He regretted that the Habyarimana government had used divisive politics and acknowledged that the

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FAR had suffered on the battlefield due to the understanding that soldiers were treated as an expendable resource by the former government. In contrast, the officer—now a lieutenant colonel in the RDF—outlined the strength of the RDF as an organization that values its people above all else.

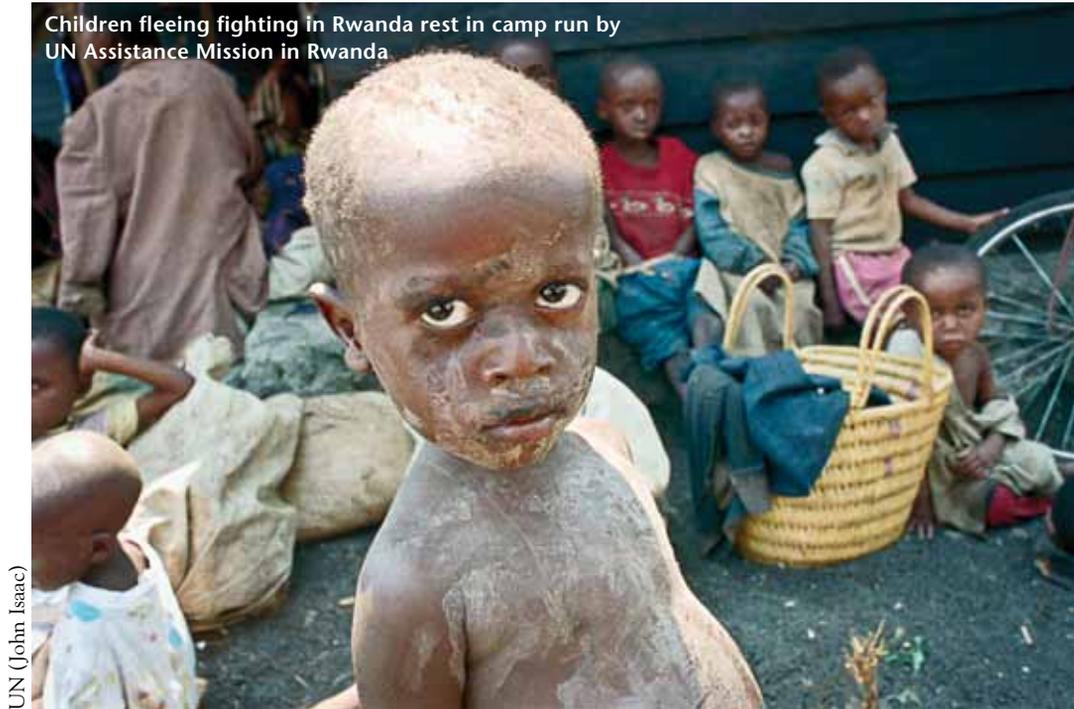
The military, as a national institution, not only guaranteed internal security, but also guarded against external aggression because the military was part and parcel of the society that produced it. The military acted as the cohesive force in the community. Toward this end, society's values, customs, and taboos were enshrined and codified into *Imigenzo n'imizimirizo* (dos and don'ts), which in military terms were actualized in how one

conducted himself or herself in times of war and peace. Ingandos entailed refocusing the individual from a manipulated tool of negative forces into an *imfura y' i Rwanda* (from a genocidaire to an agent of social change and development), actualizing the ideals of a patriotic Rwandan. With this transformation, the RPA has been able to mediate the various conflicts that characterized the deconstruction of pre-genocide Rwanda.

Eventually, more than 15,000 of an estimated 40,000 former RDF soldiers were integrated into the RPA. The newly integrated RPA would cement its solidarity and comradeship under fire in the coming Congo wars between 1996 and 2002, and use its shared experiences to demystify perceived animosities among the society as a whole. The conflict also provided the army with an opportunity to unite the efforts of RPA veterans with newly integrated ex-FAR soldiers. The Congo wars provided a conducive environment for further bonding among the integrated forces, serving a common cause for Rwanda. Such an environment also reinforced their sense of patriotism and nationalism. Moreover, the conflict represented active politicization and socialization that enhanced RPA bonding through practicing the theories from Ingando.

As the Rwandan state moved ahead with serious attempts to stabilize society and develop its economy, the RPA began an enthusiastic effort to formalize its practices, specialize its force, and devote its resources toward protecting the fragile peace. Officers who understood the unifying force that Rwanda's military had played in its past knew that the RPA had to reinvent itself as an example of progress and social change. Their vision resulted in a plan to institutionalize the RPA as an instrument for social

Children fleeing fighting in Rwanda rest in camp run by UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda



UN (John Isaac)

reconstruction, cohesion, and conflict management. In a significant demonstration of that effort, the RPA formally changed its name to the RDF in June 2002.

Understanding that success depended on a more professional and mature force, the RDF actively sought opportunities to improve the professional competency of its officers and operational units. RDF officers began regularly attending professional military colleges in Kenya, Zambia, South Africa, Europe, and the United States. In addition, the Kenyan army played a major role in developing RDF operational capacity by providing formal instruction on advanced military tactics, techniques, and procedures.

### **From Nation-building to Regional Stability Through Peacekeeping**

By 2004, the RDF was becoming widely recognized as one of Africa's more capable forces. That same year, the RDF was the first military in the world to answer the African Union's call requesting a small peacekeeping force in Sudan. The unit was to be capable of protecting UN military observers monitoring a fragile ceasefire between government forces and various rebel groups in the Darfur region of Sudan. Landing in Al Fashir that August, the initial 150 RDF soldiers became the first conventional peacekeeping forces deployed to the region. Although they received training and support for their mission from various sources, the key element that eventually brought them success was an ethos developed by an ancient warrior tradition, and honed by years of struggle. Since the first momentous deployment in 2004, the RDF consistently demonstrated expertise in peace support operations and assumed an increasingly significant role in the success of the now combined African Union and UN mission in Sudan.

From their initial deployment, RDF soldiers carried through on the promises made by President Kagame, who noted that the RDF mandate would include the use of necessary force: “Our forces will not stand by and watch innocent civilians being hacked to death like the case was here in 1994.”<sup>16</sup>

RDF actions quickly measured up to the president’s comments in 2005 when rebels, attempting to seize 28 civilian supply trucks from a convoy under Rwandan guard, were treated to a costly gun battle that resulted in numerous rebel casualties and the loss of two RDF soldiers.<sup>17</sup>

The RDF treated peacekeeping operations the same as any other warfighting endeavor. The RDF soldiers deployed to Darfur prepared to kill and, more importantly, die in support of their mission. Judged against recent history, this frame of mind is unique among peacekeepers, and it underscores the tremendous influence that heritage has played in defining the RDF and what it stands for. The commanders of these forces understand all too well the social and spiritual consequences of failed peacekeeping efforts in their own country. RDF soldiers do not propose that their mere presence can avert

environment. As mentioned, RDF decision-making is a consensus process that considers the experience and opinion of soldiers from every rank. Although RDF officers are responsible for selecting the final course of action for any given mission, the institutionalized consensus process generates a high degree of empowerment and situational awareness across the entire unit responsible for the mission. With this inclusive planning and collective mission ownership, the RDF has consistently deployed peacekeeping units capable of initiating decisive and appropriate action at the lowest levels of command—the same skill that scholars suggest holds the key to peacekeeping success. One such scholar writes, “Whether they are peacekeeping, peace-enforcement, or counterinsurgency operations, because of the chaos that characterized these environments, small unit leadership becomes particularly important. . . . [S]enior leadership, therefore, must empower small unit leaders with significantly broader decision-making power than if they were acting in a conventional war type environment.”<sup>18</sup>

With an exceptional history including warrior kingdoms, ethnic division, social destruction, civil war, and genocide, Rwanda’s military consciousness has been forged in intense instability. The product of this turbulent evolution is an organizational ethos that forsakes hope for action and chance for skill. Drawing from those ancient values, the founding members of the RDF disciplined and empowered their soldiers to eliminate the elements of social destruction lingering from Rwanda’s colonial past, and restore their homeland for all Rwandans.

Even in the short period since the genocide capped the fractured colonial stage of Rwanda’s history, the RDF has managed to reestablish the

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crisis and bloodshed, but they are determined not to allow self-preservation or callous inaction determine the outcome of events under their control.

Another critical element to RDF peacekeeping success is the empowering role that the RDF philosophy of consensus has played in the often nebulous and frenzied peacekeeping

military as a national institution. Though the wounds of ethnic conflict are far from healed, the exemplary progress of the RDF has greatly assisted in restoring the military as a key source of unified Rwandan pride. In its rightful, historical place, the RDF truly represents a resilient guardian of Rwandan unity.

## Conclusion

The Rwanda government's determination to take the lead in postgenocide reconstruction had to start with security. Because the military was an instrument of violence, monopolized by the state, the government had to use the military for higher social responsibility in facilitating social cohesion. This role could be done not only in the protection of social values from external aggression, but also in the enhancement of these values through the prevention of internal destabilization, both in the country and regionally. Rwandan youth have since transformed and ceased to be objects and subjects of the state as they were during the genocide. The ex-militia and guerrilla army have been integrated to form the RDF, which has since gained international recognition in peace support operations globally. In fact, Rwanda contributes one of the largest contingents to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations globally with about 4,000 military, police, and civilian personnel in Sudan, Haiti, and elsewhere. [PRISM](#)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Wallis, *Silent Accomplice* (New York: I.B.Tauris and Company, 2006), 186.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 579.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Bryden and Funmi Olonisakin, eds., *Security Sector Transformation in Africa* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces [DCAF], 2010), 6.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Brzoska and Andreas Heinemann-Gruder, "Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Reconstruction under International Auspices," in *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, ed. Alan Bryden and Heiner Hanggi (Geneva: DCAF, 2004), 1.

<sup>6</sup> *The African Century* (Johannesburg, South Africa: The Brenthurst Foundation, 2009), 349–357.

<sup>7</sup> Edward E. Azar, "Protracted International Conflicts: Ten Propositions," in *Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution*, ed. John W. Burton and E. Franklin Dukes (London: Macmillan, 1990), 153–155.

<sup>8</sup> Wallis.

<sup>9</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> John W. Burton, *Resolving Deep-rooted Conflict* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 17.

<sup>11</sup> H. Kelman, "Interactive Problem-Solving: A Social-Psychological Approach to Conflict Resolution," in *Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution*, 201.

<sup>12</sup> Philip Gourevitch and Paul Kagame, "After Genocide," *Transition*, no. 72 (1996), 177.

<sup>13</sup> Robert B. Rehdar, Jr., "From Guerrillas to Peacekeepers: The Evolution of the Rwandan Defense Forces" (Master's thesis, Marine Corps University, 2008).

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas P. Odom, *Journey into Darkness: Genocide in Rwanda* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 192.

<sup>16</sup> “Rwandan president: Troops will use force if necessary in Darfur,” *Sudan Tribune*, August 14, 2004, available at <[www.sudantribune.com/Rwandan-president-Troops-will-use,4722](http://www.sudantribune.com/Rwandan-president-Troops-will-use,4722)>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Paolo Tripodi, “Peacekeepers, Moral Autonomy and the Use of Force,” *Journal of Military Ethics* 5 (2006), 224.