



**(Rwanda: The size of MD as a state, 10,169 sq Mi)**

## HISTORY OF RWANDA

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### Introduction

#### **Pre- Colonial Period up to 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

Pre-Colonial History Twa, Hutu and Tutsi are the three peoples who inhabited Rwanda. Economic mobility distinguished the three complex inseparable triplets. The Twa, who number less than 1% percent preferred living in the forests where they lived by hunting and gathering.

The Hutu who number 84% were small-scale agriculturists whose social structure was based on the clan. Kings, or Bahinza, who ruled over limited clan groups. The Hutu believed that the Bahinza could cause rain; protect crops from insects and cattle from disease.

The Tutsi who number 15% were pastoralists who depended on their livestock for living. All the three groups lived under environment. The relationship between the ordinary hutu, tutsi and twa was one of mutual benefit mainly through the exchange of their labor and production. The relationship was symbiotic. A clientele system called "Ubugake" permeated the whole society. All these social groups share the same language, same culture, same arts and craft, same monotheist beliefs (Imana), same geographical habitat and intermarriage was common.

The Modern State of Rwanda is believed to have been founded in the 11th century by a pastoral group, the Tutsi clans.

The kings, known as Mwamis, were generally from a Tutsi clan called "Abanyiginya" and later "Abega". Certainly some Hutus and Tutsis were nobility and, equally certainly, considerable intermingling took place.

Before the 18th century, it was believed that the Tutsis held military power of the monarchy while the Hutus possessed supernatural power. In this capacity, the King's (Mwami's) council of advisors (Abiiru) was exclusively Hutu and held significant sway.

## How the Conflict Started

*(unethical political leadership - both - local and colonial levels & an attempt to save two masters and two cultures by religious leadership. Most Rwandans were poor and ignorant too)*

By the mid-18th century, however, the abiru had become increasingly less significant. The king controlled a lot of power including land and cattle.



By 1863 – 1895 – King Rwabugiri Kigeri IV - ruled Rwanda and he expanded the borders of the kingdom. He is considered the most powerful Rwandan king.

By the beginning of the **20th** century Rwanda was a unified state with a centralized military structure and government.

## **Colonial period - Independence**

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By 1885 – Berlin conference divided Africa, where Rwanda was given to Germany and German colony.

And by 1890 – Rwanda became officially a Germany colony.

By 1919 – German lost the 1ww and so its colonies  
By 1919 – 1923 – 1961 – Belgium. During this period, inequality became institutionalized, The "Tribes" changed to mean: tutsi, hutu and twa and were categorized by the number of cows (none, 1-8 and above 8) and looks of face and height.

In 1940's- 1950's – the on and off crushes between the aristocracy – monarchy and Belgians. Belgians shifted their support to Hutu intelligentsia and hence = bloodshed, refugees and internally displaced (IDP).

By 1961 referendum and then 1962 independence.

## **Post-independence - Genocide**

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1962-1973 Kayibanda Gregoire became the first post – independent Rwandan president.

The politics of exclusion remains as a strong mark of his presidency. First he excluded Tutsi, then his fellow Hutu who were not close to him or who did not come from Gitarama, Western region – his place of Birth.

1973 – 1994 Major Gen. Juvenal Habyarimana overthrew Gregoire and became the second post – independence president. Generally, Post-independence regimes institutionalized politicization of ethnicity and practiced systematic ethnic exclusion as a form of governance and leadership.



This is what led to 1990 – 1994 war between Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and Pres. Juvenal. It was during this period that the Genocide against Tutsi and systematic killing of moderate Hutus was planned and prepared by the former army and the well trained militia (interahamwe) when it became apparent that they could not win the war against RPF. His close allies’ especially his clique of the first families mostly who turned to be Hutu

extremist from the North, his home place championed the Genocide as the best solution to end opposition. Many people attribute his failure to lack of courage to lead decisively.

The leadership gap or bankruptcy between President Juvenal and Pasteur saw more than 1 million people were killed in 3 months, over 10,000 each day, (April – July 1994). This is where Tutsi Genocide and the killing of moderate Hutu occurred most.



**N:B The Church is accused of the sin of either commission or omission. But also the church is a victim too.**

## Attempts at Reconciliation

### **Post-genocide - Today's hope for the future sustainable Peace, reconciliation and development**

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In July 1994 RPF stopped genocide, set up a transitional government of national unity led by President Pasteur Bizimungu, July 1994 – June 2000. He then fell out with his own party RPF and the parliament threatened a vote of no confidence for him. He resigned after being accused of corruption and collaborating with militias in Congo.

In 1998/9 the war officially ended and in 2003, Rwanda adopted the new constitution

1995 – Rwandan International Tribunal Court is set in Tanzania to try genocide cases.



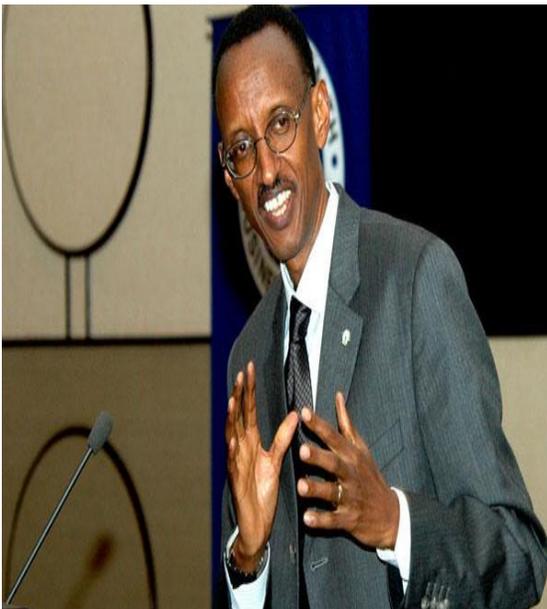
Major General Paul Kagame led the RPF, stopped the Genocide, became vice president and minister of defense until 2000 when he became a transition president after Pasteur stepped down and then later elected president.

He is a very controversial president. You either love him or hate him. He is a man whose leadership is behind where Rwanda is today.

He is a highly disciplined guy with a strong sense of courage and justice.

2003 – 2012 – he stood behind Gacaca tradition courts (over 10, 000) were established country wide to try hundreds of thousands genocide related cases in 4 categories.

Reconciliation, national healing, restorative justice and forgiveness gained upper hand. Since, then the country's focus has been peace, reconciliation, reconstruction and development.



## Challenges today

1. Security and politicization of ethnicity– once in a while social political leaders still want to politicize ethnicity. Also once in a while there is destabilization due to the presence of former army and militia in Eastern DRC, the political transition to a mature democracy, memory healing, external pressure and desire for a quick results in Human rights, democracy, institution building, trauma healing, poverty eradication, employment, peacebuilding and relations with neighbors such as Tanzania and Congo and cutting of donor fund.

For example: despite Rwanda's progress and overall internal stability, the war in the Congo is having an economic impact – aside from the human cost, the conflict is resulting in Rwanda receiving less funding from the US and UK. There is also an impact on local NGOs who are shifting their thinking to an emergency focus in other countries such as South Sudan, Central Africa republic, Syria, etc rather than long-term sustainability for Rwandans. Their funding withdrawal impacts the country.

2. Poverty, lack of resources and infrastructures – 44.9% of our people still live under less than 2 dollars a day. Also massive youth un employment and under employment is both an opportunity and really a big challenge.

Example: According to the African Economic Outlook website, youth unemployment remains a major challenge to achieving inclusive growth with an estimated 42% of young people, who also constitute nearly 40% of the population, either unemployed or underemployed. A mismatch of skills, limited job growth and job expansion are major causes of youth unemployment. ([www.africaneconomicoutlook.org](http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org))

3. Land-locked position is of paramount importance for import and export cost.

## Success

1. After the genocide in 1994, over 2 million of Rwandans were repatriated and settled into places across the country where there was no history of civic engagement, an economy destroyed by war, and social structures where both victims and perpetrators of genocide had to live side by side. The economic, physical and spiritual health of women and children suffered the most from the genocide. People were moved into settlement camps and then repatriated onto land where there were no decision-making/governance structures or opportunities to rebuild their lives.
2. Rwanda's central government began rebuilding social, civic and economic structures for the country in the early 2000's. The government established an ambitious agenda under Vision 2020 for the country, emphasizing full and equal participation by men and women, and envisioning a decentralized, democratic government where

grassroots people would be empowered to govern, build their economy and reconcile the scars of genocide. Between 2006 – 2011, the country has pulled 1 million women, men and children out of poverty (fell from 56.7% to 44.9%) \*\*\* 44% still live under less than 2 dollars per day.

3. Universal education for all and Health insurance for all – This is a blessing for the country.
4. Women empowerment. Rwanda has also made important progress in gender equality: today women represent the majority in parliament (63.8% , 51 out of 80) and hold many government and private sector offices.
5. Minimal corrupt country in Africa, decentralization of the government and supporting the organic local growth of civil society.
6. Eco – friendly – We take environmental protection seriously
7. Contributing to UN peacekeepers, taking 1 million people from poverty and creating a growth space for civil society work like mine.

### Hope for the Future

1. We hope to continue strengthening what we are doing well eg. Education, health, gender equality e.t.c.
2. We need to aggressively continue addressing the above mentioned challenges eg. Youth unemployment and under unemployment 42% is a lot, reduce poverty 44.9% is a lot, improve peacebuilding, reconciliation, democratic and human rights institution building, ethical and communitarian leaders molding and formation.
3. Contribute in communitarian ethical leadership for peace, reconciliation and development
4. Strengthen the role of civil society – so as to moderate either “political extremism”
5. The church and other faith and spiritual institutions make their spiritual and ethical voice more loud than it is now (call the country to compassion and empathy, transfiguration like Christ, holiness and perfect like our Heavenly father) e.t.c.

*Thank You very Much Epiphany Community and God’s Blessings with Peace*

**Q & A**