

Restorative Justice

Healing Wounds and Repairing Lives

Advancing the Human Rights of Survivors of Genocide in Rwanda



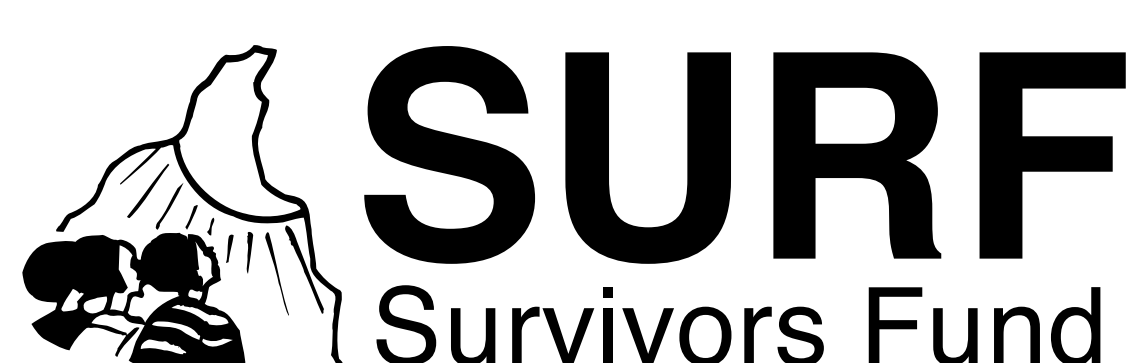
Daphrose, a genocide widow, outside her new home constructed by Survivors Fund (SURF)

This exhibition explores the role of restorative justice in promoting the human rights and welfare of survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. It features photographic, written and video testimony of survivors participating in and benefiting from, restorative justice efforts.

It illustrates a range of programmes that Survivors Fund (SURF) and its partner organisations in Rwanda offer to assist survivors of genocide in gaining access to healthcare, housing, education, job training, psycho-social support services and legal aid.

Highlighted are a selection of writings on restorative justice and related issues including reparation, compensation, forgiveness, reconciliation and aid. The exhibition also profiles some of the individuals and organisations that have been leading the drive for restorative justice for survivors of the genocide in Rwanda.

The exhibition was conceived by Noam Schimmel in association with LSE Arts, written by David Russell, designed by ldesign, and funded by the LSE Annual Fund. All photography and video is produced by Andrew Sutton of nice images.



Genocide

The Rwandan Genocide was the slaughter of an estimated 1 million Tutsis and tens of thousands of moderate Hutus, during a period of 100 days from 7th April to 16th July 1994.

The genocide had been in planning for a number of years, and was mostly carried out by two extremist Hutu militia groups, the Interahamwe and the Impuzamugambi, against Tutsi and moderate Hutus across Rwanda. Nowhere was left unaffected.



Clothes of the thousands of victims killed in Ntarama Church on display at what is now a Memorial Site.

For many, the Rwandan Genocide stands out as historically significant, not only because of the sheer number of people that were murdered in such a short period of time, but also because of the way many Western countries responded to the atrocities. Despite intelligence provided before the killing began, and international news media coverage reflecting the true scale of violence as the genocide unfolded, virtually all developed countries resisted intervention.

The United Nations refused to authorise its peacekeeping operation in Rwanda at the time to take action to bring the killing to a halt. Despite numerous warnings by Canadian Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, Head of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), peacekeepers were forbidden from even discharging their weapons.

In the weeks prior to the attacks, the UN ignored reports of Hutu militias amassing weapons and rejected plans for a pre-emptive interdiction. This failure to act became the focus of bitter recriminations towards individual policy makers, such as Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, as well as the United Nations and countries such as France and the United States more generally and President Clinton specifically. Clinton was kept informed on a daily basis by his closest advisors and the U.S. Embassy of Rwanda, but was indifferent. Belgium withdrew its forces from UNAMIR just a few days into the genocide. France was complicit, providing material, financial and diplomatic support to the genocidal regime, as well as military hardware and training to the genocidaires.

The genocide was brought to an end only when the Tutsi-dominated expatriate movement known as the Rwandan Patriotic Front, led by Paul Kagame, overthrew the Hutu government and seized power. Trying to escape accountability, hundreds of thousands of Hutus who organized and implemented the genocide (genocidaires) and their accomplices fled into eastern Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo).

The violence and its memory continue to affect the country and the region. The 400,000 survivors still seek justice for the crimes committed under the watch of the international community.

Survivors in Rwanda today

The 400,000 survivors in Rwanda today continue to face many challenges. However, young survivors are building a brighter future.



Cecille Mugeni and her 2 brothers, reunited together in a house constructed with funding from SURF.

Justice for survivors is the priority most often flagged up by our partners. Post-genocide justice in Rwanda takes many forms, but SURF is working

specifically to deliver restorative justice to address education, healthcare, shelter and livelihoods for survivors.

A landmark report on survivors and post-genocide justice in Rwanda was published in November 2008 by African Rights and Redress, concluding that for most survivors “in addition to their daily struggles to merely exist, and to live, they continue to struggle, mostly in vain, for some measure of justice that is meaningful to them.”

Thus, SURF is campaigning for restorative justice to restore the lives of survivors as far as possible to how they were before the genocide. In light of the most recent census in 2007 on the living conditions of survivors, which reported that 40,000 survivors were without shelter, 27,500 were disabled due to injuries inflicted in the genocide, 15,000 young survivors were without access to school, and 8,000 survivors with no access to higher education.

It is a call for survivors to be given shelter in those cases where houses were destroyed during the genocide. It is a call for survivors to receive antiretroviral treatment for HIV and AIDS contracted due to rape during the genocide. It is a call for survivors to be supported through education and with income generating activities to compensate for their loss of schooling and livelihoods as a result of the genocide. In particular, it is a call for the legal rights of survivors to be protected, particularly as they are threatened by the release of the perpetrators of the genocide.

Remarkably, despite a UN General Assembly resolution (62/96) requesting the Secretary General to encourage UN programmes to provide assistance to survivors, survivors still receive little financial

support from the international community. The Government of Rwanda has made a commitment to construct 20,000 houses for the most vulnerable households of survivors – but it does not have the funds to deliver this commitment.

One sign of hope is the generation of younger survivors which have received support and are now providing support to more vulnerable survivors – both the young and old. AERG and GAERG, survivor’s associations of university students and graduates, are cases in point. With the right support, young survivors can rebuild their lives though there is a need for the foreseeable future to help those survivors too old or too isolated to help themselves.

Education

For young survivors, education is their only hope for the future, the best chance to give meaning, restore order to and ultimately rebuild their lives.



Young survivors receive IT skills training at the AVEGA Eastern Region Computer Centre, a project funded by SURF.



A cow purchased with a grant from the Good Gifts initiative provides income for dependents of survivors to attend school.

For the children who escaped the genocide, securing access to education invariably means overcoming crippling economic problems, trauma, disability or ill-health and facing prejudice, fear and loneliness. Sometimes the difficulties are insurmountable.

Survivors face innumerable challenges today, in particular accessing education. Orphan heads of households are forced to choose between attending school or sacrificing their education, and thus their future, to enable their younger siblings to do so.

The Government Assistance Fund for Survivors (FARG) provides educational support to orphans through secondary school. Even in that aim, its funding is limited to supporting just one-in-four applicants that meet the criteria for receiving support. Thus the decision is made on the basis of merit, and inevitably the most vulnerable orphaned heads-of-households are those that miss out; due to manifold responsibilities, in particular caring for dependents, they may not perform academically as well

as they do not have the resources or time to commit to the study. However, this does not mean they are any less intellectually gifted. As a consequence, despite well intentioned efforts by the Government of Rwanda, assistance to survivors is inadequate. Survivors are left to struggle on by themselves, many so traumatised and impoverished that they see survival itself as a burden almost too great to bear.

Many are prepared to attend classes although they are hungry and lack any of the necessary equipment, including notebooks and pens. Family members will make considerable sacrifices to help finance education; despite the fact that they are poor themselves. Many survivors are denied access to school due to lacking uniform and shoes – mandatory for attendance.

Since 1997, SURF has helped over ten thousand orphans into school, and over 150 orphans into university. Primary school is today universally free in Rwanda, though the cost for tuition at secondary school is over £100 a year, rising to nearly £1,000 a year for university. In a unique programme with our US-based partner Foundation Rwanda, SURF is extending its support to fund secondary school education to nearly 1,000 children born to women survivors raped during the genocide.

Education is a route out of destitution for survivors, significantly improving life chances. It provides survivors with the confidence and the skills to ultimately become independent. There is no greater gift that a donor can give.

Memorial Sites

A key element of the work of Survivors Fund is the building of memorial sites in Rwanda.



Memorial sites, like the Isimbi, dot the Rwanda landscape everywhere. They are a constant reminder of pain and trauma suffered by the genocide victims. The Isimbi Memorial Centre is a grave for 25,000 people.



This simple memorial site serves also as a mass grave in Nyamashekye and is testament to the scale of the killing. There are 40,000 people buried here.

Many genocide victims were never given a formal burial. In confessions during gacaca trials, killers have admitted where bodies were dumped. SURF is working with survivors to locate the bodies and to give victims the dignified burial so important for allowing survivors a sense of closure.

Memorial sites are often built atop mass graves, and serve as a permanent testament to the events of 1994. They stand as reminders of the genocide for future generations and all people trying to belittle, rewrite or even worse, deny, the genocide.

As well as sheltering remains of the genocide victims, memorial sites often have recordings of testimonies by survivors and perpetrators, clothes and photos documenting the genocide.

Others have pangas, machete and tools used by the killers on display. In some instances, the mass graves

remain open, as bodies continue to be discovered and buried. However, a number of mass graves have been sealed, as the coffins stored reached capacity.

SURF, with its grassroots partners, has helped to build over 50 mass graves and memorial sites. Each one is vitally important, for local survivors to pay their respects to family and friends killed in the genocide – whether or not their bodies have been found. As well, the sites give survivors a place to meditate and reflect on their loss.

The burial programme has been made possible largely through funding from Comic Relief. In total SURF has helped to give a decent burial to over 300,000 victims of the genocide.

Even today, many bodies still remain undiscovered in ditches, toilets, bushes and unmarked mass graves. The remains of nearly 3,000 victims of the Kiziguro Parish massacre lay in an unmarked manhole. But survivors have not given up hope that eventually they will be able to lay to rest all the victims of the genocide.

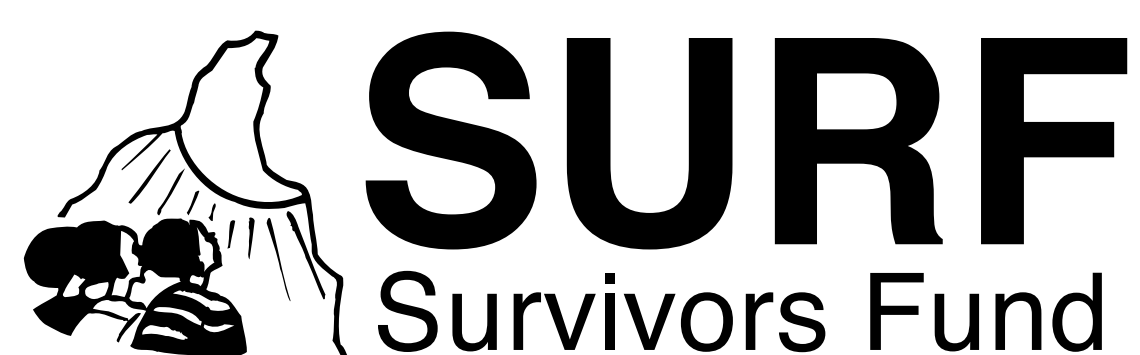
Survivors Fund (SURF)

Survivors Fund, or SURF, is a charity dedicated to aiding and assisting the survivors of the Rwandan genocide.

Since 1997, SURF has been supporting survivors to rebuild their lives and to meet post genocide challenges. Whether providing medical care for women survivors with HIV and AIDS or home building for orphan-headed households, SURF strives to help survivors rebuild a sense of self and trust in humanity.



Liliane Umubyeyi, now Co-Chair of SURF, who is a young survivor herself who has campaigned for justice since moving to the UK in 1999.



Programmes are delivered through partner organisations, including AVEGA, IBUKA, GAERG and Solace Ministries in Rwanda. SURF also provides psychological support to survivors residing in the UK.

SURF was founded by Mary Kayitesi Blewitt at the behest of survivors. She herself lost 50 family members during the genocide in 1994. Her support for survivors started back in 1995 after returning to the UK from eight months working for the Ministry of Rehabilitation in Rwanda. In 1997 Mary formally established SURF to continue to aid, assist and support survivors in the UK and Rwanda too.

SURF is working to ensure that:

- The victims of the genocide are never forgotten.
- The survivors of the genocide are always heard and supported, in Rwanda and the UK.

SURF has achieved a great deal since its inception:

- 3,000 survivors have been rehoused in 600 houses built by SURF, with a further 1,000 houses rehabilitated.
- 40,000 survivors have received livestock which helps with nutrition as well as income generation.
- 300,000 victims of the genocide have been buried in mass graves constructed by SURF.

In the past year alone, SURF has helped:

- Establish an Education into Employment programme for 6,000 survivors at university to help them secure a job on graduation.
- Distribute livestock to over 15,000 survivors through a programme funded by Good Gifts.
- Transition four medical clinics into the public health system and ensure the highest quality of care for over 30,000 patients.

Through funding from the UK Department for International Development, SURF established a Care and Treatment Project for 2,500 women survivors raped and infected with HIV during the genocide, a project which is now funded by Comic Relief.

Shelter

In trying to obliterate the Tutsis during the genocide, perpetrators also attempted to deny survivors any potential for viable futures by destroying and looting their homes, productive assets and crops.

The genocide resulted in many homeless orphans and widows who were forced to live on the street or in inadequate, unsafe and overcrowded housing. With difficulties in finding the means to pay rent, they often fall prey to abusive landlords. Many suffer from depression and isolation and frequently family members are not able to find places where they can live together and support each other.



A young survivor outside her new home constructed through funding from Survivors Fund (SURF).

It is hard for them to move forward without more personal security and a greater sense of belonging, mutual support and opportunity. Ensuring secure housing is essential to survivors' livelihoods and future.

This is part of a wider strategy of Survivors Fund (SURF) and its partners to integrate permanent housing into existing holistic interventions which address survivors' many needs through provision of psycho-social and medical support, skills development, healthcare and education.

Once the most pressing needs had been targeted (food, clothing, temporary shelter, medical care for injuries and such) attention could turn to legal aid, economic security and secure housing. A national policy was developed by

the Government (*imidigudu*) to cluster new housing to ensure good access to services and easy access to fields. SURF's approach follows Government policy. Clusters of houses are not allowed to be greater than 20 plots to allow enough space for agriculture. SURF has modified the basic plan to increase security in the housing and it engages survivors themselves in house construction.

The houses are constructed securely but cost-effectively. Local survivor organisations offer an effective framework in which to root the re-establishment of homes: membership of the survivor organisations enables survivors to organise and participate in building their homes and this increases collective responsibility for community development. Survivors who benefit from new homes are

encouraged to form cooperatives as an arena through which to develop the site and to discuss and understand their problems and find solutions to them. They work together as a group, and develop small, cooperative businesses and take in additional relatives when they can. Young, orphan survivors receive guidance from staff of survivor organisations that they would normally have received from parents or extended family.

SURF has built over 500 new houses providing shelter for over 2,500 survivors. On average, a new three-bedroom semi-detached house in Rwanda today costs £4,000 to construct. There is estimated to be nearly 30,000 survivors still without adequate shelter. This is a priority on which SURF continues to advocate.

Healthcare

Survivors endure many health challenges, resulting from injuries incurred during and as a result of the genocide. They may also suffer from chronic diseases, disabilities, and mental health issues, all of which necessitate support.



Patients await treatment at the AVEGA Health Clinic in Rwamagana.

The cost of communal health insurance (*mutuelle de santé*) ranges from FRW 2,900 (about £3) for the extremely poor to FRW 7,000 for the employed. The most vulnerable survivors are eligible to receive *mutuelle de santé*

at no cost through the Government of Rwanda Assistance Fund for Survivors (FARG) scheme. This then entitles survivors to access primary healthcare through public clinics.

However, even with insurance, many survivors find it difficult to cover the unavoidable costs of medicine, food, hygienic products and transportation fares to and from clinics and hospitals. Patients are required to pay 10 percent of the cost of prescription drugs, which is beyond the financial capacity of many survivors.

The situation is particularly acute for survivors living with HIV. Rape was committed on a mass scale during the genocide, leaving thousands of women infected with HIV. As a result, many children have since been born HIV positive.

Screening programmes are necessary to identify survivors and children who are HIV positive and to provide them with appropriate medical assistance. Much advocacy

and counselling work is needed to overcome the obstacles of testing and treatment; due to the triple stigma of rape, HIV and survivor status. Once diagnosed, patients need holistic antiretroviral treatment as well as treatment of HIV-related secondary illnesses, in addition to continued counselling to assist them in coming to terms with their status and future.

Through a five year programme funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) a Care and Treatment project for 2,500 HIV+ women survivors was developed to deliver wraparound support including home-based care, counselling, nutritional supplements, legal aid, IGAs, and access to health clinics that offer a “safe, ideal space” to seek treatment. This programme concluded last year, but a further two years funding has been secured

by Survivors Fund (SURF) from Comic Relief for an HIV + Survivors Integration Project to extend support to those still in need. A critical component of this new programme is an income-generating project that empowers women survivors to establish small businesses to earn an income that enables them to afford medicine, transport, food and better hygiene.

In addition, three specialist health clinics have been set up in Kigali, Kabuga and Rwamagana in which staff are trained to be sensitive to the treatment of survivors, so that they can receive secure and confidential care. The challenge ahead is ensuring that survivors continue to receive the support and funding that they still critically need to deal with the healthcare consequences resulting from the genocide.

Economic development

Rwanda ranks 161 out of 177 countries in the UNDP Human Development Report, with 5.3 million people living on less than 25 pence a day. Rwanda is unlikely to meet the UN MDG of halving the proportion of the 5.3 million people currently living below the poverty line (of 25 pence a day) by 2015.

The majority of the 400,000 genocide survivors live in poverty, in unsuitable housing and without any means to support their dependants. In addition to losing their husbands, many widows have often lost their entire families, and are without the family network that would have cared for them in old age. And although they are unable to support themselves, many are responsible for a number of dependants.



A cooperative of widows and orphans of the genocide that have been supported to establish a cassava-growing project to restore their livelihoods post-genocide through a project of Survivors Fund (SURF) in partnership with AVEGA in Rwanda.

With partner organisations, Survivors Fund (SURF) has demonstrated that it is possible to mentor survivors to sustainably support themselves, primarily through income generating activity (IGA) associations. These self-initiated associations provide safe spaces for mutual support and solidarity amongst survivors, helping to alleviate their trauma. The income generated provides vital means for them to address the most basic of their needs, including costs associated with the schooling of their dependants.

IGA associations reinvest any profits and replicate/extend successful projects, thereby augmenting community capital. Many are agricultural projects such as cassava growing, and animal husbandry which have direct impact on improving diets.

Experience has demonstrated that poverty reduction is achievable and sustainable, particularly if survivors can access training and start-up capital for IGAs. Through SURF's Comic Relief grant, with supplementary funding from the Good Gifts catalogue (an initiative of the Charities Advisory Trust) a programme has been developed that delivers an intensive twelve week curriculum to associations of survivors encompassing the array of skills and tools necessary to ensure successful IGAs, such as financial literacy, profit and loss accounting, market research, business planning and sales and marketing.

The training is delivered by a network of student interns, primarily young survivors at university who

are members of another of SURF's partner organisations, AERG (Student Survivors Association). The interns also provide business advice to the associations, and most importantly are sensitive to the experience and situation of the adult survivors that the IGAs are being established to support.

However, there are limitations to economic development initiatives. Older widows in particular, due to their physical and emotional disadvantage, may encounter obstacles in engaging in income-generating activities; however, SURF's work seeks to empower their dependants through education, thereby increasing their economic potential in later life, and their ability to support vulnerable older people in their community.

Mental health

Survivors who did not lose their lives during the genocide lost many of the other elements of normality and stability necessary for a healthy and contented existence.



An HIV+ woman survivor receives trauma counselling from the specialist AVEGA health clinic in Rwamagana, Eastern Region of Rwanda.

Individuals were often left with no surviving relatives as a support network to face up to the horrifying experiences they had undergone. Recurrent nightmares and chronic head pain are commonly reported.

Some describe feelings of futility. Many are simply too overwhelmed by the magnitude of the genocide to be able to talk about it. In a 1999 study by AVEGA, 80 percent of surveyed women showed signs of trauma.

The genocide destroyed infrastructure necessary for effective treatment of trauma and PTSD. As a result of the dramatic events of the genocide, there was no structure to address the psychosocial needs of these people. The only psychiatric hospital (Ndera hospital) that existed in the country was not operational. In effect, in 1994 all of its patients and most of the staff were killed. All of Rwanda's psychiatrists left during the war. By the summer of 2008, three psychiatrists practiced in the country.

As a result of the destruction of public health infrastructure during the conflict, post-genocide recovery and trauma healing programs began their efforts at a considerable disadvantage. Trauma healing programs were instituted without a solid foundation. Most programs represented a Western philosophy; they were the efforts of international NGOs or of partnerships between the Rwandan government and international organizations. They

were budding efforts in a country whose psychiatric infrastructure had never been good, but was now practically non-existent. As such, the programs failed to be comprehensive and sensitive to the specific context of the genocide.

In 1994, many such psychosocial interventions were insensitive to Rwandan culture, economy and politics. In addition, they lacked coherence and coordination between, and within, humanitarian, military and political endeavours.

A second obstacle to effective provision of trauma counselling for victims of the genocide has been the usual Kigali location of NGOs and counselling programmes. Rural women generally do not have the resources to make a trip to the capital, and many NGOs cannot afford to send counsellors into different rural areas.

Since the initial response to the genocide in Rwanda, efforts have been made to re-evaluate the importance of

psychosocial support after significant exposure to trauma. Unfortunately, there are fewer economic, physical and environmental resources to help build human capacity, promote social ecology and strengthen the culture and values of a community upon which psychosocial well being is dependant. Further, poverty continues to exacerbate the despair and lack of emotional wellbeing endured by survivors of war and conflict. [Seventeen] years after genocide, the need still exists for expanding the capacity of existing mental health treatment programs and investing in new programs to address the underlying trauma and its impact on the capacity of individuals and communities to rebuild effectively after war.

Extracted from *Treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in Post Genocide Rwanda* by Isaura Zelaya Favila (Global Grassroots, July 2009).

Kiziguro Memorial Appeal

SURF is campaigning to raise £3,000 for the construction of a memorial wall in Kiziguro that will list the names of the 3,000 people massacred at the town's parish church and dumped in a nearby pit.



The Kiziguro Memorial Site, with the glasshouse which covers the manhole in which 3,000 bodies still lie.



Survivors and relatives of those murdered at Kiziguro finally saw a degree of justice delivered this April, when a key mastermind of the slaughter of 11 April 1994 was sentenced by the

ICTR to life imprisonment, albeit 17 years late. Building on this, the memorial wall will ensure that the dead are remembered with dignity, and that survivors may rebuild their lives.

Within days of the genocide beginning, genocidaires under Jean Baptiste Gatete, in Kiziguro, slaughtered around 3,000 people who, as in so many other parts of Rwanda, had sought refuge in a local church. Some victims were forced to dump the bodies in a nearby pit before they too were killed and tossed amongst the dead.

SURF has criticised the ICTR for the protracted and expensive process by which it has delivered convictions. Gatete's trial is a case in point. He was arrested in 2002, but only this year was convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity.

By contrast, Augustin Nkundabazungu, a senior commander alongside Gatete during this massacre, had a much quicker

route to justice under gacaca. He was arrested in August 2010, tried, convicted, and given a penal sentence of life imprisonment, currently under appeal.

Convictions are a key element of restorative justice for survivors. While due process, embodied by the ICTR, is clearly essential, the more informal gacaca can be more efficient.

Miraculously, 11 survivors were rescued from the Kiziguro mass grave by RPF troops when they liberated the area six days after the massacre. Seven are still alive today, but live in extreme poverty. SURF plans, alongside the memorial wall project, to establish a fund to support them in rebuilding their lives.

The current Kiziguro memorial project originated from an appeal from Immaculee, a survivor who escaped to the UK, whose mother, brother and other family members were killed at the site:

“I am trying to raise some money to write the names [somewhere near the grave/within the compound] of all the people who were killed in the church and were then thrown into the mass grave. I cannot afford it on my own; I have even been looking for a weekend job, no luck. I genuinely need some help and SURF's assistance. It upsets me because entire families are in the grave and it hurts to think that they will be forever forgotten someday.”

The Aftermath

Compared to postwar Poland, where locals expelled or murdered Jewish survivors who managed to stagger home from the camps, present-day Rwanda looks like a multicultural haven (although there were plenty of murders in Rwanda in the 1990s).



The remains of victims are still on display in the mass grave at the Nyamata Church which is today a memorial site.

Visitors to the country are impressed by what they find there, as I myself have been; and rightly so. The country could have ended up like Somalia, or like Sierra Leone during its cycles of horror. In Nyamata, however, no one is killing anyone. (Or almost no one: Hatzfeld discusses one murder.) Fewer fields lie fallow, and there are fewer abandoned houses scarring the landscape. Hatzfeld stresses that Hutu and Tutsi go to the same churches, and even to the same cabarets, and their children attend the same schools.

But that is not the whole truth. At the end of Sunday services, Tutsis and Hutus huddle in separate groups. As evening falls, you would notice that Tutsis gather to walk home together from town for safety in numbers. On the hills, he reports, “people walking along abruptly cross to the other side of the path, sneering or muttering insults at a passerby.” And those picture-perfect schools, where adorably well-behaved children sit on hard benches with no distractions except the teacher (American kids would riot), are the same schools, Hatzfeld points out, where the killers and the victims sat beside each other twenty years ago, schoolyard chums.

“The politics are clear to the Rwandans: reconciliation satisfies the authorities, the international donors, and as for the sorrow of the survivors, that’s just too bad,” maintains Marie-Louise Kagoyire.

Innocent Rwililiza, with a sure grasp of the global economy of penance, captures the interplay of self-interest and spurious affect: “If you think about it, who is it talking about forgiveness? The Tutsis? The Hutus? The freed prisoners, their families? None of them. It’s the humanitarian organizations. They are importing forgiveness to Rwanda, and they wrap it in lots of dollars to win us over. There is a Forgiveness Plan just

as there is an AIDS Plan, with public awareness meetings, posters, petty local presidents, super-polite whites in all-terrain turbo vehicles.” That last image packs a punch, because white Land Rovers were the vehicles in which U.N. workers and soldiers hightailed it out of Rwanda as the genocide began.

Extracted from *The Aftermath and After* (Response to Jean Hatzfeld’s *The Strategy of Antelopes*) by Christine Stansell in *The New Republic*, September 2009.

Compensation Law

[Seventeen] years after the genocide, the Rwandan government still has not established the Compensation Fund for Victims of the Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity called for in the 1996 Genocide Law and the subsequent *gacaca* laws.



A poster promoting the importance of gacaca, posted alongside a Rwandan road.

The fund was supposed to cover judicial awards to genocide survivors where (as in most cases) convicted genocidaires were too indigent to pay out the awards themselves. In August 2002, the cabinet discussed a draft reparations law that would have given US\$23,000 to beneficiaries, who were defined broadly as all persons targeted due to their ethnicity or opposition to the genocide (as well as their relatives), regardless of whether they had suffered any actual injury.

In explaining why the draft bill was shelved, the then second-highest-ranking official in the Ministry of Justice told me:

“We thought it was not a very realistic draft... At the level of disbursing [compensation], let the law clearly indicate there are cases which are in acute need to whom compensation would be applied... and let the law make clear what we mean by acute need. Compensation is a right, yes, but let it be a compensation fund—not compensation for each and every person in a court of law.”

As of July 2007, there had been no new reparations bill. Some top Rwandan officials have insisted that the country cannot afford

a reparations fund. As Domitilla Mukantaganzwa, Executive Secretary for the National Service for Gacaca Jurisdictions, explained: “Compensation in a legal sense, we think it’s impossible for us... We cannot commit ourselves on something we are not sure to achieve.”

Despite the absence of a compensation fund, gacaca is providing limited reparations to genocide survivors. First, the most local-level gacaca courts are awarding restitution to genocide survivors for their loss of property (unless amicable settlements have already been reached). Those who cannot pay back stolen or destroyed goods are often required to work off their debt through unpaid labor for the survivors. Second, gacaca offers some measure of

symbolic reparations: those who plead guilty must reveal the whereabouts of their victims’ remains if they want to benefit from reduced sentences. During the genocide, many victims were tossed into pit latrines and anti-erosion ditches or left scattered on the hillsides. What genocide survivors want most, apart from compensation, is to find the remains of their loved ones and to reburial them with dignity. One of the leaders of the largest survivors’ organization credited gacaca with helping survivors to locate their dead.

Extracted from *Transitional Justice and DDR: The Case of Rwanda* by Lars Waldorf (June 2009).

ICTR

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was established in 1994 by the United Nations Security Council to prosecute individuals responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Rwanda during 1994.



Jean de Dieu Mucyo, former Public Prosecutor and now Executive Secretary of National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide, who has demanded action against corrupt ICTR counsels.

The establishment of the ICTR was an important recognition of the gravity and scale of the atrocities that had been committed, including genocide and other systematic, widespread and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law. Unfortunately, the Tribunal got off to a poor start. Cooperation from the Government of Rwanda was far from assured. There were numerous complaints of deficient management, incompetence and corruption in the Tribunal's early years.

Relations with the Government were marred by tensions and public quarrels; the ICTR complained about lack of cooperation while the Government accused the Tribunal over a host of issues. The process at the ICTR was far from the victims and others it was meant to serve, both in terms of the physical distance, based as it is in Arusha, Tanzania, and the failure to make its proceedings and decisions relevant to the daily lives of Rwandans.

Victims' perceptions of justice, as they relate to the ICTR, have been complicated from the outset. Many harboured suspicions about a United Nations court from the very beginning, given that the United Nations had abandoned them in their most urgent time of need by failing to act to prevent or stop the genocide. They saw it then as an institution set up, in the wake of the genocide, by an international

community that was more interested in symbolic responses rather than in meaningful justice. However, precisely because they continue to yearn for both justice and acknowledgment, many have withstood the ordeal and repercussions of testifying in Arusha. What most found, however, is that the ICTR, by and large, failed to specifically address and take into account their needs, broadly speaking, and that it has only minimally satisfied their hopes and expectations.

The ICTR has made a number of key rulings, setting precedents in international law - including in particular the recognition that rape and other forms of sexual violence were used as instruments of genocide, and also that such crimes formed part of a widespread and systematic attack directed against civilians, constituting crimes against humanity.

It has also indicted and prosecuted some of the key architects and leaders of the genocide. However, the numbers of successful prosecutions are exceedingly low when compared to the vast numbers of suspects who remain unpunished. Survivors have also been deeply affected by the release of well-known genocide leaders and what have often been regarded as derisory sentences. Insufficient protection for witnesses both in Arusha and in Rwanda has also widened the gulf. But perhaps no issue has been as emotive and controversial as the failure to adequately take into account the prevalence of rape and other crimes affecting women.

Extracted from *Survivors and Post-Genocide Justice in Rwanda: Their Experiences, Perspectives and Hopes* by African Rights and Redress (November 2008).

No forgiveness

“The reality, though, in Rwanda is harsh. To think that just 16 years after the genocide, I should be discussing forgiveness while released prisoners still threaten survivors, and are now back living next door to them, is unconceivable.”



Mary Kayitesi Blewitt OBE, Founder of Survivors Fund (SURF), at the Kamonyi Memorial Site.

In the words of Martin Luther King: “In the end we will remember, not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.” For it is not the words of the murderers I think of now as I

speak to you, but the silence of you, my friends, when my family was being murdered in cold blood, and the silence and lack of support for survivors over the last 16 years.

Yet, to be civil and to be seen as a Christian, I am expected to subscribe to the notion of forgiveness.

As an international “community”, to find an easy way out of our troubled world of crime and violence, doing nothing to prevent further violence is unacceptable:

- First, because of its shocking implication that the perpetrator is allowed to commit such acts, that we become complicit.
- Second, such silence betrays the victims of yesterday, if we do nothing today.

Yet you ask me to forgive? No!

I believe forgiveness is a lack of will to face the fact that violence continues to increase, because we are not prepared to face the perpetrators and bring them to account. But only by doing so will justice prevail, further atrocities be prevented and

the healing process for victims be able to begin.

Genocide may have stopped when men wielding machetes were stopped, but its legacy persists, as survivors are targeted and killed by released perpetrators because they are Tutsi.

On a personal level, I will not forgive the killers of my brother without justice. That would be a betrayal of my brother. I have no right to forgive on his behalf.

Forgiveness without justice is a betrayal of my family. Forgiveness is between me and my God. It is not a matter of national policy. Individuals who have to deal with the aftermath of horrendous atrocities should not also be robbed of their independence to decide when to forgive or not. Forced forgiveness is insensitive, intrusive and morally isolating. Those who choose not to subscribe to society’s pressure to comply and be

seen to forgive should be given that right to do so.

Violence can and is justified – not in revenge, but in defence. That defence for survivors is ever necessary today, as perpetrators continue and try finish what they almost succeeded in doing in 1994.

In Rwanda, the grievances of survivors remain unaddressed. They fear reprisal. A culture of impunity festers and encourages cycles of anger, self-destruction, generalized aggression and severe trauma that is yet to be acknowledged. We are seeing today signs that this trauma is affecting children of survivors, an intergenerational inheritance.

Extracted from a lecture on “*Is violence ever justified?*” by Mary Kayitesi Blewitt OBE on 12th May 2010.

Failed aid

In his book *Aiding Violence*, Peter Uvin provides a comprehensive, damning, yet sober account of how the development community in Rwanda prior to the 1994 genocide implicitly supported anti-Tutsi government policies adopted in the context of threats, intimidation, violence, and murder of innocent civilians for the sole reason of their being Tutsi.

Ultimately, the legacy of racism and violence in which national and transnational aid agencies and NGOs were widely complicit was to culminate in genocide. Uvin argues “Ethnic inequality; institutionalized, state-organized racism... the generalized presence of impunity and fear and the absence of justice; human rights violations; the oppressive presence of the state, and the like are emphatically not parts of the mandate of development agencies; and are thus evacuated, ignored, considered not to exist.” (Uvin 1998: 45)



Mwami (King) Rudahigwa Mutara III died in mysterious circumstances in 1959 after a routine vaccination from a Belgian doctor, in what many Rwandans consider to have been an assassination.

Given the magnitude of the moral failure of the development community in its refusal to stand up to anti-Tutsi racism before the genocide, and the genocide which ensued after years of complicity with a racist and dictatorial regime, one might reasonably expect that development organisations that have returned to Rwanda or begun to work there for the first time would make special efforts to integrate concern for the rights and needs of Rwanda’s most vulnerable and marginalised community, the survivors of the genocide.

But development agencies are doing no such thing. For all the rhetoric in which development NGOs almost

universally engage, insisting that they prioritise the most poor, vulnerable, and marginalised of social groups and that they deliberately seek to empower them, genocide survivors are today of only tangential concern in most current development projects in Rwanda that are led by international NGOs and aid agencies.

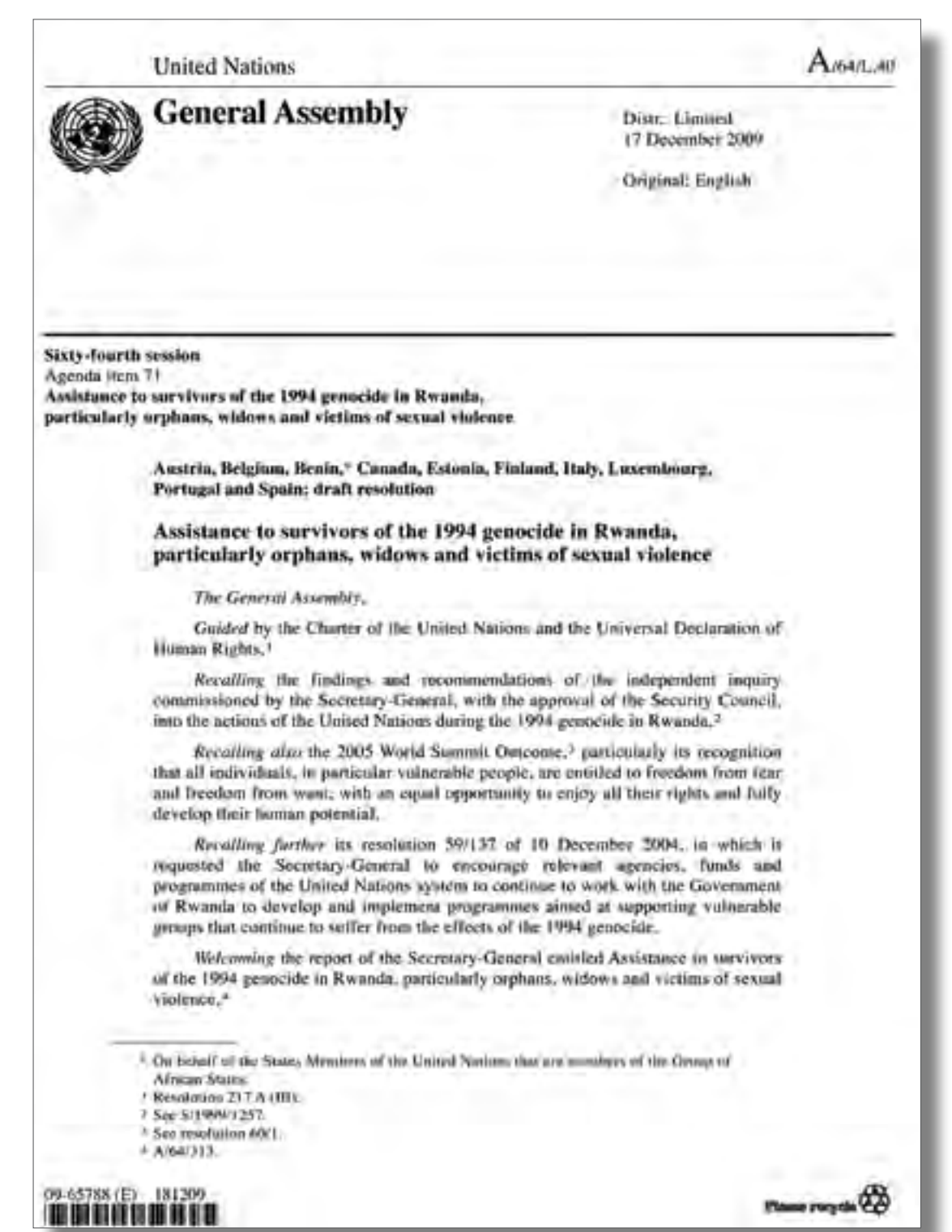
Until now, many development aid agencies have evaded their responsibility to genocide survivors by advancing insensitive and morally obtuse arguments about the need to focus on reconciliation and peace building. These are worthy goals in their own right, but they should not be pursued at the expense of the human rights and welfare of genocide

survivors. Doing so will not only further marginalise and harm these survivors, but will perpetuate a culture of racism such as that which saturated Rwanda from 1959 to 1994 in the form of the Hutu Power philosophy, which propagated the belief that Tutsis have fewer rights and less human dignity than their Hutu co-citizens.

Extracted from *Failed aid: how development agencies are neglecting and marginalising Rwandan genocide survivors* by Noam Schimmel in *Development in Practice* (Volume 20, Number 3, May 2010) and from *Remembering the Survivors of Genocide in Rwanda* from *Dissent Magazine* (May 2011).

Development agencies

The UN General Assembly has passed three resolutions calling for UN agencies and member states to direct aid to address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of genocide survivors in Rwanda.



On December 23, 2005, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 60/225, entitled “Assistance to Survivors of the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, Particularly Orphans, Widows, and Victims of Sexual Violence.” The resolution stated that it recognized the numerous difficulties faced by survivors of the

1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly the orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence, who are poorer and more vulnerable as a result of the genocide, especially the many victims of sexual violence who have contracted HIV and have since either died or become seriously ill with AIDS.

This resolution was readopted in 2009 and reaffirmed principles of support for survivors expressed in Resolution 59/137 on December 10, 2004, which requested that the Secretary General “encourage relevant agencies, funds, and programmes of the UN system to continue to work with the Government of Rwanda to develop and implement programmes aimed at supporting vulnerable groups that continue to suffer effects from the 1994 genocide.”

And yet the UN remains in contempt of its resolutions to support survivors. UN agencies such as UNICEF and the UNDP have not delivered substantial and comprehensive programs to address the injustices and vulnerability that Rwandan genocide survivors currently face. With few exceptions, other multilateral and bilateral aid organizations have a similar record of marginalizing the needs of genocide survivors, often subsuming them under

broad development goals that have little positive impact on them and overlook their distinctive challenges. This is true of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and of most European development agencies working in Rwanda (with the noteworthy exception of the UK Department for International Development, which has contributed significantly to programs supporting genocide survivors).

Many development NGOs active in Rwanda maintain a similarly shameful policy of ignoring the moral and practical imperatives set out in these UN resolutions. Even NGOs with excellent reputations, such as Oxfam and World Vision, are inadvertently contributing to the marginalization of genocide survivors by not addressing their urgent needs systematically and substantially.

To be sure, there are important and commendable exceptions

among some NGOs, such as Heifer International and Send-A-Cow, which have deliberately included genocide survivors in their projects and show awareness of and sensitivity to their needs. Some NGOs, such as Plan International and CARE, which work on a holistic community basis, have genocide survivors among their beneficiaries, although their programmes are not aimed at this population in particular. But CAFOD, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, is the only major development agency working in Rwanda whose programmes explicitly give priority to genocide survivors, and it should be commended for this exceptional commitment.

Extracted from *Failed aid: how development agencies are neglecting and marginalising Rwandan genocide survivors* by Noam Schimmel in *Development in Practice* (Volume 20, Number 3, May 2010) and from *Remembering the Survivors of Genocide in Rwanda* from *Dissent Magazine* (May 2011).

Reconciliation

“At the beginning, it [reconciliation] is very fragile, but with time I think it holds,” President Kagame told me. “People’s hearts and minds need some time to heal. A very long time indeed. They will probably need a whole generation, and the memories will keep lingering.”

Then he told me a story. Every year, on April 7th, Kagame presides over a national genocide-commemoration ceremony at one of the major massacre sites that have been preserved as memorials to the victims. In 2005, the ceremony was at Murambi, where a young man in his mid-twenties got up to speak. “A survivor,” Kagame said.



SURF has distributed through CREDI, a cooperative of survivors and non-survivors, the first donkeys to be imported into Rwanda which is one project to foster reconciliation though tensions can remain high

“Somebody who actually was killed, almost, and dumped in a mass grave of close to four thousand people. Our forces arrived after they had just been killed and brought out twelve people from the mass grave who lived, survived. They had been cut with machetes and were in very bad shape. They were treated and nursed, and over time this young person was there giving testimony of what happened.”

Kagame told me that when the young man got to the end of his account he said, “Recently, some of those people who killed our families and killed us have been released... They are there in the village living normally.” It was Kagame, of course, who had issued the order granting

the killers their reprieve, so after the ceremony he called the young man over. “And I asked him, How do you manage? When you meet them, what do they tell you or what do you tell them? What is your feeling? I want you to genuinely tell me how you feel. This young man looked me in the face and he said, ‘Well, President, I manage because you ask us to manage.’ “

Kagame repeated the man’s words in a tone of some astonishment—“This is what he told me. He said, ‘President, I manage because you ask us to manage’ “-as if he had only just heard in them the echo of the soul-molding power of his office. But there was a chastening twist at the end of the young

survivor’s story. It turned out that the released killers avoided him in his village. “They would rather take another route,” Kagame said. “When he passes them, they always look down. It was very revealing. You see, it’s like, We are managing because what else?”

In other words, I suggested, the young man wasn’t managing so well, after all.

“Yes,” Kagame said. “That’s really what he meant.”

Extracted from *The Life After: Fifteen years after the genocide in Rwanda, the reconciliation defies expectations* by Philip Gourevitch in *The New Yorker*, May 2009.

Reparation in Rwanda

Victims' rights to reparation have been widely recognized at both the national and international level. Yet in many situations the enforcement of victims' rights to reparation through national and/or international reparation mechanisms has proved extremely difficult.



The Abasangiye Cooperative, a sewing income-generating group of AVEGA members all of which are victims of sexual violence (and mothers to children born of rape) supported by SURF and Foundation Rwanda.

For this reason many victims have been left without reparation, despite gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed against them. As far as

the supranational criminal law level is concerned, the reparation regime of the International Criminal Court (ICC) may bring about a positive change for victims.

The notion that international justice should not only address traditional retributive justice, namely the punishment of the offender, but also restorative justice, namely having victims participate in the proceedings as well as providing them with reparation for their injuries, has gained increasing recognition with the establishment of the ICC. The ICC departed here from the overall retributive justice approach as applied by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

In general it can be held that the needs of victims of sexual violence for reparation (compromising restitution, compensation, and rehabilitation) during and in the aftermath of sexual violence committed as genocide, a crime against humanity, and a war crime are readily apparent. In addition

to the devastating physical, psychological, social, and economic consequences women and girls generally face, they often contract sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. The majority of victims of sexual violence are women who have been left without any form of reparation, including adequate medical and psychological care. Because of their desperate situation, without help many survivors of sexual violence can barely continue to exist, have died since, or face death in the near future. Female survivors of sexual violence therefore deserve separate attention when it comes to reparation.

Despite the terrible physical and psychological consequences of the rapes and other forms of sexual violence, more than twelve [now seventeen] years after the 1994 genocide female survivors of sexual violence have received hardly any form of reparation, either at national

or international level. While several organizations – such as WE-ACTx (Women's Equity in Access to Care and Treatment), AVEGA-AGAHOZO, and Survivors Fund (SURF) – do everything in their power to support survivors of sexual violence, the problem is so enormous that much more help is needed in the form of personnel, medicines, and funding. While reparation could have met these women's needs for medical and psychological care, they are instead still struggling to meet their own and their children's most basic needs, such as food, clothing, housing, and education.

Extracted from *Reparation to Victims of Sexual Violence: Possibilities at the International Criminal Court and at the Trust Fund for Victims and Their Families* by Anne-Marie de Brouwer (Leiden Journal of International Law, 20 (2007), pp. 207–237).

Right to Reparation

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has emphasized that reparation ‘consists of full restitution, meaning the restoration of the prior situation, the reparation of the consequences of the violation, and indemnification for patrimonial and non-patrimonial damages, including emotional harm.’

According to the court, “Under international law a duty to provide reparations attaches to every violation of an international obligation which results in harm.”



The campaign for justice and reparations for the survivors of the genocide, such as this group from Bisesero pictured at the memorial site at which 60,000 Tutsis were slaughtered, continues to this day.

There is a legal basis for restorative justice in Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966, which states that: “Anyone who has been the victim of unlawful arrest or detention shall have an enforceable right to compensation.” Survivors of genocide have obviously suffered far greater violations of their rights than unlawful arrest and detention. But the fact that compensation is legally enshrined indicates that compensation has a role to play in international law. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the UN Convention Against Torture all call for compensation and restorative justice for victims of human rights violations.

The violation of norms of international humanitarian law gives rise to a

duty to make reparations. Under international humanitarian law, the Hague Convention regarding the Laws and Customs of Land Warfare includes specific requirements for compensation. Likewise, the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 contain a provision of liability for grave breaches and the 1977 Additional Protocol I (Art.91) specifically provides for the payment of compensation.

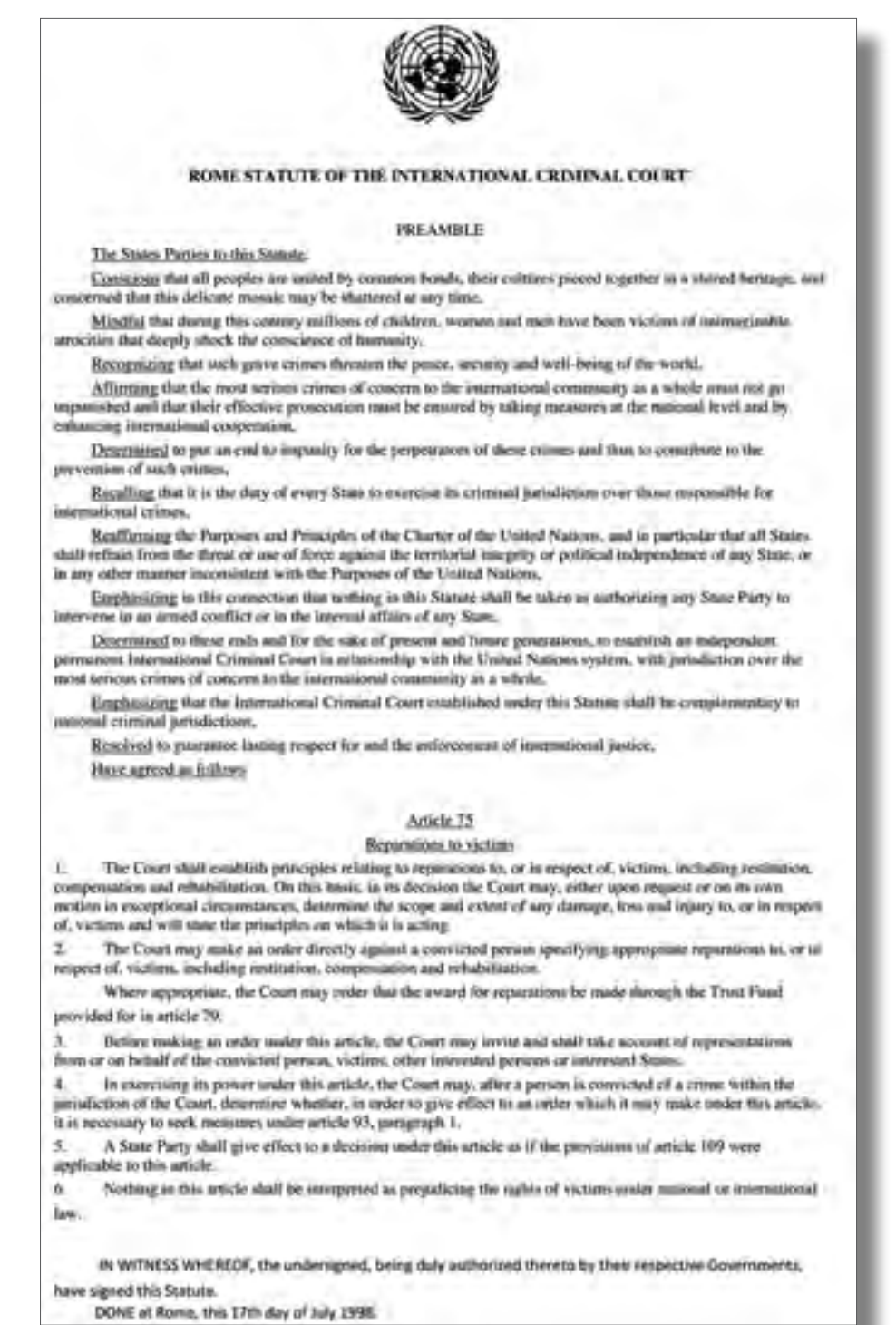
The type of reparations afforded at a national or international level will in practice depend on what jurisdictions have been seized, what funds are available, how persistent the victims are in pursuing their rights, the good will of the state(s) concerned and/or the interest of the international community. These will not necessarily reflect the wishes of victims or the nature of the violations. The lack of funds has

often been used to justify the absence of a reparations program, though there have been too few instances when creative alternatives have been employed and other forms of reparations have been awarded. The fundamental challenge is to find a way in which to ensure that victims of the worst atrocities can realize their right to reparation for the harm suffered, while recognizing the uniqueness of situations and the range of possible reparations models. This is not merely a question of compensation or restitution – the process of reparation, by acknowledging the harm done, will help to restore dignity to victims, contributing to their recovery.

Extracted from *Searching for Justice: Comprehensive Action in the Face of Atrocities* (June 4-6, 2003 – York University, Canada).

The International Criminal Court

Article 75 of the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court allows for enforcement of restorative justice for survivors of human rights violations. The UN Trust Fund is the main mechanism for doing so, along with the ICC's legal mandate to require convicted individuals to compensate victims with their own assets.



“For the very first time in history, a possibility has been created to address the wrongs which have been committed through a claim for reparations against the individual convicted by an international criminal court, including an option to claim restitution, compensation and rehabilitation.”

Judge Phillipe Kirsch, President of the ICC

The UN Trust Fund of the International Criminal Court illustrates the challenges survivors of mass atrocity face in trying to realise their human rights.

“Conflict affects all lives and livelihoods, but it continues for victims who face stigma, vulnerability, and marginalisation. It is impossible to fully undo the harm caused by genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. However, it is possible to help survivors recover their dignity, rebuild their families and regain their place as contributing members of their societies. Marginalisation makes it harder for victims to be heard, to get help, and rebuild their lives. Widows returning to their villages, for example, have to struggle to get their homes back because women rarely hold title to the family property. Crimes may compound existing vulnerabilities, or may lead to victims being ostracized from their societies. Rape victims often refrain from

mentioning their plight to avoid being shunned by their families. Victims of mutilation can be rejected by their communities. Often, people are victims of multiple crimes.”
The Trust Fund for Victims.

“The UN Trust Fund supports restorative justice efforts addressing these challenges: In both Uganda and the DRC, the Trust Fund has established three categories of programmes, reflecting the three aspects of its independent mandate to provide support to victims... These are physical rehabilitation, psychological rehabilitation and material support... The Trust Fund says that the idea of livelihood ‘embodies three fundamental attributes: the possession of human capabilities (such as education, skills, health, and psychological orientation); access to tangible and intangible assets; and the existence of economic activities.’ Elaborating on this, it says that ‘the interaction

between these attributes defines how the Board of Directors prioritizes support so that victims can cope with and recover from the stress and shocks of victimization.”
Conor McCarthy.

Although reparations are essential to restore wellbeing to survivors of mass atrocity they have received relatively little support from the UN and the international community:

“The necessity of reparations is often undisputed. Reparations are arguably the most victim centered of the various approaches to fighting impunity; but in recent years, most of the international resources meant for transitional justice and peace building has gone to operating war crimes tribunals, occasionally to truth commissions, certainly to reintegrating ex-combatants, but seldom, if ever, to directly benefit victims of human rights violations.”
Ruben Carranza.

Odette Kayirere

“I escaped death many times. It’s why I find a meaning for my survival today,” says Odette Kayirere, 54, Executive Secretary of AVEGA.

From April to May 1994, one million people were slaughtered in Rwanda. Around 50,000 women lost their husbands, and became heads of households overnight. Mass rape, used as a weapon of war, added to women’s trauma. Many were deliberately infected with HIV. AVEGA Agahozo (kinyarwanda, meaning “to dry your tears”) was founded to advocate for justice for these women.



Odette Kayirere outside of AVEGA Eastern Region, the branch of AVEGA that she helped to establish in Rwamagana. She is now Executive Secretary of AVEGA based in Kigali.

Odette herself lost her husband and was left with six daughters to raise. Despite her own difficulties, she went on to adopt several more orphans.

In the months following the genocide, “Life made no sense, I lost all hope,” she remembers. But in 1995, Odette heard about a group of women who were trying to support each through their trauma. She joined a few meetings and felt her first glimmer of hope.

“I realised that I wasn’t the only one in pain,” says Odette “There were others suffering even more than me. I thought: ‘Maybe there is something for me to do, to make a change, to help people.’”

Within days, Odette had started AVEGA East, a widow’s association based in Rwamagana, eastern

Rwanda. “I organised about 20 women and told them about AVEGA and how we could help each other. The first thing was to break the silence, to fight the isolation that women felt.”

With the help of leaders like Odette, AVEGA (Association des Veuves du Genocide Agahozo - Association of Widows of the Genocide) has flourished into a ground-breaking women’s association. Today, it has over 20,000 members, supporting over 70,000 dependents (many of which are orphans of the genocide), and the organization continues to grow.

Amongst its many services, AVEGA offers psychological support to help women overcome the horrors they have faced. It also helps women gain justice in court for genocide crimes including the murder of loved ones, rape, and loss of property and land.

AVEGA has trained 200 women, many of whom have never been to school, as paralegals. It manages three health clinics, which provide holistic antiretroviral treatment to over 1,500 HIV positive women survivors, raped and infected with HIV during the genocide. Over 5,000 of its members, once marginalised and very vulnerable, now have the confidence to participate in income-generating activities that enable them to live independent lives and reintegrate into the community.

“Many women are not educated, didn’t go to school, or know their rights. The role of AVEGA is to help them fight for their own rights,” says Odette.

Mary Kayitesi Blewitt OBE

Mary Kayitesi Blewitt is a remarkable woman hailed for her role in advocating for survivors of the 1994 Rwandan genocide through Survivors Fund (SURF), which she founded in 1997.



Mary Kayitesi Blewitt OBE with a group of survivors at the Bisesero Memorial Site.

Mary is a British citizen of Rwandan origin who lost more than 50 family members in the genocide. Immediately following the mass-killing, she volunteered for the Ministry of Rehabilitation

in Rwanda, working for eight months helping to bury the dead and to support the survivors, many of whom had lost everything – family and friends, home and health.

This formative experience inspired Mary to set up SURF upon her return to the UK to ensure that survivors received aid, assistance and support, and that people around the world would hear their voices. The London and Kigali based charity now raises over £1 million a year to support projects for survivors in Rwanda across fields including education, healthcare, income generation and shelter.

“I set up SURF to give survivors a purpose to survive, a reason to live and fight, whether as witnesses to the genocide and families that fell, or as human beings with dreams and aspirations to better themselves and their families,” Mary says.

Since retiring as director of SURF in 2009, after dedicating 15 years of her life to the cause of survivors, Mary began the next phase of her career -- researching trauma recovery to learn how best to enable survivors to manage the horrific memories of genocide. She recently completed the writing of her memoirs, *You Alone May Live*, which focuses on the lessons of 15 years of work with survivors.

As part of her research into sustainable intervention for trauma victims, Mary completed studies in complementary therapy in 2011 and established a new social enterprise called Ginger Aromatica. Through Ginger Aromatica, Mary is using

her skills as a therapist to benefit Rwandan survivors, who continue to deal with the psychological effects of the genocide, in particular post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as the intergenerational inheritance of trauma now experienced by children born and raised by survivors.

Mary sees her work with survivors as one of many efforts necessary to restore justice in Rwanda. She concludes... “There is a need for political and restorative justice, before a healing of hearts and minds is possible. If survivors are ever to eventually forgive and reconcile, this is imperative. For such justice I continue to work.”

Jean Gakwandi

Jean Gakwandi is the founder and director of Solace Ministries, a Christian survivors' organisation which provides care and support to widows and orphans of the genocide.



Jean Gakwandi, Founder of Solace Ministries, with a young survivor supported by the organisation.

Though he lost 99 family members in the genocide, Jean and his immediate family miraculously survived three attempts to kill them, hiding from soldiers for 89 days. In the aftermath of the genocide, while working with

World Relief, Jean received a number of widows and orphans in his office appealing for his help after having lost everything – family, property, land and livelihoods. These were people who were deeply traumatized and hopeless.

Jean recounts, “They expressed feeling of guilt and yet they were the victims. Anger, resentment, deep sorrow and sometimes hatred tortured them. Our discussions, which as a rule ended in deep weeping, showed that there was deep sorrow and hurt in their inner being that could not be met by only material assistance.”

On asking God what he should do, the answer came through Scripture. Isaiah 40:1, “Comfort, comfort my people says your God.” This answer was later confirmed to Jean in his reading of 2 Corinthians 1:3 “We are comforted so that we can comfort others.”

Jean’s calling was shared by a small group of dedicated Rwandan Christians whose experiences as survivors made them keenly

aware of the need for solid Christian counselling to bring healing to their country. With their help, Jean established Solace Ministries as a Rwandan charitable organization in July 1996. Recognizing that material remedies were insufficient on their own, Solace Ministries set out to meet victims’ psychological and spiritual needs as well.

Today Solace Ministries provides holistic support to meet the needs of 10,000 survivors, helping provide access to shelter, healthcare, education and counselling. In addition, Solace has expanded its ministry to focus on child-headed households, as well as those affected by HIV and AIDS. It runs a successful health clinic in Kabuga, as well as a guest house in Kigali, which generates income to sustain and extend the work of the organisation.

Solace currently trains widows to provide counselling and health education to other women, and makes a point of integrating HIV positive sufferers with healthy women in each of their work and training areas, aiming to build support networks for when they become ill and need help.

As Jean explains, “Widows need understanding, compassion and empowerment for their own socio-economic development – and a family environment. In so doing, we can comfort the broken hearted, restore hope and a desire to live on.”