

# Rwanda Revisited: A Critical Introspection on Rwanda's Resurrection from the Scars and Trauma left by the Genocide | Jos Chathukulam, Gireesan K, Manasi Joseph and Clement Kayitakire

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## **Abstract**

April 7, 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsis. The first author of this paper during his visit to Rwanda got the opportunity to interact with the survivors of the Genocide and the present-day administrators in the country. During the visit to Rwanda, the author came to know about the facts that led to the Genocide and got a first-hand experience and knowledge of Rwanda's resurrection from the tragedy. The authors share the strategies and methods used by Rwanda including home-grown solutions and the role of decentralization in post-conflict reconstruction of a country to empower its citizens. This article is not merely a commemorative remembrance to all those who lost their lives. It is also a tribute to resilience of the Rwandan people who came together to reconstruct their nation through their determination and will power by aligning with democratic principles and ideals.

**Keywords:** Rwanda, Genocide, Home Grown Solutions, De-ethnicization, Peacebuilding, Reconciliation and Forgiveness

## **Introduction**

On April 7, 1994, exactly 30 years ago, a mass Genocide began in Rwanda [1]. Close to 800,000 people, one tenth of Rwanda's population were killed in 100 days, making it one among the darkest moments in the human history. The immediate reason for the Genocide was the ethnic violence that broke out after an aircraft carrying the then Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundi's President Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down by a missile near Kigali, the Capital of Rwanda. Habyarimana belong to the Hutu ethnic group. The ethnic groups in Rwanda are the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. The Hutus are majority, while the Tutsi and Twa are minority communities.

Within hours of the plane crash, militants from the Hutu ethnic majority unleashed brutal and frenzied killings of Tutsis. Nearly 70 per cent of the Tutsi population was wiped out in the Genocide. The 100 days of slaughter saw neighbors turning on neighbors and friends turning on friends. Rape, sexual torture, mutilation, and enslavement were used as weapons to attack, terrorize and slaughter thousands of Tutsis. It has been estimated that more than 250,000 women were raped during the Genocide.

Though the Genocide against the Tutsis was an internal domestic conflict within Rwanda, it would not have escalated into the form of bloodshed and mass butchering of human lives had the international community intervened in the matter to mitigate the conflict. According to a comprehensive study by Human Rights Watch and International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, the authorities in the US, French and Belgium along with United Nations ignored dozens of warnings and intelligence inputs in the months before the Genocide and failed to act effectively (Human Rights Watch, March 31, 1999, Stanton, 2009). Lack of any strategic interest in Rwanda was another major reason for the ignorant attitude of the countries. It has been stated that “the Americans were interested in saving money, the Belgians were interested in saving face and the French were interested in saving their ally, the genocidal government,” (Human Rights Watch, March 31, 1999). Even after the sporadic killings began, the world leaders ignored the seriousness. Countries like the USA and the UK were not willing to give financial or military support to the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR) and these countries along with the UN Security Council ordered UNAMIR to leave Rwanda (Stanton, 2009). Though the US and UK were willing to commit billions to save lives in Bosnia where people are “white”, they were unwilling to do the same in Rwanda where people are “black” and neither these two countries had any strategic or national interests”, (Stanton, 2009). While foreign countries were busy evacuating their nationals from Rwanda, they did not consider Rwandan lives worth saving. None of them had any strategic interest in Rwanda and hence they did not give any priority to save the lives of Rwandan citizens. Classified documents on US also revealed that the “Uncle Sam” had no interest in Rwanda, a small Central African country with no minerals [2] or strategic value at that time (Carroll, 2004).

The Clinton administration’s disastrous peacekeeping mission in Somalia also prevented the US from intervening in Rwanda. For the US and the France, “there was no national interest at stake” in Rwanda. “There are

numerous interconnected and complex factors that led to international inaction, such as a misguided view of African conflicts, the bureaucratic nature of the United Nations and peacekeeping fatigue in general,” (Maritz, 2012). Meanwhile, Belgium had a political connection in Rwanda due to their colonial rule. Belgium was once described as the “African Peacekeeping Specialists” (African Rights, 1995). However, after the violence began, around 10 Belgian peacekeeping officials were killed on April 8, one day after the genocide began. There was increasing pressure on the Belgian government to call back their peacekeepers home (African Rights, 1995). In order to save face and not to lose its status as “African peacekeeping specialists”, Belgium began to petition for the complete withdrawal of UNAMIR, which was supported at the Security Council as no other state had an interest in the mission (Des Forges, 1999: 618; OAU 2000: 132).

Romeo Dallaire in his book *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* wrote: “Still at its heart, the Rwandan story is the story of the failure of humanity to heed a call for help from an endangered people. The international community of which the UN is only a symbol failed to move beyond self-interest for the sake of Rwanda while most nations agreed that something should be done, they all had excuses why they should not be the ones to do it. As a result, the UN was denied the political will and material means to prevent the tragedy,” (Dallaire, 2004).

International community were reluctant to call the sporadic killings in Rwanda as a “genocide”. First and foremost, they wanted to avoid the “rise of moral pressure to stop the mass killings in Rwanda,” (Jehl, 1994). By avoiding the use of the term “genocide” it was felt that it could help them to “eliminate the obligation to confront the crime,” (Human Rights Watch, March 31, 1999). The UN also admitted that it remains haunted by its decision to stay on the sidelines and Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon referred to the UN’s inaction as shameful at a ceremony in Kigali on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Genocide (BBC, April 7, 2014).

India and Rwanda have generally shared good relations before the Genocide and in the post-Genocide era. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, no Indians were killed or injured in the Genocide and during the evacuation of Indian nationals [3]. While India’s official response

to Genocide is not documented, it is to be noted that between 1994 and 1996, India expressed its support for peace and goodwill in Rwanda through the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces.

### **Colonial Roots and the Genocide**

A Genocide of this scale of such bestiality did not happen spontaneously. It might have taken years of poisonous and contagious hate propaganda to make a section of the Rwandan community and society to commit this heinous and grotesque crime and the colonial masters who invaded Rwanda are the main culprits in this regard. There is no doubt that Rwanda's colonial past had a greater role in spreading hatred and venom between majority and minority communities in the country (Mamdani, 2001, Semujanga, 2003, Rusagara, 2012 and Schimmel, 2021). In 1899, Germany became the first European nation to colonize Rwanda. However, after the first world war, the Belgian colonization of Rwanda began in 1919 under the tutelage of League of Nations.

In the pre-colonial Rwanda, Hutus and Tutsis were the two prominent ethnic groups in Rwanda. Hutus represented a significant majority of the population. Meanwhile, much before the arrival of Hutus and Tutsis, there was Twas, who are believed to be the first inhabitants of Rwanda, right from the Neolithic period (Rennie, 1972). Twa community were engaged in hunting and gathering of food and pottery. Later on, they knew about iron, started rearing cattle and began small-scale cultivation of finger millets. Between 400 - 1000 AD (CE), migrants from Central Africa entered Rwanda and they brought with them extensive knowledge of farming and agriculture and they were identified as Hutus. Between 1400 and 1500 AD (CE), cattle herding pastoralists made their way to Rwanda and they came to be later identified as Tutsis. It is believed that Tutsis migrated to Rwanda from Ethiopia and seamlessly integrated with the Hutus. Tutsis culturally assimilated with Hutus by adopting the language, values and beliefs of the Hutus. Anthropologists assert that though Tutsis are taller, thinner and lighter-skinned than Hutus, they are not practically distinguishable on the basis of racial features and characteristics. As a result, inter-marriages were common and this paved the way for a greater degree of acceptance and respect between the Hutus and Tutsis.

Later on, social class divisions started emerging between them as the Tutsis occupied a more profitable occupation as cattle herders than the Hutus who

were agriculturalists. Tutsis became wealthy and occupied elite administrative positions in the pre-colonial Rwanda. Hutus were also successful in their own right. Meanwhile, there were small tensions between Hutus and Tutsis but these were intensified after the arrival of Belgians in 1919. The Belgians openly favoured and supported the Tutsis and the Tutsi Monarchy. Tutsis were given access to Western-style education and plum posts in the administration were exclusively given to Tutsis. The social mobility enjoyed by the Hutus were curtailed and the Belgians even backed the Tutsi monarchy. During the colonial rule of Belgium, ethnic divisions were radicalized and identification cards were issued to the Hutus, Tutsis and Twa. This is how social classes became ethnic groups. It has been argued that the Genocide against the Tutsis is a product of Belgian colonialism, especially their racial-based hypothesis (Hamitic Myth) [4] brought to Rwanda by the Belgian colonizers who were of the understanding that every civilization has to come from Europe as propagated by European colonialists. The colonial worldview was that Tutsis are a foreign race and thus the descendants of Europeans and therefore they are the “superior race” or “Hamites” (Eltringham, 2006 and Phillips, 2009). Thus, the Belgian colonialists attributed that Tutsis possessed an intellectual and physical superiority over the Hutus in Rwanda. Hence Tutsis became the elites of Rwanda under colonial rule and they exploited the Hutu person power and taxed them to generate an economy.

The colonial masters radicalized the difference between Hutus and Tutsis and it had a lasting effect in Rwanda. colonial rule institutionalized ethnic differences through a series of discriminatory reforms and administrative systems that favoured Tutsis [5]. The Belgian colonizers propagated the “Hamitic Myth” favouring Tutsis and introduced the identity cards to institutionalize the Tutsi and Hutu identities, with this the colonial masters laid the groundwork for the 1994 Genocide (Phillips, 2009 and Zaidi, 2021). After Rwanda became an independent State, the oppressed Hutus [6] seized the political power and they recontextualized and weaponized the “Hamite Myth” resulting in discrimination and killings of Tutsis by the first and second Hutu governments and its culmination ended in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis.

In 1962, Gregoire Kayibanda, belonging to Hutu ethnic group became the first President. Between, 1960s and 1970s, Hutu extremists slaughtered scores of Tutsis and many of them were exiled. Fighting between two ethnic

groups became rampant and thousands of Tutsis fled Rwanda. In 1973, a military coup led by and General Juvénal Habyarimana (also a Hutu) toppled the Kayibanda government and seized the power. Habyarimana drafted a new Constitution and in 1978, he won the Presidential election. Habyarimana being a Hutu favoured Hutu Rwandans and gave preference to them in military and public service. The Tutsis were heavily repressed under the Hutu majority rule. In the 1980s, the Tutsi refugees living in the Ugandan border began to organize themselves into a strong military force and in 1988 they formed a rebel military group named as Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). In the 1990s, the RPF began cross-border offensive against the Hutu-led government from Uganda. As a counter offensive, the ruling Hutu establishment under Habyarimana regime began massive hate propaganda against Tutsis and started portraying Tutsis and even moderate Hutus as traitors like RPF.

Then came the Arusha Accords in 1993, a UN sponsored peace agreement between the Rwandan government and the RPF. The Arusha Accords envisioned the establishment of a Broad-Based Transitional Government (BBTG) comprising of the insurgent RPF and the five political parties that were formed in the anticipation of 1992 general elections. The Accords also agreed upon the rule of law, repatriation of Tutsi refugees and merging of rebel and government military. In fact, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration along with support for securing foreign funds were the key matters discussed in the Accords. The peace agreement was reached on August 1993 and two months later UNAMIR also became operational. However, the implementation of Arusha Accords was a major challenge as there was growing distrust among the Rwandan government (Hutus) and RPF (Tutsi Rebels), lack of funding, security concerns, challenges in integrating the militaries and political tensions. The implementation failed miserably as international community struggled to raise funds, Rwandans did not install the transnational government and demobilization, reintegration programmes failed. The trust deficit between the Rwandan government and RPF was the major factor that led to the failure of Arusha Accords. On April 6, 1994, an aircraft carrying the then Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana was shot down by a missile near Kigali and this was the final straw that led to the sporadic killings of the Tutsis by the Hutus.

### **Rwanda's Road to Recovery**

Though the massacre still casts a long shadow over the small Central African state, the past three decades have seen Rwanda undergo a significant transformation, becoming a rare success story in the Africa. Rwanda may be a more prosperous and stable state now, but the road to recovery has been long and reconciliation with the events of the past is still ongoing. While the Genocide destroyed the social, moral, and ethnic fabric of the Rwandan society as a whole, it is important to note that the Rwandans rose like a phoenix from the ashes by adopting “locally engineered policy innovations” known popularly as “home-grown solutions” (HGS).

The Genocide of 1994 and its aftermath completely changed the political economy in Rwanda. Forgiveness, peace building, and good governance initiatives were key elements of HGS. No other country in the world has effectively made use of the power of HGS than Rwanda [7]. The peacebuilding initiatives undertaken through the Urugwiro Village (President’s Office), formed between 1998 and 1999 to discuss ways to strengthen national unity, democracy, decentralization, justice, economy, and security, is a notable initiative in this regard. These were termed as broad-based consultations to chart Rwanda’s future course. Participants in these meetings included people from all walks of life, including religious leaders, political leaders of pre-independence and post-independence political parties, civil society groups, the academic community, youth and women, and the politicians from the RPF. The consensus outcomes that emerged from consultative meetings in Urugwiro village were incorporated into the constitutional making process that eventually led to the creation of the 2003 post-transition Constitution in Rwanda.

The post-Genocide Rwandan government has come up with several HGS built on the values and systems of Rwandan culture, Most notable among them are Gacaca (Community Courts), Abunzi (Community Mediators) Ubudehe (Traditional Rwandan Practice and Cultural Value of Working Together to Collectively Solve Problems), Girinka (One Cow Per Family), Umuganda (Community Work), Imihigo (Performance Contracts), Vision 2020 Umurenge , Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI), Tubarerere Mu Muryango (Let us Raise Children in Families), Itorero (Civic Education), Ingando (Solidarity Camp), Umushyikirano (National Dialogue Council) and Umwiherero (National Leadership Retreat).

The HGS plays an important role not only in ensuring peacebuilding but also in achieving sustainable development. HGSs have been in vogue even before the onset of the pandemic. Between 1990 and 2017, Rwanda's Human Development Index (HDI) doubled from 0.250 to 0.524; in 2021, it stood at 0.534. GNI per capita changed about 19.51 per cent between 1995 and 2021. Rwanda is also a global leader in health care in the East African region in alternative care reforms. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (reflects deprivations in areas of health, education, and standard of living) in Rwanda declined from 0.461 in 2005 to 0.231 in 2021. In the case of the Gender Development Index, the 2021 female HDI value for Rwanda is 0.521 in contrast to 0.574 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.954.

The de-ethnicization (Ndi Umunyarwanda) could empower a generation of youngsters who can openly say, "I am Rwandan, not Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa." The women have actively participated in all areas of Rwanda's peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery process. Currently, 49 of 80 seats in Rwanda's parliament are occupied by women, the highest proportion in the world. Women also hold half of the Supreme Court seats. However, the Democracy Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has classified Rwanda as an "authoritarian regime". Rwanda ranks 117 and secured an overall score of 3.30 in the 2023 Democracy Index. Rwanda fares poorly in electoral process and pluralism with a dismal score of 1.42 (EIU, 2023). Similarly, in civil liberties and political participation also fares poorly with 2.65 and 2.78 respectively. When it comes to functioning of the government, Rwanda secured a score of 4.64 and for political culture it stands at 5. The EIUs Democracy Index is measured on a zero to 10 scale. Based on the ratings for 60 indicators, grouped into five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; functioning of the government, political participation; and political culture. Each category has a rating on a zero to 10 scale and the overall Index is the simple average of the five category indices (EIU, 2023). "While the post-genocide peace and goodwill are an encouraging development, one wonders why such horrendous human tragedy was needed to bring sense to people. Why can't better sense prevail without having to incur such cost?", (Nadkarni, 2024) [8]. These questions are relevant even today especially in the context of the conflicts and violence happening in Gaza and Ukraine.

#### **Cleanliness in Rwanda**



Rwanda is one of the cleanest countries in the world, second only to Singapore. Littering or vandalizing is big no – no in Rwanda, especially in Kigali, the country capital. In Rwanda, cleanliness isn't just a policy, it's a value everyone Rwandan citizen lives by. Kigali is often described as the “cleanest city on the planet,” [9](Kow, 2023). The country is able to maintain good standard of cleanliness with support of its citizens and they even have a community work day known as Umuganda (togetherness for common purpose). The Umuganda programme takes place on the last Saturday of every month, from 8 am to 11 am. All able-bodied Rwandans aged between 18–56 years have to mandatorily participate in cleaning the streets, repairing public facilities, building homes for the vulnerable and community development projects as part of Umuganda. Though the initiative began in 1962, it became a weekly programme in 1974 and after the 1994 genocide, the Umuganda was reintroduced to help Rwandans rebuild their nation and nurture a shared social identity. As per the Rwandan law, anyone who skips the Umuganda without a valid reason is liable to be fined 5,000 Rwandan Francs (RWF). In 2022, it has been reported that 97.3 per cent citizens participated in the Umuganda (Kow, 2023).

Rwanda also has a stringent garbage collection system in place. For instance, trash is collected on every Tuesday, and each family 2000 RWF per month, while businesses pay 10,000 RWF per month in public cleaning tax. As per the environmental legislations in Rwanda, the Rwandan National Police can impose a fine ranging from 10 to 100 RWF for littering in the city. Since 2008, non-biodegradable plastic bags and other similar plastic products are banned in Rwanda, with a fine of 150 US dollars and a 6 to 12-month jail sentence. Rwandans now use bags made of degradable materials such as paper, linen, banana leaves and papyrus (Jha, 2022).

### **Transportation in Rwanda**

The Rwandan government has made an investment of US\$ 76 million to pave narrow streets, widen main roads to dual carriageways and refurbish signages. They have inclusive public transportation and bus services connecting the suburbs and city centers. Rwanda is also pedestrian friendly with high walkability indices. Motorcycles/Motorbike taxis, also known as “motos” are one of the popular forms of transport in the country. The Rwandans and tourists find these motos as quick, cheap, convenient and safe. The moto drivers usually work from stations, junctions and roadside areas to pick up passengers. Though these motos/ motorbike taxis existed

in Rwanda since the 1990s, it was only in 2015 they got the much-needed recognition and popularity with launch of an uber style phone app called SafeMotos. Rwanda is also committed to making the country a carbon-neutral economy by 2050 and as part of this they have a bike sharing scheme to promote green mobility.

### **Health and Education Sectors in Rwanda**

In 2001, Rwanda introduced a community-based health insurance (CBHI) programme which enable citizens to pool funds with donations from foreign charities, the Rwandan government and international organizations to collectively cover the expenses of health care. The members contribute 1,000 Rwandan Francs per family member. Since, the country's poorest residents found it even hard to make copayments for their outpatient visits, the premiums and copayments were subsidized. As a result, more than 90 per cent of Rwandan citizens are covered under some form of health insurance. There has also been reports that the coverage had a positive effect on the life expectancy of Rwandans, rising from 49.7 years to 69.6 years between 2001 and 2022 (Sabet et al., 2023). Rwanda is also one among the sub-Saharan low-income country to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals of reducing maternal mortality rate and containing the spread of malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS. The CBHI has in a way improved the health-care affordability. Rwanda spent 7.8 per cent of its 2020 budget on health care (Sabet et al., 2023). In the post 1994 era, Rwanda focused on building a health-care system through strong leadership, community engagement and collaborative partnerships.

Meanwhile, Rwanda's health system is not without its challenges, including shortages of doctors, nurses and other trained -health-care providers. For instance, prior to the pandemic, in 2018, Rwanda was reported to have one physician, seven nurses and midwives and three other health workers per 10,000 population density (Open Data for Africa, 2018). This was way below the WHO recommended minimum threshold of 23 doctors, nurses and midwives per 10,000 people and even farther below the updated threshold of 44.5 per 10,000 (WHO, 2016)

Meanwhile, despite all the challenges, Rwanda was able to effectively contain the Covid 19 pandemic. Rwandan government was also able to quickly mobilize Covid 19 vaccines from United States and China. Close to 82 per

cent of the population received at least one dose of vaccine while neighboring countries like Tanzania (52%), Uganda (41%), Democratic Republic of Congo (10%) and Burundi (0.26%) were not able to do the same. It also in a way shows the state capacity inherent within the Rwandan administration to tackle public health exigencies in general.

In the past 25 years, higher education sector in Rwanda has experience significant growth, especially with the establishment of international level higher learning centers including world class institutions like Carnegie Mellon University in Kigali. While Rwanda is in the quest to become an education hub for international students, it already has 30 universities and higher learning institutions of which three are public universities and the remaining are private universities. In 2019, a total of 86, 410 students got enrolled in higher learning institutions and more than half are enrolled in private institutions.

#### **Local Government in Rwanda**

In the post- Genocide Rwanda, decentralization and local governments gained more significance. The provision for local government is enshrined in the Rwandan constitution under Organic Law of 2005, Chapter 1 (Article 167). Meanwhile, since 2000s, the Rwandan government launched phased introduction of decentralization programmes. The major aim of the decentralization programme was to counter the marginalization and exploitation of the citizens through broad-based participation in local development planning (Gaynor, 2016).

Rwanda has four tier local government which includes 30 districts (Uturere), 416 sectors (Imerenge), 2,148 cells (Utugari) and 14, 837 villages (Imudungu). Rwanda has a Ministry of Local Government and local government elections are held every five years. The local governments in Rwanda are entrusted with revenue-raising powers, and derive income from property taxes and license fees and to receive regular and one-off transfers from national government. They are also in charge of providing primary health care, water supply, waste disposal, rural electrification, community development, town planning and local transport. Local governments in Rwanda also have good data management systems.

Rwanda has also introduced Decentralisation and Good Governance (DGG) programme in collaboration with German based development agency named Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (popularly known as GIZ), along with Rwandan partners including Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda Governance Board, Rwanda Revenue Authority as well as a number of civil society organisations. The overall objective of the national decentralisation strategy is to strengthen the districts in providing public services for the 11.3 million Rwandan citizens in an efficient and transparent manner in collaboration with civil society. The programme offers technical support in the major four areas including citizen-oriented local governance, institutionalization of capacity development, local service delivery, fiscal decentralization and local public financial management.

In 2016, the Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA), in partnership with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and European Union, initiated a project to facilitate the localization of the SDGs in Rwanda. It brought together a wide range of stakeholders, and aimed to develop a roadmap for localization of the SDGs catering to the local needs and contexts of Rwanda. As part of this project, awareness on the importance of localization of SDGs and training workshops on how to formulate local development strategies by incorporating SDGs.

### **Conclusion**

As the world commemorates the 30th anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsis, now is the time to reflect the remarkable progress the country has made in all sectors right from health to education. Rwanda has been heralded as a paragon of sustainability in Africa in the recent times and its road to recovery is an inspiring one. The Genocide destroyed the social, moral and cultural fabric of the country, but with the determination and will power they rose up. While the scars of this grotesque crime are still etched in the consciousness of the survivors and the present generation of Rwandans, they are not seeking revenge and retaliation against those who carried out the injustice, instead they decided to build an inclusive Rwandan society rooted in democratic principles and ideals [10]. The developing countries like India and even less developed countries can learn a lot from Rwanda's Home-Grown Solutions or the strides it has made in the health and education sectors. Despite the devastating loss of life and infrastructure in

the genocide, Rwanda successfully rebuild its health care system with collective support of its citizens at the local and national level, foreign funding, health insurance coverage and political will. Rwanda made considerable investments in the health sector and has been able to pool resources within the country and abroad in cementing its strength. Rwanda's development programs are also more attuned to the sustainable development framework envisioned in the SDGs. Rwanda is one of the most rapidly urbanizing countries in Africa, especially Kigali.

On the one side, Rwanda is hailed as a development model in Africa, on the other side, there have been constant criticisms on the authoritarian and repressive style governance of the post-Genocide governments. It has been reported by human rights groups, journalists and academics that there is lack of freedom of speech, arbitrary detentions, and limited political freedom are rampant in Rwanda (Kamanzi, 2021). While Rwanda's efforts on peacebuilding and reconciliation have been praised by the international community, the democratic deficit in Rwanda is a concern. Though the Vision 2050 Rwanda has comprehensive and holistic development strategies to make the country an economically powerful nation, there is no serious commitment for strengthening democracy and robust democratic principles in the country. Rwanda may become one of the developed countries in the world but can it sustain development without a good democratic society. Meanwhile, the nation and its citizens have made peace with the past and prohibition of ethnic identification in the present-day Rwandan society is a positive outcome. Today, Rwanda promotes the concept of "I am Rwandan" or in other words, Rwandan nationality is given utmost importance and it is the only acceptable identity in the country and a democratic and inclusive society is a primary requisite for sustaining this narrative on a larger framework.

*(Authors: Jos Chathukulam is former Professor, Ramakrishna Hegde Chair on Decentralisation and Development, Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bengaluru and currently the Director of Centre for Rural Management (CRM), Kottayam, Kerala. Email: joschathukulam@gmail.com*

*K. Gireesan, Professor and Director, MIT School of Government, MIT World Peace University, Pune, Maharashtra. Email: gireesan.k@mitwpu.edu.in*

*Manasi Joseph is a Researcher at Centre for Rural Management (CRM), Kottayam, Kerala, email: manasijoseph[at]gmail.com*

*Clement Kayitakire is an Independent Researcher located at Kigali, Rwanda. Email: clement.kayitakire[at]gmail.com)*

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[1] Rwanda is located in East-Central Africa. It is bordered on the north by Uganda, on the east by Tanzania, on the south by Burundi, and on the west by Zaire. Rwanda, known as the land of hills, is geographically a small country with one of the highest population densities in sub-Saharan Africa (Clay and Lemerchand, 2024). The population is 40 % Roman Catholic; 21%, Pentecostal; 15% Protestant, including Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, and evangelical Christian churches; 12% Seventh-day Adventist; 4% per cent other Christian; 2% Muslim; and 0.7% Jehovah's Witnesses (2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Rwanda). Altogether, 92 per cent are Christians.

[2] Today, Rwanda is one of the world's largest producers of tin, tantalum, and tungsten (3Ts) and also exports gold and gemstones. Rwanda also possesses a variety of minerals such as silica sands, kaolin, vermiculite, diatomite, clays, limestone, talcum, gypsum, and pozzolan. Small-scale mining accounts for around 80 % of the country's mineral output. In 2018, Rwanda was said to have become the world's leading tantalum producer and exporter. Tantalum, a metal that stores electricity is used to manufacture cell phones, camera lenses, computers, jet engines, and weapons systems. By then, the United States was importing an astonishing 39% of its tantalum ore and concentrates from this tiny central African country, substantially more than from any other, including neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Like other African economies, Rwanda is also on the path of "extractivism". However, discussions centred around extractivism in Rwanda has not yet emerged in the public and academic spaces. The potential of mineral resources on a large scale in Rwanda was identified post 1994, that is after the genocide. Had anyone identified the rich mineral resources in Rwanda prior to 1994, especially foreign powers, then that strategic interest would have prevented the genocide for the sake of the political economy of extractivism.

[3] [https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-Rwanda\\_Relations.pdf](https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/India-Rwanda_Relations.pdf)

[4] The "Hamitic" myth held that all civilised institutions in central Africa were the result of an invasion by Hamites, variously identified as 'black Caucasians' from Europe. When Europeans first discovered Rwanda, they saw that it as a centralized, well-organized community that contradicted their worldview of Africa as a space of savagery characterized by political and cultural emptiness. The power and organizational strength and capacity of Tutsi Monarchy shocked them. Despite being a minority, the Tutsis governed the Hutu majority in Rwanda at that time. The Colonizers of Rwanda (both German and Belgian) needed an explanation for this as they believed that only Europeans or enlightened individuals could create an organized society and rule, and Tutsis were able to do it because they were European descendants (Also see, Phillips, 2009).

[5] The last population census prior to the genocide in Rwanda was conducted in 1991. As per the 1991 census, 91.10% of the population were Hutus. This census reported 596,400 Tutsi were living in Rwanda at that time. However, the figures estimated in the 1991 census have been subjected to criticism as there have been allegations that "Habyarimana regime have deliberately under-reported the number of Tutsi in order to keep their school enrolment and public employment quotas low," (Vepoorten, 2005) and secondly, many Tutsis got registered themselves as Hutus to avoid discrimination. In the post-genocide era, the government stopped recording the ethnic identity of the Rwandan population. Today, Rwanda is a nation with no ethnicity.

[6] In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Hutus rebelled against the Tutsi rulers. Hutus became more organized as a political group and demanded greater representation.

[7] Rwandan Model can be emulated by countries like Haiti (See Sully, 2023).

[8] The following inference was emerged during email discussions between the first author and Professor M V Nadkarni on February 24, 2024. This statement is of great significance when looking from the theoretical framework of ethical, environmental economics and social solidarity economics advocated by Gandhi-Kumarappa pathways.

[9] The first author during his visit to Kigali in November 17, 2023 was astonished by the cleanliness in the capital city. The author did not find any trash/litter lying on the streets and public spaces. The author also interacted with Pudence Rubingisa, the then Mayor of Kigali City. The Mayor said that he pays 20 US dollars to those who come to collect the trash. The author saw trash cans placed in every nook and corner, flowers on medians, crews of street cleaners keeping roadways and sidewalks not only trash free but also dirt free.

[10] The first author visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial on November 16, 2023. He noticed that the Rwandans who often come to the memorial to pay obeisance and to their ancestors have made



peace with their past. The painful memories and scars are etched in their consciousness but they are not seeking revenge or retaliation towards the preparators of this crime.