RWANDAN WOMEN RISING

Swanee Hunt

FOREWORD BY JIMMY CARTER

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Women understand most the importance of peace.

In conflicts, women are the ones hurt most,
so each will participate in the recovery some way.

Look at the key institutions in our country today.

Women are providing leadership.

There's no way you can talk about the transformation of society
unless that group is involved.

Much as we want to benefit from this process,
we also want to be a part of it.

There's no way you can avoid 55 percent of a population
and think they'll be just recipients.

We have to be agents of peace.

We can't just have peace delivered to us on a plate.

ALOISEA INYUMBA
1964–2012

CONTENTS

TIMELINE

Major Historical Events and the Rise of Women's Leadership

11th–19th centuries: Rwanda organized into kingdoms. Feudal structure, with general distinctions between farmers (Hutu), herders (Tutsi), and hunter-gatherers (Twa).

Late 1800s: Tutsi King Kigeri Rwabugiri establishes unified state with centralized military.

1885: Berlin Conference divides Africa, giving the region of Rwanda to Germany.

1890: Rwanda and Burundi (Ruanda-Urundi) becomes part of German East Africa.

1895–1931: Nyirayuhi V Kanjogera is Queen Mother, then regent, during the reign of her son.

1916: During World War I, Allies capture German East Africa. Belgians occupy the region.

1923: League of Nations grants Belgium mandate. It rules Rwanda and Burundi through Tutsi kings.

1933: Belgian census categorizes population based on height, shape of nose, and color of eyes. Colonists issue identity cards distinguishing Rwandans as Tutsi (15 percent), Hutu (80 percent), or Twa (1 percent).

1957: Hutus issue manifesto calling for a voice proportionate to their presence.

1959: Hutu Power movement, self-described as "social revolution." Some 150,000 Tutsis flee to neighboring states following ethnic violence.

1961: Rwanda proclaimed a republic, amid rising nationalism and Africa's rejection of colonialism.

1962: Independence from Belgium. New president Gregoire Kayibanda is Hutu. Many Tutsi families flee the country.

1964: Madeleine Ayinkamiye appointed minister of social affairs and public health, becoming first-ever woman in a cabinet position in Rwanda.

1965: First woman elected to Parliament, A. Mukakayange.

1973: Military coup led by Major General Juvénal Habyarimana ousts President Gregoire Kayibanda. Powerful clan connected to Habyarimana's wife rises to influence as Agathe becomes first lady.

1973: Continued ethnic violence. Tutsi students purged from universities; quotas restrict Tutsi employment.

1986: Pioneering activists create first Rwandan women's organization, Réseau des Femmes Oeuvrant pour le Développement Rural (Women's Network for Rural Development).

1986: Rwandan exiles, largely Tutsi, living in Uganda form the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), with political chapters throughout the diaspora.

1990: The RPF invades Rwanda, fighting in opposition to Habyarimana's government. Militant Hutu youth organize into Interahamwe paramilitaries.

1991: Adoption of new constitution and end of one-party political system. President Habyarimana's ruling Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND) continues to dominate, but other parties emerge and some of their representatives are appointed to government.

1992: President Habyarimana creates new Ministry of Family and Women's Development.

1992: Women activists hold first-ever public demonstration, the Women's March for Peace, calling for talks and protesting the arrest of Tutsi women, whom the government accuse of being part of the RPF because of their ethnicity.

1992: Activists create Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe, which will become the country's largest network of women's rights organizations.

1993: Agathe Uwilingiyimana becomes the country's first female prime minister, and only the third ever in Africa. She is targeted politically and physically throughout her career.

August 1993: President Habyarimana and the RPF sign the Arusha Accords, which mandate a power-sharing government. The United Nations deploys 2,500 troops to oversee implementation.

April 6, 1994: Habyarimana dies when his plane is shot down as it comes in for a landing in Kigali.

April 7, 1994: House-to-house killings of Tutsi and moderate Hutu politicians by the Forces Armées Rwandaises and allied Interahamwe. Prime Minister Uwilingiyimana, a Hutu in the political opposition, her husband, and their children murdered at their home.

April 21, 1994: United Nations Security Council passes a resolution for the withdrawal of all but 270 UN troops, in the wake of the killing of ten Belgian peacekeepers. Violence spirals.

April–July 1994: In one hundred days, 800,000 killed. Two million flee fearing retribution, most crossing into eastern Congo.

July 1994: Rwandan Patriotic Front captures the capital, Kigali.

November 1994: United Nations establishes International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), in Arusha, Tanzania.

November 1994: Transitional National Assembly first session; members of Parliament sworn in.

1995: Rwandan delegation at Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. A watershed for the budding women's movement.

1996: Genocide Law categorizes offenses and sentences for crimes committed during the genocide. Following riveting testimony from women who were sexually tortured, final law classifies rape among the gravest offenses.

1996: Countrywide women's councils elevate female perspectives in governing and social policy making.

1996–1997: More than a million Rwandans who fled fearing RPF revenge return.

September 2, 1998: First case decided for ICTR and first person ever tried for rape as a crime of genocide. Jean-Paul Akayesu found guilty. The prosecution relied on testimonies of women from Taba, where Akayesu was mayor.

1999: Extensive advocacy by women in Parliament and civil society. Government adopts Inheritance Law so husbands and fathers can pass on property to their wives and daughters.

2000: Countrywide gacaca courts, grassroots justice process, designed to try hundreds of thousands accused of role in genocide.

2001: Children's Rights Law emerges—collaboration between women in Parliament and civil society.

2001: Some 35 percent of newly elected gacaca judges are women.

2002: Gacaca courts begin.

August 2003: New constitution promulgated after consultation led by a commission of twelve drafters, three of whom are women. Enshrines equality between ethnic groups and between men and women. Women must hold at least 30 percent of government decision-making posts.

September 2003: First postgenocide parliamentary election. Women win 48 percent of seats.

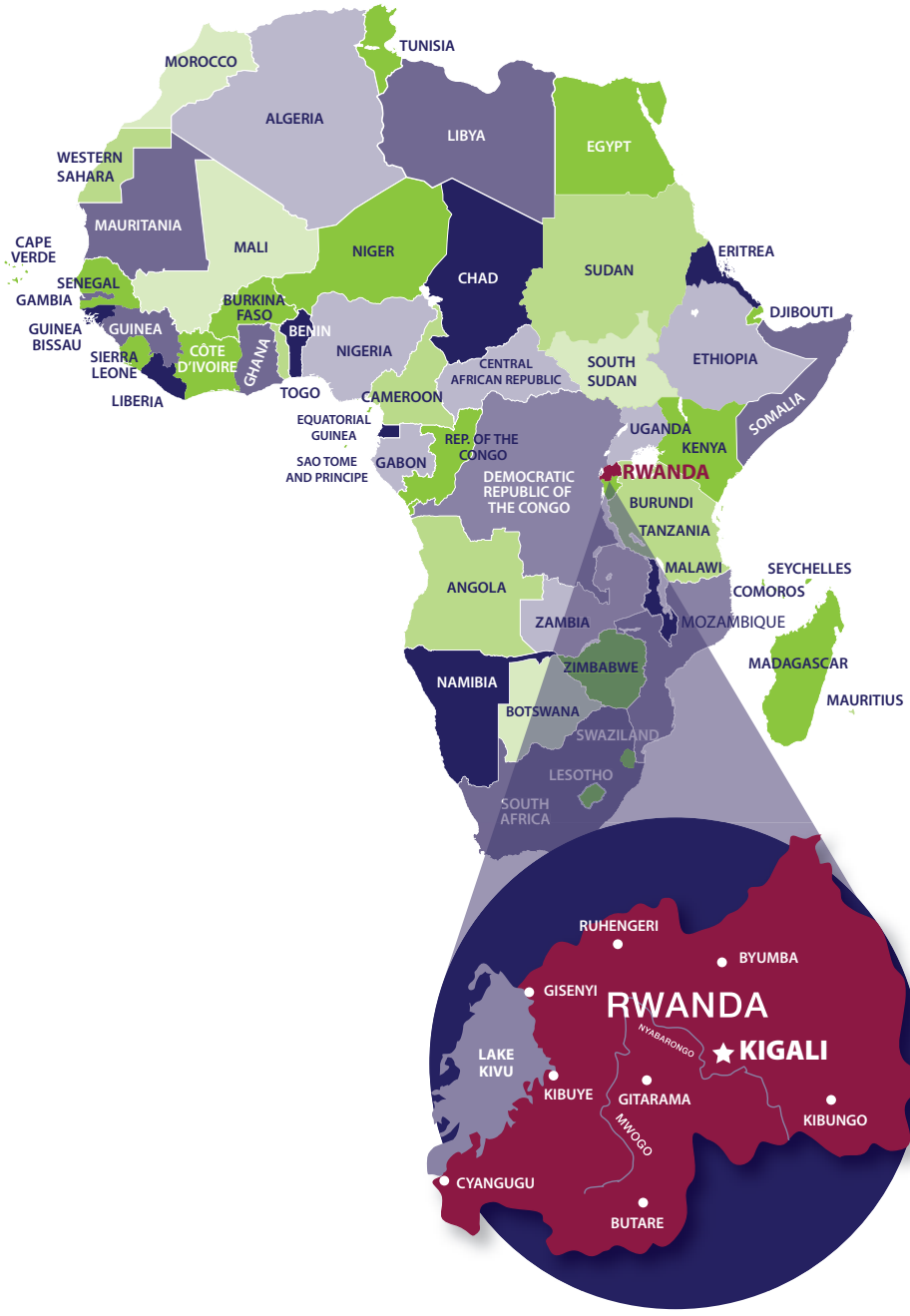
2005: Land reform requires legally married couples to jointly register property.

2008: Parliament approves Gender-Based Violence Law. Mandates strict punishments for all sexual violence, including domestic abuse.

2008: Female members of Parliament now in women-only seats vie in general election. First country in the world with female majority, at 56 percent.

2009: Nine-year basic education policy makes primary school plus three years accessible to all. Particular push for girls.

2013: Women in Parliament rate soars to 64 percent when major political parties put forth equal numbers of female and male candidates.


TUNISIA
MOROCCO
ALGERIA
LIBYA
EGYPT
WESTERN SAHARA
MAURITANIA
MALI
NIGER
CHAD
SUDAN
ERITREA
CAPE VERDE
SENEGAL
GAMBIA
BURKINA FASO
DJIBOUTI
GUINEA BISSAU
GUINEA
BENIN
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SOUTH SUDAN
LIBERIA
TOGO
CAMEROON
SOMALIA
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
UGANDA
KENYA
REP. OF THE CONGO
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE
GABON
RWANDA
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
BURUNDI
TANZANIA
MALAWI
SEYCHELLES
ANGOLA
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SOUTH AFRICA
RUHENGERI
BYUMBA
GISENYI
RWANDA
NYABARONGO
KIGALI
LAKE KIVU
KIBUYE
GITARAMA
KIBUNGO
MWOGO
CYANGUGU
BUTARE

KEY TERMS

AVEGA	Association des Veuves de Génocide, a group founded by widows whose husbands were killed during the genocide
BDF	Business Development Fund
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
FAR	Forces Armées Rwandaises, the armed forces of the Habyarimana government prior to 1994 (also referred to as ex-FAR)
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists, a group whose Rwanda chapter founded girls' schools focused on sciences
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, a militia based in the Democratic Republic of Congo led by some of the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide
FFRP	Forum des Femmes Rwandaises Parlementaires, the women's caucus in Parliament
Gacaca	grassroots, community-based justice system
GBV	gender-based violence
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, headquartered in Arusha, Tanzania

Ingando	"solidarity camps" in which soon-to-be-released prisoners, demobilized soldiers, students, and others participate prior to integrating into their new community
Interahamwe	Hutu paramilitary organization backed by the Rwandan government in power during the genocide
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, which has existed (with slight variations in name) since 1992
MRND	Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement, political party of President Juvénal Habyarimana
NGO	non-governmental organization
Pro-Femmes	shortened form of Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe, an umbrella organization linking women's promotion groups countrywide
Réseau des Femmes	shortened form of Réseau des Femmes Oeuvrant pour le Développement Rural, a women's network for rural development, founded in the late 1980s
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SEVOTA	Solidarité pour l'Epanouissement des Veuves et des Orphelins visant le Travail et l'Auto-promotion, which translates to Solidarity for the Blooming of the Widows and the Orphans Aiming at Work and Self-Promotion
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS

Preferred name capitalized.

AGNES Mukabaranga is a private lawyer who served in the transitional parliament from 1994 to 2012.

AIMABLE Nibishaka was an advisor at the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion before being elected to Parliament in 2003, where he served until his death in 2011.

Aisa KIRABO Kacyira trained as a veterinarian and devoted her early career to working in farming communities before being elected to Parliament, and then became mayor of Kigali. She serves as deputy executive director of UN HABITAT.

ALICE Urusaro Karekezi is an activist and lecturer with a background in law. She spearheaded campaigns during the first trials at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and was an outspoken advocate for women giving testimony.

Aloisea INYUMBA was an influential member of the RPF in exile and served as the commissioner of finance. After 1994 she held numerous leadership posts, including minister of gender, head of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, governor, and senator. She died in 2012.

ALOYSIE Cyanzaire led the gacaca process when it began in 2000 and then became chief justice of the Supreme Court from 2003 to 2011, where she organized the country's judicial reform.

ALPHONSINE Mukarugema was a secondary school teacher, headmistress, and women's council member in southern Rwanda. In 2003 she was elected to Parliament, where she continues to serve.

ALPHONSINE Niyigena is a businesswoman who serves on several corporate boards and is a mentor to the students at her Universal Beauty Academy.

ANGELINA Muganza was minister of gender and women's development from 1999 to 2002 and has continued in public service since then.

ANITA Asiimwe is a physician specializing in public health, with a passion for children. She served as state minister of public health and is now the head of clinical services at Rwanda University Teaching Hospitals.

ANNE MARIE Musabyemungu is an activist who played an instrumental role in convincing Rwandan rebels fighting in Congo to come home, starting with her husband. She went on to serve as a member of Parliament.

ANNONCIATA Nyirabajiwabo, a devout Catholic and a widow due to the 1994 genocide, helped create a support network of women in her church to care for each other, including wives with husbands in prison.

APOPHIA Batamuliza enlisted in the RPF when she was twenty-six years old and living in Rwanda. She was demobilized in 2004 and works for the army reserve.

ATHANASIE Kabagwira is a sociologist dedicated to the promotion of women's equality and equity. She has been an activist in Rwanda since the late 1980s.

BEATRICE Mukabaranga trained as a botanist and science teacher, worked in education, and then served as a senator until 2009. She chaired the Rwanda chapter of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and continues to be an active member.

Bernard MAKUZA is a politician who served as prime minister from 2000 to 2011 and is president of the Senate. He was a senior advisor to Agathe Uwilingiyimana, who became prime minister in 1993 and was assassinated on the first day of the genocide.

BERTHILDE Niyibaho is an entrepreneur and founder of BN Producers, a company specializing in mushrooms.

CAROLE Karemera is an artist, an art activist, and a mother. She grew up in Belgium, visited Rwanda in 1996 as a college student, then moved there a few years later.

CHANTAL Kayitesi is a nurse who joined with many other widows after the genocide to create AVEGA, the Association for Widows of the Genocide.

CHRISTINE Tuyisenge became a lawyer to advocate for the rights of women and children especially, a passion she put into practice as a member of Haguruka and with the National Women Council.

CHRISTOPHE Bazivamo is an agriculture specialist and member of the East African Legislative Assembly, representing Rwanda.

CHRISTOPHER Kayumba is a columnist and senior lecturer at the University of Rwanda who has a PhD in peace and development research. He wrote the 2010 book *Understanding High Presence of Women in Rwanda's Parliament*.

"CLAUDINE" became an activist in the 1980s and remains one today.

CONNIE Bwiza Sekamana joined the transitional parliament in 1999 and was reelected three times as an MP for the RPF.

DIDIER G. Sagashya was a key player in the country's implementation of land reform, holding senior posts at the National Land Centre and then with the Rwanda Natural Resources Authority.

DINAH Musindarwezo is a gender specialist who heads the Pan-African women's rights organization FEMNET.

DOMITILLA Mukantaganzwa is a lawyer who served on the twelve-person commission that drafted Rwanda's constitution and led the National Service of Gacaca Courts for nearly a decade until it closed in 2012.

ELISEE Rutagambwa is a Catholic priest and headmaster of Saint Ignatius High School. Father Elisee received his PhD from Boston College, where he wrote his dissertation on the historical role of women in Rwanda.

Emmanuel GASANA is inspector general for the Rwandan National Police, based in Kigali.

EMMANUEL Rutangusa is a Catholic priest who completed seminary in Kenya and returned to his native Rwanda in 1995 to serve in the Nyumba Parish. He is completing his doctorate at Rivier Catholic University in New Hampshire.

ESTHER Mbabazi became RwandAir's first female Rwandan pilot at age twenty-four, achieving her lifelong dream. She is also a mentor to young Rwandans.

FATUMA Ndangiza has held many government posts since she returned to Rwanda in 1994, including the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, which she led for nearly eight years. She is deputy CEO of the Rwanda Governance Board.

FELIX Muramutsa is a researcher in psychosocial issues who served as the board chair for the women and children's rights group Haguruka.

FLORENCE Kamili Kayiraba is a gender and grassroots democracy activist and served in various elected posts in local government, including mayor.

"GISELLE" attended one of the government's "reeducation" camps before starting university.

GODELIEVE Mukasarasi is a counselor who specializes in trauma and founded the group SEVOTA to support women who had survived rape during the genocide, especially those who had children as a result of their attack.

"GRACE" is an activist for women's rights from rural Rwanda. Eager to fight against impunity for rapists on behalf of many women like her who survived rape, she went to the International Criminal Tribunal in Tanzania to give testimony in the case against Jean-Paul Akayesu.

IMMACULEE Ingabire is a journalist by training and an activist by conviction. Her reporting was instrumental in bringing to light the stories of women who survived rape during the genocide.

INNOCENT Bulindi is CEO of the Business Development Fund, who has a keen interest in promoting financial inclusion for women and small business owners. He started his finance career in banking and telecoms.

ISABELLE Kalihangabo is a lawyer and former judge now serving in the Ministry of Justice. She studied law at University of Rwanda and Queen Mary University of London and was involved in Rwanda's postgenocide legal reforms, including in devising Kinyarwanda language legal terminology.

JANE Abatoni Gatete is a senior trauma counselor and founding member of Rwandan Association of Trauma Counselors, which she has led since 1998.

JANE Umutoni studies women's economic inclusion and is an assistant lecturer affiliated with the Centre for Gender Studies at the University of Rwanda.

JANET Nkubana, the cofounder with her sister Joy of the company Gahaya Links, felt inspired by her background in arts to preserve and modernize Rwandan handicrafts and work to empower the women who make them.

Jeanne d'Arc GAKUBA is vice president of the Senate. She started her political career on the women's council and quickly rose to become vice mayor of Kigali.

JEANNE D'ARC Kanakuze, a longtime activist, was a cofounder of the umbrella organization Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe and the national leader of the Girl Scouts.

JEANNE D'ARC Mukasekuru is an activist for her community, Rwanda's indigenous population known as the potters, and a mother of two.

JEANNETTE Kagame is first lady of Rwanda and head of the Imbuto Foundation, which, among its many programs, focuses on health and education programs for women and girls.

John MUTAMBA has carved out a niche as a rare, long-committed male advocate for women's rights. He consults for UN Women, among other international agencies.

JOSEPHINE Dusabimana lives in the lakeside town of Kibuye, in western Rwanda, where she farms and takes care of her five children and dozen grandchildren.

JOY Mukanyange served as ambassador to Kenya and Tanzania, among other posts with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She consults on projects related to women, peace, and security and is active in several civil society groups.

JOY Ndungutse is cofounder of Gahaya Links, a company she created with her sister Janet, that focuses on creating jobs and changing the lives of rural women.

JUDITH Kanakuze was an activist known especially for spearheading the law against gender-based violence that passed in 2008. She founded the early women's group Réseau des Femmes and served on the constitution drafting commission and in Parliament. She died in 2010.

JULIE Uwamwiza's career has long focused on economic empowerment of rural women. Her first job was with one of the country's earliest women's rights groups, Duterimbere.

JUSTINE Mbabazi is a gender specialist and rights activist who has worked as a legal advisor in postconflict countries across Africa and Asia. She closely consulted on numerous gender-equalizing reforms in her native Rwanda.

JUSTINE Uvuza is a gender and legal scholar who received her PhD from Newcastle University, where she wrote her dissertation on the experiences of Rwandan female leaders balancing family and political responsibilities.

LOUISE Mushikiwabo has been a member of President Kagame's cabinet since she returned to Rwanda in 2008, serving first as minister of information, and since 2009 as minister of foreign affairs.

MAMA DIANE and her mother are the only members of their family who survived the 1994 genocide. A survivor of rape, she chose to tell her story during the gacaca process. She's a member of a local reconciliation organization in the town of Taba.

MAMA MADINA is passionate about the education of her children. She decided to give testimony during the gacaca trials as a woman who had been raped by her neighbors, because she felt it was important for the rebuilding of society.

MAMA REBECCA, aka Jeanne d'Arc Mukarunyange, is a woman who loved the army from childhood. She's a reservist and feels the army is the main commitment in her life.

"MARIE CLAIRE" was elected to serve as a judge in a grassroots tribunal after the genocide.

MARIE Mukantabana was directing the National Insurance Company when she was tapped to become minister of gender and then vice president of the Senate. A member of the RPF, she chaired the RPF Women's League.

MARIE THERESE Mukamulisa is a Supreme Court justice who started her legal career in the private sector and civil society. She was one of three women on the twelve-person constitutional drafting commission.

MARY Balikungeri became an activist during the antiapartheid movement and founded the Rwandan Women's Network in 1997.

MATHILDE Mukantabana was a history professor in her adoptive home of California when she was tapped to serve as Rwandan ambassador to the United States. She has been an active organizer among the diaspora for many years.

NADINE Niyitegeka graduated from the Akilah Institute for Women in 2013 and since then has served as a development and recruitment associate for Rwanda's first all-female college.

ODA Gasinzigwa is a gender expert who has long focused her career on women's empowerment. An expert in monitoring and evaluation, she serves as minister for gender and family promotion.

ODETTE Nyiramilimo is a physician, health activist, and long-serving senator. She is a member of the East African Legislative Assembly.

Oswald SAMVURA is a longtime activist promoting women's participation, primarily through the women's development group Seruka. He formerly worked with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion.

PATRICIA Hajabakiga led the Ministry for State, Lands, and Environment for ten years, first as permanent secretary and then as state minister, and now serves as a member of the East African Legislative Assembly.

Paul KAGAME is president of Rwanda. He grew up in a Ugandan refugee camp; later, as a general he led the RPF, which returned to the country and ended the 1994 genocide.

Paul RUTAYISIRE is a professor of modern African and Rwandan histories and the director of the Center for Conflict Management at the University of Rwanda.

Protais MUSONI was deputy secretary-general of the RPF and served as a cabinet minister.

RICHARD Masozera is a physician by training and a long-serving officer in the Rwandan Defense Forces and the government. He married Aloisea Inyumba in 1996, and they have two children.

"ROBERT" served as a judge during the grassroots justice process called gacaca.

ROSE Kabuye enlisted in the RPF while the group was organizing in exile and is the highest-ranking woman to serve. She retired in 2003 as a lieutenant colonel and has held civilian leadership positions, such as mayor of Kigali and member of Parliament.

ROSE Mukantabana trained as a lawyer and was the first woman elected to serve as president of the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Rwanda's Parliament.

SISTER JUVENAL is a nun with the Benebikira congregation and the headmistress of the girls-only Maranyundo secondary school in Nyamata.

SPECIOSE Mukandutiye is a member of Parliament and served as president of the women's caucus from 2007 to 2009.

SUZANNE Ruboneka, cocreator of Pro-Femmes in the early 1990s, is a women's rights activist who has devoted her career to promoting a culture of peace in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

THERESE Bishagara is a senator and molecular biologist by training, who was appointed to lead the Kigali Health Institute when it opened in 1996, and stayed until 2004. She is a founding member of the Rwanda chapter of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE).

VESTINE is an orphan of the genocide who became the caregiver for her younger sisters. Facing rejection from the family of the man who raped and impregnated her during the genocide, she spoke out during gacaca to establish the truth about the crimes and her daughter's birth.

Wellars GASAMAGERA was a long-serving senator and before that a governor. He now heads the Rwanda Management Institute.

WINNIE Byanyima, a Ugandan diplomat and politician, took the helm of Oxfam International in 2013. She was an idolized elder sister and mentor to many Rwandan women as they started to organize.

ZAINA Nyiramatama founded the women's and children's rights group Haguruka to be a Rwandan UNICEF. She served as head of the National Commission of Children from 2011 until 2015, when she was appointed African Union Special Representative to Chad.

After 1994, women participated in elections not just as voters but as candidates too.

FOREWORD

Jimmy Carter

> The world itself is now dominated by a new spirit. Peoples more numerous and more politically aware are craving, and now demanding, their place in the sun—not just for the benefit of their own physical condition, but for basic human rights. The passion for freedom is on the rise.
>
> —INAUGURAL ADDRESS, JANUARY 20, 1977

Swanee Hunt's *Rwandan Women Rising* describes a remarkable example of the spirit referred to in this epigraph. She not only captures Rwandan women's stories of rebirth after the unspeakable hundred-day genocide of 1994—she actually shows us how they survived this cataclysm to become catalysts for the most impressive transformation in all of Africa. And importantly, she reveals these lessons through the voices of the women themselves. Her interviews paint detailed pictures of the obstacles they had to overcome, as well as their many small victories that gradually led to enormous wins for the whole society.

At the Carter Center, which Rosalynn and I launched after my presidency, we have worked for democracy and development in more than 140 countries, many of them torn by violence and conflict. Through this work, we learned that when women are actively involved, countries are more likely to embrace human rights in practical ways. We've seen how the inclusion of women and girls enables nations to end bloodshed, achieve stability, and sustain the growth that usually follows.

We saw this illustrated in a different nation that I visited in 1978, when I made the first presidential visit to sub-Saharan Africa. It was no accident that I chose Liberia, given its founding by freed American slaves. Two years

later, disaster struck: the president and his entire cabinet were assassinated, and a terrible civil war ensued. Rosalynn and I visited frequently as the country descended into brutal ruin. Finally, we watched women launch a campaign that forced a brutal warlord into exile and shaped a peace deal that included democratic elections. The winner was Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first elected female president and one of two Liberian women awarded the Nobel medal for peace.

We chose the slogan Empower Men and Women Together as we helped Liberians establish rural justice systems. This was not about helping women and girls; it was about making the entire society more fair and just. It became evident very quickly that greater involvement of women in community decision making was benefiting all citizens.

In 1995, at the time of our Liberia experience but on the other side of the continent, Rwanda was reeling from the genocidal slaughter of about 800,000 Tutsis by Hutus. The Tutsi-led troops that stopped the carnage had pursued the genocidal Hutus all the way into Zaire (later named the Democratic Republic of Congo). Along the way, the ranks of those fleeing swelled to a million with other Hutus fearing retribution.

Rosalynn and I visited the enormous refugee camp in Goma, just across the Rwandan border in the DRC. In this book, Anne Marie Musabyemungu, who had fled the country after the genocide, talks about the hideous health conditions of that camp, which we witnessed firsthand. It was impossible to secure the periphery, or create any semblance of security for those inside the camp, or for those outside.

What I remember most vividly about that camp is that violence against women and girls was rampant. That didn't have to be. But the realization that haunts me is how, when we convened presidents from the region, they made agreements that could have helped their countries stabilize and prevent disasters like that camp. Instead, even as there had been little appetite for intervening in the genocide, we received no support for those meetings from the international community. With no coherent force to hold it back, rape, not as a sexual act but as a weapon of war, exploded in eastern Congo. Bottles, sticks, and bayonets were used to rape women—in that one act mutilating them for life.

Our inadequate peace process is where Ambassador Hunt's story begins. Five years after our thwarted efforts, she began her close associa-

tion with the women of Rwanda. In these pages we hear the heartbeat of that society. We listen to the mothers. We hear from politicians and businesswomen. We watch those running the local reconciliation courts that were at the grass roots of society. We follow their halting advances at the helm in hamlets and in the capital. We explore how Rwanda has become the standard bearer in female political representation: 64 percent of the seats in Parliament, not to mention half the cabinet and half the Supreme Court.

Both Liberia and Rwanda are contending with a host of problems, and it is a modern miracle that they haven't fallen back into war. Instead, Rwandan women in particular have set a high standard for stemming gender-based violence, which has been a major concern for our center in the past several years. Recently, Swanee and I have aligned as partners on confronting the purchasing of the bodies of women and girls by focusing on the brothel owners, pimps, and buyers—the men who fuel the market. Stopping that abuse is integral to the theme of my recent book, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power*.

Since I came to know Swanee Hunt in the early 1990s, we've crossed paths on different continents and across decades as we've worked together on free elections, against corruption, toward independent media, and for decent health conditions. At the heart of our work, we're fueled by our shared Southern roots and evangelical heritage. I have taught Bible lessons for more than seventy years, and as a former minister of pastoral care, Swanee holds convictions similar to mine. It's no secret that we both have found it impossible to square our religious faith with current stances of the Southern Baptist Convention. Rosalynn and I broke with our church denomination in part over its interpretation that scripture insists that women should be submissive to their husbands, and inferior to men in the eyes of God. We have found solace in the biblical injunction that in Christ Jesus there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, slave and free—or man and woman.

When we discard the creed of men's power over women, we make room for God's power of redemption. I was deeply moved by the story in these pages of Annonciata Nyirabajiwabo, a survivor of genocide joining with other Catholic mothers who were wives of imprisoned perpetrators of the terrible crime. Together preparing meals for the inmates,

they were the embodiment of Jesus's parable in the Gospel of Matthew. "There the righteous ask the king, When did we see you hungry and feed you, in prison and visit you? And the king answers, When you did it to the least of these, you did it to me."

Over the years, I have taken pride in watching Swanee fight for recognition of the fact that true security must be inclusive. She argues that we underestimate the importance of not only women's wisdom, but also their knowledge and ability to lead.

Along those lines, in what seems like a modern parable, I remember telling Swanee about our visit to Zimbabwe to honor the Farmer of the Year. After we presented his award, I wanted to see his fields, but the farmer objected. Finally he agreed. I walked alongside him, with Rosalynn and his wife behind. We reached a fine crop of corn. "What kind of seed do you use?" I asked. He hesitated, then looked behind him for the answer. "And when do you apply fertilizer?" Again, he turned to his wife, the actual farmer.

To return to Rwanda and Liberia, it's worth noting that the United States has a lot to learn from those countries. Liberia has a woman as president, and Rwanda has an overwhelming majority of women in its Parliament. Women hold fewer than 20 percent of the seats in our own Congress.

On every continent, there are countries where a dramatic increase in women's influence has led to a peaceful foreign policy, higher education levels, longer life expectancy, safer streets, even cleaner water. These gains aren't coincidental.

So we're left to ask ourselves, what forces can we exert that will elevate women's status and utilize their capacity? In Rwanda, there has been a powerful blend of a pull from the top and a push up from the grass roots. In Liberia and Rwanda, the reforms have emerged out of war. Our challenge is to have them emerge peacefully.

PLAINS, GEORGIA
MAY 2, 2016

PREFACE

Over the past two decades, the eyes of the world have been riveted on a small state in the vast interior of Africa. Before the 1994 genocide, precious few Westerners had heard of Rwanda, home of three intermarried groups: Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa.

In the spring of 1994, we—individuals like me, a member of the innocuously named "international community"—watched from the sidelines as group turned on group in a horrific slaughter. Our gaze was a combined expression of horror, fascination, and the despair of knowing we had to help but not knowing how. As we waited to intervene, Rwanda was literally decimated: 10 percent of the population butchered. As one Rwandese diplomat commented, wryly, "Rwanda was rescued by Rwandans."

Killing squads went door to door, hill by hill, on the hunt for those they deemed "cockroaches." The offense of the targeted citizens was being classified by ID cards as members of one of the country's small minorities—the Tutsi. In a mere one hundred days, nearly one million people were killed, many by neighbors, even family members.

As the *genocidaires* fled over the border to Congo in July 1994, Rwanda lay in ruins: churches and schools turned into massacre sites, roadsides turned into open graves. Those who witnessed the horrors and managed to survive faced the tormenting task of rebuilding when every semblance of normality had vanished.

Hundreds of conversations I've had over the past sixteen years reveal an untold tale. Laden with personal burdens but driven by an ethic of responsibility, women stepped forward. In villages, mothers made sure bodies were buried. One initiated a countrywide adoption program that

found homes for nearly 100,000 children whose parents were murdered. The stories of Rwandan women are awe inspiring in their passion and startling in their pragmatism.

The people around me were women, says Father **EMMANUEL**, a newly ordained priest who had lost his family in the genocide. His first posting after seminary was to a rural parish. Their church had been burned, then bulldozed, with hundreds of desperate people inside. *Women helped me reconstruct the parish, physically and in terms of the community. The way I saw it, men were more affected by the violence, even though I think women suffered more. Afterward, men couldn't do much. Women saw that they had no alternative.*

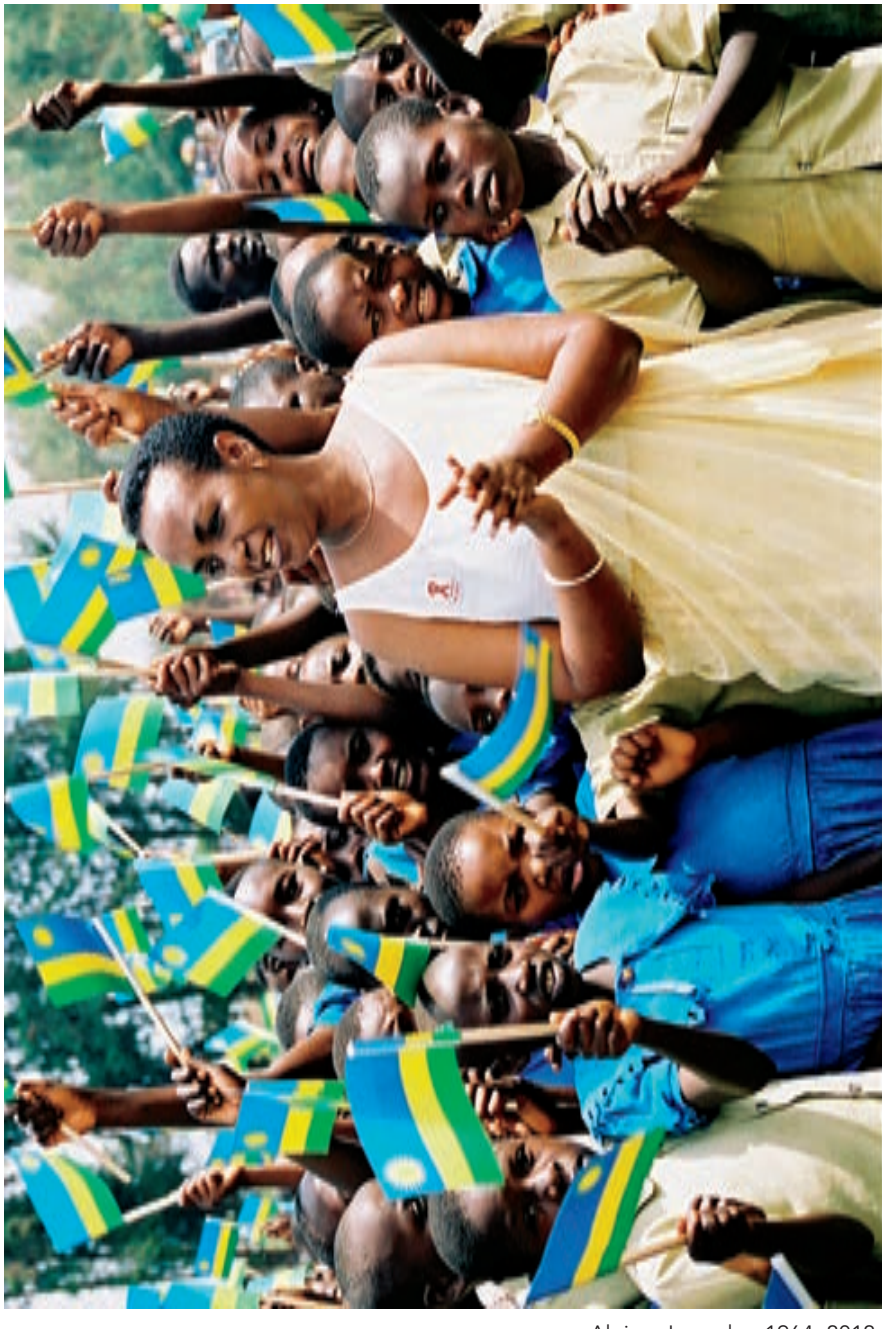
As chaos cracked open the culture, women were no longer confined to holding positions of influence solely in their homes. Given the urgent needs pressing all around them, they expanded their leadership at a revolutionary pace. Still, this wasn't a feminist uprising by design.

We didn't immediately think of creating an organization. **CHANTAL** was a founding member of a widows' organization I visited in 2001, now one of the most influential civil society groups in the country. *Most women in our group were housewives who hadn't had much schooling. We met because we needed to meet, to listen and understand each other. We needed to think things through together . . . like how we would provide for our children.*

With a strong pull from the new president, Paul Kagame, women pushed for female-friendly policies and prominent positions in the government, led initiatives to cope with the traumatic aftermath of genocide, and established businesses in the extremely fragile economy. Many who had found their voices at the national level returned to their rural communities to encourage more women to vie for public office.

In 2003, the first election since the genocide, women won 48.8 percent of seats in the lower house of Parliament, far surpassing the newly mandated 30 percent quota. In 2008 they took an even larger stride, securing 56 percent of seats and becoming the first parliament in history—anywhere in the world—with a female majority. Their gains weren't only political; across society, women took up influential roles.

One of the greatest names among Rwandan women—or men, for that matter—is Aloisea Inyumba. Our friendship began in July 2000, when I first came to Kigali to speak at a women's conference hosted by the Amer-



Aloisea Inyumba, 1964–2012.

ican embassy. As gender minister, she seemed to be an organizing force at that meeting of Women as Partners for Peace, with representatives from several neighboring countries. I was struck by how comfortable she was in her skin and the deference others seemed to grant her.

At the end of the conference, Inyumba (as she was known by followers throughout East Africa) took me to see President Kagame on my way to the airport. A year earlier, he had publicly expressed sensitivity to the economic and social benefits of gender equality, so I wasn't surprised as he and I exchanged similar views about how women shift not only the internal policies and practices of a country, but also how it is perceived from outside. "Make women the new face of Rwanda," I encouraged.

Humbly soft-spoken, Inyumba had grown up impoverished in a Ugandan refugee camp, her father killed as he and his wife, pregnant with her, fled an earlier Rwandan genocide that broke out in 1959 when the country was on the verge of its independence. In exile, Inyumba was a trusted friend of Paul Kagame. While he and Fred Rwigema organized the Rwandan Patriotic Front to reclaim a place in their native country, she mobilized Rwandans worldwide, collecting financial support for the far-outnumbered rebels.

After the last shots were fired, given her reputation for frugality and honesty, Aloisea Inyumba became a key player in the postgenocide restoration. It was over this urgent work that she and I bonded—as mothers with a mission. I had a young daughter, and she had a young daughter, but we also felt responsible for distressed children beyond our own. Kagame had asked Inyumba to serve as head of the crucial National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. Creating her own role, she was spending day after day crisscrossing rutted roads to villages throughout the country. There, she encouraged the broken to talk about, act out, or compose songs describing the impossible gore they had witnessed, the family who had been slaughtered, the homes that were no more.

When Inyumba introduced us, President Kagame asked me to help women advance in public and social spheres. My primary contribution to this bold Rwandan experiment has been to equip their women leaders. As the founder of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and the Washington, DC–based Institute for Inclusive Security, I've taught and supported the leadership

development of several hundred Rwandan women in settings inside and outside their country. In addition, Inclusive Security opened an office in Kigali for two years, from which our staff assisted the women in Parliament as they developed a strategic plan to promote their agenda for social change and stability.

Although she was revered by her people, **INYUMBA** once said to me, *I spoke in Rwanda before we met, but it was at Harvard—in the training weeks with you—that I found my voice*. I'm sure my friend had no idea that she, in turn, helped me find mine.

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This work is personal. I'm approaching the idea of documenting women's leadership in Rwanda from the perspective of having worked with women leaders in sixty countries for more than two decades. Though my career has been segmented, my work has always been related.

For many years in Colorado I focused on public education, homelessness, race relations, mental health, and low-income community development. Subsequently (in the mid-1990s) as U.S. ambassador to Austria, I oversaw a complicated embassy of five hundred employees, many working across imploded postcommunist economies of central and eastern Europe. I made more than twenty trips across that region, finding pockets of strength within frail societies.

Among those, some countries were much more than frail. The tragic, dramatic collapse was, of course, Yugoslavia, where my husband, Charles Ansbacher, became the principal guest conductor of the symphony and I, well, I did whatever the situation seemed to require. Sometimes that meant meeting with unheeded women leaders in rooms with no heat or electricity; I chronicled their work with video interviews and journal entries that became a newspaper series and two books. Sometimes it was speaking on behalf of President Bill Clinton, such as at the opening of the U.S. embassy in Sarajevo. Sometimes it was hosting peace talks, and not noticing that there wasn't one female among the dozens on the negotiating teams.

In each of those situations I've become convinced that the best way to reduce suffering and to prevent, end, and stabilize conflicts is to elevate women. Turning up the volume of their voices, we amplify waves of clar-

ion change. Out of that understanding a network of thousands of leaders from scores of conflicts has grown Women Waging Peace, now part of Inclusive Security mentioned above. In capitals all over the world, we are connecting these leaders to policy makers who badly need their help.

Even if there were no Aloisea Inyumba, I would be compelled to tell this story because of a simple promise. A dozen years ago, when Inyumba brought me to a widow's group in Rwanda, I met Fatima, a gaunt woman about thirty years old. Soldiers had raped her day after day until she lay unconscious, her baby on the ground at her side. Her other children were hacked to death with machetes. During the torture, she contracted AIDS. When we met, she offered me her thin, weak hand and stared intently into my eyes. Through an interpreter, she whispered, "I'm going to die soon, but will you tell others, so my story doesn't die with me?"

In the face of tiny Rwanda's desolation, lone superpower America did nothing to prevent the agony of Fatima. I was part of the U.S. security structure: a policy maker (among scores) with the ear of President Clinton, the first lady, and others. At the most personal level, failing to urge intervention, I failed as a leader.

There are many kinds of leadership, formal and informal, through position or persuasion. I know, because Rwandan women have led me, even as they've passed beyond this life. And so Inyumba remains my teacher, Fatima my conscience. This book is my promise kept to both.

WITH THANKS

A book sixteen years in the crafting has so many, many contributors, and I can touch only on a few. Those of you whose names are missing must do me one more good turn, to mentally write yourself into these acknowledgments.

The most important contributors are, of course, the generous Rwandan women who've taken me in. They've given me the greatest gift—friendship—and, as you might with a friend, found subtle ways to let me know I'm precariously close to crossing a cultural line or they'd like me to come closer. When life deals me tough times, I invariably think of them. They're unaware of how they've inspired whatever I've accomplished this last decade and a half, providing relative perspective for my own painful times.

In a more concrete way, I've depended on the synergistic help of colleagues at Inclusive Security, operating under the leadership first of Ambassador Hattie Babbitt, then the calmly talented Carla Koppell, and now a noble triumvirate of Evelyn Thornton, Jacqueline O'Neill, and Mersad Jacevic. Our board contributed not only wisdom, but also firsthand help with their impressions from a trip to Rwanda. Thank you all for offering me boosts all along the way.

There were three major phases in the writing of this book. The first was led by me, as beginning in 2000 I began to go regularly to Rwanda, building relationships, gathering information about what was happening with women there, and hosting some at Harvard and in our Washington, DC, offices.

Then to enrich our understanding at the ground level, from 2005 to 2007 Inclusive Security had a small Kigali office headed by Elizabeth

Powley with the able assistance of Elvis Gakuba, Justine Uvuza, and Ibrahim Murobafi. Elizabeth's expertise, hard work, and patience resulted in four scholarly papers on women's roles drafting legislation, decentralizing political power, defending children's rights, and strengthening their nation's new legislature. Her research forms a basic layer of the theoretical backbone of this book. But beyond, a decade later, Powley is a repeatedly cited source for other researchers. In addition, dozens of Elizabeth's early interviews offer a snapshot of a crucial moment in this story, when Rwanda's new constitution was being developed, leading the way for women's historic gains in the 2003 parliamentary election.

The interview process has been nonstop. Thank you to our Inclusive Security staff, but also to my students at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government who conducted interviews. Jessica Gomez and others helped create order out of a chaotic mound of material. And to Nashila Somani, Jean Demmler, Barbara Brockmeyer, and Lia Poorvu, thanks for your help in the field and at home.

The third phase was this last four years, pulling from dozens of sources to construct the final manuscript. Inside Rwanda, we had great help from the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, especially Honorable Minister Oda Gasinzigwa, and senior advisor Judith Kazayire. Mr. Alphonse Umulisa at Rwanda's National Museum and historians Rose Marie Mukarutabana and Jean-Paul Kimonyo were more than helpful, as were translators Sophie Manzi and Muhire Enock, and transcriber Jessica Lane. And as a photographer myself, I have enormous appreciation for Roopa Gogineni and Sarah Elliott's beautiful images that grace this book, as well as our internal organizer par excellence, Peggy Wang.

In these acknowledgments, Gisela Fosado at Duke University Press deserves her own space for giving me space to finish this book. Duke also, for letting me use material I already wrote for *Foreign Affairs*, the *Boston Globe*, *National Geographic*, and the *Daily Beast* to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the genocide.

Bless her, Amy Sysyn was by my side during the last year of the project's remarkably long gestation, even counting how many times I lazily relied on "stunning" and "staggering" within each hundred pages. Likewise, a troop of my friends read and offered conceptual and granular suggestions for the manuscript, especially Catherine Heaton, Jim Laurie,

Jim Smith, Carol Edgar, Marie O'Reilly, and Sister Ann Fox. Thank you (I think) for hundreds of edits. With his extraordinary level of experience and sensitivity, Michael Fairbanks was in a class by himself, and we took to heart every suggestion.

I say "we," because when I was about halfway through this process my husband and thought partner of twenty-five years was diagnosed with a brain tumor, then died a year later. My grief was profound, and even though *Rising* was my fourth book, I wondered if I would, or could, finish it. Into my life, and into this project, stepped Laura Heaton, one of the most perceptive, industrious, talented, tolerant, and insistent people I've ever known. Laura is a specialist in East Africa who has lived and worked throughout the region. We worked hand in glove for three years, first sifting through the trove of interviews out of which my outline had emerged. Then inside the country much more than I could be, Laura followed leads from one story to another. As she added new marrow to the backbone, the form not only filled out but became a shape of unexpected angles and graceful curves. It's hard to imagine a future without Laura upside down in a yoga pose on the deck of our mountain ranch, or traipsing down to the kitchen for another cup of tea in our Cambridge home.

Speaking of home, somehow to say thanks to Charles is so expected that I almost didn't write it. But I will, so I can tell this story: At the Kigali airport, the last time I left Rwanda, I sat in the lounge with my friend Odette Nyiramilimo. "I haven't said it yet," she said. "But I'm so sorry about your loss of Charles."

Tears began to flow down my cheeks, then I remembered. "This feels so wrong. You lost something like seventy family members, right?"

"One hundred twenty," she corrected me. "But you can grieve. Every death is the same."

I actually don't believe that. We can, and must, compare pain. Rwandan women have survived loss I'll never comprehend. Having lost my partner in the middle of writing this book, I can imagine the effort it took for them to meet with me, much less open their stories to a stranger. And so I'll end where I began, with my appreciation for the women of Rwanda.

Cornfield consultation with Inyumba.

INTRODUCTION

Rwandan Women Rising memorializes the resurrection of women from victims to leaders helping their country emerge from chaos. Unflinching and intertwined stories detail gruesome brutality and loss. But their raw experiences become the alchemy for grit, determination, and courage to help reconstruct a nation.

There is a strong theme of humility and generosity in the overall style of Rwandan women. At the grass roots, they've organized around common problems of poverty, shelter, health, and equality. Then, rather than driven by political ambition, they are drawn into the public sphere to protect their families and construct a new society.

Restoring their country means caring for one another as well, with trailblazing pragmatism as consensus builders and collaborators. They forgive when reconciliation defies imagination. They mentor when their own needs cry out for attention. They break a world record when seasoned legislators give up quota-ensured seats to run in the general contest, allowing a new wave to enter politics.

The five parts that follow capture the voices of some ninety pioneering women who grew from humble origins into these positions of political and social leadership. Telling the story of their resilience, savvy, and commitment was a hope expressed by **INYUMBA** numerous times during our twelve-year friendship, before her death in 2012 sent shockwaves across the world of her admirers.

There are so many women like me in Rwanda, who have done good work, my unwitting mentor told me. *Maybe others could learn from what we've gone through in such a short time, and just emerging from conflict too. If you*

look at the tremendous effort, the work that has been done by the grassroots communities—these stories need to be heard.

Inyumba went on to say that when she traveled abroad she initially assumed everyone knew about *the good work being done by Rwandan women. But hardly anybody knows. . . .*

Many of her colleagues, like **JUSTINE M.**, have joined her in urging us to collect their stories. *We work extremely hard, but we don't know how to document our work. We don't know how to put it on paper so that our process can be a model. And the challenge we have now is to offer something to our sisters in Burundi and Congo—because they're at the beginning.*

It's no surprise to most who know Rwandan women that they've contributed to this book in order to help others. But these aren't helpers who remain behind the scenes of history. Through their accounts they are coauthors of astonishing and restorative tales. The narrative their voices create includes lessons in shared power, inclusivity, and transparency. And the trajectory of these women who rise from tragedy to influence is not the story of their personal ascension. It's the story of a country's redemption.

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It would be simplistic to assert that the genocide was a war on women waged by men. On the other hand, not to see dramatic female/male differences in this story requires fat blinders. The evidence: more than 94 percent of people accused of participating in the genocide were male.[1]

That's not to say that any one man is pathologically aggressive, or that no women are. But the experience of Taba in 1994 was repeated across the country. The town, an hour-long bus ride from Kigali, is at the end of a long dirt road that extends into the bush. Women there discovered that when men, including their neighbors, were in a group, they were capable of unimaginable sexual assault. One woman was raped by six men until she lost consciousness. Another was gang raped in the village square as neighbors looked on. Another was held as a sex slave by her neighbor. Two were teenagers, one married. One became pregnant by a rapist.

In the accompanying photograph here, they joke as they pose for a photo shoot. They're excited to have their pictures taken, laughing, swap-

United by the unspeakable, they heal together.

ping clothes, like girlfriends of any age. But they have been particularly bonded by years they've spent together, preparing to testify in local and international courts.

So what's the lesson in this photograph? If the Rwandan conflict was gendered, so has been the recovery. New studies of war zones worldwide reveal consistent differences between how women as a group behave and are regarded compared to men as a group. Likewise, researchers have documented the gulf between women's positive impact at the peace table and the cramped space into which they're welcomed. It seems extremely difficult for policy makers and military leaders, even those who are believers, to break the dense, heavy mold of the security sector and foreign policy traditions. But individuals' reluctance and systemic recalcitrance only underscore the timeliness of this book.

The findings, qualitative and quantitative, are in: it's important to have women in large numbers in peace talks, reconciliation work, and new government structures after a war. Grannies, mothers, wives, aunties—generally the primary caregivers—have enormous motivation to create stability for their family members. Former vice president of the Rwan-

dan Senate **MARIE** extends that family emphasis to the crafting of public policy: *As mothers, they can understand people's problems; they can be more patient.* But she adds, *As leaders, women understand better because they're level headed.* Partly because of their caretaker roles, women in Rwanda, and worldwide, are generally seen as less threatening in hot-blooded settings. They're also assumed not to be the ones carrying AK-47s or firing mortars.

Present in a critical mass (approximately 30 percent), they have an unusual propensity to cross political and ethnic divides, whether speaking up to break parliamentary gridlock, or withholding sex until men agree to revive a moribund negotiation. More recent research has added a new twist: groups with males and females find solutions more readily than single-sex groups.

Women's power is partly in the new information they bring to the talks. The picture sketched by former parliamentarian **AGNES** is familiar to women across the world: *In Africa we deal with kids; we go to markets; we see rural poverty. Men are used to thinking about political struggle and how to get themselves into leadership. As we women are coming into leading positions, everyday life is embodied in our politics.*

But beyond their practical effectiveness, scenes of women creating the new Rwanda have sparked global interest, in part because of a mounting respect for—and hope in—the characteristics of so many (but not all) female leaders. Rather than a limitation, Joseph Nye, who ranks consistently as one of the world's most influential thinkers in international relations, sees value in the difference. In general, women contribute perspective and style that exemplify "soft power," a term Nye coined that has revolutionized the way we talk about global influence—not simply as arsenals of bombs and bullets, but also persuasion, diplomacy, and attraction.[2]

Without being carried away by the elephant in the room: the most common question of the man on the street (why always a man?) is whether males and females act and think differently because of biology or culture. We touch on that question in our epilogue, pausing for a brief look at some of the most current thinking about the mix of those two. In short, there are very significant differences between how most women act (as they focus on families and communities) compared to most men

(who readily put themselves forward as leaders). And beyond, there is the perception of gender differences, which is its own force.

Understanding those differences is certainly useful. But generalizations become dangerous when we try to fit individuals into clumsy boxes we've constructed out of social roles. In high-drama situations, stereotypes may take on archetypal stature, with words like "victim" evoking unbearable sympathy and compelling a call to action for the needy, or "hero" inciting mad adulation with inspiration to emulate a champion.

Victimized and in control. Complicit and heroic. Cowardly and courageous.

Women in Rwanda, as in any conflict, were never purely one or the other. A drafter of the constitution and key promoter of grassroots justice, **DOMITILLA** captures the range of experiences: *Women were some of the first elected as judges. And they could describe what happened, because they actually witnessed the crimes. But we also have women in prison because they were involved in the genocide.*

The complicity can be distorted, however, as we look for faces and names that will stir our imagination, onto which we can hang some simple, if wrong, idea. In September 2002, I was amazed to see a *New York Times Magazine* article focusing on Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, the only woman—compared to some eighty men—being prosecuted for genocide at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Ten years later it was a gorgeous head shot of Beatrice, Pauline's daughter-in-law, on trial in the United States. Standing in my kitchen that Sunday morning, I marveled at the gall of the *Globe* singling out a woman for shock effect. But women aren't always left out. Sometimes they're front and center. I didn't sense that the magazine editors had an ax to grind. Yet the treatment of these two women by major media outlets revealed something more complexly gendered. Why do these stories make great copy? It's all about shock value—because directing rape and ordering massacres are not what we expect from women.

The exception proves the rule: women generally don't go around planning genocides.

On the one hand, with the media mantra "if it bleeds it leads," it's no wonder that except for their carefully placed inclusion as villains, there's a dearth of attention to women, given that it's men who spilled

enough blood to fill many tomes. But like essentialism or stereotypes, near-sighted reporting carries far-reaching danger by skewing history as the story of men.

In the same vein, most mainstream coverage of the carnage (such as the film *Hotel Rwanda*) has treated women as victims of gruesome sexual violence. They were. But the popular genocide canon barely touches on women in their wisdom, perseverance, and strength. With a few notable exceptions, even scholarly research has glossed over more complicated, interchanging roles women played during the frenzied one hundred days of killings and the preparations leading up to them.[3] And almost nothing has been written about how they became experts in the rebuilding of their destroyed homeland.

The women who have inspired this book are not two-dimensional paper dolls, to be pasted onto a bucolic, if bloody, landscape in the middle of Africa. After poring over hundreds of hours of interviews, my thinking has become more healthily muddled, as I've realized there is no monolithic "women's experience" of the genocide.

One woman may fit into several categories. For example, a longtime member of the Rwandan Patriotic Front and women's rights activist, **JOY M.** brings the theoretical home. *I remember one time during a genocide commemoration, a survivor testified how a neighbor in the village hid her for two weeks—in her small house, where she kept her pots and things. Before, the neighbor didn't even know that the woman was Tutsi—it hadn't mattered to them. They were just going about their lives and suddenly they were drawn into this conflict. The neighbor didn't want her own son to know that this Tutsi was there, because the son would have killed her. So he would go out and come back and tell stories about where he'd been and how many people he'd killed, in gory details, and this woman could hear from where she was hiding.*

The shelterer is certainly a hero, but why didn't she take the next step and turn in her son? And how shall we think of the woman being hidden? Was she simply a victim crouching in the corner, or was she heroic in her determination to stay alive—possibly for the sake of her family?

Drawing this discussion together, there are three points to remember: First, despite popular portrayal, leading up to, during, and after the genocide Rwandan women were certainly not only victims. Second, depending on the situation, observers might see a woman move from one

Beatrice Munyenyezi, featured on cover of *Boston Globe Magazine*.
BY MATT KALINOWSKI

stereotype to another—for example, from hero to nurturer, perpetrator to victim. And third, those stereotypes can't really capture who these women were. Like all of us, author and readers, one woman likely had multiple and contradictory impulses and tendencies at the same time. And though this is not a theme of our book, in the intensity born of crisis, I imagine those contradictions may have plagued our protagonists.

Setting

Like the genocide itself, the recovery era is complex. At the heart of that complexity is President Paul Kagame. He is both a shaper and shaped by the remarkably progressive eight-point manifesto of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, which mandates full inclusion of all citizens in decision making.

On the other hand, there's no question that the former general holds full sway over his governing apparatus and society as a whole. Thus a common critique of this book's argument (that strong women have as-

cended to admirable heights and have been essential to the rebuilding their country) is that women's leadership is not actually significant because the president of the country holds so much power.

Some see the president wanting little opposition, and thus promoting what they say are weak (meaning female) officials beneath him, because he can control them more easily. Clearly, I disagree, in line with those who counter that power at the top of a pyramid does not mean that the blocks below are not strong.

Some argue, fascinatingly, that Kagame has used political might to promote the success of women because they are generally more moderate and less inclined to advocate violence. While he has not made that claim, the president has noted in interviews that women often exceed their male counterparts in terms of responsibility, diligence, and lack of egotism, qualities that are the spine of solid leadership. But going a step further, what if having more women in decision making were, in fact, also a recipe for less hunger and illiteracy—and less killing? What if a critical mass of women sitting next to men at the negotiating table, in the parliament, or in a cabinet meeting would lead to "inclusive security"? It's hard to imagine a more welcome unintended consequence of a politician's maneuvering.

Of course, political reckoning isn't multiple choice. The question is the extent to which any of these ideas are true. In what time period? Through whose lens?

No one, including the president, can answer those questions. Certainly there's enough goodwill in the country and beyond toward Paul Kagame that I feel comfortable not dealing with the question of his political standing. But also, settling such controversies is beyond the scope of this book. Instead I won't be shy pointing out the scores of women we interviewed who described the president's investment in their success. This book lets Rwandan women speak for themselves, and I won't edit out their dogmatic assertion that President Kagame was a central figure promoting their leadership.

Dancing the *intore* to celebrate and welcome visitors.

On the Ground

To tell this story, we've relied heavily on direct quotes, which relay audacious visions. They present unrelenting challenges as well as enduring achievements. My team and I have interviewed women and men serving in government posts, running businesses, and organizing civil society, as well as some working with them. Longtime Rwanda observers have offered astute insights on the country's experience specifically, or comparative knowledge from other contexts. And we've consulted with trusted advisors who suggested whom we should interview, made introductions, and helped us navigate sensitivities that are, unsurprisingly, abundant twenty years after the country's calamity.

Obviously we've wrestled with the best way to include voices of different ethnic identities. To stabilize the country, the government has mandated in the strongest terms a rejection of those distinctions that had been put to deadly use; instead, it vigorously cultivated a Rwandese identity. Still, feelings of separation do persist, as personal history—interwoven with firsthand memories of hardship, opportunity, or loss—remains a part of the individual. Often it's possible to guess ethnic identity, but I won't go there in this book unless it's necessary to a point a subject is making. I know that may be frustrating to you, the reader, but I hope you'll focus on the truth in the speakers' words.

INYUMBA, wise woman, offers this warning: *If you look at Rwanda today, the Hutu, Tutsi—there's no difference that justifies one killing another. None. There are more similarities that bring them together as people. It's about schools for their children. It's about roads. Many people are poor. It's about having clean water and a place to live. The needs of the Hutu, the needs of the Tutsi, the Twa—they're the same.* On the rare occasions I use the words "Hutu," "Tutsi," and "Twa," I've chosen the singular, rather than the Anglicized plural, in order to reinforce that those words are primarily adjectives rather than nouns describing distinct kinds of people. I also use "Rwandan" and "Rwandese" interchangeably, as the people I've interacted with have done.

We have a strong representation of every group, including those with mixed backgrounds. That said, some readers may criticize an imbalance that favors Tutsi experience—specifically those who were refugees in Uganda. It's impossible to know the precise proportion of ethnicities across the country or the government; that said, with so many Tutsi returning from exile (often with more educational opportunities), members of that minority group likely hold more high-level positions than their proportion of the population would suggest.[4] Still, describing the past two decades of female leadership, I clearly have to profile those at the heart of this movement, regardless of background. The point of this book isn't to analyze why speakers come from this background or that. In fact, I've found there are many more diverse life experiences among the leadership than the common perception holds.

In some instances, we're highlighting one story or commentary like others we've heard a dozen times. Other moments, we've sought out a

woman with a narrative that stands out as unique but captures an important dynamic, even if her sphere of influence is relatively limited. That is, after all, my job—to compose the most authentic experience.

Across a span of sixteen years, my colleagues and I have conducted interviews and had conversations—directly and interpreted, in English, French, and Kinyarwanda—inside and outside the country. The soft-spoken beginnings of conversations (a characteristic particular to the women) took some getting used to for me, but as minutes rolled by, eyes began to sparkle, voices intensified, gestures became more forceful, and words began to flow. The collection of interviews we ended up with was much more than a resource for historians. It was an archive spilling over with the expected sorrow and laughter, but even more inspiring was the degree of personal, insightful revelation.

Almost ninety Rwandans are featured by name in these pages. Some appear many times; several only once. Rather than linger over who's who, I hope you'll appreciate the multiple facets of each story, described by their many contributors, in their cohesive whole. Give up on character development. It's not that kind of book.

Actually, I considered presenting just a small set of profiles so that you could trace each voice throughout the book. Instead, I opted to feature a huge chorus, whose voices, in harmony, build out this extraordinary history. There's meaning in that choice.

Ultimately, this is a story of a fascinating period of time—Rwanda's rebuilding—and its telling is in keeping with the Rwandan ideal of collective effort and collective success. That means you'll sometimes have to read carefully between the lines to understand exactly how a given speaker contributed to an achievement, accepting that the best ideas rarely originate from just one person. Even the most accomplished woman gently noted, "I was given an opportunity to . . ." before launching into her story. It's worth mentioning, because there's a beautiful humility in that formulation. We also saw how often the most color came out when a woman was talking about the achievements of her friends or of the group. Tellingly, none of those featured in these pages would ever have written this book; that would risk placing herself too close to center stage.

When the setting of an interview allowed, we had a video camera

rolling, so as not to miss the body language our notebooks wouldn't always reflect. We tried to pose open-ended questions and take cues from themes our interviewees raised when describing their own work. In fact, I encouraged them to go where they would, hoping I could limit the contamination, if you will, of my assumptions.

Once we had their words, the artistic work began. For weeks every year, I had hundreds of pieces of paper, sometimes color coded with bright slashes of Sharpie highlighters, spread across every table in our home. I walked from one set to another, exploring like a miner standing above a stream, panning for gold. When I found a nugget, I marked it with sloppy asterisks. Only then could I create an outline—based on the women's narrative, not mine—stringing together the quotes.

I had a huge advantage a miner wouldn't—I could edit awkward turns of phrase that didn't reflect the expertise of nonnative English speakers. An essential step was then to review the crafted story with each person, in whichever language she or he felt most comfortable with. New details would emerge, as memories long stored away came alive on a printed page for the very first time. This was a rare collaboration that allowed us to guard personal details contributors didn't want shared and identify them as they wished, a very few times with pseudonyms, signified by placing the name in quotation marks.

Now let me be as straightforward as I can be. This isn't my story. Those who've lived it have had final say in how their experiences are represented for the world to appreciate. Instead, I'm a chronicler, a witness who sometimes had the opportunity to join in. At first, I observed. But eventually, I started actively looking—and that's where inevitable bias comes in. Each question has assumptions: "What prepared you for leadership?" presupposes that leadership can even be prepared for.

All authors bring themselves into their analysis. My given, I confess, was this: I love courage. I love Rwanda. I love women. I love the courageous Rwandan women.

Our relationships will shape my work and my spirit as long as I live.

Why This Book?

The broad purpose of this book is not to report on the progress Rwandan women have made. Not to highlight great Rwandan heroines. Nor is it only to tease apart just how women in Rwanda came to have such influence, or to see what difference it has made to have women in such a high proportion of leadership.

Since 2000, I've been collecting and studying interviews with women in this small country because of the travails but also opportunities in lands of all sizes. No country in the world will have the same combination of rough instability, uneven political structure, stable or unstable leadership, windows or limits of economic and educational conditions, or changing social expectations of women. But within every country there are opportunities.

Perhaps a nation shares only two conditions with Rwanda; it has others Rwanda doesn't that can be stirred into a mix. Whether Congo or Cambodia, the United States or United Arab Emirates, in these pages ingenious activists and politicians across the world may find not only ideas but also inspiration.

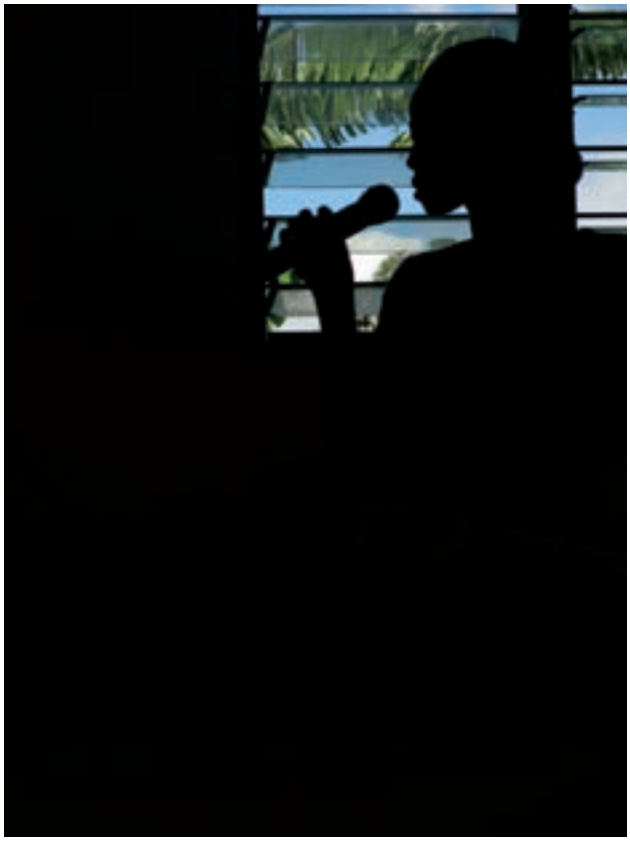
One particular clarification is critical: The most common misunderstanding about Rwandan women's progress postgenocide is that it occurred primarily because most of the males had been killed, imprisoned, or had fled, leaving a power vacuum into which females, some 70 percent of the population, needed to step. While that may have been true in the immediate aftermath of the cataclysm in some parts of the country, the larger picture is that an integrated group of factors led to women's progress. Their journey was much, much more arduous—and much, much more interesting.

In five parts broken into forty short chapters, we chart why and how women like Inyumba rose to prominent positions throughout the country, and the difference it has made to have them head so many parts of society.

Part I sets the stage by looking at women's traditional roles leading up to and immediately following the genocide. Through reflections by women and men, "Starting Places" explores how society's expectations and women's experiences in the home, in refugee camps, and in the di-

From the field
with harvest.

Tiny feet.



Coming forward to speak the unspeakable.

aspora farther afield refined their capabilities. The mass killing turns everything upside down, wrecks institutions, and crushes families. Women tell their stories of how and why they became involved in the calamitous struggle as military officers, survivors, or rescuers.

Part II describes how, in the aftermath of the catastrophe, women worked night and day in the rebuilding and beyond through fascinating initiatives and off-the-charts creativity. "The Path to Public Leadership" includes ten major elements that melded to support their upsurge: community organizing as a training ground, pull from the top led by the president, creation of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, a pyramid of countrywide women's councils, a women's caucus in Parliament, collaborative constitution making that sought out female voices, seats

One of the most striking achievements is the stride in girls' education.
BY BOBBY SAGER

at the constitutional drafting table, the government and parliamentary quota, smart political campaigns, and the reach back to rural communities for the next crop of leaders.

From their new positions of influence, what have these women accomplished? Part III, "Bending toward Reconciliation," shows them pioneering landmark justice and encouraging reconciliation with neighbors.

In part IV, "Signposts," women are magnifying civil rights, spurring economic progress, nurturing health, and investing in the next generation of Rwandans.

After documenting these major strides, part V lays out how women are ensuring that their gains are sustained, and that ongoing challenges

A new generation with more opportunity—but with the grit?

remain at the forefront of their agenda. We also hear from young Rwandan women about how this rising generation takes stock of the progress and how they see the mantle they're inheriting. The title "Building the Road They're Walking" acknowledges that their progress must continue even as everyday life goes on.

Finally, the epilogue. My reflections draw out the significance of Rwanda's story beyond the country and debunk long-held myths about development and security, turning the lens on all of us with what I hope is a convincing call to action. And then, an unforeseen realization: in an almost inconceivable twist, Rwanda is an example of how the tragic upheaval of war can create disruption of a society, allowing for an unexpected breakthrough for women.

Women's advancement travels in a jagged line, as we've seen in Afghanistan or the Arab Spring.

But when stars align, social chaos and political expediency or progressive thinking may usher in a new era of women's leadership and girls' advancement. That this uplifting phenomenon accompanies a time gen-

erally marked by trauma, despair, dread, and pessimism is all the more remarkable. For policy makers trying to figure out their roles, and for anyone concerned about the future of our planet, this is wonderful news. Just how to help escort women to the top is another matter, but even recognizing the possibility is an important first move.

Rwanda has led the way, and we would do well to study this experience. There are always excuses to turn a blind eye: The president is too powerful. The women were uniquely toughened from years in the bush. One country's experience can't predict another's. But these are more defenses than reasons not to notice the example before us. In fact, for the sake of the elusive ideal—global security—and hundreds of millions of lives shaped by those two simple words, we must take it all in.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Nicole Hogg, "Women's Participation in the Rwandan Genocide: Mothers or Monsters?," *International Review of the Red Cross* 92 (March 2010): 69–102.

2. Joseph Nye, "When Women Lead," Project Syndicate, February 8, 2012, http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/when-women-lead.

3. Another notable exception in addition to Hogg, "Women's Participation in the Rwandan Genocide," is African Rights, *Rwanda Not So Innocent* (London: African Rights, 1995).

4. Central Intelligence Agency, "Africa: Rwanda," in *The World Factbook*, 2013, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rw.html.

1. Foremothers

Epigraph: Peace Uwineza and Elizabeth Pearson, "Sustaining Women's Gains in Rwanda: The Influence of Indigenous Culture and Post-genocide Politics" (Washington, DC: Institute for Inclusive Security, 2009), 8.

1. The National Gender Policy (Kigali: Government of Rwanda, 2004).

2. The Pressure Builds

1. Valerie M. Hudson, Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill, Mary Caprioli, and Chad F. Emmett, *Sex and World Peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

2. Intertwined with ethnic motivations for the genocide was a backlash against women's expanding roles in pregenocide Rwanda. As anthropologist Christopher Taylor wrote in his seminal work on the sexual dynamics of the violence: "To many Rwandans gender relations in the 1980s and 1990s were falling into a state of decadence as more women attained positions of prominence in economic and public life, and as more of them exercised their personal preferences in their private lives." Taylor found that representations of women, especially in the vulgar cartoons published in extremist newspapers in the years leading up to the genocide, "foreshadowed the degree of sadism perpetrated by extremists on the bodies of their victims." Christopher Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (New York: Bloomsbury, 1999), 157.