



Post-Genocide Transformation of Rwanda: Critical Review of its Achievements and the Remaining Challenges

**Kyoto Peacebuilding Center (KPC)
In cooperation with
Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan (GPAJ)
And
ACUNS Tokyo Liaison Office**

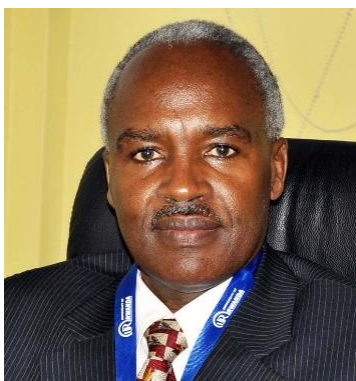
Presents

Ambassador Charles Murigande

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Report compiled by: Maciej Witek

Part 1: Keynote Speech



Ambassador Charles Murigande

Ambassador Charles Murigande is a Rwandan politician and scholar. He served in the Government of Rwanda as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2002 to 2008, as Minister of ~~Governmental~~ Cabinet Affairs from 2008 to 2009, as Minister of Education from 2009 to 2011, and Vice President of the University of Rwanda from 2016 to 2020. He also served as the Ambassador of Rwanda to Japan with concurrent accreditation to Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippines from 2011 to 2015.

Ambassador Murigande started his speech by noting that from April to July 1994, Rwanda was the scene of the last genocide of the twentieth century. In a span of one hundred days, this genocide against the Tutsi planned and perpetrated by the then government of Rwanda, engulfed the lives of more than one million people; left hundreds of thousands of orphans, widows, and widowers; made almost every surviving Rwandan either a refugee or an internally displaced person; destroyed most of the social-economic infrastructure, and grounded to halt the whole economy of the country. Many within the international community thought that Rwanda was going to be a totally and permanently failed nation. Few, if any, believed that Rwanda would ever recover and be a fully functional country, some went even to extent of suggesting that it should be divided into a Hutu land and a Tutsi land.

However, believing that this genocidal violence was not an unescapable genetical trait of the Rwandan people but rather the result of decades of ill-governance, the post-genocide leadership of Rwanda refused to heed these prophets of doom. They resolutely made the following three fundamental choices that have resulted in one of the most successful post-conflict transformations rarely witnessed in the world:

1. Staying together and forging unity and reconciliation;
2. Being accountable,
3. Thinking big.

Though Rwanda was catapulted on the world map by the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi it is today maintained on it by its successful post-conflict transformation.

Through his presentation, Ambassador Murigande examined how these 3 important choices have ultimately transformed Rwanda into one of the most peaceful, safe, and stable countries in Africa; with one of the least corrupt and most effective governments in the world; experiencing sustained high and economic growth on the continent of Africa. Though Rwanda was almost a failed state in 1994, today it is a respected member of the global community which is making a significant contribution to maintaining peace in the world as well as addressing many other global challenges such as climate change, international migration, etc.

The presentation assessed the challenges that Rwanda still faces on the continuing transformation journey, notable poverty despite years of sustained economic growth; an unstable region that offers a favorable ground for genocidal ideology and forces to thrive; a long and difficult healing process from a traumatic event of unprecedented magnitude, just to cite a few.

Finally, the presentation examines major factors that enabled Rwanda's unprecedented successful transformation and lessons that could be learned from it. In a conclusion, the presentation shows that though Rwanda is not a paradise, it is not a hell that some ill-intentioned persons labor hard to describe it. The modest but meaningful achievements so far registered have given confidence to Rwandans that they will reach their set destination of being a united, reconciled, peaceful, fair, democratic, and prosperous nation.

Part 2: Panel Commentators



Mr. Hiroshi Kato

Former Vice President of Japan International Development Cooperation Agency (JICA)

During his last 6 years as senior vice president of African Affairs at JICA, Mr. Kato came to know Rwanda very closely. As Prof Murigande summarized, Rwanda is on the right development path. It has set a goal of achieving the status of a high-income country by 2050 and Mr. Kato is sure that the country will achieve it. The country already demonstrated its capacity to grow and develop its economy and witnessed a remarkable growth rate of more than 7% in the last 20 years. Mr. Kato talked about the path to the development of Rwanda, and its economic development aspects. He visited Rwanda maybe 10 times and it was indeed his favorite country. Every time he visited he enjoyed the discussion with the leaders, minister Gatete, minister Ndagijimana, and was very much impressed by the clear vision and eagerness to implement projects and programs. Mr. Kato emphasized that Rwanda has a very clearly defined development goal, those are well thought out, and the country has taken efforts to minimize the limitations posed by some constraints. Prof. Murigande talked about the landlocked country, but instead of as a disadvantage, Rwanda decided to declare itself as a land-linked country. Some of the outcomes of this are that now Rwanda is trying to create a hub of airlines, the hub of intellectual interactions like international conferences. It also tried to develop a knowledge-based economy. His overall impression is that Rwanda has

well thought out development goals, which is not commonly found in other African countries. Every time Mr. Kato discussed with leaders, they were very demanding of foreign donors, but at the same time, they always keep their words. We can trust the Rwandan government, and we knew that everything those ministers said will be implemented. He is sure that the current government has the capacity to implement the development goals. The development strategy is based on the idea that a country's development depends on thriving business activities, not foreign aid. Mr. Kato thinks a business-oriented development vision is very important, but not always commonly found in developing countries. In terms of business indicators, Rwanda is better than Japan, and we have to learn in terms how to make Japan more business-friendly. Mr. Kato's final point is to prioritize not only ICT related service industry, but also agriculture. Taking into consideration that a large number of the population is engaged in agriculture, the Rwandan government has prioritized the development of agriculture and rural areas. Let us recall that very few countries successfully industrialized and modernized without improving the productivity of rural areas. Obtaining a high-income country status in 2050 is not an easy goal, the country has to keep the growth of more than 7% for more than 25 years. The most important obstacle is the lack of adequate infrastructure, maybe water supply is another problem. Although the human resource indicators improved, several things need to be done. Mr. Kato is optimistically cautious about the future of Rwanda, but overall with the achievement and capability that the country has demonstrated so far, he is confident Rwanda will achieve its goal by 2050.



Mr. Yasushi Akashi

Special Advisor of GPAJ and Honorary Chair of the Kyoto Peacebuilding Center

Mr. Akashi visited Rwanda once and had the great pleasure of meeting president Kagame. Countries like US and Japan have been trying their best to help Rwanda, but he was somehow disturbed by Rwanda's lack of confidence in the UN. Mr. Akashi thinks that the UN like JICA in Japan can help the country in resolving some of the remaining challenges, especially in the area of reconciliation. Rwanda was deeply divided and suffered much from the wounds of the genocide, it is not an easy matter to resolve the remaining difficulties, and achieve true national harmony. The UN in the first part of the 1990s had 3 most difficult questions: Somalia, Rwanda, and former Yugoslavia. Of those 3, 2 were in Africa, and one is a part of Europe. Somalia still has its problems that started even before Rwanda, and are yet to be resolved. Mr. Akashi wonders how ambassador Murigande proposes to solve the remaining mutual suspicions between two major groups in his country.

Part 3: Discussion

Ambassador Charles Murigande

Mr. Murigande does not think Rwanda has reached its destination, but he stated that the country made a long way, and we made progress. In 1994 very few people in the world hoped that Rwanda will become a fully functioning nation. The country has created conditions for people to be able to live together peacefully. There are no separate neighborhoods for Hutus and Tutsis, people live together. This does not mean that there are no problems, there are still people who committed genocide who fled the country, and are still spiting their venom using the internet and communication platforms. But the truth is that people in Rwanda made a lot of progress, and they want to continue. What led Rwanda to the 1994 genocide, was the mis-rule of government that was preaching the vision of segregating the people and dehumanizing a section of the population of the country. The post-genocide government has introduced and implemented policies aimed at reconciling and uniting the people of Rwanda, but this does not overnight heal the wounds. The good thing is that there is no room for those dehumanizing and discrimination policies anymore and all Rwandans are appreciated and valued based on their merit. Mr. Murigande believes the merit is equally distributed among people, and the country will continue to work on the remaining issues.



Ms. Kae Yanagisawa

Director of Africa Society of Japan, and Councilor at Kyoto Peacebuilding Center, Kyoto University of Arts

Ms. Yanagisawa stated that Rwanda and Malawi, both small landlocked countries in Africa, followed a very different paths after 1994; while Rwanda achieved remarkable development despite the genocide, Malawi was democratized but has been trapped in poverty in peace. Then she touched upon the issue of the low degree of citizen participation in politics in Rwanda and asked the reasons behind it.

Ambassador Charles Murigande

Mr. Murigande responded that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. When people look at the political governance, because it is not similar to theirs, they will comment that because “you do not look like us you are no good”. In Rwanda, there is the participation of the people, so many local NGOs, are represented even at the lowest levels of governance. At every level there is a JADF - Joint Action Development Forum, bringing all civil society organizations to discuss the challenges at that level. Whenever development plans are formulated, or during elections, there is civil society participation. Because in Rwanda you do not see people fighting each other, or abusing each other, then people tend to say that the democracy is not vibrant. People have been encouraged to treat each other respectfully, it does not mean there is no room for participation, it is a civilized way of participating in politics and contributing to the development of the country. Some people would say that Rwanda is limiting the freedom of expression related to genocide, but it is not different from European states where you can get arrested for denying the holocaust. Nobody says that these European governments are limiting freedom of expression, but when it is done in Rwanda, where the wounds are still bleeding, critics say that the government is stifling the freedom of expression.



Mr. Takahiro Shinyo

Councilor of the Kyoto Peacebuilding Center, Professor of Kwansei Gakuin University, and Former Ambassador to the United Nations and the Federal Republic of Germany

Mr. Shinyo asked what is the influence of the Ukrainian war on Rwanda? He thinks the situation between those countries is different because in Rwanda's case it is an internal conflict, but in the Ukrainian case, it is an invasion of Russia to other neighboring country. What is similar is that crimes against humanity were committed. What is influenced by the Ukrainian war? Politics or economy? In many countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe, nowadays the problem is the kleptocracy – the ruler deprives everything from their nation. According to the experience of Rwanda, when democracy prevails, such kind of problems are reduced. Is Rwanda ahead of this situation? Also the language Rwanda speaks is French, but now the education language is English, and the country becomes a part of the commonwealth. Mr. Shinyo wonders if those changes might have been the reason why the new Rwanda integrated further into the international society?

Ambassador Charles Murigande

Mr. Murigande responded that when he says that Rwanda is affected by the international crisis, and the Ukrainian war, it is affected in the economic realm, not political. The fuel price climbed about 18%, Rwanda imported most of the wheat and cooking oil from Russia or Ukraine, and that is going to be more expensive. To the question of kleptocracy, Mr. Murigande referred to a speech of Rwanda's president on the 28th

anniversary of the genocide. He said that the world tends to say that there are two systems: democracy and autocracy. But for him, there is an especially insidious one, and it is hypocrisy. Most of the world lives in hypocrisy. Rwanda tried over the last 28 years to develop a system of governance where leaders are accountable to the people. The country wants its leaders to be accountable to the people they govern, and if you are not delivering the services expected from you, you will be held accountable and eventually punished by being removed from the position. This accountability does not please some people who enter the government wanting to enjoy the privileges of power. When they are held accountable, they prefer to leave their country and make noise outside. When it comes to the issue of English and French when the government decided to make English a language of instruction it was at the time when Mr. Murigande was a minister of Education. When Africa was divided, Rwanda fell under the hand of Germans, and if not the World War I had not happened, Rwandans would be speaking German because it was imposed on them. Later, when Belgians replaced the Germans, they taught Rwandans to speak French. But, if you speak French you are only able to communicate with 250 million people around the world, but if you speak English you can communicate with 3 billion people. The idea is that if people are making an effort to learn a foreign language, let them learn English because this allows them to open a broader horizon and allow them to communicate with many people. When it comes to business, you have a far greater probability to be understood when you speak English. Rwanda realized that people would gain a lot if they were to master English.



Mr. Kazuhide Kuroda

Development consultant, Doshisha University Graduate School of Global Studies

Mr. Kuroda from New York posed two questions. The first one was on insecurity across the border from Rwanda in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the second was on the future of Kagame's presidency as he has been in power for quite a long time.

Ambassador Charles Murigande

Minister Murigande replied that DRC has been declining since the the Mobutu era with the central government unable to maintain law and order and provide necessities in the eastern region next to Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. This absence of state created a vacuum in which militia groups formed and became active. Recently, the DRC government decided to join the East African Community which agreed, among others, to assist DRC in bringing peace and stability to this region. Regarding the UN peacekeeping force in DRC, Mr. Murigande believed that it has been operating for some 23 years without improving the situation. On the presidency, Mr. Murigande stated that regular elections have been taking place and there will be another in 2024 at which time Rwandan people could decide to either keep him in the office or vote him out. Mr. Murigande viewed that President Kagame has been performing very well and is appreciated by the people. He is relatively young so he could be elected again.



Ms. Naoko Kumagai

Professor, Aoyama Gakuin University, School of Global Studies and Collaboration, Vice-Chairperson, Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan

Ms. Kumagai noted that there are different types of evaluation of the achievement, but it is more a matter of whether the glass is half full or empty, and we should not confuse the question of human rights violation and the issue of power struggles among politicians. She thinks the achievement is quite significant, and then there is no significant recurrence of violence, which is quite frequent in other countries suffering from civil wars or internal instability. What is the source of the sustainability of this reconciliation in Rwanda? Is there any education or early warning system to prevent any recurrence of violence and strengthen the reconciliation? Is there any transcendence of the identities of Tutsi and Hutus. If so, how has it been possible?

Ambassador Charles Murigande

Mr. Murigande responded that regarding the sustainability of reconciliation, the good thing is the inclusion of young people in the governance of Rwanda. The country has the youngest government in Africa, probably in the world. There is a new generation of people who are committed to unity and reconciliation, stability and cohesion in Rwanda. Mr. Murigande thinks it is going to be sustainable because young people are involved.



Mr. Keiichi Tanabe

Associate Professor, Department of International Studies, School of Global Studies, Tokai University

Mr. Tanabe mentioned that last year, two important reports were released regarding the Genocide in Rwanda. The one is the "Duclert Report", prepared by the research commission headed by French historian Vincent Duclert and submitted to President Macron in March 2021. Another one is the "Muse Report", prepared by a U.S. law firm, being retained by the Government of Rwanda, and submitted to President Kagame in April 2021. Both reports investigated the role of the French Government in connection with the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. The two reports indicated the responsibility of the French Government, although there is a difference in the analysis of the role of the French Government – Duclert Report indicates that the French Government denies the complicity of the French Government in the Genocide, whereas Muse Report points out that the French Government was in a position to foresee the Genocide and they closed their eyes to what was about to happen. Since President Kagame took power after the Genocide, he added English to the official language and selected English as the educational language in place of French in 2009. In addition, Rwanda became a member country of the Commonwealth in 2010. In this way, his foreign policy has been strengthening diplomatic ties with Anglo-Saxons. However, in May 2021, after the above two reports were released, French President Macron visited Rwanda, and the presidents of the two countries declared that France and Rwanda would advance their relations. Mr. Tanabe asked about the motive of President Kagame to strengthen relations with France despite the controversial role of the French Government in the Genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda.

Ambassador Charles Murigande

Mr. Murigande responded that president Kagame is the country's leader, but he does it in the name of Rwanda and collectively as leaders of Rwanda. Rwanda was never against France, and always tried to have a good relationship, but France was the reluctant one. Maybe for so many years, France thought that their former allies, the people who committed genocide will capture power again and probably the leadership realized this is a hopeless dream, and decided to approach the current leadership of Rwanda and mend fences with them.. There was a series of discussions including these reports. Leaders of Rwanda always desired to have good relations with every country in the world, including France, and they are happy that this has happened now.

Mr. Hiroshi Kato

Mr. Kato noted that as professor Murigande was saying, the leadership issue must be very important. If Rwanda is to attain a high-income country status by 2050, it has to keep growing at the rate of more than 7% for the next 25 years. So the stable transition of power and maintenance of development policies will be crucial for the future.



Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa
Director, Kyoto Peacebuilding Center

Mr. Hasegawa summarized the discussion and mentioned that initially Ambassador Murigande identified many achievements, but he was very honest to also listed 8 major challenges, and professor Kato elaborated on 3 of them. The discussion was narrowed down to the issue of governance and leadership. President Kagame is or is not loved so much, but the elections do work. Two days ago Mr. Hasegawa received a note from Mr. Jose Ramos-Horta of Timor-Leste, who was re-elected the president again. Mr. Hasegawa thinks leadership plays a key role in unifying the country and addressing the very difficult challenges of trying to bring different ethnic groups together.

What he learned about Rwanda and it is very interesting, is that Rwanda chose the American model, but on the other hand its neighbor Burundi, chose the UN model. What does it mean? According to the UN model, we concentrate on giving rights to the minorities, making sure they have a certain number of seats in the parliament, and so on. In Rwanda, there are no more distinctions. The identity does not show whether you are Hutu or Tutsi. How are the intermarriages between Hutu and Tutsi taking place?

Ambassador Charles Murigande

Mr. Murigande responded that even in his own family, there are intermarriages taking place. Rwandan young people have gone beyond those divisions. Of course, some very old people still refrain from blessing those marriages, but whether they like it or not, young people are forming happy marriages. Mr. Murigande thinks there is a brighter future ahead of Rwanda, because of that young generation.