

**Co-production Radio Rwanda and Deutsche Welle,
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**Living with the past
Rwanda: Searching for reconciliation and unity**

Music 1: Song about the Genocide

Indicatif – Speaker:

Living with the past

Rwanda: Searching for reconciliation and unity. Out of the series: Conflict and crisis prevention. You are listening to a co-production by Radio Rwanda and Deutsche Welle.

Speaker 2– translation of the song:

Oh my Rwanda: I came back and I failed to know where I am.

Oh what should I do?

Whom should I ask?

The one that I could have asked is not alive anymore,

My heart is broken and full of emptiness

The hills where my people used to live are empty now.

The playgrounds for our children have been taken over by crows.

Music 1 fade up...

Speaker:

Rwanda 1994: The sweetly sickening odour of de-composing bodies hung over many parts of Rwanda. Skulls and bones, torn clothing were scattered over the streets of Rwandas capital Kigali and it s mountainous countryside.

Speaker 2 – Translation of the song:

*They killed and tortured without thinking twice. Without pity or fear,
But with jeers and laughters.*

*Some who were not killed brutally by sticks and machetes paid
To be shot and therefore killed fast
If you couldn't pay, you were hacked to death.*

Speaker:

The slaughter started on April 6, 1994. As many as three quarters of the Tutsi population was slain by the Hutu militia. As well as thousands of moderate Hutus who had opposed the killing campaign and the forces directing it. The killers had struck with a speed and devastation close to madness. In not more than 100 days between 800 000 and one million people were massacred in what was later to be classified by the United Nations as a Genocide. Until now, there is no definite number of victims: many disappeared in mass graves. Survivors – witnesses - fled to neighbouring countries. The international community had watched and stayed silent.

Clip 1: Alphonsine, survivor, in French**VOICE OVER:**

“They didn't leave scars on my body. But I see their faces. They keep coming back, especially in the night. The same faces I saw during that week when they started the genocide. I see these people with their torn clothes and their weapons. Everybody seemed to carry weapons: men, women, children. And when I feel sad or tired, they are hunting me in my dreams, every night. I see them coming to kill us.”

Clip 2: Prisoner, in Kinyarwanda**VOICE-OVER:**

“I killed two children, and threw them in the river Nyabarongo. I also killed an old man and a woman. I threw her body into a latrine. After that I joint some other groups and we kept on killing other people. These are the crimes that I plead guilty for. Today I am asking for forgiveness: the families of those I killed, the Rwandan government and God.”

Music 1: fade up and then down under speaker 2

Speaker 2 – translation of the song:

A tragedy, that even fortune-tellers could not have predicted...

*Oh my country. What an unimaginable disaster has come over you
that nobody will ever comprehend?*

Music 1: ends here

Speaker:

The genocide didn't come out of nowhere. Rwandans see it rather as the culmination of a long history of repressive regimes and policies that fostered hatred and discrimination between Rwanda's two major ethnic groups: the Hutu and the Tutsi. The divisive policies were established by Belgian colonial power, who ruled the small country in Central Africa from 1916 to 1962, when Rwanda became independent. Repressive regimes reinforced the division of the population until the early 90's, when a civil war broke out. The peace agreement of Arusha from 1993 couldn't prevent the disastrous massacres a year later. At that time, the Hutu government, by fear of staying in power, had used its state resources and authority to incite - or force - tens of thousands of Rwandans to kill the Tutsi minority.

Eight years after the massacres, the legacy of the genocide continues: more than 100.000 prisoners are awaiting their trials for participating in the genocide. Survivors are still waiting for justice. Today, Rwandans are looking for a way to deal with their past and to rebuild their country. The search for reconciliation and unity has become a major topic on the political agenda of the current government under president Paul Kagamé, says Fatuma Ndingiza. She is the executive secretary of the national commission for unity and reconciliation. It was set up in 1999 by the Rwandan government to initiate and support activities to reconcile the population.

Clip 3 Fatuma Ndingiza, English

"Reconciliation is seen as the survival of the country after what happened. It is seen as a foundation. It is a foundation for sustainable development, for the promotion of the rule of law. So it is important that you have a strong foundation of national unity

and reconciliation to try and unite Rwandans. And to promote reconciliation of Rwandans.”

Speaker:

However, reconciliation and forgiveness can only happen if those who planned and perpetrated the massacres are brought to justice and if victims and survivors receive compensation for their losses. Many of those who lost their loved ones feel that the search for justice has been a long and arduous one since the events of 1994.

Music 2: Gacaca-Song, fade up and then down under Speaker:

Speaker:

A traditional Rwandan method is supposed to bring a solution to all these problems: The Gacaca tribunals. - Gacaca means “grass” in Kinyarwanda, the language spoken here.

Speaker 2 – translation of the song:

Now, here they are: the Gacaca tribunals. The tribunals which should help to strengthen reconciliation and unity.

Speaker :

Gacaca-courts were held to settle disputes between neighbours.

Speaker 2 – translation of the song:

My dear fellow countryman, witness of the tragedy without name. Tell the truth. Tell who is innocent and who is guilty.

Speaker:

It was traditionally held by the people of a village – or cell as it is called here – sitting under a tree or on the central place of the village. All the villagers were invited to participate. Those who were punished had to do community work. The main characteristic of the Gacaca, however, is that it did not just punish the accused, but sought to reconcile and rebuild mutual trust between the opposing parties. In any case, people have to live together after such a tribunal.

Today this tradition of a “justice of reconciliation” is very popular among the judges. It has been revived under the supervision of the Sixth Chamber of the Rwandan Supreme court, explains Gardine Mugwaneza. She’s a judge in the Supreme genocide suspects court and adviser on Gacaca jurisdiction:

Clip 4 Gardine Mugwaneza, Judge in Supreme court, English

“We are not only interested in punishing people. After punishment what do you do, living together? And with the classical justice system there is no element, no way you can talk about reconciliation. But again there are not many ways of channels of reconciliation. But we find many channels of reconciliation in Gacaca courts. Because people speak and you know who did what. People give evidence, everyone is participating. People asking for forgiveness from the victims, from the society. So from the Gacaca, people thought about it, because they wanted to know what will happen after punishment..”

Speaker:

Among Rwandans, expectations are high concerning the Gacaca-Tribunals:

Clip 5 woman 1, Kinyarwanda

VOICE-OVER

“In the Gacaca courts telling the truth will be of importance. Revealing what someone saw, then those who are in prison and have committed crimes, they will have to be reconcile with the people... Then the remaining population we have to unite.”

Clip 6 woman 2, Kinyarwanda

VOICE-OVER

“Thats what we want: those who will be found guilty to get their punishment. Those who are innocent to get released.”

Speaker:

These women come from the small Mataba village in the northern province of Ruhengeri. For months now, the preparations have been underway for the Gacaca courts. Posters advertise the tribunals and ask the population to participate. One of

the major activities over the past months was sensitising the villagers to the Gacaca procedure – some villagers are attending a class at the local school.

Atmo: Class in Ruhengeri

Clip 7 Kimanuka Hamis, Kinyaruanda

VOICE-OVER:

“We are teaching them to participate in the Gacaca. So that they can help end the crimes of Genocide.”

For Kimanuka Hamis, a teacher, the success of the Gacaca depends on the participation of as many people from a village as possible. He has been teaching the villagers about Gacaca for several months now.

Clip 8 Kimanuka Hamis suite...

VOICE-OVER:

“Today is not the first time we do it, we keep on explaining the Gacaca procedures to them. And here they can remind themselves of what happened in their area during the Genocide. They are looking forward to the beginning of Gacaca and they hope that they will start soon.”

Speaker:

Everywhere in the country, preparations to set up Gacaca-courts are underway. Since May 2002, a pilot phase of hearings and courts has been taking place: witnesses were called to testify, victims and families of survivors could claim reparations, and files were drawn up on the accused. Prisoners made their statements – some confessed, some pleaded innocent. Prisoners who confessed within a certain timeframe can expect a lower sentence – one of the measures to strengthen reconciliation. This prisoner, who has been in a Kigali prison since 1997, says he is innocent. More than 6 000 genocid suspects awaiting their trials in this prison. He wants to stay anonymous.

Clip 9 Prisoner, Kinyarwanda

VOICE-OVER:

“I am a prisoner at the Gikondo prison in Kigali. I am waiting for the Gacaca courts, so they can set me free. Then those people who accused me of participating in the genocide will have to face me, and those who know I am innocent can tell the truth about me.”

Speaker:

For the victims, the reconciliatory justice is not always easy to accept. Like for this young woman, who works as a journalist at the national radio station. She survived the slaughter.

Clip 10 Alphonsine, French

VOICE-OVER:

“If these people had come from another country, we wouldn’t accept this. Because they killed us. Children killed, mothers killed, people from the church killed. Everybody killed us. We have to live with death, everyday. We are frustrated about this, but it is for the sake of the reconstruction of the country. Of course we don’t feel well when we hear that a killer will be liberated after only 15 years. Somebody who might have killed more than 10 people. And what about all the others, that nobody talks about: the one who found you in the forest and denounced you. The woman who threw you out of a house where you have been hiding. They also killed us. But we have to accept the situation. Because we don’t have a choice. Maybe we will get used to it by the time. Maybe all those sick and traumatised people will not go crazy. Maybe it is ideal for the country. But for us, survivors, it is not the ideal, not at all. If you ask me, I would have them punished. At least, I could feel some relieve. But this is not the way it goes here.”

Speaker:

With more than an estimated 10 000 gacaca courts to be held over the coming years, it will be a major challenge for everybody to ensure that justice prevails. Human rights groups already fear that they don’t have enough people to monitor the proceedings. And there is still the question of what will happen when those sentenced, and those who have been found innocent, return to their villages.

Overall, young people of Rwanda have suffered a lot from the slaughter. Many young people, especially those from a poor social background were recruited by the militias

at the time of the Genocide to kill. Thousands lost their families, many still live in orphanage centres. One of the few youth centres in Rwandas capital Kigali, the Kimisagara youth centre, has made it its goal to help these young people to overcome their difficult past.

Music 4: Hip Hop....

Speaker:

It is still early afternoon when we visit the Kimisagara Youth Centre, located in the poor suburbs of Kigali. In the main hall, about 50 youngsters are already having a good time. They watch a rehearsal of a revue. Acrobats, musiciens and dancers come and go. Even if something goes wrong, it doesn't matter for the audience: for them, it is a rare occasion to spend their time. The revue – called Gacaca-mobile - is destined to inform other young people about Rwanda's history and the Gacaca courts.

Atmo: audience

Speaker:

“Gacaca is solving our problems in Rwanda, so that we can live in peace” - says a young boy from the audience. Others nod their heads in agreement. The message of this hip hop song has obviously come across. The organisers of the project are pleased:

Clip 11 Youth, English

“They easily understood this and they are glad for it. Because they want to be active and participate in the Gacaca mobile. Because they want to say what happened in Rwanda and mobilise and sensitize other youths what happened and to say the truth what happened in 1994.”

Speaker:

The Gacaca revue is one of the latest activities of the Centre, which was conceived as a meeting point for children and young people in Kigali. It is partly financed by the German government and the Rwandan ministry for youth, sport and culture. Gerd

Scheuerpflug, a German social worker, has coordinated its activities since the beginning of 2002.

Clip 12 Gerd Scheuerpflug, English

“ One is the Gacaca mobile: we will go outside of Kigali and do 16 performances in every province. And the other one is called academy of volunteers: this means we are inviting from all the provinces young men and woman to increase their level of knowlegde concerning peace building. We invite experienced people to hold seminars: conflict management, mediation. The most important aspect of this Gacaca project is that we want to invite as many people as possible to participate.

Speaker:

Issa Higi, who is a member of the elected youth committee that coordinates the centre's activities, is convinced that the programme will attract many young people.

Clip 13 Issam Higi, English

“I think the achievement in this programme will come from the youth itself to accept or to tell the truth about what happened in Rwanda. So if they say the truth, it will be easier for the Gacaca judicial personnel to solve the problems quickly. And if the prisoners or ex-prisoners will say the thruth there will be a big improvement.”

Speaker:

But telling the truth also means reviving memories of the massacres. Many of the youngsters were witnesses of the Genocide. Most of the teenagers still suffer from traumas: they can't concentrate, suffer eating disorders or get easily depressed. The Kimisagara centre is one of the few that offers help for youngsters in Kigali, says Gerd Scheuerpflug:

Clip 14 Gerd Scheuerpflug, English

“We think that everybody who is older than 20 years has been a witness. Those who lived here in this country were present, were pretty much awake of what was going on. And we think that young people are interested to increase their level of understanding.”

Atmo: spoken rap

Clip 15 band member, English

“The message in our songs includes friendship, love, care. We should love each other. Because if during the 1994 Genocide we were loving each other, this thing couldn’t have happened. We should love our families, our friends. We should care for the young children like this ones, give them a nice messages and at least we should support the Gacaca.”

Music: fade under speaker and then up

Speaker 2 – translation of the song:

The Gacaca-courts will help us: because those who are innocent will be free. We all remember what happened in 1994. People killed and slaughtered. But still they refuse to tell the truth. This is the main problem.

Music: up

Speaker:

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Music: leave until the end