

WARID: Rwanda (FPR/PALIR, FDLR) 1990-2002

STARDATE: 3 October 1990

ENDDATE: 30 March 2002¹

Related cases: DR Congo (AFDL) 1996–1997
DR Congo (RCD) 1998–2004
DR Congo (MLC) 1998–2002
DR Congo (CNDP) 2006–2009
Burundi (CNDD, CNDD-FDD) 1994–2004
Burundi (Palipehutu-FNL) 1997–2008
Uganda (ADF) 1996–2002

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Conflict overview

The Rwandan civil war was one of Africa's most devastating wars in the late 20th century.² It started with an invasion by the formerly Ugandan based rebel group, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), into Rwanda in October 1990. The RPF, mostly former Tutsi refugees who fled violent outbursts committed by the Hutu-dominated government, demanded political participation and an end to discrimination against the Tutsi in Rwanda.³ The government fostered democratization in response to the civil war and international pressure, but years of ethnic repression left their mark on Rwandan society and gave rise to radical 'Hutu power' forces within the government, which were led by Juvénal Habyarimana. Peace talks between the RPF and Habyarimana's regime were held in 1992 and resulted in the signing of the Arusha Accords, promising peace in the region and a political system based on power-sharing. However, after Habyarimana's plane was shot down on the 6 April 1994, radical factions – supported by military groups (Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), Presidential Guard,

1 Due to the high numbers of deaths caused by one-sided violence in 1995 (over 4,100) and 1996 (over 1,300), we put the two phases of Rwanda's conflict together into one civil war taking place from 1990 until 2002.

2 Rwanda's civil war and genocide were both a product of and an influential factor for the implosion and developments of the African Great Lakes Region as a whole. Its history was continuously intervened with developments in Burundi, Uganda and Zaire/the Democratic Republic of Congo (Prunier 2009: xxxi).

3 The ethnic categories of Hutu and Tutsi were deeply implemented into the Rwandan society through colonialism. During the Belgium colonial rule the minority group of 'Tutsi' (est. 15%) was favored as 'Europeans under black skin' while the majority of 'Hutu' citizens (84%) suffered from discrimination and violent attacks. Independence brought a side switch with Hutu representatives governing in a more and more discriminating fashion over the Tutsi minority (Mamdani 2001: 87ff.).

Interahamwe militias) – seized power and triggered the worst genocide of the 1990s. The civil war continued during the genocide, with the RPF launching a strong offense in July 1994 that ended the mass-killings. The former rebel movement seized power and established a transitional government (officially on 19 July 1994), loosely based on the Arusha Accords of 1993, under the leadership of the RPF's leader Paul Kagame.

The ex-FAR and Interahamwe militia fled across the border into Zaire (later the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)) and regrouped into the PALIR (Party of the Liberation of Rwanda) with its armed wing the ALIR (Liberation Army of Rwanda), declaring the goal to overthrow the RPF regime. Fighting between the two parties continued, though now outsourced into DRC territory. It was accompanied by large-scale violence, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the RPA (Rwandan Patriotic Army),⁴ especially during the attacks against refugee camps in eastern Zaire/DRC in 1996-1997 as well as during earlier stages of the civil war and genocide (Mamdani 2001: 209; Reyntjens 2011: 135; UN 1994: para. III, section c; Verhoeven 2012: 269).

In 2000, the ALIR II (the younger wing of the ALIR that was said not to have participated in the genocide in 1994) formed the politico-military organization the FDLR (Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda) which the ALIR I was dissolved into in December 2000. The FDLR was joined by other oppositional organizations, including Tutsi groups. Following the signing of the Lusaka Peace Agreement between the DRC and Rwanda in 1999, violence between Rwanda's forces and FDLR declined. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), the war ended due to low activity [WARENDUC=5]. Case-specific literature corresponds with UCDP's assessment [WARENDOS=5].⁵

The UCDP estimates that, during the 138 months of fighting and one-sided violence [WARDUR=138], about 519,000 lives fell victim to the Rwandan civil war and genocide [FATALUC=519000]. The case-specific literature contests this number: Uvin (1998) and Reyntjens (2006) estimate that the genocide in 1994 alone claimed up to 1 million lives. Des Forges (1999) estimates a number between 500,000 and 1 million and many others estimate that 800,000 were killed (e.g. Power 2002; Robertson 2006). Des Forges (1999) further estimates that one-sided violence by the RPF between 1994 and 1995 took another 60,000 lives; Reyntjens (2011: 136) points out that violence against Hutu refugee camps in the eastern DRC 1996/1997 cost over 233,000 lives, leading to an estimate of 1,093,000 deaths [FATAOS=1093000].

4 Named Rwandan Defense Forces since 2002 (Rusagara 2009: 199).

5 The decreased intensity was also made possible by the Pretoria Agreement (30 July 2002), which required all Rwandan forces to withdraw from DRC territory (Reyntjens 2011: 142).

According to the World Bank, 7,224,000 people lived in pre-war Rwanda [PREWARPO=7200000].⁶ Consequently, the death toll in the civil war and genocide according to UCDP estimates amounts to 7.21% of the pre-war population [INTENSUC=7.21]. Applying the higher estimate, this number stands at 15.18% [INTENSOC=15.18].

The military balance at the end of war

Although the Rwandan civil war slowly faded into low activity, case-specific literature considers the Rwandan Patriotic Front as the clear military victor, seizing power in 1994 and consolidating its position in what many sources characterize as an authoritarian political system [VICTORY=1].⁷

According to Cunningham et al. (2009), the RPF did not control any territory before seizing power in July 1994. Case-specific literature contradicts this interpretation. Uvin (1999) and Mamdani (2001: 187) point out that the RPF controlled areas in northeast Rwanda after its invasion in 1990 and managed to double the size of territory under its control in February 1993. The rebels had to extend their territorial control further during the genocide in order to be able to end the massacres and seize control of Kigali in July 1994 [REBTERR=1]. RPF maintained control over the entirety of Rwandan state territory since the former Rwandan government – the ex-FAR and Interahamwe – fled to Zaire. Aside from some small and brief offensives into Rwanda's western prefectures (Cyangugu, Kubuya and Gisenyi) in 1995, RPF's opposition did not manage to establish control over any Rwandan territory [MORETERR=1].⁸ RPF's military superiority indicates its high relative fighting capacities [REBFIGHT=1].

Though both parties were able to continue fighting in 2002, the RPF, with its 60,000-75,000 troops (IISS 2002), was clearly in a better position to continue fighting in more than a few areas. Commentators further emphasize that this military superiority was not only based on higher troop numbers but also on an advanced military structure, management and training (Fayemi/Musah 1999: 56). The rebel alliance in the eastern part of the DRC was estimated at 15,000-18,000 troops (ICG 2003a; IISS 2002). However, despite this asymmetry, the FDLR was implanted across 150,000 km² in the DRC territory⁹ and maintained its political and military leadership [CONFIGHT=0].

6 <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/reports/tableview.aspx> (21 May 2014).

7 Des Forges 1999; Reyntjens 2006; Straus/Waldorf 2011.

8 ICG 2003a; Reyntjens 2011.

9 ICG 2003b.

There is much controversy surrounding the assassination of former Rwandan President Habyarimana, whose plane was shot down on 6 April 1994 (Straus/Waldorf 2011; Uvin 1999). However, his assassination happened during the Rwandan civil war and did not have any influence on its end; rather, it enabled hardliners within the Habyarimana regime to go ahead with their extermination plan, which ultimately led to the escalation of the civil war into genocide. There is no evidence in the case-specific literature suggesting that either RPF's or FDLR's top political leadership was captured or killed after 1994 [**LEADER=0**].

In sum, the end of the Rwandan civil war was characterized by a military imbalance to the benefit of the Rwandan Patriotic Front [**WARBAL=0.67**].

The military balance in the post-war period

According to Reyntjens (2011: 133) and Des Forges (1999: 358, 811), ex-FAR, Interahamwe and other military forces from Rwanda's former government fled across the border to Zaire when RPF seized power in 1994. These soldiers were not re-integrated into the new Rwandan state army but regrouped as the Party of the Liberation of Rwanda (PALIR) and its armed wing the ALIR, which was later dissolved into the politico-military organization the FDLR. Meanwhile, all forces in the RPF's armed wing the RPA were integrated into the state forces: "every member of the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) is directly considered as a member of the Rwanda Defence Forces".¹⁰

Some sources hint to the integration of ex-FAR soldiers into Rwanda's army: the Peace Accords Matrix (2013) suggests that as part of Rwanda's Demobilization and Reintegration Program (1997-2001), "some 15,000 ex-FAR combatants were integrated into the RPA."¹¹ Prunier (2002: 332) and Beswick (2012: 252) estimate that 10,000 men were re-integrated. Rusagara (2009: 198) brings in much higher figures, estimating that, by 2000, "30,000-plus ex-FAR's" were integrated into the Rwandan state forces. Burgess (2014: 94) draws from Rusagara's (2008) high estimates, arguing that "between 1998 and 2002 39,200 ex-FAR soldiers and Hutu militia were integrated into the RPA".¹² However, neither the UN nor Rwanda's Demobilization Commission report specific numbers for integrated ex-FAR (or FDLR) soldiers into the Rwandan army.¹³ While Caramés (2009: 104) points out that "a first

10 Law No 19/2002 of 17/05/2002 Establishing the Rwanda Defence Forces, Article 8, http://www.geneva-academy.ch/RULAC/pdf_state/Law-19-2002-Defence-forces.pdf (12 Mar 2014)

11 https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/matrix/status/63/military_reform (12 Mar 2014).

12 It should be noted that Frank K. Rusagara was involved in RPF's struggle and has been working with the Rwandan Defense Forces, <http://www.africanbookscollective.com/authors-editors/frank-k.-rusagara> (9 Jun 2014).

13 <http://monusco.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=10727>, <http://demobrwnda.org.rw/about-rdrc/background/>; World Bank Report on RDRP process: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/>

group of just 24 FDLR combatants and 46 civilians repatriated in Rwanda on October 13, 2005”, the International Crisis Group (2003b) judges the whole Demobilization and Reintegration Program for the FDLR troops a failure. In sum, there is no evidence for the integration of a minimum of 3,000 FDLR soldiers into the Rwandan State Forces in the post-war period [**STATEFOR 2002-2008=1**]. According to the IISS (2003-2009) estimates and case-specific literature, FDLR also drew on separate troops in eastern Congo [**SEPFORCE 2002-2008=0**].¹⁴

During Rwanda’s post-war period, the rivaling forces were unequal in their strength, which was to the benefit of RPF’s governmental forces. Nevertheless, there was a change in the troop ratio in favor of the FDLR troops.¹⁵ The IISS (2002-2008) describes that the RPF substantially reduced its troops from 97,000 to 35,000 between 2002 and 2003 and again between 2006 and 2007. From 2006 onwards, the IISS does not account for ALIR’s troops anymore, reducing the rebel groups total troop number from 18,000 to 3,000. However, we disagree with these IISS estimates as it seems unrealistic that 15,000 ALIR soldiers formerly based in the DRC simply vanished without any trace, as suggested in the case literature about their demobilization or integration into other forces. Thus, we overrule the IISS’s estimates and account for the 15,000 ALIR soldiers. Unfortunately, such an overruling is not sufficiently supported by the case-specific literature and it seems impossible to draw any informed conclusions about the troop ratio between RPF and FDLR in the post-war period [**TROOPS 2002-2008=n.d.**].¹⁶

According to the IISS Yearbook estimates (2003-2009), the RPF’s (state) forces did not experience any substantial change in their equipment. Regarding FDLR’s equipment, there is a substantial lack of data, making it impossible to interpret whether there might have been a change of military equipment in favor of either side [**ARMS 2002-2008=n.d.**].

After seizing power in 1994, the RPF maintained control of the whole Rwandan territory. The former governmental forces only managed to partially invade western provinces (Cyangugu, Kibuya and Gisenyi), though without establishing long-term control over the territory. The FDLR did, however, manage to establish control over areas in the DRC, particularly the Kivus [**TERRCON 2002-2008=0**].¹⁷ Since the RPF maintained control over all of Rwanda’s

EXTABOUTUS/IDA/0,,contentMDK:22311262~menuPK:4754051~pagePK:51236175~piPK:437394~theSitePK:73154,00.html (12 Mar 2014). Also see the analysis of different DDR programs in: Caramés 2009: 101-108.

14 ICG 2003a; Reyntjens 2011.

15 FDLR and ALIR troops are considered together since they merged into a joint force in 2002 (ICG 2002: 6).

16 It should be kept in mind that despite this reduction, RPF’s troop numbers are still substantially higher than FDLR’s: 35,000 as opposed to 3,000.

17 ICG 2003a; Longman 2011; Reyntjens 2011.

territory during the post-war period, we characterize it as less vulnerable, particularly as the territories held by the FDLR in the eastern DRC were often contested among different rebel groups [**TERRWIN 2002-2008=1; VULNERAB 2002-2008=1**].¹⁸

There were no peacekeeping troops deployed in Rwanda in the post-war period¹⁹ [**PEACKEEP 2002-2008=n.r.**]. Regarding the intervention of a permanent member of the UN Security Council, one could assume that the USA and the United Kingdom would have intervened on the side of the RPF and Paul Kagame. This assumption is based on the ‘special relationship’ between Kagame and the two countries, influenced by their guilt for failing upon Rwanda during its genocide as well as Kagame’s image as an “African Solution for African Problems” (Beswick 2011: 1918; Prunier 2009: 34). However, neither of them deployed military troops in Rwanda or officially announced its commitment to intervene on RPF’s behalf. As for the FDLR, case-specific literature mentions China’s weapon support for the FDLR (Prunier 2009: 27) and describes France’s support for the ex-FAR and Interahamwe during the genocide (e.g. training of the militia carrying out the genocide). The literature, however, does not point to any commitment from China or any other P5 state on the side of the FDLR [**P5ALLY 2002-2008=n.r.**].²⁰

In sum, the post-war period was characterized by a military imbalance in favor of the RPF [**POSTBAL 2002-2008=0.6**]. The combined score for the military balance at the end of the war and during the post-war period also shows an advantage for the RPF [**BALANCE 2002-2008=0.63**].

Economy

Rwanda’s economic development shows substantial increases in the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita throughout the post-war period but remains at a relatively low level.

Table 2: GDP per capita in current USD²¹

Year	Population	GDP per capita
2002	8987523	187
2003	9126167	202
2004	9254379	226
2005	9429457	274
2006	9660946	322
2007	9928143	373
2008	10222961	457

18 ICG 2003a.

19 Fortna 2008; Reyntjens 2006; <https://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml> (5 Mar 2014).

20 Prunier 2009: 27, 33.

21 <http://data.worldbank.org/country/rwanda> (5 Mar 2015).

The scale of compromise after the war

In 1994, the RPF established a transitional government that was loosely based on the Arusha Peace Accord of 1993 and the maxim of power-sharing.²² While seven parties officially signed the Protocol of Agreement of 24 November 1994, the main coalition was soon formed by the MDR (Mouvement Démocratique Républicain) and the RPF, with the latter clearly constituting the dominant force (Freedom House 2002; ICG 2002; Meierhenrich 2003: 628). The transitional system was replaced by a new constitution that established a majoritarian democracy with a strong president. It came into force after a referendum in 2003 with 93% of the voters in support (Rhode 2003: 236-237). Rwanda's first parliamentary and presidential elections took place in August and October 2003 and led to an overwhelming victory of Paul Kagame (95%) and the RPF-dominated party-alliance (73.8%).²³ RPF's opponent, the FDLR, did not participate in the Rwandan government during the transitional period from 1995 until 2003 or after the elections in 2003 (or 2008). It was expelled from the territory throughout the post-war period [**GOVERN 2002-2008=1**].²⁴

As to participation in elections, all political parties identified with the 1994 genocide were banned, as were parties based on ethnicity or religion. Since the FDLR was labeled 'génocidaires' and thereby associated with the genocide and ethnicity, they were not allowed to participate in the elections. Throughout the post-war period, Freedom House (2003-2009) rated Rwanda's elections as neither free nor fair [**ELECT 2002-2008=1**].²⁵

Any opposition to the RPF and its presidential candidate Paul Kagame was silenced and repressed; media and civil society were controlled (Coffé 2011; Meierhenrich 2006; Rhodes 2003). This was mostly based on the accusation of genocide ideology and devisionism (Reyntjens 2011; Waldorf 2011). Since it was the RPF that decided which parties were subject to such accusations, all parties and political actors disagreeing with the RPF's objectives seem to have been prevented from participating in elections (Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2003, 2008; Freedom House 2003, 2008; Longman 2011; Reyntjens 2006). The most prominent case was the dissolution of the RPF's former coalition partner the MDR on the basis of charges of divisionism shortly before elections in 2003 (Longman 2011:

22 https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/site_media/media/accords/Rwanda_Peace_Accord.pdf (12 Mar 2014). RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front), MDR (Mouvement Démocratique Républicain – main opposition party of the former government), PDC (Partie Démocrate Chrétien), PDI (Partie Démocratique Islamique), PL (Partie Libéral), PSD (Parti Social Démocratie) and UDPR (Union Démocratique du Peuple Rwandais).

23 Elections were not held during the transitional period 1994-1999, which was extended to 2003 by the RPF transitional government.

24 ICG 2003a; Reyntjens 2011: 133-134; Rhode 2003: 237-239.

25 Reyntjens 2006.

33; Rohde 2003: 236).²⁶ Any form of identification and representation based on ethnical categories was forbidden by law in Rwanda's post-conflict political system (Constitution Chapter II, Article 9, 1-2). Furthermore, all decisions in parliament, government and judicial bodies (Freedom House 2002-2008) were highly influenced by the RPF [**VETO 2002-2008=1**], which reduced consensus-based decision-making [**VETOSAT 2002-2008=n.r.**].²⁷ There were no disputes regarding any external or internal territories [**EXBORDER 2002-2008=n.r.**], or regarding borders of federal or sub-state units [**INBORDER 2002-2008=n.r.**]. There were also no conflicts about the distribution of state power on different political levels [**COMPETEN 2002-2008=n.r.**] or about Rwanda's economic order [**ECONOMY 2002-2008=n.r.**].²⁸

The banishment of ethnic identification was a central issue in the post-war period. The RPF prevailed on this issue and banished any form of ethnical reference from the political and public discourse (Schraml 2010; Waldorf 2011), replacing them with other divisive labels as 'génocidaires' and 'victims' (Waldorf 2011: 49). It established laws against genocide ideology such as the 2001 "law against sectarianism", or the 2008 "law punishing acts and expressions of genocide ideology" (Waldorf 2011: 55). Since the RPF decided who used genocide ideology, these laws became an instrument for repression and continuously hindered any real discussion in the field of ethnic identity discrimination or promotion. This also prevented any critical discourse about the de facto domination of formerly Tutsi-associated actors (the RPF) over the majority of citizens formerly identified as Hutus [**SPECPRO 2002-2008=1**].

Aside from the RPF's attempt to maintain its power and FDLR's attempts to gain access to political participation (or return to Rwanda as a recognized opposition group), the case-specific literature does not point to any other issues [**ISSUE 2002-2008=n.r., ISSUE2 2002-2008=n.r.; NEWCON 2002-2008=n.r., NEWCON2 2002-2008=n.r.**]. Since no compromises were implemented, the question as to which side prevailed is irrelevant [**BENEFIT 2002-2008=n.r.; BENEFIT2 2002-2008=n.r.**].

In sum, the RPF established a post-war system that it clearly dominated [**COMPROM 2002-2008=1**].

26 Reports on the 2010 presidential elections show that this trend seems to continue (Coffé 2011).

27 Longman 2011.

28 Reyntjens 2006; Waldorf 2011.

Stability of peace

For the years 2009-2012, the UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia reports an armed conflict between the Rwandan government and the FDLR and one-sided violence related to this struggle.²⁹ As these events passed the threshold of a new war defined by at least 1,000 fatalities, it seems appropriate to categorize them as a recurrence of the civil war under consideration. The UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset 1.5-2011, however, reveals that this violence did not take place in Rwanda but in the eastern parts of the DRC.³⁰ Thus, all available coding options are imprecise: a civil war did not recur in a strict sense nor was the conflict between the RPF and the FDLR pacified. As the RPF was fighting the FDLR – which partly consisted of ex-FAR and Interahamwe – a categorization as a relapse into war according to the strict definition seems the ‘least bad’ option [**SAMEWAR=1; ANYWAR=1**]. The UCDP states that Rwanda formed an alliance with forces in the DRC government in 2009 in order to fight the FDLR. Its Armed Conflict Dataset v.4-2014 (P1807) reports 16 February 2009 as the start date of the new war [**DATESAME=16 Feb 2009; DATEANY=16 Feb 2009**].³¹ For the period between the end of the war on 30 March 2002 and the relapse, we count 83 months of peace [**PEACMON1=83; PEACMON2=83**].

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Annex

Table 2: Troops in post-war Rwanda (IISS 2003-2010)

Year	Government (RPF)	Rebels (FDLR)	Troop Ratio	
2002	97000 in total: 77000 (including army, air force, national police and local defense forces) and 15-20000 forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo	18000 (3000 FDLR and 15000 ALIR)	5.39	1
2003	53000 (including army, air force, national police and local defense forces. According to Lusaka Agreement RPF had to withdraw its forces from the DRC)	18000 (3000 FDLR and 15000 ALIR)	2.95	1
2004	53000 (including army, air force, national police and local defense forces)	18000 (3000 FDLR and 15000 ALIR)	2.95	1
2005	51000 (including army, air force, national police and local defense forces)	18000 (3000 FDLR and 15000 ALIR)	2.83	1
2006	51000 (including army, air force, national police and local defense forces)	3000 (only FDLR troops)	17	1
2007	35000 (including army, air force and local defense forces)	3000 (only FDLR troops)	11.67	1
2008	35000 (including army, air force and local defense forces)	3000 (only FDLR troops)	11.67	1
2009	35000 (including army, air force and local defense forces)	3000 (only FDLR troops)	11.67	1