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Rwanda: Information on ingando camps, including organization, structure, programs and participation; instances of human rights violations in the camps (2010-November 2014)

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1. Definition and Aim of Ingando

The US Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013 states that the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) has governed Rwanda since the end of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, and has pursued policies of "national reconciliation" since that time (US 27 Feb. 2014, 37). According to *Rwandapedia*, an online platform launched by the government of Rwanda and funded by the African Development Bank to provide information about the country's post-genocide development (Rwanda 31 Oct. 2013b), the Rwanda National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) is the government department that was created to "rebuild the social fabric of the nation" following the 1994 genocide (Rwanda 31 Oct. 2013a). The same source states that ingando camps are "one of the most important programs" of the NURC (*ibid.*). According to the NURC, ingando camps are "solidarity camps" defined as "a civic education activity that has facilitated the smooth reintegration" of returnees to Rwanda, former Rwandan armed forces members, and provisionally released prisoners back to their communities (*ibid.* n.d.a). An article published by the American news magazine *The Nation and Foreign Policy in Focus* (FPIF) [1] reports that, according to a government official who has lectured at ingando, the camps help create

a sense of national identity (The Nation and FPIF 23 Jan. 2014). According to the NURC, "[i]ngando provide forums to Rwandans to come to terms with their past by facing history, [and] forging a common vision for a united future" (Rwanda n.d.a).

In a paper published in the journal *Development and Change*, Simon Turner, a former associate professor of political science at Aalborg University in Denmark who focuses his research on Rwanda and Burundi, explains that there are two types of ingando: "solidarity camps" for politicians, civil society, church leaders, and students; and "re-education camps" for ex-combatants, ex-soldiers, confessed genocidaires, released prisoners, prostitutes, and street children (Turner 2014, 425). He adds that the ingando solidarity camps were later renamed itorero (*ibid.*). According to the Rwandan government, students in Rwanda and abroad also began to participate in itorero, another form of civic education which was introduced in 2007 and focused on the "reintroduction of lost cultural values" (Rwanda 31 Oct. 2013a). The article by the Nation and FPIF reports that "certain members of the government suggested that ingando was being phased out and replaced with a less militaristic, more community-centered civic education program called itorero" (The Nation and FPIF 23 Jan. 2014).

Sources report that the word ingando is derived from the Kinyarwanda word "kuganika," which refers to using reflection and time away from daily activities to resolve problems of national concern, free of distractions (The New Times 5 Dec. 2011; Turner 2014, 424). According to Turner, the government of Rwanda claims that ingando is inspired by this "traditional institution" (*ibid.*). Other sources indicate that the RPF used ingando for political campaigns during the 1990-1993 civil war in Rwanda (Clark 2010, 104-105; Purdeková Sept. 2011, 10). In her study of ingando, which was based on fieldwork conducted in 2008 and 2009 and included more than 200 interviews with participants and organisers, Dr. Andrea Purdeková of the African Studies Centre at the University of Oxford writes that her informants traced ingando "to the politicisation campaigns and 'raising of awareness' conducted by the RPF first in exile and later within Rwanda as they kept capturing territory before taking over power" in 1994 (*ibid.*). According to Turner, ingandos were meant to "impart a common identity in accordance with RPF ideology" (Turner 2014, 425).

According to sources, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has provided funding support to the ingando "peace camps" (UN n.d.; Purdeková Sept. 2011, 9). According to *Rwandapedia*, over 90,000 people have participated in ingando training between 1999 and 2010 (Rwanda 31 Oct. 2013a). The same source indicates that approximately 50 percent of participants are provisionally released prisoners and 41 percent are high school graduates going on to higher education (*ibid.*). The other participants include local defence forces, ex-combatants, and children of genocide survivors, government officials, and university staff and faculty (*ibid.*).

2. Types of Camps and Participants

According to the article by the Nation and FPIF, the length of stay at ingando camps varies depending on the participant's age and the reason for attending the camp, though "the most frequent report was that the program lasted between one and three months" (The Nation and FPIF 23 Jan. 2014). According to research conducted on four ingando camps by Professor Phil Clark of the University of London and summarized in his 2010 book, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, the length of stay at ingando camps for released genocide prisoners is three months (2010, 98). In a paper reporting on field research conducted in 2008 about the "flagship" ingando camp at Nkumba in northwest Rwanda, James Kearney, Programme Coordinator for the UN Association for the UK [2], stated that, at the ingando camp for students which was located near the Congolese border in Ruhengeri, training for students lasted one month (Kearney 2011, 156). According to Purdeková, in the past, ingando camps for students used to be

three months in duration, but at the time of her study in 2008-2009, their duration had been decreased to three weeks (Sept. 2011, 15).

2.1 Ingando for Ex-Combatants

Ingando has been used for the re-integration of former members of the Rwandan military (Forces armées rwandaises, FAR) (Rwanda n.d.a; Clark 2010, 105), as well as "ex-Interahamwe combatants" [militias involved in the genocide (Clark 2010, 356)] from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) (ibid.). According to Turner's research, ingando was mandatory for ex-combatants returning from Zaire and the DRC (Turner 2014, 427-428). Turner added that ex-combatants who follow the program receive a "starting package" and "Demob ID paper" that serves as official proof that they are no longer a threat to the community (ibid. 427-429). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2.2 Ingando for Provisionally Released Genocide Perpetrators

Clark reports that "selected [genocide] suspects" are sent to one of the eighteen ingando around Rwanda (Clark 2010, 98). The NURC reports that ingando is used for the reintegration of "provisionally released prisoners" into their communities (Rwanda n.d.a). According to Clark, ingando has been employed since 2003 for confessed genocide perpetrators as part of their provisional release prior to attending gacaca trial processes (Clark 2010, 105). Rwandapedia similarly indicates that, during ingando training, genocide perpetrators "confessed their crimes" and talked about their roles in the genocide (Rwanda 31 Oct. 2013a). According to Purdeková, there are prisoners serving 'alternative sentences' in ingando, and whose activities involve "hard physical labour" with shorter classes; these prisoners are called "TIGistes" [referring to travaux d'intérêts généraux (TIG), a form of community service that includes construction and house-building activities (Clark 2010, 98)] (Purdeková Sept. 2011, 17). Purdeková notes that these prisoners may be in TIG programs "for years" (ibid.). Sources report that prisoners jailed for genocide who are released are required to pass through ingando before returning to their home communities (ibid., 19; Clark 2010, 101). The main purpose of these camps is to "teach lessons to the detainees before they retur[n] to their communities," so that they "won't repeat the genocide," according to one of the NURC coordinators interviewed by Clark in 2010 (ibid., 103-104). Purdeková states that based on her analysis, released prisoners, Hutu returnees and ex-combatants that may harbour ideas of "divisionism" constitute a category of people that the government perceives are in "special need of re-education," an "integration exercise" including political and historical education, but also practical lessons on the "policies and programmes of the government" (Purdeková Sept. 2011, 19).

2.3 Ingando/Itorero for Students and Others

Schoolteachers, university lecturers, students, business people and civil servants have undergone civic education at ingando, according to Clark (Clark 2010, 105). The NURC states that ingando target groups have included "women, youth groups, students joining university and local leaders" (Rwanda n.d.a). Government officials quoted in the article by the Nation and FPIF stated that the "majority" of Rwandan youth between ages 14 and 35 have participated in ingando (The Nation and FPIF 23 Jan. 2014). According to sources, government officials are aiming to have all citizens complete ingando by 2020 (ibid.; Purdeková Sept. 2011, 18).

The Country Reports 2013 indicates that ingando is mandatory following high school graduation (US 27 Feb. 2014, 23). Sources report that attendance is mandatory for those attending university on government scholarships (The Nation and FPIF 23 Jan. 2014; Purdeková 2011, 16) or for university entrance (ibid.). According to a statement from the Commissioner of the National Commission of Itorero, published by the Rwandan media source IGIHE, youth are required to

obtain a certificate showing that they participated in solidarity camps in order to apply for jobs in public institutions (IGIHE 4 Dec. 2013).

Purdeková reports that "perceived social deviants," including street youth, have been targeted for ingando programs (Sept. 2011, 20).

According to the Nation and FPIF, "even when ingando is not strictly mandatory, social and political pressure is often strong enough to coerce citizens into attending" (23 Jan. 2014).

3. Camp Structure and Program Content

According to Purdeková, at the ingando camps, "physical space and time are highly structured," including breakdown of the day's schedule "almost by the hour" (Purdeková Sept. 2011, 36). The same source indicates that "most" ingando are structured into "companies, platoons, and sections, with leaders called kapita" (ibid.).

An article by the Rwandan newspaper The New Times indicates that ingando topics include: "civic education and education on unity and reconciliation, government programmes, psychological demilitarization, reintegration into civilian life, and HIV/AIDS" (The New Times 5 Dec. 2011). Although officials in the four ingando camps visited by Clark "refused" to show him teaching materials, Clark found that themes covered at the camps included what officials called "'overcoming bad governance'" and the need to resist "divisive and genocidal policies of past colonial or national political regimes," as well as teaching detainees to become "'agents of change'," who would return to their communities and "spread the government's message that there was no place in Rwandan society for the ethnic divisions of the past" (Clark 2010, 105-106). The Rwandan government describes the objectives and activities of contemporary ingando as follows:

To promote a platform for the exchange of ideas and experience among Rwandans

To encourage Rwandans to manage their communities better

To encourage self-reliance within the community

To cultivate a culture of volunteerism among Rwandans

To lead every section of the population towards peace and reconciliation

To promote social cohesion through civic education

To help build shelters for disadvantaged genocide survivors and other vulnerable citizens. (Rwanda 31 Oct. 2013a)

According to the Nation and FPIF, the camps are "strictly scheduled" and include exercise, lectures from government officials, military drills and singing patriotic songs (23 Jan. 2014). Similarly, Kearney's study of 900 participants over a three month period at the "flagship" ingando camp for students at the Congolese border in Ruhengeri, found that the lectures were formulated to encourage unity and reconciliation, and that the program activities were "regimented," including five to six hours of daily military training (Kearney 2011, 156-157, 171). Purdeková notes that military training is not a universal component of ingando (Sept. 2011, 16). For detailed information on the program content and structure of ingando, please refer to the 2011 paper Rwanda's Ingando Camps - Liminality and the Reproduction of Power by Dr. Andrea Purdeková, which is attached to this Response.

4. Treatment of Participants

The Associated Press (AP) reported in June 2013 that 14 men and 2 women fled Rwanda and sought asylum in Uganda, claiming they had experienced "harassment by officials" for refusing to attend an ingando program in Butare, 80 kilometres from Kigali (AP 17 June 2013). The students claimed that as a result of their refusal to participate in the program, authorities withheld their high school examination results (ibid.). Two students stated that the reason for their refusal was because they claimed that their friends who had gone to the ingando training had been "forced to cross the border and fight alongside M23, one of many rebel groups operating in Congo's troubled North Kivu province" (ibid.). The students also reportedly claimed that "most of their friends who went there never came back" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. However, Country Reports 2013 indicates that the Rwandan government provided support to armed rebels of the M23 group in eastern DRC, and that M23 conducted recruitment of Rwandan minors and refugees (US 27 Feb. 2014, 1). US Country Reports 2012 indicates that "at-risk youth" aged 18-35 detained on Rwanda's Iwawa Island at a "Rehabilitation and Vocational Development Centre" were recruited to join the armed group M23 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (19 Apr. 2013, 9).

The US Country Reports 2012 indicates that some young men from orphanages were pressured to join the military by the Rwanda Defense Force (RDF) during ingando civic and military training camps (ibid. 19 Apr. 2013, 18). Country Reports 2012 indicated that "some parents reported local RPF leaders also pressured their children to join the party during ingando" (ibid.). According to a Rwandan government official quoted in Clark's paper, the basis of ingando is the concept that "people are not born with values; values can only be internalized through practice and education. And we have to have specific education for reconciliation and democratization" (Clark 2010, 104). Clark states that "such views draw strongly on RPF ideology" (ibid.) According to some ingando participants interviewed by the Nation and FPIF, government lectures were "coercive and propagandistic" (The Nation and FPIF 23 Jan. 2014).

According to Kearney, based on observations made in 2008 at the flagship student ingando at Ruhengeri, "collective punishment" was used to ensure obedience and "often involved rod-whippings" (Kearney 2011, 171). According to the article by The Nation and FPIF,

by some accounts, the camps have evolved over time. Descriptions of the camps from people who attended before 2010 are particularly disturbing. A 25-year old master's candidate who attended ingando in 2008 said that the program "taught us how to contribute as soldiers, not as intellectuals." It was frequently reported that upon entering the camps, participants were forced to wear military fatigues and were treated as if they were new recruits. One participant recalled being beaten and harassed at the camps, a common refrain among ingando participants now in their mid-20s. (The Nation and FPIF 23 Jan. 2014)

The same source reports that some interviewees claim ingando has been "tamed in recent years," while "others unequivocally declared that the program was as militaristic as ever" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Further information about the treatment of ingando participants could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Notes

[1] FPIF is a project of the Institute of Policy Studies, which provides analysis of US foreign policy and international affairs (FPIF n.d.).

[2] The UN Association for the UK (UNA-UK) is a charitable organization that describes itself as "the UK's leading source of independent analysis on the UN" and whose main objective is to "influenc[e] decision-makers and opinion-shapers to support UN goals" (UNA-UK n.d.). It is not part of the UN (ibid.).

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact the following were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Amnesty International; lecturer in comparative and international politics, University of London; Ligue pour la défense des droits de l'homme dans la région des Grands Lacs. A professor of law at Fordham University in New York could not provide information for this Response.

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Internet sites, including: Afrik News; Agence France-Presse; Amnesty International; BBC; ecoi.net; Hirondelle News Agency; Human Rights Watch; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; International Crisis Group; Jeune Afrique; Ligue pour la défense des droits de l'homme dans la région des Grands Lacs; News of Rwanda; New York Times; Radio France internationale; Rwanda Focus; Rwanda - High Commission in Ottawa, Ministry of Local Government; UN - Integrated Regional Information Networks, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Refworld, ReliefWeb, UNICEF; Worldbank Group.

Attachment

Purdeková , Andrea. September 2011. Rwanda's Ingando Camps - Liminality and the Reproduction of Power. Working Paper Series No. 80. Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford. [Accessed 3 Nov. 2014]

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