

Rwanda

LEVEL ONE - INTERMEDIATE

1 Pre-reading activities

The text that follows is about a court set up to investigate genocide in the African country of Rwanda. Ten of the words in the following list are in the text. Which ones? Clue – They are mostly legal words. Look in the text to check your answers.

tribunal	criminal	trial	education	justice	international	jail	prisoner
accused	defend	judge	building	evidence	jungle	sentence	

Now read the text and check your answers.

2 Find the answer

Find the answers to the following questions in the text.

1. When did the genocide in Rwanda begin?
2. Who is Theoneste Bagosora?
3. Why was the trial postponed?
4. Where is the Rwanda tribunal based?
5. How long has Bagosora been under arrest?
6. What two notable successes did the Rwanda court achieve?
7. Who was the Prime Minister of Rwanda at the time of the Civil War?
8. How many people have been convicted so far by the Rwanda tribunal?
9. What may happen to the soldiers who carried out orders given by Bagosora and Kambanda?

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Second-class justice system

It is eight years since the genocide began in Rwanda. Prosecutors at the international court trying Hutu extremists who started the slaughter planned to mark the anniversary by exposing the political conspiracy behind it. They wanted to use the trial of Theoneste Bagosora, the army colonel who is believed to be responsible for the murder of hundreds of thousands of Tutsis over 100 days, to draw attention to one of the 20th century's last great crimes. But, after opening Bagosora's trial recently, the judges postponed it for six months - because the translations of two simple documents were missing. It was a typical disappointment for a tribunal that has raised so many expectations and become a strong argument for and against the international criminal court.

Some say Rwanda's tribunal - based in Arusha, Tanzania - shows exactly why international justice doesn't

work. Others say it shows why a permanent court is required. The Rwanda tribunal, like the international court trying Slobodan Milosevic at The Hague, was created on a temporary basis by the United Nations Security Council. But the Rwandan court has hardly been in the news. At least twice as many people died in Rwanda as in the former Yugoslavia, but the tribunal trying Bagosora and his associates does not have the same financial resources as the court in the Hague. Milosevic was brought to trial within a few months of his arrest in the Balkans. Bagosora has been under arrest for six years and Rwandans are still waiting to hear

the case against him.

It is interesting that, while many Yugoslavs are fascinated by Milosevic's performance in court, many genocide survivors in Rwanda do not seem to care about what happens to Bagosora in the international court. They do not think that the court can provide justice. This feeling comes from many years of delays, incompetence and a belief that the court is soft on the accused men. And when the court does catch public attention it is for the wrong reasons, such as the incident late last year when three judges laughed as a woman gave lengthy testimony about being raped. The judges later said they were laughing at the defence lawyer's questions, not the victim. The genocide survivors' confidence in the court is so low that witnesses are now threatening to boycott the tribunal.

The Rwanda court has had some successes. It was the first international tribunal in history to convict anyone of genocide, and it declared for the first time in legal history that rape is an act of genocide when a woman is attacked because of her race. The tribunal has also been remarkably successful at arresting the main perpetrators of the genocide, if not actually bringing them to trial. Sixty people are in detention, including many of the politicians that oversaw the mass murders. The prime minister at the time of the civil war, Jean Kambanda, was persuaded to plead guilty to genocide. Most of his ministers will probably spend the rest of their lives in jail with him.

But progress is very slow - only eight people have been convicted so far - and many Rwandans do not seem to care what happens. One of the original concepts of the court was that it would play a central role in promoting reconciliation and decent government in Rwanda by establishing that even the most powerful could not escape justice and by exposing the lies that caused the hatreds and fears that make genocide possible. Since it began operating seven years ago the court had suffered from mismanagement, underfunding, corruption, internal politics and racial tensions between Western prosecutors and African tribunal managers. The prosecution was chaotic from the start. The first chief prosecutor, Richard Goldstone, was focused on Yugoslavia and showed little interest in Rwanda.

It is probably all too late. The tribunal's chance to influence the shape of post-genocide Rwanda has gone. The genocide's survivors often find more reasons to be angry at the tribunal's activities than to hope for justice. They resent the fact that Kambanda and Bagosora, in jail, are in better accommodation than many survivors - and that the international court can impose a maximum life sentence, while those ordinary soldiers who carried out their orders and who are now on trial in Rwandan courts, could face the death penalty.

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3 Opposites

Match the words in the left-hand column with their opposites in the right-hand column:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. permanent | a. innocent |
| 2. brief | b. marginal |
| 3. fascinated | c. corrupt |
| 4. soft | d. lengthy |
| 5. guilty | e. organised |
| 6. central | f. illegal |
| 7. chaotic | g. temporary |
| 8. competent | h. indifferent |
| 9. legal | i. tough |
| 10. decent | j. incompetent |

4 Word Partnerships – Prepositions

Fill the gaps using an appropriate preposition. You can refer to the text for help.

1. Theoneste Bagosora is accused _____ genocide.
2. He may be sentenced _____ life imprisonment.
3. The former Prime Minister has pleaded guilty _____ genocide.
4. Bagosora is believed to be responsible _____ the murder of hundreds of thousands.
5. Bagosora has been _____ arrest for 6 years.
6. Many people are fascinated _____ Milosevic's performance in court.
7. Many don't care _____ the Rwanda trial.
8. A boycott by witnesses would prevent the court _____ operating effectively.
9. The tribunal has suffered _____ a number of problems.
10. The first Chief Prosecutor was focused _____ Yugoslavia.
11. The court may have had some effect _____ other extremists in Africa.

5 Discussion

What should happen to those who order mass killings in civil wars? Should there be an International Court to try such people or is it better to leave their fate to their own national courts? What are the arguments for and against an International Court?

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KEY

1. tribunal, criminal, trial, justice, international, jail, accused, judge, evidence, sentence
2.
 1. Eight years ago this month (April 1994).
 2. The army colonel who is believed to be responsible for the genocide.
 3. Because the translations of some simple documents were missing.
 4. In Arusha, Tanzania.
 5. Six years.
 6. It was the first tribunal in history to convict anyone of genocide and it established rape as an act of genocide.
 7. Jean Kambanda.
 8. Eight
 9. They may face the death penalty.
3. 1.g; 2. d; 3. h; 4. i; 5. a; 6. b; 7. e; 8. j; 9. f; 10. c
4. 1. of 2. to 3. to 4. for 5. under 6. by 7. about 8. from 9. from 10. on 11. on