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THE ROLE OF RACISM AS A CAUSE OF OR FACTOR
IN WARS AND CIVIL CONFLICT

Julie Mertus

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1. This paper examines the role of racism as a cause of or factor in wars and civil conflicts. "Racism" as understood here is defined broadly to encompass acts and processes of de-humanisation. The conflicts in Rwanda and Kosovo serve as case studies; the former illustrates a case where the racist nature of the conflict has been clear to most observers, and the latter represents a case where racism plays an important yet overlooked role. Racism did not *cause* either conflict. Rather, the conflicts were the outcome of political manipulation and enlargement of already existing group classification schemes and social polarisation, a history of real and imagined oppression and deprivation, the absence of the rule of law and democratic structures, and state monopoly over the provision of information. Under such conditions, political élites could use racist ideology as a method of gaining power and, when necessary, waging war.
2. The paper is divided into three parts. First, it briefly outlines the use of racial or ethnic classification and the effects of extreme polarisation leading to conflict. Second, it examines the characteristics of conflicts with an important racial dimension and identifies the main roles played by racism in such conflicts. Third, it suggests policy options to address the de-humanisation and polarisation impact of such events.

I. THE USE OF GROUP CLASSIFICATIONS AND EFFECTS OF EXTREME POLARISATION

3. Violence in Rwanda and Kosovo emanated from systematic public structures of differentiation that contributed to the development of a nationalist/racist ideology that could be manipulated by élites. This section outlines the importance of group classifications and extreme polarisation in such societies.

Rwanda

The Strategy of Racist Classification

4. Prior to European colonisation, Hutus and Tutsis had apparently lived in a somewhat divided society, but not based upon racist divides. Hutus farmed and Tutsis raised cattle, but otherwise they intermarried, fought together, shared a national god (“Imana”), a national language (Kinyarwanda), lived in villages together, and were loyal to their Mwami (king) regardless of his tribal background. Apparently, the mixing of the groups was so extensive that “ethnographers and historians have lately come to agree that Hutus and Tutsis cannot properly be called distinct ethnic groups.”¹ There were few or no incidents of racism or violence between the two groups prior to the late 1950s.
5. Germany was the first to colonise Rwanda, and the Germans apparently subscribed to the “Victorian race theory” that the Hutus were somehow the descendants of Ham and thus destined to be slaves. This led to a tendency to favour the Tutsis over the Hutus, a trend that was continued in a more elaborate fashion by the Belgians who gained Rwanda (from the League of Nations) after WWI. Belgian “scientists” apparently engaged in physical studies of the Hutus and Tutsis in order to establish the physical differences between the two tribes. The results of their studies focused primarily on the size and shape of the two groups’ respective noses, and contributed to the conclusion among Belgian colonisers that because the Tutsi nose was narrower and longer, the Tutsis were somehow nobler. The Belgians subscribed to the belief that the Tutsis had an “innate cognitive superiority to the Hutus and other Africans.”² As a result, the “Belgian officials reserved the best jobs in the administrative system for Tutsis, while the school system, largely run by the Catholic Church, discriminated against Hutus.”³
6. Traditionally, therefore, there had been “no age-old animosity” between the Hutus and Tutsis; the tensions between them were of relatively recent origin, largely spurred on by European pseudo-science. Thus, when many Western publications tended to represent the 1994 killings in Rwanda as merely an embodiment of typical, historical tribal warfare, they were incorrect. More importantly though, the historical background emphasises that when Rwandan radio propaganda broadcast alleged “history lessons’ of ‘well-known’ Tutsi treachery and exploitation of the Hutus,”⁴ these were largely fabricated or, at the very least, a gross misrepresentation of German and Belgian oppression prior to the Hutu revolution in 1959 that overthrew Tutsi rule and drove many Tutsis into exile. The 1959 revolution in Rwanda gave democratic respectability to Hutu rule, but it failed to give institutional expression to the rights of the Tutsi minority. Instead, it perpetrated systematic racial classification and discrimination on group lines.

¹ Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), p. 48. *See also*, Frank J. Parker, “The Why’s in Rwanda,” *America*, 171(5) (Aug. 27, 1994), (pagination unavailable); Faustin Kagame, “The Artificial Racialization at the Root of the Rwandan Genocide,” in John A. Berry and Carol Pott Berry eds., *Genocide in Rwanda: A Collective Memory* (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1999), pp. 70, 71-72; Rene Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (London and New York: Pall Mall, 1970); Africa Rights, *Rwanda – Death Despair and Defiance*, (London, U.K.: Africa Rights, 2nd. ed., 1995), pp. 2-10; Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

² Michael Chege, “Africa’s murderous professors,” *The National Interest*, Issue 46 (Winter 1996/97), (pagination unavailable).

³ John Corry, “A formula for genocide,” *The American Spectator*, 31(9) (Sept. 1998), (pagination unavailable).

⁴ Michael Chege, “Africa’s murderous professors,” *The National Interest*, Issue 46, (Winter 1996/97), (pagination unavailable).

7. The 1994 killings began after President Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and the President of Burundi were killed as their aircraft was trying to land at Kigali, but was instead shot down in a rocket attack (April 6th).⁵ The government (Hutu controlled) blamed the attack on Tutsi rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front. There are indications, however, that the violence was instead an effort by the government to consolidate Hutu power by wiping out the Tutsis. Human Rights Watch has argued since 1994 that the “the death of president Jevénal Habarimana of Rwanda in a suspicious plane crash on April 6, 1994 was the pretext for Hutu extremists from the late president’s entourage to launch a campaign of genocide against the Tutsi.”⁶ As Human Rights Watch observed in their 1999 report:
8. This genocide resulted from the deliberate choice of a modern elite to foster hatred and fear to keep itself in power. This small, privileged group first set the majority against the minority to counter a growing political opposition within Rwanda. Then, faced with RPF success on the battlefield and at the negotiating table, these few power-holders transformed the strategy of ethnic division into genocide. They believed that the extermination campaign would restore the solidarity of the Hutu under their leadership and help them win the war, or at least improve their chances of negotiating a favourable peace. They seized control of the state and used its machinery and its authority to carry out the slaughter.⁷
9. Supporting evidence for the strategic nature of the conflict includes the speed with which the killings began. Within one hour of the president’s plane crash, the capital of Kigali was surrounded by roadblocks by the Presidential Guard, and killings had begun.⁸ Within a week, approximately 20,000 were killed in Kigali and immediately surrounding areas. Allegedly, Rwandan authorities had been distributing weapons (including firearms and grenades) as early as 1992, with more extensive distributions occurring in 1993 and 1994.
10. Further support for the premise that the conflict was strategically manipulated is grounded in evidence of the killing of non-Tutsis. Some of the earliest victims included Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and President of the Supreme Court Joseph Kavaruganda,⁹ both Hutus. In addition, those who formed part of the opposition politicians were killed as well as independent journalists, human rights activists and senior civil servants.¹⁰ Mr. Kagame of the RPF said that the killings had “wrongly been portrayed as ethnic strife. It is clear that these acts are political,” and aimed at eliminating those who would have supported the peace deal which would have led to a new integrated army and a national government with shared power.¹¹

⁵ Anonymous, “The bleeding of Rwanda,” *The Economist*, (Apr. 16, 1994), p. 331.

⁶ Human Rights Watch, “Genocide in Rwanda April-May 1994,” 6(4) (New York: Human Rights Watch/Africa, May 1994), pp. 1, 2.

⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story – Genocide in Rwanda*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), pp. 1-2.

⁸ Human Rights Watch, “Genocide in Rwanda April-May 1994,” 6(4) (New York: Human Rights Watch/Africa, May 1994), pp. 1, 3.

⁹ *Id.* at 3. See also, Frank J. Parker, “The Why’s in Rwanda,” *America*, 171(5) (Aug. 27, 1994) (pagination unavailable).

¹⁰ Africa Rights, *Rwanda – Death Despair and Defiance*, (London, U.K.: Africa Rights, 2nd ed., 1995), xxi. See also, Anonymous, “Rwanda: No end in sight,” *The Economist*, 331 (Apr. 23, 1994).

¹¹ Anonymous, “The bleeding of Rwanda,” *The Economist*, 331 (Apr. 16, 1994).

Kosovo

Yugoslavia's "National" Classification System: Seeds of Discontent

11. In Tito's Yugoslavia, officially everyone enjoyed Yugoslav nationality, united for "brotherhood and unity." As a matter of constitutional law, however, the Yugoslavia people were *de facto* divided into two categories – in Zoran Paijic's terms, the "hosts and the historical guests."¹² The hosts, or nations (*narod*) were Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Muslims. The guests, or "nationalities" (*narodnost*), included all those with a national homeland elsewhere: Albanians, Hungarians, Italians, Bulgarians, Turks, Slovaks, Czechs, and Russians. Those without a homeland elsewhere, such as the Romany and Vlachs, were ignored. These divisions between three classifications were important as their national status indicated belonging and privilege.
12. Power under the 1974 Constitution was decentralised from the federal to the republic level: each of Yugoslavia's six republics and two provinces had a central bank, separate police, educational and judicial systems. These units, with the exception of Bosnia-Herzegovina, were *de facto* organised largely around national identity, based on the majority nation of that region. Thus, rewards were in fact made based on national status. Through such arrangements, national status, "which had seemingly been buried by the 1971 intervention [Tito's squelching of nationalist movements in Croatia], returned by the back door."¹³
13. The "nationality key" system was another institutional arrangement which pushed national identity to the fore. A proportional representation scheme, the "key" system became a means for many incompetent and/or corrupt party members to achieve positions of importance simply because they were of the right national status. Within each republic or province, members of the majority nation complained of the incompetence of the members of the minority nation who had been promoted to high positions of power; widespread backlash against the "key" system widened national divides.

The Sorting out Process According to Group

14. During the years after Tito's death, the population of Yugoslavia was increasingly forced to choose sides according to national identity. Many politicians used the notion of "sovereignty" as a rhetorical device, claiming that their own group's "sovereignty" was being violated by another group.¹⁴ Similarly, national status was also used as a rhetorical device, with each side, beginning with the Serbs, pitting themselves against the evil "other."
15. In the first democratic elections, nationalism became the mechanism for political differentiation.¹⁵ Few alternative categories existed to distinguish the candidates: the previous authoritarian regime had not encouraged the development of civil society in which more sophisticated differences could have emerged. Political and economic structures swayed under the weight of internal bickering as new leaders struggled for power and international financial

¹² Z. Paijic, "Bosnia-Herzegovina: From Multiethnic Coexistence to 'Apartheid' and Back," in *Yugoslavia: The Former and the Future: Reflections from Scholars from the Region*, ed. P. Akhavan (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1995), p. 162.

¹³ G. Schopflin, "The Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia," in *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation: Case Studies of Protracted Ethnic Conflicts*, eds. J. McGarry and B. O'Leary, (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 190.

¹⁴ A prime example of this tactic is the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, which warned of attacks on "the status of Serbia and the Serb nation." An English version of the Memorandum can be found in Kosta Mihajlovic and Vasilije Krestic, *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences: Answers to Criticisms* (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1995).

¹⁵ For a summary of election results, see Janusz Bugajski, *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe: A Guide to Nationality Policies, Organizations and Parties* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharp, 1995), pp. 3-192.

institutions pressed Yugoslavia to restructure its economy.¹⁶ This situation fostered intense nationalist bureaucratic competition, and often corruption, frequently along national lines.¹⁷ Certainly, nationalism was not the only force pushing Yugoslavia toward collapse, but when manipulated by politicians, it became a crucial ingredient.

The Impact of War: The Closing of the Ranks

16. Kosovo set the stage for war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Developments in Kosovo “led to a fundamental realignment of politics in Serbia and the growth of dangerous, defensive, populist, and officially sanctioned nationalism.”¹⁸ An antidemocratic coalition within Serbia of nationalists and communists manipulated the myth of Kosovo to formulate nationalist ideology and produce propaganda. Serbs were said to be the victims of Albanians in Kosovo; they needed the protection of a strong leader like Slobodan Milosevic. Populist gatherings – “meetings of truth” – on Kosovo became the main vehicle through which Milosevic spread his message in which Milosevic warned of Albanian attacks against Serbs. Incrementally, Milosevic and his supporters applied this strategy to the rest of Yugoslavia and Serbs’ list of victimisers grew. In this way, “Kosovo provided the time-fuse, and Slobodan Milosevic provided the detonators for a chain reaction of explosions in which first Serbs and then Albanians, Slovenes, Croats, and others came to believe, often to the point of obsession, that part or all of their nation was already or could be faced with extinction.”¹⁹
17. The war impacted on national identity in three ways. First, it accomplished the complete demonisation of other nations and national groups. Initially, state-controlled propaganda machines broadcast stories of the “other’s” inhumanity. Overtime many witnesses and victims of acts of great cruelty began to tell their story – and their neighbours listened. Second, war hastened physical national segregation. People who had been forced to leave their villages and cities because of their national background now crowded into new cities, creating new enclaves of “their own people.” Segregation exploited and reinforced otherness. Finally, war closed the ranks. People throughout the former Yugoslavia were forced to decide who they were among three narrow choices: Serb, Croat, or Muslim. This left four categories of people without an identity: those of mixed parentage or marriage; those who were of another national identity, such as Albanian or Hungarian; those who wanted to identify themselves as something else, either above the nation, such as European, or below the nation, such as a member of a particular neighbourhood or organisation; and those who wanted out of the labelling process altogether. Those who failed to make a choice usually left the country (if they could) or fell silent; a few stubbornly fought back, despite the extreme backlash against anything different and potentially challenging to the nation.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF CONFLICTS WITH RACIAL DIMENSION: ROLES OF RACISM

18. The above discussion demonstrates a primary characteristic of conflicts with a racial dimension. Political mobilisation linked to real and imagined group differences arises where the state’s administrative structures and legal institutions distribute scarce resources based on

¹⁶ For one review of the economic situation, see Lenard Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia’s Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition* (Boulder Colorado: Westview, 1995), p. 45

¹⁷ See Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute, 2nd. ed., 1995), pp. 47-81.

¹⁸ Bogdan Denitch, *Ethnic Nationalisms: the Tragic Death of Yugoslavia* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 116.

¹⁹ Dennison Rusinow, “The Avoidable Catastrophe,” pp. 13-38 in *Beyond Yugoslavia: Politics, Economics, and Culture in a Shattered Community*, eds. Sabrina Petra Ramet and Ljubi S. Adamovich (Westview Press, 1995), pp. 19-20.

ethnic/national differences. The problem is particularly acute where, as in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, lead positions in military and police forces are distributed based on group identity.²⁰ Yugoslavia and Rwanda are textbook examples of cases in which the controlling entity (the state, the party, the colonial entity) “for its own administrative convenience and in order to improve control over local élites, may select certain ethnic élites and organisations as collaborators or channels for the transmission of government patronage.”²¹ This favouritism based on group identity serves to polarise societies and, additionally, to institutionalise and make acceptable intra-group suspicion and hatred.

19. In Rwanda and Kosovo, polarisation and racism played a role, not as the root cause of conflict, but as a tool of élites. In both Rwanda and Kosovo, many of those who participated in the propaganda inciting racism, were intellectuals.²² It is characteristic of conflicts with a racist dimension that élites have the ability to manipulate racism because of other conditions in-country, such as: structural poverty, unmet human development needs, comparative deprivation of one group to another, media manipulation of misunderstandings among the general populace, and the absence of human rights, the rule of law and civil and political institutions encouraging citizen participation. Where a group perceives a threat to its interests and values, rising counter-élites find playing the racist/nationalist/ chauvinist card a particularly useful tool to assert a right to rule to protect the “true” national or ethnic interest. In Rwanda and Kosovo, extremist élites played upon the deep fears and frustrations of the populace.
20. In Rwanda, the enemy was often portrayed in racialised terms, as of polluted and inferior stock.²³ For example:
 - The newspaper Kangura (under the editorship of Hassan Ngeze) published the “Hutu Ten Commandments,” which referred to the Tutsis as “evil,” and their intermarriage with Hutus a pollution of “pure Hutu.”
 - Propaganda especially encouraged the killing of Tutsi children, so that Tutsi genes would not reemerge.
 - Women and girls (who were frequently the victims of sex-based torture and killings) were often the specific subject matter of propaganda. For instance, they were often portrayed as having the innate qualities of “seductress-spies.” Being considered more beautiful, they were also considered to be more sexual, and were accused of sleeping with their “Tutsi brothers.” The newspaper Kangura (again in its ten commandments for Hutus) stated that:

²⁰ Cynthia Enloe, “Police and Military in the Resolution of Ethnic Conflict,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 433 (1977).

²¹ Jalali, Rita and Seymour Martin Lipset, “Racism and Ethnic Conflicts: Global Perspectives,” in *American Leadership, Ethnic Conflict and the New World Politics*, eds., Demetrios James Caralay and Bonnie B. Hartman (ed.) (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 77-98, 91.

²² See, e.g., Michael Chege, “Africa’s murderous professors,” *The National Interest*, Issue 46 (Winter 1996/97). In the 80’s nationalist élites in Yugoslavia were not at the center of state power; they were counter-élites. In contrast, in Rwanda extremists were at the center of organs of state power. See Africa Rights, *Rwanda – Death Despair and Defiance*, (London, U.K.: Africa Rights, 2nd. ed., 1995) op. cit. at xix.

²³ The examples in this section are drawn from: Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story – Genocide in Rwanda*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), p. 215; Frank Chalk, “Hate Radio in Rwanda,” in Hoard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, eds., *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1999), pp. 93-107; Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Genocide* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1996), p. 18; Article 19 – The International Centre Against Censorship, *Broadcasting Genocide – Censorship, Propaganda & State-Sponsored Violence in Rwanda 1990-1994*, (London: Article 19, 1996), p. 64; Africa Rights, *Rwanda – Death Despair and Defiance*, (London, U.K.: Africa Rights, 2nd. ed., 1995); Article 19 – The Centre Against Censorship, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19, May 1994).

Every Hutu should know that our Hutu daughters are more suitable and conscientious in their role as woman, wife, and mother of the family. Are they not beautiful, good secretaries and more honest?

- Leon Mugesera (Vice-President of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development) gave a speech at his group's rally on 22 November 1992, where he referred to the Tutsis as *Inyenzi*, which means "cockroaches" - a term often used by his party in propaganda about the Tutsis. His statements were often repeated on Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), a station renowned for its role in broadcasting similar types of propaganda.
 - Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) had also broadcast propaganda about the RPF, claiming that not only did they kill people, but they dissected them and ate them, thus making the RPF appear inhuman.
 - People who married those of the opposing group were said to produce children who were "hybrids."
 - People who attempted to pass for members of the opposing group were like "beings with two heads."
 - Propagandists also played upon the theme that Tutsis were not originally from the area, and therefore were outsiders who could not be trusted.
 - Those Tutsis who had reached positions of importance e.g. in government, were said to have slipped "like snakes" to infiltrate those positions.
21. In Kosovo, hate propaganda against Kosovar Albanians was not as blatantly racist but instead were "nationalist" or chauvinist." Nonetheless, as the 80's progressed, the discourse became increasingly racist. Some examples follow:²⁴
- Media throughout the former Yugoslavia, and especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, portrayed Albanians as "less civilised" and less cultured.
 - Albanian women were said to be "baby factories." Images of Albanian women in the press rarely showed educated, urban Albanian women.
 - Albanian men were said to be "savages." Images of Albanian men in the press rarely showed educated, urban Albanian men.
 - Kosovar Albanians were accused of being rapists, although in reality they were actually less likely to be accused of rape than members of other national groups. Blanket acceptance of allegations of Albanian sexual misdeeds were corporal, that is racist.
 - Whenever the public needed to be reminded about the victimisation of Serbs and the barbaric nature of Albanians, the image of Djordje Martinovic was conveniently invoked. Martinovic is an ethnic Serb who claimed to have been raped with a bottle by two Albanians. As a violent crime of the most "unspeakable nature," the act itself was "written on the body." The power of the Martinovic case lay in its ability to invoke the primary image of Serb oppression: the Ottoman Turk's practice of impaling their victims with a stick.

²⁴ All of these have been drawn from Mertus, Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War, op. cit.

- With respect to the Martinovic and other cases, the media tapped into historic racism against Turks and Muslims. Albanians were equated with Turkish and Muslim peoples (while in reality, Albanians do not identify as such; they are not “Turks” and some Albanians are Catholic or Orthodox).
 - Albanians were continually portrayed as fanatical, sly and evil – enemies from within. For example, when a young Yugoslav army recruit named Aziz Keljmendi shot four men dead in his barracks, Albanians as a group were accused of aiding the crime.
22. The problem in the former Yugoslavia was not the complete absence of free speech. While the government cracked down against the activities of some nationalist journalists and others critical of Tito’s legacy, it can also be said that the most virulent hate speech in Yugoslavia was made possible due to an *increase* in free speech.²⁵ In contrast, in Rwanda information was suppressed through direct government harassment of and control over journalists and through tight controls on the right to freedom of movement which made it easier for authorities to cover up human rights abuses and to present their own version of state-sponsored and state-condoned violence.²⁶
23. Despite the differences in relative degrees of free speech, the core problem in Rwanda and Kosovo was the same. In both areas, speech went unchallenged due to a lack of institutions to break up governmental and non-governmental informational monopolies, the absence of common public forums for the free and safe exchange of diverse ideas, and the absence of a prerequisite for a “well developed” civil society: “the set of institutions and social norms that make pluralism a civil process of persuasion and reconciling of differences.”²⁷ The electronic media was the most powerful force in both Kosovo and Rwanda due to its ability to reach rural populations (Rwanda relied largely on radio, former Yugoslavia radio and television), and in both cases an ethic prevailed of biased journalism.
24. Racist discourse masterfully regenerates historical mythology and creates a culture of victimisation. Once one feels like a victim, it is much easier to be a perpetrator. Many types of hate propaganda are useful in creating a culture of victimisation, but racist discourse wields particularly potent power. Once a person can be called genetically inferior or not human at all – the height of racism - killing thus becomes justified, easy, and noble. In both Rwanda and Kosovo, hate propaganda was used in this manner to play upon memories of real and imagined past domination by the minority. Racist discourse was particularly effective in creating an enemy “other” because it tapped into the audience’s predispositions. The violent result, however, was not preordained by “tribal hatreds.” Rather, it was the deliberate result of a carefully calculated political campaign driven by a racist/nationalist/genocidal ideology, and helped along by the structural and institutional shortcomings of the societies.
25. In Kosovo, the state-sponsored and state-condoned hate propaganda offered support for a virulent chauvinist agenda that included military and paramilitary abuses. In Rwanda, the connection between militias and racist media was even more pronounced: the media was used to disseminate instructions as to when and how to kill.²⁸ Although some of those participating in the killings were government army and militia members, many of those who joined in the killings

²⁵ See Julie Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1999).

²⁶ Article 19 – The International Centre Against Censorship, *Broadcasting Genocide – Censorship, Propaganda & State-Sponsored Violence in Rwanda 1990-1994*, (1996) p. 44.

²⁷ Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, “Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas,” in Michael E. Brown et. al, eds., *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict* ((Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 61-96, 65.

²⁸ See Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), pp. 89-90.

were “peasants,”²⁹ and the young and young adults formed a large part of the audience for such stations as Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM). Although they would not normally have engaged in the torture and killing of their fellow citizens, many claimed that the propaganda broadcast by the government radio convinced them that it was the only action to take. One such man said “I did not believe the Tutsis were coming to kill us, but when the government radio continued to broadcast that they were coming to take our land, were coming to kill the Hutus – when this was repeated over and over – I began to feel some kind of fear.”³⁰ In Rwanda, the historic system of racial classification offered an easy guide for the killings. Singling out the enemy was also easy in Kosovo because of extreme polarisation between the two groups.

26. The racist ideology in Kosovo and Rwanda led to brutal racist acts as hate manifested itself in attempts to destroy the “other.”³¹ Serbian and Hutu militias subjected Albanian and Tutsi women (and in some cases men) to acts of sexual violence – individual rapes, gang rapes, rapes with objects such as sharpened sticks or gun barrels and sexual mutilation. In Rwanda, Hutu militias slaughtered Tutsis en masse and in Kosovo Albanians were forcibly deported. In both cases, men, women and children civilians were murdered, imprisoned, and tortured. These acts were racist because they were made possible by the dehumanisation of the “other”; these severe and systematic violent acts were said to be necessary to “preserve” the superior group, that is the Serbs or Tutsis. These crimes were also at their core “political” as they were perpetuated, directed or sanctioned by military and political leaders with a view toward fulfilling their political goals.
27. The historical failure of the court systems to address fairly and adequately intergroup violence gave perpetrators the sense that violence for political ends was “normal” and that such actions could be undertaken with virtual impunity. The absence of the rule of law, coupled with economic deprivations and a lack of democratic institutions, made Rwanda and Kosovo structurally extremely violent societies susceptible to a culture of hate. The outbursts of murderous violence then was “not something new, but primarily part of a continuum of ever-present violence in which violence is the answer to violence, and in which victims temporarily become perpetrators and then victims again.”³² Addressing the use of racism in conflict then means addressing the underlying structural causes of violence. Until this happens, the cycle of violence will continue.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:

28. Some steps that non-governmental and non-governmental actors could take to address the role of racism in civil conflict and wars may include the following:
 - Monitor highly polarised societies carefully and establish early warning mechanisms for those that display the characteristics of societies in which élites can use racist ideology for violent ends. Mainstream human rights organisations should recognise the importance of focusing on racist propaganda in human rights reporting and direct more energy in this regard.
 - Create disincentives for élites who want to use racism to gain power by offering “carrots” to those who refrain from doing so.

²⁹ Anonymous, “Sounds of violence,” *The New Republic*, 211 (Aug. 22, 1994).

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ See generally Human Rights Watch, Annual Reports 1993, 1994 and 1995 (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993-1995); Human Rights Watch, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999); Alain Destexhe, *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (New York: University Press, 1994).

³² Pete Uvin, *Development, Aid and Conflict: Reflections on the Case of Rwanda* (Helsinki: UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research, 1996).

- Address the conditions which foster a politics rooted in racist discourse: structural poverty, unmet human development needs, media manipulation of misunderstandings among the general populace, a culture of victimisation and history of real and imagined domination of one group over another, the absence of the rule of law and of fair and adequate judicial processes, and the lack of civil and political institutions which allow for divergent opinions.
- Combat the sense that violence for political ends is a normal course of action, by supporting the establishment of fair and unbiased judicial processes that could bring perpetrators to justice, compensate victims, and restore land to its rightful owners.
- Help people resist racist propaganda and overcome polarisation by supporting the creation of institutions and mechanisms that will ensure access to economic, cultural and political rights for all peoples – minorities and majorities. Reassure all peoples of their physical and cultural safety.
- Foster the development of institutions that challenge any monopoly control over information (governmental or non-governmental) and the creation of public fora for exchange of diverse ideas. Encourage the creation of equal time regulations guaranteeing media access, the professionalization of journalistic standards and the creation of local non-partisan “media watchdog” groups and multi-partisan and independent media outlets.
- Shut down media outlets only when they are used for explicit military or paramilitary goals, as in Rwanda where killing instructions were delivered over the airwaves. Consider the promotion of media regulations to combat hate speech only where the risk of abuse of such regulations are outweighed by their benefits.
- Support educational programs at all levels that combat divisive myth making by unbiased information and intergroup relations and actual instances of conflict prevention in other parts of the world. Make available additional resources to facilitate national social dialogue.
- Sponsor the development of multi-ethnic/multi-national state institutions, including courts, police forces and militaries. At the same time, be prepared to accept a degree of voluntary social segregation.