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Military Integration, disarmament and demobilisation. Military Integration in Rwanda.

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reconciliation mobilizers, who are active at the level of communities. This dynamism is a sign of ownership of the process of reconciliation by grassroots communities, of confidence and harmony which characterize henceforth the social relations among Rwandans: 72 % of the population are of the opinion that the situation in the country has markedly improved. Finally, among other results there is room for sharing experiences with delegations and researchers from various countries, and the creation of a “Peace and Leadership Center”. 56 % of the Rwandan population know very well activities carried out by NURC.

Experiences gained by NURC have shown that establishing confidence and healing the trauma are the central aspects in the process of reconciliation, that the use of local culture was a determining factor, and that national unity and reconciliation concern various aspects of political and socioeconomic life, from which it follows that there is a need to adopt a holistic approach to facing these imperatives. Finally, it is the strong will and the determination of the Rwandans to get up to their feet again after the genocide which are at the origin of the progress achieved so far in the political, social and economic domains.

NURC does not ignore the huge challenges which remain: the compensation fund for genocide survivors, the living conditions of the latter, disclosing the truth in Gacaca jurisdictions and security of the victims and the witnesses, poverty and illiteracy, insecurity in the region and the obstinacy of the genocidal ideology.

Nevertheless, NURC achievements are quite impressive. More particularly, it has managed to popularize concepts and practices of unity and reconciliation at community level by creating tools and modern institutions based on integrative practices of Rwandan culture. In future, NURC should capitalize its successes by strengthening the capacities of communities at all levels so that they could undertake and realize reconciliation programs on by themselves.

**THEME III: SECURITY SECTOR REFORM**


History of military integration is as old as that of armed forces. Military integration is the result of the existence of segregation in armed forces or in society itself. It is an affirmative action which dissipates fear and frustration, guarantees individual and collective security and strengthens reconciliation and stability of a divided society.

Pre-colonial Rwanda had an inclusive army, composed of Hutus, Tutsis and Twas. It had the
mandate to protect and to expand the national territory. During the colonization era (1894-1959), the army became a tool in the service of the colonial administration to dominate and exploit the colonized. In 1959 was born an army which was ethnically homogeneous whose mission was to protect the Hutu power.

In 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) launched a war of liberation against the government of the National Revolutionary Movement for the Development (MRND) and its armed forces (ex-RAF) because the situation had reached an impasse, notably the question of the refugees. When RAF and the ruling class saw their power in danger, they prepared and executed the genocide against Tutsis in April, 1994.

The genocide was stopped by the RPF army in July, 1994. All social and economic infrastructures had been destroyed and nothing was functioning. International aid organizations had followed the mass of refugees in the neighboring countries. There the international aid passed under the control of the genocidal forces who started to get organized, with the help of Zaire (current DRC) to attack Rwanda and to complete their genocidal project.

Inside the country, the government of the national unity deployed all efforts to reconstruct infrastructures and to set up the reconciliation process. The Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), now the Rwandan Defense Forces (RDF), played a central role in that recovery process.

Rwandans’ inclusive spirit was a strategy practiced by RPA in its war of liberation: this was done in order to both weaken the enemy and realize RPF political program. In the post-genocidal context, there were new developments due to the multiple challenges which the country had to face, notably the challenge to reconcile the imperatives of justice and reconciliation as well as to ensure sustainable peace. For that purpose, it was necessary to involve political forces which until then were competing for the government of national unity and to integrate ex-RFA combatants in a new national army.

The classic models which RPA could have applied are integration by consent which is part of the package of wider negotiated agreements between two belligerent parties under the mediation of a third part, the complete demobilization of soldiers from the defeated opposition decided by the government in power and the coercive model which implies the disarmament of factions in conflict under the supervision of an external intervention (e.g. UNO). Rwanda did not follow any of these models. It looked for a model which addresses its particular situation: its recent history and that of its armed forces.

The Rwandan model is based on consent: former combatants are integrated in conformity of Arusha Accords (1993): the Protocole III provides for integration of RPA into RAF. It is the opposite which occurred: ex-RFA were integrated into RPA. Contrary to the classic model, here integration was a continuous process which took place before, during and after the cease-fire. The traditional concept of ingando, solidarity camps, was taken over and used. Traditionally ingando refers to the gathering of troops before the attack in a place where they were given the last instructions and were re-organized, tasks and responsibilities were clearly specified. They were reminded that national interests were above individual interests.
The objective of the current *Ingando* is to allow participants, soldiers or civilians, to go beyond the feelings of fear and mutual suspicion and speak freely about the conflict which opposes them, to heal the wounds, to accept responsibilities in case harm was done, to demystify the negative perceptions of one towards the other, to assume collectively the consequences of the common tragedy and agree on the common future. *Ingando* is based on the approach of problem resolution, which encourages the participants to analyze their conflict, its causes, and attitudes of one towards the other and post-conflict relationships.

Within the framework of military integration, this methodology comprises four phases. The first phase allows RDF soldiers and ex-combatants to speak out about history and origin of the conflict, with the aim of removing barriers which prevented them from communicating. The second phase consists of appointing the former opponents to various posts. By working together they continue their discussions about the conflict and establish close relations. During the third stage, participants are encouraged to analyze the conflict as a common problem with shared losses and responsibilities. This is done not to utter blames but to analyze the conflict so as to prevent it from occurring again in future. During the fourth stage, ex-combatants appraise all the process.

*Ingando* is the beginning of the resolution of the conflict. The challenge is to always be capable of ensuring an atmosphere which allows mutual respect, recognition of dignity and humanity of each participant.

Between 1995 and 2002, 49,700 ex-combatants were integrated into RDF, while the latter was demobilizing 27,340 soldiers. This process has continued up to date. The country has received dividends from the security climate as a result of this policy of military integration. It has allowed to efficiently fight against uprising of infiltrated elements by cutting ex-RAF and militias from their supply base, since integrated soldiers had become citizens who wanted to protect their families. Besides, these soldiers, once demobilized, transformed themselves into actors of economic development and reconciliation.

Military integration is an important element in the process of reconciliation and restoration of sustainable peace. The success depends on the political and military leadership will, on its insertion at grassroots level and its ownership by communities. International partners will back up local initiatives but the latter do not belong to them. Finally, in the perspective of reconciliation, ex-combatants should also be considered as “victims” of the conflict and consequently losers as well.

The experience of military integration carried out by RDF produced a new example of an integrated institution. It has allowed also to ensure security in the country and to propose a new model of the culture of unity and hope as opposed to the culture of hatred and despair.

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The demobilization process in Burundi,

by Col. Isaïe NIYIBIZI

A historical reminder of the major events which occurred before this process is necessary to understand the national program for demobilization and reintegration (PNRR) in Burundi.