

= Paul Kagame =

Paul Kagame ( / k????me? / ; born 23 October 1957 ) is the sixth and current President of Rwanda having taken office in 2000 when his predecessor , Pasteur Bizimungu , resigned . Kagame previously commanded the rebel force that ended the 1994 Rwandan Genocide . He was considered Rwanda 's de facto leader when he served as Vice President and Minister of Defence from 1994 to 2000 .

Kagame was born to a Tutsi family in southern Rwanda . When he was two years old , the Rwandan Revolution ended centuries of Tutsi political dominance ; his family fled to Uganda , where he spent the rest of his childhood . In the 1980s , Kagame fought in Yoweri Museveni 's rebel army , becoming a senior Ugandan army officer after Museveni 's military victories carried him to the Ugandan presidency . Kagame joined the Rwandan Patriotic Front ( RPF ) , which invaded Rwanda in 1990 ; leader Fred Rwigyema died early in the war and Kagame took control . By 1993 , the RPF controlled significant territory in Rwanda and a ceasefire was negotiated . The assassination of Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana was the starting point of the genocide , in which Hutu extremists killed an estimated 500 @, @ 000 to one million Tutsi and moderate Hutu . Kagame resumed the civil war , and ended the genocide with a military victory .

During his vice presidency , Kagame controlled the national army and maintained law and order , while other officials began rebuilding the country . Many RPF soldiers carried out retribution killings ; it is disputed whether Kagame organised these , or was powerless to stop them . Hutu refugee camps formed in Zaire and other countries , which were controlled by the genocidaires ( participants in the genocide ) and threatened Rwanda 's security . The RPF indiscriminately attacked the camps in 1996 , forcing many refugees to return home , but insurgents continued to attack Rwanda . The attack on the refugees camps killed an estimated 200 @, @ 000 people . According to the UN Mapping report the attacks could be tantamount to genocide potentially making Paul Kagame a war criminal . As part of the invasion , Kagame sponsored two controversial rebel wars in Zaire . The Rwandan- and Ugandan @-@ backed rebels won the first war ( 1996 ? 97 ) , installing Laurent @-@ Désiré Kabila as president in place of dictator Mobutu and renaming the country as the Democratic Republic of the Congo ( DRC ) . The second war was launched in 1998 against Kabila , and later his son Joseph , following the DRC government 's expulsion of Rwandan and Ugandan military forces from the country . The war escalated into a continent @-@ wide conflict which lasted until a 2003 peace deal and ceasefire .

As president , Kagame has prioritised national development , launching a programme to develop Rwanda as a middle income country by 2020 . As of 2013 , the country is developing strongly on key indicators , including health care and education ; annual growth between 2004 and 2010 averaged 8 % per year . Kagame has had mostly good relations with the East African Community and the United States ; his relations with France were poor until 2009 . Relations with the DRC remain tense despite the 2003 ceasefire ; human rights groups and a leaked United Nations report allege Rwandan support for two insurgencies in the country , a charge Kagame denies . Several countries suspended aid payments in 2012 following these allegations . Kagame is popular in Rwanda and with some foreign observers ; human rights groups accuse him of political repression . He won an election in 2003 , under a new constitution adopted that year , and was elected for a second term in 2010 .

= = Early life = =

Kagame was born on 23 October 1957 , the youngest of six children , in Tambwe , Ruanda @-@ Urundi , a village located in the modern Southern Province of Rwanda . His father , Deogratias , was a member of the Tutsi ethnic group , from which the royal family had been derived since the eighteenth century or earlier . Deogratias had family ties to King Mutara III , but he chose to pursue an independent business career rather than maintain a close connection to the royal court . Kagame 's mother , Asteria Rutagambwa , was also a Tutsi , descended from the family of the last Rwandan queen , Rosalie Gicanda . At the time of Kagame 's birth , Rwanda was a United Nations Trust

Territory ; long @-@ time colonial power Belgium still ruled the territory , but with a mandate to oversee independence . Rwandans were made up of three distinct groups : the minority Tutsi were the traditional ruling class , and the Belgians had long promoted their supremacy , while the majority Hutu were agriculturalists . The third group , the Twa , were a forest @-@ dwelling pygmy people who are descended from Rwanda 's earliest inhabitants and formed less than 1 % of the population .

Tension between Tutsi and Hutu had been escalating during the 1950s , and culminated in the 1959 Rwandan Revolution . Hutu activists began killing Tutsi , forcing more than 100 @,@ 000 to seek refuge in neighbouring countries . Kagame 's family abandoned their home , living for two years in the far northeast of Rwanda and eventually crossing the border into Uganda . They moved gradually north , and settled in the Nshungerezi refugee camp in the Toro sub @-@ region in 1962 . It was around this time that , as young boys , Kagame and his future comrade , Fred Rwigyema , first met one another .

Kagame began his primary education in a school near the refugee camp , where he and other Rwandan refugees learned English and began to integrate into Ugandan culture . At the age of nine he moved to the respected Rwengoro Primary School , around 16 kilometres ( 10 mi ) away , graduating with the best grades in the district . He subsequently attended Ntare School , one of the best schools in Uganda . It is also the alma mater of future Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni . The death of Kagame 's father in the early 1970s , and the departure of Rwigyema to an unknown location , led to a decline in his academic performance and an increased tendency to fight those who belittled the Rwandan population . He was eventually suspended from Ntare and completed his studies without distinction at Old Kampala Secondary School .

After finishing his schooling Kagame made two visits to Rwanda , in 1977 and 1978 . He was initially hosted by family members of his former classmates , but upon arrival in Kigali he made contact with members of his own family . He kept a low profile on these visits , believing that his status as a well @-@ connected Tutsi exile could lead to arrest ; on his second visit he entered the country through Zaire rather than Uganda to avoid suspicion . Kagame used his time in Rwanda to explore the country , familiarise himself with the political and social situation , and make connections that would prove useful to him in his later activities .

= = Military career , 1979 ? 1994 = =

= = = Ugandan Bush War = = =

In 1978 , Fred Rwigyema returned to western Uganda and reunited with Kagame . During his absence , Rwigyema had joined the rebel army of Yoweri Museveni . Based in Tanzania , it aimed to overthrow the Ugandan government of Idi Amin . Rwigyema returned to Tanzania and fought in the 1979 war during which Museveni 's army , allied with the Tanzanian army and other Ugandan exiles , defeated Amin . After Amin 's defeat , inspired by Rwigyema , Kagame and other Rwandan refugees pledged allegiance to Museveni , a cabinet member in the transition government . Kagame travelled to Tanzania where the Tanzanian government , which sought to protect the new Ugandan regime , trained him as a spy .

Former incumbent Milton Obote won the 1980 Ugandan general election . Museveni disputed the result , and he and his followers withdrew from the new government in protest . In 1981 , Museveni formed the rebel National Resistance Army ( NRA ) ; Kagame and Rwigyema joined as founding soldiers , along with thirty @-@ eight Ugandans . The army 's goal was to overthrow Obote 's government , in what became known as the Ugandan Bush War .

Kagame and Rwigyema joined the NRA primarily to ease conditions for Rwandan refugees persecuted by Obote . They also had a long @-@ term goal of returning with other Tutsi refugees to Rwanda ; military experience would enable them to fight the Hutu @-@ dominated Rwandan army . In the NRA , Kagame specialised in intelligence @-@ gathering , and he rose to a position close to Museveni 's . The NRA , based in the Luwero Triangle , fought the Ugandan army for the next five

years , even after Obote was deposed in a 1985 coup d'état and the start of peace talks .

In 1986 , the NRA captured Kampala with a force of 14 000 soldiers , including 500 Rwandans , and formed a new government . After Museveni 's inauguration as president he appointed Kagame and Rwigyema as senior officers in the new Ugandan army ; Kagame was the head of military intelligence . In addition to their army duties , Kagame and Rwigyema began building a covert network of Rwandan Tutsi refugees within the army 's ranks , intended as the nucleus for an attack on Rwanda . In 1989 Rwanda 's President Habyarimana and many Ugandans in the army began to criticise Museveni over his appointment of Rwandan refugees to senior positions , and he demoted Kagame and Rwigyema .

They remained de facto senior officers , but the change caused them to accelerate their plans to invade Rwanda . They joined an organisation called the Rwandan Patriotic Front ( RPF ) , a refugee association which had been operating under various names since 1979 . Rwigyema became the RPF leader shortly after joining and , while still working for the Ugandan army , he and Kagame completed their invasion plans .

= = = Rwandan Civil War = = =

In October 1990 , Rwigyema led a force of over 4 000 RPF rebels into Rwanda at the Kagitumba border post , advancing 60 km ( 37 mi ) south to the town of Gabiro . Paul Kagame was not present at the initial raids , as he was attending a course at the Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth , United States . Rwigyema was killed on the third day of the attack , throwing the RPF into confusion . France and Zaire deployed forces in support of the Rwandan army , and by the end of October , the RPF had been pushed back into the far north east corner of the country .

Kagame returned to Africa and took command of the RPF forces , which had been reduced to fewer than 2 000 troops . Kagame and his soldiers moved west , through Uganda , to the Virunga Mountains , a rugged high altitude area where the terrain worked in their favor . From there he re armed and reorganised the army , and carried out fundraising and recruitment from the Tutsi diaspora . Kagame restarted combat in January 1991 , with an attack on the northern town of Ruhengeri . Benefiting from the element of surprise , the RPF captured the town and held it for a day before retreating back into the forests .

For the next year , the RPF waged a classic hit and run style guerrilla war , capturing some border areas but not making significant gains in the war against the Rwandan army . Following the June 1992 formation of a multi party coalition government in Kigali , Kagame announced a ceasefire and initiated negotiations with the Rwandan government in Arusha , Tanzania . In early 1993 groups of extremist Hutu formed and began campaigns of large scale violence against the Tutsi . Kagame responded by suspending peace talks temporarily and launching a major attack , gaining a large swathe of land across the north of the country .

Peace negotiations resumed in Arusha , and the resulting set of agreements , known as the Arusha Accords , were signed in August 1993 . The RPF were given positions in a broad based transitional government ( BBTG ) and in the national army . The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda ( UNAMIR ) , a peacekeeping force , arrived and the RPF were given a base in the national parliament building in Kigali to use during the establishment of the BBTG .

= = = Rwandan Genocide = = =

On 6 April 1994 , Rwandan President Habyarimana 's plane was shot down near Kigali Airport , killing both Habyarimana and the President of Burundi , Cyprien Ntaryamira , as well as their entourage and three French crew members . The attackers remain unknown . Historian Gérard Prunier , in a book written shortly after the incident , concluded that it was most likely a coup d'état carried out by extreme Hutu members of Habyarimana 's government , and was a planned part of the genocide . This theory was disputed in 2006 by French judge Jean Louis Bruguière , and in 2008 by Spanish judge Fernando Andreu . Both alleged that Kagame and the RPF were

responsible . At the end of 2010 the French government ordered a more thorough judicial inquiry , which employed ballistics experts . That review concluded in 2012 that the shots had originated from Camp Kanombe , an area controlled at the time by the Rwandan army ; this report reaffirmed the initial theory that Hutu extremists assassinated Habyarimana .

Following Habyarimana 's death , a military committee led by Colonel Théoneste Bagosora took immediate control of the country . Under the committee 's direction , the Hutu paramilitary group Interahamwe and the presidential guard began to kill Hutu and Tutsi opposition politicians and other prominent Tutsi figures ; within 24 hours they had killed all moderate leaders , including prime minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana . The killers then began targeting the entire Tutsi population , as well as moderate Hutu , beginning the Rwandan Genocide . Over the course of approximately 100 days , between 500 @,@ 000 and 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu were killed in well @-@ planned attacks .

On 7 April , Kagame warned the committee and UNAMIR that he would resume the civil war if the killing did not stop . The next day , the Rwandan government forces attacked the national parliament building from several directions , but the RPF troops stationed there successfully fought back ; Kagame began an attack from the north on three fronts , seeking to link up quickly with the troops isolated in Kigali . An interim government was set up but Kagame refused to talk to it , believing that it was just a cover for Bagosora 's rule . Over the next few days , the RPF advanced steadily south , capturing Gabiro and large areas of countryside to the north and east of Kigali . They avoided attacking Kigali or Byumba at this stage , but conducted manoeuvres designed to encircle the cities and cut off supply routes . The RPF allowed Tutsi refugees from Uganda to settle behind the front line in the RPF @-@ controlled areas .

Throughout April there were numerous attempts by UNAMIR to establish a ceasefire , but Kagame insisted each time that the RPF would not stop fighting unless the killings stopped . In late April the RPF secured the whole of the Tanzanian border area and began to move west from Kibungo , to the south of Kigali . They encountered little resistance , except around Kigali and Ruhengeri . By 16 May , they had cut the road between Kigali and Gitarama , the temporary home of the interim government , and by 13 June , they had taken Gitarama , following an unsuccessful attempt by the Rwandan government forces to reopen the road . The interim government was forced to relocate to Gisenyi in the far north west . As well as fighting the war , Kagame was recruiting heavily to expand the army . The new recruits included Tutsi survivors of the genocide and refugees from Burundi , but were less well trained and disciplined than the earlier recruits .

Having completed the encirclement of Kigali , Kagame spent the latter half of June fighting to take the city . The government forces had superior manpower and weapons , but the RPF steadily gained territory , as well as conducting raids to rescue civilians from behind enemy lines . According to Roméo Dallaire , the force commander of UNAMIR , this success was due to Kagame being a " master of psychological warfare " ; he exploited the fact that the government forces were concentrating on the genocide rather than the fight for Kigali , and capitalised on the government 's loss of morale as it lost territory . The RPF finally defeated the Rwandan government forces in Kigali on 4 July , and on 18 July took Gisenyi and the rest of the north west , forcing the interim government into Zaire and ending the genocide . At the end of July 1994 , Kagame 's forces held the whole of Rwanda except for a zone in the south west , which had been occupied by a French @-@ led United Nations force as part of Opération Turquoise .

= = Marriage and children = =

On 10 June 1989 in Uganda , Kagame married Jeannette Nyiramongi , a Tutsi exile living in Nairobi , Kenya . Kagame had asked his relatives to suggest a suitable marriage and they recommended Nyiramongi . Kagame travelled to Nairobi and introduced himself , persuading her to visit him in Uganda . Nyiramongi was familiar with the RPF , and its goal of returning refugees to Rwanda . She held Kagame in high regard . The couple have four children . Their first child , a son they named Ivan Cyomoro Kagame , was born in 1990 . Since then a daughter , Ange Kagame , and sons Ian and Brian have been born .

= = Vice President and Minister of Defence = =

The post @-@ genocide Rwandan government took office in Kigali in July 1994 . It was based loosely on the Arusha Accords , but Habyarimana 's party was outlawed . The positions it had been assigned were taken over by the RPF . The military wing of the RPF was renamed as the Rwandan Patriotic Army ( RPA ) , and became the national army . Paul Kagame assumed the dual roles of Vice President of Rwanda and Minister of Defence while Pasteur Bizimungu , a Hutu who had been a civil servant under Habyarimana before fleeing to join the RPF , was appointed president . Bizimungu and his cabinet had some control over domestic affairs , but Kagame remained commander @-@ in @-@ chief of the army and was the de facto ruler of the country .

= = = Domestic situation = = =

The infrastructure and economy of the country had suffered greatly during the genocide . Many buildings were uninhabitable , and the former regime had carried with them all currency and moveable assets when they fled the country . Human resources were also severely depleted , with over 40 % of the population having been killed or fled . Many of the remainder were traumatised : most had lost relatives , witnessed killings or participated in the genocide . The army , controlled by Kagame , maintained law and order while the government began the work of rebuilding the country 's structures .

Non @-@ governmental organisations began to move back into the country , but the international community did not provide significant assistance to the new regime , and most international aid was routed to the refugee camps which had formed in Zaire following the exodus of Hutu from Rwanda . Kagame strove to portray the government as inclusive and not Tutsi dominated . He directed removal of ethnicity from citizens ' national identity cards , and the government began a policy of downplaying the distinctions between Hutu , Tutsi , and Twa .

During the genocide and in the months following the RPF victory , RPF soldiers killed many people they accused of participating in or supporting the genocide . Many of these soldiers were recent Tutsi recruits from within Rwanda , who had lost family or friends and sought revenge . The scale , scope , and source of ultimate responsibility of these killings is disputed . Human Rights Watch , as well as scholars such as Prunier , allege that the death toll might be as high as 100 @,@ 000 , and that Kagame and the RPF elite either tolerated or organised the killings . In an interview with journalist Stephen Kinzer , Kagame acknowledged that killings had occurred but stated that they were carried out by rogue soldiers and had been impossible to control . The RPF killings gained international attention with the 1995 Kibeho massacre , in which soldiers opened fire on a camp for internally displaced persons in Butare Province . Australian soldiers serving as part of UNAMIR estimated at least 4 @,@ 000 people were killed , while the Rwandan government claimed that the death toll was 338 .

Shortly after taking power , the Rwandan government began prosecuting crimes committed during the genocide . The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda , operating under a United Nations mandate , was set up in Arusha to judge the most senior leaders responsible for the genocide . In addition , the Rwandan government determined to prosecute all suspected perpetrators , including the many ordinary citizens who had taken part in the killings , in order to end the " culture of impunity " that it blamed for the genocide . Between 1994 and 2000 , 120 @,@ 000 suspects were arrested . The prisons were overcrowded and the courts could not process all the cases . By 2006 only 10 @,@ 000 of those arrested had been tried . The government introduced Gacaca , a village court system based on traditional Rwandan justice . The Gacaca process allowed for faster processing of cases , but lacked many safeguards and principles of international criminal law .

The unity government suffered a partial collapse in 1995 . The continuing violence , along with appointing of local government officials who were almost exclusively RPF Tutsi , caused serious disagreement between Kagame and senior Hutu government members , including prime minister Faustin Twagiramungu and interior minister Seth Sendashonga . Twagiramungu resigned in August

, and Kagame fired Sendashonga and three others the next day . Pasteur Bizimungu remained president but the makeup of the new government was predominantly RPF Tutsi loyal to Kagame . Twagiramungu and Sendashonga moved abroad to form a new opposition party shortly after leaving the government .

= = = Refugee crisis and insurgency = = =

Following the RPF victory , approximately two million Hutu fled to refugee camps in neighbouring countries , particularly Zaire , fearing RPF reprisals for the Rwandan Genocide . The camps were set up by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ( UNHCR ) , but were effectively controlled by the army and government of the former Hutu regime , including many leaders of the genocide . This regime was determined to return to power in Rwanda and began rearming , killing Tutsi residing in Zaire , and launching cross @-@ border incursions in conjunction with the Interahamwe paramilitary group . By late 1996 , the Hutu militants represented a serious threat to the new Rwandan regime , and Kagame launched a counteroffensive .

Kagame first provided troops and military training to aid a rebellion against Zaire by the Banyamulenge , a Tutsi group living near Bukavu in the Zairian South Kivu province . With Rwandan army support , the Banyamulenge defeated local security forces and began attacking the Hutu refugee camps in the area . At the same time , Kagame 's forces joined with Zairian Tutsi around Goma to attack two of the camps there . Most refugees from the attacked camps moved to the large Mugunga camp . In November 1996 the Rwandan army attacked Mugunga , causing an estimated 800 @,@ 000 refugees to flee . Many returned to Rwanda despite the presence of the RPF ; others ventured further west into Zaire .

Despite the disbanding of the camps , the defeated forces of the former regime continued a cross @-@ border insurgency campaign into Rwanda from North Kivu . The insurgents maintained a presence in Rwanda 's north western provinces and were supported by the predominantly Hutu population , many of whom had lived in the refugee camps before they were attacked . In addition to supporting the wars in the Congo , Kagame began a propaganda campaign to bring the Hutu to his side . He integrated former soldiers of the deposed genocidal regime 's military into the RPF @-@ dominated national army and appointed senior Hutu to key local government positions in the areas hit by insurgency . These tactics were eventually successful ; by 1999 , the population in the north west had stopped supporting the insurgency and the insurgents were mostly defeated .

= = = Congo Wars = = =

Although his primary reason for military action in Zaire was the dismantling of the refugee camps , Kagame also began planning a war to remove long @-@ time dictator President Mobutu Sese Seko from power . Mobutu had supported the genocidaires based in the camps , and was also accused of allowing attacks on Tutsi people within Zaire . Together with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni , Kagame supported the newly created Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo ( ADFL ) , an alliance of four rebel groups headed by Laurent @-@ Désiré Kabila , which began waging the First Congo War . The ADFL , helped by Rwandan and Ugandan troops , took control of North and South Kivu provinces in November 1996 and then advanced west , gaining territory from the poorly organised and demotivated Zairian army with little fighting . By May 1997 , they controlled almost the whole of Zaire except for the capital Kinshasa ; Mobutu fled and the ADFL took the capital without fighting . The country was renamed as the Democratic Republic of the Congo ( DRC ) and Kabila became the new president . The Rwandan Defence Forces and the ADFL were accused of carrying out mass atrocities during the First Congo War , with as many as 222 @,@ 000 Rwandan Hutu refugees declared missing .

Kagame and the Rwandan government retained strong influence over Kabila following his inauguration , and the RPA maintained a heavy presence in Kinshasa . Congolese in the capital resented this , as did many in the eastern Kivu provinces , where ethnic clashes increased sharply . In July 1998 , Kabila fired his Rwandan chief @-@ of @-@ staff , James Kabarebe , and ordered all

RPA troops to leave the country . Kagame accused Kabila of supporting the ongoing insurgency against Rwanda from North Kivu , the same accusation he had made about Mobutu . He responded to the expulsion of his soldiers by backing a new rebel group , the Rally for Congolese Democracy ( RCD ) , and launching the Second Congo War . The first action of the war was a blitzkrieg by the RCD and RPA , led by Kabarebe . These forces made quick gains , advancing in twelve days from the Kivu provinces west to within 130 kilometres ( 81 mi ) of Kinshasa . The capital was saved by the intervention of Angola and Zimbabwe on Kabila 's side . Following the failure of the blitzkrieg , the conflict developed into a long @-@ term conventional war , which lasted until 2003 and caused millions of deaths and massive damage . According to a report by the International Rescue Committee ( IRC ) , this conflict led to the loss of between 3 million and 7 @.@ 6 million lives , many through starvation and disease accompanying the social disruption of the war .

Although Kagame 's primary reason for the two wars in the Congo was Rwanda 's security , he was alleged to gain economic benefit by exploiting the mineral wealth of the eastern Congo . The 2001 United Nations Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo alleged that Kagame , along with Ugandan President Museveni , were " on the verge of becoming the godfathers of the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the continuation of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo " . The report also claimed that the Rwandan Ministry of Defence contained a " Congo Desk " dedicated to collecting taxes from companies licensed to mine minerals around Kisangani , and that substantial quantities of coltan and diamonds passed through Kigali before being resold on the international market by staff on the Congo Desk . International NGO Global Witness also conducted field studies in early 2013 . It concluded that minerals from North and South Kivu are exported illegally to Rwanda and then marketed as Rwandan . Kagame dismissed these allegations as unsubstantiated and politically motivated ; in a 2002 interview with newsletter Africa Confidential , Kagame said that if solid evidence against Rwandan officers was presented , it would be dealt with very seriously . In 2010 , the United Nations released a report accusing the Rwandan army of committing wide scale human rights violations and crimes against humanity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the First and Second Congo Wars , charges denied by the Rwandan government .

= = Presidency = =

= = = Accession = = =

In the late 1990s , Kagame began to disagree publicly with Bizimungu and the Hutu @-@ led government in Rwanda . Kagame accused Bizimungu of corruption and poor management , while Bizimungu felt that he had no power over appointments to the cabinet and that the National Assembly was acting purely as a puppet for Kagame . Bizimungu resigned from the presidency in March 2000 . Historians do not agree on the precise circumstances of Bizimungu 's departure ; American author Stephen Kinzer contends that " one of the president 's friends called Kagame with the startling news that the president was preparing to resign " while Prunier states that Bizimungu was forced to resign , having denounced the National Assembly and attempted to sow discord within the RPF . Following Bizimungu 's resignation , the Supreme Court ruled that Kagame should become acting president until a permanent successor was chosen .

Kagame had been de facto leader since 1994 , but had focused more on military , foreign affairs and the country 's security than day @-@ to @-@ day governance . By 2000 , the threat posed by cross @-@ border rebels was much reduced and when Bizimungu resigned , Kagame decided to seek the presidency himself . The transitional constitution was still in effect , which meant the president was elected by government ministers and the national assembly rather than by a direct election .

The RPF selected two candidates , Kagame and RPF secretary general Charles Murigande ; the ministers and parliament elected Kagame by eighty @-@ one votes to three . Kagame was sworn in

as president in April 2000 . Several Hutu politicians , including the prime minister Pierre @-@ Célestin Rwigema , left the government at around the same time as Bizimungu , leaving a cabinet dominated by those close to Kagame . Bizimungu started his own party following his resignation , but this was quickly banned for " destabilising the country " . He was subsequently arrested and convicted of corruption and inciting ethnic violence . He was imprisoned until 2007 , when he was pardoned by Kagame .

= = = New constitution = = =

Between 1994 and 2003 , Rwanda was governed by a set of documents combining President Habyarimana 's 1991 constitution , the Arusha Accords , and some additional protocols introduced by the transitional government . As required by the accords , Kagame set up a constitutional commission to draft a new permanent constitution . The constitution was required to adhere to a set of fundamental principles including equitable power sharing and democracy . The commission sought to ensure that the draft constitution was " home @-@ grown " , relevant to Rwanda 's specific needs , and reflected the views of the entire population ; they sent questionnaires to civil groups across the country and rejected offers of help from the international community , except for financial assistance .

The draft constitution was released in 2003 ; it was approved by the parliament , and was then put to a referendum in May of that year . The referendum was widely promoted by the government ; ultimately , 95 % of eligible adults registered to vote and the turnout on voting day was 87 % . The constitution was overwhelmingly accepted , with 93 % voting in favour . The constitution provided for a two @-@ house parliament , an elected president serving seven @-@ year terms , and multi @-@ party politics . The constitution also sought to prevent Hutu or Tutsi hegemony over political power . Article 54 states that " political organizations are prohibited from basing themselves on race , ethnic group , tribe , clan , region , sex , religion or any other division which may give rise to discrimination " . According to Human Rights Watch , this clause , along with later laws enacted by the parliament , effectively make Rwanda a one @-@ party state , as " under the guise of preventing another genocide , the government displays a marked intolerance of the most basic forms of dissent " .

= = = Election campaigns = = =

= = = Presidential election , 2003 = = =

Following the adoption of the new constitution in May 2003 , the government set dates for the first elections to be held under the new law . The presidential poll was set for 25 August 2003 . In May , the parliament voted to ban the Republican Democratic Movement ( MDR ) , following a parliamentary commission report accusing the MDR of " divisive " ideology . The MDR had been one of the coalition parties in the transitional government of national unity , and was the second largest party in the country after the RPF . Amnesty International criticised this move , claiming that " the unfounded allegations against the individuals mentioned in the report appear to be part of a government @-@ orchestrated crackdown on the political opposition " .

The RPF selected Paul Kagame as its presidential candidate , to run for his first full term following his three @-@ year transitional presidency . His main challenger was Faustin Twagiramungu , who had been prime minister from 1994 to 1995 , when he resigned and moved to Brussels after a disagreement with Kagame . Twagiramungu had intended to run as the candidate for the MDR , but instead sought the presidency as an independent following the party 's banishment . Twagiramungu returned to the country in June 2003 and began campaigning in August . Two other candidates also ran : Alvera Mukabaramba , a medical doctor and former MDR member running for the newly formed Party for Progress and Concord ( PPC ) , and Jean Nepomuscene Nayinzira , an independent and former member of parliament who cited belief in God as a central part of his



campaign . Mukabaramba pulled out one day before the election , accusing Twagiramungu of ethnic propaganda and advising her supporters to vote for Kagame . The election went ahead on 25 August with Kagame , Twagiramungu and Nayinzira as candidates .

Kagame declared victory in the election on 26 August , after partial results showed he had an almost insurmountable lead , and his win was later confirmed by the National Electoral Commission . The final results showed that Kagame received 95 @. @ 1 % of the vote , Twagiramungu 3 @. @ 6 % , and Nayinzira 1 @. @ 3 % ; the voter turnout was 96 @. @ 6 % . The campaign , election day , and aftermath were largely peaceful , although an observer from the European Union ( EU ) raised concerns that opposition supporters may have been intimidated by the RPF . Twagiramungu rejected the result of the election and also questioned the margin of victory , saying " Almost 100 per cent ? That 's not possible " . Twagiramungu filed a petition at the Supreme Court to nullify the result , but was unsuccessful . The EU observer also questioned the result , citing " numerous irregularities " , but praised the election overall , describing it as a " positive step " . Kagame himself , in an interview with journalist Stephen Kinzer , acknowledged that the opposition had been weak , but he believed the result was genuine . He told Kinzer " they wanted security first of all . Even people who didn 't know the RPF program in detail saw us as the party that would guarantee that " . Kagame was sworn in on 12 September to begin his seven @- @ year term .

= = = Presidential election , 2010 = = =

Kagame 's first term expired and new elections were held in 2010 . Having served one term as elected president , Kagame was entitled to serve for one further term . The election campaign began publicly in January 2010 when Victoire Ingabire , a Hutu who had been living abroad for some years , returned to Rwanda and announced her candidacy for the presidency . This failed as she was arrested and accused of threatening state security . Ingabire caused some controversy in the country following her arrival , with comments relating to the genocide . The government accused her of breaking the country 's strict laws regarding genocide denial , and she was arrested in April 2010 . She was released on bail , but was prohibited from running in the election . In October 2012 she was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment by the High Court of Kigali , which is heavily criticized by Amnesty International .

In May , President Kagame was officially endorsed as the RPF 's candidate for the election at the party 's national congress . Kagame then became the first candidate to be accepted when he presented his electoral papers in July . Three other candidates registered successfully for the election ; they were Jean Damascene Ntawukuriryayo of the Social Democratic Party , Prosper Higiho of the Liberal Party , and Alvera Mukabaramba of the Party for Progress and Concord . Two other contenders failed to get official documents through and did not get accepted into the race . Human Rights Watch described Kagame 's three opponents as " broadly supportive of the RPF " , and claimed that most Rwandans would not describe them as " real " opposition , while those who criticised the RPF were barred from the election .

In the run @- @ up to the election , there was some violence and several incidents involving prominent opposition and media figures . In February , there was a grenade attack in Kigali which killed two people . Rwandan prosecutors blamed Kayumba Nyamwasa , a dissident General who had become a critic of Kagame . Nyamwasa fled to Johannesburg , South Africa , and in June he survived a shooting in the city . Nyamwasa alleged that it was an assassination attempt , a charge Rwanda denied . Days later , journalist Jean @- @ Léonard Rugambage , who claimed to have uncovered the regime 's responsibility in the attempted murder , was shot dead . In July , the vice president of the Democratic Green Party , André Kagwa Rwisereka , was beheaded in Butare . There is no concrete evidence linking Kagame with the attacks , but it was sufficient for the United Nations to demand an investigation .

Kagame was declared the winner of the election , according to results released by the National Electoral Commission on 11 August . Kagame received 93 @. @ 08 % of the vote , with second placed Ntawukuriryayo polling 5 @. @ 15 % . The turnout was 97 @. @ 51 % of registered voters . Opposition and human rights groups later said that the election was tainted by repression , murder ,

and lack of credible competition . Kagame responded by saying " I see no problems , but there are some people who choose to see problems where there are not . " The election was largely peaceful , although there was a further grenade attack in Kigali hours after the election commission announced Kagame 's victory , injuring about 20 people . Media reports indicated the attack may have been politically motivated and connected to earlier attacks in the same area .

===== Constitutional referendum , 2015 =====

===== Domestic policy =====

===== Vision 2020 =====

In the late 1990s , Kagame began actively planning methods to achieve national development . He launched a national consultation process and also sought the advice of experts from emerging nations including China , Singapore and Thailand . Following these consultations , and shortly after assuming the presidency , Kagame launched an ambitious programme of national development called Vision 2020 . The major purposes of the programme were to unite the Rwandan people and to transform Rwanda from a highly impoverished into a middle income country . The programme consists of a list of goals which the government aims to achieve before the year 2020 . These include reconstruction , infrastructure and transport improvements , good governance , improving agriculture production , private sector development , and health and education improvements .

In 2011 , the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning issued a report indicating the progress of the Vision 2020 goals . The report examined the stated goals of the programme and rated each one with a status of " on @-@ track " , " on @-@ watch " or " off @-@ track " . Of 44 goals , it found that 66 % were on @-@ track , 11 % were on @-@ watch , and 22 % were off @-@ track . The major areas identified as off @-@ track were population , poverty and the environment . An independent review of Vision 2020 , carried out in 2012 by academics based in Belgium , rated progress as " quite encouraging " , mentioning development in the education and health sectors , as well as Kagame 's fostering of a favourable business environment . The review also raised concerns about the policy of " maximum growth at any cost " , suggesting that this was leading to a situation in which the rich prospered while the rural poor saw little benefit .

In November 2013 , Kagame told This Is Africa " Our thinking is based on people . In national budgets , we focus on education , health , we look at technology , skills , innovation , creativity . We are always thinking about people , people , people . "

===== Economy =====

Rwanda 's economy has grown rapidly under Kagame 's presidency , with per @-@ capita gross domestic product ( purchasing power parity ) estimated at \$ 1 @,@ 592 in 2013 , compared with \$ 567 in 2000 . Annual growth between 2004 and 2010 averaged 8 % per year . Kagame 's economic policy is based on liberalising the economy , privatising state owned industries , reducing red tape for businesses , and transforming the country from an agricultural to a knowledge @-@ based economy . Kagame has stated that he believes Rwanda can emulate the economic development of Singapore since 1960 , and achieving middle income country status is one of the central goals of the Vision 2020 programme . Kagame 's economic policy has been praised by many foreign donors and investors , including Bill Clinton and Starbucks chairman Howard Schultz . The DRC government and human rights groups have accused Rwanda of illegally exploiting Congolese minerals , which the London Daily Telegraph describes as an " important part " in the success of Rwanda 's economy .

Rwanda is a country of few natural resources , and the economy is heavily dependent on subsistence agriculture , with an estimated 90 % of the working population engaged in farming .

Under Kagame 's presidency , the service sector has grown strongly . In 2010 , it became the country 's largest sector by economic output , contributing 43 @. @ 6 % of the country 's GDP . Key tertiary contributors include banking and finance , wholesale and retail trade , hotels and restaurants , transport , storage , communication , insurance , real estate , business services , and public administration , including education and health . Information and communications technology ( ICT ) is a Vision 2020 priority , with a goal of transforming Rwanda into an ICT hub for Africa . To this end , the government has completed a 2 @, @ 300 kilometres ( 1 @, @ 400 mi ) fibre @- @ optic telecommunications network , intended to provide broadband services and facilitate electronic commerce . Tourism is one of the fastest @- @ growing economic resources and became the country 's leading foreign exchange earner in 2011 . In spite of the genocide 's legacy , Kagame 's achievement of peace and security means the country is increasingly perceived internationally as a safe destination ; in the first half of 2011 , 16 % of foreign visitors arrived from outside Africa . The country 's mountain gorillas attract thousands of visitors per year , who are prepared to pay high prices for permits .

Rwanda ranks highly in several categories of the World Bank 's ease of doing business index . In 2005 , after the country was ranked 158th on the ease of doing business index , Kagame set up a special unit to analyze the economy and provide solutions to easing business . As a result , the country topped the list of reformers in 2009 . In 2012 , the country 's overall ease of doing business index ranking was 52nd out of 185 countries worldwide , and third out of 46 in Sub @- @ Saharan Africa . It was eighth on the 2012 rankings for ease of starting a business ; the Rwanda Development Board asserts that a business can be authorised and registered in 24 hours . The business environment and economy also benefit from relatively low corruption in the country ; in 2010 , Transparency International ranked Rwanda as the eighth cleanest out of 47 countries in Sub @- @ Saharan Africa and sixty @- @ sixth cleanest out of 178 in the world .

= = = = Education and health = = = =

Kagame has made education for youth in Rwanda a high priority for his administration , allocating 17 % of the annual budget to the sector . The Rwandan government provides free education in state @- @ run schools for twelve years : six years in primary and six in secondary school . The final three years of free education were introduced in 2012 following a pledge by Kagame during his 2010 re @- @ election campaign . Kagame credits his government with improvements in the tertiary education sector ; the number of universities has risen from 1 in 1994 to 29 in 2010 , and the tertiary gross enrolment ratio increased from 4 % in 2008 to 7 % in 2011 . From 1994 until 2009 , secondary education was offered in either French or English ; since 2009 , due to the country 's increasing ties with the East African Community and the Commonwealth of Nations , English has been the sole language of instruction in public schools from primary school grade 4 onward . The country 's literacy rate , defined as those aged 15 or over who can read and write , was 71 % in 2009 , up from 38 % in 1978 and 58 % in 1991 .

Rwanda 's health profile is dominated by communicable diseases , including malaria , pneumonia , and HIV / AIDS . Prevalence and mortality rates have sharply declined in the past decade but the short supply or unavailability of certain medicines continues to challenge disease management . Kagame 's government is seeking to improve this situation as one of the Vision 2020 priorities . It has increased funding , with the health budget up from 3 @. @ 2 % of national expenditure in 1996 to 9 @. @ 7 % in 2008 . It also set up training institutes , including the Kigali Health Institute ( KHI ) , and in 2008 effected laws making health insurance mandatory for all individuals ; by 2010 , over 90 % of the population was covered . These policies have contributed to a steady increase in quality of healthcare and improvement in key indicators during Kagame 's presidency . In 2010 , 91 children died before their fifth birthday for every 1000 live births , down from 163 under five deaths for every 1000 live births in 1990 . Prevalence of some diseases is declining , including the elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus and a sharp reduction in malaria morbidity , mortality rate , and specific lethality . In response to shortages in qualified medical personnel , in 2011 the Rwandan government launched an eight @- @ year US \$ 151 @. @ 8 million initiative to train medical

professionals .

== Foreign policy ==

=== Democratic Republic of the Congo ===

The Second Congo War , which began in 1998 , was still raging when Kagame assumed the presidency in 2000 . Namibia , Angola , Zimbabwe , and Chad had committed troops to the Congolese government side , while Rwanda , Uganda , and Burundi were supporting rebel groups . The rebel group Rally for Congolese Democracy ( RCD ) had split in 1999 into two factions : the RCD @-@ Goma , supported by Rwanda , and the RCD @-@ Kisangani , which was allied to Uganda . Uganda also supported the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo ( MLC ) , a rebel group from the north . All these rebel groups were at war with Kabila 's government in Kinshasa , but were also increasingly hostile to each other . Various peace meetings had been held , culminating in the July 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement which was signed by Kabila , Kagame and all the other foreign governments . The rebel groups were not party to the agreement , and fighting continued . The RPA continued to be heavily involved in the Congo War during 2000 , fighting battles against the Ugandan army in Kisangani and against Kabila 's army in Kasai and Katanga .

In January 2001 , Kabila was shot dead inside his palace . The Congolese government claimed Kabila had been killed by a rogue bodyguard , who was himself killed at the scene . According to a report published in French newspaper Le Monde , Kabila was killed by the kadogo , an army of child soldiers he was known to have assembled during the First Congo War . The kadogo had suffered badly during the battles in Kasai and Katanga , were poorly paid , and had become alienated by Kabila . Kabila 's son Joseph was appointed president and immediately began asserting his authority by dismissing his father 's cabinet and senior army commanders , assembling a new government , and engaging with the international community . The new government provided impetus for renewed peace negotiations , and in July 2002 a peace agreement was reached between Rwanda , Congo , and the other major participants , in which all foreign troops would withdraw and RCD @-@ Goma would enter a power @-@ sharing transitional government with Joseph Kabila as interim president until elections could be held . By the end of 2002 , all uniformed Rwandan troops had left Congolese territory .

Despite the agreement and subsequent ceasefire , relations between Kagame and the Congolese government have remained tense . A 2003 United Nations report alleged that Rwanda was using demobilised soldiers to continue its illegal exploitation of Congolese minerals . Meanwhile , Kagame blamed Kabila for failing to suppress Hutu rebels in North and South Kivu provinces . Two major insurgencies have occurred in the eastern provinces : the first , from 2005 to 2009 , was led by Congolese Tutsi Laurent Nkunda , while the second , carried out by the March 23 Movement ( M23 ) under leader Bosco Ntaganda , began in 2012 ; Ntaganda gave himself up to the International Criminal Court in early 2013 , and peace talks have taken place , but as of May 2013 the conflict is at risk of resuming . Human Rights Watch alleges that both insurgencies were supported by Rwanda , a charge Kagame denies . A leaked United Nations report in 2012 also alleges Rwandan support for M23 ; this report cites Kagame 's defence minister James Kabarebe as being effectively the commander of the movement .

=== Uganda and East African Community ===

Kagame spent most of his childhood and young adult years living in Uganda , and has a personal relationship with President Yoweri Museveni dating back to the late 1970s ; they fought together in the Ugandan Bush War , and Kagame was appointed head of military intelligence in Museveni 's national army following the NRA victory in 1986 . When the RPF soldiers abandoned the Ugandan army and invaded Rwanda in 1990 , Museveni did not explicitly support them , but according to Prunier it is likely that he had prior knowledge of the plan . Museveni also allowed the RPF safe

passage through Ugandan territory to the Virunga mountains after their early defeats in the war , and revealed in a 1998 heads of state meeting that Uganda had helped the RPF materially during the Rwandan Civil War . Following the RPF victory , the two countries enjoyed a close political and trade relationship .

Rwanda and Uganda were allies during the First Congo War against Zaire , with both countries being instrumental in the setting up of the AFDL and committing troops to the war . The two nations joined forces again at the beginning of the Second Congo War , but relations soured in late 1998 as Museveni and Kagame had very different priorities in fighting the war . In early 1999 , the RCD rebel group split into two , with Rwanda and Uganda supporting opposing factions , and in August the Rwandan and Ugandan armies battled each other with heavy artillery in the Congolese city of Kisangani . The two sides fought again in Kisangani in May and June 2000 , causing the deaths of 120 soldiers and around 640 Congolese civilians . Relations slowly thawed in the 2000s , and by 2011 the two countries enjoyed a close friendship once more .

In 2007 , Rwanda joined the East African Community , an intergovernmental organisation for the East Africa region comprising Uganda , Kenya , Tanzania , Burundi , and Rwanda . The country 's accession required the signing of various agreements with the other members , including a defence intelligence sharing pact , a customs union , and measures to combat drug trafficking . The countries of the Community established a common market in 2011 , and plan further integration , including moves toward political federation and a possible single currency .

= = = = France = = = =

France maintained close ties with President Habyarimana during his years in power , as part of its *Françafrique* policy . When the RPF launched the Rwandan Civil War in 1990 , Habyarimana was immediately granted assistance from the President of France , François Mitterrand . France sent 600 paratroopers , who effectively ran the government 's response to the invasion and were instrumental in regaining almost all territory the RPF had gained in the first days of the war . France maintained this military presence throughout the war , engaging Kagame 's RPF forces again in February 1993 during the offensive that doubled RPF territory . In the later stages of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide , France launched *Opération Turquoise* , a United Nations mandated mission to create safe humanitarian areas for protection of displaced persons , refugees , and civilians in danger ; many Rwandans interpreted it as a mission to protect Hutu from the RPF , including some who had participated in the genocide . The French remained hostile to the RPF , and their presence temporarily stalled Kagame 's advance in south western Rwanda .

France continued to shun the new RPF government following the end of the genocide and the withdrawal of *Opération Turquoise* . Diplomatic relations were finally reestablished in January 1995 , but remained tense as Rwanda accused France of aiding the *genocidaires* , while France defended its interventions . In 2006 , French judge Jean @-@ Louis Bruguière released a report on the assassination of President Habyarimana which concluded that Kagame had ordered the shooting of the plane . Bruguière subsequently issued arrest warrants for nine of Kagame 's close aides . Kagame denied the charges and immediately broke off diplomatic relations with France . Relations began to thaw in 2008 , and diplomacy was resumed in late 2009 . In 2010 , Nicolas Sarkozy became the first French president to visit Rwanda since the genocide , admitting for the first time that France made " grave errors of judgment " . Kagame reciprocated with an official visit to Paris in 2011 .

= = = = United States , United Kingdom and the Commonwealth = = = =

Since the end of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 , Rwanda has enjoyed a close relationship with the English speaking world , in particular the United States ( US ) and United Kingdom ( UK ) . The two countries have been highly supportive of the RPF programme of stabilisation and rebuilding , with the UK donating large sums each year in budget support , and the US providing military aid as well as supporting development projects . As president , Kagame has been critical of the West 's

lack of response to the genocide , and the UK and US have responded by admitting guilt over the issue : Bill Clinton , who was President of the United States during the genocide , has described his failure to act against the killings as a " personal failure " . During the 2000s , Clinton and UK prime minister Tony Blair praised the country 's progress under Kagame , citing it as a model recipient for international development funds , and Clinton referred to Kagame as " one of the greatest leaders of our time " . Both Clinton and Blair have maintained support for the country beyond the end of their terms of office , Clinton via the Clinton Global Initiative and Blair through his role as an unpaid advisor to the Rwandan government .

As part of his policy of maintaining close relations with English speaking countries , Kagame sought membership of the Commonwealth of Nations , which was granted in 2009 . Rwanda was only the second country , after Mozambique , to join the Commonwealth having never had colonial links to the British Empire . Kagame attended the subsequent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth , Australia , addressing the Business Forum . Rwanda also successfully applied for a rotating seat on the United Nations Security Council in 2012 , taking over the presidency of that organisation in April 2013 .

Kagame 's relations with the US and UK have come under strain in the early 2010s , following allegations that Rwanda is supporting the M23 rebel movement in Eastern Congo . The UK suspended its budgetary aid programme in 2012 , freezing a £ 21 million donation . The US has also frozen some of its military aid programme for Rwanda , although it stopped short of suspending aid altogether .

= = = China and moves toward self @-@ sufficiency = = =

China has been investing in Rwandan infrastructure since 1971 , with early projects including hospitals in Kibungo and Masaka . Under Kagame 's presidency , trade between the two countries has grown rapidly . The volume of trade increased five @-@ fold between 2005 and 2009 , and it doubled again in the following three years , being worth US \$ 160 million in 2012 . Projects completed include the renovation of the Kigali road network , funded using a Chinese government loan and undertaken by China Road and Bridge Corporation ; the Kigali City Tower , which was built by China Civil Engineering Construction ; and a pay television service operated by Star Media .

Kagame has been vocal in his praise of China and its model for relations with Africa , saying in a 2009 interview that " the Chinese bring what Africa needs : investment and money for governments and companies . " This is in contrast to Western countries , whom Kagame accuses of focussing too heavily on giving aid to the continent rather than building a trading relationship ; he also believes that they keep African products out of the world marketplace by the use of high tariffs . China does not involve itself in the domestic affairs of the countries with which it trades , hence has not followed the West in criticising Kagame 's alleged involvement in the war in the Congo .

Kagame 's ultimate goal in international relations is to shift Rwanda from a country dependent on donor aid and loans towards self @-@ sufficiency , trading with other countries on an equal footing . In a 2009 article , Kagame wrote that " the primary purpose of aid should ultimately be to work itself out " , and should therefore focus on self @-@ sufficiency and building private sector development . Kagame cited an example of donor countries providing free fertilisers to farmers ; he believes this to be wrong because it undercuts local fertiliser businesses , preventing them from growing and becoming competitive . In 2012 , Kagame launched the Agaciro Development Fund , following proposals made at a national dialogue session in 2011 . Agaciro is a solidarity fund whose goal is to provide development finance sourced within Rwanda , supplementing aid already received from overseas . The fund invites contributions from Rwandan citizens , within the country and in the diaspora , as well as private companies and " friends of Rwanda " . The fund will allocate its funds based on consultations with the populace , as well as financing projects contributing to the Vision 2020 programme .

= = Personality and public image = =

Most observers describe Kagame 's personality as one of seriousness and intelligence . Richard Grant , writing in London 's Daily Telegraph , described Kagame as radiating " a quality of intense seriousness that is both impressive and intimidating " . Roméo Dallaire , commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda during the Rwandan Genocide , described Kagame as having a " studious air that didn 't quite disguise his hawk @-@ like intensity " . Kagame has a highly dominant personality , which he uses to enforce his rule and to ensure that his vision for the country is followed . American journalist Stephen Kinzer , who wrote the biography A Thousand Hills in collaboration with Kagame himself , describes him as " one of the most intriguing leaders in Africa " . Kinzer credits Kagame with leadership skills that have fostered Rwanda 's rebirth following the genocide , but also cites a personality of " chronic impatience , barely suppressed anger , and impulsive scorn for critics " . In his interview with Grant , Kagame claimed he sleeps for only four hours per night , devoting the remainder of his day to work , exercise , family , and reading academic texts and foreign newspapers .

In Rwanda , Kagame 's RPF is seen as a Tutsi @-@ dominated party , and in the years following the 1994 genocide , it was deeply unpopular with the Hutu , who constitute 85 % of the population . Approximately two million Hutu lived as refugees in neighbouring countries until 1996 , when Kagame forced them to return home . Many Hutu also supported the late 1990s cross @-@ border insurgency against Kagame by defeated forces of the former regime . By 1999 , when the RPF had weakened the insurgents and the north west became peaceful , the Hutu population became broadly supportive of Kagame . Since becoming president in 2000 , Kagame has won two disputed presidential elections with over 90 % of the vote each time . Despite criticisms over opposition repression during these elections , and accusations that the figures were inflated , Kagame does receive genuine support from the population , who credit him with ensuring continued peace , stability , and economic growth .

Kagame 's image amongst international observers is varied . Human rights organisations , including Amnesty International and Freedom House , claim that Kagame hampers his opposition by restricting candidacies in elections to government @-@ friendly parties , suppressing demonstrations , and arresting opposition leaders and journalists . Human Rights Watch and Freedom House have accused Kagame of using strict laws criminalising " divisionism " ( ethnic hatred ) and genocide ideology to silence his critics , to the point that Rwanda is a de facto one @-@ party state . It has praised some aspects of Kagame 's rule , such as the progress made in the delivery of justice and the abolition of the death penalty . Other progressive initiatives include supporting a UN declaration on LGBT rights , as well as the world 's highest representation of women in parliament . Kagame 's image amongst foreign leaders was very positive until the late 2000s . He was credited with ending the genocide , bringing peace and security to Rwanda , and achieving development . Since 2010 , the international community has increasingly criticised Kagame following a leaked United Nations report alleging Rwanda 's support for the rebel M23 movement in Congo . In 2012 , the United Kingdom , Germany , the Netherlands and several other countries suspended programmes of budget support to Rwanda , with many redirecting their aid to project @-@ based assistance .

Kagame promotes the Internet as a means of communication between leadership and ordinary people . In addition to his personal website , which contains a personal blog , he has accounts on Flickr , YouTube , Facebook and Twitter . In 2011 , he argued with British journalist Ian Birrell on Twitter following a tweet by Birrell about media freedom in Rwanda .

Kagame has received many honours and accolades during his presidency . These include honorary degrees from the American University of the Pacific , Oklahoma Christian University , and the University of Glasgow , the Andrew Young Medal for Capitalism and Social Progress by Georgia State University , and a Clinton Global Citizen Award . Kagame has also received the highest awards bestowed by the countries of Liberia and Benin , the Distinction of the Grand Cordon in the Most Venerable Order of the Knighthood of Pioneers , and the Grand Cross of the National Order of Merit respectively . In September 2010 , the British magazine New Statesman named Kagame one of its 50 most influential figures for that year , placing him in 49th place . The Council for East and Central Africa Football Associations football tournament has been named the Kagame Interclub Cup

since 2002 , due to Kagame 's sponsorship of the event .

Emmanuel Ndahiro , a close confidant of Kagame and former chief of the National Intelligence and Security Services , has been named in the Panama Papers .