



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Rwanda Country Report

April 2025

Three decades have passed since [the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi](#) in Rwanda. Rwanda has risen from the ashes of genocide to become an African success story. Rwanda boasts one of [Africa's fastest-growing economies](#), a rebuilt infrastructure, and efficient institutions. The government has worked to restore social cohesion by improving healthcare and education. Rwanda leads the world in gender equity, with [the highest proportion of women in any legislative body](#).

Despite this miraculous transformation, [critics contend that the socio-economic growth and development have come at the expense of human rights](#). [Freedom House](#) rates Rwanda as "not free," giving it a score of 23 out of 100. [Human Rights Watch](#) reports that the Rwandan government routinely suppresses political dissent through extensive surveillance, intimidation, arbitrary detention, and even alleged assassinations of political opponents. [Reporters Without Borders](#) ranks Rwanda 144 out of 180, describing its media landscape as one of the poorest in Africa. Historically, [genocide has thrived in environments where democracy has failed](#).

[Amnesty International](#) and others have documented how anti-genocide laws have been used by the Rwandan government to silence the opposition and to curtail press and personal freedoms. Laws against "divisionism" and "genocidal ideology" have been used to suppress dissent and even to settle personal disputes through fear of false accusations. [World Without Genocide](#) contends that laws against genocide denial may suppress free speech about past genocide and hinder national reconciliation.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), [anti-Tutsi sentiment](#) has risen against Congolese Tutsis, such as the Hema and Banyamulenge. It mirrors the "Invader vs. Indigenous citizen" hate speech that promoted the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. In 2023, [a mob in the DRC lynched a Congolese Banyamulenge soldier because he was a Tutsi](#). Human Rights Watch has documented numerous attacks against individuals perceived as Tutsi or "Rwandan." [Former UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng](#), has warned of an escalation in hate speech targeting Congolese Tutsis and those presumed to be of Rwandan descent.

Statutes outlawing genocide denial are aimed at former perpetrators and their sympathizers who falsify or minimize the genocide of 1994. But the laws result in an absence of open discussion about the genocide. Many survivors believe that justice is incomplete because some notorious perpetrators remain free. [Timely justice is vital](#) because many perpetrators have died before trial. Others are too old or ill to stand trial. Combating genocide denial is essential for holding perpetrators accountable and for preventing future genocides. But laws should not cripple discussion for reconciliation.

Given the rising anti-Tutsi sentiment in the DRC and reprisals by M23 and the Rwandan Army, and persistent genocide denial among Hutu Rwandans, Genocide Watch considers Rwanda to be at **Stage 3: Discrimination, Stage 6: Polarization, and Stage 10: Denial**.

Genocide Watch recommends to Rwanda's government:

- Support reconciliation villages and open discussions about the 1994 genocide to promote genuine reconciliation.
- Build and support the Isoko Peace Institute in Rwanda.
- Clarify vague anti-genocide laws.
- Outlaw hate speech and incitement to genocide without outlawing freedom of expression.
- Engage with the Congolese government to prevent anti-Tutsi hate speech and attacks.
- Support justice for survivors by holding perpetrators accountable.