

UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

Faculty of Political Sciences

Belgrade, 22 09 2019

The Department of International studies has appointed the following members of the Master Thesis Defense Committee for the candidate Jasmina Usainović: Prof. dr. Radmila Nakarada, Prof. dr. Nemanja Džuverović (academic supervisor) and Assistant MA Goran Tepšić. Having read the Master thesis of the candidate entitled *The role of the International community in the peace-building process in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide*, the Committee is submitting the following Report.

REPORT

The MA thesis of the candidate Jasmina Usainović, entitled *The role of the International community in the peace-building process in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide* has 68 pages. Besides the Introduction and Conclusion the thesis has five chapters, and an extensive (12 pages) list of references.

In the *Introduction* the candidate contextualizes her research amidst the transformation of state sovereignty and the moral responsibility of international community to prevent drastic violations of human rights, in particular genocide. Pointing out that it is widely acknowledged that in the case of Rwanda the international community failed in preventing and stopping the genocide, she defines that her primary research interest is establishing whether the same type of indifference of the external actors – the UN, France, Belgium, the US - has continued during the peace-building process.

In the first chapter, the candidate defines her theoretical framework and the main concepts - peace-building, reconciliation and positive peace, which are in fact the criteria of establishing the nature and reach of the post-conflict developments. Having in mind the aim of the thesis, examining the role of international actors in the peace-building process, she particularly emphasizes the importance of transcending structural violence in building sustainable peace (J. Galtung), the significance of justice as the core dimension of reconciliation, and the satisfaction of basic human needs as the essence of positive peace.

The general hypothesis of this study is formulated in the following manner: the key international actors who were unsuccessful in preventing the genocide in Rwanda have continued to be passive, disinterested in the complex peace-building process that was taking place in Rwanda following the genocide.

In the second chapter (*Historical background and character of the Rwandan genocide*) J. Usainović depicts the ethnic structure of Rwanda and the relation between the main groups – the Hutu, Tutsi and the Twa, the common heritage of the two main/largest groups, Hutu and Tutsi, and the socio-economic process of their differentiation. The author then focuses on the Belgian colonial rule during which social and class differences were transformed into antagonistic ethnic identities as a result of the introduced administrative organization of the country and the privileging of the Tutsis. This was the basis for deep grievances of the Hutu population which exploded in the sixties, coinciding with the end of the colonial period. The candidate notes the serious episodes of violence that occurred once the Hutu came to power, that led to the civil war (between the Armed forces and Tutsi exiles in the neighboring countries) in the early nineties and in the end to the tragic genocide in 1994 when in the course of three months 800.000 Tutsis and 60.000 Hutu were killed.

The third chapter focuses on the failures of the UN, France, Belgium and the USA, the key international actors involved in Rwanda, to prevent and stop the tragic genocide that occurred. Beginning with the response of the UN, the candidate notes that its failure is determined primarily by the late implementation of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), its lack of resources/well trained troops to deal with the situation on the ground, and its limited mandate (monitoring the Arusha peace agreement). All of this was a reflection of the lack of coordinated and efficient UN administration, as well of political interests of the SC members. The role of France in the Rwandan genocide primarily consisted in the military support for the regime of the Hutu president Juvenal Habyrimana, the support that armed and trained the Rwandan government army and continued during the genocide. The ex colonizer Belgium, having sowed the seeds of conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi during its rule, had an ambivalent position in relation to UNAMIR. At the outset (1993) it was supportive and demanding a stronger mandate, and then it withdrew from UNAMIR when at the beginning of the genocide in April 1994, ten of its peacekeepers were killed. Following this incident it strongly argued for the

suspension of the UN mission, i.e. renouncing the “ responsibility to protect”. The USA from the outset was against a stronger mandate of UNAMIR, due to its financial concerns, fear of repeating the Somalia episode, and lack of geostrategic interest. It not only failed to advocate US response to genocide, but “discouraged any international response” and called for the withdrawal of UNAMIR. The candidate

In the fourth chapter entitled *The political, economic and social situation in post-genocide Rwanda* examines the main dimensions of peace-building. The chapter has three subchapters related to the political developments under Kagame’s regime, economic success and remaining challenges, and the role of International Criminal Court for Rwanda in the reconciliation process. While president Kagame is hailed as the peace-maker by the international community, the leader who has initiated law reforms in order to curtail sectarianism and “genocide ideology”, his internal political opponents have been accusing him of using the same laws to intimidate the opposition, harassing counter candidates during elections, and limiting the freedom of the media. While giving the details of the criticism of the internal opposition, the author does not present her explicit conclusion as far as their implications are concerned.

The part of the chapter devoted to the post-conflict economy of Rwanda is particularly interesting because it shows that in spite of the devastating genocide, the presence of authoritarian political tendencies, Rwanda has surprisingly managed in a rather short time to become one of Africa’s fastest growing economies, increasing the GDP, reducing poverty, increasing life expectancy, improving business environment and substantially reducing corruption. All of these results are documented by Reports of international financial institutions to which the candidate refers to. While challenges still remain, primarily related to education of the work force and climate changes, the economic success implies that fundamental conditions for stability are being created.

Concentrating on justice as the essential dimension of reconciliation J. Usainović, in the last part of the chapter describes the mandate and functioning of the ICTR, the challenges it faced in responding to the magnitude of the tragedy, the lack of capacity and will to deal with victims of both sides, i.e. Hutu victims, the delicate relationship between the court and the state of Rwanda, as well as the lack of western support for the prosecutor. In the last part, the candidate gives a brief description of the Gacaca court, a “traditional Rwandan community-based conflict

resolution mechanism” that was activated in order to correct some of the shortcomings of the ICTR.

In the fifth chapter J. Usainović focus on the central problem of her thesis, the contribution of the international actors’ to the political, economic processes, as well to the process of reconciliation in the Rwandan post conflict period. Having previously depicted the fallacies of Kagame’s regime, the candidate attempts to reconstruct the active relationship of US, UN, France and Belgium to the criticism voiced against the authoritarian tendencies he exemplifies. She was unable to find critical responses of French and Belgium officials, while the US and UN responses to the criticism of Kagame’s rule were more declarative acknowledgments and condemnations than practical measures. The contribution of international actors to the economy of Rwanda transcends the general political rhetoric. The US and Rwanda signed several trade agreements for instance, increasing market access for Rwanda. Furthermore, US provides economic assistance mostly focusing on food security, supporting small famers, and medium entrepreneurs. Belgium has in its cooperation with Rwanda also focused on poverty reduction, rural development health, good governance, while France has been primarily supporting the private sector. Special attention is given by the author to the contribution of the UN to the development of the Rwandan economy bearing in mind the existence of a wide range of programs, the more than twenty UN agencies involved and the motivation of the UN to assist Rwanda in achieving its strategies of development, Vision 2020 and Vision 2050, i.e. economic and social transformation, as well as accountable governance.

Finally, turning to one of the most complicated challenges – reconciliation, the candidate once again summarizes the problems the ICTR encountered and demonstrated, notes the efforts of UNDP and other UN agencies in supporting the local initiatives for reconciliation, promotion of human rights; depicts the contribution of Belgium in the form of few trials for genocide in its national courts and the support of local initiatives for reconciliation, while the contribution of US is more or less expressed in the support for the establishment of the ICTR without pressuring the government of Rwanda to cooperate with the court. France has hardly actively supported the reconciliation process, not fully cooperating with the ICTR and rejecting by and large the extradition requests from Rwanda.

In the short *Conclusion* the author summarizes her findings pointing out that the main international actors who remained either silent or insufficiently active in preventing the genocide, in its aftermath have an ambiguous record. Concerning the authoritarian political tendencies their reactions have been vague and limited, nothing resembling a profound interest in supporting the process of democratization. An active presence of the external actors is visible in the economic realm, where the local authorities have also managed considerable positive results, cutting down poverty, extending life expectancy, providing a positive business environment. However, the author did not clarify to what extent the external actors have contributed to some of the economic achievements, simply concluding generally that they have had an impact. As far as reconciliation is concerned, the candidate concludes that the international actors have not significantly contributed to it. The general conclusion of the author is that the indifference present in the genocide chapter has been, to a large degree, extended to the peace-building phase.

The members of the Committee would like to point out that the MA thesis of Jasmina Usainović, has satisfied formal criteria required by the existing procedures. The aim of the thesis, assessing the internal and external attempts to mitigate the consequences of the tragic genocide and create foundations for a stable peace, has been accomplished, although the implications of the analysis in some parts could have been more explicit and concrete. The candidate has invested an honest effort in revising and editing several versions of the thesis, each time improving her English proficiency.

Having in mind all that has been said, the Committee concludes that the master thesis entitled *The role of the International community in the peace-building process in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide* written by Jasmina Usainović fulfils all of the preconditions for a public defence.

Committee:



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