Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda

Following times of great conflict and tragedy, many countries implement programs and policies of transitional justice, none more extensive than in post-genocide Rwanda. Placing Rwanda’s transitional justice initiatives in their historical and political context, this book examines the project undertaken by the post-genocide government to shape the collective memory of the Rwandan population, both through political and judicial reforms but also in public commemorations and memorials. Drawing on over two decades of field research in Rwanda, Longman uses surveys and comparative local case studies to explore Rwanda’s response, both at governmental and local level. He argues that despite good intentions and important innovations, Rwanda’s authoritarian political context has hindered the ability of transitional justice to bring the radical social and political transformations that its advocates hoped. Moreover, it continues to heighten the political and economic inequalities that underline ethnic divisions and are an important ongoing barrier to reconciliation.

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Timothy Longman

Boston University
To my husband, Tracy Keene, who has put up with far too many trips during the process of research and writing this book. It was always a joy to come home to you.
“Much has been made of the doom of not remembering. But remembering has its limitations. Believe me, it is good to forget.”

“Yes,” I said. Though everything that I ever forgot I always remembered again later, so perhaps it didn’t count.

Lorrie Moore
A Gate at the Stairs
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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC      African National Congress
CDR      Coalition for the Defense of the Republic
FIDH     International Federation of Human Rights
HRW      Human Rights Watch
ICC      International Criminal Court
ICTR     International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IDP      internally displaced people
LIPRODHOR Ligue Rwandaise pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l’Homme
MRND     National Revolutionary Movement for Development
          (Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement)
NUR      National University of Rwanda
PTSD     post-traumatic stress disorder
RPA      Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF      Rwandan Patriotic Front
RTLM     Radio-Television of the Thousand Hills
          (Radio-Television Libre des Milles Collines)
TRC      Truth and Reconciliation Commission