



From War to Genocide: Criminal Politics in Rwanda, 1990–1994 (Critical Human Rights)

By André Guichaoua

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In April 1994 Rwanda exploded in violence, with political, social, and economic divisions most visible along ethnic lines of the Hutu and Tutsi factions. The ensuing killings resulted in the deaths of as much as twenty percent of Rwanda's population. André Guichaoua, who was present as the genocide began, unfolds a complex story with multiple actors, including three major political parties that each encompassed a spectrum of positions, all reacting to and influencing a rapidly evolving situation. Economic polarities, famine-fueled privation, clientelism, corruption, north-south rivalries, and events in the neighboring nations of Burundi and Uganda all deepened ethnic tensions, allowing extremists to prevail over moderates.

Guichaoua draws on years of meticulous research to describe and analyze this history. He emphasizes that the same virulent controversies that fueled the conflict have often influenced judicial, political, and diplomatic responses to it, reproducing the partisan cleavages between the former belligerents and implicating state actors, international institutions, academics, and the media. Guichaoua insists upon the imperative of absolute intellectual independence in pursuing the truth about some of the gravest human rights violations of the twentieth century.

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- Sales Rank: #2555982 in Books
- Published on: 2015-12-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x 1.40" w x 6.00" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 478 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

“A landmark in the historiography of the Rwandan genocide. No serious scholar writing about the genocide can afford to ignore this trailblazing contribution.”—René Lemarchand, author of *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa*

“An outstanding work of scholarship that makes a significant contribution to our understanding of political dynamics in Rwanda and how and why the 1994 genocide occurred there.”—Catharine Newbury, author of *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860–1960*

“Magisterial. . . . Guichaoua makes a compelling case that the scaling up of violence to genocidal levels was progressive and tied at least in part to the escalation of the civil war and the timid and ineffectual international response to the initial violence. A profound implication of this revisionist history is that individual decisions on the part of both Rwandans and outsiders could have prevented the genocide even weeks after the onset of ethnic-based mass killing.”—*Foreign Affairs*

“Guichaoua’s [book on the Rwandan genocide] stands out as a deeper, more expansive explanation of the complex evolution of genocide. . . . Highly recommended.”—*Choice*

“Dispels myth after myth about the Rwandan genocide and Rwandan history.”—*Washington Post*

About the Author

André Guichaoua is a professor of sociology, specializing in the African Great Lakes region, at the University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne. He served as an expert witness on the Rwandan genocide before several courts and judicial bodies, including the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda of the United Nations. Don E. Webster is a former senior legal counsel and prosecutor for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

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