

SPECIAL ISSUE

JOHN HUMPHREY FREEDOM AWARD

WOMEN AND RWANDA'S GENOCIDE: WHAT GOES UNSAID

BY FRANÇOISE NDUWIMANA, HISTORIAN, CONSULTANT IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MEMBER OF THE COALITION FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS

THE VICTIMS of the Rwandan genocide did not all die during the 100 days in which most of the killings took place. Ten years after the massacre of an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and opposition Hutu, the genocide continues to take lives. Slowly, painfully and yet almost invisibly, thousands of Rwandan women are succumbing to HIV/AIDS acquired through rape.

Genocide, rape, and HIV infection have condemned these women to certain death. We call them "survivors," when in fact their deaths are merely delayed. As we remember the Rwandan genocide this year, it only seems appropriate that we acknowledge those who lived, if only to die another day.

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difficult to prove with certainty that HIV was transmitted through rape, a report by Human Rights Watch/Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme states that "Nonetheless, it is certain that some women were infected with the virus as a result of being raped." Based on the testimony of victims such as Jeanne, who was raped by a man who clearly told her "I have AIDS and I want to give it to you," Radhika Coomaraswamy, the former UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, maintains that "many women like Jeanne have survived the genocide but are infected with AIDS."

The devastation caused by AIDS among rape victims suggests that rape was used to transmit the disease. A study published in December, 1999, by AVEGA-AGAHOZO reports that 66.7 per cent of the victims of physical violence and rape were HIV-positive.

GENOCIDE, RAPE, AND AIDS

On January 29, 1996, a UN report revealed the extent of the sexual violence committed during the genocide, stating that rape was used systematically as a weapon of war, that it was the rule, its absence was the exception, and that between 250,000 and 500,000 women were raped. The report also stated that "...the militiamen carrying (HIV) used it as a "weapon," intending to cause delayed death thereby."

Later studies focusing exclusively on violence against women shed further light on the nature, extent, consequences, and perpetrators of rape and other physical atrocities suffered by women. While admitting that it is

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Tutsi women were stereotyped and stigmatized based on their gender. The widely-read Kangura tabloid abusively ascribed sexual prowess to them, and characterized Tutsi women as a threat to the homogeneity of Hutu descent. Described as objects of temptation for Hutu men, Tutsi women were used as the prelude to a call for Hutu ethnic unity.

This kind of sexual fixation lays the foundation for ethnic hatred based on an idea of the feminine reduced to purely sexual connotations. When analyzed from the perspective of the Rwandan imagination, this raises two conflicting issues.

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Jean-Louis Roy,
President of Rights
& Democracy

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"NEVER AGAIN," we said after the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Yet since then we have seen more than 4 million die in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, mass graves in the Ivory Coast, terror in Darfur... Countless dead, and the survivors.

The 2004 John Humphrey Freedom Award has been awarded to Godeliève Mukasarasi, a survivor of Rwanda's genocide — and what a survivor she is.

Along with the women of TABA, she chose to break the silence, to tell the world and the International Criminal Tribunal in Rwanda (ICTR) of the sexual violence, rape and the spread of HIV/AIDS during the Genocide.

On Oct. 5, 1998, the ICTR made legal history by recognizing rape as an act of genocide and as an act of torture. This recognition may not undo the effects of genocidal madness, but it will serve to limit the impunity that exacerbates them. *ℓ*

Jean-Louis Roy.

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RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY'S NEWSLETTER

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A LEGAL AND GENDER-SPECIFIC PERSPECTIVE ON A DEVELOPING RIGHT

REPARATION FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLATIONS OF THE FUNDAMENTAL NORMS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

BY AMÉLIE GUILBAULT, LAW STUDENT, MCGILL UNIVERSITY

FROM SEPTEMBER 29 to October 1, 2004, the third consultative meeting was held in Geneva to finalize the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Violations of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (Bassiouni Principles), under the auspices of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. While this process testifies to the strides made in international law towards greater recognition of individual victims of violations of its fundamental norms, there is still much to be done to help victims in this regard, particularly groups of female survivors of crimes committed during armed conflicts, long ignored by international law, and for whom the issue of reparation is one of crucial importance in the post-conflict healing, reconciliation, and reconstruction process.

[...] Reparation can take various forms: Restitution of that which the victim was unduly deprived of, such as, liberty, employment or property; compensation; physical, psychological and social rehabilitation; satisfaction, such as official apologies, a ruling condemning the guilty State or individual, or commemoration of the victims; and prevention/guarantees of non-repetition. Reparation can be individual or collective, or a combination of the two. This right can be exercised legally, in the form of a lawsuit against the guilty State or individual, but can also be honoured out of court, as the result of political or diplomatic pressure. While the traditional source of reparation is the State responsible for the violation, the Bassiouni Principles also advocate other sources, such as the person — corporate or human — found guilty of the violation and, where this person is unable to or refuses to pay, simply the State where the violation occurred, in addition to promoting the creation of national victim assistance programs. [...] *ℓ*

Read the complete article — addressing the points, "Are Victims Entitled to Reparation?" and "Challenges: Restructuring the Concept of Justice" — on line at www.dd-rd.ca.

2004 JOHN HUMPHREY FREEDOM AWARD

RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY presents the John Humphrey Freedom Award each year to an organization or individual from any country or region of the world, including Canada, for exceptional achievement in the promotion of human rights and democratic development. The Award consists of a grant of \$25,000 as well as a speaking tour of Canadian cities to help increase awareness of the recipient's human rights work. It is named in honour of the John Peters Humphrey, the Canadian human rights law professor who prepared the first draft of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The winner is selected by an international jury composed of five members of Rights & Democracy's Board of Directors. *ℓ*

For further details, visit:
www.dd-rd.ca. or write
Anyle Côté (acote@dd-rd.ca).

PREVIOUS WINNERS

- 1992** Instituto de Defensa Legal (Peru).
- 1993** La Plate-forme des organismes haïtiens de défense des droits humains (Haïti).
- 1994** Campaign for Democracy (Nigeria) and Egyptian Organization for Human Rights.
- 1995** Bishop Carlos F. X. Belo (East Timor).
- 1996** Sultana Kamal (Bangladesh).
- 1997** Father Javier Giraldo (Colombia).
- 1998** Palden Gyatso (Tibet).
- 1999** Dr. Cynthia Maung and Min Ko Naing (Burma).
- 2000** Reverend Timothy Njoya (Kenya).
- 2001** Dr. Sima Samar (Afghanistan).
- 2002** Ayesha Imam, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (Nigeria).
- 2003** Kimy Pernía Domicó (Colombia) and Angélica Mendoza (Peru)



WOMEN AND RWANDA'S GENOCIDE: WHAT GOES UNSAID

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The first of these issues is the non-tacit recognition that women have the power to give birth. The second issue stems from the term *Nyampinga*, which refers to women as citizens devoid of ethnic identity. Rwanda being a patriarchal society, lineage descends through men.

The fundamental issue that must be clarified lies in the contradictions inherent to *Nyampinga*. If women had no ethnicity, they would not have been so hated. How do we explain the fear of seeing Hutu men marrying Tutsi women? How do we explain that Hutu women who married Tutsi men were described as traitors to the Hutu cause and raped under the guise of political reprisal? The challenge now facing the Rwandan people and leaders is not to deny that specific ethnic groups exist but rather to stop using ethnicity as grounds for discrimination and exclusion.

The issue of HIV/AIDS must also be analyzed through consideration of this same perspective: that of first destroying women and thereby annihilating all possible offspring. In the minds of those responsible for the genocide, HIV/AIDS transmission was a three-pronged weapon. A woman who was raped and infected with the virus became a potential source of transmission for any future sexual partner; she would then give birth to children whose chances of survival were next to nil; and she would eventually die herself, causing others to follow in her wake.

ANSWERS?

The inclusion of HIV/AIDS as a consequence of rape committed during the genocide reshapes our perception of justice, given that without access to treatment, survivors are condemned to die. Although the monthly price of antiretroviral treatments is 200 times less in 2004 (US\$30) than it was in 1999 (US\$6,000), these treatments remain unaffordable to people who have no income.

The majority of women living with HIV/AIDS are destitute. The monthly income of those working in farming is estimated at less than US\$10. The national tritherapy program currently has a maximum capacity of 7,000 patients, which means that most women have little chance of accessing it.

There is an urgent need to establish mechanisms for justice and social rehabilitation within this social and economic context. These women were infected with HIV in the very precise framework of genocide, and the nature of this act is unequivocally criminal.

These victims unanimously condemn the fact that they have been denied justice. These women have asked why the ICTR feeds and cares for those responsible for genocide, while they are left to die as the Tribunal looks on with utter indifference. They have demanded that the ICTR devote more attention to gender crimes and their consequences. The ICTR Rules of Evidence and Procedure authorize it to provide physi-

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PHOTO: SANDRA GREEN



cal and psychological rehabilitation for witnesses and victims. These women therefore request that the Tribunal adopt a policy regarding the access of victims and witnesses to antiretroviral treatments and related care.

This urgent situation should also be of concern to international solidarity organizations. There is a need for a more active and coordinated strategy to support victims in the fight against AIDS. Victims of rape and HIV/AIDS have a right to extend their life expectancy through access to treatment.

This is the price that must be paid so that survival will have meaning. This is the price that must be paid so that women's associations for rape

victims and the HIV infected – such as the Duhozanye Association in Cyangugu – will not be forced to divide up their meagre resources between hospitalization costs and the purchase of coffins. Only 22 of the association's 30 original members are still alive. Eight died last year. Yes, they were AIDS victims, but, first and foremost, they were victims of genocide. *ℓ*

THE ICTR AND JUSTICE FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN RWANDA

BY BINAIFER NOWROJEE, LAWYER, RESEARCHER AT HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, LECTURER AT HARVARD LAW SCHOOL AND MEMBER OF THE COALITION FOR WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS

MRS NOWROJEE TRAVELLED TO RWANDA IN 1996 AND INTERVIEWED VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE DURING THE 1994 GENOCIDE. THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED BY HIRONDELLE NEWS AGENCY IN ARUSHA (TANZANIA).

h: It has been about eight years since you wrote your report, "Shattered Lives," on sexual violence in Rwanda. How do you rate the ICTR's efforts in prosecuting sexual crimes committed against women in Rwanda during the genocide?

B. N.: Sexual violence during the 1994 genocide was widespread and tens of thousands of women were raped, gang-raped and sexually mutilated. Many were held in sexual slavery by individuals or collectively.

These acts are crimes under international law, and it is part of ICTR's mandate to prosecute both those persons responsible for acts of sexual violence and their superiors who did not take steps to prevent them from carrying out these acts. The ICTR started off on a very high note with its first judgment in the case of Jean Paul Akayesu, which is a groundbreaking judgment in international law. It was the first time that rape was found to be an act of genocide in a judgment and it was also the first time that rape was held to be a crime under the Geneva conventions for internal conflicts.

Since that time, we have seen a mixed record, where some cases that should have included sexual violence charges went forward without them.

The "Cyangugu" trial is one example where widespread rapes occurred in that region during the genocide, yet no charges of sexual violence were included in the prosecution of that case. However, there have been sexual violence charges included in a number of cases, including top cases of the then military and government authorities that are currently coming into trial.

h: You were among the activists who lobbied to have a separate prosecutor for the ICTR. One of your arguments was that the immediate former prosecutor, Carla del Ponte, was not keen on prosecuting sexual violence. Has the appointment of another prosecutor, Hassan Bubacar Jallow, improved the situation?

B. N.: During the tenure of Carla Del Ponte, there was no interest in investigating or fully prosecuting sexual violence charges. Del Ponte dismantled the sexual assault investigations team and subsequently, investigations of sexual assault faltered with pressure from the judges and the UN Security Council to finish cases quickly.

I think it is too soon to pass a judgment on Hassan Bubacar Jallow. He's only been the prosecutor for a year. It is heartening to see that sexual violence charges are included in the cases now coming to trial. However due to the lack of attention over the past four years, it will require concerted and immediate attention to begin addressing some of the issues in terms of both investigations and strategy.

h: What was the impact of sexual violence in Rwanda in 1994, according to your research?

B. N.: I believe that sexual violence was used as a weapon of the genocide.

In the lead-up to the genocide, there was a lot of anti-Tutsi propaganda that targeted women's sexuality and portrayed Tutsi women as beautiful yet devious seductresses.

As a result, once violence broke out, much of it was directed at Tutsi women. The statements made to Tutsi women by their rapists mirror the stereotypes contained in the gender propaganda that preceded the genocide.

These rapes were not done behind closed doors, they were not done in dark alleys. They were done out in the open at check points, in cultivated plots, near government buildings, in hospitals, in churches throughout Rwanda.

To my knowledge, there was little or no organized attempt by the authorities to protect rape victims or to punish those soldiers responsible for rape.

h: There have been reports from organizations of genocide survivors in Rwanda that rape victims who survived have been left traumatized, with some having contracted serious diseases. How should the Tribunal be involved in helping these victims?

B. N.: Rape is a very effective tool of conflict because not only does it harm the individual and the community that she is part of, but long after the act, the consequences continue. In Rwanda today, you find that women who were raped have serious health problems, reproductive health problems in particular. Many are now dying of HIV/AIDS, isolated and stigmatized because they have been raped, and some of these women have also borne children of rape and they have had to deal with the consequences.

In the course of enacting international justice, we must also ensure that we have a process that respects the dignity and welfare of witnesses and victims who pass through the Tribunal.

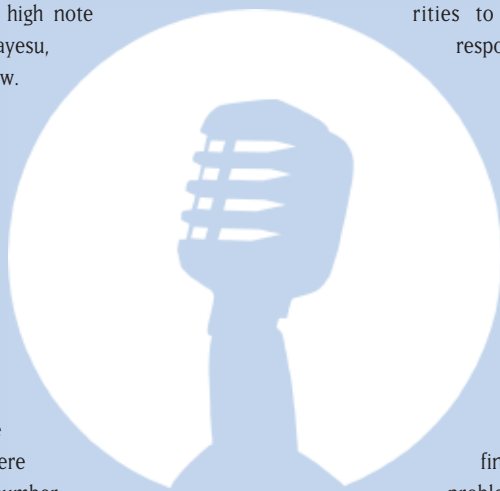
The treatment of rape victims, who provide testimony at these trials, is an important part of the Tribunal's mandate. This includes not only treating them with dignity and respect in the courtroom, but also providing for their welfare, including their physical and medical needs.

For a long time, the accused in custody have been receiving antiretroviral drugs and yet those rape victims and witnesses with HIV/AIDS — many of whom contracted this condition as a result of acts by those persons in detention — were denied the same drugs. But I think the Tribunal is now beginning to redress this inequity.

h: Do genocide victims deserve compensation?

B. N.: The statute of this tribunal was set up without any mechanism for compensation. The Rwandan Tribunal does not have jurisdiction to order reparations or compensation.

It is unlikely, in fact I guess impossible, that Rwandan genocide victims will be compensated. But hopefully, in the future, we will move to a model where that is not the case. *ℓ*



GODELIÈVE MUKASARASI

JOHN HUMPHREY FREEDOM AWARD

2004 LAUREATE

A SURVIVOR OF THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE, Godeliève Mukasarasi has campaigned for many years for women's rights in her country. With a background in social work and her ongoing work with the Women's Network for Rural Development, Ms. Mukasarasi is an exceptional advocate for women victims of sexual violence and rape

during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and to those who consequently contracted HIV-AIDS. She is the founder of SEVOTA, a support group for widows and orphans, and Urunana, a place where women survivors of violence and rape, both Tutsi and Hutu, can join together in dialogue. Ms. Mukasarasi has been instrumental in breaking the silence and documenting crimes of sexual violence for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Her work facilitating the testimony of women survivors of sexual violence helped set a legal precedent on October 2,

1998, when an international court imposed the first-ever sentence for sexual violence perpetrated in the context of civil war and recognized rape as an act of genocide and torture. Ms. Mukasarasi is now working toward ending impunity in Rwanda and ensuring that women obtain justice and compensation. *ℓ*



INTERVIEW WITH GODELIÈVE

1. WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF VICTIMS OF THE RWANDA GENOCIDE AND WHAT MAJOR CHALLENGES DO THEY NOW FACE ?

Most victims are members of the national organization Ibuka (meaning Remember), which works to preserve the memory of the genocide, promote justice and the improvement of the socioeconomic conditions of survivors, and to rebuild the country. Most female victims are members of the Association of Widows of the April Genocide (AVEGA – Association des Veuves du Génocide d'Avril).

The Rwandan government has created a genocide survivors' assistance fund (FARG – Fonds d'assistance aux rescapés du génocide) to support survivors, with a special focus on schooling for orphans and health care for the disadvantaged.

Several institutions and agencies have assisted the victims in the social rehabilitation process. The needs of all survivors have by no means all been met, and structural problems persist, especially for child heads of households and the elderly.

Challenges include:

- Abject poverty for the majority (especially women and their households)
- Diseases caused by the consequences of violence and rape
- Ongoing trauma, since there are no specialized mental health services/clinics in the country
- Slow justice: even though Gacaca community jurisdictions have been set up, the survivors are less prepared than the prisoners, who receive coaching in prison
- Homelessness and lack of basic infrastructure for home placement
- Limited university bursaries

2. HAS CREATION OF THE ICTR AFFECTED THE WELL-BEING OF THE GENOCIDE VICTIMS?

Yes, on the one hand, because the victims are relieved by the ICTR's rulings. But, on the other hand, the ICTR's impact is still weak, due to:

- Slow rulings and procedures
- Lack of protection for witnesses and victims and lack of support for the witnesses' families or the families of those who were willing to testify and were killed for this very reason
- Lack of support for witnesses, and detention conditions in Arusha that are much better than those of survivors
- Psychological mistreatment of certain witnesses (e.g. female rape victims), which constitutes a human rights abuse

The victims all hope for a change in their well-being and that of all Rwandan people.

I feel that the victims want:

- Strategies to prevent future genocide, so that they can be sure their surviving children will not be killed
- A commitment regarding their protection and basic safety, based on justice and the fight against impunity
- Fulfilment of their basic needs, including health, education and economic power

THE WOMEN'S NETWORK SINGS THE PRAISES OF GODELIÈVE

BY JUDITH KANAKUZE, NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF THE WOMEN'S NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

THE WOMEN OF RWANDA showed great bravery in the period following 1994's tragic genocide. All of these women deserve praise for their acts of courage, but Godeliève's unique contribution is nothing short of outstanding.

As a volunteer member of the Women's Network for Rural Development, Godeliève has been able to come up with best practices – both participative and inclusive – for bringing new members together and encouraging them to become agents of progress in Rwanda's countryside.

Despite the many demands on her time, she has also been able to find ways to get women to work together, for and by themselves, especially those least visible in the community.

As an instructor in fundamental rights, Godeliève exerts a positive influence on those around her and presents a new vision of the world.

Through her participatory and inclusive style, Godeliève, whether as social worker or as instructor, is able to make her community-oriented approach enriching for everyone around her.

GODELIÈVE, THE PRIDE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

In concrete terms, she has very carefully examined the principles of fundamental rights and has communicated them to all of the authorities and opinion leaders in her province, her district and her village.

Her work represents a major contribution to Rwandan justice in the aftermath of the genocide; her actions have paved the way for other women who were victims of sexual violence to denounce these abominable acts and help place rape at the forefront of crimes committed during the genocide.

She has created opportunities for dialogue on fundamental rights, including the following themes that have been debated and resulted in recommendations:

- Fundamental rights: Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Gender and rights, the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. The fight to prevent violence against women.

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THE WOMEN'S NETWORK SINGS THE PRAISES OF GODELIÈVE

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- Gender and poverty, the fight against poverty, best practices for microfinance.
- Techniques for preventing and resolving community conflicts.
- Empowering female victims of violence and their defence.

Discussions around these themes served as research actions aimed at determining the problems women face and coming up with strategies to influence policies and laws for the protection of women and the promotion of fundamental rights.

GODELIÈVE'S SUCCESS, A SOURCE OF PRIDE FOR ALL

Her courage, openness to others and charisma give everyone confidence in her. The high degree of confidence that women have in her is proven by the disclosures made to her by women who were victims of sexual violence during the 1994 genocide.

INNOVATIVE AND WORTHY OF CONFIDENCE

Thousands of widows have gathered around Godeliève in the support group SEVOTA, which she founded. These women, all of whom were victims of sexual violence during the genocide, have had time to cry, then have emerged into a framework designed to enable them to flourish, and finally to take the first steps toward leaving their status as victims behind them. They attest to having seen a vision of peace and hope and to having found a new taste for life thanks to Godeliève and her parent organization, the Women's Network.

Godeliève is innovative, she is unselfish, she is courageous and she never backs away from any obstacle challenge. On the contrary, she always comes up with alternative solutions. Her generosity knows

no bounds and she gives unstintingly of herself.

THE "TRIPLE-CROWNED" WOMAN

We now call her "the woman with the triple crown for merit and excellence"

- Prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life (1996), awarded by the Women's World Summit Foundation in Geneva
- Prize from the Millennium Peace Prize for Women - the "Veneranda Nzambazamariya Prize" (2001), awarded by the Women's Network for Rural Development.
- John Humphrey Freedom Award (2004), presented by Rights & Democracy

CHANGING CHALLENGES INTO SOLUTIONS

- Women who are victims of violence in general and the members of SEVOTA in particular need permanent support and special care. Violence is a heavy load for them to carry by themselves, especially as many of them contracted HIV-AIDS as a result of rape.
- Orphans have a right to sunshine and human kindness so that they can study and have hope for a better future.
- The face of poverty among victims of violence and other crimes against humanity is an insult to social justice. We must fight poverty so it is no longer an inevitable state in which the poverty of women grows even worse.

We wish to thank all of those who recognize the qualities of women and especially Rights & Democracy for their choice of winner of this award for 2004.

Our congratulations to Godeliève and to all those who embody her ideals. *ℓ*

Rights & Democracy continues to advocate for the adequate examination and prosecution of crimes committed against women in conflict situations by transitional justice systems.

BRINGING PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE TO JUSTICE

The Coalition for Women's Human Rights in Conflict Situations, established and coordinated by Rights & Democracy since 1996, intervened before the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) at special hearings on sexual violence during Sierra Leone's civil war to ensure that the TRC fully examine and record the crimes of sexual violence that were inflicted against Sierra Leonean women during the conflict.

These initiatives were inspired by past efforts undertaken with Rwandan NGOs to have rape recognized as an instrument of genocide – a struggle that was won in 1998 in a judgement rendered by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), based in Arusha, Tanzania.

The new Web site of the Coalition (See box) examines the advocacy work of the Coalition at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission on strategies for the prosecution and investigation of gender crimes, including rape as a crime of genocide, witness protection and support, the disclosure of rape witnesses' medical records during trial, among others.

@ RELATED LINKS

RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY PUBLICATIONS

Where are the Girls? Girls in Fighting Forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: Their Lives During and After the War (2004), by Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana.

www.dd-rd.ca/english/commdoc/publications/women/Girls/girlsmainEN.html

Investigating Women's Rights Violations in Armed Conflicts (2001), by Agnès Callamard, in collaboration with Barbara Bedont, Ariane Brunet, Dyan Mazurana and Madeleine Rees. Published with Amnesty International.

www.dd-rd.ca/english/commdoc/publications/women/iwrvac/Presentation.html

You can also consult our special file on Rwanda: Ten years after the genocide

www.dd-rd.ca/english/commdoc/publications/africa/main/RwandaGenocide.html

Documenting Human Rights Violations by States Agents (1999), by Agnès Callamard. Published by Rights & Democracy and Amnesty International.

A Methodology for Gender-Sensitive Research (1999), by Agnès Callamard. Published by Rights & Democracy and Amnesty International.

The Right to Exist. Sexual Violence, Women and HIV/AIDS, by Françoise Nduwimana, to be released Dec. 7th, 2004.

You can order these publications from our Web site at www.dd-rd.ca.



Visit the new Web site of the Coalition for Women's Human Rights in Conflict Situations at www.coalitiondroitsdesfemmes.org. The main focus of the Coalition's work is to promote the adequate prosecution of perpetrators of crimes of gender violence in transitional justice systems based in Africa, in order to create precedents that recognise violence against women in conflict situations and help find ways to obtain justice for women survivors of sexual violence. Coordination of the Coalition's activities is ensured by the Women's Rights Programme at the Montreal-based Rights & Democracy, under the guidance of Ariane Brunet and Isabelle Solon Helal (ihelal@dd-rd.ca).