

Rwanda's genocide: the media legacy continues

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2007/01/08/51/

2007-1-8

Today, Colonel Tharcisse Renzaho, former prefect of the Rwandan capital, Kigali, [goes on trial](#) at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. He faces charges of genocide and life imprisonment if convicted. In 1994, Renzaho was in charge of police and local officials – but far from controlling the violence, he used the notorious Radio Tele Libre Mille Collines (RTLHC) to broadcast messages of hate inciting the Hutus to kill the Tutsi ‘cockroaches’, in the mass slaughter in which up to one million people were killed.

Renzaho is not the first to be convicted for his abuse of the media during the genocide. In 2003, another leading figure at RTLHC was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Gradually, the international community is coming to realise the deadly effects of failing to prevent hate speech in tumultuous situations. The international media too has begun to reevaluate its own role in the genocide; more and better reporting might well have summoned the public to put pressure on Western governments to act.

But is the situation really any better now? In 2006 media rights organisation [Reporters Without Borders](#) highlighted the ongoing government intimidation of Rwandan journalists willing to investigate and criticise Rwandan history and politics. The international media continue to face criticism for failing to sufficiently report the genocide in Darfur.

On January 17th, at 16.00, POLIS is hosting the launch of a new book on the role of the international and local media in the Rwandan genocide, written by [Allan Thompson](#), Assistant Professor at Carleton University. All are welcome to come and join the debate – see our [website](#) for more details.

- Copyright © 2014 London School of Economics and Political Science