

# resurgence

just because they are forced to; not because they believe they can help," comments Aloys Habimana. "Whichever way you look at it, every attempt to deal with the past which is not based on the entire truth has no chance of succeeding."

Time to bring in my last interlocutor, David Himbara. Himbara once was one of the closest collaborators of president Kagame. He left the regime and the country in 2010, together with other key people from Kagame's inner circle of power, with Gen Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa as their leader. It was an awful moment for the regime. All of a sudden the biggest threat did not come from its traditional enemies, the armed opposition in the Congolese bush or the opposition parties in Kigali, but from within.

The regime was struggling to prevent its own disintegration. Since then David Himbara has led a public life as one of the most critical and best documented sources on Rwandan politics, but he has never joined one of the opposition parties in the diaspora: "Under the current regime in Rwanda reconciliation is no option, because the climate is intoxicated. Reconciliation can only be the result of a process in which two parties enter into a dialogue."

But it is outdated to be obsessed by the Hutu – Tutsi issue. Rwanda is a violent state, but there is a strict policy of equal opportunity violence: we all get our fair share of the whip. Of course Hutu are marginalised today, they are barely represented in the institutions that govern the country. And when they are, it is not because they are elected but because they are appointed as window dressing. But does that make the regime a Tutsi regime? I don't think so. Kagame juggles with individuals to mobilise the two groups against each other. It narrowed down the state from a one party state to a one man state."

And what about the ordinary people, I want to know. "The repression and intimidation are organised to the level of nyumbakumi, the cell of 10 households as the lowest level of government. The fault lines run through families. For example, my father was an old school Tutsi patriarch. I have 30 siblings. Several still live in Rwanda. Some even do not want me to call them."

They fear that I could put them in danger. I basically want to say this: all society has vanished from Rwanda, mistrust is complete. It has turned Rwanda into a time bomb."

Marc Hoogsteijns is much milder in his judgment: "Rwanda is a beautiful country with many strengths and opportunities, but at the same time it is some kind of African version of Brave New World. People are

afraid to talk. But they live more comfortably and safely than ever before, they enjoy high quality education and health care. They are very happy with that. The Tutsi community stands almost entirely behind Kagame and also most Hutu can live with it.

They obviously don't like the fact that they do not count on the political scene, but they can do what they want in all other spheres of life. They can study and do business etcetera. They can deal with the level of repression, because they know that countries such as Burundi, Congo or Kenya are not the slightest bit more democratic. Honestly, if we would have known 20 years ago, just after the genocide, that Rwanda would achieve this in two decades, we would have signed for it immediately."

## Lessons from the past

So, how should Rwandan society move forward from here, I ask Aloys Habimana. In many ways, the country seems ready for the future, but how to deal with the shadow the past throws over today?

"The common people on the hills and in the suburbs have found a certain balance, a way to live with the past. For example, you see more and more mixed marriages. Time is the best healer. When people live in the same community for long, sharing their problems and successes and finding common interests, they end up finding a way out. There are opportunities that bring people together and consolidate social ties. Churches and charity organisations are trying to create such moments, often with some results."

Looking at what led to past waves of violence, you wonder if our leaders have learned anything at all from the past. This country went through hell as a result of a policy of exclusion. The elimination of political opponents and critical voices in general. As long as we do not effectively deal with them, we will not get the risk of violence under control.

The priority should be on consolidating responsible leadership and building strong institutions. They do not exist today. Leadership is the key issue. It's not because you managed to silence everybody that you are effective. Decision making is an extremely top down process and the ordinary citizen is silenced, infantilised. It is most important that the space for public debate is opened up so that people can air out their grievances."

**The author works as an independent expert on Central Africa. His article was first published in Dutch in Mo Magazine (March 2014) and has been written with the support of the Pascal Decroos Fund for Investigative Journalism.**

## PROFILE

One guiding principle is to ensure one treads on one's own path

# Award winner unveils secret behind success



Mr Hanif Habib has wide experience in consultancy.

PHOTO | MICHAEL JAMSON

**It is only in the pursuit of change will you find success and reach new heights in your professional life**

By The Citizen Reporter

**Dar es Salaam.** For auditor, business consultant and tax expert Hanif Habib of Dar es Salaam, life is supposed to be dynamic for one to make and get the most out of it. To be successful in any aspiration, he argues, always strive against walking on other people's paths. The entrepreneur has reasons to believe in that life philosophy because not many people in this part of the world can vaunt of pulling off the feats he has accomplished at just 31 years of age. Hanif owns and manages three companies dealing in auditing and business consultancy that are locally well established, reputed in the region and accredited internationally. And the firms, Hanif Habib & Co Certified Public Accountants, Hanif Habib Advisory Limited and Quill Accounting and Business Services, were formed two years ago, when Hanif was only 29.

One of them, Hanif Habib & Co Certified Public Accountants, is affiliated to Russell Bedford International, which is ranked as one of the world's top accounting networks. Under the Russell Bedford umbrella, is a global network of independent firms of accountants, auditors, tax advisers and business consultants. The accounting group is a specialist in helping companies meet the challenges that international business expansion presents. To make it what it is and be on the top of the league, Russell Bedford is represented by some 460 partners, 5,000 staff and 280 offices

in more than 90 countries in Europe, the Americas, Middle East, Africa, Indian sub-Continent and Asia-Pacific. "Don't stick to one job during your life time. Seek change, frequent change, upward change. Don't change jobs within the same level. Change jobs, which give you a fast track upward movement in your career life," Hanif noted in a recent interview.

"It is only in the pursuit of change will you find success and reach new heights in your professional life. This will quench your professional thirst. Trust me, I have tried it," he told *The Citizen on Saturday* after emerging as one of the winners in the 2014 International Tax Awards that are organised by the US-based magazine Acquisition International early last month. The monthly publication has a global circulation and is mostly read by international deal makers. Its global awards recognise the outstanding achievements of individuals

and companies within the tax industry honouring success, innovation and ethics across international communities.

This year's awards recognised over 450 winners in more than 60 countries and one of them was Hanif. "I had always aspired to establish an audit firm and consulting company that offers the opportunity to utilise my professional financial expertise, extensive business experience, and ability to interact with clients and the business community (at large) on a worldwide basis," he said recently. That vision materialised and the dream became true in 2012 when the three firms were formed after more than 10 years of wide exposure.

Currently, Hanif also serves as a non-executive director in the board of a number of organisations in Tanzania. Some of these being: Hotel Marina Limited, CMC Automobiles Limited and His Highness the Aga Khan Grants and Review Board. In January this year, the South African Institute of Tax Practitioners conferred him with the title of Sir for his outstanding professionalism.

"I joined the University of Dar es Salaam in 2004. After six months, I left the university. I was pursuing a BCom degree programme. When going through the six months of UDSM, I realised that this was not what I wanted to pursue in life. I wanted a fast track career life hence I quit," the ex-Aga Khan Mzizima Secondary School student said. "After dropping from the university college, I joined ACCA – Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, United Kingdom – to pursue Chartered Accountancy Course."

## HANIF'S EXPERTISE: KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- General Tax Practitioner [GTP (SA) TM] with the South African Institute of Tax Practitioners
- Commissioner of Oaths (Republic of South Africa)
- Certified Forensic Investigation Professional (CFIP) – registered with the International Institute of Certified Forensic Investigation Professionals Inc. (United States of America)
- Chartered Certified Accountant from the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, United Kingdom (ACCA, UK)
- Certified Public Accountant from the National Board of Accountants and Auditors (NBAA) (Registration Number

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Winners of this year's awards from 60 countries