

Rwandan National Police 10th Anniversary Op-Ed
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The U.S. Mission in Kigali joins the Rwandan people in celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan National Police (RNP). We take this opportunity to recognize RNP’s remarkable accomplishments and the unwavering commitment of its officers to serving the people of Rwanda.

During the 1994 genocide, the police in Rwanda failed to protect the population. In many cases, the police actively led, encouraged, and aided the genocidaires. In the years following the genocide, the Government of Rwanda has made remarkable strides in organizing and transforming Rwanda’s police into a professional law enforcement organization that provides the people of Rwanda a feeling of safety and reassurance. Today, the RNP is well known – within and outside Rwanda’s borders – for its strong discipline, commitment, and dedication. The U.S. Government is honored to partner with the RNP in its efforts to become increasingly professional and improve services that benefit the Rwandan people.

As part of the Rwanda Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold Program launched last year, three U.S. Government agencies: the U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of Justice, and MCC are working together to implement a two-year Police Strengthening Project, initiated by the Government of Rwanda. The project is partnering with the RNP to strengthen its Office of Inspectorate of Services, enabling the RNP to more effectively monitor the performance of its police officers with the goal of preventing misconduct, improving the interaction between the police and citizens, and encouraging better service to the public. Specifically, this project supports the RNP in its efforts to establish a citizen reporting network, monitor and track citizen complaints, improve customer service and public relations, and train staff of the Office of Inspectorate of Services.

One example of this extraordinary partnership effort is the RNP’s *“Every Voice Counts”* initiative, which focuses on the installation of 250 complaint and commendation boxes throughout the entire country. The RNP is installing permanently-affixed reporting boxes at government sector offices and other locations throughout the country. The first boxes were installed in Kigali in August 2009, and the reporting network is now active in 23 of the country’s 30 districts, with 200 boxes currently in use. Each wooden complaint and commendation lock-box is designed to accommodate the dual function of distributing and collecting citizen complaint and commendation forms, which enables citizens to formally submit complaints or compliments regarding the quality of police service. To complement this initiative, the Police Strengthening Project is also supporting a number of related trainings, such as training of RNP officers to enhance their skills as trainers of internal investigative and internal audit techniques.

Through the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, we are proud to work with the RNP to train its officers in handling cases of sexual- and gender-based violence, as well as to strengthen the coordination between police, health facilities, and communities to create a comprehensive response to sexual- and gender-based violence.

The U.S. Embassy security officials work together with the RNP and the Office of Prosecutor General on high-level génocidaire cases, in which suspects are located in the United States. In addition, the U.S. Embassy has provided training to Rwandan police on counterfeit currency, investigation techniques, and interviewing skills and has sponsored RNP officers to attend

classes at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Gaborone, Botswana, an institution that trains middle managers from member countries on combating crime and terrorism.

Finally, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) is assisting the RNP with disaster preparedness and counter-terrorism opportunities. DOD plans to expand its training for the Rwandan Defense Forces to include RNP officers.

On behalf of the American people, the U.S. Mission in Kigali is proud to celebrate with the Rwandan people the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan National Police. In partnership with the people of Rwanda, the U.S. looks forward to Rwanda's stable and prosperous future.