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**RWANDA**

# DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE



**USAID supports Rwanda's initiatives for decentralization, strengthens civil society, and promotes reconciliation**



## DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN RWANDA AT A GLANCE

- Government type: Republic
- Date of independence: July 1, 1962
- President: Paul Kagame
- Constitution: Adopted in 2003

*Source: United Nations Development Report 2007*

## DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE IN RWANDA

Since the genocide in 1994, Rwanda has made remarkable progress in developing national and local institutions of government, maintaining security, promoting reconciliation and strengthening the justice system. Despite progress, weaknesses in democracy and governance remain, including a weak civil society, low capacity of the media, issues of media freedom, concentration of political power, and need for increased political space, reconciliation and improved technical capacity of government officials.

## RESPONSE AND RESULTS

The U.S. Government provided more than \$12 million in Fiscal Year 2009 to support the Government of Rwanda in strengthening local government and decentralization, enhancing civil society organizations and promoting reconciliation and conflict mitigation.

## MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION THRESHOLD PROGRAM:

In July 2008, the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Board approved Rwanda's Threshold Country Plan. The ensuing Threshold Program, being implemented by USAID and the U.S. Department of Justice in partnership with the Government of Rwanda, will address Rwanda's MCC Ruling Justly indicators in the areas where Rwanda falls short, namely political rights, civil liberties and voice and accountability. The Threshold Program strengthens the capacity and independence of the judiciary, enhances opportunities for civic participation, builds the capacity of civil society organizations, increases the professionalism of the media, and supports efforts by the Rwandan National Police to monitor and improve internal police performance.

**DECENTRALIZATION:** USAID supports Rwanda's decentralization process through the Twubakane Decentralization and Health Program. Twubakane builds the financial and management capacity of local governments in 12 of the country's 30 districts in order to increase access to and improve the quality of health services. In FY 2008, each targeted district directly received \$100,000 to provide better health care in local communities.

**RULE OF LAW:** To promote the rule of law in Rwanda, USAID supports provision of legal aid services to the poor and other vulnerable groups, helping to ensure equitable access to justice. In addition, USAID helps to strengthen the legislative process, supporting Rwanda's Ministry of Justice and other parts of government in their effort to improve the quality of legislation and ensure that the laws supporting people living with or affected by HIV and AIDS are adequate. Finally, USAID supports activities that assist the General

# DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE FACT SHEET CONTINUED



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[www.usaid.gov/missions/rw](http://www.usaid.gov/missions/rw)

Prosecutor's Office and the Rwandan judicial system in general to reduce the backlog of pending cases that have accumulated in the national courts due to personnel shortages following the restructuring of the judicial system in 2004-2006.

**POLITICAL PARTY STRENGTHENING:** To help build a political system that offers meaningful political choices to its citizens while maintaining a spirit of national unity, USAID supports a political party strengthening project. The project supports and reinforces mechanisms to promote interparty dialogue and builds political parties' capacity to organize, communicate, and reach out to constituents at the grass-root level.

**PEACE AND DIALOGUE:** To promote reconciliation and reduce the potential for conflict through increased dialogue and debate on important and sensitive national topics, USAID supports a project that aims to establish forums for debate involving citizens from all sectors of society at the national, provincial and district levels and abroad.

**EDUCATION:** Building civil society and reducing gender disparities requires an educated population. USAID provides scholarships to disadvantaged, but academically talented, girls and boys. Scholarship recipients are often orphans of war or HIV/AIDS and have limited financial means. In Rwanda, the program grew from 67 beneficiaries in 1999 to over 2040 in 2009 of which three quarters are girls.

**RWANDA YOUTH PROJECT:** The Rwanda Youth Project is a four-year (2009-2013) \$7.5 million program targeting 2,500 out-of-school youth, aged 15-24, in Kigali. Through a combination of education, training, and support services, the Project will help Rwandan young people develop the skills and attitudes necessary to find jobs, create their own employment, or return to formal education as well as to maintain healthy lifestyles and participate constructively in their communities. The Project will also build the capacity of local youth workforce development organizations and seek to contribute to emerging Government of Rwanda policy implementation in this area.