Rwanda’s heinous history, which climaxed in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi when over one million Tutsi were brutally killed and the country’s economy was ruined beyond recovery, did not deter Rwanda from seeking peace for the suffering of others but rather served as a motivating factor. This is largely because Rwandans with such a background understand and appreciate the effects of conflict. They have exported their security, unity and reconciliation expertise to nations badly ravaged by conflict.

After halting the genocide under the leadership of President Paul Kagame and freeing Rwandans from oppressive regimes that planned and carried out the genocide, the Rwanda Defense Forces (RDF) and Rwanda National Police (RNP), formerly known as Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA), have relentlessly continued to work towards liberating Rwandans from all sources of suffering and ensuring they have a livable life.



On an international level, Rwandan peacekeepers are deployed under the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

Rwanda is the fourth-largest contributor of troops, currently providing 4,585 military personnel for UN peacekeeping missions in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

UNAMIS has four main objectives: protecting civilians, creating conditions that allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid, supporting the implementation of the Revitalised Agreement and the peace process, and monitoring, investigating, and reporting violations of humanitarian and human rights law.

Rwanda has been involved in international peacebuilding efforts in Darfur since 2004, which was its first peacekeeping mission.

Regular deployments of Rwandan men in uniform, both Police and Army officers in war-ravaged countries such as Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan, Somalia, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) demonstrates Rwanda’s commitment to promote and dearly sacrifice for humanity, which is the primary goal for all her peace support operations.

They have selflessly promoted human values at all costs, including sacrificing their own lives. No wonder some officers and men have died while on duty in different countries engulfed by conflict.

Sacrifice in Rwanda meant intervening in difficult situations to protect civilians and being brave and dependable. They have lost lives while on duty in different host countries.

In November 2023, Lt. Gen. Humphrey Nyone, the Force Commander of MINUSCA, said: “Rwandan troops serving under MINUSCA) are courageous and operate under challenging circumstances”.

Rwanda first deployed in CAR in January 2014, and it boasts over 2,000 soldiers. The Rwandan blue helmets protect civilians, the country’s top leaders, including President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, UN personnel and equipment, and strategic facilities, including M’Poko International Airport.

Rwanda deployed force protection troops to CAR on December 20, 2020, under a bilateral defence agreement in response to the targeting of the Rwanda Defence Force contingent serving under MINUSCA. Some 1,200 Rwandan special forces under the bilateral agreement are restoring peace and security, securing the capital Bangui and its surroundings.

Rwandan forces have contributed to the return of peace in Haiti and Mozambique. The United Nations Security Council praised them for their peculiar discipline and professional conduct while on duty.

Enhancing Development: The Role of RDF and RNP Locally

Within the last 30 years, RDF and RNP have been at the core of efforts geared at transforming the livelihoods of the Rwandan people. In addition to their traditional duty of ensuring security for Rwandans and their property, the forces contribute variously to social and economic transformation.

They have partnered with the Local Government and Health Ministries to address problems such as shortage of blood and lack of shortages habitable accommodation among vulnerable segments of Rwandan society like widows and children orphaned by the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

In addition, the Rwandan Army provides free health services, such as eye infections and Non-Communicable diseases, such as cancer, diabetes, pressure, and cardiac-related diseases.

This year, in May, RDF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health medical personnel, launched a joint nationwide treatment campaign targeting 5,000 people afflicted with cataracts as part of the Defence and Security Citizen Outreach Programme 2024, which kicked off in March. Previously, RDF ophthalmologists launched a nationwide eye care campaign to combat blindness and rolled out the services beyond Kigali.

The military medical specialists deployed mainly in rural areas under the three-month program treated some 32,069 in 10 rural districts free of charge.

The Rwandan Defense Force has established a new Military Health Service, approved by the Cabinet this April. The Minister of Defense, Juvenal Marizamunda, revealed that this new branch is part of broader efforts to enhance the medical service capacity of the military and extend it to the grassroots level, where all the men and women in uniform operate. It will also play a key role in providing medical care to the civilian population.

The Defence and Security Outreach Programme this year constructed 31 homes for the vulnerable,15 Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, construction of 13 bridges and distributed four boats.

Additionally, the Force distributed 800 livestock for community farming, provided medical treatment, and extended the water and electricity supply to 327 households, along with enhancing other infrastructure.

Every year, during a community outreach dubbed Army Week, the Army built houses for homeless people and widows. Through such initiatives, they have given hope to thousands of Rwandans nationwide.

This year, the Rwanda Defence Force, in collaboration with the Rwanda National Police, initiated the 2024 Defence and Security Citizen Outreach Programme in partnership with the local government. This three-month nation-wide community development program focused on addressing human security concerns in various sectors including health, environment, public infrastructure, utilities, and house

construction for disadvantaged families.

This is in line with the RDF and RNP constitutional mandate to contribute to Rwanda’s socio-economic development.