

# The International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda (ICTR) Celebrates 20 years of Impunity and Endorsement of Kagame Military Dictatorship

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*Nov. 8, 2014, was the 20th anniversary of the creation of the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda, and the court celebrated itself with a new legacy website and video tribute. CIUT-Ontario radio host Phil Taylor called the video contemptible self-promotion and endorsement of Paul Kagame's military dictatorship in Rwanda.*

## Transcript

The International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda indicted 93 Rwandan Hutus, and no Tutsis, for the 1994 massacres in Rwanda. The court never indicted anyone for the assassinations of the Rwandan and Burundian presidents that shattered Rwanda's fragile peace and, by the court's own admission, started the slaughter.

**KPFA Weekend News Anchor David Rosenberg:** Nov. 8 was the 20th anniversary of U.N. Resolution 955, which created the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda, and the U.N. has announced a new ICTR legacy website, including a video tribute to its own accomplishments.

During its 20 years in operation, the court indicted 93 Rwandan Hutus, convicted 61 and spent \$2 billion. In 2003, former Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte announced that she intended to indict Rwanda's Tutsi president, Paul Kagame, for the assassination of his predecessor, Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, and Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira; but instead, she was summarily fired.

No one was ever indicted for the assassinations, which, by the ICTR's own admission, shattered a fragile peace and started the ensuing panic and slaughter of 1994. KPFA's Ann Garrison spoke to Phil Taylor, a former private investigator for ICTR defense attorneys, who became a prominent critic of the court as host of the Taylor Report on CIUT 89.5 FM in Toronto.

The Taylor Report, on CIUT 89.5 FM Toronto, was for many years the only English language broadcast covering dissident history of the 1990 to 1994 war in Rwanda and the ICTR.



**KPFA/Ann Garrison:** Phil Taylor, have you seen the ICTR's 20 year anniversary video tribute to itself?

**Phil Taylor:** Yes, one time.

**KPFA:** OK, I'm going to play the opening of the video:

**Phil Taylor:** All right.

**ICTR video tribute:** From its first makeshift courtroom, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda went to work on a formidable task. Its mission: to locate, apprehend and prosecute the architects of the genocide. Over the last 20 years, the Tribunal delivered judgments that defined, for the first time, how the world confronts acts of genocide in a court of law.

**KPFA:** Phil, what do you think?



Carla Del Ponte, former chief prosecutor at the ICTR, was summarily fired after declaring her intent to indict Rwandan President Paul Kagame for the assassination of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryaimira. – Photo: AP

**Phil Taylor:** I think it's shocking, embarrassing that they did this. You know, there's a proverb that says, "Self-praise is no recommendation." What I saw was a self-promoting

video.

It's totally inaccurate, and they end up, strangely, by seeming to endorse the current government of Rwanda. And I don't understand how that has anything to do with the mandate of a tribunal, which was to look into the crimes committed in Rwanda in 1994.

So it shows to me that they really were engaged in a political exercise to basically justify the regime that exists there today, which is a military dictatorship established by Paul Kagame masquerading as a political structure. I think it's contemptible, when you see such absurd, grand talk about the tribunal, and you hear this actor's voice - and I'm convinced that is an actor - somebody paid a lot of money for that four-minute, self-promoting video.

**KPFA:** Oh yeah, they acknowledge that it's an American television actor.

Rwandan political prisoner Victoire Ingabire, as seen in the BBC documentary "Rwanda's Untold Story." La prisonnière politique rwandaise Victoire Ingabire, telle que vue dans le documentaire de la BBC "Rwanda, l'histoire non contée".

**Phil Taylor:** Yeah. And costly. So, to bring it down to saying that now in Rwanda you can listen to the radio and be safe, that is such a caricature, because it is widely known that if you were a broadcaster in Rwanda today, and you were supporting Victoire Ingabire, you would be arrested, and you would not be safe.

Here is the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda putting out propaganda to sustain a one-man dictatorship. That is a disgrace. And that people calling themselves lawyers and judges associate themselves with such a video really just tells you that it was bankrupt from the day it started.

So, indeed it was, exactly what they said it would not be. It was victor's justice. And the video that they presented is the kind of thing you get from an authoritarian regime. They do not expect to be contradicted. They don't expect anybody to be allowed to say anything, except themselves.

So it's like a regime - the ICTR. And it's a self-congratulating regime. I don't understand why they have a public relations department to slap them on the back. That seems to be a waste of money and not the purpose of a tribunal.

**KPFA:** And that was Phil Taylor, former private investigator for ICTR defense cases and host of The Taylor Report on CIUT 89.5 FM, Toronto. For [Pacifica](#), [KPFA](#) and [AfrobeatRadio](#), I'm Ann Garrison.

*Oakland writer **Ann Garrison** contributes to the [San Francisco Bay View](#), [Counterpunch](#), [Global Research](#), [Colored Opinions](#), [Black Agenda Report](#) and [Black Star News](#) and produces radio news and features for Pacifica's [WBAI-NYC](#), [KPFA-Berkeley](#) and her own [YouTube Channel](#). She can be reached at [anniegarrison@gmail.com](mailto:anniegarrison@gmail.com). If you want to see Ann Garrison's independent reporting continue, please contribute on her website, [anngarrison.com](http://anngarrison.com).*

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