



# HOTEL RWANDA

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Hotel Rwanda is a 2004 film following the true story of Paul Rusesabagina, a Hutu, who manages an upscale hotel and lives a happy life with his Tutsi wife and their three children. When Hutu military forces initiate a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Tutsi minority, however, Paul is compelled to protect Tutsi refugees in his hotel. As the U.N. and other foreign military forces pull out, Paul must struggle alone to protect the Tutsi refugees in the face of escalating violence later known as the Rwandan genocide.

# What is the angle that the movie looks at human rights? What is the context?

- Takes place in 1994 in Rwanda, Africa
- Rwanda became a Belgium trusteeship under a League of Nations mandate after World War I
- Belgians occupying Rwanda divided the people into Hutu and Tutsi, creating conflict between the two groups
- After Belgians left Rwanda, a Hutu leader was placed in charge, leading to oppression of the previously higher-class Tutsi population
- Focuses on the lack of aid provided by the west to the people of Rwanda, even though Europeans were the cause of the issues
- Highlights how, often, we only believe people of our same ethnicity, religion, or skin color are deserving of basic human rights
- Frames human rights in a way that tries to persuade the audience that even those with little money or geopolitical power still deserve freedom from fear, freedom of expression, the right to live, and other rights we consider essential

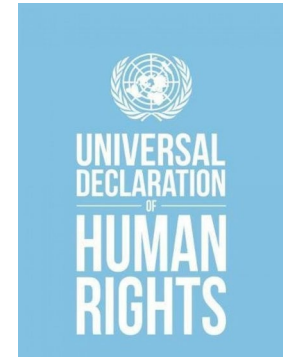
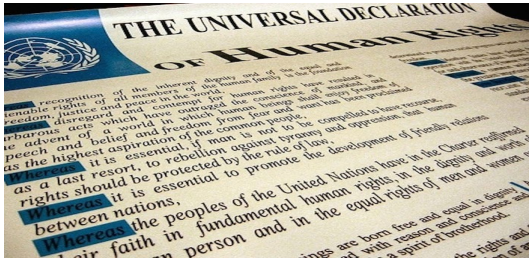


# What are the messages with regards to human rights?

- ❖ Members of all ethnicities deserve basic human rights and we have a duty to protect them from extreme violations of these rights
- ❖ Inaction in such extreme cases of human rights violation can be extremely harmful, especially when a group has the power to intervene

# Connection to declaration of human rights

- ❖ Hotel Rwanda is an act to memory in reminder of keeping the promises made after the holocaust.
- ❖ Some of the human Rights that were violated in Rwanda(Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
  - Article 1: Human beings born free and equal in dignity and rights(Tutsi vs Hutus)
  - Article 2: Everyone entitled to all rights with no distinction in race, colors, religion, and international status of a country/nationality(Foreigners vs Rwandans)
  - Article 3: Right to life (Genocide)



# What is the message of this movie? Do you agree or disagree with it?

The message of this movie is that not taking a stance is a stance in favor of the oppressor as evident to how the UN peacekeepers refused to intervene. I agree with the message because it has been sadly proven true throughout history.

I felt like the message of the movie was simply **proactivity**. Many important people and countries ignored hundreds of thousands of people being slaughtered in Rwanda, as shown in the film.

I agree with the message, as while geopolitics may be important, it is always of utmost importance to consider people first and their basic rights.



# Did you learn anything from this movie? If you did, what was it?

- Most of the film was filled with messages that really stuck with me. With its devastating imagery and events that conspired within the film, it really taught me a lot of things. Specifically, one lesson that I learned from the film was that by being a bystander you truly harm everyone around you. In the film we see the UN peacekeeping forces, and their leader Colonel Oliver do nothing about the Rwandan genocide. As a result, many had faced the consequences of that decision and they were horrible. Many ended up being killed and many suffered because of that decision.
- Hateful speech leads to violence: the radio station RTLM had been inciting Hutus against the Tutsi minority, urging its listeners to “cut down the tall trees” and “exterminate the cockroaches.” The ensuing bloodshed caused by decades of hate-mongering by the RTLM illustrates the power of hate media and serves as a cautionary tale for today’s leaders—leaders of powerful nations who too thoughtlessly use dehumanizing language in describing certain groups of people.

# Describe two images or scenes from the film that stand out in your mind

1. When help arrives for most of the white/non African guest of the hotel, but no protection was offered to the rest. Also when a group of orphans arrived at the hotel with Catholic nuns and priests, the white nuns/priests were evacuated but not the Rwanda orphans. ([Link](#))
2. One scene that stood out to me was when Paul and Gregoire were driving in the fog and the road seems really bumpy. When Paul went to see what was wrong, he fell into a pile of bodies, and discovered that the whole road was covered by dead bodies. ([link](#))



# Broader Implications/Related Events

- Currently in Ethiopia, a civil war with similar affronts at human rights has led to a loss of thousands of lives and at least 2 million displaced. A political conflict (rooted, similarly to the Rwandan genocide, in previous conflicts between ethnic groups) between the Ethiopian Prime Minister and Tigray (a semi-autonomous northern state in Ethiopia), has resulted in massive war crimes and atrocities including mass executions and rapes. As 5.2 million people face starvation and U.N. aid is blocked by Ehtiophian troops, Western powers must decide whether the human rights of Ethiopians are worth fighting for.
- During British occupation of India in the 19th century, the caste system was strengthened and enforced for the benefit of the British government, creating similar division and instability. Prior to British rule, the caste system was far less rigid, despite the fact that India is often characterized by its caste system.
- Chinese government in XinJiang is violating human rights and committing crimes against humanity on the Uyghurs. Mass detentions, cultural persecutions, and surveillance were put into place with systematic policies to achieve what the Chinese government calls “interracial fusion” between Han and Ugyhurs.
- Rwandan President Paul Kagame cynically exploits his nation’s pain to justify his authoritarian style of government— he punishes his critics with imprisonment and calls it a necessary evil to prevent a new genocide. Once again, the West turns a blind eye.
- In 2014, the conflict in Yemen has started, the civil war between the Shiite rebels and the Sunni government. They have tried to negotiate however it failed, and the rebels had taken control over the presidential palace in 2015, the president resigned and the conflict had continued since. Now the prognosis is likely to get worse. The toll it has on Yemeni citizens is awful, killing over 233,000 people--making Yemen the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.