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## Rwanda's Women Play A Key Role In Peace Building

By James Butty  
Washington, DC  
25 January 2006

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Six years ago, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325, calling for greater participation of women in conflict prevention and peace building. It also called on governments to include women at all levels of decision-making in their countries.

Justine Rukeba Mbabazi is a lawyer and author from Rwanda, a country that has seen its share of violence and is now engaged in peace building and reconciliation. She played a critical role in the debate over Rwanda's new constitution, bringing gender questions to the forefront of national politics. Mbabazi told English to Africa reporter James Butty that Rwandan women are playing a key role in the country's reconciliation process. "Today in gacaca justice, a very local initiative justice, we have 260 thousand people, meaning people with integrity who have to sit in the cases of genocide, and 75 percent of those judges are women."

Mbabazi says the genocide in her country would not have happened if there had been more women in the Clinton administration and on the UN Security Council. "Women bring different voice to the negotiating table; women bring different approach when they are bringing reconciliation around the community; women bring personal experience."

She offered this advice to Liberia and other countries coming out of conflicts: "Forget about the cut-and-paste ways of reconciling. Liberians know what they went through; Liberians know the issues on the ground; Liberian [ethnic] groups know what they are dealing with. It's better for them to go back and sit down with grassroots people and ask them how they would deal with the reconciliation process."

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