

Rwanda

**Madeleine
Prior**



Rwandan Context

- Under dominant party rule since 1994
 - Lead by Paul Kagame
- Working on development and rebuilding since the 1994 Genocide (still plays a large role in political discourse)
- Generally portrayed by outside states as an example for development in the region
- Increasingly facing charges of human rights abuses



Key Lessons

- A State can have progressive policies and autocratic tendencies at the same time
 - Rwanda is known for having progressive policies in healthcare, development and gender equality -> but also has a severe lack of freedom of speech/other civil liberties
- Understanding the context you are working in is crucial
- Development and criticism can be genuinely dangerous -> it's important to consider safety when addressing development issues



Suggestions

- Don't be blind to bad policies because of a few good policies
 - Many Western nations do not criticise Paul Kagame despite human rights abuses
- Use popular policies to pass through other works -> working through healthcare or gender equality to get other rights recognised
- Connect with local activists to better understand the problems facing the country -> but be careful and extremely discrete, forced disappearance are not uncommon
- Make sure to learn the local language, Kinyarwanda -> mostly elites speak English/French

