



Bill Clinton's 'New Generation' of African Leaders Mostly Still Around in 2016

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In March 1998, President Bill Clinton went to Africa, where he waxed lyrical about a "new generation" of African leaders supposedly committed to free markets and democracy. The relevant leaders included Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea.

Two months after Clinton's speech, Eritrea attacked Ethiopia in an attempt to seize a disputed border town called Badme. Up to 300,000 people died over the next two years. Today, Badme (pop. 1,500) is still in Ethiopian possession.

Ethiopia's Zenawi died in office in 2012. He held the office of the presidency for 17 years. Eritreans have not been so lucky. Afewerki, who became president in 1993, is still in charge.

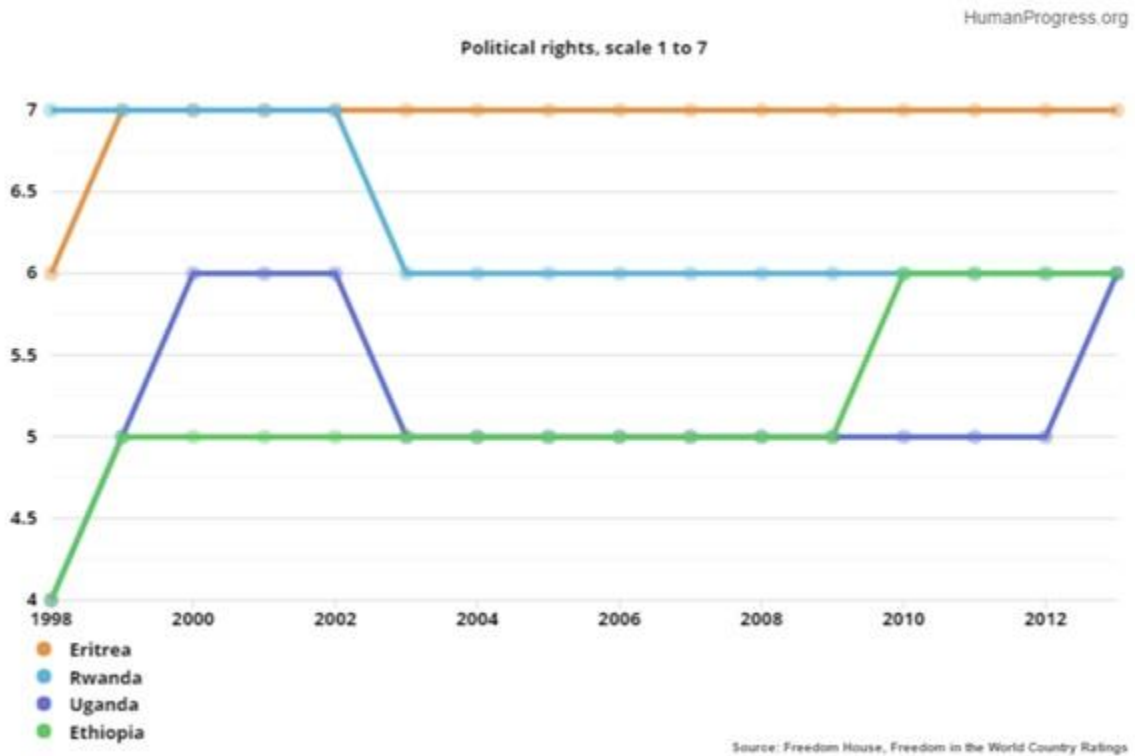
What about Uganda and Rwanda? The two have been the darlings of the aid community for many decades. Between 1998 and 2013, they received US\$20.5 billion and US\$10.5 billion, respectively. Some 20 percent of Uganda's budget and 40 percent of Rwanda's budget comes from foreign aid.

Surely, with all this aid money and, concomitantly, influence, the West has purchased Museveni's and Kagame's good behavior? Far from it. Museveni, who has been President since 1986, is running for his 5th term in office. (Uganda abandoned term limits in 2005.) The opposition candidates are being harassed, while opposition supporters are being beaten up or, worse, killed.

Kagame was supposed to have stood down from the presidency in 2017. Instead, he recently held a referendum to change the Rwandan Constitution. Over 98 percent of the voters, we are told, supported an amendment that will allow Kagame to stay in power until 2034.

A chart below, which is brought to you courtesy of *Human Progress*, shows that since Clinton's 1998 speech, the political rights of ordinary people deteriorated in three out of four of the above mentioned countries. Only in Rwanda have they slightly improved. (Seven is the worst score that a country can obtain on a Freedom House scale. One is the best.)

Turns out, the "new generation" of African leaders is as power-hungry as the old one. But then, something similar could be said about the Clinton family.



Explore more data like this at [Human Progress](http://HumanProgress.org).

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