

The Role of Credibility in RSD

EXERCISE 1

Imagine that in April 1994 a Rwandan man sought asylum in another country under the 1951 Refugee Convention. His valid identity card indicates that he is Tutsi, and his identity card has been found to be genuine. In his asylum application, he says that he was a deputy leader of an opposition political party, but this party's leadership is well-known and this man is not listed anywhere as one of its leaders or members. He also says that he had been imprisoned the previous year because of his political activities, but he is vague and highly inconsistent about this experience. The adjudicator has determined that the man's statements about his political background and detention are not believable. At the same time, there are urgent reports emerging from Rwanda that Tutsis are being rounded up and massacred on the basis of their ethnicity.

Can this man be recognized as a refugee?

EXERCISE 2

In April 2002, the UK Government issued a report about human rights violations in Sudan. It contained three sentences about problems in Darfur, referring vaguely to "claims" of "inter-ethnic" fighting. It concluded that "there is no evidence" of systematic persecution in Darfur.

Imagine that in December 2002, you interviewed an asylum-seeker from Darfur who said his village had been attacked by militia who were organized and armed by the Sudanese government.

How would you decide if this man's testimony was credible?