Contents

“Going to paradise”

PREFACE
Scope of this book
Why Rwanda’s prisons are unique
Recent events in Rwanda

CHAPTER I
Forty centimetres: space
“Hell on earth”: the early years (1994-1999)
Improvements in prison conditions since 1999
The state of prisons in 2004
Health care
Food
Trading space
A life of luxury
Fashion

CHAPTER II
The prisoners’ government: organisation
The structure
The capitale général
Elections
Getting rich inside
The prison administration
Searches

CHAPTER III
Tomatoes, blackboards and guitars: work and leisure
Work
Education
Entertainment

CHAPTER IV
God

CHAPTER V
“Living as sisters – a survival strategy”: women in prison
Conditions and organisation of the women’s blocks
Relations between the women
Babies in prison
Relations between women and men

www.rwanda-chateau.org © Carina Tertsakian 2008
CHAPTER VI

Real minors and false minors: children in prison
- Absolute minors
- Genocide minors
- Minors’ living conditions
- Activities for minors
- Sexual abuse

CHAPTER VII

Families in prison

CHAPTER VIII

Waiting to die: the elderly in prison
- Lists and more lists
- Ill-treatment in detention
- The survival of the elderly in the central prisons
- Activities for the elderly
- The vulnerable among the vulnerable
- The memory of the family
- The response of the government

CHAPTER IX

Two armies in prison: the military prisoners
- Life in the civilian prisons
- Life in military detention

CHAPTER X

“You could count yourself as dead”: memories of the cachots and brigades
- Torture and killings
- Visits
- Prisoners’ testimonies
- Improvements in conditions of detention

CHAPTER XI

Three minutes: prison visits
- Conditions of visits in the central prisons
- Solitude
- Visits: the early years
- The significance of visits for prisoners
CHAPTER XII

“The time of crying is over”: the effect of imprisonment on the family
The economic burden
The strain on relationships
The gulf between prisoners and their families
Deaths in prison
The wider social circle

CHAPTER XIII

“Your father is a killer”: the next generation
Visiting parents in prison
Explaining prison
Children of interahamwe
Separation
The future

CHAPTER XIV

“It’s more human inside than outside”: relations between prisoners
Violence and the absence of violence
Ethnic relations
Génocidaires and common criminals
Friendships in prison

CHAPTER XV

“We are always in a state of maybe”: attitudes to imprisonment
Prison as home
Hope and despair
Looking back
Looking forward: dreams of freedom
Escaping

CHAPTER XVI

Talking

CHAPTER XVII

“Innocence can be subjective”: justice
The genocide trials
“Buying innocence”
The “big fish”
Gacaca
The prisoners’ gacaca: “the real truth is in the prisons”
The paralysis of the justice system
Acquitted and still in prison
Prisoners’ views on justice
Justice for RPF and RPA crimes
CHAPTER XVIII

“The heaviest sentence”: prisoners sentenced to death
The 1998 executions
Life under sentence of death
The abolition of the death penalty

CHAPTER XIX

Where the guilty are kings: confessions
Propaganda, pressure and enticements
The decision to confess
“False confessions”
“Real confessions”
“The innocent”
Double standards

CHAPTER XX

Freedom: a mirage
The programme of releases
Returning inside
The ingando: “touching freedom”

CHAPTER XXI

Freedom: the reality
The moment of release
The process of readjustment
Support for released prisoners
Prison friendships

CHAPTER XXII

“I am still in that space now”

POSTSCRIPT

2007

APPENDICES

Map of Rwanda
Methodology
Glossary of terms and acronyms
Further reading
Acknowledgements