



THE AFRICAN GREAT LAKES: ten years of suffering, destruction and death

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Notes

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The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or the opinion of the European Commission.

The very structure of the media results in information being served to us in a manner reminiscent of restaurant menus. In similar fashion we pass from Bosnia to Somalia and on to Kosovo, almost like someone passing from the starters to the fish or meat, or to the next day's meal. And, as also occurs with menus, the dish eaten one day will no longer be of any interest on the next: we are more than likely to request something different.

This way of proceeding can be understood when one is dealing with, for example, news concerning natural phenomena (a typhoon or an earthquake) which are in themselves fleeting and following which calm returns (although the victims may continue to suffer). But unfortunately it doesn't make sense when dealing with the earth's innumerable dispossessed. Human crises continue even when we cease to hear anything about them.

Our attention has been redirected from the Great Lakes to Kosovo, and then to Chechenya. But this succession does not generally reflect an objective order of events. It is the great powers (anonymous or otherwise) that move our world, that decide from where it is convenient to remove and to where it is convenient to redirect our gaze. And they usually do it well, be it for commercial reasons or for that which is euphemistically called 'geo-strategic interests'. Such may be the creation of a global enemy (so badly needed by the rich world in order to remain united) or any position taken for future power.

And while we stop receiving news, genocides, tragedies and human tears like those of Rwanda, Sierra Leone or Nicaragua, continue to exist.

In the first instance this report aims (by means of a concrete example) to bring to awareness this almost universal mode of conduct, the 'binning' of reports that would be of great necessity to us but that 'are no longer of interest'. Moreover it aims to inform about one of those problems concerning which the media seem to have decided to 'turn the page'. For this we have commissioned a brief study to two friends who have been dedicated to, and had endless intimate experience of, the African Great Lakes situation.

We would like to be able to do the same with many other problems, but we cannot. Our means (and our information) are scarce. In some measure this is good despite its limiting us. Hopefully others will make up for us.

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1. HISTORICAL SYNTHESIS: RWANDA AND BURUNDI

1.1. Rwanda¹

From the sixth century BC the Twas, pigmy hunters, penetrated the wooded mountains of Rwanda. During the sixth century AD Hutu crop farmers began to arrive in the region. In the eighth and ninth centuries and later during the twelfth and thirteenth, cattle-farming Tutsis arrived in Rwanda, and from the fourteenth century these herdsmen began to settle peacefully amongst the Hutus, living in symbiotic relationship with them. From the sixteenth century onwards the Tutsi principalities began military campaigns against the Hutus and killed their princes, whose genitals they cut, dried and preserved, and hung on royal drums in order to provide a continuous and humiliating reminder to the conquered Hutus of their subjectivity. Despite this the socio-economic oppositions were not yet very great.

During the nineteenth century the Tutsi kings reinforced their dominion. When the royal Nyiginya clan dominated the whole country, the Tutsis scattered amongst the Hutus were incorporated into the military units of the royal clan's central power, although they were not members of the aristocracy. In this fashion a species of hierarchical military caste was established that embraced the Tutsis and excluded the Hutus. A rupture was being created that was to develop further in the following century.

The socio-economic structure set up during the nineteenth century was totally hierarchical. The best positions were occupied by the Tutsis, with a very few exceptions for the Hutus and these in inferior positions. The Hutus, the Twas and a few Tutsi groups were at the bottom of the pyramid. Towards the end of the nineteenth century a deep divide separated the rich and powerful from the weak and poor. The dependency of the poor in respect to the rich took various forms, two power structures standing out above all: the Ubuhake and the uburetwa.

The Ubuhake, originally allies with rights and duties amongst the noble Tutsi families in protection of their interests, had converted this military aristocracy into a land-owning herdsmen aristocracy. According to the Ubuhake, the Hutu peasants had to hand over half of their crop to the mwami (king). This contributed to the impoverishment of the population and accentuated the division between the Hutu people and the Tutsi nobility, the beneficiaries of this new economic system. according to the Ubuhake, the Hutu peasants had to hand over half of their crop to the mwami (king)

In respect to the *Uburetwa*, C.M. Overdule writes:

“The immense majority of the Hutu people were subject to the *uburetwa*, which consisted in each man being obliged to work for two days a week (and the traditional week comprised five days) in the service of the Tutsi chief, and this without any form of payment. Generally the Tutsis were exempt from the *uburetwa*, even if they were not members of the nobility. In this way they procured a privileged status with regard to the great majority of Hutus.

The *uburetwa* was the most humiliating and extensive manifestation of the people's submission.

The weight of this load was an enormous obstacle for the men, preventing them from working sufficiently and regularly on their own land. This task fell mostly on the women who already bore the heavy charge of the house and the children. What is more, the latter could also be called to carry out tasks in the home of the Tutsi chief. All of this combined to provoke an unprecedented situation of misery amongst the Hutu majority who lived on a minimal diet and with the permanent threat of hunger”.

Already in the twentieth century the Belgian colonisation had a double effect on the socio-political system. On the one hand, from the outset Belgium reinforced the position of the dominant Nyiginya and Tutsi class, supporting the political hierarchy. The socio-economic weight of a Tutsi minority over the Hutu majority was reinforced. Thus Msr. Classe, Catholic Church Primate, told missionaries that they should give their support to the Tutsi chiefs and teach the Hutus submission as a Christian virtue. On the other hand, taken from the perspective of justice and idealism the Belgians, upheld by the missionaries who worked amongst the population, enforced a humanisation of the system with measures aimed at limiting the flagrant injustice and the excessive exploitation.

In 1958, when an educated Hutu group drew up a manifestation demanding social change, the royal court responded with a document that said, amongst other things, the following:

“It might well be asked how it is that the Hutus now claim their rights to the redistribution of the common patrimony. It is a matter of fact that the relationship between ourselves (Tutsis) and themselves (Hutus) has always been based on serfdom; there is not, then, any basis for fraternity between us. If our kings conquered the Hutu's country, killing their petty kings, and thereby subjecting the Hutus to servitude, how can they now aspire to be our brothers?”

Bishop Perraudin was a determinant in the process of Hutu emancipation. In his pastoral letter, 11-02-1959, he clearly stated:

“The rule of justice and of charity demands that a country's institutions truly guarantee all inhabitants the same fundamental rights and the same possibilities for human advancement and participation in public affairs. Institutions that consecrate a regime of privileges, favouritism, protectionism, whether for individuals or social groups, are not conforming with Christian morality”.

On the 1st of November 1959, an incident between young Tutsis and one of the Hutu leaders provided the spark for a popular revolution. In every area Tutsi properties were burned and some of them lost their lives. All in all between 01-11-59 and 31-05-61 (the date of the UN-proclaimed amnesty) the Belgian administration drew up a list of 74 official deaths, of which 61 were Hutus assassinated by the Tutsi militia who tried to detain the revolutionary movement. Some 150,000 Tutsis, especially chiefs and sub-chiefs, left the country. In 1961 a Republic was proclaimed and a provisional government formed. In that same year the UN, strongly influenced by the refugees' propaganda, refused to accept these events and demanded the organisation of a referendum under the vigilance of its observers, the result of which was an 80% vote of NO to the maintenance of the Tutsi monarchy. Once again, numerous Tutsis went into voluntary exile before the Republic was ratified.

Nevertheless, not all Tutsis left the country. The fall of the Nyiginya regime represented liberation for many of them too. To the eyes of the exiled aristocracy those who stayed became traitors to their own ethnicity. The general sentiment was that the Tutsi dictatorship had been definitively expelled: never again a Tutsi government!

The first President of an independent Rwanda was Gregoire Kayibanda. The initial years of his government were full of hope. The Hutu peasant masses entered into education and the country progressed despite the lack of resources. Up to 1967 the exiled Tutsis launched attacks against the country but without success. Overall, little by little the government was being concentrated in the hands of the people of central Rwanda, the President's homeland. The killings of 350,000 Hutus in Burundi in 1972 produced anti-Tutsi reactions in the Rwandan interior. All of this led to the State coup led by General Habyarimana in July of 1973.

The Habyarimana government managed well until the second half of the 1980s. In 1988 the World Bank presented Rwanda as a model of development, and the 1990 Amnesty International report was satisfactory in respect of human rights. Nonetheless, the power was being concentrated in the hands of the northern Hutus, in the President's region of origin, and in the second half of the 1980s it was apparent that some sectors in power were becoming corrupt whilst the country entered into regression, owing in part to external factors such as the drop in the coffee price, the country's main export.

1.2. Burundi

In Burundi, the historical evolution is similar although with considerable differences. One of these has its origin in the composition of the Tutsi ethnic group that controls the two countries. Whilst in Rwanda the mwami (king) and the vast majority of the Tutsi chiefs belong to practically the same clan, in Burundi there was strong rivalry between the distinct Tutsi clans. The Banyaruguru, Bahima and Baganwa are the main clans. The mwami of Burundi came from the small Baganwa clan and was at war with the strong Banyaruguru clan. Throughout history these Baganwa kings had to rely on the aid of the Hutu population in order to avoid expulsion by the other Tutsi clans, and in many Hutus the conviction grew that the mwami was effectively their king.

With the Hutu majority's succession to power in Rwanda, the Tutsi minority, in fear of the same

occurrence in their country, initiated a repressive strategy that involved a number of killings, amongst which the following stand out:

1966: State coup led by the Prime Minister Michael Micombero, army Colonel (Tutsi). He declares the Republic. The army initiates a purge of Hutu officials. The Hutus remain practically excluded from power.

1969: Killings of dozens of Hutu public figures, civilians as much as military.

1972-73: Killing of 350,000 Hutus by the State coup leader Michael Micombero. 300,000 Hutus leave for exile.

1988: The country's northern Hutus rebel against the land-owning Tutsis. The army intervenes, causing some 20,000 or more deaths amongst ethnic Hutus in a region of 130,000 inhabitants. Approximately 60,000 Hutus consider themselves obliged to take refuge in Rwanda.

1993: On the 1st of June Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, is elected President. He is the first civil President in Burundi's history. On the 21st of October he is assassinated by the Tutsi military. The Hutus react with the pre-planned self-defence strategy: there is blockade of roads with felled trees, trenches etc. They attack and assassinate Tutsis. The latter, terrorised, take refuge in the administrative buildings, awaiting the army's aid. The army (98% Tutsi) massacres the Hutu population. There are thousands of victims, missing persons, and refugees in neighbouring countries. It is impossible to determine the exact number of victims. The UNHCR estimates the number of persons displaced to the neighbouring territories of Zaire, Tanzania and Rwanda to be over 700,000. In Rwanda there are calculated to be 600,000 refugees, which are added to the 900,000 displaced over previous occasions. The army has taken advantage of the chaos to eliminate the political and administrative bodies of FRODEBU, the victor in the parliamentary elections.

1994: the new President, Cyprien Ntaryamira, dies in the same assault as the Rwandan President, with his companions and staff. There are demonstrations in the capital, disappearances, killings, and the detention of opponents.

1995: The insecurity and the assassinations increase in Bujumbura, which is under military control. The Hutus living in various parts of the capital flee the escalation of violence. The city is becoming a Tutsi redoubt. The army completes a 'cleansing operation' in the few remaining Hutu districts, without permitting entrance to NGOs.

1996: State coup by Pierre Buyoya loser of the '93 elections. An international embargo against the regime is decreed, more theoretical than actual. The Tutsi army repression continues and the Hutu guerrillas multiply in the country's interior.

1998: The ex-President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, begins peace talks in Arusha (Tanzania) between the different parties implicated in the Burundian conflict, with no positive result whatever to date.

2. THE RWANDAN WAR FROM 1990 TO 1994

2.1. The RPF attack and the Arusha agreements

Rwanda was attacked on the 1st of October 1990 by Tutsis of the exiled Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), with the aid of their northern neighbour, Uganda, which in its turn was receiving British and North American support. The justification given for the attack was that Habyarimana would not allow the return of refugees owing to their ethnic origins. Overall the majority of economic operators in Rwanda were Tutsis who had returned to the country during Habyarimana's regime. It cannot be claimed that he would close all doors to the refugees.

France, Belgium and Zaire sent troops to the aid of the Rwandan government. The attack was followed by the government reaction of imprisoning some six or seven thousand people accused of collaborating with the RPF, who were released at the close of several weeks, some of them showing signs of having been tortured. Immediately after the attack the RPF committed various killings such as the extermination of the Muvumba population, or the killings in Ruhengeri on 22-01-91.

In general many young Tutsis had been recruited from all over the country to receive ideological and military training in the RPF headquarters and to form clandestine brigades, widely scattered in the hills. This created huge disquiet in the majority of the population together with the feeling of having been betrayed. The presence of these youths in the hills is confirmed by Tito Rutaremara, RPF ideologue: "towards the end of '87, 36 Front cells had been created in the country's interior"².

In some regions there were attacks and killings directed against the Tutsi population. Principal amongst these were those against the Bagogwe, a Tutsi sub-group from the north, in January 1991, and against the Tutsis of Bugesera in March of 1992.

The successive guerrilla attacks by the RPF gradually drained the north-east of its inhabitants, provoking a massive flight towards the centre and the south of Rwanda. In February 1993 a large-scale attack that involved not only intimidation but also tortures and killings provoked a general exodus, resulting in the homelessness of a million people in the Rwandan interior. Amongst the locations where the Tutsis decimated the population are: Ngarama, Mukingo, Kinigi, Kigombe, Matura, Kirambo...

On the political level after a series of international pressures a new Constitution was approved authorising the multiparty system. A coalition government was created that proposed, amongst other objectives, that of commencing negotiations with the RPF, which resulted in the Arusha Accords, signed in August 1993. These agreements anticipated a power split between the distinct political parties that had been created; the RPF was making a representation that did not

correspond with the country's reality.

Following the assassination of President Ndadaye and the Hutu killings in Burundi, the political parties in opposition to Habyarimana split into two factions, some drawing close to Habyarimana and the rest to the RPF. The Arusha agreements had envisaged a transition period after elections. In the projected situation it was considered almost impossible that the RPF and supporting factions of the parties closely allied should win these elections. The application of the Arusha agreements provided for a contingent of 600 RPF men to install themselves in Kigali, but in practice this number was very much greater.

2.2. The assault against the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi

In a climate of extreme tension and polarisation, following the assassinations of top-ranking political leaders and with the political parties totally divided, on 06-04-94 the plane carrying the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, together with important members of their governments, was to be shot down.

All the analysts agree that this assassination was the spark that lit the fire in Rwanda. The UN special reporter charged with the investigation of the 1994 killings, Rene Degni Segui agrees: “the death of President Habyarimana was to be the spark that would light the gunpowder thereby unleashing the killing of civilians”. Even so, as yet no investigation has been opened to shed light on the responsibility for this attack. The reactions of the Rwandan army, taken by surprise in the offensive unleashed by the RPF, lead one to think that it was not they who prepared it.

Recently come to light, on 10-08-99, is the testimony of a Rwandan military, Christophe Hakizabera, an RPF member from 1990 to 1995. When speaking of Habyarimana's assassination he says:

“The RPF prepared a macabre plan to drive the country into chaos: the death of President Habyarimana. He was considered to be the main obstacle to the forceful seizure of power. The first meeting to plan the assassination was held in Kabale (Uganda), in the Bishop's premises, under the auspices of the Archbishop Harerimana. Later, meetings of this type were held in Mbarara, in the home of Salim Saleh, the Major General, half brother to the Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Then, pertinently, it is known that the decision to assassinate President Habyarimana was taken in Bobo-Dioulasso, in Burkina Faso in March of 1994, and that the Commander Paul Kagame, RPF leader, participated in this meeting”.

2.3. The killings of the population in 1994

At the beginning of 1994 there were a million displaced persons from the Rwandan interior that had fled from the RPF massacres, and hundreds of thousands of Burundian refugees in the south running from the Tutsi army killings in Burundi. After the assault the country entered a spiral of violence involving generalised killings from April to June of 1994. The Hutu militia engaged in massive assassinations of the Tutsis and Hutus allied to the RPF. Simultaneously the RPF carried

out mass assassinations of the Hutus although members of the Tutsi population also died in the killings.

The media gave sufficient information and there are abundant testimonies concerning the killings carried out by the Hutu militia against the Tutsi population, which were produced across the entire breadth of the territory. One section of militia youth of the MRND party, the Interahamwe, stood out in these vast killings. One of the first assassinations that had major repercussions was that of the Prime Minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and ten of the Belgian Blue Berets who were protecting her, at the hands of the presidential guard. Only a firm intervention by the UN contingent would have been able to prevent the killings; but instead of this the withdrawal of the Blue Berets was ordered, leaving a population without protection. On the 9th of April an interim government was formed, presided over by Jean Kambanda, and without the presence of a single Tutsi or a Hutu with any RPF sympathies.

Initially the RPF brigades, formed exclusively of Tutsi youths and scattered throughout the hills, were the prioritized objective of the Hutu militia, but increasingly it became the Tutsis in general who were considered to be the enemy to demolish. Deep, hidden trenches were found between the Tutsi-owned coffee plantations that could only have been intended for the burial of Hutu corpses. Militia bands formed who roamed in search of Tutsis and forced the hill-dwelling Hutus, under pain of death for opposition, to incorporate themselves into the group. Nevertheless, many Hutu families, despite knowledge of the risk they were running, hid neighbours and Tutsi acquaintances in their homes.

The RPF issued a three-day ultimatum for the departure of all the country's foreign residents. In a few days practically all the foreigners left. Joaquin Vallmajo, a Catalan white father who decided to stay, disappeared on 26-04-94 after a group of RPF soldiers detained him. 03-06-94 saw the execution by the RPF of the Bishops of Kigali, Kagbaya and Byumba who had been unwilling to abandon their country and had elected to remain at the side of a group of Tutsi refugees threatened by the Hutu militia.

There are many testimonies to the killings committed by the RPF, but it has been difficult to give them public expression for fear of the victors' reprisals. Almost all the foreigners left the country and amongst the few who remained the testimonies of Marcel Gerin³ and Santos Ganuza are exceptional. The Belgian Marcel Gerin concluded, in synthesis, that in 1994 he and his wife were left trapped by the Rwandan war. They were witnesses to the indiscriminate killings in the area they lived in and they were able to confirm, through the fact of having been held prisoners, how those who apparently seemed to be Interahamwe militia were no more than mercenaries in the pay of the Tutsi army. They managed a miraculous escape whilst awaiting their executioners, thanks to the arrival of a number of journalists and Blue Berets. Although they state that in their residential zone the Interahamwes killed a thousand people in the church, the majority of the massacres were carried out with the arrival of those mercenaries who killed whoever they met without any ethnic discrimination, in a clear operation of whole-territory cleansing. Whatever images of the situation emerged gave one to believe that the authors were the Hutu Interahamwe militia. Santos Ganuza, a Navarrese missionary, was the rector of the Kiziguro parish, also in the east of the country. He says:

“For many years I was the parish rector in the east of the country. In 1994 the Interahamwe

arrived and killed some 1,000 Tutsis who had taken refuge in the church without my being able to do anything to prevent it. A few days later, the Tutsi military arrived and killed 10,000 Hutus. The Western world's televisions broadcast pictures of these Hutus assassinated in my parish, identifying them as Tutsis”.

On the 12th of April, the Rwandan army proposed a truce with the RPF in order to prevent the massacres, but the latter turned it down. On the 30th the UN offered to send international troops with the same objective and once more the RPF refused.

An international arms embargo was set up against the Rwandan regime but the RPF continued to receive arms via Uganda. In July 1994 the RPF seized power and three million people crossed the frontiers in search of refuge, mostly into Zaire and Tanzania. It is estimated that between April and July 1994, 800,000 Tutsis and opposition Hutus had been assassinated but there was no news about the population assassinated by the RPF. The UN Commission of experts charged with the investigation of the killings, despite recognising that the Tutsis as much as the Hutus had committed 'crimes against humanity', concluded saying:

“there are obvious indications that acts of genocide have been perpetrated against the Tutsi group by Hutu elements, in a concerted, planned, systematic and methodical manner”.

3. THE INVASION OF ZAIRE AND THE ATTACKS ON THE REFUGEE CAMPS

On 20-10-96 the refugee camps within Zaire, located near the frontier, were bombarded and attacked from Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

The attack was justified by saying that Rwandan security must be guaranteed in the face of Hutu militia incursions from the camps, and that it was being carried out precisely in order to liberate the refugees who were hostages of the aforementioned militia.

There was a definite resistance in the Mugunga camp. Many refugees died in the very same camps and the remainder fled and hid in the forest. The three armies prohibited access to journalists and observers. The Tutsi military were looking for those refugees in hiding and was systematically assassinating them.

3.1. The attacks on the refugee camps

In the first days of the attack the Archbishop of Bukavu, Christophe Munzihirwa is assassinated. His letters had denounced the presence of North American military in the zone, had repeatedly demanded a return of the refugees to Rwanda under safe conduct, and that the Tutsi lobbies stop their campaign of misinformation directed at international opinion. At the same time, four Spanish monks who worked in the Nyamirangwe camp were dying, also victims of assassination.

On 15-11-96 the UN Security Council approves Resolution 1080 to send an international force which will allow access and humanitarian aid to the refugees. The very next day Tutsi troops forced some of these to return to Rwanda. It is presented as fact that almost all had returned and the deployment of the international force is suspended. Nevertheless, some 500,000 refugees were still hiding in the forest. Many of them were assassinated or died the victims of dehydration, hunger, wounds or illnesses. About 300,000 survivors were concentrated in Tingi-Tingi, near Kisangani. At the end of February 1997, shortly after the European Commissioner, Emma Bonino's visit for humanitarian aid, the Tingi-Tingi camp is attacked and thousands of refugees are assassinated. The rest arrive in Kisangani where the killings are continuing. Some manage to cross the whole country and take refuge in Congo-Brazzaville or in

the Central African Republic, others are to be repatriated to Rwanda by the UNHCR. It is difficult to ascertain with any certainty the number of victims, but all together they must have been around 500,000.

3.2. The overthrow of Mobutu

While the refugee camps in Zaire were under attack an offensive was launched to oust Mobutu Sese Seko, the old dictator who had been in power for over 30 years. The Democratic Forces of Liberation Alliance (DFLA) was created under the leadership of Laurent Desire Kabila, citing as motive the rebellion, the discrimination being suffered by the Banyamulenges Tutsis of the Kivu-Sur province. Despite this the army was comprised of Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian military units. In six months they arrive at the capital, Kinshasa, facing Zairean armed forces that lack motivation and are in permanent retreat. Mobutu flees and Kabila steps into power. The country is re-baptised with the name of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

During the second half of 1997 Africa appears to enter a new stage. The G7 Summit is held in Denver, where the North American President announces his commitment to the continent's development: commerce should replace aid.

3.3. The war against Kabila

Kabila's first journeys were to be to China, Libya and Cuba. During the first half of 1998, at international level many declarations are made qualifying Kabila as corrupt and lacking efficiency in the country's management. In July, Kabila sacks Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian military personnel and politicians, but they refuse to leave and announce their armed opposition to the Kinshasa government from Kivu, the eastern zone under their control. Under the cover of Congolese politicians the Regrouping for Congolese Democracy (RCD) is created, at the head of which is placed the Congolese Zahidi Ngoma.

They occupy the eastern provinces of Kivu and an offensive against Kinshasa and Lubumbashi is launched, exactly the same as had occurred two years previously. A spectacular operation, with the aerial transportation of troops from Kivu to Matadi, the door to the Atlantic ocean, permits the Tutsi military a rapid advance towards Kinshasa: the city is surrounded and water and light sources are cut over a week. When Kinshasa's fall appears imminent, an unexpected event takes place: the intervention of Zimbabwe, followed by Angola and Namibia, for Kabila's aid, which catches Tutsi troops by surprise. The latter suffer a defeat and a number of soldiers are lynched by the population. A phase of slow advance follows, with the capture of various strategic cities, but with a definite stabilisation of the front line.

The countries of the region, grouped within the SADC (South African Development Community) support Kabila. All, with the exception of South Africa, have shown themselves to be unanimously opposed to the pretensions of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. Although only three countries have sent military aid, the other nine countries have given moral support to the Congolese government for the halting of what they consider to be an unacceptable expansion of

the Tutsi sphere of influence in central Africa.

Chad's dispatch of a contingent of 2,000 men to Kabila's aid, like the veiled support from the Sudan, demonstrates the position of the neighbouring Islamic countries. Uganda's broad support to the rebellion in the south of the Sudan, the Popular Army for the Liberation of the Sudan (APLS) that fights against the northern Islamic government, forms part of the United States strategy for the containment of Sudanese Islamic fundamentalism.

In Angola, the war in the Congo serves to revitalise the old conflict between the government and UNITA. The Angolan government troops that fight alongside Kabila have to withdraw into the interior of their own country in the face of the intensity of the fighting that causes many deaths and homelessness amongst the population.

At the beginning of 1999, in the Makobola settlement in South Kivu, the Tutsi troops kill over a thousand people as a reprisal for an attack by Mai-Mai guerillas. Already in August a similar massacre has occurred in the parish of Kasika. Amongst the civil population in Kivu killings carried out by the Rwandan and Burundian Tutsi military follow one after the other: Bwegera, Burhale, Uvira, Butembo, Masisi, Kamituga, Burhinyi... Many youths enter to form part of the distinct Mai-Mai guerrillas who fight with vastly inferior means.

4. THE EXTERNAL INTERESTS

Although there have been various Western countries that have intervened in this conflict, we will focus on the two that we consider to be the most significant: France and the United States. Belgium, the old mother country, sent soldiers at the outset of the Rwandan conflict in order to aid the Habyarimana government, but they soon withdrew. In 1994, due to the death of ten Belgian Blue Berets Belgium withdrew its contingent, thereby encouraging other countries to do the same and it was not possible to protect the population. Great Britain, Uganda's past mother country, has played a very important role, above all in the initial stages of the conflict, allying itself to Museveni and supporting the United States at every step.

4.1. France

France remained by the side of the Habyarimana government until the signing of the peace accords in Arusha. Their contingent, formed by 600 men, secured technical assistance to the Rwandan Armed Forces. It was determinant in the 1990 invasion, in which the RPF would have managed to reach the capital. Each time the RPF launched a strong offensive France provided arms to the Rwandan army. It finally left the country upon the arrival of the first MINUAR soldiers in November of 1993.

In the face of the upsurge of the war in 1994, the United States and Belgium applied pressure on France to dissuade it from any intervention. The Turkish humanitarian operation (June - August 1994) was accepted with much reticence and many conditions. The French were not allowed to establish safe zones in the north-west of the country, as they had done in the south-west, arguing that this would act in protection of the perpetrators of the massacres and of the government which had taken refuge in that part of the country.

Accused of collusion in the genocide of the Tutsis for having trained the Hutu army, the French, following the Turkish operation, would remain at a distance when Mobutu was to be attacked in 1996.

France provides advice and logistical support to the Tutsi army in Burundi. It had already done so

in 1972 when the killing of 350,000 Hutus took place. This did not prevent its help also being given to the Rwandan Hutu army from 1990 onwards. France appears to apply a *'realpolitik'* that, in attempting to supplant Belgium in the region, has aided the established regimes of Rwanda and Burundi.

4.2. The United States

Just as France's role has always been public and notorious, that of the United States has been none too clear for many analysts. Because of this we want to stretch ourselves to show evidence of its implication.

At the start of 1996 Ronald Brown, United States Secretary for Commerce, publicly explained that which for many observers was already becoming evident: *"The era of the economic dominion and commercial hegemony of Europe over Africa has ended. Africa interests us"*. There are many facts that demonstrate this interest, amongst which we will detail the following:

— *a.* Some members of the RPF who attacked Rwanda from Uganda in 1990 had acquired military training in the USA within the framework of the IMET programme.

— *b.* Between 1989 and 1992 the United States delivered economic aid of 183 million dollars to Uganda. This aid was the equivalent of the sum total of aid from the United States to Uganda over the preceding 27 years⁴. The World Bank (IDA) has awarded Museveni, the Ugandan President, only up until March 1997, 1,800 million dollars.

— *c.* The United States is the main supplier of arms to Uganda with sight of their use in the Great Lakes region. There are North American military in the old Entebbe airport in Nakasongola, in Kabamba, Ssinga, Nkozi, in the Ssesse islands and in other mobile units in Uganda, training Ugandan and Rwandan military⁵.

— *d.* The United States and Great Britain prevented Rwanda from turning to the UN Security Council concerning Ugandan aggression, under the pretext of a lack of material evidence. These same countries made the work of the United Nations Mission charged with the control of the Rwandan-Ugandan frontier (MONUOR) inefficient. Not only did they oppose the reinforcement of MONUOR with men and material, but they also declined to condemn Uganda when those responsible for MONUOR reported that the country was impeding the realisation of their mission.

In this way the United Nations and Great Britain have for a considerable time blocked the Security Council decision concerning the deployment of the international force provided for in the Arusha peace agreements. The first MINUAR soldiers did not reach Rwanda until November 1993, almost four months after the signing of the accords that could not be applied without this international force. The delay provoked tensions between the Rwandan government and the RPF, and also within the parties.

— *e.* The United States embassy in Rwanda was the first to evacuate the country the next day, 6th of April 1994, the day on which the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were assassinated, an event that unleashed large scale massacres. More energetic measures taken in collaboration with the other countries or in the United Nations Security Council headquarters would have prevented the extermination of the population.

— *f.* The United States blocked the adoption and application of Resolution 1080 (1996) adopted by the UN Security Council of 15-11-96 concerning the deployment of a multinational force for the protection of the refugees and the civil population terrorised in the east of ex-Zaire. This force would have been able to prevent the killings.

— *g.* During his visit to Rwanda in September 1996 a member of the North American Congress, Johnston, pleaded in favour of a politics consisting of the forced return of refugees to Rwanda. This is totally in contra to the Geneva Convention and to the international laws concerning the treatment of refugees. Johnston said:

“Stop feeding them, take your store of food aid inside the frontiers, try to get the Rwandan and Tanzanian armies to enforce discipline, and provide a security force to give personal escort to the refugees, making them cross the frontier and steering them to the food distribution centres”.

— *h.* The declaration of the North American Ambassador in Kigali, 21-01-97 states:

“The humanitarian agencies must leave eastern Zaire and stop feeding the assassins. These will then scatter into the countryside searching for something to eat and will release the hostages. If we do not act in this way we will save the children of Tingi-Tingi but we will ruin the chances of the children in Rwanda's interior who will be assassinated or left orphans”⁶.

The North American embassy in Rwanda gives full approval to Kagame's government, openly minimising the problems and human rights violations, and the international humanitarian agencies have the impression that America is downright hostile towards them. A North American embassy official told Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) that he was supporting all that Rwanda did to counter the work of an investigative mission into the atrocities committed in ex-Zaire. He challenged PHR to present proof of serious human rights violations in Rwanda and the DR of Congo⁷.

— *i.* The North American administration has concealed the genocide of the Rwandan refugees in ex-Zaire. Under its pressure the final version of the United Nations report has been modified with the result that the term ‘genocide’ has been substituted by the word ‘massacre’. In the UN it is explained that ‘following deep discussions’ in New York the report's authors ‘themselves’ decided to retract the term ‘genocide’⁸. What is more, the report concludes with the recommendation that Kabila and Kagame themselves investigate the perpetration of the massacres. With this, the very same authors of the massacres are being asked to investigate themselves, a ridiculous result. With this action Washington has tried to preserve the moral integrity of its proteges, now that the latter are using the Tutsi genocide as an ethical excuse for their ethnic dictatorship.

— *j.* Nick Gordon, a British reporter, has investigated and reported that the RPF regime has built crematory ovens in the Rwandan regions of Bugesera, Ruhengeri, Byumba, Kibungo, Nyungwe and other places where thousands of Hutus are assassinated and their bodies burnt while those responsible in the United States avert their gaze⁹.

— *k.* A member of the Clinton administration, questioned about the United States' massive military assistance to Rwanda, declared that “it was necessary to establish a very powerful military regime in the area of the African Great Lakes in order to impose military solutions to the conflicts”¹⁰.

— *l.* Aside from receiving materials of war, Rwanda and Uganda actively participated in the following training and military assistance programmes:

Rapid Intervention Force (RIF). Also called the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), this programme began in 1995. Although other African countries participated, notably Senegal, particular emphasis is given to Rwanda and Uganda in the name of the genocide. Thousands of soldiers and Tutsi officials take part each semester in these programmes of military training consultancy for *Green Berets*, an elite unit of the Third Division of Special Forces at Fort Bragg (North Carolina).

International Military Education and Training (IMET). This programme offers a very advanced military training. In the past, many of the Third World dictators as well as their execution squads have received this training. This is the case with the 'Tonton Macoutes' of Haiti and the bloody brigades of Chile, Argentina and other countries. Many Tutsi officials have been trained in Fort Bragg and in Fort Leavenworth (Kansas). It is within this programme's framework that Kagame, then an official in the Ugandan army, took part in a military training during 1993 in the company of a number of Ugandan officials.

Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET). This programme is supervised by the Marines, the Land Army and the Airforce. The objective of this training is to improve the Tutsi troops' military experience. The Third and Fifth Special Forces units participate. They are taught a number of military disciplines: camouflage techniques, combat preparation, mobility of reduced units, maintenance of battle equipment, nocturnal navigation etc.

Rwandan Interagency Assessment Team (RIAT). This project was conceived to evaluate the efficiency of all the military training given to Rwandan soldiers and officials with the objective of recommending, if necessary, solutions for their improvement.

—*m*. A Pentagon report, addressed to Congress, details the participation of the North American army in the training of the Rwandan armed forces since 1994. According to this the United States broadened its co-operation with the Rwandan army just when the latter was implicated in aiding the Congolese rebels in the overthrow of Mobutu's regime¹¹. *Le Soir* reports that, two days prior to the second invasion of the Congo, on 02-08-98, North American military experts were sighted near the border. Moreover two United States warships were operating up in Matadi, in the Atlantic Ocean, providing a communications network between Goma, Kigali and Kitona. At the same time they were sending communications to the control tower of the Kitona military airport. Furthermore: "North American instructors were training Serb, Columbian, Somalian and South African mercenaries in Dedia near the island of Idjwi, in the Congolese province of South Kivu".

4.3. The mining companies

According to geological studies carried out over recent years, the Congolese subsoil contains deposits of copper, cobalt, zinc, silver, diamonds, uranium, cadmium and other rare metals, but above all concentrations of gold in exceptional quantities. The greatest concentration of gold is located in the eastern province, in the region of Ituri at the extremes of the borders with Uganda and the Sudan. An eastern Congolese legend places King Solomon's gold mines in this region. A study made for the National Centre for Geological and Mining Investigation (CRGM) reports Ituri's soil as being so rich that with modern processing methods it is possible to obtain up to 6 to 7 kg per ton of fine gold, in the management of the old Okimo pit mines alone. Thousands of

gold prospectors were working independently throughout a region that extends over 83,000 square km. In some zones the quantity of gold reached the astronomical amount of 18kg of fine gold per ton according to CRGM records, compared to a world average of around 11 grams of gold per ton. Up to now only the secondary deposits (alluvium) have been exploited by the Okimo. The primary deposits (hard subterranean rock) are intact and would be the richest. According to the specialists, in square 200 of concession 40 of the Okimo, in the environs of Mongbalu on the border with Uganda, the Sezere mine alone would contain reserves estimated to yield between 2,000 and 3,000 tons of gold, with a value that would reach 20 or 30 thousand million dollars.

In South Kivu the exploitation of the land, not yet underway, would produce precious metals such as 'europium' and 'thorium' used in the aeronautical and space industries.

Despite the fact that North American businesses already had an intense presence in Mobutu's Zaire this is intensified and the attempt is made to secure it with Kabila's arrival. A few extracts from an article by Francois Misser in *La Libre Enterprise*, 26-04-97, serve to clarify:

“The North American businesses now occupy chief position in cobalt and gold. They have also entered the diamond sector where the De Beers empire (South African) held a monopoly on the commercialisation of the country's only industrial exploitation output. The most spectacular display has been the thousand million-dollar contract drawn up by American Mineral Fields on the 16th of April, a new business with headquarters in Hope, Arkansa, Bill Clinton's home state. This contract is for the creation of a zinc factory and for the exploitation of zinc, copper, and cobalt deposits in Kolwezi and Kipushi. AMF's desires are not limited to cobalt or copper. This association, which has a subsidiary in the gold sector in neighbouring Zambia, Zamgold, is also active in the Angolan diamond sector where it has a concession of 8,700 square km on the shores of the Luremo river in North Luanda, on the border of western Kasai.

Other North American companies also find good terms, like European Consolidated Ventures. Its Swedish associate, the magnate Adolph Lundin, signed a contract in late 1996 with the Kengo government for 1500 million dollars, for the exploitation of the Tenke-Fungurume deposits (whose cobalt reserves comprise the equivalent of 30 years' worth of current world production). The North American-Canadian company, Barrick Gold, has permission to exploit over 81,000 square km of the Kilo-Moto Office of Gold Mines concessions in upper Zaire”.

It must be added that Barrick Gold's permission for exploitation was obtained during full war against Mobutu at the end of 1996, and that the United States ex-President and ex-Director of the CIA, George Bush, is a member of their administrative council, the president of which is Brian Mulroney, ex-Prime Minister of Canada¹².

5. INFORMATION, INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND JUSTICE

In Rwanda two radios stood out: Radio Muhabura and RTLM. Radio Muhabura was established by the RPF in 1991 and was notable for its undermining of the regimes born out of the 1959 revolution, presenting them as genocidal. This provoked the creation in 1993 of RTLM, from which calls were launched in 1994 for the assassination of the Tutsis.

5.1. The media

In respect of the international information networks it is interesting to read the words of Pierre Erny, ethnologist of the University of Strasbourg:

“I must confess that it has been an almost unbearable shock for me to see how the media can say anything and drive public opinion in the direction they are aiming for. In this case, I personally had means of re-constituting the facts as I already knew Rwanda thanks to a parallel information network.

But how is it possible to ascertain whether they haven't told us the same amount of rubbish in respect of Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Algeria, the Balkans, etc. with special envoys and live images as proof? Who can still be trusted? Can one speak of the credibility of television? Of all the subtle manoeuvres, so false, employed in some reports? Of all these pictures presenting the evil Hutu murderers of children that, at long last, have been able to find a good Tutsi soldier, the modern 'Zorro' of the tropics? Of all those refugees tricked by government propaganda that return, radiant, to their homes, with peace finally regained, under the tender and watchful gaze of a benevolent RPF soldier? All these set-ups appear artificial to the point where one would have to be enormously ingenious to allow oneself to be deceived. Who do they take us for? Who are they having on? How can it be that people with a minimum of ethics or simply a critical sense can take such charades seriously in such a tragic situation?”¹³

Just as is really the case, effectively the RPF has always considered that the war was played at the media level at the same time as on the battlefield, now that it is in the North that the alliances determining victory on the ground are made. The access to the zones of combat or whichever other sensitive area are strictly controlled. The information media need pictures and it is very difficult and dangerous for them to obtain them in certain conditions. Moreover the presence of journalists puts the witnesses to those situations in great danger. If we ask something in public somebody will generally be scanning the responses. The people know this and fall silent. In consequence it results

extremely difficult for journalists to get hold of important information from the population.

The majority of the RPF's founders are veterans of the Ugandan guerrilla warfare that put Museveni in power. They are aware of the repercussions that the documents and the circumstantial evidence of the crimes have on international public opinion. Therefore the burning of victims, the secrecy, the removal of bodies from the scene of the crime to a hidden location, the communication via coded messages and double meanings, have made it so hard to obtain data on their activities.

5.2. The UNHCR

The conduct of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees has been strongly questioned. One of the highest-impact documents on the killings of the refugees in eastern ex-Zaire was written by a French missionary, a direct witness to the facts¹⁴:

“Some of the UNHCR's initiatives in the past months in the face of the attacks on Uvira, Bukavu, Goma, and Rutshuru (the grouping of the refugees in increasingly fewer locations, systematic registrations in the camps...), lead us to ask ourselves in what measure this United Nations agency was aware of the preparation of an attack coming from Rwanda, or if perhaps it has been manipulated by Kigali in order to facilitate the task.

Whatever the case, the day after the capture of Goma all the material, particularly the computer information, was emptied from the UNHCR-Goma dispatches, in BDGL. The lists of all the refugees were sent to Gisenyi (Rwanda) and along with them the confidential reports given by those refugees in order to obtain food.

On the 20th of December 1996, I approached a UNHCR-Goma leader and I reproached him for failing to denounce that situation of the indiscriminate killings. He replied: ‘We know very well that dozens of thousands of refugees are assassinated in the forest; but we, what can we do? We are not an army; the interposition force is the one that should intervene’... Despite all this, why this silence?’

A report given by two NGOs¹⁵ states:

“Information has been received about many matters that put into question a number of local workers for humanitarian organisations, particularly for the UNHCR, for having acted as ‘guides or facilitators’ who identify and trick refugees, getting them to come out of hiding whereby they end up being assassinated. In the presence of the numerous testimonies concerning the killing of refugees, the UNHCR's position has become unsustainable. Remaining silent in the face of the killings and in the face of the impossibility of bringing aid to the refugees owing to the obstruction of the military in control of the territory, is to make oneself an indirect accomplice to war crimes and to crimes against humanity”.

The surviving refugees of ex-Zaire were repatriated to Rwanda by the UNHCR while they pleaded to be sent to other countries as they feared for their safety. Half a million Rwandan refugees from Tanzania were also forced to return. In the words of Father Santos Ganuza¹⁶:

“The Tanzanian refugees were obliged to return to Rwanda. The UNHCR has acted in a manner totally contrary to its own principles. I asked them for explications and they responded that they were obeying orders”.

According to Article 32 of the Convention relating to the Statute of Refugees, they cannot, under any pretext, be sent back to their countries of origin without their own consent.

5.3. The Human Rights NGOs

The international NGOs for Human Rights have fallen short in denunciation, or else they have been well manipulated. Some, like Amnesty International, have been more objective, trying to denounce the violations committed on both sides. Others have been excessively partial in their task.

Organisations for the defence of the rights of man, such as African Rights, African Watch and the United States Committee for Refugees, presented the RPF war as a war of liberation and, therefore, legitimate. Roger Winter, president of the US Committee for Refugees and also president of Interaction, a Federation of United States NGOs, has played a very important role in the North American government's politics in the African Great Lakes.

In March 1999, Human Rights Watch and the International Federation of Leagues for the Rights of Man published an 800 page report on the genocide in Rwanda titled 'Leave None to Tell the Story'. It is incredible to confirm how little information there is concerning the RPF. The authors themselves recognise that the killings committed by the RPF against the civil population have received very little investigation (p. 692) and they add: “As this report focuses its attention on the genocide, the retrieval of data concerning the crimes committed by the RPF is limited”. Basically they are declaring that the RPF has only committed isolated acts of revenge, but that they have not assassinated in a ‘concerted, planned, systematic and methodical’ fashion as the 1994 UN report claimed in respect of the killings committed against the Tutsis.

5.4. The Criminal Tribunals

All people, of whatever group, who are guilty of interethnic killings during the war sparked off from the 1st of October 1990 should be brought before the courts. This judgement is necessary to break the pattern of the impunity of this war's protagonists.

The RPF is a party implicated in the Rwandan conflict from beginning to end, and has played a determining role in all the massacres that have been committed. It cannot be judge and party in the same process. What is more, even if the RPF were not to be set aside in this process as a defendant, the established regime in Kigali is incapable of securing a fair justice for the simple fact that the Rwandan judicial system has been destroyed. The test is in the 200,000 Hutus (officially some 100,000) detained in the prisons, the dungeons, the military barracks and other secret detention centres, with no details of the accusations and without reason given, with death resulting from torture and mistreatment being a regular occurrence.

The RPF government does not appear to exert itself to judge those suspected of having committed murders. In his resignation letter of 12-05-95 Ntakirutimana Jean-Damascene, Director of the RPF

Prime Ministers Office, denounces the RPF's blocking of the judicial system. And in the document accompanying his letter he writes “*the RPF manoeuvres subtly in order to block the functioning of the judicial system*”.

In Burundi, military impunity is almost absolute, meanwhile the prisons are overflowing with Hutus accused of having assassinated Tutsis after the assassination of President Ndaye or of being involved in the rebellion.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was constituted on 08-11-94 by Resolution 955 of the UN Security Council, without any vote in the General Assembly, to judge war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes of genocide committed in Rwanda or by Rwandan citizens in the neighbouring states during 1994. The tribunal's headquarters were established in the Tanzanian city of Arusha. The 38 detainees currently under this tribunal's jurisdiction are Hutus accused of genocide against the Tutsis.

In respect of the powers of this tribunal it is well to note that:

— *a.* It would be far more logical that whatever the crime against international rights committed within the context of the Rwandan conflict, wherever the criminal is found and whatever the nationality, it be submitted to the power of the International Tribunal for Rwanda. In this way those responsible for certain governmental services could be judged by this tribunal.

— *b.* The power of this tribunal is limited to the year 1994, but it ought to be broadened to cover an earlier and later period, especially considering the massacres committed in eastern Zaire by the RPF.

— *c.* The ‘*crimes against peace*’ defined by the Nuremberg Court, amongst which the war of aggression is placed, have not been picked up in the statute of the tribunal for Rwanda.

— *d.* According to the tribunal's statutes it has supremacy over the national jurisdictions of all the states (art. 8.2). Despite all this, to date it has not intervened in a single proceeding of those persons detained in the Rwandan prisons.

— *e.* The crimes against humanity committed in Burundi and the DR of Congo must also be judged in an International Criminal Tribunal.

6. THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF THE REGION

The five years of the RPF's power in Rwanda have been characterised by the constant disappearances of members of the country's interior Hutu population. There has been talk of the existence of a plan of the slow but steady extermination of the Hutu population.

6.1. The current situation

The following anonymous testimony, collected at the beginning of 1997, appears to us to be a reliable account of the country's daily life over the last five years:

“In certain regions the terror exists: at five in the afternoon the hills-people no longer live; each one shuts themselves into their house, insecure and isolated houses, waiting to see if today or tomorrow they or their neighbours will be taken. The whole country is militarised and the military are full of themselves, moreover, as much in the city as in the hills, the source of so many deaths is patently clear, although the media always declare that they are infiltrators from Zaire. The road control is very strong. Even though not everything is reported on radio, almost every day we bury our dead from successive killings, and the victims are almost always those who have returned from Zaire or Tanzania, and lately whites. It is the time of extermination, of revenge, personal or familial”.

On 18-01-97 three cooperators of the Spanish NGO Medicos del Mundo were assassinated in north-eastern Rwanda. In the ensuing days the vast majority of NGOs working in the west of the

country abandoned it. Without western witnesses the disappearances and assassinations of refugees recently returned to the country were constant.

Not only have there been selective killings, but some have been massive, like that of the Kibeho camp for the homeless where the army massacred some 10,000 people in April of 1995, or the Nyakimana massacre in which 8,000 civilians in hiding in a cave were assassinated in October 1997. 1997 saw the formation of the Rwandan Liberation Army (ALIR), a guerrilla group operating in the west of the country.

On 10-06-98 James Gasana, Rwandan ex-Defence Minister for the democratic transition who resigned in July 1993 and went into self-exile in Switzerland gave, in his declaration to the French Mission for Information concerning Rwanda, some figures of the victims that we consider to be very reliable, perhaps a little underestimated. He says that in mid-1997, the sum of all the testimonies that had been collected allowed him to declare that the total number of victims in the Rwandan conflict was 3,150,000 people, 40% of the country's population that, according to the 1991 census executed under UN supervision, totalled 7,150,000 inhabitants.

The present relative calm in the Rwandan interior is due to the continuing war in the DR of Congo. Currently, numerous very credible testimonies assert that Hutu prisoners are being forcefully recruited to fight in the Congolese war where they are obliged to fight in the vanguard positions on the front line under threat of being shot by Tutsi officials if they leave them. In the north-west of the country some 600,000 people live in concentration camps created and controlled by the army, in precarious conditions and unable to attend regularly to their own fields.

The Bishop of Gikongoro, Monsignor Augustin Misago, is still in prison, after being detained in April 1999 under the accusation of having participated in the genocide. It is no secret that the Catholic Church is in the government's focus. The article in the *Osservatore Romano* of 21-05-99, where for the first time double genocide is spoken of, is significant. The Catholic Church is considered by the regime to be the institution that gave moral support to the Hutu revolution in 1959 that permitted the overturn of the prevailing secular order in Rwanda.

The current situation in Burundi is extremely grave. The fighting between the Hutu guerrillas and the Tutsi army has intensified. After a guerrilla attack the army takes reprisals against the population. In the Bujumbura province the army has prohibited access to NGOs and journalists but it is known that there have been many killings and that bodies quickly disappear. Arms have been distributed to the Tutsi militia that create real bloodbaths amongst the Hutu population. The MISNA agency has filed reports of the creation of new concentration camps in which the population are forced to exist without even the barest necessary living conditions. Although the brutality of the army cannot be compared to that of the guerrillas the latter have, on several occasions, dealt out very harsh punishment to those persons accused of collaborating with the enemy.

This deterioration of the situation is directly related to the lack of progress in the peace negotiations being held in Arusha where the mediator, Julius Nyerere, has already shown his disappointment at the involved parties' unwillingness to reach an agreement.

In the DR of Congo, the recently signed Lusaka Accords have declared a cease-fire that is constantly being violated by one band or another. There is a split between Ugandan and

Rwandan troops owing, above all, to the lack of agreement over the distribution of the spoils of the mines, but also motivated by two distinct strategies. Rwanda has sustained the main burden of the war against Kabila and has given clear demonstration of its intentions to reach Kinshasa, whilst Uganda seems to be content with the control of part of the neighbouring territory. At the same time the bloody methods employed by the Rwandan and Burundian Tutsi armies against the civil population of eastern Congo have provoked the distancing of the Ugandan army, along with a good number of the coalition's few Congolese allies united within the Congolese Regrouping for Democracy (RCD), which likewise has split into two factions.

The application of the Lusaka Accords will be very difficult seeing that neither the traditional representatives of the country's eastern population that has endured the greatest aggression, nor the Mai-Mai guerrillas, have been taken into account. Neither is it at all clear how the various guerrilla groups operating in the territory are to be disarmed, nor is there any resolution concerning how to fuse the three armies contemplated in the agreements when the majority of the RCD military are Rwandan, Burundian and Ugandan. In addition there is no talk of justice for the victims of the killings, nor is there any real thought given for the present absence of a constitutional State in Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda, whilst this is being demanded of the DR of Congo.

In Tanzania, in the Kigoma region along the shores of the Tanganyika lake and throughout the length of the Burundian border, around 500,000 Burundian and Congolese refugees are packed together. Many Burundians have already been living there for years. The Congolese arrive on a daily basis, fleeing the massacres committed by Rwandan and Burundian Tutsi troops. The UNHCR has considered itself obliged to create new camps. The food rations are minimal. The Burundian refugees live in fear of a possible attack by the Burundian army similar to that in Zaire in 1996.

6.2. Building a future for all

The co-existence of the three ethnic groups, as much in Rwanda as in Burundi, will be almost impossible without an arrival at a more complete and just comprehension of the reality than is currently the case. Without complete truth reconciliation will not be achieved. Mutual recognition of the responsibilities and of the other ethnic groups' values is lacking. History must be allowed to run its course without attempting to backtrack. In Rwanda there was a revolution, the emancipation of the majority of the population, and now there cannot be a return to the old patterns of submission.

In the DR of Congo, especially in the east of the country, the population's resentment towards the Tutsi community is huge. The Tutsis, who had installed themselves in Kivu many years previously, are now regarded as invaders and oppressors of the other ethnic groups co-existing in the area. It will be extremely difficult to establish the foundations of a just and peaceful co-existence.

The greatest victim of this conflict has been, and continues to be, the civilian community. The future must be constructed for them, even though they have no vehicle of self-expression, nor political power. It will be slower, but constructed on more solid foundations. The voice of those

local and international groups and organisations working in favour of this community must be listened to.

In the face of pressure from the World Bank and the IMF there was a wish to impose democracy in Rwanda without any respect for its own processes. Nevertheless, now there is no longer talk of democracy for Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. The RPF government that had fixed a period of five years for the initiation of a democratic process ends up announcing another five years' deferment. In Burundi, following a state coup, the person who lost the 1993 democratic elections is governing. In the DR of Congo there were already sufficiently solid foundations to initiate a democratic process, but this has been completely interrupted by the war.

A United States Congresswoman, Cynthia McKinney, who visited the DR of Congo over the summer, sent a very significant letter to President Clinton on 31-08-99 saying:

“I have just returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo, meeting with committed individuals from myriad walks of life. Unfortunately, I feel compelled to report to you that crimes against humanity are being committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo and throughout Africa, seemingly with the help and support of your Administration

I would suggest to you that U.S. policy in the Democratic Republic of Congo has failed and it is another example of our policy failures across the Continent. One only has to point to diplomatic duality in Ethiopia and Eritrea, indecisiveness and ambivalence in Angola, indifference in Democratic Republic of Congo, the destruction of democracy in Sierra Leone, and inflexibility elsewhere on the Continent. The result is an Africa policy in disarray, a Continent on fire, and U.S. complicity in crimes against humanity.

Mr. President, everywhere, people whisper it, but are too `polite' to say it out loud: your Africa policy has not only NOT helped to usher in the so-called `African Renaissance', but has contributed to the continued pain and suffering of the African peoples.

In addition, your failure to intervene and stop the illegal invasion of Democratic Republic of Congo by your allies, Uganda and Rwanda, has directly led to the commission of crimes against humanity by their troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Even now, you ask the world to “shadow kiss” this outrageous policy by calling these two countries uninvited when the world knows that both Uganda and Rwanda are military aggressors deep in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, far away from their borders. The atrocities being suffered daily by all the people of this region are outrageous and are compounded by bad U.S. policy and indifferent U.S. leadership.”

Right now the construction of a future for all in the African Great Lakes still seems very distant. Despite everything we must hope that a better understanding of the conflict will facilitate a reconsideration of the western politics that have been applied in Africa, and that the African communities can initiate an era of justice, peace and liberty that enables them to decide their own future.

Notes

1. Up to Rwandan independence this is taken from the work of C.M. Overdulve, *'Rwanda, Un Peuple Avec une Histoire'*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1997.
2. Tito Rutaremara quoted by François Misser in *'Vers un Nouveau Rwanda? Entretiens avec Paul Kagame'*, Editions Luc Pire, Editions Karthala, 1995, p. 155.
3. Jerzy Bednarek, *'Quatre ans après le génocide, un témoin oculaire raconte la 'solution finale' des 'hordes armées' du general Kagame lancées à la conquête du Rwanda'*, in the magazine Africa International, Beaufays (Belgian), 07-10-98.
4. M. Harald Marwitz, responsible in the past for USAID (United States International Development Aid)
5. Remigius Kintu (Ugandan Democratic Coalition), *'Terror incognito: the U.S. conspiracy behind Museveni's wars'*, Maryland, 19-04-97. The United States Senate has invited Remigius Kintu, on more than one occasion, to present his analysis of the conflict.
6. IRIN (part of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), 28-01-97.
7. Physicians for Human Rights, *'Investigation in Eastern Congo and Eastern Rwanda, a Report'*, 16-07-97, pp. 14-15.
8. Le Monde, *'L'ONU évite d'avoir à condamner Kigali et Kinshasa'*, New York (United States), 05-06-98.
9. Nick Gordon, *'Return to hell'*, Sunday Express, 21-04-96.
10. Lynn Duke, The Washington Post, 14-07-98.
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