

London's war in Africa: Death camps in Burundi

by Linda de Hoyos

Reports placed before the United Nations from the World Health Organization show that the British-backed Burundi government of coup leader Pierre Buyoya is carrying out a systematic policy of mass death for hundreds of thousands of Burundians. In this small country of only 5 million people, up to 800,000 people have been incarcerated in "camps," in which they are now dying of typhoid fever and other diseases at the rate of 1,000 per day, according to a World Health Organization (WHO) report.

The Buyoya government began to move entire families, all of them from the Hutu group, into concentration camps beginning in December. The policy has been confirmed by the U.S. State Department. On Jan. 14, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns stated, "The [Burundian] Army has also been involved in a pattern of forced resettlement, by which Burundians in rural areas, mostly poor farmers, are forced to move into camps."

According to the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD), which represents the Hutu population of Burundi, as well as many Tutsis who reject the warlord mentality of the Tutsi military, there are more than 800,000 people in such camps "awaiting death due to lack of shelter, food, drinking water, and endemic diseases such as typhoid, cholera, and dysentery." WHO produced a report on the situation on March 11, which said that "between 500-1,000 persons are dying of typhoid each day, and that more than 400,000 persons are potential victims of that disease alone. The same international organization acknowledges that the typhoid epidemic is the most serious recorded since the Second World War."

Since the Buyoya junta came to power in a coup on July 25, 1996, Burundi has been placed under an economic embargo by neighboring African countries. Humanitarian aid has not been channeled into the country. Hence, those placed in government-run camps, their food production brought to a halt, have absolutely no means of sustenance and are rapidly dying.

This is the goal of the Burundian military, which has made a military decision to round up the Hutu citizenry, as a result of its inability to militarily defeat the growing ranks of the Forces for the Defense of Democracy, the CNDD's armed wing, which now controls large sections of the Burundi countryside. The Burundian military has the goal of placing at least 1 million people in such camps, targetting those Hutu populations living near cities, towns, or market centers, with the aim of creating a no-man's-land buffer zone between the

urban areas under its control and the rural sea of the Hutu population, the primary base of the CNDD-FDD.

Simultaneously, the incarceration policy, the military expects, will free it for deployment into eastern Zaire, particularly Shaba province, on Britain's behalf.

In addition, the Burundian military has murdered many returning Hutu refugees since December 1996, when thousands of Burundians were summarily kicked out of Tanzania. The Jan. 14 State Department statement notes that "the Burundian military has confirmed the Jan. 10 killing of over 120 Burundian Hutu returnees, who had reportedly been expelled from Tanzania the same day. This massacre is only part of a pattern of violence in Burundi which must cease. Only the day before, witnesses implicated the Army in the massacre of more than 80 civilians on Jan. 5 in rural Muramvya province."

The CNDD further adds: "The United Nations High Commission on Refugees in particular, have said that there were more than 300,000 Burundi refugees in Zaire and Tanzania following the crisis in eastern Zaire. Among them, 20,000 returned home, but a good number of them were massacred in cold blood, as soon as they set foot on the Burundi soil, while the whereabouts of the remaining ones are not known."

Britain's brothers in blood

The history of the Tutsi military rule in Burundi highlights the reasons why the British monarchy's Privy Council has found the Tutsi militarists so useful for their plans to build an enlarged British empire in East and Central Africa. The Tutsi leadership of the military rests on a small clique of linked families in the Bururi region of south Burundi. This clique has long-standing ties to the Hima and Banyarwanda groups in the southern Uganda of President Yoweri Museveni and Rwandan Defense Minister Paul Kagame. Unlike Rwanda, where the Hutus overthrew the Tutsi monarchy in 1959, Burundi has been ruled by a Tutsi military junta since independence. To retain the absolute power of the minority, the military has periodically resorted to mass murder of Hutus—in 1966, 1972, and 1988.

The Burundi military remains a major component today of the Tutsi war-machine led by Museveni, which is also comprised of the Ugandan Resistance Army, and the Rwandan Patriotic Army under Kagame. All of these armies are politically and militarily intertwined. The RPA, formerly the Rwandan Patriotic Front, was organized out of a section of the Ugandan military, just as Museveni had used the services of Banyarwanda youth in Uganda in the bush war that brought him to power, with British aid, in Kampala in 1986. The leadership of the RPF, including Kagame, were in the top echelons of the Ugandan Army. Kagame was trained in the United States in 1990-91, while a major in the Ugandan Army.

The Burundi military, which has been mono-ethnically Tutsi since 1966, also helped bring Museveni to power, with Burundi's former Tutsi dictator, Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, handing over \$10 million in Burundi government money to Museveni in 1983-84 for his bush war.

London wants Zaire partitioned

In Brussels on March 17, two days after the forces behind Laurent Kabila had taken the key city of Kisangani in north-central Zaire, Zairean Foreign Minister Kamanda wa Kamanda warned that the capture of the city carries "the seeds and the risks of a partition of Zaire." The dividing line would run through the east of the country along "the 25th parallel which goes from Kisangani in Upper Zaire, to Kamina and Shaba [province]," he said.

That is precisely London's gameplan, as called for by the March 10 London *Financial Times*, and also through that outlet for British intelligence in the United States, the *New York Times*, on March 18. The *Times* declared that "Kisangani gives the rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, substantial control over Zaire's mineral wealth. He can now consolidate his rule over the gold-producing eastern third of the country [George Bush-Barrick Gold country] while commanding river access to the rich copper and cobalt deposits of the south. . . . At this point, it is not even certain that the ethnically divided, politically demoralized country can remain united."

As per the desires of the British monarchy's Privy Council, eastern Zaire is to be attached to a mega-empire ruled from Yoweri Museveni's Uganda, that would incor-

porate most of the vast mineral wealth of the Great Rift Valley—southern Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, eastern Zaire, Tanzania, and at least the copper belt section of Zambia.

Although Kabila's political cover depends upon his appearing to be the "liberator" of Zaire from the regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko, there are indications that he will receive no backing from London to go further eastward, once he has taken the diamond areas of Kasai in central Zaire, and completed the takeover of the copper-rich Shaba province to the south. One British outlet indicated that if Kabila rejected a cease-fire and tried to take all of Zaire, he would lose the support of Uganda and Rwanda who, the outlet says, have backed him in hopes of creating a "buffer zone."

In fact, 17,000 Ugandan troops and large sections of the Rwandan Patriotic Army and the Burundi Army comprise nearly the entirety of Kabila's fighting force. Without them, he will not get very far. Kabila and Museveni's coordination is such that on March 14, Kabila traveled to Gulu, Uganda, to meet Museveni, where the Ugandan warlord is directing the Ugandan invasion of Sudan, begun Feb. 21.

The United States has consistently stated its commitment to a united Zaire, and is demanding that Kabila and Zaire adhere to a UN Security Council peace plan, beginning with a cease-fire. However, London has no desire for a unified, democratic Zaire. It wants eastern Zaire—where the loot is, and thinks it only needs mercenary marcherlord armies to get it.—*Linda de Hoyos*

Combined, all three armies are heavily deployed into Zaire, where the Burundi military is the major force behind "Zairean rebel" Laurent Kabila's march into Zaire's southern copper-belt province of Shaba.

Origins of the CNDD

The leading opposition to the Burundi military inside the country is the CNDD, which was organized by Leonard Nyangoma, the interior minister of the government of the first Hutu President, Melchior Ndadaye, who was *elected* to office in June 1993. In October 1993, the Tutsi military murdered Ndadaye, and was only prevented from taking power immediately by the United States. Even so, the military action and the bloodletting in the aftermath of the coup had a major impact on neighboring Rwanda and the expectations of the Rwandan government, if the all-Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front were to take power there.

In Burundi, after October 1993, the United States backed successive, impotent Hutu-Tutsi coalition governments, as the military carried out a persistent campaign of slaughter of Hutu civilians. Scores of Tutsi and Hutu democratic leaders, provincial governors, and parliamentarians have been mur-

dered since 1993 by the military. In March 1994, Nyangoma fled Burundi for his life, and organized the CNDD. Although its base is largely Hutu, the CNDD executive is comprised of both Hutus and leading Tutsis, including author Laurence Ndarubagiye and former deputy speaker of the Burundian parliament Staney Kaduga, both of whom also fled Burundi in fear of their lives. In July 1996, the democratic fig-leaf was ripped off the Burundi military, when a coup was carried out, bringing Buyoya back to power. Since his removal after elections in 1993, Buyoya had been a frequent visitor to Washington, and to the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, and was named an adviser to the World Bank.

Between July and December 1996, the CNDD has calculated, on a month-by-month and province-by-province basis, that the Burundi military had murdered in total 38,572 Burundians. Now they are attempting to carry out a "final solution" to the Hutu problem, placing, as of now, 800,000 men, women, and children behind barbed wire in what can only be described as Nazi-like death camps.

This is the process the British Privy Council has put into motion with its deployment of warlord Museveni and his allies. The question is: Will the United States act to stop it?