

London marcher lords prepare final solution for Burundi

by Linda de Hoyos

A “final solution” against the Hutu population of Burundi is being prepared, according to a June 17 release from the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD) issued from Brussels.

This final solution will come at the hands of the Burundian monoethnic Tutsi military, in combination with forces from Yoweri Museveni’s National Resistance Army of Uganda, from the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Army of Paul Kagame, and from forces reportedly promised by Laurent Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo—the same mercenary force that seized Zaire in a seven-month war of genocide from November 1996 to June 1997, funded in part by British Commonwealth mining companies. Now, the CNDD warns, Burundian Hutus are in for the same murderous treatment as this marcher-lord force gave to the Rwandan and Burundian refugees in Zaire.

The Tutsi military of Burundi

Since July 25, 1996, Burundi has been ruled by a military junta led by former President and military dictator Pierre Buyoya. Buyoya overthrew the last vestiges of the government that had been elected in June 1993, led by Melchior Ndayaye, head of the Frodebu Party. In October 1993, Ndayaye was brutally murdered in an attempted coup from the Burundi military. The Frodebu is a multi-ethnic party, but the Burundi military has been monoethnically Tutsi since 1966. After the assassination of Ndayaye, the international community worked to impose on Burundi a power-sharing agreement, begun in September 1994, which gave increasing powers to the Burundian military at the expense of the elected government.

Meanwhile, as *EIR* has documented, the military carried out a systematic campaign of assassination against both Hutu leaders, and especially against any Tutsi leader who opposed the caste-superiority mentality of the Tutsi militarists. Over half of the country’s 15 provincial governors were murdered over the span of two years; one-third of the elected parliament was assassinated or forced to flee the country for their lives.

When former U.S. Ambassador to Burundi Robert Krueger in 1995 protested the assassinations and the military’s unrelenting murder of Hutu farmers, his life was threatened by radical forces associated with the Tutsi military, and at one point, his convoy, during a tour of the countryside, was attacked, and Krueger barely escaped with his life.

The government of President Sylvestre Ntibantuganya eventually became a mere fig-leaf for the growing power of the Burundi military.

The only force that has offered a significant challenge to the Burundian military is the CNDD, founded by Leonard Nyangoma, the interior minister in the Ndayaye government who is credited with organizing the June 1993 election victory of Frodebu. Forced to flee for his life from Burundi in March 1994, Nyangoma organized the CNDD and its armed wing, the Front for the Defense of Democracy (FDD), convinced that Hutus and allies in Burundi must defend themselves from the Tutsi military.

Over the past two years, the FDD has made it impossible for the Burundian military to rule over large sections of the country, especially in the north. By the end of 1995, Burundi was in the midst of full-scale civil war. At the point that Tanzania, in combination with the Organization of African Unity, was preparing to bring a so-called “peacekeeping force” into Burundi, the Burundi military pulled a coup on July 25, 1996, ousting the Ntibantuganya government completely.

The coup was ostensibly carried out to preclude the deployment of any foreign troops on Burundian soil; however, the coup was also a precondition for the invasion of Zaire from Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi that followed in October 1996. Among the targets of the Zairean invasion were the FDD and CNDD bases of operation in Zaire, opposite to Burundi. Many Burundians were killed in Uvira and Bukavu, Zaire, in the first days of the invasion of Zaire. Further, even the British-tainted United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and aid agencies reported that, as Burundian Hutu refugees were driven back into Burundi, they were met with ferocious slaughter by the Burundian military. Protests to the UN Security Council brought no relief for Burundian refugees, however. In May, Peter Kessler of the UNHCR told the *New York Times* that, in Burundi, “it’s really dangerous” for returning refugees. “The International Red Cross pulled out after some of its delegates were killed. The UNHCR has no presence in the countryside. Three provinces are completely banned to aid workers for security reasons.”

Back to Burundi

Now that the job in Zaire appears to be completed, London’s marcher-lord forces are now turning their attention back

to Burundi. On the weekend of May 24-25, top officers of the Burundian and Rwandan military met to map out their strategy. Reports from Uganda have indicated that in early June, up to 3,000 Ugandan troops were being deployed to Burundi to aid the military against the FDD. As of June 25, Rwandan and Ugandan troops were massing at Uvira, Congo, directly opposite the capital city of Bujumbura. In this context, the CNDD release specifies that:

"1. The military regime in Bujumbura is preparing for a total war against Hutu populations and the CNDD's freedom-fighters in the following manner:

"1.1. The regime's Ministry of Defense has ordered a huge number of Mortar 60, as many as to equip every section of six soldiers of their army. The first consignment has already arrived via Angola.

"1.2. After receiving all the mortars, there will be a generalized attack against the population, and against the CNDD positions all over the country.

"1.3. The said invasion will lead the army into an invasion of Tanzania directed at the Burundian refugee camps. The army plans to kill as many healthy men as possible, and then to proceed to a compulsory and forced repatriation for the men who would have survived the slaughter, plus women, children and old people, exactly like it happened in Zaire/Congo recently.

"1.4. The junta minister of the interior, Epitace Bayaganakandi, said on May 19, 1997 in Gitega town, that Laurent Kabila in Congo-Zaire has promised to help them.

"1.5. Civilian Tutsi are being trained in secret. Their role will be to remain the rear base of the army and to guard the Tutsi population against retaliation and to guard the strategic points in the absence of the army which will be up-country and in Tanzania."

It is possible, the CNDD notes, that the campaign against the Hutus in Burundi will involve the removal of President Buyoya, and his replacement by Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, the military dictator of Burundi from 1978-87. Bagaza is chairman of the Parena Party, which opposes any negotiations with the CNDD or any other parties. Bagaza, who handed over Burundian state money to fund Yoweri Museveni's war to power in the Ugandan bush in the early 1980s, is known to coordinate closely with both Museveni and with Kagame in Rwanda.

Another key player is Mathias Hitimana, a Burundian arms dealer who carries a Belgian passport. Hitimana had funded and help organize the attempted coup of June 1993 against Ndadaye. Hitimana travels frequently to Kampala for consultations with Museveni, according to sources.

It is the Tutsi forces arrayed around Bagaza and Hitimana who are demanding that there be no negotiations to settle the war and constitute a government. The CNDD and Buyoya have held preliminary negotiations in Rome, under the aegis of the Community of Saint Egidio. In addition, there are negotiations scheduled to begin at the end of June in Arusha, Tan-

zania, under the auspices of former President Julius Nyerere, which would include the CNDD, the Buyoya government, and factions of the Frodebu led by former Speaker of the Parliament Jean Minani. This latter group wants a return to the conventional agreement of September 1994, whereas the CNDD is demanding the implementation of the Constitution of March 9, 1992, which ensures national elections, among other key points.

In the meantime, fighting is intensifying in Burundi, with fighting 15 miles from the capital city of Bujumbura.

Final solution already in progress

But, against the backdrop of war and fighting, the Buyoya regime has already begun a final solution for the Hutus of Burundi. In December 1996, the military regime began rounding up peasants and placing them in concentration camps. Today, there are up to 50 camps in 6 out of the 15 provinces of Burundi, holding 800,000 people. Uprooted from their homes and with no means of subsistence, these people are being starved to death and are also dying of disease, given the terrible health conditions in the camps.

The World Health Organization reported on May 12 that the camps were the site of the "most severe typhus epidemic in the world since the Second World War." Over 20,000 cases were reported in two northwest provinces. WHO official Bernard Lala noted that the sickness "always comes in the wake of war. . . . Its spread is accelerated by the close proximity of people in the camps."

The UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs also noted in April that the camps represented "catastrophic conditions" for those forced into them. A team from Doctors Without Borders found a malnutrition rate in the Karuzi camps of 18.7%, with severe malnutrition at 4.9%. The U.S. State Department has also protested the mass incarcerations, the last time in April, stating, "The United States finds Major Pierre Buyoya's self-declared Interim Government's policy of forced regroupment to be highly objectionable. . . . The forced resettlement of civilians into camps disrupts traditional rural life and places an already vulnerable population at risk of violence, malnourishment, and disease. . . . Until all Burundians are allowed to return freely to their homes and farms, the U.S. government will hold Major Buyoya and his government responsible for the lives and welfare of the inhabitants" of the camps.

However, it is now two months later, and the incarceration policy remains, as Hutus, particularly the very young, the very old, and pregnant women, continue to die in the camps.

The situation highlights the problem: The Burundi military has repeatedly demonstrated its capacity for ruthless mass murder, and is preparing now for a final solution to the Hutu problem in Burundi. Unless the United States takes action against the British Empire and its unleashing of the marcher-lord forces of Museveni, Kabila, and Kagame, the world can expect to see many horrors to come in Africa.