

Why London supports Rwanda's confessed mass killer Paul Kagame

by Linda de Hoyos

In Mainz, Germany, on May 21, 1997, Rwandan Vice President and Defense Minister Paul Kagame, confronted with questions from *EIR* on the role of his Rwandan military in the massacres of Rwandan and Burundian refugees in eastern Zaire, hissed back at the *EIR* correspondent: "You go and find out." When the question was repeated again, this time from a reporter for the *Mainzer Allgemeine Zeitung*, Kagame declaimed: "I do not know of any massacres in Zaire. I have no troops in Zaire and have nothing to do with what is happening there."

But, by July 1997, after the news of the massacres of thousands of refugees had finally broken through the Western press, even in the United States, Kagame no longer denied the role of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) in eastern Zaire. An article appearing in the *Washington Post* on July 9 under the headline "Defense Minister Says Arms, Troops Supplied for Anti-Mobutu Drive," featured an interview with Kagame by the *Post's* John Pomfret. The article began: "Rwanda's powerful defense minister Paul Kagame, has acknowledged for the first time his country's key role in the overthrow of President Mobutu Sese Seko in neighboring Congo, saying that the Rwandan government planned and directed the rebellion that toppled the longtime dictator and that Rwandan troops and officers led the rebel forces.

"Kagame, a Tutsi, also responded to allegations that Tutsi officers of the Rwandan army ordered massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees inside Congo. . . . Rwandan officers interviewed in Congo said the Tutsis were given a free hand by the Congolese rebels to attack the Rwandan Hutus . . . in exchange for backing the war against Mobutu."

This time, Kagame did not attempt to deny the atrocities, but blamed the deaths on the United Nations for failing to take action to "disarm" the refugees—a reference to the charge that Hutu militias and members of the army of the former government were in the camps. Kagame said, according to Pomfret, "the impetus for the war [against Zaire] was the Hutu refugee camps. . . . Kagame said the battle plan as formulated by him and his advisers was simple. The first goal was to 'dismantle the camps.' The second was to 'destroy the structure' of the Hutu army and militia units based in and around

the camps either by bringing the Hutu combatants back to Rwanda and 'dealing with them here or scattering them.' The third goal was broader—toppling Mobutu. Kagame said, 'It would have been more suitable' if Congolese rebels had done most of the fighting against Mobutu's troops, but it also would have been riskier."

A month after Pomfret's article, the South African *Mail and Guardian* featured an article, "Why Rwanda Trumpeted Its Zaire Role," by Mahmood Mamdani. Mamdani had flown to the Rwandan capital of Kigali, to ask that precise question, and according to his account, received this answer from Defense Minister Kagame: "I wanted to tell the truth. I did not always want to be in the position of lying, of denying things."

Further, the remorseless Kagame declared, "First, truth would allow us to put forth our own point of view, even demand that our point of view be heard on issues like the killing of refugees, and thereby relieve pressure on Kabila and the alliance."

More recently, Kagame has defended the conduct of his troops in eastern Zaire. In an interview with the Pan African New Agency published on Oct. 28, Kagame declared that "I have no apologies or regrets on the conduct of my soldiers." Now Kagame has put forward the claim that armed Rwandan Hutus were preparing an invasion of Rwanda against the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). "Everybody had information of an imminent attack on Rwanda," Kagame told PANA. "He said civilian deaths must have occurred when the armed Hutu in refugee camps, who had participated in the Tutsi genocide, fought his soldiers while mingling among women and children."

Consequences of the truth?

That there was murder of women and children and the elderly is beyond a doubt. In but one example of the reams of evidence that have surfaced on this point, Marcel van Soest, epidemiologist with Doctors Without Borders, testified to U.S. congressional hearings on Nov. 5 that a survey carried out by the organization in July 1997 showed a mortality rate of 80% among refugees, and most of those deaths were violent deaths. The group surveyed was in the Ndjoundou Camp.

“Those refugees had fled the attacked camps in Kivu Province and had undertaken a forced march over a distance of some 1,500 km under the control of elements from the old Rwandan Army (FAR) and various militia men. . . . The survey shows that, of every 5 people from the original group who left the Kivu camps in October 1996, only 1 arrived in Congo Republic; one did not survive repeated military actions; and 3 could not be accounted for. Of those reported killed, 95% were the result of violence and 5% died from disease. . . . It is interesting to note that the proportion of deaths was the same for children under age five as for the entire population, and 41% of deaths by attack were of women.”

Is it not true then, that the entire world knows that mass deaths—some say of up to 600,000 refugees in eastern Zaire—occurred during the Zaire war of 1996-97? Is it not true that the entire world knows that Rwandan Defense Minister Paul Kagame has admitted the role of his troops in such murders, not as the haphazard results of fierce battles, but as a point of strategy, or, as the *Washington Post* said in a front-page headline on June 9: “Massacres Part of Strategy in Zaire War”?

But what have been the consequences to Rwanda and Kagame of this truth? The answer is, “none.”

Since 1994, it has been the policy of the Western governments to label every Rwandan Hutu as a “genocidalist,” in reference to the mass deaths of both Tutsis and Hutus that occurred inside Rwanda in the aftermath of the murder of Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana.

In contrast to this stance, Kagame’s confessions have been met with impunity. To the contrary, his confessions have acted to make the entire world complicit in the genocide itself.

Despite Kagame’s admissions, the British Privy Council continues its sponsorship of the Kigali regime, as a subsidiary of its key bastion in the region, Yoweri Museveni’s Uganda. International Development Secretary Clare Short, in Kigali in October, declared that “Britain will continue to work in partnership with the Rwandan government to rebuild the country. This will also benefit many beyond its borders—economic and political stability in East Africa go hand in hand.”

Even in the United States, Kagame continues to be hailed by some as the epitome of the “new leadership” for Africa—along with his comrades-in-arms, Ugandan dictator Museveni, Burundian dictator Pierre Buyoya, Congo dictator Laurent Kabila, Ethiopian dictator Meles Zenawi, and Eritrean dictator Isaias Afwerki.

At a seminar on Nov. 21 on U.S. Policy toward the Great Lakes region held at Henry Kissinger’s Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda Robert Gribben defended Kagame as one of the “new leaders” in Africa, who “recognized that the international community had not come through, and have taken matters into their own hands. . . . This is good for the region, because

it represents Africans taking responsibility for the problems of Africa. We weren’t doing it.” Later, in the same vein, Gribben quoted Museveni, that “the time to look to outsiders is past.”

In short, no matter what atrocities Kagame may confess to, it a “positive development,” to use Gribben’s phrase, that Kagame and his cohorts are in power in East Africa. Gribben has played the role of apologist for the RPF, ever since he took the ambassadorship in Kigali, after Kagame forced the removal of Ambassador David Rawson. In November 1996, Refugees International demanded Gribben’s recall, for his lying representations that “all the refugees” had returned to Rwanda, after Laurent Kabila stormed the Magungu camp, forcing back about 600,000 refugees—or no more than half the total number in Zaire. Acceptance of Gribben’s figures resulted in the calling off of the proposed multilateral force intervention into eastern Zaire, thus leaving the remainder of the refugees to the mercy of Kagame’s troops.

Who is Paul Kagame?

Kagame’s continued respectability in the eyes of the international community leads to a second question: Is it the case that Kagame, as with his close friend and mentor Yoweri Museveni, was chosen by British intelligence for his role as leader of the RPF, and protected in that role, *for the precise reason that he has proven himself to be a ruthless mass killer?* A short examination of Kagame’s short but stunning career permits the reader to answer the question himself. The reader should be forewarned, however, that many of the sources for this profile of Kagame are unable to speak openly; although most of what is put forward is already in the public domain.

Kagame was a member of the group of Rwandan Tutsi exiles whose parents had fled to Uganda in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in the wake of the so-called Hutu revolution in Rwanda. Kagame’s family came to Uganda in 1959, when Kagame was four years old, and he was raised in the Nshungerezi refugee camp in southern Uganda by his mother, after his father died. As a young man, he began orbiting in the circles of Fred Rwigyema, who met up with Museveni in 1976 in Tanzania during the bush wars against Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. When Museveni took to the bush again in 1980, to begin his campaign against the second Presidency of Milton Obote, the young Rwandan exiled youth became a key component of his National Resistance Army, and Rwigyema was a top commander of the NRA.

Kagame was a leading figure in Museveni’s military intelligence even during the days in the bush. After Museveni seized power in January 1986, Kagame became deputy director of the NRA’s military intelligence apparatus, specifically its secret police apparatus inside Uganda.

“Kagame was deputy director of military intelligence,” explains one diplomat who was posted in Kampala at the time, “but, in reality, he was the real boss, because Museveni had greater confidence in him than in anyone else. He was thus

the most powerful person in military intelligence, and was in charge of counterintelligence and domestic security.”

In their role as henchmen for the NRA in between 1986 and 1990, when they “broke away” to invade Rwanda, men who are today top commanders of the RPA wracked up a record of atrocities:

- *The murder of Andrew Kayiira*: All through Museveni’s years in the bush, he had worked in an uncomfortable alliance with the Ugandan Freedom Movement of Andrew Kayiira, and the UFM had played a key role in bringing the

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National Resistance Movement to power. Once in power, however, Museveni was not interested in sharing. It is believed that he ordered the assassination of Kayiira. Kayiira was killed in March 1987, and his movement began to fall apart soon thereafter. As director of military intelligence, Kagame would have supervised the assassination plan; certainly, say Ugandans, it could not have occurred without his imprimatur also.

Kagame himself was the overseer of Basiima House, the torture palace of the Museveni regime, until 1990. Political opponents of the NRA regime were illegally detained without charge at Basiima House, Ugandans report. One opponent was detained there for three and a half months, and told *EIR* that he was personally interrogated by Kagame. “There was no public accountability for these people,” he explained. “At any one time, there would be 25 to 40 people at Basiima House. Most people were badly tortured, and many were killed. About four to five people died there every day.”

Kagame’s chief henchman at Basiima House was Jackson Nvisa, a leading commander of the RPA who was implicated in massacring Rwandan Hutu refugees in Goma and Kisanjani, Zaire. Before that, he was implicated in the murder of the Roman Catholic archbishop of Rwanda and other bishops in spring 1994 in Gitarama, Rwanda. He was also named as the first Rwandan ambassador to Nairobi, Kenya, but was

expelled from the country after the murder of leading Rwandan Hutu refugees. Nvisa retains very close ties to Kagame to this day, say sources.

Other leading commanders of the RPF left behind terror-legacies. Colonel Zaramba, a commander of the RPF, was named as being responsible for the shocking Mukura Railway incident in 1989. In this atrocity, hundreds of rebel suspects were herded into railroad cars and a fire was set under the cars. More than 50 people died of suffocation. When the courts attempted to bring the Museveni government to account for the atrocity, the NRA claimed that RPF commander Zaramba was now in Rwanda (with the RPF invasion), and nothing could be done. The current minister of health in Kigali, Dr. Karemera, was the overseer of the famous Luziro Prison in Uganda, where, many Ugandans say, he injected incarcerated political suspects with the HIV virus.

- *The murder of Fred Rwigyema*. In October 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, which had been organized in Kampala, broke out with a section of the Ugandan Army to invade Rwanda. In the first heat of battle, RPF commander Fred Rwigyema was killed. At the time of the invasion, Kagame was undertaking army training at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, as an officer of the Ugandan Army. RPF leader Fred Rwigyema had originally been slated to go, but he held back to lead the invasion against Rwanda. Kagame’s length of stay at Fort Leavenworth was two months. Upon his return, he found that Rwigyema had been killed at the front.

The story goes in Kampala, that Rwigyema was murdered by RPF leaders Dr. Peter Banyingama and Major Bunyenyezi. The issues of the internecine warfare were twofold: Rwigyema wanted to wage a protracted “people’s war” against the government of Juvenal Habyarimana, whereas other RPF leaders wanted a full blitzkrieg attack against Rwanda. Secondly, Rwigyema had no ambitions besides bringing back Rwanda’s Tutsi exiles; Banyingama et al. were arguing for carrying out the Museveni-British plan of using the RPF-seized Rwanda as a springboard for moving into eastern Zaire. It is suspected that upon his return, Kagame had Banyingama and Bunyenyezi themselves killed, for their assassination of Rwigyema, who was extremely popular among RPF troops.

Whatever the true story may be, Kagame rose quickly to become the strongman of the RPF, a title he has never relinquished. And he carried out London’s plans, under the direction of Yoweri Museveni. The first blitzkrieg into Rwanda was stalled in 1990, after the French government sent in troops to defend the Habyarimana government.

Between 1990 and 1994, when the RPF marched through Rwanda to seize Kigali in the immediate aftermath of the murder of Rwandan President Habyarimana, Kagame is known to have travelled frequently to London. In June 1994, even before the RPF took Kigali, it is reported that Baroness Lynda Chalker, the patroness of Yoweri Museveni, visited the RPF headquarters in Byumba, from Kampala. According to one knowledgeable source, the RPF had British military

officers advising them on the spot.

- *The murders of Melchior Ndadaye and Juvenal Habyarimana.* While a full analysis of the bloodletting that left up to 1 million dead in Rwanda in the spring-summer of 1994 cannot be accomplished here, among the key events that led to such mass murders were the murders of the first elected President of Burundi, the Hutu Melchior Ndadaye, in October 1993, and the murder of Habyarimana on April 6, 1994, which sparked the mass killings in which Hutus and Tutsis were targeted alike.

In both these murders, knowledgeable sources say, Kagame was involved as a co-conspirator, along with Museveni. From 1993 onward, the RPF was engaged in negotiating the so-called Arusha Accords, which were supposed to arrange a power-sharing agreement between the RPF, the Habyarimana government, and the opposition political parties, under the auspices of the United States, with France, Belgium, and the United Nations. According to one source involved in negotiating the accords, in August 1993, when Museveni and Kagame realized that the arithmetic would not favor the RPF, they began agitating for the overthrow of Ndadaye in Burundi.

In October 1993, Ndadaye was hideously murdered, in an attempted coup by the totally Tutsi Burundian military. Even sympathizers of the RPF acknowledge that the murder was “handwriting on the wall” for many Rwandan Hutus, and was a major factor in the bloodletting that followed, with the shock of the murder of Habyarimana.

Habyarimana, multiple and well-placed sources say, was murdered at Kigali airport by Ugandan forces on site. Here, the reasoning was that any compromise worked out with the Habyarimana government would spoil the next phase of the Rwandan plot: the use of Rwanda as a springboard against Zaire—the mission Kagame zealously undertook.

Further, many Rwandans believe that the mass deaths in Rwanda were pre-calculated by Kagame, as necessary to the RPF’s full and total seizure of power, and the stampeding of Hutus into Zaire. As Gerard Prunier relates in his book *The Rwanda Crisis: History of Genocide*, “During the brief occupation of Ruhengeri town by the RPF in January 1991, an old Tutsi man had remarked to one of the young guerrilla fighters, who had come to ‘liberate’ them: ‘You want power? You will get it. But here we will all die. Is it worth it to you?’ ” Or as another Tutsi survivor of the bloodletting in Rwanda in 1994 said, “Kagame has delivered us unto death.”

- *Murder of Ngandu Kisase.* In a retake of the stories given out on the death of Fred Rwigyema, André Kisase Ngandu, the key military leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, was killed in an ambush. However, according to sources in the anti-Mobutu opposition, Kisase was killed by his own bodyguards, with the backing of the RPF, in order to clear the way for marionette Laurent Kabila to take over the ADFL.

Kisase and Kabila had already had a falling out; and Kabila, who was the mere spokesman for the Alliance, charged

that Kisase was trying to throw him out. The major issues, however, were Kisase’s opposition to the Tutsi domination of the ADFL, in which they held all the key posts, and as *La Libre Belgique* put it in an article on May 1, “the pillaging of Kivu’s resources for shipment to Rwanda.”

In December 1996, two of Kisase’s bodyguards were killed, and Kisase barely escaped with his life. Soon after this attempt, Kabila announced the reorganization of the internal security forces of the ADFL, placing Jacques Nizza, a major of the Rwandan Patriotic Army, in charge. On Jan. 6, under protest, Kisase went on an inspection tour to Beni and Bunia, with his security organized by Nizza. Kisase was reportedly then killed at the entrance to the Virunga Park, by Lieutenant Celestin, a Munyamulenge and the number-one security man in the convoy. Celestin was killed in the firefight that followed.

However, in the fray, Kisase was successfully and permanently done away with, and Kabila took over, giving the effective command of the ADFL over to the RPA. Kagame admitted to the *Washington Post*’s John Pomfret that James Kabari, who emerged as the senior commander of the ADFL, is actually an officer of the Rwandan Patriotic Army. “He’s been assigned to help the Army of the Congo,” Kagame told Pomfret, less than a month after Kabila took over Kinshasa. “He’s been requested to organize the Army, training. He’s one of many able commanders we’ve had.”

Help from friends

Kagame’s Rwandan Patriotic Front continues to enjoy respectability in most Western capitals, due not to any merit on its own part—although, happily for the international bankers and the International Monetary Fund, the Kagame government has recently pledged that it will pay all the old debts of the Habyarimana government before it. Personally, the grisly record of Paul Kagame is that he will not shrink back from killing any and all who stand in the way of his attaining and expanding power. Kagame himself, who frequently lashes out at the United Nations, who has managed to expel non-governmental organizations from Rwanda so that his forces can murder Hutu civilians under a cloak of silence inside the country, may believe that he is carrying out mass murder on behalf of “the security of the Tutsis.” This is delusory on his part.

Kagame only enjoys international respectability insofar as his masters at the British Privy Council—aided by the likes of Robert Gribben or Roger Winter of the U.S. Committee on Refugees, who delivered the Rwandan Hutu refugees to Kagame in November 1996—find him useful in carrying out *their* mission: the destruction of the nation-state in Africa; the mass murder of its civilian farming populations; and the hurling back of Africa into a *terra incognita*.

Kagame’s remorseless confessions so far have borne no consequences. It would appear, then, that to bring Kagame to justice, requires the thorough exposure of his masters.