

## Africa Report by Linda de Hoyos

### More massacres in the Kivus

*The Kivu provinces of eastern Congo are occupied by Rwandan troops, with deadly results for the civilian population.*

In an article on May 17 excoriating the government of Rwanda for its attacks on the Roman Catholic Church inside the country, the Vatican daily *L'Osservatore Romano* pointed out that Rwanda in reality has suffered a "double genocide." This second genocide, which was documented by *EIR* at the time, occurred in 1996-97. It was a "genocide of Hutus," says the Vatican's newspaper, "continued in the forests of Zaire, where Hutu fugitives were massacred for months, without protection from the international community."

By the end of the month, however, the Italian missionary news agency Misma was reporting that "another Kosovo" is taking place in the forests of the Kivu provinces of eastern Congo, bordering Rwanda. These provinces were placed under effective Rwandan rule during the 1996-97 war against former Congo President Mobutu Sese Seku. Now, they are under direct Rwandan authority, following the May 1998 invasion of Congo, again from Rwanda.

The invasion followed precisely British intelligence plans to seize eastern Congo, the richest area of Congo—on behalf of British Commonwealth extraction companies—and to have the area be administered out of Kampala, Uganda.

While the Rwandan government of Defense Minister Paul Kagame announced on June 7 its withdrawal from the Congo, Rwanda has made clear that its condition is the elimination of any Hutu insurgencies against it, which Rwanda claims have been trained and backed by the Congo government of Laurent Kabila. Kigali's demand has been backed by the "inter-

national community." European Union envoy for the Great Lakes region Aldo Ajello said that "one of the most sensitive issues" that must be addressed in order to establish peace in the Congo is the disarmament of the "Interhamwe" of Rwandan Hutus and ex-FAR (former Rwandan army) now in Congo. The point has been accepted, but there are serious differences over who should do it, and when—before or after the withdrawal of foreign troops.

The Rwandan government appears to be taking matters into its own hands—as usual. On May 5, according to reports from the region, Kagame declared that he had given instructions to his army to clean the regions of Rutshuru and Masisi of Mayi-Mayi insurgents, the ex-FAR, and any armed forces of Congo who refused to join the so-called Congolese rebellion, run from Kampala and Kigali.

In the same statement, he also ordered the population in the areas of Masisi and Rutshuru to gather in the trading center of Mushaki and Matanda, where they will be forced to undergo identity screening. The statement added that Kagame had given instructions to the Rwandan army to shoot and kill anyone found outside those trading centers. As the Afro-America Network noted in a report: "The forced concentrations are similar to the infamous concentration and death camps created by the Rwandan Patriotic Front in northwestern Rwanda, in the provinces of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri."

The purposes of the sweep operation are believed to be part of the policy of isolating any Hutu insurgents from the "sea of support" within the population—a standard practice of the

Tutsi militaries of Burundi and Rwanda. In this practice, outlawed by international law, the population is effectively put into barbed-wire concentration camps, while a scorched-earth policy is carried out against their farms and villages. In Mushaki and areas around it, the Rwandan army has reportedly already started to destroy villages and burn homes of the Congolese citizens there, forcing them to flee into the concentration camps.

As reported by the Afro-America Network: "It is also reported that many people, mainly the vulnerable (women, children, and elderly people), have been beaten and seriously injured. Bodies of massacred people are buried in mass graves. Those awaiting the identification process are gathered in Bukumbili Secondary School close to Kibabi. Many more are deported to Rwanda and labeled 'repatriated Rwandan refugees.'"

The sweeps are also the first step to the wholesale looting of the properties of the local people. This process has been going on in the Kivus ever since the Rwandan army secured the region in 1997. Further, from the moment that the Rwandan army took the provinces in early 1997, the Kivus have been under Rwandan domination and the border has been managed by Kigali. The Rwandan army since 1996 has long been in a position to "secure" its border.

But the trouble comes not only from the Rwandan Hutus operating in Congo. The local Mayi-Mayi and Banyamulenge (Congolese Tutsis, originally from Rwanda) were originally on the Rwandan side, the treatment meted out to them locally has forced many to turn on the Rwandan "liberators." Military resistance mustered by local groups against the Rwandan army, however, is countered by Kagame's army with escalated attacks on civilians.