

1.6 million dead: 'Just a drop in the bucket'

by Linda de Hoyos

EIR estimates that since October 1990, when the Ugandan Army under the rubric of the "Rwandan Patriotic Front" first invaded Rwanda, at least 1.6 million people have died in the wars that the British blueprint for East Africa has instigated. Another 2 million people have been uprooted and displaced, although this is a very conservative figure.

This count is derived as follows:

1990 invasion of Rwanda by Uganda:

150,000-200,000 killed;

One million displaced to the Nyacyonga refugee camp outside Kigali. There are reports of large-scale murders carried out in the north at that time.

1993 attempted coup against Burundi government of President Melchior Ndayaye:

100,000 killed.

1993-96 continuing civil war in Burundi:

150,000-200,000 killed.

1994 invasion of Rwanda by the Rwandan Patriotic Front:

1 million slaughtered in mass melee between Hutus and Tutsis;

2 million displaced and forced to flee the country;

200,000 refugees die of cholera and disease at refugee camps in Zaire in summer 1994.

1996 Ugandan-Rwandan-Burundi invasion of Zaire:

Totals unknown, however:

- 600,000 refugees remain unaccounted for inside Zaire.

It is not known how many of these are now dead, but in early November, aid workers estimated that up to 10,000 would die per day if they were left without assistance. Those remaining in the Zairean bush, have received very little, if any, assistance so far.

- 1,000 refugees have been slaughtered in Burundi by the military, according to Amnesty International and the United Nations. This does not include those killed in fighting between the military and Forces for the Defense of Democracy.

- There are continuing reports in the Western media, such as the Associated Press on Nov. 21 and the Belgian *De Standaard* on Nov. 25, that forces under the nominal command of Laurent Kabila and the Rwandan Armed Forces culled out men and boys from the refugees before their return to Rwanda, and also in Zairean cities and towns under their control.

In total, the imperial land grab of East Africa by George Bush's Barrick Gold et al., even excluding the invasion of Zaire, has cost the lives of 1.6 million Burundians and Rwandans, out of a total population for both countries of only 13 million. In per-capita terms, this would be the equivalent of a slaughter of 31 million Americans.

The Malthusian cover story

It has become a standard ruse among the practitioners of mass murder in Africa to justify their policies with the Malthusian myth that, since Africa has too many people anyway, the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Africans are part of a necessary "solution" to the "overpopulation problem." Such claims were heard in July 1994, for instance, by the British case officer for East Africa, Baroness Lynda Chalker, Minister of Overseas Development, the self-identified mentor of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. Speaking to the Royal Society of London on July 11, 1994, as Hutu refugees were dying of cholera in Goma at the rate of 20,000 a day, Chalker declared: "The density of population in Rwanda is one reason why the scale of that tragedy is so enormous."

Similar sentiments are standardly voiced at the U.S. State Department. Dick Cornelius, of the State Department Office of Population, Refugees, and Migration, told a journalist in July 1994:

"The people dying at the moment are not the main issue. I mean, 50,000 people dying of cholera is alarming—but on the grand scale of things, looking at the impact on population in Africa and the region, it's a drop in the bucket."

Then, on Dec. 17, 1996, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Global Affairs Timothy Wirth laid the blame for the war in East Africa on "overpopulation." Speaking to a conference sponsored by the Center for National Policy Wirth declared:

"Population pressure in Rwanda underlaid a great part of the problems that were faced in the conflict between the Tutsis and the Hutus, there were no places to let off steam—you know, you had eight and a half children per woman being born in a country that was the most cultivated, intensely cultivated—in all of Africa."

The agricultural cultivation of the country, it should be noted, isn't a problem for Rwandans, but it *is* a problem for the mining operations now seeking to control the entire Great Rift Valley. Wirth did not mention the name Barrick Gold, but he did indicate why "population" is a problem for Barrick Gold et al.:

"If you ever flew over Rwanda, you see that every inch of land is cultivated. Burma and China pale in comparison to Rwanda; no matter what the political problems are, the fact is the population of Rwanda will double in 25 years, where are you going to put these people? How are you going to feed them? We can discuss the political problems all you want, but what do you do next? . . . There are too many people competing for too few resources."