

Double genocide conspiracy in the DRC: Why has Dr. Denis Mukwege gone quiet?

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The problem when good village doctors become famous, is that they stop saving lives and start touring the world conferencing about it. Since his nomination as a Nobel prize laureate, Congolese gynaecologist Denis Mukwege has neglected the operating theatre and women of his native Panzi village in South Kivu DRC and discovered the joys of business lounges and international conferences.

In principle, I would have absolutely no problem with that, if during his conferences, he didn't single out the Tutsi ethnic group as the source of all misery in DRC.

I will not go into the problems facing the DRC since, perhaps its independence in the sixties, but alleging that Tutsi or Rwanda are the source of Congo's protracted conflicts is incredibly simplistic and counterproductive.

So this article aims to give some context and nuance which terribly lacks in Dr. Mukwege's speeches. I will also prove that he deliberately in-

flates numbers of victims and asserts blame on the Tutsi communities to infuse already corrosive anti-Rwanda sentiments among the Congolese public, at a time when relationships between the two countries are warming-up.

I fear that after I publish this, Mukwege is likely to cry for help again, saying that his life is in danger, which he always does whenever he is confronted on his positions. Three months ago, Dr. Denis Mukwege was the subject of messages of support pouring in from across the world.

There was even a huge picture of him on a building in central Brussels, all following a cry for help, alleging to have received threats on his life, and MONUSCO, a UN peacekeeping force based in DRC, dispatched bodyguards on him 24/7. However, of all the messages of support, none specified where these alleged threats were coming from.

The polemics were sparked by two things ; his denouncing of massacres that, according to him, took place in the village of Kipupu, South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and his efforts to resuscitate the 'Congo Mapping Report', alleging prior massacres by the Rwandan army on Rwandan refugees around 1996-1997, at the time in camps in Eastern DRC.

In the article below, I explain how the Congo mapping report came to be discredited and shelved by the UN : Double genocide conspiracy in DRC, but Dr. Mukwege has become a populist who has no regard to facts.

In a tweet, Mukwege targeted the Tutsi population as source of the deaths in the DRC : *'They are the same people who continue to kill in DRC. The ma-*

cabre accounts of Kipupu are in the pattern as the massacres that have plagued the DRC since 1996. In subtitle, Mukwege makes no difference between the Banyamulenge community in DRC and the Rwandan government.

Following his tweet, Noella Muhamiriza, a young female munyamulenge, replied : ‘Yes but we have been begging you to speak up on behalf of rape and massacres happening in Minembwe for over three years and you chose to stay silence. Are Banyamulenge women bodies not worth so much for you ? Is it too political to stand for ALL the victims ! so disappointed in you !’

A Congolese lawyer based in Kinshasa weighed in : ‘before 1996 there were ethnic cleansings targeting the Banyamulenge population in Masisi and Walikale, and before ‘Kipupu, since three years Tutsi of Minembwe high plateau face the same ethnic cleansing. Why this selective indignation ? He asked, and to conclude, a Nobel laureate must have a Universal conscience.’

Up to this stage, the alarming numbers of victims advanced by Mukwege had been taken at face value. A Nobel laureate, we thought, is to be somewhat credible and indeed the same figure of the 220 alleged victims in Kipupu was reproduced in an article by Belgian senior journalist Colette Braeckman.

A Wikipedia page on the Kipupu massacres was even set up, with the same information and accusing the Banyamulenge community : ‘The Kipupu massacre’ took place in the village of Kipupu in Mwenga Territory of South Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo on 16 July 2020. Gunmen belonging to the Gumno and Twirwaneho militias of the Banyamulenge community attacked the village and reportedly killed over 200 people’, the page reads.

Here is the problem : There has never been any ‘Kipupu Massacre’ and there has never been any 220 victims. There was 10 victims at most !

What exactly happened ?

A local militia called the ‘Mai-mai’ launched a raid on Banyamulenge pastoral community and stole their cattle. Rival factions to the Banyamulenge frequently set-up ad-hoc alliances, at times with elements in

the national army, to conduct raids, rape women and pillage cattle of the Banyamulenge communities, estimated in tens of thousands since the conflict started.

In response, the Banyamulenge have created two groups with rather revealing names : ‘Gumno’ and ‘Twirwaneho’. These names in Kinyarwanda/Kinyamulenge language mean : ‘Let’s stay here’ and ‘let’s save ourselves’.

Following the raid, the Banyamulenge activated their two groups and pursued the assailants, fighting ensued and between five (5) and ten (10) people were killed : Between five and ten, in a fight.

That’s when Mukwege declared that a massacre of 220 people was conducted by the Banyamulenge onto neighbouring Kipupu community. In fact, on 26 July, provincial deputies released a statement condemning MONUSCO and the FARDC for not doing enough to prevent the massacre.

Irritated, the MONUSCO, which was being blamed for inaction, finally revealed the findings of their investigation : Around ten people had been killed in inter-community fighting ! Mukwege had exaggerated the number of victims and lied to everyone.

Obviously the revelations were kept silent not to embarrass the good doctor and all the merchants of the Congo misery, including opposition politician Martin Fayulu who had been for days, surfing on the alleged massacres to stir more anti-Tutsi sentiments.

Mukwege himself never rectified his allegations, however, since the international community found out, they have been taking their distances from him. I hope they draw their own conclusions on his credibility too.

That manipulation brings to mind the Timisoara case in Romania when all media announced a massacre that never took place : ‘On December 22, 1989, grim footage of 19 corpses - allegedly victims of the police crackdown in Timisoara, were flashed on televisions across the world. Yugoslavian and Hungarian news agencies were quoting a death toll of 4,630, a figure picked up by the French news agency (AFP). One month later, it turned out that the corpses were of people who died before the protest even took place..’. At the time Colette Braeckman was among the few journalists who exposed the fake news and reported the truth. This time, Mrs. Braeckman kept

quiet.

Now, the issue while reporting on the DRC conflict is that no one ever understands the context. To most, Rwandans and Congolese Tutsi are the source of DRC's problems, they don't realise they too are victims of ethnic stigma and genocide ideology.

This article, therefore, aims to give context.

It is not my intention to defend the two Banyamulenge groups : "Let's stay here" and 'let's save ourselves', with rather self-explanatory titles. I just want to point out that the Wikipedia page and the media reporting on the so-called 'Kipupu massacres', keep getting the two names wrong, calling them 'Ngumino' and 'Twiganeho'; words that have no meaning in Kinyarwanda, because indeed they are all less interested in the plight of Congolese Tutsi, and more in tying them to Rwanda, a country they left around the 18th century, to settle in the high plateaux of what was then a pastoral territory, and would only become the Congo much later in the 20th century.

The pastoral community is frequently invaded, women raped, houses burned down and cattle stolen and no one raises a finger, because reporting on the violence faced by Congolese Tutsi would contradict the theory that 'Tutsis are the problem'.

I would also like to point out that the Mapping Report' brandished by Dr. Denis Mukwege, overlook one important fact : that when the Rwandan army invaded Congo, it was no longer the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) with majority of Tutsi, but a reformed, inclusive national army.

Already by January 1995, 1,011 troops, including 81 officers from the defeated ex-FAR were officially integrated into the new national army with their former ranks and occupied commanding positions such as deputy chief of staff of the army, commandants of different brigades and battalions.

Most of these new recruits formed the main contingent in the DRC expedition of 1997 in order to have a sensitising role in addition to that of repatriation of their own relatives. They were sent to DRC to free their relatives who had been taken hostage by genocide perpetrators on the run and indeed to save them from a ravaging cholera pandemic. These are the people whom the mapping report accused of killing their own family members.

There are many allegations that can easily be debunked in the wrapped anti-Tutsi narratives sustained by experts and political opportunists in DRC, but obviously, no one is interested in the truth, as the saying goes, 'asking wartime doctors and populists to tell a truth that would end a conflict, would be like asking gold-medallist swimmers to empty the pool'.

To conclude : We are at a critical moment in DRC politics, whence the new President Felix Tshisekedi is normalising relations with his neighbours, including Rwanda, and rallying across the political board internally with the ongoing 'Union Sacré' (sacred union) campaign.

Now that Vital Kamerhe is out of the picture, the real power brokers in DRC are former president Joseph Kabila, Jean Pierre Bemba and Moïse Katumbi. Fayulu is a small-time politician with no following, and while Mukwege's political ambitions are an open secret, both men need maximum self-victimisation for Tshisekedi to consider them in his 'Union Sacré' consultations.

What's sad is that a Nobel laureate is using his fame to stigmatize the Tutsi community in DRC, exposing them and their cattle to open violence from rival groups and all sorts of militias roaming the DRC.

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