

Opinion

The Fourth Estate and Genocide denial in the West

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Since 1994, a pervasive narrative of the Rwandan government targeting its overseas diaspora has taken root within international media. This narrative has allowed genocide perpetrators to enjoy impunity and sanctuary in western capitals for over 25 years.

The narrative was framed by French intelligence in the aftermath of the fall of the genocide regime in Rwanda. Remnants of the Mitterand-era operatives who had collaborated with the Habyarimana regime, trained and armed genocide militias and ultimately exfiltrated their senior leadership to Europe in the mid-nineties, following their consecutive defeats in Rwanda, then in eastern Zaire, at the hand of Paul Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Army.

While the exfiltration was easy, settling them in several western countries proved problematic, due to their

genocidal past. At the time the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) had just been established by the UN and was issuing international arrest warrants against senior officials of the genocide regime.

The Rwandan government too later set-up the Gacaca traditional courts to try perpetrators of the genocide against the Tutsi and many of these protégés of the French army on the run were tried and sentenced in absentia.

To keep them safe, the French intelligence hatched a ploy to paint all of them as political refugees and human rights activists and dispatched fabricated intelligence to other western security organs alleging that the new Rwandan government maintained a global network of spies and hitmen targeting these innocent activists.

One remarkable case was that of the former First Lady of Rwanda, Agatha Kanziga Habyarimana known for her role, alongside her brothers in forming the infamous 'Akazu'; a reclusive ring that planned and executed the genocide. She was harbored in the French capital, Paris under secret service protection.

Mrs. Habyarimana was then instrumental in colluding with a French Judge, Jean-Louis Bruguière to shift responsibility for the perpetration of the genocide, and without ever setting foot in Rwanda, the French judge drew indictments against all new leaders of the post-genocide government, including the president, and issue blanket arrest warrants for allegedly downing the plane of then-President Habyarimana and trigger the genocide against the Tutsi.

A key witness in the Bruguière case, Abdul Joshua Ruzibiza later confirmed this, when in an interview he gave in 2008, said that his 'script' pinning RPF for downing Habyarimana's plane was written for him by French military officers.

He said that he met the French judge in the Ugandan capital Kampala in a meeting that was facilitated by the French intelligence operatives working with FDLR militia group and Ugandan officials.

He died in 2010 in the Norwegian capital, Oslo.

The French had calculated that

the best way to dissimilate their role in the genocide against the Tutsi and evade accountability, was to shift the blame onto the victims and protect those they had collaborated with, lest the latter revealed the extent of their collaboration.

The made-up indictments and their warrants were only nullified recently, by Bruguière's successors, French Judges Marc Trévidic and Nathalie Poux after they came to Rwanda to conduct a ballistic investigation, while Kanziga's resident permit in France has been revoked.

British journalist and author Linda Melvern uncovered the French DGSE conspiracy and denounced it in numerous articles and in an important book : 'Intent to Deceive : Denying the Genocide of the Tutsi'.

But the theme of the Rwandan government maintaining an international hit-squad persisted. Western media hungry for a tropical story with a James Bond twist kept printing it. Years passed and genocide perpetrators and their now grown-up offspring both decided to milk it.

In Europe and America, everyone was now a genocide survivor, a human rights activist, or an opposition politician in exile and all had one thing in common : their fear of the nebulous RPF web of spies.

The French DGSE and army assisted genocide fugitives to roam western capitals under false identities

and others to officiate as village priests in French parishes. In the United Kingdom, children of genocide perpetrators received protection from Scotland Yard, while genocide survivors were brought in for questioning on their ties with the RPF, it was the world turned upside down.

They went further : in fact, there had been no genocide against the Tutsi; there had been a genocide against the Hutu, or if there was a genocide against the Tutsi, Paul Kagame was personally responsible for it. The British national broadcaster (BBC) said as much in a controversial documentary : ‘The Untold Story.’

Emboldened, Hutu extremists in Europe and America no longer feared to publicly call for violence against the Rwandan government. Hollywood-famed Paul Rusesabagina declared to have formed a militia group : NLF/MRCD to overthrow the ‘Kagame regime’ in a New Year’s message on his militia’s website.

Children of genocide perpetrators gained prominence in the West. In January 2010, Victoire Ingabire, whose both parents were notorious killers well known to genocide survivors, was sent to Rwanda from Holland to contest for presidential elections. Her first stop was at the Kigali Genocide Memorial where she declared that the memorial did not reflect the truth about what happened.

Other genocidaires’ children for-

med NGOs to support her, while spreading double genocide theories in international conferences and collect funds to support the Front for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a rebel outfit led by genocidaires, wreaking havoc in eastern DRC and sworn to take over Rwanda and ‘finish the job’ of exterminating Tutsi.

They travelled from Europe to Eastern Congo’s forest to visit their parents and filmed themselves doing it. At the time, they also enjoyed favours from a DRC government that was hostile to Rwanda.

In Belgium, Faustin Twagiramungu, a Rwandan, once also reported to the police that his life was in danger. The Belgian police assigned security detail on his person. The same morning, he called the media to showcase his new bodyguards as proof that he was a ‘high-profile’ opposition leader. The Belgians were furious and withdrew their policemen immediately.

In Canada, journalists tricked a girl seeking asylum to tell a story of how she was a Rwandan spy and promised her papers in return. The story backfired and her asylum was revoked.

But like Tracy Chapman would sing, suddenly the tables started to turn, a new government was elected in DRC, relations with Rwanda improved and the FDLR started being seriously hunted down by the refor-

med Congolese army and its top leadership captured or killed.

In France, helped by COVID-19 confinement measures, Interpol finally nabbed the most notorious genocide fugitive, Felicien Kabuga and transferred him to the Residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals in The Hague. A few weeks later, Paul Rusesabagina who had for some time been on the radar of Belgian police, America's FBI, Interpol and Rwandan intelligence was finally misleading to land in Kigali, en route to Bujumbura where he was to meet-up with his FLN militia.

In the UK, one René Mugenzi, a consistent guest analyst at the BBC-Africa programme, frequently published in *The Guardian*, presented as a genocide survivor and Kagame critic, turned out to be a thief and a compulsive gambler.

He was recently sentenced to more than two years in prison by a British court for siphoning churchgoers' tithes to the tune of 223000 pounds in a Cathedral in Norwich County.

Shockingly, his lawyers and British media argued that his fear of Rwandan spies made him feel bulimic, and fought to conceal the case until a small newspaper won the legal battle to publish the story.

In Holland two weeks later, René's father Joseph Mugenzi was also arrested for his role in the genocide against the Tutsi.

In a pathetic attempt 'sanitize' Mugenzi Jr., the BBC visited the thief in prison and interviewed him on the RPF's integrity and loyalty oath. From his jail cell, the thief drew them a list of like-minded key informants, whom they promptly interviewed. All, the thief and his acolytes were quoted by the BBC as saying the oath was indeed immoral...

This brings me to Australia which seems to be joining the party rather late. An Australian paper recently published : 'A Sydney-based community leader who refused to be an agent of influence for the Rwandan government in Australia now fears his two brothers have been killed.'

The alleged community leader is one Noël Zihabamwe, whose father was a senior officer in the defeated genocide army. Zihabamwe has been relocating members of his family to Australia by claiming that their lives in Rwanda are in danger.

Australia is far, news travel slowly explaining why they are only discovering a sequel of the 'Rwandan spy story', premiered by French DGSE and promoted by British BBC. Australia isn't a UN Security Council member. It is every politician's dream for his opponents to move to Australia, no one would go looking for them.

Demonstrating in the streets of Melbourne, Perth or Sydney has absolutely no material consequence on any African, European, or South

American government. Rwanda is not the US or Russia. Unlike Australians (in their own words) it does not have the resources nor the ambitions to target self-appointed dissidents that far off, in fact, we all pray for Donald Trump to move there soon. . .

Children of the current head of the FDLR are studying in China, Ghana and in Rwanda on government scholarships. How can a government that targets relatives of its critics, offer them postgraduate scholarships overseas? There are many relatives of government critics occupying high government positions. I am not at liberty to disclose their names for that would defeat the purpose.

Due to its history, Rwanda has

a vast diaspora scattered across the world, living at peace and regularly visiting their motherland. While we rest on our laurels, those with things to hide are trapped in an ever ending schizophrenia that the Rwandan government is out to get them. So they multiply cries in the media and in security services to cry fool. That's the curse of criminals, they can never be at peace. And after all, it isn't such a bad thing.

Incidentally, Australia has not extradited a single genocide perpetrator to Rwanda. And from this editorial line, it seems the country has taken the side of killers.

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