

It's Time to Acknowledge Hutu Genocide and Rwandan Occupation of DRC

By [Ann Garrison](#)

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My first contribution to Black Agenda Report was "[Madame President? No, Madame Prisoner](#)," a profile of Rwandan political prisoner Victoire Ingabire Umuhoro published in January 2014. Late Black Agenda Report Editor Bruce A. Dixon had asked me to write it after following my conversations with Victoire and other Rwandan dissidents for some years. Those conversations began in January 2010, when I looked into why no viable challengers to incumbent Rwandan President Paul Kagame were being allowed into that year's presidential election. Victoire had just returned from Netherlands to Rwanda to stand as a candidate, but she had almost immediately been placed under house arrest. Why? Because upon arriving in Rwanda's capital, where she was met by Rwandan press and fellow dissidents, she went straight to the genocide memorial and made this statement:

"We totally agree and are conscious that there has been a genocide against Tutsis and we seriously and continuously advocate that all those who were responsible be brought before the courts of justice. We also agree that there have been other serious crimes against humanity and war crimes [against Hutus]; those who committed them have to bear the legal consequences. We must all the time remember those tragedies, make sure they don't get ever repeated. We also need to ensure that people's lives are effectively and strongly protected by laws."

I quoted Victoire in "[Rwanda's 1994 Genocide and 2010 Election](#)," one of the first essays I wrote about what I was beginning to understand, and soon heard from International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda (ICTR) defense attorneys and scholars including the late Edward S. Herman, co-author, with David Peterson, of "[The Politics of Genocide](#)," and "[Enduring Lies: Rwanda and the Propaganda System, 20 Years On](#)." I spoke to Ed Herman six years later for "[Rwanda, Burundi and Wars 'To Stop the Next Rwanda](#)," a Project Censored broadcast on KPFA and other Pacifica Radio stations.

Rwanda 2010 and beyond

Victoire went to prison for eight years, beginning in 2010, for "genocide ideology," which means voicing a more complex genocide history than that legally codified in Rwanda. The legally codified history is that ethnic Hutus massacred up to a million or more Tutsis during the 100 days beginning on April 7, 1994, which ended when General Paul Kagame and the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) "stopped the genocide." While in prison Victoire wrote "[Between Four Walls of the 1930 prison: Memoirs of a Rwandan Prisoner of Conscience](#)."

[Bernard Ntaganda](#), a Rwandan lawyer who also attempted to run against Kagame in 2010, went to prison for four years. Frank Habineza, the 2010 candidate of the Democratic Green

Party of Rwanda, fled to Sweden after the party's vice president was [found dead](#) by the banks of a river, with his head cut off but still in possession of his wallet and the keys to his car, which remained nearby. (Habineza later returned and became a member of Rwanda's parliament.) Rwandan journalists went to prison, were shot dead, or fled the country and the continent.

In July 2010, prominent Tanzanian law professor and ICTR defense attorney [Jwami Mwaikusa](#) was assassinated in Dar Es Salaam, and ICTR defense attorney Peter Erlinder was arrested and charged with "genocide ideology" from mid-May to mid-June 2010, while in Rwanda to defend Victoire in court.

(Erlinder was released after international outcry motivated then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to secure his "unconditional medical release." She did not respond to his legal arguments at the ICTR or in defense of Victoire, or to his criticism of war crimes committed by Kagame, a longstanding Clinton ally.)

Internationally known Rwandan gospel singer Kizito Mihigo joined Victoire in prison from 2014 to 2018 for recording a gospel song in which he acknowledged the genocide of Hutus as well as Tutsis during the [Rwandan Civil War](#) and its final 100 days. Like Victoire, he was released but forbidden to leave Rwanda, and in February 2020 he was arrested while trying to cross the country's southern border into Burundi. Kizito [died several days later in police custody](#) and few believed the police report that he had committed suicide.

In 2014, the BBC produced and aired the documentary "[Rwanda's Untold Story](#)," which so infuriated the Rwandan President and his ruling Tutsi elite that they temporarily banned BBC Gahuza, the network's Kinyarwanda language radio broadcast in Rwanda, and organized a list of [38 scholars and journalists](#) to sign a statement condemning the documentary's "revisionism."

In Praise of Blood, Crimes of the Rwandan Patriotic Front

In 2018, Judi Rever's groundbreaking book "[In Praise of Blood: Crimes of the Rwandan Patriotic Front](#)" chronicled and evidenced the crimes of Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Army, which became the national Rwandan Defense Force (RDF), in both Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Kagame's main excuse for invading DRC has always been that he was compelled to hunt down Hutus who had killed Tutsis then fled to Congo and continued to threaten Rwanda, but [Rever's book](#), and the [UN Mapping Report on Human Rights Abuse in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 1993-2003](#), document the RDF's massacre of innocent civilians, both Rwandan refugees and Congolese.

Rusesabagina in handcuffs, Dr. Mukwege under threat

In 2010, Kagame accused Paul Rusesabagina, author of the book which became the movie "Hotel Rwanda," of "[harboring the double genocide theory](#)." Last week Rwandan authorities [seized Rusesabagina in the UAE](#) and flew him to Kigali in handcuffs, where they paraded him before the press and charged him with terrorism.

Dr. Denis Mukwege, the Nobel Prize winning gynecological surgeon who founded Panzi Hospital to treat victims of the sexual violence used as a weapon in DRC's resource wars, is receiving [death threats for identifying Rwanda](#) as the primary occupier and aggressor in DRC and calling for an international tribunal to prosecute the crimes evidenced in the UN

Mapping Report.

Recognize Hutu Genocide

This is just a short list of moments in the ongoing struggle over the truth of the Rwandan Genocide, and the 25 years of hell that ensued when Kagame's army followed Rwandan refugees into the DRC and remained there to occupy and plunder. I compiled it in order to encourage BAR readers to visit the new "Hutu Genocide" website at hutugenocide.org, which calls for recognition of genocide committed against Hutu populations in Rwanda and DRC. A good entry point there is the YouTube video "[A mapping of crimes in the book 'In Praise of Blood, the Crimes of the RPF by Judi Rever'](#)," which begins with the statement, "This video is not meant to deny, minimize, or conceal in any way the genocide against Tutsis that took place in Rwanda in 1994." Judi Rever says the same, as does Victoire Ingabire, and as do I.

We also agree that neither Rwandans nor Congolese will see peace until the whole truth is told.

Why the silence in the world's upper diplomatic, governmental, and global NGO circles, including the United Nations? Because Rwanda's violent occupation of DRC and its service as an entrepôt for stolen Congolese resources has worked out well for powerful interests in the US and elsewhere in the industrialized world, and the truth would embarrass them.

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