

As Dictator Kagame Unmasked, It Is Time to Reveal the Canadian Connection

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Global Research, October 26, 2018

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Region: [Canada](#), [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [History](#)

Canada's paper of record pulled another layer off the rotting onion of propaganda obscuring the Rwandan tragedy. But, the Globe and Mail has so far remained unwilling to challenge prominent Canadians who've crafted the fairy tale serving Africa's most ruthless dictator.

Two weeks ago a front-page Globe article added to an abundance of evidence suggesting Paul Kagame's RPF shot down the plane carrying President Juvénal Habyarimana, which sparked the mass killings of spring 1994. "[New information](#) supports claims Kagame forces were involved in assassination that sparked Rwandan genocide", noted the headline. The Globe all but confirmed that the surface-to-air missiles used to assassinate the Rwandan and Burundian Hutu presidents came from Uganda, which backed the RPF's bid to conquer its smaller neighbour. (A few thousand exiled Tutsi Ugandan troops, including the [deputy minister](#) of defence, "deserted" to invade Rwanda in 1990.) The new revelations strengthens those who argue that responsibility for the mass killings in spring 1994 largely rests with the Ugandan/RPF aggressors and their US/British/Canadian [backers](#).

Despite publishing multiple stories over the past two years questioning the dominant narrative, the Globe has largely ignored the Canadians that shaped this Kagame-friendly storyline. I've [written](#) a number of [articles](#) detailing Roméo Dallaire's important role in this sordid affair, but another widely regarded Canadian has offered significant ideological support to Kagame's crimes in Rwanda and the Congo.

As Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF in the late 1990s Stephen Lewis was appointed to a Panel of Eminent Personalities to Investigate the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda and the Surrounding Events. Reportedly instigated by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and partly funded by Canada, the Organization of African Unity's 2000 report, "The Preventable Genocide", was largely written by Lewis recruit Gerald Caplan, who was dubbed Lewis' "[close friend](#) and alter ego of nearly 50 years."

While paying lip service to the complex interplay of ethnic, class and regional politics, as well as international pressures, that spurred the "Rwandan Genocide", the 300-page report is premised on the unsubstantiated claim there was a high level plan by the Hutu government to kill all Tutsi. It ignores the overwhelming logic and evidence pointing to the RPF as the culprit in shooting down the plane carrying President Habyarimana and much of the army high command, which sparked the mass killings of spring 1994.

The report also rationalizes Rwanda's repeated invasions of the Congo, including a 1,500 km march to topple the Mobutu regime in Kinshasa and subsequent re-invasion after the government it installed expelled Rwandan troops. That led to millions of deaths during an

eight-country war between 1998 and 2003.

In a Democracy Now interview concerning the 2000 Eminent Personalities report Lewis mentioned “[evidence of major](#) human rights violations on the part of the present [Kagame] government of Rwanda, particularly post-genocide in the Kivus and in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo.” But, he immediately justified the slaughter, which surpassed Rwanda’s 1994 casualty toll. “Now, let me say that the [Eminent Personalities] panel understands that until Rwanda’s borders are secure, there will always be these depredations. And another terrible failure of the international community was the failure to disarm the refugee camps in the then-Zaire, because it was an invitation to the *génocidaires* to continue to attack Rwanda from the base within the now- Congo. So we know that has to be resolved. That’s still what’s plaguing the whole Great Lakes region.”

An alternative explanation of “what’s plaguing the whole Great Lakes region” is US/UK/Canada backed Ugandan/RPF belligerence, which began with their invasion of Rwanda in 1990 and continued with their 1996, 1998 and subsequent invasions of the Congo. “[An unprecedented](#) 600-page investigation by the UN high commissioner for human rights”, reported a 2010 *Guardian* story, found Rwanda responsible for “crimes against humanity, war crimes, or even genocide” in the Congo.

Fifteen years after the mass killing in Rwanda in 1994 Lewis was still repeating Kagame’s rationale for unleashing mayhem in the Congo. In 2009 he told a Washington D.C. audience that “[just yesterday](#) morning up to two thousand Rwandan troops crossed into the Eastern Region of the Congo to hunt down, it is said, the Hutu *génocidaires*.”

A year earlier Lewis blamed Rwandan Hutu militias for the violence in Eastern Congo. “What’s happening in eastern Congo is the continuation of the genocide in Rwanda ... The Hutu militias that sought refuge in Congo in 1994, attracted by its wealth, are perpetrating rape, mutilation, cannibalism with impunity from world opinion.”

In 2009 the Rwanda News Agency described Lewis as “[a very close](#) friend to President Paul Kagame.” And for good reason. Lewis’ has sought to muzzle any questioning of the “RPF and U.S.-U.K.-Canadian party line” on the tragedy of 1994. In 2014 he signed an open letter condemning the BBC documentary [Rwanda’s Untold Story](#). The 1,266 word public letter refers to the BBC’s “genocide denial”, “genocide deniers” or “deniers” at least [13 times](#). Notwithstanding Lewis and his co-signers’ smears, which gave Kagame cover to ban the BBC’s Kinyarwanda station, Rwanda the Untold Story includes interviews with a former chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), a former high-ranking member of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda and a number of former Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) associates of Kagame. In “[The Kagame-Power](#) Lobby’s Dishonest Attack on the BBC 2’s Documentary on Rwanda”, Edward S. Herman and David Peterson write: “[Lewis, Gerald Caplan, Romeo Dallaire et al.’s] cry of the immorality of ‘genocide denial’ provides a dishonest cover for Paul Kagame’s crimes in 1994 and for his even larger crimes in Zaire-DRC [Congo]. ... [The letter signees are] apologists for Kagame Power, who now and in years past have served as intellectual enforcers of an RPF and U.S.-U.K.-Canadian party line.”

Recipient of 37 honorary degrees from Canadian universities, Lewis has been dubbed a “spokesperson for Africa” and “[one of the greatest](#) Canadians ever”. On Africa no Canadian is more revered than Lewis. While he’s widely viewed as a champion of the continent, Lewis has backed Africa’s most bloodstained ruler.

It is now time for the *Globe and Mail* to peel back another layer of the rotting onion of propaganda and investigate Canadian connections to crimes against humanity in Rwanda, Congo and the wider Great Lakes region of Africa.

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