

Neocolonial Kleptocrats with Clinton Connections. Rwanda's Links to Wall Street Billionaires

Kagame's new order of thieves without borders

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On 18 November, Rwandan President Paul Kagame honored seven and one medical doctor into his "[National Order of Outstanding Friendship](#)," presenting them with medals for "exemplary service" to the nation, meaning himself and his ruling party, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

Kagame is a modern day exemplar of French King Louis XIV's theory of government: "*L'état, c'est moi*." His list of honorees showcases the skill sets that keep any neocolonial kleptocracy in business. Agility with shell companies and offshore accounts are highly valued, and a boundlessly self-righteous sense of entitlement is absolutely required. As with all things Kagame, connection to the Clintons and the Clinton Foundation are an added plus. Here's some of what's known about the Kagame Eight:

1. Hezi Bezael, Israeli businessman and Rwanda's Honorary Consul in Israel. Kagame's newspaper, *The New Times of Rwanda*, praises Bezael for building ties between Israel and Rwanda over the years, and says that "he arrived [in Rwanda] in the middle of 1994, a time when most international figures turned away." Hard to know just what that could mean because on July 27, 1994, after Kagame had won the war that led to the massacres, the New York Times ran the headline [U.S. Is Considering A Base In Rwanda For Relief Teams](#), and reported that:

"The United States is preparing to send troops to help establish a large base in Rwanda to bolster the relief effort in the devastated African nation, Administration officials said today.

"Setting up a staging area in the capital, Kigali, would mark an important new phase, committing American troops in Rwanda for the first time. Military officials said 2,000 to 3,000 troops could be sent into Rwanda, in addition to the 4,000 that Washington has said would join relief efforts outside the country."

Relief efforts are sort of like "evacuating embassy personnel"—always a good excuse for sending troops. But whatever, maybe Hezi Bezael arrived a few weeks before the US troops, more precisely at the midpoint of 1994.



Hezi Bezael with Rwandan President Paul Kagame (Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

In "[Sex, Guns and Big Bucks](#)," the Israeli outlet *Haaretz* describes Bezael in the context of his bid for the license to become Israel's sixth mobile phone operator:

"Bezael made his fortune in Africa, including through arms dealing. Bezael represented Israeli defense companies in various African countries and reaped profits from the fees he charged. His associates say he worked only with governments, not with rebel groups. Now he wants to make himself into a legitimate businessman in Israel."

Last April Israel's Communication Minister granted Bezael the license to go legit with his Xfone 018 telecomm company.

In 2014, [Arutz-Sheva-Israel National News](#) reported that Bezael helped defeat the Palestinian Authority's UN Security Council resolution that called for Israel to withdraw from Judea-Samaria:

"The Palestinian Authority (PA)'s draft resolution calling for Israel to withdraw from Judea-Samaria [failed in a UN Security Council vote](#) Tuesday night – and an Israeli businessman may have contributed to the resolution being shelved.

"Businessman Hezi Bezael has been working in the past few weeks behind the scenes to ensure that the draft resolution would fail to gain crucial support, Arutz Sheva has learned Wednesday.

"Only eight countries supported the proposal: Russia, China, France, Jordan, Chad, Luxembourg, Argentina and Chile. The United States and Australia opposed. Five countries abstained: United Kingdom, Rwanda, Nigeria, Lithuania and South Korea.

"Bezael operates primarily abroad, mostly in Africa, and has a special relationship with the leaders of those countries. Bezael currently serves as honorary consul of Rwanda in Israel.

"This is not the first time that Bezael has worked for the State of Israel in the UN and in African countries. In recent years, he has quietly helped defend Israel from foreign interests looking to harm the Jewish state."

Israel and Rwanda have had a special relationship for more than two decades. Both benefit from the false equivalence of the Holocaust and the 1994 massacres known as the Rwandan Genocide. The late Professor Edward S. Herman and co-author David Peterson analyzed the false equivalence in "[The Politics of Genocide](#)" and "[Enduring Lies: Rwandan Genocide in the Propaganda System 20 Years Later](#)." On New Year's Day 2016, Professor Herman explained it to [Pacifica/KPFA Radio's Project Censored](#), and the transcript of that conversation was published in various outlets beginning with the [San Francisco Bay View](#).

Zionists benefit by the false equivalence, which gives them opportunity to chastise the international community for failing to keep its "Never again" promise by stopping genocide in Rwanda, while at the same time deflecting accusations that they themselves are guilty of Palestinian genocide.

The Kagame regime, in turn, uses it to bring the full weight of the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide and its inescapable association with the Nazi war against the Jews to "the genocide against the Tutsi," its official, legally enforced description of the 1994 massacres. Rwandans who tell a more complex story including Hutu victims and Tutsi perpetrators are imprisoned and even extradited from nations where they've taken refuge.

Israel endorses Rwanda's laws criminalizing "genocide denial," which are modeled after European "Holocaust denial" laws but are far more harshly and frequently enforced.

2. Howard G. Buffett, multi-billionaire son of multi-billionaire Warren Buffett, philanthropist and agribusinessman. Kagame's newspaper thanks Buffett for his "significant contribution to Rwanda's agricultural transformation, national parks, as well as security across the Great Lakes Region."



Buffett at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C. on October 24, 2011 (Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

One of Buffett's contributions to Rwanda's "agricultural transformation" has been a [\\$500 million investment in replacing subsistence agriculture with export agriculture](#)—in a country where 90% of the population relies on subsistence agriculture to survive. It's no surprise that he's never spoken out for [Rwandan political prisoner Victoire Ingabire](#), who called for a

return to subsistence crops during her ill-fated 2010 attempt to run for president: “I would give priority to the subsistence food crops,” she said, “rather than cash crops which benefit mostly traders from urban areas. For example, if people cultivate only maize – if you ask them to cultivate only maize for export – what will they eat? This is why I will give priority to enough food to my people.”

Buffett acknowledges that his farming methods involve GMO seed and chemical-intensive, no-till farming in which chemical herbicide spraying is greatly increased to control weeds in place of tillage. He grows GMO corn and soybeans on his research farm in Nebraska, and idolatrous press actually suggest that he’s on a mission to feed the world.

After the 2012 UN Group of Experts Report that documented Rwanda’s command of the M23 militia ravaging Congo’s North Kivu Province, Western donors temporarily suspended \$245 million in aid. Buffett then joined Tony Blair to pen a Foreign Policy op-ed: “[Stand with Rwanda: Now is no time to cut aid to Kigali.](#)”

He then played a remarkable role in the “peace talks” that ensued: he funded them. On December 17, 2012, the [Rwanda News Group](#), another Kagame outlet, reported:

“The [\$500,00] contribution was announced by Howard G. Buffett, President of the Foundation, upon returning from one-on-one meetings in the region with DRC President Joseph Kabila, Rwanda’s President Paul Kagame and Uganda leader President Yoweri Museveni, who is also the facilitator of the talks.

“In a joint statement released Monday, the leaders said the grant will pay for transportation, lodging and communications costs incurred by the government of Uganda in taking on this role, with the goal of ensuring all parties engaged in the negotiations are provided the opportunity to participate in a fair and inclusive process.”

To its shame, the big corporate and state press regurgitated press releases about the “peace talks,” and even about Buffett’s generous “contribution” to them, without ever pointing to his flaming conflicts of interest. No one scanning the wires would have imagined that this multi-billionaire, self-interested, self-appointed diplomat with extensive resource interests in the region was not paying for the peace talks out of the goodness of his heart. Or that he was in fact a staunch protector of the principal perpetrator—the Rwandan president and commander-in-chief who commanded M23.

The [Congolese army was reported to have defeated M23](#) in November 2013, but the Congolese people gained nothing in the Buffett peace process. In the end, it [produced a document that promised to honor all of M23’s territorial claims](#) in Congo’s North Kivu Province, which were actually cover for Rwanda’s.

Colonel Mamadou Moustapha Ndala, the Congolese commander who had won the hearts of eastern Congolese, was [killed in an ambush](#) less than a month later. His anguished supporters cried foul, but Howard Buffett appeared not to notice. Colonel Ndala had not only been a winning military strategist but had also refused to tolerate resource trafficking by his troops.

After the talks’ conclusion, Loyola University Professor Brian Endless told me that he thought it had all been political cover for the governments of Rwanda, Uganda, and DRC. “They’ve

been trying to legitimize the conflict for years now, really, since Rwanda and Uganda put the first Kabila in charge in Congo, or what was then Zaire, and turned into Congo again. So I really think that they're just looking to pull attention away from the fact that all of the international reports have implicated Rwanda in particular, Uganda to a next extent, and even DRC's own government troops in a lot of the violence that's going on there, with Rwanda and Uganda pretty clearly driving the violence. That wasn't talked about at all in Addis Ababa. This was really a showpiece much more than anything else."

Endless also said that the UN Security Council, which mediated between the African nations, had demonstrated no real interest in peace in DRC, where its most powerful members, like Howard Buffett, have resource interests.

Buffett's involvements in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and elsewhere in Africa could be the subject of an entire book. He even created the [Howard Buffett International Women's Media Foundation to "reshape the narrative"](#) in conflict zones, especially DRC. Its mission statement is pure pabulum about "the potential of women journalists as champions of press freedom" and "news with a diversity of voices, stories and perspectives as a cornerstone of democracy and free expression."

Lastly, and like so many others in Kagame's new Order of Distinguished Friends, Howard Buffett has Clinton connections. According to an August 2, 2017 [Judicial Watch release](#), the entire Buffett family donated heavily to the Clinton Foundation and Howard in particular may then have received official favors related to his agribusiness interests:

"A number of emails show the free flow of information and requests for favors between Clinton's State Department and the Clinton Foundation and major Clinton donors.

"For example, Howard Buffett, Jr., grandson of Warren Buffet, sought a meeting for his father, Howard Sr., with Hillary Clinton to discuss "food security." The Buffett family, including Warren, his son Peter, and his late wife, Susan, through the Susan Buffett Foundation, all donated heavily to the Clintons and the Clinton Foundation. On behalf of Howard Buffett Jr., Bill Clinton aide Ben Schwerin asked [Huma] Abedin to get Howard Buffett Sr. a meeting with Clinton. He says, 'Any chance of a brief meeting?' Abedin replies, 'we will take care of this.'"

3. Gilbert Chagoury, Nigerian billionaire, philanthropist, "counselor to world leaders," major donor to the Clinton Foundation, and St. Lucia's Ambassador to the Vatican. Kagame's newspaper describes Chagoury as an "envoy of goodwill" who "played a great role in fostering ties between Rwanda and the Vatican at a time when relations were shaky."



Gilbert Chagoury (Source: [The Light News](#))

In "[He was a billionaire who donated to the Clinton Foundation. Last year, he was denied entry into the U.S.](#)," the Los Angeles Times called Chagoury "part of a dictator's inner circle," meaning that of General Sani Abacha, who seized power in Nigeria in 1993, stole billions in public funds, and made Chagoury fabulously wealthy with development deals and oil franchises. Chagoury developed "a high-level network of friends from Washington to Lebanon to the Vatican" and tried to persuade the US government to think well of Abacha

and take Nigeria off a US list of nations that encouraged drug trafficking.

The LA Times further reported:

“After Abacha’s death in 1998, the Nigerian government hired lawyers to track down the money. The trail led to bank accounts all over the world — some under Gilbert Chagoury’s control. Chagoury, who denied knowing the funds were stolen, paid a fine of 1 million Swiss francs, then about \$600,000, and gave back \$65 million to Nigeria; a Swiss conviction was expunged, a spokesman for Chagoury said.

“In the years afterward, Chagoury’s wealth grew. His family conglomerate now controls a host of businesses, including construction companies, flour mills, manufacturing plants and real estate.

“He has used some of that money to build political connections. As a noncitizen, he is barred from giving to U.S. political campaigns, but in 1996, he gave \$460,000 to a voter registration group steered by Bill Clinton’s allies and was rewarded with an invitation to a White House dinner. Over the years, Chagoury attended Clinton’s 60th birthday fundraiser and helped arrange a visit to St. Lucia, where the former president was paid \$100,000 for a speech. [Nomad Capitalist lists St. Lucia, a Caribbean Island, among [“The five best offshore tax havens for bank secrecy.”](#) Chagoury is the island’s Ambassador to the Vatican.] Clinton’s aide, Doug Band, even invited Chagoury to his wedding.

“Chagoury also contributed \$1 million to \$5 million to the Clinton Foundation, according to its list of donors. At a 2009 Clinton Global Initiative conference, where business and charity leaders pledge to complete projects, the Chagoury Group’s Eko Atlantic development — nine square kilometers of Lagos coastal land reclaimed by a seawall — was singled out for praise. During a 2013 dedication ceremony in Lagos, just after Hillary Clinton left her post as Secretary of State, Bill Clinton lauded the \$1-billion Eko Atlantic as an example to the world of how to fight climate change.”

Eko Atlantic is in fact an elite, gated, and guarded city. [The Guardian](#) wrote that it “augurs how the super-rich will exploit the crisis of climate change to increase inequality and seal themselves off from its impacts.”



John Dick (Source: [Jersey Evening Post](#))

4. John Dick, the founder of multi-billion dollar satellite internet company, [O3b](#), and Rwanda’s Honorary Consul to the autonomous island nation of Jersey. Kagame’s newspaper credits Dick with “connecting Rwanda with global business leaders leading to fruitful

investment ties,” and calls him a ““bridge-builder to opportunity.” Jersey made recent headlines as [Apple Computer’s newly preferred tax haven](#).

In [Tax Haven Cash Rising, Now Equal To At Least 10% Of World GDP](#), *Forbes* situates it within a web of financial networks: “a large fraction of the money held in Switzerland belongs on paper to shell companies, trusts, foundations, and personal holding companies incorporated in other tax havens. A significant percentage of the offshore wealth managed by Swiss banks belongs to people whose primary accounts, or entities, are based in the British Virgin Islands, Panama, or Jersey.”



Dr. Paul Farmer (Source: [Academy of Achievement](#))

5. Partners in Health founder Dr. Paul Farmer. Dr. Farmer was honored in absentia “for his efforts in improving the local health sector and drastically reducing mortality rates.”

He is the author of a good book about structural violence titled “Pathologies of Power,” but in its pages on Rwanda, he repeats the legally enforced “genocide against the Tutsi” description of what happened in Rwanda, citing former UN Ambassador Samantha Power’s “The Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide” as the authoritative account. For Power, as for Kagame’s Israeli allies, Rwanda is a reminder that the US must “intervene” militarily to keep its “Never again” promise to stop genocide.

Farmer in no way criticizes Kagame, but to be fair, he wouldn’t be able to work in Rwanda if he did, or if he voiced any qualification of “the genocide against the Tutsi.”

His Partners in Health organization has received millions from the Clinton Foundation.



Alain Gauthier and his wife Dafroza Mukarumongi-Gauthier (Source: [IGIHE.com](#))

6. Alain Gauthier and his wife Dafroza Mukarumongi-Gauthier. Gauthier and Mukarumongi-Gauthier were honored for pursuing fugitives from justice for the “genocide against the Tutsi” in France and fighting “the growing global tolerance for genocide denial.” In other words, they collaborate in the relentless witch hunts that make refugee Rwandans fearful of criticizing Kagame or voicing a dissident account of what happened in 1994, even from abroad. In March, Rwandan political asylum seeker Joseph Nwakusi was extradited to Rwanda to stand trial for denying genocide on his blog in Norway. In other cases, like that of

Professor Leopold Munyakazi, anonymous Rwandan witnesses suddenly appear to accuse dissidents of genocide crime and initiate their extradition. Professor Munyakazi had dared to say that the Rwandan war and massacres were a class conflict, not an ethnic conflict, and therefore not genocide.



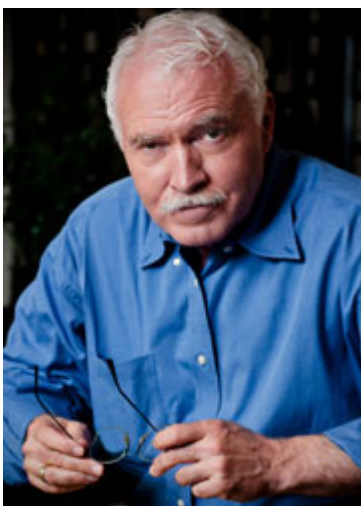
Linda Melvern (Source: [The New Times](#))

7. British “investigative” journalist Linda Melvern. Kagame’s newspaper describes Melvern as an “archaeologist of the truth” and thanks her for “producing meticulously researched accounts of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.” Whenever anyone, Rwandan or not, mounts a public challenge to that description, Melvern is the first to respond, most often in the London Guardian. After the BBC documentary “[Rwanda’s Untold Story](#),” a groundbreaking challenge to the dominant narrative, she joined other writers and academics in [filing a complaint](#) alleging that it promoted genocide denial. The complaint was rejected by the BBC’s editorial complaint unit.

Belgian scholar Filip Reyntjens responded to a Melvern defender in the comments on his Twitter post about the Kigali awards, which he called “white liars’ medals.”

8. Joseph Ritchie, Chicago options and commodities trader, international businessman, Co-chair of Kagame’s Presidential Advisory Council, and former CEO of the Rwanda Development Board. Ritchie organized the first “Rwanda Day” promotional event in the US, and Kagame’s newspaper reported that he “was honored for his role in bringing multiple business people into the country to facilitate economic transformation.”

However, according to Rwandan economist and exile David Himbara, author of “[Kagame’s Economic Mirage](#),” there’s been no transformation for Rwanda’s rural peasant majority, who live in “a world frozen in time.”



Joseph Ritchie (Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

“Kagame,” Himbara says, “has grossly exaggerated his social and economic accomplishments of the past 23 years. He says he has built an African economic lion – the

Singapore of Africa. In reality Rwanda remains the poorest country in East Africa, except for Burundi. Its per capita income stands at \$697.3 versus Kenya's of \$1,376.7; Uganda, \$705; and Tanzania at \$879. Burundi is poorer than Rwanda with per capita of \$277. Rwanda receives \$1 billion a year in foreign aid, which is half of its annual budget of \$2 billion. This is hardly a spectacular success."

Ritchie tirelessly promotes the miracle story nevertheless, and the Western press never seems to get enough of it. Reports of political repression, summary executions, assassinations at home and abroad, and flagrant election fraud are always qualified with effulgent accounts of Rwanda's economic gains, as though they were shared nationwide.

Is it strange that a white options and commodities trader from Chicago would become Co-chair of the Rwandan President's Advisory Council and CEO of the Rwanda Development Board? Not really. There are similar bonds in other neocolonial kleptocracies, such as Congolese President Joseph Kabila's with Israeli diamond and mining billionaire Dan Gertler. It makes sense if the Euro partner deals in raw stuff: diamonds, minerals, commodities, options and the like, and Ritchie and Gertler are both deft with offshore instruments.

So where were the Clintons and the Blairs?

Some wondered why Tony and Cheri Blair and the family Clinton were absent at the November 18 ceremony in Kigali, despite the Clinton connection theme. They are, after all, Kagame's most influential supporters. It may be that Kagame simply has to spread the honors around, or that the Clintons and Blairs have become shy of the attention. Especially the Clintons, now that their foundation is under investigation for corruption.

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