

Northern Uganda: Hidden War and Massive Suffering. Another White People's War for Oil

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On May 18, 2007, ABC news broke a hidden story about horrors in Uganda, and then they censored and deleted reader's comments. ABC has deleted hundreds of comments by people horrified by the atrocities who only want to bring the truth to light and help stop the horrible suffering. What are ABC's real motives? From Darfur to Congo to Ethiopia to Somalia to Kenya—who or what is ripping apart this region of Africa?

On May 18, 2007, ABC News "The Blotter" posted a story titled "Secret Photos Reveal New African Horrors." The short ABC web clip describes in unusual candor—for ABC—the hidden war and horrors in Northern Uganda. The title suggests that it is a "new" conflict, and yet another "African" conflict. Is ABC sincere in their reporting? Or is this just another propaganda campaign narrowly controlled to serve private profits?

"Documentary filmmakers in Uganda were subjected to intimidation and coercion and were the victims of break-ins while attempting to film what a former U.N. official calls "Uganda's secret genocide" in the northern part of that country," the ABC Blotter report begins. "The filmmakers say these threats came from Ugandan officials and secret intelligence organizations there."

The story goes on to describe how an American film crew was reportedly robbed of footage and equipment as the photographers documented the suffering of millions of people, and the role of the Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF) and Ugandan government officials in perpetrating massive atrocities, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The ABC report calls it "Uganda's Secret Genocide," a remarkable revelation in a world attuned only to the crisis in Darfur, Sudan, a place not so far away from Northern Uganda, and one involving some of the same combatants.

"The Ugandan government says it created refugee camps," ABC reported, "for displaced people who were victims of a violent, ongoing civil conflict with a rebel group from the north called the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)."

Like Somalia and eastern Congo, the wars in Darfur and Northern Uganda are prosecuted for the same reasons: petroleum, gold, land—and other natural resources. There is money to be made, indeed, and the Uganda government is depopulating the land to make it easier. But this has been going on for years. Out of sight, out of mind. But absence makes the heart

grow fonder.

Spotlight War, Hidden War

While the war in Darfur is always described as a *genocide* by Arabs against black Africans—and never a “war” by competing factions—the war in Northern Uganda is almost never described at all. This is also true of the multiple fangs of conflict in Ethiopia, where the U.S. backed government of Meles Zenawi is committing genocide against indigenous people, the Anuak minority and others—but it’s completely out of the Western news. The AID for ARMS scandal in Ethiopia has seen hundreds of millions of dollars of weaponry purchased—and used—by AID dollars. This is a country of starvation, drought, and famine—and now the largest standing military in Africa, serving the interests of the Pentagon. The United Nations, UNICEF, everyone is silent.

The Darfur story receives massive press, but the Northern Uganda story has been in complete media whiteout. Like the millions of people at risk today in Somalia, where hundreds of thousands of refugees are on the move today due to a U.S. backed insurgency there, the war in Northern Uganda is off the agenda. The Darfur story has been running for about five years—an outrage where nothing happens to stop it—while the Uganda conflict has been running for more than fifteen years.

What’s the hidden agenda? Whose hidden agenda is it?

In the mid-1980’s today’s President of Uganda Yoweri Museveni seized power in a bloody conflict. Fighting alongside Museveni were Tutsi soldiers who would later go on to overthrow the government of Rwanda, in a low-intensity conflict that began in October 1990, and culminated in the spectacle of the Rwanda genocide of 1994. Powerful corporate, intelligence and defense interests from the United States backed both insurgencies.

Museveni also sent his bloodthirsty troops into Congo. Millions of innocent people died under Ugandan occupation, while Museveni and his gang plundered Congo’s natural resources, raped women and whipped up killing fields scattered with skeletons.

But Museveni is someone’s “Golden Boy,” just like Uganda was always Britain’s “Pearl of Africa.”

President Yoweri Museveni has controlled Uganda for more than 20 years in a one-party dictatorship friendly to powerful corporate interests predominantly from the United States, Britain and Israel.

But years ago, up in the north of Uganda, the Museveni government herded the minority Acholi people into forced settlements—they called then “refugee” camps—under the claim that the government was providing protection from rebel forces supposedly hostile to the Museveni government. They became death camps, and they are death camps still.

For years Museveni’s low-intensity war against the Acholi people has waged on, completely out of sight, while the army of Joseph Kony—the evil Christian forces of the Lord’s resistance Army—was the only party ever accused of anything. The LRA is purported to be a rebel army opposed to the Museveni regime, but this is a convenient ruse that serves the dictates of a permanent warfare economy.

The Lord's Resistance Army

A perfect example of the skewed Western racist reportage is the Vanity Fair feature article of January 2006. Here we have popular writer Christopher Hitchens—the once left wing (sic) Nation magazine writer who went right wing after September 11—telling us a tall tale as if the only culprits—and even the only combatants—were the fanatical Lord's Resistance Army. The Hitchen's story, "Childhood's End," appeared in the posh Conde Nast publication Vanity Fair, which almost never runs anything on Africa by anyone other than Hitchens. (The Vanity Fair editors once returned a query letter to this author stating that Hitchens was their expert on Africa.)

"For 19 years, Joseph Kony has been enslaving, torturing, raping, and murdering Ugandan children," Hitchens began, "many of whom have become soldiers for his 'Lord's Resistance Army,' going on to torture, rape, and kill other children. The author exposes the vicious insanity—and cynical politics—behind one of Africa's greatest nightmares."

But the very same enslaving, torturing, raping, and murdering have been policy—from the highest officials—by UPDF soldiers against innocent people in Congo, Sudan and Uganda.

"These children are not running toward Jordan and the Lord," Hitchens also wrote, putting an African tribal face on the conflict, "they are running for their lives from the 'Lord's Resistance Army' (L.R.A.). This grotesque, zombie-like militia, which has abducted, enslaved, and brainwashed more than 20,000 children, is a kind of Christian Khmer Rouge and has for the past 19 years set a standard of cruelty and ruthlessness that—even in a region with a living memory of Idi Amin—has the power to strike the most vivid terror right into the heart and the other viscera."

"My Acholi friends look to the days of Idi Amin as 'the good old days,' wrote human rights activist Lucy Larom of the Campaign to End Genocide in Uganda (CEGUN). Several of Larom's posts to the ABC Blotter site were also removed or sanitized. "Things were better then. At least in my understanding individuals were targeted, not a whole population. Or maybe because death was quick, relatively speaking. Not the prolonged year by year kind of suffering that has caused a whole new concept and reality to creep into the Acholi consciousness: suicide, one of the leading causes of death in the camps among women."

Why does Joseph Kony get so much attention? Because he's a terrorist? Because he's a fanatical Christian? Maybe. Mostly because he is reported to be an ally of the Islamic government—read Islamic fundamentalist terrorists—running the genocide show in Sudan.

Currents of Holy War

"Joseph Kony and four other leaders of the L.R.A. were named in the first arrest warrants ever issued by the new International Criminal Court (I.C.C.)," wrote Christopher Hitchens, in the one paragraph in the entire Vanity Fair feature that has any ring of truth about it. "If that sounds like progress to you, then consider this. The whereabouts of Kony are already known: he openly uses a satellite phone from a base across the Ugandan border in southern Sudan."

Kony also has direct ties to people in Washington. In 2006, while working in northeastern

Congo in 2006, I spoke with a special intelligence investigator sent in by the United Nations Secretary General and tasked with finding and negotiating with Joseph Kony. When Washington got wind of it, they intervened, and blocked the negotiations, and the investigator was called off.

“Like the United States, Sudan is not a signatory to the treaty that set up the I.C.C.,” Christopher Hitchens went on to explain. “And it has sponsored the L.R.A. because the Ugandan government—which is an I.C.C. signatory—has helped the people of southern Sudan fight against the theocracy in Khartoum, the same theocracy that has been sponsoring the genocide against Muslim black Africans in Darfur.”

And so this is a remarkable admission by Christopher Hitchens: the Ugandan government has helped the people of southern Sudan fight against Khartoum. Of course, the Hitchen’s comment is a gross understatement. Uganda’s clandestine support for the people of South Sudan—the Sudan People’s Liberation Army—and the UPDF/SPLA alliance with the Pentagon and private military companies is something that is equally unreported and hidden, especially by the purveyors of the genocide line on Darfur. The UPDF and SPLA, with their foreign backers, have perpetrated massacres and war crimes using the human population as shields.

(See: keith harmon snow, Oil in Darfur? Covert Ops in Somalia? The New, Old, Humanitarian Warfare in Africa, www.allthingspass.com/journalism.php?catid=24.)

Christopher Hitchens never gets into the reasons for the conflict, and instead of telling the truth about the natural resources that might be up for grab, or the depth of foreign intervention, or the involvement of companies like Bechtel, for example—whose subsidiary Nexant is part of the consortium of corporations building a massive oil pipeline across Uganda and Kenya—instead we find Hitchens spewing the standard litany of racist excuses for Africa’s hopeless plight. This could not possibly have anything to do with white people, according to Hitchens, and the posh luxury wasteland of Vanity Fair, instead it must be that the problems in Uganda are the “decades of war and famine and tyranny and Ebola and West Nile fever and AIDS.”

The ABC’s of War in Uganda

And so we have this new ABC expose, which takes quite a different line. Now we find ABC revealing the true story, with a little obvious hesitation, and a lot of deception of its own, but reporting, nonetheless, that more than 1500 indigenous Acholi people are dying every week. ABC even cites a recent report about Northern Uganda by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), claiming that “approximately 1.2 million internally displaced persons—IDPs—reside in overcrowded camps where mortality rates remain above emergency levels, largely as a result of inadequate water availability, poor sanitary conditions, and the spread of diseases.”

“It’s a huge conspiracy of silence about the genocide which has been committed in northern Uganda,” ABC quotes Olara A. Otunnu, the former U.N. undersecretary-general and special representative for children and armed conflict, to say.

But if ABC is interested in exposing the truth, why have they censored so many of the

comments from readers of the story? Hundreds of comments were deleted on the night of April 20, and hundreds more were deleted or blocked before and since.

Perhaps the answer can be found in the comments made by those whose posts were deleted. Here are some, the comments of this writer, which were copied by another ABC reader (before ABC found and deleted them) and sent back to their source.

The posts were made with a sense of hope, and trust, that ABC was concerned about the people of Uganda, and interested in doing the right thing.

To read the post's and review further documentaiton on this issue, visit www.allthingspass.com

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