

The Truth of the Rwanda Genocide: RPF the New Instrument for African Imperial Conquest

By [Michael Welch](#), [Ann Garrison](#), and [Robin Philpot](#)
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"Let there be no doubt: the Rwandan genocide was the ultimate responsibility of those Rwandans who planned, ordered, supervised and eventually conducted it....But the deaths of Rwandans can also be laid at the door of the military genius Paul Kagame, who did not speed up his campaign when the scale of the genocide became clear and even talked candidly with me at several points about the price his fellow Tutsis might have to pay for the cause."

– Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, 2004 [1] (emphasis added.)

"I think that the initial story, the story that everyone believes – 800,000 Tutsis massacred by Hutus led by the Hutu government – that's a false story."

– Ann Garrison (from this week's interview)

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[Wikipedia](#), the online encyclopedia resource, run and written by volunteers, and, according to The Economist, "the biggest and most-read reference work ever" had the following to say about the 1994 Rwanda genocide:

During this period of around 100 days, members of the [Tutsi](#) minority ethnic group, as well as some moderate [Hutu](#) and [Twa](#), were killed by armed Hutu militias... The RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) quickly resumed the civil war once

the genocide started and captured all government territory, ending the genocide and forcing the government and [génocidaires](#) into [Zaire](#) (now the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)). [2]

Leading and respected researchers, and journalists, from [Phil Taylor and Judi Rever](#) to [Justin Podhur](#), [Peter Erlinder](#), and [Pierre-Claver Ndacyayisenga](#) have contradicted this story. Official documents such as the [1994 \[UN\] Gersony Report](#) question it, and place much more blame on the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Even the revered figure Edward S. Herman together with David Peterson in the book [Politics of Genocide \(2010\)](#) and its follow-up, [Enduring Lies: The Rwandan Genocide in the Propaganda System, 20 Years Later](#) (2014) argued that the Hutus, not the Tutsis, made up the majority of the victims. They were consequently accused of “genocide denial.” [3]

Today the “genocide of the Tutsis” is taken as a sad chapter in history. The day we could all learn from to prevent such violence from ever happening again. Anyone who questions it should be hung to dry, or criticized as has been done by Africa “specialist” [Gerald Caplan](#) and Adam Jones, Canadian author of [Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction](#).

But questioning official narratives is a fundamental staple in the Global Research News Hour den of goodies, and we need to get to the bottom of this disaster if we are to avoid a response that does not play into the pockets of misleading U.S. military, intelligence and corporate personnel.

In our first half hour, journalist Ann Garrison joins us to spell out the brutal truth of the affair, the imperial moves by the U.S., and the threats to the people, particularly the dissidents, in Rwanda today. In our second half hour, writer, translator and publisher Robin Philpot expands on his 2013 book, entitled Rwanda and the New Scramble for Africa, outlining the role of Paul Kagame and the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the role of Canadians like L Gen Roméo Dallaire and Prosecutor Louise Arbour, and the grand contest between the United States and France over African resources.

Ann Garrison is a Black Agenda Report Contributing Editor based in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 2014, she received the [Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza Democracy and Peace Prize](#) for her reporting on conflict in the African Great Lakes region. She can be reached at ann@anngarrison.com. You can help support her work on [Patreon](#).

Robin Philpot is a graduate of the university of Toronto and founder of Baraka Books in Montreal. He is author of [A People's History of Quebec](#), with Jacques Lacoursière (Baraka Books, 2009); and [Rwanda and the New Scramble For Africa: From Tragedy to Useful Imperial Fiction](#) (Baraka Books, 2013), among other works. Robin can be reached at philpotrobin@gmail.com.

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Transcript of Robin Philpot, April 8, 2024

Global Research: Mr. Philpot, thank you so much for making yourself available on the

Robin Philpot: Okay, thank you, Michael, for inviting me. It's a privilege, it's a privilege.

GR : We appreciate it. So, Mr. Philpot, when and why exactly did you start your research into the Rwandan genocide?

RP: I started doing it during the crisis in Rwanda in 1994. It's as simple as that. I had lived in Africa, I studied African history. Even before the plane was shot down on the 6th of April, I was following very closely what was going on, because the major error people make is that they start everything on a date, the 7th of April as we saw, we're marking the 30 years since that tragedy. That is the number one mistake and it is the number one reason – and yes, we can go back and say, "Why is that being done?" — that people are not understanding what really happened.

So, I started working on it then and I published many articles starting in 1994 basically questioning what we were being told at the time. I had a lot of Rwandan friends who were here studying and we – you know, that's what we started looking at, you know, like – you starting realizing that there's something more going on than an internal fight in an African – independent African country. There was more to it.

And so – so, like – because – so, you know, it went on. The book came out originally in French in 2003. And then, with time, I ended up publishing it in English, updated in 2014. Yeah, it was 2014.

So, it is important that – when you look at that crisis, that's tragedy – that you realize – people realize that it – what happened in 1994 was the result of what had been going on since 1990, when the Rwandan Patriotic Front invaded Rwanda.

GR: Yeah, you mentioned that in great detail in the first part of the book, you know, that since 1990 there were nearly, you know, three years in advance of what we call the genocide. People in the North were displaced from their homes. I mean, can you explain how this set up the circumstance for the —

RP: Oh, yeah. I think you have to go back a bit historically. Say that – to realize, in fact, what 1994 was, it was the reconquest of power by a minority who had run a feudal state under Belgian colonialism until 1959. What happened in 1959 was there was independence. And following 1959, and what was known as the Social Revolution in Rwanda where – and with the minority Tutsis who – and I – once again it's partly the Tutsis, but they controlled everything and the Hutus were in a feudal situation in Rwanda. There was a social revolution with independence and certain parts of the population, the Tutsi elite, left and went to Uganda, Zaire, which was The Congo, and some to Burundi as well.

And so, that – what happened – it was for – finally the 85 percent of the population started having equality, that was the aim of that social revolution and independence. And as some people point out, Rwanda is the only place in what we used to call "Black Africa" where, except for maybe Zanzibar, where there was a revolution with independence, you know?

And so, what happened in 1990: a group of Rwandan exiles living in Uganda who had

helped neighbouring President Museveni take power. And they were armed, they were part of the army, the head of the military intelligence in Uganda. They formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front in Washington, that's where it was founded. The invasion was the 1st of October, 1990.

And it was very, very violent, and it was not – it wasn't a civil war. This army, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, was armed and supported continually for three years by the Ugandans – by Uganda. Right from 1990 until 1994. So, that is the background. And it was quite obvious for many that the Rwandan Patriotic Front just wanted to take power.

So, there was a lot of a – there were huge numbers, up to 1.5 million people who were displaced South towards Kigali during that period of war. And if the big powers decided, 'Okay, well you have to negotiate a peace agreement and a power-sharing agreement.' Which is what happened in 1993, there was the Arusha Peace Accords, under which in Canada – not Canada. They created UNIMAR, the United Nations mission in Rwanda. The person in charge of the military part of it was Roméo Dallaire. It wasn't Canada who put him in there. The United States needed a French-speaking head who was not from France.

In 1993, you got to remember, the Soviet Bloc had fallen and the Americans were triumphant. They wanted to take over from France in many places in Africa. France had its own, you know, its own area which was Le Gaul Francafrigue. The Americans wanted to take over from Rwanda – from France. And so, that's how Dallaire was appointed to run the military, he didn't even know where Rwanda was on the map.

GR: Yeah. Could you just talk a little bit about Paul Kagame for a second, his background? Because I'm thinking he's kind of like, you know, the predecessor of Juan Guaido in a way, because I mean – what was his background and what explains the West's interest in his leadership?

RP: Well, he was the head of the military intelligence in Uganda. He was sent by Uganda to – for a training session in Fort Leavenworth under the American army. He was number two in the Rwandan Patriotic Front. The first one was a man by the name of Fred Rwigyema. But he was killed in that invasion in 1990. It was three or four days after the invasion. And then, Paul Kagame became – he was major at the time – he was head of the Rwandan Patriotic Front.

They called it the Rwandan Patriotic Army which was more accurate. So, he was the guy who led the war right through to 1990 and he is in power since.

GR: Mm-hmm.

RP: He does tolerate opposition, as we know. Like, we can get into that, but... So, he was a – and he is a person who you could say is responsible for many extra-territorial assassinations. Responsible for the destruction of the Eastern Congo. Invasion with a proxy army that's going on right now that we can hear about occasionally in the media. He is the man who took power.

So, he is a real dictator. Unlike Guaido, he is a – Guaido is like a figurehead, kind of a, you know, puppet. Kagame is a – is more along the lines of Netanyahu if you want to –

Netanyahu. Who, by the way, after he took power, about the first place he went in 1996, in October 1996, was to Israel.

And there is a famous photo of him meeting the prime minister of Israel who was Benjamin Netanyahu. In other words, you want to find somebody who is more like an ultra violent killer. It's as simple as that. That is the description, the best description, of Paul Kagame. His best supporters were and are Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, and the successive American presidents, right from – it was obvious that the Americans were behind the RPF from the beginning, you know?

One of the starting points for my book, and not from my work on this thing, was when I found – I read – I was reading a book by Boutros-Ghali. Boutros- Ghali was the Secretary General of the UN at the time. And he had a quote there and he said, "The Rwandan Genocide was 100 percent American responsibility." That was – he was removed from the UN about a year after – or so after that, basically by the Americans. Because they were having a total unipolar war – world at that time. After the fall of the Soviet Union, it was the American – the American century lasted about 10 or 20 years, but that was a period where the Americans ruled the roost totally. They did not like people saying, 'Hang on,' — you know, '–you have to give – you have to respect rules' and all that.

But Boutros-Ghali had said that. And the reason he said it – I interviewed him twice, by the way for the book. And he said – and I said, 'Well, why is it that you can say that?' and he said, 'Americans, with the help of the British, did everything they could to prevent the UN from creating – from establishing peace in Rwanda.' And it was because the Americans wanted a decisive, unequivocal victory of the Rwandan Patriotic Front. It did not want to apply – the Americans did not want to apply the Arusha Accord, which was a power-sharing agreement which was the under – which was what Dallaire was sent there to apply, which he of course didn't apply. That's another issue.

So, I mean, that is one of the things that – one of my departure points on this book was Boutros-Ghali saying that, but why? And so, how did that not work? And that's the conclusion I came to.

Now the use of the word "genocide," people can use it. I actually think it doesn't help understand. It doesn't mean that all these killings happened – they did happen. And not only the way people say it. In other words, not only the so-called Hutu militias, but the RPF, the Rwandan Patriotic Front did a lot of massacring as some books, some recent books – and I can talk about them later – have gotten into great detail about that.

What is important is that using the word "genocide" is that, for instance, Rwanda and the Western world, mark the anniversary of that tragedy on the 7th of April.

GR: Yeah.

RP: Yeah, okay.

GR: If you just joined us, you're listening to the Global Research News Hour. My name is Michael Welch and I'm in a conversation with the writer, translator, and publisher

Robin Philpot on his book "Rwanda and the New Scramble for Africa: From Tragedy to Useful Imperial Fiction." Just to go back, I mean you were talking about Roméo Dallaire earlier —

RP: Mm-hmm.

GR: — the force commander of UNAMIR. And basically, I mean he's not the only Canadian that's involved in this. There is also Louise Arbour, the Canadian prosecutor. There is the Canadian General Maurice Baril. A Canadian ambassador, Raymond Chrétien. I think they have more involvement in this – in, you know, settling affairs one way or the other than, I don't know, anything that I can recall since.

RP: Mm-hmm.

GR: Could you explain, you know, a little bit more about how I guess the United States is using Canada in this situation? Because I suspect it's more than just, you know, the close kinship between Chrétien and Bill Clinton.

RP: Yeah. No, it's an important point. I will get back to this question about the Peace Accords.

The United States, as I said, were – they were triumphant with the fall of the Soviet Union. One of their secretaries of state, I think it was Warren Christopher, was going around to all the countries where France – basically it was France's area, France's – the place that France that considered theirs, it had special relationships with African countries and said, 'We don't have any history of colonialism. And we will no longer put up with dictatorships and colonialism.' They were basically aimed on taking control of what was considered French – where French – areas of of French influence. The British also were agreed with that [SIC], remember that's West Africa, that's The Congo, Cameroon, where large parts of West Africa that are French-speaking and had these long-standing relationship, sort of neo-colonial but it was France. And the Americans wanted in. They made it very clear.

And so, when this UNAMIR was set up, the United States did not want to have somebody from France or even perhaps from Belgium. They wanted a French-speaking general who was against France. From within Canada, that can be found in Ottawa. It's as simple as that. You can find that in the military, in the judiciary, and in the diplomacy circles in the Canadian government.

So, that explains why Roméo Dallaire got appointed, because he didn't arrive with a lot of skills in the area. He didn't know where Africa was – where Rwanda was. He admits it in his book. And I think he was a total failure. You know, he said, 'Well, I tried,' but no, that's not how it happened.

Louise Arbour, she got appointed by Madeleine Albright, who then got in touch then with the Canadian government was – they got in touch with the Canadian government. In other words, she got vetted by Madeleine Albright who was Secretary of State in the United States before – they didn't do it along diplomatic circles, they didn't get in touch with Canada and said, 'Have you got a judge you can –' or '– a prosecutor you can propose,' it was the other way around. They started identifying – they wanted to have a French-speaking judge or person who was not necessarily in France.

Then Maurice Baril was working in the Peacekeeping Association and it – this is one thing that I also got from Boutros-Ghali, that he was – they were operating basically according to the Pentagon – what the Pentagon wanted. Maurice Baril was the one who was giving – communicating with Roméo Dallaire.

Raymond Chrétien got appointed when there was the invasion of – he was the man brought in to try and find a solution after – there was huge refugee camps in Eastern Congo. And the Rwandan government, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the government, was bombing the camps. And the refugees were being massacred and they had to flee. So, he was brought in to try and find a solution between the Congo – at the time it was called Zaire – and Rwanda. And he was a – it was a failure.

I interviewed the man and he and Baril were sort – Baril, they managed to set up an intervention force. It was going to be led by Maurice Baril. Maurice Baril flew over the area. He said the refugees were safe. And this forced invention the UN was setting up was stillborn. This was the Fall of 1996. Anybody who you spoke to, who lived there, said that sacrifice, hundreds of thousands of refugees, people who had to flee to the West of Congo and their stories of people, how they walked around the Congo. We published a book, in fact, by one man whose family walked across the Congo on foot. They were being chased by the Rwandan army. That is going on up to now with – at the – with actions by the Rwandan Patriotic Front.

If you'll allow me to just go back on one thing about the – when the 6th of April, this the date, the most important date, not the 7th, the 6th of April, the President of Rwanda flew back from peace discussions, peace talks in Dar es Salaam with the President of Burundi. Their plane was shot down on the evening of April 6th. In the plane there were – there was Chief of Staff of the Rwandan army and other top military leaders. The Rwandan state was decapitated with that. And that meant the end of the peace agreement.

Now to this day, although everybody knows it was the RPF, and it was ordered by Kagame, his close associates who have fled in the past were there when they planned his assassination. But to this day, there has never been an independent inquiry into it. And people got – they keep a kind of artistic vagueness about it all, you know —

GR: Well, you talked – you talked in the third part of it, you talked about the basically use of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda as, you know, basically a kangaroo court, you know, because it was very not even-handed and so on. I mean, could you elaborate on the use of the international criminal justice as what you call “a battering ram”?

RP: Yeah. I wasn't the one calling it a battering ram, by the way. But no, they created this court, which – as an international criminal tribunal for Rwanda and they created one for Yugoslavia as well. They gave all the power to the prosecutor. It was – it actually – there is a term, but it's used as a battering ram, as that was one of their US ambassadors for human rights and international tribunals who said – who described how he managed to organize the tribunal so that it would be a battering ram in the advancement of US and NATO interests. He said that. David Scheffer was his name and he was one of the American appointees, ambassador-at-large for it.

That's what it was. And the best example is that they gave themselves a one-year period when the crimes had to be committed that they were going to examine. But they only indicted one side of the – they did not, nobody in the RPF was indicted, nobody. And you know, nobody was – when they actually started discovering who shot down the plane, and it was Kagame and his others – his henchmen, the people with him, they started discovering that Louise Arbour put an end to that investigation.

In other words, she was in '97 if I'm not mistaken. She was the one in charge. And they started finding out this crime was committed on the 6th of April. And yet, it was excluded from the per-view of the – by Louise Arbour herself. And so, she is – so, the tribunal – and, you know, the interesting thing – well, I mean, her successor was Carla Del Ponte. And she said, if it's true that the RPF shot down the plane on the 6th of April, then the history of the Rwandan genocide has to be rewritten. But of course, she got moved out, she got removed from that, so...

GR: Okay. We've only got a couple of minutes left. But I just wanted to say, first of all, in the middle chapter —

RP: Yeah.

GR: — you highlighted four books, one from the United States, one from Canada, another novel from Quebec, and another report from Belgium and they all seem to have that same tendency to highlight the remnants of literary thinking going back to Joseph Conrad and his article – his novel. But also, you – basically you say that when you look at this monstrous deception and what it led to, you find that the RPF in Rwanda is in the glove of the US and it's propelling towards Congo. So, basically they've turned it into kind of like another Israel and Middle East, as you said, or post-coup Ukraine against Russia all while pushing back against France. So, in the last two minutes or so, is there any highlights that you want to focus on – you know, conclude with to, you know, anything you haven't gotten into in enough detail.

RP: Well, yeah, yeah. What I would say is that by reduce – by not looking at why this happened – and those four books help you show that it started with racist colonial mentality, of people who comment on these events on – and write about it, that they will reduce it to a question of Africans fighting among themselves and how brutal and bloodthirsty they are. That is what you read.

And if you don't go and say, now why did this happen? How can a — not a rag-tag – a fist of the army be developed and armed and financed and invade a country, and then the powers that be come along and say, 'Okay, you have to negotiate.' Force the Rwandan government into a corner where they can't stand up. Create a conditions where you also know that there is a history of conflict among – in the population of Rwanda. And basically you add fuel to the fire. You fuel that conflict because of your own interests and that is what was going on.

So, we've been through in the last week or so an outpouring of propaganda about what happened there. But none of it, as far as I can see, actually tries to understand what really happened and why and who was involved.

Right now, we want – we do not want, you know, what's going on in Gaza right now.

Everybody sees it now, that if the Americans were backing Israel who are killing and killing and killing. You don't want that in 20 years, 30 years to say, well, this was just violent Arabs and jihadists who were fighting against the vulnerable Israeli population who have been through a holocaust. You know, like that's basically what's happened here. But you know, if people want to understand what happened, you've got to start looking. And that is not what our media has done in the last week or two.

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Notes:

1. Lieutenant- General (Ret) Roméo Dallaire (2003), p 515, 'Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda', Vintage Canada
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rwandan_genocide
3. George Monbiot (June 13, 2011), 'Left and libertarian right cohabit in the weird world of the genocide belittlers', The Guardian; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jun/13/left-and-libertarian-right>

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