

Kabila et al. caught in Nazi extermination campaign in Zaire

by Linda de Hoyos

President William Clinton dispatched Bill Richardson, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, as a special envoy to Zaire in April, with the mission to attempt to negotiate a settlement between Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko and mercenary Laurent Kabila, whose forces are now within easy range of the Zairean capital of Kinshasa.

At a press conference in Kinshasa on April 29, after meeting with President Mobutu, Richardson defined his mission: "There can be no military solution to the crisis, but rather a negotiated settlement leading to an inclusive transitional government and fair and free elections. I am also here because of our grave concern for the plight of several thousand refugees and displaced Zaireans. There is a humanitarian crisis here and the international community must respond. There have been some reports of massacres and human rights abuses. This must end. International aid organizations and the UN must have immediate access to people in need. During my visit I will press for this."

Kabila, with backing of divisions of troops from Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi, and now Angola, has seized the entire eastern half of Zaire and has now made salients into western Zaire, aiming for Kinshasa, promising to take the capital within two weeks. Kabila, who was placed in front of the invading Uganda, Rwandan, and Burundian troops as the nominal commander in November 1996—one month after the war in Zaire had begun—has made no bones about his support for Canadian and British mining giants to operate in his "liberated" territory, particularly the South African megaconglomerate Anglo American Corp. and Sir George Bush's Barrick Gold. The policy pursued by Kabila on behalf of his British masters is to seize the immense mineral wealth of Zaire, and transport it out through the British Commonwealth's Uganda and its satellite Rwanda.

In addition, as *EIR* has consistently reported, Kabila is providing the cover for the Rwandan Patriotic Army to carry out the "final solution" to the "Hutu problem"—carrying out the mass murder, either through direct military assault or through forced death marches—of hundreds of thousands of refugees from both Rwanda and Burundi.

Just at the point that Richardson's mission was announced, the news exploded into the press of the horrors per-

petrated by forces associated with Kabila against the refugees. Tensions have been brewing since the latter part of April, because Kabila would not permit the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)—an organization which has made no attempt to defend the refugees against Kabila's attacks—and other aid agencies, to deliver any aid to the refugees, or to carry out their (forced) repatriation to Rwanda.

Protests mount

On April 28, the protests against Kabila's effective fencing off of the dying refugees caused an explosion of protest:

- Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) released a statement charging that "the policy of total liquidation of the Rwandan refugees in Kivu is accelerating."

- United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan described the treatment of the refugees by forces nominally under Kabila as "slow extermination." On April 23, Annan declared: "I am shocked and appalled by the inhumanity of those who control eastern Zaire to these refugees, most of whom are innocent. I have therefore appealed to the international community to work with me in pressing Kabila and *those in the region who back him*, to push him to allow assistance to the refugees. I do not think the international community can stand by as thousands of men and women and children are starved to death. You can kill by shooting or by starvation. Killing by starvation is what is going on" (emphasis added).

- The *New York Times* on April 26 quoted World Food Program spokesman Christiane Berthaume as saying: "Eighty thousand people are condemned to slow and cruel death. The expression 'final solution' is not exaggerated."

- In a departure from its usual coverage, the April 25 *New York Times* demanded in an editorial: "These atrocities must be halted at once," and called upon the U.S. State Department to force Kabila to stop the killing of refugees. The *Times* further warned that international mining companies signing contracts with Kabila should "take heed" of Kabila's actions toward the refugees. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns angrily noted of the *Times*'s editorial that the State Department had been demanding that Kabila change his treatment of the refugees "for the last three weeks."



Linda de Hoyos addresses a conference in Germany on "Peace through Development in Africa's Great Lakes Region," April 26-27, 1997. To her right is Lyndon LaRouche. EIR will have detailed reports on this historic conference, in future issues.

- On April 30, Sadako Ogata, the UNHCR chief, finally joined in to bewail the plight of the refugees. It would be difficult for Ogata to defend herself against the charge that the deployment of her agency over the last six months has precisely enabled the Rwandan Army to carry out its mass murder of the refugees, as she did not utter a protest at the military bombardment of refugee camps under her agency's protection, and fought against the deployment of multilateral forces to aid the refugees in November—which deployment would have averted the horror now unfolding before the eyes of the international community.

- On April 28, the *Times* of London, spokesheet for the British Foreign Office, published two articles detailing atrocities against the refugees (see accompanying excerpts). Up to now, reports of the mass death awaiting Rwandan and Burundian refugees have been dismissed as the propaganda of particularly French intelligence services seeking to keep a hold on Zaire. No such characterization can be made of the same reports from the *Times* of London.

As U.S. envoy Richardson was preparing his mission to Zaire, the news came out that Rwandan troops deployed under Kabila's cover, had carried out a massacre of refugees at the Kasese and then the Boira camps, where the refugees had gathered to seek aid. Many were killed and then shoved into mass graves with mechanized diggers. Others were forced to dig their own graves before they were hacked to death or shot. Such reports can only evoke memories of the Nazis' policies of mass murder during World War II. Now, German TV and others are reporting the slow re-emergence of survivors from

the forests—many of them with limbs missing, with terrible and unattended wounds, many of them on the brink of death.

The United States media refuse to bring the reality of the horror that is ongoing in eastern Zaire to the American people, maintaining a policy of continuing blackout.

However, the magnitude and depth of the tragedy has not been lost on Richardson, who visited Kisangani on April 30. According to news reports, while in Kisangani, Richardson walked into a crowd of Hutu refugees and stopped before a young Hutu woman and patted the brow of the baby she was carrying. "She's cold," Richardson said. "She's dead," the mother answered. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry," Richardson said.

Who backs Kabila?

While Laurent Kabila himself is being called to account for the mass murder in eastern Zaire, it were more appropriate to call to account his backers:

- Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, who commands the Ugandan Army in Zaire and is also in effect the commander-in-chief of the Rwandan Patriotic Army, which is reportedly carrying out most of the killing. In an interview on April 23 with the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, Museveni stated that he expected Kabila to "remain in contact with the countries of the region who understood and supported him." Kabila traveled to Luanda, Angola, for pre-negotiations on May 2, in a Ugandan plane. Museveni himself takes orders from Baroness Lynda Chalker, British Minister of Overseas Development, and case officer for the British monarchy's Privy Council on Africa.

- Roger Winter of the U.S. Committee of Refugees, a fervent supporter of the Rwandan Patriotic Army, who in Congressional testimony in December hailed Kabila's military assault on the Mugungu refugee camp.

- Donald Payne (D-N.J.), former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, who has stated his assessment that Kabila was treating the refugees "very humanely."

- Anglo American Corp., American Mineral Fields, Barrick Gold, and other British Commonwealth mining companies which have signed contracts with Kabila on easy terms for full possession of Zaire's mineral wealth—contracts made possible by the British-deployed Ugandan-Rwandan-Burundi military siege against Kinshasa.

Documentation

We reprint here two articles from the Times of London of May 28, which report on the nightmare of murder and starvation taking place in areas of eastern Zaire under the control of mercenary Laurent Kabila and the British-backed Rwandan Patriotic Army. Since the Times generally is known to speak for the British Foreign Office, it would be difficult to dismiss the report as mere disinformation coming from rival intelligence agencies. The first, entitled "Aid Workers Catalogue Zaire Rebel 'Barbarities,' " is from David Orr in Nairobi.

As rebels in Zaire push towards Kinshasa, the capital, details are emerging of alleged human rights violations in areas they control. Until now crimes of murder, rape and looting have long been blamed on the ill-disciplined Zairean Army. Allegations of atrocities by rebels have been few.

The lengthening list of barbarities ascribed to Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire is revealed in two confidential aid agency reports obtained by *The Times*. So sensitive are the contents and so fearful are the organisations of rebel recrimination against field staff, it is not possible to quote at length from the reports.

Those suffering most at rebel hands are Rwandan refugees unable or unwilling to return to the homeland from which they fled after the 1994 genocide. However, there are also numerous allegations of atrocities against Zairean civilians.

The confidential reports allege that crimes against both Rwandan refugees and Zairean civilians started long before concerns arose over the fate of tens of thousands of refugees still missing in the forests near Kisangani. The information, gathered on aid agency missions in eastern Zaire, points to a systematic campaign of extermination of refugees and of intimidation of Zaireans in rebel territory.

Mr. Kabila has dismissed allegations that his fighters have slaughtered large numbers of the Rwandan refugees.

However, one agency document obtained by *The Times*

refers to indications that "serious violations" of human rights laws have taken—and are taking—place in areas the rebels control. Testimony of the military killings was gathered from expatriates working in Zaire and from villagers, many visibly scared of the rebels, who are said to have initially targeted men before recently including women and children.

Military commanders and members of a secret service body recently established by the rebels told the aid agency mission that they went into the rainforest to look for refugees. They needed the agencies as bait to entice them to open roads for elimination.

Most refugees returned to Rwanda last year, but some moved deeper into Zaire's interior ahead of the advancing rebels. Among them are said to be a hard core of Hutu militiamen who took part in Rwanda's genocide.

Local people in the Shabunda area visited by the aid agency are said to suffer rebel intimidation and threats. One report says villagers have been told not to help refugees. The intimidation campaign was reportedly stepped up after an "ideological seminar" in Shabunda in March, which all regional community chiefs were obliged to attend. The mission collected evidence that Zaireans who then sheltered refugees were killed.

"The military have a very clear, well defined and systematic mission of 'cleaning' the area," says another report by a British aid agency. This also gives details of massacres of Zairean civilians and Rwandan refugees.

An article entitled "Abducted Children 'Taken for Slaughter,' " by Sam Kiley, Africa correspondent:

Hutu children close to starvation were slung into the back of a lorry "like sacks of potatoes" and abducted by Tutsi soldiers in eastern Zaire, United Nations officials said yesterday, as fears grew that the youngsters had been slaughtered.

Sources at the United Nations Children's Fund and other agencies connected with the Lwiro children's hospital, said the Tutsi soldiers fired into the air, beat up two nurses, abducted 50 children and 60 adults, and drove off in a lorry, threatening that they would be back. "Some of the soldiers said that the young [Rwandan] Hutu refugees would grow up to be killers and that they should therefore die," one relief worker said, quoting a witness in the small town close to Bukavu, in South Kivu province.

Another source said that the toddlers—close to death as a result of malnutrition after seven months on an aimless trek through Zaire's jungles ahead of the Tutsi advance—were thrown into the lorry "like sacks of potatoes."

"They will not live long without expert medical care," said a relief worker associated with the hospital.

The children have not been seen since they were abducted last week and most aid workers said that they feared the worst.

"There have been reports that they may have been killed," Pamela O'Toole, a spokeswoman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said.