

Murderous British-backed Kagame regime wins big in the Congo

by Linda de Hoyos

Speaking at a forum on Aug. 12 sponsored by the U.S. Institute for Peace, a satellite of the U.S. State Department, institute associates John Prendergast and David Smock put forth a policy for the implementation of the July Lusaka accords that were designed to end the six-country war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C.), which is guaranteed to continue the spiral of bloody confrontation in the Congo and throughout the region.

The plan revolves around the “security” measures stipulated by the accord, which are the agreement’s “most important element,” said Prendergast, who has recently hopped over to an institute post from the National Security Council. The pact calls for the establishment of a multilateral force under the command of a Joint Military Commission, to be comprised of military representatives of all states currently involved in the war. The security stipulation calls for the “formalization of a regional security framework to reunify the region around a common platform against the non-state actor,” Prendergast explained. The mission is to forcibly disarm the “non-state actors,” which prominently include any Rwandan Hutu resisters to the Kagame Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) regime and Congolese resisters to the Rwandan-Ugandan occupation of eastern Congo. The groups will be called upon to “assemble and register” their members, and if they refuse, then they will be the target of multilateral military operations.

Asked by one member of the audience why neither he nor Smock had mentioned the atrocities carried out against the civilian population of the Congo by extremists on the rebel side with its Rwandan and Ugandan military supporters, Prendergast replied that no bias was intended. He was himself frustrated after having raised the issue of the mass murders in Congo carried out against refugees and civilians in 1996-97 by the Rwandan-Ugandan invaders. He said that he had urged that the issue be taken up by the UN Security Council, but there was “no interest.” It seems that “this issue has been sacrificed,” said Prendergast. “How to resurrect it now? I don’t know.”

(See below for excerpts from the Report of the Special Rapporteur to the United Nations Roberto Garreton, and a report from Human Rights Watch, on the murders and other human rights violations carried out by the invading forces in the Congo in the 1998-99 war.)

To the contrary, Prendergast stated point blank that the security measures in the accord “give full legitimacy and support” to the demands of the Rwandan regime of Defense Minister and Vice President Paul Kagame for the elimination of any and all insurgencies that operate in the environs of Rwanda and Uganda.

Gold is the game

But just as Prendergast was announcing the world’s support for Rwanda’s security concerns, which Kigali says was its sole reason for invading the Congo on Aug. 2, 1998, serious fighting was breaking out in the Congo city of Kisangani between Ugandan and Rwandan forces, supposed allies in the fight against the Congo government of Laurent Kabila. The military clashes, which reportedly left at least 200 Ugandan soldiers and 50 civilians dead by Aug. 19, are the result of a political clash between the two allies over their split sponsorship of competing Congolese rebel factions.

Uganda backs the Congo Liberation Movement of Congolese businessman Jean-Pierre Bemba and the faction of the Rally for Democracy in Congo (RCD) of Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, both headquartered under Ugandan military protection in Kisangani. Uganda, according to the Ugandan pro-government newspaper *New Vision*, has trained thousands of Congolese troops for Wamba’s faction. Rwanda, meanwhile, backs the new leader of the RCD, Emile Ilunga, whose faction is headquartered under Rwandan military protection in Goma.

The competition among the three “rebel groups” resulted in neither Wamba’s nor Ilunga’s signing of the Lusaka accords, thereby perpetuating the war.

The serious nature of the military clashes between Rwanda and Uganda gives the lie to the entire game. The real issue is not who will control the RCD, but rather, who will control the gold, and implicitly, the entire vast mineral wealth of eastern Congo, which brought Uganda and Rwanda—with British Commonwealth extraction companies, such as Barrick Gold, Banro Resources, and American Mineral Fields, following behind—into the Congo in the first place. As Reuters cited one diplomat in Kinshasa saying, the conflict in Kisangani “shows why they [Uganda and Rwanda] are really here. This is not just about security interests. This is a good exposition to the international com-

munity of what is at stake.”

Kisangani is the center for the diamond trade in the north-eastern region, and the base from which Uganda controls gold mines. For months, the Kagame regime has been complaining about Ugandan Chief of Staff James Kazini, who is in direct charge of Ugandan military operations in Congo. Late last year, Kazini’s brother was killed in a crash of a small plane containing gold, along with an Israeli businessman affiliated with the business operations of Museveni’s half-brother and former adviser to the President on Defense, Salim Saleh. Underscoring that money is the real bone of contention in Kisangani now, *New Vision* reported that two Ugandan businessmen were also recently killed outside the Congo Palace Hotel by Rwandan troops, and another six Ugandan businessmen in Kisangani are missing.

The timing of the clash, however, appears to have resulted from the scheduled arrival in Kisangani of a team from Zambia, the mediating country of the Lusaka accords, to verify the relative military strength of the two RCD factions, following futile diplomatic interventions by South Africa, Tanzania, and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice to broker a deal between the two and get the accord signed.

Initially, the fighting, beginning on Aug. 9, involved Ugandan troops, along with those of Wamba, against forces of Ilunga’s RCD. Joseph Mudumbi, who heads the RCD-Goma’s department of “territorial administration,” declaimed to Agence France Press on Aug. 10 that Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni is “trying to weaken the RCD, because he is in a leadership war with Rwanda in this region. The Ugandans have many more economic objectives in the D.R.C. than political or security ones. For this reason, their presence here is not justified.” The same day, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) warned the Ugandan military that if it attacked their positions in Kisangani, the RPA would return fire.

Full-scale clashes between Rwanda and Uganda broke out on Aug. 15-16. After three days of intensive fighting, in which the Rwandan army destroyed the hotel in which Wamba was headquartered, a cease-fire was called. But not before U.S. National Security Council official for Africa Gayle Smith had been dispatched to Kampala, Uganda, to try to patch up differences between the two countries. Museveni and his Rwandan counterpart Pasteur Bizimungu first met in Kampala, and then Museveni and Kagame met in southwestern Uganda before the fighting was brought to a short halt, although fighting erupted again.

It is not clear how long the cease-fire will hold. Rwandan military officers on the ground are claiming that Ugandan forces have been run out of Kisangani. In Uganda, meanwhile, Presidential adviser John Nagenda told the Aug. 17 *Washington Post* that he believed “things will be worked out. But if Uganda and Rwanda were to go their separate ways, the biggest loser would be Rwanda. Nobody’s going to throw us out of Kisangani. I know that for a fact.”

FIGURE 1
The war region



There are also reports that a third party joined the fray: the Tutsi military regime of Burundi, which reportedly sent 400 troops to Kisangani on the side of the Rwandans.

As the fighting in Kisangani was being quelled for the moment, Congo Ambassador to the United Nations André Kapanga called upon the United Nations to condemn Uganda and Rwanda, because their fighting had violated a truce which was supposed to facilitate a UN polio immunization campaign in the region. He further called for UN sanctions against Rwanda and Uganda for “their systematic pillaging of Congolese natural resources, which is the real reason for their aggression against the D.R.C.”

Now, after protracted negotiations in Uganda on Aug. 20-22, involving South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Zuma, Museveni, and Kagame, an agreement has been reached to end hostilities between the armed forces of the two countries in Kisangani. The stalemate on which faction would sign the Lusaka accords, has also been reportedly resolved with the idea that all 28 founding members of the RCD would sign, including both Ilunga and Wamba.

Lusaka land-clearing

If such a signing does take place, then the Lusaka accords will officially go into effect. Combined with the Rwandan apparent victory in Kisangani, this is no mean achievement for the Kagame regime, since, as Prendergast said, the accord

provides the cover of total legitimacy to the demands of particularly Kigali for a “pacification” program for eastern Congo, which can only result in the deaths of thousands more civilian Congolese, among others. The “disarmament” process called for can only bring about a protracted and bloody war, with no guarantee of success against guerrillas operating in an ideal jungle terrain.

The Lusaka accord originally stipulated that the “disarming” of the non-state actors should be carried out by a UN peacekeeping force, but Prendergast expects that no such force will be authorized. Instead, there will be a transfer of international resources to the joint military commission comprised of the militaries of Rwanda, Uganda, the D.R.C., Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola.

“The international support [for the commission] will be robust,” said Prendergast, and will include: logistical aid to the commission to track down the non-state actors; intelligence and information input, which would include satellite communications and likely intelligence provided by satellite to pinpoint the locations of the targets; aid in transferring the captured and surrendering non-state actors so that it is a “humane process,” and aid for their training and education to enter into civilian life; and reassurances to the Congolese people that once the “security concerns” of Rwanda and Uganda are met, their forces will be withdrawing from the Congo.

According to Ugandan press accounts, the groups to be “disarmed” include the ex-soldiers of the former Rwandan army (ex-FAR); the “Interhamwe”—a misnomer for any Rwandan Hutu who resists the Kagame regime; the Allied Democratic Forces of Uganda; the Forces for the Defense of Democracy of Burundi; the Former Ugandan National Army; the West Nile Bank Front of Uganda; the National Army for Liberation of Uganda; the Lord’s Resistance Army of Uganda; and the Uganda National Rescue Front II. “These armed groups are expected to comply with the [Lusaka] agreement by voluntarily going into camps,” Ugandan Regional Cooperation Minister Amama Mbabazi explained to the Ugandan Parliament on July 16. “Those who do not comply will be disarmed by force and encamped.” Mbabazi said, however, that some groups would be offered total amnesty.

The list of groups in itself is peculiar, since it is widely known, for instance, that the Lord’s Resistance Army is not anywhere near the Congo, but has safe haven in Sudan, and furthermore, has been quiescent for the last eight months. Meanwhile, John Garang’s Sudanese People’s Liberation Army—a non-state actor which, however, enjoys the backing of Prendergast et al., not to mention British intelligence—is *not* on the list, but *is* known to operate in the Congo. According to the cited Human Rights Watch report, the SPLA in the Congo, “presumably on the side of the RCD, also committed abuses against civilian populations in eastern Congo.”

When asked by this reporter whether, given the long, bloody, and expensive process of forcible disarmament, any-

one was attempting to talk to any representatives of the groups on the list to see if there might be a more efficient route to bring them out, Prendergast replied that he was “opposed to any negotiations. We are not going to pull a Sierra Leone here”—referring to the peace agreement between the Sierra Leone government and the Revolutionary United Front. Smock qualified that discussions could be held with two excepted groups—UNITA and the Burundian FDD. The point is, Prendergast said, “now a multilateral force with international support” will be doing what the Rwandan army was doing by itself before. The major responsibility would fall on the Zimbabwean and Congolese armed forces, he indicated, evidently on the presumption of the truth of Rwandan charges that Zimbabwe was arming and training Rwandan Hutus against the Kigali regime, and therefore would now be forced to either disarm or eliminate them.

Aside from disarming the selected “non-state actors,” Prendergast also indicated that the counterinsurgency platform will require separating these actors from the civilian population. The former Adviser on African Affairs to the National Security Council cited as the model of a successful counterinsurgency campaign, that carried out by the Kagame regime in northwestern Rwanda during 1997-98. Here, the RPA countered a new insurgency sprung up to defend Hutus in the area, through a policy of vicious reprisals against the civilian population, and ultimately the forced removal of hundreds of thousands of Hutus from their farms and homes into camps in the mountains of northwestern Rwanda. Here, they live without adequate medical care or food, on an inadequate lifeline provided by the World Food Program. These camps still exist more than a year later. The forced relocation then permitted the RPF to hunt down the insurgents—driving them across the border, to the Congo, where the RPF evidently requires a “multilateral internationally supported force” to destroy the insurgents.

Prendergast also called for organizing the local population into armed militias, presumably to help carry out the platform against “non-state actors.”

As the report of the UN Special Rapporteur Roberto Garreton shows (see *Documentation*), the RPF has used the same tactics of reprisals against civilians in return for any attacks from insurgents against its armed forces in Congo.

The Lusaka accords promise to keep eastern Congo in a maelstrom, over which Kinshasa will have no control. It thus stands as a *de facto* acceptance of the partitioning of the Congo, and a commitment to the continuation of violence in the region—a policy that will bring many more deaths and much more suffering to the people of the region. Such mass death is to the greatest benefit of the British Commonwealth financial and mining interests who have seized upon the Rwandan and Ugandan militaries as useful tools. To these interests, the people of east Congo are sitting on massive mineral wealth, and must be removed, one way or another.

UN Garreton report: RPF mass murder in Kivus

The report of Special Rapporteur for the United Nations Human Rights Commission Roberto Garreton, issued in May 1999, affirms that the populations of the eastern Congo, including those refugees from Rwanda and Burundi, have been a continual victim of the invasion of eastern Congo from Uganda and Rwanda beginning in September 1996. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) is the ruling regime in Rwanda. In an earlier report, the Special Rapporteur had fully confirmed EIR's early reporting¹ of the genocidal attacks on Rwandan refugees by the Rwandan and Ugandan armies, along with Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) in 1996-97. The Special Rapporteur put forward the figure of a minimum of 200,000 civilian refugees, mostly Rwandan and Burundian Hutus, murdered by the invasion forces in the first Congo war.

The May report further confirms EIR's continuing reports of massacres against the people of eastern Congo, under a succession of occupying armies since 1997. The war had been exacerbated by tensions in eastern Congo between indigenous populations and the Banyamulenge (Tutsis from Rwanda long settled in eastern Congo). As was documented by EIR, even with the bringing to power of Kabila in Kinshasa on May 17, 1997, the war in eastern Congo continued against the civilian population. As Garreton reports in these excerpts:

28. The over-weighting of Tutsi in the [Kabila] government caused considerable unease in the population, which had welcomed victory as a liberation. This discontent was aggravated by the paralysis of democratization and contempt of the historic opposition. The Rwandan presence in the east was especially resented, since it was perceived as a real form of foreign occupation.

29. The historic problems of the east (ownership of land and access to power) were aggravated. In 1998, there were serious clashes, attacks, and burning of property resulting in numerous deaths, injuries, and displaced persons in North Kivu: Mera, Limangi, Kibumba (Jan. 8), Lubango (May 1), Goma (May 16 and 17). ADFL forces pursued anyone sus-

pected of helping the Mai-Mai, and one of the Alliance leaders, "Commander Strongman Kagame," undertook to exterminate the suspects. The suspects [Mai-Mai] are former guerrilla fighters of the time of Pierre Mulele, a companion of Patrice Lumumba. They have no ideology: They sided with the Interhamwe against the invaders, but, when Kabila appointed Banande and Baniaga to representative posts, they chose him over Mobutu. Later, however, they fought the ADFL, which they identified with the Rwandan Batutsi. Since the rebellion [Aug. 2, 1998], they have been connected with the FAC [Armed Forces of the Congo]. In September, they attacked the rebel headquarters, and that attracted public sympathy. In order to facilitate the resettlement of the Tutsis, population records were burned. In South Kivu, the main events occurred in Bukavu on Feb. 18, 1998, when massive searches were conducted for Mai-Mai militiamen. Butembo was taken by the Mai-Mai and recaptured later by ADFL using unprecedented violence that resulted in the deaths of at least 300 people (Feb. 20 and 21). The [FAC] moved whole communities (Kibumba, Rugari, Byahi, Tyazo) as a means of facilitating military maneuvers, as recognized by the Provincial Security Council of North Kivu.

30. There were three parties to the conflict: a) Tutsi, Banyamulenge, FAC, and Rwandan Patriotic Army [RPA] moving back and forth between the Democratic Republic of Congo and neighboring countries, supported by the Kinshasa government; b) Mai-Mai, remaining Interhamwe, and former members of the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR); and c) the civilian population, the main victim, which was becoming increasingly sympathetic to the Mai-Mai, although all it really wanted was peace.

31. Many traditional chiefs (*mwami*) were replaced by Tutsi (in the communities of Tombo, Bamnbu, Bakumu, Kibasi, Bukombo, Butalonga, and Kibumba) and often arrested, accused of cooperating with the Mai-Mai.

Children recruited into the military

In August 1998, the FAC in the eastern Congo rose in mutiny against the Kabila government, which rebellion was soon supported militarily by Rwanda and Uganda. As reported by EIR at the time, the rebellion and invasion sparked an anti-Tutsi pogrom in Kinshasa. Further, "government forces and their Angolan and Zimbabwean allies indiscriminately shelled civilian populations in Kimbaseke, Masina, Boma, Moanda, Ndjili, and Mikonga (Kinshasa), killing hundreds of people. Many Tutsis in western Congo have been detained." Further, as Garreton reports, the FAC continues to recruit children as soldiers:

104. Even before the conflict and more so after it broke out, the [FAC] continued recruiting children (known as *kadogos*). It is estimated that around 10,000 children are in military service. The *kadogo* child, Malumu, aged 13, was sentenced to death, after which his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

1. See, *Never Again! London's Genocide Against Africans*, an EIR Special Report, June 1997; "The Kigali-Kampala Bloody Annexation of East Congo-Zaire," EIR, Oct. 24, 1997; "Washington Is Careening Toward a Debacle in Africa Policy," EIR, June 26, 1998.

Situation in RCD-held areas

On the situation in the areas occupied by the Rally for Democracy in Congo (RCD) since the beginning the 1998 war, the Garreton report presents the following:

54. It is not easy to discover the facts owing to the dictatorship imposed by the rebels in the occupied zones. Humanitarian organizations have difficulty operating—although there has been some improvement in Goma and a few other towns—and there is no freedom of expression or freedom of the press. Only occasionally a clandestine radio station is able to broadcast. Power is held by the Rwandans, who are rejected by a population that feels humiliated and by some officials put in place by the AFDL prior to the conflict. Political parties are banned, except the [RCD]. A more careful investigation is therefore needed.

55. The victims of violations of Article 3 of the [Geneva] Conventions have been the democratic sectors opposed to the rebellion, non-combatant Mai-Mai, indigenous chiefs and social organizations, and Katangan soldiers of the [FAC]. The victims are mostly young people, or children, who object to enlisting in the rebel forces. Like in the 1996 conflict, the victims' bodies are thrown into the Ruzizi River.

56. According to NGOs [non-governmental organizations] in South Kivu, some 120 people died each day in the first 15 days of September in the two Kivu regions. The most serious violations of the Geneva Conventions were the massacres at Kasika on Aug. 24, 1998 (648 victims) and Makobola on Dec. 31 (about 500 killed), the second incident being a consequence of the impunity that followed the first. Other cases are reported in annex IV.

57. Some facts indicate that the casualty figure could be very high: It was reported that a mass grave with 630 bodies of persons captured by rebels in Uvira, Kiliba, and Sake had been discovered in Kasenga, South Kivu. In addition, some 150 civilians were killed by rebels on Sept. 6 in Kirunga, apparently in retaliation for a Mai-Mai attack. Similar cases were reported from Kalemie, after the fall of the town.

58. Persons suspected of being close to Kabila have been arbitrarily deprived of liberty and some have been deported to Rwanda. This is extremely serious, since nothing is known of what happens to them in that country. Cases reported to the Special Rapporteur included the following: between Aug. 2-8, 1998, some 356 Katangese detained between Uvira, Bukavu, and Goma; on Sept. 14, about 30 traditional chiefs detained; four persons detained in December (Babunga, Agustín; Chubaka; Bugugu; and Mrs. Muke, in retaliation for not finding her husband). Fears were expressed that some of the victims have been cremated (in Bugesera or in Gabiro) in order to leave no traces. . . .

60. The rebels have also raped women belonging to indigenous ethnic groups, as acts of war (see annex XIII.D). Similar events occurred in Bukavu (Aug. 24); in Essence (Kibonge) and Kadutu; in Mwenga, Walungu, and on the Island of Idjwi. . . .

Refugees and displaced persons

64. None of the projects for the peaceful return of the 1994 refugees to Rwanda had the backing of the governments concerned.

65. It is alleged that there are still some 170,000 Rwandan refugees in hiding in North and South Kivu, who come out only to obtain medicines and food or to attend church. They are protected by the Congolese population, but are being pursued by the "English-speaking soldiers." . . .

Right to equality and non-discrimination

110. In rebel territory, membership of the Tutsi ethnic group, which is in an absolute minority, guarantees privileges and immunities which have been firmly rejected by the local population, particularly when they have led to the removal and harassment of traditional chiefs.

Right to security of person

111. Fear and distrust prevail in the zone occupied by the rebels. The only recognizable authority is that of the members of the Rwandan and Ugandan armed forces and the Congolese who serve them out of fear. The historic anti-Rwandan feeling reported on by the Special Rapporteur since 1995 has become hatred. The soldiers, both those who are paid and those who are not, have turned to looting; they use stolen vehicles for troop transport or send them to be sold in Rwanda. In Kisanгани, the Tufuate and Lisanga Protestant schools were turned into garrisons. These incidents are going on in the provinces of Kivu and in Kalemie, Goma, Fizi, Baraka, Uvira, Kindu, Moba, Kabalo, Myunzu, Mbuji-Maji, Moanda, and Kasika. . . .

Situation of children

122. The rebels have recruited 10-year-old children. In the Kapalata military camp, which houses 3,000 allegedly Mai-Mai children, many were eliminated before the conflict by the Rwandan soldiers in charge of them (they "disappeared" 900 in less than one month); this caused even more serious clashes between Congolese and Rwandans. Other children were executed by the rebels for not joining the rebellion.

Human Rights Watch report

The Garreton Report is further corroborated by a report issued by Human Rights Watch in February 1999. The HRW report emphasizes the pattern of reprisals on civilian populations for attacks on the RCD, Rwandan, Burundian, and Ugandan militaries by militias operating in eastern Congo, including the Mai-Mai. The HRW further reports on the pattern of disappearances perpetrated by the RCD and its eastern military allies:

The RCD military and the Rwandan, Burundian, and Ugandan forces supporting them have been responsible for a pattern of arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions, and "disappearances." The rate of these abuses varied over time and differed between provinces in the east. Arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions, and "disappearances" in North Kivu have decreased

significantly since August and September.

In South Kivu, however, these types of violations continued at an elevated rate into December, highlighted by a wave of arrests and intimidation of academics, NGO leaders, and other members of civil society in late November and early December. RCD authorities and their military allies frequently accused those arrested of being collaborators with Mai-Mai, Interahamwe, or of being distributors of hate propaganda.

Human Rights Watch interviewed present and former detainees and prisoners of war (POWs) in the east, including some who had been held in illegal detention centers. Some arbitrary arrests and illegal detentions were accompanied by killings, torture, and inhumane treatment by RCD and allied forces. Human Rights Watch interviewed survivors from a group of approximately 48 young men and one young woman, most of whom were arrested by RCD military on Sept. 14 in Goma in the wake of the Mai-Mai attack on the town. The 49 detainees were held by the military in a shipping container at Goma International Airport without food, water, or ventilation. The shipping container, typical of many used as detention centers in the east, measured approximately six feet by six feet by fifteen feet with no windows or light. By Sept. 16, twenty-seven of the detainees had died of suffocation. Three of the survivors, who had helped with removal of the bodies, had scars on their backs which corresponded with their testimony that the military had cut them with knives and beat them during their arrest.

During a site visit by Human Rights Watch to a container at Goma International Airport, an RCD military commander confirmed that he had used shipping containers there until mid- to late-November as holding places for civilians arrested by RCD military and their allies. The commander stated that the containers, empty upon inspection by Human Rights Watch, were presently used only for short-term detentions and that he now transferred prisoners to the appropriate civilian or military authorities in Goma.

Other containers and private residences throughout the east are reportedly still in use as detention centers, especially for those suspected of collaboration with Interahamwe or Mai-Mai. One young man arrested near Goma in early October by Kinyarwanda-speaking members of the RCD military told Human Rights Watch he was held for two days without food or water in a container located in a quarry just north of Goma. He said four of the approximately 15 others held with him died from dehydration, exhaustion, and a lack of medical care on the second day of his detention. Many of the detainees, including those that died, were from the Monigi village on the northern outskirts of Goma, a predominantly Hutu area suspected of supporting Interahamwe. The young man was subsequently transferred to a private residence in Goma, known as the house of Mr. Hakazimana, where he was held for approximately two months. He said the approximately ten detainees who were held in this residence were beaten four

times a day, fed every other day, and forced to use a hole in the floor of their holding room for a toilet. According to the young man, some of the detainees were transferred to Rwanda. After almost two months in detention, the young man was transferred to the jail of the RCD army known as "Bureau two" where he was interrogated by a judicial police officer and accused of being Interahamwe. The young man was released without explanation in early December. One of his arms, still in a bandage when interviewed by Human Rights Watch on Dec. 6, was partially paralyzed from being tied for extended periods of time during his detention.

Other illegal detention centers in the east were reportedly located at the homes of Rwandan and Congolese military commanders in cities throughout the east, including Uvira, Bukavu, and Goma. One such center was located at the residence of an RCD officer in Goma known locally as commander "Celestin," who was reportedly a member of the Rwandan army. One former detainee at this residence described how he and other detainees were beaten and tortured in Commander Celestin's custody and, upon their release, threatened with death if they spoke about their experience. . . .

One woman interviewed by Human Rights Watch claimed that her husband was being held in the residence of a Rwandan commander in Goma known locally as commander "Ngoyi." When asked why her husband was arrested, she claimed that "if you're Hutu, you're Interahamwe; if you're Hunde, you're Mai-Mai. There is no other motivation." Many Congolese in the east felt that the RCD and their predominantly Tutsi military allies were arresting Congolese based on their ethnicity alone. Many individuals arrested by the RCD military were never acknowledged to be in detention, they "disappeared" and remain unaccounted for. One such incident occurred in late November when nine men were abducted by troops during a service at the Neo-Apostolic church in the village of Monigi. Witnesses including the wives of the "disappeared" claimed that the men had been abducted by Rwandan forces and that the nine had been taken to Rwanda. Witnesses recognized one of the soldiers who had grown up in Monigi and later joined the Rwandan army. As of mid-December, RCD authorities had not provided information on the whereabouts of the nine. Many human rights reports received by Human Rights Watch claimed that people abducted were transferred to Rwanda, with some sources claiming that prisoners were sent to a detention center at Rugerero in Gisenyi prefecture. One high-ranking RCD official confirmed that individuals arrested in eastern Congo were at times transferred to Rwanda. Other reports claimed that arrests followed by "disappearances" were frequently carried out by members of the RPA's own troops in the Congo. Numerous witnesses cited commander "Gapari" in Goma and commanders "Pascal" and "Ilias" in Bukavu, all reportedly members of the RPA, as being responsible for many incidents of arbitrary arrest, illegal detention, including at their own residences, and ill-treatment in Goma and Bukavu.