

stood by and did little to prevent the tragedy that became known as the Rwandan Genocide.

Mr. President, I urge you in the strongest terms to do all in your power to bring about an end to the bloody conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, beginning with a clear condemnation of the violations of the cease-fire agreement by Ugandan and Rwandan forces, followed by the full application of the diplomatic resources available to you to compel U.S. allies Rwanda and Uganda to withdraw their forces.

We must not stand idly by once again as the horrors of genocide are visited upon the people of another African Great Lakes region.

Sincerely, Cynthia A. McKinney Member of Congress

### **Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

*Frederick Cardinal Etsou and seven other bishops and archbishops of the Roman Catholic Church issued a statement on May 18, calling for international action to end the Rwandan and Ugandan occupation of their country. Here are excerpts from their statement:*

Somber reality of the situation in D.R. Congo

The suffering unjustly inflicted on our people compels us to denounce and condemn:

1. the aggression by troops of Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi that has victimized our country;
2. the very purpose of this aggression that aims to subject our people to a shameful recolonization in this twenty-first century; the balkanization of our country to weaken it by division and systematically plunder its mineral resources (gold, uranium, diamonds, cobalt, etc.) and other resources such as precious woods, etc.;
3. the extermination of the Congolese people, a non-violent and tolerant people; as a consequence of war, children, women, and old people are forced to abandon their villages and seek refuge in the forest or in camps, or at Kinshasa in order to flee the cruel and criminal hand of Rwandan, Burundian, and Ugandan military;
4. attempts to implicate the Church in ideologies of different warring factions to the point of preventing certain Pastors (priests and bishops) from exercising their ministry and visiting their faithful scattered in occupied territory. Such is the case of Archbishop Emmanuel Kataliko of Bukavu in forced exile in Butembo;
5. the general climate of insecurity that obliges those who travel to Kinshasa, the nation's capital, to make useless and costly detours through neighboring countries at great risk. Example: Bishop Matondo-Kwa Nzambi Ignace of Molegbe who was victim of armed aggression and shot at Bangui, Central African Republic, en route to Rome;
6. the international community's total indifference to the war in Kisangani between Rwandan and Ugandan military who want to impose a de facto situation of occupation and balkanization of our country.

... That is why as Pastors and in the name of our people, we appeal to:

1. All women and men of good will: to support efforts of peace and reconciliation in Central Africa through prayer and sacrifice, and through their public action to raise the critical awareness of international opinion to all the violations of international law and human rights taking place in D.R. Congo.

2. The United Nations:

— that they demand an immediate cease-fire throughout D.R. Congo, the withdrawal from Congolese territory of military troops from Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, and only after that the withdrawal of all other military committed to the protection of the sovereignty of D.R. Congo.

— that they urgently send an important military contingent commensurate with the expanse of D.R. Congo territory, as a force of intervention and peacekeeping along the borders of our territory. The contingent must be capable of humanitarian intervention to assure the security of the Congolese people and the preservation of the territorial integrity of D.R. Congo. . . .

4. The European Union:

## **BBC Cover-Up of a Massacre**

Media treatment of the massacre of hundreds of civilians on May 15 in the village of Katogota by Burundian military forces and the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), indicates that the murders taking place in eastern Congo are being covered up in the same way that the slaughter of Rwandan refugees and Congolese were covered up in the 1996-97 war in eastern Congo. In the 1996-97 war, although mass murder of Rwandan refugees had been taking place since October 1996, the news of this seeped out beginning in January, when relief workers began to send home reports of mass graves. The mass murder of the refugees did not make major international headlines until May 1997, long after hundreds of thousands were dead, either at the hands of the RPA guns directly, or by hunger, disease, and deprivation, as they were hunted down by the Rwandans.

On May 15, the Missionary News Agency (MISNA), which is highly respected for its accurate and independent on-the-ground reporting in the Congo, reported that "three entire families, as well as eight adults and two children were massacred last night in the village of Katogota," in South Kivu. "The massacre was carried out by soldiers of the [Rwandan-backed] Congolese Rally for Democracy [RCD] in retaliation." The massacre had been precipitated

— to expose the European countries (France, Italy, England, Belgium, etc.) and allies (U.S.A., Israel, etc.) which are involved in selling arms and other operations to despoil D.R. Congo of its minerals and other resources, and that through the complicity of institutions or third party covert structures;

— that the EU dissuade those countries from supporting our neighbors — Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi — in this absurd war of occupation of D.R. Congo: the Congolese people have never declared war on them;

— that the EU urge Western countries to provide D.R. Congo and Central Africa with the means to relaunch agriculture, and study scholarships that will permit Africans to participate in the reconstruction of material infrastructure necessary to the integral development of the African continent;

— that the EU favor the total and unconditional cancellation of the external debt of the D.R. Congo. . . .

[Signed:] 1. Frederick Cardinal Etsou; 2. Kumuondala Mbimba Joseph (Archbishop of Mbandaka); 3. Mukenga A. Kalond Godefroy (Archbishop of Kananga); 4. Mambe Mukanga Paul (Bishop of Kindu); 5. Mununu Ksiala Edouard (Bishop of Kikwit); 6. Mosengo Nkiuda Valentin (Bishop of

Kabinda); 7. Mbali Jacques (Bishop Emeritus of Buta) 8. Kasenge Wandagakongu (Bishop Emeritus of Molegbe)

### **Ugandan Churches Call for Total Ugandan Troop Withdrawal from D.R. Congo**

The Ugandan Joint Christian Council in late May called on the Ugandan government to pull all troops out of the Congo and confine the Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF) within Ugandan borders, reported the *New Vision* newspaper. "We urge the government to ensure that UPDF personnel remain within our borders and while consolidating peace in our country. We call upon the international community to prevail on all those promoting the conflict in the Congo to stop it."

On June 20, the Catholic Bishops of Uganda asked the Ugandan and Rwandan governments to promptly repatriate their troops from the Congo, according to the Missionary News Agency. Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala explained that the prelates condemn the fighting in Kisangani, and called upon the civilian and military leaders involved "in the senseless bloodshed" to stop and "concentrate efforts" on finding a rapid and peaceful solution.

by the killing of four RCD men by the Congolese resistance group, the Mayi-Mayi, nearby. When the village people heard about the killing of the RCD men, they fled Katogota. "If the majority of civilians had not fled, the toll of the massacre, which is still provisional, might have been much considerably higher. The soldiers responsible for the reprisal attack went from house to house, killing anyone they found in their path."

On May 22, the MISNA reported that the death toll at Katogota was 300 people. "The news was referred by our MISNA sources, who have already identified hundreds of women, elderly people, children and men, shot to death or killed with machetes and for the most part thrown in the Ruzizi River." The massacre was taken in reprisal, it turns out, over the killing of a Burundian soldier in the area. "When night settled in [on May 14], commented a survivor, the massacre began, it lasted from 7:30 at night until 5:00 on Monday morning."

MISNA reported: "The bodies at first were believed to be about a dozen, while later the lifeless bodies of innumerable civilians were found in the area surrounding the village, particularly along the Ruzizi River. Our MISNA sources reported an estimated 372 missing people."

The British Broadcasting Corp. reported the massacre on May 21, under the headline "Congo Rebels Massacre 300," citing MISNA as its source. However, the BBC also quoted a spokesman of the Rwandan-backed RCD saying that the MISNA story is false and "surreal."

But, later that day, the BBC then broadcast a second story under the headline: "Doubt over Congo 'Massacre.'" BBC said, "A senior United Nations official has dismissed the death toll as 'grossly inflated.'" It also reported that the RCD had dispatched a "mission headed by our military investigator" to Katogota, to determine what had happened. But the RCD spokesman also declared, "There are barely 50 people in Katogota. How could we kill 300?" BBC quoted Charles Petrie, a senior adviser to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Congo, as saying that 31 civilians may have been killed in recent clashes in the area. "He said the lower estimate was based on reports from villagers and the local Red Cross." This was the last that the Katogota massacre was heard of in the international press.

### **MISNA Sticks To Its Story**

MISNA, however, did not back down from its story, reporting Petrie's remarks later on May 22. "Our MISNA sources, linked to the Congolese civil society, referred that the village in which hundreds of innocent civilians were massacred was inhabited by around 1,000 people, a fact also demonstrated by the considerable dimensions of the local church, with seating for 850 people. Not to mention that no one has seen a UN representative in Katogota."

A month later, MISNA reports that 91 people have been positively identified so far in the Katogota massacre and that bodies are still being found.—*Linda de Hoyos*