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Cynthia McKinney together with the lawyer Jordi Palou-Loverdos, from the International Forum for Truth & Justice in Africa of Great Lakes Region

## **“The West fuels the conflicts in Africa”**

### **US activist testifies in Spain on the deaths in Rwanda and Congo**

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They aren't just a profitable venture in their own right – arms exports sometimes constitute a strategy to attain more profitable aims. Cynthia McKinney, former US congresswoman sent to Africa in 1996 to carry out Clinton's policy in the Great Lakes region, testified on Tuesday at the Audiencia Nacional [National Court of Spain] in the lawsuit initiated by the International Forum for Truth and Justice in Africa of the Great Lakes Region. “I accused his Administration of having acted as accomplices in the war crimes in Congo and instigating a genocide.”

“What my government wanted,” McKinney explained to La Vanguardia “wasn't in the best interest of the Congolese people: Clinton kept me there because he wanted an African-American whom Kabila trusted. Even though Mobutu was, technically, the President of Congo, it was Kabila who was in charge of granting the mining concessions.”

The ploy, which was denounced by McKinney and the Forum for Truth and Justice, and which there is evidence on, was as follows: at the time, the then rebel Kabila and RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) troops continued making forays into the territory with weapons and funds that he had gotten from the West by promising, in return, to grant them the mining rights once he had conquered this territory rich in gold, diamonds, and coltan (an important component used in electronic equipment), etc. He would make good on his promise once he became president. “In October 1996, Kabila began to attack Hutu refugee camps in Congo and by July he had already conquered the entire country,” explains lawyer and mediator Jordi Palou who is accompanying McKinney during her visit to Spain. Rwanda, a country the size of Catalonia, was able to conquer, in less than a year, a country which is five times bigger than Spain.

“There they are: commercial stakes, which, combined with an illegal arms trade, were out to make money by fueling a war – a war which has claimed the lives of 7 million people, both Rwandans (Hutus and Tutsis) and Congolese,” states former U.S. congresswoman from Georgia who Bush managed to fire after accusing her administration of lying about 9/11. But what started out as being a lawsuit that the Spanish justice system had initially accepted, namely, the accusation against top administration officials of the Rwandan government regarding the deaths of 9 Spanish volunteers, has now ended up becoming a legal case which seeks justice for all the people who died between 1990 and 2002. In addition, the case is also evidencing the responsibility that mining companies (from Europe, Canada but primarily from the U.S.) have had all along. “What the West perceives as tribal wars is indeed,” Palou adds “hatred geared at obtaining benefits by taking advantage of the existing chaos.”

In Europe, this would be the first time that economic interests could indeed be judicially linked to war crimes. “This would be very pertinent if we take into account Europe’s historic role in Africa,” concluded the woman who people in her native South now consider as heir to the Luther King legacy. “The fact that Catalonia has an Institute of Peace is praise-worthy. Maybe Spain could have an entire Ministry devoted to peace, couldn’t it? My country will take a bit longer to get to that point, ha, ha.”

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