

**THE ICEBERG OF THE CONFLICT IN
AFRICA OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION:
Lawsuit against those responsible for the concealed crimes against humanity¹**

Since the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded Rwanda on October 1, 1990 and the neighboring Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) in 1996 and 1998, almost seven million people have died in both countries. The victims were mostly Rwandan and Congolese, and their deaths were caused either directly or indirectly by the war conflicts. But we must also count among these figures dozens of Western victims, among them eleven Spanish nationals.

This conflict is not merely the story of a power struggle between extremist and criminal forces. It is also, and above all, the story of the pillage and struggle for the control and exploitation of the great wealth of natural resources that exist in the Western part of the Democratic Republic of Congo². Many large Western multinational corporations, mainly from the United States, Canada and Europe, as well as local organizations, have been involved in this struggle. A large part of this human and ecological drama has been deliberately covered up and, often, strategically manipulated.

The Fórum Internacional por la Verdad y la Justicia en el África de los Grandes Lagos³ ('International Forum for the Truth and Justice in Africa of the Great Lakes Region') promotes a peace initiative that centers on two main lines of action. The Forum is supported by the victims and relatives of the Rwandan and Spanish victims, the Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, the African-American U.S. Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney as well as non-governmental international and national organizations. The forum pursues the following two strategies:

a) **The strategy of the TRUTH, which focuses on a CRIMINAL LAWSUIT against the main people responsible⁴ for the above-mentioned crimes against humanity.**

¹ Check the lawsuit's special website: www.veritasrwandaforum.org.

² Primarily columbium/tantalum –also known as coltan–, copper, cobalt, diamonds, gold and tropical woods, among others.

³ International platform promoted by Nobel Peace Prize nominee Juan Carrero Saralegui, president of Fundación S'Olivar in Mallorca. The following people, organizations and institutions also support this quest for justice: Josep, Martí, Núria, Pilar and Maria Antonia Vallmajó Sala (siblings of Joaquim Vallmajó), Josep Maria Sirera Fortuny (Flors Sirera's brother), Fernando Valtueña Gallego (Luis Valtueña's brother), Fundación S'Olivar, Association "Assistance Aux Victimes Des Conflits en Afrique Centrale", A.S.B.L." (Belgium), Adolfo-María Pérez Esquivel (Nobel Peace Prize winner 1980, Argentina), Federación de Comités de Solidaridad con el África Negra de España (Fefcosane), City Council of Navata, Association "Drets Humans de Mallorca", City Council of Figueres, City Council of Manresa, Association of Victims "Pro Iustitia" (Holland), Marie Béatrice Umutesi (resident of Cameroon), 5 Rwandan victims in Brussels (Tap), Centre de Lutte contre l'Impunité (Belgium), Agueda Uzcudun Pouso (Isidro Uzcudun's sister), Cynthia Ann Mc Kinney (African -American congresswoman, U.S.A.), Centro de Recursos de la Coordinadora d'ONG Solidarias -"Cedre", Fernando Madrazo Osuna (Manuel Madrazo's brother), Organisation For Peace Justice And Development in Rwanda" (OPJDR) Inc. (U.S.A.).

⁴ The main people responsible for the crimes under investigation are: *General Major KAYUMBA NYAMWASA* (head of military intelligence at the Directorate of Military Intelligence – the Rwandan secret services – during the war), *Colonel RWAHAMA JACKSON MUTABAZI* (appointed to the DMI in Byumba), *Colonel JAMES KABAREBE* (Commanding Officer of the High Command Unit of the RPA and chief commander of operations during the Rwandan invasion of Zaire), *Colonel DANY MUNYUZA*,

There is widespread agreement that reconciliation in Africa of the Great Lakes region will not be possible unless the real truths that have been covered up are brought to light. A small group of very involved Spaniards and exiled Rwandans has undertaken this initiative, and is working tirelessly to present a legal action that will be able to unveil and reveal this concealed truth. They draw inspiration from the principles of non-violence and from the central role of truth as a driving force for change, following the teachings of Gandhi and Luther King, Jr. The initiative lays emphasis on two core endeavors: creating and developing empathy with the victims and their relatives (by providing them acknowledgment and *empowerment*) and working with the experience of those who have “repented”, both Tutsis and Hutus.

b) The strategy of **DIALOGUE**. The group has also focused on creating a framework that fosters an honest and open dialogue among the leaders of organizations of Rwandan victims and the leaders of human rights organizations who are in exile, both Hutu and Tutsi⁵. This initiative centers in turn on two core priorities: on the one hand, working on the empathy of sharing; on the other, channeling pain towards a common ground and towards the experience of sharing future visions.

The two initiatives aim to become, on the short, medium and long term, true catalysts in transforming the realities of life in Africa’s Great Lakes region.

We now present an analysis of the facts regarding the Spanish victims in this conflict and an analysis of the concealed parts of the iceberg of the conflict in Africa of the Great Lakes region.

(officer in charge of rearguard operations at the Prefecture of Byumba and staff member of the DMI), *Captain MAJYAMBERE* (Brigade Intelligence Officer B.I.O. of Brigade No. 408), *Captain EVARISTE KABALISA* (second commander of the Gendarmerie of Ruhengeri), *Brigadier-General FRED IBINGIRA*, *Colonel JAQUES NZIZA / JAQUES NKURUNZIZA*, director of the G2 police-military operation, *Major DAN GAPFIZI*, *Colonel CEASER KAYIZARI*, among others.

⁵ The First Inter-Rwandan Meeting took place in May 2004 in Estellencs (Mallorca, Spain); among the participants were ten Tutsi and Hutu leaders from the United States, Canada, Belgium, France and Switzerland.

**ASSASSINATIONS OF SPANISH NATIONALS
IN AFRICA OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION
(1994-2002)**

a) April 26 1994: **ABDUCTION, TORTURE, DISAPPEARANCE AND PRESUMED VIOLENT DEATH OF JOAQUIM VALLMAJÓ SALA (BYUMBA, NORTH RWANDA).**

JOAQUIM VALLMAJÓ SALA was born in Navata (Girona) on March 21 1941. A missionary in Africa, he started working in Rwanda on June 27 1965. He was a missionary for more than 28 years, and in charge of the Diocesan Committee for Development since March 1991. He was primarily devoted to providing assistance and service in camps for people displaced by war and stood out for openly defending the human rights of poor people and refugees before civil, military and religious authorities (of whom he was always very critical). He reported many violations to Amnesty International.

On April 25 1994, while on his way to rescue a group of people trapped in a place that had remained blocked as a result of the military attacks, he was threatened to death by the RPF, who knew of him and his struggle for equality between Hutus and Tutsis.

At 14:40 hours on Tuesday, April 26 1994 (that is, twenty days after the double assassination of the Hutu presidents of Rwanda and Burundi), he was abducted by military units of the RPA (Rwandan Patriotic Army)/ RPF, and tortured by their secret arm. His body was never found: it was most probably incinerated after execution.

b), c), d), e) October 31 1996: **VIOLENT DEATH OF SERVANDO MAYOR GARCÍA, JULIO RODRÍGUEZ JORGE, MIGUEL ÁNGEL ISLA LUCIO AND FERNANDO DE LA FUENTE DE LA FUENTE (BUGOBE/BUKAVU, EASTERN PART OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO).**

SERVANDO MAYOR GARCÍA, born in Hornillos del Camino (Burgos) on July 20 1952, was a Marian brother who arrived in Rwanda in 1995, joined the Marian community at the Nyamirangwe refugee camp (in Bugobe, Bukavu, now Eastern Congo), and became the Superior of the community; **JULIO RODRÍGUEZ JORGE**, born in Piñel de Arriba (Valladolid) on October 20 1956, Marian brother, went to Zaire in 1982, 1988 and 1993 (he lived in this country for 14 years) and joined the Marian community at the Nyamirangwe refugee camp in early June 1996; **MIGUEL ÁNGEL ISLA LUCIO**, born in Villalaín (Burgos) on March 8 1943, Marian brother, went to the Ivory Coast in 1974 and joined the above-mentioned Marian community on August 1995; **FERNANDO DE LA FUENTE DE LA FUENTE**, born in Burgos on December 16 1943, Marian brother, went to Chile between 1982 and 1995, and joined the community at the Nyamirangwe camp on December 1995.

The four Spanish churchmen had kindly answered the call of their Superior General in Rome, who thought it a good measure to send non-native clergymen to the refugee

camps in the belief that, as Westerners, they would be respected and not disturbed. In mid-October 1996, when all NGOs and other international institutions had already withdrawn from the area due to the heightened military attacks from the APL/RPF and AFDL [*Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Libération de Congo-Zaire* or Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire], they chose to stay on and continue helping the Rwandan refugees at the Nyamirangwe camp, located at approximately 20 km west of the city of Bukavu where more than 30.000 people lived.

On October 30 1996 they made an international appeal for help on the Spanish radio station COPE, calling for urgent international involvement in order to prevent a massacre of the refugees, which at that point they regarded as imminent.

Unfortunately, the forewarning that they included in that appeal turned out to be indeed prophetic - even for them, who had voluntarily remained at the refugees' side to the bitter end. The following day, on October 31 1996, all four were murdered. They had become, on one hand, inconvenient observers; on the other, their call for help had most probably prompted their killing. After being tortured and executed, their bodies were thrown into a 12-meter-deep cesspool some 50 meters away from where they lived. They were buried in Nyangezi.

On November 12, 1996, Spain's House of Representatives unanimously approved the proposed bill (File No. 162/000066) which agreed to send an international interventionary force and called attention to the four murdered Spaniards. The request for the deployment of this interventionary force was subsequently blocked.

f), g), h) <u>January 18 1997</u> : VIOLENT DEATH OF MARÍA FLORS SIRERA FORTUNY, MANUEL MADRAZO OSUNA, LUIS VALTUEÑA GALLEGRO (RUHENGERI, NORTHERN RWANDA).
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MARÍA FLORS SIRERA FORTUNY, 33, born in Tremp (Lleida) on April 25 1963, single, and a resident of Manresa (Barcelona), was a trained nurse and member of the Spanish humanitarian organization Médicos del Mundo; **MANUEL MADRAZO OSUNA**, 42, born in Sevilla on September 14 1954, separated, father of two daughters, was a doctor and member of the Spanish humanitarian organization Médicos del Mundo; **LUIS VALTUEÑA GALLEGRO**, 30, born in Madrid on February 7 1966, single, photographer, was a contributor for the photo agency COVER and member of the Spanish humanitarian organization Médicos del Mundo.

When the attacks on refugee camps by the Rwandan army together with the paramilitary rebel group called AFDL became known worldwide, Médicos del Mundo drew up a health assistance plan aimed primarily at aiding the refugees who had returned to Rwanda. This project held the approval of the Generalitat Valenciana and the Regional Health Office of the Prefecture of Ruhengeri (in northern Rwanda). Médicos del Mundo assigned three Spanish volunteers to the task (two of them, **MARÍA FLORS SIRERA** and **LUIS VALTUEÑA**, went to Rwanda on a humanitarian emergency mission that very month of November 1996) as well as a North American one (**NITIN MAHDAV**). They met with many difficulties implementing the project, but then set out to help the local population around the town of Ruhengeri. At the request of the locals, they then

went to a location near an area where a massacre had just taken place: they were needed to aid the injured, and in so doing, became first-hand witnesses – inconvenient witnesses - of a huge killing. Two days later, on January 18 1997, at around 20 hours, the three Spanish workers were assassinated and the North American one was badly hurt (one of his legs was amputated). According to the investigations carried out, the attack was perpetrated by an organized FPR commando. The four bodies were repatriated.

The timing of this killing coincided by chance with - or was perhaps a direct result of a 42-day voluntary fasting campaign held by the Spaniard JUAN CARRERO SARALEGUI in the truest Gandhian spirit. He fasted in front of the headquarters of the EU Council of Ministers in Brussels, and had the support of 15 Nobel Prize winners and many Spanish and international institutions. His aim: to denounce the crimes against humanity which were being committed in Rwanda and the then Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). CARRERO SARALEGUI almost suffered irreparable physical and psychological harm from his action.

i) June 10 2000: VIOLENT DEATH OF ISIDRO UZCUDUN POUSO (MUGINA, GITARAMA, CENTRAL RWANDA).

ISIDRO UZCUDUN POUSO, born in Pasajes (Donosti) on January 24 1931, was a priest and missionary from the Diocese of Donosti, and went to Rwanda in 1964. He had been a missionary for almost 37 years in the town of Mugina (Gitarama, central Rwanda) and made a radical personal commitment to the neediest, whether Tutsi or Hutu. He showed great courage defending the rights of the most destitute before Rwandan authorities. His relationship with RPF officers was particularly strained, especially since 1995, when he repeatedly denounced the arbitrary arrests and imprisonments taking place in central Rwanda and in the town of Mugina in particular. Given this situation, and his demands for a fitting burial for everyone, whether Hutu or Tutsi, the RPF openly accused him of being a *genocidaire*⁶. A few days before his murder, he gave up buying the new vehicle that he needed in exchange for obtaining 12 tons of beans for some 5000 people who were at the verge of starvation due to the drought affecting the region. A secret RPF commando from Kigali terminated his life at sunset on June 10 2000. They fired him a shot directly in the mouth - a message that needs no further words.

Years later, an assistant of the Gitarama prosecutor who had been urged by Spanish authorities to investigate the events, was abducted and tortured near the capital city. His investigations had been leading to the individual, a high-ranking military, who had ordered ISIDRO UZCUDUN's assassination. The prosecutor's assistant was able to flee and save his life. Today he is in exile, living in poverty in a European country away from his family, protected by a new identity.

Other Spanish nationals killed in the conflict, but on whom we have little information at present are:

⁶ This is the term that the RPA and the RPF use to stigmatize the Hutu globally, as well as those individuals and organizations which support them in any way, as was the case of all the Spaniards murdered.

j) March 19 1996: VIOLENT DEATH OF CARMEN OLZA.

CARMEN OLZA, nun from Navarra, born in Eugui, belonged to the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy of Saint Anne, and was killed at 54 years of age in Mugina when an antiperson mine exploded. She was buried in Kivumu according to her wishes and those of her family.

k) May 13 2002: DEATH OF JOSÉ RAMÓN AMUNÁRRIZ IN A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

JOSÉ RAMÓN AMUNÁRRIZ, born in Irún, was 70 years old. He had been a missionary in Rwanda for more than 30 years. He died in a suspicious traffic accident on May 13 2002 as he was heading on a jeep from Kabuga, Rwanda, to a community in Kabare, Uganda. The truck that crashed against his vehicle belonged to a military from Kigali. AMUNÁRRIZ had been planning to move back to the Basque Country two weeks from then, at the end of May 2002.

Back in 1996, he happened to escape by chance a murder attempt in Rwanda. A military commando had gone looking for him where he lived, but, not finding him, they beat seven nuns who were there.

The Spanish government has recently ratified the Royal Law-Decree 8/2004 from November 5 which gives indemnities to participants in international peace and security operations. During the plenary session, a Spanish congressman, acting on a proposal initiated by our Forum, made a formal request to include the names of those eleven Spanish victims of violent death in the African Great Lakes region. The Ministry of Defense is currently reviewing the expanded list of people to be included in the above-cited law.

Leading public institutions, national and international organizations, as well as the Spanish and international press have decried these tragic deaths, shown their concern, and offered support and solace to the victims' relatives. We demand that the facts be clarified, that the truth be investigated and that justice be done.

CRIMES AGAINST THE RWANDAN AND CONGOLESE POPULATIONS

2004 marked ten years from what is known as “the genocide in Rwanda”. Very few media have placed the year 1994 within the context of Rwandan history – not even what happened in Rwanda that year has been treated with minimally objective accuracy. The worldwide disinformation campaign denounced by Christophe Munzihirwa (Archbishop of Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo, then Zaire) and Joaquim Vallmajó continues to have an impact, thus consolidating its tampered, biased version of events.

The following summary lists the main claims and arguments of this official version. Its deliberately biased and distorted view of the facts seeks to stigmatize the Hutu people and its supporters at a global scale. The RPF claims that:

- a) they had to start the conflict in Rwanda because the Hutu government was stopping Tutsi refugees, especially those living in Uganda, from returning home to Rwanda. These refugees had fled Rwanda in 1959 after the social revolution which led to the country’s independence.
- b) they showed good will for having signed the Arusha Peace Agreement in August 1993.
- c) the attack on the presidential plane and the assassinations of the dignitaries on April 6 1994 were carried out by Hutu extremists who did not accept the Arusha Accords nor the partial relinquishing of power. (They put the blame on the Hutus from the very beginning)
- d) it was the (Hutu) State and the official radio broadcaster *Radio Television Mille Collines* who organized the subsequent planned and systematic genocide, causing, the death of 937.000 people (mostly Tutsis who lived in Rwanda and some moderate Hutus.) according to recently admitted official data.
- e) the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was established, which had the competence to prosecute the people responsible for the genocide crimes, for the crimes against humanity and for war crimes committed exclusively between January 1 and December 31 1994.
- f) their RPF military forces took over power by force in order to liberate the Rwandan people from genocide.
- g) following their liberation of the people by force, during 1994 and 1995, there were some isolated cases of vengeance against the Hutu, but that the instigators of these deeds, a few indisciplined and uncontrollable military men, were quickly punished.
- h) from 1996 to date, military defense has been necessary to protect the Rwandan borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo, given the threat posed by Hutu extremists, or *interahamwe*, who instigated numerous killings and then forced the return of many refugees in a staging set up for the TV cameras of international broadcasters.

There are of course many other aspects, but the ones we have highlighted are the core of the consolidated “official version” of the Rwandan conflict.

However, when speaking of conflicts in general, one often uses the image of an *iceberg* in order to illustrate graphically both the small visible tip as well as the huge hidden (or rather, in this case, covered up) mass of ice lurking below the surface. The “official version” detailed above in a nutshell would correspond to the uncovered part of the *iceberg*.

Following the same sequential order, we now try to complete the picture given by this official version with facts, some of which are little known and some which were deliberately covered up. Below is a parallel analysis of each of the points of the official version outlined above:

- a') The conflict in Rwanda started well before the 1959 revolution. In order to analyze the conflict in a global way we must not only consider the effects of the German and Belgian colonization, but we also, and above all, need to look at the more than four centuries of rule and exploitation of the majority of the Hutu population by the feudal Tutsi monarchy.
- b') It is widely accepted today that the Arusha Peace Agreement gave the RPF a representativeness which it did not have, and also that the RPF and MRND [Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement], the Hutu party which governed Rwanda until 1994, used these peace accords as a maneuver to distract attention while they built up their arms arsenal and prepared for war⁷.
- c') Today everybody admits that the presidential attack on April 6 1994 sparked off the dramatic events that took place in Rwanda from that day on. Among many other testimonies, the words of Mr. René Degni-Ségui, Special Rapporteur of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, clearly state in his report dated June 28 1994: “The attack on the aircraft on April 6 1994 which cost the lives of Juvénal Habyarimana, President of the Rwandan Republic, Cyprien Ntayamira, President of the Republic of Burundi, several persons in their entourage and the crew, seems to be the immediate cause of the grievous and tragic events which Rwanda is currently undergoing.. [...] The death of President Habyarimana was the spark to the powder keg which set off the massacre of civilians”.⁸ Even though the ICTR has the competence to investigate these facts, it has repeatedly decided not to do so. However, as early as 1997, a team of investigators appointed by the ICTR — a team consisting of Michael Hourigan, Alphonse Breaux and James Lion— released reports, until then held as classified, which revealed that the attack was masterminded by high-ranking RPF military and not by Hutu extremists as had been believed until then. These disclosures were corroborated in 2004 by the remarkable testimony given by Abdul Ruzibiza,

⁷ There is little talk about the systematic killings that the RPF carried out both through military operations as through terrorist acts, which were perpetrated by death squads from the *Directorate of Military Police*, the *Network Commando* and other RPF secret groups.

⁸ Report E/CN.4/1995/7 dated June 28, 1994, Paragraphs 18 and 19.

member of the FPR commando which perpetrated the attack on the presidential plane.⁹

- d') With regard to the genocide of 1994, there is little talk – at best – of the little foresight that the international community, in general, and the U.N. in particular, showed by ordering the massive withdrawal of the *blue helmets* while the killings were going on. Roméo Dallaire,¹⁰ commander-in-chief of the *blue helmets*, denounced this, as did North American intelligence reports (in telegrams by the U.S. Ambassador in Burundi), which furthermore gave warning of the possible true responsibility for the attack and the consequences that this might bring. Nor is there talk about the fact that the U.N. officially acknowledged, not just its failure, but also having committed inadmissible errors which were disclosed by the Carlsson Commission, and for which Kofi Annan, at the time in charge of the peace forces in Rwanda, later took responsibility. Nothing is said either about how the RPF-controlled *Radio Muhabura* contributed to spreading ethnic hatred and inciting widespread killings.
- e') The limited temporal competence of the ICTR,¹¹ which has an annual budget of around US\$ 200 million, has only prosecuted liable Hutus (some 50 people to be exact). It is important to note that three ICTR general prosecutors —Goldstone, Louise Arbour and Carla del Ponte— have not wanted, have not been able or capable of charging the FPR with any of the genocide crimes, crimes against humanity or war crimes committed during 1994, despite the existence of numerous reports and disclosures to this regard.¹²

⁹ See the complete testimony at <http://www.inshuti.org/>, specifically, *Abdul Ruzibiza's testimony dated April 7, 2004* where he not only explains in great detail the organization and carrying out of the attack, but also RPF's deliberate plan to exterminate the Tutsis in the Rwandan hinterlands, considered traitors, and kill a major share of the Rwandan Hutus.

¹⁰ On March 31 1994 – i.e. six days before the presidential attack – there were 2.529 *blue helmets* operating in Rwanda. Part of the troops were withdrawn while the killings raged on. Thirty days later, on April 30, 1994, there were only 700 *blue helmets* left in Rwandan territory.

¹¹ Established by the U.N. Security Council Resolution No. 955 dated 8 November 1994. We must make clear that, whereas the ICTR has a temporal competence restricted to crimes committed exclusively during 1994, the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) which had been established earlier, on May 25, 1993, has instead a temporal competence for the time period between January 1 1991 and a date to be determined in due course by the U.N. Security Council (Article 2 of the ICTY statutes). This allows the ICTY to investigate events that took place during all subsequent years even after the hostilities have formally ended.

¹² We will only mention two. First, the report by the North American investigator at the UNHCR [U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees], Robert Gersony, about the state of security and respect of human rights after the RPF took over power (specifically, from July to September 1994). The report emphasized the RPF's killing of more than 30.000 ethnic Hutu – in just a period of 2 months and in 3 Rwandan prefectures alone – and gave a detailed account of the location, date and nature of the crimes as well as of the methods used to kill and make the bodies disappear. It also identified some of the RPF officials responsible for the killings. This report, held as classified, has not yet been released. Secondly, the disclosures made by Sixbert Musangamfura, Director of the Rwandan Intelligence Agency and the person in charge of INTERPOL's National Services in Kigali between August 22 1994 and August 31 1995, allowed to draw up lists with the names of 104.800 people killed by the RPF between July 1994 and July 1995, from a total of 312.726 people whose existence was known, albeit in a non-exhaustive way. It is fitting to underline that the missionary JOAQUIM VALLMAJÓ, among many others, was abducted and murdered on April 26 1994 in the region of Byumba by RPF men who, according to testimonies obtained recently, were carrying out instructions from a RPF colonel. Similarly, at least 64 priests including three Catholic bishops

- f') The alleged liberation of the Rwandan people by RPF military forces, and the genocide itself, continue being used in a perverse way to condemn the entire Hutu people, and any person or institution that supports them, as *genocidaires*.¹³
- g') The RPF people in charge insist there is a difference between the forces at work behind the “genocide that occurred from April to July 1994” —orchestrated within the Rwandan government before the RPF takeover of power— and the killings committed by the RPF in 1994 and 1995 —which they claim had been carried out by undisciplined units. Nevertheless, the fact is that we now know that high-ranking RPF governmental leaders had established this policy of killings and that the latter was carried out by their military.¹⁴
- h') What Joaquim Vallmajó with great clear-mindedness called the “*Zairization of the conflict*” began primarily in 1996. The situation originally portrayed to the international community as being a military operation initiated by the RPF to preserve border security between Zaire and Rwanda was, in fact, the implementation of a macabre plan. On the one hand, the aim was to exterminate hundreds of thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees living in different camps located in the eastern part of the then Zaire¹⁵. To this effect, they were persecuted ruthlessly and forced all the way to the opposite tip of the country, to

were assassinated during the two months after the presidential attack. Numerous killings planned in Rwandan territory took place during 1995. One of the many serious ones was the killing on April 22, 1995 at the Kibeho camp for people displaced by war, where ethnic Hutus were staying. The slaughter resulted in almost 8.000 deaths and was carried out by organized RPF units, according to a qualified account by members of *Médecins sans Frontières*. The colonel responsible for this killing was arrested for 18 months, but later promoted to the rank of General Commander of the First Division of the Provinces of Kigali Ville, Kigali Rural and Gitarama. Most recently, one of the most renowned experts on Rwanda, Professor Filip Reyntjens of the University of Antwerp (Belgium), decided to stop collaborating with the ICTR until impunity is brought to an end and until the top RPF leaders responsible for the war crimes and other documented crimes against humanity that lie within the ICTR mandate, are indicted (see *Le Soir*, 13/1/05).

¹³ Even in 2004, an official government report written by the RPF accuses many Rwandan human rights organizations and the Church itself, among other groups and individuals, of being *genocidaires* and of promoting an ideology of ethnic cleansing. The Basque missionary ISIDRO UZCUDUN was murdered on June 10, 2000 in his parish church in Mugina (Gitarama) by RPF units that, according to recently obtained testimonies, were executing orders issued by a colonel. Local RPF authorities had accused UZCUDUN, his colleagues JUAN CRUZ JUARISTI and LEONARDO ESNAOLA and many others of being *genocidaires* for having helped the needy Hutu population in Gitarama.

¹⁴ See Ruzibiza's testimony, cited in Note 10 above.

¹⁵ Four Spanish Marian brothers died a violent death on October 31, 1996 while being with the refugees at the Nyamirangwe camp. We must point out that around that same time at least three planned attacks took place in strategic places in Rwanda: On January 11, 1997, four U.N. observers were attacked in Gicinye (Prefecture of Gisenyi); on January 18, 1997, the three Spanish volunteers of Médicos del Mundo were murdered; on February 4, 1997, five agents of the U.N. OHCHR [High Commissioner for Human Rights] were attacked in Karengera (Cyangugu). The three attacks in these strategic locations near the northwestern and southwestern borders with Zaire enabled many steps: first, getting rid of international observers and NGOs in the entire northern and southwestern Rwandan regions; secondly, prompting killings in these areas with complete impunity, and finally, allowing military units and material to exit through the localities of Gisenyi and Cyangugu to proceed with their planned attacks on the Hutu refugees in Zaire and to set off the plundering.

Mbandaka, more than 2.000 km from the Rwandan border¹⁶. These crimes were carried out in a planned and systematic manner, as were the subsequent cover-ups of bodies and of other incriminatory evidence¹⁷. Everything points to a massacre of 250.000 to 300.000 refugees. On the other hand, in a period of just nine months, the Rwandan army conquered a vast portion of the Zairean territory with the help from other rebel forces such as the AFDL.¹⁸ It is no sheer coincidence that the conquered region, and particularly eastern Zaire, has a great wealth of natural resources which especially include coltan (niobium oxide and tantalum),¹⁹ copper, cobalt, diamonds, gold and wood. RPF forces, among other, set out to systematically plunder and illegally exploit these natural resources. In just 18 months, and alone in revenues from coltan, they obtained almost US\$ 250 million, an amount considered enough for them to fund the war on their own²⁰. Their actions, however, did not stop there. Not happy with the *status quo* they had imposed, on August 2 1998 the Rwandan RPF army, aided by their Ugandan and Burundian counterparts, again invaded the present Democratic Republic of Congo. They continued killing and exploiting the Congolese population, they allowed the endemic food shortages and structurally deficient health system to continue worsening, they set forth the systematic pillage and the persistence of the conflict, even to date.²¹

¹⁶ For more information on these facts, see the astounding account by Rwandan sociologist and refugee MARIE BÉATRICE UMUTESI, *Surviving the Slaughter: The Ordeal of a Rwandan Refugee*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2004, ISBN 0299 204 944.

¹⁷ See to this effect the *Report of the U.N. Secretary-General's task force in charge of investigating gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (S/1998/581)* dated June 29, 1998.

¹⁸ We must keep in mind that the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) has a total area of 2.267.600 sq. km, and that the Congolese province of Nord-Kivu alone has a surface equal to the sum of the area of Rwanda (26.338 sq.km.) and of Burundi (27.834 sq. km.)

¹⁹ Used primarily for manufacturing state-of-the-art electronics, such as cell phones, digital PADs, computers, PlayStations, space-shuttles, missiles and "intelligent weapons", among others.

²⁰ The U.N. decided to create a panel of experts to investigate the pillage that took place in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The panel wrote four reports, among which we draw attention to the *Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of Congo (S/2001/357)*, dated April 12 2001, and to the *Final Report on the same topic (S/2002/1146)*, dated October 16, 2002. These reports mention directly the activities of the RPF and of its officials, and furthermore feature a list of the multinational companies and individuals involved in the illegal exploitation of the above-mentioned natural resources.

²¹ In addition to many others, the U.S. organization *International Rescue Committee* has published its investigations in four reports. The last report states that since the beginning of the war in August 1998, at least 3.800.000 people have died as direct or indirect result of the conflict (31.000 civilians still die today due to the war), i.e., it is the war with the highest death rate since World War II (report *Mortality in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo: Results from a Nationwide Survey*, dated April-July 2004) (see: http://www.theirc.org/pdf/DRC_MortalitySurvey2004_RB_8Dec04.pdf).

We have sought to unveil the concealed – or covered up – part of the iceberg. The collective shadows of countries known as the West are once again clearly reflected on the mirror that is Africa. Will be able to recognize these shadows as our own, or will we just look over to the other side without wanting to face the mirror?

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