

Congo Genocide: Will Obama's America collaborate or refuse?

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [Poverty](#)
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On Aug. 4, I reported on KPFA Radio that cholera had broken out in the internally displaced persons camps growing again in eastern Congo, as Congolese people flee the war which, with backing from the Kagame regime in Kigali, Rwanda, resumed in April. The cholera outbreak has sparked fears of an epidemic.

Several days later, the AP's Michele Faul reported - with a heartbreaking photo essay - that [drenching rain was adding to the refugees' misery](#).

This looks in many ways like Native American Genocide or any genocide of native people. Armies break up families and communities, forcing them off the land that someone else covets, to die in refugee camps of hunger, disease or heartbreak. It took four centuries to decimate the native population of what became the United States, but millions of eastern Congolese people have perished since 1996 alone, mostly from hardship after being displaced.

As I worked on the radio news, I asked myself, as I often do, why report this on KPFA's FM radio signal here in Northern and Central California, or even on KPFA's webstream, to an audience which is mostly American?

My answer always is, because the U.S. is very, very involved. Two of the Pentagon's most longstanding "partners," Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni and Rwanda's President Paul Kagame, have been the principle aggressors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1996.

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The U.S. has armed, trained and provided logistical and intelligence support to both their armies for many years and employed their soldiers in service to its national security agenda in Haiti, Sudan, Somalia, elsewhere on the African continent, and even Iraq.



Congolese wait for aid in Kibati with little or no shelter from the storm or protection from the insipient cholera epidemic. – Photo: Jerome Delay, APIn October 2010, President Obama announced the introduction of combat equipped U.S. Special Forces into the region, and this week the ENOUGH Project’s John Prendergast published a horrifying argument, “[Let Them Hunt](#),” in the influential journal Foreign Policy, where he called on Obama to “unleash the dogs of war” in Congo and neighboring countries to hunt down minor East African warlord Joseph Kony and his LRA militia.

“Hunt” is a terrible word to use in combination with an admonition to unleash dogs, including the “dogs of war,” to go after people, any people, but in this case, African people. And, as Ugandan American Black Star News Editor Milton Allimadi, TransAfrica Forum’s Nii Akuetteh, war correspondent and human rights investigator Keith Harmon Snow and many other Africa scholars and journalists have told KPFA, AfrobeatRadio, the SF Bay View, RT, Al Jazeera, Democracy Now and other outlets, this is not a hunt for Joseph Kony or any other bad actors. It’s a [military operation to secure oil and other African resources](#) and limit Chinese access.

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If the phony Kony hunt escalates, as Prendergast and the ENOUGH Project urge, as more and more Congolese people flee the Rwandan backed M23 militia, seeking shelter in camps, without adequate food, clean water or sanitation, Obama will become the Black face of genocide in the heart of Africa.

Many agree that has already happened.



Driven from her home, where she would have been warm and dry during the rainstorm, this child must try to survive a war fomented by foreign forces plundering resources that belong to her and all Congolese in a camp threatened with cholera. – Photo: Jerome Delay, AP
However, cynical as I may become about the brutal and ruthless scramble for Congolese resources, I never imagine that this is what the American people who rose above their history to elect their first African American president imagined. Americans voted him into the job, but they didn't write the job description.

Hugely powerful people no doubt realized that Western corporate, criminal and military interests would be more difficult to resist in Africa with a Black man in charge, but far more Americans cheered or even wept when Obama was elected, because they had so long believed that they'd never see the day.

And now, grim as the news from eastern Congo is, there is some hope. It is still possible to fight for the Obama so many Americans hoped to elect. Here are reasons for hope:

1) Last week, a bi-partisan Congressional coalition headed by Washington State's Jim McDermott wrote a [letter to Rwandan President Paul Kagame](#) to say that the latest U.N. report decisively proves that Kagame is backing the M23 militia's resumption of the war in eastern Congo and that the current relationship between the U.S. and Rwanda must end.

2) The most recent [U.N. experts report on Congo includes photographic and other documentary evidence that Rwanda is backing the M23 militia](#) in Congo.

3) In response to the U.N. experts report, the [U.S. suspended \\$200,000 in military aid to Rwanda, and the U.K., the Netherlands, Germany](#) and [Sweden](#) suspended contributions to Rwandan budget support.

4) More prominent people and publications, including [Mvemba Phezo Dizolele, writing](#) in the same Foreign Policy journal that published Prendergast's "Let Them Hunt," are pointing to

President Obama's own Senate legislation, the [Obama Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006](#), which became Public Law 109-456, and suggesting that it gives Obama both special expertise and obligation in Congo.

5) On Friday, Aug. 17, Rwandans and Congolese will gather in The Hague, Netherlands, to present a complaint with documentary evidence and petition the new chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to [indict Rwandan President Paul Kagame](#).

These efforts all deserve the attention and support of those who worked to elect Barack Obama, not because they thought he would serve as the Black face of resource war and African genocide, but because they hoped his election would signal the end of it.

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