

Geopolitics of Central Africa: Relentless Propaganda Attacks on Burundi

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Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Media Disinformation](#)

The end of the unipolar, U.S.-led global order is most dramatically signified by the U.S. loss of its proxy war with Russia in Syria, [despite dropping bombs faster than U.S. weapons industries could manufacture them](#). For the past year and a half, a much quieter struggle has been playing out in the tiny East African nation of Burundi.

The US and EU nations have repeatedly demanded that Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza step down, but Russia and China have stood up for Burundi, as for Syria, on the UN Security Council.

Despite its small size, Burundi is, like Syria, very geostrategically situated. To the east, it borders the scandalously resource rich Democratic Republic of the Congo. To the north, it borders longstanding U.S. ally and military proxy Rwanda. To the East, it borders Tanzania, which also favors Russia and China and borders the Indian Ocean. [Russian and Chinese firms have won Burundi's major mining contracts](#), and [Russia and China have repeatedly blocked UN Security Council resolutions](#) to condemn, sanction or send armed force to Burundi. [The US and EU nations have punished Burundi](#) by cutting aid, imposing sanctions, and turning a blind eye to [Rwanda's cross border aggression](#).

Western press and officials, including UN Ambassador Samantha Power, have also waged a relentless propaganda war against Burundi. This week the Washington Post published an attack on Burundi with no more evidence than [its PropOrNot denunciation](#) of independent news sites or its [claims about Russians hacking DNC](#) computers and even the U.S. [power grid in Burlington, Vermont](#). The story was first titled "They served an abusive regime. The UN made them peacekeepers anyway" but was later changed to "[UN discovers that some peacekeepers have disturbing pasts](#)." This referred to the 1,130 Burundians serving as UN peacekeepers, primarily in Somalia and the Central African Republic, making it [the 23rd greatest contributor](#) to United Nations peacekeeping operations as of July 31, 2016.

Aside from its reliance on anonymous witnesses, and its dateline Rwanda, the Washington Post story failed to mention that the top ten contributors of UN peacekeeping troops include infamous human rights abusers Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Nepal, Egypt and Indonesia. Ethiopia, where the six percent Tigrean minority rules with an iron fist, is the top contributor of UN peacekeeping troops, with 8,333 peacekeepers deployed, seven times more than Burundi.

Washington D.C.-based Ethiopian human rights activist Obang Metho, founder of the [Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia](#), says that Ethiopia escapes criticism by serving the West. "The Ethiopian government – the ruling ethnic minority regime that terrorizes its own people – they are not being criticized because they are the darling of the West. They're

pretty much that from Bush till Obama. Anything that the West will ask of them, they will do that.”

Metho also calls Ethiopia an ethnic apartheid regime. “Ethiopians call it not only an ethnic minority group. People also call it an ethnic apartheid group, because it’s almost like the way it was in South Africa and other countries. This tiny ethnic group, they control the security, the intelligence, the economy – almost every sector – and then they use it to divide and conquer, to divide one ethnic group against the other.”

The U.S. has never called on Ethiopia’s President Mulatu Teshome or his predecessor Meles Zenawi to step down, as they have Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza. National Security Council Advisor and Former UN Ambassador Susan Rice gave a [15 minute](#) tribute to Zenawi at his funeral.

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