

VIDEO: Africa's Female Mandela? Victoire Ingabiré Umuhuza on Trial

By [Ann Garrison](#)

Global Research, May 16, 2010

[Plutocracy Now](#) 22 April 2010

Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

Opposition presidential candidate Victoire Ingabire Umuhuza stood before a judge in Kigali, Rwanda, on April 22, after the Kagame government arrested and charged her with "associating with terrorists" and "genocide ideology," a crime unique to Rwanda which includes "divisionism" and "revisionism," meaning politics, and/or attempting to revise the received history of the 1994 Rwanda Genocide.

Two weeks earlier, on April 7th, speaking at a commemorative ceremony, on the 16th anniversary of the civilian massacres known as the Rwanda Genocide, Rwandan President Paul Kagame referred to [Victoire Ingabire Umuhuza](#) as "some lady," an example of "some people" who "just come from nowhere, useless people." He refused to speak her proper name, though she is widely acknowledged as the leading opposition candidate in Rwanda's 2010 presidential election, and many of her supporters now call her Africa's female Mandela:

"Some people want to encourage political hooliganism. Some people just come from nowhere, useless people. I see everytime in the pictures, some lady who had her deputy, a genocide criminal, her deputy, talking about "y'know, there's Rwanda Genocide, but there is another. . . so that is politics. And the world says, 'The opposition leader!' But I know those who say it and who support that. They know it is wrong, but it is an expression of contempt these people have for Rwandans and for Africans, that they think Africans deserve to be led by these hooligans, and to that we say NO, a big NO. And if anybody wants a fight there, we'll give them a fight." -Paul Kagame, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V09Zad51kjc&feature=related>

Two weeks later, on April 21st, Kagame's security police arrested Ingabire, then brought her before a Rwandan court for a bail hearing within six hours, creating a flurry of international news. Not only the African press, but also the [BBC](#), [Radio Netherlands](#), [CNN](#), [Yahoo News via Agence France Presse](#), and other outlets around the world, including the [San Francisco Bay View](#), [National Black Newspaper](#), [Black Star News](#), and [Global Research](#) reported the story, and it appeared on blogs across Africa, Europe, and North America, often with notes urging readers to contact Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Two days later, on April 23rd, [Rwandan authorities gave Human Rights Watch researcher Carina Tertsakian, 24 hours to get out of the country.](#)

Even the [New York Times](#), which had until then ignored this year's Rwandan presidential election, finally published three accounts of Ingabire's arrest on April 21st, and the next day the Washington Post, which had also been ignoring the story, finally published a [Reuters](#)

[wire reporting](#) that Ingabire had been released on bail that morning.

Shortly after the news of her release, the International Humanitarian Law Institute of St. Paul Minnesota announced that its director, William Mitchell Law School Professor [Peter Erlinder](#), and [Wichita Lawyer Kurt P. Kerns](#), will join Ingabire's Rwandan lawyer Protais Mutembe in her legal defense. Ingabire is charged with "genocide related crime," meaning crime related to the 1994 Rwanda Genocide, the central narrative justifying Rwanda's political life and relationship to the outside world, and, most of all, to its most ardent defenders and donors, the US and the UK.

Erlinder is Professor of Constitutional Criminal Law and International Humanitarian Law at William Mitchell College of Law, President of ICTR-ADAD (Association des Avocats de la Defense), and past President of the National Lawyers Guild, NY, NY. Most significantly, in Ingabire's case, he is the Lead Defense Counsel in the [Military-1 trial at the UN's International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda \(ICTR\)](#), where he won a victory of enormous significance to Rwandan history—the acquittal of four former top military leaders accused of conspiring and planning to commit genocide or any other crimes in 1994.

The ICTR acquitted its highest ranking defendant, Colonel Bagosora, on December 18, 2008, after which Erlinder wrote:

“. . . ALL of the top Rwandan military officers, including the supposedly infamous Colonel Bagosora, were found not guilty of conspiracy or planning to commit genocide. And Gen. Gratién Kabiligi, a senior member of the general staff was acquitted of all charges! The others were found guilty of specific acts committed by subordinates, in specific places, at specific times – not an overall conspiracy to kill civilians, much less Rwandan-Tutsi civilians.”

“This raises the more profound question: If there was no conspiracy and no planning to kill ethnic (i.e., Tutsi) civilians, can the tragedy that engulfed Rwanda properly be called “a genocide” at all? Or, was it closer to a case of civilians being caught up in war-time violence, like the Eastern Front in WWII, rather than the planned behind-the-lines killings in Nazi death camps? The ICTR judgment found the former.”

“The Court specifically found that the actions of Rwandan military leaders, both before and after the April 6, 1994, assassination of former Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, Rwanda's head of state at the time of his murder, were consistent with war-time conditions and the massive chaos brought about by the four-year war of invasion from Uganda by General Paul Kagame's RPF Army, which seized power in July 1994. —Professor Peter Erlinder, “Rwanda: No Conspiracy, No Genocide Planning. . . No Genocide?,” [Jurist, 12.23.2008, Global Research, 01.24.2009](#)

Erlinder says that the Court's ruling in December 2008 should have radically revised the world's understanding of the 1994 Rwanda Genocide, but because there were no international press covering the ICTR by December 2008, 14 years after the slaughter that left 1 million or more Rwandans dead, and because of international political investment in the received history, it continues to be told in the [Wikipedia](#) and repeated by most news outlets whenever they revisit Rwanda or the Rwandan violence of 1994.

At the ICTR, Erlinder was able to assemble the evidence and argue the case that led to the court's conclusion that there was no conspiracy, and no planning to commit genocide, and therefore no genocide crime like that covered by the international law created by the [UN](#)

[Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#) after the Nazi death camps of World War II.

Though the international press had indeed turned away from Rwanda and the ICTR by December 2008, its attention is now on Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza and her trial, less than four months before Rwanda's August 9th polls. Though her party, the [United Democratic Forces, \(UDF\)-Inkingi](#), remains unable to register, and she herself has now been indicted, she continues to attempt to contest the election.

"Ingabire was arrested on trumped-up, political thought crimes, including association with a terrorist group, propagating the genocide ideology, genocide denial, revisionism, and divisionism, all arising from the "crime" of publicly objecting to the Kagame military dictatorship, and Kagame's version of the [Rwandan Civil War](#)," Erlinder said.

If he and Rwandan lawyer Protais Mutembe can make the same case that he was able to make at the ICTR, then the international press may have to decide whether or not to report that, in Rwanda, in 1994, there was "no conspiracy, no planning . . . no genocide?" This, of course, depends on how the world defines "genocide," but, the genocide ideology statutes that Victoire is charged with violating—for having said that Hutus, as well as Tutsis, were victims of crimes against humanity—would become impossible to defend.

And, it might finally emerge that there has been a massive cover-up of the real story of what we know as the Rwanda Genocide, as Global Research writers have pointed out for years in, e.g., [Rwanda: Installing a U.S. Protectorate in Central Africa](#) and [The Geopolitics behind the Rwanda Genocide; Paul Kagame Accused of War Crimes](#), by Michel Chossudovsky, [The US Sponsored "Rwanda Genocide" and its Aftermath](#) [Psychological Warfare, Embedded Reporters and the Hunting of Refugees](#), by Keith Harmon Snow, and [U.S./U.K./Allies Grab Congo Riches and Millions Die](#), by Peter Erlinder.

If international reporters finally do begin to cover the real story of the Rwanda Genocide and the Congo War, then Paul Kagame's regime, which Hillary Clinton has called "the beacon of hope" for Africa, will cease to seem so to the outside world.

No one, least of all Professor Erlinder, denies that the bloodshed in Rwanda, in 1994 was horrific, but he says, as he did when I spoke to him for [KPFA Radio](#), that the received history of Rwanda in 1994, and the ensuing war in neighboring D.R. Congo are history written by the victors, and by their backers, the U.S. and the UK:

Indeed, on April 30, in an Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Court, [Professor Erlinder, Kurt B. Kerns, and Oklahoma lawyer John P. Zelbst filed a lawsuit](#), alleging that Kagame and nine of his current and former military officers and government officials are guilty of the assassination of [Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana](#) and [Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira](#), and subsequent acts which caused the civilian massacres that came to be known as the Rwanda Genocide, costing a million lives.

And, that they are guilty of racketeering to acquire and maintain an interest in the resources of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, at a cost of 6 million more lives.

D.R. Congo is one of the most resource rich nations on earth and its mineral wealth, most of

all its cobalt reserves, are essential to modern military industries' ability to manufacture for war. The U.S. is the world's largest consumer of cobalt.

The eight counts alleged in [Habyarimana vs. Kagame](#) are:

Wrongful Death - Murder,

Crimes against Humanity,

Violation of the Rights of Life, Liberty, and Security of Person,

Assault and Battery,

Intentional Infliction of Emotional Stress,

Violations of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act,

Torture, and,

Conspiracy to Torture

Media outlets around the world reported that Kagame had escaped process service in the U.S. on April 30th, but Peter Erlinder told KPFA Radio News, that Kagame had violated the law by doing so, and, that, assuming the law is upheld, he will be served and required to answer.

Click to listen to [KPFA Radio News, May 2, 2010](#):

As Erlinder, and lawyers Kurt P. Kerns and John P. Zelbst, prepare to advance the case against Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Erlinder and Kerns also prepare to defend Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza, against Kagame's Rwandan government.

"I consider it my job to say things that my clients are not free to say," says Erlinder, "and I'm sure that Mrs. Ingabire realized that when she asked me to defend her."

Also, click to play:

[KPFA Radio News, April 4, 2010: Peter Erlinder and Paul Rusesabagina on the 16th anniversary of political assassinations that triggered the Rwanda Genocide.](#)

[KMEC Radio News, April 28, 2010: Parti Social-Imberakuri Candidate Bernard Ntaganda and banned Rwandan Umuseso Newspaper Editor Didas Gasana on political and press repression in Rwanda.](#)

Rwanda/Congo News videos on [AnnieGetYourGang, a Youtube Channel.](#)

Ann Garrison is an independent journalist based in San Francisco, a regular contributor to the [San Francisco Bay View](#), [National Black Newspaper](#), [Global Research](#), and [Digital Journal](#), and a news producer for [KPFARadio-Berkeley](#).

The original source of this article is [Plutocracy Now](#)
Copyright © [Ann Garrison](#), [Plutocracy Now](#), 2010

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Ann Garrison](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca