

# Ethiopian Review

## False Narrative: Whitewashing Rwanda Genocide

By Keith Harmon Snow

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### [Genocide and New Speak](#)

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**BSN Editor's Introduction:** Ordinarily, we don't write [introductions](#) to articles or essays published in The [Black Star News](#) but the following column by Keith Harmon Snow warrants it.

Snow has been at the forefront, as has this newspaper, in exposing Western duplicity in Africa and how U.S. and U.K. corporate and government interests have caused the deaths of millions of Africans; all for the love of money.

In the end, the African actors, the bit players really, are the ones who are blamed; wars of blood money and profits are referred to euphemistically by major newspapers, including [The New York Times](#) as "tribal wars," so that Americans can nod their heads and continue on with their lives without bothering to ask any further questions.

After all, "tribal wars" are endemic to Africa; they always happen. Africans just wake up one day, grab machetes and start [chopping](#) off their neighbors' heads to satisfy "blood lust;" a term actually once used by Time magazine to explain what the magazine contended was the reason for the Rwanda massacres of 1994.

Meanwhile, no one writes about the Western companies that somehow just always happen to be around digging the gold and the [diamonds and](#) ferrying off the timber and the young Congolese girls, even as the chopping off of heads and limbs occur.

But Keith Harmon Snow, whose long report follows, is not with the program. He is the anti-New York Times kind of reporter; and the anti-New Yorker magazine; and, anti-BBC and anti-Washington Post kind of journalist.

In fact, he is beyond being a mere journalist. He is the type of forthright individual that corporate media would refer to as "radical," in order to impugn his reputation, without having to challenge him on a single fact. He salvages a little respectability for the profession of journalism, which has been corrupted by corporate media.

He is a crusader with a mission; his goal is to expose United States' and Britain's roles in the genocide in Uganda and in the Congo; with characters like Rwanda's president Paul Kagame and Uganda's Yoweri K. Museveni and Sudan's Omar Hassan al-Bashir all playing the bit roles.

Snow writes long; he cannot help it because he feels the pain of the Congolese and the Ugandans and he wants someone somewhere –here in the United States and Britain– to pay a price. He might be accused of being overly passionate; one has to be, when one feels the kind of indignation that Snow feels. When it is a matter of genocide no article can be too long. Readers that bear with Snow and read all his words will learn information not found in the corporate media.

Corporate media are often accomplices to crimes against humanity. Sometimes in a most perverted manner. Take The New York Times' resident Sudanese genocide expert, Nicholas Kristoff. If Kristoff really cares about the suffering of Africans, and not just about winning a Pulitzer Prize as he did for his Sudanese crusade, don't you think he would lend his big pen to expose with equal passion the suffering of Congolese and Ugandan civilians; or might that lead to the indictment of Kagame and Museveni, "friends" of United States interests? Why would a humanitarian be selective in fighting against genocide unless there was a [hidden agenda](#)?

Thank the creator for the Internet. In the past, the world was held hostage to the tyranny of selective coverage and cover-ups by newspapers such as The New York Times and writers like Kristoff. He is a hero to Africans in his own mind. The Internet era has broken the monopoly of disinformation and misinformation once enjoyed by elite media.

Many years ago, George Orwell had warned against the dangers of propaganda, or what he called "New Speak." We hear New Speak every day; where everything is turned upside down, killers are praised, while innocents are marched off to shallow graves in the forests. New Speak celebrates murderers as heroes and denounces victims.

Although successive generations have always declared "never again;" and "not on our watch," as surely as the sun rises, humanity never fails and genocide always occurs. New Speak always exonerates the killers. New Speak is public relations disinformation; black becomes white; red is yellow; and bad is good.

As one of the characters in Orwell's 1984 puts it: "It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words."

Ah, yes; New Speak has helped send millions of Africans six feet under or to the crocodiles in the Kagera river, the Nile, and Lake Victoria.

Take Uganda's Yoweri Museveni as an example; he is a master New Speaker. He has single-handedly, with the assistance of U.K. and U.S. financing and military hardware, caused the deaths of more than eight million Africans –half a million or more in Uganda; one million in Rwanda; seven million in Congo. Please see <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/116/10455.pdf>

Yet, at least up until the time President George W. Bush left office, he was treated like some respected elder statesman of politics in the West.

He is such a smooth New Speaker that he attends the funerals of people whom he has reportedly eliminated in Uganda. He is such a smooth operator that he even secured an audience with President Bush in the White House in 2007 even though [The Wall Street Journal](#) had already reported on June 8, 2006, that he is being investigated by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes committed by his troops and militia in Congo between 1998-2003 and conceivably, like Liberia's former president Charles Taylor, and like Sudan's president al-Bashir, he too may be indicted by the ICC.

While President Bush could ignore the inconvenient truth and entertain Museveni in the White House, praising him for fighting HIV/Aids, even as he used his other hand to eliminate millions of Africans, it is difficult to imagine how President Barack Obama, a constitutional law professor, could ignore the smell of blood emanating from the Ugandan. Then again, on this earth, anything is possible.

Rwanda's Kagame is another master New Speaker.

Earlier this week, he presided over memorial ceremonies for the victims of the 1994 massacres. Kagame indulges in this macabre exercise each year even though he was instrumental in the very genocide which he now "mourns": he commanded the invasion of Rwanda from Uganda in 1990 and a French court has concluded that he ordered the missile downing of the presidential plane carrying Presidents Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and Cyprien Ntuyamira of Burundi, sparking the 100 days of mass murders.

Western media had also prepared the global community for the eventual demonization and criminalization of all Hutus –even the ones who never participated in the mass murders of 1994– with a racist campaign against them in major magazines such as The New York Times magazine and The New Yorker, both with circulation in the millions. One of the first media volleys against the Hutus was an article by Alex Shoumatoff, published on June 20, 1992 in The New Yorker, where he described people he had observed while travelling in Burundi, which has the same ethnic combustibility between the majority Hutus and minority Tutsis; at that time Burundi's army and government were controlled by the Tutsi minority.

"There were three obvious Tutsis," Shoumatoff wrote, of the people he saw in a taxi cab, "Tall, slender with high foreheads, prominent cheekbones, and narrow features." He added: "They were a different physical type from the five passengers who were short and stocky and had the flat noses and thick lips typical of Hutus."

Almost three months later, an even more insidious article by Shoumatoff, "Rwanda's Aristocratic Guerrillas," was published on December 13, 1992, in The New York Times magazine. By this time, the invasion of Rwanda was in its second year and the RPF had already committed numerous massacres against Hutu civilians, as a lexis-nexus search of news reports will reveal. These crimes were glossed over or ignored in Shoumatoff's article and all contemporary and subsequent accounts in major newspapers such as the Times.

Moreover, Shoumatoff was married to a Tutsi woman who was the first cousin of the RPF's spokesperson and he was met at Entebbe airport in Uganda by RPF officials who guided him to the zones they controlled. So, The New York Times knowingly participated in the demonization campaign against the Hutus, who make up 85% of the population in both Rwanda and Burundi.

"In the late 19th Century," Shoumatoff, acting as an unofficial propagandist for the invading army wrote in The New York Times magazine, describing Tutsis, "early ethnologists were fascinated by these 'languidly haughty' pastoral aristocrats whose high foreheads, aquiline noses and thin lips seemed more Caucasian than Negroid, and they classified them as 'false negroes.' In a popular theory of the day, the Tutsis were thought to be highly civilized people, the race of fallen Europeans, whose existence in Central Africa had been rumored for centuries."

Shoumatoff added, of the Tutsis: "They are not a race or a tribe, as often described, but a population, a stratum, a mystical, warrior-priest elite, like the Druids in Celtic society." As for the

Hutus, they were far from resembling warrior priests: as Shoumatoff revealed, they were "short, stocky local Bantu agriculturalists." [To read more critique of Western media demonization of Africans, please see "The Hearts Of Darkness, How White Writers Created The Racist Image of Africa," (Black Star Books, 2005)]

Yes, heinous crimes against humanity and war crimes occurred in Rwanda, not only in 1994, but right from the time of the Uganda-sponsored invasion in 1990. Yet, the account here shows, many people would rather pretend that the atrocities started in 1994.

Some of the people who participated in the crimes have been caught and tried; many who have been tried and convicted did not even participate; those prosecuted so far have been only Hutus.

The story can never be complete when others involved in the same crime are exonerated through New Speak—some are outside Rwanda, including Museveni, for sponsoring the invasion and reportedly for supplying the missile used to down Habyarimana's jet; others, indicted and unindicted criminals now govern Rwanda.

But ours is a mere introduction. Let Keith Harmon Snow tell the sordid story. — Milton Allimadi, [BlackStar News](#)

### **False Narrative: Whitewashing Rwanda Genocide**

By Keith Harmon Snow

On 12 February 2009, Alison Des Forges, a senior researcher with Human Rights Watch (HRW) for more than 20 years, was killed when Continental Airlines Flight 3407 crashed on route to Buffalo, New York. Des Forges was widely cited as a staunch critic of the Rwandan military government controlled by Paul Kagame and the victors of the war in Rwanda, 1990-1994.

In the ongoing life-and-death struggle to reveal the truth about war crimes and genocide in Central Africa, competing factions on all sides have posthumously embraced Alison Des Forges as an activist challenging power and a purveyor of truth and justice against all odds. Meanwhile, in March, 2009, based on false accusations of genocide issued by the Kagame regime—and given the close relations between Rwanda and the Barack Obama Administration's former Clintonite officials—the U.S. Department of Homeland Security began the process of revisiting all immigration cases of Rwandan asylum seekers and criminalizing innocent refugees.

"In May of 1994, a few weeks into the killings of Tutsis in Rwanda," reported Amy Goodman, posthumously, on Democracy Now, Alison Des Forges "was among the first voices calling for the killings to be declared a genocide." Added Goodman: "She later became very critical of the Tutsi-led Rwandan government headed by Paul Kagame and its role in the mass killings in both Rwanda and neighboring Congo after 1994. Last year, she was barred from entering Rwanda."

To say that Des Forges was "amongst the first voices calling for the killings to be declared genocide" in 1994 is an Orwellian ruse. The genocide label applied by Alison Des Forges and certain human rights bodies in May of 1994 was misdirected, used to accuse and criminalize only the majority Hutu people and the remnants of the decapitated Habyarimana government; much as the genocide and war crimes accusations have been selectively applied against President Omar al-Bashir in Sudan.

The Clinton Administration refused to apply the genocide label: to do so might have compromised an ongoing U.S.-backed covert operation: the invasion of Rwanda by the Pentagon's proxy force, the Rwandan Patriotic Front/Army (RPF/A).

According to U.S. intelligence insider Wayne Madsen, Des Forges' criticisms of the U.S.-brokered pact between Rwanda's President Paul Kagame and the Democratic Republic of Congo's President Joseph Kabila in December 2008 "earned her some powerful enemies ranging from the murderous Kagame, who will not think twice about sending his agents to silence critics abroad, and international interests who want nothing to prevent them from looting the DRC's vast mineral and energy resources."

"With U.S. military forces of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) now backing a joint Ugandan-DRC offensive in the northeastern DRC to wipe out the Lord's Resistance Army," wrote Madsen on 16 February 2009, "with hundreds of civilian casualties in the DRC and Uganda, and a secret pact worked out between Kabila and Kagame to permit Rwandan troops to occupy the eastern DRC, the target of both operations is securing the vast territory that is rich in commodities that the United States, Britain and Israel—all allies of Uganda and Rwanda—want badly.

Those commodities are gold, diamonds, columbium-tantalite (coltan), platinum and natural gas." Massive oil reserves are also at stake, with major concessions bifurcated by the international border. Ongoing petroleum sector investment (exploration and exploitation) in the region involves numerous western extraction companies—many being so-called petroleum "minors" likely fronting for larger corporations—including Hardman Resources, Heritage Oil and Gas, H Oil & Minerals, PetroSA, Tullow Oil, Vangold Resources, ContourGlobal Group, Tower Resources, Reservoir Capital Group, and Nexant (a Bechtel Corporation subsidiary).

Billed as a "tireless champion" and "leading light in African human rights," there is much more to this story than the western propaganda system has revealed: Alison Des Forges and Human Rights Watch (HRW) provided intelligence to the U.S. government at the time of the 1994 crises, and they have continued in this role to the present. Des Forges also supported the show trials at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), institutionalizing victor's justice and shielding the Kagame regime.

Alison Des Forges came across to many people as a wonderful human being with great compassion and impeccable integrity. Indeed, this was my impression upon meeting her as well. She is said to have helped people who were being persecuted—no matter that they were Hutus or Tutsis—by the Rwandan regime that has for more than 19 years operated with impunity behind the misplaced and misappropriated moral currency of victimhood. In the recent past, Alison Des Forges spoke—to some limited degree—against the war crimes of the Kagame regime.

In life she did not speak about the deeper realities of "genocide in Rwanda", and she had plenty of chances. In fact, she is the primary purveyor of the inversion of truth that covered up the deeper U.S. role in the Rwanda "genocide", and she spent the past 10 years of her life explaining away the inconsistencies, covering up the facts, revising her own story when necessary, and manipulating public opinion about war crimes in the Great Lakes of Africa—in service to the U.S. government and powerful corporations involved in the plunder and depopulation of the region.

"Alison des Forges is a liar," Cameroonian journalist Charles Onana told me, in Paris, France, several years ago. Onana is the author of numerous exposés on war crimes, genocide and crimes

against humanity in Central Africa, and he is the author of the book "The Secrets of the Rwandan Genocide, Investigations on the Mysteries of a President," published in French in 2001.

Kagame, Rwanda's one-party president "elected" through rigged elections, sued Charles Onana for defamation in a French court in 2002; Kagame lost the original trial and the appeal. Kagame was the commander of the Rwandan Patriotic Front/Army (RPF/A) and a leading agent—with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and their U.S., U.K., Belgian and Israeli backers—behind the massive bloodshed and ongoing terrorism in Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Congo, Sudan and Somalia.

In his book, Onana accused Kagame of being the principle instigator of the missile attack of April 6, 1994 that brought down the plane carrying Rwanda's President Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundi's Cyprien Ntaryamira. Unlike the U.N.'s ongoing high-profile investigation of the murder of Lebanon's former prime minister Rafik Hariri, no major power has pushed for a similar probe into the murder of the two African presidents.

Des Forges own death in a plane crash garnered major coverage.

"Leading light in African Human Rights killed in Buffalo Crash," reported the Pentagon's mouthpiece, CNN. "Human Rights Watch, which is based in New York, said she was 'best known for her award-winning account of the genocide, Leave None to Tell the Story.' She was truly wonderful, the epitome of the human rights activist—principled, dispassionate, committed to the truth and to using that truth to protect ordinary people."

Alison Des Forges first worked as a HRW agent in Rwanda in 1992; in 1993 she helped produce a major international document highly biased against the Rwandan Government and protective of the RPF/A invaders: "Report of the International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda since October 1, 1990."

In late 1992, the International Federation of Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, the Inter-African Union for Human Rights and the Rights of Peoples, and the International Center for the Rights of the Individual and the Development of Democracy created the International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda since October 1, 1990. With 10 members from eight countries, the commission reported its findings in March 1993: Des Forges was co chairperson, one of the three principal writers, and translator of the French to English version.

The report noted that "hundreds of thousands" of Rwandans were made homeless and forced to flee, prior to January 1993, but these casualties of the RPF/A invasion were not attributed to international crimes of peace against a sovereign government committed by an invading army—the RPF/A guerrillas covertly backed by the U.S., Britain, Belgium and Israel—but instead merely to "war".

In other words, the initial act of aggression, the RPA/F invasion, was institutionally protected and the war crimes that set the stage for the conflagrations in Rwanda and Congo went unpunished.

Later in 1993, Rwandans Ferdinand Nanimana and Joseph Mushyandi, representing four Rwandan organizations under the Rwanda Associations for the Defense of Human Rights, challenged the DesForges commission in their 26-page document, "A Commentary on the Report of the International Commission's Inquiry on the Violation of Human Rights in Rwanda since October 1990."

"How can an international commission be taken seriously when its members spent only two weeks extracting verbal and written evidence on human rights violations for a period of two years?" the authors wrote. They also pointed out that the commission spent less than two hours in areas controlled by the RPF/A rebels and that they could not visit all the 11 prefectures in the country because of demonstrations that blocked the roads. "Can there be any objective and credible conclusions in their report?"

Ferdinand Nanimana was later sentenced to life imprisonment for genocide. Many members of the Rwandan human rights organizations he worked with prior to April 1994 were subsequently killed. The rights and due process of Rwandan Hutus are systematically violated due to victor's justice secured by the U.S., Europe, Israel and the proxy states Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda. Bernard Ntuyahaga, a Major of the former Rwandan army (ex-FAR) accused of killing 10 Belgian soldiers and Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, surrendered to the ICTR to avoid extradition to Rwanda; he was tried in Belgium and sentenced to 20 years in prison on July 4, 2007.

Like other researchers who have endlessly perpetuated the disinformation, Des Forges made no attempts to correct the record. In 1992, human rights researchers Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal established the London-based NGO African Rights. In August 1995, African Rights published *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, another pivotal "human rights" report that manufactured the "genocide" fabrications, set the stage for victor's justice at the ICTR, and began the process of dehumanizing millions of Hutu people and protecting the true terrorists. In 1995, Omaar and de Waal recycled the disinformation in the left-leaning *Covert Action Quarterly* under the title "U.S. Complicity by Silence: Genocide in Rwanda."

Since 2003, Alex de Waal has been one of the primary disinformation conduits on Darfur, Sudan. "An intensive back and forth activity between this so-called British human rights organization, African Rights, and the intelligence services of the [Kagame] President's office and the Rwandan military, has been observed," wrote Paul Rusesabagina, whose heroics was immortalized in the film *Hotel Rwanda*. "Her investigators are very close to the [RPF/A] military intelligence apparatus, and the modus operandi of both appears to be similar."

Alison Des Forges years-long "investigations" into the bloodshed of 1994 resulted in the fat treatise on genocide in Rwanda, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, a book co-researched and co-written by Timothy Longman, now Associate Professor of Africana Studies and Political Science at Vassar College. Longman and Des Forges produced numerous documents—based on field investigations in Congo (then Zaire), Rwanda and Burundi, from 1995 to 2008—touted as independent and unbiased human rights documents, all skewed by hidden interests.

According to a recent PBS *Frontline* eulogy, less than two weeks into the killing in April 1994 Des Forges met with officials in the U.S. State Department and National Security Council (NSC) and lobbied for their help. "We were not asking for U.S. troops," *Frontline* quotes her saying, "it was clear to us that there was no way that the U.S. was going to commit troops to Rwanda."

But the U.S. military was heavily backing the RPF/A tactically and strategically already. Key to the operation were "former" Special Operations Forces (Ronco Company) providing military equipment and ferrying RPA troops from Uganda to Rwanda; the Pentagon's logistical and communications support; Defense Intelligence Agency and CIA operatives. Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), was also collaborating with the RPF/A, serving the Pentagon interest.

Genocide in Rwanda became a massive psychological operation directed against media consumers using ghastly images—produced by RPA-embedded photographers like James Nachtwey and Gilles Peres—to infer that all cadavers were Tutsi victims of an orchestrated Hutu genocide; meanwhile the text was racist disinformation produced by Joshua Hammer. Newsweek, June 20, 1994.

ICTR defense attorney Christopher Black reports that reliable sources confirm that US Special forces were with the RPF all the way through the war. "My client testified in June that U.S. Hercules [C-130 military aircraft] were seen dropping troops in support of the RPF..."

Further, on 9 April 1994, three days after the so-called "mysterious plane crash" where Burundi's President Cyprien Ntaryamira and President Habyarimana were assassinated, some 330 U.S. marines landed at Bujumbura's airport in Burundi, ostensibly to "rescue Americans" in Rwanda.

More centrally however, Uganda—with U.S. trained forces and U.S. supplied weaponry—launched its war against Rwanda as a proxy force for the United States of America on October 1, 1990.

The result was a coup d'état: we won. The 2003 Frontline interview with Alison Des Forges exemplifies her continuing role in whitewashing U.S. involvement in war crimes and genocide in Central Africa. "Kagame received his military education under the Pentagon's Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) at the Command and General Staff College of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, beginning in 1990," wrote John E. Peck of the Association of African Scholars (2002). "His sidekick, Lt. Col.

Frank Rusagara, got his JCET schooling at the U.S. Naval Academy in Monterey, California. Both were dispatched to Rwanda in time to oversee the RPF's takeover in 1994. Far from being an innocent bystander, the Washington Post revealed on July 12, 1998 that the United States not only gave Kagame \$75 million in military assistance, but also sent Green Berets to train Kagame's forces (as well as their Ugandan rebel allies) in low intensity conflict (LIC) tactics. Pentagon subcontractor Ronco, masquerading as a de-mining company, also smuggled more weapons to RPF fighters in flagrant violation of UN sanctions. All of this U.S. largesse was put to lethal effect in the ethnic bloodbath that is still going on."

"This genocide resulted from the deliberate choice of a modern elite to foster hatred and fear to keep itself in power," Des Forges wrote, blaming "Hutu Power". However, her assertions about a "planned" Hutu genocide—"They seized control of the state and used its machinery and its authority to carry out the slaughter"—collapse under scrutiny.

From 1990 to 1994, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), comprised most heavily of Ugandan soldiers led by Ugandan citizens like Paul Kagame, committed atrocity after atrocity as they forced their way to power in Kigali, always falsely accusing their enemies—the power-sharing government of then President Juvenal Habyarimana—of genocide.

"Kagame assigned some people to work with Alison Des Forges," says Ugandan Human Rights activist Remigius Kintu, "and also to assist her in fabricating and distorting stories to suit Tutsi propaganda plans."

According to the International Forum for Truth and Justice in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, whose discoveries resulted in the high courts of Spain issuing international indictments against 40 top RPF/A officials: "Between 1990 and 1994, the RPA waged a systematic, pre-planned, secretive

but highly organized terrorist war aimed at eliminating the largest number of Rwandan people possible—bodies were hacked to pieces and incinerated en masse.

From 1994, once the RPA violently seized power, a terror regime was created, and developed, and a criminal structure parallel to the state was set up to pursue pre-determined kidnappings; torturing and raping of women and young girls; terrorist attacks (both directly and by simulating that the same had been perpetrated by the enemy); illegal detention of thousands of civilians; selective murdering; systematic elimination of corpses either by mass incineration or by throwing them into lakes and rivers; indiscriminate attacks against civilians based on pre-determined ethnic categories for the elimination of the predominant ethnic group; and also to carry out acts of war in Rwanda and Congo."

Before former President Habyarimana's assassination on 6 April 1994, Des Forges, and the organizations she worked with, blamed the whole war crimes show on President Habyarimana and his government, they dismissed the illegal invasion and atrocities of the RPF/A, and they began calling it genocide against the Tutsis as early as 1992.

"In the Military II case Alison Des Forges admitted that she was funded by USAID when she was part of that so-called International Commission condemning the Rwandan Government [under Habyarimana] for human rights violations," reports Canadian Chris Black, a defense attorney at the ICTR, "and she admitted that she just took the word of the RPF and pro-RPF groups and that she did not deal with RPF atrocities, as she did not have the time."

Chris Black notes that Des Forges presented reports to the ICTR in certain legal cases that were decidedly doctored from the original reports presented in previous cases against other accused Hutu genocidaires, and that it was necessary to cross-examine Des Forges "very forcefully" to get her to agree that changes had been made to the reports presented as evidence in the case being tried.

"In her expert report in the 2006 Military II trial against General Ndindiliyimana," Chris Black adds, "she removed all the positive things she had said about him in her book and in her previous expert report in the [Colonel Théoneste] Bagasora case. When asked by me why she deleted the positive view of him at his own trial, and why she tried to hide the fact that he saved a lot of Tutsis, among other things, she had no explanation. It was a cheap, low thing to do and I can tell you even the judges here at the ICTR were not too happy about it."

On December 18, 2008, after the protracted 'Military I' trial, the judges at the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda ruled that there was no conspiracy to commit genocide by former Rwandan military leaders affiliated with the former Habyarimana government. It was war, and the actions—far from a calculated genocide—were found by ICTR judges to be "war-time conditions".

"The media reports of the December 18 judgment [Military I] at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda focused primarily on the convictions of three of four former top military leaders, who were the supposed 'masterminds' of the Rwandan genocide," wrote ICTR defense lawyer Peter Erlinder. "But, as those who have followed the ICTR closely know, convictions of members of the former Rwandan government and military are scarcely newsworthy."

Since the inception of the ICTR its decisions have been decisively biased—victor's justice—in favor of protecting the Kagame regime and its backers. Thus it is no surprise that the former top military leaders of the Habyarimana government—Colonel Théoneste Bagasora and Major Aloys

Ntabakuze—were sentenced to life imprisonment for acts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

"The real news was that all of the top Rwandan military officers, including the supposedly infamous Colonel Bagosora, were found not guilty of conspiracy or planning to commit genocide," writes Erlinder. "And General 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 Tutsi civilians."

Now, after more than 15 years of massive western propaganda proclaiming an organized, systematic elimination of the Tutsi people by the Hutu leaders of the former Rwandan government, the official Rwanda genocide story has finally collapsed.

In contradistinction to the establishment narrative accusing the "Hutu leadership" of an "organized" and "planned" genocide were the countless acts of genocide committed through a spontaneous uprising of the Hutu masses—people who had been brutalized, disenfranchised, uprooted and forced from homes; people who had witnessed massacres and rapes of family members; people who were themselves the victims of brutal atrocities.

These were more than a million internally displaced Rwandan Hutus, people who had been terrorized by the Rwandan Patriotic Army from October 1990 to April 1994, as it butchered its way into Rwanda; and possibly a million Burundian refugees, Hutus who suffered massive reprisals in Burundi after the first civilian President, Melchior Ndadaye, a democratically elected Hutu, was assassinated by the Tutsi military in October 1993.

There is evidence that the RPA/F pursued "pseudo-operations"—death squads committing atrocities disguised as government soldiers—and evidence that at least some of the infamous Interahamwe militias pursued their campaigns of terror in the pay of the Rwandan Patriotic Front/Army.

"She concealed the fact that from 1990 the war caused an unprecedented economic poverty and that the one million internally displaced people tore the social fabric apart!" wrote Dr. Helmut Strizek, a former German official who had called for Des Forges' resignation from HRW.

"And these people knew that Tutsi rebels caused their misery. They did not wait for 'instructions' in order to revenge, once no one was able to maintain public order after the April 6 assassination and resumption of hostilities by the RPF."

"Alison Des Forges is no longer," writes Charles Onana. "Peace be with her soul! She nonetheless leaves behind her many victims of injustice, who she painstakingly accused, using false testimony, before the International Criminal Tribunal Court for Rwanda (ICTR)." Alison Des Forges provided expert testimony in 11 genocide trials before the ICTR, including the 'Military I' trials that condemned Col. Theoneste Bagosora and two others on December 18. Des Forges also testified in genocide trials in Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Canada.

Charles Onana continues: "Among her victims there is Jean-Paul Akayesu, the first to be condemned to life imprisonment for genocide. This man, who Alison Des Forges had accused without any proof against him, was even defended by a Tutsi from the Patriotic Rwandan Army [RPA] who had been party to the fabrication of the 'incriminating' evidence against him in Rwanda. The Tribunal never listened to this witness, but they did listen to Alison Des Forges."

"I have also discovered during the course of my investigations into the ICTR that, at the start of the trial in 1997, she introduced a forged fax that was purported to be written by General Dallaire in 1994. This fax, maintained Des Forges, concerned the 'planning of genocide'."

New Yorker staff writer Philip Gourevitch spread the mythology of "The Genocide Fax" far and wide. Gourevitch's first pro-RPF/A disinformation piece appeared in the New Yorker in December 1995; in May 1998 the New Yorker published Gourevitch's "The Genocide Fax," a charade fed to him by Madeleine Albright's undersecretary of state James Rubin.

Gourevitch's fictional book "We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families" was funded by the euphemistically named U.S. Institute for Peace and written in league with the Kagame regime.

It is certainly possible that Alison Des Forges was unaware of the original fabrication, but she and Human Rights Watch never changed their tune, and they never denounced the fabrication.

Charles Onana continues: "It was on the basis of this false document that she called for the condemnation of Jean-Paul Akaseyu. To lend credibility to this first trial process, the ICTR, with astonishing lightness and irresponsibility, condemned this man to life. The Tribunal had no proof. The judicial dossier is slapdash and skimpy, but that has no importance. This was Alison Des Forges first great victory."

"She then decided to pursue a Rwandan refugee living in Canada: an ideal target," Onana adds, referring to Leon Mugesera. "He had the misfortune to be Hutu. For her, this man was a 'planner of genocide'. But where is the proof? Alison Des Forges has none, but she wants to see this man in prison. Having deciphered or seen through Alison Des Forge's arguments, the Judge of the Canadian Federal Tribunal concluded witheringly and without pity: 'I note above all the relentlessness with which Mme Des Forges launched her diatribe against M. [Leon]Mugesera, and am astonished by the lack of care she has demonstrated in drawing up the report for the International Commission of Enquiry and in her Expert Assessment.'"

"The Canadian judge did not hesitate to qualify Mme. Des Forges as partisan, demonstrating 'a prejudice or preconceived position against Léon Mugesera'. He concluded that she could not be considered an objective witness, adding that no correctly informed tribunal could take her allegations seriously. Nevertheless it was on the basis of the same arguments, and of the same fantasy report published in 1999, that she accused numerous Rwandans, all Hutu."

"CONTINENTAL SHIFT," one of Philip Gourevitch's pivotal disinformation essays that appeared in the New Yorker, outlined the "new brand of African leader" exemplified by Yoweri Museveni and Paul Kagame: it is a whitewash of U.S.-backed terrorism. "It was thus that she devoted the penultimate day of her examination, during the process against the military, to presenting Colonel Bagosora, Hutu, as the king pin in the genocide.

The Tribunal in the long-running 'Military I' trial did not accept the 'planning of genocide' that Alison Des Forges never ceased to hammer on about by means of her pseudo-fax of 11 January 1994. She lied, lied and lied again. She tried a come-back or to recover her credibility by criticizing her 'hero' Paul Kagame, the organizer of the 6 April 1994 assassination of two presidents."

"Alison Des Forges finally dared to speak of the crimes committed by the Tutsi rebels of the RPF/A: the great taboo. It was a bit late but it assuaged her conscience. For those who were

condemned by the ICTR, deliberately and unjustly recorded by her, there will be no justice for them. Can Alison Des Forges still hear their suffering and their pain? She who has done them so much harm—along with their families? She who claimed to defend the Rights of Man has without doubt violated the rights of many Rwandans, who will undoubtedly never forget her. Their homage to Mme. Des Forges would have been different, very different, to what her many friends in the media have to say."

Timothy Longman and Des Forges, the co-authors of the HRW treatise, "Leave None To Tell The Story," both worked with USAID, the U.S. State Department and the Pentagon. Des Forges was a member of the HRW board from 1988 and was "principal researcher" on Rwanda and Burundi, 1991-1994.

In this period Des Forges also consulted for USAID, and collaborated with the State Department, Pentagon, and National Security Council. Simultaneously, Des Forges worked with, informed and influenced U.S. Congress-people, Permanent Representatives at the United Nations, the U.N. Under-Secretary General, and U.N. Special Rapporteur for Rwanda and Special Rapporteur for Summary and Arbitrary Executions. Des Forges also pumped the disinformation into the academic world through her high-level ties to human rights committees, African and African Studies departments and the elite African Studies Association.

In the same period, Des Forges constantly influenced the U.S. media through special briefings to the editorial boards and reporters of the New York Times, Washington Post, National Public Radio, and Associated Press, and she was frequently presented as an "expert" on genocide in Rwanda for CNN, 60 Minutes, Nightline, All Things Considered, BBC, Radio France Internationale, and the Canadian Broadcasting Company.

Such relations explain the mass media's consistency in producing the monolithic disinformation about Rwanda that shielded the illegal U.S.-backed and covert RPF/A- Ugandan guerrilla insurgency. The blanket media coverage falsely situated the "Rwanda genocide" as it is now widely misunderstood: 100 days of genocide, 800,000 to 1.2 million Tutsis killed with machetes; the "highly disciplined" RPF/A stopping the genocide.

Such is the disinformation that indoctrinated the English-speaking media consumers and created a mass psychological hysteria about Rwanda that persists to this day. Timothy Longman worked with Des Forges in Rwanda in 1994 and has worked regularly with both USAID and HRW on contracts in Congo, Burundi and Rwanda, throughout the late 1990's and into the present; Longman worked in Rwanda on one USAID contract for Management Systems Incorporated, a firm whose clients include the Pentagon. Longman also worked as a consultant for HRW in the spring of 2000 conducting field research in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and producing "a detailed report on human rights conditions in rebel-controlled areas."

The Des Forges and Longman position vis-à-vis their whitewashing of the Tutsi-led RPF/A organized genocide in Rwanda certainly explains the sanitation of HRW reports, and it raises questions, for example, about how Human Rights Watch "researchers" navigate their "work" in rebel (read: Rwandan and Ugandan) controlled areas in DRC.

It also raises questions about how, why and when HRW does or doesn't expose the western operatives, non-government organizations and multinational corporations: a singular example is the Human Rights Watch report that mildly exposes the criminal operations of Anglo-Gold Ashanti—a

company partnered with the George H.W. Bush connected Barrick Gold Corporation—in eastern DRC.

HRW says nothing about Moto Gold, Mwana Africa, Banro Resources, Hardmann Oil, Tullow Oil, De Beers, H Oil & Minerals, OM Group, Metalurg, Kotech, International Rescue Committee—and the many proxy armies, militias, gun-runners and other organized white collar war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Congo.

The role of HRW as an intelligence conduit to the U.S. Government is incidentally confirmed by Samantha Power in her book "A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide"—a whitewash of U.S. and allied war crimes for which she was rewarded with a Pulitzer Prize.

While Power's "bystanders to genocide" thesis about Rwanda is a total inversion of the facts, she notes in passing that "Human Rights Watch supplied exemplary intelligence to the U.S. Government and lobbied in one-on-one meetings" in April and May 1994, and that Alison Des Forges and other HRW staff visited the White House on April 21, 1994. Samantha Power is currently a member of the National Security Council in the Obama Administration.

The mass media was flooded with "Rwanda genocide" disinformation between April and July of 1994, and advertising that served up subliminal seduction and white supremacy often surrounded these "news" clips.

Alison Des Forges continued to remain silent about Western corporate and military interests in the Great Lakes region to her death. A perfect example of this silence is the very unrevealing March 2008 interview by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum titled "Alison Des Forges: The Impact of Rwandan Genocide in Congo."

Timothy Longman also produces significant pro-US propaganda about Sudan. Thus it is important to note that amongst the key USAID conduits for disinformation and covert operations in Sudan today is Roger Winter, one of the primary architects of the RPF/A guerrilla war, organized from Washington in 1989, that led to the loss of millions of lives in the Great Lakes of Africa since October 1990.

Alison Des Forges, of course, never mentioned Roger Winter or his colleague in covert operations, Susan Rice, the Obama Administration's Ambassador to the U.N. Of Roger Winter, Remigius Kintu, the Ugandan Human Rights activist says "he was the chief logistics boss for the RPF until their victory in 1994...."

"Roger Winter was with the RPA on the front lines in Rwanda and he regularly briefed the Clinton Administration of the RPA's military achievements," says Jean Marie Vianney Higiho, former Rwandan official. "Alison Des Forges contributed to the RPF/A takeover of Rwanda. I have no doubt about that... I met her three times, first in 1995, and in 2004 she encouraged me to testify at the ICTR. I said 'no way: I will only testify if RPF officials are arrested.' She insisted I should testify, she was confident that the RPF were going to be arrested. I think she did not realize that the U.S. government would never accept that. She was something of an opportunist."

The zeal displayed by Alison Des Forges and Human Rights Watch in the pursuit of justice and human rights appears in sharp contradistinction to their absence of zeal in pursuing the architects of the criminal invasion of Rwanda on October 1, 1990, by Uganda, the double presidential assassinations of April 6, 1994, and all kinds of other murderous corporate conspiracies in Central

Africa where foreign-financed wars are used as cover for illegal extraction of resources, particularly in the Congo.

Ironically, as the world this week commemorated the 15th Anniversary of the terrible mass murders that followed the assassination of the presidents, Rwandan asylum seekers that are critics of the Kagame regime live under perpetual fear of being hunted down, branded as genocide perpetrators, ostracized, and persecuted by an illegitimate dictatorship. Forty of the regime's military officials have been indicted for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide by two international courts.

Kagame's ruthless Directorate of Military Intelligence has dispatched agents to Europe to eliminate RPF opponents; some of these agents are operating under cover as bogus asylum-seekers in Europe and North America.

As of January 20, 2009 the U.S. Department of Homeland Security began reopening all cases of Rwandan asylum seekers, and is criminalizing and threatening to deport legitimate refugees to Rwanda, actions that violate the 1951 United Nations High Commission for Refugees Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.

(Keith Harmon Snow is the 2009 Regent's Lecturer in Law & Society at the University of California Santa Barbara, recognized for over a decade of work, outside of academia, contesting official narratives on war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide while also working as a genocide investigator for the United Nations and other bodies.)