

ZNet | Africa

Behind the Numbers

Untold Suffering in the Congo - Part 2 of 2

by Keith Harmon Snow and David Barouski; [All Things Pass](#); March 01, 2006

[Back to Part 1](#)

Some people have suggested the reason that there isn't greater awareness and equitable intervention in the Congo is because "we simply don't know what to do" to remedy the situation. However, it is fairly clear what needs to be done, the West is just unwilling to do it because of powerful economic and geopolitical reasons.

1. U.S. Military Training programs must have an oversight committee and total transparency. Western governments must end their hypocritical stance and ensure they don't train any "rebel" or "dissident" groups, especially if they are against a democratically elected government (provided the elections weren't fraudulent), even if the elected government isn't politically aligned with the western ideology and/or economic ideals. To do otherwise would refute claims that the west is intervening to "spread democracy."

2. In parallel with number 1, a committee must be set up to ensure the same doesn't occur for the private military companies. As multinational corporations, these firms aren't subject to obey laws of warfare as an established country's armed forces are supposed to. The U.N. must pass resolutions mandating the World Court and International Criminal Court (ICC) to prosecute such corporations. Lastly, when such companies are exposed for conducting illegal activities, such as aiding coups or trafficking human slaves, the corporations who conduct these activities must be blacklisted from receiving government contracts, domestic or international, and the guilty individuals must be prosecuted (34).

3. In the arms arena, more substantial efforts must be created to intercept and prosecute "embargo busters," illegal brokers, and arms sellers. Furthermore, those selling, transporting, brokering, funding, or wiring arms transactions for weapons specifically intended for children should receive the harshest of the penalties (certain "small weapons" are modified to reduce their weight to make it easier for a child to carry). Firms that participate in arms shipments, transport and/or the movement of the flow of the money generated from these sales with countries, people or organizations that are embargoed or act against national or international law should be held accountable for their crimes. Assets can be frozen, travel bans imposed, and all government and economic business ties with such firms severed. These penalties must also have an assurance of enforcement.

4. Debt relief is essential, but ways must be found to protect IMF and World Bank loans from being used for military expenditures. The motivations of World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz are suspect. Dr. Wolfowitz is a former Deputy Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush, a former ambassador to Indonesia under Ronald Reagan, a PNAC member, and dual citizen in Israel. Likewise, the World Bank and IMF must shift their policy of privatization as a stipulation for loan approval in order to stimulate business growth within the state instead of having the business sector growth be almost entirely from multinational corporations. The World Bank and IMF must also provide debt relief to the counties that need it most according to economic indicators. Some countries receiving debt relief, like Uganda and Rwanda, are among the biggest spenders of their loans in the military sector (35). It must be ensured that a majority of spending occurs on infrastructure and public services, and that this does not benefit the standard set of "embedded" western corporations. It must also be ensured the loan money is used in areas that need development the most. For

example, in Uganda, the loan money Museveni has used for development has focused in the south in Kampala, the capital, and in Mbarra, his hometown. Meanwhile, the Acholi people, who always vote against Museveni's party in the polls, are ignored and the situation in the Lira, Gulu, and Kitgum districts continues to deteriorate. In addition, individual countries must examine the aid they give to countries that spend a high percentage of capital on military, as well as commit human rights abuses. Lastly, debt relief doesn't harm banks that gave the loans in the first place and collect on some of the interest rates, not to mention the American businesses that make profit on the privatized businesses as part of the loan deal. The debt is transferred to the taxpayers, so transparency is needed to insure that costs are also incurred by the firms granting the loans (if they want credit for their "humanitarian" debt relief).

5. Western countries must end the impunity for those responsible for looting minerals from Congo. Firms that purchase smuggled minerals, and/or purchase concessions from illegitimate rebel groups must be prosecuted. The World Court recently made a start by convicting Uganda and fining the government, but Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe remain unaccountable for their direct pirating, as are the Western firms that purchased the minerals, and Western individuals supporting them. (The Kimberly Process, established with the support of academic and intelligence experts at Harvard University, is a perfect example of the gatekeepers policing their own gates: the huge, entrenched, but secretive interests like the Oppenheimer/DeBeers and Maurice Tempelsman owned companies are legitimized as dealers of "clean" diamonds; while the other, far less connected competitors and challengers of the status quo, including Congolese children sneaking into mines and being shot for "stealing" the diamonds off their own starving families' former lands, are demonized as dealers of "blood" diamonds.)

6. The World Court and International Criminal Court must hold all military and civilian leaders—African, U.S., European—that are guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity accountable for their actions. The West must not be allowed to shield criminals from prosecution by virtue of their economic and political alliances with Western governments. Governments that harbor these criminals should be subject to prosecution. Economic sanctions may not be proper, as poor nations generally suffer severe civilian casualties as a result; specific involved individuals in government and the military must be held accountable.

7. "Peacekeeping" forces, in particular MONUC, must be examined to ensure that the mission is being conducted with the interests of promoting stability in the country. As illustrated, elements of MONUC have used the mission as a cover to further the agenda of the West and its corporate sponsors under the banner of "peacekeeping," causing the death of civilians in the process: those responsible should be tried and prosecuted. It must also be ensured that the investigations don't stop at individual soldiers or brigades committing crimes, but to examine the chain of command and their allegiances to uncover the motivations behind MONUC operations. There have been reports of MONUC troops looting ivory, gold, and animal skins in National Parks. Villagers say that they have seen murders occur right in front of MONUC soldiers and they didn't act to prevent the killings (36). MONUC soldiers have raped Congolese women (37). When pro-Rwandan rebel leaders Laurent Nkunda and Jules Mutibusi, both war criminals wanted by the U.N., took over Bukavu by force in May 2004, MONUC provided them with weapons and vehicles. Nkunda himself has stated the head of MONUC, William Swing, personally gave him a telephone to use during the raid. (38)

8. The international media is completely silent on virtually every major issue of significance with respect to war in DRC—and the international and criminal networks behind it. Misinformation about Africa prevails due to a concerted effort by the mainstream media to blackout the truth. A boycott of key publications is imperative,

and must include the most offensive: Boston Globe, Washington Post, Newsweek, Time, US News & World Report, USA Today, New York Times, the New Yorker (Conde Nast Publications), Harper's, Atlantic Monthly (highly subsidized by Lockheed Martin and Northrup Grumman) and, especially, National Geographic.

9. The fog of war needs to be cleared away from so-called "humanitarian" and "human rights" programs, organizations and individuals currently aligned with the Western corporate enterprise. Notables in this category include: Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, CARE, USAID, Norwegian People's Aid, International Crises Group, International Rescue Committee, Refugees International, the Genocide Intervention Fund, and many U.N. bodies, but especially UNHCR. Most of these agencies appear to exist merely to perpetuate their own survival. Doctors Without Borders also deserves scrutiny for their recent actions in DRC.

10. The peace and justice community remains unaccountable for its failure to take any significant actions to mitigate war in Congo and expose the true reasons behind it. A first step should be open up the spaces to alternative voices currently excluded by major social justice media venues. Second is to declare a total boycott on diamonds and gold, and an organized campaign to protest and economically castigate diamond stores where Lazare diamonds are sold. A third action is the commitment of meaningful funds—both from individuals and from organizations—to support the vibrant grass roots organizations and individuals working for human rights, women's health, disarmament, education, food security, rainforest and environmental defense in Congo. Fourth, people need to break through their fear (inculcated by the western media) of taking action to help people in the Congo: there is no reason—except the unacceptable—that westerners cannot establish a "Witness for Peace" program situated in the Congo.

11. Rights groups with missions pertinent to Congo's need must expand their missions to include Congo. Rape is endemic in the Congo: a source of psychological and physical trauma, it contributes to the spread of HIV, Ebola and other sexually transmitted diseases. Survivors often give birth to HIV positive children with no prospects for medical or financial help. This has led to an insurmountable need for aid to care for the orphans. Mothers of children conceived of rape are often disowned by their village and families. Western feminist and women's rights activists and organizations must get involved and provide resources for the victims of rape in Congo. Those responsible for rapes must be tried and punished as per the law if guilty. Indeed, evidence from rape cases in rural DRC shows that sexual violence is significantly reduced simply by holding military officers accountable for their troops' actions, but this is not happening.

12. MONUC's Radio Okapi is the lifeline of news in DRC today, but programming is largely comprised of U.N. programming. The United Nations needs to be pressured to open up the Radio Okapi network, eliminate the "fluff" pieces, and diversify and deepen its programming and reportage. As a simple example of how things could easily be improved in DRC, programs that sensitize the public to the issue of rape, and sensitize the military to the punishment for it, could easily be implemented; such programming is never considered.

13. The transitional government in Congo is comprised of military leaders and government officials who must be held accountable for their crimes. Like the individuals, organizations, corporations and governments that have supported them, all are responsible for crimes against humanity. The current profiteering in DRC is enabled by these key players, who hold the highest levels of the DRC government, and whose crimes remain hidden by the western press. The transitional government must not be allowed to appoint war criminals to cabinet or parliamentary positions, as well as local governor positions in the provinces.

Back to Part 1

References

- (1) "Mortality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A Nationwide Survey." Benjamin Coghlan, Richard J. Brennan, Pascal Ngoy, David Dofara, Brad Otto, Mark Clements, and Tony Steward. The Lancet, 7 Jan. 2006. Number 367 pp. 44-51
- (2) "Thousands' dying in DR Congo war," BBC News, 6, Jan. 2006:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4586832.stm> .
- (3) "Depopulation & Perception Management Part 2: Central Africa," keith harmon snow. Pioneer Valley VOICE, Feb. 2001:
<http://www.allthingspass.com/uploads/html-32Depop&PercepMan.htm> ;"Congo: Capitalist Mineral Lust Fuels Bloodshed," Direct Action:
http://www.directa.force9.co.uk/back%20issues/DA%2028/regulars3_1.html
.
- (4) "The Lost World War," Erik Vilwar, Corporation Watch Newsletter, Issue 13, March-April 2003:
<http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/newsletter/issue13>
- (5) "Depopulation As Policy, or, How the Despair and Death of Millions of African People is Daily Determined by the Lifestyle of Ordinary Americans, in Small Town USA, With Nary a Word of Truth In the US Press, If Anything At All, And Why Most of Us Know Nothing About It, And Do Nothing To Stop It When We Do Know," keith harmon snow, 2003:
<http://www.allthingspass.com/uploads/html-52Depopulation%20As%20Policy.htm>
.
- (6) Private interview, keith harmon snow, Bunia, 2005.
- (7) "Central Africa: Hidden Agendas and the Western Press," Pioneer Valley Voice, keith harmon snow:
<http://www.audarya-fellowship.com/showflat/cat/WorldNews/48471/0/collapsed/5/o/1>
- (8) "Genocide and Covert Operations In Africa 1993-1999," United States One Hundred Seventh Congress. Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights. First Session. 17 May 2001. comp. Centre for Research on Globalization.
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/MAD111A.html> .
- (9) Ibid.
- (10) "Stolen Goods: Coltan and Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo," Dena Montague, SAIS Review, vol. XXII no. 1 (Winter-Spring 2002); "Congo: Capitalist Mineral Lust Fuels Bloodshed," Direct Action:
http://www.directa.force9.co.uk/back%20issues/DA%2028/regulars3_1.html;
"Congo: The Western Heart of Darkness," Asad Ismi, The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Monitor, October 2001.
- (11) "Depopulation & Perception Management Part 2: Central Africa," keith harmon snow, Pioneer Valley VOICE, Feb. 2001:
<http://www.allthingspass.com/uploads/html-32Depop&PercepMan.htm> .
- (12) "Proxy Wars in Central Africa: Profits, Propaganda, and Luxury

Goods for the White World—Pacification, Rape, and Slavery for the Blacks,” Keith Harmon Snow, World War 3 Report, Issue No. 100, 19 July 2004:
<http://ww3report.com/proxy.html> .

(13) “Named and Shamed,” Ruud Leeuw: <http://www.ruudleeuw.com/vbout17.htm>

(14) “Uganda, Sanctions, and Congo-K: Who is Who in Uganda Mining,” Africa Analysis, 5 June 2001:
<http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/congo/2001/0606uga.htm> .

(15) “Corporate Soldiers: The U.S. Government Privatizes Force,” Daniel Burton and Wayne Madsen:
http://www.totse.com/en/politics/us_military/162741.html .

(16) David Gibbs, “The Political Economy of Third World Interventions,” University of Arizona Press; and Wayne Madsen, “Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa, 1993-1999,” Mellen Press, 1999.

(17) “The Lost World War,” Erik Vilwar, Corporation Watch Newsletter, Issue 13, March-April 2003:
<http://www.corporatewatch.org.uk/newsletter/issue13> .

(18) “Sony Corporation of America: Executive Biographies,” Jan. 2006.
<http://www.sony.com.SCA/>

(19) “Proxy Wars in Central Africa: Profits, Propaganda, and Luxury Goods for the White World – Pacification, Rape, and Slavery for the Blacks,” Keith Harmon Snow, World War 3 Report, Issue No. 100, 19 Jul. 2004:
<http://ww3report.com/proxy.html> .

(20) “Genocide and Covert Operations In Africa, 1993-1999,” United States One Hundred Seventh Congress, Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, First Session, 17 May 2001, comp. Centre for Research on Globalization:
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/MAD111A.html> .

(21) “The U.S. (Under)mining Job of Africa,” :
<http://cryptome.org/us-africa.wm.htm> .

(22) “Stolen Goods: Coltan and Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” Dena Montague, SAIS Review, Vol. XXII, No. 1, (Winter-Spring 2002).

(23) “A Continent for the Taking: The Tragedy and Hope of Africa,” Howard French, 12 April 2005, Vintage, New York, NY.

(24) “The Exception to the Rule: Exposing Oily Politicians, War Profiteers, and the Media That Love Them,” Amy Goodman, David Goodman, 2004, Hyperion Press, New York, NY.

(25) See: “Friends in High Places: The Bechtel Story.”

(26) “Stolen Goods: Coltan and Conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” Dena Montague, SAIS Review, Vol. XXII, No. 1, (Winter-Spring 2002); Named and Shamed, Ruud Leeuw:
<http://www.ruudleeuw.com/vbout17.htm> .

- (27) "Rwanda's Secret War: U.S.-Backed Destabilization of Central Africa," keith harmon snow, 12 December 2004:
http://traprockpeace.org/keith_snow_rwanda.html .
- (28) "Proxy Wars in Central Africa: Profits, Propaganda, and Luxury Goods for the White World – Pacification, Rape, and Slavery for the Blacks," keith harmon snow, World War 3 Report, Issue No. 100, 19 Jul. 2004:
<http://ww3report.com/proxy.html> .
- (29) "The U.S. (Under)mining Job of Africa,"
<http://cryptome.org/us-africa.wm.htm> .
- (30) "Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa, 1993-1999," United States One Hundred Seventh Congress. Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights. First Session. 17 May 2001. comp. Centre for Research on Globalization.
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/MAD111A.html> .
- (31) Private interview, keith harmon snow, eastern DRC, July 2005.
- (32) "Corporate Soldiers: The U.S. Government Privatizes Force," Daniel Burton and Wayne Madsen:
http://www.totse.com/en/politics/us_military/162741.html .
- (33) Confidential report, received, February 2006.
- (34) "The Controversial Commando," Pratap Chatterjee, 14 Jun. 2004:
http://www.guerrillanews.com/human_rights/doc4644.html ;
"CSC/DynCorp." Corporation Watch:
http://www.corpwatch.org/print_article.php?list=type&type=18 ;
"Crossing the Rubicon," Michael Ruppert, 2004, New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: p. 79-80.
- (35) "The Use of Rwanda's External Debt (1990-1994): The Responsibility of Donors and Creditors," Michel Chossudovsky, Pierre Galand, 30 March 2004:
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/PrintArticle.php?articleId=364> .
- (36) "Rwanda's Secret War: U.S.-Backed Destabilization of Central Africa," keith harmon snow, World War Four Report, 12 Dec. 2004:
www.WorldWar4Report.com .
- (37) "Proxy Wars in Central Africa: Profits, Propaganda, and Luxury Goods for the White World—Pacification, Rape, and Slavery for the Blacks," keith harmon snow, World War 3 Report, No. 100, 19 Jul. 2004:
<http://ww3report.com/proxy.html> .
- (38) "Report on Events in Bukavu, South Kivu: May 26 to June 9, 2004," Network of Women for the Defense of Rights and of Peace,