

OPPOSING POLITICAL KILLINGS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2011

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the current campaign of extra-judicial killing being waged by the government of Rwanda. Political assassination has no role to play in the twenty first century. It must be condemned and it must cease. The government of Rwanda should understand that the large amounts of aid that Rwanda receives through America's generosity can not and will not be given to a state that kills its own citizens overseas and at home for political ends.

The government of Rwanda is conducting a campaign of terror and murder against those it sees as enemies. On May 19, 2011 the New York Times reported that Rwandan dissidents in London had been warned by Scotland Yard that the Rwandan government "was plotting to kill them." The BBC reported on May 21st that British police had told the men that "The Rwandan government poses an immediate threat to your life."

These are not just empty threats. The British police prevented a Rwandan assassin from entering the UK. In June 2010, former Rwandan Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa, survived a botched assassination attempt in South Africa. Later that same month, Rwandan journalist, Jean-Leonard Rugabage, working on a story on the attack on Mr. Nyamwasa, was himself shot dead in Kigali.

The Government of Rwanda is using every means at its disposal to harass those it sees as enemies but whom are merely exercising their democratic rights. In January 2011, four former top officials—including Gen Nyamwasa—who have fallen out with President Kagame and gone into exile were sentenced in absentia to long terms in prison for threatening state security and promoting ethnic divisions. My own constituent, American citizen and distinguished human rights lawyer and campaigner, Paul Erlinder, was detained on bogus charges for several weeks in Kigali.

Rwanda's recent history has been tragic, but a stable and prosperous country has been born from the ashes of the 1994 genocide. However, this tragic history does not give the current government the right to commit murder. The United States currently gives Rwanda over \$200 million per year in aid. This generosity must surely be reexamined if the government continues to attack and kill those it disagrees with.

[From the BBC News, Africa]

RWANDAN EXILES IN LONDON "THREATENED BY HITMAN"

TWO RWANDAN EXILES LIVING IN LONDON WERE WARNED LAST WEEK BY UK POLICE THAT THEY FACED THE THREAT OF ASSASSINATION.

It has emerged that the men were visited by officers who told them they were in danger of being killed by a hitman sent by the Rwandan government.

Shortly before the warning was issued, a Rwandan man suspected of involvement was prevented from entering the UK.

The Rwandan High Commission in London has denied involvement in any alleged plot to kill the two exiles.

"The government of Rwanda does not threaten the lives of its citizens wherever they live," High Commissioner Ernest Rwamucyo said.

The government later said that the Metropolitan police had not approached it with evidence of the allegations.

"We are ready as always to work with them to ensure that nobody, be they Rwandan or not, is the victim of violence on British soil," a statement said, quoted by the New Times website in Kigali.

"SCARED"

The two men—Rene Mugenzi and Jonathan Musonera—have both been involved in political groups opposed to the ruling party of Rwanda's President Paul Kagame.

A week ago, UK police officers knocked on their doors and told them that they could not guarantee their safety. They advised them to increase the security around their homes or move away.

The police gave them written statements saying: "The Rwandan government poses an immediate threat to your life. The threat could come in any form."

It is understood that shortly before visiting the two men, counter-terrorism officers had stopped a Rwandan man as he tried to enter the country at Folkestone.

They questioned the unidentified man and turned him away.

Mr. Musonera said he and his family were very scared.

"I was not surprised, because this is not the first time they've tried to disturb the opposition," he told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme after learning about the death threat.

"I take this problem very seriously. I used to drive my car. Right now I stopped because the police told me to use limited movement or go out with friends.

"My wife, she is scared. We have cut off the home phone. The children now they stay at home, they can't go out. They can't go out with friends. I stopped visitors coming to our home."

OPPOSITION MEETING

BBC Africa analyst Martin Plaut says it is not the first time there have been reports of threats to Rwandan exiles living in the UK.

The UK's Security Service (MI5) has apparently been attempting to prevent an assassination campaign for some time, he adds.

In April, it was reported that MI5 had warned Mr Rwamucyo to halt an alleged campaign of harassment against critics of his country's government.

The police's warning was issued just prior to a meeting in London of exiles last weekend that brought together Tutsi and Hutu opposition politicians.

The meeting heard from a former Rwandan chief of staff, Lt Gen Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa, who addressed the gathering by videolink from South Africa, where he survived an assassination attempt in June 2010.

The Rwanda government has denied any links to the shooting of Gen Nyamwasa, who was a close ally of Mr Kagame before fleeing to South Africa last year.

The party representing the imprisoned Hutu politician, Victoire Ingabire, was also at the meeting.

The possibility that Hutu and Tutsi political parties could begin working together would be worrying for the Rwandan government, our correspondent says.

In January, four former top officials—including Gen Nyamwasa—who have fallen out with Mr Kagame and gone into exile were sentenced in absentia to long terms in prison for threatening state security and promoting ethnic divisions.

President Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front came to power in 1994, ending the

genocide in which some 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed.

He was re-elected last year with 93% of the vote, amid opposition claims of harassment.

[From the New York Times, May 19, 2011]

BRITISH POLICE WARN RWANDAN DISSIDENTS OF THREAT

(By Josh Kron and Jeffrey Gettleman)

KAMPALA, UGANDA.—The British police have warned two outspoken Rwandan dissidents living in London that their lives are in danger because the Rwandan government may be plotting to kill them, according to British officials and documents.

In hand-delivered letters dated May 12, the Metropolitan Police Service warned the dissidents that the threat on their lives "could come in any form" and that "unconventional means" had been used before.

"Reliable intelligence states that the Rwandan government poses an imminent threat to your life," the warning letters read. They added, "Although the Metropolitan Police Service will take what steps it can to minimize the risk, the police cannot protect you from this threat on a day-by-day, hour-by-hour basis."

British officials confirmed the documents' authenticity on Thursday.

Human rights groups have increasingly criticized the Rwandan government as being repressive and intolerant of any dissent, and several Rwandan dissidents living abroad have been mysteriously killed.

Last year, a former Rwandan general who had broken with the government was shot in South Africa, and assailants later tried to kill him while he was recovering in the hospital. Western diplomats contended that was evidence of a government plot to kill him.

The Rwandan government has rejected such accusations, including any threats in London.

"The government of Rwanda does not threaten the lives of its citizens wherever they live," it said in a statement. "The Metropolitan Police have not approached us with evidence of allegations, but we are ready, as always, to work with them to ensure that nobody, be they Rwandan or not, is the victim of violence on British soil."

The form letters, signed by a member of the Metropolitan Police Service, did not vouch for the accuracy of the threat but said it came from a source whose account the police had "no reason to disbelieve."

One of the recipients of the warning, Rene Claudel Mugenzi, has been actively working with Rwandan opposition groups in London and said he was contacted by the British police late on May 12. "They said it was important," Mr. Mugenzi said, "that I should not leave home."

Mr. Mugenzi, 35, said he was aware that the Rwandan government did not appreciate his political views. But when two police officers showed up at his door in east London around 10:30 p.m. and told him and his wife of a threat to his life, he said he was speechless.

"I did not think they could think to kill me here in the U.K.," he said.

Mr. Mugenzi says that in March he asked a pointed question to Rwanda's president, Paul Kagame, during a BBC call-in show about whether Mr. Kagame believed an Egypt-style revolution could happen in Rwanda.

He also helped organize a recent meeting of exiled Rwandans in London. The Rwandan government has accused many opposition officials of working with a rebel group in eastern Congo that has been classified as a terrorist group by the United States and linked to the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Mr. Mugenzi, who says he holds British as well as Rwandan citizenship, also works as a director at the London Center for Social Impact. He ran with the Liberal Democrats in local London elections last year and lost.

He has been living in Britain since 1997 and has frequently criticized Rwanda's government for rights abuses.

"Take such remedial action as you see fit to increase your own safety measures, e.g., house burglar alarms, change of daily routines, always walk with an associate," said the warning letter. "It may even be that you decide that it is more appropriate for you to leave the area for the foreseeable future."

He said he had no plans to leave, but he was not ruling it out.

The other recipient of the warning, Jonathan Musonera, said he was a former Rwandan Army captain who fled to Britain in 2001 after defecting while the army was fighting in Congo. He said he was subsequently tortured by the Rwandan government. Now a critic of the government, he said the British police visited his home about an hour before the visit to Mr. Mugenzi.

"They told me about the Rwandan government," Mr. Musonera said, "that they put my life in danger and they were trying to kill me."

Critics of the Rwandan government have been killed or have simply vanished. Seth Sendashonga, a former member of the governing party, was fatally shot in Kenya in 1998. Augustin Cyiza, a former vice president of Rwanda's Supreme Court, disappeared and is believed to have been killed in 2003. Leonard Hitimana, an opposition politician, disappeared the same year.

A Rwandan journalist covering the apparent assassination attempt of the general in South Africa was shot dead the day his story was published. The shooting strained relations between South Africa and Rwanda, with South Africa recalling its ambassador in August.

Last month, *The Independent*, a British newspaper, reported that Britain's domestic intelligence service, MI5, had warned Rwanda's high commissioner in London that a harassment campaign against Rwandan dissidents must be stopped or more than \$100 million in foreign aid to Rwanda could be cut.

The Rwandan government has repeatedly denied that it represses its citizens or has had a hand in any of the attacks on high-profile dissidents.

**MR. DOUGLAS RAY BARR—IN
MEMORY OF HIS MORE THAN 32
YEARS OF SERVICE**

HON. STEVE AUSTRIA

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2011

Mr. AUSTRIA. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Ohio's Seventh Congressional District, I have the privilege of recognizing Douglas Ray Barr for his more than 32 years as a veteran of the fire service and 21 years as a veteran of the Violet Township Fire Department, and honoring his many accomplishments prior to his passing on February 27 of this year.

Douglas Ray Barr was born to Daniel and Julia Barr on July 20, 1958, in Pleasantville, Ohio where he grew up with his two younger brothers Keith and Brad. A gifted athlete, he played multiple sports at Fairfield Union High School as well as collegiate baseball at Otterbein University. After college, Douglas followed his love of working with kids by teaching students with learning disabilities at his alma mater, Fairfield Union High School, and P.E. at Pleasantville Elementary School before entering the fire service in 1978.

Doug began his firefighting career with the Pleasantville Fire Department and the Newark Air Force base where he volunteered for 12 years. He began working at the Violet Township Fire Department in 1990 where he was promoted to Lieutenant in 1996, and Assistant Chief in 2008.

Doug was extremely active in the community as well. He was very active in organizations such as the United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Pickerington Area Chamber of Commerce and the Central Ohio Fire Chiefs Association, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the Fairfield Union Local School District board of education where he served as a member from 2002 to 2009. He was also an instructor for the Ohio Fire Academy and Eastland Vocational School for fire and EMS training.

Among his numerous achievements, Douglas received the American Red Cross Safety Hero award in 2006 and was a two-time recipient of the Knights of Columbus Blue Coat Award for his invaluable contributions.

On Sunday, February 27, 2011, Douglas Barr passed away at the age of 52, at Fairfield Medical Center surrounded by family and friends. We are all eternally grateful for the countless hours he spent during his 24 years of service.

Douglas Barr was a man dedicated to his friends, family and community. His family remembers him as always putting others first and for the pride he took in his job as Assistant Fire Chief.

Douglas Barr has been regarded as selfless, courageous, driven and flexible by his friends and co-workers. It is these attributes that make Douglas Barr truly representative of America.

Douglas Barr will be remembered for his selflessness, his bravery and for his life of service to his community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2011

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to explain my absence from votes cast on the evening of May 25, 2011. My voting percentage is 97.5 percent for the 112th Congress, and I rarely miss votes, but due to a prior commitment scheduled before we knew the House would be in session late tonight, I was required to fly back to Houston and miss the vote to concur with Senate amendments to the PATRIOT Act.

On the vote I missed:

To approve and concur with the Senate amendments on the PATRIOT Act, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

And on final passage of the PATRIOT Act, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

RECOGNIZING BEVERLY MAYO AS
THE 2011 FLORIDA BIG SISTER
OF THE YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2011

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Beverly Mayo as the 2011 Florida Big Sister of the Year. For ten years, Ms. Mayo has been an inspiration to young women, her colleagues, and the Northwest Florida community. I am honored to recognize her achievements.

The children of today are the leaders of tomorrow, and these young men and women look to the adults in their lives for support and guidance. Ms. Mayo understands how vital it is for children to have positive role models in their lives. Her solid character, invaluable advice and kind heart exemplify the characteristics of a Big Sister. Through her tireless dedication, Beverly Mayo has made an incredible impact on the lives of these young women, providing them a strong foundation for their future success. I am confident that her influence will continue to inspire them to achieve excellence as they grow to lead and serve our great nation.

Volunteers of Big Brothers Big Sisters play an integral role in the lives of all the young men and women of whom they mentor. Every year, thousands of people volunteer their service to this important organization. Last year, in Florida alone, over 15,000 men and women served as Big Brothers or Big Sisters, and from this exemplary group Beverly Mayo was selected as the Florida Big Sister of the Year. This honor is a reflection of the enduring impact Ms. Mayo has made in the lives of her Little Sisters, and Northwest Florida is blessed to have her a part of its community.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to honor Beverly Mayo for her accomplishments and her continuing commitment to the youth of Florida.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2011

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, May 24 at 6 p.m. through the morning of Wednesday, May 25, I was unavoidably detained in Chicago, Illinois for personal reasons, resulting in my absence from recorded votes for H.R. 1216, to amend the Public Health Service Act to convert funding for graduate medical education in qualified teaching health centers from direct appropriations to an authorization of appropriations.

If present I would have recorded my votes as the following: on rollcall vote 335 "aye"; on rollcall vote 336 "aye"; on rollcall vote 337 "aye"; on rollcall vote 338 "no"; on rollcall vote 339 "aye"; on rollcall vote 340 "no."