

Report # 122
BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD
Central Africa
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Fighting the Cold War in a Hot Zone

Book Review

This book highlights the role of CIA in the local politics of Democratic Republic of Congo right from the post independence. The author indicated the interest of Eisenhower administration to eliminate the Lumumba's government which was the more inclined towards Soviets and later supported to Mobutu. However I consider it as an episode of the confrontation during the Cold War between the Soviets and Americans where covert actions were frequently used by the both sides particularly by CIA as it illustrates by the Devlin.

Book: Fighting the Cold War in a Hot Zone

BY: LARRY DEVLIN

Foreign Affairs

MAY – JUNE 2007

One of the more notorious CIA agents of the Cold War, Devlin has written a matter-of-fact account of his role in the Congo's tumultuous early post independence years. Although he readily admits that the Eisenhower administration ordered him to plan for the elimination of Patrice Lumumba, the country's first elected prime minister, whom Washington viewed as too pro-Soviet, Devlin claims not to have played any role in the actual assassination, which was apparently undertaken by rival politicians with assistance from Belgian security personnel. Devlin's tale is often entertaining, with lots of cloak-and-dagger drama in a chaotic and largely lawless capital city, Léopoldville. On the other hand, his account of the complicated politics of the era is pedestrian and much too focused on a handful of individuals close to the U.S. embassy. As CIA chief of station, Devlin aggressively promoted politicians he viewed as favorable to U.S. interests; he remains unapologetic about having helped advance Joseph Mobutu, a young, second-tier politician at independence who emerged as the country's undisputed strongman within five years. Devlin seems still quite confident that the alternative to Mobutu's utterly disastrous 30-year rule would have been much worse: Soviet control of central Africa or, as he calls it, "NATO's southern flank."

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Summary

1. Politics

Rwanda: Justice Will Not Be Compromised - Mushikiwabo

Rwanda will not short circuit legal procedures to release American lawyer, Prof. Peter Erlinder, despite a request by the United States State Department to release him on compassionate and humanitarian grounds. Erlinder is charged with denying the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and minimizing it. He further says that the genocide was not planned and executed and prefers putting the word genocide in inverted commas or prefers to call what happened in Rwanda as "terrible massacres", "horrific events", "massive civilian killings", "civilian-civilian massacres". Ut Foreign minister said we have some legal procedures which must ne followed in this case as well.

2. Peace keeping/ Conflict Resolution and Security matters

Armed Groups in DRC Continue Attacks, Rapes, Abductions

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, U.N. officials say while humanitarian conditions improve in one region, they're getting worse in others. For example, civilians are starting to return to their homes in Gemena in Equateur Province, following inter-communal fighting, but insecurity persists in parts of North and South Kivu Provinces. Spokesperson for OCHA, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in Kinshasa, says, "Equateur Province was the theater of violent fighting in late 2009, and this has caused displacement of the population in this area." It's estimated 114,000 people fled the fighting. Some remained within the DRC, while others crossed the border into the Republic of Congo. Humanitarian workers still have no access to many areas and their lives are at risk.

3. Economy and Energy

Rwanda: Kigali Hosts 2010 Energy Globe Awards

Dr. B. P Agrawal emerged the winner of this year's Energy Globe World award after his innovative project held in Kigali. Speaking after his victory, the award winner expressed that people should never give up on finding solutions to major issues in society, emphasizing that these initiatives, however, should be in line with environment conservation as well.

4. Elections

Burundi's Main Opposition Party Pulls out of Presidential Election

Burundi's main opposition party says it is pulling out of this month's scheduled presidential election because of concerns that the vote will be rigged. Five other opposition parties pulled out because they believe the vote will be rigged. Burundi's National Electoral Commission says the election will go ahead despite the boycott.

Burundi Opposition to Boycott 28 June Election

The leader of Burundi's main opposition National Liberation Forces (FNL) party said he will boycott the 28 June presidential election accusing the government of planning to rig the vote.

CAR President to Rule beyond End of Mandate

The president of the Central African Republic will stay in power beyond the end of his electoral mandate, in June, because of delays in organizing a new vote. His political opponents want voter lists updated and rebel groups disarmed. The Central African Republic's constitutional court says President Francois Bozize and the 102-member parliament will now serve beyond the expiration of their June mandates. Elections were originally scheduled for the end of April, and then postponed until the middle of May. In view of that situation, Justice Baba says lawmakers and the constitutional court have approved extending President Bozize's mandate beyond June 11, so he can finish the electoral process he has begun.

Rwanda: Election Coverage Must Be Professional

The Chairman of National Electoral Commission appealed to media practitioners in the country to objectively cover the upcoming Presidential elections, slated for August 9. Elections coverage, especially presidential, requires a high level of professionalism since it is the exercise whereby the people chose the person to lead the country. The electoral commission has done its part in organizing the elections, the government has ensured that each and every Rwandan exercises their right to vote, the media should now play its part by objectively informing the voting public.

5. U.S-Africa

Rwanda: Erlinder Appears in Court

American lawyer Peter Erlinder appeared in court for the preliminary hearing and beg not guilty to all charges leveled against him. They included denying and minimizing the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. He told the court that he was not aware that his "obscure" publications back in America could be tantamount to Genocide denial. Through an interpreter, he told court that even by travelling to Rwanda he was not aware that his past

publications and speeches would get him into trouble with the Rwandan government, and that he would cooperate with the court to interpret his writings, but would do so out of jail. He said that there could have been 'misunderstanding or misinterpretation' of his publications but there was no intention of minimizing the genocide or pitting Rwandans against each other. Erlinder who had come in the country to represent Victoire Ingabire Umuhoya in her case which also involves genocide denial, said that he has trust in the country's institutions but his worry was his ill health. He said he was too old and too weak to stay in jail.

Rwanda: U.S. Calls for Release of Opposition Leader's Lawyer

The United States has called for the release of a American defense lawyer detained by police in Rwanda. Professor Peter Erlinder of the William Mitchell College of Law in Minnesota was arrested last week during a visit to prepare the defense of Victoire Ingabire, a Rwandan opposition leader. Ingabire was charged with "genocide ideology" after declaring her intention to stand against President Paul Kagame in presidential elections planned for August. Speaking to journalists in Washington, U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said the U.S. government was pressing Rwanda "to resolve this case quickly" and to release Erlinder "on compassionate grounds."

Rwanda: Govt 'Won't Free U.S. Lawyer'

Daily Nation on the Web

Rwanda will not bow to pressure by the United States government to free an American lawyer arrested in Kigali on genocide denial charges. Washington has been pushing for the release of Prof Peter Erlinder on humanitarian grounds. Rwanda's Foreign minister Louise Mushikiwabo told that the Americans argued that Prof Erlinder was mentally disturbed and his health condition could deteriorate in custody. Prof Erlinder was arrested for claiming that Rwanda Patriotic Front rebels, and then led by President Paul Kagame, shot down the plane carrying then President Juvenal Habyarimana, triggering the mass killings of minority Tutsis.

Rwanda: Advocates Demand Country's Immediate Release of U.S. Attorney Erlinder

Professor Erlinder, a faculty member at William Mitchell College of Law in the United States and president of the Association des Avocats de la Defense (ADAD), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) Defense Lawyers Association, was arrested by the government of Rwanda under the leadership of President Paul Kagame. Peter Erlinder has been arrested in the course of his representation of Rwanda's opposition leader, Victoire Ingabire. Erlinder's arrest was politically motivated and seeks to punish him for fulfilling his responsibilities as a lawyer, to be a vigorous and conscientious advocate for his clients. The Rwandan government and President Kagame must allow fair and public trials. Erlinder's advocacy is in the finest tradition of the legal profession and every individual and government committed to the rule of law, including

the authorities in Rwanda, should clap his dedication to human rights and international law.

6. Social issues/ Human Rights

Human Rights Groups Call For Independent Probe of Congo Activist's Murder

More than 50 human rights organizations called for an independent investigation into the death of a well-known human rights activist in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other groups made the appeal for an independent probe into the killing of Floribert Chebeya in an open letter to DRC President Joseph Kabila. The DRC government has promised a thorough investigation. But Philip Alston, a United Nations special investigator on extrajudicial executions, cast doubt on that statement. He told reporters Friday "there is no reason at all to think there will be a meaningful investigation of that killing."

Congo-Kinshasa: Human Rights Chief Found Dead

The president of Congolese non-governmental organization, La Voix des Sans-voix or VSV (Voice for the Voiceless) was found dead on the road going out of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

7. Health

UNICEF Distributes Life-Saving Mosquito Nets in Central African Republic

The U.N.Children's Fund and the government of the Central African Republic are distributing more than one-million insecticide treated mosquito nets in the African nation to protect children and pregnant women from malaria. The Central African Republic has one of the highest child mortality rates in the world. More than 170 out of 1,000 children die before reaching their fifth birthday.

Rwanda: 10,000 Undergo Voluntary HIV Testing

Over 10,000 people across the country tested for HIV/AIDS and 100,000 condoms were distributed during the "Police Medical Services" week.

1. Politics

Rwanda: Justice Will Not Be Compromised - Mushikiwabo

Government Supporting Daily

Kigali — Rwanda will not shortcircuit legal procedures to release American lawyer, Prof. Peter Erlinder, despite a request by the United States State Department to release him on compassionate and humanitarian grounds. Erlinder is charged with denying the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and minimising it.

He further says that the genocide was not planned and executed and prefers putting the word genocide in inverted commas or prefers to call what happened in Rwanda as "terrible massacres", "horrific events", "massive civilian killings", "civilian-civilian massacres".

Addressing a press conference yesterday on the arrest of the law professor, Government Spokesperson and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Louise Mushikiwabo, said that the country will have to take Erlinder through the legal procedures to answer charges levelled against him, but at the same time, consider his health concerns.

"The US Government from the beginning knew that this man had been imprisoned, they have been following the fate of Erlinder.

"They have been in contact with us, asking us to consider on a compassionate humanitarian basis, given the looks of him being probably mentally ill, that we consider those conditions and release him.

"Our government's response is that we are sensitive to medical and health conditions, whether it's for American citizens or others, but we cannot short-circuit the legal process. So we stand advised by mental health professionals on what needs to happen," Mushikiwabo said.

She said that a joint medical evaluation is being considered by the country's doctors and any doctor of Erlinder's choice who will advise the prosecution accordingly before any decisions concerning his release or continue with the trial.

Mushikiwabo who jointly addressed the Press Conference with the Prosecutor General, Martin Ngoga, said that authorities are well aware of his hospitalisation, but his case of Genocide denial is a serious offence punished by law and cannot be rushed through.

"We as a government, are not doctors to know his mental status. We will wait for those responsible for medical processes to confirm this, but the legal processes will continue. Genocide denial is a serious crime in this country," Mushikiwabo said.

She added that the country will not bow to pressure from anyone to free the American whose Genocide denial charges compromises laws of the land, adding that it will be a lesson to whoever undermines the country's laws and minimises the Genocide.

On his side, Ngoga said that Erlinder could be from a country where the law against Genocide denial is not applicable, but by stepping on Rwandan soil, he presented himself and automatically risked facing the law.

"They have talked a lot about this law which is similar to the law on Holocaust denial, but we say we have this law and we attach much value to it. So it is up to them to go and prove their doubts in court," Ngoga said.

He accused Erlinder of intentionally travelling to Rwanda after faking a court date for Victoire Ingabire's appearance in court, and was aware of his impending arrest, but he wanted to test the government.

"Now he will have to redeem himself in court".

Ngoga said that Erlinder's plans to represent Ingabire and his arrest should not be connected, as his is a stand-alone case. He noted the American is aware that he breached the country's laws but said that due processes will be followed for a transparent legal procedure.

Among other things, Ngoga said, Erlinder has been accorded the right to choose his legal team, had been given medical attention when needed, and US Consular officials have been allowed to closely follow the events.

Ngoga said that Erlinder has continued to display theatrics that have received coverage in the press, including a faked suicide attempt and threatening to undress before prosecutors in a mental fit.

He further said that doctors will continue to follow his condition, but that will not deter legal procedures. He also revealed that all his rights are being observed during detention, dispelling reports that he is detained in squalid conditions

2. Peace keeping/ Conflict Resolution and Security matters

Armed Groups in DRC Continue Attacks, Rapes, Abductions

VOA

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, U.N. officials say while humanitarian conditions improve in one region, they're getting worse in others.

For example, civilians are starting to return to their homes in Gemena in Equateur Province, following inter-communal fighting, but insecurity persists in parts of North and South Kivu Provinces.

Stefania Trassari, spokesperson for OCHA, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in Kinshasa, says, “Equateur Province was the theater of violent fighting in late 2009, and this has caused displacement of the population in this area.”

It’s estimated 114,000 people fled the fighting. Some remained within the DRC, while others crossed the border into the Republic of Congo.

“Now, thanks to the improvement of the security situation this population has slowly started to come back home. And humanitarian actors are working, trying to help this population restore their lives,” she says.

The process is slowed by both a lack of basic infrastructure in the region and the continued fear that violence will erupt again.

“The security situation is much better than the previous month thanks to the arrival of the U.N. mission, the MONUC forces, and also thanks to the presence of the Congolese army,” says Trassari.

The Kivus “Insecurity is still persistent,” she says, “Unfortunately, we registered cases of looting, sexual violence, illegal taxation and other kinds of human rights abuses against civilians.” Trassari cites the case of a woman whose mouth was mutilated by rebels. Military operations are underway in the region against various armed groups, including FDLR rebels. This has displaced many civilians and made them vulnerable to rebel retaliation.

“We continuously reported cases of people who are abducted. Women who are raped and also children, who are involved in armed confrontations,” she says.

Humanitarian workers still have no access to many areas and their lives are at risk. About two months ago, in the Fizi Territory in South Kivu Province, staff of the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) were abducted and held for several days. “But this gives an idea of the insecurity that still persists in this area,” she says. MONUC Late last month, the U.N. Security Council extended the MONUC mandate to June 30th. It says after that date, the mission will be renamed MONUSCO, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The resolution calls for the withdrawal of up to 2,000 U.N. military personnel by the end of June “from areas where the situation permits” and concentrate forces in the eastern DRC. MONUSCO’s mandate runs until June 30th, 2011.

DRC President Kabila has indicated he wants U.N. forces to leave the country by the end of June next year, about the time Congolese elections are to be held.

OCHA spokesperson Trassari says, “It’s obviously a serious concern for humanitarian organizations. MONUC is currently providing very important logistic support for humanitarian actors, and a possible withdrawal would definitely have an impact on our activities.”

3. Economy and Energy

Rwanda: Kigali Hosts 2010 Energy Globe Awards

The New Times

Kigali — Dr. B. P Agrawal yesterday emerged the winner of this year's Energy Globe World award after his innovative project was voted the best by the audience at a colourful ceremony held yesterday in Kigali.

Agrawal who grew up in a small village in Rajasthan, India, had to carry water daily in his childhood and this experience gave him an idea the rain water harvest project dubbed, "river from heaven," that today serves 10,000 people with clean safe water.

Speaking after his victory, the award winner expressed that people should never give up on finding solutions to major issues in society, emphasizing that these initiatives, however, should be in line with environment conservation as well.

"I am so happy because this award recognizes my efforts and contribution to my community's development. What I have done is globally recognizable and I intend to do much more," Agrawal said.

Of the 15 nominated projects worldwide, Vinah Ganoo from Mauritius scooped the award in the earth category, Gunnar Nielsen from Norway in the fire category and Jacky Lin from Taiwan in air.

Ana Trabucco from Argentina also scooped the award in Youth category as Agrawal claimed the water category award as well.

Prime Minister, Bernard Makuza, Minister of Infrastructure, Vincent Karega and Environment and Lands Minister, Stanislas Kamanzi, were among the officials who presided over the ceremony which drew representatives from 150 countries across the world.

4. Elections

Burundi's Main Opposition Party Pulls out of Presidential Election

VOA

Burundi's main opposition party says it is pulling out of this month's scheduled presidential election because of concerns that the vote will be rigged.

UPRONA party chairman Bonaventure Niyoyankana says his party's candidate, First Vice President Yves Sahinguvu, will withdraw his candidacy. That decision leaves incumbent President Pierre Nkurunziza as the only candidate in the June 28 election.

Five other opposition parties pulled out Tuesday because they believe the vote will be rigged. Burundi's National Electoral Commission says the election will go ahead despite the boycott.

UPRONA joined the other parties in accusing the electoral commission of failing to prevent fraud during local elections last month. The ruling National Council for the Defense of Democracy won 64 percent of the vote.

The opposition rejected that result, but European observers said the elections met international standards.

The leader of the rebel group-turned political party Forces for National Liberation, Agathon Rwasa, was one of the candidates who withdrew from the election Tuesday.

These elections are aimed at capping a transition to democracy started by peace agreements that ended a civil war in 2005.

Burundi Opposition to Boycott 28 June Election

VOA

The leader of Burundi's main opposition National Liberation Forces (FNL) party told VOA he will boycott the 28 June presidential election accusing the government of planning to rig the vote.

Agathon Rwasa said his party, as well as four other opposition parties, will not participate in an election in which the ruling National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) is pre-determined to win.

“We’ve been obliged to take the decision of pulling out of the competition because we have just seen a simulation [24 May] of a poll, but we never got to the poll [a legitimate result]. Because the results were ever since prepared (rigged) and we could just testify that people who expected their full vote have not got their satisfaction. Because we are

discovering, here and there, where ballot boxes full of votes of the population, which have not been counted, so we don't understand what kind of results they have," he said. Four other presidential contestants have joined forces with the FNL in withdrawing from the upcoming vote saying the election will not be transparent.

But, supporters of the ruling CNDD-FDD dismissed the charges as without merit. Last week, Burundians voted after logistical problems forced several postponements of the local elections. The electoral commission declared the ruling CNDD-FDD winner of the vote, but the opposition rejected the poll saying it was fraught with irregularities. However, the European Union declared the vote as having met international standards. But, opposition leader Rwasa said the electoral body has refused to address their concerns ahead of the upcoming presidential vote.

"We have been asking that this election in June [should be postponed] so that we can really see a good result. [But], we are not seeing some moves forward. We just decided to pull out because we don't see any interest to waste our time, money and energy in a competition which is not a fair one," Rwasa said.

Burundi is scheduled to hold a series of elections starting with a presidential vote on 28 June, parliamentary poll on 23 July and a vote for senators on 28 July, with local elections in September.

Rwasa denied that the opposition boycott harms Burundi's democracy. "I don't think that our decision to pull out is harming democracy because that democracy was not there. We were looking to build up this democracy through the vote or through the election and they have hindered this process," Rwasa said.

He also said his party will rescind its boycotting decision and participate in the presidential vote if the electoral body resolves their concerns.

CAR President to Rule beyond End of Mandate

VOA

The president of the Central African Republic will stay in power beyond the end of his electoral mandate, in June, because of delays in organizing a new vote. His political opponents want voter lists updated and rebel groups disarmed.

The Central African Republic's constitutional court says President Francois Bozize and the 102-member parliament will now serve beyond the expiration of their June mandates.

Elections were originally scheduled for the end of April, and then postponed until the middle of May. Justice Minister Laurent Gon Baba says it is now clear they cannot be organized before President Bozize's term expires, June 11.

Baba says the Independent Electoral Commission proposed a date for the vote but saw that there were delays in organizing that election that would not allow the vote to be held before June 11.

In view of that situation, Baba says lawmakers and the constitutional court have approved extending President Bozize's mandate beyond June 11, so he can finish the electoral process he has begun.

Mr. Bozize won election in 2005 after taking power in a coup two years earlier against then-president Ange-Felix Patasse. So far, Mr. Bozize and Mr. Patasse are the only two candidates for this vote because a coalition of opposition parties is boycotting the process because of concerns about security and the electoral list.

The ten-party Collective of Forces for Change says conditions for democratic and impartial elections cannot be guaranteed while voter registration lists are incomplete and violence continues in the north between government troops and rebels opposed to the Bozize government. There is also fighting in the east between the Ugandan rebel Lord's Resistance Army and government troops, supported by Ugandan soldiers.

President Bozize agreed to delay the vote after meeting with leaders from the Collective of Forces for Change, who say they will not challenge the legitimacy of his rule beyond June 11, so long as there is progress toward organizing a vote.

The Economic Community of Central African States says the Bozize government should continue talks with its political opponents to arrive at an acceptable approach to elections that allow both voters and candidates to freely exercise their democratic rights.

Rwanda: Election Coverage Must Be Professional

Government Supporting Daily

Kigali — the Chairman of National Electoral Commission, Wednesday, appealed to media practitioners in the country to objectively cover the upcoming Presidential elections, slated for August 9.

Elections coverage, especially presidential, requires a high level of professionalism since it is the exercise whereby the people chose the person to lead the country.

All candidates should be accorded unbiased coverage. The nature of the work does not allow journalists and reporters to take sides.

Media reports should be accurate. Facts need to be verified and every event should be reported as it happens. There are election legislations and guidelines in place, which journalists should adhere to.

As we usher into the election period and draw closer to the election date, media houses should carry out aggressive research and inform the public objectively.

The Rwandan people, as voters, will need to make correct and informed decisions and it is the medias' responsibility to act as channels for providing the people with accurate information, which will help them vote objectively.

The electoral commission has done its part in organizing the elections, the government has ensured that each and every Rwandan exercises their right to vote, the media should now play its part by objectively informing the voting public.

5. U.S-Africa

Rwanda: Erlinder Appears in Court

Government Supporting Daily

Kigali — Embattled American lawyer Peter Erlinder, yesterday appeared in court for the preliminary hearing and pleaded not guilty to all charges leveled against him. They included denying and minimizing the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Erlinder draped in a long green overcoat and flanked by a team of 9 legal representatives, told the court that he was not aware that his "obscure" publications back in America could be tantamount to Genocide denial.

Through an interpreter, he told court that even by travelling to Rwanda he was not aware that his past publications and speeches would get him into trouble with the Rwandan government, and that he would cooperate with the court to interpret his writings, but would do so out of jail.

He pleaded with Judge Maurice Mbishibishi to conditionally release him and allow him to travel back to the United States for appropriate treatment as his health is deteriorating, but the prosecution insisted he should be provisionally detained as investigations into his case continue.

"As prosecution, we have strong reasons to ask for his provisional detention because we see it as the only means to protect the accused as investigations into his case continue," said Prosecutor Richard Muhumuza.

"This way, he can always be available when prosecution needs him, and it is also to ensure that the accused doesn't escape," he said.

But Erlinder and his defence team argued that the accused is ready to cooperate and play by the rules the court will set, as long as he is allowed to access treatment.

As the focus shifted to the health of Erlinder, Muhumuza informed the court that the decision should be determined by medical doctors at the request of the court.

Erlinder who said he was undergoing an emotional and psychological breakdown, almost decided not to leave the courtroom when the judge pronounced that bail would be decided on Monday.

The hearing which was supposed to kick off at 2pm delayed for three hours as Erlinder was said not to be in a normal mental state. He told court that he has not been mistreated during his time in jail and doctors were there for him all the time but, he could not stay in jail anymore.

He said that there could have been 'misunderstanding or misinterpretation' of his publications but there was no intention of minimizing the genocide or pitting Rwandans against each other.

Erlinder who had come in the country to represent Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza in her case which also involves genocide denial, said that he has trust in the country's institutions but his worry was his ill health. He said he was too old and too weak to stay in jail.

The Prosecutor argued that Erlinder's case is a serious one and there is strong evidence to back up the accusations ranging from his publications and utterances where he continuously and explicitly minimises and denies the Genocide.

The accused also refers to President Paul Kagame as a genocidaire and who downed the plane carrying President Juvenal Habyarimana, thereby triggering the Genocide. He added that Erlinder intentionally preaches that the Genocide was not planned.

On top of his four lawyers, an American, two Kenyans and a Rwandan, The Rwandan Bar Association has appointed five of its members to advise Erlinder.

The hearing continues on Monday.

Rwanda: U.S. Calls for Release of Opposition Leader's Lawyer

The New Times

The United States has called for the release of a American defense lawyer detained by police in Rwanda.

Professor Peter Erlinder of the William Mitchell College of Law in Minnesota was arrested last week during a visit to prepare the defense of Victoire Ingabire, a Rwandan opposition leader.

Ingabire was charged with "genocide ideology" after declaring her intention to stand against President Paul Kagame in presidential elections planned for August. The New

Times of Kigali, which is close to the Rwandan government, has reported that Erlinder is also to be charged with denying the 1994 genocide.

Speaking to journalists in Washington on Thursday, U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said the U.S. government was pressing Rwanda "to resolve this case quickly" and to release Erlinder "on compassionate grounds."

The State Department announced on Friday that, during a meeting with Erlinder's family, "We explained our efforts to make sure that Rwandan authorities accord Mr. Erlinder due process under local law in a timely and transparent manner."

There was no public criticism of Rwanda for arresting a defense lawyer.

Erlinder's law school colleagues defended his work, saying he "exemplifies the great tradition of lawyers who take on the representation of unpopular clients and causes," according to a statement on the law school website.

The president of the American Bar Association, Carolyn B. Lamm, urged Rwanda to respect United Nations protocols on the role of lawyers, one of which she said stipulated that lawyers "shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions."

The New Times reported said this week first that Erlinder was admitted to hospital after complaining about what it described as a "hoax" heart ailment, and then that he had attempted to commit suicide by overdosing himself with drugs.

News agencies later reported that U.S. consular officials told Erlinder's family he had taken an overdose of prescription medication to escape his jail cell and get into hospital.

The State Department said Friday that it had provided "extensive consular services and visits" and had taken measures to safeguard Erlinder's health and welfare.

Rwanda: Govt 'Won't Free U.S. Lawyer'

Daily Nation on the Web

Rwanda will not bow to pressure by the United States government to free an American lawyer arrested in Kigali on genocide denial charges.

Washington has been pushing for the release of Prof Peter Erlinder on humanitarian grounds.

Rwanda's Foreign minister Louise Mushikiwabo told reporters in Kigali on Friday that the Americans argued that Prof Erlinder was mentally disturbed and his health condition could deteriorate in custody.

However Ms Mushikiwabo said that despite the US request, saying the lawyer's mental state will have to be proved by medical experts in Rwanda.

"Rwanda is sensitive to medical conditions, but we are proposing a joint medical evaluation by our own doctors and the doctor of his (lawyer) choice. This team will advise the prosecution accordingly," she added.

US State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley told reporters on Thursday that the US was pressing for the release of Prof Erlinder, who was arrested on May 28, on arrival in Kigali to take up a case involving embattled opposition presidential candidate, Ms Victoire Ingabire.

Ms Ingabire stands accused of having ties to Hutu extremist rebels fighting from the Democratic Republic of Congo, a UN-listed terrorist group that advocates the resumption of the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Prof Erlinder was arrested for claiming that Rwanda Patriotic Front rebels, and then led by President Paul Kagame, shot down the plane carrying then President Juvenal Habyarimana, triggering the mass killings of minority Tutsis.

But Kigali says these remarks are in conflict with independent investigators who say the plane was shot down by people in Mr Habyarimana's inner circle.

Genocide denial is a criminal offence in Rwanda.

Rwanda: Advocates Demand Country's Immediate Release of U.S. Attorney Erlinder

Friends of the Congo (Washington, DC)

Professor Erlinder, a faculty member at William Mitchell College of Law in the United States and president of the Association des Avocats de la Defense (ADAD), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) Defense Lawyers Association, was arrested by the government of Rwanda under the leadership of President Paul Kagame. Peter Erlinder has been arrested in the course of his representation of Rwanda's opposition leader, Victoire Ingabire.

Erlinder's arrest was politically motivated and seeks to punish him for fulfilling his responsibilities as a lawyer, to be a vigorous and conscientious advocate for his clients. The Rwandan government and President Kagame must allow fair and public trials. Erlinder's advocacy is in the finest tradition of the legal profession and every individual and government committed to the rule of law, including the authorities in Rwanda, should applaud his dedication to human rights and international law.

As international human rights activists, we join the Erlinder family to call on the United States government, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and individuals around the world to prevail upon Rwanda to release Erlinder immediately. The U.S. has had a special relationship with Rwanda which remains one of the largest recipients of U.S. foreign assistance in Africa. Given the U.S. government's expressed commitment to democracy and the rule of law, it is critical that the Obama Administration and the U.S. Congress uphold these values in Rwanda and demand the immediate release of Peter Erlinder, an advocate of justice.

"Professor Erlinder has been acting in the best tradition of the legal profession and has been a vigorous advocate in his representation of his clients. There can be no justice for anyone if the state can silence lawyers for representing defendants it dislikes. A government that seeks to prevent lawyers from being vigorous advocates for their clients cannot be trusted. The entire National Lawyers Guild is honored by Erlinder's membership, his leadership as past president and his courageous advocacy." said David Gespass, president of the National Lawyers Guild.

"The offense Peter is charged with is not based on facts, but on the suppression of free speech in his representation of clients, which undermines the rule of law. His family knows he stands with people who are oppressed by those in power and he encourages people to stand up for justice." Masako Usui, wife of Peter Erlinder.

"The real issue here seems to be whether the U.S. and the world will stand by and allow my father to be detained and prosecuted for doing his job, as an attorney and advocate for his clients. After a career of defense of others, he needs our help now demanding his immediate release and dismissal of all charges." said Sarah Erlinder, daughter of Peter Erlinder.

"The International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) is outraged at the arrest of Peter Erlinder in Rwanda. This arrest violates the rights and privileges of lawyers in discharging their professional responsibilities, constitutes a willful obstruction of the judicial process and is in gross violation of the rights of defense of an accused person," said Jeanne Mirer, President, International Association of Democratic Lawyers.

6. Social issues/ Human Rights

Human Rights Groups Call For Independent Probe of Congo Activist's Murder

VOA

More than 50 human rights organizations called Saturday for an independent investigation into the death of a well-known human rights activist in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other groups made the appeal for an independent probe into the killing of Floribert Chebeya in an open letter to DRC President Joseph Kabila.

Chebeya was found dead Wednesday in a car in the outskirts of Congo's capital, Kinshasa. His driver is missing.

The DRC government has promised a thorough investigation. But Philip Alston, a United Nations special investigator on extrajudicial executions, cast doubt on that statement. He told reporters Friday "there is no reason at all to think there will be a meaningful investigation of that killing."

Alston says the circumstances of Chebeya's death "make it look very likely that there was government involvement."

Chebeya was head of one of the most prominent human rights organizations in Congo, Voice of the Voiceless. He had been arrested by authorities multiple times over the past two decades.

Amnesty International says Chebeya had told it on several occasions that he believed he was being followed and under surveillance by security forces.

The U.S. government said Friday that it is deeply concerned about what it called Chebeya's apparent assassination. It said it stands ready to provide forensic experts to help Congolese authorities with their probe into the activist's death.

Congo-Kinshasa: Human Rights Chief Found Dead

Radio France Internationale (Paris)

The president of Congolese non-governmental organization, La Voix des Sans-voix or VSV (Voice for the Voiceless) was found dead on the road going out of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, according to police. Floribert Chebeya, 47, was found dead in his car, and his chauffeur, who had been driving at the time, has not been found.

VSV issued a statement saying Inspector-General John Numbi of the National Congolese Police in Kinshasa had called Chebeya on Tuesday, and he went to the office with his chauffeur.

Chebeya had exchanged a number of text messages with his wife, saying that he "had not able to meet the Inspector General" but that he was going to the National Teaching University.

RFI correspondent Thomas Hubert says that there is speculation in Kinshasa as to whether Chebeya had sent the text message himself.

After 21h15 Chebeya did not answer his cell phone, nor did his driver.

Inspector-General Numbi has not responded to journalist requests for an interview, nor has he made a statement, said Hubert.

Audio - Congolese Human Rights Chief Found Dead

Double click above to play, or download this mp3

Provincial police "consider it as a murder. The fact that Olkeo went on the record saying they are looking for the perpetrator seems to imply that they consider this as a murder. There were no wounds on the body of Chebeya, there were no bullet wounds or cuts or anything like that," said Hubert.

Chebeya had been threatened by the police before, said Hubert.

There have been reports that Chebeya's car had condoms and women's hair in it. Some activists have gone on local radio to say that the items might have been planted to make the death look like a love story gone bad, said Hubert, adding that the public seem to think that he was killed for his human rights activities.

Chebeya was a well-known human rights defender. As the head of VSV, he worked on a number of issues, including helping to provide legal aid for those who could not afford it and helping those who had tried to emigrate to Europe but were deported.

The police investigation continues.

7. Health

UNICEF Distributes Life-Saving Mosquito Nets in Central African Republic

VOA

The U.N.Children's Fund and the government of the Central African Republic are distributing more than one-million insecticide treated mosquito nets in the African nation to protect children and pregnant women from malaria.

The Central African Republic has one of the highest child mortality rates in the world. More than 170 out of 1,000 children die before reaching their fifth birthday.

UNICEF spokeswoman Christiane Berthiaume tells VOA malaria accounts for 19 percent of these deaths

"It is easy to fight malaria. You can do that with a simple mosquito net, which is treated with a kind of insecticide," said Berthiaume. "And, so the aim of UNICEF is to put at least one mosquito net into each of the country's nearly 900,000 households in the coming months."

But Berthiaume says more must be done. She says UNICEF needs an additional 1.5 million long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets and \$1 million to be able to achieve universal coverage for all people at risk of malaria. She says this investment is cheap considering the benefits." Regular use of a mosquito net can decrease malaria mortality by about 20 percent and malaria incidence by 50 percent in children age under five," she added. "This is very important. The children and the pregnant women are the most at risk in this country."

UNICEF hopes to distribute all the nets before the rainy season begins and malaria becomes a huge problem.

As part of the distribution campaign, Berthiaume says aid workers will go door-to-door to demonstrate how to hang up a net and to persuade every family that sleeping under it could save their children's lives.

UNICEF says it will be able to reach most people in the Central African Republic. But, it says continuous instability in the north is making it difficult to reach large parts of the population.

This includes more than 300,000 internally displaced, returnees and refugees from neighboring countries.

Rwanda: 10,000 Undergo Voluntary HIV Testing

The New Times

Kigali — Over 10,000 people across the country tested for HIV/AIDS and 100,000 condoms were distributed during the "Police Medical Services" week which ended yesterday.

Speaking to The New Times, Police Spokesperson, Supt. Eric Kayiranga, revealed that 326 people also donated blood.

This is the seventh week since the Force kicked off various activities last month to mark its 10th anniversary.

Other activities included malaria prevention, promotion of maternal and child health and fighting against Gender Based Violence. 43,900 mosquito nets given out to both civilians and police families countrywide.

"A lot of positive results were realized and this was because of the partnership with the community," Kayiranga observed.