

Who polices the U.N. police?

By Mary Jo Anderson

Wednesday, February 2, 2000

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Reports of transgressions perpetrated by the United Nations are routine, from Peru to East Timor to Kosovo. Not a day ticks by that some new story doesn't surface detailing the United Nations' mishandling of operations or outright abuse. Typically these assaults present themselves as peacekeeping interventions, humanitarian aid, education or human rights enforcement. Thus far the United Nations has escaped official sanction. That may soon change. Suit has been filed on behalf of two Rwandan women who charge the United Nations with complicity in the 1994 genocidal massacre of 800,000 Tutsi people, approximately 75 percent of Rwanda's population. The suit is the first ever in the history of the United Nations. As countries move toward ratification of the International Criminal Court (ICC) treaty with its sweeping powers to indict individuals and nations, this suit raises a grave question: who will police the United Nations' police? According to a Jan. 11 story carried by Independent News (UK), the Rwandan women are represented by Michael Hourigan, who has resigned from his position with the U.N.'s International Criminal Tribunal. Hourigan, a former South Australian crown prosecutor working in Kigali, became frustrated by attempts to block his official investigation of the Hutu assault on the Tutsis. He is joined in the suit by Geoffrey Robertson, an Australian human rights attorney. The Independent reports, "The women -- the widow of a former Rwandan Supreme Court judge and the sister of a Tutsi former cabinet minister -- accuse U.N. soldiers who were meant to defend their families of either handing them over to their killers or running away." Hourigan, interviewed by Melbourne Age, noted the murders were "caused by the cowardice, negligence and bungling of U.N. forces." The suit comes on the heels of an internal investigation of the U.N.'s activity during Rwandan conflict. Chaired by former Swedish Prime Minister, Ingvar Carlsson, the assessment panel concluded that the U.N. peacekeeping forces in Rwanda failed to respond to reports of genocide. One of the plaintiffs, Anonciata Kavaruganda, widow of Rwandan Supreme Court judge, Joseph Kavaruganda, claims her husband was murdered "because he sympathized with the Tutsis." According to the Independent, Kavaruganda reports that "U.N. troops from Ghana, responsible for protecting her family, drank and socialized with Hutus while she and her children were being tortured." Rony Braunam, former president of Doctors Without Borders, confirmed the failure of the peacekeeping efforts. His group reported: "The humanitarian intervention, far from representing a bulwark against evil, was in fact one of its appendages. ... The social and political role of humanitarian aid was simply to state-manage goodwill, to organize the spectacle of compassion." U.N. secretary general, Kofi Annan conceded with "deep remorse" that the U.N. had failed to respond appropriately to the genocide. Annan was head of U.N. peacekeeping operations at the time of the Rwandan massacre. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, documents indicate Annan ignored warnings of genocide sent to the U.N.'s New York Headquarters by U.N. commander in Rwanda, General Romeo Dallaire of Canada. The cables Dallaire sent under "most immediate" status just three days before the General Assembly met to discuss the crisis in Rwanda were not made available to the Assembly. Documents given to Melbourne Age include cables that requested additional troops and insisted U.N. troops would stand by as Tutsis were handed over "for inevitable killing rather than use their weapons to save local people," and that government controlled radio was "exhorting the population to destroy all Tutsis." Annan did not forward the cabled information to the U.N. Security Council. This suit and similar events serve as stark reminders that the U.N. and its agencies are not infallible or even consistently trustworthy. Credible voices have presented evidence of a distinct U.N. agenda at odds with many American legal traditions and cultural values. The International Criminal Court treaty is awaiting ratification by the nations. It places foreign judges, with no particular allegiance to the American Constitution, over American citizens. Recall the 1997 report to the U.N. Human Rights Commission written by the committee's "special rapporteur," that decried the "arbitrary" use of capital punishment in the U.S. Once the ICC is ratified, pressure on the United States to conform to world judicial norms set by the United Nations will increase. Sober questions must be posed to all nations before they yield sovereignty in exchange for both a United Nations global peacekeeping force and its global tribunal, the International Criminal Court (ICC). There is no restraining mechanism to check abuse of these proposed planetary powers. While cautious voices debate the merits of the U.N. as the world's peacekeeping body, and the proper

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U.N. secretary general, Kofi Annan conceded with "deep remorse" that the U.N. had failed to respond appropriately to the genocide. Annan was head of U.N. peacekeeping operations at the time of the Rwandan massacre. According to the Sydney Morning Herald, documents indicate Annan ignored warnings of genocide sent to the U.N.'s New York Headquarters by U.N. commander in Rwanda, General Romeo Dallaire of Canada. The cables Dallaire sent under "most immediate" status just three days before the General Assembly met to discuss the crisis in Rwanda were not made available to the Assembly. Documents given to Melbourne Age include cables that requested additional troops and insisted U.N. troops would stand by as Tutsis were handed over "for inevitable killing rather than use their weapons to save local people," and that government controlled radio was "exhorting the population to destroy all Tutsis." Annan did not forward the cabled information to the U.N. Security Council. This suit and similar events serve as stark reminders that the U.N. and its agencies are not infallible or even consistently trustworthy. Credible voices have presented evidence of a distinct U.N. agenda at odds with many American legal traditions and cultural values. The International Criminal Court treaty is awaiting ratification by the nations. It places foreign judges, with no particular allegiance to the American Constitution, over American citizens. Recall the 1997 report to the U.N. Human Rights Commission written by the committee's "special rapporteur," that decried the "arbitrary" use of capital punishment in the U.S. Once the ICC is ratified, pressure on the United States to conform to world judicial norms set by the United Nations will increase. Sober questions must be posed to all nations before they yield sovereignty in exchange for both a United Nations global peacekeeping force and its global tribunal, the International Criminal Court (ICC). There is no restraining mechanism to check abuse of these proposed planetary powers. While cautious voices debate the merits of the U.N. as the world's peacekeeping body, and the proper jurisdiction of the ICC, pro-globalist forces such as the World Civil Society Conference push tirelessly to establish "conditions for global governance," including a world police force. The balance tips in their favor: Kofi Annan, now U.N. General Secretary, in his keynote address to WOCSOC in December, referred to the organization as representative of "global people power" and implored them to agitate governments when they "are unwilling to act." Annan's remarks are the prelude to the Millennium Forum at the United Nations in May. Forces within the inner circle of U.N. and Non-Governmental Organizations are poised to present a "People's Assembly" to join the United Nations. (NGO's are non elected, non accountable lobbying groups -- many funded by corporate foundations.) This People's Assembly was also referred to as a "Parliament of Humankind" during the State of the World Forum in San Francisco in October. The State of the World Forum, a creation of Mikhail Gorbachev, drew the world's liberal glitterati to a posh six-day confab where world governance, as an expansion of the U.N. and a "global means of enforcement," was touted at a session led by the World Federalist Association. Each year the State of the World Forum gathers marquee names from the ranks of Nobel laureates, ambassadors, politicians, actors, and even a psychic or two. Past speakers have included Ted Turner, Desmond Tutu, Earth Council president, Maurice Strong, David Rockefeller, Queen Noor of Jordan, John Naisbitt, Jane Goodall, Carl Sagan, the witch "Starhawk and a covey of U.S. congressmen. Yet, despite the prophecy of Infoseek CEO, Steve Kirsch, the nude parade of Patch Adams and Helen Caldecott, the cosmic healing advice of Deepak Chopra or the posturing of Jesse Jackson, not a whisper of this year's Forum was heard from the major networks. The media blackout left unreported such roundtable sessions as, "The United Nations in Ten

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