

Secretary Kerry on More Work to Bring War Criminals to Justice

April 4, 2013

Mission of the US to Geneva

<http://geneva.usmission.gov/2013/04/04/secretary-kerry-on-more-work-to-bring-war-criminals-to-justice/>

Secretary of State John Kerry announces the expansion of the State Department's War Crimes Rewards Program. Prior to becoming secretary of state, Kerry served as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. As chairman, the last piece of legislation Kerry authored and guided through to enactment dealt with war criminals

This op-ed by Secretary Kerry on rewards for leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army originally appeared in the Huffington Post on April 3. There are no republication restrictions for use by U.S. embassies.

More Work to Bring War Criminals to Justice

By Secretary of State John Kerry

Imagine for a moment that you are a child growing up in central Africa. Instead of sleeping at home with your family each night, you take shelter with dozens of other children. You hope you'll find safety in numbers. You pray that you will not be pulled out of your bed and abducted in the night by an armed militia — conscripted into a life of violence, forced to brutalize your own family members, used as a sex slave, condemned to a life on the run from the authorities.

It's a living nightmare — but thanks in part to last year's Kony video about the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), it's a reality that millions of Americans now know that for almost twenty years has tormented and terrorized children across Uganda, the DRC, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan.

It has to stop.

Last April at this exact time, I came to the *Huffington Post* and I talked directly with you about some common sense steps we could take to help end the horror of thugs like Kony. I was chairing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and introducing new legislation which I asked you to help pass into law. You responded — we mobilized the grassroots — Congress moved quickly — and the very last piece of legislation I passed as a Senator was the bill we'd talked about right here. As I was awaiting confirmation to become Secretary of State, the bill came to President Obama's desk and he signed it into law.

So the last piece of legislation I passed as a Senator is one of the first I'm now ready to deploy on an issue we care about deeply. Today I return to Huffington Post to announce the new steps the State Department is taking in order to tighten the screws on murderers like Kony — and you should know you helped to make it happen.

Today, I am announcing a new weapon in our fight. Through the expansion of the War Crimes Rewards Program, the Department of State is offering up to \$5 million for information that leads to the arrest, transfer, and conviction of the top three leaders of the LRA: Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo, and Dominic Ongwen. All three are charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Kony and his cronies have eluded capture for years. The LRA is broken down into small bands of rebels, scattered throughout dense jungle, hidden by dense canopy, controlling territory through tactics of fear and intimidation. We know they will not be easy to find.

But we know that rewards have a proven track record of generating tips that help authorities find fugitives and hold them accountable — just look at the example of criminals and butchers from conflicts in Sierra Leone, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda, all brought to justice in part through the use of rewards.

Of course, Joseph Kony and the LRA are not the only fugitive criminals we are targeting in Africa. So today I'm also announcing a \$5 million reward for Sylvestre Mudacumura, who has committed and ordered brutal attacks on civilians as the military commander the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). Several individuals accused of carrying out the 1994 Rwandan genocide belong to the FDLR.

Nineteen years after nearly one million Rwandans were killed in the 1994 genocide, nine of the men wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda for allegedly planning, organizing, and carrying out the genocide remain free. Today, I also want to remind people around the world that the United States government still offers rewards of up to \$5 million leading to the arrest of these fugitives. Their names are Felicien Kabuga, Protais Mpiranya, Augustin Bizimana, Fulgence Kayishema, Pheneas Munyarugarama, Aloys Ndimbati, Ladislas Ntaganzwa, Charles Ryandikayo, and Charles Sikubwabo.

I know coming forward takes guts, particularly when we are asking for information about notorious criminals like Kony. Let me assure you that the security of our informants is a priority of the War Crimes Rewards Program. The United States does not announce the names of informants even when a reward payment has been made — and we always make good on our payments. In the past three years alone, we have made 14 reward payments to individuals who have provided critical information.

Anyone with information can help bring these criminals to justice. Simply contact the U.S. government through any of our embassies or through our secure website (www.state.gov/warcrimesrewards). Stephen Rapp, our Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues and his staff in the office of Global Criminal Justice are ready to receive and respond to tips.

To be clear, this is not a dead-or-alive bounty program. Information must lead to the secure arrest, transfer, or conviction of these people men in a court of law. We want these men to look into the eyes of their victims and answer for their actions.

Can it work? You bet it can. Two weeks ago, one of the most notorious and brutal rebels in the DRC voluntarily surrendered to our Embassy in Rwanda shortly after being named to the War Crimes Reward Programs list. Now Bosco Ntaganda is charged by the International Criminal Court with war crimes and crimes against humanity. I would have been announcing a reward for him today, but instead, he is sitting in a cell at The Hague. He realized it was better to face justice under the law than live on the run as a wanted man any longer.

I refuse to accept a world where those responsible for crimes of this magnitude live in impunity. We will keep working to hold them accountable and deliver justice to all the people they have hurt.

Nowhere will thugs and war criminals who terrorize children be safe — not for long anyways.

And starting today, their lives on the run — always looking over their shoulder — include an even greater prize on their head.

Impunity is the enemy of peace. Accountability is essential to preventing atrocities from taking place in the future. We are putting all those who would violate these simple principles on notice: Your days are numbered.

Now, to all of you here who helped me push for action last April — this April let's renew our commitment to bring every war criminal to justice. Onward.