

Rwanda optimistic ahead of Belgium Genocide trials

James Karuhanga

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The Rwandan Government has said that it hopes the forthcoming trial of three people, in Belgium, suspected to have participated in the murder of Rwandans during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi will be conducted in a way that reflects the needs and expectations of survivors of the Genocide.

The officials were reacting to the news that judges in Brussels were set to look into the case of Fabien Neretse, Emmanuel Nkunduwimye and Ernest Gakwaya during the European country's 2019-2020 judicial year.

The trio is expected to answer charges of genocide and war crimes they committed during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

Prosecutor General Jean-Bosco Mutangana told *The New Times* Tuesday that ; "Rwandan prosecution indicted these men years back for trial and cooperation has been going on with our Belgian counterparts."

This, he added, was another step in holding to account Rwandan genocide fugitives for their atrocities.

"Trials like these remain a key demand of Rwandan survivors. I trust they will be conducted in ways that reflect their needs and expectations," Mutangana said.

Mutangana also underscored Kiga-

li's stance that the prosecution for international crimes have more potential for impact when their trials are held domestically — within the communities where the crimes occurred.

On October 21, lots will be drawn in Belgium to pick the jurors and hearings will begin on October 24 and run for several weeks.

Gakwaya and Nkunduwimye were arrested in March 2011 in Brussels while Neretse was arrested in France in the same year.

The duo, notorious ex-members of the Interahamwe militia group are accused of committing murder and rape during the genocide, as crimes against humanity.

Neretse, originally from Ruhengeri – now Musanze District – was an influential figure in the genocidal regime of President Habyarimana.

He, among others, is suspected of involvement in the murder of a Belgian citizen, Claire Beckers, as well as her Tutsi husband, Isaiah Bucyana, and their daughter Katia on April 9, 1994 in Kigali.

Martine Beckers, a sister to the late Claire Beckers, told *The New Times* that Neretse was a neighbour to her sister's family.

"He was a neighbour to my sister,

Claire Beckers, and after the Genocide he took to hiding under another name in France,” she

Martine noted that the suspect also “organised killings in Mataba, Ndusu area” in his native Ruhengeri.

Eugene Murangwa, a Genocide survivor who resides in the UK and knows the murdered family “very well” having been neighbours with them in the Nyamirambo area of Kigali, said; “This is another overdue case among many cases of génocidaires who have been living freely here in Europe.”

About the suspects

According to available information, Fabien Neretse was born in Mataba-Ndusu-Ruhengeri.

He was the head of Ocir-The, a tea export organisation that was merged with other public parastatals to create the National Agricultural Export Board (NAEB).

Neretse was also at the rank of

Lieutenant. During the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, he was the Director of ACEDI Mataba, a secondary school based in Gakenke District.

He was the leader of the Interahamwe militia, which massacred many Tutsi in this area.

Emmanuel Nkunduwinye who was known as Bomboko was born in Murambi, Byumba (current Gatsibo District). He was a prominent trader with various business interests in Kigali and Murambi.

During the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, he was based in Nyarunge, Kigali where he headed the Interahamwe militias.

He closely worked with Robert Kajuga, the president of Interahamwe at the national level as well as George Rutaganda and JMV Mudahinyuka – both senior members of Interahamwe.

He is famous for setting up a roadblock in Gakinjiro where he masterminded the killing of many Tutsis as well as looting cars.