

Ex-radio chief rejects massacre accusations

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NAIROBI, Jan 3 (AFP) - The former chief of Rwanda's Mille Collines radio and television station, Felicien Kabuga, on Tuesday rejected allegations that the station had encouraged hatred and anti-Tutsi violence after it was created by Hutu hardliners.

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Kabuga, 61, said in a statement made available to AFP here he had nothing to blame himself for and called for an international tribunal to investigate the allegations as soon as possible.

The Free Radio and Television Mille Collines (RTL) was created in 1993 by majority Hutu hardliners who were in power in Kigali at the time.

The station stands accused of calling on Hutus to kill minority Tutsis and opponents of president Juvenal Habyarimana who died in a suspicious plane crash in April last year.

Inter-ethnic violence, perpetrated after the president's death, claimed more than 500,000 lives and triggered a mass exodus to neighboring countries.

"*The RTL never meant to encourage hatred,*" said Kabuga, adding that, contrary to newspaper reports, it was not his personal property nor was he the main shareholder.

He said he had bought one percent of the station's capital of 100 million Rwandan francs (about 700,000 dollars).

Kabuga, his wife and their seven children were deported by Switzerland to Zaire in August after spending two months in the European country. Swiss authorities said he was not arrested and extradited to Rwanda or tried as his responsibility in the RTL hate campaign would have been difficult to prove.

In his statement Kabuga accused the former rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR), which seized power after the ouster of the Hutu go-

vernment, of being resentful because he had "refused to give in to blackmail" and pay membership fees for the FPR.

He said the movement was responsible for the Rwandan civil war for invading northern Rwanda from Uganda in October 1990.

"This is why they drag my name

in the mud and even try to kill me," he added.

Kabuga was one of the richest entrepreneurs of Rwanda where he owned a flour mill, a tea plantation and various other businesses, employing more than 3,000 people. He now lives in exile.

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