

# French police arrest Rwandan genocide suspect Félicien Kabuga

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## **Officers find African country's most-wanted man living under false identity in Paris**

French police have ended a decades-long hunt for a fugitive accused of playing a key role in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, arresting 84-year-old Félicien Kabuga during a dawn raid near Paris.

Kabuga, who is accused of financing the killings and frequently listed as one of the world's most wanted men, was living under a false identity in the French capital's suburbs, local police and prosecutors said in a statement on Saturday.

French officials said Kabuga had been hiding in an apartment in Asnières-Sur-Seine, north-west of Paris, aided by his children who had set up an effective system to conceal him.

Around 800,000 people, mainly Tutsis but also moderate Hutus, were murdered by ethnic Hutu extremists with knives, clubs and other weapons during three months of mass killings in 1994.

Kabuga is accused of creating the notorious Interahamwe militia and equipping it with the machetes used in the majority of its murders. One of Rwanda's richest men, he also ran

the equally notorious Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines, which incited murder.

"Félicien Kabuga is known to have been the financier of the Rwandan genocide," French authorities said.

He is expected to appear before local magistrates before being transferred to the custody of The Hague to stand trial "following completion of appropriate procedures under French law".

Kabuga was part of the inner circle of the Rwandan government of Juvénal Habyarimana, the president whose assassination triggered the genocide. Two of his daughters were married to Habyarimana's sons.

The arrest will raise questions about how he was able to evade justice for so long and live so close to Paris, at least in recent years.

Kabuga was indicted by the UN international criminal tribunal for Rwanda in 1997 on seven counts, including genocide. Following the victory of the Rwandan Patriotic Front under Paul Kagame, he fled first to Switzerland but was expelled. It is thought he then travelled to Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He narrowly avoided arrest in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1996.

The Rwanda tribunal formally closed in 2015 and its duties were taken over by the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), which also deals with cases left over from the international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

“The arrest of Félicien Kabuga today is a reminder that those responsible for genocide can be brought to account, even 26 years after their crimes ... Today’s arrest underlines

the strength of our determination,” said Serge Brammertz, IRMCT’s chief prosecutor in The Hague.

Brammertz praised French authorities and said the arrest “could not have been made without their exceptional cooperation and skill”. He also thanked other countries including the US, the UK, Rwanda, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, and international organisations such as Europol and Interpol for their assistance.