

Anti-genocide denial body to sue French TV over hate speech

Ange Iliza

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A Rwandan organisation aimed at fighting denial of the Genocide against the Tutsi has condemned a French television for giving a platform to genocide deniers to air hate message and denied the 1994 Genocide.

Umurinzi Initiative, a local not-for-profit body is contesting the decision by the French television network, LCI France TV to allow genocide deniers, Charles Onana to spew hate message that only brings more pain to survivors of the Genocide.

On October 26, through a show called “Tout un Monde”, Onana, an infamous genocide denier, was hosted by the network’s journalist Vincent Hervouet to discuss the former’s book “*Rwanda, la vérité sur l’Opération Turquoise*”.

Onana is a Cameroonian-French writer

The book labours to justify the deployment of French troops during the Genocide, a deployment that has been debunked as an effort to provide an escape corridor to genocide perpetrators that offer humanitarian assistance as they claimed.

During the talk show, Umurinzi

says in a statement, Onana publically denied the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi calling it “the biggest conspiracy in Africa”.

In the statement issued on Wednesday, the organization challenged LCI France TV to act against both Onana and Vincent Hervouet whom the organization says also has a record of denial of the genocide against the Tutsi.

“This is like continuing perpetrating the genocide against Tutsi. Umurinzi Initiative requests the leadership of LCI Television to pronounce itself on the matter and take action against their journalist Vincent Hervouet,” the note reads.

Intent to sue

The initiative also expressed its interest to support litigations that may be brought up against the two genocide deniers.

Speaking to *The New Times*, Louis-Antoine Muhire, vice-chairperson of Umurinzi Initiative announced that unless the television apologises and takes action, “a plan to sue them is absolutely in place”.

He added that it is a responsibility to all Rwandans to refute false claims

about the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

“We may not have the means to file cases for all deniers, but we can use other means available to disprove and devalue genocide deniers,” he said.

The denunciation comes after the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism, Licra, expressed its distaste on the matter.

In a letter to LCI France TV, Mario Stasi, who heads Licra, stressed that having been declared as a genocide denier, Onana should, by no means, address the public on the genocide against the Tutsi.

Onana, 55, is a Franco-Cameroonian journalist and essayist.

He had used various platforms including his books to deny the 1994 Ge-

nocide against the Tutsi.

He has written books such as “*Ces tueurs tutsi : Au cœur de la tragédie congolaise*”, “*Les secrets du génocide rwandais*”.

Although enforcement still needs a push, the French government has been putting efforts in discouraging genocide denial cases.

In April this year, April 7 was declared by President Emmanuel Macron as a day to remember the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi in 1994.

In 2017, France passed anti-genocide denial law that prescribes a one-year prison sentence and a fine of €45,000 (approximately Frw45m) for anyone found culpable of denying the Genocide against the Tutsi.