

# Over 14 million pages of Gacaca court archives indexed

Michel Nkurunziza

The New Times, April 30, 2023



The Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE) told The New Times that 14,220,000 pages of Gacaca court archives have already been indexed.

The archives that have been indexed represent 33 per cent of 48 million copies currently in digital format, said Paul Rukeshya, the Director General of Communication and Partnership Cooperation at MINUBUMWE.

Indexing consists of linking each file with identification details including the name of the corresponding defendant, their district, sector, and cell of origin.

After the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi where over one million people were killed, Rwanda initiated the Gacaca courts to handle

genocide crimes. Gacaca was a home-grown community-based justice system.

Through Gacaca, Rwandans demonstrated the capacity to solve their own problems, mend the social fabric, and reveal the truth about the Genocide which had been planned for a long time.

The Gacaca justice system officially closed in 2012, after trying more than 1.9 million Genocide crimes in 10 years.

Gacaca archives could also be registered to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Documentary Heritage Listing on the recommendation of a national committee that is set to assess and discern different historical, cultural and documentary heritages that can be listed on the world's heritage list.

## **Bilateral discussions continue on UN-ICTR related genocide documents**

The United Nations decided to keep all International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and International Crimi-

nal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) documents as the property of the UN over the next 25 years.

These include huge volumes of video recordings of genocide testimonies, written requests to the court, and written decisions among other things.

However, Rwanda was pushing for the transfer of archives of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, which are housed at the Arusha-based International Residue Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

*“So far, there is no process to bring these archives to Rwanda, and they are still consid-*

*ered by the UN as their property with other recordings of the court,”* Rukeshu said.

He said those archives are not only from the Rwandan cases, but also from around the world including from other international courts in audio, text, and video formats.

*“This is why the UN argues that the Rwanda-related archives are international property. However, we will continue bilateral discussions. The good thing is that we agreed that the archives would be uploaded on digital platforms of the international residual mechanism, except those that are confidential,”* Rukeshu said.