

UN, US renew call to arrest Genocide fugitives

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The New Times, October 4, 2022



Félicien Kabuga, one of the key masterminds of the Genocide, was arrested on May 16, 2020 in Asnières-sur-Seine, France. Photo : Courtesy.

The United Nations and United States have re-echoed their call to have those responsible for the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, who are still at large, to be arrested and brought to justice.

The call followed the commencement last week of the trial of one of the key masterminds of the Genocide, Félicien Kabuga. He was arrested on May 16, 2020 in Asnières-sur-Seine, France and transferred to the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) where he is currently standing trial for his role in the genocide.

He was arrested after 26 years on the run.

Kabuga was last week charged with genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, and persecution on political grounds, extermination, and murder as crimes against humanity.

In a statement issued by Alice Wairimu Nderitu, the UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, she said; “Our collective commitment not to forget constitutes a commitment to prevent. Accountability is prevention in itself and hence a deterrent for future crimes.”

She further called on all member states “to continue to fully cooperate with the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals in the identification, arrest, detention, surrender, and transfer of accused persons still at large as mandated in Security Council resolution 1966 (2010).”

Unlike national systems, the Mechanism - which replaced the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda - has no police force and no powers of arrest. It remains reliant on the cooperation of national governments to arrest fugitives.

Under the Mechanism's Statute, member states are obliged to cooperate unconditionally and to comply with requests for assistance and orders of the Mechanism.

Meanwhile, in a separate statement issued by Edward Price, the US State Department spokesperson, he also said that the UN continues to hunt for Genocide fugitives across the world.

"Nearly three decades after the genocide, the United States, through the War Crimes Rewards Program, continues to seek information leading to the arrest of the four remaining suspects indicted by the IRMCT," said Price.

Kabuga was for decades on the US Rewards for Justice Programme, where he had a \$5m bounty on his head upon capture.

While commenting on Kabuga's trial, Price noted that after nearly a quarter century as a fugitive, he faces prosecution for allegedly using his power, vast resources, and influence to incite the killing of hundreds of thousands of Tutsi civilians.

"He is accused of enabling the radio broadcast of messages identifying and denouncing Tutsis, as well as providing weapons and transport to Interahamwe militia members who carried out acts of genocide. The United States strongly supported the establishment of the ICTR by the United Nations Security Council and worked closely with the IRMCT in the long effort to bring Kabuga to justice, including by offering a reward for information leading to his arrest or conviction through the Office of Global Criminal Justice's War Crimes Rewards Program," said Price in a statement.

Kabuga is accused of mobilising other Hutu-Pawa ideologues both within and outside the then government, to establish the infamous RTL, the infamous station that was a key tool in the run up to and during the Genocide.

Among the Genocide suspects indicted by the UN court and remain at large, include Charles Sikubwabo, former mayor of Gishyita Commune in Kibuye Prefecture (in the current Karongi District), Aloys Ndimbati, former mayor of Gisovu Commune also in the former Kibuye Prefecture, Fulgence Kayishema, former Judicial Police Inspector of Kivumu Commune in the former Kibuye Prefecture and Charles Ryandikayo a former businessman in Mubuga sector, Gishyita commune and a member of MDR-Power.

All these were referred to Rwanda for trial as part of the court's completion strategy.

Over 1,000 genocidaires at large

Meanwhile, besides UN-indicted fugitives, there are hundreds of other Genocide fugitives indicted by the Rwandan prosecution through Genocide Fugitives Tracking Unit (GFTU).

Statistics from the unit indicates that between 2007 and 2020, Rwanda issued 1,146 indictments and arrest warrants against Genocide fugitives in 33 countries.

Of the 1,100 Genocide fugitives, 408 were believed to be in the neighbouring DR Congo, 277 in Uganda ; 63 in Malawi, 52 in Tanzania,

47 in France, 42 in Congo Brazzaville, while 40 are in Belgium.

Other countries are Kenya where 35 Genocide suspects are believed to reside, 23 in America (USA), 18 in The Netherlands, Zambia harbours 15, Burundi hosts 15, Canada 14, Mozambique hosts 13 and 11 are in Central African Republic.

Also, 10 suspects are in Cameroon, 7 in

Norway, Sweden, and Gabon, each; Germany, UK, and South Africa host five, each; and three are in Denmark, New Zealand, Ivory Coast, and Switzerland each.

Also, there are two Genocide suspects believed to be in Zimbabwe, two in Swaziland, while one was reported in Finland, Ghana, Benin, and Australia each.

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