

# Kabuga Trial : Witness reveals how RTLM fuelled Genocide in former Cyangugu

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Genocide suspect Felicien Kabuga at the Hague-based UN court. The hearing is set to resume next week on Tuesday, October 11 with the defense continuing to cross examine the witness. / File

A witness testifying before judges at the UN International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) revealed how Felicien Kabuga's extremist radio station incited and fuelled the Genocide against Tutsi in the former Cyangugu prefecture (current Rusizi District).

Kabuga was the chief financier of Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), an extremist radio that called on the public to

hunt and kill Tutsis during the Genocide.

The protected witness code-named 'KAB005' was appearing in court on the second day of his cross-examination as prosecution continued to present evident pinning Kabuga on his role in the Genocide.

This time, the witness was being cross-examined by both the prosecution and the defense. He revealed how RTLM orchestrated and aired a radical propaganda broadcast against Tutsi in Cyangugu by profiling them, calling them enemies, and urging Hutus to exterminate them.

*"Areas like Giheke and Shanghi had a big number of Tutsis residing there and that made them a focus for RTLM. Radio presenters like Noel Hitimana singled out these areas saying that they are the bases of Tutsis who wanted to take over Cyangugu",* KAB005 told the court.

Prosecutor Grace Harbour backed the witness's testimony with an audio clip of a broadcast aired on February 1, 1994 where a presenter calls on Hutus to hunt Tutsi, urging that no Tutsi should escape.

Prosecution also played another audio clip that was aired on RTLM on March 27, 1994

calling on Hutus to be ‘vigilant.’

“*The word vigilant was widely used in the build up to the Genocide and during the Genocide; it implied hunting and killing Tutsis. Presenters like Hitimana and Kantano Habimana frequently used it*”, KAB005 told the court.

The witness hailed from Cyangugu but was living and working in Kigali during the Genocide. Harbour asked the witness how he survived the genocide and he (the witness) narrated how he walked from his Kacyiru home to Hotel de Mille Collines.

“*The night of April 6, 1994 when then President Juvenal Habyarimana’s plane was shot, we knew it was the beginning of an end because of what we had witnessed in the previous months that was being prepared. Everyone went into hiding. I left my home with my servant, and we went through Muhima heading to Mille Collines hotel. There were many roadblocks but there was this huge and most active one that had been mounted at a building owned by Kabuga in Muhima near the Yamaha building. It was there that I was stopped. I was to be killed but someone who had gone to school with me saw me and told his fellow interahamwe to spare me*”, KAB005 narrated.

## The power behind RTLM

Prosecution went back to yesterday’s hearing where KAB005 said that the then Minister of Information, Faustin Rucogoza, did not have the power to shut down RTLM and asked the witness to give substantive reasons.

“*The radio protected the interests of the ruling political party, Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement, (MRND). Party royalists included judges, top military commanders, politicians and prominent businessmen. These people believed in the radio’s editorial line. There is no way the minister would have succeeded*”, the witness said, adding that at a certain point, RTLM dared the minister to attempt closing the radio saying that it would backfire on him.

The witness who worked at the Ministry of Information told the court that he was in charge of monitoring private media outlets particularly RTLM and that he took notes and recorded all shows on the radio.

Asked how RTLM broadcasts were in the first week of the Genocide, KAB005 said, “*RTLM went all out calling for the extermination of Tutsi at a wide scale. They created all sorts of propaganda to convince people to kill. They claimed Tutsis wanted to take over Rwanda and create ‘a Tutsi land’. It got worse when Kantano sang on the radio calling on people to come out and celebrate, saying that Tutsis had been wiped out, and that the future generation of Hutus will ask how Tutsis looked like. This escalated the killings to a much wider scale*”, KAB005 said.

The defense lawyer, Emmanuel Altit, took the floor and started cross-examining KAB005 basing on his testimony.

Altit asked the witness why he never feared interahamwe or if he wasn’t a target.

“*Interahamwe had lost their souls, you would be out of your mind to not fear them. At the roadblock where I was supposed to be killed, there was one who was walking around*

*carrying a human head in his hands, so yes, I feared them and I was a target at one point*", said the witness. Tuesday, October 11 with the defense continuing to cross examine the witness.

The hearing is set to resume next week on Follow @EdwinMusoni