

Rwandan Suspects Face Extradition Calls

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By Caroline Tosh in The Hague (TU No 484, 12-Jan-07)

Rwanda has called for the extradition of four Rwandan men who have been remanded in custody by a British court, accused of taking part in the 1994 genocide.

Vincent Bajinya, Charles Munyanez, Celestin Ugirashebuja and Emmanuel Nteziryayo appeared before the City of Westminster Magistrates' Court in London on December 29.

The men, who were arrested in a series of raids across the UK on December 28, deny charges of genocide related to the slaughter of an estimated 800,000 Tutsi and some moderate Hutus in Rwanda.

Their extradition warrants accuse the men of killing and aiding and abetting the killing of Tutsis between January 1, 1994 and December 12, 1994 "with the intent to destroy in whole or in part, that group".

They were arrested after a special agreement between Britain and Rwanda was signed - in which Rwanda has agreed to waive the death penalty if the suspects are convicted.

British law does not allow extradition to countries that practice the death penalty.

Bajinya, who changed his name to Vincent Brown on becoming a British citizen, was arrested in north London and is accused of coordinating Hutu militias in the Rwandan capital of Kigali in 1994.

Munyaneza, arrested in Bedford, was a former local mayor and is alleged to have masterminded the slaughter of tens of thousands of Tutsis.

Ugirashebuja, apprehended in Essex, is also a former mayor. He is accused of setting up roadblocks to prevent the escape of Tutsis.

Nteziryayo, also an ex-mayor, was taken into custody in Manchester and is accused of attending meetings where the slaughter of Tutsis was planned.

The Rwandan prosecutor general Martin Ngoga has praised the UK for arresting the men and called on other countries said to be harbouring Rwandan genocide suspects to follow its example.

If extradited, it is too late for the four to face trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, ICTR, which is due to close in 2010.

Human rights group Amnesty International has expressed concern that war crimes suspects will not get a fair trial in Rwanda.

According to agency reports, the defendants will appear in court again on January 26.

Caroline Tosh is an IWPR reporter in The Hague.

Topic: Kratke Vesti

Focus: International Criminal Tribunal for the former
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