

Team on the Way to Collect Congo War Crimes Suspect  
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By Jeffrey Gettleman

NAIROBI, Kenya — American officials on Wednesday said that a team from the International Criminal Court was on its way to Rwanda to collect a war crimes suspect who had turned himself in to the American Embassy and that they were hoping Rwanda would cooperate. Rwanda has indicated that it would not interfere with the transfer of the suspect, Bosco Ntaganda, a rebel commander nicknamed the Terminator, to the International Criminal Court at The Hague, where he has been charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity.

On Monday, Mr. Ntaganda, who has been accused of massacring villagers and recruiting child soldiers in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, showed up unexpectedly at the American Embassy in Rwanda and surrendered. On Wednesday, Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson reiterated that the United States now needed Rwanda's cooperation to get Mr. Ntaganda to The Hague.

"We hope the Rwandan government will work with the U.S. government," he said in a conference call from Washington. "We need cooperation so he can move freely from the American Embassy compound to the airport."

Rwanda — and the United States, for that matter — are not members of the International Criminal Court, and Rwanda's foreign minister, Louise Mushikiwabo, said this week, according to the SAPA news agency, "The I.C.C. is a political court, and we have never believed in its jurisdiction." But she pledged to work with the United States and in other interviews, including one published by Bloomberg, Ms. Mushikiwabo reinforced the position, saying "The U.S. is a partner state, and we commit to give them any support they want."

Mr. Carson said the critical issue now was getting Mr. Ntaganda from the American Embassy in Kigali, Rwanda's capital, to the airport about five miles away. He said that the Rwandans had given "appropriate assurances that they will not interfere," but he did not elaborate.

Rwanda has faced broad international pressure because it is widely suspected of covertly supporting Mr. Ntaganda in the past and fomenting rebellions in eastern Congo that have killed countless people. It also has had a touchy relationship with international justice, condemning cases tried in France and Spain that accuse Rwandan government officials of assassinations and other crimes.

Several analysts have said that Rwanda may be worried that Mr. Ntaganda, once he leaves the country, might spill secrets that could further damage Rwanda's reputation.

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