

17 March 2007

International Genocide Tribunal Allows Rwanda to Keep Archives

KIGALI, Rwanda — The chief registrar of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Mr. Adama Dieng, has said that archives of the closing tribunal should be "as close as possible to the victims" essentially reinforcing Rwanda's request, RNA has established.

Though the decision remains with the United Nations, Senegalese Dieng told Hironelle News Agency that Rwanda should be "fully associated" with the process. "This tribunal is the first to have judged the crime of genocide. This is shared knowledge that is necessary to continue to promote the fight against impunity," Mr. Dieng explained. "We have engaged this reflection in cooperation with the Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia: we will very soon submit our report to the Department of Judicial Affairs (of the UN)," he continued.

On a recent visit of the US envoy for war crimes, Mr. Clint Williamson, Rwanda Prosecutor General Martin Ngoga emphasized the country's stand on the archives referring to them as the "property of Rwanda". Mr. Williamson was actually from a tour of the Arusha (Tanzania) based tribunal where he reiterated "the willingness of the United States government to do all that it can to apprehend ICTR fugitives and to help the Tribunal to finish its work successfully."

The US has a 5m dollar bounty for the arrest of genocide financier billionaire Félicien Kabuga and Maj. Mpiranya commanded the Presidential Guard (GP), a notorious unit that carried out most of the savage during the 1994 100-day horror in Rwanda.

In light of perpetuating the ICTR's heritage, Mr. Dieng hopes that the Umusanzu centre opened by the Tribunal in Kigali and notably holding a library would be reinforced after the mandate to be a "veritable centre of fight against impunity: a large centre of radiance in the Great Lakes Region" of Africa.

Created by a Security Council resolution in November 1994, the ICTR, which opened its first trial in 1997, has currently pronounced 28 guilty verdicts and 5 acquittals. It must also end all trials before Trial Chamber by 2008, and all appeals trials by 2010. Twenty-seven accused are on trial, 9 are awaiting trial while 18, including Félicien Kabuga, are at large.

Controversially however, public opinion in Rwanda still ponders to why the tribunal has not indicted former first lady Mrs. Agathe Kanziga Habyarimana—considered one of the planners of the Genocide along with a clique of

senior insiders commonly known as the "Akazu".

On several requests for comment from the ICTR by RNA, no official has accepted to say anything publicly. After several requests, Deputy Registrar O'Donnell Everrand at one time e-mailed back saying he was holiday but that he had "forwarded" the information to his superiors.

Copyright 2007
BBC News