

**US indicates Rwanda hasn't assured safe passage of Congolese warlord at embassy**  
**By Associated Press**  
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NAIROBI, Kenya — The United States appears to be worried that Rwanda won't allow a warlord from Congo now camped out in the U.S. Embassy safe passage to the airport to be flown to the International Criminal Court for prosecution.

The U.S. hopes Rwanda will help facilitate the transfer of Congolese rebel leader Bosco Ntaganda from the U.S. Embassy in Kigali to the airport for a flight to the ICC in the Netherlands, the top U.S. State Department official on Africa, Johnnie Carson, said Wednesday.

"We hope that the Rwandan government will do its part," Carson said in a telephone press conference from Washington. "It is a small but significant part to ensure that Bosco Ntaganda is able to move freely from the American embassy compound to the airport where he will board a plane and go to The Hague."

Carson said it's important that Ntaganda's movement from the embassy to the airport "in no way be inhibited."

Carson also indicated that Rwanda hasn't yet assured cooperation with ICC officials en route to Rwanda. He noted that Rwanda, like the United States, is not a signatory to the Rome Statute that created the ICC and is not bound by international obligations to hand Ntaganda to the ICC.

Rwanda's foreign minister, Louise Mushikiwabo, implicitly criticized the ICC on Twitter on Sunday that "Rwanda believes in justice, not judicial colonialism," in response to a question from the head of Human Rights Watch on whether Rwanda would commit to sending Ntaganda to the court's headquarters in The Hague.

A spokesman for the ICC, Fadi El Abdallah, said the ICC is "contacting authorities in Rwanda and the Americans in order to check how we can get him as soon as possible." He wouldn't elaborate on the nature of the contacts.

Ntaganda's reputation for ruthless methods in the battlefield acquired him the nickname "The Terminator," and his ICC arrest warrant describes how Ntaganda would not hesitate to shell villages with heavy artillery before launching an attack in which his men would kill people with machetes, knives and rifles.

Those who recently fought alongside him say Ntaganda fled Congo over the weekend after his men lost a key battle against fighters who split off last month from his M23 rebel movement.

"Ntaganda's self-surrender at the U.S. Embassy in Kigali was a surprising end to a saga of conflict, human rights abuses, and blatant disregard for his ICC arrest warrant by (Congolese) officials for many years. It is very significant in terms of a victory for individual rights," said Laura Seay, a Congo expert at Morehouse University in Atlanta.

Having Ntaganda on the stand, though, could pose problems for Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Seay said. Kagame won't want Ntaganda, who was born in Rwanda, to reveal the details of security arrangements and illicit mineral extraction deals between Congo and Rwanda, she said.

Congo has been wracked by warfare for years, and Carson noted that some experts indicate 5 million people have died in violence. Women suffer from mass rapes and children are forced to become soldiers.

But even with Ntaganda out of the picture, peace in eastern Congo remains a long way off. The victorious M23 faction of Gen. Sultani Makenga has lost little strength in the fighting with Ntaganda's faction, and troop morale is high after defeating one of the most feared warlords in Africa. Makenga himself does not have an international arrest warrant against him, but is under United Nations sanctions and has a track record of similar crimes to those committed by Ntaganda.

"It is an interesting development for peace in eastern Congo," said Marc-André Lagrange, senior analyst at the International Crisis Group. "A warlord is leaving, but it doesn't mean that he won't be replaced. Makenga has exactly the same connections in minerals trafficking and so on. A warlord is merely being replaced by another."

Carson said the next 48 hours are critical for Ntaganda's situation. Carson said Ntaganda moved across the border from eastern Congo to Rwanda late on March 14 or early on March 15 with 500 to 700 of his fighters.

"We then found Mr. Ntaganda coming to our embassy. We did not encourage him, we did not know his whereabouts," Carson said. "I suspect he may have come because he knows we are a symbol of fairness and justice and integrity in these kinds of processes but I can't tell you because I don't know and can't read his mind."

Carson said the situation with Ntaganda is an opportunity for progress to be made in the battle against impunity for atrocities and crimes against humanity.

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