

French prosecutor seeks trial of genocide suspect Philippe Hategekimana

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A prosecutor in France has requested that Genocide suspect Philippe Hategekimana, alias Biguma, be referred to the country's cour d'assises, or Assize Court, a criminal trial court that handles cases of genocide and war crimes.

Hategekimana is one of the most wanted masterminds of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

On Wednesday, April 14, the France-based Collectif des parties civiles pour le Rwanda (CPCR), which works to see genocide suspects living in France brought to book, received the indictment of the prosecutor in the

case of Hategekimana.

According to CPCR President Alain Gauthier, the prosecutor asked for the suspect to be taken to the Assize Court.

"We must now wait for the decision of the investigating judge within a few months," said Gauthier, adding that; "But there shouldn't be any surprises. I simply think that the investigating judges will confirm the referral of Philippe Hategekimana to the Assize Court. The facts are damning even if he denies them."

Gauthier said the suspect is accused of genocide, complicity in genocide, crimes against humanity and complicity in crimes against humanity.

In April 2018, Hategekimana was arrested in Yaoundé, Cameroon where he had been living under the name Philippe Manier ever since his naturalisation as a French citizen.

At the time of his arrest the National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA) noted that the suspect was on the list of the most wanted key perpetrators of the Genocide against the Tutsi.

Rwanda issued an international arrest war-

rant for him on July 25, 2017.

Hategekimana was born in Rukundo, in the former Prefecture of Gikongoro.

Formerly a deputy commander of Gendarmerie (police) in the current Nyanza District, Hategekimana is said to have been instrumental in massacres in the former communes of Nyabisindu, Ntyazo and Rusatira all in the former Butare prefecture.

Gauthier said they have up to 40 witnesses - men and women - from Nyanza ready to testify when the case starts. He did not wish to reveal their identities without their permission.

Hategekimana arrived in France in February 1999, with a passport in the name of Philippe Hakizimana.

His wife had arrived before him. They had lived in Kashusha camp in Zaire, now DR Congo, before moving to Congo-Brazzaville, then the Central African Republic, Cameroon, and finally, France.

During the Genocide, Hategekimana was a gendarme in Nyanza.

Knowing that he was the target of a complaint, he had fled to Cameroon where his daughter still resides. The Cameroonian police arrested him when his wife wanted to join him.

Extradited from Cameroon to France, Hategekimana has been in provisional detention since February 15, 2019.

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