



## **France to Prosecute Two Rwandan Genocide Suspects Many Others Continue to Benefit from Impunity**

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(Brussels/ Kigali, 13 December 2007) Yesterday, the French Court in Paris postponed a decision on the request of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) to try Wencelas Munyeshyaka and Laurent Bucyibaruta before French courts for their alleged participation in the Rwandan genocide in 1994. The decision was postponed to 30 January on formal grounds. Both are accused of genocide and crimes against humanity and both have been living in France since the genocide.

African Rights and REDRESS, two human rights organizations committed to ending impunity for serious international crimes including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture, are concerned about yet another postponement of the case, which comes after victims of the genocide have been trying to obtain justice before French courts for almost thirteen years. Victims of Wenceclas Munyeshyaka submitted a complaint against him as early as July 1995. Yet, French authorities failed to act, despite a ruling of the European Court of Human Rights, which, in 2004, condemned France for the inexcusable delays in the proceedings.

Despite the postponement of the decision, recent developments in France seem to indicate a shift in position. There appears to be a welcome recognition of the need to bring alleged perpetrators of the genocide, who are currently living quite openly in France, to justice. The arrest of Isaac Kamali, wanted by Rwanda and Interpol for acts of genocide, on 23 June of this year was followed by the arrest (and subsequent release on judicial supervision) of Munyeshyaka and Bucyibaruta. On 16 October 2007, French authorities, in cooperation with Interpol arrested Dominique Ntawukuriryayo in the South of France. Ntawukuriryayo is wanted by the ICTR for charges of genocide and is currently waiting for his transfer to the ICTR.

“These developments are most welcome and long overdue”, said Rakiya Omaar, Director of African Rights. “It is time for France to demonstrate that it does not tolerate impunity and does not provide a sanctuary for genocide suspects”, Omaar said.

Other individuals suspected of participating in the genocide include Callixte Mbarushimana, a former UN employee who is suspected of directing and participating in numerous killings, including of UN personnel. Despite requests to France by the UN itself to initiate proceedings, no investigation has been undertaken against Mbarushimana yet.

African Rights and REDRESS, who are currently implementing a joint project designed to support national authorities and victims in their efforts to hold genocide suspects living in Europe accountable, urge French authorities to follow up the UN request for investigating the serious and consistent allegations against Callixte Mbarushimana.

“More than thirteen years after the genocide, victims’ efforts to ensure accountability of suspects based in France and to fight impunity have been stymied by the inaction of French authorities. It is imperative that their voices are heard now and that these serious allegations are fully investigated”, Carla Ferstman, Director of REDRESS, said.