



RWANDA DOMESTIC MEDIA MONITOR REPORT FOR THE WEEK OF: JULY 19TH-25TH, 2011



By Paula Cook-Dinan, MIGS Monitor for Rwanda

<http://migs.concordia.ca/Rwandaradioandnewssummaries.htm>

CONTENT

- A. FORMER MILITARY CHAPLAIN FOUND GUILTY OF GENOCIDE, SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS
 - B. AFRISAN CONFERENCE UNDERWAY IN KIGALI
 - C. RWANDAN MP EXPELLED OVER MISCONDUCT
 - D. MISCELLANEOUS
-

A. FORMER MILITARY CHAPLAIN FOUND GUILTY OF GENOCIDE, SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS

ORINFOR—25 July: Emmanuel Rukundo sentenced to 25 years (state-owned source)

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has convicted former military chaplain Emmanuel Rukundo on three counts of genocide, murder and extermination; crimes that were committed during his tenure as the military chaplain of the Rwanda Armed Forces (RAF). Rukundo was appointed to the position in February 1993, and was posted in Ruhengeri and Gesenyi before being transferred to Kigali in May 1994.

Rukundo left Rwanda after the defeat of the RAF by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) in September 1994 and went into exile in Burundi followed by Switzerland. He was recently arrested in Geneva and transferred to the International Detention Centre in Arusha.

The Tribunal heard evidence from 18 witnesses in the course of a 25-day trial, with the defense taking 41 days to call 32 witnesses. Following the trial, the accused appealed to the appeal chambers and had his sentence reduced to 23 years.

B. AFRISAN CONFERENCE UNDERWAY IN KIGALI

ORINFOR—20 July: AFRISAN 3 kicks off in Kigali (state-owned source)

The third Africa Conference on Hygiene and Sanitation (AfriSan 3) began today in Kigali, the goal of which is to evaluate and ameliorate strategies to meet the Millennium Development Goals on sanitation by 2015. Rwanda welcomed over 800 delegates from 50 African countries to the conference, which follows the 2008 AfriSan 2 meeting in Durban, South Africa.

Among the challenges to be discussed at the three-day conference is the lack of latrines in developing countries. In his keynote address, Rwandan Prime Minister Bernard Makuza said that the country welcomes the opportunity to be a case study on which this conference may exchange views and experiences. Currently, the government of Rwanda spends 0.48% of GDP on sanitation-related funding.

The New Times website—23 July: Political will key to achieving MDGs (privately-owned, pro-government source)

In his concluding remarks at the third Africa Sanitation and Hygiene conference (AfricaSan 3) held in Kigali this week, President Paul Kagame reiterated Africa's commitment to meeting hygiene-related

targets without donor support. The President—who has often stressed the need for Africans to take control of their own development—said that the primary responsibility to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the 2015 deadline rests with the African people. Examples of the success of national independent initiatives, continued the President, include the Nine-Year Basic Education programme in Rwanda, through which classrooms were constructed in record time, without having to rely on foreign aid. Such initiatives require a level of political will and leadership that can only come from the African people themselves.

Rwanda News Agency (RNA)—22 July: Rwanda “on track”, but Africa still “lagging behind” on MDGs’ sanitation (privately-owned source)

According to RNA sources, only a handful of African countries including Rwanda are on course to reach the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the number of people who don’t have access to clean water, safe sanitation, and hygiene facilities. The revelation comes on the heels of the third African conference on Water and Sanitation, which took place in Kigali from July 19-21.

“Sanitation has always been the most neglected and off-track of the MDGs, with little funding, resources, or political will to address the crisis,” said a statement issued at the close of the conference. There has been little progress towards the agreed target of allocating 0.5% of GDP to sanitation in many African nations; however, Rwanda comes in close at 0.48% of GDP devoted to the field of hygiene.

According to official statistics, 1.8 million people die every year from diarrhea-related diseases, of which 90% are children under five.

C. RWANDAN MP EXPELLED FOR IMPROPER CONDUCT

ORINFOR—20 July: MP Expelled for Improper Conduct (state-owned source)

Rwandan Parliamentarian Ashinzuwera Dumas Alexander was evicted from the lower chamber of the national Parliament for what the latter termed as “improper conduct”. According to the vice speaker of Parliament, Polisi Denis, Alexander was involved in various illicit behaviors, including assaulting his brother and resisting an arrest by security agencies at his home. The dismissal is permissible under Article 90 of the Rwandan Parliamentary rules of procedure for the removal of members of Parliament, which stipulates that “misconduct in and out of Parliament” are grounds for punitive action. Mr. Alexander has 48 hours to appeal in the Supreme Court.

D. MISCELLANEOUS

The New Times website—21 July: 180 fail to declare wealth (privately-owned, pro-government source)

A source from the office of the Ombudsman has revealed that a total of 183 senior government employees failed to declare their wealth by the year-end deadline of June 30th, despite repeated requests. Under the 2006 Wealth Declaration Law, 7,058 civil servants are required to submit their annual income, assets, and liabilities to the Office of the Ombudsman, a process that can, as of this year, be completed online. The purpose of the Wealth Declaration Law is to fight corruption and to enforce accountability of politicians. According to Jeanne d’Arc Mwiseneza, Director of the Declaration of Assets unit, those civil servants who failed to report their earnings will be “given ample time to explain why they did not declare their wealth in time. The Ombudsman office will then see whether they have legitimate excuses...[if not], their names will be submitted to their employers for disciplinary action.”

In 2009, the Ministry of Labor and Public service suspended 56 civil servants for failing to declare their wealth.

Rwanda News Agency (RNA)—21 July: Government broadcaster loses prime land to investors (privately-owned source)

Rwanda's state-owned broadcaster, ORINFOR, has been given until January to vacate its Radio Rwanda headquarters in Kigali as the Executive Investment Group has bought the land to construct a hotel. The plot in question sold for approximately US \$1.5 million. ORINFOR will be relocated to another building in Kacyiru, located exactly opposite the Office of the President. The media company runs TV Rwanda, Radio Rwanda, and two weekly newspapers; it is also in charge of Rwanda's only web printery. ORINFOR officials are concerned about the move deadline, as they say they will need more than eight months to transfer all their equipment to the new building.

The New Times website—21 July: Some UNHRC recommendations are misconceptions—Karugarama (privately-owned, pro-government source)

In a news conference organized in response to a recent UN report on Rwanda, Minister of Justice, Tharcisse Karugarama has condemned some of the body's recommendations as "false and misconceptions". The report, released in January by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on the status of human rights in Rwanda, contained 73 recommendations to be implemented, 67 of which were adopted by the Rwandan government. The other six, according to Karugarama, "were false and we cannot implement falsehoods." Among those rejected are some that claim Rwanda engages in human trafficking, recruitment of child soldiers and arbitrary arrests and detention. Karugarama stated further, "we shouldn't have people thinking that they will tell us how to respect human rights. Rwanda understands human rights more than most people who come to give lectures." He also noted that the country scored very high in the social and economic sectors such as the provision of education, infrastructure, and health.

The Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Sylvia Zainabu, responded by saying that although the government's policies themselves may not be discriminatory or in violation of human rights, they are not properly implemented or heavily prejudiced.