

Rwandan Priest Sentenced For Genocide

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An international tribunal sentenced a Rwandan priest to more than two decades in prison on Friday after finding him guilty of killings in connection with the country's 1994 genocide.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda sentenced Emmanuel Rukundo to 25 years in prison for crimes including genocide and murder.

"Rukundo's acts were clearly part of the genocide," said Judge Joseph Asoka de Silva after the judgement was read. "When he committed these crimes, he intended to completely or partially destroy the Tutsi ethnic group."

According to the judgement, the 50-year-old priest along with Hutu extremists participated in the kidnapping of Tutsis who had sought refuge in a seminary in Gitarama in central Rwanda. Several of the Tutsis were later killed.

The court also found that Rukundo attempted to rape a Tutsi woman in May 1994.

Prosecutors had demanded life in prison for the priest, who was a military chaplain at the time of the genocide.

He was arrested in Switzerland in July 2001 and transferred to the tribunal's detention centre two months later. His trial began in November 2006.

Two other Rwandan Catholic priests have appeared before the tribunal. One has been sentenced to life in prison, while prosecutors earlier this month requested life in prison for the other.

Another Catholic priest indicted by the tribunal will stand trial in France as the court, based in Tanzania, seeks to wind down its case load.

Hutu extremists killed some 800,000 people, mainly minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus, during the 1994 genocide.

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