

Dutch Verdict Due In Rwanda War Crimes Trial

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Dutch judges were delivering their verdict Monday in the case of a Rwandan Hutu accused of murdering and raping ethnic Tutsis hiding in a church during his country's 1994 genocide.

Joseph Mpambara allegedly took part in a massacre of Tutsis who had taken refuge in a church complex and hacked to death seven people dragged out of an ambulance.

Prosecutors asked a three-judge panel at The Hague District Court for a life sentence, saying in a closing submission that the allegations were "gruesome beyond belief."

Mpambara, 40, denies the war crimes charges of murder, rape and torture.

The allegations against Mpambara came to light when he applied for asylum in the Netherlands. Under Dutch law he can be tried for war crimes allegedly committed in another country because he was living here at the time of his arrest.

Hutu militias slaughtered minority Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus during Rwanda's genocide, which raged from April to July 1994 and left at least 500,000 people dead.

At the October start of the trial, prosecutor Hester van Bruggen said Mpambara was among a group of Hutus who slaughtered Tutsis hiding in a Seventh Day Adventist church in April 1994 using guns, clubs, machetes and grenades.

Van Bruggen said Mpambara also raped three women, using a bayonet to rape one victim. He allegedly raped the other two women in a hospital ward before killing them with a knife.

Mpambara also is accused of subjecting a German doctor and his Rwandan wife and baby to psychological torture by asking them where they wanted to die as they tried to pass through a roadblock in western Rwanda.

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