

# Genocide convict Munyagishari appeal case begins on Thursday

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Munyagishari Bernard

The Court of Appeal will on Thursday November 12 begin the hearing of an appeal lodged by genocide convict Bernard Munyagishari against the life imprisonment sentence that was handed down by the High Court in 2017.

Munyagishari, 60, was convicted by High Court on two counts : participation in the Genocide against the Tutsi, and killing as a crime against humanity.

According to the law of criminal procedure, this is the final jurisdiction that Munyagishari can appeal to.

Munyagishari is a former zonal head of MRND – the political party that masterminded the genocide – in the former Gisenyi Prefecture.

He was transferred to Rwanda in July 2013 from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) as the court wound up its activities to pave way for the Mechanism for International Criminal

Tribunals.

In its ruling, the High Court affirmed that the suspect attended several meetings in which the Genocide was prepared in 1994 ; and played a major role in drawing up lists of Tutsi to be killed.

He also facilitated the setting up of roadblocks where Tutsi were slaughtered, mainly in Gisenyi, currently Rubavu District.

During his trials in the high court, witnesses testified that he used to train Interahamwe militia and supplied them with weapons to use in the killings.

He was arrested in May 2011 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, following an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

In the early days of the trial, Munyagishari had maintained that he was not Rwandan but a Congolese citizen, despite several witnesses who knew him well pinning him.

According to an indictment issued by the ICTR, Munyagishari wielded a lot of powers during the genocide, which he mainly derived from his close association with the then government and military officials.

The UN court said that he closely worked with Joseph Nzirorera, the Secretary General of MRND, the then planning minister Augustin Ndirabatware and the military commandant in Gisenyi area Col Anatole Nsengiyumva.

All these were tried and convicted to varying terms by the ICTR.

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