

Rwandan appeal court upholds war crimes death sentence

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KIGALI, Sept 13 (AFP) - Rwanda's appeal court has upheld the death penalty on a former top politician for his involvement in the 1994 genocide, in which more than half a million people died, reliable sources told AFP Saturday.

Frodwald Karamira, 50, was sentenced to death in January for inciting hardline members of the country's Hutu militias and army to carry out the massacre of Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

He was also accused of personally organizing some of the killings.

Karamira is one of the highest-ranking defendants to go on trial, and was among the top 50 names on a list of 1,900 accused published by the government in Kigali.

A Tutsi who renounced his ethnic origins to become a leading advo-

cate for Hutu extremism, Karamira had pleaded not guilty to all charges.

He was a former deputy leader of the Democratic Republican Movement, and headed the extremist tendency within the party which was opposed to any compromise with the Tutsi-majority rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front now in power.

Most other war crime suspects have fled to foreign countries or are awaiting trial in the Tanzanian town of Arusha, headquarters of the UN-run international criminal tribunal for Rwanda.

Rwandan courts have already handed down more than 142 judgments. Some 60 accused received the death penalty, while eight were acquitted. Only six of the judgments have gone to appeal.

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