

Rwandan Man Convicted for Immigration Fraud and Perjury in Connection with the 1994 Genocide

Justice des Etats-Unis, April 5, 2019

Defendant convicted on eve of 25th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide

BOSTON – A man who fled Rwanda near the end of the 1994 genocide was convicted today by a federal jury for immigration fraud and perjury in connection with his application for asylum in the United States.

Jean Leonard Teganya, 48, was convicted of two counts of immigration fraud and three counts of perjury. U.S. District Court Judge F. Denis Saylor IV scheduled sentencing for July 1, 2019.

“For 25 years, Jean Leonard Teganya has been running away from the truth,” said United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling. “Mr. Teganya hid the truth about atrocities he committed during the Rwandan genocide in order to seek asylum in the United States. Our asylum laws exist to protect true victims of violent crime – especially genocide – not the perpetrators.”

“Today’s guilty verdict is a true testament to the significant efforts, over many years and across two continents, of a committed team of Homeland Security Investigations Special Agents and Assistant U.S. Attorneys who valiantly pursued this investigation,” said Special Agent in Charge Peter C. Fitzhugh, Homeland Security Investigations, Boston. “This verdict is a victory, not just for the people of Rwanda, but for all Americans, as it serves as a reminder of our nation’s commitment to prevent human rights violators from exploiting America’s historic hospitality for immigrants by using it as a shield from accountability for their reprehensible war crimes.”

The Rwandan genocide began on April 6, 1994, and lasted for a period of 100 days. During the genocide, approximately 800,000 ethnic Tutsis were

murdered, making it the deadliest genocide since the holocaust in World War II. Prior to the genocide, Teganya was enrolled as a medical student at the National University of Rwanda, in Butare. During that time, he was a member of the MRND political party, the ruling Hutu-dominated party that incited the genocide. Teganya was also a member of the Interahamwe, the MRND youth wing, where he participated in martial arts and weapons training.

During the genocide, Teganya remained at the hospital in Butare, where he led teams of soldiers and Interahamwe around the hospital to locate Tutsi patients and refugees hiding in the hospital. Once discovered, the Tutsis were taken and killed behind the maternity ward. Teganya also led teams of soldiers and Interahamwe who took Tutsi women to be raped.

The evidence at trial demonstrated that Teganya participated in the murders of three Tutsi people at the hospital and two Tutsi students he discovered in the dormitory where he was living. Teganya also participated in five rapes of two Tutsi women who were hiding in the hospital.

At the end of the genocide in mid-July 1994, Teganya fled Butare, traveling to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, India, and then Canada. In 1999, Teganya applied for asylum in Canada. Canadian authorities twice determined that Teganya was not entitled to asylum because he had been complicit in atrocities committed at the Butare hospital during the genocide. After 15 years of asylum proceedings, Teganya evaded the Canadian deportation order and fled across the border into the United States. On Aug. 3, 2014, Teganya was encountered walking on foot after he had crossed from Canada into Houlton, Maine. Teganya was taken into custody and he formally applied for asylum. On the application for Asylum and Withholding of Removal, Teganya made false statements by failing to disclose his membership with MRND and his activities during the genocide.

The charge of immigration fraud provides for a sentence of no greater than 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of perjury provides for a sentence of no greater than five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

U.S. Attorney Lelling and HSI SAC Fitzhugh made the announcement today. U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. State Department and the Revere Police Department provided valuable assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Scott L. Garland, Deputy Chief of Lelling's Nation Security Unit,

and George P. Varghese, also of the National Security Unit, are prosecuting the case.

Department of Justice
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