

René Mugenzi reacts on President Kagame's accusations about Karake's arrest

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Rwandan President Paul Kagame, in his speech on June 25th, accused René Mugenzi of being responsible for the arrest of Rwanda's head of Intelligency Services Karenzi Karake. Jambonews spoke to Mugenzi about his alleged role in the matter.



Jambonews: While addressing the nation on Karenzi Karake's arrest in London last month, President Kagame said British police had used "*foolish fellows to gather evidence*" and added that "*even those they used to advise in the arrest of Karake are criminals, one of them is called René Mugenzi*". What did you think when you heard this statement?

René Mugenzi: I saw a terrified president, fearing about what is happening. What we have done with Global Campaign of Rwandan Human Rights (GCRHR) is terrifying to him. We raised awareness in law serving services and lawyers. We collaborated with the services wherever necessary in order to identify the gaps that were preventing Karake's arrest warrant to be implemented.

Jambonews: How did you go about filling those gaps?

René Mugenzi: By raising awareness through campaigning. I cannot discuss that in more details.

Jambonews: Is President Kagame right about your involvement in orchestrating the arrest?

René Mugenzi: Yes, I played a role, with the collaboration of many other people. There were other (human rights) organizations involved as well as other Rwandan individuals in the UK and the rest of Europe. Spanish lawyers also collaborated.

Jambonews: According to Kagame you knew about Karake's arrest ahead of time. He claimed you were writing about the arrest on social media on the 17th of June before it had occurred. Did you have any information in advance?

René Mugenzi: Some people sparked a conversation on Karake's arrest warrant and I got involved. I did try to warn them on Twitter, to tell them that the warrant is valid. When they did not believe me, I said: "Okay, I will show you the truth in a few minutes". And I showed them after he was arrested.

Jambonews: Why was it important for you to have Karake arrested?

René Mugenzi: It is important because finally victims will get justice and learn about the truth – these are important foundations of peace and reconciliation – that Rwandans desperately need and deserve.

Jambonews: What do you think has changed in British law serving services that led to the arrest compared to, for example, Karake's free movement in the country in May 2013?

René Mugenzi: It is not that something changed in terms of justice. Our work of raising awareness and acceptance of existing arrest warrants has changed and resulted into a bigger impact on law-enforcement assistance.

Jambonews: What do you think will happen next?

René Mugenzi: We hope that at the end of the trial he will be delivered to Spain where he will answer for his crimes. Furthermore, we will continue to campaign in order to have even others, those in Rwanda and in exile, arrested so that they can be brought before court.

Jambonews: In 2011 you received a warning by British Security Office that the Rwandan government had sent people to the UK in a plot to assassinate you. How do you think the recent mentioning of your name by the President will influence your security?

René Mugenzi: President Kagame has had an issue against me for a while, so his accusations do not change anything for me. Already in 2011 he implied that I should be “stopped”. As far as I am concerned, the plan to kill me still stands as a public reminder. For me personally, nothing has changed.

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