

Spain's Zapatero snubs UN meeting with Rwandan President Paul Kagame over war crime protests

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MADRID - Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero has refused to meet Rwandan President Paul Kagame at a U.N. meeting here following protests against the African leader.

Zapatero was to meet Kagame and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon at government headquarters Friday for a first session of the Millennium Development Goals Advocacy Group.

Ban chose Zapatero and Kagame to preside over the group as part of preparations for a September U.N summit on reducing poverty.

But complaints by human rights groups and opposition parties led the government to move the meeting to a Madrid hotel and Zapatero sent his foreign minister in his place.

A U.S. lawsuit accuses Kagame of ordering the downing of a plane carrying Rwanda's president in 1994. The crash sparked a genocide that left at least 500,000 people dead.

Kagame's rebel army helped end the 100-day slaughter by overthrowing the government.



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