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Rwandan chief of Intelligence

Karenzi Karake arrested

23 June 2015



Karenzi Karake (First from the right) is Rwanda's chief of intelligence

British police have arrested Rwanda's intelligence chief who is wanted on charges of Genocide by Spain.

According to Reuters, British police arrested Rwandan Karenzi Karake at the request of Spain, where he is wanted in connection with war crimes.

Karenzi entered the UK more than a week ago and is now under arrest in London. Reports say he was arrested by the Metropolitan police at Heathrow on Saturday.

Rwanda is said to have expressed it's displeasure with the move asking why now, since Karenzi has been going to the UK several times.

However it is yet to release an official statement about the matter.

Reports say he appeared before Westminster Magistrates' Court after being detained under a European Arrest Warrant, Scotland Yard confirmed.

Karake is currently director general of Rwanda's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), an umbrella spy agency that oversees intelligence gathering in civilian and military spheres.

In February 2008 an indictment was issued against 40 commanders loyal to Rwandan President Paul Kagame on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and other offenses committed in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The charges against Karake stem from his tenure as head of military intelligence after the 1994 genocide. He is expected to appear in court on Thursday.

The Spanish court has accused the lieutenant general of ordering large scale, organized massacres of Rwandan civilians throughout a number of Rwandan areas.

800,000 Rwandans were killed between April and June 1994 by ethnic Hutu extremists the worst conflict ever witnessed in Rwanda.

Most of the dead were members of the minority Tutsi community and moderate Hutus.

The killings ended when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi-led rebel movement that entered Rwanda from Uganda, seized control of the country.

Gen Karake, who is a member of the RPF, is one of 40 current or former high-ranking Rwandan military officials named on the Spanish indictment.

Phillip Gourevitch, a leading writer on Rwanda, told Newsnight that Gen Karake's arrest was the equivalent of the head of the UK's MI6 or the US's CIA being arrested.

He said the Spanish indictment against Gen Karake and 39 others had been criticised as highly politicised by many, including US diplomats.