

WORLD

In the News | Bobbi Kristina Brown | Export-Import Bank | Donald Trump | Mike Huckabee | 'Key & Peele'

Advertisement



Master of the Cellar SWEEPSTAKES

Enter to win a private consultation with our Master of Wine and a \$500 e-gift card to spend on your own custom case of wine.

See official contest rules at washingtonpostwine.com

ENTER NOW >

The Washington Post wine club

washingtonpost.com > World > Africa

FOLLOW THE WORLD DESK ON: 



Unrest in the Middle East
Full coverage of anti-government protests in the region

Interactive: Map the protests
Photos: Demonstrations spread
Complete Coverage >>

U.S. Backs U.N. Official in Darfur Indicted in Rwanda Deaths

By Colum Lynch
Washington Post Staff Writer
Sunday, June 29, 2008

UNITED NATIONS -- The State Department has urged the United Nations to retain a Rwandan general as the second-highest-ranking U.N. peacekeeper in the Darfur region of Sudan, even though he has been indicted for allegedly committing war crimes in Rwanda during the mid-1990s, according to U.S. and U.N. officials.

Rwandan Maj. Gen. Emmanuel Karake Karenzi, the U.N. deputy force commander in Darfur, was charged by a Spanish magistrate in February with responsibility in the killings of thousands of ethnic Hutus during the mid-1990s. The Rwandan government says the charges are baseless and has asked the United Nations to renew his contract for another year when it expires in October.

Rwanda's insistence that Karenzi remain in the mission poses a dilemma for the United States as it seeks to ensure support for a faltering U.N. effort to prevent atrocities in Darfur. Rwanda contributes 3,000 troops to the mission in Darfur -- roughly one-third of the current force -- and its withdrawal would erode the peacekeepers' ability to function.

Advertisement



The Washington Post

Power Post

REAL NEWS FOR REAL NEWSMAKERS

Get "The Daily 202" free A.M. newsletter

Sign Up Now

In a meeting last week, Jendayi Frazer, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for Africa, urged U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and the world body's top peacekeeping official, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, to renew Karenzi's contract, according to American and U.N. officials. Frazer argued that the United Nations cannot afford to alienate the Rwandans when they are needed in Darfur and may play a role in a future U.N. mission in Somalia. She signaled that Karenzi "has to stay," a U.N. official said.

But others in the administration believe Karenzi should go. "There are many in the U.S. government who think we should dump the guy," said one American official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly. "But Assistant Secretary Jendayi Frazer has the final call."

"The message was, 'Listen to the Rwandans,'" the official said.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has indicated that the U.S. position was not monolithic but that he lacked instructions from Washington on how to proceed. "Ambassador Khalilzad made it clear to the secretary general that this is [Ban's] decision," said Ric Grenell, the spokesman for the U.S. mission to the United Nations, "and that we will not stand in the way of what the U.N. thinks is best."

Rwanda's U.N. ambassador, Joseph Nsengimana, noted that the world body has already offered to renew the contract of the top commander of the U.N. mission in Darfur, Gen. Martin Luther Agwai of Nigeria, but has not done the same for Karenzi. "We have nominated General Karenzi because he is professionally qualified and the U.N. has

Advertisement



grupoinventia

Contactar

Reformas Integrales Barcelona

Network News MY PROFILE X

Friends' Activity

View More Activity


Network News PROFILE X

View More Activity

TOOLBOX

Resize Print
E-mail Reprints

Sponsored Links



Is It Time to Retire?
Have a \$500k portfolio? Ken Fisher has a retirement guide for you!
www.fisherinvestments.com

recognized he is a very good official," Nsengimana said. "As the force commander's contract was automatically renewed, we requested to know why Karenzi's was not."

The controversy surrounding Karenzi comes as the United States struggles to press countries to commit more troops to the U.N. force in Darfur. Fewer than 10,000 peacekeepers are serving in a mission that was originally expected to include more than 26,000 troops. By most accounts, Karenzi has served with distinction in Darfur.

In 1994, Rwanda's Hutu extremists killed more than 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus in a genocidal campaign that ended after the Tutsi rebel army, known as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), intervened and drove the Hutu-dominated government into eastern Congo. Karenzi, who played a key role in the rebel campaign, is considered a war hero in Rwanda for driving out the genocidal regime.

A Spanish magistrate, D. Fernando Andreu Merelles, issued an indictment in February against 40 Rwandan officials, including Karenzi and Col. Rugumya John Gacinya, Rwanda's military attache in Washington, for reprisal killings against Hutus in the years after the RPF seized power.

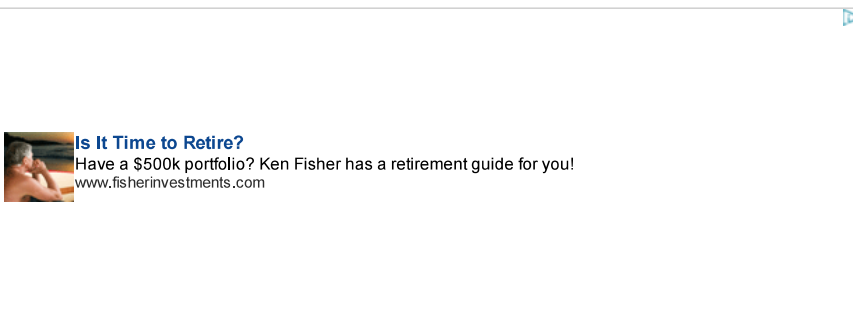
Merelles alleged that Karenzi, who was Rwanda's intelligence chief, had command responsibility for a series of political assassinations and massacres, including the "elimination" of Hutu populations in the towns of Nyakinama and Mukingo between 1994 and 1997.

"There is no basis whatsoever to support these allegations," said the Rwandan Foreign Ministry, which has accused the judge of conducting a halfhearted investigation that relied on evidence provided by anti-government extremists. It said Merelles made no effort to interview witnesses in Rwanda or to work with Rwanda's judicial authorities.

Karenzi's appointment last August as the second-ranking U.N. peacekeeper fueled criticism from the New York-based advocacy group Human Rights Watch, which said Rwandan forces under Karenzi's command recklessly killed civilians during a June 2000 battle with Ugandan troops in the Congolese town of Kisangani. Both sides showed a "blatant disregard for the lives of civilians," the rights group's executive director, Kenneth Roth, wrote in a letter to the United Nations and the African Union in December.

U.N. peacekeeping officials said they looked into the charges but could not establish whether Karenzi was responsible for war crimes. However, the Spanish indictments have prompted the United Nations to try to persuade the Rwandan government to replace Karenzi with another officer.

Nsengimana suggested that Rwanda would not budge, claiming that the Spanish case is built on allegations from individuals responsible for Africa's worst genocide. "For us this is a very big issue -- to choose between the people who committed genocide and a person who stopped genocide," he said.



Is It Time to Retire?
Have a \$500k portfolio? Ken Fisher has a retirement guide for you!
www.fisherinvestments.com

More Africa Coverage



A Mother's Risk

A multimedia report about the dangers of childbirth in poor nations.



Seeds of Peace

Uganda faces a long road to recovery after decades of war.



Connect Online

Share and comment on Post world news on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).