



General Karake Appointment Remains Hanging

Rwanda News Agency/Agence Rwandaise d'Information (Kigali)

NEWS

20 August 2007

Posted to the web 20 August 2007

Kigali

Rwandan Gen. Karenzi Karake was unanimously approved by the African Union to deputise on the Darfur hybrid force but the UN now says it has not stamped his candidacy despite pressure from Rwanda, RNA reports.

"We are aware of these allegations and we take them seriously," Reuters quotes an anonymous U.N. official to have said on Saturday in New York. The Official was referring to accusations by groups opposed to his appointment.

"We are consulting with the African Union and the government of Rwanda on the matter."

Gen. Karake, 46, has been nominated as the deputy commander of a joint UN and African Union (AU) force established by a Security Council resolution engineered by UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French president Nicolas Sarkozy.

The AU is said to have confirmed the general's appointment without consulting the UN - a sign of possible coordination problems to come in deploying the world's biggest peacekeeping force.

Last week, The Netherlands based Rwandan opposition group United Democratic Forces - UDF Inkingi alleges that Gen. Karake supervised several extra judiciary executions targeting politicians and civilians in Rwanda and DR Congo. The group points to the period before the Genocide and after the Rwanda Patriotic front - RPF rebels took over Rwanda.

According to Reuters, the U.N. official stressed that rules and regulations require that all U.N. personnel, especially those in leadership roles, "must embody the highest levels of professionalism, integrity, respect for diversity and accountability."

The official said the United Nations also welcomed "any information that organizations or individuals may have regarding such allegations against candidates for U.N. appointments."

According to The Guardian, a UK foreign office spokeswoman said that the appointment of force commanders was a job for the UN department of peacekeeping operations. But, apparently, British officials are concerned that if there was any substance to the allegations it could discredit the Darfur mission.

Back in Rwanda, officials usually do not take criticism from opposition groups seriously because most of these take advantage of being out of the country to raise largely discredited issues.

Rwanda envoy to the UN - Prof. Joseph Nsengimana told the BBC great lakes service last week that those raising the allegations had simply run out of ideas to complain about.

"The whole world and the diplomats at the UN, the Sudanese government and people of Darfur have appreciated the role that our troops in Darfur have played", Amb. Nsengimana said.

The Guardian quotes Rwandan Army spokesman Major Jill Rutaremara as saying last week that such allegations represented an effort by those responsible for the genocide "to tarnish Rwanda's image and to derail efforts at stabilising peace in Sudan".

"Such unfounded allegations should be treated with the contempt they deserve," he said.

Meanwhile, The Guardian also reports that Mr. Jordi Palou-Loverdos, a lawyer who is taking Rwandan military leaders to court in Spain for the murder of nine Spanish missionaries and humanitarian workers, argued that Gen Karake had questions to answer as he was in a senior military position when the killings took place.

"I would say that for a senior Rwandan officer under suspicion to be nominated at this point may not be a prudent decision for the UN," Mr Palou-Loverdos said.

Rwanda has about 2000 soldiers in the Sudanese troubled region of Darfur and all are planned to be incorporated into the newly agreed hybrid force of 22,000. Rwanda also recently promised AU chief Omar Konare that it would increase its force numbers.

Considering that the UN may foot all the bills of the force, there is no doubt that its reservations will be looked into. In a case where an agreement on the issue is impossible, observers say Gen. Karake, as a senior officer of the force, may find it challenging to reach out to a divided UN system. (End)

Copyright © 2007 Rwanda News Agency/Agence Rwandaise d'Information. All rights reserved. Distributed by AllAfrica Global Media (allAfrica.com).

Master of Arts in Education		 University of Phoenix	
■ Curriculum and Instruction - Computer Education	■ Elementary Teacher Education		
■ Curriculum and Instruction - English as a Second Language	■ Secondary Teacher Education		
■ Early Childhood Education	■ Cross-Categorical Special Education		