

NATIONAL

Nyamwasa wanted in Spain and France

By Tabu Butagira

Posted Thursday, July 8 2010 at 11:24

South Africa yesterday confirmed France and Spain have issued fresh extradition requests for Lt. Gen. Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa wanted for allegedly participating in the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

“Yes, there are [new] extradition requests from those two countries that we are considering,” Mr Tlali Tlali, the spokesman for South Africa’s Foreign Ministry, told this newspaper by telephone last evening.

A French judge indicted Gen. Nyamwasa in 2006 for allegedly shooting down the plane carrying Rwanda’s ex-President Juvenal Habyarimana and his Burundian counterpart Cyprian Ntaryamira, whose deaths sparked the unprecedented 1994 murder of an estimated 800,000 Rwandans in three months.

Separately, Spain in 2008 accused him of having links to the death of Spanish nuns during the genocide. The fresh extradition requests, which together with that made by Rwanda now total three, came to light as Rwanda’s Foreign Affairs Minister, Ms Louise Mushikiwabo, on Tuesday summoned South Africa’s Ambassador, Gladstone Gwadiso, to protest the way investigation into Gen. Nyamwasa’s June 19 shooting is being handled.

This followed what Ms Mushikiwabo called “insinuations emanating from official circles in South Africa and carried in the media [that] appear to be pointing a finger at the Rwandan government.”

“Naturally, there is no truth to this. We find these insinuations very alarming,” she told French news agency AFP. Mr Tlali said Rwanda’s extradition request too is “under consideration” but Gen. Nyamwasa has already been offered asylum.

The former confidant of President Kagame and an influential military figure in Rwanda Defence Forces ran into exile alleging Rwandan authorities were hounding him on fabricated charges. President Kagame said he was on the run to “avoid accountability”.