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Rwandan spy chief Karenzi Karake arrested in London

23 June 2015 | **UK**

Rwanda's intelligence chief Karenzi Karake, who is wanted in Spain for war crimes, has been arrested in London.

Gen Karake, 54, was arrested at Heathrow Airport on Saturday, and remanded in custody ahead of a court hearing on Thursday.

He is accused of ordering massacres while head of military intelligence in the wake of the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

Louise Mushikiwabo, Rwanda's foreign minister called the arrest "an outrage".

Gen Karake is also accused of ordering the killing of three Spanish nationals working for Medicos del Mundo.

'Contested vigorously'

In 2008, a Spanish judge indicted him for alleged war crimes along with 39 other current or former high-ranking Rwandan military officials.

He was arrested by Metropolitan police officers under the **European Arrest Warrant**.

But the Rwandan government is said to be puzzled by the timing of Gen Karake's arrest, as he had travelled to the UK several times since the indictment was issued.

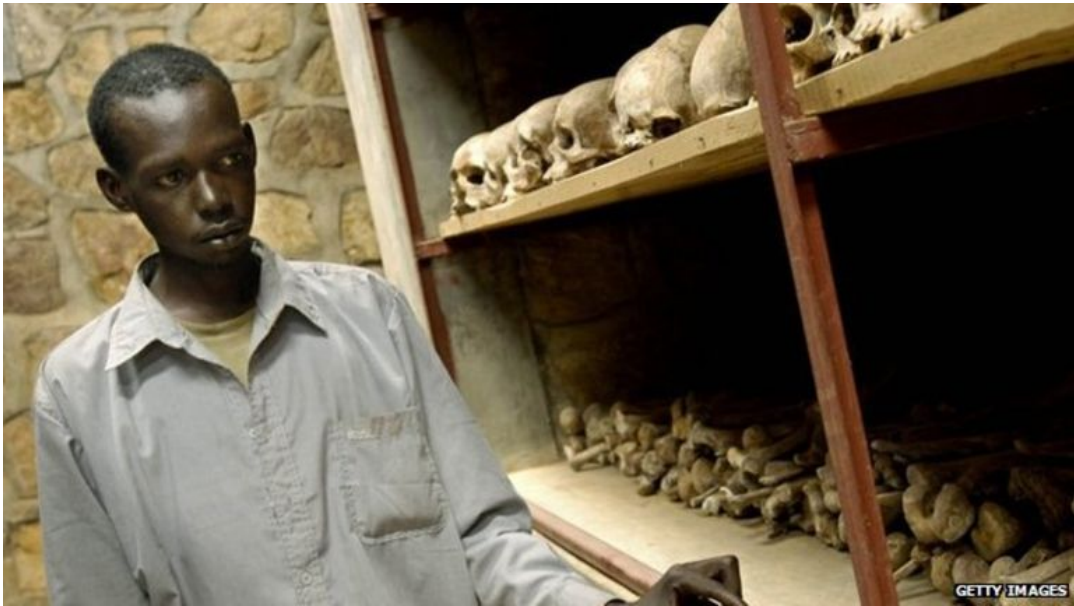
Williams Nkurunziza, Rwanda's High Commissioner to the UK, called the arrest "an insult".

"We take strong exception to the suggestion that he's being arrested on war crimes," he told the BBC World Service.

"Any suggestion that any of our 40 leaders are guilty of crimes against humanity is an insult to our collective conscience."



The genocide had a huge impact on Rwanda and its neighbouring countries



There are a number of memorials dedicated to those who were killed

Gen Karake is director general of Rwanda's National Intelligence and Security Services and a member of Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

Nicknamed KK, the Rwandan government hail him as one of the people who stopped the genocide. He went on to be deputy commander of the country's first UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur before returning to his role as spy chief.

During the genocide an estimated 800,000 people were killed between April and June 1994 by ethnic Hutu extremists.

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

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

But Human Rights Watch reported that in their drive for military victory and to control the population, the RPF killed thousands, including government troops, members of the militia and some civilians in numerous executions and massacres.