

28.06.10 - ICTR/KAREMERA - MRND OFFICIALS HAD NO PLAN TO STAGE COUP D'ETAT, CLAIMS BAGOSORA - Arusha, June 28, 2010 (FH) - Genocide-convict Theoneste Bagosora, Monday refuted prosecution claims that top leaders of then Rwandan ruling party, MRND, refused to nominate a successor of President Juvenal Habyarimana because they had a plan of staging a coup d'Etat to take over power.

"There is a paradox here. Those required to take power after death of president on April 6, 1994 refused to accept the offer given to them by the international community. This means, the theory of launching a coup d'Etat is not true," he told the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

Bagosora, who has been jailed for life for masterminding the 1994 genocide, was referring to MRND President Mathieu Ndirumapfse, Vice-President Edouard Karemera and Secretary General Joseph Nzirorera, when defending the latter.

The prosecution claims in the indictment that the trio staged a conspiracy of forming interim government to implement genocide policy by meeting with Bagosora on April 7, 1994 in the Ministry of Defence office, where he served as Director of Cabinet.

Examined by Nzirorera's co-counsel Patrick Mayidika, the witness testified, however, that he had met with MRND officials to convey a message from the UN Secretary General Representative for them to replace the deceased president.

"Paradoxically, they did not obey that message. They said they were not in a position to nominate the successor according to their party's constitution, which required calling for a congress. By that time it was not possible to convene a congress meeting," he testified.

Bagosora, now waiting for the hearing of his appeal case, continues with his testimony on Tuesday. Nzirorera and his colleagues are charged with crimes allegedly committed by members of their party. The prosecution has indicted them for their superior responsibility as top officials of the party then in power in 1994.

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