

VIDEO: Criminal Defense Lawyers Dispute The History of the Rwanda Genocide

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May 21, 2010 The ad hoc organizing committee of the Second International Criminal Defense Conference being held in Bruxelles on May 21-23, thanked Rwanda Chief Prosecutor Ngoga, and Kigali's New Times, for publicizing their efforts.

This week, as the [conference](#) dates approached, [The New Times](#) published several articles condemning it and quoting Rwanda's Chief Prosecutor Ngoga saying that, ""For a few years now, some defense lawyers at the ICTR have badly deviated from their professional duties and turned into activists and advocates of genocide denial."

Ngoga and The New Times thus drew international attention to the significance of the conference to the ongoing struggle over disputed histories of Rwanda's 1994 tragedy and related violence in Central Africa, both before and after. Last week Ngoga [warned Ingabire that she might be jailed once again](#) if she continues speaking to the press.

The ad hoc Conference organizing committee also said that they are defending the right to freedom of speech and thought and expect the conference to be a non-disruptive exchange of ideas that would be subjected to public critique, and historical/scientific evaluation, as the ideas exchanged at the [Nov. 2009 Hague Conference on the legacy of the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda](#) were.

They said that Rwanda Chief Prosecutor Ngoga had mischaracterized the historic Military-1 Trial Judgment of February 2009, which completely rejects the theory that what the world has come to know as the Rwanda Genocide was the result of a longstanding conspiracy, planned well in advance of April 1994, as the Nazi death camps were planned by the Third Reich.

They reaffirmed that the [Military-1 Trial Judgment](#) of February 2009, in the [International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda](#) had:

- Acquitted all four defendants of "planning or conspiracy" to commit genocide, or other crimes, either before or after April 6, 1994;
- Acquitted the highest ranking officer to be tried at the ICTR, Gen. Gratien Kabiligi, of all charges; and,
- Acquitted Col Bagosora (who is represented by Me. Rafael Constant of Paris not Mr.

Erlinder) of all charges that occurred before April 6 and after April 8, 1994.

The committee also said that “[Rwandan President Paul Kagame](#)’s regime habitually calls its political opponents ‘criminals’ as has been demonstrated in the [arrest and prosecution of Madame Victoire Inagabire](#) and others, in the run-up to the August presidential elections, and, that “Kagame used the same tactic to virtually eliminate political opposition in the 2003 sham presidential election that formalized his monolithic regime.”

The Conference organizing committee rejected the Kagame government’s efforts to make it illegal to question the role of Kagame’s ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front Party (RPF) in crimes that the RPF instead accuses its opponents of.

They said that Kagame and the RPF’s responsibility for the assassinations of the Presidents of Burundi and Rwanda is the subject of French and Spanish indictments, and a [wrongful death civil case in U.S. federal court](#), and that RPF responsibility for these crimes has been confirmed by former Chief ICTR Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte, and others from ICTR Prosecutor’s Office.

Members of the ad hoc organizing committee of this week’s International Criminal Defense Conference in Bruxelles were Professor Peter Erlinder, Me. Beth Lyons, Me. Ken Ogetto, Me. John Philpot, and Me. Andre Tremblay.

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