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## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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| <b>The Board</b>                     |   |
| About the Board                      | <b>RWA102792.E</b>  |
| Biographies                          |   |
| Organization Chart                   | Rwanda: Involvement of members of the Roman Catholic clergy in the 1994 genocide  |
| Employment                           | Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa   |
| Legal and Policy                     |   |
| References                           |   |
| Publications                         | Several sources consulted by the Research Directorate implicate a number of members of the Roman Catholic clergy in Rwanda in the country's 1994 genocide (RNS 5 Jan. 2008; IWPR 1 Dec. 2006; BBC 20 Sept. 2004; <i>The New York Times</i> 12 May 2002; <i>ibid.</i> 10 June 2001). Although there are reports of priests and nuns offering protection and standing up to Hutu "death squads" ( <i>ibid.</i> ; IWPR 1 Dec. 2006; RNS 5 Jan. 2008), there are also accounts of certain members of the clergy being complicit in the genocide ( <i>ibid.</i> ; <i>The New York Times</i> 12 May 2002; <i>ibid.</i> 10 June 2001; IWPR 1 Dec. 2006; BBC 20 Sept. 2004). There are also allegations that some senior clergy members were closely connected to those who planned the genocide or remained silent during the killings ( <i>The New York Times</i> 10 June 2001; <i>ibid.</i> 12 May 2002; see also RNS 5 Jan. 2008; IWPR 1 Dec. 2006). A 5 January 2008 news article by the Washington-based Religion News Service (RNS) states that in Rwanda, "stories circulated ... of a hierarchy [in the Roman Catholic Church] that condoned ethnic hatred from the pulpit, and of top church leaders who held positions of prominence in the Hutu government that orchestrated the genocide" (RNS 5 Jan. 2008). |
| <b>Tribunal</b>                      |   |
| Refugee Protection Division          |   |
| Immigration Division                 |   |
| Immigration Appeal Division          |   |
| Decisions                            |   |
| Forms                                |   |
| Statistics                           |   |
| <b>Research</b>                      |   |
| Research Program                     |   |
| National Documentation Packages      | Several Roman Catholic clergy members have been indicted and convicted for genocide and crimes against humanity by the traditional Rwandan village courts, referred to as <i>gacaca</i> [or "justice in the grass"], by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) based in neighbouring Tanzania (IWPR 1 Dec. 2006), and by courts in Belgium (UN 16 Feb. 2006; BBC 20 Sept. 2004; <i>The New York Times</i> 10 June 2001). The following paragraphs provide a brief description of some of these cases.  |
| Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets |   |
| Responses to Information Requests    |   |
| Recent Research                      | In 1998, a <i>gacaca</i> court sentenced two Rwandan Catholic priests to death after finding them guilty of "genocide and complicity to genocide" (CNN 18 Apr. 1998). The two priests, Jean François Kayiranga and Edouard Nkurikiye, allegedly encouraged approximately 2,000 Tutsis to seek refuge in their church in Nyange before it was attacked by Hutu militias ( <i>ibid.</i> ). The priests reportedly then had the building bulldozed with the bodies inside ( <i>ibid.</i> ).  |
| <b>Media Centre</b>                  |   |
| News                                 |   |
| Information Sheets                   |   |
| Media Relations                      |   |
|                                      |   |
| Proactive Disclosure                 | In 1999, Rwandan bishop Augustin Misago was arrested and brought to trial in Kigali on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity (BBC 20 Aug. 1999; <i>ibid.</i> 15 June 2000). Misago was accused of failing to protect Tutsis in his church and was also thought to have close ties to the Hutu authorities, including those  |

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involved in leading "death squads" (ibid. 20 Aug. 1999). In 2000, he was acquitted of the charges (ibid. 15 June 2000).

In 2005, a Belgian Catholic priest, Guy Theunis, was arrested for his alleged complicity in the 1994 genocide (BBC 27 Sept. 2005; RSF 9 Nov. 2005; Freedom House 2007). Theunis, the first foreigner to appear before a gacaca court, was accused of inciting killings by publishing certain articles in a magazine that he had edited (BBC 27 Sept. 2005; see also RSF 9 Nov. 2005). However, the priest's supporters, including the non-governmental organization (NGO) Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontières, RSF), contend that he was imprisoned for exposing human rights abuses committed by the ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) (RSF 9 Nov. 2005; ibid. 21 Nov. 2005; Freedom House 2007). Following negotiations between the Rwandan and Belgian authorities, Theunis was repatriated to Belgium, where he was to be tried (ibid.; UN 16 Feb. 2006; RSF 21 Nov. 2005). Information on the outcome of Theunis' trial could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, according to a United Nations (UN) Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) article, in February 2006, Theunis was awarded a peace prize by a Belgian weekly church newspaper (16 Feb. 2006). At that time, the Belgian authorities were still investigating his case and had not issued an arrest warrant against him (UN 16 Feb. 2006).

In 2005, Archbishop Thaddée Ntuhinyurwa, the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Rwanda (UN 22 July 2005), appeared before a gacaca court in southern Rwanda to answer questions regarding his alleged participation in the genocide (*The New Times* 20 July 2005; UN 22 July 2005). Archbishop Ntuhinyurwa was accused of being a member of a "death squad" (*The New Times* 20 July 2005), and of ordering approximately 600 people from a church into a soccer stadium, where they were killed by Hutu militia and government soldiers (UN 22 July 2005). Sources consulted by the Research Directorate do not indicate whether the Archbishop was charged or convicted for his alleged involvement in the genocide; however, as of December 2007, the Archbishop was still preaching at St. Michael's Cathedral in Kigali (*The New Times* 26 Dec. 2007).

In 2006, the ICTR sentenced Catholic priest Athanase Seromba to 15 years in jail for his role in the 1994 genocide (BBC 13 Dec. 2006; Jurist 26 Nov. 2007). The Tribunal found Father Seromba guilty of organizing the killing of over 2,000 Tutsis in western Rwanda (ibid.; BBC 13 Dec. 2006; ibid. 20 Sept. 2004). The Tutsis were reportedly taking refuge at a church that the priest had ordered bulldozed (ibid.; Jurist 26 Nov. 2007; BBC 13 Dec. 2006; *The New York Times* 12 May 2002).

In 2006, a Rwandan tribunal sentenced Roman Catholic priest Wenceslas Munyeshyaka to life in prison for his role in the genocide (Jurist 16 Nov. 2006; IWPR 1 Dec. 2006). Father Munyeshyaka, living in France in 2006, was tried in absentia; he was found guilty of committing rape and assisting Hutu militiamen in the genocide (Jurist 16 Nov. 2006; IWPR 1 Dec. 2006). In 2007, the French authorities arrested the priest on an international warrant issued by the ICTR; however, he was released a month later after a French court of appeals found that the warrant "could not be executed" (Jurist 1 Aug. 2007).

In 2007, the ICTR indicted another priest, Hormisdas Nsengimana for the following counts: genocide; conspiracy to commit genocide; crimes against humanity for murder and extermination; and collaboration for ordering college students to cooperate with Hutu militiamen (Jurist 23 June 2007; see also Hirondele News Agency 11 Feb. 2008; *The New York Times* 12 May 2002). Information on the outcome of this trial could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Other Roman Catholic clergy named in the media who have been convicted for their alleged involvement in the 1994 genocide include: Father Laurent Ntimugura (UN 25 Jan. 2001); Father Emmanuel Rukundo (Hirondele News Agency 20 Feb. 2008; ibid. 11 Feb. 2008); Sister Theophister Mukakibibi (BBC 10 Nov.

2006; IWPR 1 Dec. 2006); Sister Julianne Maria Kizito and Mother Superior Gertrude Mukangango (ibid.; *The New York Times* 10 June 2001).

Information on the total number of members of the Roman Catholic clergy in Rwanda who have been imprisoned for their alleged involvement in the 1994 genocide could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. Reporting on the indictments of three Rwandan Roman Catholic priests by the ICTR, a 12 May 2002 article in *The New York Times* states that "[i]t is not known if there are more clergymen among the tribunal's secret indictments."

A 5 January 2008 RNS article alleges that some Hutu priests charged for their involvement in the 1994 genocide "either fled [Rwanda] or washed the blood from their hands and continued preaching."

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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