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2 September 2004

RWA42954.FE

Rwanda: Whether in 2000 certain prisoners accused of participating in the 1994 genocide were released or whether they were granted clemency; if so, whether accusers were threatened; if so, whether those threatened filed complaints with the authorities; state protection available to the accusers (2000-August 2004)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

No information concerning a release or clemency granted in 2000 to prisoners accused of participating in the 1994 genocide could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response.

However, corroborating sources refer to the release at the beginning of 2003 of thousands of prisoners accused of participating in the genocide (Reuters 8 Mar. 2003; MSF 16 Aug. 2004; AFP 5 May 2003; AP 25 Feb. 2003; BBC 7 Jan. 2003). According to those same sources, that release occurred in preparation for the creation of traditional courts called "Gacaca," where genocide suspects were to be tried (ibid.; MSF 16 Aug. 2004; AP 25 Feb. 2003). "In all, some 40,000 detainees [were] expected to be released under the order, with the exception of those suspected of leading and organizing the genocide or those accused of rape" (ibid.).

No information on whether threats made against genocide survivors come specifically from people who were released in 2003 and on whether the threats are intended only for the accusers could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, RWA42872.E of 27 August 2004, concerning the current situation of the 1994 genocide survivors, might be of interest.

For further information on the 2003 release of the 1994 genocide suspects, please see RWA40362.E of 23 January 2003.

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.

References

Agence France Presse (AFP). 5 May 2003. Helen Vesperini. "Thousands of Rwandan Genocide Suspects Freed Pending Trials." (NEXIS)

Associated Press (AP). 25 February 2003. Rodrigue Ngowi. "Rwandan Genocide Suspects Freed from Prison Face Uncertain Future as they Return Home." (NEXIS)

BBC. 7 January 2003. "Anger at Release of Rwandan Killers."
<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2631741.stm>> [Accessed 31 Aug. 2004]

Médecins sans frontières (MSF). 16 August 2004. "Rwanda: Mass Release of Rwandan Genocide Suspects from Prison Prompts Concern for Mental Health of Genocide Survivors." <<http://www.msf.org.au/tw-project/008twp.html>> [Accessed 31 Aug. 2004]

Reuters. 8 March 2003. Adam Tanner. "Rwandan Leader Defends Mass Release of Prisoners."
<<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/e3fb71d5983f8e55c1256ce500470b94?OpenDocument>> [Accessed 31 Aug. 2004]

Additional Sources Consulted

Attempts to contact IBUKA, an umbrella organization for survivors of the 1994 genocide, were unsuccessful.

Publications : *Africa Confidential*, *Africa Research Bulletin*, *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent*, *Keesing's Record of World Events*, Resources Centre country file.

Internet sites, including : Africatime, AllAfrica, Amnesty International, BBC Africa, Dialog, Ecoi.net, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), MISNA, ReliefWeb.

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