

Banque de France sued over complicity in Genocide against the Tutsi

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A complaint has been filed against France's central bank, Banque de France, for having authorised wire transfers that allegedly facilitated the arming of extremists who perpetrated the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.



Banque de France headquarters. Photo by Reuters

As part of the allegations, human rights advocates and researchers accuse the bank of playing an indirect but significant role in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi.

The complaint was filed on Dec 4 to the senior investigating judge of a Paris court's

unit for crimes against humanity, by attorneys Matilda Ferey and Joseph Brehm on behalf of three civil parties: Dafroza and Alain Gauthier, along with the Collective of Civil Parties for Rwanda (CPCR).

The plaintiffs - the Collective of Civil Parties for Rwanda (CPCR) along with its founders Alain Gauthier and Dafroza Mukarumongi, claim that the Bank of France not only failed to block the National Bank of Rwanda's account but also authorised seven transfers from it, totalling 3.17 million francs (about pound 486,000).

The transactions reportedly occurred between 5 May and 1 August 1994.

Among the recipients was the French firm Alcatel, which is alleged to have supplied communication systems to Rwandan authorities. Documents referenced in the complaint indicate that a transfer of 435,000 francs was made to Alcatel on 5 May 1994. Testimonies cited by the plaintiffs suggest that this money helped fund the purchase of satellite phones-equipment the interim Rwandan government considered crucial for maintaining communication with the outside world.

Additional transfers were directed to Rwanda's diplomatic missions in Ethiopia, South Africa and Egypt, and may have been used for weapons procurement.

'The Tutsi genocide was not only the work of those who killed with machetes. It was made possible by a multitude of white-collar criminals who, comfortably seated in their offices, authorised transfers and signed off on operations with administrative banality, far from the bloodshed but necessary to the genocidal machine,' CPCR lawyers Matilda Ferey and Joseph Breham said in a statement.

The complaint relies on evidence compiled in 1996 by two UNDP experts-including former Belgian senator Pierre Galland-who logged the transfers, their value and timing.

Galland told *Libération*, a French newspaper that when the interim government fled Rwanda in early July, it *'left behind many documents showing that donors had carried out transfers without sufficient oversight. The funds allowed the Rwandan army and the perpetrators of the genocide to operate. Our mission was to trace all those transfers'*.

Some of the payments may have directly

financed arms purchases.

'At the time when the Bank of France facilitated these seven transactions on behalf of the génocidaires, it likely had procedures and tools in place that should have alerted it,' said Austin Kathi Lynn, founder of the Conflict Awareness Project, who conducted early investigations into post-genocide arms trafficking.

'Given the extensive media coverage of the Rwandan genocide, the control exercised by an unconstitutional interim government over the Rwandan state's bank accounts, and the arms embargo imposed on Rwanda, certain transactions involving the génocidaires should have been flagged as potentially illegal,' she added.

The plaintiffs maintain that the Bank of France could not plausibly have been unaware of the situation.

'Hutu militants were carrying out systematic extermination wherever they could – in churches, in schools,' Gauthier told Radio France. *'The whole world knew. How could the Bank of France and French authorities not have known?'*