

# Justice delayed but finally served: Activists, survivors on ‘Butcher of Tumba’ Genocide conviction

Aurore Teta Ufitiwabo

The New Times, December 20, 2023



Genocide convict Sosthène Munyemana infamously known as the ‘Butcher of Tumba’ for his role in the 1994 Genocide, was handed a 24-year prison sentence.

Rights activists as well as survivors of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda are relieved that justice has finally, though delayed, been served after a French court on Tuesday, December 19, handed a 24-year prison sentence to Sosthène Munyemana, infamously known as the ‘*Butcher of Tumba*’ for his role in the 1994 Genocide.

He was convicted and sentenced for his role in the Genocide against the Tutsi, particularly in the former Butare prefecture,

now Huye district. The Cour d’Assises de Paris found Munyemana guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity, and complicity in the crime of genocide.

Daphrose Gauthier, the spouse of Alain Gauthier, the president of France-based Collectif des Parties Civiles pour le Rwanda (CPCR), which has for nearly three decades advocated for justice against Rwandan genocide suspects in France, expressed satisfaction with Munyemana’s conviction.

She emphasized that despite the prolonged delay in delivering justice, Munyemana, who had been living freely for almost three decades, has finally been rightfully sentenced.

“*Although delayed, the time for justice has come,*” Gauthier stated.

She underscored the significance of Munyemana’s conviction for his role in the 1994 genocide, noting that while there is still room for appeal in his sentence, the crucial aspect is the acknowledgment of his guilt after almost 30 years.

Reflecting on the length of the sentence, Gauthier stressed that what matters most

is Munyemana's accountability for his actions during the Genocide. She acknowledged the potential for further legal proceedings but highlighted the satisfaction among the Tumba population that justice, "*though delayed, has been served.*"

Naphtal Ahishakiye, the Executive Secretary of Ibuka, an umbrella body for genocide survivors' organisations, equally expressed gratification that justice has finally been served "*after so many years of waiting.*"

He noted that while a 24-year sentence might be short, considering the severity of Munyemana's crimes, the important aspect is the acknowledgment of guilt and the subsequent conviction.

Ahishakiye commended the efforts of the French justice system in trying genocide suspects and urged for the acceleration of pending cases. He emphasized the importance of continued efforts to ensure justice for those whose investigations have concluded and those still awaiting legal resolution.

He said the residents of the former Butare prefecture, now the Huye district, where Munyemana committed his crimes, find relief in the verdict.

Ever since Munyemana's arrest, Ahishakiye said, the affected community in Huye held onto hope that justice would prevail.