

# Trump pulls US out of UN court that tried Genocide perpetrators

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The United States has withdrawn from the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT). Internet

The United States has withdrawn from the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), the successor of a United Nations court that played a role in prosecuting masterminds of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

The mechanism is among 66 UN and non-UN organisations affected by President Donald Trump's decision to withdrawal his country from international bodies the White House says "no longer serve American national interests."

Trump formalised the decision through a memorandum signed on Wednesday, January 7.

## The work of IRMCT

The IRMCT is a UN judicial body established by the UN Security Council to continue and complete the work of two now-defunct tribunals: the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The ICTR was mandated to prosecute those responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Rwanda in 1994, during which more than one million people were killed.

A total of 93 people were indicted by the ICTR for crimes related to the Genocide against the Tutsi before the tribunal officially closed in 2015. Following its closure, the IRMCT assumed responsibility for the remaining judicial functions to ensure accountability was not lost.

The IRMCT has prosecuted several high-profile genocide cases. A prominent case is that of Félicien Kabuga, an alleged financier of the Genocide, accused of funding militias and supplying weapons used in the mass killings. Kabuga was arrested in France in May 2020 after more than 25 years on the run. His trial began under the IRMCT but was later suspended due to concerns over his mental fitness to stand trial.

Another case is that of Fulgence Kayishema, one of the most wanted genocide suspects, who was arrested in South Africa in May 2023 after nearly two decades on the run. He is accused of orchestrating the killing of about 2,000 Tutsi refugees at Nyange Catholic Church during the genocide.

The residual mechanism also accounted for Protais Mpiranya, a senior military commander indicted for his role in organising genocide. The IRMCT later confirmed that Mpiranya had died, marking a step in closing long-standing fugitive cases.

Similarly, Pheneas Munyarugarama, a former lieutenant colonel in the former Rwandan

Armed Forces (FAR) who was indicted for genocide and crimes against humanity, was confirmed dead in May 2002. It was confirmed that Munyarugarama died in February 2002 in eastern DR Congo.

Other fugitives linked to ICTR indictments include Charles Sikubwabo and Charles Ryandikayo, both of whom were among the last individuals wanted for genocide crimes. The IRMCT has since confirmed that both are deceased, effectively accounting for all people indicted by the ICTR.

Beyond active prosecutions, the Mechanism has handled legacy matters involving convicted genocide planners such as Théoneste Bagosora, whose post-conviction applications, including those related to sentence enforcement, fell under the IRMCT's jurisdiction.

The Mechanism has also monitored cases referred to national courts, including those of Bernard Munyagishari, Ladislas Ntaganzwa, and Jean-Bosco Uwinkindi, ensuring compliance with international standards.