

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide: Jean Leonard Teganya, a Rwandan in Boston's Federal Court

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Genocide is among the worst possible crimes. Victims of genocide and crimes against humanity deserve to see the perpetrators prosecuted and punished. However, the innocent must be presumed innocent until proven guilty, despite the seriousness of the alleged crime.

No U.S. citizen, neither president nor military officer, has ever been accused or tried for genocide crime in a U.S. court, but Rwandan immigrants have been tried here many times for participating in the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and lying about it on their immigration papers. Former Rwandan medical student **Jean Leonard Teganya** has been facing such charges in Massachusetts Federal District Court, and his case will be decided in coming weeks, most likely by mid-April.

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Teganya is accused of identifying and helping Hutu militants capture and kill Tutsis in the hospital where he was training in 1994.

In order to convict Teganya of the crime of perjury in the U.S., the jury must conclude that he is indeed guilty of alleged crimes in Rwanda or that he lied about being a member of the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND), the ruling party before Gen. Paul Kagame and his army seized power in July 1994. The court must presume his innocence until conclusive evidence of his guilt is presented.

Rwanda's military dictator **Paul Kagame** commonly accuses innocent Rwandans living abroad of genocide crime because they differ politically, because they challenge the government's account of who killed whom and how during the genocide, and because they are of Rwanda's Hutu ethnic group, which is commonly believed to have committed genocide against the Tutsi.

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Imagine a group of people who have been coerced by threat of death or imprisonment in an African jail and then told that to escape that fate, they need simply go on a trip to the United States to testify against some stranger, with the flight, hotel, meals etc. all paid for by American taxpayers. Imagine those people being coached by an African prosecutor about what to say in the U.S. courtroom.

Imagine that, after the defense team cross-examines them and manages to prove obvious lies in their testimony, these people simply leave their hotel and fly home to Rwanda, avoiding perjury charges unless the prosecutor later decides to indict them in a U.S. court and demand their extradition. It's so unlikely that a U.S. prosecutor would do such a thing that it deserves mention only as a legal technicality. In fact, prosecution witnesses testify without penalty of perjury.

Many observers present at the trial of Jean Leonard Teganya in Boston, Massachusetts, have observed all this happening.

The U.S. federal court system is normally biased against the defendant. In 1972, the conviction rate in that system was approximately [75 percent](#) and by 2012 it had climbed to [93 percent](#). Today, some say that rate is as high as 95 percent. It does not take a genius to realize that at least some of these convictions are wrong and the Innocence Project has exonerated many people years after they were convicted.

Prosecution collaborates with Rwandan military dictator Paul Kagame

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts made the odds even worse for Mr. Teganya by collaborating with the government of Rwandan military dictator Paul Kagame to produce "witnesses," who have nothing to lose because they will leave this country before they can be charged with perjury, and who have everything to gain back home in Rwanda by falsely accusing Mr. Teganya.

The witnesses that the Kagame regime has offered to the prosecution are a defense team's worst nightmare and an abuse of the U.S. legal system because they testify essentially without penalty of perjury.

What's more, the human rights crimes of Kagame himself and his military forces have been widely documented in annual [reports from the State Department](#) as well as various reports by [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Amnesty International](#). He and his forces could be convicted of genocide if charges were brought in a criminal court and honestly investigated.

This was explained in the BBC documentary "[Rwanda's Untold Story](#)" and in the [United Nations' Mapping Report](#). Gen. Kagame's plots to assassinate Rwandans abroad have been exposed in the United Kingdom, Belgium and South Africa.

His use of false witnesses to go after real or perceived enemies has been documented by many, including Alexander Zahar in "[The Problem of False Testimony at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda](#)." Nevertheless, federal prosecutors in Massachusetts have chosen to partner with this regime to increase their chances of convicting Mr. Teganya.

The mainstream media in Boston, particularly the Boston Globe's Maria Cramer and the Boston Herald's Laurel J. Sweet, aided the prosecution by publishing, upon the trial's opening, accusations with no countervailing account of events. As these accusations now fall apart in court, these reporters are failing to correct the public record. This is not only media malpractice, but also a disservice to their audiences.

One of these Rwandan witnesses claimed that Mr. Teganya sexually assaulted her during the 1994 genocide. This same witness had previously testified about her 1994 ordeals in several proceedings in Rwanda and at the United Nations Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda in

Arusha, Tanzania. Some defendants were convicted on the basis of her testimony in those proceedings in Africa.

However, at no time in multiple proceedings did she ever mention Mr. Teganya's name. In the Massachusetts federal district court, she was unable to explain why, 25 years later, she is accusing Mr. Teganya for the first time ever.

Her current testimony does not match all her previous testimonies. Was she lying multiple times in African courts or is she lying now, assuming that the American court would never know what she told the African courts?

Another Rwandan witness claimed that he was on the janitorial staff at the school where Mr. Teganya was studying medicine in 1994, and that the two of them would go to town every week to get militia weapons-training in preparation for the genocide. However, in response to defense questioning, this witness was unable to name any other medical students known to him or to Mr. Teganya. The jury was expected to believe that this janitorial staffer made friends with just one medical student, Mr. Teganya, without knowing any of his other friends among the hospital's medical students. American taxpayer dollars are being used to fly these kinds of witnesses to Boston.

Despite all this worthless testimony, the Massachusetts prosecutors who charged Mr. Teganya have failed to demonstrate why he, at the time a high-achieving, 22-year-old medical student with a passion for medicine and no prior record - not even a parking ticket - would suddenly commit murder and rape women.

Americans should oppose the use of their taxes to bring such pathetic witnesses to U.S. courts. They should oppose the federal government prosecutor's collaboration with an infamous military dictator hunting his enemies down abroad.

And they should oppose mainstream media that tarnishes defendants' names and then fails to correct the record when new information comes out. They should watch the U.S. District Court in the State of Massachusetts in the case of Jean Leonard Teganya.

Genocide victims deserve to see real perpetrators punished, not to see the innocent framed.

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