

Rwanda: UN's Louise Arbour Under Fire Over 1994 murder of the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi

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The former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour is responsible for covering up the murder of the President of Rwanda, the President of Burundi and many other persons who were assassinated on April 06 1994, a senior attorney with the UN Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has alleged.

Lead Counsel Christopher Black who is defending General Augustin Ndindiliyimana, former Chief of Staff of Rwandan Gendarmerie says that Louise Arbour – as Chief Prosecutor of the ICTR conspired with some countries to cover up investigations into allegations against the RPF.

According to the Canadian Barrister, Ms. Arbour, 61, is a “criminal, corrupt, (and) a shame to all Canadians”. The sooner she is indicted and thrown in prison the better, says Mr. Black – who was reacting to an interview of the former senior UN officer on CBC. Ms. Arbour announced Sunday that she was retiring after years of international service.

In 1997, Ms. Arbour is said to have been informed by her chief of investigations, Australian Michael Hourigan and his team, including FBI agent Jim Lyons and Canadian police officers assigned to their unit that it was the RPF who had shot down the plane and massacred all those people.

“But instead of indicting Paul Kagame and the RPF men who had murdered all those people she ordered Hourigan to come to The Hague where she told him to kill the investigation and to burn his notes”, says Mr. Black.

“This makes her an accessory to mass murder and a war criminal.”

Barrister Black points fingers at the UN, the US, Canada and Belgium as the culprits in helping the RPF to carry out the alleged assassinations. She did this on the instructions of the US government in violation of her oath to be independent as prosecutor, argues Mr. Black.

The ill-equipped UN force in Rwanda during the Genocide was incidentally also headed by Canadian Gen Romeo Dallaire.

Ms. Arbour was the Chief Prosecutor of the ICTR and ICTY between 1996 and 2000. She moved back to the Supreme Court of Canada and in 2004 she became the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

As chief prosecutor, she indicted former Yugoslav and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, among others, for war crimes and crimes against humanity for his part in atrocities committed in Kosovo. The indictment of Slobodan Milosevic was the first of a serving Head of State.

It is during the same period that several senior former officials of the Genocidal government in Rwanda were tracked and brought to book. Their cases have been ongoing at the Tanzania-based court.

Controversy started when it came to what have become the longest and grueling trails involving senior Ex-government soldiers such Major Ntabakuze, Colonel Theoneste Bagosora, Brigadier-General Gratien Kabiligi, and Colonel Anatole Nsengiyumva in case 'Military I'.

Others that are co-accused in trail 'Military II' are General Augustin Bizimungu - former chief of staff of the Rwandan army, General Augustin Ndindiliyimana, the former commander of the recognition battalion, Major François-Xavier Nzuwonemeye and Captain Innocent Sagahutu, who commanded a squadron of this elite unit.

The defense in these cases have held that the RPF rebels - with support from some quarters especially the west are responsible for the death of President Habyarimana and thereby culminating into the Genocide. The defense has also stood by demands that as these officers are tried, those they were fighting against should come to the dock as well.

"Once she (Arbour) proved her reliability to the Americans, that is that she was corrupt and willing to cover up those responsible for mass murder, she was then used to lay false war crimes charges against Milosevic in order to prolong the war against Yugoslavia", claims Mr. Black who has worked with the ICTR since 2000.

Last year Ms. Arbour was in Rwanda and held discussions with top government officials and President Paul Kagame. She was also at the forefront praising Rwanda for abolishing the death penalty last year.

In January this year she said she would seek another term at the helm of the UN Rights body but last month decided otherwise.

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