

Victoire Ingabire. Challenging the Official Rwanda Genocide Story

At the African Court on Human and People's Rights

By [Ann Garrison](#)

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KPFA Weekend News Anchor: Rwandan political prisoner Victoire Ingabire's appeal of her 15 year sentence has been accepted by the African Court of Human and People's Rights. KPFA's Ann Garrison has the story.

KPFA Ann Garrison: Rwandan political prisoner Victoire Ingabire has been compared to Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyii, and even Patrice Lumumba because of the scale of her challenge to existing belief and power structures that has led to the death and disinheritance of millions in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, most of all in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. After becoming the leader of the Rwandan Diaspora's opposition to the authoritarian regime of Rwandan President Paul Kagame, she returned to Rwanda to run against him in the 2010 election. She was instead placed under house arrest shortly after her return and is now serving a 15 year sentence. This week the African Court of Human and People's Rights agreed to hear her case on appeal, in Arusha, Tanzania.

Marcelline Nduwamungu, a Rwandan exile in Belgium, and a member of the Womens Internatioal Network for Democracy and Peace, said that many Rwandans in the Diaspora speak and write against the regime, but Victoire Ingabire dared to return and challenge President Kagame directly, in Rwanda.

Marcelline Nduwamungu: Her struggle is very important for us, because all of us, we are outside the country. We speak, we talk, we write, but she decided to go and to confront Mr. Kagame in Rwanda.

KPFA: Nduwamungu said that Victoire's courage was also extraordinary because a number of men had said that they would return to Rwanda with her, but in the end found reason not to go, so she decided to go alone.

BK Kumbi, a Congolese Swiss activist said that Victoire should be an inspiration for all African people.

BK Kumbi: She's a symbol of justice. And all she's doing, all her fight, is just telling us that there can't be peace without justice, and she doesn't give up. And I think that she invites us all to reflect on that as Africans. As a whole, we should really really support that woman because we have a very special person and a true leader.

KPFA: Ingabire was convicted of inspiring Rwandans to rise up against the state, and quote unquote "genocide denial," which means disagreeing with the official history of the

genocide that is legally enforced in Rwanda. She said that there Hutus and Tutsis were both extremists and victims during the mass killing in Rwanda in 1994 and before and after, and that both sides must be allowed to mourn and commemorate their dead. That description was recently affirmed by the controversial new BBC documentary, "[Rwanda: The Untold Story](#)," which so angered the Rwandan government that they canceled BBC broadcasts in the Kinyarwanda language and indicted the BBC itself for – quote unquote – “genocide denial. ”

For [Pacifica](#), [KPFA](#) and [AfrobeatRadio](#), I'm Ann Garrison.

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