



**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**

*National Commission for the Fight against Genocide*

*Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Génocide*

*Komisiyo y'Igihugu yo Kurwanya Jenoside*



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THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST GENOCIDE (CNLG)  
WELCOMES THE DECISION OF CONVICTION OF FABIEN NERETSE BY THE  
BELGIAN JURISDICTIONS.

This 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019, the Brussels Assize Court found Fabien Neretse guilty of genocide and war crimes. Neretse Fabien was prosecuted for the crime of genocide and war crimes committed in Nyamirambo where he resided and Mataba his native region; as well as connections elsewhere in Rwanda, between April 6, 1994 and July 14, 1994.

Neretse called the army to proceed with the execution of several families, that is 13 dead, in total in Kigali. Neretse had created an Interahamwe militia of Mataba to which he had distributed weapons before the attacks, and paid for it.

Neretse's conviction is a landmark decision for several reasons :

First, it is the first time in Belgium that a criminal prosecution and conviction have been based on a law punishing genocide. Indeed, other convictions of Rwandans had been made on the basis of the law punishing crimes against humanity and war crimes.

This first case law in Belgium of recognition of the genocide committed against Tutsi Rwandans is for Belgian deniers a failure and an honor given to the victims.

Then, it is necessary to underline another dimension of the Neretse trial which showed a negationist defense, in particular in the person of the lawyer Jean Flamme, throughout the trial, was very virulent with regard to the Prosecutor and the civil parties.

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For the first time in Belgium, the denial of the genocide committed against the Tutsi was used as the main means of defense, thereby tending to obscure the responsibility of the accused.

Finally, as soon as the Neretse trial was announced, the latter set up a team to bribe witnesses. In-kind donations were distributed to witnesses including cash and field land to encourage them to exonerate him.

This trial is highly symbolic for other trials to come.

## 1. NERETSE CORRUPTED THE WITNESSES

Neretse appeared free during the hearing. This freedom allowed him to buy witnesses, threaten them and put pressure on them.

For several months, Neretse's family donated land, distributed money to key prosecution witnesses. The corruption of witnesses was accompanied by intimidation, sowing fear, following Neretse's phone, or through his agents in place.

But despite this pressure, survivors of the genocide testified against Neretse, defying the genocidal obsession to "tabula rasa" the reality of the crime of genocide he committed.

CNLG denounces the practice of bribery of witnesses, which is becoming a practice before national foreign and international courts. This was the case during the request for review of the Augustin Ndirabatware trial before the Mechanism of the International Criminal Tribunals, where a group of five people were arrested for trying to bribe and intimidate witnesses.

This practice is a threat to the quality of justice, a strategy of genocidaires to escape justice.

Preventive measures must be taken, including the incarceration in prison of those suspected of genocide who are under investigation during an investigation.

## 2. THE NEGATIONIST DEFENSE STRATEGIES



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Since the beginning of the trial, defense lawyer Me Flamme has repeatedly cited genocide deniers focusing on the double genocide. Already in the choice of context witnesses, there were names of people known in Holocaust deniers such as Judi Rever, Joseph Matata, Johann Swinnen and others.

The aim was to provide a platform for individuals explicitly known as deniers of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Several people were shocked to hear Me Flamme say that the genocide against the Tutsi was not perpetrated, and that therefore his client was innocent since he was being prosecuted for a crime that does not exist.

Already known for his negationist strategies before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, in particular as a lawyer for Tharcisse Renzaho, Me Flamme wanted to rehash the theory of double genocide, a theory "which has been spreading for many years in the propaganda of genocidaires and their supporters. "

Faced with the lie of Me Flamme, we must salute the intelligence and patience of all those who intervened in this trial, followed with interest the witnesses of the genocide, which made it possible to establish the truth about the genocide against the Tutsi.

### **3. ATTEMPT OF FRIENDS OF NERETSE TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME OF THE TRIAL**

It should be remembered that shortly before Neretse's trial, denial initiatives were successively organized in France, Canada and Belgium, with the aim of influencing public opinion in these countries. Very skilfully, these genocide deniers wanted to put pressure on the Belgian courts which were to judge Neretse.

In this context, the emergence of denial of the genocide against the Tutsi was linked to one idea: to explain that there was a genocide which targeted the Hutus and was perpetrated by the Tutsis.

Thus, on October 26, 2019, the journalist Vincent Hervouet of the French television channel, LCI, interviewed Charles Onana on his negationist book, "Rwanda, the truth about the Turquoise



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Operation". On this occasion, Onana resumed his negationist theses where he explains that there is a genocide committed against the Hutu.

On October 31, 2019, Canadian journalist Chantal Lavigne of CBC Radio-Canada broadcasted a pseudo-investigation "Des espions chez nous", which scandalously assembles a testimony of a student supposed to spy on behalf of the government of Rwanda.

Once again, Judi Rever develops there his hateful remarks against the Rwandan government.

During this period, Jambo asbl developed an outrageous activism to justify the existence of the genocide against the Hutu, by assembling from scratch all the testimonies of supposed survivors of this imaginary genocide. These witnesses are nothing more or less than former combatants of the FDLR terrorist movement involved in several massacres in Rwanda and the Congo.

At the same time, Judi Rever organized conferences in Belgian Flemish universities: the Catholic University of Louvain, the University of Antwerp and the VUB in Brussels as well as the VUBArteveldehogeschool Gent.

On this occasion, sixty researchers, journalists and historians had sent an open letter to the rectorates of these four Belgian universities to protest against the intervention of Judi Rever.

Finally, on December 2, 2019, the head of the Pharos association, Pierre Morel organized a Holocaust denial conference on the Mapping report at the National Assembly in France.

On this occasion, negationists from all sides met and reported on the negationist theses validating the existence of an imaginary genocide against the Hutu.

This denial campaign has not achieved its objectives, but it is an endless process that must be denounced and condemned.

#### 4. A TRIAL THAT ILLUSTRATS THE WILL OF ALL TO FIGHT AGAINST IMPUNITY

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Neretse's sentencing verdict is a triumph against impunity and the culture of hate. Several people resisted the threatening defense arguments, and the pressure from Neretse and his pressure agents at his home in Mataba.

We thank the examining magistrates, the court, witnesses, and the lawyers for the civil parties at the heart of this trial. All of them have done remarkable work for the preservation of memory and justice.

Twenty-five years after the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi, this trial shows that the crime of genocide is imprescriptible, and that wherever genocidal suspects hide they must be arrested and tried.

Genocide is an unnamed crime, which should not be brought to court for any reason. This negationist temptation, whether individual or collective, must be combated by all means and by all.

**Dr BIZIMANA Jean Damascène**  
**Executive Secretary**

