



Briefing on Rewards for Justice Search for Rwandan War Criminals

Jendayi Frazer, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs
Clint Williamson, Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues
Washington, DC
May 12, 2008

[View Video](#)

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to be here today with Ambassador Williamson to reaffirm our commitment to bring to justice all remaining fugitives wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the ICTR.

The Rewards for Justice War Crimes program is a valuable tool that has complemented our efforts to end war in the Great Lakes region and to implement the Lusaka, Sun City and Pretoria peace processes. Through it, we received valuable information that led to the arrest of three dangerous fugitives. These include former government and militia leaders accused of genocide, complicity in genocide, and in crimes against humanity: Tharcisse Renzaho, Jean-Baptiste Gatete, and Yusuf John Munyakazi. These three are now in trial proceeding and waiting -- these three are now in trial proceedings and awaiting trial.

In addition to facilitating the apprehension of fugitives wanted for their involvement in the Rwandan genocide, this program showcased our commitment to justice and peace in the Great Lakes region.

Since 2004, we have demonstrated U.S. commitment to prevent further conflict and support conflict resolution through the facilitation of the Tripartite Plus process, culminating with Secretary Rice's chairmanship of the Tripartite Plus Heads of State Summit in December. That would include the presidents of Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and the foreign and defense ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United States remains very engaged in bringing peace to the Great Lakes region today.

The disarmament processes enshrined in the Nairobi Communiqué and Goma Agreement provide a process to disarm the foreign and domestic armed groups in eastern Congo and represent the next step to continue the work that began at Lusaka, Sun City, and Pretoria.

As part of our strategy to achieve lasting peace in the Great Lakes, we are renewing our efforts to bring to justice those who look to undermine regional peace.

During his recent visit to the region Ambassador Williamson assessed the benefits of re-launching the Rewards for Justice War Crimes program to reward those who will help us bring to justice the fugitives who are still at large and a mark of our determination to lasting peace.

As President Kabila has said, the time is now for the former Rwandan Armed Forces and Interahamwe in eastern Congo who have caused so much insecurity, suffering and devastation to lay down their arms peacefully and return to Rwanda as outlined in the Nairobi Communiqué.

With that, I will turn it over to my colleague, Ambassador Williamson, to go into greater detail about the Rewards for Justice Program.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: As Assistant Secretary Frazer indicated, the State Department is renewing its efforts to bring to justice those most responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. I'm pleased to announce that the Office of War Crimes Issues will be working closely with the Bureau of African Affairs and the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa to launch a new Rewards for Justice campaign. This campaign aims to secure the arrest of the 13 men indicted by the ICTR for genocide and crimes against humanity who remain at large.

As you know, ethnic violence of the scale and horror that we witnessed in 1994 does not happen spontaneously; it requires extensive preparation and planning. Many of the architects behind the Rwandan genocide have been arrested, thanks to political and material support from a wide range of nations including the United States. These arrests and the trials and convictions that have followed challenge the notion that those who direct crimes such as these can go unpunished.

But years later, thirteen of those indicted remain at large. These men include Augustin Bizimana, Idelphonse Nizeyimana, Protais Mpiranya, Gregoire Ndahimana, Ladislas Ntaganzwa and Félicien Kabuga. All of these individuals exercised positions of power and influence in the lead-up to and during the genocide itself. The impunity of these men, fourteen years after these crimes were committed, and their continuing presence in the region represents a threat to stability and reconciliation.

The State Department is cooperating with other governments, with the UN, and with the ICTR to make it harder for these fugitives to remain at large. The Rewards for Justice initiative that we're announcing today is one element of an international effort to tighten the net around them.

Because many of the fugitives are believed to be living in the Democratic Republic of Congo, this Rewards for Justice campaign will be focused there. In the next weeks, our Embassy in Kinshasa will work with the UN mission and other partners in the Congo to distribute posters, matchbooks, and other articles indicating that these men are wanted for genocide -- and advertising a financial reward of up to \$5 million for information that leads to their arrest.

Information generated by the Rewards for Justice campaign will support the efforts of the ICTR, whose team of investigators continue to pursue fugitives. Callixte Nzabonimana, an indicted government minister, was arrested in March thanks to cooperation between the ICTR's tracking team and the Government of Tanzania. He now awaits trial at the ICTR.

As this shows, some of the most critical steps to ending the impunity of these fugitives must be taken by national governments in the region. Just last week, the Government of Kenya persuaded a Kenyan court to freeze real estate property from which Félicien Kabuga, the ICTR's most wanted indictee, is believed to have drawn funds to support his life at large. This is a welcome development, but it's our strong hope that this represents only a single step toward still more aggressive action from all governments in the region to capture these men.

We look forward to seeing the results from this campaign. We believe it will accelerate the process of bringing to justice those most responsible for these horrible crimes.

And we would be happy now to take any questions you have.

QUESTION: Go ahead.

QUESTION: In terms of the figure, you're saying up to 5 million -- 5 million?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Yes, 5 million.

QUESTION: Yes, 5 million reward. Is that per person?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: It is. The -- a decision on the exact amount that is paid is taken based on the quality of the information, the individual that it leads to, a whole variety of circumstances. And it's taken by a whole group of actors here in Washington.

QUESTION: So has this been increased from previous rewards that you've offered?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: The reward has been up to 5 million in the past as well.

QUESTION: So there's no difference in --

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: There is no difference, no.

QUESTION: When were those rewards first offered?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: They go back to the late 1990s. The program had continued in full force until 2006. At that point, there was very little information coming in, so we had discontinued it. We have felt like now is the right time to re-initiate it.

QUESTION: Yeah, I seem to remember one of your -- or maybe even two of your predecessors had done the same thing --

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Yes.

QUESTION: -- in going to Kinshasa with the matchbooks and the posters.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Yeah.

QUESTION: Can -- where -- you think that Kabuga is in Congo now?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Most of the information has indicated that he's in Kenya.

QUESTION: That's what I would --

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Yeah, and we have certainly pressed the Kenyan Government to move against him, to help locate him. So that's why we were encouraged by these recent steps that the government has taken to go after his assets.

The program at this point is focused primarily on the Congo, where most of these individuals are believed to be. Certainly, Kabuga has links to people in the Congo. It's the same group that he was associated with earlier. So we're open to expanding this program again in Kenya if we think that it's useful to do so.

QUESTION: And one more thing. It would seem to me that while these guys were certainly responsible for great evil and atrocities back during the genocide, that currently, in Congo at least, there are people who are more -- you know, who are responsible for current -- the current state of horrendousness in the east.

Why -- you know, when this was announced, my presumption was that you were going to start offering rewards for this guy who is a top aide to Nkunda whose arrest -- ICC arrest warrant was just unveiled last week, or perhaps even Nkunda himself. Why not go after some of these dissident elements who are causing, you know, problems right now? Because this program already exists.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Well, it's -- this program has existed, but it has not been operable for the last year and a half, so we are restarting it. But there are statutory constraints on who we can target in this. Right now, the statute provides for people who have been indicted by the Yugoslavia and Rwanda tribunals to be the focus for Rewards for Justice.

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: It has not been expanded beyond that yet. So that's going to take action by Congress.

QUESTION: So your alleged new love of the ICC has not gone -- it hasn't gone as far as to allow for rewards to be offered for their indictees?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: It hasn't been yet. So it's going to be up to Congress if they want to expand it. But as of yet, it hasn't been.

QUESTION: Okay.

QUESTION: Just two things. One, just to clarify, so you were eligible for a \$5 million reward up to 18 months ago, and then you weren't and now you are again?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Well --

QUESTION: For these particular 13 individuals?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: People have been eligible for rewards throughout this period. We had discontinued, sort of, the operations for this program. In other words, to run this program in a full force, you need a 24-hour telephone line, you need websites that are monitored, you need ICTR investigators who are going to be available to follow up on information. These things had dropped off, and so this is what we are trying to do right now, is just reinvigorate those efforts.

QUESTION: And I have another question on this, and then if I could ask Secretary Frazer something. The -- you said that this -- that these people were going to create, I think you said, potentially instability in the region?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Is that right?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Yes.

QUESTION: Could you be more specific?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Well, these individuals that are in the Congo that were affiliated with Interahamwe, they're still operating, they still have the same affiliations that they've had all of these years. They continue to be a source of instability there. It's of concern to the government in Kinshasa, it's of concern to the government in Kigali and Bujumbura. It's something that needs to be addressed. So again, we have some statutory constraints on who can be targeted through the Rewards for Justice Program. And although we are going after individuals that have been indicted by the ICTR, they certainly are part of a bigger problem. None of these things exist in isolation.

QUESTION: And can I ask Secretary Frazer a question on another topic?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Maybe we should finish with this and then come back to a different topic.

QUESTION: Okay.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Okay. Yes.

QUESTION: Can you -- over the past number of years that this program has been in effect, how much has been paid out in Rewards for Justice, for how many people?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: I can't tell you the exact amount that has been paid out. There are programs for information on terrorists as well as war criminals, so I just don't know how it breaks down.

QUESTION: Come up with this (inaudible) Rwanda?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Maybe I can -- because I was here when --

QUESTION: (Inaudible) Rwanda --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: I was here when this was launched the first time. And frankly, most of the information that we got that led to the arrest of at least three of the individuals that were on this list, came from governments themselves. And we didn't pay out any reward to the governments. I'm not aware that any individuals during that time had given us information that led to the arrest of any other ones that we've gotten.

QUESTION: Can we get a full list of the names of the 13, Gonzo, of the --

QUESTION: I just -- I'm not quite clear why now you're reinvigorating it. You said very little info was coming in as of 2006. What has changed since then?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: A couple of things that -- maybe Jendayi as well. The -- right now we're reaching a critical stage in the life of the Rwanda and Yugoslavia tribunal. They have certain deadlines that had been imposed by the Security Council to complete their work. So there is some urgency in trying to resolve the issue of all the fugitives that are out there. There has also, I think, been renewed interest on the part of the ICTR to operationalize the hunt for these people. They have enhanced the capabilities of their tracking unit. We've had new indications of the willingness of governments to take this on. The UN Mission in the DRC has also been very interested in doing this. So I think it's just all of these factors coming together that we felt like this was the right time to restart it.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: And to add to that on a diplomatic front, we have the Goma Agreement and the Nairobi agreements, which lead to a renewed effort to try to address the FDLR Interahamwe continuing instability in eastern Congo. And part of President Bush's conversations with President Kagame in February was to go after the leadership of these groups, which often act as hostage -- they keep the normal rank-and-file hostage. And so we really do need to, in many ways, cut off the head and these guys are that leadership.

And the Secretary had the same conversations when she met in December in Addis Ababa with President Kagame and Museveni and the defense and foreign ministers of the Congo, saying that we would renew our efforts to try to get some type of -- not some type of, but to implement the Goma and Nairobi agreement as part of a comprehensive approach to finally resolving the crisis in eastern Congo.

QUESTION: Well, when was the last information about Kabuga being in Kenya? When is the last time that there was a sighting of him or any kind of information about him being there?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: I don't want to get into too specific a detail, but there has been information over -- certainly over the last year indicating that he's there. Now, whether that can be verified or not, it's hard to say. But there has been a pretty steady flow of information.

QUESTION: Since then? Because I remember about a year and half ago, there was a big swell in the ICTR people coming to Nairobi and saying "do something" to the Kenyan Government and, you know, we think he's here.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: I mean, there have continued to be reports over the last year. If that's it on this issue, I'll --

QUESTION: Just a point of clarification. So it's 5 million for each of these people or is it five million total?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: The reward goes up to 5 million as to any individual.

QUESTION: Okay. So it potentially could be ten for two or something like that.

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Yes.

QUESTION: Potentially, okay (inaudible.)

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: If you got really lucky, yes. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Fifteen for three, in fact.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: If you told us which house he was in, and what hour he was going to be there.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) but that – but that's just for these five. It's up to 5 million?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: For the eight.

QUESTION: For the – for the other eight are also five million?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: Yes, yeah.

QUESTION: Yeah?

AMBASSADOR WILLIAMSON: It's anyone in a Rewards for Justice program. But as I say, it depends on who the fugitive is. It depends on the type and quality of information that comes in. So all of these factor into the final decision on how much money would be allocated.

QUESTION: Secretary Frazer, on another topic, do you have any comment on the JEM-led coup attempt last week and Chad and Sudan breaking off ties? Are you worried that that could fuel further hostilities?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: We are – we certainly are concerned and we've condemned the attack of the Justice Equality Movement on Khartoum. And we've called for the Government of Sudan to not carry out reprisals, especially against Zaghawa or Darfurians. We are looking at action in the – at the UN, again, to express our concern that this not become a regional conflict and a greater increase in the tension between Chad and Sudan.

QUESTION: What do you make of the latest – I mean, the latest arrest of – Hassan Turabi seems to be in some kind of a revolving door in Khartoum where he's in and out, in and out, in and out. Is there anything – do you see anything coming from this?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Well, of course, Khalil Ibrahim, the head of the Justice Equality Movement, is known to have been very close to Turabi. And so there's a concern that, in fact, the Government of Sudan will overreact and arrest a large number of people because of the political relationships and because of the ethnic association of JEM being in Darfur and their connections with Turabi. So we are trying to encourage the government to be – to not do, you know, blanket arrests, but rather to – you know, try to, of course, (inaudible) their relationship with Chad. But also, we would join with them in denouncing the Justice Equality Movement. It's unacceptable.

QUESTION: But you don't see the hand of Turabi in this --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Well, it's kind of early to know, but not necessarily. I think that they're – it's a bit over-determined who Justice Equality Movement is getting their assistance from. There are many different sources, possible sources of assistance.

QUESTION: Okay.

QUESTION: What does – just to follow up, what does this mean for the peace process there?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Which one?

QUESTION: Sudanese reconciliation, you know --

QUESTION: North-South?

QUESTION: No, not North-South. Darfur, Khartoum.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Well, we've always known, which is why we have sanctions on Khalil Ibrahim, that his commitment to peace was tenuous and that his goal was a political agenda to take over. I mean, he's been very open that his desire is to take over the Government of Sudan. And so, you know, even as far back as the Abuja Peace Accord, there was little expectation that JEM would actually sign on to a peace agreement.

QUESTION: Can I ask about another country? Your old friends, the Eritreans, seem to be stirring the pot again, this time with Djibouti, complaining about them. And I'm just wondering, one, what you make of that, if you think that there's any – any threat there, particularly given the situation with UNMEE and its withdrawal from Eritrea completely. And also, a while back, you had said that there was some thought being given to putting Eritrea on the state sponsors list. Has that gone anywhere?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: On the first question about their incursion into Djiboutian territory, we are continuing to investigate and study it. There could be any number of reasons for that, including that many of their military are deserting, may be deserting in that direction, and so they're trying to put a block up. Another explanation is that they may be concerned about peace talks between the Somali opposition that sits in Eritrea and the Transitional Federal Government talks which were supposed to happen in Djibouti. And they're trying to send a message to the Djiboutian Government. So there are many hypotheses about why. We don't have firm evidence from the Eritrean Government about why in fact, they've, you know, invaded, essentially, or occupied territory in Djibouti.

On the second question, we continue to look at this question about state sponsor of terror. We continue to monitor the activity of the Eritrean Government. Our intelligence community is looking very closely at support for opposition versus support for Al Shabab. I think you know that there's been a split between the Shabab which is – which has al-Qaida – which has members who have affiliations with al-Qaida, and the – what do they call themselves, the ARS – the Reliberation of Somalia, the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia, there's been a split between those two groups. We clearly see that Eritrea continues to have Aweys who is designated under Security Council resolution and the United States as a terrorist being hosted in Eritrea. So clearly, we have to keep watching it.

We've sent messages in to the Government of Eritrea that they need to stop harboring terrorists and not support any terrorists in Somalia and the region as a whole, but no final determination has been made.

QUESTION: On another area, do you have any comment on what's happening in Zimbabwe and the runoff and whether there will be enough monitors? Do you think it could be a fair poll if it does indeed, you know, go ahead?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Well, right now, the conditions aren't there for a free and fair runoff, but certainly, we hope that the conditions can be put in place. And those conditions would have to include an end to the violence, which is essentially state-sponsored violence against the opposition. It would have to include a massive number of monitors that can go out into the rural area. We would hope that there would be greater transparency so that there could be international press that would be allowed in. So those are all conditions that we would expect to be put in place prior to the runoff taking place, including conditions so that the leader of the opposition and the person who got the most votes in the first round is not threatened if he returns home to Zimbabwe. So some type of security and guarantees for Morgan Tsvangirai's safety certainly should be a necessary condition for holding a runoff.

The United States is prepared to assist and support the creation of those conditions by supporting SADC, by supporting the African Union, by working with the United Nations and other institutions and organizations that will be necessary to put in place those -- the necessary conditions for a runoff.

QUESTION: Do you think that the SADC countries are doing enough? The Secretary called some of Zimbabwe's neighbors on Friday to try and get them to do more. Do you think that they are doing enough --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Well, I think they're going to have to keep -- it's not -- they're going to have to keep doing more. It's sort of a continuous process. And we know that President Mbeki was in Harare. We haven't yet had a chance to learn more about what was communicated during this trip, but we certainly do hope that he made it very clear to President Mugabe that the violence has to end, that the human rights violations have to come to an end. And we hope that he pushed for allowing international monitors in a runoff. But we yet -- we haven't yet gotten a readout of that meeting from his visit.

QUESTION: Are you dealing directly with Mugabe yourself or are you just channeling everything through SADC?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: We, as the United States, we certainly deal with the Government of Zimbabwe, primarily through our Ambassador James McGee, who is in Harare. We haven't had a conversation with President Mugabe. He hasn't -- he's been selective about who he will talk to in terms of answering his phone.

QUESTION: So he hasn't -- have you tried to get hold of him and not been able to?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Early on, very early on after March 29th, we made an effort to speak to him and haven't been able to -- weren't able to reach him. But not since then.

QUESTION: Back to the conditions that you would like to see for the runoff, how many of those realistically do you expect to see, if any?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Well, we certainly don't yet know when the runoff will occur. According to the electoral law, it should be 21 days after the announcement of -- the ZEC announcement of the outcome. So we are running down that time very quickly. It took them five weeks to make the announcement, but they haven't yet said when the runoff date would be.

Certainly, if they pull a surprise and they say that the runoff is in a week, it's very unlikely that you're going to have the number of monitors there necessary for a free and fair runoff. But we won't know until we know what the date is. But I think that there's a clear will on the part of SADC, on the part of the AU and on the part of the international community to try to create the conditions. I'm not so sure that there's a clear will on the part of the Government of Zimbabwe.

QUESTION: Thank you.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FRAZER: Thank you.

2008/385

Released on May 13, 2008

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.