

Rwandan national sentenced to 10 years for fraudulently obtaining citizenship

Concealed her involvement in the 1994 Rwandan genocide

CONCORD, N.H. — A federal judge sentenced a Manchester woman Monday on two counts of procuring citizenship unlawfully. The sentence follows an extensive investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

This case marks the first such conviction in the United States for concealing one's personal participation in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

District Court Judge Stephen J. McAuliffe sentenced Beatrice Munyenyezi, 43, to 10 years in prison, the maximum sentence for the charge of procuring citizenship unlawfully. She also faces removal proceedings after serving the sentence imposed by the court. McAuliffe also stripped Munyenyezi of her U.S. citizenship on the day of her conviction.

Munyenyezi was charged in June 2010 and later [convicted](#) in March 2012, by a New Hampshire federal jury. The jury determined she obtained her U.S. citizenship unlawfully, after fleeing her home country of Rwanda, by misrepresenting material facts to U.S. immigration authorities.

“She has stolen the highly prized status of U.S. citizenship,” said McAuliffe in court. “The defendant was not a mere spectator; the defendant personally participated in the killing of men, women and children, merely because they were called Tutsi.”

Testimony during the 12-day trial revealed that Munyenyezi concealed her role in the 1994 Rwandan genocide, including her involvement in the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND), the political party in power before and during the genocide, and its youth wing, the Interahamwe. The Interahamwe ran a militia that played a key role in the genocide. Evidence at trial demonstrated that Munyenyezi, as a member of the Interahamwe, participated, aided and abetted in the persecution and murder of Tutsi people during the 1994 genocide.

Several witnesses testified to Munyenyezi's staffing of a notorious roadblock outside her home during the course of the genocide, where she checked identification of passers-by and decided who would be allowed to pass and who would be detained pending their almost certain death. The evidence demonstrated that Munyenyezi misrepresented these facts in order to obtain immigration and naturalization benefits. She was ineligible to become a U.S. citizen because of her participation in genocide and murder.

“Today's sentence should send a clear message to those involved in human rights violations that the United States will not protect those who take advantage of our accepting borders. I want to thank the tireless efforts of the prosecution team and investigators in this case, who have worked doggedly to ensure that justice is served,” said U.S. Attorney Carmen M. Ortiz.

“Today's sentencing clearly demonstrates that this nation will never be a safe haven for human rights violators and war criminals,” said Bruce M. Foucart, special agent in charge of HSI Boston. “After a stellar collaborative investigation and prosecution by HSI special agents and our partners at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts, Munyenyezi will be held accountable for disguising her role as a participant in the Rwandan genocide. I am hopeful that

this case will send a message to others like Munyenyezi. HSI will never allow our country to be a place where individuals seeking to distance themselves from their pasts can hide or evade detection.”

[ICE's Human Rights Violators and War Crimes Center](#) (HRVWCC) assisted with the investigation.

HSI is committed to rooting out alleged human rights violators who seek a safe haven in the United States. The HRVWCC investigates human rights violators who try to evade justice by seeking shelter in the United States, including those who have participated in war crimes and acts of genocide, torture, the use of child soldiers and extrajudicial killings. These individuals may conceal their past to enter the country and attempt to blend into communities in the United States.

Members of the public who have information about foreign nationals suspected of engaging in human rights abuses or war crimes are urged to call the toll-free HSI tip line at 1-866-DHS-2-ICE or to complete its [online tip form](#). Both are staffed around the clock.

To learn more about the assistance available to victims in these cases, the public should contact HSI's confidential victim-witness toll-free number at 1-866-872-4973. Tips may be provided anonymously.

Since fiscal year 2004, ICE has arrested more than 250 individuals for human rights-related violations under various criminal and/or immigration statutes. During that same period, ICE obtained deportation orders and physically removed more than 640 known or suspected human rights violators from the United States.

Currently, HSI has more than approximately 140 active investigations and ICE is pursuing more than approximately 1,850 leads and removal cases involving suspected human rights violators from 97 different countries.

During the last four years, ICE's HRVWCC has issued more than 20,000 lookouts for people from more than 111 countries and stopped approximately 124 human rights violators or war crime suspects from entering the United States.

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