

Court frees 4 accused in Rwanda genocide

by UPI

LONDON -- Four men accused in the Rwanda genocide must be set free and not extradited because they cannot receive a fair trial in their country, a British court ruled.

Britain's High Court of Justice ruled there was "a real risk" the men, held in British custody since December 2006, "would suffer a flagrant denial of justice" if they were returned to Rwanda to face trial.

The ruling marks the first time a British court has blocked an extradition request from a foreign government on the grounds it would violate the European Convention on Human Rights, which safeguards the right to a fair trial.

The men -- Vincent Bajinya, who had changed his name to Vincent Brown; Celestin Ugirashebuja; Emmanuel Nteziryayo; and Charles Munyaneza -- are accused of killing, or of conspiring with or aiding and abetting others to kill, members of the Tutsi ethnic group "with the intent to destroy in whole, or in part, that group," The Times of London reported.

The judges said they were convinced that defense witnesses would be afraid to give evidence in any Rwanda trial and that Rwanda's government would interfere with the judiciary, The Times said.

The judges also refused to let Rwanda appeal the decision to the House of Lords, Britain's court of last resort in addition to its legislative function.

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