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Sweden: Extradition of Rwandan genocide suspect jeopardizes right to fair trial

Amnesty International calls on the government of Sweden to immediately reverse its decision to extradite Sylvere Ahorugeze to Rwanda where there is a real risk he will not receive a fair trial.

Instead Swedish authorities should investigate the allegations against him and, if there is sufficient admissible evidence, prosecute him before Sweden's courts.

"While the allegations against Mr Ahorugeze are serious and should be subject to full criminal investigation, there is overwhelming evidence that his right to a fair trial would be violated should he be returned to Rwanda," said Tawanda Hondora, Amnesty International's deputy Africa director.

"The horrific crimes committed in Rwanda during the genocide were so serious that they amount to crimes against the whole of humanity. Sweden, and other national authorities around the world, have the responsibility to prosecute these crimes before their national courts."

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and national authorities in France, Finland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have all decided not to transfer cases to Rwanda on the basis that a fair trial could not be guaranteed. The issues identified in these rulings include the lack of independence of the Rwandan judiciary, obstructions of defence lawyers and lack of effective witness protection system.

"Extradition of accused persons should only take place where it can be guaranteed that the rights will be respected," said Tawanda Hondora.