



Source: Amnesty International

## TRIALWATCH EXPERT HIGHLIGHTS KEY LEGAL ISSUES AHEAD OF THE TRIAL OF PAUL RUSESABAGINA IN RWANDA

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### CHARGES

Various Crimes as Forms of  
Terrorism

### POTENTIAL SENTENCE

Life imprisonment

### TRIAL MONITOR

American Bar Association Center  
for Human Rights

#### January 25, 2021

As [previously announced](#), the Clooney Foundation for Justice's partner the American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights will monitor the trial of Mr. Paul Rusesabagina in Rwanda as part of CFJ's TrialWatch initiative. The trial had been scheduled to open on January 26, but was recently postponed. CFJ welcomes the announced decision of the Government of Rwanda to provide TrialWatch monitors with access to the proceedings, in line with their international and regional obligations.

In advance of the opening of proceedings, the ABA's Center for Human Rights has prepared a [background briefing](#) on developments to date and the applicable international and regional legal standards. Based on a preliminary review of the indictment, Geoffrey Robertson QC, the [TrialWatch Expert who will assess the fairness of the trial and assign a grade](#), said:

"Mr. Rusesabagina's trial must be fair and must be perceived as fair. There are a number of issues that will be before the court as it takes up its work that warrant careful review, including:

- The indictment states that Mr. Rusesabagina "could not be extradited" from Belgium to Rwanda. What were the circumstances of his transfer from Dubai to Kigali and were they lawful?
- The indictment references close cooperation between Rwandan authorities and Belgian police, including searches of Mr. Rusesabagina's home in Brussels and his electronic equipment, and the handover of material seized there to his Rwandan prosecutors. Was this conduct lawful? If not, the admissibility of this evidence must be considered.

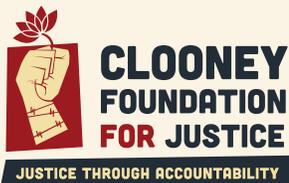
## Statement Continued

- There are allegations that Mr. Rusesabagina's fair trial rights have been violated by denying him access to counsel when he was first interrogated and then by denying him access to his counsel of choice in later interrogations. The indictment relies heavily upon statements Mr. Rusesabagina made during these interrogations. Any statements made in such circumstances must be carefully evaluated if their reliability is questioned.
- It is critical that Mr. Rusesabagina is able to consult confidentially with his legal team on a regular basis. Further, there are allegations that he has been denied the ability to review case-related documents while in detention. He must be afforded all proper facilities to prepare his defense.
- It is a matter of concern that Mr. Rusesabagina is reportedly not being provided with the medical care that he requires and that his health is seriously declining. He must be permitted examination by an independent medical doctor and should receive any necessary treatment."

TrialWatch remains committed to monitoring the upcoming trial and observing how the court resolves these and other issues raised by the proceedings to date. A TrialWatch Fairness Report evaluating the conduct of the proceedings against international and regional standards will be released following the trial's conclusion.

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### ABOUT THE CLOONEY FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE'S TRIALWATCH INITIATIVE



The Clooney Foundation for Justice's [TrialWatch](#) initiative monitors and grades the fairness of trials of vulnerable people around the world, including journalists, women and girls, religious minorities, LGBTQ persons and human rights defenders. Using this data, TrialWatch advocates for victims and is developing a Global Justice Ranking measuring national courts' compliance with international human rights standards.