

It is risky for Rwandan refugees to go back home, says activists' report

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A report by two human rights civil society agencies has claimed that it is unsafe for Rwandan refugees in Uganda to return home.

The report by Refugee Law Project and the International Refugee Rights Initiative says refugees who had returned to their country in 2001 have fled back because of oppression by Rwandan government institutions.

'Refugees view the government as repressive, and dissent in many aspects of life is not tolerated'

Report

"Refugees view the government as repressive, and dissent in many aspects of life is not tolerated," the report says.

Mr Moses Okello, a senior research advisor at Refugee Law Project, said refugees in Nakivale do not want to go home because of fear of repression.

Researchers interviewed 102

refugees in Nakivale Resettlement Camp in Isingiro District, one of the three camps housing 12,800 Rwandan refugees in Uganda.

Refugees afraid

Both Rwanda and Uganda governments through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees have agreed to repatriate refugees.

But the report says refugees who return home are subjected to human rights violations that include discrimination in employment, imprisonment and disappearance.

"As a result, refugees are not only reluctant to return home, they are afraid," the report says. "Specifically, the horrific events of the 1994 genocide are being used by the government of Rwanda as a smokescreen for political repression, particularly through the association of Hutu identity with the genocide."

Rwanda government spokesperson, Ms Louis Mwishikiwabo, was reportedly in a meeting and could not respond to the allegations by the report.

Rwanda experienced genocide in 1994.

Close to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed.