Eugene Barikana, a former member of Rwanda’s Parliament, was arrested by the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) for illegally possessing firearms. Barikana claims he obtained the weapons while living with military personnel and simply forgot to return them.

The confiscated weapons included a grenade and an AK-47 magazine. Barikana is currently detained at Remera Police Station in Gasabo district while authorities investigate the source and purpose of his possession.

Barikana’s arrest came shortly after his resignation from Parliament on May 11, 2024. He faces charges under Article 7 of the Arms Act for illegal possession of firearms. If convicted, he could be sentenced to 1-2 years in prison and a fine of 1-2 million Rwandan francs, or receive just one of these penalties.

The RIB emphasizes that Rwandan law strictly regulates weapon ownership. Anyone violating these laws will be prosecuted according to the country’s penal code.

Balikana has been an MP since 2013. Before that, he served as the Director of Cabinet in the Office of the Prime Minister. He also held the position of permanent secretary in the Ministry of Local Government. Prior, Balikana served in various capacities, predominantly in local government. Notably, he worked as the prefect of Kibungo Prefecture, which is now part of the Eastern Province.