

Amnesty urges U.N. to look at rights in Rwanda

Reuters, April 14, 1994

LONDON, April 14 (Reuter) - Amnesty International urged the United Nations on Thursday to pay closer attention to the human rights of those suffering in clashes in Rwanda.

"The evacuation of foreigners coordinated by Belgium, France and the United States has overshadowed the plight of the thousands of Rwanda citizens still at risk of being killed in the chaos," the London-based human rights group said.

"Closed doors at foreign embassies have meant that refuge has been denied to people at imminent risk of being killed.

"Governments should bear in mind the universality of human rights, not just for their own citizens abroad, but for the equally innocent and defenceless civilian population of Rwanda," the statement said.

Amnesty urged governments to consider what steps could be taken to ensure the safety of those in peril from the presidential guard and armed Hutu gang, who it said had committed most of the carnage in Rwanda.

It strongly condemned the thousands of extrajudicial executions by the armed forces and vigilante gangs allied to extremist Hutu political parties close to the former president and said some reports put the death toll at about 20,000.

"The U.N. should also play a larger role in Rwanda...Amnesty International calls for the expansion of the U.N. operation's mandate so that it can investigate and report on human rights abuses not only by the police and gendarmerie, but also by all armed forces, including the army, the presidential guard and the RPF," it said.

(c) Reuters Limited 1994