

FRONT PATRIOTIQUE RWANDAIS
RWANDESE PATRIOTIC FRONT

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PRESS RELEASE

FRENCH MILITARY BACKING FOR THE PERPETRATORS OF GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

The Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) is dismayed by the decision of France to intervene unilaterally in Rwanda. The purpose of the proposed military intervention is allegedly to stop the massacres.

The United Nations Security Council by resolutions 918 and 925/1994 devised a plan to send a humanitarian U.N. force of 5,500 soldiers for exactly the same purpose. Many countries across the world have responded favourably to the request of the U.N. Secretary General. To date, more than 7,000 soldiers have been offered. It is reported that some countries like Ethiopia and Zimbabwe have their own equipment. Others such as Ghana have agreed to provide troops so long as the necessary equipment is available. Some of the equipment like the APC's promised by the USA is already in the region. The U.N. mission appeared well on the way to taking off.

The prospect of a permanent member of the Security Council by passing the mechanisms determined by the Security Council to launch a unilateral operation in a country in which that permanent member of the Security Council has historically had partisan and contraversial involvement raises very strong questions about the motives of the mission.

The direct responsibility which French governments, present and past, bear for the tragic situation in Rwanda is a matter which should not be treated lightly:

- i) France is a long time supporter of the clique that organised and supervised the execution of genocide in Rwanda.
- ii) France has been and remain the principal arms supplier to the regime as indicated in the 1994 Arms Project Report of Human Rights Watch.
- iii) France trained the Presidential guards, much of the regular army and the militia who are at the fore front of the ongoing atrocities.
- iv) French troops fought side by side with the discredited Rwandese government forces to prop up the dictatorial regime of the late President Habyarimana for 3 years. Reputable human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and Africa Watch have documented how the Rwandese government forces killed thousands of innocents civilians during the period (October 1990 to December 1993) when the French were

still openly fighting on the government side. The French troops never intervened to stop those massacres and the French government never condemned them.

- v) We have credible intelligence that there are even now French troops who are caught up in the besieged government army camps in Kigali. The French operation may partly be a rescue mission. This may explain why President Mitterrand has announced today that their operation can not wait for the U.N. Security Council authorization.
- vi) France is one of the very few countries which have recognized the rump government, hosted some of its officials who are very notorious for their role in inciting atrocities through the media and has granted asylum to the masterminds of the genocide in Rwanda who are commonly known as "Escadron de la Mort".
- vii) French political and diplomatic support for the regime of the late President Habyarimana encouraged intransigence on the part of the regime during the Arusha peace talks and stalled the process of implementing the Arusha Agreement.
- viii) It has recently been reported and repeated by very credible newspapers in Belgium that President Habyarimana's plane was shot down by French Military officers acting on behalf of extremists who wanted to derail the peace process.

In view of the very detrimental role of France in Rwanda in the recent past, her good faith should not be taken for granted when the issue of the proposed French intervention is up for discussion. The intervention is in our view intended to assist the authors of genocide to prosecute the war, to protect them from being brought to justice for their war crimes and preserve a role for them in the future politics of the country.

The RPF condemns the proposed French intervention unreservedly. We have for the duration of the war in Rwanda considered France a party to the conflict in every respect. We equally consider the return of France to Rwanda a hostile act of war against her people. The RPF will fight the proposed intervention by any means at its disposal and for as long as is necessary.

In the absence of a comprehensive ceasefire agreement between the parties the RPF intends to proceed with its operations to rescue Rwandese at risk, restore law and order and to bring the killers to justice regardless of the presence of the French troops in Rwanda.

We are of the firm opinion that the solution to the crisis in Rwanda must be found in the context of resolutions 918 and 925/1994 of the U.N. Security Council and we reaffirm our strong support for the U.N. humanitarian mission mandated by those resolutions. We request members of the Security Council to prevail upon France to illustrate its good faith in this matter by putting the resources

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which it plans to use in its unilateral mission at the disposal of U.N. force.

The RPF wishes to draw the attention of the International Community to the very grave consequences which the intervention of France will give rise to. French intervention will have a destabilizing effect in the region. In Rwanda itself, it will bring to an end the ongoing ceasefire negotiations and lead to an escalation of the conflict as Rwandese government forces see the prospect of military backing by France. The RPF itself will be compelled to reevaluate its commitment to the U.N. mission proposed by the security council. Finally, the return of French troops to Rwanda may have severe repercussions on the continued relevance of the Arusha peace agreement as the basis for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Rwanda.

For the Political Bureau of the Rwandese Patriotic Front

Gahima

Mr. Gerald Gahima
Special Envoy to the United Nations and the USA.

Contact: Tel: 301-588-8566 or 703-553-0452
Fax: 703-553-0458