

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH/AFRICA

Formerly Africa Watch

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For Immediate Release
April 29, 1994

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Human Rights Watch/Africa learned today that the Radio des Mille Collines, available nationwide in Rwanda, has declared May 5 as the target date for finishing the "clean-up" of the Tutsi minority and members of the political opposition. The deadline for these massacres is linked to the funeral of the late president, Juvenal Habyarimana, set for that date.

The self-proclaimed government of Rwanda has launched an aggressive disinformation campaign in an attempt to justify the carnage that has overwhelmed the country. Senior ministers have appeared not just in Nairobi, but also in Paris, and have indicated an interest in holding meetings elsewhere. Human Rights Watch/Africa welcomes the decision of the Belgian government to deny visas to representatives of this self-appointed regime for this purpose and calls on other governments to follow suit. Earlier this week, Human Rights Watch/Africa sharply criticized France for holding two days of meetings with Jerome Bicomumpaka, named Foreign Minister by the military officers who have exercised power since April 6, and Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, a key leader in the CDR political party, closely affiliated with the MRND party of the late president.

In Nairobi Justin Mugenzi, Minister of Commerce for the self-proclaimed Rwandan government, told reporters that the wholesale killings were a spontaneous explosion of rage by Rwandans following the death of Habyarimana in a suspicious plane crash on April 6. Evidence collected by Human Rights Watch/Africa, clergy and numerous other international organizations contradict this blatant attempt to cover up the genocide taking place across the country. The groundwork for the slaughter was carefully laid over a period of months through a virulent propaganda campaign on the radio against the political opposition, human rights activists and the Tutsi minority and also by the training and arming of the militias attached to Habyarimana's MRND political party and its ally the CDR. Within ten minutes of the crash on April 6, members of the

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Presidential Guard and the militia barricaded roads around the capital of Kigali and the killings began within an hour after that.

Mugenzi sought to explain the government's failure to end the carnage by saying that all available military and police were engaged in battling the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) insurgents. Questioned by reporters who had themselves seen numerous Rwandan soldiers killing civilians or encouraging militia to do so, Mugenzi responded that such soldiers were some of the few undisciplined elements found in any army. Pressed further, he explained that they were probably "on holiday" in the capital of Kigali at the time.

In fact, the names of the military authorities are well known, and Human Rights Watch/Africa has called upon the United Nations Security Council to denounce them by name: Colonel Bagosora, the military officer in charge during the first days of the massacre; Colonel Augustin Bizimungu, Commander in Chief of the Rwandan Armed Forces, and Captain Pascal Simbikangwa, a military figure implicated in many killings and cases of torture who is reportedly directing the anti-Tutsi killings by the militia from the office of the presidency.

The international community must not be taken in by false representations of events by Rwandan officials. Simultaneous with the announced deadline for the final "clean-up," Radio Mille Collines has issued a clearly contradictory call for calm. This call gives the government the chance to say they have done everything they can to stop the killing, when in fact, militias and soldiers under their control continue the wholesale slaughter unchecked.