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ACTION AF-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-01	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	C-01
	OASY-00	DODE-00	ITCE-00	DS-00	EB-01	EXME-00	E-01
	FRB-01	HA-09	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	L-01
	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-02	PM-00
	PRS-01	P-01	SNP-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-01	TRSE-00
	T-00	USIE-00	RPE-01	PMB-00	/027W		

-----36EF07 010639Z /38

R 010638Z APR 94
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6109
INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

UNCLAS KIGALI 01429

BUJUMBURA FOR RSO

DEPT FOR AF/C AND EB

E.O. 12356:N/A
TAGS: EINV, PINS, PINR, PREL, ECON, RW
SUBJECT: SORWATHE TEMPORARILY SHUT DOWN

REF: A) KIGALI 1170 B) KIGALI 1148 AND C) KIGALI 1039

1. NORMAN RIDPATH, THE GENERAL MANAGER OF SORWATHE, ADVISED ECONOFF THAT THE U.S. OWNED TEA FACTORY WOULD REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE AREA

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IMPROVED. THE FACTORY WAS SHUT DOWN ON MARCH 18, FOLLOWING THE MURDERS ON MARCH 15 OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL AND THE SECRETARY OF ASSOPTH (THE RWANDAN ASSOCIATION OF TEA GROWERS). SEE REF B.

2. TO PROTEST THE FACTORY'S TEMPORARY CLOSURE, LOCAL TEA GROWERS THREATENED TO BLOCK THE ROAD FROM KIGALI TO RUHENGERI ON MARCH 24 AND 25. NO PROTESTS EVER MATERIALIZED; BUT AREA RESIDENTS THREATENED TO ATTACK

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THE RWANDAN ASSISTANT MANAGER OF SORWATHE. THE ASSISTANT MANAGER HAS REMAINED IN KIGALI EVER SINCE.

3. COMMENT. THE SORWATHE CLOSURE, EVEN IF TEMPORARY, IS YET ANOTHER BLOW TO AN ECONOMY THAT IS ALREADY ON ITS KNEES. SORWATHE IS THE ONLY VIABLE FACTORY CURRENTLY OPERATING IN THE DMZ. IT EMPLOYS 1026 WORKERS AND PROVIDES INCOME TO THE TEA GROWERS OF THREE COMMUNES (APPROXIMATELY 1000 PERSONS). IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SECURITY IN THE AREA CAN BE ASSURED TO ALLOW THE FACTORY TO RE-OPEN UNTIL THERE IS A GOVERNMENT. SHOULD THE INSECURITY CONTINUE, DMZ TEA GROWERS COULD BECOME DISPLACED PERSONS AGAIN, SEEKING HUMANITARIAN AID AND REFUGE OUTSIDE THE DMZ. RAWSON

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