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MY TELNOS 1374 AND 1375: RWANDA

SUMMARY

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1. Council President briefs on meeting with Bangladeshi Permanent Representative. Latter underlines his government's commitment to participation in UNAMIR but seeks assurances that should the security situation deteriorate, the Security Council would take appropriate decisions to ensure the safety of the Bangladeshi contingent.
2. Secretariat brief on developments. Fighting continues. Killing appears to be intensifying behind Rwandan Government Lines. No ceasefire or truce, although negotiations continue. UNAMIR regrouping forces particularly at airport. Force Commander and Special Representative reviewing the situation and expect to present further recommendations on UNAMIR's future within the next few days.

DETAIL

3. Keating (New Zealand, Council President) opened informal consultations of the Security Council on 18 April with a report on his meeting earlier in the day with the Bangladeshi Permanent Representative. Bangladesh was still committed to participation in UNAMIR but the Ambassador had wished to underline the concern his government felt at the gravity of the situation in Rwanda. They were becoming increasingly nervous about the security of their contingent and wanted assurances from the Security Council that the situation was being monitored very closely and that, if the level of threat increased significantly, Bangladesh would be informed and the Security Council would take appropriate action. Keating said that he had given these assurances and had also relayed the Secretariat's view that at present an announcement of the impending

withdrawal of UNAMIR would be the step most likely to damage the force's safety.

4. Gharekhan (Secretary-General's Special Political Adviser) gave a briefing on current developments. He noted that UNAMIR now had a very limited presence outside Kigali and that its information was very much limited to Kigali. Fighting had continued throughout the city. The RPF was in control of north Kigali and continued to move troops into the city. Their offensive had slowed down, either deliberately or because they were meeting resistance from the Rwandan government forces. Rwandan government forces were also reported to be defending positions in other regions across the country. The number of killings had increased, particularly in areas behind the Rwandan government lines and ahead of the RPF advance. The evacuation of foreigners continued.

5. Since the initial face to face talks between the parties the Force Commander and the Secretary-General's Special Representative (SGSR) had continued to encourage negotiations for a ceasefire or a truce but this had not been achievable so far. The RPF were insisting there could be no ceasefire until the killings behind the government lines stopped. UN reports confirmed that massacres were continuing in Kigali. UNAMIR was regrouping its forces particularly at the airport. All Belgian headquarters staff had left Rwanda on 17 April. The Ghanaian battalion was scheduled to take over from the Belgian battalion at the airport on 19 April. The Ghanaians from the DMZ had now all deployed to Kigali. Two Ghanaian soldiers had been wounded but not seriously.

6. Gharekhan said the humanitarian situation was deteriorating significantly. The Force Commander had set up a small humanitarian cell to gather information on the situation. DHA had made arrangements to despatch a team to Kigali but it was unlikely they would be able to reach the city or carry out an assessment of needs in the absence of a ceasefire.

7. Gambari (Nigeria) drew Council members' attention to information he had received from Secretary-General of the OAU. Salim Salim had been in direct contact with the first Vice Chairman of the RPF and reiterated the OAU's deep concern at the killings in Rwanda and called for an immediate end to this. The RPF had replied that the reason they had moved towards Kigali was that they felt they had a responsibility to protect their own personnel and supporters. Salim Salim was also in touch with President Museveni

who had also met the RPF in Kampala and encouraged the RPF to agree to a ceasefire. The OAU was therefore complementing the efforts of the UN.

8. Bizimana (Rwanda) added that efforts were underway to try to organise a meeting on 23 April in Arusha during which the two parties might meet and examine the situation including the need for a ceasefire.

9. No one else spoke. Gharekhan noted that Force Commander and the SRSG would be submitting further recommendations on the future of UNAMIR within the next few days.

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