

Rwanda

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UNSP 062 80
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01 MAY 1994
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MY TELNO 1494: RWANDA

SUMMARY

1. Secretariat brief on developments. Unilateral ceasefires are not holding. Fighting continues. Further shelling of airport. Interim Government delegation inform Special Representative that they did not attend the Arusha meeting because they had gone to Zaire instead at President Mobutu's invitation. They agreed a separate ceasefire there. WFP distributing food in south and north of country. Could do more if parties would guarantee security.

2. Council members discuss possible next steps. Nigerians outline African group ideas for OAU involvement. Czechs circulate emotional draft Presidential Statement condemning slaughter of civilians and placing the blame squarely on elements of the Rwandan Government forces. General support for some kind of statement but differing views on its contents.

DETAIL

3. During informal consultations of the Security Council on 28 April Gharekhan (Secretary-General's special political adviser) gave a briefing on the latest developments in Rwanda. The unilateral ceasefires declared by both sides were not holding. Fighting continued and there had been heavy exchanges of artillery, mortar and small arms fire. The RGF positions around the airport were under fire from the RPF while the RGF had targeted the RPF in the CND complex in the centre of Kigali. Mortars had hit the airport again. This had not caused significant damage but a UNAMIR resupply flight had not been able to land. There had also been prolonged shelling of the area surrounding the Amahoru stadium and the UNAMIR headquarters. But again there had been no damage. Overall

there had been no significant change in the positions of the parties. The RPF were still advancing to Kigali from the east but were meeting stiff resistance from the RGF. The Force Commander was in daily contact with both sides. The main focus of his contacts was a ceasefire, the security of the airport and humanitarian issues. He had asked both parties to withdraw troops and heavy weapons from areas controlled by UNAMIR. The UNAMIR force level remained at 450. This included 72 UNMOs. The troops were drawn from Ghana and Tunisia and the UNMOs from eleven other countries. The troops which had been evacuated to Nairobi had now been repatriated to their home countries, except for 175 UNMOs who would stay in Nairobi for a few more days.

4. Gharekhan also briefed on the activities of the Secretary-General's representative (SRSG). He had been to Arusha where a draft ceasefire agreement had been presented to the RFP. This had also been presented to the RGF in Kigali. The SRSG had then travelled to Nairobi where, on 27 April, he had met a delegation from the interim government (the Ministers of Justice, Commerce, Transport and Communications and the former Chief of Staff of the Army). The delegation said they regretted they had not been able to go to Arusha. They had received an invitation from President Mobutu to visit Gbadolite instead. Mobutu had given them a draft ceasefire agreement which they had accepted. The interim government delegation had said there was also an RPF delegation in Gbadolite. They had also accepted Mobutu's draft. The SRSG would be returning to Kigali as soon as he could. It was his firm view that leaders of neighbouring states could play an important role in adding to the peace process in Rwanda and would continue to seek their assistance.

5. Gharekhan also gave a briefing on WFP activities in response to the US request (para 4 of TUR). WFP had mobilised over 58000 tonnes of food to meet the needs of refugees for two months. There had been two deliveries last week in southern Rwanda in cooperation with the ICRC. 8 tonnes had been distributed in Gitarama and 24 tonnes in Butare. However the supply to Butare had had to be suspended because of the deteriorating security situation. The ICRC and MSF had both been deployed from Butare to Burundi. There were drugs and food available in Burundi and a relief programme could begin as soon as the security situation improved. WFP were carrying out

similar work in Northern Rwanda. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. A DHA assessment team was currently in Rwanda. The initial appeal had been for \$16.5 million in emergency aid.

6. Gambari (Nigeria) said UNAMIR was still playing a very important role under difficult and dangerous circumstances. He noted that there were two types of fighting going on in Rwanda. The first was fighting between the forces of the RPF and the RGF and the second was the fighting and killing occurring as a result of the total breakdown of law and order in the country. The African group had met earlier on 28 April to discuss what could be done. The first suggestion was to convene an emergency meeting of the OAU Conflict Prevention Mechanism at Foreign Minister level. The second was that the OAU Conflict Prevention Mechanism should help regional countries to arrange a ceasefire in a coordinated manner. The OAU should also ask some of its members to consider deploying mixed battalions of police and soldiers to Rwanda. However the OAU did not have the resources to do this itself. The expanded ECOMOG in Liberia might prove a model, finance via a UN trust fund. The final suggestion was that a Contact Group on Rwanda be established. The African Group had also discussed Burundi (see my separate telegram).

7. Kovanda (Czech Republic) circulated a draft Presidential Statement (text by fax to AD(E) and UND). This expresses Security Council horror at the slaughter of innocent civilians, and notes references in the Secretary-General's latest report that the current wave of killings were started by members of the Presidential Guard joined by elements of the RGF. It characterises the killings in Rwanda as genocide and warns the interim government that it bears responsibility for reining in and disciplining all elements of the RGF. In circulating the draft Kovanda drew attention to reports he had been receiving from Amnesty International, Medicines Sans Frontieres and Human Rights Watch. Human Rights Watch had said the violence in Rwanda was not random. It had pointed the finger at the Presidential Guard and armed militias trained over the past few years by members of the previous coalition government. The violence had been designed by Hutu hard-liners close to the late President to derail the Arusha process. It could not be characterised as purely ethnic since, immediately after the death of the President, Hutu opposition leaders had also been

killed. The massacres were of civilians and were totally separate from the fighting between the RGF and RPF which was being carried out by more conventional means. Human Rights Watch and the ICRC both believed that what was happening in Rwanda was genocide according to the Genocide Convention.

8. Albright (US) said there were a number of ideas circulating as to Security Council actions. One might be the establishment of an arms embargo. Although much of the killing was being carried out by machetes, there were arms involved and the US had reliable evidence that the RGF were actively looking for arms. The Rwandan Government should also be called upon to ensure its armies stopped killing civilians.

9. There was then a fairly lengthy discussion on the most appropriate next steps for the Council during which all Council members except the Rwandan Ambassador spoke. Merimee (France) was attracted by the approach put forward by Gambari. The UN had taken a decision on the withdrawal of troops. A Presidential Statement which made no reference to any action to be taken would be somewhat weak. Vorontsov (Russian Federation) said there was a need for something to be done to stop the killing. In other operations the Council authorised air power to stop bombardment of civilians. Why hadn't we acted to stop killing of civilians in Rwanda? As a first step the OAU should be called upon to do all it could and might be helped by the UN. Olhaye (Djibouti) was not convinced that the sort of presidential statement suggested by Kovanda would help in this respect. Yanez (Spain) said the Czech statement would need to be redrafted, but violations of humanitarian law could not be brushed under the carpet. Marker (Pakistan) said that we should react in some way to the continuing atrocities. As well as focussing on human rights issues this statement should underline the need for a ceasefire and a return to the political process. A statement should be adopted on 29 April.

10. I said you felt strongly that the Security Council needed the help and guidance of the African countries in its consideration of Rwanda. They should take the lead in this issue and had the right to look for UN help and guidance. I suggested that the Secretary-General consider what more could be done to improve the links between the SRSG, the force commander and the OAU and neighbouring countries. It was important for UN representatives, either from UNAMIR or from

headquarters, to participate in regional meetings. Experience in Bosnia had shown that a ceasefire negotiated away from the field rarely stuck on the ground. Local military leaders needed to be part of the discussions. There should be no disconnect between the efforts being made, for example, by President Mwinyi towards a ceasefire and what was being negotiated on the ground. As far as the statement was concerned, I would seek instructions. But I would welcome advice from the Secretariat as to whether the SRSG thought such a statement would help. If there was a statement, it should be more than just condemnatory. It should talk about contacts underway to bring about a ceasefire and a return to the political process. An expression of indignation was not enough.

11. Chen (China) said it was difficult to see what effective measures the Security Council could take. We should certainly encourage the OAU's activities. Better coordination was needed between countries within the OAU, between the OAU and the SRSG and the force commander in New York and with the Security Council. He saw problems with the draft Presidential Statement circulated. We should certainly seek the advice of the SRSG as to whether it would be useful. Any statement should address both the massacres of civilians and the fighting between the RPF and the RGF. Solutions to both these problems were related and we should not address them in isolation.

12. Keating (New Zealand, Council President), said there was a lot in Kovanda's draft which needed to be said but it would read easier if it were more action-oriented. He also saw value in Albright's suggestion that we consider an arms embargo.

13. There was agreement that the New Zealanders would circulate additional elements for inclusion in a Presidential Statement for consideration on 29 April (text by fax to UND and AD(E) when available). Gharekhan added that his one appeal would be for any statement not to contain anything which put the lives of UNAMIR personnel in jeopardy. He also made the point that the airport was crucial. It would be useful if a statement could find some way to call on all the parties to keep the airport open.

14. Possible Council action on Rwanda was also raised at the weekly meeting of EU Ambassadors on 28 April. Yanez raised

in the question of a Commission of Inquiry (para 10 of my t- no 1481 refers). The Council had authorised such an inquiry in the former Yugoslavia. It could not be seen to discriminate against African countries. He had some support from Noterdaeme (Belgium). I again expressed some scepticism. The track record of the UN on such inquiries was not encouraging. It tended to be a short-term response when the Council was not able to take military action. Discussion of the terms of reference for such an inquiry would inevitably divert attention from the most important task: achieving a ceasefire. I did not think we could rule out an eventual inquiry of some kind but it should be seen as one of the options before the international community and not pursued in isolation. The only other specific suggestion was from Noterdaeme who argued, [REDACTED], that additional UNAMIR troops should be deployed in small pockets around the country protecting civilians, in particular those in hospitals. I said this made little sense. There was a danger in placing penny packets of troops around the country in the current security situation. A small group of soldiers guarding a hospital was just as likely to be massacred as the patients and doctors within it.

COMMENT

15. [REDACTED]. Seen from here, there would be value in retaining the reference to genocide. However I do not think we should point the finger specifically at the RGF, despite the evidence cited in the Secretary-General's report. Doing so might have serious consequences for the safety of UNAMIR personnel on the ground. One way round it would be to condemn the atrocities and make clear that the two sides each bear responsibility for violations of international humanitarian law in the areas under their control. I am not much attracted by the idea of an arms embargo: a possibility, if others want to pursue it, might be to ask the Secretary-General in the statement to explore the merit of the idea in his contacts with the OAU etc.

16. Grateful for instructions 291300Z.

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