

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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TO: Ambassador Albright

THROUGH: Ambassador Walker
Ambassador Marrero *M*

FROM: ECOSOC - Craig Kuehl *CK*

SUBJECT: SYG, HCHR and UNHRC on Rwanda

Before you meet with the SYG this afternoon, there is additional information on Rwanda you may wish to consider.

1. The HCHR announced today in Geneva (copy of press release attached) that he is going to Rwanda and Burundi "in the next few days", and that the decision had been made "after consultation with the SYG." (Regarding the SYG's statement to you that he was concerned about such a trip, because the HCHR's first mission should not be an "investigation," of course the USG supports strongly his going, and we believe that such a trip is a core component of his mandate. It is not likely that governments will be disturbed by this visit, since the situation in Rwanda has revulsed the whole world.)

2. The HCHR in his press release also calls on the members of the UN Human Rights Commission (HRC) to consider convening an emergency session to deal with the human rights situation in Rwanda. Informal soundings in Geneva indicate that there will be adequate support among members of the HRC to convene such a session. Only the timing is in doubt. (The soonest it could take place would be about May 11.)

3. While the USG may have doubts about the ability of the HRC to take effective action concerning the situation in Rwanda, it will almost certainly agree to support convening the session. We may be able to establish a human rights monitoring presence on the ground (see para 4, below). It will be difficult, however, to come up with effective action, and the session may result in nothing more than hand-wringing.

4. Amnesty International issued a press release (copy attached) today in Geneva calling for (inter alia):

A) a joint mission of the relevant working groups and special rapporteurs of the HRC to both Rwanda and Burundi

B) the holding of an emergency session of the HRC after the return of the joint mission;

C) the SC to include a larger civilian police monitoring component (CIVPOLs) within the current PKO in Rwanda with a mandate to report on and take up human rights abuses by all parties.

clear: ECO:JBlaney, POL:LShestack

cc AMBs, AMB Gelber, ECOSOC chron, Shestack, Rwanda file, Kuehl
chron

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
MR. JOSE AYALA LASSO
(4.5.1994)

1. The violence unleashed in Rwanda since 6 April 1994 has shocked the world: many thousands of innocent civilians have suffered violations of their most basic human rights. Large numbers of children, women and elderly persons were among those killed, wounded, deprived of their belongings or forced to leave their homes. They have become victims of a crisis that has degenerated into a human rights disaster, described by many of those who witness it as genocide.
2. The High Commissioner has been following the situation in Rwanda with increasing concern and requested information on the situation and suggestions for action from a wide range of UN Agencies, Programmes, Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights, Chairmen of human rights Treaty-based bodies, the OAU, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the ICRC and non-governmental organizations.
3. The High Commissioner after consultations with the Secretary-General has decided to undertake personally a mission to Rwanda in the next few days. He will also visit Burundi in order to continue to offer UN support and assistance in the field of human rights.
4. Given the extreme gravity of the situation, the High Commissioner has decided to call on the members of the Commission on Human Rights to consider the advisability of convening the Commission on Human Rights in emergency session to deal with the human rights situation in Rwanda.
5. In order to enable the High Commissioner to be informed continuously of the evolution of the situation and to enable him to take action which would help consolidate progress towards ending violations of human rights and restoring peace, the High Commissioner is exploring the possibility of establishing a human rights presence in the area through the sending of human rights monitors to collect information and suggest action whenever necessary.
6. The High Commissioner expresses his concern about the human rights situation of refugees and urges the international community to provide generous assistance to those States in the region which host large numbers of refugees from Rwanda so as to ease their burden.

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Mr. Peter D. Eicher
Counsellor
Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations
11, route de Pregny
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3 May 1994

Dear Mr. Eicher,

I am sending you herewith a news service issued on 4 May by Amnesty International in which the organization calls for an urgent UN Commission on Human Rights reaction to the human rights crisis in both Burundi and Rwanda.

Given the appalling level and persistence of human rights violations in Rwanda and the impending danger of a further deterioration in Burundi, which go unchecked as the international community passively looks on as the massacres continue, Amnesty International is urgently calling for:

1. a joint mission of the relevant working groups and special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights to both Rwanda and Burundi
2. the holding, without delay, of a special session of the Commission on Human Rights to take appropriate action, and in particular to follow up on the recommendations of the joint mission.

The attached news service details some concrete steps that could be taken by the Commission on Human Rights in this context.

Amnesty International strongly hopes that UN Members States such as yours will live up to their responsibilities and will seize the opportunity open to all of them to call for a special session of the Commission on Human Rights, as provided for in ECOSOC Decision 1993/286: this exceptional option is specifically designed for such exceptional human rights crisis as in Rwanda/Burundi and cannot be overlooked in the search for concrete measures to stop further massacres and widespread torture.

I look forward to receiving any comments and reactions you may have to this proposal and would very much welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you or someone from your staff.

Yours sincerely and respectfully,

Isabelle Scherer
Amnesty International Representative to the UN

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News Service
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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL LAUNCHES PUBLIC APPEAL FOR EXCEPTIONAL
 UNITED NATIONS ACTION ON RWANDA AND BURUNDI

Amnesty International is calling for a special session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) to act on the human rights crisis in Rwanda and Burundi and to hear UN experts report back on an immediate joint mission to those countries.

The organization is calling for the UN experts on extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", torture, violence against women, racism and the internally displaced to collect information in Rwanda and Burundi on the human rights situation there. The mission should then make their recommendations to governments, to the special session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, and to other institutions in the UN system.

Amnesty International is deeply shocked by the continuing human rights crisis in Rwanda, the prospect of an escalation of the crisis in Burundi and the failure of the international community to effectively deal with the horrendous massacres. The government and security forces of these countries have either ordered, triggered, incited, encouraged or condoned the violence in which traditional weapons such as machetes and spears or firearms have been used countrywide to kill their suspected or known opponents. In addition, a humanitarian crisis has begun as over 300,000 people have fled Rwanda to neighbouring countries, while an estimated two million -- over a quarter of the population -- are displaced within Rwanda.

Amnesty International has strongly condemned the thousands of extrajudicial executions by the armed forces and killings by vigilante gangs armed and mobilized by the former President Juvénal Habyarimana's ruling party to attack and kill known or perceived political opponents. Some reports put the death toll in Rwanda at 100,000. The UN expert on extrajudicial executions made extensive recommendations to prevent such human rights violations after his April 1993 visit to Rwanda but they were not implemented. He, too, strongly condemned the recent killings.

Amnesty International also repeats its condemnation of the roughly 100,000 killings in Burundi since October 1993, sometimes by the Tutsi-dominated security forces and allied

Tutsi vigilantes, but also in large part by armed gangs of Hutu supported by some local government officials.

At a time when the UN Security Council has just decided to reduce the number of personnel in Rwanda from 2,486 to 270, Amnesty International is urging that the UN Security Council immediately expand the capacity of the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) to protect human rights. In addition, Amnesty International is now urging member states to call for a special session of the UN Commission on Human Rights to hear the report of the experts and to take concrete steps, including action on their recommendations. The Commission should also ensure support for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in his efforts to address these situations and ensure coordination of the UN's human rights response.

The special session should also ensure that concrete steps are taken to do at least the following:

1. Ensure a human rights monitoring presence on the ground in both countries which should report on the human rights situation, take up cases, and act as a dissuasive presence. The special session could draw on the experience of other on-site human rights reporting operations. For example:

The first-ever special session of the Commission in 1992 appointed a Special Rapporteur on the former Yugoslavia who has some staff in the former Yugoslavia collecting information. In addition, he is sent all reports on human rights violations which come to the attention of UN personnel in UNPROFOR and the other UN specialized agencies.

The UN General Assembly with the Organization of American States (OAS) has established a civilian human rights monitoring mission in Haiti which issues public reports on the situation as well as public statements on particular incidents as they happen.

The UN Security Council should include a larger civilian police monitoring component (CIVPOLs) within the current peace-keeping operation in Rwanda (UNAMIR) with a mandate to report on and take up human rights abuses by all parties (the UN operation in Mozambique will soon have over 1,000 CIVPOLs). Amnesty International has already called for the UN Security Council to expand the UNAMIR human rights monitoring capacity in this way in its News Service of 14 April 1994.

2. Send a clear message to people in Rwanda and Burundi that human rights violators must be brought to justice and the victims and their families compensated.
3. Consider the report and recommendations of the UN fact-finding mission sent by the Secretary-General and just returned from Burundi.

4. Start developing a long-term human rights program of action in Burundi and Rwanda to protect human rights and prevent further violations.

Amnesty International is appealing to the international community, and in particular to the Organization of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement, to ensure that a special session of the Commission takes place.

The organization hopes that, as required by the procedure, a UN member state will request the UN Secretary-General to convene a Special Session by submitting a request to the Assistant-Secretary-General for Human Rights in Geneva. Amnesty International also hopes that a majority of the 53 states who are members of the Commission will agree to the holding of such a session within four working days of such a request being made.