

3
Defense Intelligence Report

31 January 1995
PS-06-95

Rwanda-Burundi: Still on the Brink (C/NF)



Key Judgments

(C/NF/NC) More widespread violence between Hutus and the Tutsi minority could engulf Rwanda and Burundi at any time in the next year. Growing militancy among Hutus in Zairian and Tanzanian refugee camps poses a security threat to the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), relief workers, and the host countries. Most Hutu refugees are unlikely to return to Rwanda because they believe that the RPF is killing returnees. The Tutsis view the military as their only protection from another round of Hutu-led genocide and will probably continue to use tough security measures that risk widening the humanitarian crisis and conflict.

(C/NF/NC) In Burundi, hundreds have died in ethnic clashes in the past few months, while maneuvers by the Hutu ruling party and the Tutsi-led opposition strain a UN-brokered power-sharing accord. Several incendiary issues could spark a coup or ignite an ethnic conflagration.

(C/NF/NC) International mediators have had some effect in moderating conflict, but Hutus and Tutsis alike still believe that they are in zero-sum game of ethnic survival. Policing the Rwandan refugee camps and negotiating a Hutu-Tutsi settlement enjoy the broadest support from the international community, but many Hutus and Tutsis find even these solutions contentious. No option can succeed if strongly opposed by either the RPF or Hutu leaders.

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2

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