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The other major internal development this week was the GOR's operation to replace all old currency with new notes. UNAMIR assisted in providing security for transport of the new notes, but poor coordination and money shortages have delayed the operation. The GOR closed the border at Goma, Zaire, in order to forestall any effort by the refugee population -- particularly those in the power structure -- from attempting to smuggle old bank notes back for changing before they are declared worthless. Embassy Kigali reports that the money changing operation will undoubtedly undercut the power structure of the refugee camps, but the question remains whether innocent refugees who decide to return permanently to Rwanda after the operation is over will be allowed to exchange some amount of old notes.

STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Rwanda Rule of Law Assistance: On Tuesday DRL met with AID/AF to discuss AID's proposal for a "rapid response program" to help Rwanda re-establish its justice system. The AID program will: (1) provide technical assistance to the Rwandan MoJ; (2) provide foreign jurists to help handle civil cases; and (3) explore the possibility of establishing pilot alternative dispute programs, primarily for land disputes.

AID intends to hire a contractor to send 5 specialists to Kigali for approximately one month (starting possibly before the UNDP Roundtable (Jan. 18-19)) to develop specific, detailed work programs in these three areas. In the second phase, AID will supply long-term (approximately one year) specialists to work with the MoJ, identify and fund as many as 20 foreign jurists, and supply a six-person team to begin alternative dispute programs in Rwanda.

AID was reluctant to provide judges for criminal cases or technical assistance for the national commission charged with performing triage on the 10,000+ criminal cases. AID felt that providing assistance here would entangle the U.S. in political issues and get them too involved with the Rwandan government. We noted that the need to show progress in meting out justice in criminal matters was a most pressing need in Rwanda. DRL agreed to work with AID in developing more information on the national triage commission so that AID could add this to its assistance package.

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