

**EXTERNAL RWANDA: THE KIBEHO KILLINGS - THE NEED FOR AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY**

According to the Rwandese Government, over 300 people in Kibeho camp for the internally displaced were killed on 22 April 1995.

Independent witnesses put the number of dead at between 2000 and 8000 and have spoken of government soldiers shooting at clearly unarmed and defenceless civilians. Others are reported to have been killed in the ensuing panic. The true number of dead is not yet known - that is one reason Amnesty International is calling on the Rwandese Government to hold an independent inquiry, including appropriate forensic investigations.

Amnesty International is asking governments and others to support this call, believing there are other compelling reasons for such an inquiry. It would provide a clear indication of the Rwandese Government's concern at such loss of life and could help rebuild the much needed confidence among people in Rwanda and internationally that the Government has not adopted a policy of arbitrary and deliberate killings by its security forces.

Establishing how and why the killings took place could provide vital lessons for preventing further killings if the government continues to implement a policy of closing down camps for the internally displaced.

Establishing an inquiry and holding to account those responsible for extrajudicial killings will strengthen calls by the Rwandese Government and the international community that those responsible for the genocide of 1994 be prosecuted. It is vital that the same standards on impunity be applied to continuing, as well as to past human rights violations, whoever is responsible.

Amnesty International's call for an inquiry provides a practical focus for a strong international response to these killings. It could help prevent human rights violations by the RPA from becoming entrenched. Truth and justice must be at the heart of efforts to restore respect for human rights in Rwanda.

Given reports of hasty attempts to bury many of the dead and hide evidence of the killings, Amnesty International believes that a proper forensic investigation, as part of any overall inquiry into the massacre will be essential to determine the number of people killed, the sequence of events and the cause of death. Amnesty International is asking the international community to offer any necessary assistance for such an investigation.

Amnesty International is also asking governments and others to support its call for the public issuing by the RPA and Rwandese Government of clear instructions to the military on the use of lethal force, its commitment to independent investigations of reports of human rights violations and to holding to account those found responsible in accordance with international standards.

In Rwanda today there is tension, fear and insecurity. Fear of killings and of reprisal killings is fed by failure to act against the killers. This in turn fuels the cycle of violence. International concern and support for programs of prevention, and the need for the Rwandese Government to demonstrate its commitment to upholding human rights is essential.