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RWANDA: INDEPENDENT FORENSIC INQUIRY AND URGENT PROTECTION
NEEDED FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS FOLLOWING THE MASSACRE
OF SEVERAL THOUSANDS

An independent inquiry -- including forensic investigation -- should be launched immediately into thousands of deaths this weekend in southwest Rwanda, before crucial evidence is concealed and the possibility of determining the truth is destroyed, Amnesty International said today.

"The massacres at Kibeho camp sadly illustrate the ongoing cycle of violence in Rwanda, which will continue until perpetrators of human rights violations are brought to justice," Amnesty International said.

"Justice has still not been done in addressing last year's genocide," Amnesty International said. "Massacres and reprisal killings are likely to continue until the Rwandese people see that those who commit such atrocities are brought to justice, whether such crimes were committed a year ago or today."

Amnesty International strongly condemns the killings at Kibeho on 22 April and is urgently calling for the Rwandese government to issue clear instructions to the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) that extrajudicial executions will not be tolerated under any circumstances and that perpetrators will be brought to justice.

Those in charge of the security forces should maintain a strict chain-of-command control to ensure that officers under their command do not commit extrajudicial executions. Officials with chain-of-command responsibility who order or tolerate such killings by those under their command should be held criminally responsible for these acts.

Amnesty International is also calling for:

- ◆ An independent inquiry, including a forensic investigation to determine the true number of people killed and the cause of their deaths. The inquiry should establish the precise role of the RPA in directly or indirectly causing these deaths; and those found responsible for the killings should be brought to justice promptly and in accordance with international standards of fairness;

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♦ Protection of the nearly 80,000 survivors of this incident, who have now been force-marched from Kibeho to Butare;

♦ Protection of internally displaced persons at risk of human rights violations in other camps and locations around the country;

♦ Immediate measures by the Rwandese authorities to ensure that RPA troops do not carry out extrajudicial executions against internally displaced persons in future operations, and that any further interventions by the RPA should be done in coordination with the United Nations. No internally displaced persons or refugees should be forced to return against their will if they are at risk of human rights violations; and

♦ If there are known human rights violators among the internally displaced persons, their involvement in past human rights violations should be properly investigated by national authorities or the International Tribunal where appropriate, and they should be charged and tried in accordance with international standards. The mere fact of their presence in the camps can never justify arbitrary killings of unarmed civilians.

Tension had been mounting since last week as mainly Hutu internally displaced persons resisted attempts by the RPA to forcibly move them from camps in the south west of the country. The situation was especially tense at Kibeho camp, thought to shelter some of the *Interahamwe* militia and other Hutu extremists.

On 22 April, as thousands refused to move from the camp which had been cordoned off by the army, RPA troops reportedly opened fire into the crowd. Several thousand women, men and children were killed, bayoneted to death or stampeded in the panic which ensued.

The true number of victims is not known; estimates range from 2,000 to 8,000. The government put the figure at 360 and described the killings as legitimate, claiming that the troops fired in self-defence.

Amnesty International published a report earlier this month entitled "Crying out for justice". It describes how one year on -- the Rwandese people are still waiting for justice to be done for the genocide and other human rights violations committed in 1994.

Amnesty International is now repeating its call to the Rwandese government and to the international community to take immediate measures to put in place a system which can restore

respect for human rights in Rwanda and reassure internally displaced persons and refugees that their safety can be guaranteed on return to their homes.

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