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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - UNITED NATIONS (RWANDA)

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China - 1 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

**** USA - 14 June **** - A report and news release on the conditions for death row prisoners in Oklahoma State Penitentiary. Please note that although this document has been sent out in the weekly mailing dated May 1994, it is EMBARGOED FOR 14 JUNE. Please do not release it before that date.

Turkey - 30 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 104/94

Pakistan - 27 July - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

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Guatemala - 25 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 99/94

MOROCCO - 31 MAY - SEE NEWS SERVICE 105/94 ** NOTE CHANGE OF DATE, SEE ABOVE NOTE **

Austria - 7 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 105/94

Denmark - 15 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 105/94

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FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Annual Report - 7 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 51/94

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES DECISION BY UN COMMISSION, BUT CALLS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS IN RWANDA

A two-day special session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on Human Rights that just ended made an important decision to investigate the human rights catastrophe in Rwanda but failed to include Burundi on its agenda, despite the danger of escalating violence in that country, Amnesty International said.

The special session that condemned all breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses in Rwanda, including genocidal acts that may have occurred.

The commission also appointed a Special Rapporteur, with a team of human rights field officers, to investigate the killings in Rwanda and make practical recommendations to stop the violations and prevent them from ever happening again.

The Special Rapporteur will investigate immediately and report back in four weeks. However, the commission did not call on the General Assembly and Security Council to make sure that the UN operation in Rwanda has an immediate and strong human rights role.

"The special session should have called on the Security Council to return the UN civilian police monitors to Rwanda from where they sit in Kenya and for UN troops to report the human rights violations they see and are told about", Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International also welcomed the UN meeting's demand that officials or others who commit violations of human rights or international humanitarian law be held "individually responsible and accountable" and that the "international community will exert every effort to bring those responsible to justice."

Yet the international community must make this a reality because Rwanda's judicial system has broken down and senior judges have fled or been killed. The commission, meeting in Geneva on 24 and 25 May with 70 governments from all regions of the world attending, made no reference how to bring those responsible to justice, Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International remains convinced that identifiable authorities -- including the Presidential Guard and state-sponsored militia -- have committed most of the carnage. It's disappointing that the special session did not point this out and it is now up to the UN to move swiftly to identify the crimes and those responsible for committing them. The Special Rapporteur will play a role in this, but to achieve this will require substantial resources and a body of experts to gather evidence which could be used for prosecution.

While the convening of this special session represents an important step, Amnesty International considers that the international response to Rwanda's human rights crisis should be strengthened by other immediate measures. These should include:

- returning civilian police monitors immediately to Rwanda, in increased numbers and with an extended mandate;
- ensuring that UN troops and other personnel in Rwanda do not remain silent witnesses to atrocities, by requiring them to send reports to the commission's Special Rapporteur and other UN bodies;
- adopting of effective measures within the shortest possible time to bring to justice those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law or human rights violations or abuses, including establishing as soon as possible a fair and effective permanent international criminal court;

- stronger cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Amnesty International deeply regrets that this special session did not also act on the situation in Burundi, where more than 100,000 people have been killed since October 1993. The human rights organization continues to believe that the international community needs to heed the advice of the UN's own expert on extrajudicial executions that immediate steps are needed to prevent the cycle of violence there from continuing.

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