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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **BURUNDI** - (this item will be sent to Africa media and selected international media with an interest in Africa)

PLEASE NOTE: The Ethiopia news release has now been re-scheduled for 19 April.

SECTION NEWS

The draft minutes of the European Press Officers' Meeting (sent out in NS 42/95) have now been agreed as final.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Campaign on Women - 7 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 12/95, 34/95, 37/95, 42/95 & 44/95

RWANDA - 6 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

SYRIA - 11 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 32/95

** ETHIOPIA - 19 APRIL - SEE NEWS SERVICE 59/95

** TIBET - 9 MAY ** -

GERMANY - 23 MAY - SEE NEWS SERVICE 59/95

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

BAHRAIN - 30 APRIL - SEE NEWS SERVICE 64/95

** JAPAN - 4 MAY ** This item is timed to coincide with a section-level death penalty action on Japan

ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES - 11 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 59/95

IRAN - 31 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 59/95

EVENTS AND MISSIONS

The details below are for your information only, and there may or may not be media work involved. Can you please not publicize anything until further notice from the IS.

Brazil - 28 March (Pierre's visit) - SEE NEWS SERVICE 29/95, 59/95, 60/95

MISSION TO KENYA 16 March - 2 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

MISSION TO HAITI 18 March - 3 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 58/95

MISSION TO CHAD - 27 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 59/95

28 MARCH 1995 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BURUNDI: DELEGATES BACK FROM BURUNDI WARN OF ANOTHER CYCLE OF SLAUGHTER

Amnesty International delegates returning from Burundi told of interviewing tortured prisoners and relatives of victims of new mass killings, and witnessing the burning of houses, grenade attacks and gunfire.

"Burundi is poised on the brink of another cycle of horrific slaughter," according to the Amnesty International delegation, which spent 10 days in Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi. "Thousands have already been killed this year and the death toll rises day by day."

Amnesty International urges the Burundi military authorities to take immediate steps to prevent killings of unarmed civilians by members of the Tutsi-dominated armed forces and extremist Hutu and Tutsi armed gangs.

In recent days, hundreds of civilians have been shot, bayoneted to death or have "disappeared" after being taken away in military trucks, several sources told the Amnesty International investigators. Thousands of Hutu citizens left Bujumbura and fled to Uvira in neighbouring Zaire.

On 24 and 25 March, the suburbs of Bwiza and Buyenzi in the capital Bujumbura were the scene of another outbreak of mass violence and human rights abuses. The local Hutu majority population were driven out of these two suburbs, which were the last remaining ethnically mixed areas. Armed Tutsi youth gangs, in some cases with the active support of members of the armed forces, blocked the main road leading to the suburbs, preventing access by local human rights groups, foreign journalists and observers.

This latest wave of violence seems to have been sparked off by the assassination of the Minister for Mines and Energy, Ernest Kabushemeye, a Hutu and president of the *Rassemblement du peuple burundais* (RPB), or Rally of Burundi People. Also fueling the violence was the later discovery of the mutilated body of a retired Tutsi army officer, Lieutenant Colonel Lucien Sakubu, in a Hutu-dominated area of Kinama in Bujumbura.

The murder of Lucien Sakubu caused an immediate reaction by the Tutsi-dominated army. On 15 and 16 March, at least 80 people were arrested in the area of Kinama and taken to the *Brigade spéciale de recherche* (BSR), or Special Investigation Brigade, for interrogation. Women and children among the detainees were made to point out men possibly involved in the abduction and the assassination of Lucien Sakubu. As a result, 12 men were picked out for interrogation and the rest were released.

The Commander of the BSR, Commandant Pierre Ntahorwamiye, told Amnesty International representatives that the *Procureur général*, or General Prosecutor, Jean Bosco Butasi, advised using "more or less violent means" for

the interrogations, because of the "highly political nature and priority of the case." Ntahorwamiye said four additional *Officiers de police judiciaire* (OPJ) or judicial police officers, would be brought to interrogate them using what he called the "fatigue technique", a series of interrogation sessions -- lasting as long as 12 hours -- by several officials in succession.

Amnesty International delegates were allowed into the BSR prison to interview prisoners, two of whom had been tortured during their interrogation. Jean Minani, a peasant farmer, and Tharcisse Nzimpora, a bike taximan. They displayed scabs and open wounds from beatings with *indembo* or police batons, which were manufactured in and supplied by France as part of the military cooperation program. This program also has a French Gendarmerie advisor (*Conseiller de Gendarmerie*), who occupies an office in the BSR compound. While standing in front of that office on 20 March, the organization's representatives heard screaming elsewhere in the compound.

The organization's delegates expressed deep concern about this torture to Burundi Government officials and to the military attaché at the French embassy in Bujumbura. The delegates called upon the French authorities not to be "silent witnesses" of human rights violations. The French Government should oblige its military and security advisors to ensure that their equipment and training are not used for human rights violations, and to denounce publicly any violations they witness. Amnesty International also urges the Burundi authorities to stop the torture, and calls on foreign governments and intergovernmental representatives to protest such torture.

On 19 March, shortly after the round-up of assassination suspects, a Hutu armed gang attacked several cars outside Bujumbura and killed 17 people, including three Belgian nationals, one of them a child. On 24 March sources within the President's Office told Amnesty International representatives that more than 100 bodies of civilians were lying along the road in Kanyosha, south of Bujumbura. Army Chief of Staff Colonel Jean Bikomagu told Amnesty International representatives that there had been continued attacks by Hutu armed groups on the military in the area, but he denied reports of killings of unarmed civilians. He denied Amnesty International access to the area, as well as an advisor to Burundi's president, the Minister of Communication and a local journalist.

Amnesty International is calling on the Burundi military authorities to take immediate steps to prevent killings of unarmed civilians and other abuses by members of the armed forces and armed gangs. Independent and impartial observers, members of human rights and humanitarian organizations and governmental officials should be given access to the areas where violence is reported. A public independent and impartial commission of inquiry should be set up to investigate the causes and perpetrators of the abuses and those responsible should be brought to justice. The organization is also calling on foreign governments and intergovernmental organizations to urgently send human rights monitors to investigate the current human rights abuses.

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