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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **BURUNDI**

PLEASE NOTE: Press officers still have not got back to me with their comments/suggestions about the proposals (sent out in news service 163/94) for the international press officers meeting which the IS will be holding early next year. I know the past few months have been really busy so you probably haven't had much time to think about it, but if you have any suggestions please could you try and get them to me by the end of this week. You can contact me by e-mail (DStavrin) or via the press office fax machine (44 71 413 5815). Many thanks - Dina S.

PLEASE NOTE: The Burundi item that is being sent to you in this news service is intended for use by sections in their campaigning publicity work around the anniversary of the mass killings in Burundi. The IS Press Office will send it out to targeted Africa-specific media, rather than to international media, to avoid conflict with the Rwanda news release embargoed until Thursday 20 October. Please refer to a 7 October 1994 fax sent by Campaigns to sections for ideas about how this item can be used. Also, press officers could use a previous news service on Burundi (News Service 231 of 4 October) in conjunction with this latest news item.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Rwanda - 20 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 234/94

Algeria - 25 October - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

APEC - 3 November -SEE NEWS SERVICE 212/94

Iraq - 29 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 212/94

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Burundi - 21 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 230/94

Turkey - 24 OCTOBER - SEE NEWS SERVICE 181/94

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EMBARGOED FOR 21 OCTOBER 1994

BURUNDI: ANNIVERSARY OF MASS KILLINGS SHOULD SHAME FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

One year after the assassination of Burundi's president, which precipitated mass killings that cost some 50,000 lives, political killings take place in the country virtually every day.

"Despite the mass killings that occurred a year ago, and the scale of the even greater calamity in Rwanda this year, the international community still turns a blind eye to ongoing carnage in Burundi," Amnesty International said.

None of those responsible for killings in October and November 1993 or in subsequent months have been brought to justice, and little has been done to prevent a recurrence of the mass killing which has been a feature of the country since the mid-1960s.

The past year has seen envoys of the Secretaries General of both the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) sent to Burundi to promote reconciliation.

Yet the international community has failed to take steps to prevent these current killings, such as implementing the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council fact-finding mission to deploy human rights monitors to investigate and report on human rights violations in Burundi. The UN has yet to release the report of its investigators who visited Burundi in early 1994 with their findings and recommendations.

"The international community's apparent lack of interest, even though a UN employee has been among the victims of this year's political killings, amounts to serious negligence," Amnesty international said.

"UN member states with substantial influence and resources appear to pay attention only if victims are counted in thousands, not just hundreds or dozens, and neglect countries where they have no strategic interests," the organization added.

In the intervening year since the massacres in Burundi, hundreds of thousands of people have been murdered in neighbouring Rwanda where similar intercommunal divisions, between a Hutu majority and Tutsi minority, were used to justify killing defenceless men, women and children on account of their origin or political beliefs.

Burundi has experienced both "ethnic cleansing" and violent conflict during 1994 between supporters of different political groups and, despite formal

power-sharing between the political parties, the killing of defenceless people continues.

In September, Burundi's security forces killed 13 unarmed men and five others "disappeared" after arrest. A journalist, a medical student and a medical doctor were among those apparently tortured and killed after being assembled for a "screening exercise" by security forces in a suburb of Bujumbura, the capital. Eyewitnesses saw the bodies dumped from two *Gendarmerie* vehicles driven by soldiers.

The government of Burundi is now keen to have human rights monitors yet their appeals are not being answered, with rich nations prepared to pay for UN civilian missions in Haiti and Guatemala but not in Central Africa. The High Commissioner for Human Rights' fund for his advisory services program in Burundi stands at a mere US \$405,400, months after his appeal for more than US \$3 million. Only 31 out of 147 human rights monitors proposed and only 30 out of the 90 civilian police authorised are deployed in Rwanda.

"The sums needed are small but the stakes are high: Burundi and Rwanda need help now to rebuild their judiciary, yet governments are parsimonious and short-sighted," Amnesty International said.

"We have seen this month that money can be found for huge military deployments in the Gulf and the Caribbean, yet the fate of Central Africa is at the bottom of the rich nations' agenda."

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