

World-wide Appeals

Bangladesh

Whipping, burning and stoning have been taking place in Bangladesh since 1992, with no legal authority. Local village councils, or *salish* have ordered and supervised these punishments under Islamic laws, which are not on Bangladesh's statute book.

Most victims have been women. Shefali, aged 14, became pregnant after a landlord allegedly raped her. Because she could not produce four male witnesses, she was subsequently sentenced by a *salish* in April 1992, to 100 lashes for admitting adultery. Her mother also received 100 lashes for accusing the landlord of rape, since the testimony of one woman is not accepted under Islamic law.

Noorjahan Begum, aged 21, who obtained permission from village clergy for a second marriage because her first husband had abandoned her, was stoned, together with her new husband in January 1993. A *salish* had found their marriage illegal. They were buried up to their chests and then subjected to public stoning. Noorjahan died soon after.

In October 1993, Amnesty International expressed concern that the Government of Bangladesh had failed to prevent *salish* bodies from taking the law in their own hands, and urged the authorities to bring to justice those responsible for these extrajudicial punishments and killings, and to take effective measures to prevent such punishments.

AI was encouraged by reports that in February 1994, a Bangladeshi court had sentenced nine men to seven years' imprisonment each for their participation in the stoning of Noorjahan and her husband.

Please send appeals to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, office of the Prime Minister, Dhaka, Bangladesh: and to President Abdur Rahman Biswas welcoming that in one case perpetrators have been brought to justice, but urging the government to ensure that *salish* bodies do not assume extra-legal judicial or law enforcement functions, and that law enforcement personnel found to have deliberately failed to protect the victims are brought to justice.

Libya

Mansur Kikhiya, a prominent Libyan human rights activist and opposition leader, went missing on 10 December 1993 from a hotel in Cairo. AI fears that he has been abducted by Libyan government agents and taken back to Libya.

Mansur Kikhiya, 61-year-old former Foreign Minister, resigned as Libya's permanent representative to the United Nations in September 1980 and since then has been an active opponent of the government, living in exile in France. He is diabetic and needs regular injections of insulin.

A few days before his "disappearance", Mansur Kikhiya was in Cairo attending the general conference of the Arab Organization for Human Rights, of which he was a founding member. During the conference he was re-elected to its Executive Committee. He was last seen on the evening of 10 December at al-Safir Hotel, in Cairo.

Fears that he may have been abducted and taken back to Libya increased when, two days later, Libyan authorities publicly described opposition members abroad as "stray dogs" and called for their "annihilation". The Egyptian authorities have launched an investigation into Mansur Kikhiya's "disappearance", but its outcome has not been disclosed. In 1990 two other prominent members of the Libyan opposition "disappeared" in Cairo. They are believed to be held in a secret location near Tripoli.

Please send appeals asking the Libyan Government for information concerning Mansur Kikhiya's whereabouts and asking the Egyptian Government to make public the results of the investigation, to:

His Excellency Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi/Leader of the Revolution/Office of the Leader of the Revolution/Tripoli/Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

His Excellency/Muhammad Hosni Mubarak/President of the Arab Republic of Egypt/'Abedin Palace/Cairo, Egypt.

Kyrgyzstan

Andrei Arazov, 23, and Sultan Karibzhanov, 24, have been sentenced to death for murder. There are allegations that they were convicted on the basis of confessions they made as a result of beatings and threats by law-enforcement officials.

Andrei Arazov and Sultan Karibzhanov were convicted on 7 February 1994 by Chuy regional court of the murder of an elderly couple. Sultan Karibzhanov's brother Rustam and a fourth man, Nurkan Ospanov, were also convicted of involvement in the crime and sentenced to, respectively, five and 10 years' imprisonment. The sentences were upheld by the Supreme Court on 5 April 1994.

It is alleged that the only evidence against these four men were confessions they made during interrogation following their arrest in February 1993, and that they were beaten and intimidated into making these confessions, which were dictated to them by their interrogators. In one incident, Andrei Arazov is said to have been threatened with a gun. During their trial the defendants retracted their confessions.

Please send appeals calling for the immediate commutation of the death sentences passed on Andrei Arazov and Sultan Karibzhanov, stressing that miscarriages of justice which result in capital punishment can never be put right, and calling also for an investigation into allegations that all four defendants in this case were ill-treated during interrogation. Send your appeals to Askar Akayev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Government House, 720003 Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (write "Former USSR" on envelopes in the language of your national postal authority, for easier delivery).

News

Sudan

The Sudanese authorities have recently arrested a number of journalists and closed an independent newspaper in a crackdown aimed at halting the publication of articles critical of government policies.

Mahjoub Mohamed al-Hassan Erwa, the editor of *Al-Sudani al-Doulia* and a member of the Transitional National Assembly (Sudan's government-appointed

parliament) who is a prominent supporter of the government's Islamist ideology, was arrested on 4 April 1994 following the publication of articles critical of the government's performance.

Although no charges are known to have been brought against Mahjoub Mohamed al-Hassan Erwa, officials are reported to have accused him of treason and spreading "false news" after *Al-Sudani al-Doulia* published reports of governmental corruption and calls for a return to multi-party politics. As of mid-May 1994, he reportedly remained in detention.

In June 1993, four years after seizing power and banning private newspapers, the government announced that it was relaxing the state monopoly of the press and would grant licenses to independent newspapers.

Since starting to publish in Khartoum in January 1994, three other journalists from *Al-Sudani al-Doulia* have been detained, one for a period of two months. All three have now been released without charge. The authorities appear to have closed the newspaper indefinitely.

Nigeria

About 20 people have been killed in clashes over a land dispute between Ogoni and neighbouring Ndoki villagers in Rivers State, southeast Nigeria. AI fears for the safety of members of the Ogoni ethnic group after Nigerian security forces were implicated in the killings.

On 3 April the security forces, after allegedly encouraging the Ndoki attack on Ogoni villages, followed in their wake, burning down Ogoni homes and detaining several of their people.

On 21 April hundreds of police and military were ordered into Ogoniland to restore order. At the same time the local authorities set up a special Civil Disturbances Tribunal with the power to impose the death penalty for previously non-capital crimes such as "attempted murder". AI is concerned that the tribunal's power may be used against Ogoni detainees after hasty and unfair trials.

The Nigerian security forces have reportedly been responsible for extrajudicial executions of Rivers State villagers protesting against environmental damage and inadequate compensation for destruction of land and crops by oil companies. In October 1990 about 80 villagers were killed and their homes razed by police. A judicial commission of inquiry recommended prosecution of named police officers but its findings were kept secret and no one was brought to justice. In 1993 the security forces were allegedly involved in further extrajudicial executions while ostensibly maintaining order in Ogoniland.

AI is calling for an impartial investigation into extrajudicial executions by security forces and inter-ethnic killings in Ogoniland and for those responsible to be brought to justice in accordance with international standards for a fair trial and without death sentences being imposed.

In May, AI called for the release of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a writer and President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, arrested on 22nd May. Later that same day, four Ogoni leaders were murdered in Ogoniland. AI believes Ken Saro-Wiwa is a prisoner of conscience, and that his arrest is part of the continuing suppression by the Nigerian authorities of the Ogoni people's campaign against the oil companies.

Haiti

More than 20 people died in one of the worst mass killings in Haiti since the overthrow of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in September 1991. According to some sources, as many as 50 people from the shanty town of Raboteau, Gonaives, department of Artibonite, may have been killed in April 1994, by the military and members of the Revolutionary Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), a paramilitary group linked to them.

Since the coup, the residents of Raboteau, including children as young as two years old, have been subjected to a series of beatings, arbitrary detentions and armed attacks carried out by the Haitian military, often acting in conjunction with so-called *attachés* (armed auxiliaries to the security forces). On 18 April 1994 soldiers went to Raboteau to search for a local activist, Amio Métayer. When they could not find him they burnt his house down, ransacked other homes, beat fleeing villagers and arrested others, including Amio Métayer's father and sister.

The villagers were released the following day, but in the early hours of 22 April, soldiers accompanied by members of FRAPH, surrounded Raboteau and began firing their guns into the air. As frightened residents fled towards the beach to try and escape, the soldiers and FRAPH members chased them, shooting at their backs and legs. Others fired on the fleeing villagers from the water and also targeted residents who had been sleeping in their boats. According to the military however, the dead were killed in a gun-battle between the military and "terrorists" loyal to President Aristide.

It is believed that the military may have burned or dumped the bodies of some of the dead into the sea. Many of the shanty-town's residents fled the area, making it difficult to establish a final death toll.

AI has called on the authorities to carry out an investigation into these abuses and for steps to be taken to ensure the safety of all Raboteau residents.

USA

State Governor Joan Finney of Kansas has allowed a bill reinstating the death penalty in the state to become law, despite her own opposition to capital punishment.

In April 1994 Governor Finney, who could have vetoed the bill, decided to take no action but to let the bill become law without her signature as she believed it to be the will of the people of Kansas. AI condemned the move, which it called a retrograde step for human rights in Kansas, and contrary to international human rights standards and treaties which encourage governments to reduce the use of the death penalty.

A disturbing provision of the new law allows the involvement of health professionals in the execution process. This is contrary to ethical guidelines issued by the American Medical Association (AMA) and the World Medical Association (WMA) prohibiting physicians from participating in executions. There have been no executions in Kansas since 1965.

Brazil

Abandoned shoes strewn across the entrance of the auditorium of the University of São Paulo marked the opening of a ceremony to launch AI's campaign against "disappearances" and political killings in Brazil. The empty shoes symbolized the absence of those who have "disappeared" or been killed in the country. Speeches by the university's vice-chancellor and the president of the Brazilian Section, Carlos Idoeta, were followed by a moving presentation by a group of prominent Brazilians. Throughout the day representatives of the legal profession, the arts, journalism, commerce and academia adopted the lives of seven of the campaign's appeal cases - each telling their story, answering questions and describing the impact of their "disappearance" or extra-judicial execution on their families and friends.

Known as AI's "Ambassadors of Hope", the personalities also gave press conferences, wrote articles, made television appearances and took part in

debates and public events throughout the country on behalf of their adopted victims.

The launch received much media attention, including front-page coverage in a leading Brazilian newspaper and reports in most of the main local and national news bulletins.

India

Amnesty International has made its first research visit to an Indian state - Maharashtra - for 14 years. The delegation visited the state capital Bombay from 8 - 15 January, 1994, and spoke to senior state and police officials; dozens of victims of human rights violations; lawyers and members of civil liberties groups.

AI chose to visit Bombay because of reports of indiscriminate police shootings and indications of police partiality during the December 1992 - January 1993 riots, which left at least 1,500 people dead. The delegation also raised allegations of arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment of Muslims after the 12 March 1993 bombings in the city. The government attributed the blasts to Pakistan's intelligence service in cooperation with Muslim elements in Bombay. AI also wanted to deepen its understanding of police procedures in a state which is not faced with widespread insurrection: if effective measures to protect human rights are not taken in Bombay, they stand little chance of being adopted in states like Jammu and Kashmir, where the police and security forces face much more extreme pressures.

The delegation found that there are large numbers of people held in police stations in Bombay without proper police records of their detention. Acknowledging this, one senior police official said: "I don't know whether it is 50 per cent of detainees or 25 per cent". Those detained included wives, children and other family members held for several days - sometimes as "hostages" - and ill-treated or tortured to obtain information about suspects of the March bombings.

The illegal practice of unrecorded detention is dangerous and conducive to serious human rights violations like torture or even, elsewhere in India, "disappearances". AI concluded that the beating of suspects is common and that serious forms of torture occur in Bombay from time to time, and that there was an almost total lack of transparency about what happens in police stations. In a 35-page memorandum presented to the government in May 1994, AI made 15 detailed recommendations to remedy the situation. This included establishing a system of comprehensive police custody records and an independent mechanism to scrutinize police behaviour in all Maharashtra police stations. It also asked for a review of the alleged abuse of the Terrorism and Disruptive Activities Acts (TADA) in Bombay, particularly its provisions which permit prolonged remand in police custody without charge or trial. The memorandum also urged the government to take immediate steps to prosecute police officers responsible for killing people deliberately and illegally during the December 1992 - January 1993 riots, and requested that existing rules facilitating unlawful killings should be reviewed and brought in line with international standards.

The delegation also met the Indian Home Minister and other senior government officials in Delhi to discuss its continuing human rights concerns in the country as a whole, including the detention of several prisoners of conscience from Jammu and Kashmir. It was informed that its request to visit that state was still under consideration.

Russia

Ill-treatment in Russian prisons is to be investigated following widespread reports of beatings of prisoners in pre-trial detention.

The Russian State Duma set up a commission on 26 April, 1994, to investigate human rights violations in prisons. AI has written to the commission adding its concern about ill-treatment to that of local human rights groups, raising as an example the case of a man reported to have died after being severely beaten by police officers in Moscow.

Anatoly Rassadkin was assaulted by eight police officers on 16 October 1993. They were called, following an argument, by a neighbour whose son was a police sergeant at the local station. Anatoly Rassadkin and another man present in his flat were kicked and beaten with truncheons and gun butts, then taken to the police station, where they were beaten again. They were released approximately seven hours later, but by that time Anatoly Rassadkin was partially paralysed and unable to walk. He was taken to hospital where he underwent an operation for head injuries on 19 October, but he died the following day.

Amnesty International wrote to the authorities in November urging a full and comprehensive inquiry into the beating and subsequent death of Anatoly Rassadkin, asking that the findings be made public and the perpetrators identified by the investigation be brought to justice. No response has been received.

Spain

José Luis Iglesias Amaro, a 23-year-old man, hanged himself in an isolation cell in Picassent II prison in Valencia on 28 February 1994. He had used a noose made of his shoe laces attached to the bars of the door.

The prisoner had a history of self-harm and had recently been released from La Fe Hospital where he had been treated after reportedly swallowing an aerial, spectacle frames and pushing a nail into his navel. He had unsuccessfully attempted to escape from hospital and other prisoners saw him being admitted on a stretcher to the cell where he later died. In the last few days before his death, according to statements made by fellow prisoners, he was repeatedly beaten by guards armed with truncheons. Photographs of the dead prisoner and the autopsy report reveal numerous injuries, two to four days old, including large blood clots in the head and severe bruising to the face and body. The injuries are consistent with blows from truncheons.

Amnesty International is concerned about the alleged ill-treatment by prison guards and the negligence of the authorities in allowing a prisoner with a history of self-harm to be placed in isolation with access to the means to commit suicide. A judicial inquiry has been opened into the death and Amnesty International has urged a full inquiry into the allegations of ill-treatment.

Lebanon

Bassam al-Muslah was hanged in Sidon in the first execution in Lebanon for 11 years. He had been convicted in a criminal court of the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl. His execution on 23 April 1994, was followed one week later by the execution of two Syrian soldiers convicted in April of the murder of two brothers in December 1992. AI believes they had no right of appeal. At least one other prisoner remained under sentence of death facing imminent execution.

Amnesty International had called on the Lebanese authorities not to execute these men, and asked for all current and future death sentences to be commuted. AI also called for a review of all legislation with a view to reducing the number of capital offences. In March a new law introduced the death penalty for intentional murder and for politically-motivated killings.

Iraq

Hundreds of people continue to be executed each year in Iraq for political and criminal offences. In recent months the Iraqi Government has targeted individuals suspected of currency speculation, apparently due to worsening economic conditions in the country.

On 26 March five people were executed in Abu Ghraib Prison near Baghdad. Among them were 'Abbas 'Abd al-'Aoun, a Shi'a Muslim Arab well known as a money changer from the al-Kadhimiyya district of Baghdad. He was reportedly arrested in September 1993 with the four others; all were accused of currency speculation. The previous month, the government announced that a "criminal gang" of eight people had been sentenced to death following their conviction of murder and theft. The eight, who allegedly confessed to the crimes are: Fadhil 'Abdallah Fadhil, Zhafir Zuhair Nahi, Nazhem 'Atiyya Khudayyer, Hassan Hamdullah 'Abbas, 'Abbas Hamdullah 'Abbas, 'Abbas Faraj Khafi, Turki Muhammad Jawad and Ahmad Sa'dun Muhammad. Several of them, however, are members of the prohibited Iraqi Communist Party and AI is concerned that they may have been sentenced to death because of their political affiliation. It was not known by May 1994 whether the sentences had been carried out.

caption: Qassem 'Abd al-Karim Hassan al-'Ibadi, one of the five money changers executed in March.

caption: Zhafir Zuhair Nahi, a member of the Iraqi Communist Party sentenced to death on criminal charges.

Kuwait

The Court of Cassation in Kuwait reduced two death sentences to prison terms in March and April 1994. Khalifa al-Tanak and Walid Jassem Mahdi (see February Focus on Kuwait) were both sentenced to death before the State Security Court in 1992 and 1993 respectively, on charges of "collaboration" with the Iraqi forces during the occupation of Kuwait. Walid Jassem Mahdi will now serve 15 years in prison for other crimes and Khalifa al-Tanak will serve ten years.

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Focus

Intro

"We know that all these deaths were not inevitable. We know that if the international community had woken up earlier to the crisis situation in Burundi and Rwanda it may well have been prevented. Because the voices of the people in Burundi and Rwanda are not being heard we believe that it is the obligation of an organization like Amnesty International and of its members worldwide to speak up for them"

Pierre Sané, Secretary General, Amnesty International

It is not too late to save thousands of lives in Burundi and Rwanda: to stop people in these two countries from being killed for their ethnic origin or supposed political sympathies.

AI has strongly condemned the governments and security forces in both countries for their part in perpetrating or condoning human rights violations. In Rwanda, hundreds of thousands have been killed by the armed forces or by vigilante

gangs armed and mobilized by the country's former ruling party. AI has also condemned numerous human rights abuses, including the deliberate killings of civilians, by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which invaded the country from neighbouring Uganda in 1990. The findings of an International Commission of Inquiry, which visited Rwanda in January 1993, implicated President Juvenal Habyarimana, killed in April 1994, in the organization of several hundred political killings. The United Nations (UN) expert on extrajudicial executions made extensive recommendations to prevent such human rights violations after a visit to Rwanda in April 1993. These recommendations were not implemented. In Burundi, the Tutsi-dominated security forces and allied Tutsi vigilantes have killed thousands of people since October 1993, as have armed gangs of Hutu supported by some local government officials.

But AI is not only concerned at the role taken by the security forces and governments of Burundi and Rwanda in these crises. The response -- or lack of it -- by the international community to the situation in these two African nations has been signally inadequate.

Burundi

In Burundi, the violence has continued for nearly 30 years. Those responsible have never been brought to justice for their crimes. The killings are the result of a persistent struggle between the Hutu and Tutsi elite for control of state institutions. In 1993 democratic elections put a Hutu President, Melchior Ndadaye, in charge of the country for the first time. He was assassinated during a coup attempt in October 1993. The failed coup unleashed a wave of violence in which tens of thousands of people were killed.

The remnants of the Burundi government appealed to the international community for help. The response was tragically inadequate. The UN sent a small number of civilian observers but refused military assistance. The UN Commission on Human Rights condemned the massacres but failed to appoint a Special Rapporteur to monitor the human rights situation. A proposal by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to send nearly 180 soldiers and 20 civilians ran into difficulty from Burundi's opposition parties. The Burundi Government's own commission of inquiry into the coup attempt failed to get underway.

In January 1994, by which time an estimated 100,000 people had died in the latest round of bloodshed, AI again called on governments worldwide to act to prevent further tragedy. Killings continued -- in March more than 200 unarmed civilians, including women and children, were reportedly executed by the army in the Kamenge zone of Burundi's capital, Bujumbura.

The international community knew what had to be done and knew the historical problems -- but only acted to evacuate their own nationals who were in danger when the violence in neighbouring Rwanda turned into an unprecedented bloodbath in April 1994.

The United Nations actually had a presence in the country -- the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) -- sent there to supervise the implementation of Peace Accords signed in August 1993 by the RPF and the government. But the UN did not allow its 2,500 soldiers to stay and prevent the killings:

As the violence increased, the UN pulled out, leaving only a token 270 personnel. This decision was deplored by many humanitarian and human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, who warned such a decision would have disastrous consequences for the thousands of Rwandese citizens who had sought protection in areas where there was a UN presence. It was not until a month later that the UN reversed this decision, by which time over 100,000 had been killed.

Burundi

After the soldiers had killed 26 year-old Vénérende Bucumi's husband in front of her, in her village in north Burundi, they forced her to sit on his dead body while they ransacked her house. As other villagers approached, the soldiers opened fire. Vénérende, who has six children and is expecting another this month, saw another 12 people killed before the soldiers left. They were killed apparently for belonging to the Hutu ethnic group, in the violence that followed an attempted coup and the killing of the President only a few days before, on 21 October 1993.

AI has repeatedly warned that such atrocities will continue until the government, political leaders and the security forces commit themselves to ending the mass slaughter of their own citizens. It will continue until those responsible for the atrocities are brought to justice. And it will continue until the international community acts to encourage and assist the Burundi authorities and people to secure these ends.

History

Although the conflicts in both Burundi and Rwanda have come to be seen in ethnic terms, with the majority Hutu pitched against the minority Tutsi, history gives a different perspective. In pre-colonial times, the two kingdoms were ruled by the Ganwa clan who, although Tutsi, were considered as distinct from the general population. Tutsi and the Hutu shared the same language and lived together in the same communities. Intermarriage was common.

Until the late 1950s, Burundi shared a colonial history with Rwanda. Following independence in 1962, the Union pour le progrès national (UPRONA), Union for National Progress, whose stated aim was to unite all groups and interests, won a huge majority in Burundi's new national assembly. In spite of attempts to balance the government, crisis followed crisis, with huge numbers of Hutu killed at the hands of the Tutsi in their efforts to retain power.

In April 1972, following an abortive insurrection tens of thousands of Hutu were massacred and several hundred thousand more fled the country. Educated Hutu, particularly those living in exile, continued to criticise the marginalization of Hutu by Tutsi-dominated governments and security forces. Tensions mounted and violence broke out when Hutu gangs attacked Tutsi civilians in 1988, 1991 and 1992. In 1988 for instance, Hutu killed hundreds of Tutsi when tension arose in the north of the country: in retaliation, the Tutsi-dominated army massacred thousands of Hutu, and more fled as refugees. Despite apparent attempts in the late 1980s and early 1990s by the government to introduce political reforms -- a new draft constitution was ratified in March 1992 by over 90 per cent of voters -- tensions continued and more people were killed, mainly Hutu at the hands of government security forces.

Finally, in June 1993, national elections were held, and the results changed the political balance in the country for the first time. Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, became the first democratically-elected president of Burundi. But the security forces remained under Tutsi control and four months later President Ndadaye was arrested and killed in an attempted coup by the military. This was to lead to one of the worst massacres in Burundi's history, with tens of thousands of people -- both Hutu and Tutsi -- killed. After initial reports that the army was carrying out killings, it then emerged that Hutu groups, some organized by local government officials appointed by President Ndadaye's government, had massacred tens of thousands of Tutsi civilians as well as some Hutu government opponents. The army then carried out extensive killings of Hutu in reprisal. Hundreds of thousands more either fled to neighbouring countries or were displaced inside Burundi. The country was still tense, with human rights abuses continuing on both sides, when the plane carrying Burundi's new President, Cyprien Ntaryamira, and the President of Rwanda, Juvénal Habyarimana, was apparently attacked and crashed over the Rwandese capital, Kigali, on 6 April 1994.

(Picture Caption)

Refugees at the Mokindo camp, in Burundi, which holds over 50,000 refugees. Behind them are the tiny tents in which they live. Within a month of the eruption of violence in Rwanda in early April 1994, over 300,000 people fled from Rwanda to neighbouring countries: according to UN estimates, over 5,000 fled to Uganda, over 8,000 to Zaire, 40,000 to Burundi and 250,000 to Tanzania. In addition, almost 150,000 refugees from Burundi who had earlier fled to Rwanda were forced to flee - an estimated 80,000 of them to Zaire and over 65,000 back to Burundi. Furthermore, it is estimated that as many as two million Rwandese (over a quarter of the population) have been forced to flee their homes and are displaced within Rwanda. AI welcomes the fact that the governments of neighbouring countries have adhered to their international obligations to keep their borders open and to allow refugees seeking protection to enter. AI calls urgently on all states throughout the world to provide these governments and international organizations such as UNHCR with all the assistance necessary to ensure continuing protection for the refugees for as long as necessary.

Rwanda

Intro

When the soldiers came for Monique Mujawamariya -- a local human rights worker, who took part in the launch of AI's political killings and "disappearances" campaign in October 1993-- she hid between two floors. She hid there for 40 hours, but she knew it was only a matter of time before they found her. She had to think -- and act -- quickly. She had married a high-ranking army officer. Grabbing an old wedding album, she came out of hiding and approached the armed soldiers outside her house. At this point Monique - regarded as an opponent of President Juvénal Habyarimana like tens of thousands of her fellow citizens - could easily have been gunned down or hacked to death. But, clutching the photograph of her husband, she persuaded the soldiers to allow her to leave by saying that the soldiers should save themselves the trouble of having to protect her by letting her go to the hotel where other high-ranking officials were staying. A few days later she was on a plane to Belgium. She is still trying to find out what happened to the three children she had to leave behind. Although the situation in Rwanda reached unprecedented heights of violence following the shooting down of the presidential plane on 6 April, the world has been turning a blind eye to the human rights situation in Rwanda for decades. There was virtually no outcry when it became known that 50 political prisoners, including most members of the government overthrown by President Habyaramina in 1973, had been killed, or had died though ill-treatment. There was no attempt to tackle the permanent system of discrimination against the country's Tutsi minority, now forming the bulk of the RPF. And long before the present crisis, the security forces were able to violate human rights with impunity. Virtually no-one has been brought to justice for a catalogue of violations including the killing of at least 2,300 suspected or known opponents of former President Habyaramina since late 1990.

History

At the turn of the 19th century, both Rwanda and Burundi were occupied by Germany, and after World War One became Belgian-administered League of Nations and later United Nations Trust Territories until independence in 1962. Conflict between the two main ethnic groups appears to have been heightened by colonial rule which placed virtually all administrative responsibility in the hands of the Tutsi.

Although the colonial authorities maintained Tutsi hegemony, it was during this period that the Hutu majority in Rwanda -- encouraged by some members of the Belgian administration -- began to demand majority rule. Hutu politicians

overthrew the monarchy in 1959. Violence ensued and tens of thousands of Tutsi were killed and several hundred thousand more fled into exile during the early 1960s.

After Rwanda's independence in 1962, Hutu control was consolidated under first a civilian government and then, after a military coup in 1973 led by Juvénal Habyarimana, a military-led one. Many members of the civilian government, virtually all of them Hutu, were secretly and extrajudicially executed or died through ill-treatment in prison.

Before 1990 Hutu from southern Rwanda had been complaining that those from President Habyarimana's northwestern region received preferential treatment and were allowed greater political and economic influence. Members of the Hutu elite also complained that the Tutsi kept a disproportionate share of economic wealth and influence.

While the economic and political situation in Rwanda deteriorated sharply in the late 1980s, thousands of Rwandese exiles in neighbouring Uganda were preparing to return by force. In 1990 an estimated 10,000 rebels, representing the exiled Tutsi-dominated RPF, crossed the border from Uganda into north-eastern Rwanda, capturing a number of towns as they advanced towards the capital, Kigali. In the crisis that followed, the Rwandese authorities detained more than 8,000 people, mostly Tutsi, many of whom were tortured or killed. Fighting between the RPF and government security forces had already cost many lives. At the same time more than 2,000 civilians had died in deliberately targeted political killings before President Habyarimana was killed. And, although a peace accord -- which included human rights components, particularly regarding investigations into human rights violations and ending impunity -- had been signed by the two sides in August 1993, human rights abuses continued, particularly the targeting of opponents of the President.

Appeal to the International Community

Speaking after visiting Rwanda in January 1993, a member of the International Commission of Inquiry (comprising foreign human rights groups), said: "Many people I spoke to -- both Hutu and Tutsi -- said they lived side by side with each other and all they wanted was to live in peace."

In both countries, a number of local human rights groups have been active since the early 1990s in monitoring and condemning human rights abuses. In Rwanda, some human rights activists have themselves become victims, targeted because of their work.

Contrary to the common perception that ethnic in-fighting and anarchy are solely responsible for the hundreds of thousands of deaths in Burundi and Rwanda, these killings are also the result of a carefully orchestrated campaign by the army and the government authorities to eliminate all opponents.

In Rwanda for example, the Republican National Movement for Democracy and Development, the party of the late President Habyarimana, has armed and mobilized its supporters, especially the party youth wing, known as Interhamwe, to carry out massacres of its political opponents.

A radio station controlled by an extremist political party of the majority Hutu frequently called on militias to murder civilians.

In Burundi, the government has failed to exercise effective control over its armed forces, dominated by the Tutsi, or indeed to restrain its own, largely Hutu, supporters. The Burundi armed forces continue to use equipment obtained from foreign countries against the civilians they are supposed to protect.

France and Germany are among countries which have provided military training and equipment to the Burundi army. France has also provided military assistance and training to Rwanda. At the same time, the RPF has received many of its weapons from Uganda and its National Resistance Army.

AI believes that the central issue in the continuing violence in these countries is impunity - the fact that gross human rights violations in Burundi and Rwanda are rarely if ever investigated and no one is brought to justice for them. Recommendations to prevent human rights violations were made by the UN's expert on extrajudicial executions following a visit to Rwanda in April 1993, but were not implemented.

In May this year, AI called for the UN experts on extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", torture, violence against women, racism and the internally displaced to visit the two countries to collect information on the human rights situation there, and to make recommendations for further UN action. AI's membership worldwide has been campaigning on a national and international level calling on governments to act urgently to help put a stop to the killing. AI also drew up a plan of action which it has asked the international community to implement. This plan includes:

- ensuring a human rights monitoring presence on the ground, in both countries, as soon as feasible in both countries to report on the human rights situation, take up cases and act as a dissuasive presence, and to protect those citizens most at risk
- sending a clear message to the people in Burundi and Rwanda that killings cannot be committed with impunity and that the international community is determined to see those responsible for organising and carrying out such crimes against humanity brought to justice; and the victims and their families compensated
- asking the UN to make public the report and recommendations of the UN fact-finding mission which was sent to Burundi in March 1994 by the UN Secretary-General
- developing a long-term human rights program of action in Burundi and Rwanda in order to protect human rights and prevent further violations

In May this year, a two-day special session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights discussed the situation in Rwanda after AI and others had urged the UN's leading human rights body to examine the situation in both countries and to ensure that the above measures were carried out.

What you can do

- appeal to your own government to fulfill their international obligation to help the people of Burundi and Rwanda.
- alert others in your country to the human rights crisis in Burundi and Rwanda and ask them to join this campaign
- appeal to the Burundi and Rwanda authorities asking them to take immediate steps to prevent further killings. Urge them to set up a commission of inquiry to investigate killings by members of the security forces and civilians with a view to bringing those responsible to justice. Urge the RPF commanders to ensure that their combatants do not carry out arbitrary and deliberate killings and other abuses.

Write to, Son Excellence, Monsieur Sindikubwabo, Thaddee, Président de la République, Présidence de la République, BP 15, Kigali, République rwandaise. Son Excellence, Monsieur Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, Président de la République, Présidence de la République, BP 1870, Bujumbura, République du Burundi. Major General Paul Kagame, Commander, Rwandese Patriotic Front, 3 Avenue de l'Observatoire, Box 8, 1180 Brussels, Belgium.