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RWANDA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REMINDS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
OF UNAMIR'S VITAL WORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN RWANDA

As the UN Security Council considers the future of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) this week, Amnesty International is reminding the international community that UNAMIR carries out vital work in support of human rights protection in Rwanda.

The organization noted that Rwanda is reported to have accepted the presence of UNAMIR for a further three months but that the conditions of this extension are still not confirmed.

UNAMIR provides vital logistical support to UN agencies and departments operating in Rwanda -- in particular to the UN Human Rights Field Operation for Rwanda (UNHRFOR) which monitors human rights across the country.

“Without the international support currently provided by UNAMIR, the work of this operation -- which is critical to the future of human rights in Rwanda -- would be seriously jeopardized,” Amnesty International said.

“We hope that the work that has been undertaken by UNAMIR and the Civilian Police monitors in training of a new Rwandese police force, confidence-building, monitoring prisons and the gendarmerie, and providing technical assistance will continue,” the organization said. “These are essential aspects to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Rwanda.”

The organization expressed its hope that adequate human and material resources will also be provided to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. It called for adequate and impartial protection for the staff of the Tribunal in the field, who are responsible for gathering evidence against those responsible for the gross human rights violations in Rwanda in 1994, for witnesses and for the headquarters where records are kept.

Amnesty International also pointed out that in the event of a mass return of refugees, effective guarantees for the security of the refugees have to be given by the international community. UNAMIR has already begun playing a vital logistical role in assisting the Rwandese government, the UNHRFOR and the UNHCR to ensure that returnees are adequately received and settled and that their rights are safeguarded.

Amnesty International appealed to all Member States of the UN, who are currently considering draft resolutions on Rwanda and Burundi at the UN General Assembly, to support Rwanda in finding durable, comprehensive solutions to addressing the critical situation of human rights. Such support must include the provision of secure financial commitments.

Meanwhile, the organization regrets that the final declaration of the summit of leaders of five countries in the Great Lakes region, held in Cairo 28-29 November, contained few concrete measures to protect human rights, and did not address the above-mentioned concerns.

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