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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 235/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **RWANDA** (please see news schedule below)

PLEASE NOTE: FOR YOUR INFORMATION: Next week the British section will be releasing a report and news release on asylum seekers in the UK embargoed for 18 October. If you would like more information about this or a copy of the report or news release please contact the press office at the British section on 44 71 814 6238/9.

PLEASE NOTE: Please would press officers send to us any details of coverage of the France report (embargoed 12 October 1994). Thanks - Dina S.

## INTERNAL

### INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

France - 0001 hrs GMT 12 October - PLEASE NOTE EXACT EMBARGO TIME SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

\*\* Rwanda - 20 October \*\* - PLEASE NOTE NEW EMBARGO DATE, SEE NEWS SERVICE 234/94

Burundi - 21 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 230/94

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

Turkey - 24 OCTOBER - SEE NEWS SERVICE 181/94

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AI INDEX: AFR 47/WU 15/94  
EMBARGOED FOR 20 OCTOBER 1994

### RWANDA: HUNDREDS OF KILLINGS BY RWANDESE ARMY SOLDIERS CONFIRMED

Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) soldiers have killed hundreds and possibly thousands of prisoners and unarmed civilians, according to eye-witness testimonies and reports obtained by Amnesty International.

"There is clear evidence of deliberate and arbitrary killings and summary executions carried out by the RPA when they gained control of successive regions of Rwanda and, finding evidence of genocide committed against their supporters or relatives, took indiscriminate revenge on unarmed Hutu civilians," said Amnesty International, releasing a report that documents killings by the RPA from April to August 1994.

The pattern of killings confirmed by Amnesty International occurred as the RPA, the armed wing of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), won control of territory from the former government, with RPA killings in northeastern Rwanda in mid-April, then southern, western and southwestern Rwanda in the months that followed up to September.

"If the new government in power since July fails to investigate killings by its own security forces, fails to publicly report on the findings and fails to take action to prosecute those responsible, then we will conclude that the government condones such murderous acts," Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International has submitted a series of individual cases of killings which occurred between April and August 1994 to the government for comment, but has not received a response.

Among those cases is the testimony of one 56-year-old survivor of the killings, who was summoned to a public meeting on 13 April at Gishara, in northeastern Rwanda. He told Amnesty International that RPA soldiers, who had promised the people food to emphasize their good intentions, instead threw a grenade into the meeting. Many people were killed, including his wife, 10-year-old son and 20-year-old daughter. Others killed by the grenade and gunshots included a primary school director, his wife and a visiting Roman Catholic nun.

In early June about 100 men, women and children were detained by RPA soldiers in southern Rwanda. An eye-witness who spoke to Amnesty International representatives said RPA soldiers killed dozens and heaped their bodies in an open pit.

Another woman told the human rights organization that she tried to escape from an RPF "screening" centre south of the capital, Kigali, with her child strapped to her back. When she and several other women were recaptured, RPA soldiers killed her baby and two other women with blows from a nail-studded club. The woman bears distinct scars on her head from their attempts to kill her.

In each of these cases, the victims belonged to Rwanda's Hutu majority, some of whose members took part in mass killings of members of the Tutsi minority earlier this year.

These killings, however, are far fewer than those carried out by forces and militia loyal to the former government who killed 500,000 or more people. Nevertheless, if respect for human rights is to be restored, the new government should immediately set up a commission of inquiry to investigate these killings or the people of Rwanda -- particularly members of the security forces -- will not believe the government's pledges to respect and protect the human rights of all.

"So far, the Rwandese authorities deny or explain away allegations of serious human rights violations without any independent investigation," Amnesty International said.

Other steps the Rwandese authorities could take include explicitly instructing all security personnel that firearms may only be used with lethal intent when strictly unavoidable and in order to protect life.

While some Rwandese refugees who fled to Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire have returned home, many others have been unwilling to return, partly because of reports of such killings by the RPA in recent months. A proper government investigation of alleged abuses, together with a strict limit on the use of force by security personnel, could help provide these refugees with a measure of assurance about their future safety in Rwanda. It would also enable those who would wish to return home to make an informed choice about doing so.

Amnesty International recognizes its report confirming deliberate and arbitrary killings by the RPA may be used as propaganda by supporters of the former government, which carried out genocide in Rwanda. Nonetheless, the organization considers it unacceptable that the international community dismisses without proper investigation reports of RPA abuses. Such reports include those made in September by officials working for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that the RPA had carried out extrajudicial executions in southeastern Rwanda. Other UN agencies appeared to dismiss or disregard these reports even before a UN investigation was announced several weeks later.

"The international community appears to be making excuses for the new Rwandese authorities and turning a blind eye to human rights violations committed by RPA soldiers, on the grounds that they are not as serious as those committed by its predecessor," Amnesty International said.

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