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RWANDA: STOP ARMS FLOW TO PERPETRATORS OF GENOCIDE

Secret shipments of arms to the perpetrators of genocide in Rwanda could be used again by the former army of Rwanda and associated militia, now largely based in Zaïre, to commit further massive human rights abuses.

"There looms a real possibility of large-scale human rights abuses, fuelled by the hand grenades, landmines, rifles, machine guns and ammunition being supplied to those responsible for last year's crimes against humanity," said Amnesty International today as it released its report *Rwanda: Arming the perpetrators of the genocide*.

The re-arming of those known to have committed mass killings in Rwanda requires urgent action by the international community, which has clearly failed to bring to justice those responsible for genocide and other crimes against humanity, Amnesty International said. In 1994, over half a million members of the minority Tutsi ethnic group as well as moderate Hutu and others were murdered.

Amnesty International has confirmed continuing reports of secret transfers of weapons and ammunition to the former army of Rwanda and the Hutu militia Interahamwe, now based in Zaïre under their former commanders. The arms shipments came from countries including Bulgaria and Albania, involved United Kingdom-based arms traders, and arrived at Goma Airport in Zaïre on large cargo planes registered in Ghana, Nigeria, Ukraine and Russia.

Amnesty International has also confirmed allegations that secret night flights of arms were continuing to arrive regularly in Goma until at least mid-May 1995, virtually every Tuesday at around 11:00pm, even though the airport does not officially have night landing facilities and cargo flights normally occur only during the day.

In addition to Zaïrian authorities allowing the delivery of arms transfers from abroad, Zaïrian army commanders are also reported to have re-sold to the former Rwandese government forces weapons seized when those forces originally fled across the border in 1994.

Many of the militia have been incorporated into the former army. They use the imported arms for military training in secret military camps near the refugee camps in eastern Zaïre and for cross border raids which have included deliberate and arbitrary killings.

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The rearmed militia have made death threats to refugees wishing to return to Rwanda and refusing to join the militia, Amnesty International said.

In one recent incident, a Hutu regional medical officer was shot dead and one of his children stabbed to death in Gisenyi, Rwanda. While in a refugee camp near Goma, Dr Anatole Bucyendore was told that the Interahamwe would kill him and his family if he returned to Rwanda. Before his assassination on 25 February 1995, Bucyendore had again received death threats, reportedly from unnamed persons in Goma.

Amnesty International takes no position on sanctions, embargoes or boycotts, but opposes transfers of weapons that can be reasonably assumed to contribute to human rights abuses. The organization also does not take a position in principle on whether or in what circumstances it would be legitimate to resort to violence as a means to political ends.

In the context of the situation of the exiled Rwandese now in Zaïre, Amnesty International is opposed to military transfers to forces which continue to be under the command of those who were responsible for the genocide in Rwanda. Amnesty International believes that such transfers are likely to result in further human rights abuses.

The organization is calling on all the governments named in its report to take immediate, practical steps to investigate reports of military transfers emanating from or in transit through their countries and to prevent any transfers to the former Rwandese army and militia.

The Government of Zaïre, in particular, should allow the independent monitoring of all cargo planes landing in Goma or other Zaïrian airports.

Amnesty International also calls on the international community to ensure that those individuals outside Rwanda who are suspected of genocide and other crimes against humanity are brought to justice in fair trials that exclude the death penalty in all cases. They must not be allowed to rearm.

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