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RWANDA

Alarming resurgence of killings

I. INTRODUCTION

While unarmed civilians continue to be massacred in Burundi at the hands of the security forces and armed groups, a pattern of alarming similarity is emerging again in neighbouring Rwanda, only two years after the genocide there which claimed as many as one million lives in 1994.

The first half of 1996 has been marked by a sharp escalation of killings by members of the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) and by armed opposition groups. Between April and July especially, violence directed against unarmed civilians has intensified, claiming more than 650 lives. The exact number of victims may be substantially higher as many people remain unaccounted for; other cases simply go unreported.

In some cases, the evidence available points overwhelmingly to the responsibility of the RPA, in other cases to armed opposition groups believed to be allied to the former Rwandese government forces and *interahamwe* militia responsible for the massacre of hundreds of thousands of people in 1994. However, in many cases, responsibility for recent killings is difficult to establish: many of these attacks are attributed to a third category of perpetrators, often referred to as “unknown armed assailants” or simply “criminal elements”.

Amnesty International believes that both the RPA and the armed opposition bear responsibility for the grave human rights abuses taking place in Rwanda. Their respective responsibility for the killings should be exposed and measures taken to prevent further grave human rights abuses. This report concentrates on the violations of the right to life and threats to physical integrity by both parties. It includes examples of killings which have occurred in recent months - mostly between April and July 1996 - to illustrate the brutal manner in which both government forces and other armed groups are massacring civilians in their efforts to destroy support for their opponents.

In the present climate in Rwanda, each killing carries with it the real prospect of reprisal. The number of victims rises with each incident. Urgent action is needed to prevent a further spiralling of violence if Rwanda is to be saved from a repetition of its own recent past, or from becoming a mirror of the violence which is tearing apart neighbouring Burundi.

This report concludes with a set of recommendations which Amnesty International is urging all those concerned to implement immediately.

II. THE CONTEXT

Up until recent months, most incidents of killings of unarmed civilians in Rwanda were concentrated in the areas to the west of the country, bordering Zaire. By July 1996, individual killings and massacres

were continuing in the western *préfectures*¹ of Gisenyi, Kibuye and Cyangugu, but had also spread to central parts of the country, such as the *préfectures* of Gitarama and Rural Kigali. Killings have also been reported in the southeastern *préfecture* of Kibungo, near the border with Tanzania, and, less frequently, in several other *préfectures*.

These killings of unarmed civilians are occurring against a backdrop of increased insurgency by armed groups based primarily in Zaire, but also in Burundi and Tanzania. These groups, believed to be composed of, or allied with the former Rwandese government forces and militia, operate from the areas surrounding the refugee camps in these three countries.² The presence of these refugee camps so close to the border continues to pose a significant security threat, both for residents living in Rwanda and for refugees themselves, as well as for the local population in host countries.

It is rumoured that some armed groups have also launched operations from within Rwanda in 1996. In June 1996 a hitherto unknown group calling itself *Peuple en armes pour la libération du Rwanda* (PALIR), People in Arms for the Liberation of Rwanda, was reported to have issued a statement announcing the creation of an armed front within the country, the *Front de résistance intérieure* (FRI), Interior Resistance Front. Amnesty International has not been able to confirm the existence or nature of this group.

The positions of the parties to the conflict have become increasingly entrenched. In response to reports of continuing insurgency, the RPA has stepped up its presence in the areas most directly affected. Military reinforcements have been sent especially to the *préfectures* bordering Zaire, where the population is predominantly from the Hutu ethnic group and residents are often suspected of collaborating with or sheltering insurgents who carry out incursions from Zaire or Burundi. Civilian patrol groups have been organized to ensure security at night, especially on the shores of Lake Kivu, to pre-empt attacks by groups thought to be operating from Idjwi Island (situated on the Zaire side of the border). In certain areas, for example in the *préfecture* of Cyangugu which borders Zaire to the west and Burundi to the south, there have been reports of battles of a military nature between the RPA and armed opposition groups, sometimes involving prolonged exchange of fire and mortar attacks. The areas where these armed clashes are occurring are often inaccessible to independent observers for reasons of security. The total number of casualties among soldiers and insurgents is unknown.

However, the killings of concern to Amnesty International are of a different nature: the victims are unarmed civilians. They include men, women, the elderly, young children and babies. The victims may have been targeted because of their ethnic origin, out of personal revenge, or because they were suspected of collaborating with "the enemy". Others simply happened to be in the wrong place at the

¹ Rwanda is divided into 12 *préfectures* (regions), which are divided into *communes* (districts), in turn divided into *secteurs* (sectors); *secteurs* are further divided into *cellules* (cells), the smallest administrative entity. The French terms are used throughout this document to enable precise references to the locations of the incidents described.

² Around 1.1 million Rwandese refugees are still living in refugee camps in Zaire, close to the border with Rwanda, since their flight in July 1994. A further 527,000 are living in Tanzania and around 70,000 in Burundi.

wrong time, as in the case of those killed or seriously injured by land mines. Some individuals have been assassinated because they have tried to expose the truth, either about crimes committed during the genocide in 1994 or about current human rights violations in Rwanda. However, many of the victims are peasant families living in areas where infiltrations are reported or suspected. They find themselves caught in the violence of both sides.

III. EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS BY RPA SOLDIERS

III.1 Patterns of extrajudicial executions

During the first half of 1996 there has been a noticeable increase in extrajudicial executions by the RPA in correspondence with an increase in attacks by armed opposition groups.³ While the Rwandese Government has acknowledged that isolated cases do occur and has assured Amnesty International that soldiers found responsible for human rights violations have been arrested, it has so far failed to address the broader pattern of extrajudicial executions by RPA soldiers and to prevent further killings. There seems to be a certain resignation to what is described as “the inevitability of occasional casualties in the context of efforts to combat insurgency”. In reality, the need to “fight the enemy” may have been used as a pretext for eliminating individuals, or whole groups of individuals, whose presence or influence is perceived as a political obstacle or threat to those in power.

Extrajudicial executions by RPA soldiers in 1996 have followed various patterns. Scores of people have been shot dead during military “cordon and search” operations. Individual detainees have been shot dead at close range while allegedly trying to escape, with little or no effort to apprehend them without the use of lethal force. In other cases, individuals such as local officials and other educated people - mainly Hutu - have been assassinated in circumstances which lead Amnesty International to believe that they were targeted specifically because of their social or political position or even because of their ethnic origin. Some also appear to have been targeted because of their attempts to expose or limit human rights violations by government or security authorities. Not all those targeted in this way by the security forces have been killed. Many have been arrested on accusations of having participated in the genocide and have joined the prison population of more than 80,000 held mostly without charge and all without trial in grossly overcrowded prisons and detention centres.

There have also been reports of involvement of RPA troops in human rights violations in Burundi, in particular in the northwestern province of Cibitoke. Several sources, including refugees who fled the area due to the violence, reported that RPA soldiers assisted the Burundi security forces in massacring unarmed civilians in Cibitoke in June 1996.

III.2 Extrajudicial executions during military “cordon and search” operations

³ For an overview of the pattern of extrajudicial executions and other human rights violations in Rwanda in 1995, see Amnesty International reports [Rwanda: Two years after the genocide - human rights in the balance](#) (April 1996, AI Index AFR 47/02/96); [Rwanda and Burundi - The return home: rumours and realities](#) (February 1996, AI Index AFR 02/01/96) and [Rwanda: Crying out for justice](#) (April 1995, AI Index AFR 47/05/95).

In July 1996 there were several massacres of unarmed civilians during “cordon and search” operations, intended to uncover suspected insurgents, members of the former government forces and *interahamwe* militia. Amnesty International recognizes the need for the Rwandese Government to apprehend individuals who have been responsible for crimes against humanity and who continue to instil fear in the population of Rwanda. However, this should not provide government forces with a licence to use lethal force against unarmed individuals who pose no threat to life at the time of the operations.

Senior government officials have issued statements which sought to justify or excuse these human rights violations. They have stated explicitly that military operations would be launched in areas where there had been attacks on civilians. On 4 July 1996, in a speech to commemorate the second anniversary of the victory of the Rwandese Patriotic Front over the former Rwandese government forces, the Vice-President and Minister of Defence, Major General Paul Kagame, announced that action must be taken to stop the killings being carried out by the perpetrators of the genocide, and that “we must find a remedy whatever its cost [...]. It is important that everything legal be done to stop this. This will definitely cause casualties, injuries. There is no doubt about this and no one should fear this.” Similar public statements have been made by the President, the Minister of Interior and other senior officials.

The chain of command when extrajudicial executions are committed is not always clear. However, even if explicit orders were not issued from the highest level, senior government and security officials must bear the ultimate responsibility for disciplining those found responsible and ensuring that such killings are prevented.

Between 5 and 13 July 1996 an estimated 170 people - the vast majority of them civilians - were killed in several locations in the northwestern *préfectures* of Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, during operations by the RPA to search the area for insurgents. These killings are summarized below.

On 5, 9 and 10 July 22 people were reportedly killed in Muhungwe *secteur*, Karago *commune*, in Gisenyi. On 9 and 10 July around 100 others were killed in several different *secteurs* in the *communes* of Giciye (Gisenyi) and Nyamutera (Ruhengeri). The victims were shot by RPA soldiers who reportedly suspected them of being infiltrators, even though they included young children. One man said that his four sons were all killed, the youngest of whom was only 10 years old. Many of the victims were reportedly shot while trying to flee. Others - including a group of around 3,000 men - were rounded up by soldiers and led away to a confined space, where they were deprived of food and water. Some described being severely beaten and kicked by RPA soldiers. They were interrogated and made to denounce infiltrators in the area. It is not clear what happened to all those who were rounded up in this way. Some are known to have been released, some were killed, some are presumed to be still in detention; others remain unaccounted for.

On 13 July, in Bayi *secteur*, Ramba *commune*, at least 47 civilians were killed during a military operation. Following an attack in which an RPA soldier was shot dead, allegedly by infiltrators who escaped, RPA soldiers rounded up a group of peasants who were working the land and shot them all dead. The victims included three children and two babies. The authorities claimed that the victims had been caught in cross-fire between RPA soldiers and infiltrators.

These operations took place in the aftermath of several reported attacks by insurgents on civilian and military targets in late June and early July, including an attack in Giciye *commune* - believed to have been carried out by an armed opposition group - in which an estimated 28 people were killed (see Part IV below).

In the *préfecture* of Rural Kigali, Rushashi *commune* has experienced a sudden increase in killings since June 1996. On 2 July, nine people were killed during an RPA search operation in Gatare *secteur*. The search operation began early in the morning, in several different *secteurs*. It appeared to intensify after the RPA apprehended two individuals reported to be members of the former Rwandese army, one of whom subsequently escaped. In the course of questioning local residents about the presence of these two men in the area, RPA soldiers arrested eight men and led them away to a banana plantation where they were shot dead. A ninth man, suspected of having provided accommodation to the two soldiers of the former army, was also killed. This search operation took place one week after eight people were killed by unidentified armed assailants in the same *commune* (see Part V below). The extrajudicial executions by the RPA may have been in reprisal for these earlier killings in the same area. However, Amnesty International is not aware of any evidence that the individuals killed by the RPA had participated in the earlier killings or were posing any threat to life at the time.

On 10 and 11 April 1996, at least 40 people were killed in several locations in the *préfecture* of Gisenyi after an RPA soldier was shot dead by an armed individual at a military post at Muramba, Satinskyi *commune*. The victims included at least nine detainees from the communal detention centre at Muramba, who were reportedly killed by RPA soldiers on 10 April. More than 30 civilians were killed during subsequent military search operations on 11 April in the *communes* of Gaseke and Satinskyi. The following day, on 12 April, soldiers fired into the air at the market place at Gatega, creating a panic but no deaths. However, that same morning, a local trader, **Patricie Banguwiha**, was assassinated at her house, reportedly by soldiers who also looted her home.

On 7 April 1996, eight civilians (three men, four women and one baby) were killed in Kavumu *secteur*, Gisovu *commune*, in the *préfecture* of Kibuye, after an RPA soldier was shot dead by an unknown assailant. According to the authorities, the eight people died in a shoot-out between RPA soldiers and *interahamwe*. However, witnesses stated that the victims were all shot by RPA soldiers who fired into the fleeing crowd. The civilians who died included **Alphonsine Barekayo, Espérance, Pélagie Mukaremera, Myavu, Félicité Nyirahabimana, Semayira, Sibomana, and an 18-month-old baby.**

On 4 April 1996, 34 people were killed in Rutsiro *commune*, in the *préfecture* of Kibuye, following the alleged discovery by RPA soldiers of a secret meeting of suspected *interahamwe*. The victims included 17 civilians, among them two children, aged 12 and 15, and two babies.

III.3 Extrajudicial executions of local officials

Local officials who have been assassinated have included several *bourgmestres* (district administrators), *conseillers de secteur* (sector administrators), judicial officials and other figures who occupied positions of authority in the local community.

On 7 July 1996, in the *communes* of Rushashi and Tare, in the *préfecture* of Rural Kigali - five days after the search operation of 2 July described above - 18 people were assassinated. These killings were not part of a search operation. The victims were specifically targeted in three separate but related attacks which occurred within one hour. The victims included several local officials and their relatives and colleagues: **Vincent Munyandamutsa**, *bourgmestre* of Rushashi *commune*; **Laurent Bwanacyeye**, director of Rwankuba secondary school; **Léopold Murekezi**, head of studies at Rwankuba secondary school; **Théobald**, the school driver; **Carine**, a primary school teacher; **Floribert Habinshuti**, assistant prosecutor in Rushashi; his wife **Emilie Kayitesi**, his son **Eric Habinshuti** and daughter **Ernestine Ingabire**, both of primary school age; his nephew **Olivier Uwimana**; his sister-in-law **Egidia Ingabire** and his cousin **Eugène Surwumwe**.

All the victims, except Vincent Munyandamutsa, were killed on their way back from a ceremony of ordination of a priest in Rulindo, in the *commune* of Tare. They were travelling in two separate cars when they were ambushed in separate locations and shot dead. Four were killed in one ambush and 13 in the other. Independent local witnesses believe they were killed by soldiers.

Vincent Munyandamutsa had also been invited to the ceremony but was unable to attend. He was stabbed to death as he was returning home on his motorcycle from a meeting at a trading centre. He was killed three kilometres away from his home. Witnesses reported that soldiers had prevented them from intervening. Soldiers had been seen on the road leading to his house minutes before the attack; local residents said this was not normally a patrol route. In the weeks preceding this attack, Vincent Munyandamutsa had reportedly been threatened and accused of collaborating with *interahamwe* - even though he had been given an award by the government for protecting his *commune* from the genocide in 1994. Vincent Munyandamutsa was known to have opposed human rights violations under the previous government of Rwanda, as well as under the current government.

Although bodies of victims are often left where they fall, efforts are sometimes made to conceal the abuses. For example, **Elie Dusabumuremyi**, *bourgmestre* of Nyabikenke, in the *préfecture* of Gitarama, and a former teacher, “disappeared” on 11 July 1996 on his way home from a meeting with local officials.⁴ He has not been seen since. Traces of blood were found in the area where local residents had heard his screams but his body was not found. Two military trucks carrying soldiers were seen nearby; they were apparently waiting for him and ambushed him. Local residents who attempted to rush to the scene were stopped by gunfire. Elie Dusabumuremyi is feared dead. He leaves behind his wife and their first new-born baby.

Government authorities are reported to have launched investigations into these and other incidents. The conclusions of these investigations are not known.

III.4 Extrajudicial executions of detainees

⁴ See Amnesty International Urgent Action 180/96, dated 18 July 1996.

Over recent months, a pattern of killings of detainees by the security forces has emerged. Most of these killings have occurred while detainees were held in communal detention centres (*cachots*) before being transferred to the central prisons.

The single largest incident occurred in the night of 19-20 May 1996, when at least 46 detainees were killed in an attack on the communal detention centre at Bugarama, in the *préfecture* of Cyangugu. The real number of victims may be higher as apparently not all detainees had been registered. The detainees died from injuries caused by gunshots and grenades. The authorities blamed the killings on infiltrators, who had launched two previous attacks in the same area in the preceding days: one on 18 May on the communal office and detention centre at Karengera, in which several detainees were freed, and another on 19 May on the communal office at Nyakabuye. The authorities claimed that the infiltrators were trying to free the detainees at Bugarama and that during a confrontation with RPA soldiers, the infiltrators threw grenades into the detention centre.

However, it appears unlikely that infiltrators would have attacked detainees they allegedly intended to free. At the same time, it was reported that only one RPA soldier was injured. According to some reports - later suppressed by the authorities - , detainees had been threatened by the guards, shortly before the alleged attack, and made to confess that they were *interahamwe*. It is claimed that certain prisoners were then shot by guards, while others died when grenades were thrown in through cell windows. UN human rights observers and local human rights organizations who visited the site reported that the signs on the detention centre building indicated an attack from the inside. There was no evidence that an attack had been launched from outside the building. It appears that these extrajudicial executions of detainees may have been a reprisal attack by RPA soldiers following the previous attacks by opponents, described above.

There have been other cases where individual prisoners have been shot dead at close range by soldiers or prison guards, allegedly while trying to escape. Several such cases have been reported in particular in the *préfectures* of Kibuye and Gitarama. Amnesty International is not aware of any government investigations into these deaths. The prisoners - most of whom are detained on the basis of vague accusations of having participated in the genocide - are labelled as “*génocidaires*”, with the implication that because they are killers themselves, their death is not a serious matter. Apart from violating the basic right to life, this attitude disregards the fact that these detainees have not been charged or tried and therefore not been found guilty; furthermore, many have been arrested on the basis of unsubstantiated denunciations.

There have also been a number of deaths in detention, as a result of intolerable prison conditions amounting to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. In July 1996 the prison population reached more than 80,000. An increase in mass arrests since April 1996 - linked to the launch of an operation for registration for identity cards - led to yet further overcrowding in detention centres across Rwanda. There was a marked deterioration in conditions in the communal detention centres, as many central prisons, filled to several times their capacity, could not accept any further transfers. Amnesty International delegates who visited Rwanda in May 1996 investigated the deaths of 22 detainees at the communal detention centre at Kivumu, in the *préfecture* of Kibuye, on 11 May. The authorities claimed that the deaths were caused by fighting which broke out among the detainees. After visiting the detention centre and speaking to detainees who had witnessed the deaths, Amnesty International believes that the 22 detainees died as a

result of lack of air and extreme heat in the grossly overcrowded cells. Prison guards had refused to open the door, even though they heard detainees screaming for air and water. The victims, all men, included **Rucekeri Gasekero, Ruwanzabo, Shirigame and Safari.**

Similar conditions have been observed in other detention centres in Kibuye and in several other *préfectures*, including Butare and Kibungo. As communal detention centres continue to fill up and the rate of arrests increases, further deaths in detention can be expected.

IV. DELIBERATE AND ARBITRARY KILLINGS BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

Armed opposition groups have continued to carry out deliberate and arbitrary killings of unarmed civilians, often in the context of cross-border incursions which intensified in the first half of 1996. The victims have included vulnerable individuals such as the elderly, children and very young babies. They are almost always killed at night, often in their homes. Some of these killings are characterized by especially brutal methods. Victims are subjected to mutilation; some are reportedly decapitated.

The victims of these attacks are often described as “genocide survivors” or “witnesses” - a shorthand term for members of the Tutsi ethnic group who stayed in Rwanda during the genocide in April to July 1994 and are likely to have witnessed killings by the Hutu-dominated former army and militia during that period. This may not be the only motive for these attacks. Some of the killings are attributed to cases of personal revenge. Some may also form part of a long-term plan by forces loyal to the former Rwandese leaders to gradually destabilize and eventually overthrow the Rwandese Government.

Below are some recent examples of such killings.⁵ Amnesty International has collected evidence of several other killings attributed to armed opposition groups in addition to those cited below.

On the evening of 27 June 1996 in the *préfecture* of Gisenyi, 28 people, including several children, were killed and six injured in Giciye *commune*, Nyamugeyo *secteur*, Kiruma *cellule* and Rubare *secteur*, Kinihira *cellule*. The victims were attacked with guns, grenades, machetes and clubs, by around 30 assailants who split into three groups. Those who died are thought to include Tutsi survivors of the 1994 genocide as well as several Tutsi refugees who had lived in Zaire for several decades and had recently returned to Rwanda. The victims included **Furaha, Kabanyana, Gahuru, Gasominari, Gatari, Kayitare, Nyirantege, Ndayambaje, Nyirabasirimu, Murwanashyaka, Munyangabe, Mukarusagara and her one-year-old baby, Kinomero, Rubuza, Rudahunga, Rwagasore, Rwamunigi, Nyirangofero, Nzitonda, Senga, and Muhundaza.** Those injured included two elderly people, **Mvutse**, aged 67, and **Bushati**, aged 64, and three children, **Bugega, aged eight, Nkurunziza, 18 months old, and a two-week-old baby, Musabyimana**, whose body was riddled with shrapnel. Survivors of the attack claim to have recognized some of the assailants as residents of the area, including one man alleged to be a soldier of the former Rwandese army. They reported that the perpetrators, as

⁵ Examples of deliberate and arbitrary killings in 1995 can be found in the following Amnesty International reports: [Rwanda and Burundi - The return home: rumours and realities](#) (February 1996, AI Index AFR 02/01/96) and [Rwanda: Arming the perpetrators of the genocide](#) (June 1996, AI Index AFR 02/14/95).

well as some local residents who could have provided testimony of the attack, fled the neighbourhood after the killings and did not return the following day.

On 18 June, in the late evening, in the western *préfecture* of Kibuye, at least 13 civilians, including children, and one RPA soldier were killed in Bunyamanza, in Gitsimbwe *secteu*, Rwamatamu *commune*. Three children and one baby were reportedly injured. Those who died included **Séraphine Uwampinka, Callixte Kabandana, Vestine Nikuze, Concessa Nyiransabimana, Consolata Habumugisha, Anastasie Mukandamira, Claude Tuyisenge, Ruyonza, Mahoro, Ngendahimana, Mutungirehe, Berthe, Saveri and Kayitare**. Survivors of the attack said that they recognized the voices of some of the assailants and identified them as their neighbours before the genocide. The assailants, estimated to number around 40, had reportedly split into several groups and had distracted the attention of the local military patrol by appearing to attack another area.

The number of casualties resulting from landmines has also increased in 1996. The majority of these incidents have occurred in the areas of Rwanda bordering Zaire and are thought to be the work of supporters of the former Rwandese Government operating within this area or from Zaire.

For example, on 25 January 1996, in the middle of the day, in Kayove *commune, préfecture* of Gisenyi, **Jean de Dieu Dushimiramana**, a 24-year-old student, stepped on a mine which had been laid at the entrance to the toilets in the building where he was preparing his exams. His foot was blown off. He died in hospital the same day.

In March 1996 a mine explosion in Ramba *commune*, also in Gisenyi, killed three men in their twenties who were in a minibus on their way to a ceremony for installing a new district administrator.

On 20 April 1996 a mine exploded under a car in Mushesha *cellule*, Gitambi *secteur*, Bugarama *commune*, in the *préfecture* of Cyangugu, and killed four men: **Emmanuel Munyantwali, conseiller** of Nzahaha *secteur*, and three employees of the government-owned cement company, **Jean-Pierre Kompanyi, Védaste and Segasagara**.

The fear which these deliberate and arbitrary killings have instilled in the Tutsi population has caused a number of Tutsi to flee from their homes. In several areas, Tutsi fearing for their safety have left their houses and sought refuge in local government buildings, in some cases after receiving threats.

V. KILLINGS BY UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUALS

Many killings of civilians have been carried out by armed groups or individuals whose identity is difficult to verify. Interpretations as to the identity of the perpetrators and the motives of these attacks abound and there are usually several contradictory versions of the same events. Some believe that the unidentified assailants are members of the *interahamwe* or soldiers of the former Rwandese army attacking from refugee camps in neighbouring countries or who have infiltrated deeper into Rwanda. Others believe that some of these killings may have been carried out or instigated by members of the RPA, or by armed individuals allied to the RPA; however, few dare to offer this interpretation publicly. Others portray the perpetrators as armed criminals whose primary motive is robbery. Sometimes one can

infer the identity of the perpetrators from that of the victims, but even then, there can be conflicting explanations as to why particular individuals may have been targeted.

Whatever the truth in each case, the result is that civilians who have taken no part in armed conflict, including young children and the elderly, are being terrorized and killed or maimed in many parts of Rwanda. The increasing confusion surrounding these attacks means that investigations are difficult and the perpetrators know that there is little likelihood that they will be brought to justice.

In the examples mentioned below, Amnesty International has not been able to attribute responsibility for the killings conclusively. Only independent and impartial investigations may establish whether the RPA or armed opposition groups were responsible for these killings.

On the evening of 24 June 1996, eight members of a peasant family were massacred in the *préfecture* of Rural Kigali, Rushashi *commune*, Minazi *secteur*, Nyabitare *cellule*. Those killed included **Languida Nyiramakuba, Simon Butururu, an elderly farmer, his wife Sophie Mukandutiye, their son Jean-Paul Ruvuzandekwe and daughter-in-law Nyirabugore, and their three daughters Mukampamira, Nyirabazimaziki and Daria Uriwenuwe**. The only survivors of the attack were a 12-year-old boy and a six-month-old baby girl. The victims were killed in their homes with guns and bayonets by a group of armed men in military uniform, whose identity has not been established. Some believe the victims were survivors of the genocide, and that at least some of them may have been targeted because they had denounced certain individuals for crimes committed during the genocide. Others believe that the killings were motivated by disputes over possessions or property.

On 27 June and 2 July, at least three other individuals were shot dead in apparently separate incidents in the same *commune* of Rushashi, in unclear circumstances.

On 18 July, in Kibilira *commune*, in the *préfecture* of Gisenyi, 12 people including several children were killed. Amnesty International has not been able to verify the identity of the perpetrators. Some were described as members of the former Rwandese army; the identity of others is not known.

The number of killings of local government officials is increasing week by week. In many of these cases too, the identity of the perpetrators is in doubt. Some sources in Rwanda state that these attacks are carried out by Hutu armed groups who may be targeting officials whom they accuse of collaborating with the Tutsi-dominated government. Other sources say that some of the killings are carried out or ordered by Rwandese Government or security authorities.

On the evening of 10 May **Anne-Marie Mukandoli**, *bourgmestre* of Karengera *commune*, in the *préfecture* of Cyangugu, was shot dead by unidentified men in military uniform while she was alone at home. She had been appointed to the post of *bourgmestre* towards the end of 1995. Two of her neighbours were reportedly arrested after the assassination for failing to intervene at the sound of gunfire.

In the early hours of the morning on 20 May unidentified assailants threw two grenades into the bedroom of **André Nvumba**, a magistrate at Murambi High Court (*Tribunal de première instance*), in the *préfecture* of Byumba, and his wife **Catherine Mukamusoni**, while they were sleeping. One of the grenades exploded, tearing through the bed and seriously injuring Catherine Mukamusoni. She has deep wounds on her legs and feet and may never be able to walk unaided. André Nvumba sustained

lighter injuries on his leg. The reasons for the attack are not clear. The couple had reportedly been threatened and harassed by *interahamwe* even before the genocide began in April 1994. André Nvumba may have been targeted for cooperating with the current authorities. On the other hand, the attack may have been related to his position as a magistrate dealing with sensitive issues.

VI. THE REPRESSION OF TRUTH

The confusion surrounding attacks such as those described above is not accidental. It appears to be in part the result of attempts to protect members of government forces who have carried out human rights violations. In certain cases of suspected involvement of members of the RPA in human rights violations, there has been a campaign of misinformation to obstruct independent investigations and obscure the truth.

It has been extremely difficult to establish the exact proportions of killings perpetrated by the RPA and those perpetrated by former government forces or *interahamwe* militia over the last few months. These difficulties arise in part from the nature of the attacks and in part from seemingly deliberate concealment by the government. Military authorities have sometimes denied or delayed access by independent investigators to the sites of particular killings, claiming that the area was unsafe. In some cases, evidence may have been destroyed before access was permitted.

The general public perception, influenced by media reports both inside and outside Rwanda, is that the groups referred to as *interahamwe* are responsible for most if not all of the recent killings, and that most of the victims are “genocide survivors” or “witnesses”. The Government of Rwanda has been quick to denounce many of the recent killings as soon as they have occurred, exposing them as the work of *interahamwe* or claiming that civilians were caught in cross-fire between *interahamwe* and RPA. Evidence to substantiate these assertions is sometimes scarce. In some cases, these public denunciations, for example on the government-controlled Radio Rwanda, appear to be deliberately calculated to pre-empt suspicion of RPA involvement by presenting these killings as attacks by armed government opponents. Amnesty International believes that independent investigations should be carried out to establish responsibility for each incident, unless there is incontrovertible evidence as to the identity of the perpetrators.

In some instances, it seems likely that members of the RPA were in fact responsible for killings which were publicly attributed to opposition groups, as in the case of the killing of at least 46 detainees at the communal detention centre at Bugarama in Cyangugu (see Part III.4 above).

The tendency to blame all attacks on the *interahamwe* and to portray most of the victims as “genocide survivors” or “witnesses of the genocide” has had wide-ranging effects. The government and its supporters use the official media to blame virtually all killings on *interahamwe*. Subsequent independent reports that some of these killings were actually extrajudicial executions committed by the RPA or groups allied to the security forces are discredited apparently without verification. Official media reports are further amplified by some non-governmental organizations and some officials of foreign governments or intergovernmental organizations.

Individuals and organizations inside Rwanda who dare to speak out about human rights violations by government forces are subjected to persistent intimidation, threats, arrests and other forms of

harassment, and are publicly and personally branded as “*génocidaires*” or defenders of *interahamwe*. Members of human rights organizations, journalists and judicial officials have been especially targeted. This increasing repression concerning freedom of speech has had a devastating effect on human rights activists and other individuals in Rwanda who attempt to expose human rights violations. Those who have defied this repression and continued to speak out about the current human rights situation in Rwanda live in a state of constant fear for their lives. An increasing number no longer dare to issue public statements after seeing others arrested, assaulted or killed simply for expressing their opinions. Those foreign organizations which identify some of the perpetrators of killings in Rwanda as government agents or supporters are branded as supporters of those responsible for the genocide or “revisionists”.

The manipulation of information about the situation in Rwanda has succeeded in whipping up the population’s fears about attacks by *interahamwe*, thus heightening the level of suspicion within communities. Senior government officials have delivered speeches on the national radio appealing to the population to help hunt down infiltrators.

Amnesty International believes that no effort should be spared to identify and bring to justice those responsible for these attacks. However, serious attempts should be made to protect unarmed individuals from being killed, assaulted or arrested in the process and to institute safeguards against such abuses. The present climate in Rwanda is already leading to false denunciations and could further encourage people to take the law into their own hands, especially in areas most affected by infiltrations.

The actions of certain associations of survivors of the genocide appear to have led to an increase in human rights abuses in this context. Amnesty International appreciates the need for local organizations in Rwanda to campaign for the protection of vulnerable sectors of the society who saw their families wiped out during the genocide, and believes that some of these organizations are playing an important role in the aftermath of the tragedy of 1994. However, some of the associations which have emerged more recently, and which are believed to be close to government authorities, have contributed to the campaign of misinformation. They have rightly drawn attention to cases where survivors of the genocide have been victimized but have implied that these are the only types of killings occurring. Some of these organizations have either denied or attempted to justify human rights violations by the RPA and other government forces or supporters. They have put strong pressure on the government to take tough action - involving human rights violations - against suspected infiltrators or insurgents and have accused it of not providing sufficient protection for Tutsi sectors of the community. Such statements not only ignore the serious human rights violations being carried out by government forces but appear to provide a kind of legitimacy to human rights violations against Hutu. The memory of the genocide is being twisted for political ends. This has the adverse effect of alienating Hutu and others who played no role in the genocide.

Some of these groups of survivors have played a leading role in denouncing individuals as participants in the genocide. This has led to numerous arbitrary arrests, without the accusers being required to substantiate their allegations or the accused being given an opportunity to challenge the basis for their arrest. In some cases, denunciations have led to death. In a case reported in May 1996 a man who presented himself for registration for his identity card at Kibilira *commune*, in Gisenyi, was accused by a group of Tutsi survivors of being an *interahamwe*. He was beaten to death by soldiers.

Amnesty International has been campaigning continuously for those suspected of involvement in the genocide of 1994 to be brought to justice. Sadly for the victims and for those detainees who are innocent, more than two years on and with more than 80,000 people in custody, justice remains an elusive prospect. All suspects have the right to be charged and tried according to procedures which are fair and impartial and based on sufficient evidence, in conformity with international standards. Amnesty International is concerned that individuals whose guilt has not been established by a court of law are being subjected to unlawful punishment. Crucial evidence and information, such as the identity of those who carried out arrests, are being lost, thus reducing prospects for fair trials or even convictions in an impartial court of law. Amnesty International is appealing to the Rwandese authorities to stop the practice of imprisonment as a substitute for justice or as a weapon for reprisals.

Manipulation of the international community

Attempts to conceal government responsibility for certain human rights violations has affected international perception of the human rights situation in Rwanda. Reports of killings of Tutsi survivors of the genocide and witnesses are broadcast across the international airwaves but the media remains almost silent about killings of Hutu civilians by the RPA. The absence of freely-available information about these human rights violations confirms a widely-held perception among some foreign governments, non-governmental organizations and media that human rights violations by the current government forces are negligible. The result is that many governments are consciously or unconsciously turning a blind eye to the emergence of another human rights crisis in Rwanda. For example, at the June 1996 meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the Cameroonian capital Yaoundé, a draft resolution on Rwanda, which included concerns about prison conditions and a request to the Rwandese Government to embark on speedy trials of suspects, was not adopted, due to objections by the Rwandese representatives which prevented consensus. The Rwandese delegation reportedly claimed that the situation in Rwanda was under control and did not merit discussion or an OAU resolution.

The guilt felt by the international community for failing to prevent the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 may also explain their readiness to accept any reports of new killings by the forces which carried out the genocide and their reluctance to condemn - or even acknowledge - current human rights violations being perpetrated by the present Rwandese Government. Some seem to believe that the extent of massacres committed by the Hutu-led Rwandese Government in 1994 can excuse the smaller number of abuses or reprisal attacks by the Tutsi-led government. The international community should seek to obtain independent information about the present human rights situation on which to base its assessment. It should be reminded of the grave risks of ignoring advance warnings of a rapidly deteriorating human rights situation in a country where political and ethnic tensions remain extremely high, and should not forget the incalculable cost of having done so under the previous Rwandese Government.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Amnesty International fears that killings in Rwanda are unlikely to stop unless the Rwandese Government and those controlling armed opposition groups take immediate action to prevent further human rights abuses. The international community - particularly foreign governments who have an influence over the parties concerned, as well as the media and non-governmental organizations in these countries reporting on Rwanda - also has a duty to press for action which will prevent further massacres in Rwanda.

Recommendations to the Rwandese Government and security force officials

- issue immediate and public instructions to all members of the security forces that the killing of unarmed civilians or captured combatants constitutes a grave violation of human rights and humanitarian law and will not be tolerated;
- ensure that these instructions are adhered to at all times;
- carry out prompt, independent and impartial investigations into each report of extrajudicial execution or deliberate and arbitrary killing and publish the findings;
- ensure that the individuals found responsible for carrying out or ordering extrajudicial executions or “disappearances” are brought to justice within a reasonable time, in a trial which conforms to internationally-accepted standards of fairness and without recourse to the death penalty;
- investigate reports of deliberate and arbitrary killings by armed opposition groups, including by seeking the cooperation of the authorities in neighbouring countries, with a view to identifying the perpetrators and bringing them to justice;
- provide protection for sectors of the population most at risk, regardless of their ethnic or political affiliation, profession or background;
- institute safeguards against arbitrary arrests and ensure that sufficient evidence is produced against an individual before any arrest is carried out;
- refrain from making public statements which may incite the population to carry out false denunciations or acts of violence;
- ensure that human rights activists are protected from human rights violations and are able to exercise freedom of speech without fear of being arrested, ill-treated, made to “disappear” or extrajudicially executed;
- ensure freedom of access to sites of killings and other human rights violations - immediately after the incidents have occurred - to independent investigators, including members of Rwandese human rights organizations and United Nations human rights observers.

Recommendations to leaders of armed opposition groups

- issue immediate instructions to those under their command to stop carrying out deliberate and arbitrary killings of unarmed civilians. Make it clear that these human rights abuses will not be tolerated;
- investigate and denounce deliberate and arbitrary killings committed by those under their command and provide public information about steps taken to prevent further killings of unarmed civilians.

Recommendations to foreign governments and inter-governmental organizations

- actively seek to obtain independent and balanced information on the current human rights situation in Rwanda;
- acknowledge that grave human rights abuses are being carried out in Rwanda both by government forces and by armed opposition groups;
- urge that the United Nations Human Rights Field Operation for Rwanda (UNHRFOR) carries out independent and exhaustive investigations with a view to establishing responsibility for killings in Rwanda; call for their findings to be made public and widely available both inside and outside Rwanda to contribute to the provision of objective and impartial information and to further encourage the Rwandese authorities to take measures to prevent further killings; urge that these reports avoid the use of ambiguous language in cases where there is clear evidence of responsibility for specific human rights abuses; call for the UNHRFOR to follow up all cases of suspected extrajudicial executions with the Rwandese Government and to report publicly on the results of investigations and on the level of cooperation of the Rwandese Government;
- urge the Rwandese authorities to carry out independent investigations into the killings of civilians perpetrated both by the security forces and by the armed opposition and insist that the results of these investigations are publicly disclosed, so that the public inside and outside Rwanda can have a true and accurate picture of the current human rights situation and so that measures can be taken to bring to justice those found responsible;
- use their influence on the Rwandese Government and on opposition groups to urge them to prevent further killings of unarmed civilians;
- use their influence on the Rwandese Government to urge them to ensure that human rights activists are protected from human rights violations and are able to exercise freedom of speech and carry out investigations without fear;
- encourage intergovernmental organizations of which they are a member to take seriously the deteriorating human rights situation in Rwanda and seek measures to help prevent further human rights violations there.

Recommendations to international media and non-governmental organizations

- acknowledge that grave human rights abuses are being carried out in Rwanda both by government forces and by armed opposition groups;
- assist the international community in obtaining information about human rights abuses in Rwanda;

- take measures to denounce these abuses and seek corrective measures by putting pressure on decision-makers in their country to use their influence to halt the deterioration of the human rights situation in Rwanda.