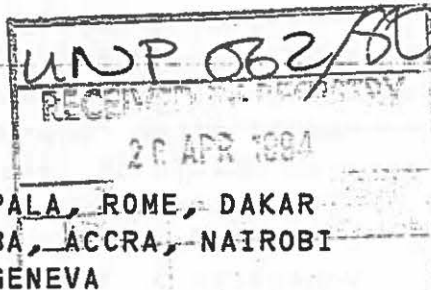


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MY TELNO 1471: RWANDA

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SUMMARY

1. Secretariat brief on developments. Situation in Kigali remains very tense. Massacres continue, particularly in the south. Withdrawal of UNAMIR continues. Remaining force strength now 450 all ranks. RPF present unilateral ceasefire declaration to UN and OAU at Arusha.

2. Council President briefs on his conversation with Director-General of Medecins sans Frontieres. Appalling atrocities taking place in Bhutare. Some Council members suggest some sort of inquiry. I encourage focus on regional diplomatic efforts.

DETAIL

3. During informal consultations of the Security Council on 25 April, Gharekhan (Secretary-General's Special Political Adviser) gave a briefing on developments in Rwanda. The situation in Kigali remained very tense. There had been intensive shelling. There was no change in the positions of both sides. The RPF controlled the hills around Kigali and the north and north-east of the country. The north-west, west and south of the country were held by Rwandan Government Forces. The RPF were reported to have taken Byumba and were also advancing from Rwamagana to Kigali, but their advance was being slowed by the RGF. The RGF in turn were advancing from Gitarama to Kigali. Massacres and killing of civilians, particularly in the south, continued.

4. Gharekhan said the withdrawal of UNAMIR was continuing. Some 1,000 personnel had now withdrawn. The present force level was 450 of all ranks. On 22 April the

Secretary-General's Special Representative (SRSG) and the Deputy Force Commander had left Kigali for Arusha. The Secretary-General of the OAU and the OAU Facilitator, as well as a number of other observers, were present. Arrangements had been made by UNAMIR to take an RGF delegation from Goma in Zaire to Arusha. But when the plane landed the RGF delegation was not there and the plane had to return. The Secretary-General of the RPF had arrived in Arusha and had presented to the OAU facilitator and to the UN a unilateral ceasefire declaration taking effect from 12 midnight on 25 April. But the continued observance of the ceasefire by the RPF was linked to a number of conditions.

5. Gharekhan noted that Peter Hansen (Under-Secretary-General at the Department of Humanitarian Affairs) had arrived in Kigali on Saturday for a first-hand look at the humanitarian situation. Conditions in Kigali were severe. The Force Commander was negotiating with both sides on the safety of civilians still in the Anahoru Stadium.

6. Keating (New Zealand, Council President) said he had been briefed by the Secretary-General of Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) on events in Bhutare over the weekend. MSF had been running a hospital with large numbers of people wounded, many seriously. Soldiers had come into the hospital and rounded up all the Rwandan hospital staff and doctors and killed them. The next day they had returned and killed all the patients. The MSF Director-General had said this was the worst atrocity seen by MSF since it was established. He had appealed to Keating to relay the information to the Security Council and to consider establishing safe areas or safe havens where Rwandan civilians might take refuge. In response to a question, Keating confirmed that the soldiers who had committed this atrocity were Rwandan Government soldiers, some wearing regular army uniforms, others in the uniform of the Presidential Guard.

7. Gambari (Nigeria) asked whether the intention was for the UNAMIR forces who had withdrawn to remain in Nairobi so that they could be redeployed quickly if the situation improved. Gharekhan replied that the troops could not be kept indefinitely in Nairobi. They would be transported to their home countries as soon as this could be arranged. By 26 April less than 200 would be left in Nairobi.

8. Cardenas (Argentina) said that there was a danger that public opinion would think the Security Council indifferent to events in Rwanda. It was important for the Council therefore to make it clear, particularly to the media, that the UN was aware of the gravity of the situation and was attempting to negotiate a ceasefire. We also needed to think about the humanitarian aspects. Was there anything further the Council could do? Perhaps we should think about safe areas. Yanez (Spain) agreed. Marker (Pakistan) was wary of discussion of safe areas. But it was true that there was a need to get the Council's concern across. At the very least the Council should say it was shocked at the atrocities reported by MSF.

9. I said that the Security Council was in an unenviable position. Some took the view, I thought wrongly, that the UN was to blame for the situation in Rwanda. It was unfortunate that the Secretary-General of the OAU had written to the Secretary-General in the way he did. Whether or not UNAMIR personnel had withdrawn from Kigali, they could have done nothing to prevent massacres in the countryside. We had to think carefully what we could do. There was no point in promising what we could not deliver. The key was to encourage neighbouring countries to continue their efforts to facilitate a political solution. The resolution we had just adopted gave us the peg for this.

10. There was then a somewhat confused discussion as to what else the Council could realistically do. Yanez (Spain) said that in previous cases of horrific crimes the Council had taken measures to bring the perpetrators to justice or at least to investigate more fully. There was the War Crimes Tribunal for Yugoslavia which had been preceded by the Commission of Experts. In Liberia, a Commission of Inquiry had been established following the Harbel slaughter. The Council should reflect on how it could respond to the massive violations of humanitarian law being committed in Rwanda. Gambari said that the key was to get back to the core of the problem: the abandonment of the Arusha process. What the Council should be doing was to facilitate and encourage a return to this process. Albright (US) said that under any other circumstances the Council President would ask the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to come in and brief on why his Government had failed to turn up at Arusha. Bizimana (Rwanda) said that the Secretariat

had described some of the events over the weekend but had not highlighted one point. There had been a meeting in Dar es Salaam on 6 April after which the President of Rwanda had perished. But one member of the previous Rwandan Government had remained in Dar es Salaam: the Minister of the Interior. On instructions from the interim government he had travelled from Dar es Salaam to Arusha. Contrary to press reports therefore there had been a Rwandan Government presence in Arusha. [REDACTED]
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11. I underlined the need for the Security Council to make efforts in parallel with those of the Secretary-General to encourage the governments of neighbouring countries, all of whom had representatives in New York, to get the peace process back on track. I was perfectly willing to seek my Government's views on some kind of enquiry into the events in Rwanda. But whatever evidence was found, not much could be done with it until there was peace and stability in the country. Cardenas agreed. The need was for the Council not to project indifference, but to encourage regional powers to help bring about a solution.

COMMENT

12. If you have views on Yanez' idea for an enquiry into the massacres, grateful to receive them by 27 April.

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