

1994

Site Visit to Rwanda, Zaire, and Burundi

Jeff Drumtra

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/rawson_rwanda

Recommended Citation

Drumtra, Jeff, "Site Visit to Rwanda, Zaire, and Burundi" (1994). *David Rawson Collection on the Rwandan Genocide*. 82.

https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/rawson_rwanda/82

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives and Museum at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in David Rawson Collection on the Rwandan Genocide by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.



Site Visit Notes

Site Visit

To Rwanda, Zaire, and Burundi

...

October 20 to November 17, 1994

...

By Jeff Drumtra, Africa Policy Analyst
U.S. Committee for Refugees

Site Visit Notes

Site Visit to Rwanda, Zaire, and Burundi

. . .

October 20 to November 17, 1994

. . .

By Jeff Drumtra, Africa Policy Analyst

U.S. Committee for Refugees

The purpose of these "Site Visit Notes" is to provide timely information, analysis, and recommendations to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), U.S. policy makers, and to UN and other international officials working on issues affecting Rwanda and the surrounding region of east-central Africa. This summary contains findings and observations in six thematic areas:

- A Demographics
- B Security Inside Rwanda
- C Repatriation and Resettlement
- D Internally Displaced Persons
- E Goma and Bukavu
- F Final Notes

These "Site Visit Notes" are written with an assumption that readers possess a basic familiarity with Rwanda, its geography, and the events that have occurred there during 1994.

Purpose and Itinerary

Jeff Drumtra, Africa Policy Analyst for USCR, traveled to Rwanda and to neighboring countries during the four-week period of October 20 to November 17, 1994.

The purpose of USCR's trip was to view the Rwanda situation in its full regional context--to examine the situation from the vantage point of Kigali, from the perspective of the hills and communes of rural Rwanda, and from the perspective of refugee camps outside Rwanda's borders. USCR attempted to gain a better understanding of the attitudes of uprooted Rwandans, assess the humanitarian and security conditions in the refugee camps and the dynamics at work in those camps, and examine the conditions for repatriation and resettlement of Rwandan refugees and internally displaced Rwandans. USCR's four-week site visit was also an effort to better understand the psychological impact on Rwandan society in the aftermath of genocide that killed up to one million persons and a civil war that deposed one government and installed a significantly

different one.

USCR's time in the region included parts of 12 days in Kigali, parts of seven days in rural Rwanda, five days in the Goma region of Zaire, three days in the Bukavu region of Zaire, and parts of five days in Burundi. Within Rwanda, USCR conducted site visits in six specific locations, including Kigali, Gitarama, Gikongoro, Kaduha (Gikongoro area), Cyanika (Gikongoro area), and the Bugesera region (southeast of Kigali). USCR also traveled overland within Rwanda from Kigali to Gisenyi and from Cyangugu to Kigali via Butare, in order to gain impressions of resettlement patterns and security conditions.

In the Goma region of Zaire, USCR conducted site visits to Kibumba, Mugunga, and Katale refugee camps. In the Bukavu region of Zaire, USCR traveled to the refugee camps of Kashusha, Inera, Hongo #1, and Hongo #2. In Burundi, USCR met with NGO and UNHCR staff in Bujumbura and traveled to four sites in Muramvya province where internally displaced Burundians have temporarily settled.

A • Demographics: Findings and Observations

1-A • Demographics of Rwanda prior to the genocide.

To provide a context for current-day Rwanda, it is helpful to keep in mind that Rwanda had an estimated population of 7.5 million before this year's genocide, including a Tutsi population living in Rwanda of 1 million to 1.5 million persons, according to various estimates. Rwanda's population included an estimated 6 million to 6.5 million ethnic Hutu.

In addition, USCR estimated at the beginning of 1994 that some 500,000 Rwandan Tutsi were living outside Rwanda as refugees or in refugee-like circumstances, although some Tutsi sources estimated almost double that number of refugees.

2-A • The number of Rwandan refugees and internally displaced persons is probably 20 percent fewer than official estimates.

It appears that about 1.7 million ethnic Hutu Rwandans are refugees outside the country, somewhat fewer than UNHCR's official estimate of 2.1 million. Some relief organizations active in the region, such as Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), have estimated that the number of Rwandan refugees is closer to 1.3 million--nearly 40 percent fewer than official estimates.

In addition, there is reason to believe that no more than 1.5 million Rwandans--mostly Hutu--are internally displaced within Rwanda, somewhat fewer than the official UN estimate of 1.8 million.

These revised estimates suggest that a combined total of approximately 3.2 million Rwandan Hutu are uprooted from their homes. Even this may be a substantial over-estimate.

UNHCR and NGO personnel working in the region readily acknowledge that the official refugee estimate of 2.1 million is inflated due to relief workers' inability to conduct an official census (leaders of the deposed regime have blocked census efforts in many camps), the humanitarian desire to ensure that more than enough food is distributed, and occasional confusion in distinguishing between Rwandan refugees and Burundian refugees in some reporting.

Based on discussions with UN and NGO staff in Rwanda and in asylum countries, USCR believes that 650,000 or fewer refugees are in the Goma region--nearly 25 percent fewer than the 850,000 cited in official estimates. Some 300,000 refugees are believed to be in the Bukavu region--slightly fewer than the 320,000 official estimate. Some 60,000 Rwandan refugees are located in Uvira (the balance of the 200,000 refugees in Uvira are Burundians, not Rwandans).

Some 160,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees are in Burundi--substantially fewer than the figure of 210,000 cited in many reports. USCR was unable to conduct a site visit in Tanzania, but the official estimate of some 500,000 Rwandan refugees in Tanzania appears to be a reasonably accurate estimate, according to several sources.

UN workers in Rwanda indicated to USCR that their official estimate of 1.8 million internally displaced persons is probably inflated by methodological flaws. The official UN estimate was generated primarily by UNAMIR troops with no training in such surveys. Spot-checking by USCR in late October in Rwanda's sector 4A (the Gikongoro area) indicated that the UN estimate there was inflated by about 25 percent. UNREO is attempting to revise its methodology for measuring internal displacement and has sought funding from USAID for an "air count" by satellite imagery.

3-A • Inflated estimates of the size of Rwanda's uprooted population have political repercussions. Many international policymakers and donor governments appear to be measuring the legitimacy or illegitimacy of Rwanda's new government based in part on inflated estimates of the size of the uprooted population. International policymakers dealing with Rwanda should guard against using inaccurate demographic information to arrive at misguided policies.

In most emergencies, estimates of the number of refugees and internally displaced persons are important primarily to gauge humanitarian assistance requirements. In Rwanda, however, these estimates of population displacement have a powerful **political dimension** and for that reason should be as accurate as possible.

Foreign governments are attaching enormous political weight to the size of the Rwandan Hutu refugee population and to the number of Rwandan Hutu who are internally displaced. The estimates appear to influence how the United States and other foreign officials view the new government of Rwanda; the higher that the number of uprooted Rwandans is estimated to be, the less legitimacy the new Rwandan government is judged to have in the eyes of many foreign governments.

Leaders of Rwanda's deposed regime, as well as numerous U.S. and international officials,

have argued that reports of nearly 4 million uprooted Rwandans indicates the new government's lack of credibility and proves that Rwandan Hutu cannot live in present-day Rwanda. This analysis appears to be one reason that the United States and most European nations have given virtually no bilateral assistance to Rwanda's new government. In fact, massive numbers of Rwandan Hutu clearly are uprooted, but the total number is probably closer to 3.2 million or fewer, not the reported 3.9 million. This is a substantial difference that might begin to affect the international community's political response to current-day Rwanda.

In another example, approximately 3 million Hutu may be living at home in Rwanda, which suggests that large numbers of Hutu Rwandans have managed to settle and are attempting to resume their normal lives. In fact, the number of Hutu settled in Rwanda appears to be nearly equal to the number of Hutu who are refugees or internally displaced. An alarming number of Hutu have been killed in Rwanda since July, but the statistics indicate that millions of Hutu have **not been targeted** for reprisal killings in the country.

Too many Rwandans are uprooted, too much mistrust exists among Rwanda's various population groups, and, for years to come, conflicts over land ownership and individuals' complicity in the genocide will too frequently turn violent. The situation in Rwanda is sufficiently grim; outsiders need not paint a worse picture by exaggerating facts in a way that provokes misunderstandings and counterproductive policies by international powers.

4-A • Useful analytic tool: A "demographic snapshot" of Rwanda in late 1994 shows six key population groups.

International attention has understandably focused on the large population of Rwandan refugees. But the refugees are only one of six population groups who are greatly affecting current-day Rwanda.

The first population group includes the half-million to a million **Tutsi who were killed** in the genocide--their absence is apparent and is an important element in the political and social dynamics of current-day Rwanda.

The second population group is **Tutsi who survived** the massacres despite living in Rwanda during the killings; these traumatized survivors might number as few as 100,000 or as many as 500,000.

The third group includes an estimated 400,000 **Tutsi exiles who have returned** to Rwanda since July after 30 years or more as refugees. No definitive census of these returnees exists, and some ethnic Hutu Rwandans claim many more Tutsi exiles have settled in Rwanda since July. The UN's estimate of 400,000 Tutsi returnees is the number most commonly cited, however. Most Tutsi exiles are returning from neighboring Burundi and Uganda. Many international observers predict that political and social tensions are likely between the English-speaking Tutsi returnees from Uganda and the French-speaking Tutsi returnees from Burundi.

The fourth group is comprised of the estimated 1.5 million, or fewer, **internally displaced Hutu** within Rwanda.

The fifth population group includes the approximately 1.7 million **Hutu refugees** in Zaire, Tanzania, Burundi, and Uganda.

The sixth population group of Rwandans is comprised of Hutu who are living in their homes in Rwanda--in other words, **Hutu** who are settled and are **not uprooted**. No census of this group exists. It appears, extrapolating from the number of Hutu refugees and the number of Hutu who are internally displaced, that 2.5 million to 3.5 million Rwandan Hutu may be living at home.

Each of these six populations groups has its own needs, concerns, and motivations. Dead victims of the genocide require justice. Traumatized survivors require special services and confidence of safety. Tutsi returnees require land to restart their lives. Uprooted Hutu require accurate information, freedom of choice, and security. Hutu settled at home in Rwanda need continued safety and a resumption of development programs in their home areas.

B • Security Inside Rwanda: Findings and Observations

5-B • Security incidents do occur almost daily in Rwanda. It is an exaggeration, however, to portray the country as being awash in violence. Many areas appear to be generally peaceful for sustained periods. The Butare area appears to be an area of particular concern.

Mysterious killings happen nearly every day somewhere in Rwanda. These cannot be condoned or ignored, but they are not surprising in the aftermath of genocide and in the absence of a strong government or a functioning justice system.

During USCR's site visit to Rwanda, several large security incidents each claimed the lives of five to 35 persons near Gisenyi and Kibuye. One parish priest near Gitarama told USCR that 216 persons had been murdered in his parish area during the preceding three months, among an estimated parish area population of about 50,000. The priest confided that, in his opinion, "many of those who deserved to be killed have been killed"--an interesting comment by a priest. He said that murders in the parish had decreased significantly in October.

Large numbers of long-time Tutsi exiles have returned to the Butare area, and a disproportionate number of killings and other violent acts appeared to be occurring there during USCR's site visit to Rwanda. No exact crime statistics are available. USCR heard numerous accounts of Hutu civilians who attempted to return home to the Butare region but were compelled to flee again because of threats to their safety. During early November, unconfirmed rumors circulated that some local government officials in Butare, apparently acting on their own initiative and contrary to the official policy of Rwanda's national authorities, were not cooperating with plans to return large numbers of Hutu displaced persons to the region.

6-B • Killings are occurring in Rwanda for numerous reasons and with a mixture of motives. Human rights experts and other international observers should not jump to quick assumptions about the purpose and perpetrators of a particular murder, or about how killings can be stopped.

Foreign policymakers viewing Rwanda from a distance tend to assume that all killings there occur for purposes of revenge, and that the only question is whether the killings are a matter of policy by the government or RPA. These quick assumptions over-simplify the dynamics at work in Rwanda and underestimate the difficulty of curbing violence. There are many motives for killing besides revenge, and many suspects beyond RPA soldiers.

USCR identified at least **seven** reasons why killings are being committed in Rwanda by different sets of culprits:

- some Tutsi civilians commit murders as personal revenge for the death of their families;
- individual RPA soldiers commit murders as personal retribution for the genocide;
- groups of RPA soldiers under pay from Tutsi civilians act as hired assassins against specific individuals;
- some Tutsi civilians kill to gain land ownership;
- Interahamwe militia operating in Rwanda kill fellow-Hutu to discourage repatriation, intimidate returnees, and cast international suspicion on the new Rwandan government;
- some Hutu civilians have allegedly committed murders to eliminate Hutu eyewitnesses to the genocide of April-May;
- banditry may be a source of some killings, particularly in the absence of a strong central government or a local police force.

This brief listing of motives suggests that no single, easy **panacea** can bring full security inside Rwanda. Putting international pressure on the central government to discipline the RPA is a partial remedy but will not stop all killings. It is reasonable to expect that the establishment of a functioning justice system in the country could curb some--but not all--killings by raising expectations among Rwandans that a state legal system will reliably punish Hutu murderers of April-May as well as Tutsi killers since July. The existence of a justice system, however, is unlikely to curb ongoing killings by Interahamwe or by individuals who are determined to eliminate witnesses to their participation in last April's mass murders.

No single tactic can stop violence in Rwanda, but a combination of strategies can help. The international community should continue to press the new government for improved domestic security and adherence to human rights. The new government requires bilateral financial assistance from the U.S. and other major donors in order to implement and enforce its avowed policies of reconciliation and justice. Placing RPA soldiers on salary might facilitate military discipline and lessen individual soldiers' incentive to operate as vigilante killers-for-hire. The UN human rights monitoring program in Rwanda should expand operations rapidly to every commune in the country and should receive the resources needed to sustain itself for a year or more. Murders perpetrated inside Rwanda by representatives of the former regime will not be curtailed unless the international community moves more aggressively to detain leaders of the former regime and crack down on Interahamwe operating in Rwanda and along its borders.

This mixture of strategies can begin to help stabilize security in Rwanda, but the results are

likely to be gradual. Policymakers, NGOs, and others must be tough-minded and cannot expect instant **social reconciliation**. In the aftermath of genocide, civil war, the overthrow of a government, an administratively weak new government, persistent land pressures, and years of hate-filled propaganda by the old regime, a sustained period of isolated violence, insecurity, and mistrust are virtually inevitable in current-day Rwanda. Even if the majority of Tutsi and Hutu have good intentions, it is to be expected that things will be amiss for a long time to come.

7-B • The discipline of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) has deteriorated since July.

The vaunted discipline of the RPA has eroded, perhaps due in part to an expansion of the army in order to patrol the entire country after the RPA's military victory in July. Many new recruits reportedly have minimal training. Veteran RPA soldiers, flush with victory, are agitating for salaries after operating four years in the bush as an unpaid rebel force.

USCR's policy analyst, traveling alone and with other NGO personnel throughout Rwanda in October and early November, encountered no harassment, threats, or inconveniences by the many RPA soldiers encountered. RPA roadblocks were actually fewer and more casual than USCR expected. However, numerous incidents occurred during USCR's site visit--including murders of Rwandans, harassment of UNAMIR troops, and robberies of NGO compounds--in which witnesses reportedly implicated uniformed or partially uniformed RPA soldiers. Some civilian government officials acknowledged to USCR that "the RPA is not what it used to be."

8-B • More Interahamwe live and function inside Rwanda than many outsiders realize. Interahamwe are particularly active in camps for internally displaced persons in southwest Rwanda.

NGO workers interviewed by USCR were convinced that Interahamwe are present in the internally displaced camps in the Gikongoro area and that they are becoming stronger and more active there. One relief worker told USCR that several thousand internally displaced persons in one area had registered to return to their homes by bus during a recent week, but that only about 20 persons actually returned home because Interahamwe effectively blocked or intimidated the overwhelming majority from leaving.

A recent UNREO report on camps for internally displaced persons in southwest Rwanda leaves no doubt about Interahamwe activity. The report noted that "Interahamwe [are] openly active" in one camp, that "former RGF [former Rwandan government forces] are mounting criminal attacks from a base nearby" another camp, that "former RGF have been carrying out criminal acts" in a third camp, and that former leaders at a fourth camp "threatened displaced persons who expressed any wishes to leave the camp."

The continued presence of Interahamwe inside Rwanda has **important implications**. It means, for example, that many international policymakers misunderstand the multiple sources of violence in Rwanda. The conventional wisdom abroad tends to assume that all Interahamwe and other guilty persons fled Rwanda after the RPA military victory, and that all Hutu remaining inside Rwanda are innocent civilians. Not so. The continued Interahamwe presence inside Rwanda

contributes to violence and general insecurity that is beyond the new government's ability to control. Furthermore, the presence of Interahamwe in Rwanda means that many of the estimated 1 million internally displaced Hutu in southwest Rwanda cannot freely choose when to return home. Some displaced Hutu in Rwanda may be virtual hostages to the Interahamwe, in the same way that many Hutu refugees in Goma are virtual hostages.

The growing Interahamwe presence in the camps in western Rwanda has created security concerns within the new government and has occasionally provoked an overly aggressive response by the RPA, which raided and burned several camps in early November. The international community rightfully condemned the manner of the burnings and the forced movement of the camps' residents. The episode, however, illustrates the complicated international expectations placed on the new government: it is under pressure to restore internal security expeditiously, but not in an overly aggressive fashion; the existence of internally displaced persons camps is cited as an indictment of the government's legitimacy, but heavy-handed government efforts to close some camps have drawn criticism.

9-B • Security inside Rwanda cannot improve--and may significantly deteriorate--until the new Rwandan government receives the bilateral aid and resources it needs to function and attempt to maintain order. The power vacuum created by a virtually non-functioning central government in Kigali is having negative consequences in the countryside.

The United States and most other major donor nations have conspicuously withheld bilateral aid from the new Rwandan government, which has virtually no financial resources of its own. The court system does not yet function, a trained police force does not exist, and most government officials, civil servants, and RPA soldiers work with little or no pay. Virtually all government personnel are new to their jobs and have limited expertise and experience in government administration. Basic supplies and equipment are scarce. The net result of donors' short-sightedness is that the Rwandan government has only a limited capacity to implement policies of reconstruction, resettlement, justice, and national reconciliation.

The existence of a crippled government in Kigali encourages **local officials** to take matters into their own hands and pursue personal agendas. The resulting deterioration of government discipline and accountability is dangerous. Many local officials appear to be less moderate than national officials in Kigali.

One prime example, which occurred during USCR's site visit to the region, was the forced closure and destruction of several camps for internally displaced persons near Kibuye in late October. The incident was one signal that the national government, handicapped by its lack of resources, is sometimes helpless to enforce its own clearly stated policies on local officials. Prior to and immediately after the incident at the camps, national officials in Kigali publicly stated that **forcible resettlement** of uprooted Hutu is contrary to government policy. Sources told USCR that local Kibuye officials who supported forced closure of the camps acted without permission, in direct violation of the national government's policy. UNREO reported on October 26 and October 28 that "the government has said that there is no policy to forcibly remove IDPs from IDP camps." After forcible removals occurred, UNREO reported on November 7 that "the government has reiterated that there is no government policy to forcibly remove IDPs from the

camps."

10-B • The UN human rights monitoring program for Rwanda is developing too slowly. At current rates of deployment, the program may not reach its mandated full strength of 147 monitors until March 1995.

The monitoring program is an important component in establishing conditions conducive to repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced Rwandans. The program will provide a sustained, trained international presence throughout the country to monitor current human rights conditions.

Despite its widely recognized importance, the program is operating at less than half-speed due to insufficient financing by international donors, inadequate equipment, and uncreative administration by UN human rights staff. USCR found that approximately 40 UN human rights observers had arrived in Rwanda by early November, fewer than 20 of whom were actually deployed in the field outside of Kigali. The head of the monitoring operation in Kigali, William Clarence, told USCR that he expected to have about 70 or 80 monitors in-country by the end of December. The full contingent of 147 might not arrive until March or April 1995.

Clarence told USCR that the monitoring operation lacked vehicles, radios, reliable translators, and needed more administrative support in Kigali to coordinate the program's expansion. The program has virtually exhausted its limited first allotment of funds. The U.S. pledged a modest \$750,000 to the program months ago but reportedly had not paid the money as of late November. In any event, \$750,000 from the United States is paltry support for an estimated \$10 million operation that can bolster security, justice, and accountability in a country where up to one million persons have been slaughtered and millions of others are waiting to return home safely.

C • Repatriation and Resettlement: Findings and Observations

11-C • The pattern of resettlement within Rwanda is spotty. Some areas are virtually empty, some locations have 90 percent resettlement, many areas appear to be half full.

It is difficult to generalize about settlement patterns in Rwanda. Some communes and hills appear to be well-settled, whereas locations three miles down the same road are eerily underpopulated. Parts of extreme southwest Rwanda (between Cyangugu and Nyungwe forest) and southeast Rwanda appear to be virtually empty for long stretches, though some people can be found. Patterns of permanent settlement are often difficult to ascertain because farm land in some areas is being cultivated by displaced persons rather than by the actual owners, who are dead or absent. Hutu individuals and families engaged in daily activities were readily identifiable along the many highways traveled by USCR. Daily UNHCR bus convoys carry Tutsi exiles into Rwanda to settle.

Several NGO workers told USCR they believe that Kigali has regained its previous population level, albeit with a significantly different mix of people. In the opinion of USCR, however, based on unscientific observations, Kigali remains less populated than it was previously, with perhaps one-third fewer people now.

12-C • The next opportune moment for repatriation is during the January planting season, but repatriation at that time will probably remain relatively small.

Many relief workers in Rwanda were surprised when relatively few Hutu refugees repatriated in time for the September-October planting season. Those relief workers now say they were naive to expect large repatriation so soon after the trauma of a few months earlier. The January planting season may act as a magnet to draw some refugees and internally displaced Hutu to their homes, but fear about conditions in Rwanda and intimidation in the camps will probably keep repatriation relatively small. As a result, another planting season will have been missed, and **food dependency** will be prolonged.

13-C • It is important to understand the many reasons why Hutu refugees and internally displaced persons are not returning home.

Too many international observers and policymakers see only part of the picture in Rwanda. Many foreign officials mistakenly believe that reprisals against Hutu must be the singular reason why refugees and internally displaced Hutu are not returning home. Similarly, many relief workers are tempted to believe that most uprooted Hutu would rapidly go home if the Interahamwe were dismantled. In fact, the attitudes among uprooted Rwandan Hutu are more complicated.

USCR's site visit to the region indicates that there are at least **ten** reasons why people are staying in camps and are not returning home:

- some refuse to go home because they are **guilty** of murder and fear being brought to justice; it is important to remember that those who are guilty are not considered to be refugees under international law, and do not deserve refugee protection or support;
- some Hutu hesitate to go home because they are sincerely **unsure** of their own culpability; some may feel morally guilty although legally they are innocent; others believe themselves innocent but fear that Tutsi or the UN might judge them to be guilty.
- some do not go home because they are aware of real **security incidents** in which Hutu have recently died in Rwanda;
- some are afraid to go home because systematic rumor, misinformation, and **propaganda** by the deposed regime in the camps have created false accounts about killings and have instilled an exaggerated fear of security conditions inside Rwanda among uprooted Hutu;
- some Hutu have been physically prevented from returning home by **Interahamwe** in the camps; they have seen fellow-refugees murdered in the camps because they planned to repatriate; they have been told by camp leaders that Interahamwe will hunt them and kill them at their homes if they return home without permission;
- some Hutu do not repatriate because, by **cultural tradition**, they feel compelled to loyally

support and follow their leaders, right or wrong;

- some do not return home because their homes are now **occupied** by Tutsi;
- others do not return because their homes have been **destroyed**;
- escalating violence in neighboring **Burundi** may influence some Rwandan Hutu refugees to stay in camps; reports of killings and other violence in Burundi compound the general sense of insecurity and uncertainty felt by many Rwandan Hutu;
- some Rwandan Hutu do not go home because they are physically or emotionally **exhausted**, infirm, traumatized, and they need rest; some have been uprooted for nearly two years because of Rwanda's civil war; for some farmers, the nutrition and health conditions in the camps may be equivalent to their normal impoverished lives in Rwanda.

This list of ten motives carries **policy implications**. It suggests that no single policy or program will, by itself, open wide the flow of repatriation. A comprehensive strategy is required inside Rwanda and in refugee camps. International policymakers should also note that the government of Rwanda has direct control only over three of the ten factors impeding repatriation (clarifying culpability, addressing security incidents, and returning homes to rightful owners). The majority of factors blocking repatriation and resettlement can only be addressed by the international community.

The new government of Rwanda should take several steps. First, the new government could help ease individual Hutu's uncertainty about their own culpability by assembling and publishing a list of individuals being sought for crimes of murder and genocide. Whether the list contains 10,000 or 30,000 or 50,000 names is, at this point, unimportant. What is important is that the list be published so that the huge number of innocent Hutu refugees will know that they are considered innocent and can **return without fear of prosecution**. Although a list of suspected culprits would probably contain many names of innocent people and would probably lack the names of some guilty people, these flaws are correctable in the long-term. Such a list would immediately be a significant step toward accountability, reconciliation, and repatriation. The new government would require international funding and other resources to assemble the list quickly.

Secondly, the new government, with the necessary international financial support, should address ongoing security incidents in the country by acting forcefully and publicly to punish vigilante reprisals, banditry, and other human rights abuses. Thirdly, the new government requires the necessary international assistance to inventory all land left vacant by the genocide and provide for the **relocation of Tutsi returnees** who are currently residing on land owned by Hutu refugees.

To repeat: these three steps, none of them simple even for a strong government, much less a new one, can only be undertaken if the U.S. and other international donors become actively engaged in working with the government of Rwanda. The international community has thus far resisted taking this step.

Even if, miraculously, the new government immediately achieved all three steps suggested above, it is important to understand that significant **other factors would continue to impede repatriation**. The new government can do nothing, for example, to stop the destructive propaganda of the deposed regime, nor can it neutralize the intimidation practiced by the Interahamwe in refugee camps outside the country, nor can it control troubling events in Burundi,

nor is it in a position to offer to rebuild destroyed homes or induce Hutu farmers to return with promises of an easier life.

14-C • The majority of the ten factors impeding repatriation and resettlement can only be addressed by the international community.

The international tribunal must move quickly to arrest guilty leaders of the old regime and bring them to justice. Only the international community can break the control of the Interahamwe and the former military in the refugee camps. Only international donors and development agencies can help to repair homes and conduct programs that might improve the quality of life in Rwanda and encourage uprooted Hutu to resettle. Only the international community can provide the international presence that will give Hutu and Tutsi confidence to live again in a multi-ethnic Rwanda.

15-C • Rwanda is caught in a political trap created by the policies of the international community, including the United States. The new government has been signaled that it must induce millions of Hutu refugees and internally displaced persons to return home so as to boost the new government's political credibility among international donors. Yet the new government, deprived of bilateral aid, has virtually no administrative capacity to create conditions for repatriation or to cope with the tensions and disputes certain to occur when millions of uprooted Hutu return home.

The "wait-and-see" policy of the United States and other major countries toward the new government is paving the way toward guaranteed **social chaos** and renewed violence. U.S. policy makers insist that the new government must provide better security for the Hutu population and for potential returnees, yet U.S. policy deliberately deprives the Rwandan government of resources to function. As a result, the new government cannot gain or demonstrate the credibility it is accused of lacking.

16-C • The government of Rwanda says that its land ownership policy protects the ownership rights of Hutu citizens who have fled. This policy is supposedly favored by the international community, but the government has been deprived of the international support it will need to implement the policy.

Officials of the new government say that Hutu landholders retain ownership of their property and that long-time Tutsi exiles returning to Rwanda cannot, as a general rule, regain possession of land they previously owned. The large majority of Tutsi exiles who have returned to Rwanda have been allowed to settle on plots of land on a temporary basis, the government says. Rwandan Hutu who have fled retain legal rights to the property left behind and can gain possession upon their return home, according to government policy.

This is the correct policy. If properly implemented, it can reduce disputes over land ownership and could encourage Hutu refugees to repatriate. The problem is that the international community has, so far, failed to give the government the support needed to implement the policy

properly. Arbitration panels, land use studies, and relocation services will be necessary to resettle Tutsi returnees permanently.

D • Internally Displaced Persons: Findings and Observations

17-D • Rwanda's internally displaced population is almost certainly smaller than official estimates. UNREO lists some 80 sites for internally displaced persons throughout the country. Most sites, however, are food drop-off points rather than camps. Encampments for the internally displaced population primarily exist in the southwest.

The internally displaced population is 1.5 million or fewer (see item 2-A).

18-D • Internally displaced persons in camps in southwest Rwanda include a disproportionate number of old, young, and infirm who were apparently too weak to make the six-day trek to Zaire in August.

This is a potentially significant finding. It suggests that some residents may be unable to return home because of physical limitations, regardless of any improvements that may occur in security conditions.

19-D • As many as two-thirds of the internally displaced persons in some camps in southwest Rwanda are more than 30 kilometers from their normal homes. Therefore many of them may not necessarily possess timely, accurate information about security conditions in their home areas.

This is a potentially significant and unexpected finding. Since a large portion of the internally displaced persons in the camps are farther from their homes than commonly realized, they may **not** have first-hand information about the conditions for return. This makes them potentially susceptible to misinformation in the same way that refugees outside the country are, particularly if Interahamwe are present in the displaced camps.

In some cases it might be a mistake for UNHCR to view the internally displaced population as a barometer of insecurity in the country. According to UNHCR officials, refugees outside Rwanda cannot safely repatriate until the displaced population inside the country demonstrates that conditions are safe by returning home. UNHCR officials believe that most internally displaced persons are close to their home areas--within a few kilometers--and therefore possess reliable, first-hand knowledge of safety conditions. This is not always the case, however. Internally displaced Hutu in the camps of southwest Rwanda may not always be a reliable indicator of true security conditions in the countryside.

Security concerns are one reason uprooted Hutu do not go home, but it is not the only reason. (See item 13-C for a discussion of additional reasons.)

20-D • Health conditions in most camps for internally displaced persons in the Gikongoro area have improved dramatically since September. Security conditions, however, have deteriorated. Interahamwe are present and increasingly active.

Mortality rates in most camps have declined to two or three deaths per day per 10,000 residents, one-third the death rate experienced in the same camps in August and September. Most camps receive NGO medical services and food relief. MSF reported 20 percent global malnutrition rates in some camps examined by USCR.

Some relief organizations were privately considering **withdrawing** from the most problematic camps south of Gikongoro, near the Burundi border, because of deteriorating security or, in some cases, because of a sense that the camps are unnecessary. (See item 8-B for information about Interahamwe in the camps inside Rwanda.)

21-D • NGOs should work closely with the new government to gradually phase out many of the camps in southwest Rwanda in a coordinated manner.

Officials of the new government say that they are eager to close the camps for internally displaced persons in an **orderly** manner. Several NGOs indicated to USCR that they would concur with such a plan, linked with a gradual reduction in food rations to the camps and larger food distributions to potential home settlement areas. Improved communication and coordination between relief organizations and government officials are needed to begin this sensitive strategy.

E • Goma and Bukavu: Findings and Observations

22-E • The humanitarian emergency is stabilized. Relief organizations have done their humanitarian jobs well.

The refugee camps, particularly in Goma, remain crowded, miserable places. Massive deaths due to cholera and dysentery no longer occur, however. UNHCR and NGOs have generally managed to coordinate their relief operations. Camp hospitals and clinics are prevalent, NGO sanitation teams patrol the Goma camps, and solid waste disposal is relatively under control. Water systems are in place and are expanding. Water is trucked to Goma's Kibumba camp at a cost of \$1 million per month.

Mortality rates appeared to be impressively low, although inadequate census data make accurate mortality measurements impossible. Reports of official mortality rates of less than one death per day per 10,000 persons in Bukavu are "probably too good to be true," UNHCR acknowledges. Although dysentery deaths have declined, dysentery remains the most serious health threat in Goma. Malaria and pneumonia are growing health problems in the current rainy season. Meningitis is also a concern.

Malnutrition among refugees in both Bukavu and Goma is reportedly less than 10 percent, although malnutrition may be increasing in the Goma camps, according to some reports. Relief workers continue to express concern that health conditions are worse among female-headed families and other vulnerable groups, due to the deposed regime's continued control over most food distribution. Any food shortages that occur in the Zaire camps appear to be caused by improper or dishonest food distribution by camp leaders, rather than due to a real shortage of food.

UNHCR reports that it expended **\$115 million** in the Goma camps alone during July through October. The International Rescue Committee's (IRC) relief operation in Goma's Kibumba camp is the agency's largest in the world.

23-E • The deposed regime continues to control the largest refugee camps in a brazen, highly capable manner. The deposed regime and its Interahamwe enforcers block refugees physically and psychologically from repatriating.

The deposed regime's physical and psychological control of the camps was evident during USCR's site visit. During USCR's time in Goma, at least four refugees--perhaps more--were clubbed to death one mid-afternoon near an NGO compound for allegedly trying to obtain accurate information about conditions in Rwanda and the potential to repatriate. Relief workers told USCR it was the most flagrant incident of deadly violence they had witnessed. The incident indicated the brazen control and intimidation imposed by camp leaders on a daily basis. Relief workers told USCR that murders occur several times per week in the Goma camps and that many incidents go unreported. UNHCR protection officers are usually unable to intervene.

In addition to physical intimidation, the regime conducts "psychological warfare" in the refugee camps with an effective, systematic misinformation and propaganda campaign that exaggerates the dangers facing Hutu inside Rwanda, accentuates ethnic hatred, and has convinced many refugees that the **war must continue**. Refugees interviewed by USCR insisted that "the war is not finished." The refugees have been told repeatedly by their leaders that virtually no Hutu are able to live in Rwanda and that Rwandan Hutu have been the **victims** of a genocidal campaign by the RPA in which 2 million Hutu have allegedly been slaughtered, according to the deposed regime.

USCR visited Mugungu refugee camp near Goma, which contains thousands of former Rwandan soldiers in uniform. The camp stretches 20 kilometers (12 miles) along the road. The greater security threat in the camps, however, are the Interahamwe, who are more integrated into the camp population than are the soldiers.

24-E • Camps in Goma remain dangerous for international relief workers.

Based on our site visit, USCR believes that it is probably only a matter of time before one or more international relief workers are assassinated in the Goma camps. Previous NGO attempts to reform the food distribution system and undermine the control of the deposed regime have been met with death threats and intimidation.

"Relief workers are powerless to break the regime's control over the camps," several NGOs said in a joint statement on November 3, during USCR's site visit to Goma. UNHCR reported in October that "the lives of relief workers have been threatened repeatedly." A relief worker reported to USCR that Interahamwe threatened to kill his local workers unless he hired Interahamwe members. Relief workers widely believe that the former Rwandan military breach NGO security by monitoring NGO radio traffic.

25-E • Relief organizations should engage in robust debate about the ethics of operating in the refugee camps.

Relief organizations in Goma were in the process of debating whether they should threaten to withdraw from Goma for ethical and security reasons during USCR's site visit to Goma in early November. Fifteen NGOs issued a joint announcement on November 3 threatening to withdraw their support from the Goma camps. The NGOs said that the refugees are "hostages" in the camps. Given the pervasive military and Interahamwe presence in the camps, some relief workers had come to believe that their own efforts were, at worst, providing a catering service to military bases. They were concerned that humanitarian relief is inadvertently **strengthening** a genocidal regime bent on continued warfare.

USCR witnessed several NGO discussions in Goma on this issue and was impressed with the rigor of debate among relief workers and the care with which they crafted their public statement. Numerous NGOs operating in Goma **disagreed** with the notion of withdrawal and refused to sign the joint statement. They argued that a large-scale NGO withdrawal of assistance would seriously harm hundreds of thousands of innocent refugees.

USCR believes the decision to stay or withdraw from the camps is a matter that each NGO should decide separately. What is important is that each NGO operating in the camps should engage in **rigorous debate** at the field level and at the headquarters level. In Goma, humanitarian relief has political and human rights repercussions that responsible NGOs should not ignore. Given the realities of the refugee camps in Goma, NGOs cannot easily claim that their relief programs there are nonpolitical.

26-E • Zaire military and police are a large part of the security problem. They cannot and should not be trusted to provide reliable security for refugees and relief workers.

Zaire's security forces are historically corrupt, undisciplined, and poorly trained. Zairean police and military in Goma and Bukavu routinely extort money from relief agencies, physically harass relief workers, and generally pose a security problem rather than a security solution.

Relief workers in **Bukavu** confided to USCR that Zairean police and soldiers pose an even more serious threat to NGOs' security than does the Interahamwe. UNHCR's chief protection officer in Bukavu, traveling in a clearly marked UNHCR vehicle, was robbed by Zairean police during USCR's site visit. Police in **Goma** routinely confiscate NGO vehicles. Relief groups in Goma believe that Zairean police and military monitor NGO radio traffic for unauthorized

purposes.

Any policies by the U.S. or UN that primarily rely on sustained, constructive help from Zaire's security forces are likely to fail and may make the situation worse. Crackdowns in early December by Zairean soldiers against some refugee leaders produced mixed results.

27-E What to do about Goma: four scenarios are possible.

Option 1--The Status Quo

The international community might continue its current policy of massive aid to the refugee camps and to the former regime, in hopes that refugees will trickle back home at current rates of 500-1,000 per day and that the former regime will gradually lose control of the refugees. Under this scenario, perhaps most refugees might return by the end of **1996**, with only hardcore extremists, murderers, and their families remaining in Zaire. The scenario would presumably give Rwandan society and the country's new government extended **breathing space** to gain strength and capacity to absorb returnees.

Option 1 would require an **expensive**, extended relief effort. UNHCR alone spent \$115 million in Goma in a three-month period. There is uncertainty whether donor nations will continue to pledge adequate funding. In addition, this scenario ignores the deposed regime's savvy tenacity in preventing large refugee repatriation. The regime's leaders would likely revert to more aggressive measures to block refugees' movements if the regime senses its support base is eroding. Policy makers should not underestimate the regime's power to hold refugees physically and psychologically.

The longer that refugees remain outside Rwanda and under the sway of the old regime's propaganda, the stronger their sense of **victimization** will become, and the more complicated the **land ownership** issue will become inside Rwanda. The status quo may be unsustainable and may fail to avoid a humanitarian emergency if numerous NGOs fulfill their threat to leave or donors withdraw support from the camps.

Option 2--Massive Armed UN Intervention

UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali has proposed sending up to 12,000 heavily armed UN troops into Goma camps with an aggressive mandate to **disarm** the estimated 20,000 former Rwandan soldiers and neutralize the Interahamwe. This action would address far more than the refugee problem: it would remove a military and political force that is deadly, radical, and is threatening to destabilize Rwanda and the entire region for years or decades to come. It is an ambitious, far-reaching option that would seek to eliminate the most blatantly genocidal regime the world has seen in 50 years.

Option 2 is probably **politically unrealistic**. The U.S. and other major donors appear to have no appetite for financing such a UN mission at this time, and other countries appear unlikely to volunteer troops for a clearly dangerous assignment. Any disarmament effort would probably require a **mini-war** for several weeks or months against a desperate regime that has already proven its willingness to employ brutally extreme tactics to survive. The operation would probably be bloody for all concerned, including the UN, the deposed regime, the refugees, and

NGOs. The operation would probably interrupt relief activities for a minimum of several weeks. Some relief workers question whether Option 2 would manage to break the control of the Interahamwe, who do not wear military uniforms and would not be easily identifiable by an outside military force.

Option 3--UN Police and Escorts

The UN might deploy some 4,000 UN troops in the Goma camps to act as a police force and to escort refugee families out of the camps when they want to repatriate. This force would be smaller and more **passive** than the UN force in Option 2. This force would not attempt to disarm the former Rwandan military. The purpose would be to make repatriation physically possible on a day-by-day basis when families decide they are ready to return to Rwanda.

Option 3 is criticized as **politically unrealistic**, for the same financial and safety reasons as Option 2. Doubt exists whether a UN force, if assembled, would possess adequate training to perform this policing function well. Presumably African troops would compose most or all of the force. It should be expected that the deposed regime's military and Interahamwe militia would **militarily challenge** this force, particularly if it proved to be effective at facilitating repatriation.

Option 4--Pullout by NGOs

Numerous NGOs might withdraw their services from the camps for reasons of ethics or security during the first half of 1995. Many would probably shift their humanitarian operations **into Rwanda**, thereby acting as a magnet to attract repatriation. Some NGOs would attempt to link their pullout from Goma with the establishment of **safe havens** in western Rwanda to be protected by UNAMIR troops. Such a strategy would also assuage ethical concerns about stopping services to large numbers of dependent refugees in Goma. This strategy would be messy, but it might help force the first step toward national reconciliation by getting virtually all Rwandans back in their country.

Option 4 might cause innocent refugees to suffer or die when aid becomes unavailable in the camps. The strategy, in its early stages, would merely shift the uprooted population from the Zaire side of the border to the Rwanda side, where they would probably **remain uprooted** and in need of assistance due to initial hesitations about returning all the way to their homes. Option 4 would likely create **bottlenecks** of large numbers of internally displaced Hutu in western Rwanda that could lead to new humanitarian emergencies.

In addition, Option 4 might not solve **security problems**, since Interahamwe and former soldiers out of uniform would probably accompany the refugees into new camps in Rwanda. Remember that current displaced camps in Rwanda already have Interahamwe and security problems despite the presence of UNAMIR and RPA soldiers. New camps in Rwanda might merely become **new bases** for the former regime's insurgency, with the added advantage to the old regime that the new bases are inside "enemy territory."

F • Final Notes

28-F • Rwanda is one of the largest refugee situations in the world. But Rwanda is much more than strictly a refugee crisis.

Rwanda will never be the same again. In the aftermath of genocide that systematically murdered up to 1 million persons, as well as a four-year civil war, a pervasive psychology of fear, paranoia, and lingering hatred may require **generations** to resolve in favor of true reconciliation. Nearly two-thirds of the country's population have been killed or uprooted--an upheaval from which no country or society can quickly recover. A genocidal force of some 20,000 soldiers and some 60,000 militia, by some estimates, remain poised on Rwanda's borders and in some pockets of the country itself, intent on continuing the killing and threatening to destabilize the region of east-central Africa for years to come.

Viewed in its full context, Rwanda is far more than one of the largest, most complex refugee crises in the world. The difficult and dangerous task before the world at the moment is getting Rwandan refugees home voluntarily. Even if all refugees repatriated tomorrow, however, it is sobering to realize that many of the demons afflicting Rwandan society remain. The last time the world witnessed such a clear-cut case of genocide was 50 years ago in Nazi Germany, and the surviving victims were given their own nation in which to rebuild their community and their lives. That is not an option under discussion in the aftermath of Rwanda's genocide.

The new government of Rwanda insists that it is committed to a multi-ethnic, multiparty state. But even if it pursues the wisest of policies and the best of intentions, reconciliation will be neither easy, nor smooth, nor quick. Such is the legacy of genocide.

