

Pope Calls For End To Rwanda Killing After Murder Of Bishops.

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By Sam Kiley, Africa Correspondent, and James Bone in New York.

The Pope yesterday added his voice to the slowly growing chorus of outrage over the genocide in Rwanda which this week claimed the lives of a total of 22 clergymen, including the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kigali, in two separate massacres.

The rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front admitted on its own radio station yesterday that four soldiers, guarding 13 bishops and other clergymen suspected of complicity in the murder of hundreds of people in the Kabgayi seminary, had killed the churchmen. One of the soldiers had been shot dead by other rebels, and three others, the front said, were being "hunted down". The United Nations said yesterday that earlier this week nine clergymen and at least 63 other people were killed in Kigali by government militias while soldiers looked on.

The UN Security Council has given approval for about 5,000 UN troops to start moving into Rwanda to guard aid convoys and protect civilians in special "humanitarian zones". The council voted to approve the deployment on Wednesday night, after the United States lifted earlier objections to send-

ing UN peacekeepers into a battlefield without a ceasefire being agreed.

Washington originally wanted the reinforcements to operate only in border areas and to move towards Kigali when the fighting subsided. But the new resolution allows the extra peacekeepers to go to Kigali, if possible, and fan out through the country to places where civilians are most at risk.

To prevent UN troops getting embroiled in the civil war, as in Somalia, the United States insisted that the security council should bar the peacekeepers from using force to stop the fighting between the Hutu-led rump government and the predominantly Tutsi rebel movement.

Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal and Zimbabwe have each offered an infantry battalion of 800 men, and Nigeria, Congo and Mali have pledged enough troops to make up a fifth battalion. United Nations officials say the troops might not arrive in Rwanda for weeks because of a lack of equipment.

The Pope said in a statement that the Central African country was being torn apart by the conflict in which half a million people had been killed since April. He said: "(I) beseech God ... to allow reconciliation in this martyred nation and to receive its victims with

kindness.”

“I adjure all Rwandans, as well as the leaders of nations which can come to their aid, to do everything without delay to open the way to agreement and reconstruction in this country which has been so gravely ruined. I unite with you in deploring cruel deaths,” he said.

The Pope’s words will strike a hollow note with many leaders of his church in Rwanda, which is 65% Catholic, because the Vatican has been almost silent during the killings that began in April. In addition, Western priests have reported that they believe some of their Rwandan colleagues were helping to identify opposition supporters and members of the Tutsi tribe before the genocide. A Catholic relief agency said yesterday that it believed that at least one of the bishops killed by the renegade rebels in Kibagayi had had a part in the killing of Tutsi refugees who had sought sanctu-

ary in the town’s seminary.

The readiness of the Rwandan Patriotic Front to admit that its men lost control of themselves after they suspected the bishops of complicity in the killing of their families is a clear attempt to show itself to be open after a series of unsubstantiated reports that the front had also been involved in massacres.

These reports, from Hutu government officials who took part in the early weeks of the genocide, have been repeated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, but there has been no evidence so far to support the allegations.

The murder of Archbishop Vincent Nsengiyumva of Kigali, chairman of the bishops’ conference, Bishop Thaddee Nsengiyumva and Bishop Joseph Ruzindana of Byumba, is a severe blow to the clean image of the Rwandan rebels.