

# HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH/AFRICA

Formerly Africa Watch

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Human Rights Watch welcomes the Security Council decision to send more troops to Rwanda with an expanded mandate to protect civilians. After six weeks of slaughter, the international community has finally recognized its responsibility to act to defend unarmed civilians who risk massacre by the murderous political party militia.

Human Rights Watch deplores, however, the thousands of innocent lives already lost to delay and fears that thousands more will die before the cumbersome review procedure, imposed by the United States, permits the actual deployment of enough troops to provide havens from the killings. Driven by the need to make the Rwandan mission conform to new directives for peacekeeping forces, the U.S. has raised substantial obstacles to the actual execution of this humanitarian undertaking, even while offering nominal backing.

Human Rights Watch calls upon the United States to immediately cease obstructing efforts to come to the aid of thousands of persons threatened by genocidal slaughter. If in fact the United States opposes the immediate deployment of these troops only because it believes further planning to be necessary, then it should immediately make the necessary resources available to the Secretary General to have this planning completed. Every day of delay costs untold numbers of lives and the United States must not contribute to the appalling death toll by blocking effective action.

The need for urgent action was underscored by an appeal received last night by Human Rights Watch. Sent by clergy of the archbishopric of Bukavu, Zaire, just across the river from Rwanda, the appeal is based on information provided by those fortunate enough to have escaped the massacre in the southwestern province of Cyangugu.

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Human Rights Watch is a not-for-profit corporation monitoring and promoting human rights in Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, and among the signatories of the Helsinki accords.

Several weeks ago, these clergy alerted the world to the intolerable conditions under which some 5,000 persons were being held hostage by the militia at a sports stadium in the provincial capital of Cyangugu. On May 4, they reported that more than 300 of these persons had been massacred on April 29. As of May 17, they report that the militia and authorities of the so-called Rwandan government are now emptying the stadium and transferring the hostages to a more remote location, a former refugee camp at Nyarushishi, some thirteen kilometers from Cyangugu. The hostages are being transferred by bus, but on the way certain persons are being removed from the bus and executed at the side of the road. The bus making the trip on May 11 was stopped and all men between the ages of 40 and 80 were taken off and killed. No monitoring of those who are moved to Nyarushishi will be possible and the clergy fear that they will be massacred without a word being said or a hand raised on their behalf.

The French government, a major backer of the extremists in Rwanda, recently demonstrated its considerable influence by persuading them to refrain from attacking and killing hostages who have taken refuge at the Hotel des Milles Collines in Kigali. Human Rights Watch now calls upon French President Francois Mitterrand and his chief advisor for Africa, Bruno Delaye, to do everything in their power to protect these thousands of endangered hostages in Nyarushishi.

Human Rights Watch urges those members of the Security Council who have insisted that the international community act responsibly in ending the genocide in Rwanda to redouble their efforts to obtain prompt and effective action through the United Nations.

At the same time, the United States must redouble its efforts to secure a clear and unanimous international declaration that any regime created by those guilty of genocide will never receive any form of international assistance.