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PRESS STATEMENT BY THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
MR. JOSE AYALA LASSO
(4.5.1994)

1. The violence unleashed in Rwanda since 6 April 1994 has shocked the world: many thousands of innocent civilians have suffered violations of their most basic human rights. Large numbers of children, women and elderly persons were among those killed, wounded, deprived of their belongings or forced to leave their homes. They have become victims of a crisis that has degenerated into a human rights disaster, described by many of those who witness it as genocide.
2. The High Commissioner has been following the situation in Rwanda with increasing concern and requested information on the situation and suggestions for action from a wide range of UN Agencies, Programmes, Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights, Chairmen of human rights Treaty-based bodies, the OAU, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the ICRC and non-governmental organizations.
3. The High Commissioner after consultations with the Secretary-General has decided to undertake personally a mission to Rwanda in the next few days. He will also visit Burundi in order to continue to offer UN support and assistance in the field of human rights.
4. Given the extreme gravity of the situation, the High Commissioner has decided to call on the members of the Commission on Human Rights to consider the advisability of convening the Commission on Human Rights in emergency session to deal with the human rights situation in Rwanda.
5. In order to enable the High Commissioner to be informed continuously of the evolution of the situation and to enable him to take action which would help consolidate progress towards ending violations of human rights and restoring peace, the High Commissioner is exploring the possibility of establishing a human rights presence in the area through the sending of human rights monitors to collect information and suggest action whenever necessary.
6. The High Commissioner expresses his concern about the human rights situation of refugees and urges the international community to provide generous assistance to those States in the region which host large numbers of refugees from Rwanda so as to ease their burden.

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