

Red Cross chief urges creation of world "human rights" police

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GENEVA, Dec 19 (AFP) - The president of the International Committee of the Red Cross urged Monday the creation of an international "human rights" police force to protect civilians in areas devastated by war and anarchy.

Cornelio Sommaruga was quoted by the Swiss ATS agency as saying that the force should be placed permanently at the disposal of the United Nations to enable the world body to undertake "emergency policing operations" when required.

The force would intervene in the event of "general chaos in a country devoid of all political authority or massive human rights violations".

The proposal comes amid continuing doubts over the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations in the world's conflict zones.

A possible withdrawal of UN forces from Bosnia is on the cards after Bosnian Serb forces stepped up

their war of attrition against the peacekeepers, while UN military operations in Somalia and Rwanda have failed to secure an end to bitter ethnic and clan bloodshed.

Sommaruga cited the UN forces' intervention in Rwanda before and during the central African country's savage civil war from last April to July, saying that, instead of ending the massacres, "we saw the opposite reaction, a reduction in numbers of 'blue helmets' on the ground."

The Red Cross president added that he feared a resumption of fighting in Rwanda, where more than 500,000 people, mainly minority Tutsis, died during the war, and urged a massive injection of international aid to resurrect the country's impoverished Tutsi-led government.

He added that he also favoured the deployment of an international force in Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire to combat mob violence there

and prevent the rearming of Hutu militias blamed for the bulk of the civil war bloodshed.

The police force would, he stressed, need to be granted means to di-

sarm warring parties.

"That was not done (by UN forces) in Somalia, and today nothing has been resolved (there)," he said.

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