

Rwandese Peace Meeting

Consultations between the Rwandese Interim Government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) continued throughout the night until late this afternoon in the attempt to get the two parties to sign the document committing themselves (though separately) to a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities in Rwanda. Both parties had agreed in principle to sign the said document. We thus proceeded to prepare the drafts along the principles agreed upon in separate consultations with both parties.

However, at the last minute, the RPF has a change of mind after learning that the Rwandese Interim delegation was to sign a similar document as theirs. For them, entering into identical commitments with the Rwandese Interim Government would have constituted implicit recognition of a government they consider as illegitimate. Efforts by Prime Minister John S. Malecela to reason with the RPF delegation on this question were to no avail as the feelings were such that they were being forced to recognise a "murderous" regime. Consequently the RPF left today leaving behind the Rwandese Interim Government delegation.

As for the interim government delegation, they were relatively disposed to reaching agreement on an immediate ceasefire as a demonstration of their commitment to putting an end to the massacres and cessation of hostilities. In this regard they withdrew their earlier conditions for a ceasefire which had included a demand that RPF withdraw to positions held before 6 April 1994 and to temporarily return to their base in Mulindi.

With the above conditions out of the way, consultations thus continued with the interim government delegation on a draft text underlining the four elements: immediate ceasefire, cessation of hostilities, role of international force and implementation of the Arusha Peace Accord.

After rounds of consultations, the government delegation finally signed a declaration of their commitment to a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities between the warring parties in the Rwandan conflict. The document was also countersigned by Prime Minister Malecela and the representative of the OAU Secretary General. They avoided any mention of RPF in their document.

Although what has emerged from the Arusha initiative falls short of what was expected, its significance should not be underestimated considering the objective of the meeting. At the same time, while direct negotiations between the two parties were not possible, the informal consultations held here revealed a lot about the feelings of the two parties, particularly regarding the role of the Facilitator.

Arusha,
5 May 1994

