

US envoy for war crimes returns from trip to Rwanda, Bosnia, Burundi

AFP, September 22, 1997

WASHINGTON, Sept 22 (AFP) - The State Department expressed confidence in the work of the international war crimes tribunal for Rwanda Monday after the new envoy for war crimes met with officials in the region.

Ambassador at large for war crimes David Scheffer returned from a trip to central Africa and Bosnia where he introduced himself to officials as the administration's first point man for war crimes.

The position was created by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to shine a spotlight on war crimes prosecutions as an area of high priority in American foreign policy.

Scheffer "reviewed the work of the Rwanda tribunal in Arusha and in Kigali and he concluded that it is back on track," State Department spokesman James Foley said.

A UN report last year severely criticised the tribunal, raising questions

about financial mismanagement and the slow pace of the judicial process.

"There is room for further improvements," Foley said of the tribunal but he noted that senior figures believed to have played key roles in the 1994 genocide were now awaiting trial.

Scheffer also traveled to Burundi to discuss President Pierre Buyoya's proposal for a tribunal to look into the 1993 massacre of Tutsis.

In Kinshasa, he appealed to authorities to allow work by the UN team investigating atrocities in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Scheffer also held talks in Bosnia and Croatia before ending his two-week tour in The Hague where he met with chief prosecutor Louise Arbour of the international war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

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