

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH/AFRICA

Formerly Africa Watch

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April 15, 1994

Colonel Gatsinzi
 Commander in Chief
 Rwandan Armed Forces
 Etat Majeur
 Kigali, Rwanda

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Your Excellency,

Human Rights Watch/Africa condemns in the strongest possible terms the slaughter of thousands of defenseless Rwandans by the Presidential Guard, the militia attached to the MRND and CDR political parties, and soldiers of the Rwandan armed forces. It deplores calls for continued killing, such as that issued by the Rwandan Ministry of Defense over national radio on April 12 and those broadcast daily by the Radio Des Mille Collines, operated by the CDR political party.

In the face of these massacres, it is absolutely crucial for military commanders of all forces to take full responsibility for the conduct of their troops and to enforce strict discipline among them. Human Rights Watch /Africa calls upon you as the President of the Rwandese Patriotic Front to order your troops to observe the customary laws of war, particularly those principles embodied in Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions, and to impose prompt, effective sanctions on all who fail to obey these orders. Among other provisions, Article 3 prohibits violence to the life and person of non-combatants and summary executions of such persons.

Human Rights Watch/Africa has issued a similar call to Colonel Alexis Kanyarengwe.

Human Rights Watch/Africa believes that the massacres in Kigali and elsewhere constitute crimes against humanity. Once a legitimate government is established in Rwanda, one of its first duties must be to try those accused of these killings in an orderly fashion, with all guarantees of due process, in courts of law. In the meantime, those presumed guilty must not be punished by arbitrary reprisals.

Human Rights Watch/Africa will continue to monitor the situation in Rwanda carefully with a view to investigating and publicizing any and all violations of human rights in this country that has already suffered so much.

Sincerely,


 Dr. Abdullahi An-Na'im
 Executive Director

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