

SecDef Weekly Update - Rwanda

Conflict Watch

(C) There was a lull in fighting in Kigali on Monday after intense fighting Sunday, 15 May. In the last few days, UN flights have been able to land in Kigali, but this has certainly not been the case during most of the past month due to intense factional fighting.

(C) The UNAMIR commander continues to meet in Kigali with leaders of both parties in an attempt to negotiate a cease-fire. Massacres of civilians continue in government-held areas. In neighboring Burundi, ethnic tensions remain at a slow boil, with some unrest being noted in the capital of Bujumbura.

(C) The interagency sent a team up to the UN on 16 May to negotiate the language of next Security Council resolution on Rwanda. Unfortunately, these suggestions were generally ignored and a new resolution was adopted which expands the current mandate. This includes a call for a cease-fire and arms embargo and an increase in the size of the UN contingent to 5,500 troops (presumably coming from African states). This larger force will provide security and support for the distribution of relief supplies as well as contributing to the security and protection of displaced persons and refugees--this involves the establishment of the difficult-to-police "safe havens." Along with this, the UN has inquired into the possibility of leasing 50 M113 armored personnel carriers from us. Given the terrain and mission of this equipment, we are now in the process of informally recommending that the UN consider acquiring wheeled vehicles.

(C) The expanded UN force will require significant logistics support from a Western nation. So far, no one has stepped forward to assume this challenge. The USG so far does not plan to take the lead, but expects to be asked.

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