

Advisor to the Presidency

N O T E

**to the attention of
the President of the Republic
(c/o the Secretary General)**

SUBJECT: Attack against the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi

1) Yesterday evening, the airplane of the Rwandan president, Juvénal Habyarimana, with the President of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira, also on board, crashed in Kigali near the airport. The plane was returning from Dar es Salaam, where a meeting had taken place of regional heads of state, dedicated specifically to Rwanda and Burundi, and, in its final approach, came under fire. According to the Belgians, it was either rocket or missile fire.

The two presidents are dead, as well as all other passengers (a dozen) including the Rwandan Chief of Staff and two Burundian ministers. The three crew members—all French—were also killed.

The attack is attributed to the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

2) In Kigali, the presidential guard threw itself into the hunt for the opposition. We have received information, not yet confirmed, of arrests of ministers and figures, Hutu or Tutsi, who are political adversaries of President Habyarimana. A clash between the Rwandan army and the RPF in the capital seems inevitable. For the time being, the interior of the country is calm.

Transitional institutions have not yet been able to be put in place, and the president's death leaves the country without any recognized authority (the government and parliament had not been installed). **We fear a military coup d'etat.**

In Bujumbura the president of the Assembly has taken charge of the country, in accordance with the constitution. The situation in Burundi is calm and authorities are developing, in their public declarations, the view that what happened to the Burundian president was an accident. It seems that it was not planned for him to be on board President Habyarimana's plane on the return from Dar-es-Salaam.

3) An interministerial meeting took place this morning in the Quai d'Orsay. The following points were addressed:

- The French position: Matignon and the Quai d'Orsay would like France, in this new Rwandan crisis that risks being extremely deadly, to not be on the front line, and to limit our actions to UN interventions, so that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) can perform its security mission in Kigali (which, until now, it has not really done).

- Security of the French community: For the time being, our nationals are not threatened and no evacuation is envisaged. If that were to be the case, we would act in collaboration with Belgium and UNAMIR (1500 men on the ground, including 450 Belgians).

The Defense Ministry has, however, already sent out two companies and one health unit (Bangui, Libreville and Ndjaména).

- Family of President Habyarimana. They are, for the time being, under the protection of the presidential guard. If they wish, they will be welcomed at our ambassador's residence, subject to your instructions.

Bruno DELAYE