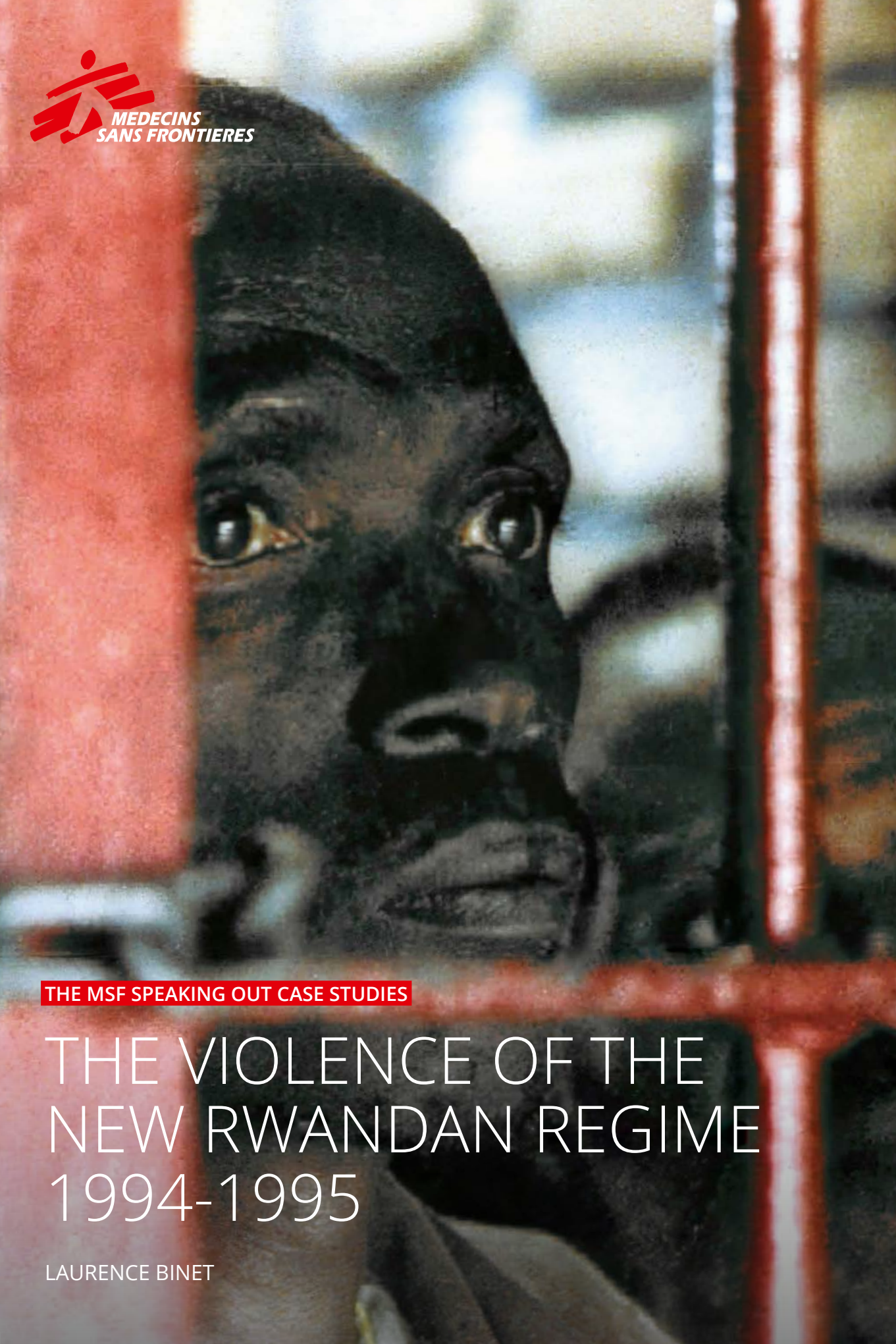


MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES

THE MSF SPEAKING OUT CASE STUDIES

THE VIOLENCE OF THE NEW RWANDAN REGIME 1994-1995

LAURENCE BINET

THE MSF SPEAKING OUT CASE STUDIES

THE VIOLENCE OF THE NEW RWANDAN REGIME 1994-1995

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FOREWORD

This publication is part of the 'Médecins Sans Frontières Speaking Out' case studies series prepared in response to the MSF International Council's wish to provide the movement with literature on MSF *témoignage* (advocacy).

The idea was to create a reference document that would be straightforward and accessible to all and help staff to understand and adopt the organisation's culture of speaking out.

It was not to be an ideological manual or a set of guidelines. *Témoignage* cannot be reduced to a mechanical application of rules and procedures, as it involves an understanding of the dilemmas inherent in every instance of humanitarian action.

The International Council assigned the project to a director of studies, who in turn works with an editorial committee composed of MSF representatives chosen by the International Board for their experience and expertise. They serve in their capacity as individuals and do not represent their national sections.

Faced with the difficulty of defining the term '*témoignage*', the editorial committee decided to focus the series on case studies in which speaking out posed a dilemma for MSF and thus meant taking a risk.

The main source of information for these studies is MSF's written and oral memory. This is done by researching documents dating from the period in question and by interviewing the protagonists of the events selected.

The individuals interviewed speak in the language they choose. They offer both their account of events and their assessment of MSF's response. The interviews are recorded and transcribed.

Document searches are conducted in the operational sections' archives and, as far as possible, press archives.

The research is constrained by practical and financial issues, including locating interviewees, securing their agreement, and determining the existence, quality and quantity of archived materials.

The main text details events in chronological order. It includes excerpts from documents and interviews, linked by brief introductions and transitional passages. We rely on document extracts to establish the facts as described and perceived by MSF at the time. When documentation is missing, interviews sometimes fill the gaps. These accounts also provide a human perspective on the events and insight into the key players' analyses.

This methodology aims at establishing the facts and setting out a chronological presentation of the positions adopted at the time. It enables the reconstruction of debates and dilemmas without pre-judging the quality of the decisions made.

Preceding the main texts collected, the reader will find a list of abbreviations, a map, and an introduction that lays out the context of MSF's public statements and the key dilemmas they sought to address.

In addition, a detailed chronology reconstructs MSF's actions and public statements in regional and international news reports of the period.

Each case study is available in English and in French.

These case studies were essentially designed as an educational tool. Some are now being used as the basis for podcasts and training modules. To reinforce this educational objective, access to all this material is available on the msf.org/speakingout website.

We hope you find them useful,

The SOCS Editorial Committee,
2025

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[...]
MSF Belgium, Field Coordinator in Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
AFP	Agence France Presse
AGCD	Administration Générale de la Coopération et du Développement (France)
AI	Amnesty International
CHK	Centre Hospitalier de Kigali (Kigali Hospital Center)
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)
EEC	European Economic Community
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (formerly European Commission Humanitarian Office)
EU	European Union
FAR	Forces armées rwandaises (Rwandan Armed Forces)
FIDH	Fédération Internationale pour les Droits Humains (International Federation for Human Rights)
HACU	Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit
HRFOR	Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda
HRWA	Human Rights Watch Africa
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFHRL	International Federation of Human Rights Leagues
IOM	International Office for Migrations
MDM	Médecins du Monde
MILOBS	Military Observers (United Nations)
MINIREHAB	Ministry of Rehabilitation (Rwanda)
MINIREISO	Ministry of Social Rehabilitation (Rwanda)
MINISANTE	Ministry of Health (Rwanda)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
RCN	Rwanda Citizen Network
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SCF	Save the Children Fund
Sitrep	Situation report, sent from the field or from the programme manager

UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNREO	United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office
UNSRSG	United Nations Special Representative to the Secretary-General
WFP	World Food Programme
ZHS/SHZ	*Zone Humanitaire Sûre* (Safe Humanitarian Zone)



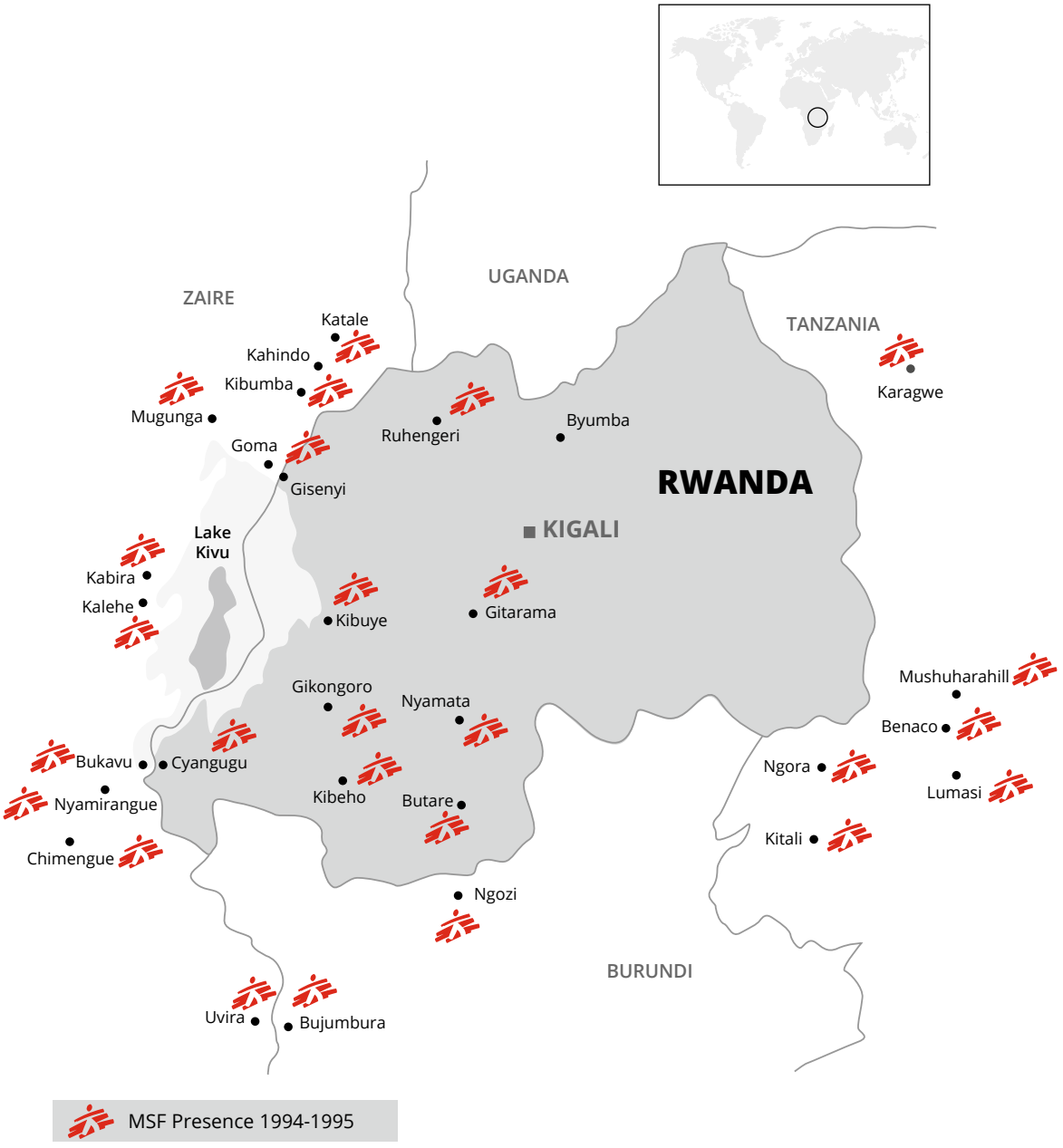
Extract from documents.



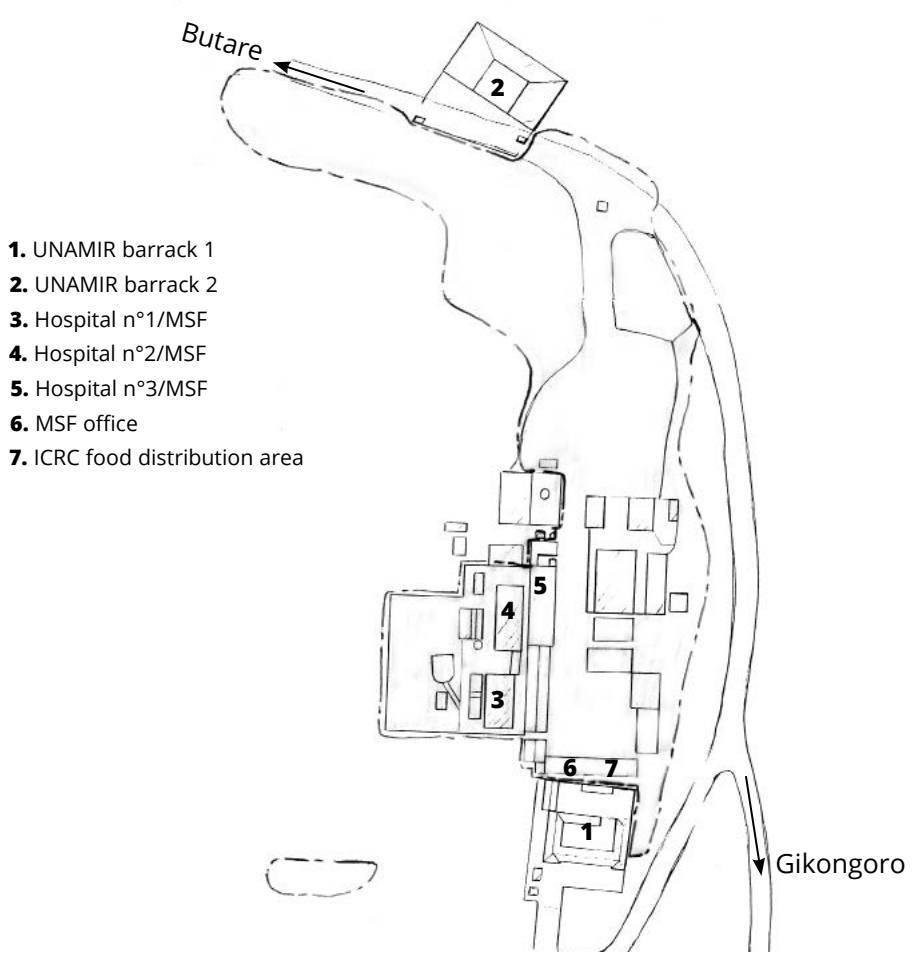
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Click to access the reference material list. Then click on the referring number to access the video.


UGANDA
ZAIRE
TANZANIA
Katale
Kahindo
Kibumba
Mugunga
Goma
Gisenyi
Ruhengeri
Byumba
Karagwe
RWANDA
KIGALI
Lake Kivu
Kabira
Kalehe
Kibuye
Gitarama
Gikongoro
Nyamata
Bukavu
Cyangugu
Nyamirangue
Chimengue
Kibeho
Butare
Ngozi
Mushuharahill
Benaco
Ngora
Lumasi
Kitali
BURUNDI
Uvira
Bujumbura
MSF Presence 1994-1995

Centre of Kibeho camp



1. UNAMIR barrack 1
2. UNAMIR barrack 2
3. Hospital n°1/MSF
4. Hospital n°2/MSF
5. Hospital n°3/MSF
6. MSF office
7. ICRC food distribution area

SUMMARY

On 6 April 1994, the plane carrying the Rwandan President was shot down as it approached Kigali. The slaughter of the Tutsi minority commenced in the days that followed. Simultaneously, leaders of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), an opposition movement organised by Tutsi exiles in Uganda, launched a military offensive in Rwanda and seized power in Kigali in early July.

From April to July 1994, between 800,000 and one million Rwandan Tutsi were systematically exterminated by militiamen under Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR in French) control. The genocide was the outcome of long-standing strategies implemented by politico-military extremists who roused ethnic resentments against the Tutsi minority. The extremists also killed many Rwandan Hutu who opposed the massacres.

Fleeing the advancing RPF, the authors of the genocide compelled hundreds of thousands of Rwandans Hutus to accompany them towards Rwanda's borders by threats and the influence of their propaganda. The first wave of refugees arrived in Tanzania in May 1994. In June, a second wave fled to the 'safe humanitarian zone', created by the French army in southwest Rwanda under Operation Turquoise (23 June-21 August), and then sought refuge in Zaire. The leaders imposed totalitarian control over the refugee camps and used them as a rear base from which to pursue their plan to return to Rwanda and complete the genocide.

From the moment the RPF took control, Médecins Sans Frontières' teams witnessed abuses and brutalities committed by the administration and armed forces, particularly against displaced populations and the hundreds of thousands of detainees crammed into prisons. Prisoners were dying at an alarming rate while awaiting trials that were constantly delayed by the paralysis of the judiciary system. The violence increased in the months that followed, and rumours about the brutal behaviour of the new regime were corroborated by reports produced by human rights organisations.

In April 1995, an MSF team witnessed the Rwandan army's deliberate massacre of over 4,000 displaced people in the Kibeho camp in southwest Rwanda. MSF spoke out publicly to denounce the killing, and produced a report based on the eyewitness accounts of its staff. The report documented the extent of the massacre, and differed greatly from the dismissive account prepared by an International Commission of Inquiry into what had occurred.

Médecins Sans Frontières again spoke out publicly in July 1995, to criticise the inhuman conditions in which detainees in Gitarama prison were being held, and to call for improvements. This stance was backed by medical data collected by MSF staff.

In December 1995, the French section of Médecins Sans Frontières was expelled from Rwanda. The whole MSF movement regarded this move as a settling of scores by the Rwandan government, given that it was staff of the French section who had directly witnessed events at Kibeho and had initiated the public denunciations.

DILEMMAS & QUESTIONS

During this period, MSF's operational, advocacy, and speaking-out choices were the subject of controversies, dilemmas, and questions, including:

- Was it acceptable for Médecins Sans Frontières, having denounced the génocidaires' control over the Rwandan refugees in Zaire and Tanzania, to encourage the return of refugees to Rwanda, given the insecurity that potentially awaited them? Did MSF have a responsibility to alert them to what was occurring in Rwanda?
- Could Médecins Sans Frontières – after having issued a call for an international armed intervention to put an end to the genocide – now criticise the regime that had effectively done so, thereby risking accusations of favouring the *génocidaires* and supporting the revisionists?
- Should Médecins Sans Frontières keep silent to continue caring for detainees who might otherwise die in the appalling prison conditions?

To quote this content :
Laurence Binet, 'The Violence of the New Rwandan Regime 1994-1995', April 2014, URL: https://www.msf.org/speakingout/violence-new-rwandan-regime-1994-1995

THE VIOLENCE OF THE NEW RWANDAN REGIME 1994-1995

From early April to mid-July 1994, between 800,000 and one million Rwandan Tutsi were murdered, as were Rwandan Hutu who opposed the massacres. The genocide was planned and organised by Hutu extremists in and close to the governing regime. It was carried out by militias recruited from among ordinary Rwandan citizens and placed under the control of the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR in French).
Since 1987, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a predominantly Tutsi rebel organisation based in Uganda, had been leading a war of territorial conquest. As soon as the genocide started, they invaded Rwanda from the north, and from Kigali, where a 600-strong battalion was stationed under the Arusha peace accords[1]. The RPF rapidly gained territory against the larger and better-equipped FAR, and took control of Kigali on 4 July, effectively putting an end to the genocide.

I. VIOLENCE ON THE DISPLACED POPULATION

In May 1994, two international human rights organisations, Human Rights Watch/ Africa (HRWA) and Amnesty International (AI), published reports on the genocide then underway. The reports also referred to "abuses by the Rwandan Patriotic Front" (HRWA) and "deliberate and arbitrary killings perpetrated by the RPF and its supporters" (AI). Both emphasised, however, "that the killings are not as widespread as those [of the genocide]" (AI) and "that there is no credible evidence that the RPF is engaged in widespread slaughter of civilian populations, although there are reports of less systematic abuses" (HRW).



'Genocide in Rwanda: April-May 1994', **Report**, **Human Rights Watch/Africa**, May 1994 (in English).

Extract:
Abuses by the Rwandan Patriotic Front
After extensive investigation among reliable sources, both Rwandan and foreign, representing clergy, staff of nongovernmental organisations, and journalists, Human Rights Watch/Africa has concluded that there is at present no credible evidence that the

1. The Arusha Peace Accords, signed on 4 August 1993 between the RPF and the Rwandan government, provided for a ceasefire, a transitional government, the merger of the two armies and the establishment of an 'arms-free zone' in Kigali.

RPF has engaged in any widespread slaughter of civilian populations, although there are reports of less systematic abuses…
In other cases, church sources report that refugees at a camp in Uganda relate that the RPF killed civilians at Rwantanga, seven kilometres from the Ugandan border, and at Nyambwesongezi, in Byumba prefecture. A witness from Rwantanga, a woman who arrived badly beaten, recounted that RPF soldiers had beaten her 12-year-old daughter to death with their rifle butts. Another witness reported that his wife and children had been killed by the RPF when the soldiers attacked people whom they had summoned to a meeting.
A newspaper account published in Uganda in late April related that RPF soldiers had tied up a person accused of being a local leader of the Interahamwe militia and had delivered him to an angry crowd who had kicked him to death. A photograph of the apparent victim accompanied the story. Other reliable sources have told Human Rights Watch/ Africa that they have seen RPF soldiers execute civilians who appear to have been militia leaders.



'Rwanda: Massacres Committed in All the Country (April-May 1994)', **Report**, **Amnesty International**, London, 23 May 1994 (in French – in English).

Extract:
The intentional and arbitrary homicides committed by the RPF and its partisans.
Apart from the massacres committed by the soldiers, the militia and other people in the zone theoretically under government control, Amnesty International received claims that intentional and arbitrary homicides were committed on partisans of the government in regions under RPF control. RPF soldiers and some civilians were blamed for these homicides, which were not, however, as numerous as those mentioned above [genocide] […] Information came in mostly last week suggesting that intentional and arbitrary homicides were committed by RPF soldiers from 6 April. Around mid-April 1994, an unconfirmed number of presumed Interahamwe members were captured by the RPF and tied up by the same method used in Uganda, known as *kandoya* or 'three links': the victim's arms are tied behind their back above the elbows. One of the prisoners (?) was killed by being kicked in the head and chest. He reportedly died while begging for his life. One of the RPF leaders is said to have declared in the press in April 1994 that his organisation's soldiers killed Interahamwe militiamen whenever they saw one. Amnesty International is concerned that the declaration, made by one of the leaders of the RPF, seemed to indicate that prisoners and militiamen may have been executed by this organisation in violation of the basic principles of humanitarian law.

In early June 1994, MSF Belgium announced to the press that it was opening programmes in Nyamata, Bugesera (southwest) region and Kigali, and reminded the media that MSF had been present in the northern Rwanda displaced people's camps in Gitare and Byumba for several weeks.



'MSF Initiates Mission in Nyamata in the Bugesera Region', MSF Belgium **Press release**, 3 June 1994 (in French).

Extract:
From today, a three-person team – doctor, nurse and logistician/water and sanitation specialist – will be setting up operations in Nyamata in the Bugesera region. The team will care for 100 hospitalised patients, 50 of whom suffer from war wounds. The hospital was established in an orphanage that also houses 300 children. On Monday, the team will begin to evaluate the needs of the displaced people dispersed throughout the region and will provide them with supplies. According to our team, some 20,000 people need assistance.



'Médecins Sans Frontières Sends Reinforcement Team to Kigali', MSF Belgium **Press release**, 7 June 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Today Médecins Sans Frontières sent an additional six-person medical and surgical team from Nairobi to the Rwandan capital, Kigali. This team will assist civilian populations, establish health stations in four Kigali camps, and oversee water supplies, sanitary equipment and measles vaccination. In addition, a cargo plane carrying eight tonnes of aid supplies and equipment has left Schiphol airport for Kigali.



When the Rwandans came from Uganda to take power, they didn't go straight to Kigali. They made a detour along the Burundian border and back up towards Butare. From there they headed for the capital. I had already made a short exploratory trip to Burundi to see whether you could cross the border. We had already made a few contacts, and we sent in a mission as soon as we learned that the area was under Rwandan control. There were three or four of us, following the victors. We were in an ideal position to see what had happened. We were shocked.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications until November 1994 (in French).

From late May and early June 1994, MSF Belgium teams were subject to violent and arbitrary behaviour by representatives of Rwanda's new regime. In the northern part of the country, one of the first regions to be retaken by the RPF, the Byumba team noticed that local populations had been chased out of their houses and crammed into camps, while the new regime's elites occupied their homes.



'Rwandan Crisis **Sitrep**', MSF Belgium team in Rwanda June 28-July 3 1994 (in French).

Extract:
More and more questions have been raised about the status of civilian populations in the RPF zone [...].

- RPF pressure on the population is increasingly evident. People are afraid. Even our local personnel are subject to considerable pressure.
- Displaced people in the Kigali camps have indicated that the RPF separated the displaced Hutu from the others and then beat them to death.
- There have been reports of many disappearances.
- Populations are required to work without pay in the RPF's various activities. It wants to control all activity in the region.
- The teams talk about a 'communist-style' regime, to quote their mildest comment.

MSF will have to take a position on these issues in the coming days, but it is also clear that MSF is an important witness as we, along with ICRC, are the only organisation in the region.



'Summary of Incidents with RPF', MSF internal **report**, MSF Belgium Coordinator in Rwanda, 9 July 1994 (in English).

Extract:
Kinazi: A displaced woman told Roger Job [a photographer on assignment with MSF] that two captains, Deogene and Zigira, had come to the camp with heavy armed escort. They selected a group of 'undesirable persons' and ordered the rest of the camp population to beat them with stones till they were dead. The woman had seen it all. She, a university graduate, had been sent to the camp "to learn farming".



During my first visit to Byumba, the MSF team was providing care in the displaced people's camps. The residents were all Hutu peasants from the region. I asked myself, 'What's going on here? Why are there displaced camps in a "liberated" zone?' The Coordinator said, 'They asked us to build schools because educating children is important.' 'But there are already schools here in Byumba!' I answered. 'Yes, but they say there should be schools in the camps.'
The state of the camps was not what one would expect from "liberators". Their strategy was to gather all the people in the camps, examine each one and brainwash them. Obviously, they intended to keep the camps operating, since they asked us to build schools there. I met with the Health Officer, who was still in Byumba. He was trained in Lille, France, and his French is perfectly polished. But at that time, it was forbidden to speak French in Rwanda, so we spoke a kind of garbled "kitchen table" English. He had a hard time pronouncing the words. The talk was difficult because we had come to tell him that in the context of military logic, we might be able to understand why the displaced people's camps exist, but in the context of humanitarian logic, it is impossible for us to understand why they are here. So, we were going to cut back our presence to a minimum and in a week, we were going to withdraw. I told him all this in English. He began trying to contradict me. At one point he became irritated and started speaking fluent French! His superiors were putting pressure on him. In the end, they closed the displaced people's camps around the same time we left [August 1994].

Dr Eric Goemaere, MSF Belgium, General Director (in French).



In Byumba, the RPF had evacuated a zone for Tutsi being liberated from Kigali. They were bringing them from the Hotel Mille Collines and they were dropping them off with trucks. It was clearly the new settlement for the RPF elite, and they wanted a concentration of services there. This was a problem for us because there were huge camps of inter-

nally displaced – people that had been evicted from their houses and screened. We didn't know exactly what was going on, but it seemed like a Khmer Rouge tactic: get people out, check them, and eliminate those who were not wanted. The RPF had little interest in facilitating MSF's work in the displaced camps because they were not interested in those people – the displaced were peasants. The Tutsi elite were sent to Byumba, were labelled 'new ministers' and 'new mayors' and were given nice houses. Step by step it became more obvious that MSF was expected to provide their healthcare. At first, people come to the hospital with wounds. Then we were treating wounds. Little by little we got into regular healthcare and then it became clear that there was a big distinction between the elite and ordinary people.
In the displaced camps, they played some dirty tricks on us. After I arrived, they had given the two or three major camps to an African NGO who operated from Uganda. We had trained local staff in situ and the logistic lines were up and running, but without any discussion they gave the camps to Africare. They gave the image of Africa caring. But these people never came to the camps again. They'd never been seen. Either they were not allowed to, or they were not able to run these camps. That was the first move to get us out of the whole area. We were obviously not going to support what was going to happen... Then we found camps in the coffee plantations with undesirable people. People forced into slave labour, being marched up and down.

[...], MSF Belgium Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

The MSF teams witnessed disappearances, summary arrests, and executions.

'**Sitrep** No. 2' (marked 'confidential'), MSF Belgium Coordinator in Rwanda to MSF Belgium Programme Manager, 17 June 1994. *The sitrep was transmitted to MSF missions in Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Kenya, and to MSF France, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, and Luxembourg.* (In English).

Extract:
The former Director of the Byumba hospital, Dr Canissius, has been executed along with his wife and three children, about two weeks ago. They were accused of being Interahamwe. Other people have been intimidated by the RPF.
We will monitor the situation closely but are not really capable of doing something. People are complaining about the control the RPF is putting on them [...] There were several small incidents between MSF Belgium staff and RPF escorts, concerning medical ethics, free movement in camps, physical harassment of a girl in the hospital etc. The working atmosphere remains stressed.

'**Summary** of Incidents with RPF', MSF internal **report**, MSF Belgium Coordinator in Rwanda, 9 July 1994 (in English).

Extract:
Dr Emmanuel, surgeon in the MSF Belgium-supported hospital in Byumba, has received continued warnings and intimidations from the RPF.

He is scared but refuses to talk, because he fears that telling the problem to the white man will endanger him more. He seems to have been part of prior-mentioned opposition group. Information comes from a nurse in the same hospital.
This nurse reports his findings to me concerning all irregularities in the Byumba region. He told me about the questioning of inpatients at gunpoint, the constant infiltration of armed RPF security service personnel in the hospital at night for this kind of activities, and the disappearance of at least two patients.
He also knows that a local nurse that worked with us from the beginning disappeared at the end of May.

In Nyanza hospital, security problems were key. They were stealing patients from the postoperative ward. They would bring people to this hospital whose throat they had just slit and say that it was suicide attempt… A nurse told me that soldiers would enter the hospital as soon as MSF staff had left. They would go to the beds of people that they didn't trust and would say: 'As soon as you are away from this hospital and under the protection of this flag, we will take care of you.' Several of them were killed and a nurse was killed, disappeared, never seen again. We witnessed the same thing in Nyamata in Bugesera. By coincidence, a doctor returned to the hospital to see a woman in labour and saw four soldiers intimidating patients, beating them up.

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

The MSF Belgium team questioned the reliability of the communication system with headquarters, as it broke down regularly.

I sent Brussels satellite telexes by standard C, which strangely broke down. Then my standard M broke down also. The next standard A arrived, worked for one day and broke down and then they sent me another standard M and I think it worked for six weeks. It was very strange because other phones were working. We used the phone of ICRC in the end, calling by that phone. I have the slight impression that it was not by coincidence that the machine itself was working but the connection to the satellite was interrupted all the time. So, either it could not spot the satellite, or the satellite did not accept it, or the land station could not be called. I think all that was manipulated by someone. There were only three medical relief organisations there. Some had problems but we were the most outspoken.

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

Added to this was the issue of armed escorts imposed by the RPF when humanitarian teams travelled.

We had female escorts. They put their bags between the driver and themselves. When we arrived in Kigali, they jumped out to greet somebody and we touched the bag: hand grenades. They all had hand grenades. Once they realised that a gun was not acceptable in our car, they would have hand grenades on their body and in their pockets. Claude Briade and Roger Job had an escort in the car that I refused. It was the special escort I spoke about in my report that was intimidating the staff and beating them. He had brought a hand grenade since he wanted to be ready for the dangerous part of the road. Claude made him throw it out of the window. Otherwise, he would have thrown the guy of the window with it… which is in the end what Claude did. He took the hand grenade and threw it out of the window.

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

MSF Belgium employees were themselves constantly subjected to insidious permanent personal intimidation.

They said I was the number one on their hit list. I was supposedly mis-communicating the Rwandan truth to the rest of the world. So, there was a lot of pressure, personalised intimidation, very subtle things and lots of little clues to make you know you are very vulnerable. They knew that they only needed to give me a hint that they were aware of what I was stressing and then I would know that I was in danger. So, they would say: 'You should realise, Mister, that Byumba is 100,000 m above sea level and if your brakes fail driving down the road, then you could have a terrible accident.' My car was parked outside – anybody could tamper with the car, and nobody would find out. Then they replaced the administrator in the office and the next thing I found was that my files with this kind of report were being read in English, so they knew what I was thinking of the RPF. So, I decided to burn the reports. The next morning, I walked out in the garden and made a pile of paper. And 14, 15 people gathered around: 'Oh he is burning something, he has something to hide.' So, then I was asked questions. Canissius had been executed – he had been critical of the way the RPF was treating relief. He wanted to have more liberty to help organisations set up a medical aid relief programme. But he was too critical, and we said: 'Canissius, you should be careful! You cannot just sit here being a Hutu and say the things you are saying. Be careful.' And then somebody told me he woke up in the morning and heard five shots. And in the end, we pressured the staff, and they said, 'He was an Interahamwe.' I said, 'He was a what? Even if the guy was an Interahamwe, why were three small children executed that had nothing to do with it?' I was very much aware that I had to be careful because we were finding corpses left and right. People that had been just executed in the night before were found lying dead in their house with their legs sticking out to the street.

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

On 17 June 1994, the MSF Belgium Coordinator for the Byumba and Bugesera regions presented these problems to the new regime's Regional Director for Humanitarian Issues.



'**Sitrep** No. 2' (marked 'confidential'), MSF Belgium Coordinator in Rwanda to MSF Belgium Programme Manager, 17 June 1994. *The sitrep was transmitted to MSF missions in Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and Kenya, and to MSF France, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, and Luxembourg.* (In English).

Extract:
Four days after returning from my exploratory mission I finally had the chance to meet Dr [E] [Regional Director for Humanitarian Issues.] We had a discussion for more than two hours which was constructive and open [...] I complained about the incident in Kisaro camp where an escort insulted Albert and Vanna and made it impossible for them to examine a patient. They were told that they had nothing to look for in that camp [...] [E] took notes of the incident and would issue strict orders. He agreed that medical ethics are the same worldwide and that she should have free access to camp, patients, etc.
I also complained about a lieutenant beating up a 16-year-old girl with a steel pipe inside the hospital, causing severe bleeding on her head. Albert witnessed the incident and treated the girl. He wanted to keep her under 24-hour observation, but the lieutenant wanted to arrest her. After arguing for a while, the girl stayed in the hospital. [E] took notes again and said he would take care of the disciplinary correction of the lieutenant. He agreed with my point of view that I could not tolerate this kind of incident in a hospital where we are responsible.

The MSF Belgium Coordinator also complained about the RPF's authoritarian attitude toward the NGOs during coordination meetings in the Mulindi barracks.



'**Summary** of Incidents with RPF', **MSF internal report**, MSF Belgium Coordinator in Rwanda, 9 July 1994 (in English).

Extract:
The meeting in Mulindi, which is called the 'coordination meeting', is usually a lecture. There is no time for questions, let alone answers. All the time we have to listen to RPF propaganda, which is full of lies. The tone is dictating, humiliating and without the slightest thanks for all we've done [...] We did not speak in this meeting, because they were waiting for me to show my opinion (to freak out) [...] ICRC asked for an appointment to get answers to the questions about Rilima problems. Christine [Umutoni, Deputy of the Minister of Rehabilitation] told him that she had no time; that he had to wait five days to see her, because he did not announce it in time, but she would come to the Bugesera (like last week and she didn't come). ICRC said that it was urgent and that the matter should be solved or the continuation of ICRC/MSF Belgium activities would be in danger. No reply from Christine. MDM asked for five minutes to get permission for a food distribution to a group of starving persons. No appointment either for the same reasons. All NGOs where shocked and the meeting closed in turmoil. I asked ICRC's Ferry if his eyes were opened now, and he answered: "Yes." We agreed to issue a letter to RPF in which we ask them to meet us in Rilima on Wednesday, but that 18.00 is the deadline.

If they don't want to talk, we will conclude things for ourselves. Take it or leave it. In this letter I announced the arrival of our general director. Let's see. Mieke was shocked and said that if the situation continues like this, she will face motivation problems. She had never experienced this, not even in Tibet with the Chinese. Mieke agrees with me and will talk to Eric about her feelings.

On several ocasions, the Regional Director for Humanitarian Issues implicitly suggested that it could be dangerous to be too critical of the RPF.



The repression was getting worse. But still there were people who understood the humanitarian cause and [E] was one of them… He was the guy with whom I negotiated in the difficult times about giving up camps, and the killing of Dr Canissius, executed with his wife and children. The guy had a certain understanding with me. With a blink of his eyes, he could tell me things that I understood. I didn't have to ask any more questions because also he gave me warnings about where to set the limits, where to stop because it was getting dangerous… He stayed in the limits of what was acceptable for the RPF. And of course, he knew things that he didn't share with me… When I asked him about Dr Canissius, he said, 'You should be careful because you are not a human rights organisation. You did not come here for human rights.' I said, 'No but it's stupid to treat people and not to take care of the fact that they are going to be executed after the treatment, if you don't mind dear doctor.'

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

The field team had problems convincing the headquarters in Brussels of the seriousness of the situation.



When I reported the incident about Dr Canissius to the desk, the answer was that I had to go back to the RPF senior commandant and tell them that I knew that they had murdered Dr Canissius and that MSF was protesting against it. I replied to the desk, 'Would you then please send in the next plane my coffin? They are going to kill me, you know!'… The desk had not the slightest idea of the circumstances under which we were working… Then the next move was that Dominique [Boutriau – Desk Officer] arrived in the field and it was a very positive thing. She saw the organised logistic lines that we had set up and the problems we encountered and when she left, she was a lot more aware. That was already five or six weeks into the mission. She came to Uganda only.

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

On 17 June 1994, during a press conference, MSF France called for an international armed intervention to halt the genocide in Rwanda. Materials distributed at the press conference also included statements from Burundian refugees in Rwandan camps about abuses committed by RPF soldiers.



'**Press kit** Distributed at the MSF France Press Conference', 17 June 1994 (in French).

Extract:
- 11 May: RPF attack on the Gako military camp
- 12-15 May: RPF arrives in Maza and Nzangwa
- 15 May: RPF massacre in Maza and Nzangwa
- 15 May: RPF arrives in the Burenge camp [...]

RFP abuses: a Burundi refugee in the Maza camps stated that around 15 May, RPF soldiers entered the camp. They gathered the refugees and took them to the Nzangwa camp, where they were imprisoned in the mosque and the feeding centre. Soldiers then shot into the crowd and beat survivors with clubs. She lost three of her children and her husband but was able to flee with her son, nine. She had a wound on the back of her head.

On 22 June 1994, UN Security Council Resolution 929 authorised the French army to intervene in Rwanda for a two-month period (to be relieved by UNAMIR), to protect civilian populations and humanitarian aid in "an operation that shall be led in an impartial and neutral fashion." French troops were deployed in the 'safe humanitarian zone' that covered 20 percent of Rwandan territory in the western part of the country.[2] V1



'United Nations Security Council **Resolution** 929 of 22 June 1994' (in English).

Extract:
The Security Council [...] taking into account the time needed to gather the necessary resources for the effective deployment of UNAMIR [...] Noting the offer by Member States to cooperate with the Secretary-General towards the fulfilment of the objectives of the United Nations in Rwanda and stressing the strictly humanitarian character of this operation which shall be conducted in an impartial and neutral fashion, and shall not constitute an interposition force between the parties [...] deeply concerned by the continuation of systematic and widespread killings of the civilian population in Rwanda. Recognizing that the current situation in Rwanda constitutes a unique case which demands an urgent response by the international community [...] 1. Welcomes the Secretary-General's letter dated 19 June 1994 – S/1994/728 – and agrees that a multinational operation may be set up for humanitarian purposes in Rwanda until UNAMIR is brought up to the necessary strength [...] 3. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, authorises the Member States cooperating with the

2. The ZHS (safe humanitarian zone) covered the Cyangugu and Gikongoro prefectures and part of Kibuye prefecture.

Secretary-General to conduct the operation [...] using all necessary means to achieve the humanitarian objectives.

On 23 June 1994, under the guise of setting up a defence zone in response to the French 'Operation Turquoise,' the RPF forcibly displaced 50,000-100,000 inhabitants of the quadrangle bounded by Kabgayi, Gitarama, Nyanza and Ruhango. The displaced people were sent on foot in difficult conditions to the swampy area of Bugesera, some 150 kilometres away. On 24 June, MSF Belgium informed the press that the RPF had forcibly evacuated 35,000 civilians from the Gitarama-Butare zone to the Bugesera region.



'35,000 Civilians Evacuated after Tension Increases South of Gitarama', MSF Belgium **Press release**, Brussels, 24 June 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Yesterday morning, mortar attacks were launched on the Ruhango region and on Nyanza, south of Gitarama. Following these attacks, the RPF immediately decided to evacuate the displaced population to Nyamata in the Bugesera region. This evacuation is currently underway and will continue in the days and hours ahead.



'Rwandan Crisis - **Sitrep**', MSF Belgium team in Rwanda, 28 June-3 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Since 28 June, the city of Ruhango and the hospital, with 800 hospitalised patients, have been empty. The hospital was evacuated by RPF trucks and several belonging to MSF. On 28 June, 60,000-80,000 people crossed the bridge. On Tuesday 29 June, the Kinavi camp – 20,000 people – and the health centre, housing 250 patients, were evacuated. Some 100,000 people, along with their livestock and baggage, were observed on the road to the bridge. The line of people stretched for about 25 km. The Nyanza hospital was the next to be evacuated. Six MSF dispensary tents were set up at the bridge to receive and treat patients dropped off there en masse by the trucks evacuating the hospital. Their health status was sometimes quite worrying, even hopeless (suffering from dehydration and exhaustion). [...] A dispensary with local staff is functioning in Ruhuha. In addition, MSF is distributing water (water tanks are filled by a 25,000-litre cistern truck which goes back and forth) and biscuits along the road, and is picking up those who are too worn-out to walk and transporting them to the Rilima hospital. This massive population displacement, which occurred in record-breaking time, has left many victims. One wonders whether their emergency evacuation was justified [...] It is clear that these massive population displacements are difficult to justify given the security situation on the ground: when the RPF ordered people to move, Ruhango, Nyanza, Gitarama, Kinavi and Buyoga, in the north, were relatively calm. Whatever the RPF's reasons for provoking these population movements (security reasons, the obvious desire to improve control over these populations), it is obvious that the populations are moving unwillingly, to the detriment of their personal and humanitarian situation.

At the last minute, the RPF requested that MSF teams accompany the evacuated. Working closely with ICRC teams, the MSF teams watched these same authorities impede their work. The RPF seemed to accept their presence only as a humanitarian cover for their operation.



'Rwandan Crisis - **Sitrep**', MSF Belgium team in Rwanda, 28 June-3 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
MSF was able to begin its Rilima activities on 28 June. The MSF doctor from Nyamata and two MSF nurses began receiving patients. An agreement was made with ICRC under which MSF will have final responsibility for the Rilima hospital and ICRC will provide support with its medical teams – two nurses – during the setup phase. ICRC will be responsible for follow-up food aid (general distribution). Regarding local staff to work at the hospital level, ICRC will provide us with their local staff (protected by the Geneva Conventions and thus under ICRC protection). MSF will try to use the opportunity to renegotiate with the RPF so that the staff can continue to hold the same status.[3]
A total of 1,400 wounded and ill people were hospitalised in Rilima. The rest of the MSF teams are accompanying the truck convoys transporting patients between Ruhango and Rilima. Relations with the RPF are not easy because information channels even within different RPF bases are not always efficient. This has created problems in the field (escorts unavailable, delay in the Rilima installation mission, disorganised transport of the wounded from Ruhango). These issues were discussed in Byumba with Captain Denys and Dr Emile. To improve communication, a liaison officer will be detached from Byumba for MSF in the Bugesera region in the coming days. Furthermore, our Head of Mission has established a direct link with the RPF in Brussels.



'**Summary** of Incidents with RPF', MSF internal report, MSF Belgium Coordinator in Rwanda, 9 July 1994 (in English).

Extract:
<u>Evacuation of Ruhango, Nyanza and Kinazi</u>
Having been asked by RPF's' Dr [E] to provide medical and logistical assistance with the evacuation of patients, orphans and the population of the defence area of Ruhango and Nyanza, MSF Belgium moved all resources and personnel. We found the population being forced to move without any assistance. The emergency situation was growing by the hour. Evaluating the happenings after the operation was 'completed' I came to the following conclusions.
- The population had been moved into screening camps before.
- They originated from Kigali, Gitarama and Kabgayi and have been displaced several times.
- MSF Belgium in Ruhango has been misinformed about the location of camps. Local staff informed us of major clusters which were not shown to us by RPF.
- The evacuation has been ordered due to reasons different from security. First it was dangerous for ICRC to stay, because the French were going to bomb them according to RPF, later they said that there was in fact no direct security problem to be expected, but they had to be ready. At what price!

3. In fact, it is not only ICRC personnel who are protected by the Geneva Conventions, but also any neutral medical personnel.

- By ordering the people to start moving instantly, RPF knew that the death toll would be enormous. Trying to get international attention and a good name in the western world was probably one of the reasons they asked us to show up for assistance.
- General attitude of RPF was blunt and insensitive to the huge suffering of the people. They said things like: "We will make them suffer, because we suffered for their liberation," and "Oh, you say this is a human catastrophe, we call this natural selection." Another interesting statement was made when we wanted to give soap to workers: "You should not pay the people. We are creating a society in which people will work without pay. If they don't work, we'll punish them."
- The arrest of our trucks at the border with Burundi was probably a planned action. By slowing us down, they could continue the dumping of patients, orphans and civilians at their own speed and without conscious white men around.
- By getting MSF to Rilima and forcing ICRC to move for the time being to the same place, they evacuated all healthcare to a small place in the Bugesera. After this, the stream of people towards Rilima was stopped so that the majority of the population was staged 65 km away from the main concentration of relief. I asked to increase the number of displaced in the area, so that Rilima could be the provincial health centre. At the moment they only moved 5,000 persons out of 70,000 persons to Rilima. Planned? By the way, they say they only know of 30,000 persons, 5,000 in Rilima and 25,000 in Ruhuha. Where are the rest?
- Access to Rilima has been denied for three days without any reason why. It looks like they did not want us to be ready to receive 'worthless' people. In the mean time people were forced to stay at the bridge, while everybody knows that this place is an excellent spot to spread disease, epidemics and suffering.
- The shortcut from Ruhuha to Nyamata/Rilima has been closed by the RPF due to 'security reasons'. It forced the population to walk another 60 kilometres. Instead of facilitating the quick evacuation to the assigned area, people were ordered to stop, to walk again, to turn around again, making them run around in circles, with what cause in mind...? We saw big groups being turned back towards the bridge, and nobody wanted to answer the question why. My escort: "They are coming back from the fields, they live at the bridge." They came from the field with mattresses on their heads??
- Trucks of MSF have been rerouted, delayed, arrested etc. Patients that were loaded in Ruhango/Kinazi have not all reached the hospital in Rilima. One truck was ordered to park at gunpoint. It arrived the next day with a load of dead or half-dead patients. The driver [...] was shocked.
- Orphans that we were supposed to move were dumped at the bridge by the RPF and kept there for three days on purpose. Nobody was allowed to touch them ("These are our children, don't touch them!") The access to Zaza was granted to ICRC. When the trucks with 180 dead sick, dehydrated and malnourished children arrived in Rilima, access to Zaza was denied again, leaving a medical team waiting for the children in Zaza. Later they accused ICRC of trying to play authority by arranging themselves what should happen to the children of the RPF state. They had unfortunately spoken to the wrong prefect, RPF military explained. These children were absolutely healthy when they were pictured by Roger Job in Ruhango. We sheltered them temporarily, fed them and hospitalised the sick ones.
- As we had no water, we could not do our medical job properly. They delayed our water search operation for two days. As last resort, we went for lake water (to be heavily chlorinated) in order to save the lives of the 180 children. The day after a certain Mister Henri arrived at the Rilima hospital and accused MSF of the following:

1. We were responsible for the bad nutritional status of the orphans. Why didn't MSF feed them?

2. The housing was below standard. Why did MSF not look for a better place?
3. We had not treated the children according to medical standards.
He said that I was personally responsible for the mistreatment. I gave Mister Henri (RPF Non-Medical Relief Coordinator) the answers to the questions:
1. RPF was ripping them out of their orphanage before we could do it. RPF dumped them at the bridge and kept them there for three days without anything. We saw the children in good condition before in Ruhango. YOU brought them in this state.
2. The authorities have been asked to empty the cinema, but that was not possible. There were only 50 displaced in this cinema and I gave enough plastic sheeting to resettle them.
3. All sick are in the hospital, the malnourished in the feeding centre, the diarrhoea cases in the rehydration ward and the healthy ones are in front of you. Would you like to visit the other ones? Henri said no. So I concluded with rejecting his insulting attempt to make us guilty for the lives of innocent children. He gave no comments.



Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium Director of Communication came from Burundi to visit the mission. I asked him whether he was still a doctor. He said, 'Yes,' so I told him I needed him, and he came in the evacuation of the orphans and the operation to bring them over the bridge. I think he was very impressed by what happened, and we had very good cooperation. He was aware of what was happening. He was in the middle of it. He has seen it. He was on the truck that people died on. The deliberate waste of life, he was witnessing. He stayed around two weeks.

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).



We decided to head for Butare, and that's where we began to see dozens, hundreds, and then thousands of people coming towards us. First, we told ourselves that it was just people fleeing. But little by little we realised that as they won areas, they swept the people out. In appalling conditions. With no organisation at all and absolutely no assistance. People were literally dropping dead at the side of the road. They were exhausted from their forced march. It was total chaos. And we were in the middle of it and completely overwhelmed. We had set up two or three dispensary tents along the way. We tried at least to rehydrate people, which might not have been a good idea because the place we had been more or less allotted was far from ideal. It was way too hot, there was very little water, and it was virtually impossible to get supplies. It was the first open, level area we found on the way. At some point this guy tapped me on the shoulder. It was the papal envoy, Cardinal Etchegarray; he took me aside and asked me, 'What is going on here?' I told him, 'We don't really know what is going on, but it is awful.' Besides, I never really knew what it was about, what the rationale was, why, or how, etc. But it was plain to see that those people were being chased from their villages and sent to the rear with no means of subsistence.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications until November 1994 (in French).

On 1 July 1994, MSF Belgium informed the press about the lack of preparation and poor conditions facing thousands of people who were being forcibly displaced by the RPF.



'Rwanda: Massive Numbers of People Displaced to Bugesera', MSF Belgium **Press release**, 1 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Over the last five days, we have observed a mass exodus of people from Gitarama, Ruhango, Kabgayi, Nyanza, and the displaced camps to the city of Rilima in the Bugesera region, on orders from the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). This displacement is taking place under poor conditions and without real preparation. Some people had to walk 150 km before reaching their destination. Currently, 50,000-100,000 people have been affected by this displacement. It is impossible to estimate the number of people who will never reach their destination: the displaced population has been ravaged by dehydration and dysentery. Given the high number of victims, the displaced have been authorised to settle along the road. 1,400 patients from different hospitals in the region were also evacuated to Rilima. MSF teams are trying to respond to the humanitarian needs. Twenty international staff are on site, with support from many Rwandans, to receive displaced people as well as patients.



MSF witnessed this forced displacement. We alerted the authorities and said that it must be stopped. I think it was over quickly. I think we were the only witnesses. I am not all that sure about MSF's ability to have a real impact. But I do think that in this case we might have had a bit of influence. No one was ever informed besides the papal envoy, which was good because they are influential people. We even managed to halt their movements without much difficulty. When I got back, I remember talking about it with several Belgian journalists. There were a few articles in the press. In this communiqué [dated 1 July, 1994], you can sense a certain apprehension. It doesn't say that it is a systematic policy. Maybe the coordinator had other information. I don't remember. Maybe he stayed longer than I did.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications until November 1994 (in French).

The MSF team protected and then evacuated one of its Tutsi secretaries. She was threatened with death because she refused to collaborate with the new authorities by spying on her employers.



They were very anxious to keep an eye on every white person in town. They wanted our secretary, a Tutsi, to report on us. She refused, telling them that they should be a little grateful for what the people were doing for them. They had a security file in Byumba against her. We had to protect her from being kidnapped. She should not leave the hospital. She could not leave the company of any one of us because otherwise they would ambush her and kill her. She was in the day working in our office and as soon as the night fell, I walked her down together with somebody else, with a blanket wrapped around her head. We walked up to the operating block. There we had an intravenous fluid room with no win-

dows. There was a mattress, a radio and a key, so she would go inside to sleep there. I would say, 'You don't open the door for anybody – in case there is a problem you call me by radio.' So, we checked the radio. She stayed inside. The surgeon's room was next to hers with a huge, big, surgeon who would keep an eye out and move his mattress in front of the door. And I would sleep a hundred metres from the barracks with the radio next to my ear and the other key. And this was the only way to protect her from being attacked. It lasted two or three weeks. And then we found a possibility to bring her to Nyamata. In Nyamata there was confusion because the RPF were taking Kigali. At the moment they were taking Kigali, somebody wrote a note and said, 'We have to go to Bujumbura and get supplies. Can you please sign that we pass the border with this, this, this and this.' We put the secretary's name on the paper. They signed. And when the prefect had signed, we could pass the border. We got her to Burundi. And the next stage was to move her outside of the country.

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

In his 7 July 1994 sitrep, the MSF Belgium Coordinator reported on the RPF's negligent treatment of the population and its efforts to manipulate humanitarian organisations.

'**Sitrep** n° 4 to Programme Manager', MSF Belgium Coordinator, Rwanda, 7 July 1994 (in English).

Extract:
After the deployment of French troops in Rwanda, the atmosphere in RPF territory changed dramatically. The RPF prepared their defence lines and moved big numbers of population. The attitude towards NGOs became more aggressive, suspicious, and the cooperation diminished day by day.
Passports were checked in the search for French nationals, and those present were intimidated. I sent a French logistician back to Bujumbura upon arrival in Ruhango and another was sent to Kampala to change with a Belgian national.
Both evacuations were done for security reasons. On 23 June, the RPF ordered the evacuation of the population in the zone between Gitarama and Butare, meaning all displaced, residents and relief workers. Everybody would be directed to Nyamata and surroundings. We were asked to assist with the evacuation of hospital patients and orphans, medical and logistical. […] RPF attitude: general disinterest for the well being of the populationb. Terms like 'natural selection' and lines like 'nobody will die in your trucks, not even the worst ones' were used by military personnel. Our operation, although requested by the RPF has not been supported by them.

MSF Belgium did not have a symbiotic relationship with the RPF. Anyway, that was impossible. They weren't nice people. From the outset I, personally, associated them with the guerrillas I had met in the past. I might love them when they are in the guerrillas, but I hate them when they are in power. In the guerrilla, they are romantic and likable, but after that they are murderers. They reminded me of the Eritreans. They had the same hardened attitude, self-assured, arrogant. They gave me the willies. They were hard people to whom human life didn't mean much. You could just tell. Besides, they were Tutsi and the peo-

ple on the roads were Hutu. In that setting they didn't feel like doing them any favours. Anyhow, they let us travel around the region. It is true that we didn't have the means to respond to the emergency and that our presence might have been used as an alibi. But at the time there was no one there and we had to intervene. I am still sure that the displacement was not organised by either side. It was the kind of localised upheaval that happens in a conflict, with bad decisions based on strategy that led to the death of thousands and maybe tens of thousands of people.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications until November 1994 (in French).

On 9 July 1994, the MSF Belgium Coordinator provided MSF Belgium headquarters' with a report summarising RPF incidents in which he described the new regime's members as 'Khmers Rouges'. In conclusion, he encouraged MSF to consider a public denunciation of RPF abuses.

'**Summary** of Incidents with RPF', MSF internal report, MSF Belgium Coordinator, Rwanda, 9 July 1994 (in English).

Extract:

My personal conclusions

• The RPF comes from Uganda, Burundi and Zaire –Tutsi – and is not representing the majority of Rwandan Tutsi. They are not liberating the country but occupying it. Compared to the other side, which is even worse, they have all the sympathy they want. NGOs and governments are blind to the 'saviours'. "Please, give me a camp, please let us be on your side." Almost everybody accepts the dictate and fills in the forms the RPF presents them, accepts the system, the harassment, and the planned extermination of certain parts of the population.

• The RPF has no majority support. They rule by gunpoint and intimidation. I see a terrified population that obeys in order not to get shot. Nobody dares to open his mouth. Those who tried are dead now. They are planning to have and keep power. But they can only do so by dictatorship and suppression. The new rule is that Hutu should not work…

• The cover, that they care for their population, is a perfect smokescreen for gaining support from the western world. In fact, they only care for those who are super pro-RPF, intelligent, and needed for the future or for the war. Soldiers are well fed, the political upper ten percent is in splendid condition, and the rest can die.

• There is enough proof of mass violations of human rights, executions and intimidation. This regime has nothing good in mind. If they tried to gain popular support, they would have more power and chance to rule for longer. Why are they not interested in popular support?

• NGO presence is seen as difficult. All those white people that ask stupid questions are only a burden. They try to control us, collect from us (more, more), spy on us, and they try to block us from seeing something. Real interest for helping us to help them is not existing. "Wait five days for your 15-minute meeting with me…" That people starve doesn't interest them. All sayings, the official attitude, the field lack of cooperation, the planned movements of the civilians they rule… it all looks like an official line, a dogma. In September the rain will be here. Cholera is around the corner. No harvesting means starvation next year. Why don't they let us do our job? Why let children die in a massacre

field? Why move the people all the time, till they are so tired and sick that they fall dead in the ditch?
I think that this is a communist system based on the ideology of the Khmer Rouge. Move the people all the time and they will listen. Let them suffer, let their family die; nothing is easier to control than a weak and obeying population. RPF officials are extremely intelligent, have all the ins and outs planned. They have doctrines and guidelines for everything. They are ready for the press. They play the media game splendidly. They control and abuse the NGOs, and they try to show to us that they are a good future with a human face for Rwanda.
Unfortunately, we (the relief workers) are the only ones to evaluate the situation because we work and live (some of the NGOs) in Rwanda. I see planned genocide appearing in front of my very eyes. Murder by planned starvation, by disease, nice and clean because they will look like the victims, the martyrs. I see a system that functions like the KGB. Spies around you 24 hours. Disappearances. Executions. Compilations of security files. No respect for human rights, no respect for NGO rules or ideologies. What conventions of Geneva? What "No guns in the hospital"? The lies they throw over us are clearly recognisable because we see the truth. Most of the suffering in the RPF-controlled zones has been created by the RPF themselves.
According to me, MSF should end its activities and open up in mass media coverage. Curing created disease, regardless of present and future for those people we cure, is making us accomplices of the crime.
Questions that MSF will have to ask itself:
1. What do we want to achieve in Rwanda?
2. Do we accept the role of free-of-charge medicine supplier?
3. Do we accept that our rules of implementation are non-achievable? That we have no control over our projects?
4. Are we doing good to continue to support a regime that violates human rights systematically? Do we allow them to use the MSF flag for cover and as a smokescreen for what really is happening?
5. Are we going to respond to emergencies that are created by dictatorship and contribute to the media role that the dictator wants to gain?
6. Do we stand up for the rights of the masses, by project implementation or by project ending, or are we busy sustaining our own existence?
7. Do we continue this way, now that not one of the working conditions is reached?
8. *Haben wir es nicht gewusst???* [Did we not know it?]



What motivated me to draft this report was writing on the Mulindi meeting, preparing for Brussels the motivations for Eric Goemaere to come and support me. That's how I explained that things were not all right, referring to the criticism in the report of the Mulindi things or the mistakes, the deliberate hate campaign against certain organisations, and the false figures that were in there. That's why I wrote that thing, to create an atmosphere within MSF that I, as a general coordinator, could not bear the responsibility for human rights violations which were happening under our flag and our cover. Because RPF was saying to HQ in Brussels: 'MSF is there, so what are you talking about?' Human rights were violated, these people were deported, and I was seeing them but when I reported it, the Programme Manager said, 'The only thing that matters is to continue the programme.'

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

The MSF Belgium Coordinator's report was discussed in Brussels and transmitted to the other MSF sections. Opinions were divided.

For me it is totally unclear. I understood that it was broadly discussed in Brussels, that there was a big polemic around the text I wrote. Of course, I didn't know that at the time. Some of the things were facts like Dr Canissius being killed. But one of the general sentiments about this document was that, 'The guy is overworked, he is not seeing things clearly and he has to be replaced as soon as possible, then we will have a good mission.' So, when Eric Goemaere came to Rwanda, he said, 'That's the impression Brussels gave me. Yet I am seeing you and I am checking what you have written, I am checking what you have said and it's my opinion you are right.' And after that nothing happened. I closed my mission, and I went back home.

[...], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

I never saw that report... I had fallen out with MSF at the time [Pierre left MSF a few months later]. I just read a few paragraphs and not one jogs my memory. I have seen scores of reports. But I would remember that one if I had seen it... It's too bad that I never saw it, and it is strange that [the Coordinator] never told me about it. There probably aren't too many people who have seen it... I do remember that [the Coordinator] was a great guy, but he had some credibility problems... I can picture the scene: [the Coordinator] arriving with the report and six other guys from headquarters saying, 'He's nice but he gets on our nerves, he needs a rest.' At MSF, back then, that's the end of the report. That's how things were. It might have happened like that. I really can't express an opinion on the context of the report because, out of context, it really doesn't mean all that much. By the time we got to Nyanza, I think that I had already seen the bodies of tens of thousands of genocide victims. We were seeing nothing but bodies. We were overwhelmed and felt powerless. We were walking a tightrope. When you land in a country, without support, and the two-bit lieutenant there, who isn't even a lieutenant but who is armed, says, 'That's it,' well, that's it. I see here [reading from the report] that [the coordinator] is outraged because people went to the hospital with weapons. If I look back at the situation, even today, I say that's ridiculous. What's the problem? A hospital is no place for weapons, we all agree on that. But that's a rule you make when you can. It takes time. He uses the term "Khmer Rouge". That is a fear I shared; I already told you. But it was never confirmed, because I don't know of any other mass displacement inside a country after that. It wasn't institutionalised. There were camps, but the men in the camps had a lot to be nervous about. A good many of them had a lot of blood on their hands. And yet, the way the RPF was acting put me on my guard right away. And I sure wasn't inclined to let them get away with anything. But when you are in a hospital, surrounded by dying people, and someone shows up with a toothache, you send them packing. You automatically stand back, and that can be very dangerous. But it is also a way to protect you. It was just so incredible. There were piles of bodies! We didn't even stop if there was a body by the roadside. The RPF discovered the bodies when we did. The difference is that it was their families, and they were armed. If I were to exaggerate, I would say that they even showed some restraint! However, they did commit some atrocities. During the genocide, the Butare hospital was emptied of Tutsi patients, who were all killed. Then the RPF came and put two supposed culprits up against the

wall. Executing them was an atrocity, too. Obviously, that's unforgivable, intolerable, but it was a particular situation.

Dr Pierre Harzé, MSF Belgium, Director of Communications until November 1994 (in French).

From the outset, these atrocities reinforced the image that the RPF was perhaps not all roses and that some of their methods could at least be described as strong-arm. But the war was still going on. This could have been part of their strategy to control territory. These were the very first statements against the RPF and we were afraid because, in fact, they were not very pleasant people.

Dr Eric Goemaere, MSF Belgium, General Director (in French).

In 1994, after evacuating Kigali and Butare, MSF Belgium reintroduced an initial team into northern Rwanda via Uganda. The first team member's report on the social atmosphere described the following: 'It's sheer terror. My colleagues are disappearing. When I ask for information, I'm told to be quiet. Afterwards, everyone says they were murdered.' He described an atmosphere marked by arbitrary arrests and summary executions. He was very shocked by the repression underway within the society. He sent a report to Brussels. There was no public position on this. But in any event, the Gersony[4] Report came out in September. UNHCR said that the RPF was conducting massacres. So, it's not as though this information was a secret anymore.

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).

Fleeing advancing RPF forces, hundreds of thousands of Rwandans took refuge in the safe humanitarian zone around Gikongoro. International journalists in the region reported the French military's appeals to humanitarian organisations.

'**Sitrep** to MSF Communication Departments', Samantha Bolton, MSF Information Officer in East Africa, 7 July 1994 (in English).

Extract:
"Thousands left to die – where are NGOs?" – This is what the journos are saying about the hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the frontline, amassed around Gikongoro area, and after seeing all the displaced sleeping in the open with little food and no medicine. (There is an EBU TV feed point in Gikongoro).
The first batch got back to Goma last night, and they all had the same comments and questions. Why were there no NGOs? Where were the medical organisations? And what was MSF waiting for? Even those who were previously anti-French military are saying that the military try their hardest to help people, but that they are not equipped nor supposed to do the work of the NGOs.

4. Robert Gersony, a consultant for the UN, reported in September 1994 that tens of thousands of Hutu had been killed by RPA soldiers over the past three months.

From 4 to 10 July 1994, MSF's Belgian, French, and Dutch sections conducted an evaluation mission in the Gikongoro region's 'Zone Turquoise'. The mission revealed that thousands of displaced people were living there in extreme insecurity, and noted that it was both necessary and possible to provide them with aid while remaining independent of the French army.



'**Minutes** of the MSF Belgium Project Committee', 8 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
FAR zone
A major catastrophe is brewing near Gikongoro, where famine and death rates have already reached alarming levels. Marie-Christine [Ferir, MSF Belgium Emergency team] notes that we have been waiting for two months for the Dutch to reach the field. The situation was known to be catastrophic. Scepticism regarding the internationalisation of this mission. The mission may begin in Bukavu and expand to Cyangugu and Gikongoro. Coordination: MSF Holland and MSF France are ready to participate. MSF Belgium: no personnel. We must have a presence in the FAR zone to assert our neutrality. Other organisations possible in the field to manage the new camps? OXFAM UK, CARE?
Conclusions: The mission on the FAR side is international, coordinated by MSF Holland; MSF Holland has supplies in Bujumbura for the FAR zone. This mission's activities will be divided into modules. MSF Belgium wants to participate but lacks necessary resources for now. MSF Belgium will take a month to find the necessary staff.



'Rwandan Crisis **Sitrep**', MSF France, 4-10 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
However, an MSF International exploratory mission to Gikongoro, via Bukavu, was conducted independently and without escort. The mission had been put off for several days after a FAR helicopter attacked an MSF vehicle in the RFP zone. The evaluation mission did not encounter security problems and was able to make appropriate contacts with civilian and military authorities. A preliminary evaluation found 300,000-500,000 people in the northern part of the prefecture, while one million were reported to be in the southern part; populations are moving (source: French army) [...] MSF decided to intervene and assume management of three camps [...] a 14-member team is planned, to be operational next week and coordinated by MSF France. Supplies pre-positioned by MSF Holland in Burundi will launch the operation. MSF Belgium is supporting the operation with non-Belgian personnel and sending an expert to analyse the region's food pipeline.



'**Sitrep** to MSF Communication Departments', Samantha Bolton, MSF Information Officer in East Africa, 7 July 1994 (in English).

Extract:
MSF mission explo: The four-person international exploratory mission in the southwest of Rwanda, including famous Gikongoro area, ended on Sunday. All sections agree to start work but under condition of strict independence and neutrality (MSF Holland

particularly insists on this). Please only communicate on this once you hear from MSF in Brux/Paris. Paris responsible for coordination and communication.



'**Minutes** of Evaluation Mission Debriefing', Gikongoro, on 13 July 1994' (in French).

Extract:
We are under a lot of pressure to intervene. They're even threatening to go to the press. It's clear that the French political and military operation needs a 'humanitarian backing' to be able to claim the humanitarian label. That's why they want NGOs present; particularly MSF.
Intervention necessary: yes, but [...]
We must be very careful about our behaviour in the field to guarantee our independence in the areas of:
- Finances
- Supplies
- Travel.

We cannot accept French government coordination. We can agree to UN coordination or 'joint'/ICRC action.
Even if we do, in fact, benefit from the passive security of the French army, it is out of the question for us to place ourselves under its protection except, of course, in case of serious problem and, hence, evacuation. To put it plainly, we are on our own. However, we will not refuse contact and if there are security problems, we will not hesitate to call on them. We can explain our position to the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs or another UN agency.
We must also distinguish ourselves, at all costs, from local authorities, who will try to manipulate us. However, these contacts will be critical for protecting the team's security. It will be difficult to find the right balance at this level of contacts. We must always keep in mind that we will have to deal with people who organised genocide. To put it plainly, our position will have to be both pragmatic and ethical (a difficult task).
We must remember that the population could be ready to turn against us.
We must thus maintain our freedom of speech. Our work must be limited to meeting the most basic, emergency, and short-term needs.
The situation could turn ugly. Our work must focus on addressing emergency needs (let's not forget that not all Hutu are '*génocidaires*' and that many are victims of manipulation and a policy of terror and are now very dependent on international aid). But we must find partners, international or local, who can quickly take over. We must always look for the balance between need, on the one hand, and compromises and insecurity, on the other. At this point, the balance has shifted toward intervention but could move in the other direction.

On 11 July 1994, after MSF Belgium's Communications Director returned from Rwanda, he published an article criticising Operation Turquoise in the Belgian daily, *Le Soir*. A few cautious lines on 'possible settling of scores' and a call for vigilance 'particularly in view of the recent population displacements observed in the regions conquered by the RPF' highlighted the difficulty of talking about RPF abuses in the post-genocide context.



'Take Off the Masks', ***Le Soir*** (Belgium), Pierre Harzé, 11 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Just days after Operation Turquoise was launched, the project has turned out to be just what its sponsors had in mind: a hopeless effort aimed at saving the government – a faltering and bloody one, but friendly to an extremist Hutu faction.
Backed by a national media that appears, for now, to have lost its critical edge, the French government is involved in an extraordinary act of mythmaking. It has managed to disguise what the evidence suggests being its true interests by wrapping its actions in the discreet flag of humanitarianism. Shamelessly, yesterday's victims are now publicly demonised and introduced as tomorrow's executioners. At the risk of forcing the point, allow me to restate several key items that should be kept in mind if one is to calmly challenge those who might find themselves tempted by a 'revisionist' version of the Rwandan tragedy [...]
The RPF is innocent – and remains so until proven otherwise – of systematic massacres against civilian populations under its responsibility. This does not exclude the possibility that accounts have been settled, nor should it dull our vigilance, particularly in the face of recent population displacements observed in the areas taken by the RPF.



Pierrot Harzé came back from there, saying, 'The supposed liberators are using methods that are hard to endorse.' He wrote one or two articles in which the term "Khmer Noir" was used to refer to the RPF for the first time. It appeared in the major Brussels newspapers, including Le Soir*. But people don't pay much attention to accounts that go contrary to their expectations. They've got to be verified. They didn't start again, and it's become ancient history. The press didn't jump on it because the RPF had a huge reservoir of sympathy. In the end, we let it drop.*

Dr Eric Goemaere, MSF Belgium, General Director (in French).



I haven't heard of any article in Le Soir *but I spoke. I had a very short talk by phone with Colette Braeckman [journalist at* Le Soir*]. I am not a French speaker so it's difficult for me to speak to the French press. I think she had read what I had written. To be frank, everything that happened with this thing since it was sent to Brussels, I don't know. I am totally blank.*

[...], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

By mid-July 1994, the MSF Belgian and Dutch sections had finally withdrawn, leaving the French section as the only one working in the Turquoise Zone. A letter from the MSF International movement was sent to the United Nations Security Council asking the international community to encourage the displaced people's return by assuring their safety and increasing aid to Rwanda. (See MSF Speaking Out Case Study 'Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaire and Tanzania 1994-1995'.)



'MSF Launches Independent Aid Programme in Southwestern Rwanda', MSF International **Press release**, 12 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
"It's only a short-term measure so that the displaced people can return home."
Late next week, Médecins sans Frontières will launch a new emergency medical programme to aid some 200,000 displaced people in southwestern Rwanda. (One of three teams is already in the field.) The new MSF programme will be based at three displaced people's sites north of Gikongoro (Cyanika, Rukondo and Kaduha). The staff will include 14 international doctors, nurses and water engineers. A cargo plane carrying medicine and health and medical equipment will be landing in Bujumbura. The operation will be conducted independently from the French government's military operation.
The new programme follows an MSF evaluation mission conducted in the designated 'security zone'. MSF's evaluation mission confirmed that some 300,000-400,000 displaced people are living in extremely precarious conditions in temporary, overcrowded sites north of Gikongoro. They lack protection and medical care. Food supplies could quickly become inadequate and in coming weeks, the lack of drinking water could lead to widespread epidemics.
MSF emphasises that this operation is independent of the French government's policy in Rwanda. Aid in the French 'security zone' can only be considered a short-term solution to alleviate the considerable suffering.
This protection zone is not viable in the long term in either political or humanitarian terms. It would be a mistake to think that massive humanitarian aid could solve the problem. In the end, the displaced people will have to go home. Humanitarian agencies and the UN must now pursue that goal. In a letter today addressed to the UN Security Council, Médecins Sans Frontières calls on the international community to increase aid throughout Rwanda and take measures to assure the population of both humanitarian aid and protection from political violence, thereby encouraging displaced people to return to their home regions. Médecins Sans Frontières also urges the United Nations to take a leadership role in both the political and humanitarian response to the crisis, specifically by mobilising the UN's aid agencies.



'MSF Launches Its Own Aid Programme in Southwestern Rwanda', MSF Belgium **Press release**, Brussels, 14 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Late this week, MSF will launch a medical aid project, independent of French military operations, on behalf of at least 200,000 displaced people in southwestern Rwanda. In a letter addressed to the UN Security Council, MSF also issued an urgent request that the displaced people in that area be able to return home as soon as possible [...] MSF emphasises that this operation should not be interpreted as support for French policy in Rwanda. Aid provided in the French 'security zone' can only be considered a short-term solution to alleviate the most urgent needs. From a political and humanitarian perspective, the 'safety zone' is not viable in the long-term. It would be a mistake to think that massive aid could be maintained indefinitely in this area [...] In a letter addressed to the Security Council, MSF called on the international community to encourage the displaced people's return. Their return will only be possible if aid is increased in other regions of Rwanda and if their safety is guaranteed. The population must be assured of humanitarian aid and protection against political violence.



'**Letter** from Médecins Sans Frontières (International Office) to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, UN Secretary-General', 12 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
From the health perspective, we think that the only way to help these hundreds of thousands of people quickly and significantly is to let them return home. We request that you urgently take all possible political initiative in view of allowing these displaced to return to their region of origin as quickly as possible so that appropriate protection and humanitarian aid can be provided. We also request your intervention so that the United Nations, as a whole, retains a determining leadership role, both in the political response (so as to avoid one country acting alone) and humanitarian response (by mobilising the United Nations' specialised agencies).



'Three Hundred French Soldiers to Leave the Country Before the End of July', ***Le Monde*** (France), 14 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Philippe Biberson [MSF France, President of the Board of Directors], announced that on Monday, the humanitarian aid organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) launched an aid mission in Gikongoro prefecture. Although located in the heart of the French-created security zone, the mission is independent of French authorities. The organisation's team will include 12 people in the field. MSF will accept no government aid. "MSF wants to distinguish itself from Operation Turquoise," the group's President explained. "It's a matter of credibility." According to estimates from MSF's evaluation mission in the region, there are between 700,000 and 800,000 displaced people – 99 percent Hutu – in this zone.

Between 13 and 17 July 1994, some 500,000-800,000 Rwandans,[5] driven by militias and the FAR and fleeing the advancing RPF, flooded into Goma, Zaire, a few miles from the Rwandan border, north of Lake Kivu.
On 19 July, during a press conference in Brussels, MSF Belgium officials called for the repatriation of Rwandan refugees in Zaire and Tanzania and for the implementation of guarantees required for their return. MSF Holland took the same position.



'MSF Belgium Demands that Refugees Return Home Quickly', MSF Belgium **Press release**, 19 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
"Political and humanitarian conditions demand that Rwandan refugees be allowed to return home as quickly as possible. This is of vital importance." That, in short, is MSF's message on the Rwandan refugee crisis [...]
Secure living conditions must be provided within Rwanda so that refugees in Goma, other refugee camps in Rwanda, and in neighbouring countries can return to their places

5. The UNHCR's first estimate of 1.2 million people was reduced following field investigations and aerial photographs. Source: Goma Epidemiological Group, 'Public Health Impact of Rwandan Refugee Crisis: What Happened in Goma, Zaire, July 1994?' *The Lancet* 345 (February 1995): pp. 339-344.

of origin [...] If a sustainable political solution is not found quickly, we anticipate an even greater disaster in Bukavu within the next month. The French army's mandate expires at the end of August and the question of UNAMIR replacements has not yet been resolved. If UNAMIR, in its current status, were to take on the French government's role, the RPF would be able to break through in southwestern Rwanda – meaning that massacres would probably continue. The millions of displaced people in the French security zone would have to flee towards Bukavu, Zaire [...]
The organisation says growing political problems are compounding the humanitarian catastrophe. Tensions with the local population are breaking out in areas where refugees are gathered [...] Furthermore, the camps may serve as ideal recruiting grounds and entry points for extremist militias. In this regard, the militias enjoy a considerable advantage given that, to the extent possible, people take refuge in the camps.



'MSF Holland Position on Rwandese Refugee Crisis', 20 July 1994, **internal document** (in English).

Extract:
Background
It has been suggested that the reason behind these flows is the military strategy of the RPF and their victory. However, there are reports that refugees are incited to leave by the old extremist Hutu regime through their radio station Mille Collines, that continues to spread the message that all Hutu will be killed by the new government.
MSF message
There can only be one clear message: the refugees have to return to Rwanda as soon as possible. For humanitarian agencies present in Zaire, it will be virtually impossible to achieve an adequate level of protection and assistance for these huge numbers of refugees.

On 29 and 30 July 1994, after several weeks of harassing and threatening MSF and ICRC staff, RPA [RPF army] soldiers attacked the Rilima (Rwanda) hospital and demanded that the ICRC turn over its Hutu employees.



'**Summary** of Incidents with RPF', MSF internal report, MSF Belgium Coordinator in Rwanda, 9 July 1994 (in English).

Extract:
Rilima and the ICRC/MSF Belgium cooperation
Because MSF Belgium agreed to take care of all health services in this location, ICRC was offering us their local staff [...] Because many of them fear the RPF command, they guaranteed security in case we would work with these people. I asked the respect of their status according to the Geneva Convention and demanded equal treatment for any staff under the MSF flag as for those under ICRC flag.[...] The answer was negative [...], they told us, 'Some NGOs have already been removed from our territory because of espionage.' The message was clear. They demanded to have screening access to our staff in order to remove 'undesirable' people.
Upon arrival of the staff in Rilima (still ICRC-protected), the intimidation started again. The first night, armed personnel, accompanied by the RPF nurse working with us, entered

the hospital by threatening the guard, went to the surgical ward and sneaked out with a woman and her child before we could be alerted.[...] The same night we had to remove three armed individuals from our hospital compound.
The next day a certain Mr Richard Rutatiiwa showed up with armed escort and talked to me in a very humiliating tone, stating that ICRC was always difficult, and that MSF was more practical. He wrote in his notebook: 'Separate MSF and ICRC, priority 1.'
He made sure that I could read what he wrote. I asked him to remove his armed personnel from the hospital and he refused.



'**Sitrep**', 25 July-8 August 1994 from MSF Belgium Programme Manager to MSF International, MSF France, MSF Holland, MSF Italy, MSF Spain, ECHO, AGCD, Aide et Action, Fondation de France, Europe Tiers Monde, UNHCR Geneva, (in French).

Extract:
On 29 and 30 July, the RPF surrounded the area of Rilima, Bugesera region, and arrested 33 people (including 32 former ICRC local staff members and one MSF Belgium hospital employee), who were transferred to the Rilima prison. ICRC has visitation rights.



'**Update** on Rwandan Crisis', from MSF International to MSF sections, 4 August 1994 (in English).

Extract:
Other news: 32 former local staff members of ICRC and one hospital employee were jailed by the RPF at the beginning of the week. ICRC has the right to visit them. They will probably be released after their interrogations. (In Rilima, MSF has one IPD [In-patient department] with 300 beds and one OPD [Out-patient department]. The facility will close next week, and the 45 patients transferred to the King Faisal Hospital in Kigali.)



We met ICRC in Nyanza, and we ended up working together in Bugesera because it was the only hospital in the whole region. Their surgeon freaked out. A bomb hit the other surgeon in Kigali; I think he left his leg on the operation block. Then we said: these are times to join our forces and if you feel like working with us, I feel like working with you. So, we did, and it worked well. This provoked the RPF to try to split our unity... The RPF wanted the names of the ICRC staff from Gitarama, Hutu who were mostly trained hospital personnel. ICRC refused at the beginning. Intimidation became very strong. I witnessed the intimidation of the ICRC representative in Nyanza. It was alarming. They pointed a hand grenade at him saying, 'If you do not move now, we will blow your head off.' They were not going to pull the trigger, but it was not very nice to have such a thing pointed at your head... After I had just left Rilima and was on the road to pick up Eric Goemaere in Kampala, they surrounded the hospital because they thought we were leaving, and they wanted to grab the staff. They assembled all the staff and took them to jail in trucks. ICRC managed to follow them and to give the normal ICRC prisoners' protection. But this faded in the end. There was not a real open-door policy to let ICRC go back to the prisoners. I am quite sure that several of them were killed.

[...], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

Many of the victims of this mass roundup ended up in the Rilima hospital, where MSF was working. We were set upon by the RPF, which had cordoned off the hospital. By some miracle, we managed to keep them from entering. We were literally under siege. They had surrounded us and wanted the patients. We defended ourselves.

Dr Eric Goemaere, MSF Belgium, General Director (in French).

While in Kampala, the MSF Belgium Coordinator in Rwanda came across the Dutch Minister for Cooperation and Development, and told him about the RPF violence he had observed.

I met the Dutch Minister for Cooperation and Development, Jan Pronk, in Kampala. He asked me what I was doing. I said, 'I have just come back from Rwanda, and I am waiting for my director general to brief him on events that are not very nice. I understood that you have been stating things in the press in Holland which give me the idea that you don't know everything and that there is a lot I want to tell you.' He wanted to know everything, and I told him everything I knew. He said, 'Ok why don't you write this down for me?' I said, 'I will, but not now. I will write this down for you as soon as I am back in Holland, as soon as I have ended my contract with MSF Belgium, because I cannot compromise the people in the field by giving you, politicians, a statement on human rights in a mission where my mandate is strictly medical. I will come to The Hague and bring it to you.' That was the deal.

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

On 4 August 1994, during a press conference in Goma, the French section's President of Board of Directors, Philippe Biberson, issued a call on behalf of the entire MSF movement, asking the international community to increase its aid to Rwanda. He also called for the presence of international observers and UNAMIR troops in Rwanda. He stated that the refugees were still too weak to be able to return to a country where reception facilities were not prepared for their arrival.

'Rwanda: Death Rate Still Unacceptable', MSF France **Press release**, 3 August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Operation Turquoise began one month ago but the issue of refugee return – the key to avoiding a humanitarian catastrophe – remains unresolved. They have received no guarantee from the international community that they will be able to return under normal conditions. Deploying an international military force under a UN mandate is the key to overcoming the refugees' fears. But UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has announced that the organisation has only enough resources to deploy 1,000 of the anticipated 5,500-member force […] On the eve of the French withdrawal from the so-called 'security' zone, Médecins Sans Frontières is launching an appeal to the United Nations to replace French troops with an international peacekeeping force. It is

inconceivable that humanitarian organisations should fill the void left by the troops' withdrawal. They are neither trained for nor suited to that goal. The refugees' significant unmet humanitarian needs should not allow us to forget the international community's political responsibilities towards those who instigated the genocide, nor exonerate the international community of those responsibilities. The instigators hold sway even today, operating in complete impunity within the safe humanitarian zone and in the refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania.



'MSF Protests Lack of International Response to Plight of Rwandan Refugees', MSF International **Press release**, 4 August 1994 (in English).

Extract:
Three weeks after the first Rwandan refugees arrived in Goma, the international community has still failed both to meet their most basic need in the camps and to provide guarantees for their safe return to Rwanda [...]
Deployment of a military force is an important step that is already foreseen, but the primordial requirement is for the deployment of civilian human rights observers. Médecins Sans Frontières stresses that such observers should be spread throughout the country, with at least two in each of the 150 largest communes [...]
With the approaching withdrawal of French forces from their 'security zone', MSF is calling for a UN peacekeeping force to be mandated to take over from them. There is absolutely no question of the relief agencies fulfilling this role for which they are untrained and unsuited.



'**Sitrep** from Samantha Bolton, MSF Communication Officer in East Africa to MSF Communication Departments', 5 August 1994 (in English).

Extract:
The press conference went well and we got good coverage. Philippe spoke of security problems and how there needs to be international observers and UNAMIR troops throughout Rwanda to ensure safety. He added that at this moment in time most of the refugees were not in physical condition to go back, especially when the structures to receive them were not even in place.
Philippe also spoke about his trip and visit to the southwest Safe Zone where "no food has been distributed for the past 10 days... children are eating the chewed sugarcane which has been spat onto the ground... everywhere people are killing their cattle and very few beans or flours are visible anywhere."
Philippe appealed to the international community to make an effort to bring in food – as the food pipeline is weak – into the region or we could face a massive exodus, when the French leave, of refugees into Bukavu in Zaire.

During this same press conference, the MSF France President of Board of Directors was questioned about rumours of abuses committed by RPF troops against those repatriated to Rwanda. He responded that MSF was, indeed, concerned that abuses had been committed. He later returned to his comments, acknowledging that he had no proof and declaring the situation in Rwanda to be too uncertain to encourage the refugees to return.

Philippe said exactly what we'd agreed about cholera. He made the statement before some 100 journalists. Then someone asked him, 'Has MSF heard anything about the RPF committing abuses in Rwanda?' I said to myself, 'OK, he's going to say that MSF has no direct information, that we are concerned, but that we can't comment on the issue.' What he said was, 'Yes. I'm also afraid that there have been abuses.' It was all over after that. The reporters were taking down every word. They were really excited because this was the first time anyone had said anything about that. I felt sick. I told myself that I had to interrupt him so I knelt down next to him and said, 'Now you've got to take back what you said because we don't have the right to say that. We don't have any evidence.' He said, 'I can't, I've just said it.' I got up and said, 'I just want to clarify something. This is our President's first press conference in English. What he was trying to say is that we've heard lots of things but we don't have any evidence. We are not in a position to say whether they are true or not.' I looked at him and he said, 'Yes, I apologise for my English. We have no evidence on this question. I expressed myself poorly.' The reporters looked at me. They knew me pretty well and were wondering what to think. I repeated: 'Is that clear? We do not have evidence and this is not MSF's position. You may not quote us on that.' I called Jean-François Alesandrini, MSF France's Communications Director, to alert him and ask if I'd done something stupid. He said I'd done the right thing and we should absolutely not have said that.

Samantha Bolton, MSF International Press Officer, East Africa, 1994-1995 (in French).

On 6 August 1994, General Paul Kagame, the new Rwandan government's Vice President and Defence Minister, denied a statement, made on 5 August by the Operation Turquoise spokesperson, that RPF soldiers had abused refugees.

'Rwanda: New Government Denies Abuses Against Refugees', ***Le Monde*** (France), 7-8 August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
In a 6 August interview broadcast over Rwanda's national radio station, Radio Rwanda, General Paul Kagame, Vice President and Defence Minister in the new Rwandan government, denied reports that RPF soldiers had committed abuses against refugees [...] The Defence Minister said that this information was part of "efforts intended to deter and prevent refugees from returning to their land" [...]
On Friday, Operation Turquoise spokesman Colonel Alain Rambeau announced in Goma (Zaire) that the RPF had kidnapped four young villagers in the area east of Kibuye, in the humanitarian zone under French forces' control [...] Shahryar Khan, UN Special Envoy to Rwanda, said that Rwandan refugees returning home were not suffering widespread abuse at the hands of RPF soldiers. 'Incidents' may have occurred, Khan said in Kigali, but the UN has no evidence that refugees are subject to 'widespread' harassment.

On 10 August 1994, during a press conference in Brussels, the President of MSF Belgium called on the UN to increase its observers and asked that private human rights organisations take an active role in Rwanda.
On 11 August, he repeated that request in the Belgian daily, *Le Soir*. MSF Belgium then created the '*Réseau des Citoyens*' (Citizen's Network), with legal support from

MSF France and other human rights organisations. This new NGO urgently focused on providing technical assistance to the Rwandan judiciary system.



'Médecins Sans Frontières Calls for Human Rights Monitoring in Rwanda', MSF Belgium **Press release**, 10 August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
MSF calls on the UN to send UNAMIR troops in force with an explicit mandate to monitor human rights, but also asks the many specialised NGOs to take on that responsibility. The massive presence of observers will significantly increase the sense of safety [...] This action is even more critical because the French army is going to withdraw soon. Everyone fears that a massive additional displacement of refugees heading toward Bukavu will follow. Humanitarian organisations are now preparing to organise camps in Bukavu. However, MSF believes that everything possible should be done so that people do not leave their country, which is why the organisation will open the first 'way station' along the Gikongoro road (in the Turquoise zone) to Butare to provide medical care to returning refugees. MSF will simultaneously bring the hospital and three clinics in Butare back into operation. Further, MSF France has established health aid stations around Gitarama, drawing people to a 'health zone' administered by international aid organisations just as they are drawn to the French security zone. These measures will attract refugees only if people are guaranteed proper treatment, which is why MSF insists that specialised organisations conduct immediate investigations into recent rumours of 'disappearances' on the RFP side.



'*Opinions et Débats*', **Interview** with Réginald Moreels, President of MSF Belgium, ***Le Soir*** (Belgium), 11 August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
We will call on human rights organisations to change their policy. This is a significant 'first' and represents a new dimension in humanitarian aid. We will ask them to shift from an investigative role to one of permanent monitor, like the monitor's role in conflict prevention situations. We must create an organisation of diplomats in the field who will remain on-site for six months to three years to rebuild relationships among communities and ethnic groups. Organisations like Amnesty, Africa Watch, Common Cause, Avocats Sans Frontières, and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers must go into the field and remain there. Authorities in Kigali have assured me that they completely support this kind of action. There are currently 20 UN human rights observers in Rwanda. Some 450 monitors are needed, stationed in each of the country's communes and employed by the UN and private, non-profit organisations.



Human rights organisations exist to denounce violations committed by governments, but when there is no government, when there is only chaos, they're at a loss what to do. There were no (human rights) organisations present, but when Réginald Moreels made his appeal in the media they all woke up and said, 'We totally agree, but we're not used to working in these types of situations.' MSF offered to take a certain number of representatives of these organisations to the field and Réginald asked me to accompany them. We went to Rwanda for 15 days to see what they could do for the country... We ended up outlining several possible pragmatic actions that no human rights organisation as such could imple-

ment. A minimum of things that we considered necessary, realistic and relatively positive, and that did not have any negative effects. Thus, MSF and these organisations decided to create together the Réseau des Citoyens *(the Citizens' Network) which was operational immediately: it thus received funding from the French and Belgian sections. Six months later, the bilateral cooperation was to be set up. Once there is peace, everyone is there to implement development programmes. But what about before that? We reconstituted a legal library by buying books in Zaire on the civil and penal codes etc. We provided a photocopier. We bought paper for the general prosecutor: the very basics. We looked for lawyers. We worked with the Justice Ministry to set up two rapid refresher courses for magistrates and judicial investigators. These are people that are officially authorised to take depositions, to issue the document required to open an inquiry, to arrest people in due form (name of the person, place, date, etc.). The prisons were full of people who shouldn't have been there as they had not been arrested according to the rules and because the army is not authorised to arrest people.*

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor (in French).

In August 1994, the MSF International Council decided to send 'facilitators'[6] to Rwanda, Zaire (Goma) and Tanzania. Their job was to collect information on the situation and, specifically, on the existence of power structures linked to the '*génocidaires*' in the camps.

'**Minutes** of the International Council Teleconference on Rwanda', 10 August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Human rights observers: human rights organisations typically operate on a short-term basis, but some are considering sending permanent observers to Rwanda. However, that will take time. Because of its medical activities, MSF will not be involved directly in monitoring compliance with human rights but has decided to send a 'facilitator' to Rwanda. We are expecting names and suggestions today. MSF will continue to encourage initiatives and is ready to support actions financially, logistically and otherwise.

'MSF and Human Rights in Rwanda', ***Le Zarwabuta*** No. 1 (**internal newsletter** on the Rwandan crisis), MSF France, 25 August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
In late July, MSF International decided to undertake a lobbying campaign to increase the presence of human rights observers among the Rwandans. The effort was targeted at the international community (UN and member states), and sought to augment the number of UN observers. Pressure was also directed at private non-profit organisations like Amnesty International, Avocats Sans Frontières, the International Federation of Human Rights, and Africa Watch. Some of these organisations were conducting evaluations in the region, with the goal of creating on-site permanent teams to investigate the course of the genocide (registering victims and establishing files) and current abuses in the camps, as well as elsewhere in Rwanda. [...] The second goal was to station MSF

6. These 'facilitators' are also called 'human rights officers', 'information officers', 'legal officers'. In August 1994, the MSF Dutch section sent two legal officers to Goma and Benaco. The French section sent one to Kibeho.

legal staff in Goma, Kigali, Benaco, and Bukavu. They would serve as liaisons between the teams collecting information on their missions and these independent human rights observers.

During the same period, ill prisoners disappeared from the King Faisal Hospital in Kigali, where an MSF Holland team was working. Since the beginning of its activities in early June 1994, this team had been subjected to pressure from soldiers guarding these prisoners.



'**Summary** of Events', MSF Human Rights Mission Officer in Rwanda, 7 September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
6 June 1994: MSF Holland has started a programme at the King Faisal Hospital. Patients include ill prisoners. Other prisoners have since been brought there. The army put 19 of them in the generator room because they were found guilty of murder. The other prisoners were housed like regular patients according to their treatment needs:
- Eight hospitalised for serious illnesses
- The remaining 28 were placed under a tent (physiotherapy)

Tensions with the RPF:
The army was not pleased that the prisoners were not being guarded and asked MSF to take charge of their surveillance. Armed men were circulating in the hospital.
MSF cannot agree to:
- Selecting or guarding patients
- A military presence in the hospital

Prisoner disappearances:
One night in early August, a prisoner was observed running away from the generator room, pursued by a soldier. At the same time, four RPA soldiers were observed near the room.
Situation – 12 August 1994
There is no longer any military presence in the hospital. The disappeared prisoners have not been found. It seems that ICRC might have found them.
Question to ICRC: any trace of the disappeared prisoners? Is there a list of the prisoners to monitor their disappearance?

On 11 August 1994, the UN Security Council spoke in favour of the refugees and displaced people's 'rapid' return to Rwanda. But given the refugees' poor health and rumours of abuses against those who returned to Rwanda, UNHCR and aid organisations were not favourable to that position. The first mass return scheduled for 16 July was cancelled.



'Rwanda: The Refugees' Impossible Return', Anne Le Coz, ***Le Figaro*** (France), 17 July 1994 (in French).

Extract:
The first convoy of refugees scheduled to leave Zaire for Rwanda was organised very quietly over the last several days, but was cancelled yesterday morning following threats against those preparing to return. The seven trucks chartered by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) crossed the border – empty – around 07:30. That day, 144 refugees from the Mugunga camp (15 kilometres northwest of Goma) were to have been transported to Kigali, the Rwandan capital. Most of those scheduled to return were farmers who did not want to miss the harvest. Until now, refugee departures have been organised exclusively from Gisenyi (Rwanda), three kilometres from the Zairian border. Despite the discretion of the operation's preparations, Mugunga camp 'leaders' – officials of the former Rwandan government – had spread false rumours that those preparing to return were agents of the RPF, now in power in Kigali. According to Panos Moumtzis, UNHCR spokesman in Goma, the rumours even "called for killings". By joint agreement, UNHCR and IOM decided to cancel the operation to avoid "risking refugee lives" and attacks on the trucks.

In mid-August, the departure of the French army from the 'safe humanitarian zone' was confirmed for the end of the month. Thousands of people left the zone and headed toward Bukavu, Zaire. V2



'**Message** from MSF Press Officer in Goma to MSF Communication Departments', 11 August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
UNHCR estimates that up until yesterday, 1,000 Rwandans per hour were leaving the security zone and crossing the border toward Bukavu. Today, according to French soldiers, 1,000 people in total left for Bukavu and 700 people left the security zone heading further west. French soldiers believe that 800,000 people are waiting in the security zone to go to Bukavu.



'The Third Exodus of Rwandan Refugees Has Begun', MSF France **Press release**, 13 August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
In the absence of a political framework for resolving the Rwandan crisis, specifically sanctions against those responsible for genocide, the third mass exodus of Rwandan refugees has begun. After fleeing to Tanzania in April and to Goma over the last few weeks, the displaced people from the humanitarian safe zone are now heading toward Zaire. The same leaders responsible for the genocide are orchestrating this flight. Over the last few days, MSF teams in the zone (Kibuye, Gikongoro, Kaduha and Rukondo) have observed major population movements heading toward Cyangugu, and encouraged by members of the former Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR). These teams will evaluate the current situation in this part of Rwanda.

If the international community does not act in the coming days to protect the populations, the consequences of this third exodus could be as tragic as those preceding it.

In the summer 1994 issue of MSF Belgium's internal publication, the General Director reported on his visit to Rwanda's RPF zone several weeks earlier and raised questions about MSF's protection mandate.



'A Fragmented Context, a New Mandate ', Eric Goemaere, ***Contact*** No. 29 (MSF Belgium's in-house magazine), July-August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
In Bugesera, 100,000 people and the wounded from two hospitals, forcibly removed in the space of 48 hours, are congregating in hostile marshland [...] Everywhere there are the same arguments to justify the lack of safety, the militia on the prowl, including in the camps. Everywhere the same terrified glances, the refusal to speak out, except to talk in secret of the massacres in April, the disappearances and summary executions of yesterday. Genocide had undeniably taken place. We have condemned it, and we will continue to do so. But how far can we accept a situation in which yesterday's victims become torturers? And how can we keep our humanitarian work from being an accessory to the fact, as denounced by [the coordinator] and all the team, who were ready to leave? [...] Never have I encountered such a tense atmosphere, such a polarised society, with its mixture of hatred and terror. Casualties disappear from our hospitals almost on a nightly basis, and the medical staff is regularly intimidated. The doctor who runs the hospital in Byumba, our main contact on the ground, disappeared one day [...] they say he's dead, that he was executed along with his wife and three children. There is great unease among the teams. Protection isn't part of our mandate, eh? [...] Basically, a protection mandate calls for procedures, vigilance, and often tough action when dealing with disappearances. This lack of clear procedure and instructions means we make mistakes which sometimes turn into a crisis, like the case of the two armed guards, accompanying us for security reasons, who jumped out of the MSF car to kill two passers-by who were walking in a 'suspicious' fashion.There is an urgent medical need to repatriate the refugees and to get them out of the death camps... but what level of risk can we tolerate before involving these hundreds of thousands of sick and starving people in what can only be another manipulation of their distress?

In its 17 August 1994 issue,[7] the French daily newspaper *Le Monde* reported statements by refugees in Burundi who confirmed that they had been victims of abuses by RPF soldiers in Rwanda.

7. This daily is published in the afternoon and is always dated the following day. For example, the issue available on Monday bears the Tuesday date.



'Fleeing RPF Abuses, 2,500 Rwandans Arrive Daily in Burundi', ***Le Monde*** (France), 17 August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
"Unlike the rumours that are reported, these statements all say the same thing", said an official of a humanitarian organisation. According to accounts, the RPF locked people in several houses before setting fire to them. Those who escaped were killed. Several days earlier, the abuses reached the Saga sector, where some 100 people died in a similar fashion. UNHCR observers confirm the accounts and find that "sporadic abuses" carried out by RPF soldiers are occurring in the region. The issue is whether these soldiers are obeying orders or are rogue elements. The second possibility would seem more plausible, but increasing numbers of massacres around Butare could suggest the former. [...] Reliable sources confirm that there are bodies in the Kanyaru valley. Slightly further east, Médecins Sans Frontières treated two individuals with bullet wounds [...] On 14 July, armed men locked some 12 families (47 people in total) in a Mparamirundi chapel and killed them with a grenade. Three days later, some 50 men were taken away by truck. The next day, several bodies were found a few kilometres away. Last, on 13 August, some 50 men were shot and killed in Kiri. Their bodies were thrown into a common grave. The organisation Physicians for Human Rights learned of the incident and obtained permission from Bujumbura civil authorities to exhume the bodies. But when they reached the spot, the soldiers forbade them from doing so. UNHCR quickly dispatched representatives to Kiri, who found several witnesses. The soldiers tried to prevent the representatives from leaving the village with the people under their protection. The UNHCR staff member killed in his home last Saturday was among those who went to Kiri.

On 22 August 1994, while the President and members of the Rwandan government travelled the country to assure the population of their desire for peace, the Rwandan Interior Minister, Seth Sendashonga, acknowledged in the press that acts of vengeance and disappearances were continuing.



'Rwandan Government's "Operation Seduction"', Jean-Philippe Ceppi, ***Libération*** (France), 22 August 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Despite everything, as Sendashonga acknowledged, disappearances and acts of vengeance are continuing. "Isolated RPF detachments have committed abuses. They will be tried. If we were still at war, military justice would certainly have been more expeditious. We will continue to look for and identify the guilty parties, and we will provide equitable justice." There are also indications that political authorities have numerous accounts to settle with the soldiers, who are still giddy with victory.

Officials of humanitarian organisations that had gathered testimony about RPF abuses told the newspaper Le Monde, in confidence, that they prefer to remain silent so that they could continue working in Rwanda.



'Rwandan Vengeance: Summary Executions, Kidnappings, Massacres, Reprisals. Numerous Statements Incriminate Those Who Won the Civil War', ***Le Monde*** (France), 7 September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Some humanitarian organisations have gathered testimony regarding revenge taken by the victors but are remaining silent so they can continue to work in Rwanda (suggesting a minimum of cooperation with the new authorities.) They say it is "likely" that around mid-May, RPF soldiers killed 2,000-3,000 Burundian Hutu refugees from the Nzangwa camp in the Bugesera region. According to a witness who went to the site, the neighbouring mosque was full of burned bodies. An NGO representative said she was convinced, based on the account of one of her employees, that executions were conducted "hand over fist" in the Kabutare veterinary school near Butare. Pick-up trucks carrying prisoners with their hands tied behind their backs were seen entering. Those same trucks were seen leaving moments later, empty. "This is a military area," the Kigali prefect says. "You can't enter." Will common graves, filled by RPA troops, be discovered there one day? Another NGO representative never objected, even in private, to the arrest of 30 Rwandan employees – "all Hutu" – solely on ethnic grounds. She did not want to anger the new political authorities either.

In her report of the 20 August-5 September 1994 Rwanda mission, the MSF France Legal Advisor described the catastrophic state of the Rwandan legal system. She also informed the teams of the established procedures for gathering information, and made recommendations regarding MSF's monitoring of changes in the country's human rights situation.



'**Report** on Rwanda Mission', Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Today, six judges and ten lawyers remain in Rwanda. The Justice Ministry is destroyed. The minister's office is on the third floor of a devastated building. There is no door and no window. He managed to grab two chairs and some paper. The Palais de Justice has been turned into a restaurant. The archives were burned to cook meals. The illegal occupants have just been evicted and the judges have gathered there so that a first court division can be seated as soon as possible (a minimum of five judges are required and this number has been reached). The national prosecutor in Kigali is translating a procedure code into Kinyarwanda by hand for police officers, who (when they have been found) will conduct questioning and carry out arrests. The prosecutor lives in fear of the legal system. "When we start the trials, all the lawyers in the world will be watching us. They will be able to nullify our judgments – even those regarding the most serious criminals – for a simple procedural error." [...]

The gradual reconstruction of a legal system puts the problem of arrests and imprisonment in stark relief. Today, the army is the only public law enforcement agency. There is no police force, and it will take time to establish a civilian force. It makes sense, and would seem reasonable, to recommend that the army's role be limited and that civilian police be established. But the army can only be limited when soldiers receive pay, which is not yet the case. Today, this 'justifies' the army's looting and expropriation of civilian property in Kigali and elsewhere. Furthermore, the army remains on a state of alert throughout the country and has not relaxed its discipline or eased its training. The war will not be over until the refugees return home and the fate of the former security zone is resolved. So, it seems to me that we must get used to the idea that the army is not going to demobilise any time soon. Instead, we must propose some safeguards.

There is only one 'civilian prison' in the country – the one in Kigali. The World Food Programme is responsible for maintaining prisoners' minimum nutrition levels (including the imprisoned minister of justice and the national prosecutor). There is no medical clinic for those 15,000 prisoners. Everywhere else, prisoners are held in military camps. Their names are not recorded on lists. In Rwanda today, that makes it impossible to distinguish between those who have disappeared and those who are incarcerated.

Fear of the army is so great that families, including MSF workers, rarely seek information from the military about people who have been arrested or disappeared. The system is so disorganised that these prisoners are not a priority for anyone. On the other hand, under current conditions, they represent a significant expense for those holding them [...]

ICRC is currently negotiating access to detention facilities throughout the country. But ICRC's mandate is a general one that covers only prisoners of war. The government does not consider these prisoners to fall in that category. This matter should be followed very closely. ICRC's negotiations should not be weakened in the early stages. The conditions of confinement are dreadful with respect to health and nutrition. Furthermore, in the current climate of pressure and fear, the question of whether someone has disappeared or has been imprisoned is crucial. [...]

I wanted to standardise the coordinators' work. Their primary role is to gather information within MSF and externally. This involves documenting each situation with facts. [...] MSF is not interested in knowing everything about everything. Instead, we are taking on specific responsibilities for certain individuals whose situations we must monitor.

The Kigali Legal Officer will thus collect information on:

- Disappearances and poor treatment of ill and wounded people,
- Disappearances and poor treatment of our local employees (medical and non-medical),
- Serious security incidents involving our facilities and those of other humanitarian organisations.[...]

The first goal of this information gathering is to allow MSF to better determine the seriousness of the situation and its likely development so that we can restructure programmes and develop lobbying or advocacy actions. MSF can always decide to carry out advocacy on its own if we agree among ourselves, at the International Council or elsewhere, but we can also supplement, on a confidential basis, information available to other networks. I have been asked to recommend the most reliable [...]

Very effective working relationships have been developed in the field with the Africa branch of Human Rights Watch, represented by Alison Des Forges. She participated at the end of our evaluation mission, and I have attached the report she made public yesterday in London. It's never a waste of time to work with people like her, and it's not like working with an institution that is going to spend months digesting our information.

All information regarding individuals who have been arrested or who have disappeared should be transmitted to ICRC for investigation and to be registered in their central tracing agency.
When we are dealing with patients in MSF custody or individuals under contract with MSF, we should deal directly with the nearest military and civilian authorities to obtain:
- Confirmation that the person is in the hands of the authorities,
- An opportunity to deliver aid to the individual (from MSF or the family).
We must follow this approach as soon as possible after something suspicious has happened.

On 7 September 1994, ICRC nurses[8] took five detainees from the Gitarama prison to the Kabgayi hospital near the city, where an MSF team had been working for five months. The MSF staff observed that the prisoners were in very poor health.

'**Summary** of Events on 7 September 1994', MSF 'Human Rights' Mission Officer in Rwanda, 12 September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
On the morning of the 7th, the first prisoner, Mr Hakizimana, was brought in. He was severely malnourished and dehydrated. His overall state of health was very poor. He bore rope marks on his arms. He died the night following his arrival and was buried with other hospital patients. No family member came [...]
Mr Musonera, 30, said that he had been jailed for two months, had been struck and beaten with a club, and had received one glass of water and one dish of corn every day. He had a scar on his left forearm. He was severely malnourished and dehydrated and was suffering from diarrhoea. He was put on a drip and treated but remains in poor condition overall.
In the hospital, the prisoners are in one room, guarded by a soldier without a visible weapon.

The international press began to describe the prison situation and the deficiencies of the Rwandan legal system.

'Speedy Justice in Kigali', ***Libération*** (France), 7 September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
"In all honesty, I admit that these mass incarcerations are illegal," said Adrian Sinayobye, who returned to his position as Prison Director. "I received the order from the justice minister, but there were no charges that would be recognisable to a magistrate." Among his prisoners are the former Ambassador, Silvestre Kamali, bourgmestres, civil servants and intellectuals. "I have nothing to give the prisoners," he says. "We feed them only 100 grams/day. We have no vehicle in which to transport the ill or wounded to the hospital."

8. ICRC holds an exclusive mandate providing access and the right to visit prisoners to provide assistance and protection.

The Kigali prisoners may include plenty of notorious killers, but most of the inmates rotting in the mud and garbage believe they have been imprisoned arbitrarily.
In September 1994, Human Rights Watch published a report denouncing the killings committed in May and June 1994 by RPF troops during their struggle to conquer Rwanda.



'The Aftermath of Genocide in Rwanda: Absence of Prosecution, Continued Killings', **Report**, Human Rights Watch/Africa, September 1994 (in English).

Extract:
Devastated by a genocide that cost the lives of at least half a million Tutsi, Rwanda continues to suffer from the aftermath of these catastrophic killings. According to Human Rights Watch/Africa, whose representative just completed a ten-day mission to Rwanda:
- The present government lacks the resources to even begin prosecuting the thousands accused of massacres.
- The international community, despite its infinitely greater resources, has done little to gather the evidence necessary for judicial proceedings.
- With the prospect of actual trials still distant, people accused, rightly or wrongly, of participation in the massacres are being killed or disappearing from their communities, frequently at the hands of government soldiers. A small number of those taken by soldiers have been handed over to civilian authorities for trial but many others are presumed dead.
- The government has denounced killings for vengeance but has not acted effectively to stop them.
- Soldiers of the Rwandan Patriotic Front also killed numerous civilians during the war against the then government of Rwanda, thus violating the Geneva conventions. Sixty-four soldiers are now under arrest but not all are charged with killing civilians. [...]



'Rwanda: Patriotic Front Soldiers Guilty of Slaughter', ***Libération*** (France), 8 September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
According to a report by the human rights organisation Human Rights Watch, which just completed a 10-day observation mission in Rwanda, RPF soldiers carried out extensive killings throughout the country in recent months. On 19 June, as they advanced on areas still under FAR control, RPF soldiers killed nearly 100 people when they opened fire on a crowd gathered in a field. The bodies were then thrown into three common graves, photographed last week by the Human Rights Watch delegation.
Although the war has ended, the killings continue. Human Rights Watch lists at least 10 deaths at the hands of RPF soldiers. Hundreds of people accused, sometimes wrongly, of participating in the genocide of Tutsi and moderate Hutu have been executed or have disappeared.

In their daily work, MSF teams were subjected to increased monitoring by the new authorities. Forced population displacements and abuses by RPA soldiers (the RPA – Rwandan Patriotic Army, was created by the RPF once in power) continued to weigh on possible refugee repatriation.



'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 20 September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Saturday, 17 September 1994,
The RPA demanded that displaced people from the Rubengera camp (5,200 according to camp leader, 1,500 according to MSF) leave the camp within one hour. People dispersed in every direction, with the RPA burning down several grass huts constructed by the displaced to hasten the movement. No wounded people were admitted to the MSF clinic. The RPA destroyed the latrines constructed by MSF, although the MSF representative requested the respect of these latrines. The camp was totally empty by the end of the day.
All displaced people in the Rubengera 'college' (500 people) were dispersed by the RPA in a similar manner.
The RPA demanded that displaced people from Birambo (UNAMIR figure 3,000, although probably less in reality) leave the area. House searches are conducted, and three men were arrested for possession of weapons.



'**Summary** of the MSF Coordinators' Regional Meeting on the Rwandan Crisis', 23-24 September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
[...] the government has a growing desire to control NGO activities. RPA strong-arm tactics in the former Turquoise Zone: vehicles (MSF) and houses (ICRC) requisitioned in Cyangugu; forced displacements of internally displaced people (Runegera camp, Kibuye). UNAMIR falling into line with RPF official position that internally displaced people must return to their homes; growing passivity in the face of security incidents (no investigation); high tolerance for RPF methods vis-à-vis displacements (official denial of MSF allegations of forced displacements in Kibuye). Danger for the teams: mines in Kigali, organised crime at night and definite violent anti-French feeling in case of FAR attack.



'**Sitrep**', MSF Communication Officer in East Africa, 27 September 1994 (in English).

Extract:
rumours of incursions by former government troops in the southeast of Rwanda and also of RPA misbehaviour. The incidents are obviously creating a lot of insecurity. Killings have taken place; as a result people flee again to Tanzania at a rate of approximately 1,000 per day. [...]
Gikongoro – new info concerning the incidents that took place on the night from 16 to 17 September and during which six people were killed and two injured. Witnesses on the scene say that the assailants were dressed in uniforms. [...] The house searches carried out by the RPA in this region caused some panic on Tuesday but according to Major Plant, "Everything's back to normal now."
Then again on 23/9, two people were killed and four injured by an RPA soldier supposedly as a reprisal for killing his family. The MSF team also report that on the same day an RPA soldier threw a grenade into the Gikongoro marketplace injuring four people, of which two severely. He was arrested. According to a local team member in the camp of Rukondo, six persons were lynched when going to the fields to harvest. [...]

UNAMIR in Gikongoro told NGOs that they were not sure if they could guarantee their security in case of an attack.
Kibuye: on 17 September, RPA demanded that the displaced population of Rubengera camp (according to MSF 1,500 people) leave the camp within the hour. RPA soldiers burnt down several grass huts to hasten the movement. RPA destroyed the latrines constructed by MSF. RPA also made people leave by force the Rubengera College, where 500 displaced are staying. A similar scenario at Birambo, where less than 3,000 displaced are staying. ICRC confirmed these reports. We considered going to the press with these testimonies but agreed it would be more sensible to urge the government and UNAMIR to act or investigate these incidents. By informing the journalists we wouldn't accomplish anything except endangering our programmes in the area.

On 23 and 24 September 1994, MSF section coordinators in the Zaire and Tanzania camps met in Kigali to analyse the situation in the camps and the possibilities for MSF activity. They questioned their "approach in response to certain RPF practices in Rwanda".



'**Summary** of the MSF Coordinators' Regional Meeting on the Rwandan Crisis', 23-24 September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Politics also has its limits in Rwanda, as shown by the RPF's behaviour toward its own population and toward NGOs. Nonetheless, we have not reached that limit yet and it doesn't justify a policy of disengagement [...]
Conclusion: although our activities are based on needs, we must make sure that we maintain a certain consistency across missions in our engagement/disengagement criteria [...] We must try to avoid double standards in our activities. Our approach in response to certain RPF practices in Rwanda should be very similar to the one adopted in response to similar practices in Zaire.

On 23 September 1994, the UNHCR spokesperson in Geneva announced that the organisation "is no longer encouraging" Rwandan refugees to return to their country "because of reports of violence there". He based his statement on a report by Robert Gersony, a consultant who reported that tens of thousands of Hutus had been killed by RPA soldiers over the past three months. Although the report was not made public, it received significant press coverage.



'UNHCR No Longer Encouraging Refugees to Return', ***Le Monde*** (France) (from **Agence France-Presse [AFP]**), 25-26 September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
On Friday 23 September, a UNHCR spokesperson announced that the agency "is not currently encouraging" Rwandan refugees to return to their country "because of reports of violence carried out there".

"As of 10 days ago, we've become concerned and have decided to cease all assistance to voluntary refugee repatriation from neighbouring countries," he said. On Thursday, a UNHCR official in Goma, Zaire noted that a growing number of Hutu refugees who had gone back to Rwanda were returning, fleeing acts of vengeance attributed to Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) soldiers.



'Summary of UNHCR **Presentation** [of Robert Gersony] Before Commission of Experts, 10 October 1994 – Prospects for Early Repatriation of Rwandan Refugees Currently in Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire' (in English).

Extract:
1. Significant areas of Butare prefecture, Kibungo prefecture, and the southern and eastern areas of Kigali prefecture have been – and in some cases were reported to remain as of early September – the scene of systematic and sustained killings and persecution of their civilian Hutu populations by the RPA [...] Large-scale indiscriminate killings of men, women, children, including the sick and the elderly were consistently reported [...]:
- Mass killings at meetings [...]
- House-to-house killings and attacks on villages and displaced populations [...]
- Pursuit of hidden populations [...]
- Killings of asylum seekers [...]
- Killing of returnees [...]

An unmistakable pattern of systematic RPA conduct of such actions is the unavoidable conclusion of the team's interview.

On 24 September 1994, UNAMIR denied having information on killings committed by RPA soldiers. A spokesperson for the United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office (UNREO)[9] announced that there was no forensic evidence of such killings.



'Two UN Agencies at Odds on Report of Rwanda Killings', ***International Herald Tribune***[10] (Europe) (from Reuters), 26 September 1994 (in English).

Extract:
Two United Nations agencies were at loggerheads on Sunday over a report by the UN Refugee Agency that Tutsi soldiers of the new Rwandan government were systematically killing Hutu. The UN Rwanda Emergency Office, which is coordinating UN operations in the central African country, said the report lacked evidence and was based on rumours. The report, by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, "gave no physical or forensic evidence of its claims," a UN Emergency Office spokesman said.
"We certainly want to support this government, not undermine it with uninvestigated rumours," the spokesman said. "These are sensitive allegations made without proof."
The office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said in a report issued Friday in Geneva that a consultant it hired had found a "consistent pattern" showing that Rwandan

9. United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office.

10. The international *Herald Tribune* was a daily English language newspaper published in Paris, France, for international English-speaking readers. It was jointly owned by the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. It ceased publication in 2013.

Patriotic Front soldiers, who are mostly Tutsi, had harassed, intimidated and killed members of the majority Hutu tribe. The High Commissioner for Refugees said on Sunday that it stood by its report.

On 24 September 1994, Operation Homeward, under UNAMIR supervision, began repatriating internally displaced people from Gikongoro to their communes in Butare prefecture. Because UNHCR was not mandated to care for internally displaced people and UNAMIR limited its action to transport functions, no UN agency took responsibility for feeding, treating and protecting the repatriated refugees. MSF Belgium and MSF France decided not to get involved in this operation.



'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 27 September 1994 (in French).

Extract:
The displaced people are still waiting in Kibuye. There is no sign of new movements. On Monday, UNAMIR's Operation Homeward began in Gikongoro. Only 60 percent of the people on the departure lists showed up to leave. Fear predominates. Given the UN's failure to assume responsibility (no agency wants to take on the overall operation, lack of security guarantees, lack of assistance on arrival, etc.), MSF France and MSF Belgium decided not to get involved in this operation. UNAMIR's medical team is conducting medical screenings on departure. UNHCR is conducting registration and is overseeing the voluntary aspect of the move but does not want to distribute current and objective information on the situation in the camps. The UNHCR is also setting up a transit centre in the city of Butare, but it will be inadequate if UNAMIR meets its transport goal of 4,000 people/day. The most significant aid questions – medical, nutritional, diet, etc. – remain unanswered for those who have returned to their communes. If large numbers should return from Gikongoro to Butare and Gitarama, they would find nothing ready for them. There are only 30 dysentery beds in Butare and 40 in Gitarama. There are no feeding centres in Butare and only a small one in Gitarama. There is no general food distribution in these prefectures and only 1/3 of the sanitation system has been brought back into operation, etc. We must consider several scenarios: a slow and gradual return (we can manage by gradually increasing reception capacity), or a massive one, which would involve way stations, temporary transit centres, etc.
The government is tightening the administrative noose around the NGOs, including lengthy procedures for clearing customs at the airport and an interest in restoring the Magerwa tax system. We are trying to mobilise the NGOs and UN agencies to organise joint opposition to this measure.

On 27 September 1994, the UN Secretary-General instructed all UN agencies involved in Rwanda not to speak publicly on the issue of possible RPF abuses against refugees returning to Rwanda until the results of underway investigations became available.



'Report on Reprisals by Tutsi Sets Off Bitter Feud at UN', ***The New York Times*** (USA), Geneva, 28 September 1994 (in English).

Extract:
In an effort to quell the controversy and to protect against the possibility that the Rwandan government, which has reacted angrily to the report, might expel all UN forces from the country, the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has ordered an investigation into the allegations. He has also issued "strict instructions" to all UN officials not to talk about the agency's findings, which are based on a five-week investigation [...] The agency's report, which has not been made public or even given to other UN agencies, has dealt a severe blow to efforts to get the Rwandan refugees to return home. This has been a priority of the international community, worried about the destabilising effect of more than a million refugees in Zaire, and more than a quarter of a million in Tanzania. In a sharp reversal of policy, the agency is no longer encouraging refugees to return home. It will no longer even provide assistance for those who wish to return, agency officials said.[...]
But in the corridors and when speaking on background, UN officials are bitter in their recriminations about the Refugee Agency. Much of the criticism stems from concerns that in issuing a human rights report, the Refugee Agency was infringing on the mandate of other UN organisations. "There are turf questions, which are unfortunate," Mr Spiegel said. But he and Refugee Agency officials said the agency did not set out to do a human rights investigation. The investigation was indeed to focus on the mechanisms for repatriation.

The Rwanda Coordinator's assignment with MSF Belgium ended in early October 1994. He submitted a complete and detailed report in his own name, in Dutch, to Jan Pronk, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, as promised in July. The document covered RPF incidents he had witnessed between May and September 1994 in the Byumba and Bugesera regions.



'Rwanda Behind the Screens of the RPF: **Report** of 90 Days Emergency Health with MSF Belgium', 27 September 1994 (in Dutch).

Extract:
Introduction
Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) was one of the first NGOs to set up projects in Rwanda after President Habyarimana was killed and the civil war broke out in full force. As Coordinator of Doctors Without Borders – Belgium, I was able to take stock of the situation in the region controlled by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Doctors Without Borders – Belgium was, after initially being viewed suspiciously and later on favoured, one of the most important humanitarian aid organisations in the RPF zone. On several occasions we were asked by the RPF to provide assistance in newly occupied areas, in crisis situations and with population migration. In my capacity at that time, I was always present when scouting missions had to be carried out, when frontline campaigns were launched or if complex situations arose. This enabled me to observe on a wide scale; to form a picture of the daily realities in the RPF-controlled zone and to mirror these against reports in the media. As in every guerrilla war that I have witnessed, the mood in the Rwandan war often changed from day to day. Many factors influenced

the situation in the RPF zone, and as a result, the way in which it was 'governed'. During the period described here, I noted a distinct deterioration of the humanitarian situation. This deterioration was so alarming that I felt obliged to alert our headquarters in Brussels and to urgently request our General Director, Dr Eric Goemaere, to come to Rwanda right away for consultation and evaluation. To illustrate my findings, I wrote a situation report, which is the basis of this document. When I returned to the Netherlands, I felt I needed to give a more extensive portrayal than I had given in the brief situation report. I have decided to bundle all the important facts, my impressions and conclusions into this report so that it will serve as information for others. All facts are stated according to the truth and have been commented on to the best of my ability; however, the reader should bear in mind that these findings constitute my personal experience and views and cannot be regarded as the absolute truth.



When I came back to Holland in September, I wrote this report in Dutch: "Rwanda Behind the Screens of the RPF: Report of 90 Days Emergency Health with MSF Belgium," which is much more detailed than the previous one. That report was the basis for Jan Pronk's intervention in Rwanda and discussions with the RPF.

It was an influential time because they were having the donor conferences. The leaders were going into talks with the new government to see how people could return, how human rights were dealt with, what to do with the prisons, and how to build a judiciary again. Jan Pronk was one of the main donors to this new Rwandan government, so tried to find ways to get the message across. One part of the Dutch message has been that we were aware that things were going wrong. Although Rwanda did not have enough prison capacity, police and judges, they should not start allowing popular tribunals in which people are executed behind the barracks. We were aware of a so-called purification process of people either coming back from Zaire or being stuck in the country, and you only had to point your finger on somebody and say, 'I saw him kill my neighbour' and he would immediately be killed. Jan Pronk took the decision to go forward and invest in this government, invest with a lot of risk, knowing that he had very little chance to influence them, so it was better to be on board, to talk to them instead of ignoring them…

I had clearly chosen Jan Pronk to be the messenger in the political sense to bring forward the conclusions I had, and I thought it was not up to me to start exposing MSF personnel to a tribunal. It was also up to MSF to have a hold on that report.

I quit MSF to get rid of the medical mandate and the obligations under it – to be able to use this to influence the politicians that I thought could change circumstances for the people of Rwanda. MSF Belgium had been informed. They never made any objection. I brought it out under my own name. The first page was stating that this is my personal view on things and that it can never be absolute truth. But I was willing to give people information for them to judge how things happened that I had reported or that people had reported to me from reliable sources – to do something with the burden on my shoulders which was beyond the medical mandate. The Flemish people in the MSF Belgium office had the Dutch version of this report. I shared it with them. Many people have copies.

[…], MSF Belgium, Coordinator for Byumba and Bugesera (Rwanda), May-September 1994 (in English).

On 3 October 1994, the UN's expert Commission charged with investigating the genocide proposed that the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia also be assigned to try those who led the genocide against the Rwandan Tutsi. On 6 October, the Rwandan President called for an international tribunal to be created to try crimes against humanity.
Around the UN General Assembly, people were discussing the information on the RPF massacres contained in the Gersony report. When the Commission questioned the Rwandan government on the issue, the government stated that the killings were not planned and systematic but individual, uncontrolled acts of vengeance.



'A Confidential Report States 30,000 Hutu Dead: Controversy Persists Regarding UNHCR Allegations', ***Le Monde*** (France), 4 October 1994 (in French).

Extract:
UNHCR's confidential report stating that 30,000 Hutu were killed in Rwanda [...] remains controversial. With its mandate limited exclusively to refugees, UNHCR does not have a presence in Rwanda. This report thus rests solely on statements by refugees in neighbouring countries.
Many in Geneva's international community are irritated that they have not yet had access to the 'Gersony report' on the Rwanda situation. The document was delivered to Madame Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, who transmitted it to UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He asked that UNHCR no longer provide any information to the press regarding the Rwanda situation until the results of an "in-depth study" are available on UNHCR's allegations [...]
Robert Gersony, a US consultant to UNHCR, who previously conducted a study of accelerated repatriation to Nicaragua, wrote the document. He reported the observations of a three-person team that collected statements from more than 300 interviews in various refugee sites. Gersony concluded that at least 30,000 Hutu civilians had been killed during the RPF's conquest.
These killings were not isolated acts of vengeance but the result of a deliberate policy of emptying entire villages in certain regions of their population so that Tutsi who had been living in exile in Uganda could resettle in Rwanda.
As a result of the Gersony report's alarming conclusions, UNHCR decided to halt refugee repatriation operations, as the current situation was found to be too grave.

The Gersony report caused concern within the US administration, which until then had supported the new Rwandan regime.



'Reports Accuse Kigali', ***Libération*** (France), 1-2 October 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Judging the reported facts to be damning and extremely embarrassing, the US administration, initially favourable toward the new Rwandan regime, held additional crisis meetings. The first meeting took place Thursday night at the Department of State in Washington, DC. Yesterday, the National Security Council, close to the White House, was scheduled to take up the problem. "We would like to believe that that Kigali

government is not responsible for these abuses," said a US diplomat, who asked not to be named. "Along with a serious warning, we expect to provide the Rwandan authorities with the logistical means – including vehicles and communications – to improve their control over the situation. Until we see proof to the contrary, we would prefer to believe that these killings do not represent an organised will to exterminate."



'Monitors Needed to Halt Rwanda's Cycle of Revenge', Tony P. Hall (Democratic representative from Ohio and Chairman of the Congressional Hunger Caucus), ***International Herald Tribune*** (Europe), 19 October 1994 (in English).

Extract:
Recently, a leading human rights expert who was contracted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has documented atrocities. His report concludes that an "unmistakable pattern of killings and persecution" by soldiers of the Tutsi-based Rwandan Patriotic Front is aimed at the Hutu population. In the past, this expert has released irrefutable reports of human rights abuses in Uganda, Somalia, Mozambique, Liberia and Central America.
Some discount the report, which has been embargoed by the UN secretary-general, but senior officials at the United Nations, the State Department and the US Agency for International Development who are familiar with the author's track record are confident of the report's veracity and its methodology.
Will the international community turn its back on the findings and assault the methodology, thereby becoming a party to increased human suffering? Or will it instead take the report seriously and inform both the Patriotic Front in Kigali and the Hutu outside Rwanda that the cycle of revenge killings must stop, and also insist upon the deployment of human rights monitors to address both the fact and the perception of the current atrocities perpetuated against the Hutu?

Every day, MSF teams in Rwanda observed tighter RPA control over the entire country and gathered increasing numbers of statements about abuses committed by the new regime's soldiers.



'**Minutes** of the International Meeting of the Operations' Directors on Rwanda', Paris, 5 October 1994 (in English).

Extract:
Northeast: MSF Switzerland is currently working in the area. There are 40,000 returnees who have arrived from Uganda since June. They were allegedly told by the RPF that they would receive a parcel of land, cattle and a house on arrival. The population in this area is almost entirely Tutsi: They are pushing the Hutu population out.
In general:
- The Tutsi now occupy all the key positions of authority.
- Tutsi from Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda are settling in Rwanda, often taking what was once the property of Hutu.
- The Tutsi are not encouraging repatriation of the Hutu refugees.

- The attitude of the RPF towards NGOs is becoming more and more demanding. They are disappointed with NGOs: they are seeking more long-term investment and have pushed out non-effective NGOs. They couldn't care less what the NGOs do in the north.
- The latest Africa Watch report details evidence of killing by the RPF after the war and the RPF killings (including women and children) in Bugesera during the war.
- An international tribunal is needed to judge the genocide and civil war.



'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Emergency Desk', 7 October 1994 (in French).

Extract:

Security

The MSF teams have recorded increasing numbers of incidents pointing to the RPA's tightened hold over the country, specifically in Butare, Gitarama and Ruhengeri. Although there are only a few direct statements, information coming from different regions is consistent.

Several themes stand out:

- Arrests by the RPA and transfers to prison. The prisons that ICRC visited are full (1,000 in Butare, 300 in Gitarama). Several of MSF's local staff members were arrested in similar fashion on suspicion of participating in genocide or an attack. ICRC has access to all prisons where the conditions of incarceration are disastrous; nonetheless, they have been forbidden entry into part of the Butare prison.
- 'Disappearances,' that is, nighttime arrests of men by the RPA. Families receive no more news of them. In Gitarama, Burundians are said to be participating in these operations with the RPA.

There is no legal structure in place. Arrests or disappearances can occur based on a simple denunciation by a single person (10 arrests of this nature occur weekly at the King Faisal Hospital). Further, those arrested and imprisoned are held without questioning or charges (as in the case of an MSF Belgium medical assistant in Butare and MSF France Gikongoro staff transferred to Butare). The government has clearly stated that criminals will be kept in prison, without trial, until an international tribunal has been established. According to MSF Holland in Ruhengeri and MSF Belgium in Butare, the RPA gave priority to arresting returnees and intellectuals.

- Attacks: in Gikongoro, two brothers of an MSF guard were attacked at night by "four unknown men dressed as soldiers". They suffered knife wounds to the head. The reason offered by the brothers: ethnic reprisals. Five or six similar cases recorded weekly in the Kigeme hospital in Gikongoro.
- Appearance of "informal prisons". In Ruhengeri, the MSF Holland team observed an RPA detention site in a school.
- Population displacements: Arrival of 2,000-3,000 people in Birambo, Mwendo commune, Kibuye prefecture. They said they were fleeing disappearances and RPA attacks at night in Gitarama prefecture. Reversal of flood of refugees between Goma and northern Rwanda: returnees appear to be returning to the Goma camps after their experiences in Ruhengeri/Gisenyi.
- The displaced of Gikongoro are not returning, Operation Homeward continues to be a flop. The displaced people do not want to go back, claiming security concerns (c.f. below).

The volume of information has increased and has become more pressing in the last few weeks. Are we really seeing the situation harden or are we simply better informed? Are these still isolated incidents carried out by uncontrolled elements that must be checked (government's version), and thus understandable given the history here, or are we seeing

something else altogether (control of populations by 'armed terror')? Does this confirm that the military is gaining the upper hand over a civilian power that has barely been established? In short, to be watched closely!

Government-NGO relationships: after the grace and 'laissez-faire' period, authorities have been trying to gain control over the NGOs. For example, travel permits specifying the purpose and goal of every trip must be requested in Butare prefecture. MSF Belgium was unable to visit a seed distribution area for three days following the distribution. The prefect decided that the trip was unnecessary. Some areas are forbidden, even to UNAMIR. UNAMIR, which had brought a convoy of returnees to Ntiazo (Butare), was refused access to the site several days later when they wanted to check on the returnees' status. According to ICRC, which visited later, the zone is calm and there is nothing to report.

In Kigali, the government wants to implement an NGO registration procedure. MSF is part of a committee of four NGOs that is supposed to convey NGO views on this procedure. It has not yet been presented. However, according to available information, this procedure will be very restrictive and would confer NGO status in Rwanda only on certain organisations fulfilling selective criteria (programme and financing type, etc.).

Repatriation

The current situation is not viable. Turning the camps into permanent fixtures is not a sustainable solution. People need to return home. However, given the complexity of the problem, MSF's policy in this area must be as clear as possible.

The reason most often cited by displaced people for not returning is lack of security (information from all the agencies agree). The second reason offered is the lack of assistance (food and healthcare) in the return areas.

In mid-October 1994, MSF France officials denounced the UN irresolution in the press, criticising the organisation for failing to provide the means for determining the truth about the genocide, and thus compromising the chance to restore peaceful coexistence among Rwandans. These texts did not refer to, or barely mentioned, internal reports circulating among MSF sections on the systematic violence carried out by the RPF.

'Rwanda: A Losing Bet', Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier (MSF Legal Advisor), ***Le Monde*** (France), 12 October 1994 (in French).

Extract:

Since April, the UN has purposefully made a losing bet in Rwanda and has chosen lies over truth. For months, the UN has been issuing reassuring speeches on the fight against impunity. Meanwhile, as procedures for uncovering the truth have increased, the immense UN bureaucracy has denied its departments the means to carry out their work. While the UN's humanitarian and military branch could deploy more than 5,000 armed and baggage-laden people to this crisis, its 'human rights' activity may be in flagrante delicto of breach of trust and deception. A lone Kigali-based representative, working without a budget, car or radio, carried out the official line for four months. To his credit, he resigned [...]

As the Security Council was about to vote on a resolution calling for the immediate creation of an international tribunal, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and UNHCR issued sensational revelations regarding RPF killings of Hutu, based on an

outside consultant's report. The immediate impact was to avoid a Security Council decision and to test public opinion and the reaction of the political class to the notion of 'mutual genocide'!
Since then, UN independent experts have acknowledged that genocide occurred. But it is time to question the methods. By hiding behind a consultant to do the work of its investigators and observers, the UN was able to tar both Hutu and Tutsi with the same brush. In so doing, the UN also effectively allowed rumours to spread without giving itself the means to do its own job: establish the truth.



'The UN's Lack of Resolution in Rwanda', Rony Brauman (MSF Fondation, former MSF France President of Board of Directors), ***Libération*** (France), 18 October 1994 (in French).

Extract:
"The Tutsi extermination was planned months in advance [...] to destroy in whole or in part a national entity, a national ethnic group or a racial or religious ethnic group," the UN's experts declared in a report submitted to the Security Council on 3 October. The final version will be presented on 30 November. Three months ago, the UN Commission on Human Rights made public a report on the situation in Rwanda. It came to the same conclusion: genocide was clearly established. The Special Rapporteur, Mr Degni-Segui, called on the UN to condemn the genocide by informing those responsible that they would be held to answer for their acts. He asked the UN to "take concrete measures aimed at disarming the militias and armed civilians," set up a human rights observer team, and create an international court. Failing that, he seconded the recommendation of another commission, proposing to "extend the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Tribunal for war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia [...]"
The second key issue is the immediate creation of an international criminal court and a team of human rights observers provided with the means to carry out their mission. The rivers are running with corpses again in Rwanda. While there may be no evidence that the new regime in Kigali is behind these crimes, it is obvious, on the other hand, that private acts of reprisal are increasing. Could we expect anything else after the carnage of the last months? If impunity remains the rule, extremists of all stripes will take that as a green light and the endless cycle of mutual revenge will continue. That is why creating an international court is so urgent. It is also why recognising genocide for what it is represents not only a simple act of morality but also a concrete requirement for restoring the conditions under which Rwandans can coexist. It is also why sending a team of human rights observers – planned since June and actively ignored – is equally pressing. Their active presence in the field would curb the spiral of abuses by showing that the international community will not allow the horror to be forgotten [...]
Rwanda's reconstruction does not depend on any legal ruling, but on appropriating resources to a government stripped by its predecessors' scorched-earth policy of any chance to govern. The smallest NGO working in Rwanda is better equipped logistically than the country's government. The government must be provided the minimum means to govern, set up an administration, resume public services, and rebuild and re-equip facilities that have been destroyed or looted. Given its special relationship with Africa, the European Union is facing a project on which it can put its formidable resources – expertise and material means – to work. Otherwise, the RPF army – Rwanda's only institution with a semblance of organisation – will grab all the levers of power, which will inevitably end up in the radicals' hands. We must act quickly to avoid a Sekou Toure-like scenario. Appropriate resources could, without a doubt, check such an outcome.

On 20 October 1994, Amnesty International published a report on the killings committed by the RPFarmy between April and August 1994.



'Rwanda: Reports of Killings and Abductions by the Rwandan Patriotic Army, April-August 1994', **Report**, **Amnesty International**, 20 October 1994 (in English, in French).

Extract:
Reports received from Rwandan eyewitnesses and others suggest that hundreds – possibly thousands – of unarmed civilians and captured armed opponents of the RPF have been summarily executed or otherwise deliberately and arbitrarily killed since countrywide massacres and other acts of violence flared up after the death of former President Juvénal Habyarimana on 6 April 1994. [...]
Many of the killings took place in a series of arbitrary reprisals mainly against groups of Hutu civilians, some of which occurred in some cases before 6 April, but mainly afterwards in the northeast. There were also sporadic deliberate and arbitrary killings as the RPA took control and, uncovering evidence of genocide, took indiscriminate revenge on unarmed Hutu civilians. There were also deliberate executions carried out in the course of a 'screening' process. There have also been reports of revenge killings by Tutsi supporters of the RPF [...]
Amnesty International has known for several years that the RPF closely monitored and controlled movements of foreigners in areas under its control. Journalists and representatives of humanitarian organisations rarely talked to Rwandan citizens under RPF control without an RPF official being present. This ensured that before the new government came to power on 19 July 1994, very limited information about abuses by the RPA could be gathered or made public by independent observers. However, Amnesty International has received numerous reports of human rights abuses.



'Kigali Discredited: Amnesty International Takes Its Turn Denouncing the Increasingly Isolated Rwandan Government', ***Le Monde*** (France), 21 October 1994 (in French).

Extract:
The mood has shifted from sympathy for the appalling genocide the Tutsi have suffered to discredit. The international community views the new Rwandan government, in office since July, with increasing suspicion. Now Amnesty International is the latest to cry shame. On Thursday 20 October, with the publication of a report on killings committed by the RPF army between April and August, the organisation distributed a press release highly critical of the new Kigali authorities.
"Soldiers of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) killed hundreds, even thousands, of prisoners and unarmed civilians," Amnesty International reports. The organisation says it has submitted several cases to the government but has not received any response. It warns that if the Kigali authorities do not investigate and bring those responsible to justice, Amnesty will conclude that "The government supports these deadly acts."
Amnesty International acknowledges that, "The number of killings committed by the RPA is, however, smaller than those perpetrated by the armed forces and militias loyal to the former government, who killed at least 500,000 people." The organisation also acknowledged that "Supporters of the former government – those responsible for the

genocide in Rwanda – could use its report for propaganda purposes." Nonetheless, it has chosen to alert the international community.

Alerted to the disastrous health situation in the prisons, the MSF Belgium team in Rwanda asked the ICRC to improve its treatment of detainees.



'**Fax** from Barbara Kerstiens, MSF Belgium Coordinator in Rwanda, to the Desk', 21 October 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Regarding the prisons: I went to see ICRC again to nudge them in the right direction (that is, towards a more pragmatic approach and more intensive support from their internationals in the prisons). The problem came up during a meeting between MSF's and ICRC's "head honchos" [...] Mr [...] (ICRC Africa desk) had said ICRC was going to be more "pragmatic". I then met with Dr [...] (former MSF, Somalia). He told me they were doing more [...] I'll ask the Citizens' Network to visit again in 10 days to see if there's still a problem. If there is, I'll go and check it out.

On 28 October 1994, during the MSF France Board meeting, Board member Frédéric Laffont presented information and testimony he had gathered on a recent visit to Rwanda about abuses committed by the new regime's supporters. The ensuing discussion highlighted the dilemma confronting MSF, which found itself trapped in the 'genocide framework'.



'**Minutes** of the MSF France Board Meeting', 28 October 1994 (in French).

Extract:
<u>Rwanda mission</u>
Frédéric Laffont [MSF France Board member] and Françoise Saulnier [MSF France Legal advisor] spent 10 days in Kigali and Gitarama. The fight against the génocidaires is becoming increasingly complicated. From the judicial standpoint, things are still fragile, although there are efforts to help set up a legal system. Further, MSF teams in the field are living with constant rumours. Nothing has been put in place that would allow them to obtain answers.
There are still abuses, mass graves and 'regrettable errors' ... Obviously, if people's houses can be taken over, shameful things are happening. Entire families are still disappearing.
How can we continue to provide medical care in a place where they say people disappear every night? We need to open our eyes because it's pointless to operate in the UN mindset. If you ask questions, you can start a process that can end up with people being freed.
We can't just keep pedalling furiously with our heads down. We've got to try to stop the rumours and get answers. Without them, there will be no medium-term strategy for MSF.

There are places to go for information because Rwandan information networks do exist, and some people have been struggling since 1980 to defend human rights.

Discussion

Philippe Biberson, [President of MSF France Board of Directors]: It is not easy to get objective information on what is really happening in Rwanda. The Rwandans have become used to manipulating tools like lists very skilfully, and they know how to present things, so they seem to make sense…

Faced with rumours, MSF tried to place someone in the teams to try to clarify what was happening with abuses, but that didn't work. This person was designated as a 'specialist,' and the information went straight to headquarters without going via the team in the capital. Maybe we should try again but do things differently? Still, it's a strange country where you don't know what the person you are dealing with has done in the past…

Guy [Hermet, board member]: recalls that at the time of liberation, 30,000 summary executions took place and were never investigated.

There is concern about whether MSF is capable of and determined to investigate individual abuses (same problem in Iraq). On the other hand, it seems clear that we must support organisations created to do just that, like Citizens' Network, Africa Watch, FIDH, and the ICRC delegates who can visit prisons.

Elikia [M'Bokolo, board member] noted that there are lots of rumours. Some are justified but still highly misleading. They don't have to resort to the kind of violence used in the past.

Bernard [MSF France General Director]: If we witness an incident directly (for example, if one of our employees disappears), then we do have a responsibility. However, it is not our role to investigate every rumour (others can do that). Today, there is an imbalance between:

- The people who are trying to find out what is going on in the country, and
- The fact that nothing is happening in the camps (identification of the *génocidaires*).

The UN observers are observing each other. Same thing for UNAMIR – and nothing is happening.

We've already put pressure on the UN to increase their observers, gather information and provide statements. Unfortunately, we have limited power over the UN and member states. Decisions are made but not implemented.

Brigitte [Vasset, MSF France Director of Operations]: We must understand what is going on if we are to be able to act. It was important for MSF to stay in Rwanda in case the rumours turned out to be justified. Now we know the facts. The issue is to figure out how we can stop these things from happening or speak out about what we know.

Jean-Hervé [Bradol; MSF France Programme Manager] added that we knew the situation would be complicated. Thanks to Amnesty's and Africa Watch's reports, we can't talk about rumours anymore – these are facts. If we hesitate to talk about RPF abuses, that will damage our credibility and weaken our work.

Philippe: Whether we like it or not, we're not neutral about Rwanda. We're lending weight to the current government. The government is manipulating us on the refugee return issue and to lend it credibility. We're silent about the massacres – we've taken a wait-and-see position – because we're trapped in the 'genocide framework'. If we want the teams to keep their ears and eyes open, we've got to say clearly:

- That genocide doesn't allow you to do whatever you want, and it must not force us to swallow lies we don't have to swallow…
- Which networks to use when you have information.

In this setting, taking positions in the media is dicey. It's not easy to explain things to the public, and given the short timeframe, we won't be able to mobilise people again.

Frédéric Laffont, a reporter and MSF France Board member, provided the first information on RPF massacres inside Rwanda to the MSF France Board after we visited Rwanda together in October 1994. It was André Sibomana – one of the Gitarama priests whom I knew and who knew the MSF team in the field – who gave the information to Frédéric, whom he saw for the second or third time, not to me. He trusted Frédéric. We saw the priest together in the afternoon. At the end of the meeting, he made a date to meet us the following evening in front of a hotel in Kigali. That night, we went to the hotel and Frédéric said to me, 'He asked me to stop by because he wanted to give me some documents.' The priest came secretly at night, put the papers in the car and left without saying anything. We ended up in possession of the list of everyone who had disappeared in the Gitarama diocese since July. This was October, so there were lots of names. Frédéric brought the list to the Board, and we were faced with the certainty that the new government was not only arresting people but killing them. Who were they killing? How? Why? It was very complicated. The MSF Board debated the issue. As of that moment, the honeymoon with the RPF government was over. They didn't look any more to us like people who'd freed the country from genocide. They looked like military dictators. There was a real debate within MSF France.

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France Legal Advisor (in French).

In Early November 1994, Filip Reyntjens, a Belgian researcher returning from Rwanda, reported about alarming abuses of the new Rwandan regime and its army.

'Concerns About Rwanda in October 1994' **Working paper**, Filip Reyntjens, Institut de Politique et de Gestion du Développement, University of Anvers, 3 November 1994 (in French).

Extract:

1. The first problem is insecurity, due to several factors. The Armée Patriotique Rwandaise (APR, military wing of the FPR), now a national force, is no longer the disciplined army of the guerilla years [...]
2. A second problem is the anarchic return of the former diaspora and the unlawful occupation of property [...]
3. There is a worrying number of 'disappearances' – assassinations or even massacres. People disappear on an almost daily basis, arrested by members of the APR and taken to unknown destinations [...]
4. Still on the issue of human rights, attention must be drawn to the situation of thousands of people detained for complicity in the genocide [...]
5. Another trend that must be considered: the rapid injection of ethnic radicalisation. We can see a striking difference between the diaspora coming from Uganda and that of Burundi and the lines these groups draw up between the old FPR and the new. The radicalism of the Burundi group is a cause for heightened concern: according to a Tutsi from the interior, a genocide survivor himself, the 'Burundians' demonstrate attitudes that he terms "worse than the Interahamwe" [...]
6. The heterogeneity or even the splits within the government and the FPR is another source of concern [...]
7. There is a paradoxical trend of marginalising Tutsi from the interior. They have been victims twice over [...]

8. Many Hutu, particularly intellectuals, live in fear. It is striking to see how far the disenchantment extends, even among those who pinned their hopes on the FPR's history and sought refuge in the areas under its control [...]
9. On the human rights side, the action – or rather lack of it – of the UN agencies in the country is striking.

The Rwandan government continued to reaffirm its desire to close the internally displaced people's camps and return individuals to their communes. On 13 November 1994, UNAMIR announced that on 10 and 11 November, RPA soldiers fired on the Musange refugee camp, north of Gikongoro, killing 14 people and wounding 17 others.



'UN Commission Emphasises that Genocide was Planned', ***Le Monde*** (France), 3 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
On Thursday 1 December, Emile Segbor, Head of UNHCR's Bukavu sub-delegation, said that last week around 12,000 Rwandans fled southwestern Rwanda for Zaire when the RPF 'emptied' at least one camp of displaced people.
Over the last few weeks, the Kigali government has stated repeatedly that the displaced people's camps must be closed, and occupants must return to their homes in the hills. Last week, Rwandan President Pasteur Bizimungu said he hoped all the camps would be closed before the end of the year.

MSF teams observed growing numbers of security incidents. They watched anxiously as the new government created a registration process to control NGOs, threatening to paralyse their work.



'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 9 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Army discipline continues to worsen. On 27 November, for example, a mutiny occurred in an RPA camp in Kibuye. One of the mutineers died and four were arrested.
The RPA provoke repeated security incidents, resulting in scores of deaths: 25 deaths in Cyangugu between November 22 and 23 (RPA threw a grenade into a crowd to slow a fleeing suspect; RPA opened fire on a boatload of refugees heading for Zaire), 16 dead in Ngenda and nine in Gashora among recently arrived (reason unknown). Situation still tense in Gitarama [...]
The government continues to play cat-and-mouse with the IDP issue. Ministers' statements are contradictory – some conciliatory, others very harsh.
Several announcements have put 12 December forward as the deadline. At the same time, the government is offering only vague support for 'the general outline' of the UN's voluntary repatriation plan. There are two explanations for this shift: either they really

do not know how to resolve a problem that is beyond them, or they are so divided that they cannot manage to define a course of action.
The deterioration of the situation in Burundi, especially given that the Hutu are using strong-arm pressure, could lead the RPA to deal with the danger the camps pose sooner than anticipated. We take this very seriously.
Government-NGO relationships
Things are not going well. The NGO registration process and framework the government has outlined, based on the Ethiopian model, has almost been officially adopted. The Minister of Rehabilitation is supposed to announce it on Tuesday. An immense bureaucratic machine designed to control NGOs is going to start grinding. The likely result will be to paralyse the NGOs' activities.

On 6 December 1994, the MSF France team observed RPA soldiers conducting a forced closure of the Kaduha displaced people's camp. The soldiers threatened to set fire to the camp. The displaced people headed for larger camps in Kibeho and Ndago.



'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 9 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Kaduha is empty:
26 November: census conducted by medical home visitors: 40,635 people.
6 December: the team (plus Françoise and Catherine) finished its exhaustive camp census. At noon, there were 20,300 people. By 14:30, the IDPs had begun leaving en masse, most on foot. A UNAMIR convoy was also organised. On 7 December, there were no more than 1,000 people in the camp. Most were waiting for truck transport. On 8 December, the camp was empty.
While awaiting exact figures from UNAMIR and UNHCR, we can say that more than 80 percent of the displaced people left on foot. Most of them said they did not want to return to their communes because of security concerns. Fearful of the RPA, they dispersed into the hills and, following small paths at night, tried to reach other camps further south (Rukondo and Cyanika). There is no mass movement on the roads. Only 300 people arrived in Rukondo on Wednesday and 600 on Thursday. On Thursday, small groups of displaced people from Kaduha were seen on the road near Kibeho.
The RPA was the only group involved in the camp closure (contingent based on site). No civilian authority was involved. No physical violence was used. There were no deaths or injuries. The IDPs did not complain about theft, looting or extortion by the army. It was all carried out using verbal intimidation. A captain gave the evacuation order on Tuesday afternoon. According to the IDPs, he threatened to burn the camp if people did not leave.



While the departing coordinator and I were preparing for her to transfer her responsibilities to me, the Kaduha camp emptied. That was the beginning of the "eviction" process carried out by the soldiers. On the day we both left Kaduha, within an hour we saw 40,000 people leaving, carrying their bundles of belongings. They were heading in all directions through the hills. We managed to stop some of them and asked what was happening. They told us that the soldiers were driving them out. We returned to Kaduha and the camp

was empty. We called the team at the hospital. They hadn't seen anything because it had all taken place in the space of two hours! The soldiers arrived and said, 'Everybody out!' There was no violence. The simple fact that they were there en masse, telling everyone to leave, was enough to convince camp residents to go. Over the next few months, we saw the same process unfold in one camp after another. They went further and further south and towards the border. The 40,000 people from Kaduha were transported to other camps. As the camps emptied one by one, they made their way to Kibeho and Ndago, the two largest camps. There was still a third – Munini – a smaller camp. I think most people went to the biggest one because the blue helmets were there, and they really thought they would be protected. The total reached nearly 100,000 people. I never imagined that. There is no question that the RPA wanted to empty the camps and set the process in motion. I thought they were trying to push people to the other side of the border. That's certainly what they wanted to do indirectly, but in the end, they used violence.

Catherine Quillet, MSF France, Field Coordinator, Gikongoro, Rwanda, November 1994-May 1995 (in French).

Following these incidents, we went with the field officer to see the Gikongoro prefect to protest the soldiers' firing on aid workers and the population and setting huts on fire. This prefect, who was then, I believe, an English-speaking RPA captain, told us, 'But all these people are Interahamwe and there's only one way to deal with Interahamwe…'

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).

On 9 December 1994, the Gikongoro prefect announced the planned closure of the Rukondo, Cyanika and Kibeho camps. The MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda anticipated the action would harden attitudes among the displaced people. Closing the camps would not be enough to convince them to return home. V3

'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 9 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Follow-up to events: Rukondo, next week; Kibeho and Cyanika the week after.
9 December: the Gikongoro sub-prefect announced the planned closure of the Rukondo, Cyanika and Kibeho camps. We'll have the details next Wednesday, but Rukondo is first on the list. The deadline has been set for Friday 12 December at the latest. They'll get to Cyanika and Kibeho the week after […]
Analysis/outlook:
- Camp closures are speeding up.
- The closures are starting in the north and moving southward.
- The government seems determined to continue: its attitude is that, "If people aren't criminals, there's no reason for them not to return home," which means that civilian authorities are not bothering with a genuine and constructive effort to convince people to go home. Only a minority (25 to 50 percent) will return to their communes via UNAMIR truck or on foot.

- There is no reason to think that the IDPs who are refusing to return home will change their minds in the weeks ahead. People are going to continue to move south and toward other camps. In Kibeho, commune leaders have rejected UNHCR's proposal that all residents return together to increase their sense of security.
- As the number of camps declines and as the populations increase, the camps will become increasingly 'hard-line' and resistant to the idea of closing.
- Kibeho could become a powder keg, given the growing number of people and the presence of infiltrators and troublemakers. Any incident will prompt the IDPs to head to Burundi.

MSF France sent an investigator to Gitarama prefecture to assess the residents' views of their own security. The research results were alarming, revealing that arbitrary arrests, torture, executions and group massacres were common. A priest confirmed the information.

We asked an administrator and lawyer by training, to survey Gitarama prefecture residents' perceptions of their safety. The survey results were very negative. According to residents that were interviewed, huge numbers of abuses had been committed, including arbitrary arrests, executions, torture and small group killings. Our team based permanently in Gitarama received the same reports and confirmed this information. During a November visit, we interviewed Father Sibomana. Speaking formally, he told the head of mission and me: 'The RPA harasses local officials, mayors and the administration. People are denouncing only uneducated peasants, while the RPA wants intellectuals and important people. People in my network attend those meetings. They are hearing people say, "Stop bringing us peasants. Bring the intellectuals."' To be an intellectual in the region means knowing how to read, write and speak French, and being capable of organising a group and, possibly, an opposition and a leadership.

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).

The UN asked the Rwandan government to suspend camp closures and authorise the creation of aid stations. Humanitarian organisations expected that displaced people would flee en masse to Burundi rather than return to their communes.

'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 9 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
UN Plan:
To put the brakes on the juggernaut, UNREO's proposed plan involves: 1) asking the government to suspend closures for two weeks; 2) creating 10-15 'open relief centres' in key communes of origin to provide temporary assistance, reintegration aid, and protection/reassurance (UNAMIR/RPA collaboration); 3) encouraging camp populations to move to the communes by creating open relief centres.

The major snag is that the government has not yet agreed to this plan, which was finalised today. The Ministry of Rehabilitation agrees – 'in principle' – to creating open relief centres, which means nothing. In fact, the plan has not yet been submitted to the government. SRSG [Special Reptresentative of the Secretary-General] Khan and UNREO have asked to meet with Kagame on Thursday, but the meeting probably won't be until later. The juggernaut has been launched.



'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 13 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
UN Plan:
• SRSG Khan submitted the UN plan (two-week suspension of camp closures and creation of open relief centres) to the prime minister. The prime minister is "surprised" by the Kaduha closure and wants to support the plan but apparently does not have the political means to do so.
• Boutros-Ghali is supposed to contact Kagame in New York to ask him to intervene and suspend operations in the southwest.
• The Council of Ministers is supposed to decide on the UN plan at its 14 December meeting. The UN is threatening to denounce the government in the international press if it does not agree to "halt the closures."
• UN-NGO teams are scouting the field for open relief centre locations in Gitarama, south Kigali and Butare, but have agreed to halt all preparations unless the government holds off.
The consensus here (ICRC, OXFAM, Save the Children-France, ACF and us) is that failing a last-minute about-face by the government, along with a real effort at persuasion, confidence-building, etc. to convince people to return, the rapid camp closure approach will prevail. The army will close camps for security reasons and huge numbers of people (100,000-150,000?) will try to cross to Burundi.

On 13 and 14 December 1994, the RPA and UNAMIR joined forces, carrying out 'Operation Hope' in the Kibeho and Ndago camps in an effort to arrest Interahamwe leaders and confiscate weapons. Aid organisations were not warned and were no longer able to circulate in the camps. The MSF team had to remain inside the hospital.



'Rwanda: Blue Helmets Enter Two Refugee Camps to Disarm Hutu Extremists', ***Le Monde*** (France), 16 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
On Wednesday 14 December, following a resurgence of violence, 1,800 'blue helmets', supported by RPA soldiers, invaded the refugee camps of Kibeho and Ngabo, in southwestern Rwanda, to disarm Hutu extremists. The operation ended in failure. After initial optimistic announcements, the UN acknowledged that the key leaders had escaped the dragnet.
Only 27 suspects were apprehended, and 200 machetes and knives were seized. "I suspect that the leaders, the ones with weapons, got wind of the operation and fled,"

said Jan Arp, the Canadian Colonel and second-in-command of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). Yet in Nairobi, Shahryar Khan, the UN representative in Rwanda, had just announced that the operation had gone well, and grenades and other weapons had been seized. However, representatives of humanitarian organisations say that this kind of operation could stir up violence and provoke Hutu to again flee the country.
From Geneva, our correspondent Isabelle Vichniac notified us that Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), has called on UN member states to assume their responsibilities in the face of the Rwandan tragedy. "The international community's indecision threatens to leave the field open to increased violence and rapid renewal of fighting," he wrote in a document delivered to UN ambassadors in Geneva.



'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 14 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
I) <u>The operation's design:</u>
UNREO confirmed this morning that none of the UN's 'civilian' agencies was consulted. UNAMIR only notified UN agency representatives midday Tuesday about the operation that was to begin Tuesday night. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs in New York and Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Kofi Annan, were only informed on Tuesday night. In Rwanda, UNAMIR announced that it would also notify ICRC and NGOs on site in Gikongoro before beginning operations. This was not done. The failure to include a UN civilian agency in the operation's design speaks to the problem of institutional roles within the UN and the failure to address humanitarian issues in a military police operation. That is a problem in itself. Practically speaking, failure to provide advance information to NGOs could have had serious impacts on the security of international staff in other camps, the security of local staff, and the lives of people receiving aid (including ill people and children).
UNREO took the initiative of informing the NGOs in Gikongoro.
II) <u>The course of the operation:</u>
Although it was not a success, the operation did manage to avoid the worst. With assistance from RPA liaison officers, UNAMIR forces (2,000 soldiers) in the Kibeho camps were deployed according to plan. An RPA cordon was set up in the hills. People remained quietly in their huts while the weapons search was underway, and suspects were arrested. UNAMIR set up a field hospital with a surgical theatre. It also positioned two helicopters for medevac transport to Kigali. No incidents to report and no deaths or injuries. The reduced MSF team sent to the site had to remain in the hospital as it was forbidden to circulate in the camp.
Results of the operation: 27 arrests (ICRC and UNHCR presence at the 'temporary prison'), some 200 machetes and knives seized. Most importantly, no guns or grenades were seized. From a military perspective, those results are thin considering that they hoped (officially) to make 400 arrests. It seems that the criminals must have got wind of the operation and were able to flee.



'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Operations Director', 19 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Information on the situation in Gikongoro and the displaced people's camps.
• End of UNAMIR/RPA's Operation Hope on 15 December at 08:00: final results: 1,000 knives seized, including 800 machetes. No guns or grenades. That's equivalent to raiding a mafia nightclub and confiscating the silverware. 47 arrests, including four people released for lack of evidence. UNAMIR is not revealing how many were arrested for "carrying knives" and how many were arrested on information from RPA liaison officers. According to UNAMIR, the RPA did not have a list but only an idea of certain people they wanted to arrest. It is not at all clear whether the individuals targeted by the RPA were arrested for "participating in genocide" or for "recent criminal activities in the camp". Legally questionable, at the very least.
• Operation Hope's political results: unclear except that the RPA suspended camp closure operations. UNAMIR confirmed that they had negotiated the suspension with the RPA at the time of Operation Hope. With Operation Hope concluded, UNAMIR confirms that that agreement with the RPA is no longer in force, but the government has approved the UN 'return' plans, which anticipates a two-week delay in closing the camps and then expedited voluntary return. The RPA does not seem very pleased with Operation Hope's results. On 17 December, they carried out searches in a Kibeho sector. The population greeted them with rocks and UNAMIR had to disperse the crowd. They are unlikely to be convinced that there are no more criminals in the camps. The displaced people questioned in Kibeho are pleased with Operation Hope. "This proves to the RPA that there are no weapons in the camp…" Operation Hope showed that UNAMIR remains a credible force in the camps. There was no panic, flight or opposition and the overall impression was positive. ICRC is furious about the operation and the fact that they were neither consulted nor informed. They've cut off operational relations with UNAMIR. An RPA security unit will take over food distribution.

On 18 December 1994, the Rwandan government announced it was abandoning its plan to close the camps in the former safe humanitarian zone.



'Rwanda: Government Abandons Plans to Close Refugee Camps', ***Le Monde*** (France), 20 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
At the UN's request, on Sunday 18 December, the Kigali government announced it was abandoning plans to close refugee camps in southwestern Rwanda, the former humanitarian zone created by French soldiers as part of Operation Turquoise. These camps were set up for Hutu fleeing the advancing Rwandan Patriotic Front troops. They still house some 140,000 refugees.

But insecurity and fear continued in the region's hills. MSF teams regularly admitted people who had been wounded and beaten to the Kibeho hospital. UN observers, and, later, ICRC members, gathered statements from them about the abuses they suffered.

We knew there were people being killed in the hills because at the hospital we regularly admitted people who came from there and had been beaten or stabbed by gangs of masked men. In the beginning, we notified the UN human rights observers each time we had such a case. Six or seven of them would show up with translators. They questioned people in the large examining rooms. One day, they lost the papers of the people they had questioned. From then on, we ordered the hospital guards not to let the observers in. They had no experience and did one stupid thing after another. We sent them away because they had endangered people's lives. Then we asked ICRC if they wanted to take the statements. We set up a treatment room for ICRC where we would bring people to have their wounds dressed. During the bandaging, the ICRC delegate questioned them. It was a little more private than in the large rooms. We put all the statements on a disk. We said to ICRC, 'OK, you gather up your statements but we're going to make copies, too.'

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

People would not speak freely about the regime's excesses due to fear of being labelled revisionist for criticising those who ended the genocide.
On 30 December 1994, Action Contre la Faim (ACF) received a letter from the Minister of Rehabilitation instructing the organisation to suspend all activities in the country.

'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 2 January 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Last Friday, 30 December, Pascal Lefort, Head of Mission for ACF, received a letter from Jacques Bihozagara, Minister of Rehabilitation. The letter asked ACF to suspend all its activities in the country until 2 January.
The reason: The Minister of Rehabilitation had, 'entirely by accident,' intercepted an internal situation report for the week of 19-25 December, that Pascal had sent to his desk in Paris. The minister objected to:
1) The 'biased' description of the Rwandan situation, which only confirmed that ACF was engaged in 'underground activities,' intended to undermine relations between the Rwandan government and the international community on the one hand, and among the different government departments on the other.
2) The 'demonisation' of the RPA, whose actions were described as "cynical and ironical," with the goal of convincing the organisation's representatives that the "fate awaiting refugees returning to the country is death".

Frankly, anyone living in Rwanda in that tiny world of journalists, humanitarian workers, embassy staff, etc. who did not agree with that analysis was assumed to be an idiot, someone who didn't know what's going on. Of course, there were also people in that little world who said, 'Yes, yes, I know, but things can't be all neat and tidy in a post-war period; face facts, they're all rotten, they're génocidaires*. You've got to gamble a bit on the future. If you start criticising the new government just as it's rebuilt an administration and a set of policies… Obviously, you can predict the worst, and it will always happen. But what kind of positive contribution are you making to the region's political development?'*
The two large human rights organisations, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, got it right very early. Alison Des Forges, from Human Rights Watch/Africa, whom no one could suspect of ties to the former regime, denounced the RPA massacres early on. Because she was very well liked in Rwanda, especially among the former Rwandan opposition in power today, she was received by Kagame. She made a personal protest to him about several assassinations committed by his men. The part of the church associated with André Sibomana that hadn't been compromised by the genocide said the same thing. Their information networks were better than ours. ICRC had protested strongly against the authorities' actions in the prison. We're not alone on this. But a deep silence – imposed primarily by a few fans of the regime – still fell the moment anyone mentioned a crime committed by the new authorities, called them génocidaires*, accomplices to genocide, revisionists or lackeys of the French. It's anathema. People like Alex de Waal, Rakiya Omaar, Philip Gourevitch – there were lots of them. This was the heart of the "new Africanism" theory. Even in Brussels, at MSF, "new Africanism" was becoming a political concept. People were cut off from reality.*

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).

On the night of 6 January 1995, soldiers attacked the Busanze camp, located a few kilometres from the Burundian border in Gikongoro prefecture. Twelve displaced people were killed, and around 30 were wounded. ICRC asked the MSF France team doctor in Gikongoro to perform forensic examinations on the bodies.

'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda', 10 January 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Below is a transcript of Didier's [MSF France Physician in Gikongoro] report on the events in Busanze.
Response: medical certificate transmitted to all involved and signed by MSF to protect the witnesses' names.
On the morning of 7 January, MSF was contacted by ICRC about an 'incident' that was supposed to have occurred the previous night in the Busanze camp. A doctor experienced in emergency medicine, accompanied by a Caritas surgeon, was sent to the site. They reached Runoymbi at 10:30 and found some 30 wounded people at the health centre. Six were seriously injured (bullet wounds) and had to be transferred to Kigali by helicopter. Four were transferred to Butare and five to Kibeho, where MSF runs a hospital. The group of five had machete and bullet wounds. Several had grenade fragment wounds.
The doctor then went to the Busanze camp. When he arrived, he spoke with the head of the UNAMIR contingent, who told him that 12 people died when soldiers attacked during

the night. The doctor then entered the camp. Five hundred displaced people were still there. The huts were burned.
The doctor identified 12 bodies: three young men between 15 and 20, six children and three women. The bodies were in the latrines. He examined all of them.
Findings:
1. The bodies bore no evidence of blows (no bruising or contusions) or rape. The bodies showed bullet wounds (one-two per person) and signs of machete blows.
2. The shots were fired at close range. The bullets' entry and exit openings were identical. A large-calibre cartridge was found in the clothing of one of the women.
3. The victims had not been fleeing. There were no bullet entry wounds in their backs.
4. They had been shot with intent to kill. One person had been killed with a shot to the temple. A child with a broken leg had been killed by a machete blow to the back of the neck. A baby had its skull shattered by a machete.
5. The use of machetes would indicate that soldiers were not the only individuals involved in the killing. Soldiers only rarely use machetes as weapons. When questioned later, Busanze's Hutu residents confirmed that civilians, identified as Tutsi living in Busanze, accompanied the soldiers during the operation.
Follow-up to the events:
• On Monday, the RPA acknowledged that its soldiers were responsible for the incident, acknowledged that excessive force had been used, and announced the arrests of the officer responsible for the patrol and the major commandant of the Gikongoro region.
MSF's process:
• This is the first case in which MSF had a first-hand medical account of a major RPA abuse.
• While we have not made public statements for lack of clear and timely information and given the complexity of the Rwandan situation in which every statement is immediately distorted and hijacked for political purposes, we should at least have a policy of 'speaking out privately'. This was the backdrop for my meeting with the RPA and UNAMIR in Kigali on Tuesday.
a) Meeting with Major Frank Rusagara, RPA military staff
He confirmed the arrest of the two officers and RPA's responsibility. His explanation was that someone had thrown a grenade, and the patrol had retaliated spontaneously. He confirmed that a military Board of Inquiry would be formed and that the officers would be tried in a military court. He took note of the medical report (presented orally in general terms) and of MSF's concern. He said that the RPA took this incident very seriously and asked for our full cooperation in the investigation and the trial. He mentioned calling Didier to testify.
Although I explained that I was opposed to testifying on principle, he insisted, asking, "What is your opinion on this question?" What were the arguments, aside from the witness' safety and not wanting to set precedents, etc? [...]
c) Meeting with Major Mark Cuthbert, Force Provost Marshal (military police), UNAMIR
The Major was involved "just by chance". He is usually in charge of the military police and the behaviour of UNAMIR troops. He had come to the site on Sunday with the Minister of the Interior. He prepared a report for internal UNAMIR use to encourage his superiors to request an explanation from the RPA and to take up an inquiry. On the decision of his superiors, he thought his report would be transmitted to the government.
• UNAMIR is very angry and is pressuring the RPA's high command.
• As to the event itself, he thinks the RPA version will not hold up, that the event involved the forced closure of an IDP camp and was probably the result of local initiative. He has cartridges taken from the sites and proposes that they be compared with the weapons of RPA soldiers at the site.

• He asked for the MSF medical report to add weight to UNAMIR's report. He does not think there is another medical report (physical examination) of the event. I said I would think about it and did not give him anything in writing.
• It seems we have the only medical report of this incident with examinations of the bodies and the wounded.
• All the parties know that we have this information. They also know its general contents.
I propose, contingent on Didier's agreement as the witness, to make a declaration on behalf of MSF based only on his medical observations. It will not include any interpretation, analysis of the causes, or description of how the killing unfolded because plenty of other people can do that. We would submit this declaration to all the parties (Ministries of Defence, Justice and Interior, UNAMIR, Human Rights NGOs and ICRC). Our involvement would end there – no oral testimony before an investigative commission, etc.
I need your feedback quickly on this question. I hope we're not doing anything stupid here. We need your support and your clear thinking!



When we got word of the massacre in Busanze camp on the radio from the blue helmets, we were on our way to the camp of Kibeho. We had kits ready because we knew there were serious threats in the area. We contacted ICRC, which arrived with trucks in case injured people needed to be transported. We organised treatment of the wounded in the hospital. Then we went back to the camp. A UNAMIR official there provided confused information on the number of deaths and who had carried out the attack. They had brought the bodies out of the shared latrines. There were some 20. I proposed to ICRC that I examine all the bodies, and they take notes of my findings. I conducted a forensic examination. Most were women and children. Some had been wounded in the leg by bullets and then had their necks slit. There was no question that this had occurred at night. I described each case. From the beginning I had said to the ICRC delegate, 'When you've finished taking notes, give them to me. I'll organise them and give them back to you. I'm going to sign in my capacity as a doctor.' I gave the description, and they wrote down as I spoke. These notes made sense only to me. Re-reading them, I could visualise the body and the wounds, but they wouldn't mean anything to anyone else. At 09:00 the next morning, after I'd spent a difficult night examining bodies that had been in latrines for 10 hours, disembowelled children, etc., the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs' official for Rwanda showed up at the house. He said to Catherine, the Field Coordinator, 'Apparently, someone living here conducted the examinations.' I was standing to the side, and I kept quiet. ICRC had given them my notes, although I hadn't organised them yet. They'd already edited them and had sent them off as official. Later I wrote up the medical certificates and a short report. The official UN report declared, 'No stab wounds.' They didn't examine the bodies. We did. In the end, they didn't use our report.
According to displaced people's accounts, soldiers and Tutsi civilians were among the attackers. There was an investigation and two highly placed soldiers from Gikongoro were arrested, including the chief, who was a war hero. The arrests were carried out based on the MSF doctor's statement. That didn't improve our relationship with the police and the RPA soldiers.
Kigali officially requested that I testify at the military tribunal before the court martial. I didn't go. The official version of the massacre was that it involved an abuse committed by individuals, that the military hierarchy did not order it and that it was not an organised action.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

II. THE PRISONS OF HELL

By late 1994-early 1995, the Rwandan government had received only limited aid.[11] The legal system was struggling to resume operation. Nonetheless, the number of arrests rose sharply. In spring 1995, official Rwandan records put the number of prisoners awaiting trial at 20,000. An additional 20,000 were reportedly held in local jails and detention centres (*cachots*). V4

'Rwanda Mission **Report** 30 January-7 February 1995', Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, 7 February 1995 (in French).

Extract:

The Rwandan legal system gradually resumed operation. A public prosecutor was appointed for the city of Kigali. Additional prosecutors were named for Butare, Gikongoro and Gitarama. The lack of material and human resources severely hampered the system. To date, the Ministry of Justice and the Kigali prosecutor's office have been functioning thanks to paper provided by the Citizens' Network (RCN), an NGO that MSF Belgium created in September 1994. The RCN also set up a basic law library open to lawyers and the judge [...] The Kigali public prosecutor has just asked us to send him the civil compensation procedure code. Visiting European and UN experts had not yet managed to provide them with more than the basics. The RCN is currently training 150 judicial police officers who will be authorised to lead investigations and draw up official arrest and interrogation reports.

Imprisonment and the Legal System

[...] Twenty thousand people are currently in Rwandan prisons based on a simple denunciation. Some 800 arrests are made every week. Given the total population of six million, that rate is unheard of, especially considering the fact that many who could legitimately be accused of a role in the genocide are outside the country. Furthermore, the incarcerated people are being held without charges, and documentation is limited to a denunciation letter. A few accusations may arrive once the person is already in custody. The judge does not have the means to go on site so that the accused can face the witnesses. In October, the Kigali public prosecutor had a car provided by the police department. It was taken away.

On 11 November 1994, background work on 99 files had been completed and the matters were ready for trial. The Kigali court was prepared to address civil proceedings. The public prosecutor received an order not to begin the trials.

A selection commission (*commission de triage*), composed of the public prosecutor, a representative of military internal affairs, and the Ministry of Defence lawyer, granted interim releases. The commission operates like a bazaar, where deals are struck based on haggling and bargaining. Any given week, the commission releases between zero and three people after reviewing 60 case files, none of which provides any proof of guilt. In November, the Kigali tribunal announced the interim release of 40 people for lack of evidence pending further investigation. The army rearrested them all immediately and the judge was later reported missing.

It seems that the current government does not consider genocide trials to be a priority, nor of any urgency. Drawing its political legitimacy from the genocide, the government

11. Most of the two billion US dollars spent in the whole region between April 1994 and December 1995 were allocated to the Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania. The new Rwandan government received only 2.44 million US dollars. Source: Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (19 OECD members, EU, UN, Red Cross Movement, five international NGOs). The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: lessons from the Rwanda experience, 576 pages, Synthesis Report, March 1996 Copenhagen, p 29.

seems to think there is no need to examine history or recent memory. We should be suspicious of a tendency to honour numerous and convenient martyrs rather than heroes. Today, the genocide pits Tutsi victims against Hutu criminals. A hardening of attitudes tends to transform all Tutsi into victims and all Hutu into the guilty, which completely overlooks the fact that not all Tutsi living in Rwanda suffered equally from the genocide, and that some Hutu who remained tried to protect, and even save, threatened Tutsi.
Lack of resources is not a convincing argument. Some point out that the RPF was an army of foot soldiers and managed to win the war. "Foot-soldier prosecutors" could do their job, too – if they had government support.
[...] According to government sources, 420 RPF soldiers were arrested for abuses [...] A military Adjudication Board has just been set up. Major Frank Rusagara sits on that board. We know him as the Senior Humanitarian Liaison Officer.
[...] For now, the prison death rate is very effective at quietly doing the awkward and expensive work of the legal system. In Gitarama, for example, the death rate is 10.8 per 10,000/day.

In December 1994, at Headquarters' request, the MSF Belgium team visited Rwanda's three large prefectorial prisons in Kigali, Butare and Gitarama. The team found disastrous health conditions in those institutions. The prisoners were particularly affected by an outbreak of shigellosis. In the Gitarama prison, more than 7,000 men were crammed into areas designed for 400 people. Prisoners spent days and nights standing, immobile, with their feet in the mud. The struggle for living space was fierce. MSF treated hospitalised prisoners for illnesses linked to the horrible conditions of confinement.

'**Fax** from the MSF Belgium Rwanda Administrator', 20 December 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Prison feedback: visit conducted yesterday in the Kigali prison. Currently, 5,650 prisoners are being held in a 2,000-person-capacity space. Barbara will follow up with statistics, but at this point, we can report the following:
1) Hygiene issues: much progress remains to be made
2) Medical issues: the situation is disastrous
3) Other evaluations are planned, including at Butare and Gitarama; in principle, there is space for MSF Belgium – limited to medical issues but with a technical lobbying component for improving the health status of the country's prison system

I started at the Kigali prison and then moved on to Gitarama and Butare. I visited all three. It was horrible. Overpopulation is one thing, but they were in the middle of a shigellosis epidemic and hygiene conditions were awful... The Minister of Health had put Rwandan medical staff in the prisons, but they didn't really have much medicine. Some had had a little on-the-job training but couldn't organise things when faced with a shigellosis epidemic ... From the hygiene perspective, my impression was that the suffering was worst in Gitarama. That prison was the most cramped, medical staff were the least competent, and

the prisoners probably had fewer outside visitors. In Butare, there was more space, and the health centre seemed to be operating better. We were in the hospital.

Dr Barbara Kerstiens, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Rwanda, September 1994-March 1995 (in French).



When people die from a lack of living space, you understand what the concept means. That's what happened to them. They died for lack of living space. Their deaths could have been avoided simply by building a guarded camp, surrounded by barbed wire, in the prairie next to the prison. They could have lived in huts and maintained a shred of human dignity. But the prison was worse than anything imaginable. We calculated that there were two or three people per square metre. They took turns sleeping – when they could sleep, that is! That's not to mention the rape and the violence… We saw lots of bruising in the outer ear. I had never seen such an epidemic of pinna bruising. I conducted the visit with an Australian doctor, Alison, and I asked the prisoner, 'Can you explain how this happened to you?' He said, 'There are two ways. First, since we are crammed so close together, when people fight you can't step back away from the blow. So instead, you turn your head to avoid being hit in the face and often get hit in the ear. And the second is that when you have to move through the crowd to get to the toilet, reach the food, or get something to eat, all those bodies trap you and keep you from moving. You have to clear a path. One of the ways to do that is to punch the person in front of you in the ear so that he will move out of the way.' They stood in mud all day long so, of course, they all had infected feet. They rotted away on their rotten feet. They step on top of them, they crap on them. So the death rate was, obviously, extremely high.

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).



The cells weren't cells. Everything was open. There were no doors. There were people everywhere, crowded on top of one another. The toilet was an open stall and there were two people inside. It was horrifying. Surprisingly, there were no complaints… I remember that they cooked the food in a huge pot. The "cook" explained that with so many people, there were lots of accidents. When they served the food, a dozen people would get burned because everyone crowded around the pot!

Dr Arnaud Veisse, MSF France, Physician in Kabgayi Hospital, Rwanda, September 1994-June 1995 (in French).



I went once to the Kigali prison. It is one of the most powerful images I've ever seen in my life. There were 10,000 prisoners standing on their feet. Hands and arms were outstretched through the bars. People were staying close to the bars so that they could breathe a little. The prison guards opened the gate to let you enter. They turned you over to the prisoners' security force, like in the concentration camps, and cleared a path through this mass of humans. Everyone was standing. They were closer than elbow-to-elbow – they were literally stuck together. From time to time, someone would fall, faint from hunger, or die. I've never seen anything like this human mass. The crowd was organised – the mass of people shifted every two hours as if it were a single person. The toilets were here, the infirmary was there. Obviously, there weren't enough dormitories for everyone. The huge crowd had to be turned so that once a day, part of the mass faced the toilets and the other part faced the food

distribution. It was unimaginable: human engineering at a level of sub-human degradation. I've never seen anything like it! When you saw the state they were in, you would leave with a sense of overwhelming, complete disgust. This affects our own sense of what it means to be human. There are two possible reactions. Either you don't see them as fellow human beings and so you distance yourself from them, or you say, 'These are human beings like me and there but for the grace of God go I.' And then you shudder from the depths of your soul. You say to yourself, 'How can humans be reduced to such a state of degeneration? This is nothing more than a stockyard.'

Dr Eric Goemaere, MSF Belgium, General Director (in French).

MSF Belgium and MSF France had different approaches to operations in the prisons. MSF Belgium wanted to work inside the penitentiaries to supplement ICRC's work, which MSF Belgium viewed as inadequate. MSF France opposed that idea, preferring to treat Gitarama prisoners referred to the Kabgayi hospital. The two sections agreed on the need to avoid weakening ICRC, with whom discussions were underway.

'**Minutes** of the Meeting Between MSF Belgium and MSF France Rwanda Programme Managers and ICRC on the Rwandan Prison Problem', 22 March 1995 (in French).

Extract:
MSF Belgium has issues with ICRC because there has been no information exchange, and health conditions in the prisons a month ago were shocking. That is why MSF Belgium wants to address medical concerns in the prisons.
Georges Dallemagne: MSF Belgium is very interested in working in the prison setting.
MSF France position: MSF France is working in prisons in specific cases (for example, Burundi and Madagascar) but is not interested in expanding this kind of activity. In the Rwandan case, MSF France is working with ICRC by setting up a medical reference system in the hospital where MSF is involved. No problems with information and communication with ICRC because the two organisations meet. If necessary, MSF France is prepared to do the same in other areas where it is present. MSF France is ready to respond should ICRC request help with logistics or medical staff.
ICRC emphasises the problem of the government's underinvestment in prisons if several NGOs start working there. ICRC emphasises its work on prisoner registration and follow-up in case of prisoner transfer to another institution or disappearance [...]
ICRC asks that MSF get involved in medical referral and takes on the job of providing medical information (considering ICRC's confidentiality requirements). Conclusion: improved collaboration with greater familiarity and better communication among ICRC, MSF Belgium and MSF France.

Were we going to go there? If yes, how? How was ICRC going to react? In the beginning, there was a lot of discussion. Before I visited a prison, I wanted to be sure that there would be some follow-up action. I didn't want to just go to look and say, 'Oh, how awful,' and not be able to do anything. Working in the prisons wasn't easy, especially because ICRC was "set up" and responsible for prisoner health. From Paris, MSF France was saying,

'What are you going to do in the prisons? ICRC is already there. You've got to avoid weakening ICRC'... We were in a very difficult position. ICRC did not want anyone else to intervene in the prisons because they felt it would weaken their position vis-à-vis the authorities. I wanted to avoid weakening ICRC's position, too, but I could not agree to let people die in these prisons when things could be done better than they had been.

Dr Barbara Kerstiens, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Rwanda, September 1994-March 1995 (in French).

MSF Belgium wanted to intervene inside the prisons. They said ICRC wasn't doing its job and that MSF had to be inside. MSF France didn't want to weaken ICRC's mandate by separating assistance and protection. We thought we should let ICRC take charge of intervention in the prisons because they were using the assistance mandate to provide protection. But at the same time, we wanted to find out if you could take care of patients and improve prison conditions at the same time. That's what we did. As a result of pressure from MSF Belgium, ICRC finally assumed its responsibilities in the prisons. They began taking certain measures.

Nicolas de Torrenté, MSF France, Coordinator in Rwanda, August 1994-March 1995 (in French).

MSF Belgium developed a medical assistance project in the Rwandan prisons. The team hoped the project would complement ICRC's work. Negotiating simultaneously with the ICRC and Rwandan authorities, the team was unable to implement the project it had designed on an ongoing basis.

'Medical Assistance Project on Behalf of Rwanda's Civilian Prisons', **Project proposal** addressed to the Ministry of Justice, MSF Belgium, 26 January 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The priority is to reduce the daily death rate. This will be accomplished by systematising medical follow-up, supervising Rwandan medical staff and improving referrals and management of cases referred [...] The proposed project will be carried out in two phases: the first involves a rapid response intervention to address urgent needs identified during evaluation. The second involves strengthening available resources so that authorities will not again confront the kinds of disastrous conditions prevailing in the prisons visited.
Phase 1:
- Support prison infirmary organisation (staff training/supervision)
- Strengthen the organisation and distribute medical care equitably via placement of international MSF medical staff
- Establish a referral system for regular serious cases and as needed
- Create a patient isolation unit where lacking

Recommendations:
As a medical organisation, we recommend rapid medical intervention to respond to the most pressing needs. However, the overpopulation problem clearly requires priority

action. Relieving prison overcrowding will occur when the country's legal system resumes operation.
a) Rebuilding of the legal structure: training, recruitment
b) Support for the legal system's operations: at the primary (means of supervision) and secondary levels (files, typewriters)



At MSF Belgium, we said, 'Yes, we must work in the prisons, we have to give priority to helping people so that we can advocate. We must be able to work inside.' We defended this position strongly in an international meeting. The French were completely opposed, but in the end, MSF Belgium couldn't find the right people for the mission, which was interrupted several times. We didn't have the right information. We had a coordinator on site who opposed the idea, so we never really worked in the prisons. We only visited now and then.

Dr […], MSF Belgium, Programme Manager, then Director of Operations (in French).



This agreement between ICRC and MSF – to give MSF responsibility for medical care in the prisons – was never carried out. ICRC always blocked it, one way or another. So, the MSF team visited, managed to talk with the nurses, sometimes provided a bit of supervision, brought supplies and medications if ICRC didn't have what was needed, and helped organise medical management in cases of dysentery. But it wasn't permanent or established. For example, the team was never able to set up in the infirmary. ICRC told us they were taking care of it. They didn't want an MSF-run infirmary.
We tried to insist but didn't want to yell from the rooftops, 'ICRC isn't doing its job and doesn't want MSF inside the prisons.' In fact, it wasn't their place to decide whether we were given access or not. It was up to the authorities – and they didn't give us access every day. It was complicated.

Dr Barbara Kerstiens, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Rwanda, September 1994-March 1995 (in French).

The MSF France teams and the ICRC nurses working in the Kabgayi hospital and Gitarama prison, respectively, cooperated to identify, transfer, and treat seriously ill prisoners in the hospital. The MSF team took responsibility for their hospitalisation in a medical setting, which discouraged the soldiers from pressuring them.



The dual question of treatment and security came up quickly because there were soldiers with huge rifles at the entry. Discussions were held right away – negotiating about what they could or could not do. I remember talking with the soldiers about ambulance convoys coming to the Kigali hospital. There was a truck they called an ambulance that was used to transport people to Faisal Hospital who couldn't get the treatment they needed at the Kabgayi hospital. Should the soldiers be inside the truck with the prisoners or outside? That's the kind of discussion we had. I explained that in a very different context – in the hospital in Fresnes, in France – we were always involved in the same kind of negotiations. When it comes to taking prisoners out, you've got to negotiate. For example, if an escort is not avail-

able, the transport is put off until the next day. You've got to negotiate and say, 'You do what you must do, but tomorrow will be too late. You've been warned. The decision is yours, Mr Prison Administrator.'
Overall, what I remember about the soldiers in Kabgayi is that they were intelligent, sometimes a little cynical, but that there were no confrontations. They always wore these half-smiles, as if to say, 'We completely understand what you are saying, but that's not possible, you understand, because…' They would make those kinds of comments, somewhat muffled… One day, we thought the guards inside the hospital had beaten a guy. We notified the authorities because the man's death was suspicious. We requested an autopsy. I was present. A Belgian surgeon who had lived in Rwanda for 20 years and had come back after the genocide conducted the autopsy. He was working for Caritas in the same hospital. He was not pleased that we were making him do this – us, those MSF jerks, meddling in things that didn't concern us. The autopsy did not find anything unusual. We didn't get any further than our suspicions and sending letters of protest to the regional military commander. I remember this incident. Things got a little heated and our exchanges were a little tense. Overall, my sense was that they played the game, and so we did we. Quite quickly, we said to ourselves, 'We're not going to be able to keep them from monitoring the prisoners. Their job is to make sure that they don't escape. But they must let us treat them.'

Dr Arnaud Veisse, MSF France, Physician in Kabgayi Hospital, Rwanda, September 1994-June 1995 (in French).

We were working in two areas. The first was working in the prisons and the second was managing treatment of those who were referred, which was slightly easier. We had heated discussions with MSF France about their taking charge of referrals from the Gitarama prison. The authorities agreed to transfer ill prisoners to the hospital on condition that they be guarded so they could not escape. MSF France said, 'We can't agree to let armed men inside the hospital.' I imagine that there were equally intense discussions between Brussels and Paris. We were saying, 'You're there, you have the resources, you can't let these people die because there's a problem with organising how to guard the prisoners.'

Dr Barbara Kerstiens, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Rwanda, September 1994-March 1995 (in French).

MSF France staff in the Kabgayi hospital questioned the limitations on, and effectiveness of their work with, ill prisoners, condemned to death by the slow pace of the legal system, and living conditions inside the prisons. The Country Coordinator, the HQ Programme Manager and the Legal Advisor asked the same questions.

'Rwanda Mission, 30 January-7 February 1995', Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, **Report**, 7 February 1995 (in French).

Extract:
A positive consensus is emerging within MSF which addresses:
- Our legitimate concerns about prison health.
- What we can gather about the causes of this situation and the areas where we can act.

This consensus is based on medical observation. Mortality in prison is not a health problem strictly speaking but rather of political will and prison overpopulation. If we want to improve mortality rates, we must take a position on these issues. Medical intervention is still possible if linked to efforts supporting new detention centres and ending the deadlock over the legal process.[…]
The prison situation requires that we respond in medical terms.
Action:
- MSF is developing a clear observation and intervention policy.
- The different MSF sections should take a public position on this issue in Kigali.
- An article clearing up all the ins and outs of the legal and health systems in Rwanda would be useful. The government continues to be sensitive to public positions taken by international agencies. Taking a position is useful if we want to preserve our workspace in the country and not be limited to going where we are told.
- Foreign governments and institutions involved in Rwanda's reconstruction are scheduled to visit.



I don't remember if we asked ourselves the question from the outset, but we began to have qualms quickly. 'What kind of game are we playing? The prison is like a factory that produces patients and people on the verge of death. We fix them up a bit and send them back to the slaughterhouse.' When prisoners we brought back to health went back to prison, you had the feeling that there was no solution. Things were going to stay like this. The prisoner death machine was humming along quite nicely. Given that the negotiations didn't offer much hope – especially for opening additional prisons – we said to ourselves that taking a position might change things.

Dr Arnaud Veisse, MSF France, Physician in Kabgayi Hospital, Rwanda, September 1994-June 1995 (in French).



The Australian doctor who was on her first mission in Gitarama taking care of prisoners said to me, 'I don't understand what I'm doing there. Why am I treating these people? They're going back to prison; the same thing will happen and in a month I'll see them again. It's a vicious circle.' She kept on working but told me later that if we hadn't been doing advocacy work, she would have stopped. The advocacy made it possible for her to keep at it because she thought she could do something.

[…], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).



The mortality rates were horrifying. When you calculated the time required to bring all those people to trial, you said to yourself that it was not worth starting the process. If mortality rates remained at the same level, everyone would have died before the trial. People were in danger of dying and the danger of injustice was certainly there. But there was also a risk that the truth about this genocide would disappear from memory. The prisons should have been a priority for MSF's intervention inside Rwanda. But on the condition that we build a framework that would allow us not to be complicit in the violence perpetrated

against people and that we try, objectively, to improve their situation. The first requirement was that they had a chance of showing up alive at their trial.

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor (in French).

In February 1995, in agreement with headquarters, the team decided to write a report about prisoners hospitalised in Kabgayi and about Gitarama prison. ICRC nurses working there would provide the medical data. The report would also include mortality rates provided by Rwandan authorities.



'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager and the Legal Advisor', 7 February 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Mortality: no exact numbers for Butare or Kigali. In Gitarama, 197 deaths between 1 November and 31 December in the prison; an additional 47 in the Kabgayi hospital. This brings the average to 2.7/day. With an average prison population of 2,500, the daily mortality rate works out to 10.8/10,000 people per day. This is extremely high for a population composed essentially of young men (critical threshold in a refugee camp is 2/10,000/day).
General conditions: problems of poor treatment are more common in 'upstream' local holding cells and detention centres (*cachots*) than in Ministry of Justice prisons. Also, the greatest risk of disappearances occurs during prisoner transfer. According to ICRC, there was a 10 percent difference between an exhaustive census of 20,000 prisoners and the committee's own lists. However, ICRC said it could not conclude that the 10 percent represented 'disappearances'. The discrepancy could be explained by double registrations, false names and mistakes in the transcription of names.



'**Sitrep** from the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 28 February 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Please find a first draft of the prison report attached.
I am going to visit Gitarama prison tomorrow with Arnaud to try to obtain first-hand statistics/data on population, food, water, hygiene/latrines and available space. I am also going to pick up more medical data on hospitalised prisoners (percentage of admissions by disease, percentage of lethality by disease, etc.) as well as February data.
I need your opinion on 1) the tone of the report; 2) its content/message; 3) the use of non-MSF data; for example, the number of deaths in the prison (source: ICRC).



The government was letting everyone visit the prisons. We had access to the official ones and could look at the statistics, etc., so we had all the information required to be able to say, 'The Gitarama prison was built in such-and-such year for these many prisoners. It has this many square feet and there are six latrines. It was built for hundreds of people and houses several thousand, which translates to one latrine per x number of prisoners and two or three prisoners per square foot.' There were so many prisoners that they could not

all sit down at the same time. They were all in the courtyard and lacked protection in case of rain. This explains the diseases we had to treat as well as their rotten feet. We knew the mortality rates in the prison because they kept a register of deaths. We simply explained, 'Here are the figures, here are the prison conditions, here are the patients we're seeing and here are the prison's mortality rates. After we treat them, we send them back into an environment that will only make them sick and end up killing them.'

Nicolas de Torrenté, MSF France, Coordinator in Rwanda, August 1994-March 1995 (in French).

We couldn't save prisoners because the prison sent them to the hospital when they were at the point of death. That way, they could reduce the mortality rate in prison… and increase it in the hospitals. Arnaud, the MSF Physician, said, 'It would be worth it if we could be proactive.' So, we set up a project to evaluate mortality, count prisoners, create dossiers, etc. We could also determine whether our activities reduced mortality or if we ought to give up because we weren't making a difference. Above all, that project gave us access to a strategic and key statistic: mortality inside prisons. That put us in a position of strength – we could criticise the incarceration policy if we could prove that with those rates, no one would live long enough to go to trial. ICRC was working in prisons under confidentiality rules that covered mortality rates, so they could not speak out. But we at MSF thought this information could have a significant humanitarian impact on the prison population, so we worked on the project. We showed mortality rates in the prison over six months. We concluded that certain improvements were necessary if people were to survive.

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor (in French).

A cooperative effort was organised among ICRC, MSF France and MSF Belgium teams. Without setting up real programmes, the latter two groups became involved, discreetly, inside the prisons.

'Rwanda Mission, 30 January-7 February 1995', Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, **Report**, 7 February 1995 (in French).

Extract:

Health and detention

Health issues in Rwanda directly affect MSF. We are the primary medical agency there. However, addressing health needs in prisons poses many problems. We must not weaken ICRC's protection role in prisons by offering a programme of separate assistance. ICRC has access to all Ministry of Justice detention facilities and can, in principle, gain access to military detention sites. It registers prisoners, distributes family messages, and given the system's economic decline, carries out various assistance measures.

It has limited room to manoeuvre in terms of negotiation, however, because it is committed to keeping the information it gathers confidential. In this instance, the mortality rates ICRC records are transmitted only to the government. MSF can supplement ICRC's activities by getting certain information out.



'**Minutes** of the Meeting Between the MSF Belgium and MSF France Rwanda Programme Managers on the Prison Issue', 5 March 1995, Nicolas de Torrenté, MSF France Country Coordinator (in French).

Extract:
MSF Belgium position:
- In strictly medical terms, ICRC is doing a poor job (to put it mildly…).
- ICRC has pulled out all stops since sensing a threat from MSF Belgium (comment: it's true and it's positive). ICRC is doing everything it can to prevent MSF Belgium from working in the prisons.
- MSF Belgium recognises that it must not 'impair' ICRC or weaken its protection mandate. MSF Belgium does not want to work in the prisons 'at any cost' but thinks it can do better, medically speaking, than ICRC without threatening them by distinguishing MSF's long-term perspective – 'the organisation of the prison health system' – from ICRC's.
- MSF Belgium chose not to confront ICRC directly but instead to 'infiltrate' the prisons by working quietly, professionally and non-interventionally in prison-hospital referrals and the organisation of clinic treatment. That leaves the entire 'detention' role to ICRC. The goal of this incremental approach is to gain the confidence of and credibility with prison officials and ICRC (not to be perceived as a threat).

With some hesitation, MSF Belgium agreed to develop a dossier on prisoners' health status and, possibly, to distribute it.



'**Minutes** of the Meeting Between the MSF Belgium and MSF France Rwanda Programme Managers on the Prison Issue', 5 March 1995, Nicolas de Torrenté, MSF France Coordinator (in French).

Extract:
- MSF Belgium criticised Françoise Saulnier (MSF France Legal Advisor) for coming to Rwanda and creating a prison dossier without consulting directly with MSF Belgium in Kigali, which had already launched a prison programme.
- MSF Belgium was distrustful of MSF France's intentions and, specifically, those of Ms. Saulnier and Paris: advocating on a subject about which MSF France lacks first-hand knowledge, and an overall strategy or specific objectives simply to ease its own conscience – and with the potential to destroy MSF Belgium's project in the prisons. MSF Belgium had proposed that we work in the Gitarama prison, but Paris rejected the proposal (JHB) [Jean-Hervé Bradol, Programme Manager]. Now MSF France wants to raise a fuss about Gitarama without giving MSF Belgium time to get things back on an even keel in the prison.
MSF Belgium position
- Regarding advocacy, MSF Belgium would not denounce the prison situation before gaining concrete experience working in the prison and observing, firsthand, the limits of its activities. They feel the possibility of advocacy justifies their activities, independent of ICRC's.
Conclusion: MSF Belgium will read my draft. They share our diagnosis of the problem and are not opposed to working with us but first want to be sure that the prison will not be closed to them as a result. They are reassured by the tone and gradual approach proposed (distribution first to representatives and individual lobbying, possible publicity

later). They want to target responsibilities and requests to different representatives (lobbying based on our analysis of the situation). They don't trust our communications strategy and would like to reach a "protocol agreement" to be sure we won't hold an unauthorised press conference in a week if we decide to take a common approach based on our analysis.



'**Fax** from the MSF Belgium Rwanda Programme Manager to the MSF France Programme Manager', 13 March 1995 (in French).

Extract:
- OK in principle regarding MSF submitting a report to relevant authorities and diplomatic entities; we think this report should be delivered by hand to Kagame; according to J. Matata, it appears that Kagame may still be one of the 'reliable' people in the current government, but his cabinet is considerably less so and may even screen such a report.
- MSF Belgium thinks MSF should also take a public position on the prison problem and the current (intentional) slowness of the legal system. We would like to develop such a press release for early next week and, in any event, by at least 10 days before the commemoration of the genocide. MSF Belgium does not want to conflate the commemoration of the genocide with the current human rights situation in Rwanda.
- Concerning Nicolas' text specifically, we would have liked more thorough coverage of MSF International's activities inside the prisons; given MSF Belgium's access and its activity (limited) in the Kigali and Gitarama prisons, that should have been noted.



I knew that data gathering was underway, and the idea was to use the information. Personally, I was suspicious about how it would be used. I wanted to know more... My point in discussions with MSF France was that we should talk about what we had seen. We should not base the entire advocacy effort on data only indirectly related to what we ourselves documented. I felt we had every right to talk about the situation of prisoners in the Butare hospital since MSF was on site and we had data and first-hand observations. On the other hand, I found it questionable to add information based on hearsay, without having witnessed an event or a situation. I know there were discussions about it.

Dr Barbara Kerstiens, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Rwanda, September 1994-March 1995 (in French).



The MSF Belgium team was not very happy about the prison dossier. However, they were the ones who raised the issue at the outset. MSF Belgium had attacked ICRC about the Kigali prison, saying they ought to provide additional medical care in the prisons because there were problems. I had just arrived to replace Nicolas de Torrenté as MSF France Country Coordinator. I took over the dossier and said, 'OK, we'll keep on working on this issue. We'll do advocacy on the prisoners' state of health.' Barbara, the MSF Belgium Coordinator, asked, 'What will advocacy do for us? We did our job by pushing ICRC to do more and now it's working.' We sensed that they weren't very eager. That dragged on for a long time before we could resume lobbying.

[...], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).

MSF France already had staff who, although not working in the prisons, worked full-time with prisoners they treated in the hospital and whom they would send back to prison. So – fortunately – they had plenty of statements prepared on the prison situation. In the end, MSF France spoke out – justifiably – on the situation and we agreed. I don't think the sections took up the statement actively, but we agreed.

Dr [...], MSF Belgium, Programme Manager, then Director of Operations (in French).

In early April 1995, MSF transmitted a report titled, 'Diagnosing the State of Prisoner Health: The Gitarama Example' (Médecins sans Frontières in Rwanda, March 1995), to the Rwandan Ministries of Justice and of Rehabilitation, and to the staff of Paul Kagame, the regime's 'strong man'. The report showed that all the diseases suffered by inmates resulted from prison crowding. It was not made public, but on the anniversary of the genocide, MSF officials gave interviews to the international press on the changing situation in Rwanda. Prisoner health status was raised.

'Diagnosing the State of Prisoner Health: The Gitarama Example', Médecins Sans Frontières in Rwanda, **Report**, March 1995 (in French).

Extract:

This assessment is based on Médecins Sans Frontières' Gitarama experience. Its goal is to report MSF's findings regarding medical care and the overall health status of prisoners in Rwanda, and to develop recommendations for improving a situation that can only be described as critical.

Why is MSF, a medical and humanitarian organisation, calling attention to this issue?

- As an active supporter of reference hospitals – specifically the Kabgayi hospital in Gitarama –MSF is a stakeholder in the prison medical system.
- Mortality rates remain very high among prisoners. From a medical perspective, this group within Rwandan society remains extremely vulnerable.
- Despite the very important activities of healthcare workers inside the prisons (Health Ministry and ICRC) and MSF's efforts among reference hospitals, we are quickly approaching the limits of medical action. Under current conditions of confinement, the remaining medical care improvements will have only a marginal impact on reducing mortality rates.
- Improving prisoner healthcare is in the interest of bringing justice to victims and survivors of the genocide. This must begin with clear and concerted efforts to address the immediate cause of the problem: extreme prison overpopulation.
- Beyond these first measures, the restoration of the entire Rwandan judicial system requires immediate attention.

<u>Conclusions</u>

A humanitarian and medical organisation like MSF does not typically venture into issues of incarceration and the judicial system, nor make concrete recommendations on such matters. But when medical efforts cannot save lives, MSF must do more.

We observe that current prison mortality rates are closely linked to prison and jail overpopulation. Improving medical services within these facilities is a necessary but insufficient strategy for achieving the goal of acceptable prisoner survival rates.

The Rwandan government and the international community must thus treat the struggle against overcrowding as urgent.
To be effective, any effort must take the following two issues into consideration:
- The continuing high numbers of arrests; and,
- the Rwandan legal system's current state of paralysis.
MSF is concerned about the current situation. Even as the prison population continues to grow, the legal and judicial system for handling arrests, imprisonment, criminal charges and trial has been only partially reestablished.
The legal system is not capable of dealing with this growth in prison population. No one in a Rwandan prison charged with participating in the genocide has yet been brought to trial. The legal system, such as it is, faces serious obstacles.
The international tribunal's delay is particularly troubling, as is the fact that many of those responsible for the genocide are outside the country.
It is thus difficult to imagine the return of large numbers of refugees, with due regard for the legal system's requirements, under current conditions.
Given the current pace and nature of arrests, unless the entire Rwandan legal system is restored, increasing the country's prison capacity will only defer the problem. Continued prison population growth will quickly raise the crowding issue again, with all its attendant negative health impacts on prisoners.



'**Fax** from MSF Holland Country Coordinator to MSF Holland Programme Manager', 6 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Françoise Saulnier [MSF France Legal Advisor] arrived and yesterday evening we had a meeting here in the office about what had to be declared, together with Samantha Bolton [MSF International Communication Officer], and Gerda [Bossier, MSF Belgium Communication Director]. We all agreed that she will try to get the appointment with Kagame and that she will deposit the dossier at his cabinet. In the meantime, she is being questioned by journalists on the prison system. MSF Belgium is getting nervous, as they are afraid her declarations will cost them their programme afterwards. This afternoon we will have a meeting with her again to make sure that she only speaks about the medical contents of the prison problem and that she does not deviate to the judicial system too much.



'Rwanda Jails: No Space, No Food, No Justice', ***The New York Times*** (USA), 15 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
The prisoners cannot sit or lie down because there is no room. So, they stand, four to a square yard, in the muddy central courtyard. It takes hours to reach the latrines, or the cooking fires where they eat. There is no protection against the daily downpours, and many of the prisoners' bare feet are rotting from gangrene. Every day five to ten die and many more are taken to a local hospital with pneumonia and dysentery.
The prison in Gitarama, southwest of Kigali, was built to hold 500 inmates. It now holds 7,000 and dozens more arrive each day. Prison officials say most are charged with involvement in massacres last year in which Hutu militias, soldiers and mobs killed an estimated 500,000 Rwandans, most of them minority Tutsi.

Government officials emphasise that Rwanda has neither the institutions nor the money to deal with so many inmates. More than a year after the massacres began, there is still no working judicial system, and basic services like electricity, running water and communications have not been restored.
But prisons like Gitarama underscore the moral crisis facing the government, which came to power after the victory of a Tutsi-led rebel movement last summer. As an unchecked military carts some 2,000 people to jail each week, and no one comes to trial, the government is open to growing charges of abusing human rights. As far as can be determined, more than 32,000 Rwandans are packed into 11 main prisons without access to lawyers, family members or hope.
"It is horrific," said Dr Alison Davis, of the relief agency Doctors without Borders. "They are being treated like animals."
The western relief workers treating about 120 prison patients at the nearby hospital in Kabgayi say they alternate between sympathy for the inmates and disquiet at the thought that many were involved in vicious massacres.
"There is a paradox," said Dr Davis, of Doctors Without Borders. "A lot of people I'm dealing with are murderers. I personally can't come to terms with that."



Minutes of the MSF International Operations Meeting on Rwanda and Burundi, Brussels, 11 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Situation in the prisons in Rwanda
The report has been given to the Ministry of Health and Rehabilitation but not yet to Kagame. We plan to make an update every three weeks and then to present it to a larger public. It is not necessary to present the actual report to the public at this stage because these types of reports have already been presented by other agencies. The 'MSF updated report' will be sent to the press mail with a presentation letter and not via a press conference.
If we do not see amelioration in one month, the 'MSF updated report' will be presented via a press conference.
Recently the authorities transferred 2,000 prisoners from the prison of Gitarama to another one. The strategy of the government could be to judge a maximum of people guilty of petty crimes (50% of the prisoners). There are also 150 judicial police officers trained by RCN who are going to work in the prisons to create legal files for each prisoner.



The first report was prepared in March or April 1994. We were working in a Rwandan hospital, treating huge numbers of prisoners. We had medical data. The Rwandan administration was the first to receive the report. We also sent it to several embassies but not to journalists. We did not make it public.

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).

III. THE KIBEHO KILLINGS

In the meantime, on 9 March 1994, MSF's sections operational in Rwanda had discussed their positions on the repatriation of Rwandan refugees and displaced people to their home communes.

'**Minutes** of the International Operations Meeting on Rwanda and Burundi', 9 March 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Repatriation
MSF Belgium is actively providing information on the humanitarian situation in Rwanda (e.g. what hospitals are open) as it feels that the information that the refugees have on the situation there is totally manipulated and distorted. The refugees have the impression that the country is war torn and deserted.
They are participating in the medical assistance for those who return to Rwanda.
MSF Spain feels that, although the conditions are not perfect, it is safe for the refugees to return to Rwanda.
MSF Switzerland does not try to actively promote repatriation as:
- They do not feel the situation in Rwanda is stable enough.
- They do not feel it is their role.
MSF France does not feel it can promote repatriation, as the little information they have on the situation in Rwanda is more discouraging than encouraging. They feel that it is UNHCR's mandate, and that MSF should try and work through them.

During the same period, the MSF France Country Coordinator in Rwanda met several times with the UN Human Rights Observer, who shared his concern over the fate of displaced people returning to their villages. He also mentioned that the Rwandan government was about to act.

Rwandan authorities had decided to close the camp. Marc, the UN Human Rights Observer, whom I knew, was working on this and wanted to have the census data for all the camp residents. He wanted to know where they came from and to go to neighbouring communities to assess their fate on their return. I told him, 'I would like to give it to you, but you need to place more observers in the camp. The situation there is troubling.' We met several times. He was worried and said, 'The government is going to take a hardline position very soon.' He knew a month ahead of time what was going to happen. He was in a hurry to find out what was going on in the communes. I didn't have time to give him the census.

[...], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).

We were asked to take part in a PR campaign to encourage people to return to their prefecture of origin, where they risked being killed. In the end, we said, 'No, we're not going to do it. We won't act on this. As long as people are in Gikongoro, we will provide them healthcare services. The day they leave, we'll stop. But we won't stop providing health-

care services to force them to leave.' In practice, the RPA wanted to cut off food distribution and all services in the camps so that people would have to leave. We said no. So, they forced CARE to cut off food distribution. People protested, saying they were being starved.

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).

During the first week of April 1995, the RPA expelled the displaced people from the small camps in the Gikongoro region to force them to return to their villages. The IDPs went to the main Kibeho camp, where the population soon reached 130,000. The MSF France team lived an hour away in the city of Gikongoro and went to the Kibeho site hospital every day to work.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Our house was in the town of Gikongoro, and Kibeho was 37 km from there. One third of the road is paved, and the rest is dirt. When everything was going right, it would take a little more than an hour to reach the camp. Located on a hillside, the Kibeho hospital was in the centre of the camp, where some 100,000 displaced people lived in huts made of wood and plastic sheeting. Beginning the first week of April, that number increased as other IDPs arrived. The government's camp closure programme began, and the total rose to around 130,000 people.
The health situation in the camp was being kept under control by the MSF France team including Rwandan staff, some of whom are themselves displaced persons.. Caritas and CARE Australia provided medicines.



Malnutrition rates were very low, and the health situation was excellent. Mortality rates were very low. We worked at the hospital with a group of highly competent Rwandans. In two or three months, they could take over patient care. I supervised and visited as if I were a head of service. I saw two or three patients alone to confirm how the staff was handling things, but overall, they ran the departments. We were three international staff – two nurses and me. We didn't have a logistician anymore. Things were really working very well.
The population of the town was 120,000, with the additional numbers of the refugees in the hills. At night, the temperature was 10 degrees centigrade. As a result, the hospital's 120 beds were always full. We had a home visit system throughout the camp. We vaccinated continuously. If diarrhoea spiked even slightly – increased by 10 cases per week – we were there. We had time to work on things in depth. There was genuine supervision. But there was no question of leaving – otherwise there would be no more medicine, no more supervision and no more staff salaries. We were the hospital management. Caritas did small things and a CARE Australia logistician distributed medicine to the small clinics. For the last three or four months, the needs were in paediatrics and medicine. The paediatric department was full.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

The atmosphere in the camp was calm since December 1994, when the RPA and UNAMIR-led operation expelled the violent leaders who had held sway there. The MSF France team staff found no presence of armed men among the displaced people.



There were not a lot of security problems in the camp. From time to time, there were thefts, but nothing major. It wasn't like Goma. For example, you didn't see hundreds of bare-chested guys hanging around early in the morning. I saw food distributions in Goma and Kibeho and they didn't work the same way. In the Goma camps, people were grouped with their district or village leader, and he was the one who received the food and redistributed it. So obviously lots of the aid was diverted. In Kibeho, ICRC handled distribution with food going directly to families.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).



The Rwandan soldiers told us that there were armed men in the crowd. We never saw any ourselves. The ICRC didn't know about them either. They were incapable of responding. During the week prior to the events, ICRC came to inspect the camps. They came because we'd noticed that the RPA was arresting men. On the other side of the camp, there was a station house that had become a kind of prison. They were interrogating men there and the ICRC delegates wanted to know what was going on. But they were never able to enter the barracks where the prisoners were being held. The soldiers said, 'You are on their side. But there are armed men inside the camp and it's dangerous, even for you.' In the camp, the hospital was a good observation spot. But I can't say whether there were militias or armed men in the camp. At the beginning of my stay, I attended the leaders' meetings once or twice. These guys were vicious. They were very aggressive towards the army and the Tutsi. They used racist language. At the time of the events, I saw the camp leader and other people I knew, but I never saw the violent and racist leaders again. My impression is that the most dangerous men had left.

Catherine Quillet, MSF France, Field Coordinator in Gikongoro, Rwanda, November 1994-May 1995 (in French).



The RPA and UNAMIR searched the camp several times looking for weapons. All they ever found were a few machetes that people needed for everyday tasks and a few old traditional hunting weapons. Those of us who worked in this camp certainly knew that there were mini mafias operating. We knew about the people who went between Bukavu and the camps and tried to give some kind of political directives. But overall, the key leaders of the former regime did not stay in the camps around Gikongoro, where the RPA was. They escaped to Zaire. In these camps, there were only a few infiltrators who tried to keep hold of some element of power and influence. But there was no chance of controlling everything because the RPA and UNAMIR were there. And most importantly, people had had enough of political leaders. They were trying to survive. They were terrorised. And that's why they stayed together. When you study the structure of these camps, you see that there were lots of people living in the neighbouring hills. But they preferred to come live in the camps for security reasons. Isolated on their hill, they were afraid that the RPA would kill them. And then abuses were committed from the camps – a few cows were stolen and sometimes Tutsi families were

harmed. But you can't compare these camps to Bukavu and Goma! I went to both. If people did not want to go home, it was because they were afraid that they would be killed when they got there – that's it.

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).

7 April 1995 was the date the Rwandan government chose to hold ceremonies marking the beginning of the genocide. For security reasons, the MSF France team did not work in the camps that day. In Kibeho, where a large massacre took place during the genocide, the displaced people feared acts of vengeance.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Thursday 6 April: the eve of the day of commemoration. What would happen? The government announced that a day of commemorative ceremonies would be held – that's fine, but the IDPs in the area, including Kibeho, formed an attractive target for a day of vengeance. Rumours circulated and people were afraid. For two days we saw hundreds of IDPs on the road, fleeing the other camps to take refuge in Kibeho. Although UNAMIR's presence appeared to reassure people, the atmosphere remained very tense and explosive. Before leaving, several staff people said to us, 'You may not see us again.' For security reasons, we won't be working that day.

On Saturday 8 April 1995, the MSF France team returned to work in the hospital. An unusual silence reigned there, but the situation remained calm until the following Thursday.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Saturday 8 April: return to the hospital. The apparent calm was misleading. Small groups of staff talked among themselves in low voices. Work resumed its normal rhythm, but things were oddly quiet. J, the staff supervisor, asked me if it would be possible to pay the workers on Saturday, the 15th, instead of as usual on the 18th. They would like to have a little money for Easter.
Sunday and Monday: rest days. Monday had been declared a holiday as part of the genocide commemoration. There were no unusual incidents until Thursday the 13th. Torrential rains tore up the road. In places it was nothing more than ruts, sheets of ice, holes and muck. Until then, it hadn't been especially difficult to get to the camp. We passed through the RPA checkpoints with no problem.

On 11 April 1995, the programme managers from the different MSF sections met in Brussels and decided to create the position of international information officer in Rwanda.



'**Fax** from MSF Holland General Coordinator in Rwanda to the Programme Manager', 6 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Advocacy strategy has been on the agenda of both the desk meeting in Brussels as well as at a strategy meeting here at the office.
We would like to give you quick feedback on the main conclusions:
1. The TOR for the international post of Kigali has been agreed by all desks. Agnes Wagenaar will arrive in Kigali this Friday. She will work closely together with Eleanor in Goma and the person in the proposed international post in Burundi [...]
2. All desks agreed that we should have an integrated advocacy strategy for the region. That is that we will collect information through Agnes, Eleanor, and the coordinators in Rwanda, Zaire and Tanzania with the purpose of writing a document, which will reflect MSF's concerns in the region. Publication of such a document is not excluded, but timing, the sort of information we get etc. will be factors in the decision about a possible publication [...]
3. Advocacy will be done as much as possible together with the other sections but should remain quick and effective. Public initiatives should be sent to the desks for consultation, but feedback needs to be given within 24 hours.
Terms of reference [...]
Objectives of the mission:
To gather detailed information on 1. Repatriation [...] 2. The Rwandan judicial system/ international tribunal [...] 3. The human rights situation.

On Thursday 13 April 1995, the MSF France team discovered that the Rwamiko site, several kilometres from Kibeho, had been destroyed. The camp's 5,000 displaced people headed to Kibeho.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
As usual, we crossed through the small IDP camp (5,000 inhabitants) in Rwamiko commune, but today there was no longer anyone there. It had just been evacuated. Household objects, bags of food, and personal items left on the ground suggested the move had not been orderly and peaceful. Some shelters had been burned and were still smoking. Rwamiko is located a few kilometres from Kibeho. The people who fled to Kibeho explained that the night before, RPA soldiers had come to warm them that if they were still there in the morning, the soldiers would burn everything down. They also warned them that if they went to Kibeho and were still there on Monday, there would be war. The same day, M and B, two of our MSF colleagues, invited us to visit the Munini dispensary and have lunch there. It is located 45 minutes by trail from Kibeho. We left the camp around 13:00, slightly worried because of the rainstorm. During lunch, A, our

radio contact at the hospital, called us on the walkie-talkie. In a trembling voice, he told us that the RPA had entered the hospital. Everyone was in a panic. People were frightened. We left immediately for Kibeho. By the time we arrived, calm had been restored. The RPA had forced out the people who sought shelter in the hospital. Their actions were always brutal – they would strike people with rifle butts and clubs.

On Friday 14 April 1995, there was a stepped-up presence of RPA soldiers in the camp. At MSF France's request, UNAMIR soldiers were dispatched to protect the hospital's occupants.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Friday 14: RPA columns circulated all night around the hospital. The staff is very worried. There's no question that the number of soldiers has increased. To find out what was going on, D, an MSF doctor, contacted a UNAMIR official, Commander F, who explained that the RPA team had changed. That explained all the soldiers' comings and goings. In response to D's concern, the Commander reaffirmed that he was there to protect the population and us. D asked him to dispatch several of his men to patrol at night and protect the people in the hospital. He agreed to set up surveillance.

On 15 April 1995, the MSF team learned that the RPA had ordered an end to deliveries of food supplies to the camp.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Saturday 15: We learned from PH, an ICRC representative, who supplies the camp's food, that he had to stop the delivery of food to force people to leave. RPA officials thought that if people had nothing more to eat, they would have to return to their commune. Those who did not want to leave would be expelled by force if necessary. The threat was obvious.

On Tuesday 18 April 1995, returning from work in the Kibeho camp after the long Easter holiday weekend, MSF France staff discovered that the army had attacked and destroyed the camp and forced all the displaced people to gather on the hill around the UNAMIR building, hospital and school. The Ndago and Munini camps had also been attacked and emptied.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Tuesday 18: as always, at 07:15, before leaving, we made radio contact with A, who was always at the hospital. He informed us that the RPA had attacked two sites at the Kibeho camp. We feared the worst. 08:00 we contacted A again to learn more. The news about the camp was not very clear. There were lots of RPA soldiers there, Commander F had been notified and would be at the hospital.
The first car left for the camp with the driver, the doctor, the logistician and me. One kilometre from Rwamiko, we were stopped by a truck blocking the road, bogged down in the mud. 09:30: A called us on the radio. Shots had been fired around the hospital. The first gunshot victims were hospitalised. Panic reigned at the site. In the end, we got through. The news made us fear the worst. We were worried and tense, sick with fear. We passed the first two UNAMIR checkpoints without them telling us what was happening in the camp. We stopped at the last UNAMIR checkpoint before the camp to find out if we would be able to get there. It looked impossible. The RPA was blocking all access. We decided to go anyway. RPA checkpoint: we talked, negotiated and, finally, got through.
We reached the camp to discover a vision of hell. It was empty. The thousands of shelters were destroyed and burned. The ground was strewn with broken and abandoned domestic objects, sacks of corn had been slashed and their contents strewn on the ground. The camp was dead. There was no one there. The RPA had come very early in the morning. Having seen the same camp, the day before – with its lively market, little shops where craftsmen had gone back to work, kids tearing down the track on their funny wooden bikes – the scene was horrifying [...] The 130,000 people who had been in the camp were now grouped around the UNAMIR and school's two encampments.



'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995,' Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
In the night of 17-18 April 1995, contrary to the agreements made between the Rwandan government and UNAMIR, an estimated 2,500 RPA military entered and emptied the camps of Kibeho, Ndago and Munini.
In Kibeho camp more than 100,000 IDPs were living. The military chased the displaced out of their shelters while pulling away the plastic sheeting. In the initial panic and chaos ten people (nine children and one woman) died of trampling and suffocation, and more than 100 people were wounded.
Other camps:
On 17 April 1995 there were four big camps in Gikongoro prefecture: Kibeho (100,000 people), Ndago (40,000), Munini (15,000), and Kaman (28,000). During the night of 17-18 April, the RPA emptied three out of these four camps. In Munini some of the shelters were burnt down. After the nightly eviction from their shelters the displaced remained in the camps, grouped together. Only Kamana camp was still intact.



Our camp radio operator called us and said, 'The soldiers have been in the camp since 04:00. They are driving everyone out of their huts and assembling them. They want everyone to leave. All these people were grouped at the top of a hill where there was a food distribution area and permanent buildings. On one side were the blue helmets, the

hospital, the rest of the Caritas hospital, and large buildings in an interior courtyard. People were grouped in this distribution area, surrounded by RPA troops. The area measured about the size of 1 1/2 soccer fields and held more than 100,000 people. The soldiers told them, 'You must leave. We are stopping food distribution and there will be no more water.' People were standing packed together. They were not permitted to move from that spot.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

After negotiating with UNAMIR and the RPA, the MSF France staff obtained authorisation to work in the hospital, where they treated people wounded during the forced evacuation.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Before entering the hospital, a blue helmet showed us the bodies of the 10 people who died during the hospital evacuation. There were eight children, a woman and an infant – they'd all been suffocated and trampled to death. Our throats tight, we went to the hospital. More and more wounded people were arriving. Wounded by bullets, their legs were torn by the barbed wire surrounding the UNAMIR buildings where people tried to take refuge. They had been struck with machetes [...]
The RPA surrounded the perimeter where people took refuge. Those who left the area and tried to gather their belongings from their shelter were beaten. We couldn't supply the hospital with food any longer. There was nothing left to feed the staff, who were working day and night. Tomorrow there won't be any milk left for the children.

When the MSF France team reached Kibeho camp and discovered that the RPA had rounded up the displaced people, the members contacted the Head of Mission in Kigali, who quickly alerted the press.



The only idea we had was this: 'We've got to treat the people who are there. We've got to be there so that someday we can testify to this.' My first argument for staying was that we needed witnesses. Would MSF organise the testimony or set up a tribunal? I had no idea. But we had to have witnesses. They were deporting some people and killing others. We had to be there to be able to say, 'It's true that people were killed, and others were deported and that no one knew what became of them.'

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

With hindsight, I'm sorry we didn't stay the night in the camp after they had gathered people. We could have treated people and had a better view of what happened. In fact, being on the outside, and with the extremely strict security rules, we couldn't see much. But on site, I was the one there. I carried out the security rules in agreement with Kigali. No one said, 'I would like to stay the night.' But later I said to myself, 'In terms of advocacy, we could have been much stronger if we had stayed the night to treat people.' I felt like I was abandoning people every night.

Catherine Quillet, MSF France, Field Coordinator in Gikongoro, Rwanda, November 1994-May 1995 (in French).

On Wednesday 19 April 1995, the RPA deployed 2,500 men in the camp. They shot at the crowd that had sought refuge between the hospital buildings. Thousands of people were reduced to living packed together, in the rain, without water, food or latrines. The RPA no longer authorised international organisations to distribute food, and cut off the water distribution system. MSF and OXFAM logisticians negotiated intensely to obtain authorisation to install a few water reservoirs.

'**Report** on the Kibeho Camp Killings', Etienne Quetin (MSF France Logistician), 18-23 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
This was the day (Wednesday) that I really understood the tragic health situation in terms of water and hygiene. People were only a short distance from the latrines, but the RPA had set up a cordon preventing them from getting there. People were so packed together that they had to shit on each other. There was shit everywhere, mixed in with the mud. As for water, we knew people would not be able to survive very long without it. The RPA had cut off the distribution system. What they'd done was to dismantle part of the motor-pump, which was installed at the Viro site. With OXFAM and UNICEF, we decided to do everything we could to obtain authorisation to restart the system and give people access to the water. An OXFAM volunteer was supposed to meet the RPA Commander early in the morning to convince him to restart the system. He didn't manage to see him [...] We decided to go with a UNICEF volunteer to the UN checkpoint to find the OXFAM volunteer and find out what was going on. We left the hospital accompanied by two UN soldiers. That's when there was a terrible fight. We passed through the crowd and when we reached the distribution area, I noticed some IDPs on the right throwing stones at RPA soldiers (the RPA had let a small group of people go to a natural water source, located at the bottom of the valley, between the Kibeho and Viro sites. The others were protesting the RPA soldiers' refusal to let them reach the source). Suddenly I heard shots. The crowd panicked and people ran in every direction. At that moment, I believed I was going to be crushed and trampled by the crowd because there was no way out. Then the RPA fired again, and everyone hit the ground, including us. I called my colleague on the VHF. I was scared to death.
The firing was going on when a UN soldier called out to me, "Don't worry! Get up, follow me! Everything is OK!" After a moment's hesitation, I followed him, along with the UNICEF volunteer. As we stepped over people stretched out on the ground and reached the far end of the area, they started getting up and rushing towards us for protection. We had to keep from being crushed a second time. The firing started again. It was even heavier.

We stopped a little way before the UN checkpoint to try to calm the crowd. I said to them, "Everything is all right, it's all right! Calm down!" A man answered, "No, it's not all right!" The RPA soldiers continued shooting into the air, but later we admitted two people with bullet wounds to the MSF hospital, proving that at the beginning, the RPA had opened fire on the crowd. The MSF team in the paediatrics department was also almost crushed by the crowd that rushed inside [...] I had barely arrived when the OXFAM volunteer asked me to go with him to meet with the Interior Minister near the market [...] Several people were waiting for us, including the Interior Minister, a UNHCR representative, RPA Captain Shema (the leader of the operation), the MILOBS [military observers] Commander, and representatives of other NGOs. After a long discussion with the Minister, he agreed that OXFAM could restart the water distribution system on the condition that it provide only enough for drinking and no more. Captain Shema contradicted him, refusing to allow Rwandans to participate in the operation, while the Minister had authorised 15 local technicians to help. Captain Shema made clear that he did not want to see any African, other than UN workers, working in the camp. I asked Captain Shema if I could distribute water to meet the hospital's needs and if our staff could continue to work in the hospital. He agreed.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Radio contact with A. The night in the hospital was calm. Increasing problems getting through RPA checkpoints. We learned from UNAMIR that the RPA deployed 2,500 men in the camp and surrounding areas.[...]
Around 14:00, people tore down the fence surrounding the hospital and came to take refuge between the buildings. People didn't try to enter the hospital that entire week, but you had to step over bodies, sacks and garbage to get from one building to another. The RPA entered and fired. People panicked and we evacuated through a crowd that, despite the situation, made an opening for us. Some people called out to us, "Tell them to let us leave, tell them not to kill us, we want to go back with you, help us." It was awful to leave all those people behind. We represented a faint ray of hope to them [...] After each episode of panic that followed an armed RPA intervention, new wounded people arrived at the hospital. We admitted many burned children [...] The crowd around the hospital set up living quarters there. Those who had managed to save a few animals began butchering them. They cooked their little remaining food on improvised stoves. A thick, bitter smoke invaded the hospital courtyard. The wind carried the smoke into the hospital, and we couldn't breathe. It rained almost continuously, and the water diluted the excrement littering the ground. Most people were overwhelmed by fear, exhaustion, hunger and thirst. I had to cross the courtyard several times a day. Each time, someone would spontaneously take it upon himself to clear a path for me. The children would greet me, saying, "Komera.[Don't give up !]" People held out their hands.



'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995,' Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
During the first days the RPA did not give permission to international organisations (UNICEF, ICRC, OXFAM) to supply food and only a limited amount of water was given.

The first two days after the forced eviction from the shelters were very hot and without rain. In these days only 18,000 litres of water was supplied to the crowd of 100,000 people, whereas the minimum need in hot weather is five litres per person per day. The MSF hospital was inundated by displaced who were desperate for the little water that had remained in the hospital.
On the third day the displaced received a total of 150,000 litres – which mosof Justicet probably reached the population in an unequal manner, as many people stood too far away from the water points. On the fourth day people told MSF that they no longer had access to water as the soldiers were beating them away from the water points.

The Rwandan army's intervention at the Kibeho site was reported in the international press.



'Rwandan Authorities Close Displaced People's Camps in the South', ***Le Monde*** (France), 20 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Another UNAMIR official, who requested anonymity, said that the operation represented "an effort at intimidation to force the displaced people to return home against their will". In late December 1994, Rwandan authorities had set a deadline for the camps' closure, but at UNAMIR's request, had agreed not to issue ultimatums or to use force. The displaced people still refuse to return to their villages out of fear of imprisonment or death. The Rwandan army continues to arrest around 1,500 people weekly. They will swell the already overpopulated prisons, which hold more than 33,000 people [...]
Under the terms of the agreement, the camps' 'closure,' organised by an 'integrated operations centre,' was to have begun last week, on 15 April. It was delayed until after the week ending 14 April because of the period of mourning in Rwanda to honour the victims of the genocide.

On the morning of Thursday 20 April 1995, the displaced people were assembled in an even smaller area. Famished and exhausted, the members of MSF's local medical staff in the Kibeho hospital, themselves displaced people, feared that the RPA would enter the hospital.



'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995', Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
During the night or early morning of 19-20 April, the crowd had apparently been driven together even more tightly. The terrain next to the first UNAMIR compound where on Wednesday many people had been standing, was by Thursday morning just covered with belongings left behind.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
07:15: Radio contact with A. The night was calm. People remained on the hospital grounds but stayed outside of the units. In the units, treatment was organised as well as possible, which, given the situation, was pretty good. The staff were desperate, hungry, sleepy and frightened. A, the cook, asked me in tears if she could bring her children into the building. They were outside. Then J, the staff supervisor, asked if his wife and their children could take shelter in the hospital. We were afraid the RPA would enter the hospital with weapons to drive out anyone who was not a patient. Aside from the four medical assistants we brought in every morning, the members of the medical staff were IDPs, and their families were in the camp. From that moment, one question would haunt us: What good was it to treat and care for people who might be killed the next day? Should we continue working under such conditions?

RPA soldiers prevented the displaced people from reaching the water reservoirs that MSF and OXFAM had set up. The displaced people who were trying to flee the awful living conditions were beaten as they fled.



'**Report** on the Kibeho Camp Killings', Etienne Quetin (MSF France logistician), April 18-23 1995 (in French).

Extract:
We decided to install a reservoir and two hydrant-fountains lower down, asking the RPA if people could have access. They agreed, but after installing the system we quickly realised that very few people were given access. The RPA beat people to discourage them. OXFAM then installed a hydrant-fountain (connected to the network) near the hospital cistern to replace the one damaged by the crowd [...] The health situation worsened dramatically, and MSF was increasingly fearful of a cholera epidemic.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Thursday 20th [...] The atmosphere is increasingly tense. People have no more water. An RPA cordon is blocking access to the reservoirs OXFAM installed. The only access to water is inside the hospital. People flood in to fill their containers. The hospital staff no longer has control over the situation. They came to get me so that I would do something so the kitchen and the hospital could get water. It took more than an hour, and the help of two guards, to move the thirsty crowd aside and fill the kitchen and service reservoirs a little. There were dozens of them, handing me their water bottles, signalling that they were thirsty, begging me to let them have some water. One of the pipes leaked. A women slid her container underneath to catch the drops. When I determined that the hospital had enough water for the moment, I explained to the people that they could help themselves. There was a rush that turned into a riot. I was afraid. I called the UNAMIR commander

on the walkie-talkie to come and intervene. A few minutes later, the blue helmets arrived and made all the people go outside the hospital compound.
J, the Staff Supervisor, asked me what was going to happen and if they could get some special protection, given that they worked for MSF. I felt impotent. What could I say? That day we were sure that the killing had begun and that it would continue.

There was shooting every night. People were wounded and tried to flee. They were clubbed like baby rabbits… People remained outside in the rain for a week without eating. They drank rainwater. When you see your child living in such conditions, of course you're going to be extremely upset! Some tried to run off into the hills. The soldiers suspected those who escaped of being Interahamwe and fired into the crowd! Little by little, the deaths mounted, and it ended in carnage on Saturday.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

At the end of the afternoon, when the MSF staff left the camp, some 50 additional soldiers headed for the hospital. At MSF's request, UNAMIR agreed to post night guards. Around 18:00, the hospital radio operator notified the team that he heard shooting in front of the building.

'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995', Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
On Thursday 20 April at about 16.30, just when the MSF team was leaving the camp to go back to their house, they saw a group of at least 50 RPA military heading towards the hospital. Already during the day many soldiers had been walking in and out of the hospital and had hampered the work of the team.
At 16.30 MSF asked UNAMIR if they could put men to guard the hospital for the night. UNAMIR said they would, but did not do so. At 18.00 the local MSF radio operator who remained day and night in the hospital radioed the team that there were shots in the hospital square.

In a press release distributed by all the sections, MSF asked that the displaced people be allowed to remain temporarily in the camps.



'Médecins Sans Frontières Requests That Displaced People's Camps Be Maintained Temporarily', MSF Belgium, MSF France, MSF USA, MSF International **Press release**, 20 April 1995 (in French – in English).

Extract:

MSF USA

Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors without Borders demands that the camps for displaced people in Rwanda be temporarily maintained.

Thursday 20 April 1995 – since the morning of 18 April, 2,500 soldiers from the RPA (Rwandan Patriotic Army) have been surrounding the camps for displaced people in the Kibeho region of Rwanda (200,000 people grouped in four principal camps) to force them to return to their original homes.

The deployment of Rwandan military forces has caused panic among the population, provoking the deaths of nine people in Kibeho and the wounding of one hundred people at Ndago. The populations have hastily left the camps and have taken refuge on the outskirts of the UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda) encampment. They have been without shelter for two days and have not been allocated food or water in any of the camps.

Since Tuesday, two camps (Ndago and Munini) have been partially burned and the army seems determined to close the last sites. The populations are afraid to return home because they have seen the failure of government repatriation effort Operation Return, now called Operation Homeward, which was put in place by UNREO (United Nations Rwandan Emergency Operation). There has even been a movement in the past few weeks of repatriated people back to the camps.

Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders is outraged by the conditions in which these operations are taking place and is deeply concerned about the fate of these populations. The displaced must be able to get food, water, and the necessary shelter to survive. As long as no satisfactory solution exists to assure the return and reinstallation of these displaced people, MSF demands that, for better or for worse, these camps must be maintained.

MSF International

MSF calls for Rwandan displaced camps to be maintained [...]

Reintegration of the displaced into their communes of origin is proving so problematic that over the past month and a half MSF has seen a marked increase in the number of arrivals in the internally displaced camps of southwest Rwanda. These include both people who had been repatriated from the camps to their communes of origin and then who fled again, as well as people who had never been displaced before.

[The] MSF Coordinator in Rwanda, [...], said, "Tonight will be the third night these people spend in the open air in terrible conditions. The displaced must have access to the minimum of food, water and shelter necessary for their survival."

Every morning, the MSF team wondered whether to go to Kibeho that day. They were finding it increasingly difficult to gain access to the displaced people. Blockages at RPA checkpoints were increasing, and negotiations were becoming longer and more difficult. At the hospital, the RPA soldiers blocked the team from working.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Friday 21 April
Every day, we ask ourselves again if we should go to Kibeho. And every day we decide to go. But each person is free to refuse if he or she is not comfortable. I decided to follow my mission through to the end – if I'm not putting my life in danger. Our duty is to assist this population in distress and these people have the right to humanitarian assistance. If we are refused access to the hospital and prevented from working, we're still there as witnesses.
Reaching Kibeho was even more difficult than on the other days. The RPA made us wait for authorisations at the checkpoint, but they didn't have them. We had to call the UNAMIR commander and get the MILOBS (military observers) and the UNHCR official involved.



'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995', Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
From the moment of eviction, it was no longer possible for the displaced to have full access to MSF facilities or for MSF to have full access to the people who needed medical assistance. The mass concentration of displaced made this impossible.
Besides this, it became increasingly difficult for the MSF team to continue their work in the hospital as before. Every day they were stopped at RPA checkpoints and had to negotiate their access over and over again, up to one hour sometimes. MSF was usually told that the reason to be stopped was an order from a higher-up person, who happened to be absent at that moment. Also, the MSF team had to wait considerable time for trucks manoeuvring on the difficult dirt roads or blocking the Butare road.
The hospital itself soon was inundated by displaced trying to fetch water from the hospital, and by RPA soldiers who walked in and out and hampered the work of MSF. According to one MSF nurse, "There were so many soldiers all over the hospital all day. They went through every ward and evicted relatives accompanying the patients. They were searching through everything and everyone. For a while we were not allowed by them to go to the store to get supplies. They even forbid us to give milk to the 25 malnourished children in the paediatric ward. We had to negotiate a long time with them before they let us feed them [...]"
On Thursday, as MSF saw that it became increasingly difficult to treat patients in Kibeho hospital, they approached the RPA asking for permission to transport patients to Butare. They did not get a real answer, just were told to come back the next day to discuss the matter again. However, on Friday it was impossible to find any RPA commanders in the camp. Neither was it possible to reach any RPA responsible at Butare or Kigali level.

On the morning of Friday 21 April 1995, MSF staff found 21 bodies in a tent near the hospital, victims of the previous day's gunfire. Throughout the day, they tried in vain to notify the authorities of the threat of a cholera epidemic among the displaced people and the nearby population.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Friday 21st, 07:15, radio contact. A notified us that an RPA column had entered last night after we left. The soldiers fired near the hospital. Some 20 people died, and many were injured.



'**Report** on the Kibeho Camp Killings', Etienne Quetin (MSF France Logistician), April 18-23 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Friday 21: This morning we discovered 21 bodies in the morgue. Sixteen were gunshot victims, three died of machete wounds and two, including a baby, had been suffocated. The hospital also admitted some 50 wounded people. During the night, the RPA had fired on people who were trying to flee. The UN workers had brought in the bodies in the morning. I went to look at the corpses. It was not a pretty sight [...] The MSF Camp Coordinator asked the UN staff to bury the bodies as soon as possible (to push them to assume their responsibilities). He threatened to deliver the corpses to the UN compound if they didn't do the job quickly. With Commander Francis, I organised the grave digging (near the hospital). The team and I lent them shovels, hoes and lime. At the same time, the UN brought us three additional bodies, including an infant, bringing the total number of victims to 24.



'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995', Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
On Friday morning several cases of dysentery were brought to the hospital. All the preconditions for cholera were there: the extreme concentration of people; people consuming food and water in the same place they were excreting; decreased immunity; and on top of that heavy rains on Thursday afternoon and during the following night.
MSF alerted UNAMIR and all the UN and international agencies working in the area about the imminent risk of outbreaks of dysentery and cholera. This was in vain, as the day before, MSF tried to contact the RPA commander in the camp, but nobody seemed to know where he was. Before the crisis, contacts were usually established easily, as all camp actors knew each other from regular security meetings.
MSF was concerned that these epidemics would not only affect the camp population, but also the neighbouring communes, as every day some thousands of people left the camps in IOM trucks or on foot.
At 12.00 on Friday the Special Representative for the Secretary-General of the UN in Rwanda, Mr Shahryar Khan, arrived by helicopter at the camp. Briefed already that morning by NGOs, UN and international organisations during a meeting in Butare about

the health hazards, and after a short discussion with MSF staff in the camp, he tried to meet the RPA commanders, to propose them to reopen the facilities in the camp while waiting for the complete transfer of all the displaced. Epidemics could still easily be prevented by dispersing people in smaller groups, giving them a medical screening, and sufficient water and food.
After 15 minutes in which no RPA official showed up, the UN Special Representative left again.
Later that day the Ministry of Rehabilitation officially refused the request of the UN. Mr Khan then declared that the solution would be to increase the number of trucks and accelerate the departure process.

That same day, MSF France notified the press that the situation was deteriorating and asked that the displaced people be allowed to remain in the camp, where they could receive assistance while awaiting a political solution.



'Nearly 200,000 People Gathered Around Displaced People's Camps in Southwest Rwanda Prepare to Spend a Fifth Day in the Open', MSF France **Press release**, 21 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The situation is worsening for tens of thousands of people still crowded near the camps in the Kibeho region. Water supplies remain extremely limited. The displaced people gathered around the Kibeho camp are currently receiving between one and two litres per person per day. At Ndago, they are receiving barely more than one litre. The lack of food is also becoming painfully apparent. While some of them were able to carry a portion of their food rations with them, most left with nothing. A general food distribution has not yet taken place. Furthermore, hygiene facilities are lacking in the places where they are gathered. The first cases of dysentery were recorded, and miserable health conditions could well lead to epidemics.
This lack of shelter, food and water is even more unacceptable because the displaced people are close to shelter, their food supplies and water sources. Médecins Sans Frontières is once again angered by the conditions under which the camps are being dismantled. Before the situation worsens dramatically, the authorities must make sure that the displaced populations have access to their means of survival.
Preserving the camps is certainly not a good solution, but it represents the only compromise acceptable today while awaiting a political solution allowing the populations to return under acceptable security conditions.
Fifteen members of Médecins Sans Frontières are working in the Kibeho hospital. Between 36 and 40 people wounded during yesterday's incident, which killed 22, are hospitalised there. Along with other organisations, the team is also trying to supply water to the Munini and Kibeho camps.



'**Letter** from Philippe Biberson, President of MSF France Board of Directors, to Martin Griffiths, Director of the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and Augustin Mahigao, Coordinator of UNHCR's Special Rwanda Unit in Geneva', 21 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
We are writing today to notify you of our deep concern regarding the displaced people in the camps in southwest Rwanda, in the Gikongoro region [...] We know there is no good solution to this problem right now. Preserving the displaced people's camps is certainly not the answer, but to us it represents the best compromise while awaiting a political solution allowing the population to return under acceptable security conditions. The lack of refuge, food and water is even more unacceptable because the populations are close to their shelter, food supplies and water sources.
We believe that everything must been done to assure these populations access to basic assistance, without which many people will not have the means to guarantee their immediate survival.

Throughout the week of 17 to 23 April 1995, the Rwandan army took displaced persons back to their communes of origin, in conditions that did not guarantee their safety.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Wednesday 19: Hundreds of people are waiting at the Kibeho departure point on the Butare road for the trucks that are supposed to transport them to their commune. Individuals were not registered by name. A UNHCR member only counted the numbers of people leaving.



'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995', Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Meanwhile transport of the displaced to their home communes took place. International staff involved in this process in Kibeho camp informed MSF that on Wednesday 19 April some 1,000 displaced had been screened by the RPA and then transported in an orderly way from Kibeho camp to their home communes. On Thursday some 6,000-7,000 people left and on Friday an estimated 2,000-3,000.
The ample international presence during the transportation process was supposed to guarantee the safety of the returnees. However, at the checkpoint on the way out of the camp sometimes only the RPA was seen, controlling the luggage of the returnees and taking people aside. Sometimes also one or two UN human rights monitors were seen, counting how many people were supposed to go to which communes.
On Friday it became evident that protection was absolutely insufficient: on Friday afternoon the belongings of about 500 displaced were found on the road between Kibeho and Butare, indicating a rushed departure or a forced abandonment.

On Saturday 22 April 1995, the international press reported Thursday 19's shooting and the deterioration of living conditions at the Kibeho displaced people's site. Reinforced by a dozen additional staff from throughout the movement, the MSF team, along with representatives of other international organisations, went to the Kibeho camp by convoy. They were all held for more than an hour at an RPA checkpoint. V5

'**Report** on the Kibeho Camp Killings', Etienne Quetin (MSF France Logistician), April 18-23 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Friday night reinforcements arrived from all over (MSF Holland, MSF Belgium, MSF Spain, Kigali team), and we decided to go in force the next day. That morning, our radio operator did not respond, and we feared the worst. We loaded up two pickups with medical supplies (dressings, compresses, infusion kits, etc.), jerry cans, mattresses, lime, biscuits, milk, etc. We decided to go by convoy with four MSF cars and one each from ICRC, SCF, UNICEF and UNREO.
Our plan was to go to Rwamiko and then see if we could reach the camp. The team included ten from MSF France, two from MSF Spain, two from MSF Holland and one from MSF Belgium, made up, if I'm not mistaken, of five doctors, five nurses, four logisticians and one communications officer.
A UNHCR volunteer called us from the VHF base radio at the Kibeho hospital. He had just forced open the door of the place to warn us. There had been shooting all night. Around 30 bodies lay in the hospital courtyard and there were many wounded. The Australian UN medical team tried to treat the wounded, but the RPA ordered them to stop working and leave the hospital.
In Rwamiko, the UN workers advised us against going. They said it was too dangerous and they could not guarantee our safety under those conditions. But the shooting had stopped so we decided to continue to the camp to check out the situation and try to reach the hospital so we could get to the wounded.
We managed to cross the first two RPA checkpoints without too much trouble (Gakoma and Viro). But we were held up for 1 1/2 hours at the third because the soldiers had received an order to allow only OXFAM, ICRC, and UNREO through. In the end, they let us pass when we met an OXFAM woman who had just got the order from her boss to evacuate the camp with the rest of the OXFAM team.

'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995', Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
At about 10:30 on their way from Gikongoro to the camp, it had already become clear to the MSF team that the situation had significantly worsened. While they were stopped for more than an hour at the last RPA checkpoint just before the entrance of the camp they heard regular shooting in the camp. However, they were told by the RPA that the main reason for stopping them was not security, but that the RPA forbids any medical people (both MSF and the Australian UNAMIR medicals) to work in the hospital and camp, and that only OXFAM and ICRC could pass.

Except for a logistician who remained at the rear base, all the staff decided to go to the hospital with a UNAMIR escort. There, they found dozens of dead and wounded, and began organising treatment. A group of RPA soldiers then came down the road from the church toward the hospital. Whistling and singing, they positioned themselves in front of the hospital and opened fire on the displaced people.



'**Report** on the Kibeho Camp Killings', Etienne Quetin (MSF France Logistician), April 18-23 1995 (in French).

Extract:
A MILOBS [military observer] came to meet us to explain the situation. The RPA had driven all the international staff out of the hospital. They threatened the staff by telling them that if an international ended up inside the hospital when the RPA soldiers wanted to empty it, the military would not distinguish between black and white when they started shooting [...] We decided to go to the hospital anyway, on condition that the UN escorted us. Didier proposed that those who did not want to come should stay at the parking area. The entire team decided to go, but I hesitated. I thought for a moment and decided to stay. I called the MSF coordinator who had already reached the hospital to tell him. "I don't feel like following you." I said, "I'd rather remain at the rear base to gather information and for security reasons!" He answered, "No problem, that's fine!" [...]
When I warned the MSF team that had entered the hospital about the RPA soldiers coming from the church whistling and singing, I heard firing from the school courtyard.



'**Testimony** of an MSF expatriated doctor", MSF Belgium Doctor, member of the team at Kibeho on 22 April (appended to 'Report on the events at Kibeho', April 1995 - Médecins Sans Frontières, 25 May 1995) (in French).

Extract:
As soon as I entered the building, I observed women, children, and about 15 people with machete wounds. I had seen other wounded people on the staircase leading to internal medicine as well as in this unit. I could not tell exactly how many there were. As I prepared to give first aid with the help of three international volunteer nurses, firing broke out between the buildings. It was around 12:15. In the meantime, it had begun to rain. In the minutes that followed, the shooting intensified and drew nearer. Panicked people were coming back into the units. As the tension heightened, we noticed that shots were coming from the other side of one of the two entry doors (the wooden one). We evacuated to the UNAMIR camp.



We heard singing and then, suddenly, we heard shots ring out. They were singing! They were singing! Etienne, the logistician who had stayed near the cars, saw a column of men coming from the military camp. They had shoulder-held rocket launchers and were singing as they headed to the hospital. He became frightened. The soldiers began firing. Some of the hospital buildings were hard-sided and others were of plastic sheeting. From inside the hospital, you couldn't see the soldiers. But we heard them singing and then the firing started. They said that armed men were hiding in the school buildings. The hospital was behind, up against the base of the hill. The soldiers shot from the hospital because there was a wall with holes through which they could see into the large courtyard. They wanted to drive

people toward the exit, but they did it with heavy weapons. We weren't targeted directly. We didn't understand what was going on. We were face down on the hospital floor. We heard shooting. From the window, I could see guys with weapons going by. I was afraid because they were completely high. They were singing – they were totally crazy, those Rwandans!

Catherine Quillet, MSF France, Field Coordinator in Gikongoro, Rwanda, November 1994-May 1995 (in French).

After lying on the floor for an hour as firing continued above them, the MSF staff were finally evacuated by UN blue helmets to the Zambian UNAMIR battalion's barracks. The RPA soldiers stormed the building. From there, they fired on the displaced people, right in front of MSF staff and UN peacekeepers.



'**Report** on the Kibeho Camp Killings', Etienne Quetin (MSF France Logistician), April 18-23 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Rain was beating down on the camp. The hospital team called me in a panic. "Etienne, we're evacuating! Send UN soldiers to come for us! Our escort has disappeared! There's shooting everywhere!" I ran to the Zambian soldiers, yelling, "Get to the hospital right away! I have 14 friends inside! Please, it's an emergency! Find them and bring them back!" For five minutes I didn't realise that there was shooting going on around me. I thought of my friends trapped there and I saw the Zambians who said, "We'll go! We're going now!" But I didn't see them move an inch! I went crazy! [...] The hospital team called to find out if the soldiers were coming. After that I couldn't reach them. I waited several interminable minutes without knowing what was going on. Suddenly, I saw the team arrive at a run and I rushed with them inside the UN building [...]
The shooting was still underway. I said to myself, "They (the RPA) have the nerve to finish off the IDPs even with plenty of us here to witness what's happening. They don't give a damn – they want to be done with them." [...] The UN soldiers were running back and forth in and out of the building. As soon as the firing became sporadic, we went outside the UN buildings. I could see clearly as RPA soldiers beat the IDPs who were trying to leave via the valley. From time to time, I saw soldiers leading IDPs toward the church, but I didn't know where they were taking them. I could see several bodies sprawled on the hill, beneath the market.



'Dozens Die at Camps in Rwanda – Refugees are Caught in Gunfire and Panic', ***The New York Times*** (USA), 22 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Dozens were killed and hundreds were wounded today when Rwandan government forces opened fire on a makeshift camp here where tens of thousands of ethnic Hutu have been moved in the past few days. It was unclear how the shooting began. But the gunfire quickly ignited panic in the hillside encampment in southwestern Rwanda, which was packed with Hutu displaced by the civil war last year. Hutu militiamen also allegedly fired at government forces and at United Nations forces.



We were all crammed into a single room. Rwandan soldiers came into the UN peacekeepers' barracks. They came to see what we were doing and then they left. They scaled the barracks walls and fired on the crowd from on top of the wall. Two IDPs managed to get into the room where we were. We lay on top of them to hide them. We weren't being proud; we were really frightened. The soldiers were like crazy men. After the shooting stopped, we went outside. There were bodies and wounded people everywhere. Some people were still running, and the soldiers fired at them like rabbits in a field.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

The MSF team and the Australian UNAMIR medical team treated the wounded. The blue helmets then sent them back into the courtyard.



'**Testimony** of an MSF expatriated doctor", MSF Belgium Doctor, member of the team at Kibeho on 22 April (appended to 'Report on the events at Kibeho', April 1995 - Médecins Sans Frontières, 25 May 1995) (in French).

Extract:
Armed RPA soldiers kept entering the building, looking carefully in all directions. When the firing became sporadic even inside the UNAMIR 1 camp, we began treating about 10 people wounded by bullets. I don't recall anyone with machete wounds.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
In the UNAMIR encampment, the Australian peacekeepers were treating several wounded people who'd been gathered up between two rounds of firing. We offered to help them, but our good intentions looked silly, even pitiful, to us when confronted with the thousands of wounded people we could not bring inside.



The blue helmets went to look for the wounded all around and brought them back to us. We tried – I'm saying we tried – to care for them a bit. Some, not all. The Australian UNAMIR battalion's medical team treated others and then they were moved into a truck. To put it crudely, they filled it up with the wounded and then they took off. At one point the Zambian blue helmets told us straight out that we shouldn't keep the wounded with us. We should leave them outside. We couldn't keep them with us. Other refugees – the ones who weren't too badly wounded – decided to leave. Around 13:00, there was another attack. We saw the blue helmets transporting dead bodies. They put them aside, near the camp. Among them we saw people we had treated after the first wave, with their bandages and infusions. They had been beaten afterwards. It made us sick.

Catherine Quillet, MSF France, Field Coordinator in Gikongoro, Rwanda, November 1994-May 1995 (in French).

At the request of the Zambian battalion's commander, and under his escort, four MSF staff went to the other side of the site to aid the IDPs waiting to be repatriated to their communes and who were under RPA fire. To reach the Australian blue helmets' barracks, they had to cross a field of dead bodies. They tried to care for the wounded while the fusillade continued.

'**Testimony** of an MSF expatriated doctor", MSF Belgium Doctor, member of the team at Kibeho on 22 April (appended to 'Report on the events at Kibeho', April 1995 - Médecins Sans Frontières, 25 May 1995) (in French).

Extract:
We spent some time discussing, among other things, whether to evacuate Kibeho or continue our work. We decided that I would go there with part of the team, including the Caritas surgeon. (My idea had been to stay and go to the second UNAMIR camp, where, according to the blue helmets, there were more wounded.) While waiting for the transport, I went to the latrines, using the opportunity to look over the wall along with two Zambian blue helmets. They said it would be impossible to get to the second camp because the road was strewn with bodies.
We went to Camp II by vehicle. For part of the way, the road was free of bodies. Here and there, unmoving feet protruded from plastic sheeting. Near Camp II, we had to stop because a thick crowd lined the road and circled the camp. The road was impassable because it was covered with bodies and a few wounded people. We crossed on foot, carrying the supplies. There were so many bodies piled one on top of another, we couldn't avoid them. We literally had to walk on the corpses of men, women and children. A dazed crowd surrounded us.
When we reached Camp II, we began treating the wounded the blue helmets brought over. We treated a total of around 30 people, including some who had been wounded by weapons other than guns. Human rights workers and ICRC, UNICEF, Caritas and MSF staff was there. Throughout the entire time I've described, we could hear sporadic fire in single shots or short bursts. At one point, the firing intensified and the blue helmets stopped their stretcher-bearer work. Then the shooting became continuous and the crowd tried to force the blue helmets' blockade. As the firing reached its crescendo, it sounded like hail pounding on a tin roof. At that moment, the crowd surged and babies were thrown over the blue helmets' sandbags.

Francis, the Commander of the Zambian blue helmets, said to us, 'You must come to the other barracks because there's been a carnage, there are wounded people everywhere. You have to come…' We discussed it: 'Do we split up? Do we stay? Do we go? In this situation, we really don't have much to offer in the way of treatment.' There were lots of opinions. Some people wanted to leave and others wanted to stay. As the Kibeho Supervisor, I made the decision. 'We're staying because something is happening. Even if we don't manage to treat a single patient, I think we should be here… otherwise…' I still had a certain hope of protecting them. Everyone said, 'We'll all stay because we'll honour the majority decision.' We took the car and the supplies and we went… When we got within 30 metres of the buildings, bodies covered the road, blocking the cars' passage. They were piled two or three high across the road. There was no other solution, so we put the crates on our backs and walked across the bodies towards the barracks where the wounded were waiting. Corpses lay beneath the wheels of the blue helmets' vehicles. It was horrifying. People threw themselves against the barbed wire trying to get into the barracks. Around 200-300 died, crushed against the bar-

racks doors. We saw piles of dead people… The survivors were stoic as they stood there, their gaze empty. I recognised people in the crowd who I had worked with for six months. They asked for nothing. They were just there. They weren't moving any more. They knew it was the end. In their eyes, this was the end. What more could happen? We crossed the field of dead bodies, entered, and began treating the wounded, who were in terrible shape… Some had bullets in their faces. We put betadine-soaked compresses on them. That's all we could do.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

During that time, the crowd kept moving as the firing continued around and inside the first UNAMIR barracks where the Zambian battalion was housed and where other members of the MSF team remained.



'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
It was around 14:30. The sporadic firing resumed and continued for several hours. We were sure we heard Kalashnikovs, machine gun and RPG fire. We were gathered in a small room inside the UNAMIR buildings, pressed close together. The things we heard were awful […]
Hundreds of people had taken refuge next to the encampment where we were. Suddenly, they panicked. I can't say what provoked them, but they started moving. They entered the UNAMIR encampment and then the buildings. The RPA was pursuing them and began firing. The blue helmets also took fright and entered the building to take shelter. When the shooting stopped, the blue helmets made those who had entered leave the building. People were frightened and some remained. The blue helmets were brutal as they shoved them out. The RPA was waiting outside the buildings and attacked them violently. Through the windows, we saw the blows raining down. A little further off, an RPA soldier was beating an old man accused of having entered the UNAMIR building with a grenade.



There was a Rwandan with us who had managed to get into the blue helmets' camp. He was literally clinging to the cement! A Zambian blue helmet came to get him, telling him he had to get out! It was awful, because the man really was holding on for his life! Then he tried to hang on to us. The Zambian said to us, 'Let him go, don't keep him here. Tell him to leave – the Rwandan soldiers are in the camp.' The Rwandans had managed to get into the blue helmets' camp. They managed to do worse still. When the door opened, they saw us. They climbed on the roof and fired from the roof of the blue helmets' building, the United Nations' building! The camp was just behind the area where they said there were snipers.

Catherine Quillet, MSF France, Field Coordinator in Gikongoro, Rwanda, November 1994-May 1995 (in French).

According to all witnesses, the Rwandan army used heavy weapons against the crowd of displaced people, and beat those who tried to escape.

'**Report** on the Kibeho Camp Killings', Etienne Quetin (MSF France Logistician), April 18-23 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The firing became more intense. We heard heavy weapons and took shelter again in the room. According to the UN soldiers who were with us, the RPA was using heavy machine guns, RPGs (mini-rocket launchers), grenades and Kalashnikov fire. The UN soldiers were obviously as frightened as we were and were hugging the walls. At that point, I began wondering if the RPA soldiers had just gone crazy and decided to kill all of us (NGOs and UN). In any event, they had the means to do it. One blunder and we could all be exterminated. What I mean to say is that if a UN soldier were hit by accident, that would set off an exchange of fire between the RPA and the UN. But the RPA soldiers knew exactly what they were doing and were careful to avoid firing on us. The RPA only wanted to kill the IDPs.

The people at the place we got to in the car were shot with anti-tank weapons... they were shooting everywhere, in every direction. They put a huge machine gun on a turret that turned toward the hillside and fired. They shot into the crowd with the anti-tank weapon. People were completely packed together. The shot fell into the crowd and blew people up. Exploded bodies were sprawled out in front of us. One woman who wasn't moving anymore had her arm lying next to her.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

In the late afternoon, the four MSF staff in the Zambian UNAMIR barracks were finally evacuated by Australian blue helmets whose barracks were located at the camp entrance. The corpse-covered area they had to cross once again had expanded.

'**Testimony** on the Kibeho Killing', Geneviève Legrand (MSF France Nurse in the Kibeho team), April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
After that long round of firing, there were still hundreds of people gathered along the Butare road, ready to leave. When the shooting stopped and we were able to go, there no one was left standing on that hillside. They'd all been mowed down. When the team was able to come back from Camp II, they had to walk over piles of bodies.

The four staff tried to cross with Francis, the Zambian blue helmet commander, along with a couple of guys acting as escorts. But the Rwandans didn't really respect the Zambians. Each time they tried to get out, the Rwandans fired over their heads and

Francis said, 'Make a U-turn.' Then the Australian commander took one of his trucks, put 12 of his soldiers inside, raised the tarps so they were visible and went to get them with the truck. It was impressive.

Catherine Quillet, MSF France, Field Coordinator in Gikongoro, Rwanda, November 1994-May 1995 (in French).

We didn't have any more radio batteries. We said to each other that it was about 17:00 or 18:00 and we didn't want to spend the night there. We were just about at the end of our tether. Whatever happened, we couldn't stay any longer. We tried to leave five times. With each attempt, the firing started again. Once the soldiers threatened us and fired over our heads with an RPG. When we went out, the refugees would press against us for protection. Then it was the blue helmets that beat them with sticks to push them away again. We protested weakly. We were thinking about saving ourselves. We came back because we couldn't get out and we renegotiated. Each time we tried to leave they would shoot for between 45 minutes and 1 1/2 hours. Finally, the Australian blue helmets evacuated us. The Zambians were completely flattened. They were in quite a state! They didn't know what was going on any more. It was scary for us, too. And then they got the order from Kigali not to shoot and not to intervene.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

I was in contact with the team by radio, and with Paris. Paris pushed me to give numbers – how many dead, etc. Didier said to me, 'This is the first time I've walked on so many bodies.' They crossed a checkpoint and walked 150 metres – walking on piled-up corpses the whole way. They managed to get out at the end of the afternoon. I said to them on the radio, 'Can you give me an estimate for Paris? They're pushing me – they want to publish the numbers right away.' That was difficult. How do you push a team that's been completely traumatised by an event like that? I said to them, 'We'll talk about it again, but try to give me a figure anyway.' They answered, 'Thousands!' 'Thousands? That's good enough for me, that's a massacre!' So I called Paris and said, 'You can tell the press there are thousands dead.'

[...], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).

MSF France denounced the killings in a press release.

'Thousands of Victims in Kibeho: Médecins Sans Frontières Denounces the Massacres', **Press release**, 22 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Crossing through the Kibeho camp this afternoon, the Médecins Sans Frontières team offered a rough estimate of the massacre's victims, placing the number of dead at "several thousand". The MSF team was unable to reach the Kibeho hospital until late

Saturday morning. The RPA had forbidden access until 11:30. The shooting began in the early morning and did not stop. Later, the teams reached the UNAMIR encampment, where they were able to treat some 60 wounded. They were able to carry out between five and 15 evacuations to the Butare surgical hospital.
The firing continued into mid-afternoon. Shocked by the carnage and aware that it was impossible to reach the wounded, the teams, along with the other organisations present, decided to temporarily evacuate the camp. A scaled-back Médecins Sans Frontières team is expected to return tomorrow to Kibeho, security conditions permitting. In Butare, surgical teams are ready to treat the severely wounded that can be evacuated.

On Sunday, 23 April 1995, when the MSF team arrived at the site, the thousands of bodies had disappeared. The RPA soldiers refused access to the hospital and to UNAMIR's second barracks.



'As Many as 2,000 are Reported Dead in Rwanda', Donatella Lorch, ***The New York Times*** (USA), 24 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
An estimated 2,000 members of the Hutu ethnic group were killed here on Saturday and more than 600 wounded, senior United Nations military officials said, shot by Rwandan government troops or trampled to death in the ensuing panic. The government said 300 people had been killed. Armed Hutu militias inside the camps coerced and incited people to try to run through the troops' lines. Scores of Hutu were also attacked by others with machetes, United Nations officials said.
Except for several hundred bodies that lay scattered near a brick building, most of those killed Saturday were already buried. The dirt road that crosses the camp here and the hills nearby were empty and still today, marked only by skeletons and thatched huts and carpeted by blood.
By early morning today, almost all of the bodies of those killed here had already been buried by Rwandan soldiers, United Nations peacekeepers said. Many were shoved into latrines or piled into shallow graves. The soldiers did not allow access to certain areas to any United Nations or relief workers until after the cleanup. The delay prevented the United Nations from realising the full extent of the carnage until today, when they estimated the toll at 2,000 dead and more than 600 wounded.

During the day, an MSF Belgium doctor gathered statements from the blue helmets confirming the information.



'**Statement** of an MSF expatriated doctor", MSF Belgium Doctor, member of the team at Kibeho on 22 April, written on 10 May 1995 (appended to 'Report on the events at Kibeho', April 1995 - Médecins Sans Frontières, 25 May 1995) (in French).

Extract:
I took advantage of the calm to take statements from the blue helmets.
1) An English major-parachutist.

- Do you see that red spot there? It's a body. I saw the person surrender yesterday with his arms upraised. The soldier approached and shot him.
- Just here, near the wall, a family surrendered, their arms upraised, and a soldier threw a grenade in the air.
- I put the number of dead in front of the UNAMIR II camp last night at at least 500.
2) An Australian private:
- We counted 4,050 bodies but we couldn't count all of them.
- Yes, there were armed civilians with single shot rifles. How many? Five or six.
They (the RPA) worked all night.

The MSF team helped the Australian UNAMIR battalion's medical team at the first UNAMIR barracks treat the wounded. The team then tried to evacuate the patients to the Kabutare hospital in Butare. The blue helmets continued to bury the dead.

'**Statement** of an MSF expatriated doctor", MSF Belgium Doctor, member of the team at Kibeho on 22 April, written on 10 May 1995 (appended to 'Report on the events at Kibeho', April 1995 - Médecins Sans Frontières, 25 May 1995) (in French).

Extract:
Around noon, we ended up again at Kibeho camp, at the UNAMIR camp, where I remained until around 17:00. Then I left with about 90 wounded people, heading toward Kabutare. We couldn't do any real medical work other than helping the Australians and bringing a few wounded people back from the hospital. The blue helmets collected the corpses and buried them.

We treated a man who'd got out alive from a latrine where he had hidden. He came out covered in excrement and ran towards us because there were RPA soldiers everywhere who wanted to beat him. The Australians drove him off. We grabbed him and took care of him. The poor guy had spent the night in the latrines. We put him in a truck so that the ICRC could evacuate him. We didn't know what happened to the ones who were evacuated.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

A doctor and logistician from the MSF team attempted a foray into the hospital and came back with eight newborns. They also found the bodies of patients who had been alive the day before and had been shot dead.

I wanted to go the hospital to see what was happening there and to get our VHF radio. The RPF soldiers had stolen everything, including the generators. But I knew they didn't have the radio and I didn't want them to get it. I had asked the Rwandan radio operators to hide it in a mattress and I wanted to fetch it. After touring the hospital, the Australian soldiers came to see us and said,

'There are three newborns alone in the paediatrics unit.'
'You don't want to go back and get them?'
'No, it's too dangerous. There are snipers everywhere.'
'We'll go.'
I asked Christian to come with me because I was afraid and didn't want to go alone. We left. The Australians were yelling at us, 'You jerks! You stupid idiots!' But they had to escort us because there were RPA troops in the hospital. We went over there. Eight babies, between two weeks and two months, lay naked on a bed, shrieking with hunger. The blue helmets didn't want to put their guns down so Christian and I each had to carry four babies. I went to get my radio and I hid it between the four infants in my arms. We brought them back and the ICRC evacuated them... The RPA had "cleaned out" the hospital. There was only one patient still alive. We found dead patients with their IVs still in place. We had to put the bodies in the grave with the IVs. We had to move so quickly there wasn't time to remove them. It was obvious that the soldiers had executed the patients in the hospital.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

Around 2,000 displaced people took refuge in the buildings and refused to leave. Declaring that there were snipers hidden in the crowd, the RPA gave the people an 18:00 ultimatum. After that, they would be shelled.



'UN Says Last Pocket of Resistance in Kibeho', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, Nairobi, 23 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
A UN spokesperson in Nairobi announced that on Sunday, a group of around 2,000 Hutu, including some armed people, put up a final resistance at the Kibeho displaced people's camp in southwestern Rwanda. Quoting a UNHCR staff member on site, Ray Wilkinson, the agency spokesperson, said that the Rwandan army had given the crowd until 18:00 local time (also Paris time) to leave.

In the morning, the Justice Minister had come to the Kibeho site and tried to calm the ardour of the RPA soldiers determined to dislodge the displaced people by force.



'**Statement** of an MSF expatriated doctor", MSF Belgium Doctor, member of the team at Kibeho on 22 April, written on 10 May 1995 (appended to 'Report on the events at Kibeho', April 1995 - Médecins Sans Frontières, 25 May 1995) (in French).

Extract:
The Minister of Justice, as well as another minister I didn't know, visited the camp when Major General Tousignant was there, too. When the Minister was informed of the soldiers' intentions (to kill the 2,000 people who had taken refuge in the building), he negotiated and secured their agreement to "starve the people out". According to a

UNHCR representative, the General confirmed that he would withdraw his forces if the RPA attacked again.

IV. POST-KILLING CLEANING, INQUIRIES, REPORTS

On 23 April 1995, while in Brussels, Rwandan Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu expressed his regret at the heavy loss of life, and announced that an inquiry would be conducted into the Rwandan soldiers' responsibility for the killings.



'Rwandan Army and UN Bury the Kibeho Dead', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 23 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
While visiting Brussels, Rwandan Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu promised to punish the soldiers involved in the Kibeho killings if it was proven that they acted deliberately. "If this was an act of legitimate self-defence, there is nothing further to be said," the Prime Minister noted. He expressed regret at the heavy loss of life. "If these were deliberate acts, we condemn them and will not tolerate them."

In mid-afternoon, the UNAMIR spokesperson announced to the press that the RPA had killed several thousand displaced people. V6



'Rwandan Army and UN Bury the Kibeho Dead', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 23 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The Rwandan Patriotic Army (majority Tutsi) and UN forces worked Sunday to bury the dead from the Kibeho displaced people's camp in southwestern Rwanda, where the RPA killed at least 5,000 Rwandan Hutu on Saturday. Bodies lay among the ruins while stretcher-bearers threw corpses into graves. Another 2,000 bodies remain to be gathered up Sunday night, including women and children whose bodies were crushed, men who were disfigured, and children torn apart by grenades. According to a UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) report provided Sunday afternoon, several thousand people were killed and 1,500 to 2,000 wounded. Other UN sources in Kigali place the total dead at 8,000 [...] According to UNAMIR, soldiers fired on Saturday when the displaced people tried to force the army's security cordon. But according to Ray Wilkinson, UNHCR spokesperson in Nairobi, "nervous" soldiers opened fire first when the refugees tried to find shelter from torrential rains.

On 24 April 1995, on a visit to the site, Rwandan President, Pasteur Bizimungu, Defence Minister, and RPA leader, Paul Kagame, admit to a maximum of 300 victims and claim that they had been crushed against the gate of the blue helmets' locked barracks during a riot. The Commander of the UNAMIR Zambian battalion

accused the RPA of using heavy weapons against the displaced people. That day, following death threats, he had to be evacuated immediately by helicopter.

'As Many as 2,000 are Reported Dead in Rwanda', Donatella Lorch, ***The New York Times*** (USA), 24 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
During a visit to Kibeho today, President Pasteur Bizimungu said that the numbers were wildly exaggerated and that the troops had killed no more than 300 people. Radio Rwanda said today that "criminals" inside the camp had provoked clashes.
"The figure that has been given has been greatly exaggerated," President Bizimungu said. It is a pity that people have died. But people inside the camp had arms and were violent. The international community has been shocked because they have been told lies."
Yet to the relief workers, United Nations medical personnel and visitors who witnessed the shootout, it was obvious that the figures were much higher than the ones the government gave. The President argued at length with the Zambian Commander of the peacekeepers here, Capt. Francis Sikaonga, accusing him and the United Nations of giving false death tolls. Mr Bizimungu's aides called the Zambian Commander a "fool" and "stupid".

Kagame and the President arrived by helicopter. They wanted to talk with their soldiers, Francis (the blue helmets' commander) and us. Francis was in a state of collapse. He was distraught. He told Kagame that his army was no army, but a band of killers and buggers. He called them all sorts of names and said that a soldier worthy of the name does not fire at a crowd with an anti-tank weapon. Anti-tank weapons are made to be used against tanks. His military logic was totally confused. Then the young soldiers around Kagame – guys wearing sneakers, not even boots – said to Francis, who was talking to the President and Kagame, 'Shut up or you're going to be in trouble.' They said that in front of the authorities, who didn't say a word.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

The Commander, Francis, was a good guy. I saw him call his Commanding Officer in Butare several times asking for permission to counterattack. He repeated that request all day long and never got authorisation. The soldiers in his regiment, who were based in Gikongoro, were stunned. These were professional soldiers. They said, 'You don't shoot women and children with anti-tank weapons.' They could not understand the Rwandan soldiers' attitude. They were all professional soldiers with principles. They had taken part in peacekeeping operations in other countries. We felt like they couldn't believe their eyes. They really talked with the IDPs. They lived with the population. I think that might have been part of the problem. Maybe, indirectly, they put out a message of safety. They told us, 'We'll defend them.' But I think they were convinced that they would be able to.

Catherine Quillet, MSF France, Field Coordinator in Gikongoro, Rwanda, November 1994-May 1995 (in French).

The RPA were looking for the Zambian UNAMIR Commander. They wanted to take him out. They would have killed him if he hadn't left the country very quickly. I met him Sunday night with Didier. There were slices of sausage on the table. He said, 'As a soldier, I don't understand how soldiers can fire on a crowd with anti-tank weapons. I saw people who looked like your bits of sausage! In any case, when I called my superiors in Kigali, I received a very clear order: "You are only to watch!" I sent in a report, and I hope it will reach Boutros Boutros-Ghali's desk. I don't know what good it will do, but at least I did it.' Later on, we had contact with him. We wrote to each other. He was torn up.

[...], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).

The tens of thousands of displaced people who survived the killing set off on a forced march, under threat by RPA soldiers, to the neighbouring town of Butare. Others fled into the hills. MSF teams tried to help along the road. The different MSF sections notified the press of the thousands of dead, the survivors' forced march to Butare, and the lack of protection available to displaced people.

'Five to Eight Thousand Victims of Massacres in Kibeho Camp, and Many Collapse of Exhaustion Among the 80,000 Displaced People on a Forced March', Médecins Sans Frontières (USA) **Press release**, 23 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Yesterday, soldiers from Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA – the military arm of the Rwandan Patriotic Front) opened fire on the displaced populations of the Kibeho camp in western Rwanda, killing between five and eight thousand, reports [...], the Field Coordinator of Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders).
The camp is now empty, with the exception of some 30 wounded in the hospital, but the RPA is preventing Médecins Sans Frontières from operating in the camps and opposed the evacuation by helicopters of the wounded.
In the Butare hospital, Médecins Sans Frontières' surgical teams are ready to operate on the heavily wounded from the Kibeho incident. However, the UNAMIR troops have only been able to bring 40 wounded to the Butare hospital. The RPA is preventing the evacuation of the wounded and holding the convoys of wounded at checkpoints.

<u>Eighty thousand on a forced march</u>
The displaced populations had to undertake a forced march – controlled by the RPA military – and, as of this Sunday morning, some 80,000 people had left to the town of Butare, some 20 kilometres away, and 12,000 arrived in Butare had been led to the city stadium.
Without shelter, having lacked food and water for five days now, dozens of victims are collapsing from exhaustion among the forced marchers. According to MSF teams who accompany the displaced, many are also beaten up and harassed by the local population. More than 70% of the displaced are originally from the Butare prefecture and are forcibly being led to transit camps installed in the Nyakisu, Runyinya and Gishamvu commune.



'Forced March for Kibeho's 100,000 Displaced People: Tens of Thousands of People Collapse En Route – MSF Angered by UNAMIR's Inability to Protect Civilians', MSF Belgium **Press release**, 23 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Médecins Sans Frontières is also outraged at UNAMIR's inability to fulfil its mandate to protect the civilian population. UNAMIR's attitude to yesterday's carnage and to the human rights violations that our teams are currently witnessing is intolerable.



'Rwanda', MSF France draft **Press release**, 23 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Firing continued throughout the night and this afternoon around the Kibeho hospital, as RPA soldiers tried to dislodge the few people still fighting them. A Médecins Sans Frontières team of 17 people went to Kibeho. The team saw 100 wounded people in the UNAMIR encampment. Most had gunshot wounds. The camp is practically empty now. In the afternoon, the Rwandan staff decided to leave the hospital.
The RPA continued to push and harass the populations along the road. It prevented those already on the road from stopping or grouping together. Thousands of people, including many women and children, are now heading toward the south and west. Many have taken refuge in the hills. On the road, they face hostility from local populations.
In Butare, the Médecins Sans Frontières teams are taking charge of the wounded. But the city is unprepared to receive the displaced people and guarantee their safety for any period. Tomorrow, mobile teams are scheduled to investigate the roads to the south and east of Kibeho and arrange for water and feeding stations and treatment centres.



'**Statement** of an MSF expatriated doctor", MSF Belgium Doctor, member of the team at Kibeho on 22 April, written on 10 May 1995 (appended to 'Report on the events at Kibeho', April 1995 - Médecins Sans Frontières, 25 May 1995) (in French).

Extract:
Along the road, you could see personal effects abandoned by hundreds of people. I was able to pick up several wounded people and unaccompanied minors. Groups of IDPs were walking at night, escorted by soldiers.



'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995', Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
An MSF nurse who had been working in a first aid post on the road Butare-Runyinya said, "I guess I saw between 10,000 and 15,000 people pass by on foot. Many of them had bullet wounds and were beaten up with sticks. The way they had been beaten up was the most shocking: they could not sit up or lay down any more, they could hardly move any more. I saw people being stoned by the public on the road between Butare station and Runyinya. Sometimes they had to walk through a corridor of stone-throwing people."

We headed toward Butare and came across people who were walking, including our nurses, wearing rags. They had lost everything; it had been taken. They were barefoot and in tatters. When we got to Butare, people were lined up throwing rocks at the car. They knew we were MSF, and they were throwing stones at the people we were accompanying. On Sunday, people were still on the road. But Monday morning, we headed back in the other direction and when we got close to the camp, in places on the side of the road, especially in front of the tea fields, we found clothing scattered everywhere. We think they must have said to people, 'Now get going! Run!' And they probably fired on the crowd… We didn't look for bodies. Did they fire on the crowd or not? I don't know. Returning to Gikongoro, we stopped the car every so often in little, empty places. We waited and people came out to see us. There were people with bullets in their stomachs, etc. They categorically refused to let us take them to the hospital. We gave them betadine compresses and wished them good luck. They didn't want to come, and we couldn't protect them.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

The displaced people were gathered in the Butare stadium and then, under RPA control, were taken by bus to their home communes. The few UN observers present limited themselves to counting people without registering them.

'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995', Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Other displaced have been transported back in trucks on Sunday 23rd and Monday 24th. The counting and transportation process in Butare, where there was a considerable number of observers, proceeded in an orderly manner.
On the trucks transporting the people back to the communes there was not always international presence. Only on the days before the massacre there had been some UNAMIR escort of the trucks, as well as RPA military. On Sunday 23rd and Monday 24th April during the big exodus out of the camps we saw trucks that were escorted only by RPA military and a local IOM assistant and driven by a local IOM driver.

The soldiers took people to the Butare stadium. MSF Belgium was there to treat people and make sure they were not dehydrated and had access to water. We didn't really know what was going on there. People were selected and put in buses paid for by the UN or the UNHCR… Rwandan soldiers were in buses bearing the UN symbol. There wasn't a single UNHCR or UN employee. The soldiers forced people to get in the buses. The kids stayed behind all alone. Families were broken up. It was horrible. The buses left, heading toward the hills to take people back to the villages.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, Rwanda, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

ICRC and MSF staff tried to transport the most seriously wounded to the Butare hospital, but Rwandan authorities blocked transfers to other hospitals. The Kibeho wounded had to face the hostility of the hospital staff.



'**Statement** of an MSF expatriated doctor", MSF Belgium Doctor, member of the team at Kibeho on 22 April, written on 10 May 1995 (appended to 'Report on the events at Kibeho', April 1995 - Médecins Sans Frontières, 25 May 1995) (in French). member of the team at Kibeho on 22 April (written 10 May 1995) (in French).

Extract:
Once we got to Kabutare, I managed to get all the trucks carrying the wounded, including UNAMIR's, to the hospital. Based on estimates made on site, we admitted at least 300 wounded people. As the triage supervisor on the night of the 23rd, I can state that at least two-thirds of the wounded had been injured by bullets and/or explosions. My hunch is that at least 90 percent were wounded by exploding bullets, but I'd rather err on the side of caution. More than half the wounded presented with entry wounds in the back or side. Most of the children had bullet wounds beneath the shoulder. The last of the wounded were still arriving at the hospital on Wednesday and Thursday. Some 30 unaccompanied minors were at the hospital.



'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camps, April 1995', Médecins Sans Frontières Kigali, 16 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Wounded displaced have been admitted to the MSF-run hospital in Butare, the private hospital in Kigemi, Butare University Hospital, and several health centres where NGOs are working. A way-station was set up in Butare, and several MSF mobile medical teams have been active from Tuesday 25th onwards in the communes.
Neither on Sunday 23rd April, nor the following days, did UNAMIR and ICRC get permission from the local authorities in Butare to transport the wounded from the overcrowded MSF-run hospital in Butare to Kigali, where more surgical capacity was present. Initially the RPA prevented patients from being hospitalised in the university hospital of Butare (800 beds). Later on Sunday 23rd they allowed 10 patients in and then claimed to be full. ICRC negotiated access in the late afternoon to set up operating theatres.
On Sunday in the private hospital of Kigeme, only after long negotiations, international aid workers got permission to admit some 40 displaced, almost all of them wounded by bullets. But several hours later a high RPA commander showed up with his men, tried to stop the operations that were underway, and ordered that the wounded could not stay there any longer, and had to be brought immediately to the university hospital in Butare. ICRC succeeded in keeping the wounded there till the next morning.
Then the 25 most serious patients were transferred by ICRC to the MSF hospital in Gitarama, and other patients to dispensaries in the surrounding areas.



'Statements on the Kibeho Killings', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 23 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
On Sunday in the little Kigeme hospital, around 20 kilometres from the Kibeho camp, humanitarian organisations were trying to treat the wounded. The numbers of wounded were disturbingly few. Colonel Patrick Myamvumba, RPA commander for Gikongoro prefecture, came to Kigeme at the end of the day on Sunday to tell the medical team that the wounded had to be evacuated to the Butare university hospital. "We want to know how many wounded there are and who they are," he announced to journalists. The medical staff present were worried, fearing the soldiers' intentions. The wounded in the little hospital's tents numbered only around 15. Most had bullet wounds.



'MSF Activities in Butare Hospital', MSF Holland **sitrep**, 12 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
The other patients are severely injured by beatings and stoning. The children especially are very traumatised. In general, there is an atmosphere of big tension and fear.
The work was complicated by the many electricity cuts in the hospital. At the entrance of the hospitals the RPA installed a checkpoint, at which they sometimes refused access to MSF for a while and made minute checks on the supplies and cars.
As almost none of the local staff was willing to help the displaced patients, the expats were doing all the work in the hospital themselves, including the general hygiene. They were overburdened, which was the worse as all post-operation patients need a lot of care to avoid infections. According to one MSF nurse:
"However, the worst are the departures. The patients often pass through a crisis when they have to leave the hospital and get into a truck. Normally we do not accompany them, but we did a few days ago. Just outside the hospital a group of 40 to 50 people were throwing stones at the patients in the truck. We stood up, and then they stopped."



MSF Belgium was in Butare with a surgical team. They had been there for a while. They admitted IDPs who arrived in an awful state with very infected wounds. I went to spend a day at the hospital to help the Kibeho team, along with a surgeon and a logistician, who had been made available to MSF Belgium. They operated on gangrenous wounds and performed amputations. Frankly, it was horrible, and they were very, very shocked. They were working in the worst conditions. Those patients were clearly segregated. The hospital staff didn't talk to them or take care of them. They were really pariahs. MSF handled their operations, but the post-surgical follow-up was awful. And then worst of all, the Rwandan army came for them, put them in trucks and we didn't know what happened after that. The MSF France staff told me that they wanted to protest the disappearance – to who knows where – of some of the wounded people after they had passed through a transit camp where MSF had access. They were very shocked and wanted to make a lot of noise about it. And they were shocked that the rest of the MSF Belgium team no longer protested to local Rwandan authorities. But that was undoubtedly the price they had to pay to maintain their presence at the

hospital. They talked with MSF Belgium's Operations Director. It didn't go very well. He told them there would be no protest on the issue.

Anne Guibert, MSF France, Communications Officer on mission in Rwanda, April 1995 (in French).

Until Wednesday 26 April 1995, the MSF France team was refused access to the entire Kibeho site, which was now reserved for ICRC staff and a few journalists. On Monday 24 April 1995, the MSF sections issued several press releases denouncing this situation and the difficulties of working at Butare.



'After Last Weekend's Carnage, the Situation of Displaced People Continues to be Worrying', MSF France **Press release**, 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The RPA is preventing all humanitarian organisations from reaching the displaced people's camps. This morning RPA soldiers forced the Médecins Sans Frontières teams, under pain of bombing the hospital, to leave the hospital at the Kibeho camp where they had come to help look after the injured. Nor is anyone allowed to visit the Kamana and the Munini camps. The army therefore seems to be doing all in its power to prevent the international organisations from treating the wounded.
MSF strongly condemns the savage methods the RPA used to dismantle camps and demands that the populations should have access to treatment centres. Despite the massive foreign presence in the country generally, and particularly the 5,500 UNAMIR troops mandated to protect civilian populations, the government and the army now seem to have a free hand to put an end to the question of displaced populations.



'Aid to Kibeho Victims Still Hampered by the Rwandese Army – MSF Condemns the RPA Attacks Against Kibeho and the United Nations' Failure to Protect Civilians in Rwanda', MSF UK **Press release**, 24 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
MSF calls on the Rwandan government to restore discipline within the ranks of the RPA and stop all violence against civilians.
MSF calls on the United Nations to ensure the effective protection of Rwandan civilians as laid out in its mandate. United Nations human rights observers should urgently be deployed in the Butare area.
MSF is also calling on the Rwandan government to allow humanitarian aid organisations immediate access to the survivors of the massacre.



'MSF Demands Free Access to the Victims of the Kibeho Massacre', MSF Belgium **Press release**, Brussels, 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
MSF demands free access to the wounded survivors of last Saturday's massacre in the Kibeho camp and appeals to the United Nations to intensify the activities of human rights

observers present in the Butare prefecture. Teams of surgeons in the Kabutare hospital are currently operating round the clock. Tomorrow MSF will be sending 35 tonnes of emergency equipment by cargo plane.
All through Sunday night and into today the teams of surgeons present at the MSF hospital at Kabutare operated on nearly 200 wounded survivors who were brought from the Kibeho camp yesterday.
Displaced populations throughout the rest of the region are being prevented from receiving treatment: the management at the Butare university hospital is refusing to accept victims of the Kibeho massacre. The RPA has closed the Kibege field hospital located 20 kilometres from the Kibeho camp. At present, humanitarian organisations have no access to the Kibeho hospital and thus cannot treat unevacuated casualties.
Displaced populations who are being forced to return to their home communes are first screened by the RPA in transit centres. From there they are taken without protection to the original hills they came from, where they are frequently mistreated by the local people.
Médecins Sans Frontières demands immediate access to the casualties, particularly in the Kibeho camp, to be able to treat or evacuate the injured.
MSF is appealing to the United Nations and the EU for the 127 human rights observers already present in Rwanda to become more involved in the provinces of Gikongoro and Butare and for them to accompany displaced populations back to their villages.
A cargo plane will take off from Ostend airport tomorrow with personnel and 35 tonnes of extra aid (high-protein biscuits, surgical kits, dressings, mobile dispensaries, shelters).
An extra surgical unit was dispatched this morning to reinforce the teams already present in the field.

On the morning of 24 April 1995, an Australian military spokesperson announced to the Agence France-Presse (AFP), that on the day after the massacre, the Australian UNAMIR medical teams had counted at least 4,000 bodies in the Kibeho camp. This figure corroborates the 'heavy toll' mentioned in Brussels a day earlier by the Rwandan Prime Minister and that of at least 4,000 victims collected by a member of the MSF team from an Australian peacekeeper. V7

'The Australian UNAMIR Doctors Counted At Least 4,000 Bodies', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The Australian medical teams of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), who managed on Sunday to visit the scene of Saturday's massacre in the Kibeho (southwest Rwanda) camp, managed to count at least 4,000 bodies, said an Australian military spokesperson on Monday.
According to Colonel Damien Roach, speaking on Australian national radio, the estimated death toll of "8,000 to 10,000 is too high, our men counted (on Sunday) nearly 4,000 bodies that they could see. I think that figure is close to the total number of people killed."
When questioned by the Australian Associated Press, another Australian spokesperson, Major Peter Seaman, indicated that for him "the total count was somewhere between 4,000 and 8,000 killed, probably close to 7,000," and that there were "between 1,500 and 2,000 wounded waiting to be evacuated from the camp" [...]

According to a United Nations spokesperson in Geneva, the massacre resulted in 5,000 dead and 600 to 700 wounded, whereas UN sources on the ground indicated 8,000 dead. Based on information provided by the Belgian Embassy in Kigali, the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Erik Derycke, indicated on Sunday evening that 5,100 people had been killed in the massacre and about 500 wounded.

Three hours later, the UNAMIR Commander issued a press release in Kigali estimating the dead at 2,000 and the wounded at 600. The President of Rwanda maintains that the death toll is 300.



'UNAMIR Revises Downwards the Numbers Killed at Kibeho; the Rwandan President Estimates 300', **Agence France-Presse (AFP),** 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) revised downwards the number of displaced Hutu massacred by the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) on Saturday in the Kibeho camp, estimating the figure at 2,000, in comparison to the 5,000 given in an earlier estimation.
A UNAMIR press release indicates that the Commander of the UN operation, General Guy Tousignant, visited the Kibeho camp on Sunday, and that "As a result of a more scientific count of the dead, the figure was revised downward to about 2 000." The release underlines the fact that the number of wounded is estimated to be more than 600.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the French Prime Minister condemned the Kibeho massacre. The Dutch government announced the suspension of direct aid to the Rwandan government.



'The High Commissioner for Human Rights Expresses His Shock and Outrage at the Massive Loss of Life at the Kibeho Internally Displaced Persons' Camp in Rwanda', UNHCR **Press release**, 24 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
The return of IDPs is a valid objective and the High Commissioner shares the concern of the government of Rwanda that certain elements of former government forces and militia have been organising and inciting unrest, aimed at political destabilisation. However, the action undertaken by the RPA on the morning of 22 April 1995 at the Kibeho camp has developed into a dramatic violation of human rights which needs to be condemned and cannot be justified in any circumstances [...]
Mr Clarance, Head of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda (HRFOR), called on the authorities to take all possible steps to avoid further bloodshed and in particular, to deal humanely with the remaining 1,000 persons who have refused to leave Kibeho. He further emphasised the need to ensure the security of persons from Kibeho at present on the road to their home communes and also of those presently quartered in the

Butare Stadium. Following the tragedy, Mr Clarance proceeded to Kibeho with the Minister of Interior and Minister of Justice and discussed measures to facilitate the return of displaced persons and refugees to their communes.



'Killing in Kibeho: UNHCR Consternation and Fears for the Future', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Mrs Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "condemned" on Monday "the brutal killing of thousands of people" in the Kibeho camp in Rwanda, expressing her consternation and fears that the situation might escalate.
"Whatever the circumstances, the brutality of this act is totally disproportionate to the objective, which was to transport these people out of the camps," declared Mrs Ogata, exhorting the governments of the region to maintain their borders open and to respect the principle of the right to asylum.
She called on the Rwandan government to guarantee humane and decent treatment for the tens of thousands of people who fled from the camps [...]
Another concern for UNHCR is the reinstatement of refugees in their original villages, which the Kigali government called for and has proved to be dangerous.
"We fear they may receive a dubious reception," said the spokesperson of UNHCR, Ron Redmond, indicating that in many localities the houses abandoned by refugees have since been occupied by other people. He added that UNHCR had received information concerning incidents over the last 48 hours. "Displaced people have been welcomed back to their villages with stones and batons," he said.



'The UN Cannot Send an Important Force to Rwanda and Burundi, Says Mr Juppé', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The Minister described the massacre committed by the Rwandan Patriotic Army when evacuating the refugee camps in southwest Rwanda as "odious and unacceptable" acts, and added that the EU would soon be making a declaration to condemn them.



'The Hague Suspends Direct Aid to Kigali', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The Dutch Minister for Cooperation and Development, Jan Pronk, announced on Monday that he had decided to suspend direct aid to the Kigali government following Saturday's massacre by the Rwandan army of thousands of Hutu refugees in the Kibeho camp. In a letter addressed to the Dutch parliament, Mr Pronk explained that his decision had been prompted by the "abominable character of the violence."

The Dutch Minister for Cooperation and Development cancelled his aid to Rwanda that weekend. He went very too far in his criticisms of the RPF, and never recovered. He told me that several times afterwards.

Dr Jacques de Milliano, MSF Holland, General Director (in English).

Jan Pronk, the Dutch Minister for Cooperation and Development , was the chairman of the donor group to Rwanda. He was in China but was informed of the massacre. From China, he wired Holland and then Kigali and said, 'Freeze all aid and make it public that you are freezing all assistance to Rwanda.' Because he did that, all the other donor countries did the same and froze all aid.

Wouter van Empelen, MSF Holland, Programme Manager (in English).

Pasteur Bizimungu, President of the Rwandan republic, accused Hutu militia of being responsible for the massacre and blamed the international community for not separating innocent people from criminals in the displaced camps.

'**Declaration** by the Rwandan Government Concerning the Decision to Close the Gikongoro Camps for Displaced People', Kigali, 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Today the Rwandan people have unjustly paid with the lives of between 200 and 300 of their sons and daughters, trampled to death or mutilated by the same machetes that perpetrated the genocide and the massacres. Others died when government forces and UNAMIR troops opened fire in self-defence following the attacks launched by the Interahamwe in the Kibeho camp [...]
We also wish to express our indignation at the outrageous exaggeration of the number of dead to 8,000, a completely unfounded figure and a manoeuvre destined to distract international opinion from the government's efforts in the process of national reconstruction and reconciliation.

'Rwandan President Accuses Hutu Militia and International Community', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
During a press conference in Kigali, Mr Bizimungu estimated at "between 200 and 300" the number of victims in the Kibeho camp where, according to UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda), the RPA (Rwandan Patriotic Army, totally dominated by the minority Tutsi tribe) killed nearly 2,000 displaced Hutu on Saturday. "The Rwandan people have unjustly paid with the lives of between 200 and 300 of their sons and daughters, trampled to death or mutilated by the same machetes that perpetrated the genocide," said the President.
According to President Bizimungu, the Rwandan government was led by the international community to "tolerate camps for displaced people that had become hotbeds of Interahamwe," the extremist Hutu militia, perpetrators of last year's worst genocidal

massacres of more than 500,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu. According to the President, the "soldiers were attacked on Saturday by militia armed with machine guns and had no choice but to return fire". He moreover declared himself "indignant" at the "outrageous exaggeration" of this affair with figures of up to 8,000 dead.

The international press reported on Saturday's massacre and quoted MSF witnesses.



'8 000 Rwandan Refugees Die in Army Massacre'. Sam Kiley, ***The Times*** (UK), 24 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
An MSF aid worker, Etienne Quetin, who was in the camp when the worst of the violence took place, said, "We saw the army shooting into the backs of people fleeing the camp, old people and women, it was indiscriminate." An MSF doctor added, "Yesterday I was walking over bodies. We couldn't even get the car through. Today there were none." He was referring to about 500 people, most of whom seemed to have suffocated in the heart of the camp.



'The Army Massacres 5,000 Hutu in Rwanda: Soldiers Reported to Have Used Rocket-Launchers Against Refugees at Kibeho,' ***Libération*** (France), 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
According to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the wounds prove that the RPA used not only machine guns but also rocket-launchers [...]
What is the responsibility of the United Nations and the humanitarian organisations on the ground, more generally? Their responsibility is relative to the disproportion – in a country hardly any larger than Brittany and with a population of four million at best, 5,500 United Nations peacekeeping troops and some 140 humanitarian organisations could not prevent the massacre.

The same day, the RPA ultimatum that threatened to bomb the 2,000 displaced people sheltering in a school was renewed several times before being finally abandoned after the MSF Kigali team sounded the alarm, thus mobilising the United Nations, embassies and international agencies.



'The 'Cleaning' of the Kibeho Camp Nearly Finished', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 24 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Since Sunday the RPA several times renewed its ultimatum to totally evacuate this school-hospital. On Monday it was to have been finished before noon. "But we can push

back the deadline," a Rwandan officer stated, while the few foreigners present fear a deadly attack.

It was Monday. The army had been threatening to bomb the hospital. At 10:00 we went up to the site to see what was happening. Over the radio I told Sophie, the Kigali Administrator, 'Go and see Boutros Boutros-Ghali's representative, tell him they want to blow up the hospital. It's complete madness, we have to gain time.' The RPF had set a deadline for 11:00-noon. We were stuck at the checkpoint. The hospital was situated above us, and we knew that if they bombarded it, we would be hit. The deadline came and we evacuated in the truck that an ICRC delegate had managed to get in because he knew the people well. We applied pressure in Kigali. Sophie had telephoned all over the place. I don't know if it served any purpose, but the ultimatum went back from one hour to the next. The ICRC delegate managed to evacuate wounded and children that we picked up with another MSF car and two doctors. They managed to stabilise the condition of the wounded before sending them to Gikongoro and they gave some water and biscuits to the kids. The RPA never blew up the hospital. The last displaced people continued to be stuck, surrounded by the RPA, who controlled the whole zone.

[…], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).

In communication with the MSF information officer in Rwanda, the MSF Holland Humanitarian Affairs department started to draft the broad outline of a report on events at Kibeho.

'Killings in Kibeho', **Memo** from Hanna Nolan, Humanitarian Affairs department, MSF Holland, to Agnes Wagenaar, MSF Information officer in Rwanda, 24 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
I am in the process of writing a proposed framework for the report and will send it to you hopefully by tomorrow […]
I heard you were in Gikongoro to gather information on the events in Kibeho. Following a talk I had today with Karen Kenny (formerly UN Human Rights Monitor in Rwanda), I would like to suggest a number of issues that you and Ton may want to follow up if you have not done so already.
What is the official response of the Rwandan government? Have they announced an inquiry? Have they announced they will suspend the soldiers involved in the killings pending investigation? If they have announced an inquiry, what conditions have they set to guarantee that this inquiry will be independent?
Has the Special Rapporteur/High Commissioner for HR instructed the field operation (the UN human rights monitors) to look into these incidents? What is the field operation currently doing? Has the Special Rapporteur for Rwanda asked for assistance from the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions, who is apparently currently in Burundi?

On Tuesday 25 April 1995, the Belgian government announced the suspension of its bilateral aid to Rwanda.



'**Press release** from the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs', Brussels, 25 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
As a result of events at Kibeho, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Erik Derycke, called a meeting with the Rwandan Interim 'Chargé D'affaires' on 25 April 1995 [...]
In accordance with the Plan of Action adopted at the Bujumbura conference, the Belgian authorities demanded an in-depth investigation and those responsible for the massacre to be identified and punished. In the meantime, Belgium has suspended its bilateral aid to Rwanda, except for emergency aid that benefits the population directly, and aid in re-establishing a state of law [...]
Minister Derycke reminded the Rwandan representative that Belgium's commitment in favour of Rwanda both on the ground and in the international community aims at fostering the reconstruction of a democratic and not an ethnic Rwanda. This requires positive action on the part of the Rwandan government to promote the peaceful return of the refugees and stability in Central Africa.

During a press conference on the same day in Kigali, the MSF team described massacres, the difficulty of getting access to the wounded, and the situation of survivors hiding in the hills.



'Half of the Kibeho Displaced People are Hiding in the Nearby Hills'. **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, Kigali, 25 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Half of the displaced people who fled from the massacre in the Kibeho camp are still wandering, terrorised, through the hills of southwest Rwanda, stated the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Coordinator at Kigali, [...]
"All the camps have been emptied," confirmed [the MSF Coordinator], and half of the displaced people preferred to flee into the hills rather than return to their homes in the trucks of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
"When we stop at the side of the road, after a little while people start to come out from cover and ask for help," said [the MSF Coordinator]. They are making their way home without support, completely abandoned, he added.
Many fear reprisals and poisoning after being denounced by their former neighbours as "*génocidaires*".
The humanitarian organisations have "very limited access to the victims," according to MSF, which continues to treat the wounded on the ground.



Our relations with Kigali were very strained. We wanted to have a press conference. We all worked together. It was very moving. The staff wanted to speak. Then they didn't want to speak. This is standard with traumatised people. They are afraid but they still want to say things. We decided that our strategy would be to speak, to provide medical data

because we had seen that most of the people fleeing had been hit by bullets in the back, shoulders, calf, etc… We organised this press conference on the ground floor of the Hotel des Mille Collines. At the time the United Nations and the Kigali regime were saying that MSF was against the Kigali government, that we were lying, that there weren't thousands of people dead but only about a hundred, that we were hysterical, that the representatives of the UN and UNAMIR soldiers present at Kibeho hadn't seen the same things as us. In fact, they had changed their story. All the journalists came, as well as a lot of people from the Ministry of Information at Kigali. It was very strained. The staff were on the verge of tears. It was obvious that they were telling the truth. They explained what they had seen and what had happened. They explained that the people who tried to get away had been shot in the back. In the press release we declared that 70% of the people had been shot in the back. We concentrated on the medical data. Afterwards the journalists asked us: 'But does that mean that the soldiers were out of control? What happened?' We did not judge the situation. Based on our medical data, we could say that the people running away were civilians and unarmed, but we did not clearly state that the RPA had killed unarmed civilians. But this is obviously what was reported because we provided the proof. The international staff were very traumatised. There was one who wanted to describe everything. We listened very carefully. With the Head of Mission, we prepared the staff so that they wouldn't give too much expression to their emotions and hatred, so that they would stick to medical descriptions. That's what they did but it was still very moving, and, in the end, the Rwandan journalists asked lots of questions. We were pretty much attacked.

Samantha Bolton, MSF International, Press Officer, East Africa, 1994-1995 (in French).

The US news network, CNN, retransmitted by satellite a debate between the Rwandan Ambassador to the UN in New York, the representative of the UN at Kigali, Shahryar Khan, and MSF Holland General Director Jacques de Milliano. The satellite link was cut off just as the interviewer asked the United Nations representative to confirm the figure of 4,000 dead as estimated by UNAMIR.

There was an interview with CNN at 17:00. I said that Jacques should do it since he was the only IC [International Council] member present – it was more appropriate. We were told that it was a special interview with the Rwandan Ambassador to the UN, Khan the big hotshot to the UN in Kigali, and Jacques. The Ambassador said that there was no more than 80 or 120 – a very low number killed – and that "we were provoked because the population was throwing stones at the soldiers." Then the CNN guy asked Jacques what he thought. Jacques said that it was completely outrageous, absolutely unbalanced – if someone throws a stone at you and you start killing everybody. He also said that the UN Commander told his men to stop counting when they had counted 4,500. Jacques was very diplomatic. Then the interviewer, Jonathan Mann, said, "Well Mr Khan, what do you think?" Khan put the telephone down – he thought that it would be too dangerous.

Wouter van Empelen, MSF Holland Programme Manager (in English).

All the organisations were looking at Kibeho, wondering what to do. The UN was very emotional in the first 24 hours. One of their guys said, 'It's an emergency meeting, come together. We have a report from our people in the field. They've counted 862 corpses (I think it must be in the MSF report) and then they stopped counting.' That's what I

am sure of. He said that during the meeting. And then in the meeting afterwards they did not mention a figure because there were always people from the Ministry in that meeting and they couldn't say anymore anything on the subject.
We had an interview in the Hotel Mille Collines with the Special Representative from the UN, Mr Khan, and with the Rwandan Ambassador in New York. We condemned the UN for not interfering, just looking. That was quite an interesting moment, to see how they tried to manage and then the United Nations had to complete their figures. I said, 'You stopped at 862.' Then they started to withdraw this figure. At the end they said there were about 300. And then the RPF military came to the Hotel Mille Collines and closed the emission, saying, 'No more satellite connections anymore.'

Dr Jacques de Milliano, MSF Holland, General Director (in English).

On the same day, the UN acknowledged that the Rwandan authorities had not informed the organisation about the evacuation of the Kibeho camp. The UN declared an official figure of 2,000 dead at Kibeho.



'The UN Acknowledges that it Was Not Informed of the Evacuation of the Kibeho Camp', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, Kigali, 25 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
"We had been in consultation with the government for some time concerning the evacuation, but the date of 18 April was decided without consulting us," stated Boutros Boutros-Ghali's representative during a press conference in the Rwandan capital.



'Massacre at Kibeho: UN Upholds Figure of 2 000 Dead', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, Geneva, 25 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
According to Thérèse Gastaut, this figure was reached "after a more scientific evaluation" than the one initially conducted, and which led the UN spokesperson in Geneva to announce a figure of 5,000 dead on Sunday morning. The figure of 2,000 is an "official figure" and "it is extremely unlikely that it will be revised, since most of the victims have been buried," stated Ms Gastaut. On Monday morning sources close to specialised institutions in Geneva indicated that the Rwandan authorities had put strong pressure on UNAMIR to revise its figures downwards.

In the days following the massacres, the 'cleaning up' of the bodies at the Kibeho site continued. Foreign observers present on the site stated that they had found bodies in the latrines but refused to speak publicly of this. The MSF Communications Officer in East Africa gave this information to a few journalists, pointing out that it was not MSF staff who had seen these bodies in the latrines.



'Tutsi Troops Cut Off Food for Survivors of Massacre', ***The Times*** (UK), 26 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
OXFAM and Médecins Sans Frontières believe the UN has suppressed the scale of the killings. "Something very fishy is going on," said Robert Maletta of OXFAM.



Throughout the following nights, trucks came by, and we received information that people had smelled the very specific smell of rotting bodies. We couldn't say so, but we were almost sure that it was the Kigali government that was cleaning up the bodies and dumping them somewhere else.
Thanks to teams gathering information all over the place we also discovered that World Vision, which was cleaning up the place, had found hundreds of bodies in the latrines and that they didn't want to talk about it. Everyone knew it was World Vision, but no one wanted to talk about it. I suggested giving this information to certain journalists so that they could go for themselves and ask the questions. And that's what I did with a few journalists that I trusted. I told them that trucks had been seen and that there was a smell of death. I added, 'We're not the only ones. You should go and ask World Vision about what they found in the latrines.' I specifically spoke to my friend Jules, a Reuter's journalist, who was very moved because he was on the Kibeho site and had seen the soldiers shooting. He had also heard this information. But World Vision didn't want to say anything "on the record." They refused to answer the questions of the journalists who tried to investigate. In the end, World Vision completely denied everything and retained the same figures as Kigali... That's what they told the journalists.
That evening in a Kigali restaurant I was speaking about the whole thing with someone from UNHCR who was very frustrated by what was happening. A journalist I hadn't spoken to, Sam Kiley of The Times*, was at the table next to us. I think he overheard.*

Samantha Bolton, MSF International Press Officer, East Africa, 1994-1995 (in French).

All over the country, staff from MSF and other organisations, as well as journalists, were the victims of security incidents provoked by RPA soldiers. MSF initiated an information campaign with the ambassadors of western states.



'MSF France **sitrep** for Rwanda', 26 April 1994 (in French).

Extract:
Catherine [Quillet, MSF France Field Coordinator] and Gilles couldn't reach the hospital because of the RPA ban: "MSF doesn't get through because we know MSF and its declarations to the BBC" [...] A security meeting this morning because:
- Cyangugu: MSF Spain violently forced out of a car and searched.
- Médecins du Monde: member of MDM threatened by an RPA soldier (brandishing a newspaper).
- Catherine, at Butare, abused verbally by a representative of the Ministry for Rehabilitation who said that MSF made false declarations.
- A journalist (name?) threatened by a well-connected RPA Colonel who also mentioned MSF in his threats.

- Bernard [Pécoul, MSF France General Director] demands that for each mission there be a "security" person to recount all security events.
- Following a meeting yesterday evening, ICRC agrees to continue working with MSF but asks for a slow-down for a couple of days…

This morning's US government press conference spoke of things getting out of control. A limp speech.

Embassy breakfast this morning:

Present: Belgium, Holland, UK, France, Germany, Canada. Switzerland. EU embassies

- MSF explained its preoccupations and its action on Kibeho.
- Question of UNAMIR mandate.
- Security context degenerating.

Belgian Ambassador confirmed suspension of bilateral aid.

Dutch Ambassador also confirmed suspension of bilateral aid.

On the evening of 26 April 1995, the MSF France team received an invitation from the Rwandan authorities to "meet the Head of State" the next day at the Kibeho site. After hesitating, the international staff decided to attend.

'**Invitation** from Rwandan Republic Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Kigali', 26 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:

The Rwandan Republic Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation presents its compliments at the Apostolic Nunciature, to accredited diplomatic missions and consulates in Kigali, to international organisations and NGOs, and is honoured to invite them to a meeting with the Head of State at Kibeho, in the prefecture of Gikongoro, on Thursday 27 April 1995 at 10:00 sharp.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Rwandan Republic takes this opportunity to reaffirm its high regard for the Apostolic Nunciature, accredited diplomatic missions and consulates at Kigali, international organisations and NGOs…

On Wednesday evening we received this invitation from the government. De Milliano and the rest of us were a little embarrassed: 'If we go, they'll corner us. We will be manipulated yet again, they're very good at that kind of thing, and what have we got to gain?' But I couldn't ask the team to go there alone. After consulting with Paris, I decided to go to Kibeho tomorrow morning along with Didier, Catherine and Anne Guibert, the Communications Officer dispatched by MSF France, to see what they had to say to us.

[…] MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).

On Thursday 27 April 1995, journalists, representatives from international organisations, and ambassadors were assembled by the authorities close to the Kibeho church, where hundreds of people were massacred during the genocide in April 1994.

Then, during a press conference, the President of Rwanda declared that the RPA had been wrongly accused, particularly by MSF, of killing thousands of displaced people, and announced the creation of an Independent Commission of Inquiry into the incident. Paul Kagame, the Minister for Defence and strongman of the regime, then invited the assembled representatives to come and count the bodies in the mass graves.
When the press conference resumed, journalists again mentioned thousands dead and bodies hidden in the latrines, quoting MSF. Questioned several times by the Minister for Defence, the MSF France Communications Officer repeated what the team had witnessed.



'Review of the Situation at Kibeho', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 27 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
"The truth must be made public," declared Mr Bizimungu when announcing the creation of an Independent Commission of Inquiry into the massacre. He asked the "great countries" – USA, Canada, Great Britain, France, Holland, Germany, Belgium – and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), to each send an expert to make up the Commission. The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Rwanda, Shahryar Khan, should also designate a member, and the Rwandan government would designate another.
The Commission, which should start work on 3 May at the latest, must, among other things, study the 'context' in which the decision to close the camps for displaced Hutu was made, the situation of the 'militia' present in the camps, and how the operation unfolded.
On Thursday the government began an 'immediate verification' of the number of victims. After asking the soldiers of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR) and the RPA to indicate the location of the mass graves, the President ordered the immediate exhumation of the bodies.
After about two hours and while the operation was still going on, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Anastase Gasana, drew up a first report: 23 bodies in one grave, 13 in another, 41 somewhere else... Coming to a total of 338 bodies buried at Kibeho.
Nevertheless, this operation did not dispel doubts concerning the total number killed. UNAMIR soldiers present at the massacre and personnel from the humanitarian organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) spoke about the rushed burial of several thousand bodies in the latrines, but no one indicated their location. When questioned, a young woman from MSF simply answered: "We maintain what we have said over the previous days."



'Update on Kibeho and the Big Government Cats,' **Message** from Samantha Bolton, MSF International Communications Officer in Kigali to all sections, 27 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Today at 10.00, as you know, MSF was invited to participate in a big showdown along with all the diplomats, journos and NGOs, to open up Kibeho camp. Bizimungu announced three major items.

1. An international inquiry would take place to establish what happened last Saturday – this would include reps of the UN, the OAU, France, Belgium, Holland, Canada, Germany, the UK and the USA.
2. The government announced that there were only 300 or so bodies to be found or killed – and then proceeded to dig up 328 bodies (a commander said that this was bullshit and that there were graves all over the place). Bizimungu then said that MSF and other NGOs were "invited to indicate where the corpses were buried" to dig up the bodies to see how few there were (there were also other negative comments about MSF – we are the only ones to speak publicly).
3. Bizimungu tried to get the displaced to come out because there were trucks and the international community to witness them coming out and to protect them. The displaced basically replied and said that they would rather die than go home and that in any case the international community did not protect them last time round on Saturday so there were no guarantees this time.
4. Bizimungu also said he was pissed off with MSF for saying that there were around 100,000 people in the hills and that not everyone had been registered. Fortunately, the UNHCR rep stood up and said that in fact these were UN figures not MSF and that it was true.

It is clear that MSF is being made a scapegoat for this whole fiasco. MSF is easier to attack than the Australian battalion of the UN who took pictures and gave them to Reuters and who counted at least 4,000 dead on a ticker.

I have checked with all the wires and none of them have picked up bitching about MSF, the idea now is to play it low. I will review tomorrow how to play it. Meanwhile I am checking that the journos know all the sources of figures. For a fair story and so that MSF is only quoted on the medical, surgical etc.

In question time, *The Times* of London – Sam Kiley – started saying that this was all bullshit and that there were thousands of bodies in the latrines etc.

Bizimungu said this was incorrect so Kiley said that he didn't understand why MSF would tell him off the record but not to the face of the govt – this is the same night after he attended our eye witnessing account in which team members specifically said they did not have such information and could not say from MSF stats [...]

Kiley was told off the record by MSF team members to ask the human rights people who had seen it and that we had not. He was also sitting at the same table as a group of people last night who were talking about this over a beer, including MSF and UNHCR.

The President and Kagame, the Minister for Defence, came and opened the grave next to the hospital to be able to say, 'It's easy to see that there aren't many bodies.' They opened the grave where we put the bodies on the first days. There was no point in opening it, we could have told them how many were buried there. It didn't even contain the bodies from Saturday's massacre... not to mention the other days.

Dr Didier Laureillard, MSF France, Physician in Gikongoro, December 1994-May 1995 (in French).

Kagame asked me to come and explain. I crossed the room. The room was silent, and the atmosphere was very aggressive. It was a little intimidating for a young woman. I climbed up on the platform and I started to explain what the teams had seen, thousands of people dead, that they had been able to estimate the number and that we were not going back on the figure, that it was the official MSF version. The government might have

counted 376 but the MSF team had seen thousands of dead. Kagame, who spoke only English, said, 'Repeat what you have just said in English.' I repeated it in English and then I went and sat down. Then the Minister of Rehabilitation started getting excited and said that NGOs say whatever comes into their heads and he quoted MSF as saying things that we never said. We stuck to thousands of dead; we did not extrapolate from that. He asked me to come back and explain. So, I crossed the room for the second time. I told him that I didn't know where that information came from and that I maintain the figure of thousands of dead. Just then an American journalist from I don't know what newspaper said, 'Someone from MSF told me yesterday evening that the bodies had been hidden in the latrines.' He asked Kagame and Pasteur Bizimungu, 'Is it true that the bodies were hidden in the latrines?' He quoted MSF, which isn't very smart. So, Kagame asked me to come for the third time. I answered that we had seen thousands of bodies but that we did not know where they had been transferred to. In all, I repeated the same thing three times: 'The team saw thousands of bodies, saw them with their own eyes. We did a rough count and now we don't know where the bodies are. But it's not my place to say whether they were in the latrines or elsewhere. It's up to you to do your work.' That's when it started to get aggressive. A Rwandan television crew filmed me close-up! A few brave journalists came and shook my hand, saying, 'It can't be easy,' etc. But at the time not one of them opened their mouth.

Anne Guibert, MSF France, Communications Officer on mission in Rwanda, April 1995 (in French).

Sam Kiley, of The Times*, asked this question: 'MSF says there are bodies in the latrines. What's this all about?'*

After the press conference a journalist from Voice of America and another journalist said to him, 'You shouldn't reveal your sources!' They appreciated the fact that we were giving out information because we were the only ones to do so. They could see that we were being very honest and that what we were saying was true. Sam Kiley just wanted his little scoop for his newspaper. I went to look for him at the Mille Collines hotel. All the journalists there knew I was furious. I arrived asking, 'Where the hell is Sam Kiley hiding? He's hiding because he knows he has put his foot in it.' I told him, 'What's all this about? You should never reveal your sources! Never!' MSF was quoted before all the diplomats and everyone and we couldn't defend ourselves.

Samantha Bolton, MSF International Press Officer, East Africa, 1994-1995 (in French).

On 27 April 1995, MSF Belgium announced to the press that they would increase aid in Butare province.

'Following the Forced Evacuation of the Displaced People at Kibeho, MSF is Increasing its Aid in the Province of Butare', MSF Belgium **Press release**, 27 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Following the forced evacuation of the displaced population from camps in southern Rwanda, MSF has decided to increase its action in the prefecture of Butare. The action of MSF Belgium is focusing on three axes: surgical operations in the Kabutare hospital,

medical treatment in health centres in the communes of Nyakisu and Runyinya, and the setting up of mobile teams. These teams are to travel throughout the communes to evaluate the living conditions of the people who have been returned to their villages of origin. The Belgian government has granted MSF 12 million BF [290,000 euros] towards this programme.

The UN Secretary-General asked that no force be used against the 2,000 displaced people still at the Kibeho site.



'Kibeho Camp: Mr Boutros-Ghali Calls for Restraint', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 27 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
According to a UN spokesperson in New York, about 1,000 people are refusing to leave the medical centre at Kibeho and the Kigali authorities are refusing to allow any supplies through.
"The Secretary-General asks the Rwandan government to refrain from using force. He is also asking the people in the medical centre to cooperate with a view to settling their differences by peaceful means," stated the spokesperson.
Mr Boutros-Ghali sincerely hopes that this standoff "will not degenerate into new violence". Journalists present at the site estimate that there are still 2,000 people at the Kibeho camp.

The UN Security Council condemned the "killing of several civilians" and asked the Secretary-General to present a report on the events.



'Kibeho: Security Council Condemnation Six Days After the Killings', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 27 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Six days after the events, the UN Security Council has condemned Thursday's "killing of several civilians" in the Kibeho (southwest Rwanda) camp for displaced Hutu, and has asked Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General, to present a report on the events "as soon as possible".
In a declaration derived from a consensus after many long days of consultation in New York, the 15 member countries of the Security Council declared themselves "heartened" by the decision of the Rwandan government to conduct "without delay" a complete investigation of these events and to bring those responsible to justice [...]
According to diplomats, finalising the declaration was considerably slowed by the presence on the Security Council of a representative of the Rwandan government, which hold a non-permanent seat on the Council [...] In recent days the UN has been trying to ease the situation with the Rwandan authorities, whose armed forces (controlled by the Tutsi minority) have been accused of being responsible for the killings at the Kibeho camp last Saturday. The Security Council declaration does not say who is responsible for "killing many civilians".

The Rwandan Minister for Defence accuses NGOs of supporting militia in displaced people's camps.



'Kibeho Massacre: Paul Kagame Accuses NGOs of Supporting Hutu militia', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 27 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
"We sent in soldiers to empty the camps and return the refugees to their homes," asserts Mr Kagame, "but Interahamwe (Hutu militia) who wanted to prevent the civilians from leaving launched attacks on the soldiers and forced the defence cordon. Our soldiers had to respond so they opened fire, it was a case of self-defence," he stressed.
Paul Kagame added that the problem for the new Rwandan authorities is that "the camps are providing shelter for armed men and the NGOs refuse to accept that by feeding them, they are supporting the militia (Hutu) in this way." In response to a question about the accusations formulated by the NGOs concerning his government's policy of repression, Paul Kagame declared, "While we're trying to solve considerable problems, the NGOs are spending their time criticising the government. Those people have no moral right to judge us."

On 28 April 1995, the MSF Holland Information Officer in Rwanda recommended that MSF lobby for the creation of an Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Kibeho killings because the evidence was rapidly disappearing.



'Lobbying for Independent Investigation Into Killings and Recommendations Report', **Message** from Agnes Wagenaar to all directors, programme managers and coordinators in Rwanda, 28 April 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Dear all,
1. I know that it's agreed that lobbying at the moment will be for access, and that only next week with the report in our hands we will start lobbying for an independent investigation. However, it would strengthen our position if we would ask ASAP (right now already) for such an investigation, because the process of changing evidence and influencing witnesses is already in full swing. I think that if we will ask for it only next week that would look kind of naïve, as if we didn't think about this, and/or are not worried about it.
2. Hanna Nolan sent a first outline for the report, including one page of (draft) recommendations. Did you see/discuss them already? What are your proposals?

Back in Europe, the MSF Holland staff who were present at Kibeho made statements to the international press. V8



'MSF: Humanitarian Aid is Superfluous As Long As the Guilty Have Not Been Brought to Justice', ***Vers l'Avenir*** (Belgium), 30 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:

Last Saturday's massacre at the Kibeho refugee camp cost the lives of at least 2,000 people, according to independent evaluations, and cannot be passed off as an 'incident,' stated Mr de Milliano, Director of Médecins Sans Frontières, during a press conference at Schiphol following his return from Rwanda. According to Mr de Milliano, there had been "a rise in terror" in the camp from the previous Tuesday. The massacre did not take place out of the blue. Everyone knew something was going to happen, stated the Director of MSF.

A few days before the massacre, MSF received indications that things could get "out of hand". MSF sounded the alarm, without getting any reaction, he said.

On Thursday, 21 refugees were killed. As MSF entered the Kibeho camp on Saturday about noon, the Rwandan army (a Tutsi majority) opened fire. According to Mr de Milliano, the soldiers continued to shoot the Hutu refugees for almost an hour and a half, all the while singing and whistling. The shooting was interrupted between 16:30 and 17:00 but was resumed shortly after 17:00. In all, the soldiers continued to shoot for five hours one day and for two nights, he stated.

The Rwandan government had promised that the Kibeho camp as well as other camps in the region would be evacuated correctly and without violence, pointed out Mr de Milliano. In the absence of a believable lower figure, MSF estimates that at least 5,000 people were massacred. The Australian United Nations peacekeeping force counted up to 5,000 bodies before abandoning their count. The United Nations has put forward a figure of 2,000 dead, whereas the Rwandan authorities claim there were no more than 300 victims. According to MSF, the UN is unable to deal with the spiral of violence in Rwanda. The international organisation does not have sufficient means in terms of people and equipment to confront the violence and lust for vengeance that drives the parties in the conflict. "The 200 UN peacekeeping troops present at Kibeho couldn't do a thing to stop the 2,500 government soldiers from committing the massacre," according to MSF.

MSF, which has more than 100 people in Rwanda, supported by 2,500 local staff, is beginning to wonder whether there is any point in providing humanitarian aid to Central African countries. The humanitarian aid will have no effect, say MSF directors, until the people responsible for serious crimes are brought to justice. "If it becomes apparent that there is absolutely no guarantee of personal safety for the people and that we can no longer help the weak who are returning to their villages, then we have reached the point where we have to stop the aid," declared Mr de Milliano.



I did a lot of interviews with the Dutch press. Not long after we arrived home, the office set up a press conference. We had agreed that I would do an eyewitness account so I would tell them exactly what I am telling you now. And Jacques would answer the contextual and the political context – more the MSF message say. In detail, I told them that there was a moment when we went up to the mountain on the UN compound where the people were dying. The Australian soldiers were trying to treat them but there was nothing to treat. The wounded did some hocus-pocus just before they died and then the nurses would put them in the hole. You're there and they are still shooting, and some people are still fighting to save lives… It cuts your air. So, during the interview, I had to stop talking because I would start to cry and I didn't want to do that before the camera. That night, I watched the TV – I had spoken for at least 20 minutes before the camera and the only thing they had transmitted was this

silence. They showed me with my mouth open and nothing coming out and underneath was a voice saying that it was terrible and even the most experienced people in humanitarian aid were not able to fully face that situation.

Wouter van Empelen, MSF Holland, Programme Manager (in English).

On 30 April 1995, the Rwandan Minister of Rehabilitation attacked MSF France on Radio Rwanda.



'The Government Denounces the Action of MSF France', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 30 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Some organisations working in Rwanda "disguised as humanitarian workers are actually working for their own governments" and are spreading disinformation, stated Jacques Bihozagara, Rwandan Minister of Rehabilitation, on Radio Rwanda on Sunday morning. He "deplored the fact that MSF France" had spoken of thousands of victims in the massacre at the Kibeho camp which, according to the government, amounted to some 300 dead.
The Minister "denounced the campaigns of some NGOs," but also "certain international media". Radio Rwanda (the official radio) particularly denounced RFI, the BBC, and CNN. There is to be a demonstration in Kigali on Sunday morning, organised by associations close to the government, "to denounce the international community's campaign" against Rwanda.

The Rwandan government promised the UN not to use force against the 2,000 displaced people still at Kibeho. Displaced people returning to their villages were still subjected to violence.



'Fourteen Displaced People Killed Thursday on Returning Close to Butare, According to UNHCR,' **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 30 April 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The Rwandan government has promised the UN not to use force to move the displaced Hutu sheltering in the Kibeho camp since the massacre on 22 April. "We have reached an agreement, the government will not use force at Kibeho," announced Mr Aldo Ajello, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, at a press conference in Kigali on Sunday [...]
Fourteen displaced people who fled from the Kibeho massacres were killed with stones and batons when they returned to the Uye sector near Butare (southwest) on Thursday, indicated the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Sunday. They were stoned and beaten to death by their former neighbours, said UNHCR. Another hundred displaced people had to flee the sector to protect their lives.
According to the UN, another 2,000 displaced people who returned to their communes last week were arrested. Their former neighbours accuse them of having taken part in the 1994 genocide and they have been thrown into jail [...]

Jacques Bihozagara, Minister of Rehabilitation, accused MSF France on Radio Rwanda (official radio) on Sunday morning of practising disinformation. "Some organisations disguised as humanitarian workers are actually working for their own governments," he said, aiming mainly at France and Belgium.

On 1 May 1995, the MSF country coordinators and Headquarters' representatives of the different sections reviewed the space available for MSF to continue assisting the Rwandan populations. MSF Belgium announced a plan of action in the communal '*cachots*', and another in a prison for women and children.



'**Minutes** of the Meeting Between Heads of Mission and HQ Representatives from MSF Belgium, France, Holland, Switzerland and Spain', Kigali, 1 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:

General debate

• The result of the re-evaluation during the meeting of all MSF France teams: more press releases, renewed contact with government to explain who we are, to try to discover what they really expect from us, the necessity of demonstrating our independence in all choices (programmes) we make now or in the future.

• What is patently obvious on the part of the government is the lack of contacts to whom we can explain what we do and who we are. This enables the government to use information as a means of intoxication or propaganda to put pressure via MSF on our respective governments. The objective for the next two weeks will be to identify these contacts during our visits to ministers and to find out whether we can get the MSF message across.

• It is important to strongly emphasise the history of MSF in Rwanda (Samantha is working on this in Nairobi), especially our presence during the genocide.

• It is now time to return to the missions and go through them with a fine-tooth comb to identify the actions that are vital and essential for the survival of the populations, and which do not compromise MSF with the government. What priority actions must we maintain (prisoner referrals? Populations displaced/returned to their communes?), how can we condense currently existing activities while adhering strictly to MSF principles and getting our actions to reflect our ideas?

• There is a general problem throughout the country of providing for the vital needs of the population while satisfying the government's interest in using MSF to rebuild its health system without always respecting our principles. There are nevertheless zones where the population is more vulnerable, and our activities should focus on these regions, in so far as our presence can be an embarrassment (testimony). In the Kibungo prefecture, for example, MSF Spain, regardless of the result of their nutrition survey, was forced to open a nutrition programme, which did not correspond to needs.

• What is the range of activity for MSF in Rwanda? Even in limited activities, we can still find a role that is consistent with our principles: referring prisoners, access to treatment for vulnerable populations, *témoignage*.

• We must take a united stand to have credibility with the government and to have an impact on it: we must have cohesion between the different sections (same policy of condensing activities) on the ground and at desk level, not isolating ourselves as MSF, opening up to other NGOs or organisations (ICRC in particular), in order to build

constructive pressure. The importance of presenting ourselves to the government as MSF and not MSF national.
• Criticism of UN: their policy has so far been a failure. Three questions: how will they behave in the future? How will the international investigation go, and their role in it? How are they going to ratify established facts?
Special points
• Butare (Ivan): not too many problems, still some difficulty accessing hospitals and checking casualties, some sabotage attempts. Unease among expat teams concerning the reception reserved for people leaving hospital to return to their home commune. Unease also in relation to local personnel who refuse to treat '*génocidaires*'. It is apparently impossible for expats to access communes. Until the emergency work at Butare is finished, debates concerning the presence and meaning of MSF work are suspended.
• Prisons (Ivan, Bernard): ICRC and UN human rights have asked MSF Belgium to make a medical commitment to the communal '*cachots*' in Butare prefecture. We do not have a mandate for this type of intervention (Philippe), unlike ICRC, and must beware of not sanctioning 'torture' centres. Bernard pointed out that at the last inter-section meeting, MSF work in relation to prisons concerned only medical references and transportation for prisoners. Ivan said that no signs of torture had so far been reported, and that if this happened it would call into question their work in '*cachots*'.
• MSF Belgium has another project for prisons: in partnership with UNICEF and UNAMIR, they will support the medical aspect of a new prison for already imprisoned women and children < 14 years.

The MSF Holland Information Officer in Rwanda circulated the first draft of the Kibeho report to the Rwanda coordinators and programme managers of the different sections.That same afternoon, 500 Rwandans demonstrated in the streets of Kigali against the way the international community had seized on the events at Kibeho, and particularly criticised Médecins Sans Frontières.



'**Internal Report** on the Kibeho Massacre', Agnes Wagenaar, Information Officer MSF International, Kigali, to the teams, coordinators and programme managers of MSF France, MSF Belgium, MSF Holland, MSF Switzerland, MSF Spain, MSF International, 1 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
1. Herewith the draft version of my report about the Kibeho events. For the moment it is only an internal version. Part of it will be included in a second, external version, which hopefully will be ready next week.
2. For this eyewitness report many MSF team members told me already what they had seen, heard, knew. But additions, corrections etc. are very welcome, if possible before 8 May. You can send them to me at MSF Holland, Emergency desk, Amsterdam.
3. Something about numbers: as you probably all know the big question is turning around how many people died (338? 5,160? 10,000?) – as if this makes the difference.
The MSF point of view is that it is and will be impossible to give exact figures. People died from shooting, trampling, macheting, stoning, hitting, illnesses, exhaustion, dehydration, and continuing lack of water, food, shelter and medical care.

Further: who knows what will happen to displaced who find that other people have moved into their house and onto their land? How will the security situation be in the communes?
4. There is going to be this independent inquiry, for which nine representatives have to be found (before 3 May) from the Rwandan government, USA, Canada, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, UN, the Organisation of African Unity. They will probably dig up bodies again and try to get to a definite number. But this would come close to the truth only if they would do this systematically in all graves, latrines, ditches etc. in a very wide area around the camps and communes. Which probably won't be the case.
Chapter 5, especially the information about medical care and protection in the communes, could not be finalised yet. Will come ASAP. All feedback welcome.



'Kibeho Camp: Demonstration in Kigali Against the International Community', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 1 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:
About 500 people demonstrated in Kigali on Monday against foreigners in Rwanda and the way the international community has fixed on the events in the Kibeho camp, commented an AFP journalist.
The mostly young demonstrators accused the foreign media, especially French media, of publishing a report of the number massacred that is more than the official government estimate of 338 dead. They criticised the French humanitarian association Médecins Sans Frontières, whose representatives were present at Kibeho on the day of the massacre and who reported several thousand killed.
They were also lively in their criticism of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR), whose military observers arrived at a similar estimate. "Whites go home," shouted the most aggressive demonstrators at the few journalists present. "Mitterrand the murderer," they cried before the French embassy, having previously protested before the Belgian embassy.

Agence France Presse, which had access to daily reports by the Australian UN peacekeeping force, reported that the UN troops accused the RPA of digging up the bodies in the Kibeho camp to disguise the real number of people killed in the massacre on 22 April.
On 2 May 1995, UNAMIR denied being the source of this information, without, however, denying the truth of it.



'Rwandan Army Accused of Digging Up and Hiding the Bodies of the Victims of the Kibeho Massacre', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 1 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:
UNAMIR soldiers are accusing the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) in a confidential report that was shown to journalists in Kigali on Monday of digging up and getting rid of the bodies from the Kibeho camp to disguise the truth about the real number killed in the massacre on 22 April.
The purpose of the operation is particularly to 'discredit' UNAMIR, whose soldiers and observers reported several thousand people killed at Kibeho. The government and its

army claim that about 300 displaced Hutu were killed after militia hiding among them 'provoked' the soldiers by attacking them...
But in their daily report, UNAMIR soldiers claim that the RPA availed of the night to dig up the bodies of their victims and transport them in trucks to other sites.
Although present at the camp, UNAMIR soldiers had no access to the sites where the bodies were dug up. "We could hear the continuous sound of vehicle traffic all along the road linking Kibeho to Butare," they wrote in their report.
"The effect on an international level will be the physical proof of hundreds and not thousands of dead at the Kibeho camp," added UNAMIR soldiers.



'UNAMIR Denies Being the Source of the Information Without Denying Its Truth', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, Kigali, 1 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:
On Tuesday, UNAMIR denied being the source of the information to the effect that bodies had been exhumed and removed from the displaced people's camp at Kibeho (southwest), but did not deny the truth of the information itself.
Journalists, including one from AFP, gained access on Monday to a confidential report by UNAMIR troops stating that the soldiers of the RPA were digging up the bodies of the victims of the massacre on 22 April to hide the real number of deaths and discredit UNAMIR, whose observers counted several thousand victims.
The latest official UNAMIR estimate reported about 2,000 dead. The Rwandan government however estimated that about 300 people were killed after the army was 'provoked' by Hutu extremists hiding among the displaced people.
"UNAMIR's position concerning the recent events at Kibeho was duly explained in earlier press releases and by other official means. This position remains unchanged," added UNAMIR in a brief statement to the press on Tuesday evening.
The special representative of the UN Secretary-General in Kigali, Mr Shahryar Khan, indicated on Monday that before adopting any new position he was waiting for the results of the International Commission of Inquiry ordered by Pasteur Bizimungu, the President of Rwanda, last Thursday. He was hoping the Commission would begin work on 3 May.

Groups of displaced people continued to leave the Kibeho camp, at last open to the MSF team.



'168 Departures From the Kibeho Camp on Tuesday, According to UNAMIR', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 2 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:
One hundred and sixty-eight people left the Kibeho (southwest Rwanda) displaced people's camp to return to their home communes, announced UNAMIR at Kigali. On Monday, 78 'displaced' Hutu (ethnic majority) left the camp where more than 1,000 people are still holding out, including several children considered to be hostages of the extremist Hutu present in the camp.
According to a UNAMIR estimate, there could still be 1,700 displaced people taking refuge in a school. More than 500 people have left since last Thursday.

Living in deplorable sanitary conditions with no food and only rainwater, the displaced people have received minimum humanitarian assistance authorised by the Rwandan government.
According to Mr Ismaël Diallo, spokesperson for UNAMIR, only medical service personnel were authorised to provide the most urgent treatment.
The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) was unable to distribute food to the displaced people, but the organisation Médecins Sans Frontières was again admitted to the camp, reports a humanitarian source.
The refugees have so far refused to go home because they are afraid of being arrested or killed by the population or the soldiers of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) in retaliation for the massacre last year of at least 500,000 people, mainly Tutsi and moderate Hutu. On 22 April, a massacre at Kibeho left 300 dead, according to the Rwandan government, and at least 2,000 according to UNAMIR.

On 4 May 1995, the MSF International Council set about drawing conclusions from the recent events and defining the framework for the organisation's forthcoming actions and positions on Rwanda. They also discussed MSF actions regarding Rwandan prisons.



'**Minutes** from the MSF International Council Meeting in Geneva', 4 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:
To renew contact with the government and to stop speaking via press releases, loudspeakers, denunciations etc., Philippe [Biberson, President of MSF France board of directors] wanted to meet with Christine, the Executive Secretary to the Minister of Rehabilitation. A review of the situation was conducted with the government to specify what MSF is about and how we function. We needed to highlight for the Minister of Rehabilitation, with whom no agreements have yet been signed, the specific nature of MSF in our missions. The Kibeho crisis only confirmed what had been happening for a long time. What will our next step forward be? How will it translate into actions and positions? We must avoid making things worse. There is still room for us in Rwanda, but we must give ourselves the means of going there and refocusing on our objectives, which we consider to be essential. These objectives must be defined jointly. Philippe thinks we should maintain strong political relations with this government without losing sight of our limits. We must extend our range of relations to other influential circles to have a more equitable analysis. We are facing a government in a state of siege with a very well-defined and very tough policy. It is using the genocide as a justification for everything that is happening now [...]
Jacques (de Milliano, President of MSF Holland board of directors] pointed out that the radicalisation of the regime began last February, and that we must now target our actions carefully to remain as invulnerable as possible. We must avoid making things worse and our only means of retaining a working situation in this country is to have more political contacts with the authorities. [...]
The prison problem has been a preoccupation for MSF for several months. MSF France and MSF Belgium have undertaken several actions. There is a doctor present in the Kigali prison, which currently holds 7,000 people, but which was designed for 700. MSF France has taken charge of 130 beds in Kigali hospital, 1/3 of which are occupied by prisoners

whose general state of health is alarming. The mortality rate is very high. We are collaborating with ICRC, which recognises that it doesn't have the medical means to take charge of health matters in the prisons. There is talk of building an annex to the hospital as an incarceration ward. Moreover, the manager of the prison has announced the arrival of new prisoners.
How can MSF contribute to the health services of a concentration camp? These prisons are veritable hospices, and it is difficult to believe that this system is not deliberate and coordinated.
Moreover:
- ICRC asked MSF Belgium to involve itself in the communal '*cachots*,' which are a sort of shed without windows, water or electricity.
- There is talk of removing children under the age of 14 from Kigali prison, to be cared for medically by MSF.
The needs are enormous, but it is imperative to make a political decision:
Should MSF as an organisation become more involved in this work?
We find ourselves confronted with a situation that includes concentration camps, death camps. ICRC is also completely confused about this problematic situation.
Philippe thinks that if MSF, which is not an international organisation and has no mandate, becomes involved in the prisons there will be no means to apply pressure in relation to the detention conditions, except by *témoignage*.
Eric [Goemaere, Executive Director of MSF Belgium] reminds us of the demand made to MSF Belgium by the government to build a detention centre for children under the age of 14 at Gitarama. Proposition refused.
While in Brussels, ICRC asked MSF to withdraw from the prisons but wants us to intervene in the '*cachots*,' where they feel they cannot cope.
However, it is one thing for an MSF doctor to work in the prison in Kigali, but working in the '*cachots*,' veritable torture centres, is a totally different matter. Developing a health service there will change nothing, and our only means of fighting the system will be by speaking out. As soon as we do, we must expect to be expelled. We have no legal means at our disposal.
Eric pointed out that it is ICRC and not the Rwandan government that is asking us to intervene in the '*cachots*'. We must remain extremely vigilant to avoid getting tainted. We are faced with a government that resembles a military dictatorship that recognises no international laws.

On 8 May 1995, the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Kibeho massacre met for the first time.
On 9 May 1995, the 320 displaced people still at Kibeho left the site to return to their communes. The members of the International Commission of Inquiry began work by visiting the Kibeho site.



'The Commission Investigating the Kibeho Massacre Sets to Work,' **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 8 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The members of the International Commission of Inquiry into the massacre of displaced Hutu in the Kibeho camp met for the first time in Kigali on Monday, while the camp continued to be emptied little by little, reported UNAMIR [...]

The UN, the Organisation for African Unity, the Rwandan government, and seven foreign countries (USA, Canada, Great Britain, France, Holland, Germany, Belgium) are taking part in the Commission, whose members were to define their mode of action on Monday. Their task will be to establish the circumstances and provide a report on the events at Kibeho on 22 April, subjects that are open to question. The government estimates that about 300 displaced people were killed, whereas other UN and humanitarian sources estimated the figure at several thousand victims. The army further declares that it was provoked by extremist armed elements hiding among the displaced people.



'The Last Displaced Hutu Have Left the Kibeho Camp', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 9 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The 320-odd displaced Hutu in the Kibeho camp left on Tuesday to return to their communes, reported the civilian spokesperson for UNAMIR, Ismaël Diallo [...]
The displaced people, living in deplorable conditions, had so far refused to leave because they were afraid of being arrested or killed by the soldiers of the Rwandan Patriotic Army in retaliation for the massacre last year of at least 500,000 people, mainly Tutsi and opposing Hutu.
The UNAMIR spokesperson further stated that the International Commission of Inquiry, created at the request of the Rwandan government, went to the Kibeho camp on Tuesday and remained there for four hours [...] The members of the Commission listened to various witnesses, particularly UNAMIR soldiers who were present at the camp on 22 April, and took some samples. According to Mr Diallo, no exhumations were conducted [...]
The Commission, whose work is scheduled to last two weeks, should establish the circumstances surrounding the disputed events of 22 April, and the number of people killed.

MSF provided the Commission of Inquiry with its staff testimonies, gathered by the communication and information officers and by the legal department. On 16 May 1995, these factual elements were also communicated to the three Rwandan ministers concerned. Gathering information from survivors of the massacres in Butare was proving much more difficult.



'**Letter** from Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF Legal Advisor, to Mr Foucault-Brisset, Member of the Kibeho Commission of Inquiry', 9 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Dear Mr Brisset,
Congratulations on being nominated as an investigator in the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the events at Kibeho.
The Médecins Sans Frontières team present at the time of these tragic events has drafted a precise report of the facts as it observed them. This report is scheduled to be transmitted to the relevant Rwandan authorities soon. I am very pleased that a Commission was appointed to shed light on the tragic events that have caused a public debate that is prejudicial to all.

To determine how and when we may be able to participate in your investigation procedure, I would be extremely grateful if you could provide me with:
- The definitive make-up of the Commission and the list of its members.
- The texts constituting the group and its powers of investigation.
- The Commission's general method of gathering and processing information, as well as that of each member.
- The form and authority of the conclusions of your investigation.



'**Fax** from Dominique Boutriau, MSF Belgium Programme Manager to MSF France and MSF Holland Programme Managers', 11 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
1. This is the written report of Albert Brizio re Kibeho; I have underlined the things that are not included in Agnes' report.
2. Re that report, I am still waiting for more info CC Kabutare.
3. Re procedure, we have discussion amongst us in Brussels concerning this report; the conclusions will be discussed at the general directors' next teleconference (when?). They are:
- Ok for Agnes' report but it should be completed with info from Albert and info from Kabutare
- Ok for transmitting it to the three concerned Rwandan ministries
- Ok for transmitting it to human rights organisations (UN, Human Rights Watch, FIDH, RCN…)
- Ok for transmission to embassies
- MSF Belgium would not see any inconvenience in allowing the MSF staff that are directly concerned with the events to talk directly to the Commission; of course if the expatriates accept; on a confidential basis and out of the presence of the Rwandan members of the Commission. Moreover, being at the place of the members of the Commission it would be hard to understand why MSF personnel cannot collaborate as direct witnesses (if the people accept).



We knew very well that the Rwandan government was going to deny it. We had to be able to provide figures, to evaluate the number of people killed, but also to know the circumstances, and for that, the survivors of Kibeho who were arriving at Butare were a mine of information. We therefore told the Butare team, via Dominique Boutriau, the Desk Manager, to collect data concerning the wounded people at the hospital. Dominique said, 'We'll set up a system in Butare to interview people, find out how they were wounded, how many were wounded, compare this with that, etc.' As it turned out, none of that was ever done because we never even managed to get the statistics concerning the wounded at Butare hospital… I got a little document from the hospital that was completely unusable, had no meaning, and which contradicted the words of the staff on the ground who said, 'In any case, we can't treat anyone at the hospital because the people are immediately taken back to their communes.' There was a transit centre at Butare where people who had been shot at all along the road arrived in a terrible state. But MSF was forbidden to treat them in this transit centre. We couldn't take them to the hospital either. They were terrorised, loaded into trucks and taken back to the communes… The MSF Belgium mission had no physical access to the survivors of Kibeho passing through Butare. The report is made up of testimonies from people who

were at Kibeho and a few elements provided by the logistics people who worked at Kibeho and Butare, but no information from the survivors hospitalised at Butare.

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor (in French).

The independence of the International Commission of Inquiry was compromised by the presence of the Executive Secretary of the Rwandan Ministry for Rehabilitation, who was likely to discourage the survivors of the tragedy from coming forward. The Commission listened to the MSF France Coordinator only after he asked to be heard and only in the last days of the investigation.



The investigators arrived very late. Most of the MSF Kibeho staff had gone back to Europe or Nairobi. I had said to the desk, 'If they ask the staff to testify, they should return to Rwanda, make their testimony, and the next day return in the plane. They should not stay. The safety aspect is clear.' They talked about it in Europe and decided to give the MSF report on the Kibeho events to the Commission. I gave it to the Public Prosecutor for Créteil, who was a member of the Commission. First, he came to see me alone and interview me. I told him, 'I would rather you came a little more officially. You are familiar with the French policy on Rwanda…' He returned with a Canadian and an Englishman. They really tried to get me to say there were Interahamwe in the camp till the very end. Later, one of the members of the Commission told me 'off the record' that the Executive Secretary of the Rwandan Ministry for Rehabilitation was controlling the whole process of drafting the report and that as a result they couldn't write what they wanted to. A commission that includes a member of the government cannot be impartial.

[…], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).



I was in Rwanda at the time of the investigation. The Commission was to give its report on a specific date. It was a day or two before that date and they still hadn't contacted us although we had 15 witnesses present on the site. We had to call them and tell them that we wanted to be heard. But the impression we got was that they had finished drafting the report before they heard the witnesses, that the grand outlines of what they were going to say had already been finalised. And anything that didn't fit in with what they had decided to say, the testimonies of the Zambian soldiers, our testimonies, were just ignored. This International Commission was supposed to be independent but one of the members was an official representative of the Rwandan government. So the government was both the accused and the judge. As soon as a foreigner on the Commission asked about anything that was unfavourable to the Rwandan government, she immediately interrupted with, 'Where's the proof?' etc., effectively hamstringing the Commission. And because the Commission had no decision-making mechanisms other than a consensus, and because she was a member of the Commission, the consensus had to be based on the lowest common denominator, and she pulled the minimum down as low as she could. If the other members opposed her, they ran the risk that she might abandon the Commission publicly while stating the government's favourite argument: 'The ex-colonisers still want to continue to dominate us after all they have

done to us.' The Commission's investigation was therefore a botched job, and any conclusion had to be based on a political consensus.

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).

I spoke unofficially to a Dutch investigator. I asked him how he conducted the investigation. He said, 'Well, you must understand a couple of things. We were with 12 people of whom only a few were official investigators – I think six were real investigators who were mandated to write, so we could not cover everything. We could not go into the field and see if they had buried people.' I asked, 'Did you look into the latrines?' And he said, 'I think that we randomly covered 60% of the latrines and yes, there might have been single bodies there but not the massive bodies that you were thinking.' But then he said, 'I do admit that our investigation is not the type of investigation that you would like in these situations. But we had no choice. We had little time plus before publishing the report a person from the Ministry of Health – and some other people – were delegated from Kigali as a committee, and they had agreed before the investigation that both parties should agree on any report coming out of this investigation.'

Wouter van Empelen, MSF Holland, Programme Manager (in English).

On 17 May 1995, the Rwanda programme managers of the different MSF sections decided to draft a second, more complete report on the events at Kibeho.

'**Minutes** of the International Meeting of the Rwanda Programme Managers', Paris, 17 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Two eyewitness reports on the events in Kibeho, along with Etienne's report, were submitted to the Independent Commission investigating the events that occurred on April 22nd and 23rd in the IDP camp of Kibeho. This report was compiled by Hanna and Agnes of MSF Holland.
MSF France:
Feels that it is important to compile a second, more complete report on the events in Kibeho; both for internal and external use. This report would include an introduction, the former report and a conclusion. It feels that it is important to have an introduction to describe the background to the present situation e.g. mentioning that the government perceived the camps as a military threat. It would also be useful to include why and how the report was written.
MSF France wants to have such a document for future use internally when memories become blurred. Likewise, the report would be a useful document as a support and follow-up to oral interviews. Many people (journalists, postgraduate students, etc.) have already contacted MSF concerning the events in Kibeho, and more will do so after the Commission announces its conclusions on Friday in Kigali. The written report would be an essential tool to avoid misinterpretations.
Further external use might occur if the Commission's conclusions were weak; MSF could then send the report to the Rwandan government, UN bodies and the Independent

Commission. MSF France would like all sections to work together on this report which MSF France will make available to all those interested both internally and externally.
MSF Holland
Agrees with MSF France.
It feels that it is important to send the report to the Commission and others, whatever the result of the Commission, as MSF is an important eyewitness.
MSF Spain
Is also in favour of circulating a second report, although if the commission's conclusions are in line with ours, then circulation needs to be done via a major press campaign.
Feels that the question of impunity could perhaps be mentioned in the introduction rather than in the conclusion, but if the others feel otherwise, is has no objections to including it in the conclusion or appeal.
Feels it is important to send the report to UNAMIR, as in later years, when their efficiency will inevitably be questioned, it is important that there be a record of official complaints.
MSF Belgium
Has some hesitations on the form of the report and on its usage:
- It feels that the witness reports sent to the Commission were incomplete: lacking in data and omitting some events. For example, the field phoned Dominique on the 22nd and told her that they had received patients on the 21st and 22nd in Butare injured by machete. They were told that soldiers had forced displaced to attack other displaced with machetes. These events were not mentioned in the report; perhaps in the heat on the moment certain things were forgotten. It is clear that the witness reports are very emotional, which can be both positive and negative.
- It does not feel that it is MSF's role to go into a detailed analysis. It is not sure that there is much to gain from distributing such a report. It feels that it would be just as effective, if not more so, to talk to people directly.
- It does not see the point in a long introduction as those concerned already know the context. It is more in favour of a neutral, short introduction mentioning the impunity of the perpetrators of the genocide, the fact that the justice system is not working in Rwanda, and the situation of the refugees in Zaire. It is anxious that the report should not 'point the finger' at anyone (either the government or the UN) [...]
Decisions:
1) A second report will be compiled by Hanna and Agnes. This report will include:
- A background on the situation leading up to the present-day situation.
- The two eyewitness reports.
- Etienne's report.
- A conclusion.
- Recommendations/demands/appeal, including the:
• Right to humanitarian care for displaced persons.
• Right to protection for the displaced.
• Right to medical treatment for the wounded.
• Lack of justice following the genocide; i.e. the right to be judged.

2) The second report will be sent to the Head of the United Nations Security Council and to Commander Tousignant, along with a cover letter underlining the fact that they did not fulfil their mandate during the events at Kibeho; i.e. they did not protect the displaced persons. Françoise will write the cover letter.

During this meeting, the MSF France Programme Manager questioned the role of MSF Belgium and MSF Switzerland in the hospitals at Butare and Byumba, where the authorities and personnel refused to accept certain patients.The debate also covered the possible role of MSF Belgium in the construction of a prison for children.

'**Minutes** of the International Meeting of the Rwanda Programme Managers', Paris, 17 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
MSF Belgium [...] There have been some problems in Butare since December. The local staff at the hospital refused to treat the IDPs from Kibeho and left – they are slowly coming back.
MSF France questioned (open question) how MSF Belgium could work in a hospital that refused to treat certain patients. MSF Belgium answered that they had no proof.
MSF France also mentioned that it did not understand (open question) how MSF Switzerland could work in Byumba, where only Tutsi are treated. MSF Switzerland replied that they were reducing their activities by 50% and were trying to redefine their objectives in order to reach those people who do not have access to medical care.[...]
Likewise MSF France questioned MSF Belgium's presence in the prisons. MSF France disagreed with the latter's decision in December, but is now even more concerned by their decision to stay present in the prisons, as:
a) the mortality in the prisons is still as high as 10 per 10,000 (Gitarama);
b) they cooperate with the Ministry of Justice, Defence, and Interior, whose reason for putting the suspected authors of genocide into prison seems to be in the hope that they will die there, rather than to bring them to justice.
MSF Belgium explained once again their reasons for opening programmes in the prisons (see minutes of 10/03/95). Since its presence in the prisons, ICRC has multiplied its presence 10-fold.
MSF Belgium is rehabilitating an old detention centre, which is destined to become a children's prison in which they will run the health post inside the compound (the local population will have access to the health post too). They are taking care of the water supply and the latrines (UNAMIR is taking care of the fencing, which will not be barbed wire).
The centre will have a capacity for 100 children under 14, who will be transferred from Kigali prison. Minors of this age are not responsible under Rwandan law; the adult who is responsible for the minor pays a penalty: but the adult responsible for the minor has to be located, which is not always easy. The second problem is that an individual cannot be tried in Rwanda for genocide; the crime does not exist: they can only be tried for murder. The government does not agree that the suspected perpetrators of the genocide be tried for murder, and so the trials are blocked for the moment.
The cases of those children in prison for crimes other than genocide can be accelerated. UNICEF has agreed to supply 10 lawyers to assure that the files of the children in this prison get dealt with quickly.
MSF Spain, MSF Holland, MSF France objected to MSF Belgium's decision on this project.

In Kigali prison a special centre was opened for children. MSF Belgium was in charge of sanitation only. There were real problems in terms of catering for the children medically. Many of them had been raped. They had stopped eating, to such a degree that

they had to be put on drips. The journalists heard about it and wondered why MSF wasn't doing more. MSF Belgium replied, 'We are providing water. The rest is not our responsibility.' I had to do an enormous amount of "damage control" to prevent this question from being made public. There was lots of internal discussion with MSF Belgium to get them to make a commitment to the prison. In the end it was very complicated because the authorities had asked another organisation to intervene. Everybody had to review their programmes. This opened up the debate and enabled us to bring pressure to bear for other projects.

Samantha Bolton, MSF International Press Officer, East Africa, 1994-1995 (in French).

On the same day, the Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration of Rwanda informed the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda that he was aware of the problems raised by the MSF report dating from end of March concerning health conditions in the Gitarama prison. He added that MSF France should stick rigorously to its humanitarian vocation.
On 23 May 1995, the President of MSF France responded that bearing witness to the fate of populations is an inherent part of a doctor's vocation, and he again asked for an agreement that would enable them to define the activity of MSF in Rwanda.



'**Letter** from the Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration of Rwanda to the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda', 17 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:
We cannot, however, tolerate anyone using this situation to interfere in matters that are the responsibility of the government. More specifically, we want MSF France to stick strictly to its humanitarian and medical vocation and to abstain from all political considerations in its diagnoses, as in its public and unofficial declarations.



'**Letter** from the President of MSF France Board of Directors to the Rwandan Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration', 23 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Dear Minister,
The MSF Head of Mission in Rwanda, [...], forwarded to my office the letter you addressed to him on 17 May 1995. I would like to thank you and to give you a rapid response with regard to the humanitarian and medical character of MSF's work [...]
Our testimony concerning the fate of populations we are trying to help is meant to inform the public and our donors – on whom we depend for financial independence – about the nature of our actions. It is an inherent part of our vocation as doctors that while treating the ill we also name the diseases from which they suffer. Our testimony is factual and presents human suffering as the result of more of less temporary crisis situations and indicates the people or populations responsible for the crises. We systematically avoid all sordid or fatalistic considerations, as well as all forms of paternalism with regard to the populations we help.
In exceptional circumstances, MSF denounces or adopts a stance with regard to certain situations.

We thus denounced the genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda in May '94, and demanded that those responsible be brought to justice. Again in relation to the genocide, we withdrew our teams from the camps for Rwandan refugees in Zaire and Tanzania in protest against the same instigators of genocide using international solidarity in order to strengthen their hold on the populations in question. These positions had no directly political character. They aimed at preventing aid from contributing to an acceptance of the fate reserved for the victims, or from making it worse. We are aware of the fact that our testimony can be used by others to further their own ends, in the same way as our presence and activity can be misrepresented and used in a partisan fashion. We constantly endeavour to limit such undesirable effects as much as possible.
To this end, we strive to develop a relationship that is constructive and respectful of the total sovereignty of the government that receives us. That was the purpose of [the Head of Mission's] recent letter to you concerning the patients we receive from Gitarama prison.
I wish to add that [the Head of Mission] is a very experienced coordinator, and that he acts in perfect liaison with, and enjoys the full confidence of, our headquarters. He has total latitude concerning the manner in which he represents MSF, and we have asked him to finalise, as quickly as possible, an explicit agreement with your Ministry in order to define the framework of our activity in Rwanda.

On 20 May 1995, the International Commission of Inquiry made public its report on the Kibeho massacre, which had been submitted to the Rwandan government two days earlier. This report concluded that certain members of the RPA were 'out of control,' and it requested that the Rwandan government take better measures in the future to deal with such events. While announcing that the number of victims was without doubt greater than the initially announced figure, the Commission declared itself incapable of evaluating the exact number because of 'timing and logistical constraints'. Lastly, the report concluded that the responsibility for the tragedy should be divided evenly between the RPA, UNAMIR, and aid organisations. The latest were accused of having contributed to the problem by keeping the displaced populations in the camps.



'**Report** of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Events at Kibeho, April 1995', Kigali, 18 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Conclusions
1. In the opinion of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, the tragedy of Kibeho neither resulted from a planned action by Rwandan authorities to kill a certain group of people, nor was it an accident that could not have been prevented.
2. The Commission recognizes the legitimate interests of the Rwandan government and the international community to have the displaced persons camps closed as quickly as possible, both for reasons of national security and in order to remove an important obstacle to the country's efforts to recover from the devastating effects of last year's genocide.
3. The Commission recognizes the efforts made by UN Special Representative, UNAMIR, the government of Rwanda, and other organisations to keep the situation at Kibeho under control.

4. The Commission regrets that UN agencies and NGOs were not able to contribute more efficiently to the speedy evacuation of IDPs from the camp.
5. There is sufficient reliable evidence to establish that, during the events at Kibeho camp between the 18th and the 23rd April 1995, unarmed IDPs were subjected to arbitrary deprivation of life and serious bodily harm in violation of human rights and humanitarian law committed by RPA military personnel.
6. There is sufficient reliable evidence to establish that, during the events at Kibeho camp between the 18th and the 23rd April 1995, unarmed IDPs were subjected to serious human rights abuses, including arbitrary deprivation of life and serious bodily harm, committed by armed elements among the IDPs themselves.

Recommendations
1. The Commission welcomes the initiative taken by the Rwandan government to carry out an investigation at the national level. The Commission calls upon the Rwandan authorities to carry out an analysis of mistakes which occurred in the preparation and handling of the closure of the camps, as well as a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation of individual responsibilities within its armed forces and any other factors which may have contributed to the event.
2. In the future, high priority should be given to improving the capability of Rwandan State and local authorities to react adequately and within the internationally recognized framework of human rights and of humanitarian law to situations of social tension and emergency.
3. The Commission recommends to the international community to continue encouraging and assisting the Rwandan Republic in its efforts to achieve justice, national reconciliation and reconstruction.
4. The Commission calls on the United Nations system to review its chain of command and its operation procedures to make sure that in the future an entire operation is not held hostage or bogged down by one or several agencies and organisations with limited mandates and responsibilities.

On 25 May 1995, MSF distributed its own report on the events at Kibeho via the different sections to the members of the Investigation Commission, to the authorities of the countries donating aid to Rwanda, and to foreign embassies at Kigali. Journalists were informed.



'**Report** on Events in Kibeho Camp, Médecins Sans Frontières, April 1995', 25 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Context
MSF's position and recommendations
Events leading up to the massacre
Annexes
• Two direct eyewitness accounts written by MSF staff
• Surgical data, Kabutare hospital, Butare
1. The IDP camp of Gikongoro prefecture poses a clear threat to the security of the population of Rwanda due to the influence of perpetrators of the genocide in the camps. The peaceful closure of the camps was under the responsibility of UNAMIR/UNREO and

the Rwandan government in 'Operation Retour'. This operation failed due to the fear of the displaced that they would be arrested or killed, and to the influence of the authors of the genocide in the camps. In those camps, the role of MSF and other NGOs, as agreed by the government, was only to provide services indispensable for the survival of the population (food, water, shelter, medical facilities). To convince the IDPs and to organise their return to home communes was never part of the duty of MSF, as agreed between MSF, UNAMIR/UNREO, and the Rwandan government. By re-establishing medical services in the home communes of IDPs, MSF contributed in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health to create the condition for the return of the IDPs.
2. Since 18 April 1995, during the closure of the camps, the RPA denied the basic rights of internally displaced persons to receive the services indispensable for their survival (water, food, shelter, medical care). UNAMIR failed to take measures to ensure that those in need would have access to indispensable services. MSF challenges the use of such deprivation as an acceptable and lawful method to pressure for camp closure.
3. The RPA used force in a disproportionate manner against the IDPs on 22 and 23 April 1995, in Kibeho camp. By opening fire on several occasions directly into the crowd with light and heavy weapons, the RPA indiscriminately killed thousands of unarmed men, women and children.
4. These killings occurred in front of UNAMIR buildings and troops. UNAMIR failed to fulfil their mandate of protection of displaced persons by not taking any significant step to stop the killings. Moreover, UNAMIR failed to release publicly the accurate information collected during the events by UNAMIR officers.
5. The RPA, during the military operation, obstructed the work of medical aid agencies by denying them access to the wounded and hampering their work. Despite the various requests of MSF, UNAMIR failed to protect IDPs during their journey home from stone throwing and beatings from the crowds along the roads.

MSF's recommendations

Considering that the report of the International Independent Commission of inquiry on the events of Kibeho has not proven able to clearly establish the facts nor the responsibility of the perpetrators of this massacre, and considering the fact that the international community has not yet proven able to establish the responsibilities and to bring to justice the authors of the genocide:

To the government of Rwanda:
1. Bring to justice the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide.
2. Investigate the massacre at Kibeho and try those involved in the killings.
3. Monitor actively the human rights situation in Rwanda and the respect of international law.

To the international community:
1. Provide assistance for the re-establishment of the rule of law in Rwanda.
2. Bring to justice the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide.
3. Ensure the proper implementation of UNAMIR's mandate.



'Practical Considerations Concerning the Distribution of the Report and Personal Impressions', **Memo** from Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France Rwanda Programme Manager, 25 May 1995 (in French).

Extract:

Target: donor countries, including the EU, UN agencies, embassies in Kigali, members of the Commission of Inquiry. We are trying to avoid provoking an official response by the

government (too easy, all they have to do to seriously discredit us is refer to the Commission's report).
1. Distribution to the members of the Investigating Commission. Each section distributes the report to the members of the Commission in its country in Europe. MSF Kigali handles those present in Rwanda. MSF France handles those who are neither in Kigali nor in Europe.
2. Distribution to donor countries, each section handling its own country, MSF France handling all others by means of its offices. MSF Belgium distributes report to EU. MSF Switzerland distributes report to ICRC, UNHCR, and UN Commission for Human Rights in Geneva.
3. Distribution (UN, embassies, ICRC) in Kigali is entirely the responsibility of the MSF coordinators in Kigali. It is up to them to decide how to proceed.
4. Françoise Saulnier (trip to US on 2 June) to submit report to UN and to seek complementary information (e.g.: UNAMIR report on Kibeho).
5. We will not organise an active communication campaign on the subject for the general public. We will brief journalists orally while asking them not to mention MSF specifically as the source. We accept the fact that the report cannot be kept totally 'secret' and that there will necessarily be leaks.
6. The report can be distributed as soon as received by each of the players. It comprises the factual part submitted in Kigali on Tuesday 16 May, the context (page 0), and the position of MSF and its recommendations (18 and 19).
Personal impressions (Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France prtogramme manager):
The Rwandan government is becoming more radical, but did it have any other option? The massive aid from the international community to the camps in Zaire and Tanzania to the Hutu extremists and the limited aid to Rwanda comprise two major elements in the response to this question.
MSF clearly assumes responsibility for the denunciation of the Kibeho massacre to the press at the time of the events.
The conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry:
- Favour the government's explanation;
- Accuse us (an obstacle to closing the camps).
In a word, the Commission 'transforms' the event, a massacre of several thousand civilians, into:
- A military slip-up (number of victims not specified but more than 300) that does not involve government responsibility;
- Responsibility for the conditions that produced the event is shared between all the players (RPA, displaced people, UN and NGOs).
The political aim (Kigali and embassies) is clear: to prevent this event from calling into question the policies of the different western states involved in the region.
While lobbying on the prison situation and Kibeho events, the MINIREAB subjected MSF France to considerable pressure to silence us on public positions, but also in terms of silent advocacy.
Several different options in this context:
a. Continue to take aggressive public positions at the risk of being expelled from Rwanda. I do not consider this to be a valid option because the political context (UN and state desire to hush up the affair) leaves little chance of obtaining good media coverage (contact Stephen Smith, *Libération*, France) and credibility in the eyes of the public for an MSF position that conflicts with the conclusions of an International Commission of Inquiry. Moreover, the Rwandan government is sufficiently clever not to expel us immediately, but to await an excuse some months down the road. We would then find it very difficult to prove that our problems (impossibility of continuing to work in Rwanda)

are linked to our denunciation of Kibeho. Besides, we already made our position clear at the time of the events and when Kagame visited Kibeho.
b. Stick to press declarations made at the time of the events and the factual testimonies submitted to the Commission. The danger is obvious: one day this Kibeho question will return in one way or another. If we want to refute the claims of the Commission, we will need more solid documents than press releases and purely factual testimonies without any formal conclusions.
c. Complete the MSF testimonies with a conclusion concerning the real nature of the events and provide targeted distribution. Avoid engaging in a public debate with either the government or the Commission for the moment. The reason is not that we are afraid of the reactions of the Commission or the government, but that we do not believe we are given good media reception (small coverage and attacks on our credibility), and therefore have little impact on the public.
The retained option is option C.
It leaves us confronted with contradictions:
• Big MSF operations in progress, non-urgent;
• Considerable violence brought to bear on the population (prison, Kibeho, disappearances in the communes);
• Very limited impact of MSF positions testifying to this situation.
Conclusion: when option C has been chosen, the basic problem remains intact!
The best tactical option at this stage is definitely not to counter-attack the report of the Commission. But counter-attack must be our priority option for the 'post-Kibeho' period, the precise details remaining to be decided.
If we are unable to conduct this activity, we will get bogged down in material operations (in the absence of an acute medical crisis and therefore emergency programmes) and will not contribute to increasing the level of protection for the populations that are systematically targeted by the murderous actions of the two extremist political currents in the region.
Taking the offensive in protecting the population against massive violence in Rwanda will prove legitimate only if:
• We state on every occasion that the main threat for the population of the region continues to be the leaders of the genocide and their ability to take military or political initiatives (denials of the genocide and political facelifts enabling them to present themselves all over again as respectable political representatives);
• We ourselves do not collaborate with the organisers of the genocide in Zaire and Tanzania (MSF Belgium, Holland, Switzerland?);
• If we systematically denounce the attitude of the international community (no justice, little material aid for Rwanda, de facto support for the *génocidaires* in the refugee camps).
Without these preconditions we have no ground to stand on when we reproach the Rwandan government with violence committed inside Rwanda supposedly in an effort to fight the threat of genocide represented by the Hutu extremists and the ongoing cop-out of the international community (example: six million dollars for Mobutu provided by UNHCR).
Our difficulties (lack of legitimacy, little contribution to protecting populations) are created by:
1. The domination of extremists in the two camps, and the lack of space for political moderates, and therefore for independent and impartial humanitarian action;
2. Our inability to document and provide an accurate account of acts of violence inside Rwanda, in a context where every position is systematically used by one of the two camps and gives rise to threats (of death sometimes) from the other;

3. Our explanations concerning the negative evolution of Rwanda run up against the realpolitik of states and we are not able to find a precise angle of attack to counter this;
4. The Rwandan government's great skill in developing its policy of repression 'transparently' while threatening with exclusion all agencies that publicly or unofficially denounce the violence applied (ACF, MINIREAB letter to MSF France);
5. The cosmetic operation by the leaders in Zaire and Tanzania. We have to provide a rapid response for questions 1 to 5, otherwise we risk seeing the presence of MSF in the region lose all meaning.

On 26 May 1995, in a letter to the President of the UN Security Council and the Commander of UNAMIR, MSF reported on the passive attitude of the United Nations during the Kibeho massacres. It requested that the UNAMIR commander's report on the events be made public and that the Security Council takes 'a clear position on the concept of self-defence included in the mandate of UNAMIR II'.



'UNAMIR's Conduct and Attitude During the Massacres that Took Place in Kibeho During the Last Week of April 95', **Letter** from MSF to the President of the UN Security Council and to Major General G.C. Tousignant, UNAMIR Commander, 26 May 1995 (in English).

Extract:

MSF's concerns

One year after the genocide, UNAMIR again took the same passive attitude when face to face with the massacres at Kibeho. The change of mandate did not change the attitude of the UN soldiers that silently witnessed the killing of thousands of unarmed civilians that were supposedly protected by UN troops. The UNAMIR contingent was useless and powerless to [help] those victims. The military reports establishing the facts on the events that occurred between April 22nd and April 23rd have been kept secret. Moreover, by doing so UNAMIR has not been consistent with its role of observation and protection with regards to either the victims or the public.

The report written by the UN Commander at Kibeho has not been released. The conclusions of an ad hoc International Commission of inquiry appointed to investigate these events challenge those of the direct UN and NGO witnesses to the massacres.

MSF believes that UNAMIR has not carried out its mandate of protection in Kibeho:

- UNAMIR failed to impose upon the RPA the implementation of the agreed-upon strategy for emptying the IDPs camps; namely a non-violent return conducted under full protection.
- UNAMIR failed to take adequate measures, such as increasing its presence, when it witnessed the increase of RPA troops during the weeks preceding the massacre.
- UNAMIR failed to fulfil its mandate of protection of displaced while on Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd April thousands of displaced were shot by the RPA right before the eyes of UNAMIR soldiers.
- By putting wounded displaced back into the crowd after they had received medical treatment, UNAMIR did not give sufficient protection to these vulnerable groups, in full knowledge that these displaced would become defenceless targets of the RPA soldiers.
- From 18th to 22nd April, UNAMIR did not take adequate steps to allow access of displaced to those services indispensable for their survival: water, food, shelter, sanitary and medical facilities.

- UNAMIR failed to protect MSF's work in the hospital and to ensure MSF access to the wounded people in the days after the massacre.
- UNAMIR failed in giving adequate protection to the displaced on their way home to the communes, who as a result were severely ill-treated by angry crowds.

MSF requests the following measures to be taken by the UN.

- The report of the UNAMIR commandant of Kibeho should be publicly released.
- The Security Council should take a clear stand on the concept of operational self-defence included in the mandate of UNAMIR II.

On 22 June 1995, at the end of a seminar in Kigali with Rwandan journalists, the MSF Communications Officer for East Africa was threatened by one of the participants in the presence of Rwandan ministers, who did not react.

'Weekly **Report**' from Samantha Bolton, MSF International Kigali to all coordinators, communication departments, 23 June 1995 (in English).

Extract:

Kibeho still hurts

At the end of the seminar – four days on responsible journalism and human rights and the right to freedom of expression – one of the journalists came up to me and asked me where I could be found during the day and then said that one of his colleagues really wanted to meet me. He then asked me if I had ever had a grenade in my face and then proceeded to say that it was better if he didn't introduce me to his colleague because "he wants to put a grenade in your face and in the face of MSF for what you said on Kibeho." I replied that I welcomed verbal grenades, as MSF is always open to discussion, but that I would prefer no weaponry grenades.

It took place in front of the ministers. No one reacted. They all smiled a little and it was clear that he wouldn't have done it unless everyone thought the same way as he did. I was a little shaken. I called Paris and they told me to get out fast and keep a low profile for a while. Every time we made a declaration, my name was on all the press releases. I was fairly well known in Kigali. When I got to the airport, I was told, 'It's you who gives all the interviews, it's you who's always telling lies about the government, etc.' They were very well informed. It was more or less a threat and it was particularly linked to Kibeho.

Samantha Bolton, MSF International Press Officer, East Africa, 1994-1995 (in French).

V. PUBLICATION OF 'HEALTH DIAGNOSTIC OF PRISONERS FROM THE GITARAMA PRISON'

The situation had not improved inside the Gitarama prison, and a large number of injured and sick prisoners continued to arrive at the hospital every day. The MSF France team in Rwanda updated the 'Health Diagnostic of Prisoners from the Gitarama Prison', written in March 1995, and decided to make it public. They first sent it to the Rwandan administration and to the embassies. All MSF sections present in Rwanda signed it.
On 29 June 1995, MSF France issued a press release deploring the situation in the Gitarama prison.



'Catastrophic Death Rate Among Prisoners in the Gitarama Prison in Rwanda', MSF France **Press release**, 29 June 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Over a nine-month period, one in eight people imprisoned in Gitarama has died: 902 prisoners out of the 7,000 incarcerated from September 1994 to May 1995 awaiting judgment have died. This excessive death rate can be explained by the catastrophic detention conditions in this prison, which was initially built to house 400 prisoners. Each prisoner has less than half a square metre in which to live. In May, among those referred to the Kabgayi hospital where Médecins Sans Frontières is working, 38% suffered from traumas and 41% from foot sores.
It is urgent that priority be given to the transfer of Gitarama prisoners to the new detention centres that the government is planning to build. Any further admissions to the Gitarama prison will only contribute to increasing an already alarming death rate. The enlargement works currently underway are insufficient; even if the number of prisoners were not increased, on completion of the works each prisoner would still only have less than one square metre of living space.
Médecins Sans Frontières takes note of the changes announced by the government to increase the country's prison capacity. These measures should be applied with aid from the international community as rapidly as possible to ensure that overcrowding and excessive mortality does not spread to other prisons in Rwanda.
The blocking of legal processes by the national courts and the international tribunal contributes to creating inhuman detention conditions. To date, no trials have taken place to judge crimes of genocide. April 1994 saw the beginning of a systematic extermination process of Rwandan Tutsi and government opponents. According to estimates, the genocide in Rwanda led to the death of between 500,000 and one million people.



'**Diagnosis of the Situation**: the Health Status of Gitarama Prisoners, Rwanda', Médecins Sans Frontières, June 1995, (in French).

Extract:
Cover
This diagnosis of the situation follows the report made in March concerning responsibility for the medical care and general state of health of prisoners in the Gitarama prison, which remains of great concern. The report describes the changes in the situation on the basis of demographic and health data covering the period from September 1994 to May 1995. The source of the demographic and mortality data is the Gitarama prison

management authority. Despite the efforts made during their collection, these data are subject to a certain degree of imprecision.

Introduction:

The disease picture of the accused people in the Gitarama prison must be placed within the context of events in Rwanda since April 1994.

From April 1994 to mid-July 1994, the former Rwandan government implemented a systematic extermination policy targeting Rwandan Tutsi and opponents to the regime. The United Nations Security Council qualified these events as genocide in June 1994. Estimates indicate that between 500,000 and one million people were killed.

Since April 1994, those responsible for the genocide have been freely travelling around and residing in a large number of countries. Only three people, in Canada and Belgium, have been subject to judicial measures. The large majority of military personnel and militia responsible for the genocide found refuge in Tanzania and Zaire, where they benefitted from aid provided by the international community within assistance programmes for Rwandan refugees. The French army, which controlled the southeast of Rwanda up to mid-June 1994, took no measures to try and arrest them.

Despite the embargo on the supply of arms voted by the United Nations Security Council on 17 May 1994, the authors of the genocide continued to regularly receive deliveries of arms to their sanctuary in Zaire (Kivu region; the towns of Uvira, Bukavu, and Goma). France, a permanent member of the Security Council, could be implicated in these arms deliveries. The military and militia that carried out the genocide have, in all tranquillity, continued to carry out military training in the Kivu region of Zaire.

A year after the genocide, the international tribunal set up to try the authors of the genocide has not yet really begun its work. To date, the Rwandan courts have not made a single judgment for the crime of genocide. Rwandan's prison population (prisons and '*cachots*') could increase to 47,000 people. The majority of these prisoners are the presumed authors of genocide.

The limited nature of the international financial aid given to Rwanda's new government for the reconstruction of the country is another important factor to be taken into consideration.

Tension remains at a high pitch in Rwanda, where the forceful closure by the Rwandan Patriotic Army at the end of April 1995 of displaced people's camps in the Gikongoro prefecture, an area where the Interahamwe continued to retain a certain influence, resulted in the indiscriminate massacre (men, women, and children) of a very large number of defenceless displaced people. UNAMIR was present during this massacre and, despite its mandate, took no measures to protect the displaced.

Nevertheless, these events do not explain the fact that from September 1994 to May 1995, one out of eight prisoners died in the Gitarama prison. A reminder of their occurrence contributes to a more complete understanding of the context within which the arrest and detention of these prisoners took place...

Conclusion:

The death rate of prisoners awaiting trial in Gitarama prison remains extremely high: over a nine-month period, 902 people died out of the 7,000 imprisoned, constituting one out of eight.

This catastrophic death rate is due to extreme overpopulation that results in inhuman conditions of confinement. The blocking of the legal process on the level of the national courts and the international tribunal (to date, no trial for the crime of genocide has yet been heard) is another element that has clearly contributed to the deterioration of health in Gitarama prison.

Improvements made in the provision of water and food, and the provision of medical care, will do nothing to change this situation unless an acceptable amount of living space is given to the prisoners (currently less than half a square metre per person).
The enlargement works currently underway will increase the surface area but to an extent that is still largely insufficient. Less than one square metre per person will be provided by the end of the works on condition that the prison population remains at a level of around 7,000 people. It is essential that this increased surface area does not represent an opportunity to admit new prisoners into the prison. Any new admissions into the prison will simply contribute to increasing the already catastrophic death rate.
Discussions are currently underway among the Rwandan authorities aiming at the opening of provisional detention centres. This will increase the country's prison population capacity. It is absolutely essential that the Gitarama prisoners be the first to benefit from transfers in order to increase their living space and to rapidly reduce the catastrophic death rate of this population.
Due to the large size of Rwanda's prison population and the blocking of the legal process, the development of an overpopulation/excessive death rate situation remains a threat for other prisons in Rwanda. This should and must be anticipated and prevented.
Everything must be done as rapidly as possible by the Rwandan government and by the representatives of the international community present in Rwanda to ensure that an acceptable living space, so vital for the survival of these prisoners awaiting trial, be made available to them.

As the situation inside the prisons was not improving whatsoever, in June, and 900 deaths later, we prepared a report. We told ourselves that it was out of the question that it not be made public. And if they pretend not to understand our problems, well, in that case, we'll just have to be more explicit. Once again, it's a report signed by the five sections.

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).

It was a great medical report covering the living conditions, the state of health and the death rate of the prisoners. Everything was included, it was perfect. I thought it was an excellent example of what MSF could do, incorporating a humanitarian and medical approach that also took the political context into consideration. And I think this is what led to them being thrown out of the country.

Dr Dominique Boutriau, MSF Belgium, Programme Manager (in French).

It was a subject that everyone was discussing, but in reality, not very much data had been collected. There was an excellent Medical Coordinator there, Arnaud, who had previously worked in French prisons, and a very good team. From my point of view, this was one of the best reports that MSF had produced. It was very medical in nature, but also highly political, and this had an enormous effect. I remember that it was put together very fast and that it was very well done.

Samantha Bolton, MSF International Press Officer, East Africa, 1994-1995 (in French).

On 5 and 6 July 1995, the report on the prisons was distributed by all MSF sections during press conferences given in Nairobi, Paris and Brussels. MSF condemned the confinement conditions in Gitarama prison, stated that the enlargement works underway were insufficient, and appealed to the international community to support the Rwandan government's initiative to build new prisons. A shorter version of the report, written in English by MSF's UK, was distributed to the press.

'Catastrophic Death Rate in Gitarama Prison: MSF Demands the Immediate Transfer of Prisoners to Other Detention Centres', **Press release**, 5 July 1995, issued by MSF Belgium, MSF International, MSF Holland, MSF UK (in French – in English).

Extract:
Over the past nine months, one in every eight prisoners has died in Gitarama prison, Rwanda, according to an MSF report released in Nairobi on Wednesday 5 July 1995. The prison was built for 400 but there are now over 7,000 prisoners awaiting judgment. 902 prisoners died between September 1994 and May 1995.
The Rwandan government has announced that seven more detention centres will be opened over the next few weeks. MSF supports these plans, as it is essential that the Gitarama prisoners be the first to be transferred to these new centres.
The high death rate at Gitarama prison is caused by catastrophic conditions, mainly overcrowding. Each prisoner has less than half a square metre of living space. Most have no choice but to stand day and night.
Among the referrals to Kabgayi hospital, where MSF is working, 38% are suffering from trauma wounds, and 41% from rotting feet caused by standing on the wet and dirty ground, often resulting in amputation. The surgical unit is so overcrowded that prisoners now have to share beds.
Kabgayi Medical Coordinator, Dr Arnaud Veisse, said, "The conditions in the prison are so bad that we are seeing an increase in serious wounds and burst eardrums from beatings. If an epidemic breaks out there is no saying how many will die – too many are dying already. Gitarama prisoners must be transferred to the new centres as soon as possible."
A prison extension is currently being built for Gitarama. This will only improve conditions if some of the prisoners are transferred to other centres. It is crucial that the extension not be filled with new detainees, as it would only increase the already alarming mortality rate.
To prevent such high death rates and overpopulation in prisons and detention centres in Rwanda, the international community must support the Rwandan government to quickly set up the new centres and to transfer the prisoners.
The inhuman conditions in the Rwandan prisons are aggravated by the stalemate of the judiciary process at the level of the national courts and the international tribunal. To this day, no trial has taken place to judge the perpetrators of the genocide, in which between 500,000 and one million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed between April and July 1994.

I avoided criticising the government during the press conference. I said that it should be helped in its efforts to provide more space in prisons. We took the government's line, asking the international community to give it further means to achieve this end. We had long discussions with ICRC to establish a strategy to assure that our eye-witnessing

did not affect its goal of increasing the prison system's accommodation capacity by, for example, creating a temporary correctional centre in an abandoned factory.

[…], MSF France, Emergency Cell Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).

I did not feel that the discussions during the press conference were particularly impassioned. There was a certain drift between what we wanted to say and the reaction of the journalists. They were looking for general information rather than specific details. They asked questions such as, 'Can you tell us again what you have written?' It was fairly technical. During the entire following day I gave telephone interviews to radio stations. This led me to believe that there was an interest in the subject. Personally, I was very concerned by the difficulties I had in expressing myself in English and making the journalists understand just how horrific the situation was.

Dr Arnaud Veisse, MSF France, Physician in Kabgayi Hospital, Rwanda, September 1994-June 1995 (in French).

Over the following days, journalists flocked to Kigali to visit the Rwandan prisons.

'A Thousand Prisoners Die in Gitarama Prison', ***Le Soir*** (Belgium), 6 July 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Around 1,000 prisoners have died since September in the overcrowded Gitarama prison, in the centre of Rwanda, where 7,000 Hutu accused of genocide are imprisoned, explained the Médecins Sans Frontières humanitarian organisation in Nairobi […]
"The Rwandan government has announced that seven additional detention centres will be opened over the next few weeks. MSF backs this project. It is essential that the Gitarama prisoners be the first to be transferred to these new centres," emphasised […], MSF Coordinator for Rwanda.

'Terrifying Death Rate in Rwandan Prisons', ***Le Monde*** (France), 7 July 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Since September 1994, 1,000 prisoners have died in just one overcrowded prison – Gitarama – located in the centre of the country, where 7,000 Hutu (ethnic majority) accused of genocide are imprisoned, states a report written by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and distributed on Wednesday 5 July in Paris. This terrifying death rate of one in eight prisoners is due to sickness (dysentery, pneumonia, etc.), infected wounds, and blows and beatings that the prisoners occasionally inflict on one another. Nearly 25% of the approximately 700 prisoners hospitalised since September have died; the others died in prison.
NON-OPERATIONAL JUSTICE

Certain prisoners taken to the hospital have had gangrene-infected limbs amputated. Foot infections are caused by interminable periods of having to stand in the water and the decaying rubbish covering the prison yard where there is no place to sit let alone lie down. Of all Rwandan prisons, all of which are overcrowded, that of Gitarama, built to receive 400 prisoners, is the worst, states MSF.
According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which visits prisoners, around 50,000 people are currently imprisoned in atrocious conditions in Rwanda. Most are accused of genocide. None have yet been tried, as the justice system, which lost its personnel during the massacres and the subsequent exodus, is not yet operational.
In addition, on Thursday, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was planning to resume the repatriation of Hutu having sought refuge in the Goma region (eastern Zaire) since the military victory of the RPF in July 1994. UNHCR interrupted repatriations in September, after having published a report detailing the serious violations of human rights by the RPF, accused of 30,000 'summary executions'.



Immediately after the release of the report and the press conference, we went to Kigali to organise a visit to the prison by journalists and photographers. A large number of articles were published, and there were even photographs on the front page of The New York Times*. Everyone used the report because it was very well put together. It was fairly easy because the authorities did not have that much control over the prison. The inside was controlled by the Interahamwe. They opened the main gate and closed it behind us. There are some extraordinary photos of that scene. It had an immediate press impact throughout the world, leading to reactions from authorities and diplomats... The authorities were annoyed but it was all so clear cut and accompanied by medical data that it could not be denied. They had to manage the situation.*

Samantha Bolton, MSF International Press Officer, East Africa, 1994-1995 (in French).

In late June 1995, on his return from the press conference in Nairobi, the MSF France Coordinator was summoned by the authorities to sign the administrative registration of the organisation.



'**Letter** from the Head of Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit to Médecins Sans Frontières France', 28 June 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Subject: Registration
Thank you for submitting a complete registration form and providing relevant documents. The Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit has carefully studied the contents and is satisfied with the information provided.
We are kindly asking you to make an appointment with the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit immediately to sign the basic agreement. A meeting should be sought between Monday 03/07/1995 and Friday 07/07/1995.

On 27 July 1995, MSF Holland published its second report on the repatriation of Rwandan refugees from the camps in Zaire. Part of this report concentrates on the events in Kibeho and the situation in the prisons.



'Deadlock in the Rwandan Refugee Crisis', **Report**, Médecins Sans Frontières, July 1995 (in English).

Extract:

Overcrowded prisons

1. The government of Rwanda, assisted by the international community, must ensure that prisoners are not subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment by keeping them locked up in overcrowded prisons. Prisoners should also be allowed full access to healthcare. Sufficient space needs to be created for the prisoners to live in. Prisoners should not be held for unreasonably long periods without trial, and should have their cases reviewed by an independent and adequately staffed commission de triage.

The Kibeho massacres

2. The Rwandan government should implement the recommendations of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the events at Kibeho, and in particular carry out an analysis of mistakes which occurred in the preparation and handling of the closure of the camps, as well as a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation of individual responsibilities within its armed forces and any other factors which may have contributed to the Kibeho events.

3. Following the Commission's recommendation, the international community should encourage and assist the Rwandan government in its efforts to achieve justice, national reconciliation and reconstruction.



'MSF Publishes a Report on the Impasse Reached in the Rwandan Refugee Crisis – The Growing Influence of Extremists Impedes Repatriation', **Press release**, MSF Belgium, 27 July 1995 (in French).

Extract:

On 22 April 1995, thousands of people displaced from the interior of the country were massacred by the Rwandan army when the government decided to forcefully close the camps in what had previously been the Turquoise Zone. The repatriation, which had already been extremely slow, gradually dried up as these events fitted perfectly into the climate of fear concerning the return fomented by the refugee leaders [...]

In the absence of trials, the prisons have become overcrowded and the imprisonment conditions in Rwandan prisons are terrifying. For example, the prison in Gitarama, designed for 400 prisoners, currently holds nearly 7,000 people. The inefficient operation of the legal system has placed Rwanda in a situation where vengeance prevails over justice. Despite the fact that the international community has proclaimed the supremacy of law, the international legal response is hindered by inertia. The international tribunal has not been able to fully pursue all aspects of its work due to budgetary uncertainties. MSF calls on the Rwandan government to ensure that prisoners are not subject to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, and to authorise their unrestricted access to medical care. MSF calls on states to act in compliance with their promises to help the Rwandan government re-establish the authority of the law and to provide assistance and adequate funding to the international tribunal. In terms of international law and the relevant

resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, states must arrest and imprison those people suspected of genocide.

In July, MSF France was the first organisation to sign an accord with the Rwandan government. Everyone was surprised. I was on my way back from the press conference in Nairobi on the prisons when I received a letter. We were summoned to sign. The other organisations had problems and were furious that, once again, it was MSF France that was the first to sign the accord.
After the signature, the Minister of Rehabilitation summoned all the coordinators and said, 'Very good, MSF has signed. I received your report and found that the political analysis was highly pertinent.' He talked about the report "Deadlock in the Rwandan Crisis," which included a chapter on the events in Kibeho. He said it with a certain degree of irony! He didn't even attack us on the subject. This shows just how little impact this report has had on the level of the Rwandan government. They simply said to themselves, 'Bah! They're just amusing themselves!' I admired them because they are in a difficult situation: all the money from the international community passed through the 200 NGOs that had been set up and the government did not receive a single dollar. One day, the World Bank summoned us to say, 'We would like to finance small projects for the Rwandan people, but we would like the international NGO to set them up because we have confidence in these organisations: we are sure that the money will not be misappropriated.'

[...], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).

On 3 August 1995, the Rwandan President announced a series of measures to improve the situation in prisons.

'The Rwandan Government Seeks to Improve Conditions in Prisons', **Press release** from the President of the Republic of Rwanda, 7 August 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The new government has promised the Rwandan population that all will be done to assure that the authors of genocide and massacres are arrested and tried. It is thanks to these assurances that the victims of genocide have, generally speaking, abstained from vengeance and that we have been able to rapidly stabilise our society.
However, given that the existing prisons were built for a normal situation, they have rapidly become overcrowded and the living conditions in these prisons rapidly deteriorated. Concerned by this situation, the Rwandan government has taken the following measures to improve the situation:
- Enlargement of existing prisons, as carried out for the prisons of Kibungo, Gitarama, Nyanza and Kigali.
- The allocation of sites to build new detention centres, particularly the Nsinda, Ngarama, Ntyazo and Kibuye sites.
- The creation of an inter-ministerial commission responsible for identifying unused buildings that could be used as temporary detention centres. Following the report submitted by this commission, the government has decided to requisition seven sites to be converted into temporary detention centres [...]

The government launches an appeal to the international community, asking it to continue providing assistance in order to meet the needs of the prison population and, above all, rebuild its legal system to administer justice to this population.

The MSF teams did not, however, see any concrete steps taken to apply these measures. Prisoners were not being transferred to new centres, and arrests continued to be made. V9



'**Message** from the MSF France Programme Manager to the MSF Belgium Programme Manager', 18 August 1995 (in French).

Extract:
You will find attached the latest documents concerning the situation of prisons in Rwanda.
Our basic position remains that no substantial improvements to the prisoners' situation have taken place over the last few weeks:
- In other words, there has been no significant transfer of prisoners to reduce the population in the Gitarama prison.
- The reduced death rate is probably mainly due to the dry season in the Gitarama region.
- Kibungo is becoming a new Gitarama.
- For the time being, the promises have remained at a preparatory stage without any real consequences for the prisoners.
- It is therefore necessary to maintain pressure during meetings...



I was not involved in drawing up the report. But, in principle, I hoped that its distribution would lead to an improvement in the situation and that more would be done for these prisoners. I believe that MSF found itself pushed to its limits in its interventions. From a practical point of view, it was difficult to know just what MSF could say. Logically, it ought to have said, 'There are X thousand people in this prison. This means that there are ten times too many per square metre. There is a need to build new prisons.' But it would place MSF in a difficult position to demand the construction of more prisons. Nor could we say, 'Three-quarters of these prisoners are innocent.' We had no idea. It was therefore much more difficult than witnessing the type of event where, following a long discussion, we could say, 'Right, we will call for an intervention.' We were placed in a position where we would have to either ask for the prisoners to be freed or for the construction of prisons. At the end of the day, all we could do was bear witness and hope that things would improve.

Dr Barbara Kerstiens, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Rwanda, September 1994-March 1995 (in French).



We decided to bear witness on the condition of the prisons in order to avoid entering into the issue of justice. We wanted to avoid being put in a situation where we could be accused of being against the trial and punishment of those responsible for genocide. That was the problem in Rwanda. If you said that people should be better treated in prison, then you were seen as favouring those that perpetrated the genocide. We tried to avoid

the discussion concerning the true willingness of the Rwandan government, and it was not easy. The Rwandan authorities just could not understand that the international community forbade them from condemning those responsible for the genocide to death, so they let the prisoners die in prison. In the report, we attempted to avoid entering into interpretations and intentions, and simply described the situation by providing raw data and letting people draw their own conclusions. We tried to provide a highly medical and objective assessment.

Nicolas de Torrenté, MSF France, Coordinator in Rwanda, August 1994-March 1995 (in French).



It was a death sentence by any other name. In the end, we began to believe that it did not bother them that prisoners were dying by the hundreds. But at the same time and quite cynically, we asked ourselves if our assessment did not provide them with a way of recuperating money to build other prisons. Was that their principal goal? It was impossible to say. But it was clear that no efforts were being made to reduce the number of deaths among the prisoners. I got the impression that cynicism played a very important role, even though I'm not convinced that that was what they wanted at the beginning. They were going through exceptionally difficult times. They found themselves with 60,000 prisoners, in other words the same number of prisoners to be found in France, with a population 1/10th the size and a penitentiary capacity that could not be compared with that of France. With four or five judges, they also had a real problem of legal logistics. So it is quite easy to imagine that justice and the living conditions in prisons were not their priority, even if this meant prisoners dying. But one cannot say that it was planned. And, if I were to play the devil's advocate, it could have been worse. I feel that they fairly rapidly began to play ball, even if this just meant sending sick prisoners to hospital. Naturally, there would have been negative repercussions if they hadn't done it, but it should not be forgotten that they were not obliged to take this step.

Dr Arnaud Veisse, MSF France, Physician in Kabgayi Hospital, Rwanda, September 1994-June 1995 (in French).



We feel that there was a real desire to see this population disappear rather than assume the cost of the trials. This population clearly included people that had nothing to do with the genocide. They included people who interfered with the establishment of the new government, the new power base, the new authorities. There were a vast number of personal disputes being settled, problems concerning joint ownership and the appropriation of wealth, all of which were dealt with by throwing these undesirables, whether bothering or bothersome, into prison, knowing there was a chance that they would die and that that would resolve the problem before the case came to court. We felt it essential that this aspect be highlighted because it was something that had previously been completely hidden away.

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor (in French).

The MSF Belgium team, which ran 20 health centres in Butare and Gisenyi districts, was trying to gain access to prisoners in '*cachots*,' where conditions were even worse than in the prisons.

'**Report** on the Gitarama '*Cachots*' between 4 and 13 September 1995', MSF Belgium (in French).

Extract:
Visit dated 7 September 1995 – Nyabikenke commune
Remarks: On 30 August 1995, a number of prisoners, apparently five, were beaten in the '*cachot*' by soldiers. A single soldier was arrested because he had received money. One prisoner died immediately, another the following day in the first aid centre, another was returned to the '*cachot*,' and the last one will be transferred tomorrow to Kabgayi.

*The Citizens' Network told us that the situation in Rwanda was possibly worse in the "*cachots*" than in the prisons. This is because the prisons fall under an official penitentiary system, while the "*cachots*" are simply ad hoc structures. In districts where we were running health structures and where we thought there might be a "*cachot*," we demanded access wherever possible to these units and asked that sick prisoners be given access to the health structures we were managing. We did this in Butare, where we had 10 health centres, and in Gisenyi, where we ran 12 centres. We tried. There were days when those responsible for the "*cachots*" brought sick prisoners to the health centres managed by MSF, but I have no idea how many. We had to negotiate to get them out. In addition, the arrival of prisoners did not always take place when there was an expatriate present to see what was going on.*

Dr Barbara Kerstiens, MSF Belgium, Coordinator in Rwanda, September 1994-March 1995 (in French).

*Where the prisons were concerned, we really had problems in carrying out our work. Above all, we wanted to work in the "*cachots*". MSF nurses visited the "*cachots*" on a regular basis. The nurses in Butare prepared inventories, reports, etc. Concerning MSF's report on the state of health of the prisoners, the Health Commissioner felt that to make public a medical report prior to submitting it to the authorities was obviously undiplomatic. Subsequently, we tried to prepare reports that would first be submitted to the authorities and then published if the situation was found to be too extreme... We tried to set up a policy of open dialogue with the authorities on what was going on and what we saw. We told them what was unacceptable. But they continued to arrest people. I don't think they paid attention to what we wrote in the reports. We shouldn't be naïve, but at least we had a frank and clear approach similar to that of ICRC. It was only fair play to do things this way because this is what the government demanded and because we were supposed to be working in partnership with it.*

Dr Dominique Boutriau, MSF Belgium, Programme Manager (in French).

*There were a great many rumours concerning the existence of police cells, guarded houses where the conditions were hard but which were not officially prisons. When the conditions began to improve in ordinary prisons, the following questions were raised: what is going to happen to the "*cachots*"? How could we get hold of the files concerning these people? We also asked ourselves what was going on in the communes. MSF Belgium worked on these questions. There were a large number of internal discussions as to whether or not the issues should be raised. How should they be raised? Did we have sufficient infor-*

*mation? MSF coordinators gave personal interviews on this subject. But journalists found that it was too complicated. I remember this discussion on the "*cachots*," but nothing came out publicly in a report. As usual, a large number of sections felt that something should be said but, above all, it was MSF Belgium that was working there, around Butare. It was up to them to manage the situation and they found they did not have sufficient information to discuss it.*

Samantha Bolton, MSF International Press Officer, East Africa, 1994-1995 (in French).

On 8 November 1995, the MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda informed the Rwandan Minister of Health that two days earlier, a group of RPA soldiers had opened fire on patients in a health centre in the Gikongoro prefecture. He asked that measures be taken to prevent any further incidents of this type.



'**Letter** from the MSF France Coordinator to Colonel Dr Joseph Karemera, Minister of Health, Republic of Rwanda' (with copies to the Ministers of Rehabilitation and Defence and the Prefect of Gikongoro), 8 November 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Monday morning, 6 November, in the Runyiombi health centre, Nshili commune, Gikongoro prefecture, a Rwandan army soldier entered and opened fire on people waiting for a consultation. Our team arrived shortly after and counted 13 dead, of which five men, six women, and two children. We transferred eight injured people to the Kabutare hospital. During the transfer, one woman died, and another died shortly after arriving at the hospital. As a medical humanitarian organisation working for the Rwandan population, we cannot tolerate that armed soldiers enter health structures to assassinate civilians.
I hope that the concerned authorities will take all necessary steps to avoid any further incidents of this kind. This type of event is absolutely intolerable and clearly prevents us from carrying out our medical role.

VI. EXPULSION OF MSF FRANCE AND MSF SWITZERLAND

On 6 December 1995, the Rwandan government announced the expulsion of 39 humanitarian organisations, accusing them of being 'incompetent' or 'not respecting the regulations in force'. MSF Switzerland and MSF France were on the list of expelled organisations, most of which were French NGOs.



'**Letter** from the Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration to the Head of Missions of Non-Governmental Organisations Operating in Rwanda', Kigali, 6 December 1995 (in English).

Extract:
A year after the drama, it is important to note that some of the NGOs operating in Rwanda have intervened successfully, while others have not been up to standard, either

because of a lack of adequate means and capacities, not having clear programmes and experience, or neglect of existing government regulations.
Therefore, after consultations with different government authorities, the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Social Integration has decided to review NGOs operating in Rwanda. Working in accordance with the regulations set up in the working procedures for NGOs, the following has been done:
1. Non-governmental organisations on the list in Annex A (here attached) have been registered and legally accepted to operate in Rwanda.
2. Non-governmental organisations on the list in Annex B are requested to cease operations in Rwanda.
3. Non-governmental organisations on the list in Annex C are requested to suspend their operations in Rwanda and report to MINIREISO to explain each individual case to assist in the process of making a final decision on them.

MSF France informed the press of its 'astonishment' on learning of the expulsion, and reminded that it had been among the first organisations to sign a protocol of agreement with the Rwandan government.
On 7 December 1995, MSF told the press that it had demanded explanations from the Rwandan government.
The European press evoked the political nature of MSF France's expulsion.



'The French and Swiss Sections of Médecins Sans Frontières Expelled from Rwanda Without Explanation', MSF France **Press release**, 6 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Late this afternoon, Médecins Sans Frontières learnt with astonishment that its French and Swiss sections had been expelled from Rwanda, along with 37 other humanitarian organisations. For Médecins Sans Frontières, the reasons for this decision, which was completely unexpected, remain completely unknown. Last July, MSF was among the first associations to sign a protocol of agreement with the Rwandan government.
Present in Rwanda for several years, MSF, which remained in Kigali throughout the period of the genocide, has pursued its actions helping the populations in all Rwandan provinces.
Médecins Sans Frontières seeks to obtain explanations for this expulsion as rapidly as possible.



'MSF Demands Official Explanations Concerning its Expulsion from Rwanda', MSF France, MSF UK **Press release**, 7 December 1995 (in French).



'MSF Demands Meeting with Rwandan Government on Expulsion', MSF France, MSF UK **Press release**, 7 December 1995 (in English).

Extract:
The humanitarian organisation, Médecins Sans Frontières, has requested an interview with the Rwandan Minister of Rehabilitation in order to receive explanations concerning

the expulsion of its French section. This expulsion was announced yesterday in Kigali during an impromptu press conference.
"We are very surprised that a part of the organisation has been expelled in such an arbitrary manner," stated Frances Stevenson, Médecins Sans Frontières Coordinator. "MSF is an international organisation. All our teams work to the same principles and apply the same policies. We see no logical explanation for the expulsion of our colleagues." To date, the Rwandan government has refused to discuss the expulsion with MSF representatives in Kigali.
MSF is one of the largest medical organisations in Rwanda, with 88 expatriates and over 1,000 Rwandans employed by MSF in its teams. In close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, its staff work in 52 health centres throughout the country and in six hospitals, providing medical assistance, assisting in the reconstruction of the National Health Service, and training local personnel. The organisation is also involved in smaller-scale projects, such as a programme for unaccompanied children, and provides medical care to prisoners.
Médecins Sans Frontières, present in Rwanda since 1990, was one of the rare organisations to remain in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide during which nearly one million people were killed. Médecins Sans Frontières has also run a campaign to ensure that those responsible for the genocide be judged.
Médecins Sans Frontières wishes to continue to provide its medical assistance, which is vital for the Rwandan population. MSF regrets the Rwandan government's sudden and unexplained change of attitude towards it and hopes to be able to open dialogue.



'MSF Demands Meeting with Rwandan Government on Expulsion', MSF International **Press release**, 7 December 1995 (in English).

Extract:
Following the expulsion of its French branch from Rwanda, the international medical relief organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) demands a meeting with the Rwanda Ministry of Rehabilitation to have a full explanation of their arguments for the expulsion, which was announced in an impromptu meeting in Kigali yesterday.
"We find it astounding that one part of the organisation should be expelled in such an arbitrary manner," said MSF Coordinator Frances Stevenson. "MSF is an international organisation, and all our teams follow the same principles and policies. We can see no reason for the expulsion of our French colleagues." The Rwandan government has so far refused to discuss the matter with MSF representatives in Kigali.
MSF is an important agency for health in Rwanda, with 88 expatriate workers and more than 1000 national staff on its payroll. In close cooperation with the Rwandan Ministry of Health, MSF works in 52 health centres nationwide and six general hospitals, where we provide much-needed medical aid and support to the rebuilding of the national health service, and training of local staff. The organisation provided approximately half the national budget for the Rwandan government's medical staff in 1995. MSF also runs a small-scale project for unaccompanied children and provides medical care to the prison population.
During the 1994 genocide, when up to a million people died, MSF was among the handful of aid agencies to remain in Rwanda. The organisation subsequently campaigned for the perpetrators of the genocide to be brought to justice. MSF has been active in Rwanda since 1990.



'Rwanda Risks Isolating Itself: Bitterness Among Expatriates', ***Le Soir*** (Belgium), Colette Braeckman, 9 and 10 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
While the Rwandan authorities might have asked themselves questions concerning little-known NGOs, the measure taken with regard to the French NGOs appears to be overtly political: the efficiency of MSF is known by all. The organisation employs 88 expatriates and over 1,000 Rwandans. It is present in 52 health centres and six hospitals. In addition, both MSF and Médecins du Monde have worked hard in France and elsewhere to increase the awareness of public opinion and of decision-makers, with particular emphasis placed on the need to judge the authors of the genocide. Perhaps Kigali has not forgiven MSF France for having stated that in Kibeho, there were thousands and not hundreds of victims…
As for the Swiss, the decision is undoubtedly motivated by Bern's refusal to renew its cooperation with Rwanda, even though Switzerland had given close backing to the previous regime through its banks, among others.

On 9 December 1995, the Franco-German television channel Arte broadcast a documentary revealing the lack of political will shown by both the international community and the new Rwandan authorities to judge the authors of the genocide. The film director was a member of MSF France's Board of Directors, and co-author, along with MSF France's Legal Advisor, of a book[12] on the same subject, which was published in France at the same time. The film, which was shot in the prisons, was seen by certain Rwandans as a 'political manoeuvre' in an attempt to place the perpetrators of the genocide and its victims on the same level. **V10**



'Three Figures in Search of Justice in Rwanda: Cursed Be Those Whose Eyes Are Closed – a Documentary and Book of the Same Name to Explain the Silence that Shrouded the Genocide', ***Le Monde*** (France), 9 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The Director chose to focus his work on the theme of justice by tracing the footsteps of three figures who all strongly felt the need to assure that history was not watered down by the pragmatism of reconciliation, but who have progressively abandoned their quest. The first, Joseph Matata, a Hutu human rights militant, was out of the country when the genocide began. From Kigali to Brussels, where he was given refuge and wrote a play on the 'Rwandan tragedy' (that of the past and of the present), we see him typing away on his old machine, noting down the testimonies of those who escaped and whom he questioned on the hillsides. It was a work that he carried out both for himself and for history, as the director makes it clear that these testimonies have no legal value before the courts.
As if the UN were just paying lip service.
The second, François-Xavier Nsanzuwera, is the Kigali Prosecutor. His identity card shows that he is a Hutu, but he has what he himself calls "the physical traits of a Tutsi," and managed to escape the genocide militia by the skin of his teeth (*Le Monde*, 14 January).

12. http://books.google.fr/books?id=xOUWNAAACAAJ&dq=Maudits+soient+les+yeux+ferm%C3%A9s&hl=fr&sa=X&ei=1b70UsfcI4Ob0QWS3YGwBQ&ved=0CEYQ6AEwAQ

Despite the risks to his own safety, he protested against the lack of legal recourse and against the massive arrests of Hutu by the new Rwandan army, and chose to leave the country to avoid having to give his backing to this drift towards totalitarianism. We follow him to his windowless office in Kigali. Dossiers are piled up. He is doing all he can to free the innocents and, above all, bring the guilty to trial. For certain people, the accusations are confirmed and the preliminary investigations completed (despite a number of physical difficulties), but no cases have yet been brought before the court. Why hasn't the Rwandan government brought anyone to trial? The answer is not explicitly given in the film. "I've prepared 150 dossiers and I've been asked to wait. Wait for what? I don't know, but I'm waiting," explains the clearly discouraged prosecutor.
The third figure is Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, the Médecins Sans Frontières Human Rights Specialist [...] We follow the lawyer through a progressive series of disappointments. Her initial fighting spirit and her lack of suspicion of the new government were gradually worn down as she progressively realised that its desire for justice was more words than action. And she found the same attitude at the UN. In Kigali, the UN evaluation missions saw observers arriving with their hands empty, as if the organisation was simply paying lip service to the fulfilling of its tasks. Able to express herself more freely than the Rwandans, Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier asked in-depth questions of her interlocutors and typed nervously on her computer. "They don't give a damn about us" [...]
But the Director's strongest images show the living, the prisoners – thousands of them stacked up in their cells. They are shown almost as an aside to the film, as if the director himself was a little scared. But these are the most striking, the most disturbing images and, as a result, certain Rwandans who were present for the *avant-première* viewing in Paris gave the film a different interpretation. They immediately deplored it as a "political" manoeuvre, repeating that it was just not possible to place the fate of the prisoners, the presumed culprits of the genocide, on the same level as the fate of the progressive Tutsi and Hutu in 1994.
Nonetheless, we had already commented on the overcrowded prisons and the distressing visit that took place in January. At that time, there were 14,000 prisoners. Now there are 59,000. Back then, we couldn't even imagine how they could all lie down at the same time. Now, they are literally trampling each other underfoot...
Despite the fact that the UN and ICRC have prepared new detention centres, not a single prisoner has yet been transferred.

On 11 December 1995, the Ministry of Rehabilitation used a statement (dated 8 December) to announce to the NGOs, the press and the national radio that the concerned NGOs must quit Rwanda within seven days and leave all their emergency equipment for the authorities.

'**Press Release** Intended for the NGOs', Rwandan Ministry of Rehabilitation, 8 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Following a review carried out on the situation of operational NGOs in Rwanda and the ensuing decision to terminate the operations of 38 NGOs in the country and the suspension of activities for a further 18 NGOs while awaiting subsequent measures, these NGOs are requested to comply with the following:

1. The NGOs whose operations are to be terminated must accede to this instruction with immediate effect and leave the country within the seven days following this pronouncement. They must contact the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit (HACU) at the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Social Integration to carry out the final formalities.
The 18 NGOs that must meet with the Ministry are requested to organise a meeting as of today, Monday 11 December 1995, with the office of the Cabinet Director (Ministry of Rehabilitation).

On 12 December 1995, MSF announced to the press that the telephone lines of the expelled NGOs had been cut and their bank accounts blocked. V11



'Expelled NGO Accounts Frozen and Telephones Cut', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 12 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
According to a statement published on Thursday by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF France) in Kigali, the international non-governmental organisations expelled from Rwanda have had their telephone lines cut and their bank accounts frozen.
MSF France also underlined that it had been "subject to several incidents of intimidation aimed at its Rwandan personnel and its equipment," and "that it is concerned for the safety of its teams and the retention of its equipment" [...]
In its statement, MSF France "deplores the brutal nature" of the expulsion to which it is subject given that "it was carrying out important measures in close coordination with the Ministry of Health to provide the populations in three prefectures with access to quality healthcare". MSF France deplored "having received no form of explanation as to the reasons behind this expulsion".

On 14 and 15 December 1995, the MSF International Council reviewed the situation in Rwanda.



'**Minutes** of the MSF International Council Meeting', Barcelona, 14 and 15 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Update on the situation in Rwanda
Philippe Biberson [MSF France President of Board of Directors] is in Kigali to negotiate. He received an expulsion order a week ago. There are three hypotheses as to why this occurred. MSF France has given itself to midday on 16 December to obtain a meeting with the government to attempt to change its mind. If MSF France must leave the country, what is there to say? What attitude should be taken with regard to the rest of the MSF operation in Rwanda?
Discussion:
In Madrid, Doris Shopper [President of MSF Switzerland Board of Directors] decided to build her presentation around what was taking place between Rwanda and MSF France.

Emma Bonino [European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs] is trying to send an EU delegation to Rwanda today to clearly express its disagreement with this decision. All countries (with the potential exception of England) have shown willingness to defend the position of the NGOs. Bernard Pécoul [MSF France General Director] wants a general agreement as to what we shall state at the moment of expulsion. He proposes that we say that it is because we are troublesome witnesses (ex-Kibeho), and that this is a very serious matter that attacks the very concept of "humanitarian independence".
Eric Goemaere [MSF Belgium General Director] insists that our objective should be to remain in Rwanda, and that we should not denigrate the government in place by associating it with unfounded rumours that, in the long term, would lead to the expulsion of all MSF teams.
Conclusion:
a) MSF must remain in Rwanda to meet medical needs and to act as witnesses.
b) MSF France will make a statement at the moment of the expulsion through its last members present.
c) We shall only discuss what we have seen (concerning the human rights situation), without criticising the regime for anything outside these parameters.
Kigali: people are tired, the teams are slowly coming in, only the "core" (coordination + administration) remain while awaiting expulsion.

The attempts made to obtain official explanations concerning the expulsion from the Rwandan government were fruitless. The Rwandan authorities were exerting pressure to make the MSF France teams hand over their equipment.



'**Letter** from Colette Braeckman, Journalist for ***Le Soir*** (Belgium) to the Rwandan Minister of Rehabilitation', 12 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
This is a little personal note that I felt I should send to you, not so much as a journalist as an individual [...]
Without wishing to question the soundness of the decisions taken by your ministry concerning the NGOs working in Rwanda, which clearly depend on national sovereignty, I would nevertheless like to state that the measure taken against Médecins Sans Frontières risks having a very negative impact on opinion. This is not only because MSF is a well-known organisation and much appreciated by the public but, above all, because the French and Belgian sections of MSF were the first to assume positions and sound the alarm from April 1994. MSF France stated in May that "a genocide cannot be stopped by doctors," while in April, MSF Belgium bore witness to the killings in Butare. Following this, while so many NGOs found themselves on the wrong political track, MSF adopted balanced positions that contributed to increasing awareness of the situation: criticism of the "hostage taking" of civilian populations in the camps in Zaire, and its refusal to work with the hostage population under such circumstances, and the battle against impunity and for justice by, in particular, financially (and discreetly) providing aid to the NGO Citizens' Network, which trained the first judiciary police to assist the works of the International Penal Tribunal. This is naturally in addition to the work carried out alongside the Rwandan population. And then there was Kibeho and the report published by MSF, which placed it in contradiction with the highest authorities of your country. But I feel

that MSF's politically correct commitment since the very beginning allows it to take a position and face the resulting disagreements.
While I clearly do not know the reasons for MSF being expelled, I do know that this organisation's commitment to justice, its battle against impunity, and its assistance in providing international aid means that a very large number of people view this organisation as being highly committed to the reconstruction of Rwanda. Its departure from the country risks troubling people, reinforcing the arguments of all those campaigning against your country, and weakening the efforts being made for the physical and moral rehabilitation that you are accomplishing under particularly difficult circumstances.



'**Minutes** of the Meeting between Philippe Biberson and Doris Schopper of MSF and Mr Mazimhaka, Rwandan Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration', held in Geneva on 19 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
The meeting was organised after Wouter, MSF Holland, talked to the Minister in the plane from Kigali, and the Minister suggested a meeting with the MSF France management team. The meeting occurred thanks to the insistence of Martine Lochin, who accomplished the impossible by locating the Minister in Geneva, and as a result of the support provided by Ana-Liria Franch, the UNHCR Officer responsible for Rwanda. We saw Minister Mazimhaka for around half an hour in his hotel on Tuesday evening.
The Minister was open but serious, neither friendly nor unfriendly. He was immediately joined by a person who sat down with us and was presented as his advisor (I did not get his name). The conversation continued in English as the advisor was not a French speaker [...]
MSF is particularly undermined by this decision. Our wish is to be able to maintain our activities alongside the populations and to find an honourable way out of this crisis, either by working under the Dutch or international umbrella.
The Minister began by saying that until today a frank discussion had been lacking and that he believed in the virtues of dialogue. He knew of the excellent work carried out by MSF as well as the courageous positions taken by MSF France on Rwanda.
He mentioned certain difficult moments in the past that had been raised with him by the ministry responsible for security. It was necessary to go to the heart of the problems raised and MSF had the right to know what these problems were. It is necessary to see if the negative activities of which we are accused are the result of individuals, MSF France policy or the policy of MSF in general [...]
In concrete terms, the Minister had two things to say:
- That issues relative to the resumption of programmes must be discussed with the Ministry of Health.
- That discussions concerning an analysis of the problems blamed on MSF France shall be carried out with HACU.
We are within our rights to know what we are being blamed for. The Minister will be back in Kigali on Thursday 21 and will give instructions to this end so that this work can be started as soon as possible. Our local representatives [...] are qualified to have these discussions and will call their head offices to deal with the problems raised and at the moment that decisions are to be taken[...]
We left on this positive note. He said that he was pleased to deal with Doris and MSF International, as "fools" like us (and he picked me out) are not easy to deal with! [...]

My impression is that negotiations have been opened but that they will be difficult and that we shall have to answer accusations concerning "state security" [...]
It is MSF France or people from MSF France that are under the microscope and stand accused of implementing French policies.
No matter what the results of these negotiations, it is MSF as a whole that will need to clearly define the policy underlying its presence and its role as witness in Rwanda and renegotiate these activities with the government.



'Expulsion of the French section of MSF – **Chronology**', MSF France, Rwanda, 21 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
On 11 December, we received a press release from MINIREISO (Ministry for Rehabilitation and Social Integration). We continued contact with MINIREISO and MINISANTE (Ministry of Health) to obtain meetings for Bernard. He was received, along with Frances (MSF Holland Head of Mission), by a MINIREISO representative (Jean-Marie), who informed them that the Executive Assistant to the Minister was too busy to receive them. He asked them to make a proposal on the time it would take to leave the country and to provide him with a list of equipment belonging to MSF France [...]
On 12 December, Philippe succeeded in contacting a number of embassies and met with Mr Kratz, European Union representative. This person, who had met the Executive Assistant to the MINIREISO Minister, told him that there were no specific explanations for the expulsion of the individual NGOs and that there would be none. A European diplomat explained to Philippe that he saw four reasons for this policy:
- for the government to reaffirm its sovereignty;
- to reduce the assistance provided to the majority population;
- to appropriate the equipment belonging to the NGOs;
- to embarrass governments acting as hosts to those responsible for the genocide.
During a meeting with MDM, which was on the B list (expulsion), we learnt that this organisation had obtained a meeting with the President of the Republic and the Minister of Rehabilitation. This meeting resulted in a radio declaration that made mention of misconceptions and misunderstandings.
During the meeting between the MSF Belgium Head of Mission and the Executive Assistant to the Minister of Health, the latter said that his Ministry had no criticism of MSF from a technical or relationship point of view and that he was surprised by the decision that had been taken. He accepted a meeting with MSF France for the following morning to discuss technical problems.
A request for a meeting was delivered to the office of the Executive Assistant to the Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration. During the afternoon, meetings were held between the NGOs and HACU. All the questions and requests for information concerning the expulsions were sent on to the government: this was not the aim of the meeting.
Gikongoro: Bruno went to Ngara where, despite a few people being absent, the centre continues to function. The stock stored with Caritas, which is responsible for distribution, had been redistributed among the various health centres and the health region.
On 13 December, the meeting planned with the Minister of Health was cancelled. It was impossible to contact any of the Ministry executives.
We learnt that our bank account was frozen and we received no explanation. A letter was sent to the Minister of Rehabilitation asking him to resolve the situation.
Two out of the three office telephone lines were cut.

A request for a meeting was sent by Philippe to the President of the Republic, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Rehabilitation.
Gikongoro: After having been blocked in his residence for an hour by the authorities, the team arrived at Kigali at the end of the day.
Kibuye: Submission of inventory and donation to the health region for the hospital and the health centres [...]
Antoine, the MINIREISO Technical Manager, summoned us to his office to have an update on our preparations for departure and, above all, to know what we planned to do with our equipment. We told him that the financed medical equipment would be handed over to the various health centres, and that MSF's own equipment would remain in Rwanda to continue with other MSF programmes. We discussed our frozen bank account with him and the wish of the MSF France President to meet with the Minister of Rehabilitation [...]
On 15 December, departure of six expats to Nairobi. Our bank account was unfrozen. Philippe sent a letter to the Executive Assistant of the Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration stating that at the end of a week of presence in Kigali, he would be leaving on 16 December and that this would be the last opportunity for them to meet [...]
Around 17:00, a meeting was obtained with the Executive Assistant to the Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration. He very vaguely informed us that certain expatriates had carried out subversive activities with regards to national security. Given the arguments we put forward (unacceptability of such vague reasons, the vast amount of work carried out in the field, etc.), Christine added that she was not in possession of all the elements, that the decision had been taken at a higher level and that we could probably reapply [...] We asked her to talk to the Minister [...]
Bernard and MSF Holland informally met with Mr Bihozagara, the former Minister of Rehabilitation, who is currently the Minister of Youth and Sport. He gave evasive answers and seemed uncomfortable with the situation. He recommended that we once again request explanations from the Minister of Rehabilitation.
Still in an informal manner, but this time without Bernard (MSF France was not invited), MSF Holland met with Lieutenant Cameron, an RPA Liaison Officer. According to him, the expulsion of the French section is more due to its nationality than as a result of its eyewitness reports.



We tried contacting the former Minister of Rehabilitation, but he is now the Minister of Sports and was unable to do anything. We also met with a French person running an NGO who is close to Paul Kagame. He told us, 'There is nothing I can do for you.' He had already helped rehabilitate Médecins du Monde and knew its Managing Director. As far as I was concerned, it was clear that we had been expelled because of what we had said concerning the events in Kibeho and the prisons. The name MSF France had been added at the last moment to the list of expelled organisations. On the original list, there were all the NGOs that had not signed a basic agreement with the government or which had made errors on an administrative level. MSF France was formally registered and had had no administrative problems. There was no argument as far as these aspects were concerned. As they could not justify their position, they avoided us so that they wouldn't have to confront the problem.

[...], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).

Although I knew the Executive Assistant to the Minister of Rehabilitation from the time that she was in Uganda, she did not want to meet me. She did all she could to avoid me. Our Logistics Coordinator, Christophe Dupont, called me from the Ministry: 'I've managed to get my foot in her office door. Can you come and see her?' At the moment I arrived, she was preparing to go to Butare with an Italian organisation and Christophe was holding her back, saying, 'Philippe's on his way, you can't not see him.' I told her, 'I've got an idea. You let them go on ahead in your car and then we'll take you to Butare in our car and during the two hours it takes to get there, you can listen to me.' So we travelled together, although in a sense she was our hostage. I told her that she could not deny that MSF France had been expelled because of what it had said concerning the prisons and the events of Kibeho. I told her once again that MSF had always taken great care to remain impartial and that violations of human rights remained violations of human rights, no matter who committed them. She answered by criticising us for what we ourselves reproach certain historians and academics who advance the theory of a double genocide. I said to her, 'No, absolutely not, we are not talking about a double genocide. We are simply qualifying what went on in Kibeho. According to us, there were 5,000 dead, we saw them. As for the living conditions in the prisons, for the prisoners they are the same thing as a death sentence.' She concluded by saying, 'In any case, it's a decision made above the level of my Minister, it comes from much higher up.' At least we had an explanation, and at least I was able to discuss with a Rwandan official and let her know our point of view.

Dr Philippe Biberson, MSF France, President of Board of Directors (in French).

I think that the French nationality had a large part to play as it was around that moment that Paul Kagame said, 'We are at war with France.' So, given the local existing paranoia, the authorities found it very easy to use the argument of a French military infiltration via MSF France as a pretext. I personally intervened to try and stop the French section being expelled. I went to see the Executive Assistant to the Minister of Rehabilitation to plead the cause of MSF France, clearly explaining that all the sections formed a single whole. It was a very difficult discussion because it was clear that the instructions were coming from a great political height: 'In any case, we are completely aware that there are people being paid by the French government that have infiltrated the French section and we are at war with France,' etc. So I am unable to say whether it was the eyewitness reports on the events that took place in Kibeho or the question of nationality that was considered the most important. Probably a little of each. Why didn't they expel the other sections? Because they wanted to impose a high level of damage limitation. MSF was an important partner for them in the reconstruction efforts. They said to themselves, 'As they've signed independent contracts, then they are independent sections, so let's limit the damage and not expel all the MSF sections.' At no time did Paris ask us to leave. It was very clear. I asked the question a number of times, but at no point was it on the agenda. I clearly remember a phone call from Philippe Biberson who said to me, 'If we are really expelled, there is no way that this means we are asking you to leave. On the contrary, stay there, it would be interesting.' Subsequently, we brought in staff from the French section to swell our ranks and put their foot back in the door.

Dr Eric Goemaere, MSF Belgium, General Director (in French).

They are French. All the French NGOs were expelled one after the other. The Rwandan authorities got rid of all the French NGOs as fast as possible. They could no longer stand the French since Operation Turquoise and all those other affairs. They really could no longer bear them!
As far as I'm concerned, it is clear that the reports on Kibeho and the prisons clearly didn't improve things. But in any case, MSF was quite aware that while we could have French staff in our teams in Rwanda, it was clear that obtaining or extending visas would be more difficult. But when they showed that technically speaking, the teams worked well, then everything was OK...
The reports were issued in the name of MSF, and in Kigali all the sections had their offices in the same compound and shared the same warehouse. But the Rwandan authorities knew exactly what they wanted to do. They had decided to get rid of the French for political reasons. They expelled them and, to avoid upsetting the European Commission, the United Nations, etc.. and to prove their good intentions, they expelled them for administrative reasons.

Dr Dominique Boutriau, MSF Belgium Programme Manager (in French).

On 22 December 1995, the last MSF France staff left Rwanda. In a press release, MSF France commented on the expulsion and noted that no explanations had yet been provided by the Rwandan government.

'Expulsion of Three Staff from the French Section', MSF France **Press release**, 22 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Three members of the coordination team of Médecins Sans Frontières' French section were expelled from Rwanda today.
Two weeks after the announcement by the authorities that they were closing down the activities of MSF's French section and following two meetings with the Ministry of Rehabilitation (Minister and Executive Assistant to the Minister), no explanations have yet been given to justify this measure.
According to an evaluation carried out over the last few days, the expulsion of the Médecins Sans Frontières staff from the Kibuye, Gitarama and Gikongoro prefectures has led to a considerable reduction in medical treatment. The medical and paediatrics departments in the Kibuye hospital are almost deserted.
All MSF sections are on standby awaiting a meeting with the Minister of Rehabilitation to envisage the ways in which their medical activities can be resumed in the Kibuye, Gitarama and Gikongoro prefectures.

'**Letter** from the MSF France President and the MSF International President to the Rwandan Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration', 29 December 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Dear Minister,
Thank you for the meeting you agreed to have with us in Geneva last Tuesday, 19 December...

We noted that you stated serious reasons such as "activities contrary to the security of the state" as being among the motives for expelling MSF's French section.
We also noted your strong commitment, as soon as you returned to Kigali, to organise the meetings necessary to provide MSF with explanations given that, in your own words, you said that we had a right to know why we had been expelled.
We discussed the possibility of taking a detailed look at the accusations made against MSF and to place all aspects on the table.
We agreed that it was not necessary to inform the press of problems that we could settle between ourselves and we believe we have respected this aspect of the discussion.



We sent the teams home. The government official responsible for security said to us, 'Now you all go, we don't want to see you anymore.' I told them, 'I'm staying and I want the Administrator to stay with me.' They accepted… I managed to stay a month to continue the fight. Soldiers had moved into the compound. We were constantly followed and stopped for identity checks. I lived in the MSF Holland house and no longer went to the MSF France compound. We were visited by security service agents every day. They had received an order from very high up to remove the cars. We refused to let them and they became desperate. We were able to discuss things sensibly with one of the agents. He told me that Rwanda was in a mess, that the RPA was a large army that was becoming uncontrollable and that it was necessary to demilitarise the country. There were around 50,000 troops at that time.
In the end, they took our cars and blocked the compound. Cars from other MSF sections were no longer allowed to leave and the programmes stalled. They posted two soldiers in front of our warehouse to prevent us taking out equipment. Every time they came to see us, they demanded our passports. I told them, 'Go and get them from the French embassy, it's French territory.' In fact, we had our passports with us… On the Monday of the last week, a person fairly highly placed in the Ministry of Defence arrived. He was furious and said, 'You've got nothing to do with either the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Rehabilitation, you are now dealing with the Ministry of Defence and I am the Ministry of Defence. As from today, you are considered as persona non grata in Rwanda and I can no longer assure your safety.'
They went to the airport every morning to see if we were there with our tickets. As we weren't there, they returned to the compound to say, 'What, you're still here!' On the last day, we left on an ICRC plane without telling them. The day before I just said, without giving any more details, 'I'm leaving tomorrow.' They went to the airport and because they couldn't find us on the regular flight, they went back to the compound and searched it from top to bottom. The MSF staff who were there did not say anything.

[…], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).

On 3 January 1996, during a conference given in the name of the entire MSF movement in Nairobi, the MSF France and MSF Holland Coordinators in Rwanda denounced the theft of equipment by the RPA. These accusations were immediately denied by the Rwandan authorities.



'Expelled Aid Agency Accuses Rwandan Army of Theft', **Reuters** (UK), 3 January 1995 (in English).

Extract:

MSF France's [Reuter's error: Frances was MSF Holland Coordinator] Rwanda Country Manager Frances Stevenson told a news conference in Nairobi that the military confiscated 16 MSF vehicles, medicine and equipment worth more than $500,000 on December 24.

Asked if the confiscation amounted to theft, fellow MSF Rwanda Manager [...] said it did. MSF said it was making a formal protest to the government [...]

"There's armed military inside and outside our compound. They intend to take the remaining vehicles and communications equipment which belongs to the French section of MSF," said Stevenson.

They've also asked for a list of the entire pharmacy stock of MSF which is very large and worth more than $200,000 – they're obviously preparing to seize that as well," she added.

Authorities cut telephone lines of agencies ordered out and froze their bank accounts. Diplomats said the crackdown was partly in response to delays in $1.2 million of international aid arriving.

MSF said the expulsion of MSF France eliminated $4 million in health financing for Rwanda plus the jobs of 22 foreign medical and logistic staff and salaries for 375 Rwanda staff.

Stevenson said the army had moved a number of vehicles to a nearby military barracks. "All vehicles and equipment are still in the hands of the military which is very worrying," she said.

She said MSF has protested about the army presence in its international compound, which concerned other aid agencies. Sister agencies MSF Holland and MSF Belgium remain in Rwanda.

[fellow MSF Rwanda manager] said that while no formal reason was given for the expulsions, the government was critical of MSF reports on human rights abuses, overcrowded prisons crammed with genocide suspects and a massacre of civilians in Kibeho last year. Authorities argue agencies had broken laws, operated without sufficient financial backing and had not received permission to work. But [fellow MSF Rwanda manager] said none of these reasons applied to MSF.

Stevenson said the expulsion amounted to divide and rule purely on the basis of nationality. "There's strong anti-French feeling in Rwanda – there's nothing new about that," she said.

France backed the government of late President Juvenal Habyarimana, whose assassination triggered the mass slaughter.

MSF spokesman Andre Le Sage warned that Rwanda's precarious health service faced collapse as a result of the expulsion.

MSF France had to abandon its programmes in the towns of Gitarama, Gikongoro and Kibuye in a week, critically reducing healthcare for an estimated 1.5 million people, he said.

"The health situation [...] will eventually deteriorate unless something is done to fill the gap where MSF was," he added.



Journalists had already interviewed the teams of the other expelled NGOs as they got off their planes. MSF was the last to make comments, using a press conference. We could feel that the journalists were no longer that interested.

I was with the MSF Holland Coordinator, Frances Stevenson. The press conference was par-

ticularly moribund! And when a journalist asked, 'Would you say that the Rwandan authorities robbed you?' I answered, 'What do you want me to say? Yes, it was deliberate theft.' Frances went even further, saying, 'Yes, of course.' It was enough. The press conference wound up shortly thereafter. They had what they wanted. Shortly after, I met the regional AFP Manager who said to me, 'When I heard that guy ask that question, I knew they had their scoop.' The journalists immediately called the Minister of Rehabilitation to say, 'MSF France is accusing you of being thieves. What administrative reasons do you have for expelling them? There don't seem to be any.' He tried to get out of it by repeating that it was due to an administrative problem, but didn't justify it. The journalists insisted. 'But surely it wasn't necessary to steal their cars and expel them manu militari?' In the end, they managed to smother the affair…

[…], MSF France, Emergency Cell, Coordinator in Rwanda, March 1995-September 1995 (in French).



I think there is a difference between the statement that one makes when expelled and what one says when it is a personal decision to leave. At the end of the day, we were being expelled and we therefore needed to defend ourselves and state that we had done nothing wrong and that even if we were part of a French organisation, we were not tied to the French government. We were obviously on the defensive given that it was not us that had decided that we should leave. We left with our tails between our legs but, in any case, we would inevitably have understood that there was no way of working in this country while respecting our criteria of independence, impartiality, etc. We could not have continued working like that. I think that what we had to say concerning the prisons contributed to our being expelled because it provided the Rwandan authorities with confirmation that we could not be controlled. The authorities understood and saw that if we were prepared to speak up on the subject of genocide, then we were capable of doing so on other subjects and that, as a result, our speaking up on the genocide would no longer protect them… Our message deplored their lack of willingness to apply justice. This was diametrically opposite from their official line which was 'justice for all.' I think there was a real problem there. However, with hindsight, I think that when we released the report on the prisons, we possibly made the mistake of not seeking out fairly high-level political contacts.

Nicolas de Torrenté, MSF France, Coordinator in Rwanda, August 1994-March 1995 (in French).



The conditions were clear from the outset: either we shut up and collaborated, or we would expose ourselves to serious problems. From the moment that we decided not to be gagged, it was clear there was a fairly good chance that we would be thrown out. Consequently, we were not very surprised when we were expelled. In any case, we were convinced that we would no longer be able to work in Rwanda without collaborating with the regime's crimes or in its propaganda to conceal these crimes. Personally, I did not feel that our expulsion was a dramatic event, but rather a clarification of the situation.

Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, MSF France, Programme Manager (in French).

On the same day, MSF France held a press conference in Paris deploring the authoritarian drift of the Rwandan government.



'MSF Press Conference **Invitation**', 2 January 1996 (in French).

Extract:
Following two years' presence in Rwanda, the French section of Médecins Sans Frontières, which had become a troublesome eyewitness for the authorities in Kigali, was expelled from the country. The expulsion of independent and impartial humanitarian organisations, as well as the large number of abuses targeting a population perceived as hostile, reveal to what degree the Kigali government has become radicalised.
Médecins Sans Frontières
Press conference
Wednesday 3 January 1996 at 11:00.
8, rue Saint Sabin 75011 Paris
In the presence of Dr Philippe Biberson, President of Médecins Sans Frontières, and Dr Jean-Hervé Bradol, Rwanda Programme Manager.



'Rwanda: Humanitarian Interventions Reduced to Silence', MSF France **Press conference pack**, 3 January 1996 (in French).

Extract:
After more than two years in Rwanda, the French section of Médecins Sans Frontières was expelled from the country. This decision, for which no convincing explanations were given and which was accompanied by confiscation of equipment by the army, is unacceptable for the MSF movement.
Having publicly criticised the genocide in spring 1994 and refused any collaboration with its instigators by leaving the Rwandan refugee camps in autumn 1994, MSF is now judged undesirable by the country's authorities. While basing its legitimacy on the battle against genocide, the Rwandan government, rather than seeking justice, is committing serious violations of human rights against its population. Within this context, the expulsion of Médecins Sans Frontières is an additional indication of the drift of a government that is increasingly locked into a logic of repression and which seeks to silence organisations prepared to bear witness about the fate of its populations [...]
While the serious violations of human rights perpetrated by the authorities should in no way be compared with the horror of the genocide that preceded them, this cannot under any circumstances excuse the major exactions now taking place. Faced with the indifference of the "international community," symbolised over the last two years by the powerlessness of UNAMIR, it is our responsibility to bear witness to the exactions that we have seen. Firstly, because the most serious crimes are often carried out in a deafening silence. Secondly, because the absence of reaction, and the resulting feeling of impunity, is a precondition for their being continued. This has been tragically shown by the history of the Rwandan genocide. The presence and witnessing provided by independent and impartial humanitarian organisations is a necessary safety factor in a climate that is increasingly marked by a growing intolerance and the reign of terror. It is because it denounced serious violations of human rights that the French section has now been expelled from Rwanda. Unfortunately, the main victims of this measure are

the hundreds of thousands of Rwandans that benefit from our medical assistance, our presence, and our eyewitness function.
While private acts of vengeance, extra-judicial exactions and deaths while in detention take the place of justice, the multiple exactions against a population that is seen as hostile and the expulsion of independent and impartial humanitarian organisations are a bad omen for the government's desire for peaceful coexistence.



'MSF France Sounds the Alarm on the Situation in Rwanda', **Agence France-Presse (AFP)**, 3 January 1996 (in French).

Extract:
The President of the French section of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), expelled from Rwanda, stated on Wednesday that he was concerned that "silence will reinforce a reign of terror" in this country.
"We are worried that the only humanitarian organisations authorised in Rwanda will be those prepared to remain silent," stated Dr Philippe Biberson during a press conference in Paris.
He explained that since the notification of its expulsion on 6 December, the French section of the humanitarian organisation had attempted, unsuccessfully, to assure the continuity of the activities of the three missions it had been managing in Rwanda. He added, "Our efforts to obtain explanations from the authorities have been in vain."
According to its President, MSF France had become an "undesirable eye-witness" in Rwanda. "Every day, our teams heard testimonies revealing a state of fear among the population."
In addition, MSF had been "a direct eye-witness of serious exactions," referring to the massacres denounced by the organisation in Kibeho (April 1995) and Kanama (September 1995), as well as the deplorable detention conditions in the Gitarama prison, which had been subject to a medical report.

The description made by the MSF France Rwanda Programme Manager of the pathologies prevalent in the Rwandan prisons as characteristic of those to be found in concentration camp environments were picked up and misrepresented in a Reuters dispatch.



'MSF says Rwanda Expelled it for Atrocity Reports', **Reuters** (UK), 3 January 1996 (in English).

Extract:
The charity Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), one of 43 aid agencies expelled from Rwanda, said on Wednesday that its French wing was thrown out for reporting atrocities committed by the authorities.
MSF President Philippe Biberson told a news conference that the "real reason was [...] our testimony on the serious attacks affecting the people we were working with." [...]
MSF had also written a medical report on the conditions in a prison in the central city of Gitarama where 6,000 prisoners lived in squalor in a facility designed for 400.
MSF said in its report doctors had to amputate limbs, which had become gangrenous because prisoners did not have enough room to lie down.

Bradol said one out of every eight prisoners – 902 people – died there between September 1994 and August 1995.
"It was Auschwitz," Bradol said. "Prisoners couldn't walk because they were on their feet all day. Their ears were covered with scars because they were beaten all the time." Both men voiced fear that events of 1994 could be repeated.
"We are afraid that once again, the silence [...] will strengthen a regime of terror. We are very worried, we fear for the people," Biberson said.



'**Letter** from Eric Goemaere, General Director of MSF Belgium, to the Presidents and General Directors of MSF Sections, 4 January 1996 (in French).

Extract:
As you can imagine, we here in Brussels are amazed by the Reuters report on your press conference. We are amazed at the misuse of the terms used, knowing that any allusion to the semantics of genocide to qualify the current regime will inevitably and readily be used by politicians who are looking for any way to "rewind the clock". In just a few words, this has contributed to annihilating 18 months of work on the memory of the single genocide that took place in Rwanda. Naturally, we are also disappointed that the vast number of preliminary talks aimed at drafting the final speech that was to be read in the name of all in Nairobi has been distorted by a press conference in Paris and resulted in a situation where all we did to develop international cohesion and confidence is now treated with contempt. Finally, we are concerned by the way that MSF is now using its right to speech in such a rash manner, confusing the role of direct eyewitness with that of being a propagator of rumours.



'**Letter** from Dominique Boutriau, MSF Belgium Programme Manager to Other MSF Programme Managers and to MSF Teams in Rwanda', 5 January 1996 (in English).

Extract:
As you might have heard, the press conferences that took place in Nairobi and Paris on the 3rd of January have made us 'pissed of' with the words used by MSF members:
- Jean-Hervé [Bradol, MSF France Programme Manager]'s comparison of Gitarama with Auschwitz in a Reuters report
- The Biberson [Philippe, MSF France President of Board of Directors] and Jean-Hervé [Bradol] "fear that '94 could be repeated in Rwanda in '96" in Reuters report
- The accusation (made by Frances Stevenson) of "theft" by the Rwandan government of the MSF France equipment in most press reports.
The first two mistakes will be very much appreciated by the perpetrators of the only genocide that took place in Rwanda (in 94... against the Tutsi and their friends) as the Hutu extremists love to talk about two genocides.
Such kinds of misjudgements, even if made by "mistake" in front of journalists, show a certain kind of "spirit" that is existing within MSF France, which gives credit to allegations of mass human rights abuses without sufficient MSF background in a context where rumours, disinformation and propaganda are the key instruments of the Hutu extremists. Of course, there are human right abuses in Rwanda, but according to MSF knowledge, they are not comparable with a risk of a second genocide. At least, MSF should document them... We have not done that (except Kibeho, Gitarama and Kanama).

Such kinds of mistakes could have been avoided if MSF had oriented its press conference to the expulsion of the French section, its consequences, its reasons and the way it was done (as suggested by Samantha in her fax on 2nd January), and not mixing it with current human right abuses... Let me remind you that we have few new objective facts for documenting that...
The last mistake (accusation of the Rwandan government of theft) is more a diplomatic mistake; the word "confiscation by the army" is more appropriate.
I will not bore you with the possible consequences of such mistakes on the security of our teams in Burundi...



'**Minutes** of the International Programme Managers' Meeting', Rwanda/Burundi, 15 January 1996 (in English).

Extract:
The reason for the protest by MSF Belgium were the words used by MSF France: "second genocide," "Auschwitz". The press conference was done well, but we really have to be careful which words we use in front of journalists even when we have informal talks. The mistake was made during an informal talk with a journalist. At the moment MSF does not have enough information to give credit to these kinds of allocations. MSF is less informed in Rwanda than in Burundi; there is an urgent need to work on the lack of information to analyse the human rights situation in Rwanda.
MSF France states that a mistake was made, that it was a case of misinterpretation by the journalist, and that a rectification has been asked for. MSF France is of the opinion that although we do not have enough data to document the concern we have for the situation in the country, we still have the right to express this concern. Based on the information we receive from the field it is clear that the situation is deteriorating; now it is up to us to back this feeling up with data.

In the January 1996 issue of its in-house journal, which was distributed to 200 journalists, MSF France presented its expulsion from Rwanda as the result of its role as eyewitness, and noted the positions it has held on the events in Rwanda since April 1994.



'Expulsion: the Price of an Eyewitness Role – the Positions Held by MSF', **Messages n° 83** (MSF France in-house magazine), January 1995 (in French).

Extract:
Having been present in Rwanda for over two years, the French section of MSF was expelled with 38 other humanitarian associations. This decision, which was not accompanied by any convincing explanations from the Rwandan government, is unacceptable, as the medical requirements remain enormous and because there are continuing violations of human rights.
MSF position
Between April and June 1994, MSF was, along with ICRC, the only NGO present in Kigali. Having reached the limits of what it could do, MSF publicly denounced the genocide, the passivity of the international community, and France's particular responsibility.

Following the massive exodus of refugees and the emergency period, MSF decided to interrupt its activities in Tanzania and Zaire to avoid giving the impression of sanctioning those responsible for the genocide who controlled the refugee camps and who sought to instrumentalise humanitarian aid.
Over the previous year, this wish to make the voices of the populations heard has remained an essential aspect of our work.
In April 1995, our teams, responsible for the hospital sector of the Kibeho refugee camp, protested the massacre that took place before them of several thousand civilians, without the UNAMIR troops taking the least step to prevent it.
Similarly, in June 1995, our medical reports on the inhuman detention conditions of prisoners in Gitarama, where, over a nine-month period, one in eight prisoners died (being 902 deaths), once again illustrated our firm determination to make known the unacceptable situations that we had witnessed.

Since the expulsion of the French section of MSF, other sections continued to carry out programmes in Rwanda. MSF no longer took any public positions on violations of human rights in Rwanda.



The problem is that the expulsion of a certain number of NGOs meant that silence fell over everything. Since our expulsion in 1995, we have not heard a single criticism from a humanitarian non-governmental organisation on what is going on in Rwanda. The question raises itself as to exactly what margin of manoeuvre really exists. Either everything has become wonderful and there is nothing left to say, or the natural selection operated by the government has been efficient. In the latter case, one can ask oneself exactly what weight to give the argument that is regularly put forward: 'You, you talk, and we stay silent, we are working together in a complementary manner.' But when those who talk are no longer there, the only ones that remain are those that remain silent. There are no new complementarities set up between those who stay. If the argument is to be retained, then it must be logically carried through: those that remain silent must always do what is necessary to ensure that there are others that talk. But, since 1995, nothing has been heard. I believe that silent humanitarian action is a very serious mistake because we cannot create humanitarian areas if they are not defined by words. We need to know where we are being bothersome, exactly at what point we risk going too far, and at what point lives are really placed in danger. If not, if one goes on the basis that all suffering is due to poverty, then prove to us that all the deaths are deaths due to poverty!

Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, MSF France, Legal Advisor (in French).

EPILOGUE

In 1997, the MSF Holland Programme Manager for the Great Lakes region was summoned to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he was criticised for MSF's "irresponsible" attitude at the time of the Kibeho events.

The Dutch government asked me to come to a meeting to The Hague with Hanna Nolan (from the humanitarian affairs department). I asked what was the topic and they said, 'This is just a brainstorming about some issues – no real agenda.' I smelled a rat. Hanna didn't feel very comfortable as well. So we insisted that they send an agenda to us. They never did. We went, they put us at the table with 20 people in front of us: the medical department, the intelligence, political people, the people I always dealt with for funding, etc. And they took turns shooting at us – 'You don't understand your responsibility and you really have to understand that if you release information like Kibeho, very important decisions are taken based on your information.' They stopped all aid to our organisation – so I'm sure that they had some problems internally so they decided to come back at us. But I felt very strong and I said, 'I know my responsibility – I said what was our confirmed information and you can come up with your funny reports and the UN reports – but I have the pictures. I showed them to the Minister – the pictures proved that there were mountains of dead people, thousands of them and not 300. The politicals started to say, 'You must understand that we financed those missions and you must understand…' I replied, 'No, not at all, we are an independent organisation. If you do not fund us, we will finance ourselves. And the next time, I will do exactly the same.'

Wouter van Empelen, MSF Holland, Programme Manager (in English).

Years later, several Australian peacekeepers who witnessed the Kibeho massacres published testimonies in press articles and books. They mentioned that at least 4000 people were killed by the RPA. Some of these testimonies were posted on the website of the Australian War Memorial in April 2020.

Presentation text of the book 'Combat Medic' by Terry Pickard, doctor with the Blue Helmets contingent in Kibeho in 1995, Big Sky Publishing, 2008 (in English). New edition in 2020. http://books.google.com.au/books/about/Combat_Medic.html?id=H5jjB-JhgosC&redir_esc=y

Extract:
On 22nd April 1995, more than 4,000 Rwandans were massacred and thousands more injured in a place called Kibeho. Terry Pickard, a seasoned soldier and medic, was one of a 32-strong force of Australian UN peacekeepers present on that terrible Saturday. While the United Nations prevented a higher death toll, the massacre continues to haunts him.



'Remembering the Kibeho Massacre', David Sutton, **Blog** on Australian War Memorial website, 21 April 2020 (in English). https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/remembering-the-kibeho-massacre

Extract:

On 22 April 1995, Private Wayne Jones of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR), was one of a small group of Australians in southwest Rwanda who were witnesses to a massacre. The Australian peacekeepers, along with a Zambian infantry company, could do little to stop the carnage as troops from the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), recently victorious in a fierce civil war, attempted to clear thousands of their own countrymen from an overcrowded internally displaced persons camp at Kibeho. The RPA attacked the massed civilians with any weapons available – machete, assault rifle, mortar and grenade – killing an estimated 4,000 men, women and children. Jones described how "We watched the RPA kill thousands of [people] and witnessed many murders of unarmed women and children. [The RPA] seemed to be enjoying it."

Private Andrew Zimmerman, who also witnessed the massacre, later recalled the unimaginable carnage he witnessed after the killing came to an end.

"I couldn't believe they could do this to their own people. The RPA seemed to show no remorse for what they did, but I noticed as we were walking around the dead [the next day] that they would not look you in the eye when you stared them out."

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS APRIL 1994 - 1997

The main purpose of this chronology is to help the reader by reconstructing MSF's actions and public statements in regional and international news reports of the period. It is intended as a tool for this specific document, and not as an academic reference.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
1994 **APRIL 1994**		**6 APRIL 1994** Genocide launched against Rwandan Tutsi; Rwandan Hutu opposed to the genocide also killed.	
MAY 1994	**1 MAY 1994** Human Rights Watch publishes report on Rwandan genocide. One section addresses "abuses by the Rwandan Patriotic Front" (RPF). **23 MAY 1994** Amnesty International publishes report on the genocide. One section addresses "deliberate and arbitrary murders carried out by the RPF and its supporters".		**MAY 1994** MSF Belgium initiates programme in Byumba (RPF zone in northeastern Rwanda) – team witnesses RPF exerting heavy pressure on the population.
JUNE 1994	**18 JUNE 1994** France announces its intention to address the UN Security Council regarding a "targeted military intervention for humanitarian ends in Rwanda, codenamed 'Operation Turquoise,' with or without the support of other countries."		**3 JUNE 1994** MSF Belgium opens programme in Nyamata (Bugesera). **6 JUNE 1994** MSF Holland initiates programme based in Kigali's King Faisal Hospital to treat prisoners. **17 JUNE 1994** MSF France press conference: "You can't stop genocide with doctors." Press packet includes statements from Burundian refugees in Rwanda about abuses committed by RPF soldiers.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
JUNE 1994	**22 JUNE 1994** Security Council Resolution 929 authorises Operation Turquoise on the basis of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter: "protection of civilian populations and humanitarian aid".	**23 JUNE-EARLY JULY 1994** Under precarious conditions, RPF carries out forced transfer of 50,000-100,000 residents of the Gitarama-Butare region to the Bugesera region.	**23 JUNE-EARLY JULY 1994** MSF asked to provide medical assistance during population transfer but RPF hinders activities – MSF Belgium Communications Director is there with the team. **24 JUNE 1994** MSF Belgium press release: '35,000 Civilians Evacuated After Tension Increases South of Gitarama.' **28 JUNE 1994** MSF Belgium begins work with displaced people at Rilima Hospital.
JULY 1994	**3 JULY 1994** UN authorises France to establish "safe humanitarian zone" in southwestern Rwanda (Cyangugu, Gikongoro, Kibuye).	**4 JULY 1994** RPF takes Kigali and Butare – Hutu begin massive exodus, heading to northwestern Rwanda (Ruhengeri, Gisenyi), where interim government is located. **6 JULY 1994** Rwandan national unity government formed.	**1 JULY 1994** MSF Belgium press release: 'Rwanda: Massive Population Displacement to Bugesera.' **4-10 JULY 1994** MSF Belgium, France and Holland conduct evaluation mission in the *Zone Turquoise*, around Gikongoro: MSF France and Holland agree to joint programme; MSF Holland later withdraws.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
JULY 1994		**14 JULY 1994** RPF takes Ruhengeri. Interim Rwandan government flees to *Zone Turquoise*. **14-17 JULY 1994** 500,000-800,000 Rwandans settle near Goma, Zaire. **22 JULY 1994** Rwandan government calls on refugees to return: "Those who did not participate in the massacres have nothing to fear."	**7 JULY 1994** Sitrep from MSF Belgium Coordinator: RPF neglects the population and manipulates humanitarian organisations. **9 JULY 1994** 'Report on RPF incidents' delivered to MSF Belgium headquarters: MSF Belgium Coordinator summarises RPF abuses. **11 JULY 1994** Article by MSF Belgium Communications Director in *Le Soir* opposes Operation Turquoise. **12 JULY 1994** MSF France launches programme in southwestern Rwanda (*Zone Turquoise*). **19 JULY 1994** MSF Belgium press conference and press release: 'MSF Belgium Demands the Refugees "Return to Rwanda" – MSF Holland takes the same position.'

	International	Rwanda	MSF
JULY 1994			**29 AND 30 JULY 1994** RPA lays siege to Rilima Hospital seeking to arrest Hutu staff (former ICRC) – in Kampala, MSF Belgium Coordinator notifies Dutch Foreign Minister about RPF abuses.
AUGUST 1994			**EARLY AUGUST 1994** Prisoners disappear from MSF Holland programme at King Faisal Hospital in Kigali. **4 AUGUST 1994** MSF press conference in Goma: President of MSF France says he's afraid that people repatriating to Rwanda are being abused but has no proof; states the refugees are too weak and the risks too great for them to return to Rwanda.
		5 AUGUST 1994 Operation Turquoise spokesperson reports Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) abuses against displaced people. **6 AUGUST 1994** Rwandan Defence Minister denies statements by Operation Turquoise spokesperson.	
			10 AUGUST 1994 MSF Belgium press conference update on operations and finances, "call for human rights monitoring in Rwanda," – decision of International Board of Directors to lobby for more human rights observers in Rwanda and to send MSF volunteers to gather information on human rights violations in Rwanda, Zaire and Tanzania.
	11 AUGUST 1994 UN Security Council supports "rapid" return of refugees and displaced people to Rwanda – UNHCR cancels mass return scheduled for 16 August.		**11 AUGUST 1994** Article by MSF Belgium President appears in *Le Soir* (Belgium): appeal to human rights organisations.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
AUGUST 1994		**13 AUGUST 1994** Hutu flee *Zone Turquoise* for Bukavu following announcement that French troops will leave *Zone Turquoise*.	
	17 AUGUST 1994 Statements by Burundian refugees victimised by RPF abuses published in ***Le Monde*** (France).		
			19 AUGUST 1994 MSF Belgium and MSF France press releases: 'French Troops Depart Rwanda, Leaving Chaos in Their Wake.'
			20 AUGUST-5 SEPTEMBER 1994 MSF's Legal Advisor in Rwanda – report on the catastrophic state of the legal system.
		21 AUGUST 1994 Last French soldiers leave the *Zone Turquoise*.	
		22 AUGUST 1994 Rwandan Interior Minister admits in the press that acts of revenge and disappearances are continuing.	
SEPTEMBER 1994		**5 SEPTEMBER 1994** RPF begins deploying 2,000 troops in cities of Gikongoro, Kibuye and Cyangugu.	

	International	Rwanda	MSF
SEPTEMBER 1994	**7 SEPTEMBER 1994** Publication of Human Rights Watch report on serious human rights violations by RPF troops during June and July 1994. Humanitarian organisations tell the newspaper ***Le Monde*** that these actions "probably" occurred but prefer to remain silent to protect their programmes in Rwanda – first descriptions of prison conditions in international press. **12 SEPTEMBER 1994** In Brussels, Faustin Twagiramungu, former Rwandan Prime Minister, says that conditions required for refugees to return to Rwanda are "far from being satisfied". **16-17 SEPTEMBER 1994** According to UNAMIR, there are more than two million internally displaced people inside Rwanda. **23 SEPTEMBER 1994** UNHCR announces it is not encouraging Rwandan refugees to return home "based on reports of violence being carried out there" (Gersony report, not distributed) – UN Secretary-General requests further investigation. **24 SEPTEMBER 1994** UNAMIR denies having information regarding killings committed by APR soldiers. **27 SEPTEMBER 1994** UN Secretary-General calls for halt to publication of information regarding risks facing refugees returning to Rwanda.	**24 SEPTEMBER 1994** UNAMIR-supervised Operation Homeward begins repatriation of internally displaced people from Gikongoro to their communes.	**7 SEPTEMBER 1994** ICRC transfers first five prisoners from Gitarama prison to the Kabgayi hospital where MSF France is working.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
OCTOBER 1994	**3 OCTOBER 1994** UN Security Council adopts report from the UN Commission establishing that genocide was committed against Rwandan Tutsi – discussion in conjunction with the General Assembly on information in the Gersony report regarding RPF massacres.		**EARLY OCTOBER 1994** Former MSF Belgium Coordinator in Rwanda delivers detailed report on RPF abuses he witnessed in Byumba and Bugesera between May and September 1994 to the Dutch Foreign Minister.
		6 OCTOBER 1994 Rwandan authorities take total control of the former 'safe humanitarian zone' in southwestern Rwanda. When questioned by UN Commission on possible RPF massacres, Rwandan authorities refer to individual, uncontrolled acts of revenge. Rwandan President calls for international tribunal to try crimes against humanity.	
	24 OCTOBER 1994 UNHCR, Zaire and Rwanda sign agreement on refugee repatriation.		**MID-OCTOBER 1994** Articles in the French press by MSF members criticise UN's lack of resolution, without mention of RPF violence.
	28 OCTOBER 1994 Rwandan government calls for limiting jurisdiction of an international tribunal on genocide and war crimes to acts prior to the RPF's coming to power in July, thus excluding war crimes committed subsequently by the new regime.		**28 OCTOBER 1994** Information on abuses by the new Rwandan regime reported to MSF France Board of Directors by an administrator returned from Rwanda; discussion of MSF's dilemma – "trapped in the framework of genocide".
NOVEMBER 1994	**8 NOVEMBER 1994** UN Security Council passes Resolution 955 creating international criminal tribunal for Rwanda.		
		10 AND 11 NOVEMBER 1994 RPA soldiers open fire on the Musange refugee camp (north of Gikongoro), leaving 14 dead and seven wounded.	**10 NOVEMBER 1994** Distribution of MSF Holland report, 'Breaking the Cycle,' describing the situation in Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire and Tanzania.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
NOVEMBER 1994			**14 NOVEMBER 1994** MSF International, MSF US and MSF Great Britain press release: 'MSF withdraws from Rwandan refugee camps in Bukavu, south of Kivu (Zaire).' **6 DECEMBER 1994** RPA carries out forced closure of Kaduha displaced people's camp (Gikongoro region) in full view of MSF France team – displaced people flee to Kibeho camp.
DECEMBER 1994	**9 DECEMBER 1994** UN asks Rwandan government to suspend camp closure operations and authorise first-aid stations.	**9 DECEMBER 1994** The Gikongoro prefect announces that Rukondo, Cyanika and Kibeho camps to be closed. **13 AND 14 DECEMBER 1994** RPA and UNAMIR undertake 'Operation Hope' (leaders arrested and weapons confiscated) in Kibeho and Ndago camps. **18 DECEMBER 1994** Rwandan government announces it will give up plan to close camps in the former "safe humanitarian zone". **30 DECEMBER 1994** Rwandan government suspends ACF activities throughout Rwanda.	**DECEMBER 1994** MSF France conducts survey in the camps with alarming results – returning refugees face arrest, torture, abuse and killings. **MID-DECEMBER 1994** MSF Belgium wants to take over medical care from ICRC in Kigali and Butare prisons; debates the issue with MSF France.
1995 JANUARY 1995			**6 AND 7 JANUARY 1995** MSF France doctor conducts forensic examination after RPA attacks Busanze camp. **30 JANUARY-7 FEBRUARY 1995** MSF legal advisor in Rwanda – MSF France team in Gitarama decides to draft a report with data on hospitalised prisoners and mortality rates in prison. Collaboration with ICRC and MSF Belgium.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
MARCH 1995			**9 MARCH 1995** Debate among MSF operational sections regarding repatriation of refugees and displaced people to Rwandan communes: MSF Belgium supports informing refugees; MSF France opposes encouraging repatriation.
APRIL 1995		**FIRST WEEK OF APRIL 1995** Displaced people driven by the RPA from the region's small camps gather in Kibeho.	**EARLY APRIL 1995** Report on Gitarama prisoners' state of health presented to Rwandan authorities.
		7 APRIL 1995 Ceremonies in commemoration of the beginning of the genocide.	
			11 APRIL 1995 MSF operational sections' programme managers decide to create a position for international information officer in Rwanda.
			13 APRIL 1995 MSF France team finds Rwamiko camp ransacked – 5,000 displaced people flee to Kibeho.
		14 APRIL 1995 RPA reinforces troops around Kibeho camp.	**14 APRIL 1995** MSF France team asked UNAMIR for a detachment of soldiers to protect the Kibeho hospital.
			15 APRIL 1995 MSF team learns that RPA has ordered that camp is no longer to receive food deliveries.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
APRIL 1995		**19 APRIL 1995** 2,500 RPA soldiers fire on crowd gathered near the Kibeho hospital – RPA cuts off water delivery system. **20 APRIL 1995** Displaced people gather in an even smaller area – denied access to water tanks installed by MSF and OXFAM. **22 APRIL 1995** RPA fires into crowd of displaced people with heavy weapons.	**18 APRIL 1995** MSF team discovers that Kibeho camp has been ransacked, and that displaced people have gathered around UNAMIR buildings, school and hospital – MSF team treats wounded in the hospital – MSF France Coordinator in Rwanda notifies press in Kigali. **19 APRIL 1995** Humanitarian organisations forbidden to provide aid to thousands of people crammed into small outside area in precarious conditions – MSF and OXFAM logisticians install several water tanks. **20 APRIL 1995** MSF France team delayed at checkpoint, RPA hampers team's work – 18:00: on leaving the camp, the team sees soldiers arrive – radio operator hears gunfire. MSF Belgium, MSF France, MSF US and MSF International press release: 'Médecins Sans Frontières Calls for Displaced People's Camps in Rwanda to be Maintained Temporarily.' **21 APRIL 1995** Following shooting, MSF team discovers 21 bodies and tries, unsuccessfully, to alert authorities to risks of epidemic – MSF France press release: 'Nearly 200,000 People Gathered Around Displaced People's Camps in Southwest Rwanda Prepare to Spend their Fifth Day in the Open' – MSF France delivers this message in a letter to the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs and UNHCR. **22 APRIL 1995** RPA refuses MSF International team entry to Kibeho hospital – team walks across thousands of corpses, tries to treat wounded, present for several rounds of firing and evacuated by UNAMIR.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
APRIL 1995			MSF press release: 'Thousands of Victims in Kibeho: MSF Denounces Killings.'
	23 APRIL 1995 UNAMIR spokesperson announces to the press that RPA has killed several thousand displaced people – Zambian UNAMIR Commander accuses RPA of firing heavy weapons – he is evacuated immediately after receiving death threats.	**23 APRIL 1995** Survivors leave the massacre site under RPA threat – 2,000 displaced people still entrenched in central buildings – RPA issues ultimatum before bombing – Rwandan Justice Minister visits to calm RPA – Defence Minister and Rwanda President visit, latter says 300 victims were crushed during riot – in Brussels, Rwandan Prime Minister regrets heavy loss of life and announces investigation into the responsibility of Rwandan soldiers.	**23 APRIL 1995** Kibeho: Thousands of corpses disappear – MSF team forbidden access to the hospital, treats wounded in UNAMIR barracks, evacuates infants from the hospital and buries dead in a ditch. RPA hinders evacuation of wounded to Butare. Butare: MSF and ICRC teams prevented from working and from transferring wounded to hospitals. MSF Belgium press release: 'Forced March for Kibeho's 100,000 Displaced People: Tens of Thousands of People Collapse En Route. MSF Angered by UNAMIR's Inability to Protect Civilians,' MSF USA press release: "Five to Eight Thousand Victims of Massacres in Kibeho Camp, and Many Collapse of Exhaustion Among the 80,000 Displaced People on a Forced March"
	24 APRIL 1995 Australian military spokesperson announces that UNAMIR counted 4,000 bodies the morning after the Kibeho massacre. Three hours later, the UNAMIR Commander in Kigali puts the number at 2,000 – announcement that direct aid to Rwanda is suspended.	**24 APRIL 1995** Rwandan President accuses Hutu militias of responsibility for the massacre and blames international community for not separating victims from innocent people – RPA bombing ultimatum is pushed back and then called off.	**24 APRIL 1995** MSF team mobilises UN, embassies and international agencies to notify them of RPA ultimatum. MSF Belgium press release: 'MSF Demands Free Access to Victims of Kibeho Massacre.' MSF France press release: "After Last Weekend's Carnage, the Situation of Displaced People Continues to be Worrying" MSF UK press release: 'Rwandan Army Still Preventing Assistance from Reaching Kibeho Victims: MSF Condemns RPA Attacks on Kibeho and UN's Failure to Protect Civilians in Rwanda.'

	International	Rwanda	MSF
APRIL 1995	**25 APRIL 1995** Belgian government suspends bilateral aid to Rwanda – UN acknowledges it was not informed of the Kibeho evacuation and confirms official death toll at 2,000.		**25 APRIL 1995** MSF press conference in Kigali: statements from volunteers on the Kibeho massacre "Timely" interruption of satellite link during CNN discussion among President of MSF Holland, UN representative to Rwanda, and Rwandan Ambassador to the US.
		26 APRIL 1995 Kibeho: witnesses observe RPA transfer of corpses and exhumation of bodies from latrines during the night.	**26 APRIL 1995** MSF France team denied access to Kibeho. Several NGOs experience security incidents. MSF team leaks news of "corpses in latrines" – invitation from MSF team to a "meeting with the Rwandan Head of State" in Kibeho the next day – MSF lobbies embassies.
	27 APRIL 1995 UN Secretary-General asks that force not be used against displaced people entrenched in Kibeho – UN Security Council condemns "death sentence" carried out against civilians and asks Secretary-General to make a report.	**27 APRIL 1995** Rwandan government press conference in Kibeho: exhumation of 300 official victims – MSF accused of providing false data – NGOs accused of supporting militias in displaced people's camp – announcement of creation of an international "independent" investigative commission.	**27 APRIL 1995** During the Rwandan government press conference, the MSF representative maintains that the team saw thousands of corpses.
			28 APRIL 1995 Warning by MSF Information Officer in Rwanda: proof of massacres is disappearing very quickly.
	30 APRIL 1995 Rwandan government commits to not use force against displaced people remaining in Kibeho.		**30 APRIL 1995** On Radio Rwanda, Minister of Rehabilitation accuses MSF France of providing false information.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
MAY 1995	**1 MAY 1995** According to **Agence France-Presse**, a report by Australian blue helmets accuses RPA of disinterring and removing corpses from Kibeho to hide truth about number of victims from April 22 massacre. **2 MAY 1995** UNAMIR denies it is source of **AFP** report that RPA has surreptitiously removed corpses but does not contradict the information.	**8 MAY 1995** First meeting of the Independent Investigative Commission established at Rwandan government request. **9 MAY 1995** Last displaced people leave Kibeho camp – Independent Investigative Commission visits Kibeho site.	**1 MAY 1995** MSF Belgium, MSF France, MSF Holland, MSF Spain, and MSF Switzerland country coordinators and programme managers meet in Kigali to evaluate space available for MSF intervention with Rwandan population – MSF Belgium announces a project in jails and children's prison – MSF targeted during demonstration in Kigali against international community's position on Kibeho events. **2 MAY 1995** MSF given access to Kibeho – groups of displaced people leave the camp. **16 MAY 1995** MSF presents its report on Kibeho events to Rwandan authorities and Independent Investigative Commission. **17 MAY 1995** MSF decides to write a second, more thorough report on Kibeho events – sections disagree over MSF Belgium's participation in construction of a juvenile prison – letter from Rwandan Minister of 'Rehabilitation and Social Integration' to MSF France asking that it adhere to its "strict humanitarian purpose".

	International	Rwanda	MSF
MAY 1995	**18 MAY 1995** Independent Investigative Commission on Kibeho events presents its report to Rwandan government. **20 MAY 1995** Independent Investigative Commission's report on Kibeho events is published: unable to determine precise number of victims; RPA excesses; international community and NGOs unable to effectively aid displaced people to evacuate camp quickly.		**23 MAY 1995** MSF France responds to Minister of Rehabilitation: "advocacy on behalf of the population's fate is central to the physician's vocation". **25 MAY 1995** MSF's report on Kibeho events is published **26 MAY 1995** Letter from MSF to UN Security Council President and UNAMIR Commander regarding UNAMIR's attitude during Kibeho events.
JUNE 1995			**22 JUNE 1995** Rwandan journalists physically threaten MSF Communications Officer during a seminar in Kigali. **29 JUNE 1995** MSF France press release: 'Catastrophic Mortality Rates Among Prisoners in Gitarama, Rwanda.'
JULY 1995			**5 AND 6 JULY 1995** MSF press conferences in Brussels, Nairobi and Paris on health status of prisoners in Gitarama

	International	Rwanda	MSF
JULY 1995			Press release from all MSF sections: 'Catastrophic Death Rates in Gitarama Prison: MSF Calls for Immediate Transfer of Prisoners to Other Detention Facilities.' **7 JULY 1995** MSF France signs registration with authorities in Rwanda. **27 JULY 1995** 'Deadlock in the Rwandan Refugee Crisis,' a report by MSF Holland on the repatriation of Rwandan refugees from camps in Zaire and Tanzania is published. Part of the report addresses Kibeho massacre and Rwandan prisons.
AUGUST 1995		**3 AUGUST 1995** Rwandan President's office announces series of measures to improve prison conditions. **30 AUGUST 1995** Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu and Interior Minister Seth Sendashonga dismissed after calling role of armed forces in continuing insecurity into question.	
NOVEMBER 1995		**8 NOVEMBER 1995** Rwandan Defence Minister Paul Kagame tells Belgian daily newspaper *Le Soir* that soldiers who committed mistakes have been punished.	**8 NOVEMBER 1995** MSF France sends letter to Rwanda Health Minister regarding shooting attack by RPA against health centre in Gikongoro prefecture.
DECEMBER 1995		**6 DECEMBER 1995** Rwandan government announces that NGOs have seven days in which to leave Rwanda and must leave all their supplies in the country.	**6 DECEMBER 1995** MSF France press release: 'The French and Swiss sections of Médecins Sans Frontières expelled from Rwanda without explanation'.

	International	Rwanda	MSF
DECEMBER 1995	**18 DECEMBER 1995** European Parliament passes resolution calling on Kigali government to reconsider decision to expel 38 NGOs.	**9 DECEMBER 1995** The Rwandan government gives the NGOs concerned seven days to leave Rwanda, leaving behind all their equipment.	**7 DECEMBER 1995** MSF France press release: 'MSF Requests Official Explanation of its Expulsion from Rwanda.' MSF UK press release: 'MSF Calls for Meeting with Rwandan Government Regarding its Expulsion.' MSF International press release: 'MSF Calls for Meeting with Rwandan Government Regarding its Expulsion.' **9 DECEMBER 1995** French German TV chain Arte broadcasts film by a member of MSF France Board of Directors showing catastrophic conditions in the Rwandan prisons from which the organisation has been expelled. **12 DECEMBER 1995** Bank accounts belonging to MSF France and other NGOs are blocked and their phone service cut off. **19 DECEMBER 1995** Meeting between MSF France Board President Philippe Biberson, MSF Switzerland Board President Doris Schopper, and Mr Mazimhaka, Rwandan Minister of Rehabilitation and Social Integration, who promised to give explanations. **22 DECEMBER 1995** Last MSF France international staff leave Rwanda. MSF France press release: 'Three MSF France Volunteers are Expelled.'

	International	Rwanda	MSF
1996 **JANUARY 1996**			**3 JANUARY 1996** MSF press conference in Nairobi denounces theft of supplies by RPA. MSF France press conference in Paris denounces authoritarian moves within Rwandan government. Reuters news agency wrongly picks up comments of MSF Programme Manager (comparing Rwandan prisons to Auschwitz). **4 JANUARY 1996** Other MSF sections react negatively after Reuters picks up MSF France comments.
1997			Dutch authorities criticise MSF Holland for "irresponsibility" at the time of the Kibeho events.
2008	Publication of the book 'Combat Medic', an account of the experience of Terry Pickard, a doctor with the Australian Australian peacekeepers present in Kibeho during the massacres in April 1995.		

The Speaking Out case studies is a series of studies from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) that openly examine and analyse the organisation's actions and decision-making process during complex humanitarian interventions focusing on dilemmas surrounding speaking out.

The methodology aims at establishing the facts and setting out a chronological presentation of the positions adopted at the time. It enables the reconstruction of dilemmas, constraints and controversies without pre-judging the quality of the decisions made.

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© Corinne Dufka - One of more than 7.000 mostly Hutu inmates at the overcrowded Gitarama prison stares out from behind the bars.