

4) the humanitarian basis for the camps' existence is gone. The fighting in Rwanda which led to the refugees' flight is long over, and the GOR has, since taking office, demonstrated reasonable good faith and restraint. While security conditions in Rwanda are imperfect, the risk to the returnees would not appear to outweigh the risks associated with keeping the camps open. Humanitarian relief can be provided to returnees at way-stations inside Rwanda where, in addition, tools, seeds and other assistance can be distributed to help the returnees get on with their lives and begin to rebuild their country. Transport can be arranged by UNAMIR and relief agencies. The longer the return is delayed, the more difficulties there will be with Tutsi exiles who have reclaimed land;

5) disarmament or the creation of safe havens in the camps, as the Secretary-General proposes, will almost certainly lead to violence. Disarming militias and soldiers crossing the border would be much simpler and less likely to provoke violence. Border checks could be jointly mounted by UNAMIR and the RPA to carry this out. While some re-infiltration of arms would undoubtedly occur as militiamen traversed hills, heavy weapons could not get in, nor could large groups of organized soldiers, particularly in the Goma border region where access to and from Rwanda is relatively restricted by geography;

6) attempting to mount an ambitious project in Zaire will be much more difficult than simply providing the appropriate means for refugees to come back to Rwanda, where security can be provided and relief distributed under the existing UNAMIR mandate.

International coordination

The key to acceptance of camp closure will be agreement of the UNHCR and other relief agencies for this plan (which would represent a major philosophical departure for them). This approach is in line with the thinking of many in the aid community who find conditions in the camp dangerous, and realize that there is no way to separate food going to the innocent from that going to killers. Thus, justifying the camps existence is becoming more and more difficult for relief agencies.

The relief agencies themselves are the first to admit that there is inadequate coordination of relief efforts (up to 83 NGOs were operating in Goma alone recently). Under these circumstances, it would be unrealistic to expect early agreement among all these players on the concept of camp closure or the means to implement it. For camp closure to be agreed to quickly, it may be that the half-