

- ▶ support reintegration strategies which promote the reconstruction of housing in the places of origin of the population, provided that those strategies form part of a well-planned effort on the part of the authorities;
- ▶ the programmes of the UN agencies should continue their support for the local communities through revenue-generating activities, increased participation of women in the economic and social life of their communities, and increased food security;
- ▶ provide support for the legal assistance programme established under the auspices of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the participation of the Burundian Bar and authorities, intended to assist those suspected of participation in the attempted putsch; assiduously pursue and expand this programme to remedy the deficiencies in the judicial system and to eradicate impunity in the country once peace has been restored;
- ▶ immediately implement the embargo on the sale of arms to Burundi;
- ▶ take strong measures against those who ordered the crimes and those who benefit from the arms traffic, including action to freeze their bank accounts abroad, withhold fellowships from members of their families and refuse visas for travel abroad; and
- ▶ UN members should take legal measures against their citizens who are involved in the arms traffic, in violation of the embargo declared by the UN, even when such individuals are operating in a third country.

Following presentation of the report the General Assembly did not adopt a resolution on the situation in Burundi.

### SECURITY COUNCIL

On 30 May 1997, the President of the Security Council issued a statement (S/PRST/1997/32) in which the Council, *inter alia*: expressed concern at the continuing instability in Burundi; welcomed the decision of the regional leaders to ease sanctions in order to alleviate the suffering of the people; welcomed the commitment of the government to the comprehensive political dialogue among all the parties; urged all the parties in Burundi to continue to pursue a negotiated settlement and to refrain from actions which are detrimental to such dialogue; and, expressed its deep concern at the involuntary resettlement of rural populations and called on the government to allow the people to return to their homes without any hindrance.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/1997/547, 15 July 1997) is focused on the steps that had been taken to encourage a negotiated and peaceful settlement of the ongoing conflict in Burundi.

Commentary is provided on the political situation, noting: deep divisions within and between the country's leading political movements; the polarizing influence of militant extremist groups at both ends of the political spectrum; the adverse effects on the security situation of events in DR Congo; the lack of an agreed mechanism for negotiations acceptable to all the principal actors; the fact that divisions within the two main political parties, their rivalry and the constraints imposed on their work by the government, continued

to feed animosities; the fact that extremists on both sides continued to disrupt reconciliation efforts by threatening and undermining the President; the fact that restoration of the National Assembly in September 1996 had increasingly provided a forum for more regular political activity and dialogue among politicians of the different factions; and, the need to put an end to the judicial harassment of the Speaker and provide the Assembly with the necessary financial and logistical support for its regular work.

Referring to human rights, the report includes extended commentary on problems related to: the arrest and trials of people suspected of involvement in massacres and of supporting the armed Hutu rebels; the fact that most of those suspected of collaboration or participation in the October 1993 coup remain free continue to go about their usual business with apparent impunity; and, the public call by the President for the establishment of an international criminal tribunal for Burundi, in order to try the instigators and perpetrators of acts of genocide that followed the October 1993 coup.

The report describes the humanitarian situation, noting that: extensive fighting in the north and south of the country displaced a significant proportion of the population; landmines were an increasingly pervasive source of danger to aid workers and civilians alike; outbreaks of cholera had been recorded; the high degree of insecurity in the country and the concentration of the rural population from conflict-prone areas into regroupment camps has exacerbated the problems related to humanitarian conditions and needs; the number of people displaced by fighting and insecurity was more than 350,000 and the number of vulnerable people in rural areas totalled some 700,000; out of a population of an estimated 6 million, approximately one out of nine Burundians lived in a camp, often in poor sanitary conditions; the negative impact on agricultural production has been made worse through incidents resulting in the deliberate destruction of fields and livestock by the warring protagonists; and, significant environmental damage had occurred in some areas as a result of deforestation by refugees and displaced persons, and acts of sabotage.

The report notes that both parties to the conflict agreed, in March 1997, to an agenda for a negotiated settlement focused on: the restoration of constitutional and institutional order; issues related to the Burundi armed forces and police; the suspension of hostilities; the administration of justice, including the creation of an international criminal tribunal to try acts of genocide and political crimes; the identification and involvement of other parties in the negotiation process; a permanent ceasefire; and, guarantees for the respect and implementation of the agreement.

### FIELD OPERATIONS

The Field Operation proposed by the former High Commissioner for Human Rights to deploy human rights observers in Burundi has been chronically under-resourced since its creation. A contingent of 35 observers was originally proposed but at the end of December 1996 the goal was to