

reinforce military manpower and available resources the fight now under way against CNDD, FROLINA and PALIPEHUTU rebels. There is concern that the fighting between the rebels and the army will continue until real negotiations begin for a long-term solution to the conflict.

On both sides, the civil war is a convenient excuse for flagrant human rights abuses. Since the July coup d'état and especially the crisis in eastern Zaire, we have received few independent reports about the undoubtedly worsening situation. The UN has a small human rights field operation in Burundi, but its freedom is severely curtailed by the ongoing civil war.

A cease-fire accompanied by a resumption of the Arusha process and political negotiations, mediated by President Nyerere, is absolutely essential if there is to be any improvement in the human rights situation in Burundi. This could also lead the Buyoya regime to participate fully in seeking a peaceful solution to the conflict. However, some feel that the regional initiatives instituted by the Arusha process, including economic sanctions against Burundi, could also lead to Buyoya's fall if Burundian Tutsi extremists feel that the international community is not supporting the leaders in the region and their initiatives.

CANADIAN POSITION

In the current climate, it is difficult to ensure respect for human rights. Canada supports the firm and courageous stance taken by the countries in the region, including the imposition of economic sanctions, aimed at a return to constitutional order and restoration of the constitutional state. In this regard, Canada maintains its support for mediation by Julius Nyerere. Round table discussions between various groups of Burundians, proposed by Canada and supported by France and La Francophonie, remain worthwhile proposals which can be acted on only when the local situation allows.

A military solution cannot resolve a political crisis: a militarization of the conflict must be avoided at all costs. The diplomatic approach, including economic sanctions, is the only solution that could lead to an improvement in the serious situation that exists in Burundi.

Canada co-sponsored the consensus resolution on Burundi at the 52nd Commission on Human Rights, but would have preferred a stronger text.