

reconciliation), but has yet to agree on a force for the camps, inter alia, to assist refugees wishing to return to Rwanda. No steps have been taken to counteract Hutu extremists' propaganda. Human rights monitors inside Rwanda have failed to produce the confidence that their deployment was intended to achieve. In Burundi, thinly veiled blackmail of Tutsi and Hutu extremists has prevented the conclusion of a solid political agreement despite months of negotiations brokered by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG).

### **3. ISSUE: IS A POLITICAL SOLUTION POSSIBLE?**

The tragedy in Central Africa raises questions of whether a political solution is possible. There are serious obstacles that must be overcome; a necessary first step is to acknowledge that they exist.

#### *The dilemmas of the immediate*

International efforts have focused on:

- humanitarian relief;
- crisis management aimed at:
  - restoring normalcy to Rwanda, especially by facilitating the refugees' return,
  - preventing Burundi from exploding,
  - relieving pressure on Zaire, and, to a lesser extent, on Tanzania.

The root political problem - essentially that the Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority in both Burundi and Rwanda cannot find an acceptable political formula for living together - is still a background issue, overshadowed by more immediate concerns.

Without addressing this fundamental political problem, however, the best that can be hoped for is a temporary truce between these two groups whose capacity for slaughter is virtually unrivalled and, apparently, far from exhausted. Depressingly, despite heroic efforts by UN mediators, and some local and regional politicians, no accord or arrangement so far devised offers a lasting solution.

#### *Bad arithmetic*

The Arusha accords, for example, if fully implemented in Rwanda, would culminate in an election likely to produce a polarization along ethnic lines. This was, broadly, the outcome in the 1993 Burundi elections, in spite of an extensive, multi-year and enlightened government program before the elections de-emphasizing ethnicity and stressing democratic and civic values. Ultimately, given the strength of individuals'