

Estimates of displaced Rwandans in those sectors range from 500,000 to a million. Approximately 300,000 moved into Zaire as refugees during the existence of the French 'safe humanitarian zone'. This would imply that for whatever reason, between 200,000 and 700,000 felt secure enough not to move on to Zaire. French forces also disarmed Rwandan Government Forces (RGF) in the zone, and collected information on human rights violations and passed that information on to the Commission of Experts set up by the Security Council.

There were no reports of conflict between the advancing RPF and the French, and in fact near the end of their mandate the RPF were quietly asking them to delay their departure until UNAMIR was better able to take over. The RPF had initially opposed the French initiative partly from fear that they would delay an RPF victory. Paradoxically the French presence allowed the RPF to ignore that region and more quickly roll over the RGF units in the north and south.

Various humanitarian agencies reported being unable to operate in the region until the French moved in, and subsequently found them open and cooperative¹⁰.

As early as the New York Troop Contributors Meeting of July 7th, the French emphasised their intention to begin their withdrawal at the end of July with total withdrawal no later than the end of August, the 2 month deadline set by SC Res 929. Ironically they appealed for member states to quickly expand UNAMIR and take over from the French.

They completed their withdrawal as of August 21st, and their haste to depart had as much to do with their desire to get out before anything went wrong as much as the deadline set out by the Security Council. The French and most others agreed that they had been fortunate to get out without any serious incident.

Few people want to believe that Operation Turquoise was a success, for the French history in this crisis screams out for condemnation. The French had facilitated Egyptian arms sales to Rwanda¹¹, the French had equipped and trained the RGF, the French had advised and reportedly fought along side the RGF against the RPF, and the French had acted as apologists for RG sanctioned or RGF led massacres of Tutsis. Even during Operation Turquoise, France made no effort to encourage Francophone African nations to join UNAMIR II until after Operation Turquoise as they needed them to camouflage their total control and conduct of Operation Turquoise.

¹⁰ Anecdotally, their replacement UNAMIR units were commanded by an Ethiopian with a military security background. He proved to be much less cooperative and at one point refused to give humanitarian agencies any idea of UNAMIR troop strengths and deployment.

¹¹ see the Human Rights Watch report "Arming Rwanda: the arms trade and human rights abuses in the Rwandan War", pp. 66 January 1994. This report was particularly enlightening about those prepared to sell arms to an unelected regime of an impoverished African country in the midst of a civil war. This included France's role in facilitating the sale of \$6 million in arms by Egypt to Rwanda as well as its own arms transfers to Rwanda combined with the provision of military advisors and up to 680 troops who by many accounts actively participated in the conflict with the RPF.