

The International Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) is slowly picking up speed, three years after its creation. The chief prosecutor, Madam Justice Louise Arbour, has begun dealing with the main mismanagement issues. Although 11 prisoners are already in captivity in Arusha, only two trials have begun. The first sentencing is expected by March. With the expected creation of a second chamber of trial judges, the Tribunal should soon be able to work faster.

After the genocide, the UN Human Rights Field Operation (HRFOR) was created to monitor and investigate the human rights situation and to assist in rebuilding civil society. This is the largest UN human rights field operation ever, although the Government of Rwanda is increasingly vocal in objecting to HRFOR's exercise of its monitoring mandate.

The Rwandan legal system still reflects the traditionally subordinate role of women in Rwandese society. The Rwandan Government intends to undertake reforms in this regard.

After its assumption of power in 1994, the new Government declared a five-year transition phase, during which all grassroots-level activities of political parties was suspended. Recent fighting in Rwanda is indicating that this transition phase might have to be prolonged.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada is continuing its support for national reconciliation. Canada is assisting with the efforts to combat the effects of the 1994 genocide and to ensure it is not repeated. To this end, Canada is concentrating its efforts, bilaterally and multilaterally, on the restoration of an independent Rwandan judicial system.

In its contacts with the Rwandan Government, Canada has repeatedly reiterated its position that a military solution to the problems of the region is not possible. Canada urged the Government to continue its efforts to promote reconciliation between the ethnic groups of the country and to develop a democratic perspective for the country.

Since 1994, Canada has had the lead on the Rwanda resolution adopted by consensus at both CHR and the UN General Assembly 3rd Committee. However, at CHR 53 the African Group insisted that it takeover responsibility for drafting the resolution. The Group's draft text proceeded to call for the elimination of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. The eventual compromise was to replace the Special Rapporteur with a Special Representative, whose mandate is primarily (though not exclusively) focussed on technical assistance. At the last session of the General Assembly, Canada resumed its traditional lead on this resolution. However, the Rwandans lobbied very strongly for the resolution to be dropped and then, once it became clear that this would not be permitted to happen, pressed for language which would have constrained the activities of the Field Operation. At the last minute, redrafting of the resolution preserved the status quo, but it is anticipated that at CHR54, Rwanda will again lobby for the resolution to be dropped.