

contributions from the international community. However, as the international community has had hardly any experience in dealing with this type of emergency, it was left to a non-governmental organization (Réseau des Citoyens-Citizens Network) to take the first steps. Other NGOs, several western countries, the European Union and United Nations agencies have since provided additional support, with varying degrees of success.

Three separate periods can be distinguished between July 1994 and March 1999.

- The first, July 1994 to August 1996, saw the start of the emergency reconstruction phase of a judicial system that was barely functioning. This period concluded with the passing of a law on 30 August 1996 relative to the genocide and massacres.
- The second period, August 1996 to December 1997, saw the application of this law and the first genocide trials. It concluded with the completion of the emergency reconstruction phase.
- The third period began a few months ago with the opening of a debate on the sensitive issue of the measures to be adopted in order to process 125,000 detainees within a reasonable period of time. The government's solution, to develop a form of citizens' justice, is a bold gamble.

This last phase has also been marked by difficulties in trying to establish an appropriate judicial system for the country in regard to the administration of ordinary justice in tandem with the prosecution of the genocide cases, which must always be given priority.

The scene has completely changed over the past four years. Verdicts have been passed on almost 900 people accused of genocide and crimes against humanity at the conclusion of trials that have generally proved satisfactory. The time has now come for the government to reach a compromise between the requirements of justice and the absolute impossibility of bringing the remaining 125,000 detainees to trial before they die in prison. At the institutional level the judicial machinery is more or less operational, but it is still far from being really effective.

B. THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE : A SUMMING-UP

1. The law dealing with the genocide: four categories of criminal

In November 1995 the government invited a number of foreigners to join it in a series of meetings to debate how justice in regard to the genocide and the massacres should be administered. Different formulas were considered, including that implemented in South Africa. Although the genocide was planned and led by a relatively small group, it was perpetrated by a huge number of people transformed into killers overnight. It was inconceivable that the tens of thousands directly involved in the atrocities could be allowed to escape unpunished. A new system had to be devised to encourage the truth to emerge and responsibility to be acknowledged.