

3 CRISIS RESPONSE - Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping

Crisis response, what do we do when catastrophe is imminent or situations have totally deteriorated, is the crux of this study. The Rwandan crisis response divides easily into three separate chapters:

- this Chapter 3 -conflict resolution and peacekeeping**
- Chapter 4 -humanitarian assistance**
- Chapter 5 -human rights violations and protection.**

This Chapter on conflict resolution and peacekeeping can be usefully broken down into two further divisions, the UN and the OAU. While the OAU played a minor role in the UN context, it merits its own subsection to deal generally with debate over regionalism and specifically with the OAU action and inaction in the Rwandan crisis.

3.1 Conflict resolution and peacekeeping - through the United Nations

Throughout this discussion, we must not lose sight of the international legal regime particularly as it applies to the UN. This international regime is populated by a widely disparate group of players with gross differences in power. International customary law and practice provides the overwhelming normative influence for their behaviour.

The United Nations with its member sovereign states with all that the term sovereign implies, ostensibly operates by the rules of its Charter. However it is part and parcel of that larger international legal regime in which power, perception and customary practice reign almost supreme. Also, the UN Charter does not explicitly address internal conflict situations. In previous decades that gap would have been a fundamental flaw in how the UN would have handled a similar Rwandan crisis.

The reaction or inaction of the Security Council and the UN in the face of events in Rwanda post April 6th make it obvious that this flaw remains in part. Fortunately as will be seen, there were