



United Nations and

RWANDA



International Tribunal for Rwanda

On 8 November 1994, the Security Council established the [International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda](#) “for the sole purpose of prosecuting persons responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda and Rwandan citizens responsible for genocide and other such violations committed in the territory of neighbouring States, between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994”. The International Tribunal for Rwanda is located in Arusha, Tanzania.

The experience of the 1994 genocide continues to affect Rwanda and the entire region. It is estimated that 800,000 Rwandans were slaughtered by their fellow countrymen and women. The United Nations force deployed in the country at the time -- the [United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda \(UNAMIR\)](#) -- was neither mandated nor equipped to prevent or halt the genocide.

Independent Inquiry

Five years after the event, the United Nations and the whole international community remain accused of not having prevented the genocide. In view of the enormity of what happened, and the questions that continued to surround the actions of the United Nations and its Member States before and during the crisis, in March 1999 the Secretary-General, with the approval of the Security Council, commissioned an independent inquiry into those actions. The members included Mr. Ingvar Carlsson (former Prime Minister of Sweden), Professor Han Sung- Joo (former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea) and Lieutenant-General Rufus M. Kupolati (rtd.) (Nigeria).

The findings of the inquiry were made public on [15 December 1999](#). The inquiry concluded that the overriding failure in international community’s response was the lack of resources and political will, as well as errors of judgement as to the nature of the events in Rwanda. Expressing deep remorse over the failure to prevent the genocide in Rwanda, the Secretary-General, in a statement on 16 December, said that he fully accepted the conclusions of the report. He welcomed the emphasis which the inquiry had

put on the lessons to be learned, and its recommendations to ensure that the United Nations and the international community could and would act to prevent or halt any other such catastrophe in the future.

Humanitarian Aspects

Health and nutrition indicators in Rwanda reveal dire conditions for many people. A study conducted by the World Bank in 1998 indicated that over 77% of all people in Rwanda live in absolute poverty. Lack of appropriate shelter is also a major problem – an estimated 300,000 families in Rwanda, approximately 20 percent of the total population live under plastic sheeting, in damaged houses or are squatters. The most recent reports indicate that the nutritional situation of hundreds of thousands of the internally-displaced people in north-west Rwanda is particularly precarious.

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