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**A Call for International Response to the
Emergency Situation in Rwanda**

Text of an open letter addressed to:

Current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity
President of the Security Council of the United Nations
Secretary-General of the United Nations
Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity

From:

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I have the honour of writing to you from Cairo, Egypt, where a major international Consultation on conflict management in Africa has been taking place under the joint sponsorship of the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the International Peace Academy (IPA). Over 140 participants, drawn from some 40 African countries, comprising senior military and diplomatic officers, parliamentarians, representatives of international organizations, resource persons, representatives of non-governmental organizations and international observers have been taking part in the Consultation, all participating in their personal capacity.

Throughout the Consultation, the tragic situation in Rwanda has loomed large in our preoccupations, with participants calling for urgent and resolute international response. Drawing on these deliberations, I wish to propose a set of ideas as a possible framework of action in Rwanda, on the part of both the United Nations (UN) and the OAU, as follows:

1. **The need for a multilateral force.** A multilateral force should be organized and deployed under the auspices of the UN in co-operation and co-ordination with the OAU.
2. **UN responsibility.** As well as assuming overall responsibility for the operation, the UN should in particular take charge of the following arrangements: financing; logistical support; and command and control structure. In this connection the Security Council should act to assume its full responsibility to the people of Rwanda without any further delay.
3. **OAU role.** The current Chairman of the OAU and the Secretary-General of the OAU have an important role to play in mobilizing support within Africa as well as within the UN Security Council for this operation. The Secretaries-General of the OAU and the UN should co-ordinate their efforts closely on this matter.
4. **Responsibility of African countries.** As a practical arrangement, in view of the prevailing mood within the international community, African countries should spearhead international response to the Rwanda humanitarian emergency; contingents from African countries should therefore constitute the core and bulk of the proposed force. However, it should be emphasized that being a UN operation, any humanitarian undertaking in Rwanda should be open to universal participation.

5. **Mandate of the force.** The force should be constituted primarily for a humanitarian mission, in particular with the objective of bringing to a halt the ongoing inter-communal atrocities. In this regard the mandate of the force might include the following tasks:

- establish protected areas wherever possible for the protection of displaced persons, women, children, and other non-combatants
- promote and monitor cease-fire arrangements
- establish wherever possible buffer zones to separate the fighting forces.
- ensure access for relief supplies to populations in distress
- secure communication lines necessary for the undertaking of its mission.

The multilateral operation should be authorized to use such force as may be necessary, as a last resort, to accomplish its mission. It is also important to stress that the mandate, size and equipment of the proposed force should correspond to the magnitude of the mission.

6. **Importance of peacemaking.** Simultaneous with the humanitarian operation, current peacemaking efforts should be intensified with a view to achieving a negotiated political settlement which accommodates the legitimate concerns of all Rwandese communities and political formations.

7. **Preventive action in Burundi.** Historical patterns demonstrate that political convulsions in Rwanda tend to spill over into Burundi and vice versa; present developments are unlikely to be an exception, unless preventive action is taken. The OAU and the UN therefore should explore more energetically the prospects for appropriate preventive measures in that country.

I hope these views will be helpful as the UN and the OAU seek to organize an appropriate, swift and effective international response to the horrendous political and humanitarian tragedy unfolding in Rwanda.

Signed:

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