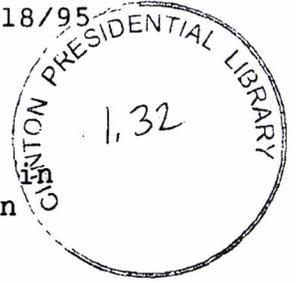


~~SECRET~~Prison Reduction Strategy

Goal: To dramatically reduce the prison population in Rwanda and start trials of the most serious offenders in national custody.

Background: Although the GOR has made some noises about reducing the prison capacity and appears willing to form a Presidential Commission on the issue, hardliners within the government have shown little interest in reducing the prison population, making the jails more humane or beginning trials. Indeed, the prison population has surged from 30,000 in May to 50,000 at present. Although the USG has made various demarches to the Rwandan Government, greater political pressure is needed to gain a reduction in the prison population. Pressure is timely given the lifting of the arms embargo. We may wish to underscore the importance we place on the prison issue by a visit to Rwanda from a senior State Department official to lay out our position. We should also seek support from the ROSG. When appropriate, President Clinton could follow with a call or letter to President Bizimungu and Vice President Kagame.

Message:

To pressure the GOR, we should tell them that we must see tangible progress within one month in the areas enumerated below or the USG will have to review its assistance to the GOR. Given the level of concern within the Congress and the USG about prison conditions, we will tell the GOR that it will be extremely difficult for the US to maintain the level of support we have (e.g., aid to government ministries). It will be difficult to authorize new support (e.g., lethal or non-lethal arms equipment) until we see tangible improvements in the prison situation.

To ensure continued USG assistance, the GOR must show progress in the following areas within the next month:

1. Work with international humanitarian organizations to increase the capacity of its prisons and spread out the population. (We have given \$625,000 to the ICRC to expand prison capacity but could give more money or equipment for this purpose).
2. Release the young (over 400 under age 14), the elderly (over 3,200 age 55 and over), the pregnant and the infirm on humanitarian grounds.
3. Dramatically reduce the number of arrests (currently at 500 a week) by only making arrests where there is sufficient evidence of guilt.

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4. Take steps necessary to appoint Rwandan judges and begin trials in Rwanda.
5. Provide for the security of released prisoners and make clear that reprisal killings will not be tolerated.
6. Give high-level support to a Presidential Commission to develop a political strategy for reducing the prison population, triaging prisoners and re-integrating Hutus. (AID will provide \$300,000 out of the \$4 million rule of law assistance to the Commission, as suggested by post).

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