

## **Rwanda**

### **\* President Seeks Diplomatic Solution to Conflict**

*91AF0142A Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in  
French 24-30 Oct 90 pp 7-8—FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY*

[Interview with Juvenal Habyarimana by S.A. and H.K.;  
date and place not given]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [JEUNE AFRIQUE] Are  
you certain that Tanzania and Uganda will succeed in  
making the "rebels" respect the cease-fire?

[Habyarimana] If President Yoweri Museveni is truly  
convinced of what we decided on 17 October in  
Mwanza, then he will obtain a cease-fire. Furthermore,  
we were to meet, just the two of us. In the end, we agreed

that a third party could join us, which is why President Hassan Mwinyi came, but Uganda and Rwanda are the two main parties.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] You seem to be insinuating that Uganda is your adversary in these events.

[Habyarimana] I am not saying that, but President Museveni does bear some responsibility! He worked with the people who attacked us. They are officers who served in his army.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] Then you are saying they are Ugandans?

[Habyarimana] They are Rwandans who were living in Uganda. There are also Ugandans that Museveni wanted to get rid of.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] Do you maintain that these are ethnic conflicts?

[Habyarimana] No, it is not an ethnic problem. There are Tutsis in our army fighting the rebels, among whom there may be non-Tutsis. It is a refugee problem concerning all countries in the region. Moreover, this is why, at our 17 October meeting, we decided to call for the organization of a regional conference on refugees that would mainly involve Rwanda, but also Uganda, Burundi, Zaire, Tanzania, and even Kenya, because we have refugees there.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] When you came to power, you accused Gregoire Kayibanda's regime of engaging in "ethnicism" in excluding the Tutsi minority. What is your position 17 years later?

[Habyarimana] Under the First Republic, they blamed all our problems, all our sins, on one ethnic group. I could not accept this. I personally tried—and everyone knows this—to bring in all Rwandans. Moreover, there are Hutus who criticize me by saying that President Habyarimana has betrayed them!

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] But you have not in fact done away with including ethnic affiliation on Rwandans' ID cards.

[Habyarimana] It would not bother me to do so, but what is more important: to do away with a written notation or eliminate the complex in the minds of individuals? Just because I am identified as a Hutu on my ID card does not mean I think I am superior to others. But whether they mention it or not, I am a Hutu and a Tutsi will always be Tutsi!

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] Why not make the political decision, even if it is purely a formality, to do away with that ethnic identification?

[Habyarimana] I must say that the problem has never concerned me too much. When I was born, ID cards showed Hutu or Tutsi or Twa, but you can do away with it. I am willing to do it if it is so important.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] There will remain another discriminatory symbol: the quota system that continues to be applied in order to reserve spots in the schools or government or the army depending on one's ethnic affiliation.

[Habyarimana] Let me give you an example: We have 4,000 openings in the high schools and 30,000 pupils who have just completed elementary school. Consequently, there is not room for everyone and we have to make a selection based on regions and ethnic groups.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] But in so doing, you reinforce what you call the ethnic complex!

[Habyarimana] They have that system in Belgium, where they make a distinction between the Flemish and Walloons.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] That is a poor example. The Belgians have not solved the problem and will not resolve it because they have the additional problem of language.

[Habyarimana] Let us not talk about ethnic groups but of regions. If the people from a single prefecture raffled off all civil service jobs, what would happen to the Rwandan Government?

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] On what criteria would the selection be based?

[Habyarimana] On the criteria of representation in the national community: 85 percent Hutu, 14 percent Tutsi, and 1 percent Twa.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] Are those criteria systematically applied?

[Habyarimana] Nothing is systematic.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] Will they be applied to choose the Rwandans abroad who will be authorized to return home?

[Habyarimana] Absolutely not. All Rwandans can return to their country. Moreover, they are not all refugees; there are also emigres. Furthermore, we had already begun to study that problem when they attacked us. We outlined several hypotheses: Rwandans living in Uganda and wishing to remain there and become naturalized Ugandans will be naturalized; Rwandans living in Uganda and wishing to become Rwandans again will do so; Rwandans wishing to be Rwandan and return to Rwanda will return as such to Rwanda.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] Do you know the exact number of Rwandans who have fled abroad?

[Habyarimana] There has never been any real count. Some give the figure of 2 million, but I wonder if there are over 500,000 or 600,000. We only know there are 150,000 in Uganda.

[JEUNE AFRIQUE] In your opinion, how many of them will return?

[Habyarimana] I could not tell you, but during my meeting with Presidents Mwinyi and Museveni, they told me that even if Rwanda agrees to take in all Rwandans abroad, a maximum of one-fourth of them would return. However, if there are 500,000, I will take them in. I do not want people to keep telling me that the scarcity of land and overpopulation are nothing but excuses for me to use. In some regions, we have up to 1,000 inhabitants per square kilometer, but I am saying to the international community: Everyone can return home. Just help us to repatriate and resettle them.