



ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE AFRICAINE

B.P. 3243

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**The appeal of the Secretary General, H.E. Salim A. Salim  
for Urgent and Increased Relief Assistance to meet the  
deepening Humanitarian Tragedy facing Rwandese Refugees  
and Displaced Persons**

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I continue to be gravely preoccupied by the deepening humanitarian crisis compounded by the cholera epidemic which has already claimed the lives of thousands of Rwandese refugees in Goma and elsewhere. I am equally concerned at the plight of the millions of displaced persons in Rwanda.

I very much appreciate and commend the great humanitarian work being done by staff of various aid and relief agencies, including those of the UN System with meagre resources and means at their disposal and at immense risk to themselves. The magnitude of the tragedy as exemplified by the mounting deaths clearly demonstrates that even as hard as the International Community has tried, much more needs to be done in terms of urgently moving in the acutely needed food, medicines, clean water and shelter, to the refugees in Goma and elsewhere, as well as to the displaced persons inside Rwanda.



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I note with appreciation the efforts underway by a number of countries to respond to the catastrophe in material terms. I wish to urge them to move with greater speed, to send in the needed supplies and equipment. The toll which the cholera epidemic has already claimed and the estimates of the likely number of deaths in the next few days are horrendous. The International Community therefore needs to act and do so now. Any further delay, will only mean more suffering and more deaths.

Equally, I wish to launch an urgent and solemn appeal to Africa - individuals, entrepreneurs, non-governmental organizations, institutions and association, to come to the help of their fellow Africans. Charity begins at home. Africa doctors, nurses and other needed personnel therefore ought to be seen working alongside their colleagues from outside Africa, who have with so much selflessness worked indefatigably to save lives of the victims of the cholera epidemic in Goma.

The neighbouring countries of Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire, have been seriously affected by the influx of the Rwandese refugees. The limited resources of these countries have been stretched to the limit. Even with all the characteristic good will and hospitality inherent in African traditions, these countries cannot sustain support to these refugees without continuing and increased international



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assistance. As I call upon the International Community to redouble their efforts, I urge the other African countries, in particular, to show example and join hands in bringing succor and hope to the Rwandese refugees and displaced persons.

Of course as we seek to bring help to the refugees and displaced persons, we realize that ultimately, a durable solution to the crisis lies in the resolution of the underlying political causes. The Arusha Peace Agreement continues to provide a framework within which these can be addressed. Now that we have a cease-fire and a new government in the country, I wish to urge all the parties and every citizen of Rwanda to seize this as a moment of a new beginning towards irreversibly defeating the forces of division and of destruction and reaching out for reconciliation and building National Unity as the basis for true and enduring peace in the country. Now the challenge is winning peace and providing the necessary political confidence for the return of the refugees and displaced persons and addressing the humanitarian tragedy of unprecedented proportions which Rwanda is facing.

Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

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