

Amnesty appeals to Rwanda to halt persecution of Tutsi minority

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LONDON, June 4 (AFP) - Amnesty International appealed Thursday to Rwanda's new national unity government to halt widescale persecution of the country's minority Tutsi population.

More than 1,000 Tutsis have been extrajudicially executed since 1990 while dozens of others have "disappeared" or been tortured while detained without trial, the London-based human rights watchdog organisation said in a 33-page report.

Those responsible for violations had been able to act with impunity, Amnesty said.

Most of the violations happened following an armed invasion of northern Rwanda in October 1990 by mainly Tutsi Rwandese exiles of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (FPR).

Serious abuses committed by the FPR, including arbitrary killings of captives and civilians, were met with

a violent response by government security forces, drawn primarily from Rwanda's majority Hutu population.

Security forces, often supported by armed Hutu civilians, attacked Tutsi suspected of supporting or sympathising with the rebels, Amnesty said.

Several hundred Tutsi were reportedly killed in October 1990 and more than 500 others in early 1991.

More than 8,000 people, mostly Tutsi, were detained without trial, including prisoners of conscience, the report said. Some were tortured or ill-treated and dozens "disappeared."

Amnesty said virtually all detainees had been released by the end of February 1992, which it welcomed, but it called on the Kigali government to take immediate steps to prevent further human rights violations.

(Attention embargo)

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