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## ASSASSINATIONS OF PRESIDENTS OF RWANDA AND BURUNDI

### Summary

1. Secretariat informs Members of the Council on 6 April of the assassinations of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi who were flying back to Kigali from Dar es Salaam in the former's aircraft when it crashed near Kigali airport. French Permanent Representative, drawing on press reports, says that the aircraft was shot down. Rwandese Permanent Representative confirms the aircraft was hit by a rocket and says that work is underway to recover the bodies. Council Members authorise the President of the Council to express their condolences to the press and their hope that the peace process will not be destroyed and that calm will prevail. They observe a minute's silence in a formal meeting of the Council (on Bosnia) later that evening.

### Detail

2. In informal consultations of Members of the Security Council on 6 April Gharekhan (Special Political Adviser to the Secretary-General) announced he had some "sad and tragic news" to impart to the Council. He said that the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi had been travelling back to Kigali from a summit meeting in Dar es Salaam when their aircraft crashed near Kigali airport killing them. He would inform the Council when he had further information.

3. Keating (New Zealand and President) said he wished, on behalf of the Council, to express to the Permanent Representative of Rwanda deepest sympathy and condolences.

4. Merimee (France) added his condolences. He said that, from

press reports, it seemed that the aircraft had been shot down while landing. This was indeed very serious; the Council would appreciate the consequences. There might be a reaction from certain sections of the population. Since UN troops were on the ground the Secretariat would have to come to grips with the situation rapidly and look at both the safety of the troops and their mandate, since they must help to ensure the security of Kigali. It was very distressing that fanatics were trying to destroy the peace process when peace was so close.

5. Bizimana (Rwanda) expressed his gratitude for the expressions of sympathy which he would convey to the people of Rwanda and the families of those killed. This was not an accident. The two heads of state had been assassinated while returning from a regional conference on the situation in Rwanda and Burundi. The Presidential aircraft had been shot down by a rocket and had caught fire. His latest information was that work was underway to recover the bodies. The President of Rwanda had been travelling with close aides. The attack had been committed by enemies of the peace process. The consequences could not at present be measured. The situation would no doubt be difficult. The Council and the UN in general, which had done so much to support the people of Rwanda through UNAMIR, should continue to support them at this critical moment.

6. A number of members of the Council also expressed their condolences. It was agreed that Keating should address the press and express the hope that the tragedy would not destroy the peace process, that calm would prevail and that all would refrain from acts of violence. He did so. At a formal meeting of the Council to adopt a statement on Bosnia later Keating once again expressed the condolences of the Council and called for a minute's silence. Bizimana was of course present in his capacity as a Member of the Council; Sinunguruza (Burundi) was unaware of the assassination of his President and had to be summoned to attend.

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