

Rwanda Domestic Media Report (September 21-28, 2010)

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State-Owned Media Sources

*Radio France Internationale – 23 September 2010: **DR Congo army to launch offensive to recapture rebel-controlled mines***

- DR Congo Armed Forces (FARDC) announced the launch of a massive military offensive in the east of the country against the Rwandan FDLR rebels, in order to recapture mines in the region that had been overrun by the latter in the ongoing conflict between the two groups.
- Villages in the region have experienced an escalation of violent attacks by armed groups in the last month.
- The UN force in the region, Monusco (UN Mission for Stabilization in DR Congo), has responded with Operation “shop window”, which spokesperson Lt Col Amadou Gaye said was successful in preventing the escalation of violence and in reassuring the population. The force consists of 400 men covering 4,000 sq meters of ground; however, the risk of violence escalating due to the upcoming FARDC attack is high.

Privately-Owned Media Sources

*The New Times website (retrieved from BBC Monitoring) – 23 September 2010: **Rwandan troops leave for Darfur***

- 85 Rwandan peacekeeping troops were deployed to Khartoum, Sudan as part of a routine rotation of the 254 Rwandan troops currently in the region as part of the UN-African Union joint mission in Darfur (UNAMID).
- Rwanda is scheduled to complete its peacekeeping mission in the region at the end of the month.
- The Army and Defense spokesman did, however, reiterate Rwanda’s commitment to pulling out its peacekeeping troops earlier should the UN draft report leaked in August be published (see report from week of 10-20 Sept).

*Sudan Tribune (retrieved from BBC Monitoring) – 25 September 2010: **Rwanda leader affirms troops will remain in Sudan***

- Rwandan President Paul Kagame confirmed that Rwanda has **rescinded its threat made in August to withdraw its peacekeeping troops from Darfur** should a leaked report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights be released.
- The announcement was made by UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Alain Le Roy, following the annual meeting of the UN Assembly this past week.

- The report accuses the Rwandan Defence Force (RDF) of war crimes committed between 1994-2003, when the latter invaded Congo to hunt down rebel Hutu refugees involved in the 1994 Genocide.
- Currently, there are 3,446 Rwandan troops serving with the UN contingency in Darfur and in Sudan.

*IRIN (retrieved from allafrica.com) – 24 September 2010: **Killings spread fear in Burundi***

- 14 bodies were discovered northwest of the capital, Bujumbura, in the Ngozi province bordering Rwanda earlier this week.
- The dead include a senior policeman and two military officials.
- Officials have attributed the violence to various rebel groups (including the Rwandan FDLR) located in the volatile eastern region of the DR Congo.
- 22 suspects have been detained in connection with the murders; however, the chair of the Association for the Protection of Human Rights said he had been unable to find out the location of the suspects being detained.
- Tensions had been mounting in Burundi since elections earlier this month.

*UN News Service (retrieved from allafrica.com) – 24 September 2010: **Preliminary UN report confirms over 300 rapes in Eastern DR Congo by FDLR***

- A UN human rights team confirmed that at least 303 civilians were raped between 30 July and 2 August in the far east region of the DR Congo; the volatile and systematic nature of the rapes stand out among the ongoing violence in the area.
- According to the report, the attacks were executed by a “coalition” of three armed groups, including the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). Local officials speculate that the reason behind the attacks was to punish the local population whom the attackers saw as ‘traitors’.
- The report released on the subject blames the Monusco forces in the region for failing to adequately prepare or be trained in the protection of civilians.

*The New Times website (retrieved from allafrica.com) – 27 September 2010: **Radio program calls back RDF and criticize leaked UN report***

- Callers and interviewees on the talk-show program *Ibyiza Biri Imbere* on City Radio showed united support for the RDF (formerly the RPA), whom the UN report leaked in August accuses of violence and war crimes in the DR Congo.
- Not a single caller voiced any support for the UN report for the duration of the 2-hour show. Callers advocated for “mass street protests against the UN establishment”; some also called for an investigation into the failure of the UN to prevent the 1994 Genocide.

*The New Times website (retrieved from BBC Monitoring) – 28 September 2010: **UN pushes for prosecution of Rwanda rebel leaders***

- UN special representative on the prevention of sexual violence and conflict, Margot Wallstrom, announced to the UN Human Rights Council yesterday

that the UN will push for justice against those rebel groups accused of mass rape of civilians in the eastern DR Congo (see brief above).

- A list of names of militia leaders from the FDLR and the Mayi-Mayi that may be charged with war crimes has already been drafted. Wallstrom stressed that the window of opportunity until the “trail grows cold and media attention fades” is small.