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10 May 2006

**RWA101153.E**

Rwanda: Forced recruitment into the state security apparatus or for activities involving espionage or denunciation within Rwanda. Forced recruitment into the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), whether in an official or tacit capacity or for espionage or denunciation (2003-2006)

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The Rwandan government is led by President Paul Kagame, leader of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) political party (*Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Intro.). The Rwandan state security apparatus is composed of the Rwandan Defense Forces (RDF), responsible for "external security", and the National Police, responsible for "internal security" (*ibid.*, Sec. 1.d). Additionally, the Local Defense Forces (LDF), which are not constitutionally established but fall under the Ministry of Interior, assist police by conducting "basic security guard duties" (*ibid.*). However, these forces have also been described as a "paramilitary government militia" (*Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers* 17 Nov. 2004; HRW May 2003, 14) and have reportedly acted in that capacity in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (*Coalition* 17 Nov. 2004).

### Forced recruitment into the state security apparatus

According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004*, once a citizen has served in the military, the government can oblige them to return to duty at any time (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 1.f). No further information on such military obligations could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. *Country Reports 2004* related that children living in refugee camps within Rwanda were being recruited, "sometimes forcibly," into the ranks of the Congolese Rally For Democracy-Goma (RCD-G) with the assistance of Rwandan officials (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). The United Nations Security Council Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo also reported that Congolese "recruitment drives" occurred within Rwandan refugee camps and "documented Rwandan support for [this] militarization of youth," (UN 25 Jan. 2005, para. 186; *ibid.*, para 191; see also *Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2.d; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5), which was facilitated by the exchange of money (UN 25 Jan. 2005, para. 192). Though by the end of 2005, "[t]here were no further reports of such activities" (*Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2.d).

In 2003, the government announced plans "to integrate the LDF into the National Police force" (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 1.d), yet no information as to the realization of this plan could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. Sources reported that children were enlisted

as members of the LDF (Coalition 17 Nov. 2004; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5), with most joining voluntarily, but some being "conscript[ed] by local authorities" (Coalition 17 Nov. 2004). According to the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, the LDF's participation in military exercises in the DRC "reportedly led to increased recruitment in Rwanda of child soldiers, including street children" (17 Nov. 2004). There were no reports, however, of children being enlisted into the LDF in 2005 (*Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 5).

In response to March 2004 attacks from rebels based in the DRC, the government initiated nightly security patrols and obliged citizens to take part (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 1.f). Those who declined to participate were assaulted and detained (*ibid.*).

No information on security forces forcibly compelling participation in acts of espionage or denunciation could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

### **Forced recruitment into the Rwandan Patriotic Front**

Among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate, information on forced recruitment into the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and on coercive measures through which it garnered support centres around the 25 August 2003 presidential and parliamentary elections (AI 22 Aug. 2003).

Sources outline the pressure tactics used by the RPF during the 2003 pre-election period as follows: detention of opposition supporters (*Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 3; AI 22 Aug. 2003); intimidation and harassment (*Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 3), including violence and death threats (AI 22 Aug. 2003); disappearances (HRW May 2003, 1); and coerced recruitment into the RPF (*ibid.*, 3; NORDEM Dec. 2003, 8; AI 22 Aug. 2003).

Opposition supporters had reportedly been detained and their release made conditional on renouncing support for opposition parties (NORDEM Dec. 2003, 28; AI 22 Aug. 2003) and agreeing to display RPF symbols (*ibid.*). Over the course of the 2003 campaign period an estimated 300 people, mostly aligned with opposition candidate Faustin Twagiramungu, were detained (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005 Sec. 1.d). According to Amnesty International, incidents of this nature are often unreported for fear of retaliation (22 Aug. 2003). *Country Reports 2004* likewise indicated that actions taken by state agents during the presidential campaign resulted in a climate of fear (28 Feb. 2005 Sec. 2.b). The coercive tactics surrounding the 2003 election "point to a pervasive pressure to sign up to the dominant party line" (NORDEM Dec. 2003, 28).

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that "persons have joined the RPF because they believed they had no other choice and some have been threatened with sanctions if they chose not to do so" (May 2003, 3). The RPF's recruitment efforts target respected community members, "such as teachers" (HRW May 2003, 3).

Accusations of "divisionism," or threats thereof, were used by the RPF to coerce citizens into becoming party members (HRW May 2003, 1; *ibid.*, 3). Law No. 47 of 2001, as translated by the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM), defines divisionism as "any oral or written statement, or any act of division that may generate conflict in the population" (NORDEM Dec. 2003, 8). Accusations of this "grave crime" (*ibid.*) have been used by state agents to silence criticism of government policies (*ibid.*; *Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2.a; HRW May 2003, 1). In one region of Rwanda it was suspected that the reason for disproportionately high charges of divisionism was the population's refusal to vote for the RPF in 2003 (*Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2.a). Divisionism carries a sentence of up to five years in prison and/or financial penalty (*ibid.*).

*Country Reports 2004*, on the subject of coerced denunciations, related that "there were reports that local government officials incited Tutsi citizens to make false accusations against or discriminate against Hutus" following the Rwandan parliament's release of its June 2004 report on genocidal ideology (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). No incitements of this kind were reported in 2005 (*Country Reports 2005* 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 5).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

Amnesty International (AI). 22 August 2003. "Rwanda: Run-up to Presidential Elections Marred by Threats and Harassment." (AFR 47/010/2003) <<http://www.amnesty.org/library/print/ENGAFR470102003>> [Accessed 17 Mar. 2006]

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#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** République Rwandaise Commission Electorale Nationale; European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI.net); ElectionGuide.org; Human Rights Watch (HRW); Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN); International Crisis Group (ICG); Ligue des Droits de la personne dans la région des Grands Lacs (LDGL); Ligue Rwandaise pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LIPRODHOR); Radio France Internationale (RFI); ReliefWeb; Reporters Without Borders; Transparency International; Twagiramungu.net; United Kingdom Home Office, Immigration and Nationality Directorate; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); U.S. Committee for Refugees; War Resisters International.

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