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18 March 2008

RWA102783.E

Rwanda: Whether the authorities force some Hutus to become active members for life of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF); reports of individuals in Bibare or Kigali being detained and tortured in order to exact signed agreements to become life members of the RPF

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In 14 March 2008 correspondence to the Research Directorate, a specialist on Rwanda who is a senior advisor to the Africa Division of Human Rights Watch (HRW) provided the following information concerning recruitment practices of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) [or the Front Patriotique Rwandais, RPF]:

[T]here is strong RPF pressure to recruit anyone--Hutu or Tutsi--who seems to show some leadership ability. This has been the case since 2000.

Human Rights Watch has documented many different forms of pressure applied to persons who do not immediately agree to join the party. Some are threatened with loss of job, others are subject to pressure from friends or local officials, still others are denied administrative ordinary services to which they should usually have access.

I do not know of any specific case where someone has been detained and subjected to torture in order to force adherence to the RPF although I would not exclude this possibility. I would suppose that the more usual approach would be to detain a person on some other pretext, which the person in question would then suppose was the necessary consequence of his or her refusal to join the party. Once detained, the person could also be subject to ill-treatment. (14 Mar. 2008)

On 17 March 2008, the Senior Advisor sent further correspondence indicating that she had just received a report from Rwanda of a specific case of an individual being pressured to join the RPF (17 Mar. 2008). The person was reportedly "ordered to report to the local RPF branch to swear allegiance to the party," which he had apparently refused to join up to that time (Senior Advisor to HRW 17 Mar. 2008). The Special Advisor to HRW was not certain of the consequences that this individual might face should he continue to refuse to join the RPF; however, she stated that "certainly this kind of activity is increasing, given that legislative elections are planned for September or October [2008] and the RPF wants another astonishing victory" (ibid.). Further or corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Information specific to Bibare or Kigali could not be found among the sources

consulted by the Research Directorate.

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

Special Advisor, Africa Division of Human Rights Watch (HRW). 17 March 2008. Correspondence.

_____. 14 March 2008. Correspondence.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: A professor of African Law and Politics at the University of Antwerp, Belgium provided contact information for the Special Advisor, Africa Division of Human Rights Watch (HRW). An assistant professor of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison likewise suggested another contact.

Internet sites, including: African Research Bulletin (ARB), *Africa Today*, *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs*, AllAfrica, Amnesty International (AI), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Freedom House, GlobalSecurity.org, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), *Jeune Afrique*, Minority Rights International, Réseau Documentaire International sur la Région des Grands Lacs Africains, United Kingdom Home Office, United States Department of State, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI).

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