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U.N. Delays Release of Report on Possible Congo Genocide

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UNITED NATIONS — Rwandan outrage over a report suggesting that its troops might have been responsible for genocide in neighboring Congo during a decade of violence there prompted the United Nations on Thursday to delay the official release of the report for a month.

Navi Pillay, the high commissioner for human rights, said in a statement from her headquarters in Geneva that the report would be released on Oct. 1, giving all nations mentioned in it the chance to respond to the extensive study of violence in Congo from 1993 through 2003. Any comments submitted could be published along with the report, she said.

The countries with the most troops in Congo during that period — Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Angola and Burundi — all received copies of the report in July for their comments. But Rwanda and Uganda responded more with fury than by addressing the report's substance, senior diplomats said, and the pending release created significant tension.

The postponement was widely seen among diplomats as a face-saving gesture orchestrated by Secretary General Ban Ki-moon after Rwanda angrily dismissed the accusations as “fatally flawed” and threatened to pull 3,600 peacekeeping troops out of the long-troubled mission in Darfur.

Senior United Nations officials, along with key member states, hope a month will give them time to persuade Rwanda to keep its forces in Darfur. The report had been scheduled for release on Friday, but its contents had already been reported in Le Monde, The New York Times and other newspapers.

United Nations officials and other diplomats are expected to try to persuade Rwanda to continue its commitment to Darfur by arguing that destabilizing Sudan at this critical juncture would harm all Africa. A withdrawal might also increase the possibility of yet more slaughter in Darfur. Finally, the peacekeeping mission in Darfur is a joint effort with the African Union, so having a major contributor pull out could call into question the union's reliability as a partner.

In addition, Mr. Ban is believed to be trying to spare the Rwandan president, Paul Kagame, certain embarrassment. His inauguration is scheduled for next week; he was re-elected in August, although in an election considered flawed by outside observers.

In addition, Mr. Kagame is one of the co-chairmen of an organization of politicians, business leaders and development executives who are supposed to suggest ways that the United Nations and its members can meet eight major goals to combat global poverty.

At the first gathering of the organization, known as the M.D.G. Advocacy Group, in Madrid in July, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, the prime minister of Spain and the other co-chairman, refused to meet with Mr. Kagame.

A summit meeting of world leaders in advance of the United Nations [General Assembly](#) will focus on the Millennium Development Goals, as they are called, starting Sept. 20. Rwanda has long accused the world of ignoring the 1994 [genocide](#) there, during which more than 800,000 people, predominantly members of the ethnic Tutsi group, were killed by members of the Hutu tribe.

Although Rwanda won plaudits from outside investors for its efforts to rebuild, and aid groups credited the nation for its economic reforms and promotion of women, a recent suppression of opposition voices has led to questions about Mr. Kagame's commitment to democracy. The delayed 545-page report, which documents 600 of the worst atrocities in Congo, contends that invading troops from Rwanda and their rebel allies killed tens of thousands of Hutus, including many civilians. After a Tutsi-led government seized power in Rwanda, Hutu militias and civilians fled across the border to Congo, then known as Zaire. Rwandan troops pursued them, according to the report.