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## **Another War Is Threatening Central Africa**

**By BARBARA CROSSETTE**

UNITED NATIONS, June 1 — Burundi, where competition for power between an ethnic Hutu majority and a Tutsi minority has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths in several decades of sporadic fighting, may be on the brink of a new war, a Security Council mission and a leading independent conflict-prevention group warned this week.

Gareth Evans, former foreign minister of Australia and now president of the International Crisis Group, said at a news conference here on Thursday that the potential for the type of genocide that occurred in Rwanda, where more than half a million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were massacred in 1994, existed in Burundi. The Security Council, he warned, seems unprepared to act.

The International Crisis Group, a research and advocacy organization, has become known for its blunt, even undiplomatic, reports that are intended to raise alarms "before the blood flows," Mr. Evans said.

A recent report on Burundi found that a peace accord negotiated last August in Arusha, Tanzania, by former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa was unraveling. The country, Mr. Evans said, was on the brink of a new war.

The report concluded that "the limited achievements of the Arusha accord are shriveling to nothing." And it warned that President Pierre Buyoya, who seized power in a coup in 1996, "faces the real risk of assassination."

A Security Council delegation of 12 ambassadors, who returned last week from a 10-day trip to Africa, came to many of the same conclusions.

Reporting to the council, the ambassadors, led by Jean-David Levitte of France, said Mr. Buyoya had acknowledged a virtual state of war along his borders, as Hutu rebels in Burundi crossed from Tanzania and Congo.

The International Crisis Group report went further than council members could go diplomatically.

It recommends that Mr. Mandela find a way to get Mr. Buyoya out of the country and out of power.

If he refuses to go, the report adds, he should be threatened with "personal sanctions," including the freezing of his overseas assets and restrictions on his travel.

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