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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4913  
INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
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ROME FOR WFP  
YAOUNDE FOR DATT

E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: PEF, PHUM, PREL, RW, BY  
SUBJECT: BURUNDI REFUGEES IN RWANDA AT 200,000

1. SUMMARY. UNHCR REPORTED AN ESTIMATED 200,000 REFUGEES, MOSTLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, HAD REACHED SOUTHERN RWANDA BY EVENING OCTOBER 23, WITH THE GREATEST CONCENTRATION SOUTHEAST OF BUTARE. UNHCR, WHICH HEADED A JOINT UN AGENCY-GOVERNMENT MISSION TO THE AFFECTED AREAS, SAID INTERVIEWS SUGGEST MOST FLED FROM FEAR; FEW SHOWED SIGNS OF INJURIES. UNHCR WILL

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Charles Daris, Senior Reviewer

BRIEF DONORS AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 25 ON CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS BY SECTOR. UN AGENCIES AND NGO'S, ALREADY IN COUNTRY TO ASSIST WAR-DISPLACED IN THE NORTH, ARE ALREADY MOBILIZING TO USE STOCKS ON HAND TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS; THESE RESOURCES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO COVER ALL THE PEOPLE FOR LONG. WITH ALL OF THESE AGENCIES STRETCHED THIN IN THE NORTH, VEHICLES AND STAFF ARE URGENT NEEDS ALONG WITH FOOD AND NON-FOOD ITEMS. BELGIUM IS BRINGING IN FOUR PLANELOADS OF NON-FOOD ITEMS AND ADDITIONAL STAFF FOR THE BELGIAN RED CROSS. EMBASSY/USAID BELIEVE ROLE FOR USG AID WILL BE INDICATED AND WILL ADVISE SOONEST. END SUMMARY.

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2. UNHCR MOBILIZED. ON THE DAY OF THE BURUNDI COUP, 10/21, UNHCR ALERTED GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL RWANDAN OFFICIALS AS WELL AS UN AGENCIES AND NGO'S TO A POSSIBLE REFUGEE INFLUX. IT ALSO CONTACTED ITS OFFICES IN NAIROBI ABOUT AVAILABILITY OF NON-FOOD ITEMS SUCH AS TENTS AND BLANKETS. (NONE ARE AVAILABLE.) UN AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS MET 10/22 TO POOL INFORMATION. ICRC ESTIMATED 35,000 REFUGEES HAD ARRIVED BY 10/22 WITH THE POTENTIAL FOR A TOTAL OF 60,000. ON 10/23, A JOINT INTER-UN AGENCY/GOVERNMENT MISSION, INCLUDING THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTER FOR LABOR AND SOCIAL SERVICES, WHO COVERS REFUGEES, FANNED OUT TO THE COMMUNES ALONG THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE RWANDAN BORDER WITH BURUNDI TO ESTIMATE NUMBERS AND NEEDS OF ARRIVING REFUGEES.

3. NUMBERS. AS OF 10/23, UNHCR WAS USING A WORKING FIGURE OF 200,000 REFUGEES. THE JOINT MISSION DETERMINED THAT IN THE BUTARE PREFECTURE ALONE, UP TO 191,000 PERSONS HAD ARRIVED, WITH THE GREATEST CONCENTRATION IN THE COMMUNE OF KIBAYI, A BIT NORTHEAST OF NGOZI IN BURUNDI. NUMBERS HERE SOARED FROM AN ESTIMATED 30,000 TO 100,000 IN ONE DAY. UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE, CARLOS RODRIGUEZ, TOLD DCM THAT HE SAW THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WAITING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE AKANYARU RIVER TO CROSS, WITH MORE WALKING TOWARD THE RIVER. ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE JOINT MISSION DESCRIBED A SIMILAR SCENE AT A DIFFERENT POINT ALONG THE RIVER.

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4. POPULATION PROFILE. A PRELIMINARY READOUT FROM UNHCR INDICATES THAT, WHILE THERE ARE SOME MEN OF ALL AGES, MOST OF THE REFUGEES ARE WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND OLD PEOPLE, THE MOST VULNERABLE GROUPS OF THE POPULATION. MOST ARE HUTU.

5. REASONS FOR FLIGHT. UNHCR SAID FEAR APPARENTLY TRIGGERED THE EXODUS. MOST REFUGEES INTERVIEWED BY MEMBERS OF THE JOINT MISSION SAID THEY FLED FROM FEAR, HAVING HEARD ABOUT INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE.

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GENERALLY, THE REFUGEES REPORTED INCIDENTS OF ETHNIC AND POLITICAL CLASHES AS WELL AS SCORE-SETTLING. SOME SAID THEY HAD WITNESSED KILLINGS OR HEARD SHOOTING. SOME WOMEN REPORTED SEEING HOUSES BURNING. SOME SAID THEY ARE FRODEBU PARTY MEMBERS WHO FEARED REPRISALS.

6. HEALTH SITUATION. UNHCR JUDGES THE CURRENT STATE OF HEALTH OF THE REFUGEES TO BE FAIR. IN EACH PREFECTURE VISITED, HOWEVER, JOINT MISSION MEMBERS SAW CASES OF MEASLES, AND RADIO RWANDA REPORTED CHOLERA AND DYSENTERY AS WELL. UNICEF, THE BELGIAN RED CROSS, AND CARITAS MET AFTERNOON OF 10/24 TO DETERMINE NEEDS AND DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING THEM.

7. INJURIES. UNHCR AND A WFP MEMBER OF THE JOINT MISSION TOLD DCM THEY HAD SEEN FEW INJURIES AMONG THE REFUGEES. THREE REFUGEES WHO WERE INJURED WERE TAKEN TO A LOCAL HOSPITAL. A COUPLE OF OTHERS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO KIGALI HOSPITAL. JOINT MISSION MEMBERS  
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AND RWANDAN AND INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS REPORTED SEEING BODIES IN THE AKANYARU RIVER WHICH REFUGEES MUST CROSS TO ENTER RWANDA. DCM, ON A HELICOPTER TRIP ORGANIZED 10/24 BY RWANDAN MILITARY FOR DIPLOMATS, SAW 16 BODIES IN AN AREA WELL DOWN-RIVER FROM THE AREA OF THE INFLUX, BUT COULD NOT CONFIRM REPORTS OF 200 BODIES FROM THE DAY BEFORE. THERE IS SOME SUSPICION THAT THE BODIES ARE THOSE OF TUTSIS KILLED BY FLEEING HUTUS.

(FYI. REFUGEES DID REPORT THAT THE HOSPITAL IN THE

COMMUNE OF BUGABERA IN THE PREFECTURE OF KIRUNDO IS FULL. RADIO RWANDA REPORTED ATTACKS ON HOSPITALS IN BURUNDI BY GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS. REPORTS REACHING THE EMBASSY VIA AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST WHO HAS TALKED WITH REFUGEES INDICATE A HOSPITAL AT KIREMBA, ALONG THE MAIN ROAD NEAR THE RWANDA BORDER) WAS ATTACKED BY GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS AND A GERMAN NURSE WAS INJURED. END FYI.)

8. FOOD. IMPENDING DROUGHT IN RWANDA AND THE UNAVAILABILITY OF BEANS ON THE LOCAL OR REGIONAL MARKET WILL UNDOUBTEDLY COMPLICATE THE PROVISION OF FOOD FOR THIS MASSIVE INFLUX OF REFUGEES. THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES WILL BRIEF ON THIS AT THE AFTERNOON MEETING. WHEN THE NUMBER WAS ESTIMATED AT 60,000 ON 10/23, WFP THOUGHT IT COULD HANDLE IMMEDIATE FOOD NEEDS WITH FOOD IN STOCK. WFP IS NOW ESTIMATING THAT IT CAN PROVIDE OIL AND CSM FOR UP TO 300,000 PERSONS FOR ONE MONTH. CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE AVAILABLE SOME OF THE

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FOOD IT HAS EN ROUTE TO RWANDA FOR WAR-DISPLACED.

9. SHELTER. REFUGEES ARE NOW STAYING IN THE OPEN AIR. UNHCR HAS NO TENTS OR BLANKETS IN STOCK. IT EXPECTS TO HAVE TO PROCURE TENTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET, ALTHOUGH EMBASSY HAS ADVISED UNHCR THAT A LOCAL COMPANY IS MAKING TENTS IN ANTICIPATION OF MILITARY DEMOBILIZATION. BLANKETS CAN BE PROCURED LOCALLY BUT NOT IN THE QUANTITY THAT WILL BE NEEDED. THE SWISS HAVE ALREADY PROMISED SOME FUNDING FOR LOCAL PURCHASE OF RELIEF ITEMS.

10. AID AGENCIES. UNHCR, ICRC, UNICEF, BELGIAN RED

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CROSS, CARITAS, AND THE RWANDAN RED CROSS, ALL INVOLVED IN ASSISTING THE WAR-DISPLACED, HAVE THUS FAR BEEN INVOLVED IN ASSESSING NEEDS OF THE REFUGEES. MSF/HOLLAND, MSF/BELGIUM, CARE INTERNATIONAL, OXFAM, AND OTHER NGO'S, ALSO WORKING WITH THE WAR-DISPLAED, WILL BE BROUGHT INTO THE PICTURE AT THE BRIEFING AFTERNOON OF 10/25. UNHCR DOES NOT/NOT PLAN AT THIS TIME TO ACTIVATE ITS NEW EMERGENCY CAPACITY GIVEN THE WEALTH OF EXPERTISE ALREADY IN COUNTRY. HOWEVER, ADDITIONAL UNHCR STAFF

FOR LOGISTICS AND FOR MANNING A SUB-OFFICE IN BUTARE, ARE EXPECTED. UNHCR SAID THAT VEHICLES AND ADDITIONAL STAFF ARE URGENTLY NEEDED FOR ALL THE AID AGENCIES THAT ARE CURRENTLY STRETCHED THIN MEETING THE NEEDS IN THE NORTH.

11. COMMENT. UNHCR HAS RESPONDED RAPIDLY AND, SO FAR, EFFECTIVELY TO THIS MASSIVE INFLUX OF MORE THAN 200,000 REFUGEES IN THREE DAYS. THE NEXT CHALLENGE IS TO PUT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS INTO PLACE. PROVIDING FOOD AND MEDICINES CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE INITIALLY  
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FROM STOCKS ALREADY IN COUNTRY, THIS WILL BE ONE REFUGEE POPULATION THAT WILL NOT HAVE TO WAIT THREE MONTHS FOR ASSISTANCE.

12. COMMENT CONTINUED. WHILE THE INFLUX MAY HAVE SLOWED, THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS ON THE POLITICAL FRONT THAT WOULD SUGGEST THE POSSIBILITY OF IMMEDIATE RETURN. THE REFUGEES MAY WANT TO MAKE IT BACK TO THEIR HOMES AT LEAST IN TIME FOR THE NEXT PLANTING SEASON IN EARLY 1994, AS HAPPENED IN 1988 WHEN BURUNDIANS FROM THE SAME REGION FLED ARMY MASSACRES. HOWEVER, UNLESS THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN BUJUMBURA CAN BE BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL AND SECURITY RESTORED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WE MAY HAVE A LONG-TERM EMERGENCY ON OUR HANDS. END COMMENT.

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