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Refugee Fact Sheet

US Embassy Rwanda

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PRF
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RWANDA

REFUGEE FACT SHEET

I. AFFECTED POPULATIONS

Refugees in Rwanda

29,000 refugees in Rwanda (almost all Burundi)
22,000 Burundi refugees (1972 era)
700 Burundi refugees (1988 era)
2,000 Burundi refugees (from November 1991)

Displaced Rwandans

130,000 internally displaced Rwandans in northern Rwanda

Refugees from Rwanda

500,000 Rwandan refugees in Central Africa (most from 1959-1964 period).

200,000 in Uganda (80,000 receiving assistance)
8000 are new refugees (post-October 1990)
270,000 in Burundi (77,250 receiving assistance)
1000 are new refugees (post-October 1990)
12,000 in Zaire receiving assistance
22,000 in Tanzania receiving assistance

II. REFUGEE RELIEF AGENCIES

UNHCR - UNHCR's Branch Office in Kigali oversees refugee protection and assistance, and works with regional governments towards durable solutions for Rwandan and Burundi refugees.

ICRC - Operations in Rwanda include providing logistical and supervisory assistance to agencies helping internally displaced Rwandans.

WFP - Provides food to internally displaced.

AFRICARE- Assists internally displaced Rwandans in the Butaru prefecture, and provides periodic assistance to former refugees repatriated and resettled around Lake Nasho in 1985.

CARE - Assists internally displaced in the Byumba prefecture.

Rwandan Red Cross - Provides day-to-day camp management for Burundi refugees in Gisali and Muhura. Also assists internally displaced in northern Rwanda.

III. KEY ISSUES

- 1) Repatriation: At the Dar-es-Salaam Summit in February 1991, countries of the region asked the OAU and UNHCR to develop a Plan of Action for Durable Solutions for Rwandan Refugees. Countries involved agreed to offer refugees the options of repatriation, naturalization in the country of asylum, or permanent residence status in the country of asylum. The plan was to have been presented to the donor community in February 1992, but has not yet been completed due to several factors, key among them the as yet unresolved conflict between the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the Government of Rwanda (GOR). The lack of political settlement between the GOR and the RPF has dampened regional enthusiasm for the Durable Solutions package, particularly in Burundi and Uganda.
- 2) RPF/GOR Conflict: On October 1, 1990, Rwanda was invaded by the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a force of about 4,000 Rwandan exiles from Uganda, many of whom had been in Uganda's National Resistance Army. The RPF was not able to take the country (largely due to French and Belgian intervention) but remains entrenched in northern Rwanda fighting what has now become a guerrilla war with the GOR. About 130,000 people have been internally displaced due to this conflict. Several cease-fires have been agreed to not honored. France has been playing the lead role in trying to negotiate a resolution to the conflict, but progress appears to be slow.
- 3) Resettlement of Burundi Refugees: The 700 Burundi refugees who remain in Rwanda from the 1988 influx are unable or unwilling to return to Burundi. They have requested that UNHCR resettle them in third countries. Although UNHCR has approached several countries in the region and elsewhere, few have offered to accept Burundi refugees. The refugees have grown increasingly frustrated by what they perceive as inaction on the part of UNHCR on their cases.
- 4) Refugee Protection: In order to mitigate any mixing of refugees with dissident groups, the governments of Burundi and Rwanda have reached an agreement to move refugees in both countries further from the border.

IV. U.S. ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

UNHCR - \$250,000 in FY91 for Preparatory Activities for a Comprehensive Plan of Action for Rwandan Refugees

The contribution listed above is in addition to State Department Bureau for Refugee Programs (RP) regular annual contributions to UNHCR's and ICRC's Africa programs. In FY91, RP contributed \$49.2 million for UNHCR's general programs for Africa and \$18.5 million for ICRC's Africa budget. To date in FY92, RP has contributed \$30 million for UNHCR's general program for Africa and \$22.5 million for ICRC's Africa budget.