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ACTION RP-10

INFO LOG-00 AP-01 AID-01 AMAD-01 CA-02 OASY-00 EUR-01
OIGO-01 HA-09 TEDE-00 IO-16 ADS-00 OCS-06 OIC-02
SR-00 FMP-00 /050W

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O 100952Z FEB 94
FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO AMEMBASSY KAMPALA IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5695
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE

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KAMPALA FOR AMBASSADOR AND MS. LEADER
STATE FOR RP
GBNEVA FOR RMA

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ROME FOR FODAG
NAIROBI FOR REFCORD THOMAS-GREENFIELD
ADDIS FOR FARNSWORTH

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PREF, RW, BY
SUBJECT: GOR, RPF, UNHCR, ICRC PLAN FOR RWANDAN
RETURNEES FROM UGANDA

REF: KIGALI 0454

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1. SUMMARY. RWANDAN PATRIOTIC FRONT CLAIMS THAT NEARLY 7,000 REFUGEES WITH ALMOST 10,000 HEAD OF CATTLE RETURNED FROM UGANDA TO RPF-HELD TERRITORY DURING JANUARY. UNHCR IS MAKING AN EFFORT TO ASSESS THEIR FOOD AND NON-FOOD NEEDS OR A LIMITED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, IN RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT AND RPF REQUESTS. RELIEF PLANNING IS COMPLICATED BY LACK OF STRUCTURES TO MAKE DECISIONS ON REFUGEE ISSUES PENDING FORMATION OF TRANSITION GOVERNMENT. THE ISSUE IS CLOSELY LINKED WITH THAT OF WAR-DISPLACED FROM THE RPF ZONE WHO STILL LIVE IN CAMPS AND DEPEND ON INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN PAST WEEK, AMBASSADOR AND DCM DISCUSSED ISSUE OF "SPONTANEOUS REFUGEE RETURN" FROM UGANDA WITH UNHCR, RPF, ICRC, BRIEFLY WITH GOVERNMENT, AND WITH CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, AMERICAN NGO UNDER CONSIDERATION AS UNCHR IMPLEMENTING PARTNER FOR ASSISTING THE GROUP. UNHCR IS UNDER PRESSURE TO LIMIT REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE RPF. AT THE SAME TIME, UNHCR IS WARY OF BEING DRAWN INTO AN OPEN-ENDED OPERATION WHERE EVENTUAL MAGNITUDE AND DURATION ARE UNKNOWN. NUMBERS INCREASING


5. UNHCR’S PROTECTION OFFICER TALKED WITH THE HERDERS.
SUBJECT: GOR, RPF, UNHCR, ICRC PLAN FOR RWANDAN RETURNEES DURING THE VISIT. SHE SAID THEY CLAIM THE LOCAL POPULATION IN UGANDA PUSHED THE REFUGEES TO RETURN, SAYING THE ARUSHA ACCORD IS THERE, YOU CAN RETURN, AND WE WANT YOUR LAND. ASKED IF SHE BELIEVED THE MOVE WAS TRULY SPONTANEOUS, SHE RECALLED UNHCR THE VISIT IN LATE JANUARY OF UNHCR'S SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE REGION TO THE REFUGEE SITES IN UGANDA. HE REPORTED FINDING WIDESPREAD ENTHUSIASM FOR RETURN. SO, SHE SAID, SHE IS CONVINCED THE RPF DID NOT PUSH THE REFUGEES TO RETURN. ON THE OTHER HAND, SHE NOTED THE RPF WOULD HAVE HAD TO ALLOW THE RETURNEES ACROSS THE BORDER. (COMMENT: A UN FORCES SOURCE SAID THEY HAVE LOCATED BETWEEN TWO MINE FIELDS, SUGGESTING THEY MAY HAVE HAD SOME ASSISTANCE IN FINDING THEIR WAY, AS WBLL. END COMMENT.)

ASSISTANCE PLANS

6. NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE. UNHCR HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE CONSISTING OF RELIEF SUPPLIES COMMON TO TEMPORARY POPULATION MOVEMENTS: BLANKETS,
7. Food Assistance. The Joint Mission of February 3 looked into food needs of the returnees. There is disagreement over what the food needs might be. CRS representative noted to Ambassador and DCM that most of the cattle herders are Hima who live on milk, meat, and cattle blood. Therefore, he reasoned, as long as they have their cattle, they have no need of international assistance. UNHCR, on the other hand, said its office in Kampala affirmed that the people in question, though they might once have lived solely off their cattle, now are habituated to cereals, bananas, and more traditional foods. In a tense meeting with UNHCR February 2, RPF insisted on immediate assistance based on the data it had tabled. UNHCR and PVO’s said they could not proceed until they had a thorough population and needs assessment. UNHCR plans another mission to the site February 11.

8. Technical Problems. UNHCR said that any food assistance operation would be difficult. The site is three and one-half hours from Kigali over unmaintained roads and a log bridge (the other was blown up in the war) that can take only a 6-ton truck at most. The WFP operation has only 15-ton trucks, suggesting they would have to deliver to warehouses south of the bridge for transfer to smaller vehicles. The current group would need an estimated 120 tons of food per month, if all required.

9. Philosophical Problems. UNHCR has said it will only launch an operation if the people are grouped
TOGETHER, BUT THAT APPEARS UNLIKELY. THEY HAVE ALSO SAID THEY WILL NOT ASSIST PEOPLE SETTLED ON OTHER PEOPLE’S LAND.

UNHCR HESITATES TO CREATE A PULL FACTOR. ASSISTANCE TO THIS GROUP, THE PROTECTION OFFICER SAID, COULD DRAW AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF

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        SR-00  SVC-00  PMP-00  /050W

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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
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SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5697
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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Refugees in Uganda to return now. It could also cause displaced persons still living in camps and dependent on international assistance to rush back, fearing that the returnees will take their land. UNHCR, if it launches an operation, wants it to be minimal and low profile. The Protection Officer also believes any operation should be limited in size and duration, given the current unknowns.

A role for CRS?

10. While CRS has doubts about the food needs of the returnee population, it expressed to UNHCR concern for its credibility with the beneficiaries of its current assistance to displaced persons. Apparently the population it now aids, 80,000, hail primarily from Muvumba Commune. CRS would find it problematic, UNHCR said, to aid the displaced and returnees settling on their land.

A role for ICRC?

11. ICRC has been involved in discussions about this.

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Group and is under pressure from the RPF to provide food assistance to the entire group. ICRC has made it clear that it is prepared to treat as war-displaced, and assist, those who fled to Uganda in the 1990's. It will not become involved with the refugees from earlier times, and it is not/not prepared to begin helping the war-displaced refugees now. That must wait until the conditions for the return of all war displaced have been met. Meanwhile, UNHCR has agreed to assist the entire group until ICRC is prepared to help. (Note. The

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ARUSHA SCHEDULE PERMITS RETURN TO THE RPF ZONE ONCE THE FORCES OF BOTH THE RPF AND THE GOR HAVE LAID DOWN (#) ASSEMBLY POINTS. END NOTE.)

AMD WHAT ABOUT THE CATTLE?

12. WITH THE RISK OF CATTLE IMPORTING DISEASE TO RWANDA, THE MINISTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR REFUGEES HAS PROVIDED THE RWANDAN FRANC EQUIVALENT OF ABOUT USD 7,500 FOR VACCINES FOR THE CATTLE. HOWEVER, NOTHING IS UNDERWAY AS YET. UNHCR SAID THAT IT PLANS TO WORK WITH THE RPF, WHICH HAS VETERINARIANS IT CAN MAKE AVAILABLE FOR THE OPERATION, BUT THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT VACCINES AVAILABLE.

ROLE FOR UN FORCES?

13. AT A MEETING CALLED BY THE PRIME MINISTER JANUARY 31, THE GOR, RPF, AND CONCERNED INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DISCUSSED HOW TO RESPOND TO THE SPONTANEOUS RETURNEES. THE MEETING AGREED THAT THE UN FORCES AND THE RPF, IN COLLABORATION WITH UNHCR AND THE OAU, WOULD IDENTIFY TEMPORARY SITES FOR THE SPONTANEOUS RETURNEES WHERE THEY COULD BE ASSISTED. IT WAS THE SENSE OF THE MEETING, ACCORDING TO A SUMMARY PROVIDED THE DCM, THAT THE UN FORCES OUGHT TO BE CONCERNED WITH THE SECURITY OF THE RETURNEES AND WITH ASSURING CONDITIONS THAT WOULD PERMIT ASSISTANCE.

NOTE: (#) OMISSION IN PARA 11 CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.
TO BE DELIVERED.

RPF POSITION

14. THE RPF ASSURED DCM THAT IT HAS TRIED TO DISCOURAGE PREMATURE REPATRIATION AND THAT THOSE WHO HAVE ARRIVED KNOW, WITHOUT ANY DOUBT, THAT THEY ARE IN TEMPORARY LOCATIONS. THE RPF SAID THAT ICRC IS HESITATING TO BECOME INVOLVED IN FOOD ASSISTANCE, BUT THAT IT WILL PROBABLY REFURBISH THE HEALTH CLINICS IN
THE AREA OCCUPIED BY THE RETURNEES FIRST, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS LONGER-TERM PLAN FOR CLINIC REHABILITATION. THE RPF WAS PLEASED WITH THE JANUARY 31 MEETING, SAYING THAT IT OVERCAME THE RESISTANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT, UNHCR, AND THE ICRC TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE RETURNEES.

DISPLACED ALSO RETURNING TO RPF ZONE

15. ALTHOUGH ATTENTION HAS BEEN ON THANX M NANEUS RETURNEES FROM UGANDA, THE RPF CLAIMS THAT 18,000 PERSONS DISPLACED FROM THE RPF ZONE BY THE WAR HAVE ALSO RETURNED. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THE 10,000 ICRC HAS BEEN ASSISTING IN THE RPF ZONE SINCE THE PEACE ACCORD WAS SIGNED IN AUGUST. (NOTE. IT IS EMBASSY'S UNDERSTANDING THAT THESE RETURNS HAVE OCCURRED PRIMARILY IN THE BUTARO COMMUNE OF THE RUMENGERI PREFECTURE. END NOTE.) THE RPF SAYS THESE PEOPLE ARE RETURNING AS CLOSE TO THEIR HOMES AS RPF MILITARY POSITIONS AND MINE FIELDS WILL PERMIT. TO AID THEM, THE RPF SAID IT HAS DEMARCATED SOME MINE FIELDS (ALTHOUGH ONE PERSON HAS BEEN INJURED). THE RPF CLAIANS IT IS KEEPING CLOSE TRACK OF THE RETURNEES AND PROVIDING ICRC WITH THE NAMES SO THEY CAN BE DELETED FROM ASSISTANCE LISTS IN CAMPS FOR THE DISPLACED. BUT THE RPF ANTICIPATES THEM NEEDING ASSISTANCE IN THEIR HOMES, PARTICULARLY SEEDS AND TOOLS. THIS ISSUE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE UNDER DISCUSSION FOR THE MOMENT.

DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES LACKING

THAT THE CONCERNED PARTIES COULD GET TOGETHER TO DISCUSS MODALITIES AND DIRECTIONS. (NOTE: UNHCR’S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

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SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE REGION, MICHEL MOUSSALLI, GAVE DIPLOMATS IMPRESSION AT BRIEFING FEBRUARY 2 OF A MORE DEFINITE DECISION TO ESTABLISH A TEMPORARY TECHNICAL COMMITTEE THAT WOULD HAVE DONOR REPRESENTATIVES INCLUDED AT ITS DELIBERATIONS. END NOTE.)

COMMENT

17. WE ARE PLEASED THAT UNHCR HAS DECIDED TO BECOME INVOLVED IN RESPONDING TO THE SPONTANEOUS RETURNES. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT WHATEVER ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED

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SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5699
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SUBJECT: GOR, RPF, UNHCR, ICRC PLAN FOR RWANDAN

SHOULD BE MEASURED AND BASED ON IDENTIFIED NEEDS. THE RISK OF CREATING A PULL FACTOR, DRAWING REFUGEES FROM THE NORTH OR DISPLACED FROM THE SOUTH IS REAL AND COULD JEOPARDIZE RWANDA'S ABILITY TO MANAGE A VERY COMPLEX PROBLEM. A MIDDLE ROAD BETWEEN HANDS-OFF AND UNRESTGIKKASSISTANCE IS LICOYJE FOR NOW.

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