

# **BURUNDI, RWANDA, TANZANIA, UGANDA & ZAIRE: RWANDAN & BURUNDIAN REFUGEES**

31 May 1996

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*After January's crisis, when approximately 37,000 Rwandan refugees fled from their Red Cross camps in Burundi's Muyinga province to cross the border into Tanzania, International Federation operations in the two countries stabilised. Having constructed the new Keza refugee camp in Tanzania within 36 hours to accommodate the new influx, the Federation/Tanzania Red Cross spent the rest of the quarter consolidating the camp's infrastructure. Meanwhile, attention switched back to Zaire, where another attempt by the government to pressure Rwandan refugees in the camps to return home came to naught. The Red Cross's Kibumba camp near Goma was encircled by Zairian troops in an attempt to isolate its inhabitants ahead of repatriation efforts. However, the troops were withdrawn at the beginning of March and the situation in the camps returned to normal. Meanwhile, the Federation Secretariat in Geneva conducted its own internal review of the management of the Great Lakes operation and has begun to fold the Rwanda-Burundi Task Force back into the Africa Regional Department.*

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## ***The context***

Two years after the terrible events in Rwanda plunged the Great Lakes region of East/Central Africa into crisis, the Federation's humanitarian operations in Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire remain in a 'care and maintenance' phase, providing effective but balanced and basic services for 623,000 refugees. The Federation is also assisting the Rwanda Red Cross to re-establish itself and restore traditional support programmes to local communities.

## ***Latest events***

### **Zaire •**

Ongoing uncertainty over the possibility of repatriations of Rwandan refugees from the Zairian camps dominated the first quarter of 1996. The tensely-anticipated deadline of 31 December — which the Zairian government had declared to be the date by which all the camps in North and South Kivu should be empty — passed without incident. But in mid-January another deadline emerged when the government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced that the gradual repatriation of Rwandan refugees should begin on 15

## March.

In early February, troops were flown into North and South Kivu to close off selected camps which were to serve as pilot repatriation projects. In the Goma area, Kibumba was surrounded, in Bukavu it was Nyangezi. The primary objective of the operation was to stop all movement into and out of the camps, as well as to halt all commercial and social activities in them. Commercial activities in the other camps — including the Federation/Zaire Red Cross-run camps at Kashusha, Nyamirangwe (South Kivu) and Kahindo (North Kivu) — continued to thrive, though the school at Kashusha, which was financed and built by the Red Cross, was closed down.

The Zairian government also announced that humanitarian activities should be scaled down to essential services, i.e., food and firewood distributions, curative medical care, and the provision of water and sanitation facilities. New information campaigns were launched (by the government and UNHCR) in a bid to 'encourage' the increased repatriation of Rwandan refugees. However, these measures — and a reinforced deployment of army and gendarmerie troops around some of the camps in Goma and Bukavu — only served to increase tension amongst the refugees, disrupt services provided by humanitarian organisations and create an atmosphere of general uncertainty.

During February, pressure on the refugees and relief organisations mounted, culminating in a 21 February communiqué signed by Gérard Kamanda wa Kamanda, the Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister at the time, which threatened, the immediate arrest and expulsion of any relief organisation representative opposing repatriation or spreading 'false reports', and once again ordered all commercial and social activities in the camps to be stopped immediately.

But then, in a surprise move, the Zairian authorities withdrew the gendarmes encircling the refugee camps in North and South Kivu on 1 March and the situation in the camps quickly returned to normal. The government's initiative also had virtually no effect on levels of repatriation. Only 1,500 refugees returned to Rwanda in February, and a month later this had dwindled to negligible levels. The incident highlights, however, the continuing frustration of the Zairian authorities, which may yet have serious implications for humanitarian agencies working in the camps.

Increasing clashes and population movements in the Masisi region west of Goma have added to tension in the area and ethnic Tutsi refugees are reported to be moving into Rwanda at Gisenyi near Goma. While the situation remains calm elsewhere, persistent tension and aggression towards humanitarian agencies — and the Federation in particular — continue to occur in Kashusha Camp, causing constant strain for delegates and staff.

### **Tanzania •**

Voluntary repatriation from Tanzania remains minimal (1,229 in February, falling to 218 in March). The scale of the problem can be gauged by the fact that in the whole of 1994 and 1995, only 8,652 refugees were repatriated, compared with 30,000 births amongst the refugee community in the same period.

In late January, large numbers of refugees were driven from the Red Cross camps at Muyinga in Burundi and crossed into Tanzania. The Federation delegation in Ngara rapidly responded, and lessons learned from 1994's experiences in Ngara and Goma were put to the test. In 36 hours, a complete camp on a new site at Keza was completed with all services — including food and non-food distributions, health dispensaries, water and sanitation facilities — established through the co-ordinated efforts of the Federation, National Society, UNHCR, CARE and other smaller agencies. Full use was made of

Red Cross DPP structures placed in the region and the Federation delegation received considerable acclaim for its work. From an initial 5,000 refugees located in the camp, the population now stands at 33,000.

#### **Burundi •**

After the panic caused by the forced clearing of the Muyinga camps there was an increase in repatriation from Burundi to Rwanda as well as a rise in the numbers of people crossing into Tanzania. However, the number of refugees in Burundi seems to have stabilised at about 90,000 after falling from a high of 165,000 in December. The Federation sub-delegation in Ngozi therefore continues to provide all necessary services to these remaining refugees, though reductions have been made in staffing and resources to adjust to the fall in caseload.

After a period of calm during the Carter Centre conferences in Addis Ababa and Tunis, the situation in Burundi deteriorated once again, with violent clashes between the army and rebel groups increasing the numbers of refugees crossing into Tanzania and displaced persons (IDPs) inside the country. This increase in IDPs led the Federation to ask a number of donor Societies to allow the partial transfer of non-food items to the ICRC, who are responsible for supporting IDPs in Burundi.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

In December 1995, the Rwanda/Burundi Task Force made a S.W.O.T. analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to review progress and achievements over the previous year. The review concluded that the Geneva-based Task Force should be reintegrated back into a Great Lakes Project Team within the Africa regional department by May 1996 and this is now being achieved, along with personnel changes both in Geneva and the field.

In response to the ongoing need to monitor and report in greater detail on its operations the Federation is planning to establish a field officer/reporting delegate in the region. This delegate will be the co-ordinating link between the Secretariat, delegations, OSU and the field representatives of ECHO, WFP, UNHCR and donor government agencies such as ODA, SIDA, CIDA, USAID, etc. To improve the knowledge and capacity of delegates involved in various aspects of implementing donor contracts in the field, a series of five workshops was scheduled for early May in selected sub-delegations throughout the Great Lakes region. These will be run in conjunction with National Society staff, local representatives of ECHO and other agencies.

#### **Zaire •**

*(North Kivu: Kibumba, 183,000 refugees; Kahindo, 110,000;  
South Kivu: Kashusha, 48,000 refugees; Nyamirangwe 21,000)*

#### ***Food and Non-Food Distributions***

WFP suffered continuous problems with the delivery of food during the first quarter because of bad road conditions, poor vehicle maintenance and some internal logistic coordination problems. The Federation is trying to recover approximately US \$90,000 in transport costs from 1994 and 1995, as well as 1,000 mt of maize and 300 mt of beans loaned from our buffer stock of 1995. Nevertheless, WFP reports that its stock base is secure for the whole region for the rest of the year.

Double distributions of food were used in the Red Cross camps in North Kivu to increase efficiency and reduce relief workers' exposure during the insecurity in February. The Federation continues to distribute rations with a daily calorific value of approximately 1,500 K.cal., slightly lower than the current UNHCR recommended level

of 1,606.

Typical food distributions in Kibumba and Kahindo camps during the first quarter were as follows:

	<b>Grams/Person/Day</b>	<b>K.cal. per gram</b>
Corn-Soy-Blend (CSB)	30	3.8
Maize Meal	37.5	3.6
Maize Grain	243.75	3.5
Sorghum	6.25	3.35
Beans	120	3.35
Vegetable Oil	3.75	8.87
Salt	5	0
Soap	7.14	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>453.39</b>	<b>1,525</b>

The following amounts of food were distributed in Nyamirangwe and Kashusha (all figures in mt), giving an average daily ration of 1,568 k.cal per person:

	<b>Maize</b>	<b>Beans</b>	<b>Lentils</b>	<b>Oil</b>	<b>Salt</b>	<b>CSB</b>	<b>Total</b>
January	472	112	113	37	9	56	<b>799</b>
February	711	306	34	57	14	85	<b>1,207</b>
March	474	159	69	38	9	57	<b>806</b>

In addition, used clothing from the Swedish Red Cross was distributed in Goma, along with selected distributions of plastic sheeting, tents, Lysol, soap and blankets. A total of 11,244 bundles of firewood are regularly distributed each month in both camps in Goma, although the supply of firewood remains a major environmental concern as massive deforestation has already occurred across the whole region.

In South Kivu, a shortage of soap in late December and early January meant rising numbers of refugees suffering from scabies, but February and March saw the distribution of 26.3 mt of soap to alleviate the crisis. Firewood shortages continue, however, even though over 8,800 m<sup>3</sup> was distributed in the first quarter.

### **Health**

During the February disruptions in Goma and Bukavu, non-essential services — including the community health programme — were suspended. As the situation eased, however, all health services were resumed by the Federation, with the exception of the community health programme in Kibumba, responsibility for which was transferred to GOAL and ECZ. A health post established at the Rwanda-Zaire border in February was removed a month later, but Zaire Red Cross Society (ZRCS) emergency response teams remain available should the situation deteriorate again.

The Federation/ZRC run one dispensary with in-patient capability in both Nyamirangwe and Kashusha in South Kivu. These facilities offer primary health care services such as maternity and child care, vaccinations, pre-natal cares, family planning and treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases. Red Cross community health programmes also include traditional birth assistance, preventive health care and public health and sanitation. Detailed statistics for the two Red Cross dispensaries in South Kivu are as follows:

	Consultations		Hospitalisations		Referrals		Deliveries	
	Nyam	Kash	Nyam	Kash	Nyam	Kash	Nyam	Kash
January	5,679	9,711	401	471	4	9	92	97
February	5,341	6,631	337	326	5	7	74	107
March	4,229	6,966	319	194	5	4	81	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,249</b>	<b>23,308</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>282</b>

An evaluation of Red Cross health programmes in Goma and Bukavu was scheduled for mid-April, with the British Red Cross assisting the Federation assessment. The overall delivery of services will be reviewed and recommendations on future health strategy made, oriented particularly around the best use of existing services.

The Federation/ZRC also run water and sanitation programmes in the two Bukavu (South Kivu) camps, maintaining more than 900 latrines in Kashusha (one per 50 persons), with a building programme underway to construct another 400 — leading ideally to a ratio of one latrine for every 35 refugees. There are another 900 latrines at Nyamirangwe (one per 22 persons). In both camps, between 11 and 12 litres of drinking water are supplied to each refugee, an amount that is meeting and sometimes even exceeding current demand.

#### **Tanzania •**

*(Benaco camp, 107,000 refugees; Lukole, 19,500; Keza, 33,000)*

In Ngara, the main activity for the first quarter was the construction of the new camp at Keza and the ongoing efforts by both the Federation and UNHCR to streamline overall services in the camps. This involved, among other things, discussions on the consolidation of some services to enable a single agency to handle one function. e.g., curative health. In addition, further improvements of the distribution systems were made.

The new camp at Keza was also steadily improved as structures which have proven themselves in Benaco were established. Additional vehicles pledged by the German Red Cross and other donations will reinforce the delegation's logistics capacity to cope with the extra demands provided by the Keza operation. In addition, the GRC agreed to supply replacement water tankers for the ongoing water operations in the region. A new Red Cross vehicle workshop, staffed with a new delegate and counterpart, was also completed, allowing improved vehicle maintenance.

While the overall health status of the refugees remains good, a number of new initiatives were introduced in the first quarter:

- A restructuring of health services left the Federation/TRCS responsible for preventative health care (including Mother and Child Health and Health Information Teams) in Benaco as well as sanitation, solid waste, and vector care. This meant that the Benaco dispensary was closed. In Lukole, the Red Cross is responsible for both preventative and curative health care (including HIT activities), and construction on the new dispensary at the camp proceeded well.
- MCH/EPI services started in Keza.
- In co-operation with the Tanzania Ministry of Health, the Federation /TRCS hosted and organised a Disaster Preparedness and Rehabilitation Workshop in Ngara, attended by 56 people. The initiative was highly praised by the Tanzanian government and is likely to lead to even closer cooperation between the National Society and the central authorities. A 70-page report is currently being finalised and will be released in Nairobi by mid-June.

- The Tanzanian government has decided that all health staff, including delegates, must be registered by the health authorities before they will be permitted to work. With the strict conditions now being enforced regarding work permits, this new decision will further complicate the processing of delegates. Thanks to the efforts of the Federation delegation and the National Society, up to 17 delegates are permitted to be working in Tanzania — three times more than other organisations. But the new rules are now being strictly enforced. Participating National Societies offering delegates for this operation must therefore ensure that, in co-operation with the Federation's Field Personnel Service, these conditions are met before delegates are sent to the field. Without both a work permit and, where necessary, a health registration, the delegate will be refused entry to the delegation.

#### **Burundi (94,726 refugees) •**

A significant drop in beneficiaries occurred with the clearing of the Red Cross camps at Muyinga. Latest figures of the total number of refugees being supported by the Federation/Burundi Red Cross are:

<i>Ngozi Province</i>		<i>Kirundu Province</i>	
Magara	39,513	Rukuramigabo	18,172
Kibezi			19,840
Ruvumu	17,201		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>94,726</b>		

Food distributions continue to run well in all camps, with rations (maize grain, 0.15 kg; maize flour, 0.15 kg; beans, 0.12 kg; and oil, 0.2 kg) providing a daily caloric value of around 1,800 K.cal./person. Distributions of non-food items included 20,000 blankets and 6,000 m<sup>3</sup> of firewood. In addition, local schools received soap, buckets, cups and plates to assist the local community. The following statistics provide details on the main items distributed in the first quarter:

	<b>Food (mt)</b>	<b>Soap (pieces)</b>	<b>Wood (bundles)</b>	<b>Blankets</b>	<b>Sheeting (m)</b>
January	2,514	215,255	3,741	—	600
February	1,661	173,217	2,982	16,119	1,276
March	1,352	114,785	2,851	—	2,680
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,527</b>	<b>503,257</b>	<b>9,574</b>	<b>16,119</b>	<b>4,556</b>

In addition to the distributions, several hundred volunteers, coordinated by the sub-delegation in Ngozi, are responsible for the maintenance of the camps' infrastructures, including roads, sanitation facilities, communal kitchens, etc.

Following an evaluation of all fixed assets, surplus vehicles were transferred from the Burundi to the Rwanda and Uganda operations, and Rubb Halls and plastic sheeting to the Keza operation in Tanzania. With the approval of those Societies who made donations of blankets and sheeting, some of these goods were also transferred to the ICRC and the Burundi Red Cross to assist the rapidly-growing IDP population as a result of continuing clashes in the North/Central regions. An agreement for the maintenance of the fleet by ICRC technicians was also completed.

Assisted by both the Federation and the ICRC, the National Society embarked upon a S.W.O.T analysis of its activities with a view to improving its structure, capacity and effectiveness. At the same time, construction of a training centre in Ngozi began, with training in Red Cross principles, community health and first aid for a first class of 168 volunteers due to commence shortly.

### **Rwanda •**

Widespread ongoing violence in the Masisi (south-west of Goma) and Kanyabayonga (north-east of Goma) regions of Zaire between opposing Batwa, Bahutu and Batutsi residential populations has been exacerbated by the involvement of Interhamwe militia (part of the 1994 Hutu refugee caseload). As a result, thousands of people were driven from their homes, many of whom crossed the border into Rwanda. The Rwandan government has proposed establishing a new camp near Gisenyi and asked the RRC and the Federation to assist in these efforts. On 24 April, therefore, the Rwanda Red Cross officially appealed to the Federation for support in assisting 10,000-12,000 refugees for an initial three months, following assessments carried out by delegates and RRC officers.

Meanwhile, the RRC's school feeding programme continues well. A proposal to expand the operation was considered but the National Society's present logistical capacity — as well as the increasing possibility of having to respond to other more essential needs — resulted in a decision to concentrate RRC efforts on the existing four prefectures. Another proposal to supplement rations with locally-purchased goods has been approved, however, and the Federation will carry out this procurement which will boost the existing supplies donated by the ICRC.

Along with all other humanitarian agencies in Rwanda, the Federation is experiencing difficulties with the refusal of the government to release relief goods without the payment of heavy taxes. Many international agencies have simply returned goods to their place of origin rather than pay the taxes and relations between them and the government are presently strained.

A distribution of plastic sheeting (11 rolls), blankets (15 bales), 170 jerry cans, children's clothes (5 bales), soap (4 cartons) and beans and seeds (8 bags) to 101 families (433 beneficiaries) in very poor condition in the Cyimbogo commune was carried out by the RRC with logistical support from the Federation.

The Federation's operational support of the Rwanda Red Cross (RRC) also continued to run well. In the first quarter of 1996, a number of significant activities were undertaken by the Federation and the RRC, including a workshop to develop a Strategic Work Plan after earlier assistance had been provided by the Federation's Regional Delegation.

Negotiations aimed at the signature of a tri-partite agreement between the Rwandan Red Cross, the Federation and the Belgian Red Cross have begun. The agreement, expected to be finalised at the end of May, will include general provisions about the roles and responsibilities of the partners, as well as plans of action and budgets for specific projects. This undertaking will serve as a model for agreements with other National Societies working in Rwanda.

### **Uganda •**

*(Orukinga, 5,538 refugees; Nakivale, 1,550)*

Federation/Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) operations in the Mbarara region continue smoothly with no difficulties other than a need to improve some aspects of the water supply to the Orukinga and Nakivale camps. New food assessments were carried out by UNHCR/WFP and the Uganda government with a view to reducing distributions, as refugees in the area are now cultivating their own gardens and crop production is good — though not yet to the level of self sufficiency. Total first quarter food distribution totals are as follows (all figures in mt):

Millet	Maize Meal	Maize Grain	Beans	Veg. Oil	Salt	Sugar	Rice
0.1	21	188	36	13	3	7	0.2

In addition, the following non-food items were distributed:

Sheeting	Blankets	Jerry cans	Cups/Bowls	Buckets	Saucepans	Used Clothes	Hoes	Soap
1.9 rolls	2,648	22	3,100	890	968	19 sacks	100	1,136

Social welfare activities in both camps concentrate on education, income-generation, crafts and agricultural activities. A small number of unaccompanied minors also remain in Orukinga. The Federation's water and sanitation delegate from Bukavu, Zaire, visited Mbarara and carried out a detailed assessment of the existing systems. These systems will now be improved utilising excess material in Goma and a short-term (three-month) water and sanitation delegate.

The overall health status continues to be good both in both camps and the surrounding communities, with 18,000 consultations taking place in the Red Cross dispensaries (40% of them refugees) over the quarter. The services in the dispensary in Nakivale also improved thanks to an increase in staff.

## *Contributions*

See Annex 1 for details.

## *Conclusion*

The Federation's ability to reduce and consolidate its operations in the Great Lakes without losing its emergency response capacity was tested by the crisis in Burundi and Tanzania in the first quarter and proven to be more than adequate. The Keza camp now stands as an excellent example of the lessons learned and the co-operative potential between a National Society and the Federation. The region continues to pose grave challenges, both politically and operationally, but it is felt that the means to respond to them are now well established.

The Great Lakes operation continues to be well supported, and it is hoped that the Federation's careful attention to the needs of donors and its strict accountability of the resources provided by them will justify their continued assistance.

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