

BURUNDI, RWANDA, TANZANIA, UGANDA & ZAIRE: RWANDAN AND BURUNDIAN REFUGEES

28 October 1996

emergency appeal no. 01.02/96

situation report no. 7

period covered: 27-28 October 1996

EMERGENCY REPORT - KIVU CRISIS

Latest events

Bukavu - after the departure of UN and NGO expatriate staff on Saturday 26, the Federation and the Red Cross Society of the Republic of Zaire were the only remaining providers of humanitarian assistance (albeit limited) to the refugees and to the local community. They were also as the only reliable sources of information on the developing crisis situation. The latest update on the afternoon of Sunday 27 spoke of up to 15,000 refugees scattered over the hills around the town, a similar number temporarily settled in Nyamirangwe camp and between 40,000 and 60,000 further south from Nyamirangwe towards Kihanga camp. The Federation sub-Delegation reported a rapidly deteriorating security situation, with widespread fighting in and around the town. The Head of sub-Delegation, while delivering a second consignment of essential medicines to Bukavu hospital in the early morning of Monday 28, witnessed that the previous day's heavy fighting had left a large number bodies lying on the road in the town centre.

Considering the virtual impossibility of rendering any assistance to the vulnerable and the serious threats posed to the security of delegates, it was decided in the late morning to relocate the remaining expatriate staff. At 15:00 local time, three Federation, two ICRC and one Belgian Red Cross delegates were taken out by a Federation plane specially flown in from Nairobi.

Goma - the overall situation did not collapse as had been feared. Over the last 24 hours virtually the entire population of the former Kibumba camp reached the outskirts of Goma where they were diverted by the Zairian army towards the existing camps of Mugunga and Lac Vert. By late afternoon of October 28 nearly 200,000 people were reported to have settled in the area without major incidents. Thanks to the existing network of the Red cross Society of the Republic of Zaire, 90% of volunteers from Kibumba presented themselves and assistance began as early as this morning.

Red Cross/Crescent Action

Bukavu •

Yesterday limited food distributions were carried out by Red Cross volunteers in Kashusha and Nyamirangwe. In the latter both the former residents and the new influx received food aid. Medicines were delivered to Bukavu hospital, already overloaded with patients and left without assistance since humanitarian agencies left.

Goma •

The Federation set up a tent to provide emergency health services; high protein biscuits were distributed to thousands of children, exhausted after 48 hours on the road. Drugs and medical supplies were delivered to both Goma Central Hospital and to Mugunga Camp Hospital, now filled beyond capacity with patients. An ambulance service was organised to refer the most serious cases to the City Hospital.

The situation in the northern camps of Kahindo and Katale is reportedly stable. Red Cross volunteers have carried out food distributions sufficient for two days. One emergency Hercules flight was despatched from Nairobi, delivering food and non-food supplies and barrels of much-needed diesel fuel. Three of the delegates recently relocated to Nairobi were able to return to Goma to support a minimally-staffed sub-Delegation facing enormous challenges. More airlifts are envisaged over the next few days, including, in all likelihood, the deployment of the Norwegian Red Cross Emergency Response Unit for basic health care.

Piero Calvi Parisetti
Senior Officer
Great Lakes Desk

Bekele Geleta
Director
Africa Department