

# ***KENYA: SOMALI REFUGEES***

5 May 1997

***Emergency Appeal no. 01.03/97***

***situation report no. 1***

***period covered: January - March 1997***

---

*In February the Mombasa District Commissioner announced the immediate closure of the Swaleh Nguru camp for Somali refugees, and given them the option of either relocating to Kakuma in Turkana District, managed by Lutheran World Federation (LWF) or Dadaab in Garissa, managed by Care International. This came in the wake of a fire which virtually destroyed the camps, and just after the refugees had finished rebuilding their homes.*

---

## ***The context***

The KRCS/Federation operation for Somali refugees has been running since February 1992, soon after their initial arrival in Kenya. Support services include camp management, distribution of food and non-food items, preventive and curative health care and the provision of social services (education, mental health, physiotherapy, and vocational training). At the beginning of 1995, the KRCS/Federation shared the responsibility for managing five camps holding 100,000 refugees on the Kenyan coast, but by the end of last year the number of camps was reduced to three and the refugee registered population had fallen below 20,000.

## ***Latest events***

Fire devastated the Swaleh Nguru camp on 23 January, burnt down in a vengeance act. The only structures which survived were a Rubb Hall, the Administration block, and some toilet units. A man and an infant died in the fire. Another 25 refugees were treated at local hospitals. Just as refugees had almost rebuilt their houses, the Mombasa District Commissioner announced the immediate closure of the Camp and gave options of either relocating to Kakuma in Turkana District or Dadaab in Garissa. Despite resistance from the refugees, citing insecurity as their main concern, the first convoy of 316 left for Dadaab on 28 February.

On 19 March there was a bloody inter-clan fight in Swaleh Nguru after which 23 casualties were treated at Utange clinic. Two shelters and personal property worth thousands of shillings were destroyed by fire. To restore peace and security, UNHCR called in Kenyan police and prisons wardens.

To date 4,539 refugees have already been relocated from Swaleh Nguru; 3,282 to Kakuma and 1,257 to Dadaab. Once the UNHCR moves the remaining 3,196 registered refugees the next issue to address is the fate of the 7,000 unregistered refugees still in that camp.

However, the closure procedures have not yet been initiated in Jomvu and Hatimi camps, where 8,500 refugees await relocation.

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

### **Logistics/Relief •**

Population figures in camps:

<b>Camp</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>
Swaleh Nguru	7,176	5,482	3,196
Jomvu	5,221	5,221	5,221
Hatimi	3,312	3,312	3,312
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,709</b>	<b>14,015</b>	<b>11,729</b>

**N.B. these figures reflect only the registered population**

### **Relief - Food and Non Food Distribution •**

From January to March distributions went smoothly, except for February when they were the scene of some disorder, as refugees believed this would be their last food distribution. UNHCR announced that the last food distribution would in fact be in March, and only those refugees who had registered for relocation and were waiting for transport would receive rations.

	<b>January</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>
Cereals	210	171	107
Lentils/Pulses	3	0	0
Vegetable oil	12	10	7
Salt	2	2	1
<b>Total (mt)</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>115</b>

### **Sanitation •**

Previous problems with sanitation in all camps have been countered through teams of camp residents who spray garbage sites, and collect and burn refuse.

### **Health •**

	<b>January</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>March</b>
OPD	4,240	2,935	2,427
Admissions	350	207	103
Referrals	213	176	115
TB cases	95	108	84
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,898</b>	<b>3,426</b>	<b>2,729</b>

With the ongoing relocation process in Swaleh Nguru camp it is impossible to estimate the population aged under five. During the quarter four children under five among this group died due to malnutrition.

The fall in the number of consultations in February is caused by a standardisation of the data collection system with each patient only being recorded under the main presenting condition.

The number of births in this quarter is over 50% higher than in the same quarter last year while the number of deaths is 40% lower than in the same period last year.

**Water •**

Water supply in Swaleh Nguru and Hatimi was adequate but in Jomvu the water supply was less than 15 litres per person per day due to low supply from the main line. This problem has affected the surrounding area as well, although the situation has improved with the identification of a new water source.

**Social Services •**

UNHCR and the Government of Kenya requested the Red Cross to withdraw all non-essential services in line with the order to close the camp. On 25 February all social services activities in Swaleh Nguru were closed and nine KRCS staff laid off. The department now provides services in Hatimi only.

Six refugee community social welfare workers conduct home visits to identify those requiring assistance. Counselling sessions are also conducted for refugees whose applications for resettlement to the USA have been rejected.

**Education •**

School Enrolment:

Category	Male	Female	Total
Pre-school	130	70	200
Primary School	230	180	410
Adult Literacy	55	40	95

The fire in Swaleh Nguru destroyed all the social services buildings including the school classrooms and the rehabilitation centre. With the closure of education services in Swaleh Nguru, Hatimi is the only camp where educational services are provided. Its school functions in the afternoons only as classrooms are used by the IOM in the mornings for cultural orientation classes for Barawa refugees who have been accepted for resettlement to the USA.

***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

The IOM and KRCS co-operate on medical check-ups for refugees who have been accepted for resettlement in the USA.

***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details. For more information contact Helga Leifsdottir, Desk Officer on ++ 4122 7304316.

## *Conclusion*

The closure of Swaleh Nguru camp is going smoothly, and the registered refugees are voluntarily signing up for relocation to Dabaad and Kakuma camps. To date, more than 4,000 refugees have been relocated. However, the fate of 7,000 unregistered refugees living in Swaleh Nguru remains in the balance and with the closure drawing nearer a solution needs to be found. A further 8,500 refugees in Jomvu and Hatimi still await relocation. While the Government insists that the all refugees should also be provided with the option to register for relocation, UNHCR has stated that its policy of not assisting the unregistered population remains unchanged.

Ann Naef  
Acting Head  
Appeals and Reports Service

Bekele Geleta  
Director  
Africa Department