

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

21 November 1996

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period covered: 11-20 November 1996

Latest events

Population movements (Zaire) •

The following information has been collected by UNHCR from various sources and is believed to provide a reasonable account of the present situation in the "conflict belt" between Fizi in the south and Ruthuru in the north. Data, coming mainly from aerial reconnaissance and satellite intelligence, are inevitably approximate; it is impossible to detail the composition (refugees/displaced) of the various groups identified in eastern Zaire.

- approximately 100,000 have been spotted in the region of Fizi, on the western shore of lake Tanganyika, presumably waiting to join the others who have crossed the lake into Tanzania in the last weeks.
- no major settlements have been identified between Fizi and Bukavu;
- approximately 250,000 have been spotted in the region of Mwenga, some 100 kilometres south-west of Bukavu;
- approximately 100,000 have been spotted around Katchunga, north of Shabunda, some 150 kilometres west of Bukavu;
- approximately 100,000 have been spotted on the road between Bukavu and Walikale; this group is presently reported as heading back towards Bukavu;
- approximately 150,000 have been spotted on the western shore of lake Kivu around the village of Kubi;
- between 30,000 and 50,000 have been spotted around the town of Masisi, west of Goma;

- approximately 100,000 have been spotted in the area of Walikale, 150 kilometres west of Goma.

The Federation/Zaire Red Cross assessment mission reports from Kisangani that only a few hundreds displaced have reached the town so far, but that many more -possibly in the tens of thousands- are scattered in the region.

Population movements (Rwanda) •

The influx of returnees across the Goma/Gisenye border was reduced during the last two days to a trickle of about 20 people/hour. A total of approximately half a million is estimated to have returned since the beginning of the mass repatriation. The communes receiving the highest number of returnees are Gisenye (23% of the caseload), Ruhengeri (23%) , Kigali rural (19%) and Byumba (15%). At the time of writing, virtually all the returnees in Gisenye and Ruhengeri have reached their communes of origin. Substantial movements are still taking place from Ruhengeri towards the south (direction of Byumba and Kigali). Contrary to what reported by some news agencies, no movements are reported across the Bukavu/Cyangugu border.

Population movements (Tanzania, Burundi) •

There are no indications that the Rwandan refugees in Tanzania are preparing for repatriation. The caseload of refugees in Tanzania has grown by as many as 75,000 from the beginning of November, including both movements from Zaire across lake Tanganyika and influxes from Burundi. In Burundi itself, the movement of returnees from Zaire seems to have dried out during the last week, after approximately 30,000

Red Cross/Red Crescent actions

Rwanda •

The focus of relief activities in Rwanda has been moving during the last few days following the stream of returnees moving towards their communes of origin. Having Gisenye virtually emptied, the health centre in Rubano and the transit center of Umubano were closed on the 21st. A total of six transit centres have been organised in Kacyru, where all services (food, water, first aid, sanitation) are provided for up to 15,000. Distribution of BP5 biscuits are carried out by Rwanda Red Cross volunteers in a number of distribution points around Mukungwa. The Japanese Red Cross health team was transferred to Kirengi, where they are running with the Rwanda Red Cross a primary health care centre. Water and food distribution is taken place in the same area, where a 15,000 litres water bladder was positioned. Rehabilitation and rest tents were set up for the vulnerable groups. A similar primary health centre was organised in the outskirts of Kigali, where 5,000 people had arrived on the morning of the 21st and where new arrivals were growing by the hour. The head of the German Red Cross technical team has been identifying with the local authorities suitable sites in Kigali rural where to organise the construction of temporary shelter for the returnees. The actual construction work is expected to start in the next two or three days.

An agreement have been reached with WFP for the distribution of food to 126,000 beneficiaries in 14 communes located in five prefectures (Gisenye, Byumba, Ruhengeri, Kigali town and Kigali rural). 2,600 MT of food will be distributed by Rwanda Red Cross volunteers for two consecutive months. The outstanding transport needs for this effort will be met thanks to the donations of heavy vehicles from the

British and French Red Cross, with trucks recuperated from Goma sub-Delegation and possibly with a loan of trucking capacity from ICRC.

Zaire •

The Federation/Zaire Red Cross are assessing the situation in Kisangani, where hundreds of displaced from nearby areas are gathering in a former hospital in town. While movements in the region are made difficult by the poor state of the roads and by the rainy season, consistent reports speak of tens of thousands of displaced in movement towards the town. The local authorities have asked the Zaire Red Cross, with the support of the Federation, to assist the displaced already in the centre and to prepare structures for the expected influx of thousands of displaced. Initial requisitions have been forwarded to Geneva and a full plan of action is expected for Saturday 23.

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