

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

RWANDA: PEOPLE FLEEING BURUNDI

13 October 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 01/2004) is being issued based on the needs below. CHF 50,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The Federation does not anticipate further needs. Un-earmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the DREF update.

Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Rwandan Red Cross will consider enlarging its operation and seeking international support.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

According to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Accord of August 2000 under which Burundi's three-year transitional government was established, democratic elections should be held by 31 October 2004. To date, the electoral commission has not yet released. The ensuing uncertainty has heightened tension in Burundi and created

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fears of the emergence of violent clashes reminiscent of the 1993 massacres; this has in turn prompted an exodus of people into neighbouring Rwanda.

This population movement began on 2 October 2004. To date, approximately 3,250 people are believed to have fled into Rwanda, and new arrivals continue to be registered. They consist of Burundi nationals, and a refugee caseload from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This latter group has been living in refugee camps in Burundi since June 2004 after fleeing their country following heavy fighting between government and rebel forces in eastern Bukavu. (Refer to http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_Appeals.pl?rpts04/BI040705.pdf). The DRC refugee caseload comprises three ethnic groups: Bafulero, Bashi and Banyamulenge.

The first group consisting of about 1,000 Congolese arrived in Rwanda on Saturday 2 October 2004 and entered Cyangugu Camp, and another group of 400 Burundians who crossed into Butare in Rwanda; this later had increased to 750 by 9 October 2004.

The second wave consisted of 360 Burundians comprising mainly of children, women and elderly men who crossed into Ngenda district on foot through on Tuesday 5 October 2004; this number had also increased to 500 by 9 October 2004.

The last group to cross into Rwanda consisted of over 100 Burundians who crossed through Cibitoke on Wednesday 6 October 2004; Burundian authorities reported having registered another 1,000 Burundians waiting to cross into Rwanda at Cibitoke on the same day.



Children crossing into Rwanda

Some of the Banyamulenges attempting to return to eastern DRC were met with demonstrators in Uvira who pelted them with stones. There has been opposition to the return of the Banyamulenge whom are considered to be foreigners because of their Rwandan descent; they have at times also been rebuffed by border authorities.

About 1,600 returnees who had been stuck at the boarder with Burundi for almost a week were finally allowed entry by DRC authorities and have moved into a UNHCR camp at Uvira.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Rwandan Red Cross¹ has to date distributed non-food items to 640 families in the following camps:

Butare

The local Red Cross office has provided some shelter and non-food items to the 750 people that were camped in Butare by 9 October 2004.

¹ Rwandan Red Cross - <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=143>

Cyangugu camp

This camp has been hosting 1,800 Congolese refugees since June 2004. The Rwandan Red Cross has distributed kitchen sets, jerry cans, blankets, clothes, disinfectants, boats for kids, sleeping mats and hand spray pumps to 190 families while UNHCR provided non-food items to the remaining 170 families. The national society has also contributed tents and tarpaulins to supplements shelter material provided by UNHCR. Red Cross volunteers are providing HIV/AIDS awareness and organizing social activities. UNHCR is the lead agency in all the camps; WFP is providing food while the Rwandan Red Cross is providing support in camp management. Currently there is one camp manager, 15 volunteers and one land cruiser pick up on site at Cyangugu camp. The ministry of local authorities is in charge of general coordination and overall security.



Rwandan Red Cross volunteers distributing non-food items

The national society has also distributed none food items to the 1, 000 Congolese who arrived in the camp on the 2 October 2004. The facilities at the camp particularly water and sanitation (WatSan) services have been overloaded by the new arrivals and require expansion. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has been taking a lead role in WatSan services since June but may terminate their activity hence the need to identify another agency to take over urgently. The national society has trained volunteers in WatSan components: hardware, software and PHAST.²

Ngenda

The Rwandan Red Cross has distributed non food items to the 500 Burundian that were being hosted at a primary school at Ngenda by 9 October 2004. The water and sanitation situation is precarious since there is only one water tap and two toilets at the site. UNHCR and the Ministry of Local Authorities have transferred some of people to the main refugee camp in Gikongoro which has however reached its maximum capacity. UNHCR is negotiating with the Rwanda government for an additional camp site in Butare

ICRC Kigali assisted the national society with a lorry to transport a Rub Hall to the UNHCR transit camp in Nyagatare, Cyangugu on 8 October. Members of the national disaster response team will assist in putting it up. The Rwandan Red Cross is currently handling a total population of 5,050 of which 3,800 are from DRC; new arrivals are expected on a daily basis. Gikongoro camp site is now filled to capacity and plans are underway for the UNHCR to establish a new site. The national society's national disaster response team is closely monitoring the situation and is on standby to send out assessment teams along the western corridor (Butare, Bugesera, Cyangugu and Gikongoro).

The national society has requested a DREF allocation to replenish disaster preparedness stocks distributed to 640 families to date (see table below) and to cater for emerging needs of new arrival

² **'Hardware'** refers to the structural aspect of a project which involves actual implementation of the needs that have been identified e.g. borehole drilling, latrine construction. **'Software'** refers to the planning stage of a project where needs of a community are identified, defined and capacities build in order to promote self-sustainability, ownership. **PHAST** - Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation

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| Item | Tarpaulins | Blankets | Sleeping mats | Kitchen sets | Jerry cans |
|----------|------------|----------|---------------|--------------|------------|
| Quantity | 640 | 1280 | 640 | 640 | 1280 |

The Rwandan Red Cross will also request for technical and financial support from the Federation regional delegation in Nairobi should the need arise.

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

- East Africa sub-region, Appeal 01.08/2004 – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/010804.pdf
- East Africa regional , Appeal01.10/2004 – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/011004.pdf

Please also watch for the 2005 Annual appeals, due to be launched in Geneva on 23 November 2004.

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