

German air force ends Rwanda aid mission

AFP, January 2, 1995

NAIROBI, Jan 2 (AFP) - The German air force has ended its humanitarian airlift operation for Rwandan refugees, the German embassy in Nairobi said Monday.

The operation, which began last July, made its final flight at the weekend. The air force, using two Transall C-160 transport planes and a Boeing 707 based in Nairobi and Johannesburg, flew 250 missions in 167 days.

A total of 3,750 tonnes of emergency aid was delivered mainly to the Rwandan capital Kigali and to Goma and Bukavu, the two east Zairean towns that became hubs for sprawling refugee camps last year.

More than a million Rwandans fled the country after it plunged into three months of ethnic carnage among the Tutsi minority and the majority Hutus on the death of president Juvenal Habyarimana in a sus-

picious plane crash in April.

The Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) that seized power in July and installed a coalition government has accused Hutu former government troops and extremist militias of the genocide of up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

A spokesman for the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) said the expensive operation was no longer necessary as aid could now be delivered by road. In case of emergency, private charter companies could be used, it said.

The UNHCR said that with its participation in the Rwanda airlift, the German government had again demonstrated its willingness to take up its responsibilities in the international arena.

at/db AFP AFP