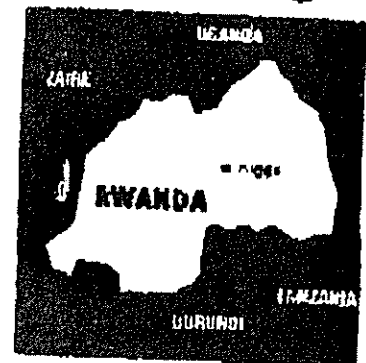


# UNHCR UPDATE

## on RWANDA

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### UNHCR NEEDS \$56.7 MILLION FOR RWANDESE AND BURUNDI REFUGEES

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees made an urgent appeal Tuesday for \$56.7 million to aid some 860,000 refugees who fled ethnic violence in Rwanda and Burundi. The funds would cover a three-month period through July 15.

Much of the appeal focuses on Tanzania, where about 250,000 Rwandese refugees converged over a 24-hour period two weeks ago in the largest and swiftest exodus UNHCR has ever seen. Between 400 and 1,500 refugees, most traveling in small groups, continue to arrive daily in Tanzania.

Relief workers have warned of a refugee catastrophe unless enough food, clean water, shelter and sanitation services are provided to the Rwandese refugees packed into the Benaco camp in Tanzania, about 18 kilometers from the Rwandese border. Children comprise half of the population at Benaco, which is about an hour's drive from the town of Ngara. The children are most vulnerable to outbreaks of dysentery, measles and cholera in the midst of the rainy season.

Another 47,000 Rwandese refugees are in Burundi, 10,000 in Zaire and 8,000 in Uganda.

The exodus from Rwanda began after an April 6 plane crash in the capital Kigali killed the presidents of Burundi and Rwanda and triggered widespread ethnic clashes.

In addition to the Rwandese refugees, UNHCR is assisting 785,000 Burundi refugees who have returned to Burundi. These are people who escaped, mostly to Rwanda, after similar ethnic violence engulfed Burundi in October. About 80,000 Burundi refugees remain in Rwanda, 60,000 in Tanzania and 100,000 in Zaire.

The fighting in Rwanda also forced some 20,000 Zairean refugees to flee back to their homeland. The Zaireans, who had fled civil strife in their own country, had been in Rwanda for several years.

(more)

The World Food Program on Tuesday made its third food distribution since the Rwandese swarmed into Tanzania April 28-29. The three-day food ration was increased from 1,300 to 1,900 kilocalories. WFP said it has enough food in central Africa to feed the refugees.

UNHCR has been airlifting medicine, jerrycans, blankets, kitchen sets and shelter materials since the fighting in Rwanda broke out. Chartered planes land in Mwanza, Tanzania, and the supplies are then ferried by truck to Ngara -- a two-day trip. UNHCR desperately needs more trucks to keep the convoys going to Ngara, an area so remote it presents tremendous difficulties to reach during the current rainy season.

Major agencies participating in UNHCR's assistance programs in central Africa are Médecins Sans Frontières from France, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland, Oxfam, CARE, Caritas, ICRC, IFRC, Médecins du Monde, Medair, and Pharmaciens Sans Frontières, International Rescue Committee, Concern and Action internationale contre la faim.