

Over 20,000 have fled Rwanda, says UNHCR

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GENEVA, April 15 (Reuter) - Over 20,000 people, many of them refugees from Burundi, have fled the current unrest in Rwanda, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said on Friday.

UNHCR spokeswoman Sylvana Foa told reporters that 12,000 people had fled to Burundi, around 9,100 to Zaire, several hundred to Tanzania and around 100 to Uganda.

Of those that had fled to Burundi, 11,000 were Burundians who fled ethnic violence in their own country late last year. There are around 275,000 Burundi refugees in camps in Rwanda.

Of the 9,100 who had fled to Zaire, 8,000 were Rwandans and 1,100 refugees from Burundi. Those who had fled to Zaire and Tanzania were Rwandans.

Foa said a U.N. team had managed to get into Burundi refugee camps around Butare, near the Burundi border, where about 140,000 refugees are holed up.

The team had reported that the situation in the area was stable and had given the green light for cross-border aid convoys from Tanzania via northern Burundi to the camps. Foa said there was about a week's supply of food in the camps, even with all the refugees in them only on half-rations.

She added that High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata had released \$5 million from a UNHCR emergency fund to tide the operation over until donor governments responded to an appeal for funds.

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