

84

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Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 1

Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

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PAGE 01 KIGALI 00606 01 OF 05 101009Z  
ACTION RP-10

INFO LOG-00 AF-01 AID-01 AMAD-01 CA-02 OASY-00 EUR-01  
OIGO-01 HA-09 TEDE-00 IO-16 ADS-00 OCS-06 OIC-02  
SR-00 FMP-00 /050W

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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI  
TO AMEMBASSY KAMPALA IMMEDIATE  
SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5695  
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA  
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
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AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE  
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 05 KIGALI 00606

KAMPALA FOR AMBASSADOR AND MS. LEADER  
STATE FOR RP  
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PAGE 02 KIGALI 00606 01 OF 05 101009Z  
ROME FOR FODAG  
NAIROBI FOR REFCORD THOMAS-GREENFIELD  
ADDIS FOR FARNSWORTH

E.O. 12356: N/A  
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SUBJECT: GOR, RPF, UNHCR, ICRC PLAN FOR RWANDAN  
RETURNEES FROM UGANDA

REF: KIGALI 0454

Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 1

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 2

Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

1. SUMMARY. RWANDAN PATRIOTIC FRONT CLAIMS THAT NEARLY 7,000 REFUGEES WITH ALMOST 10,000 HEAD OF CATTLE RETURNED FROM UGANDA TO RPF-HELD TERRITORY DURING JANUARY. UNHCR IS MAKING AN EFFORT TO ASSESS THEIR FOOD AND NON-FOOD NEEDS OR A LIMITED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, IN RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT AND RPF REQUESTS. RELIEF PLANNING IS COMPLICATED BY LACK OF STRUCTURES TO MAKE DECISIONS ON REFUGEE ISSUES PENDING FORMATION OF TRANSITION GOVERNMENT. THE ISSUE IS CLOSELY LINKED WITH THAT OF WAR-DISPLACED FROM THE RPF ZONE WHO STILL LIVE IN CAMPS AND DEPEND ON INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN PAST WEEK, AMBASSADOR AND DCM DISCUSSED ISSUE OF "SPONTANEOUS REFUGEE RETURN" FROM UGANDA WITH UNHCR, RPF, ICRC, BRIEFLY WITH GOVERNMENT, AND WITH CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, AMERICAN NGO UNDER CONSIDERATION AS UNCHR IMPLEMENTING PARTNER FOR ASSISTING THE GROUP. UNHCR IS UNDER PRESSURE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KIGALI 00606 01 OF 05 101009Z  
RESPOND TO REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE FROM BOTH THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE RPF. AT THE SAME TIME, UNHCR IS WARY OF BEING DRAWN INTO AN OPEN-ENDED OPERATION WHERE EVENTUAL MAGNITUDE AND DURATION ARE UNKNOWN.

NUMBERS INCREASING

3. THE RPF HAS REGISTERED AND COLLECTED DATA ON THE REFUGEES SPONTANEOUSLY RETURNING FROM UGANDA SINCE DECEMBER 28, 1993, TO THE TABAGWE SECTOR OF THE FRONTIER COMMUNE OF MUVUMBA, IN RPF-HELD TERRITORY. RPF REPORTS THAT, BY JANUARY 21, THERE WERE 1,921 FAMILIES NUMBERING 6,700 PEOPLE, WITH 9,100 HEAD OF CATTLE. MOST BECAME REFUGEES IN THE 1960'S AND HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE THEIR FAMILIES ORIGINATED FROM IN RWANDA. OTHERS, WHO FLED FOLLOWING THE OUTBREAK OF WAR IN 1990, COME FROM THE RPF-HELD ZONE. ALL HAVE LEFT THE NYAKIVALE REGION WHERE THEY WERE EITHER LOCALLY SETTLED (THE 1960'S REFUGEES) OR IN CAMPS (THE 1990'S REFUGEES). THE GROUP IS PRIMARILY MEN AND BOYS.

Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 2

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 3  
Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

4. UNHCR VISITED THE RETURNEES FEBRUARY 3 IN A JOINT MISSION WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE RPF, ICRC, AND THE CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES (CRS). UNHCR PROTECTION OFFICER TOLD DCM THAT IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO VERIFY THE RPF'S CLAIMS. THE HERDERS, ALL BUT 579 FAMILIES, ARE DISPERSED ACROSS THE HILLSIDES, HAVING BUILT SMALL SCATTERED HUTS AND FOLLOWING THEIR CATTLE BY DAY, SOMETIMES MOVING THEIR HUTS AS WELL. ACCORDING TO CRS REPRESENTATIVE ON

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PAGE 04 KIGALI 00606 01 OF 05 101009Z  
THAT TRIP, THE TEAM SAW ONLY A COUPLE HUNDRED OF THE 7,000 PERSONS SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE AREA. THE HERDERS ARE PRIMARILY FROM THE 1960'S GROUP. OTHERS, FROM THE 1990'S G OAP WHO COME FROM MUVUMBA COMMUNE, HAVE RETURNED TO LAND THEY CLAIM IS THEIR OWN. MUVUMBA COMMUNE IS ALSO THE HOMELAND OF WAR DISPLACED WHO FLED TO REFUGEE CAMPS IN THE SOUTH (SEE PARA 10).

5. UNHCR'S PROTECTION OFFICER TALKED WITH THE

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PAGE 01 KIGALI 00606 02 OF 05 101011Z  
ACTION RP-10

INFO LOG-00 AF-01 AID-01 AMAD-01 CA-02 OASY-00 EUR-01  
OIGO-01 HA-09 TEDE-00 IO-16 ADS-00 OCS-06 OIC-02  
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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 3

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 4  
Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
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AMEMBASSY ROME  
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 05 KIGALI 00606

KAMPALA FOR AMBASSADOR AND MS. LEADER  
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GBNEVA FOR RMA

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PAGE 02 KIGALI 00606 02 OF 05 101011Z  
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E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: PEF, RW, BY  
SUBJECT: GOR, RPF, UNHCR, ICRC PLAN FOR RWANDAN

RBTURNEES DURING THE VISIT. SHE SAID THEY CLAIM THE LOCAL POPULATION IN UGANDA PUSHED THE REFUGEES TO RBTURN, SAYING THE ARUSHA ACCORD IS THERE, YOU CAN RETURN, AND WE WANT YOUR LAND. ASKED IF SHE BELIEVED THE MOVE WAS TRULY SPONTANEOUS, SHE RECALLED UNHCR THE VISIT IN LATE JANUARY OF UNHCR'S SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE REGION TO THE REFUGEE SITES IN UGANDA. HE REPORTED FINDING WIDESPREAD ENTHUSIASM FOR RETURN. SO, SHE SAID, SHE IS CONVINCED THE RPF DID NOT PUSH THE REFUGEES TO RETURN. ON THE OTHER HAND, SHE NOTED THE RPF WOULD HAVE HAD TO ALLOW THE RETURNEES ACROSS THE BORDER. (COMMENT: A UN FORCES SOURCE SAID THEY HAVE LOCATED BETWEEN TWO MINE FIELDS, SUGGESTING THEY MAY HAVE HAD SOME ASSISTANCE IN FINDING THEIR WAY, AS WBLL. END COMMENT.)

ASSISTANCE PLANS

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6. NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE. UNHCR HAS AGREED TO PROVIDE NON-FOOD ASSISTANCE CONSISTING OF RELIEF SUPPLIES COMMON TO TEMPORARY POPULATION MOVEMENTS: BLANKETS,

Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 4

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 5  
Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

PLASTIC SHEETING, GERRY-CANS, ETC. THE PROTECTION OFFICER BELIEVES SOME SUCH SUPPLIES MAY BE ABLE TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KIGALI 00606 02 OF 05 101011Z  
BORROWED FROM STOCKS FOR THE BURUNDI REFUGEES IN THE SOUTH.

7. FOOD ASSISTANCE. THE JOINT MISSION OF FEBRUARY 3 LOOKED INTO FOOD NEEDS OF THE RETURNEES. THERE IS DISAGREEMENT OVER WHAT THE FOOD NEEDS MIGHT BE. CRS REPRESENTATIVE NOTED TO AMBASSADOR AND DCM THAT MOST OF THE CATTLE HERDERS ARE HIMA WHO LIVE ON MILK, MEAT, AND CATTLE BLOOD. THEREFORE, HE REASONED, AS LONG AS THEY HAVE THEIR CATTLE, THEY HAVE NO NEED OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE. UNHCR, ON THE OTHER HAND, SAID ITS OFFICE IN KAMPALA AFFIRMED THAT THE PEOPLE IN QUESTION, THOUGH THEY MIGHT ONCE HAVE LIVED SOLELY OFF THEIR CATTLE, NOW ARE HABITUATED TO CEREALS, BANANAS, AND MORE TRADITIONAL FOODS. IN A TENSE MEETING WITH UNHCR FEBRUARY 2, RPF INSISTED ON IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE BASED ON THE DATA IT HAD TABLED. UNHCR AND PVO'S SAID THEY COULD NOT PROCEED UNTIL THEY HAD A THOROUGH POPULATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT. UNHCR PLANS ANOTHER MISSION TO THE SITE FEBRUARY 11.

8. TECHNICAL PROBLEMS. UNHCR SAID THAT ANY FOOD ASSISTANCE OPERATION WOULD BE DIFFICULT. THE SITE IS THREE AND ONE-HALF HOURS FROM KIGALI OVER UNMAINTAINED ROADS AND A LOG BRIDGE (THE OTHER WAS BLOWN UP IN THE WAR) THAT CAN TAKE ONLY A 6-TON TRUCK AT MOST. THE WFP OPERATION HAS ONLY 15-TON TRUCKS, SUGGESTING THEY WOULD HAVE TO DELIVER TO WAREHOUSES SOUTH OF THE BRIDGE FOR TRANSFER TO SMALLER VEHICLES. THE CURRENT GROUP WOULD NEED AN ESTIMATED 120 TONS OF FOOD PER MONTH, IF ALL REQUIRED

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PAGE 04 KIGALI 00606 02 OF 05 101011Z  
TRADITIONAL REFUGEE RATIONS.

9. PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS. UNHCR HAS SAID IT WILL ONLY LAUNCH AN OPERATION IF THE PEOPLE ARE GROUPED

Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 5

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 6  
Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

TOGETHER, BUT THAT APPEARS UNLIKELY. THEY HAVE ALSO SAID THEY WILL NOT ASSIST PEOPLE SETTLED ON OTHER PEOPLE'S LANDS. UNHCR HESITATES TO CREATE A PULL FACTOR. ASSISTANCE TO THIS GROUP, THE PROTECTION OFFICER SAID, COULD DRAW AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF

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PAGE 01 KIGALI 00606 03 OF 05 101013Z  
ACTION RP-10

INFO LOG-00 AF-01 AID-01 AMAD-01 CA-02 OASY-00 EUR-01  
OIGO-01 HA-09 TEDE-00 IO-16 ADS-00 OCS-06 OIC-02  
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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI  
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SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5697  
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 03 OF 05 KIGALI 00606

KAMPALA FOR AMBASSADOR AND MS. LEADER  
STATE FOR RP  
GENEVA FOR RMA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 KIGALI 00606 03 OF 05 101013Z

Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 6

DECONTROLLED/UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 7  
Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

ROME FOR FODAG  
NAIROBI FOR REFCORD THOMAS-GREENFIELD  
ADDIS FOR FARNSWORTH

E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: PREF, RW, BY  
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REFUGEES IN UGANDA TO RETURN NOW. IT COULD ALSO CAUSE DISPLACED PERSONS STILL LIVING IN CAMPS AND DEPENDENT ON INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO RUSH BACK, FEARING THAT THE RETURNEES WILL TAKE THEIR LAND. UNHCR, IF IT LAUNCHES AN OPERATION, WANTS IT TO BE MINIMAL AND LOW PROFILE. THE PROTECTION OFFICER ALSO BELIEVES ANY OPERATION SHOULD BE LIMITED IN SIZE AND DURATION, GIVEN THE CURRENT UNKNOWNNS.

A ROLE FOR CRS?

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10. WHILE CRS HAS DOUBTS ABOUT THE FOOD NEEDS OF THE RETURNEE POPULATION, IT EXPRESSED TO UNHCR CONCERN FOR ITS CREDIBILITY WITH THE BENEFICIARIES OF ITS CURRENT ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED PERSONS. APPARENTLY THE POPULATION IT NOW AIDS, 80,000, HAIL PRIMARILY FROM MUVUMBA COMMUNE. CRS WOULD FIND IT PROBLEMATIC, UNHCR SAID, TO AID THE DISPLACED AND RETURNEES SETTLING ON THEIR LAND.

A ROLE FOR ICRC?

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11. ICRC HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KIGALI 00606 03 OF 05 101013Z  
GROUP AND IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE RPF TO PROVIDE FOOD ASSISTANCE TO THE ENTIRE GROUP. ICRC HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT IS PREPARED TO TREAT AS WAR-DISPLACED, AND ASSIST, THOSE WHO FLED TO UGANDA IN THE 1990'S. IT WILL NOT BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE REFUGEES FROM EARLIER TIMES, AND IT IS NOT/NOT PREPARED TO BEGIN HELPING THE WAR-DISPLACED REFUGEES NOW. THAT MUST WAIT UNTIL THE CONDITIONS FOR THE RETURN OF ALL WAR DISPLACED HAVE BEEN MET. MEAMWHILE, UNHCR HAS AGREED TO ASSIST THE ENTIRE GROUP UNTIL ICRC IS PREPARED TO HELP. (NOTE. THE

Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 7

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 8  
Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

ARUSHA SCHEDULE PERMITS RETURN TO THE RPF ZONE ONCE THE FORCES OF BOTH THE RPF AND THE GOR HAVE LAID DOWN (#) ASSEMBLY POINTS. END NOTE.)

AMD WHAT ABOUT THE CATTLE?

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12. WITH THE RISK OF CATTLE IMPORTING DISEASE TO RWANDA, THE MINISTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR REFUGEES HAS PROVIDED THE RWANDAN FRANC EQUIVALENT OF ABOUT USD 7,500 FOR VACCINES FOR THE CATTLE. HOWEVER, NOTHING IS UNDERWAY AS YET. UNHCR SAID THAT IT PLANS TO WORK WITH THE RPF, WHICH HAS VETERINARIANS IT CAN MAKE AVAILABLE FOR THE OPERATION, BUT THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT VACCINES AVAILABLE.

ROLE FOR UN FORCES?

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13. AT A MEETING CALLED BY THE PRIME MINISTER JANUARY 31, THE GOR, RPF, AND CONCERNED INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DISCUSSED HOW TO RESPOND TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 KIGALI 00606 03 OF 05 101013Z  
SPONTANEOUS RETURNEES. THE MEETING AGREED THAT THE UN FORCES AND THE RPF, IN COLLABORATION WITH UNHCR AND THE OAU, WOULD IDENTIFY TEMPORARY SITES FOR THE SPONTANEOUS RETURNEES WHERE THEY COULD BE ASSISTED. IT WAS THE SENSE OF THE MEETING, ACCORDING TO A SUMMARY PROVIDED THE DCM, THAT THE UN FORCES OUGHT TO BE CONCERNED WITH THE SECURITY OF THE RETURNEES AND WITH ASSURING CONDITIONS THAT WOULD PERMIT ASSISTANCE

NOTE: (#)OMISSION IN PARA 11 CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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PAGE 01 KIGALI 00606 04 OF 05 102056Z  
ACTION RP-10

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OIGO-01 HA-09 TEDE-00 IO-16 ADS-00 OCS-06 OIC-02

Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 8



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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 9  
Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

SR-00 FMP-00 /050W  
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 04 OF 05 KIGALI 00606

KAMPALA FOR AMBASSADOR AND MS. LEADER  
STATE FOR RP  
GBNEVA FOR RMA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 KIGALI 00606 04 OF 05 102056Z  
ROME FOR FODAG  
NAIROBI FOR REFCORD THOMAS-GREENFIELD  
ADDIS FOR FARNSWORTH

E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: PEF, RW, BY  
SUBJECT: GOR, RPF, UNHCR, ICRC PLAN FOR RWANDAN

TO BE DELIVERED.

RPF POSITION

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14. THE RPF ASSURED DCM THAT IT HAS TRIED TO  
DISCOURAGE PREMATURE REPATRIATION AND THAT THOSE WHO  
HAVE ARRIVED KNOW, WITHOUT ANY DOUBT, THAT THEY ARE  
IN TEMPORARY LOCATIONS. THE RPF SAID THAT ICRC IS  
HESITATING TO BECOME INVOLVED IN FOOD ASSISTANCE, BUT  
THAT IT WILL PROBABLY REFURBISH THE HEALTH CLINICS IN

Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 9

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 10  
Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

THE AREA OCCUPIED BY THE RETURNEES FIRST, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS LONGER-TERM PLAN FOR CLINIC REHABILITATION. THE RPF WAS PLEASED WITH THE JANUARY 31 MEETING, SAYING THAT IT OVERCAME THE RESISTANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT, UNHCR, AND THE ICRC TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE RETURNEES.

DISPLACED ALSO RETURNING TO RPF ZONE

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15. ALTHOUGH ATTENTION HAS BEEN ON THANK M ANEUS RETURNES FROM UGANDA, THE RPF CLAIMS THAT 18,000 PERSONS DISPLACED FROM THE RPF ZONE BY THE WAR HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 KIGALI 00606 04 OF 05 102056Z  
ALSO RETURNED. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THE 10,000 ICRC HAS BEEN ASSISTING IN THE RPF ZONE SINCE THE PEACE ACCORD WAS SIGNED IN AUGUST. (NOTE. IT IS EMBASSY'S UNDERSTANDING THAT THESE RETURNS HAVE OCCURRED PRIMARILY IN THE BUTARO COMMUNE OF THE RUMENGERI PREFECTURE. END NOTE.) THE RPF SAYS THESE PEOPLE ARE RETURNING AS CLOSE TO THEIR HOMES AS RPF MILITARY POSITIONS AND MINE FIELDS WILL PERMIT. TO AID THEM, THE RPF SAID IT HAS DEMARCATED SOME MINE FIELDS (ALTHOUGH ONE PERSON HAS BEEN INJURED). THE RPF CLAIMS IT IS KEEPING CLOSE TRACK OF THE RETURNEES AND PROVIDING ICRC WITH THE NAMES SO THEY CAN BE DELETED FROM ASSISTANCE LISTS IN CAMPS FOR THE DISPLACED. BUT THE RPF ANTICIPATES THEM NEEDING ASSISTANCE IN THEIR HOMES, PARTICULARLY SEEDS AND TOOLS. THIS ISSUE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE UNDER DISCUSSION FOR THE MOMENT.

DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES LACKING

-----  
16. THE ABSENCE OF THE TRANSITION GOVERNMENT IS HOLDING UP FORMATION OF THE NEW SECRETARIAT, TO BE HEADED BY THE RPF, THAT WILL HANDLE REFUGEES, RETURNEES, AND DISPLACED PERSONS DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD. IT IS ALSO PREVENTING FORMATION OF A COMMISSION DEFINED IN THE ARUSHA ACCORD AS HAVING RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLANNING REPATRIATION AND REFUGEE REINSTALLATION. THE PRIME MINISTER'S JANUARY 31 MEETING, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY CONCLUDED

Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 10

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 11  
Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

THAT THE CONCERNED PARTIES COULD GET TOGETHER TO  
DISCUSS MODALITIES AND DIRECTIONS. (NOTE: UNHCR'S  
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PAGE 04 KIGALI 00606 04 OF 05 102056Z  
SPECIAL ENVOY TO THE REGION, MICHEL MOUSSALLI, GAVE  
DIPLOMATS IMPRESSION AT BRIEFING FEBRUARY 2 OF A MORE  
DEFINITE DECISION TO ESTABLISH A TEMPORARY TECHNICAL  
COMMITTEE THAT WOULD HAVE DONOR REPRESENTATIVES  
INCLUDED AT ITS DELIBERATIONS. END NOTE.)

COMMENT

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17. WE ARE PLEASED THAT UNHCR HAS DECIDED TO BECOME  
INVOLVED IN RESPONDING TO THE SPONTANEOUS RETURNEES.  
WB ALSO BELIEVE THAT WHATEVER ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED

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PAGE 01 KIGALI 00606 05 OF 05 101015Z  
ACTION RP-10

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 11

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1994KIGALI00606

Page: 12  
Channel: n/a

Case Number: 200003723

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 05 OF 05 KIGALI 00606

KAMPALA FOR AMBASSADOR AND MS. LEADER  
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PAGE 02 KIGALI 00606 05 OF 05 101015Z  
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ADDIS FOR FARNSWORTH

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SHOULD BE MEASURED AND BASED ON IDENTIFIED NEEDS.  
THE RISK OF CREATING A PULL FACTOR, DRAWING REFUGEES  
FROM THE NORTH OR DISPLACED FROM THE SOUTH IS REAL  
AND COULD JEOPARDIZE RWANDA'S ABILITY TO MANAGE A  
VERY COMPLEX PROBLEM. A MIDDLE ROAD BETWEEN  
HANDS-OFF AND UNRESTGIKTKKASSISTANCE IS LICOYJE  
FOR NOW.

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Current Class: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Page: 12

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