

# Rwandan refugees facing starvation: NGOs

AFP, March 16, 1995

LONDON, March 16 (AFP) - Two relief organisations warned Thursday that time is fast running out for two-and-a-half million Rwandan refugees faced with famine, and urged the international community to act now to prevent disaster.

In a joint appeal warning of a growing emergency, Oxfam and Save the Children said that declining stocks held by the UN Food Programme would be exhausted within two weeks.

"There is now a real fear that without a major injection of cash and food, the crisis will affect every refugee and displaced person within the region," the statement said, stressing that women and children would be the first to suffer.

The two British non-governmental organisations (NGOs) believe the situation is particularly serious for the 650,000 Rwandan refugees in Tanzania.

"The refugees already perceive the food crisis as a deliberate attempt by the international community to starve them into returning home to Rwanda," the statement added.

The organisations added that a famine would lead to even worse violence in the central African countries hosting the refugees, and scupper attempts to return them to their homes.

Both organisations are providing aid on the ground in teeming refugee camps in Rwanda, Zaire and Tanzania.

phv/db/gk AFP AFP