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## Rwanda's Humanitarian Situation and the U.S. Response

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### SUMMARY

In mid-July 1994, following the victory of the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Popular Front (RPF), 1.5 million Rwandans (primarily Hutus) fled into Zaire. More than 4.6 million Rwandans have fled to other neighboring countries and to safe areas in Rwanda out of a pre-civil war population estimated at 8.1 million. International aid agencies have been overwhelmed by the situation. The United States has responded to the emergency with a pledge of \$470 million in humanitarian assistance and is sending military personnel to help with the aid effort.

### BACKGROUND

The limited international response to the civil war in Rwanda changed dramatically in mid-July 1994, when the rapid movement of 1.5 million people across the border into Zaire created a massive humanitarian crisis. Since April, Rwandans have also fled to Tanzania (460,000), Burundi (210,000) and Uganda (15,000) resulting in a total of more than 2.1 million refugees. Many thousands more may have fled to those countries but have not come under the care of the U.N. agencies. An additional 2.6 million persons have been driven from their homes, but remain in Rwanda. The United Nations estimates that more than 100,000 Rwandese children were orphaned or separated from their parents.<sup>1</sup>

### HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE NEEDS<sup>2</sup>

**Eastern Zaire.** The 1.5 million (primarily Hutu) refugees who fled into Zaire in advance of the victory of the Tutsi-dominated RPF forces entered an area with limited infrastructure (roads, airports, medical facilities, water or

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<sup>1</sup>For further information on the Rwanda situation, see CRS IB94027, *Rwanda and Burundi: Background and U.S. Policy Options*.

<sup>2</sup>The information in this section is drawn from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance situation report on Rwanda. This report is available from USAID by calling 202-647-5707.



sanitation facilities), few vehicles such as trucks or bulldozers, difficult terrain (lava rock), no potable water, endemic cholera and dysentery, and two active volcanos. In the two weeks after their arrival, an estimated 18,000 Rwandans died of cholera in the refugee camps of Goma, and these numbers are expected to rise even if adequate water and care are available immediately. In addition to the food, water, shelter, and medical needs of the refugees, the unburied bodies of those who have died are creating a health hazard for the refugees. Burial in the camp area is difficult because of their location on lava rock.

While international relief has been arriving in the area for many weeks, the massive influx into Zaire in mid-July overwhelmed the humanitarian assistance agencies. (As of Friday, July 22, there were only 200 humanitarian assistance personnel in Zaire.) On July 22, the U.N. Secretary-General raised the estimate of the amount of money needed for the relief effort to over \$435 million, nearly double the amount previously requested. In addition, he and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced that the situation was beyond the capacity and resources of the U.N. humanitarian and voluntary agencies to handle alone, and called on donor governments to take over major portions of the relief effort directly. The eight specific tasks identified are

1. airport maintenance, security, off loading and storage;
2. maintenance, fuel, and repair of the U.N. truck fleet;
3. road construction, maintenance and security in the relief area;
4. camps construction;
5. delivery and management of cooking fuel;
6. drilling and maintaining 60,000 latrines;
7. providing, organizing, and managing water tanker operations; and
8. air lift management.

Because of the cholera epidemic, as well as the unsustainable location of the refugees, all U.N. agencies and many voluntary agencies are asking the refugees to return to their homes. The international agencies are establishing way stations on the roads in Rwanda to provide food, water, and medical care to the refugees as they return. The Government of Zaire reopened the border crossings to Rwanda on July 24, and in the first two days, 15,000 to 20,000 refugees returned to Rwanda from Goma. The U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) cites unconfirmed reports that as many as 90,000 began to return in the first few days, although refugees also continue to flee into Zaire from Rwanda.

The new Rwandan government has announced that it welcomes the return of the refugees and the displaced, and will not take reprisals against the Hutus. The new leaders will allow unlimited numbers of international human rights monitors into Rwanda, and have promised that they will not impose border controls on returning refugees. Nonetheless, the deposed Hutu government continues to warn the refugees that they will be killed if they return to Rwanda. Humanitarian agencies complain that the Hutu militia is terrorizing and intimidating the refugees in the camps. Some voluntary agencies are also

arguing that the refugees should not return because of concerns for their security in Rwanda.

**Other African Countries.** Most of the refugees in Tanzania, Burundi, and Uganda arrived between April and mid-July. Water, sanitation, medical care and food needs are being addressed by the international humanitarian community, although supplies and funds have been slow to arrive. In both Tanzania and Burundi, humanitarian aid workers have been threatened by continued fighting between the ethnic groups, or by the presence in the camps of persons responsible for the genocide, and armed militias from both sides.

**Inside Rwanda.** The violence of the civil war in Rwanda forced almost all relief organizations out of the country in April. After the victory of the RPF in mid-July, these agencies began to return. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimates that more than 1 million of the displaced are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. Many of these are in the French Security zone. On July 5, the French established a safe zone in Southwestern Rwanda which now contains about 2 million displaced persons. (Unconfirmed reports indicate that more than 50,000 persons had left this zone by July 26 to return to their homes.) The RPF area in the northeast has over 700,000 displaced victims of the civil war, including at least 20,000 orphans, or children separated from their parents. As of July 25, 22 humanitarian organizations were providing relief inside Rwanda.

Humanitarian agencies are also concerned about the agricultural situation in Rwanda. Many of the refugees and many of the displaced inside Rwanda are farmers, and the United Nations warns that extensive food aid will be required for the next several years if the refugees cannot return quickly to their fields. The harvest should be occurring now, and the new planting season begins in a few weeks.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELIEF EFFORTS**

The U.N. Rwandan Emergency Office (UNREO) was established in April to coordinate international assistance provided to the refugees of the civil war by both U.N. and nongovernmental humanitarian agencies. UNREO moved into Kigali and is now coordinating assistance inside as well as outside the country. The UNHCR has taken the lead in providing aid to the refugees, and on July 22 announced that it would begin providing aid inside Rwanda as well. Many other U.N. and non-governmental agencies are also working in Rwanda. A pledging conference will be held in Geneva, Switzerland on August 2 to publicize the needs and increase the amount of contributions from governments.

Countries other than the United States have announced food/in kind or cash donations of \$150 million and pledges to the Rwanda appeal total \$400 million. The European Union has approved a donation of \$28 million and is planning to reprogram another \$172.5 million. British and Canadian military forces began entering Kigali on July 31.

The U.N. humanitarian agencies have adopted a two-part strategy. First, they are providing minimum, life sustaining assistance to refugees outside of Rwanda. Second, they are centralizing the humanitarian effort inside Rwanda and providing way stations along the roads the refugees will follow to return home. Because of fears that refugees will bring the cholera epidemic into Rwanda and because the damage to the Rwandan infrastructure must be repaired, the international community does not want the refugees to return as quickly as they left.

## U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS

The table below shows the U.S. pledge and actual commitment to Rwandan humanitarian assistance.

<b>FY1994 Humanitarian Assistance to Rwanda*</b>	
<b>(in millions of U.S. dollars)</b>	
<b>Obligated Funds/in Kind (April 6 - July 17)</b>	
Food for Peace (Agriculture)	60.1
Refugee assistance (State)	34.6
OFDA (U.S. AID)	14.3
Department of Defense	<u>6.7</u>
<b>Obligated</b>	<b>116.4</b>
<b>Identified, But Not Obligated</b>	
Food for Peace (Agriculture)	20.6
OFDA (U.S. AID)	6.0
U.S. AID/Rwanda (bilateral aid)	<u>6.5</u>
<b>Identified</b>	<b><u>33.1</u></b>
<b>Total Pledged (April 6 - July 11)</b>	<b>150.0</b>
<b>Pledged (July 22 and July 29)</b>	<b><u>320.0</u></b>
<b>Total Pledged (April 6 - July 29)</b>	<b>470.0</b>
* Totals do not agree due to rounding. Source: AID.	

The U.S. effort, both inside and outside of Rwanda, will be part of a multilateral military and civilian effort. USAID OFDA personnel have been working in the area for several weeks, coordinating the U.S. response and providing funds, and relief supplies to U.N. and voluntary humanitarian agencies.

The U.S. military effort outside of Rwanda (which now has 750 personnel and is expected to rise to 3,000) responds to the Secretary-General's request for direct assistance to the refugees in Zaire. Military personnel are providing airlift of supplies and management of the airports of eastern Zaire and will

continue and expand that capability as long as there is a need. In addition, U.S. military personnel will provide minimal medical care, drinkable water, and sanitation in order to encourage and help the Rwandans to return to their homes. The deployment of troops began on July 24.

The U.S. military response to the second part of the international effort--assistance to refugees and displaced persons returning to their homes in Rwanda--began on July 31 with the arrival of 85 of the 200 airport personnel in Kigali. U.S. personnel will be confined to the airport for the present and have set up the airport for rapid delivery of relief supplies. Secretary of Defense Perry announced that only a few hundred troops would be stationed in Rwanda. U.S. aid inside Rwanda will consist of a supply base at the Kigali airport and help in rebuilding the electric and water systems in Kigali (and possibly establishment of a number of relief stations along the roads travelled by refugees where relief and supplies will be provided to help them on their journey).

#### **SOURCE OF U.S. FUNDS AND POSSIBLE SUPPLEMENTALS**

The original \$150 million was taken from existing disaster programs and does not need to be appropriated. Nonetheless, the Department of Defense Emergency Fund, the Emergency Refugee and Migration Fund (ERMA), and the OFDA emergency funds need to be replenished to be available for other emergencies. On July 29, the President requested an emergency FY1994 Supplemental Appropriations to assist in the urgent humanitarian relief efforts for refugees in Rwanda. This supplemental would include: \$270 million for the Department of Defense, \$30 million for the Department of State ERMA account, and \$20 million for USAID OFDA account. (An "emergency supplemental" does not require off-setting reductions in other spending programs.) Of the \$270 million for the Department of Defense, \$100 million would be available only upon the President transmitting a budget request to the Congress. Several of the major FY 1995 appropriations bills, including Foreign Operations, State/Justice/Commerce, and the Department of Defense, are currently before Congress, and could provide the vehicle for an emergency supplemental.

On July 29, in anticipation of the President's request for funds, the House/Senate Conference Committee on the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill (H.R. 4426) agreed to appropriate \$50 million for Rwanda humanitarian assistance, consisting of \$30 million for ERMA and \$20 million for OFDA. Also on July 29, the Defense Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee approved an appropriation of an additional \$170 million for Department of Defense expenditures in Rwanda.