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8-FEB-1996 U.N. says Zaire will not push out Rwandan refugees

(Updates with camps reported calm, previous GISENYI)

By Elif Kaban

GOMA, Zaire, Feb 8 (Reuter) - The U.N. refugee agency said on Thursday it was assured Zairean forces would stay out of Rwandan refugee camps despite Rwandan officials fearing they would be forcibly emptied.

"Our understanding is that the Zaireans plan to send a high level ministerial delegation to some of the camps soon to talk to these people to encourage them to go back to Rwanda," said a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesman in Geneva.

"The Zaireans will then send troops to encircle the camps to prevent movements. But our understanding is the troops will not enter the camps. The ministers will only go in to talk to the refugees," UNHCR spokesman Fernando del Mundo told Reuters.

U.N. officials in the eastern Zairean border town of Goma said the refugee camps in the region were calm on Thursday and there were no reports of unusual Zairean troop movements.

"We are waiting for the refugees to come back," said a Rwandan army officer at a border crossing into Rwanda four km (2.5 miles) east of Kibumba refugee camp, which has 190,000 residents.

The main crossing to Goma, said by Zairean officials to be closed to foreign journalists on Tuesday, was open on Thursday.

Rwandan officials said they had heard Zairean forces would besiege the camps and expel refugees to Rwanda and that a Zairean commander had requested reinforcements for this.

In Rwanda's capital, an aide to Vice President Major-General Paul Kagame said: "We have heard Kibumba and another camp in Bukavu will be besieged by gendarmerie and people will be forced out.

"We also heard the 200 gendarmerie are already in Goma but the local Zairean commander thinks this number will be heavily outweighed and the operation will end disastrously," he added.

"He has requested for more personnel if the exercise is to be carried out properly."

U.N. officials forecast on Wednesday Zairean troops were likely soon to close down Kibumba as part of a so far failed campaign to send home the one million refugees from east Zaire.

Last August Zaire kicked out 15,000 refugees but its threat to deport all the refugees by the end of 1995 came to nothing.

Many of the Hutu refugees took part in the 1994 genocide of up to a million Tutsis and allied Hutus. Killers loyal to the former extremist Hutu regime in Kigali menace some Hutus in the camps in an attempt to stop them from returning to their homes.

Del Mundo said the operation to encourage voluntary returns was expected to

start within the next few days in Kibumba and another camp near the border town of Bukavu to the south.

Asked about fears among U.N. officials and aid workers that the operation would provoke a flood of hundreds of thousands of refugees forced across the border, Del Mundo said that he could not forecast for sure what would happen in the camps.

"The Zaireans made a commitment for a voluntary return," he added. He said the operation was in line with a Geneva agreement in December to promote voluntary repatriation and progressively close camps.

Kagame's aide said the Rwandan government was prepared to receive anyone forced out but might have logistical problems if large numbers arrived on its western border with eastern Zaire.

A foreign aid official in Goma said he was assured by Zairean officials and other agencies that a special force of 250 Zairean soldiers would first ring Kibumba.

"Then there will be a sensitivisation campaign to promote voluntary repatriation inside the camps. It is very clear from both sides there will be no forced repatriation," he added.

8-FEB-1996 12:05 UN to hold more refugee talks in eastern Zaire

KINSHASA, Feb 8 (Reuters) - A senior U.N. refugee official will hold more talks in eastern Zaire this weekend on ways to boost efforts to send home a million Rwandan refugees, the U.N. said on Thursday.

The representative of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Zaire, Hubert Edongo, told Reuters talks between UNHCR special envoy Carole Faubert and the Zairean government in Kinshasa last Monday agreed on the need to resume voluntary repatriation.

"The special envoy will probably return to Zaire this weekend. Another series of discussions with the Zairean authorities is scheduled for this weekend in the east of the country," Edongo said.

"These (repatriation) operations could resume at the beginning of next week. We'll see what comes out of the discussions this weekend."

U.N. officials say Zairean troops will soon close down Kibumba camp near the eastern town of Goma as part of a so far failed campaign to send home the refugees.

Last August Zaire kicked out 15,000 Rwandans but its threat to deport all the refugees by the end of 1995 came to nothing.

Edongo said the United Nations had been assured that the military presence in the camps would be kept to a minimum.

He said Zairean troops charged with assuring security in the camps would guard the exits from Kibumba camp and escort refugees to the border.

In Geneva, UNHCR spokesman Fernando Del Mundo said the operation to encourage voluntary returns was expected to start within the next few days in

Kibumba, which has some 190,000 refugees, and another camp near the town of Bukavu to the south.

7-FEB-1996 18:20 Zaire seen poised to force Rwandan Hutus home

By Elif Kaban

KIGALI, Feb 8 (Reuter) - Fresh trouble loomed for Rwandan Hutu refugees in Zaire on Thursday with U.N. predictions that Zairean troops would force them back into Rwanda, where many fear merciless revenge for the 1994 genocide.

Any day now, U.N. refugee agency officials said, Zairean troops were likely to close the crowded refugee camp of Kibumba in line with a December deal with the United Nations to speed a failed campaign to send home one million refugees from eastern Zaire.

In Zaire's capital Kinshasa, an aide to premier Kenga Wa Dondo said Zaire would "repatriate" the refugees and planned to send its officials to the border town of Goma soon to decide which camps to start with.

In the past Zaire has not always lived up to its promises, and it was unclear whether it now has the political will or the means to close Kibumba -- in effect a city of 190,000 people.

In Kibumba, near Goma, enterprising Rwandan Hutus have opened bars and restaurants, clothing shops, brothels and general stores. They have built post offices and churches. They have set up tent hotels and movie houses.

"It is very possible that 5,000 refugees will go home on the first day, another 3,000 on the second day, then Rwandans will start slowing things down and after a week, Zairean troops will get fed up and go home," said a Western diplomat.

Last August Zaire kicked out 15,000 refugees but its threat to deport all the refugees by the end of 1995 came to nothing.

Many refugees took part in the 1994 genocide of up to a million Tutsis and allied Hutus. Killers of the former extremist Hutu regime still menace their Hutu clansmen in the camps.

As aid workers bracing for a likely influx dug latrine toilets and stocked up on food at Rwanda's border with Zaire, a local commander of Rwanda's Tutsi-led army nervously peered at the haze of cooking fires from camps across the frontier.

"No one knows what Zaire will do," said Major Jean-Bosco Mur Isa. "If large numbers are pushed across, things would get very rough for us."

In the distance, dark slopes of volcanoes rose over the teeming camps in the seedy, fly-rich Goma region -- a lawless, man-made mess with 700,000 Hutu refugees, a handful of aid workers and menacing Zairean soldiers unpaid for months.

So far, refugee leaders are opposed to going home. Unless Zaire has the support of camp leaders or can neutralise them, there is a danger that marauding

Zairean troops may use force.

"If refugees are pushed, there'll be complete chaos. It'll be very unpleasant and violent," said one Western aid official.

It is impossible to say what would result if nervous Rwandan Tutsi soldiers, many of whom lost families in the genocide, were confronted with a sea of people -- all majority Hutus, some possibly mass murderers -- pouring back into the country, apparently set to destabilise Rwanda.

The grimmest possibility would be if Zairean troops caused a panic stampede at the border and Rwandan troops, with no rubber bullets or even tear gas to control crowds, responded with fire.

The refugees want guarantees of protection if they go home, but the U.N. does not have enough people to keep a watch on returnees in villages where ethnic hatred still runs deep.

Some diplomats fear killings if large numbers of Hutus return. Some 66,000 Hutus accused of genocide are jammed into Rwanda's overcrowded jails where 2,300 have died so far and hundreds of others have been thrown into village lock-ups.

Worse, the problem of resettling the refugees is far from solved. Most Kibumba refugees are from border regions where houses are occupied by 100,000 Tutsi returnees from exile.

"Almost all houses are occupied here," a U.N. official in the region said. "Tutsi refugees don't want to leave the houses and no one knows where refugees from Zaire will be settled."

7-FEB-1996 14:53 Zaire poised to resume refugee repatriation

By Arthur Malu Malu

KINSHASA, Feb 7 (Reuter) - Zaire has decided to resume repatriation of refugees according to the spirit of a 1995 agreement it signed with Rwanda and the U.N. refugee agency, an aide to Prime Minister Kenga wa Dondo said on Wednesday.

The aide, who declined to be identified, said negotiations were continuing but that Zairean officials would probably travel to the refugee zone in the east of the country at the weekend to decide in which camps to start.

The aide said journalists would continue to be granted access to the refugee camps. It was not immediately clear whether they would be allowed across the border from Rwanda itself.

"The decision has been taken to implement the Geneva accords. We are preparing to proceed with the repatriation of refugees but we do not know yet which camp we will begin with," the aide said. "The authorities will probably go to the area this weekend to see which camp to begin with. The negotiations are continuing."

On Rwanda's border with Zaire, Western aid workers hurriedly set up latrine

toilets and stocked up food as U.N. officials warned of a large refugee influx from Zaire.

Officials of the U.N. Refugee Agency in Rwanda's border town of Gisenyi said Zairean soldiers were expected to close a crowded refugee camp in Goma region to speed up a flagging U.N. campaign to send home one million Rwandans in eastern Zaire.

The refugees fled to Zaire with forces of the former Hutu government which led to 1994's genocide of up to a million minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Zairean troops kicked out 15,000 refugees in August but halted forced repatriations following international outcry. Zaire said it wanted all the refugees out of the country by the end of last year but has taken no formal action to expel them.

Zaire shut its Goma border crossing to foreign journalists on Tuesday and in Nairobi, the Zairean embassy stopped issuing visas to foreign reporters trying to go to Goma.

7-FEB-1996 13:06 Rwandan border troops await march of refugees

By Elif Kaban

ON THE RWANDA-ZAIRE BORDER, Feb 7 (Reuter) - Rwandan army Major Jean-Bosco

Murisa nervously peered at the haze of cooking fires from Rwandan refugee camps across the border with Zaire.

In the distance, dark slopes of volcanoes rose over the teeming camps near Goma, a lawless, man-made mess of 700,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees, a handful of aid workers and an extortion of menacing Zairan soldiers unpaid for months.

"The situation is unpredictable. No one knows what Zaire will do," said Murisa, sipping beer at a cafe by the golden shores of Lake Kivu in Rwanda's quiet border town of Gisenyi -- a far cry from the seedy, fly-infested dump of Goma in Zaire.

Murisa and his troops are bracing for a large influx of refugees from a crowded camp housing 190,000 Rwandan Hutus just across the frontier.

Any day now, U.N. officials say, Zairean soldiers are expected to close Kibumba camp and march refugees across in line with a December agreement with the U.N. refugee agency to speed up a campaign to send home one million refugees in Zaire.

"They call this the green march," Major Murisa said. "They will start with the weak and the young, then former government soldiers will come behind them.

For every single refugee man will be suspected milita."

Many of the refugees took part in the bloody ethnic frenzy in 1994 which left up to a million minority Tutsis and allied Hutus dead. In the camps, mass killers of the former extremist Hutu government are still free to menace their

Hutu clansmen.

No one knows what would result if nervous soldiers of the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) were confronted with a sea of people -- all majority Hutus -- and some mass murderers trying to slip across the border to destabilise Rwanda.

The grimdest possibility is if Zairean troops cause a panic stampede at the border and Rwandan troops, with no rubber bullets or even tear gas to control crowds, respond with fire.

Major Murisa acknowledged the risk.

"We are prepared. We have reinforced our troops at the border," he said. "But if large numbers of refugees are pushed across, things would get very rough for us."

A Western aid official agreed: "If refugees are pushed, there'll be complete chaos. It is going to be very unpleasant."

A mass influx would be a real test of the Rwandan government's stated goal of reconciliation. Ethnic hatred is still harboured in many hearts so soon after the genocide and some diplomats fear killings if large numbers of Hutus return.

RPA soldiers are already increasingly jumpy because of a worsening Hutu insurgency waged from camps in Zaire.

But the most immediate question, U.N. officials say, is where to house the refugees.

Most refugees in Kibumba are from the border regions of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, where houses are occupied by Tutsis who recently returned from many years of exile.

Since Tutsi rebels swept to power in July 1994, more than 800,000 diaspora Tutsis have returned to Rwanda -- almost a one-to-one replacement of the dead. In Ruhengeri and Gisenyi alone, more than 100,000 Tutsis are resettled.

"Almost all houses are occupied here," a U.N. official in the region said. "Tutsi refugees don't want to leave the houses and no one knows where refugees from Zaire will be settled."

7-FEB-1996 02:36 Zaire shuts border with Rwanda to journalists

GISENYI, Rwanda, Feb 7 (Reuter) - Zaire has shut its eastern frontier at Goma to foreign journalists amid reports that its troops plan to close down a crowded Rwandan Hutu refugee camp in the eastern town and forcibly repatriate refugees.

A Zairean immigration official at the crossing near Rwanda's border town of Gisenyi told Reuters late on Tuesday new instructions meant no foreign reporters would be allowed to cross into Zaire.

Despite negotiations between senior U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR) officials and Goma authorities, a Reuters correspondent and a reporter of the British

Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) were turned away by menacing Zairean soldiers at the border.

Another Western journalist who was leaving Zaire had her government permit to visit Rwandan refugee camps confiscated by the immigration officials.

U.N. officials in Gisenyi said they expected Zairean troops to close the camp of Kibumba, home to 190,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees, in eastern Zaire soon in line with an agreement in December between Zaire's government officials and the UNHCR.

Eastern Zaire is home to one million Rwandan Hutu refugees who streamed across the border with soldiers and militias of Rwanda's former Hutu government after 1994's genocide of up to a million minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

U.N. officials said Zairean troops would tell the refugees to march across the nearby Rwandan border, where they would be met by UNHCR staff and Rwandan soldiers.

Zaire last August kicked out 15,000 Rwandan and Burundian refugees after complaining that the world was not doing anything to take responsibility for their return.

5-FEB-1996 Cash-strapped U.N stops handing out pencils, paper

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 5 (Reuter) - In a bid to save money, the cash-strapped United Nations on Monday stopped handing out pencils and notepads to delegates attending meetings.

This is expected to save up to \$200,000 a year.

At the end of last year, U.N. members owed nearly \$2.3 billion in unpaid regular budget dues and for peacekeeping operations.

A further \$250,000 is expected to be saved each year by largely discontinuing the practice of distributing documents at each meeting and instead requiring diplomats to bring with them copies sent earlier to their respective missions.

5-FEB-1996 Gunmen kill 11 in Rwanda, hit electricity pylon

KIGALI, Feb 5 (Reuter) - Eleven civilians have been killed in northwestern Rwanda near Zaire's border after an attack by unidentified gunmen who blew up an electricity pylon, the radio of the U.N. assistance mission in Rwanda said on Monday.

Quoting U.N. human rights officials in Rwanda, the radio said seven of the dead were killed by bullets and four died in an explosion at an electricity pylon near a brewery in a commune of the border town of Gisenyi on Friday night.

The circumstances surrounding the killings were not clear and the identity of the victims was not known.

The radio said the blast caused a power cut in Gisenyi. A second explosion nearby damaged a section of a water pipeline.

The region is suffering a guerrilla campaign waged by extremist Hutus operating from refugee camps across the Zairean border. Reports of mine blasts and gunbattles between Hutu gunmen and nervous soldiers of the Tutsi-led army are common.

Eastern Zaire is home to 1.7 million Rwandan Hutu refugees and members of Rwanda's former extremist Hutu government, its army and militia responsible for 1994's genocide of up to a million minority Tutsis and allied Hutus.

U.N. military observers reported that seven people were arrested after the incident, the most serious in recent months.

The pace of the guerrilla campaign had slowed down after November, when government troops killed several hundred rebels on an island on Lake Kivu on the Rwandan side of the border which was being used by the extremists as a training base.

5-FEB-1996 U.N. agency seeks food aid for Burundi, Rwanda

ROME, Feb 5 (Reuter) - The U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) appealed for

donations from the international community on Monday to enable it to continue feeding 2.4 million refugees from the African countries of Rwanda and Burundi.

The WFP said in a statement that it needed \$155 million to keep up relief efforts this year. The agency said the United States had already donated 100,000 tonnes of food but said it needed another 258,000 tonnes.

Over two million Hutus from Rwanda are in exile in neighbouring countries, where they fled in 1994 fearing revenge for genocide attacks in which up to a million Tutsis and allied Hutus were killed.

Thousands more have fled Burundi where more than 100,000 people have been killed in violence between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi-dominated army since the 1993 assassination of Hutu president Melchior Ndadaye.

The WFP said it was feeding some 1.9 million refugees in camps in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi and another half million outside the camps.

The Rome-based agency said "voluntary repatriation" was a priority of the refugee assistance programme, which includes the distribution of a two-month supply of food to those returning home.

5-FEB-1996 Rwandan premier to Tanzania to coax refugees back

KIGALI, Feb 5 (Reuter) - Rwandan Prime Minister Pierre-Celestin Rwigema will visit Hutu refugees in camps in Tanzania to try to woo them home during a three-day trip which starts on Tuesday, government officials said on Monday.

The visit by Rwigema, the most senior Rwandan official to visit Rwanda refugee camps, is sign of new-found government enthusiasm to try to solve Africa's biggest refugee problem.

There are 493,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees in Tanzania, another one million languishing in Zaire and some 110,000 in Burundi. They fled in fear of retribution after 1994's genocide of up to a million Tutsis and allied Hutus.

Ephraim Kabaija, head of the presidential commission on repatriation, said visits to camps in Tanzania and Burundi by senior officials would move into higher gear in coming weeks.

"We will go into the camps with loudspeakers and tell refugees that we want them home. We have to seize the opportunity," he told Reuters.

In the first such visit by a senior government official, Rehabilitation Minister Patrick Mazimhaka travelled to Ntamba camp in neighbouring Burundi at the end of January to try to persuade refugees to come home.

Although voluntary repatriation has been at a virtual standstill in Zaire and Tanzania, it has picked up in Burundi following worsening insecurity there.

Some 4,500 Rwandan Hutu refugees came home on Thursday and Friday from Ntamba camp. They were among 12,000 refugees who returned from Tanzania's border after fleeing their camp in fear of attacks by Burundi's almost exclusively Tutsi army.

The Rwandan government, whose Tutsi rebels swept to power after the genocide, estimates that two-thirds of the refugees are peasants controlled by extremist Hutu leaders.

Many refugees see the government as a Tutsi clique and fear revenge if they return. Some 66,000 Hutus accused of genocide are jammed into Rwanda's prisons and between 700 and 1,000 people are being arrested every week, according to figures from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

3-FEB-1996 Hutu rebels raid Burundi capital

By Christian Jennings

(Adds detail and updates U.N. security mission)

BUJUMBURA, Feb 3 (Reuter) - Hutu rebels attacked a suburb of the Burundian capital Bujumbura but security forces drove them off after a two-hour battle, a senior military officer said. *included*

"We've driven the rebels out of Kamenge in a military operation," Commandant Edouard Nybigera told Reuters on Friday night.

The rebels had infiltrated Kamenge, a northern suburb, to attack army and police positions on Friday night, he said.

Nybigera gave no details of casualties from the two-hour clash.

The virtual civil war in Burundi pits rebels from the Hutu majority against the Tutsi-dominated army, with civilians often caught in between.

More than 100,000 people have been killed in ethnic violence since the 1993 assassination of Hutu president Melchior Ndadaye, the country's last freely elected leader, by renegade Tutsi soldiers.

"The rebels infiltrated the suburb tonight to attack military positions outside it. We've pushed them out -- we've won," said Nybigera, who commands a 1,350-strong force of gendarmes.

Defence Ministry spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Longin Minani downplayed the clash, saying: "The rebels fired at our position to remind us that they were there, and we responded to remind them that we were here."

Reporters estimated several thousand rounds of automatic rifle fire were exchanged and heard prolonged bursts from heavy machine guns from both sides.

The fighting quickly spread into the neighbouring suburbs of Mutanga North, Kinama, Nyakabiga and Rohero 2, they said.

The rebels last attacked the capital between December 6-10, when they were also repulsed from the northern suburbs.

U.N. military sources estimated 53 people were killed and 8,500 civilians fled their homes during the December violence.

In a related development, a U.N. team assessing the feasibility of providing guards for aid workers finished its week-long visit to Burundi on Saturday.

Last month U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali proposed that security guards and a peacekeeping force be deployed to protect aid workers and prevent full-blown warfare between Hutus and Tutsis.

The Burundi military rejected any plans for such a deployment. President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya last week admitted his country was suffering a serious crisis but ruled out foreign military intervention, saying it was no solution.

3-FEB-1996 Rwanda to boost security after foreigners beaten

KIGALI, Feb 3 (Reuter) - Rwanda on Saturday pledged to boost security for expatriate aid workers and U.N. staff after the beating of three Western investigators of the U.N. genocide tribunal by government soldiers in Kigali this week.

Foreign Minister Anastaza Gasana said in a statement that the government had set up a new military police force specifically to protect expatriate staff of the U.N. force in Rwanda and U.N. agencies as well as foreign aid workers.

Gasana said he presented his government's apologies in a meeting with tribunal judge Honore Rakotomanana and reiterated Rwanda's commitment to ensuring security in the country.

The tribunal protested strongly to the government after soldiers beat the investigators -- two Dutchmen and an American -- in the centre of Kigali on Monday.

The three were beaten, made to kneel on the ground, hit with rifles and badly bruised in the attack which occurred after the investigators' car inadvertently blocked a driveway into which a military vehicle wanted to enter.

The government arrested an officer and two soldiers after the attack, which also drew a formal protest from the U.S. government because of the involvement of its citizen.

"Too much fuss has been made of this. In New York people get beaten up every day," a Rwandan government official commented.

Despite the embarrassment, the government believes it has some reason to feel aggrieved. For personal security, Kigali is one of the safer African cities, particularly compared to Kenya's capital Nairobi or Zaire's Kinshasa.

Thousands of humanitarian workers flocked to Kigali after the genocide of up to a million minority Tutsis and allied Hutus in the small Central African country in 1994.

Cars of U.N. staff or aid workers are sometimes stolen by soldiers, but reports of violence are rare.

There are robberies but no expatriate has been killed since the current government took power in July 1994 after the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Army toppled the former hardline Hutu government which led the genocide.

Gasana's statement said: "Since July 1994, the government has not recorded a single loss of life among expatriates nor any serious injury -- no victim of this so-called insecurity."

The assault raised security fears among some U.N. officials weeks before the mandate of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Rwanda expires in March.

There is strong resentment in Rwanda against the United Nations which Rwandans blame for failing to stop the genocide, during which its peacekeepers were cut to a bare minimum.

Diplomats say the way the government has handled the incident has sent a

strong message to the military, which is having discipline problems after it grew by more than three-fold to a 50,000-strong force since the end of the war.

2-FEB-1996 Zambian court blocks extradition of Rwandans

LUSAKA, Feb 2 (Reuter) - A Zambian court has blocked the extradition to Rwanda of seven Rwandans accused by their government of participating in the 1994 genocide that killed up to one million people, according to court papers obtained on Friday.

The papers said the ruling, delivered on Thursday, ordered the release of the men.

"Any request from the Rwandan government demanding the repatriation of any Rwandan accused of genocide should not be acted upon by any government because such a demand will not be coming from impartial quarters," Judge Kaboza Chanda said.

Any extradition request should be initiated by the U.N. tribunal into the Rwanda genocide, he said.

The judge ordered that an eighth Rwandan remain in detention because he had been named as a suspect by the United Nations.✓

The U.N. tribunal was inaugurated last June, and in December it issued indictments against the first eight suspects in the genocide of a million people - mainly Tutsis and ~~minority~~ Hutus.

The killings erupted after the assassination of Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana on April 6, 1994.

Habyarimana supporters, including members of his fiercely loyal presidential guard, took up arms and hunted down Tutsis and Hutus opposed to his military rule.

The killings only ended after Tutsi rebels took power and drove Habyarimana's 40,000-strong army into exile in Tanzania and eastern Zaire. Around two million other Rwandan Hutus also fled their homes.

2-FEB-1996 Rwanda blasts Zairean rebel arms probe

KIGALI, Feb 2 (Reuter) - Rwanda blasted Zaire on Friday for blocking the work of a U.N. commission investigating reports of illicit arms supplies to ex-government soldiers who led 1994's genocide of up to one million people.

The six-member U.N. commission said in a report this week that it had been effectively stymied by Zaire's refusal to allow its work near Rwandan refugee camps and by lack of cooperation from several arms-exporting countries.

In a January 29 letter to the United Nations Security Council accompanying the commission's interim report, copies of which were obtained by Reuters, Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali suggested the commission be disbanded this month.

7 people
released out
of 8 suspects
of genocide
in Zambia

steps towards
justice by the
tribunal.

Relations
between
Rwanda and
Zaire not
so good.

Claude Dusaidi, a senior Rwandan defence ministry official, accused Boutros-Ghali of not putting enough pressure on Zaire.

"Zaire is still involved in arms supplies to former Rwandan soldiers," he told Reuters. "Zaire should face sanctions for blocking the commission's work. But Boutros-Ghali is giving a free ride to the extremists and providing cover for them."

Former government soldiers and militia involved in killing up to a million minority Tutsis and allied Hutus fled to Zaire and Tanzania after Tutsi-led rebels seized power in July 1994.

Confirmation that arms trafficking in Zaire is aiding the Hutu rebellion would support Rwandan demands for sanctions against countries selling weapons in the ethnically-torn region.

The Security Council in August lifted an arms embargo slapped on Rwanda during the killings but kept a ban on arms supplies to its neighbours if intended for use in Rwanda.

The commission was created in September to investigate reports the Hutu army in exile was rearming for a comeback.

Human rights group Amnesty International alleged last June that cargo planes from Ghana, Nigeria, Ukraine and Russia had been arriving at Goma airport in eastern Zaire with arms from Bulgaria and Albania and that British-based arms traders were also involved.

Human Rights watch said France, Zaire and South Africa are aiding the Hutu army. These countries have denied the charge.

The commission said it wrote to Bulgaria, China, France, South Africa, Belgium, Seychelles and Zaire demanding answers to questions about arms shipments.

In most cases, it received flat denials. China, South Africa, Bulgaria and Seychelles did not reply at all.

The creation of the arms commission was proposed by Zaire which had offered its full support in the investigations.

But the commission said Zairean officials delayed its visit to the country and later set tough conditions on its work.

Its report said Zaire first objected to the commission's proposed 20-day stay in Zaire as 'too much' and wanted it cut.

A team of officers led by a Zairean general accompanying the commission in Goma restricted its movements and insisted on attending its meetings with witnesses, the report said.

In Goma, the commission gathered information including persistent eyewitness reports of mysterious night flights and unloading of cargo in secret, giving rise to "suspicion that clandestine activities were being carried out."

"While the commission has insufficient evidence...it is persuaded that these reports are accurate," the report said.

"The commission could not but be impressed by the very noticeable climate of fear and retribution," it added.

*one of a number
of accusations by
Rwanda on the
Secretary General*

not confirmed.

*Some of the
reports found were
Chinese or S. African*

1-FEB-1996 Some Rwanda Hutus set for home, others for Tanzania

By Christian Jennings

BUJUMBURA, Feb 1 (Reuter) - About 1,400 Rwandan Hutu refugees have boarded U.N. trucks at a camp in northeast Burundi ready to return to their homeland, but others are on the move towards Tanzania, the U.N. refugee agency said on Thursday.

Hitoshi Mise, head of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Burundi, told Reuters that those boarding trucks were part of 12,000 Rwandans housed at Ntamba camp.

The 12,000 returned from the Tanzanian frontier a week ago after fleeing there from the camp in fear of attack.

"We've got 1,400 people on trucks who've chosen to be voluntarily repatriated, and they are going to be heading towards the Rwandan border soon," Mise said.

Their return follows a visit to Ntamba on Sunday by two ministers from Rwanda and Burundi who persuaded the refugees that they had nothing to fear from returning home.

The ministers' visit was the first joint effort by Rwanda and Burundi to deal with the millions of refugees spawned by ethnic fighting in both countries.

Mise said there were also signs, however, that some refugees were also evacuating towards the Tanzania border.

"There is a movement (of refugees) towards Tanzania," he said, but would not say how many.

Aid workers said the movement followed reports that at least 16 soldiers of Burundi's Tutsi-dominated army had entered Ntamba on Wednesday night and reports that more were on their way.

There was no indication of what the soldiers, feared by Hutus, were doing in the camp.

"When our delegates left last night, there were 16 soldiers inside the camp and others were moving in masses towards it," said Andrei Kisselev, head of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Cross Crescents (IFRC).

The Rwandan refugees are among two million who fled into neighbouring countries in 1994 fearing retribution from advancing Tutsi rebels following the genocide of an estimated one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus by Hutu soldiers and militia. The Tutsi rebels overthrew the Hutu government and took power in Rwanda.

Burundi has the same ethnic make-up as Rwanda and more than 100,000 people have died there in ethnic violence following the 1993 assassination by renegade

Tutsi soldiers of the country's first freely-elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu.

In the Rwandan capital Kigali, UNHCR officials said they expected Ntamba camp to shut by the end of the week following the movements of refugees to

Rwanda and Tanzania.

Refugees first left Ntamba over a week ago after the exodus of 15,000 Rwandan Hutus from nearby Mugano camp into Tanzania after clashes between Burundian soldiers and Hutu rebels nearby where refugees claimed at least 20 people died.

"If there's a little push, it seems the people are willing to come back," Paul Stromberg, Kigali spokesman for the UNHCR, told Reuters.

"We'll send in more trucks on Friday. It's clear the movement to Tanzania and Rwanda will continue. There won't be anyone left by the end of the week."

31-JAN-1996 UN Council protests beatings of UN staff in Rwanda

By Evelyn Leopold

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 31 (Reuter) - The president of the Security Council called in Rwanda's U.N. ambassador on Wednesday to protest the beatings of three investigators gathering material for a U.N. tribunal on genocide in Rwanda.

British Ambassador Sir John Weston, the current council president, said members felt the incident was "a shocking attack which should not have occurred."

"It is the responsibility of the Government of Rwanda to see that action is taken swiftly to punish those responsible for what was an inexcusable physical assault on the three staff members concerned," he said.

Weston said he was relaying the council's sentiments to Rwanda's ambassador, Manzi Bakuramutsa.

Rwanda on Wednesday said it arrested three soldiers, including an officer, for beating the investigators, one of them a woman, when they were stopped at a roadblock on Monday.

The Rwanda war crimes tribunal is based in Arusha, Tanzania, but shares its chief prosecutor and five of its 11 judges with the U.N. tribunal for former Yugoslavia, which is located in The Hague. In December it issued indictments against the first eight suspects in the genocide of a million people -- mainly Tutsis and minority Hutus in 1994.

Shaharyar Khan, the U.N. special representative in Rwanda who is currently in New York, told reporters the United Nations was particularly concerned the Rwandan army was involved after it had promised protection.

U.N. peacekeepers are slowly pulling out of Rwanda and will be gone by March at the request of Rwanda's government.

"Here is a country that states we will look after all your security needs and you get (soldiers) who are supposed to be protecting us actually themselves beating up the tribunal persons," Khan said.

Khan, who briefed the Security Council, said members had to consult with the Rwandan government as soon as possible about whether civilian political officers should remain after the troops leave to oversee aid operations and help repair the judicial system.

31-JAN-1996 Rwanda arrests officer, soldiers for beatings

(Adds soldiers to be punished, new Ndahiro quote)

By Elif Kaban

KIGALI, Jan 31 (Reuter) - Rwanda has arrested three government soldiers for beating three investigators of the U.N. genocide tribunal in the capital Kigali on Monday, a senior defence ministry official said on Wednesday.

The assault drew a sharp protest from the United Nations and raised security

fears among U.N. officials, weeks before the mandate of the U.N. peacekeeping force in Rwanda expires in March.

Emmanuel Ndahiro, aide to Defence Minister and military strongman Major-General Paul Kagame, said the three soldiers, including an officer, were arrested as part of investigations into the incident which he described as "unacceptable."

The three were now in a military prison facing disciplinary charges and would be punished for their "heavy handedness," he told Reuters.

"We talked the incident over with the tribunal. This incident did not target the tribunal and has not damaged out relations," Ndahiro said.

On Tuesday, the Hague office of tribunal chief prosecutor Richard Goldstone protested to the authorities in Kigali about the assault and said it expected those responsible to be punished and steps taken to ensure no further attacks occurred.

Earlier Ndahiro gave the government version of events, saying the incident occurred after the tribunal car inadvertently blocked a driveway into which a military vehicle wanted to enter.

A soldier jumped out of the military vehicle, forced out the Dutch investigator in the driving seat and hit him, Ndahiro said. The soldier and several other men in civilian clothes in the military car then forced the investigators into a compound.

"They asked the investigators to kneel down. One was hit with a rifle and the woman was slapped in the face," he said.

"We're investigating the incident. There was a lack of communication on the ground between both parties. But whatever happened, beating was unacceptable," Ndahiro added.

There is strong resentment against the U.N. in the central African nation which blames it for failing to stop the genocide, during which its peacekeeping force was cut to a bare minimum.

Diplomats said it was unlikely the attack specifically targeted the tribunal. U.N. staff in Rwanda are occasionally harassed or U.N. vehicles stolen but there are few reports of violence.

The Rwanda tribunal is based in Arusha, Tanzania, but shares its chief prosecutor and five of its 11 judges with the U.N. tribunal for former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

It was inaugurated last June, and in December it issued indictments against the first eight suspects in the genocide of a million people -- mainly Tutsis and minority Hutus in 1994.

The killings erupted after the assassination of Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana on April 6, 1994.

Habyarimana supporters, including members of his fiercely loyal presidential guard, took up arms and hunted down Tutsis and Hutus opposed to his military rule.

The killings only ended after Tutsi rebels took power and drove Habyarimana's 40,000-strong army into exile in Tanzania and eastern Zaire.

Around two million other Rwandan Hutus also fled their homes.

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31-JAN-1996 No U.N. guards to be sent to Burundi yet - envoy

(Adds details, background)

By Christian Jennings

BUJUMBURA, Jan 31 (Reuters) - The U.N. envoy to Burundi has said it would not be immediately possible to deploy U.N. guards to protect aid workers in the ethnically-torn country because of strong resistance from the government.

The envoy, Abdul Aziz Hani, was speaking to reporters on Tuesday night as a five-strong U.N. security team assessed the feasibility of providing guards in the tiny central African nation.

"Due to the government's position expressed yesterday, and because the Burundian government refuses to be interested in the idea of any foreign intervention, I do not think it will be feasible (to send guards here)," Hani said.

Hani was referring to a Burundi government statement on Monday which categorically ruled out deployment of foreign forces in Burundi, where Hutu rebels are battling the country's Tutsi-dominated army.

"The government of Burundi states that the Convention of government refuses in the name of national sovereignty; any foreign political or military interference," the statement said.

The statement was issued a day before the U.N. assessment team arrived.

Burundi's army has also strongly rejected any deployment of a foreign force, regardless of its purpose.

Last week Burundian President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya admitted his country was suffering a serious crisis but ruled out foreign military intervention, saying it was no solution.

Ntibantunganya, whose two predecessors were assassinated, said that foreign military interventions in Africa were often dismal failures and had no hope of solving Burundi's deeply-rooted ethnic problems.

Earlier this month U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali repeated a proposal made six months ago that security guards and a U.N. peacekeeping force be deployed to protect aid workers and prevent full-scale tribal violence between Hutus and Tutsis.

On Monday, the Security Council called on Boutros-Ghali to develop contingency plans to forestall any spread of ethnic violence in Burundi which might lead to genocidal massacres like those in neighbouring Rwanda in 1994.

In a unanimous resolution, it also warned it would consider imposing an arms embargo on Burundi as well as travel restrictions and other measures on any of its leaders who continued to threaten violence.

The resolution demanded that all concerned in Burundi exercise restraint, refrain from acts of violence and take part in a comprehensive dialogue aimed at national reconciliation, democracy and security.

It invited U.N. members and others to help identify and dismantle radio stations which incite hatred and acts of violence in Burundi -- a phenomenon which helped spur killings in Rwanda where up to a million minority Tutsis and moderate members of the majority Hutu tribe were slaughtered.

Boutros-Ghali revived the proposals he first made in 1994, not only for the dispatch to Burundi of security guards to protect humanitarian workers but also the stationing of a standby military force in nearby Zaire, ready to intervene at short notice.

Burundi's ethnic composition is similar to Rwanda's. More than 100,000 Burundians have been killed since the murder in 1993 of the country's first freely elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye.

30-JAN-1996 U.N. tribunal protests as Rwanda investigators beaten

THE HAGUE, Jan 30 (Reuter) - The U.N. tribunal investigating genocide in Rwanda has protested to the authorities in Kigali after three of its investigators were beaten by Rwandan army soldiers, prosecutor Richard Goldstone's office said on Tuesday.

The assault took place in Kigali on Monday and the motive was unclear but it did not appear to be directed against the tribunal or its work, Goldstone's office said in a statement.

"The investigators, including a female member of staff, were beaten and struck with rifle butts. While they were badly bruised, fortunately they were not seriously injured," it said.

Goldstone's deputy, Honore Rakotomanana, had personally protested to the Rwandan authorities, the statement said.

"The prosecutor expects those responsible to be punished and the necessary steps taken to ensure that no further attacks occur," it added.

The Rwanda tribunal is based in Arusha, Tanzania, but shares its chief prosecutor and five of its 11 judges with the U.N. tribunal for former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

It was inaugurated last June and issued indictments against the first eight suspects in December.

30-JAN-1996 EU to send envoy to east Africa

BRUSSELS, Jan 30 (Reuter) - The European Union will send a special envoy to the Great Lakes region in Africa to step up its role in helping to restore peace in the region, European Commissioner Joao de Deus Pinheiro said on Tuesday.

The move comes amid fears of a spread of ethnic violence in Burundi which might lead to massacres similar to those in neighbouring Rwanda in 1994 when one million minority Tutsis and moderate members of the majority Hutu tribe were slaughtered.

Pinheiro, who handles EU relations with African countries, told the European Parliament the EU needed to develop a long-term strategy to help restore stability and security in the region, a Commission spokesman said.

The EU envoy, who will be appointed shortly for an initial period of six months, will work closely with the governments of Zaire and Tanzania where millions of refugees sought safety, as well as with those of Rwanda and Burundi, and international organisations.

The foreign ministers of Spain, Italy and Ireland, the past, current and future EU presidents, will also visit Burundi.

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The foreign ministers of Spain, Italy and Ireland, the past, current and future EU presidents, will also visit Burundi.

29-JAN-1996 U.N. seeks to forestall spread of Burundi violence

By Anthony Goodman

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 29 (Reuter) - The Security Council on Monday called on Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to develop contingency plans to forestall any spread of ethnic violence in Burundi which might lead to genocidal massacres like those in neighbouring Rwanda in 1994.

In a unanimous resolution, it also warned it would consider imposing an arms embargo on Burundi as well as travel restrictions and other measures on any of its leaders who continued to threaten violence.

Meanwhile, it welcomed the dispatch of a U.N. technical team, which arrived in Burundi over the weekend, to study the feasibility of providing guards to protect aid workers whose operations have been halted in some areas.

The resolution demanded that all concerned in Burundi exercise restraint, refrain from acts of violence and take part in a comprehensive dialogue aimed at national reconciliation, democracy and security.

It invited U.N. members and others to help identify and dismantle radio stations which incite hatred and acts of violence in Burundi -- a phenomenon which helped spur killings in Rwanda where up to a million minority Tutsis and moderate members of the majority Hutu tribe were slaughtered.

Boutros-Ghali recently revived proposals he first made in 1994, not only for the dispatch to Burundi of security guards to protect humanitarian workers but also the stationing of a standby military force in nearby Zaire, ready to intervene at short notice.

Burundi's ethnic composition is similar to Rwanda's. More than 100,000 Burundians have been killed since the murder in 1993 of the country's first freely elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye.

The Burundi government, comprising both Hutus and Tutsis, and the Tutsi-dominated army, have rejected foreign military intervention.

Boutros-Ghali said recently, however, that the country's leadership appeared divided. Those determined to launch an all-out offensive against some of the armed factions were most opposed to international intervention or preventive deployment, while those who favoured a wider political dialogue welcomed the idea of an external military presence which might help stabilise the situation.

The council showed little enthusiasm in 1994 for any military involvement. But its latest resolution asks the secretary-general, in consultation with the Organisation of African Unity and U.N. members, to consider what further preventive steps might be necessary if the situation deteriorated and to develop appropriate contingency plans.

The council said it was ready, in the light of a report which Boutros-Ghali is to provide by Feb. 20, to consider measures under the U.N. Charter, including an arms embargo on Burundi and travel restrictions on leaders who "continue to encourage violence."

Burundi's U.N. envoy, Terence Nsanze, told the council his government

welcomed the resolution's call for a political dialogue among the various parties. Military intervention, however, was "in nearly all cases ... an admission of diplomatic capitulation," he said.

He questioned the threat of an arms embargo, saying it "would be strange to treat a legal government endeavouring to achieve peace and security on the same footing as the perpetrators of the violence that is threatening the peace."

28-JAN-1996 Ministers sweet-talk Hutu refugees in Burundi camp

By Victor Antonie

BUJUMBURA, Jan 28 (Reuter) - Two ministers from Rwanda and Burundi teamed up over the weekend to fly to a camp in Burundi and try and persuade thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees that they had nothing to fear from returning home.

Rwandan Minister for Rehabilitation Patrick Mazimhaka and Burundi Home Affairs Minister Sylvestre Banzubaze visited Ntamba camp where aid workers estimate 12,000 Rwandan Hutus have returned to live in squalid conditions after panic provoked a mass stampede towards the border with Tanzania last week.

Heavy security surrounded the two men, who both belong to the Tutsi minorities that now dominate power in their respective countries, when they arrived at the camp on Saturday in a military helicopter.

But the ministers encouraged Hutu refugees to ask questions and tried to talk them into going home in the first joint effort of its kind by Rwanda and Burundi deal with the millions of refugees spawned by vicious ethnic fighting in both countries.

Two million Rwandan Hutu refugees fled the country in 1994 after Hutu militias and soldiers had murdered up to a million members of the Tutsi minority and allied Hutus just before a Tutsi-led guerrilla army took power in Kigali.

Burundi has the same explosive mix. The Tutsi-led army holds real power in the country but fighting with Hutu rebels risks degenerating into full scale civil war and massacres.

Mazimhaka tried to reassure the jittery population of Ntamba, 150 km (90 miles) northeast of Bujumbura, that their fears of vengeance were unfounded. But he also warned that instigators of the 1994 genocide would face arrest.

"We will not negotiate with those who took part in massacres -- that is impossible," he told refugees assembled at Ntamba.

According to U.N. figures more than 116,000 Rwandans are now living in five refugee camps in Burundi. More than a million also live in Zaire.

On January 21 almost the entire 17,000 population of Ntamba evacuated the camp and fled en masse to the Tanzanian border fearing an attack by Burundi's Tutsi-dominated army.

Four days previously, 15,000 Rwandan Hutus from nearby Mugano camp fled into Tanzania after clashes between Burundian soldiers and marauding Hutu rebels nearby. Refugee accounts of the action claimed at least 20 people died.

The ministers' visit was a rare attempt at conciliation between the Tutsi-led governments of Rwanda and Burundi and the Hutu majority populations.

Aid workers and diplomats say more forceful means are often used.

Burundi's military suspects Rwandan Hutus of supporting their Burundian brethren in fighting that has killed more than 100,000 people since the 1993

assassination of Burundi's first freely-elected Hutu president Melchior Ndadaye.

On Saturday aid officials on the Tanzanian border accused the Burundian army of harassing and threatening Rwandan Hutus.

Soldiers were preventing 23,000 refugees from leaving Kibezi camp which had run out of cooking fuel, said an official from the U.S.-based aid agency CARE.

"The refugees feel that if they have to leave they do not want to go to Rwanda and they would prefer to head towards Tanzania," Ken Porter from CARE International told Reuters.

27-JAN-1996 Burundian army pressures refugees to leave - aid official

By Matt Bigg

NGARA, Tanzania, Jan 27 (Reuter) - Soldiers in Burundi are harassing and threatening Rwandan Hutu refugees to try to drive them out of the ethnically-explosive Central African country, aid officials said on Saturday.

Members of Burundi's Tutsi-dominated army were preventing the 23,000 refugees leaving the Kibezi camp in northeast Ngozi province although they had no cooking fuel in the camp, said an official from the U.S.-based aid agency CARE.

"The refugees feel that if they have to leave they do not want to go to Rwanda and they would prefer to head towards Tanzania," Ken Porter of CARE International told Reuters.

A senior Burundian military official recently visited Kibezi and made a threatening speech to the refugees, said one aid official who asked not to be named.

Quoting statements from refugees, he said similar intimidating speeches were made to inmates at Burundi's Mugano and Ntamba camps in recent weeks and were a major reason for their mass evacuations on January 18 and 21 respectively.

According to refugees, the speeches called on them to return to Rwanda and warned that their camps would soon be moved to more dangerous locations closer to the capital, Bujumbura, an almost exclusively Tutsi enclave.

According to U.N. figures, Kibezi is host to 23,000 Rwandan Hutus and recent military action by the Burundian army has sparked fears among the camp population of an army pogrom against them.

Tribal warfare between the army and Hutu rebels has left more than 100,000 people dead after the 1993 assassination of the country's first freely-elected Hutu president Melchior Ndadaye.

Last weekend, an estimated 17,000 Rwandan Hutus left Ntamba camp for the Tanzanian border after Burundian troops were accused of attacking neighbouring

Mugano camp whose 15,000 population had fled to Tanzania.

"They are putting pressure on Kibezi camp and since it is the closest camp

to the (Tanzanian) border you have to fear the effect. They could be here in a two-day walk," said the unnamed official.

The refugees are frequently caught up in the violence between the Burundian army and Hutu militia groups operating in a large swathe across the northern provinces.

Aid organisations and the Tanzanian government are extremely sensitive about a further influx of refugees, but in private officials acknowledge that more refugees could be driven towards Tanzania if the situation in Burundi deteriorates.

Burundi's Tutsi minority, Hutu majority mix is the same as in Rwanda where up to a million Tutsis and allied Hutus were massacred in 1994.

Not only Rwandan Hutus are feeling the pressure of the Burundian army's counter-insurgency operations against Hutu rebels.

Burundian Hutu refugees who fled across the border to Tanzania this week spoke of a pattern of attacks by the Burundian army against civilians in their war against Hutu militias.

"It is always the same -- with the army against the armed groups," said Aphmani Kajambo, 22, a Burundian Hutu from Moyinga who fled to Tanzania this week.

"I was studying in the capital (Bujumbura) and when I got home I found our house had been burnt -- my mother was killed and my father had fled into Tanzania," he said.

25-JAN-1996 Some Rwandan Hutus return to Burundi, many cross border

(Adds Hutus crossing into Tanzania)

By Christian Jennings

BUJUMBURA, Jan 25 (Reuter) - Several thousand Rwandan Hutus who fled their camp in northeast Burundi have returned despite an uncertain security situation, but many more trudged on into safe exile in Tanzania on Thursday.

Hitoshi Mise, head of the UNHCR in Burundi, told Reuters the refugee agency was working out plans to rebuild the looted camp at Ntamba to accommodate the returnees, numbering nearly 3,000.

"Yesterday afternoon (Wednesday) people started walking back to Ntamba. We expect several thousand to be registered by the end of the day (Thursday)," Mise said.

UNHCR officials were on hand on Thursday to supervise those returning to Ntamba and check with registrations, he added.

Last weekend 17,000 Rwandan Hutus evacuated Ntamba and fled to the Tanzanian border after Burundian troops were accused of attacking neighbouring Mugano refugee camp.

They were initially denied entry by Tanzania, already hosting 700,000 Rwandans, but were allowed in on Wednesday on humanitarian grounds. Nearly 7,000 have crossed so far, Tanzanian officials said.

Mise said new security assurances for the returnees had been given by Burundi's deeply divided coalition government, which has little or no control over the Tutsi-dominated army.

However, one senior U.N. official said most of the Ntamba refugees appeared to have opted for asylum in peaceful Tanzania.

A Reuters correspondent visited the frontier on Thursday and saw hundreds of Rwandans crossing into Tanzania. He heard accounts of how they were driven out at gun-point by Burundi's army which is accused of trying to force Hutus out.

One refugee said Burundian soldiers warned the refugees they would "face the consequences" unless they vacated their camp at Ntamba before a deadline last Sunday.

"They came with guns and threatened us unless we left," another refugee added.

By Thursday, up to 7,000 refugees who fled their camp at Ntamba in northeast Burundi had crossed the border into Tanzania, aid officials said.

Many are being held at a transit camp at Muhungo on the border before being moved to a newly constructed camp at Keza, 65 km (37 miles) away.

Conflicting reports have been given about the reasons for the evacuation of Ntamba, which came five days after another camp at Mugano was attacked by the Burundi army leading to an exodus into Tanzania.

Some refugees said several of their comrades had drowned while crossing the

25 metre-wide Ruvubu river which marks the border between Burundi and Tanzania.

They said they had been marching for up to five days and many people had become exhausted from carrying heavy bundles containing their personal belongings retrieved from Ntamba.

"Some of us drowned as we tried to cross the river -- it was terrible but the Tanzanians helped us get across and gave us canoes," said Gilid Bwanakeye, former camp president at Ntamba.

Two children and an old man drowned on Sunday when they fell out of canoes and could not swim the Ruvubu River, Bwanakeye said.

Other refugees told Reuters that people who had stayed behind or returned had been beaten by members of Burundi's Tutsi-dominated army.

All along the dusty road leading from the border a trickle of refugees were seen trudging towards the Muhungo camp.

At a tiny border hamlet where some refugees spent last night a little market had been established while further along the road thirsty refugees were drawing water from a stagnant pool.

25-JAN-1996 13:27 Rwandan Hutus say they fled hostile Burundi army

By Matt Bigg

ON THE TANZANIA-BURUNDI BORDER, Jan 25 (Reuter) - Hundreds of exhausted Rwandan Hutus crossed into Tanzania on Thursday, saying they were forced out of Burundi at gun-point by the Tutsi-dominated army which threatened violence if they returned.

Up to 7,000 refugees who fled their camp at Ntamba in northeast Burundi have now crossed the border into Tanzania which agreed to offer them asylum on Wednesday, aid officials said.

Many are being held at a transit camp at Muhungo on the border before being moved to a newly-constructed camp at Keza, 65 km (37 miles) away.

Reports coming out of the Burundi capital Bujumbura said several thousands had returned to Ntamba on Thursday despite the uncertain security situation.

Conflicting reports have been given about the reasons for the evacuation of Ntamba, which came five days after another camp at Mugano was attacked by the Burundi army leading to an exodus into Tanzania.

On Thursday, refugees told Reuters they were threatened at gun-point by Burundian soldiers, but some aid officials have said the evacuation was prompted by the fear of violence rather than actual violence.

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At a tiny border hamlet where some refugees spent last night a little market had been established while further along the road thirsty refugees were drawing water from a stagnant pool.

On Wednesday Burundi's hawkish Defence Minister Lieutenant-Colonel Firmin Sinzoyiheba adamantly denied allegations of military operations to forcibly clear the camps.

The Rwandan Hutu refugees were among two million who fled into neighbouring countries in 1994 to escape the advancing Tutsi army following the genocide of up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus by Hutu extremists.

The latest influx of refugees into Tanzania threatens to stretch humanitarian resources and could cost up to \$2 million dollars, aid workers said.

"It is stretching already-stretched resources although thankfully the infrastructure for this emergency is already in place," said Peter Holdsworth, a senior official from the European Union (EU).

Refugees said they were extremely grateful for Tanzania asylum, saying they had no other place to go.

"We have no idea what we would do if Tanzania refuses to let us stay -- so we are so grateful to the Tanzanian government," said Msalimana Sarafina, 22, who said she lost her two children when she fled Rwanda in 1994.

25-JAN-1996 Rwanda slaps taxes on imports of aid equipment

By Elif Kaban

KIGALI, Jan 25 (Reuters) - Rwanda, which kicked out more than 40 Western aid agencies last month in a major public relations disaster, has slapped new taxes on some imports by the remaining agencies, foreign aid officials said on Thursday.

They said equipment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars was impounded by customs due to non-payment of taxes ranging from 70 percent for four-wheel-drive vehicles to 24 percent for computers.

Rehabilitation Minister Patrick Mazimhaka, seen as the engineer of December's heavy-handed expulsions, defended the new taxes and accused agencies of making political capital.

Mazimhaka told Reuters that temporary tax exemptions for all foreign aid agencies had been suspended with immediate effect in January, excluding imports of material going towards development projects which remained tax-free.

"This is a good way for the government to make money and to give better services to its people, including customs agents who clear this stuff," Mazimhaka said.

"The aid agencies are making a big fuss about this," he said. "When aid agencies bring in vehicles or computers, they should not complain about paying taxes.

"If I bring in computers as a government, I pay duty. So nobody should be complaining. Instead of obeying the law to get their stuff out, aid agencies are busy trying to make a political issue out of it," he added.

The government, irritated with delays in Western aid after 1994's genocide of up to a million Tutsis and allied Hutus, has also started charging tens of thousands of dollars for handsets and radios used by aid workers to communicate, diplomats said.

In a country where genocide survivors have not finished burying their dead and where average pay for government officials is less than \$70 a month, many people resent the lavish lifestyle of foreign aid workers.

Mazimhaka said his government, which has allowed 102 agencies to remain, recommended aid workers leave behind equipment used in Rwanda even if they had paid taxes on them, but this was not compulsory.

Some aid workers saw the move as a sign of the growing influence of Tutsi hardliners in the government, whose ties with humanitarian and U.N. agencies are sour.

"It wouldn't be unfair to say that the new taxes point to a more hardline attitude," said John Keys, country director for the International Rescue Committee, a U.S. aid agency.

"I can easily understand why the Rwandan government needs to raise revenue.

However, I am puzzled why they would turn to the very people who already are doing everything possible to help the same government rebuild the nation," he told Reuters.

The government, incensed at what it sees as the political bias and inefficiency of some aid agencies, ordered out more than 40 predominantly French agencies last month including big names like Medecins Sans Frontieres (France).

Aid agencies flocked to the Central African country after Tutsi rebels

24-JAN-1996 U.N. seeks funds for hosts of Rwanda s

GENEVA, Jan 24 (Reuter) - The United Nations called on donor states on Wednesday to back a \$70.5 million programme to repair damage to the environment and infrastructure in African countries hosting refugees from Rwanda.

A package of projects was presented at a Geneva meeting of donors called by the UNHCR refugee agency and the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP). They are expected to call a pledging conference later to try to raise the funds.

"This initiative is vital in the effort to help repair the ravages of a massive human tragedy which has affected the lives of many people, not only in Rwanda but in neighbouring countries as well," Alan Doss of the UNDP told the meeting.

Kamal Morjane, UNHCR regional director for Africa, said support by the world community "would acknowledge the generosity and show appreciation for the hospitality extended" to the refugees by Rwanda's neighbours over the past three years.

There are some 1.8 million Rwandan refugees in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi -- most of them Hutus who fled after the Hutu government accused of sponsoring genocide against Tutsis in 1994 was driven out by a mainly Tutsi rebel army.

But many Tutsis also fled Rwanda before and during the killings, in which up to one million people died.

Thousands of Rwandan Hutus are currently pushing into Tanzania from Burundi, where there has been a mounting spiral of conflict between the country's own Hutus and Tutsis.

The UNHCR said the projects outlined at Wednesday's meetings involved efforts to stop environmental damage, including an end to unregulated woodcutting by refugees outside their camps, reforestation, rehabilitation of roads, communications facilities and sanitation, health and education services.

The Geneva meeting followed a conference on help for refugees in central Africa's Great Lakes region held in the Burundian capital Bujumbura in February last year.

The conference asked the UNDP and the UNHCR to prepare a programme to tackle the problem of environmental damage caused by the flood of refugees out of Rwanda.

24-JAN-1996 President says genocide mi

(adds details, background)

By Christian Jennings

BUJUMBURA, Jan 24 (Reuter) - President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya said on

Wednesday the mood of genocide which hit Rwanda in 1994 had now found roots in Burundi, where a Tutsi-dominated army is battling Hutu rebels.

Ntibantunganya spoke to Reuters a week after Rwandan Hutu refugees said they were targets of an attack by the Burundi army in which 20 of their comrades were killed, scores wounded and which triggered an exodus into Tanzania.

His stern remarks also come a few days after U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Madeleine Albright, warned the army against overthrowing his fragile government, saying this would lead to an international isolation of the central African state.

"The spirit of genocide is already here -- the thought that by eliminating somebody, you can have peace, is dangerous," Ntibantunganya, a Hutu, said.

The president was referring to efforts by Burundi's two communities to eliminate each other in violence that has killed more than 100,000 people in the last two years.

Burundi has been unstable since its first freely elected president Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, was murdered by renegade Tutsi soldiers in 1993. In neighbouring Rwanda, with the same ethnic make-up, up to a million people, mostly Tutsis, were slaughtered by Hutus in 1994.

The president appealed to Burundi's army to reform itself from a tribally-based institution seen as bent on the elimination of other tribes in the country.

"The army must open itself up and stop giving out negative signals that it's ethnically monopolised," the president who lost his wife in ethnic upheavals that followed Ndadaye's death in 1993, added.

Despite being an executive president, Ntibantunganya has little control over the Tutsi-dominated army, which to date refuses to open up its ranks to the Hutu majority.

Ntibantunganya defended his position saying: "The very fact that certain parts of the population rally against me indicates that I have some sort of power, if I was a puppet, I don't think the strength of feeling against me would be quite so strong."

As Ntibantunganya spoke, troops took positions on the streets of Bujumbura to prevent a civil strike called by Tutsi extremists demanding his removal from power. The strike failed to materialise and businesses functioned normally.

Tutsi extremists accuse Ntibantunganya of turning a blind eye to killings of Tutsis by Hutu rebels, battling the government army in hit-and-run attacks across the country.

Hutus in return accuse the army of indiscriminately attacking them in an unwritten policy to empty Burundi of Hutus. Last week some 15,000 Rwandan Hutus fled northeast Burundi into Tanzania after their camp was attacked by Burundi soldiers.

About 16,000 more massed at the frontier after Tanzania, already burdened with hundreds of thousands of refugees, refused to let them through -- a move that was reversed on Wednesday.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is pressing for a U.N. force to prevent further violence in Burundi.

But Security Council envoys said on Monday they were still deliberating about his suggestions to station peacekeepers in neighbouring Zaire or alternatively, get a commitment from nations to earmark a rapid reaction force that could help if trouble broke out.

The Burundi government and the army has rejected any troops or guards, regardless of the purpose.

24-JAN-1996 Tanzania reopens border ts

(Adds details of refugee movements)

By Matt Bigg

NGARA, Tanzania, Jan 24 (Reuters) - A senior Tanzanian official said on Wednesday his country was allowing in 16,000 Rwandans fleeing ethnic violence in Burundi, despite playing host already to hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Brigadier-General Sylvester Hemedi, district commissioner for Ngara area, told Reuters the decision to let them in was a humanitarian one and did not mean the border with Burundi, closed last year, was officially reopened for refugees.

"I have been instructed by central government to allow in Rwandan refugees now at the border. We are expecting not less than 16,000," Hemedi said. "I have in turn instructed my troops at the border to allow them in."

Paul Stromberg, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), told Reuters at Ngara that the Tanzanian military was already guiding the refugees into temporary sites.

"Between 6,000 and 7,000 people are walking their way across the border but they will probably spend the night at Nyarulama (a village on the Tanzanian border)," Stromberg said, adding it would be their fourth night in the open.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) societies said on Wednesday that a new camp at Keza, 65 km (37 miles) from the border was now ready to receive up to 30,000 new Rwandan refugees including 17,000 who fled Ntamba on Sunday.

Hemedi lashed out at the international community for doing little or nothing about the situation in Rwanda and Burundi. "The problem is with the international community. They don't do anything to pressurise the governments of Rwanda and Burundi, they only put pressure on us to shoulder the (refugee) burden," he said.

The Rwandan Hutu refugees, in northeast Burundi since 1994 and fearing attack by Burundi's mainly Tutsi army, have been camped at the border since last Sunday hoping Tanzania would reopen the frontier closed last year.

Tanzanian defence minister Edgar Majogo said on Saturday his country,

already sheltering 700,000 Rwandan Hutus, could no longer cope on its own.

Tanzania re-shut its borders to the refugees on Sunday after allowing in 15,000 last week who said they were fleeing a campaign of terror by Burundi's army to drive them out.

Those who crossed last week were from Mugano camp and said 20 refugees were killed and many more wounded when Tutsi soldiers torched their camp on January 17. The Burundi army has denied attacking the refugees.

President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya told Reuters on Wednesday that Burundi was now in the same genocidal mood which engulfed neighbouring Rwanda in 1994.

The Rwandan Hutu refugees are caught between a hostile Tutsi army in Burundi and Tanzania's reluctance to open its doors. Their only other option is to go home but many can expect to be arrested and accused of involvement in the 1994 .

24-JAN-1996 Rwanda angry after u.n. sg

By Elif Kaban

KIGALI, Jan 24 (Reuter) - Rwanda on Wednesday reacted angrily to comments by U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros- Ghali that hardliners had ended the government's policy of promoting of ethnic harmony after the 1994 genocide of Tutsis.

Rehabilitation minister Patrick Mazimhaka accused Boutros-Ghali of poisoning the return of 1.7 million Hutu refugees who fled from a Tutsi rebel victory after the killings.

The U.N. chief, in a statement read out by Mazimhaka, said the government was no longer pursuing a policy of reconciliation.

Frictions between moderate government members and hardliners have deepened and the expulsion of more than 40 Western aid agencies showed the latter now had the upper hand, the statement said, according to Mazimhaka.

"This statement certainly goes a long way to poison the repatriation exercise," Mazimhaka said.

"Would you expect refugees to come back after such a statement by the U.N. secretary general? We consider this statement unwanted and very irresponsible."

The refugees, among them countless murderers, fled after the slaughter of up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus by forces of the former Hutu regime. They feared revenge attacks from the Tutsi forces who toppled the Hutu regime.

The new government's stated goal of reconciliation has been marred by widespread arbitrary arrests of Hutus.

Lack of government action to deal with the overcrowding in prisons stuffed with more than 60,000 suspected killers has reinforced the impression hardliners are winning.

In the first official Rwandan reaction to the plight of thousands of Rwandan

Hutu refugees fleeing Burundi, Mazimhaka also appealed to aid agencies to assist them.

More than 15,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees in Burundi fled to Tanzania last week after reports of killings by the Tutsi army.

Mazimhaka said Rwandan officials would try to resolve the crisis in talks in Burundi's capital Bujumbura .

23-JAN-1996 Thousands of Rwandan refui

By Elif Kaban

ON THE RWANDAN-BURUNDIAN BORDER, Jan 24 (Reuter) - More than 15,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees, among them mass murderers of the country's 1994 genocide, ran out of places to go on Wednesday after Burundi chased them away and Tanzania shut its borders.

But with children and goats in tow, only a trickle resigned to their fate braved the journey back home nearly two years after fleeing in fear of reprisals for the genocide of up to a million minority Tutsis and allied Hutus.

There were no welcoming smiles for the first group of 168 refugees greeted at this dusty, sun-scorched border crossing by a line of gun-toting soldiers of Rwanda's Tutsi-led army.

Goats bleating and babies screaming at the back of three U.N trucks, the refugees looked uncertain and afraid as they crossed into Rwanda down a dirt track winding through untended coffee plantations and rotting banana trees.

A nine-month pregnant woman guarding family possessions -- a stool, a bench, a bicycle and a kettle -- said she would give birth in Rwanda because there was no safety left in Burundi.

A man complained he was forced to return after a western aid agency employing him in northeastern Burundi -- a major pull factor that keeps many refugees from returning to impoverished Rwanda -- quit Burundi following recent violence.

Primary school teacher Faustin Birutakwinjinja, clutching a small boy h one hand and smoking a cigarette with the other, said his five-member family had no option left but to go home.

"The security in Rwanda is now better than the security in Burundi," Birutakwinjinja, sitting on a wooden coffee table he carried from his tent home, said when asked why he came home.

Birutakwinjinja and about half of the new arrivals fled the Ntamba camp in northeastern Burundi after reports of killings in nearby sites by Burundi's almost exclusively Tutsi army.

Neighbouring Tanzania shut its borders to the refugees on Sunday after letting in 15,000 last week who fled the army.

Testing the patience of Tanzania which is fed up with the presence of 700,000 refugees on its soil, 15,000 refugees were stuck near the frontier on Tuesday, U.N. officials said.

The large Rwandan refugee presence on the border is certain to add to growing tensions between Tanzania and Burundi.

Already caught up in one civil war, the Rwandan refugees look as if they are about to be caught up in another war this time in Burundi between Hutu death squads and Tutsi soldiers.

Witnesses said Burundi's army killed 20 refugees and wounded many more in the Mugano camp last Wednesday.

Abdulbaquee Khogaini, a repatriation official of the U.N. refugee agency UNHCR, said Mugano was empty with all its population now in Tanzania while 16,000 refugees from Ntamba were now camping near the Tanzanian border.

Khogaini said UNHCR is on standby for a possible influx but there was no sign of a mass refugee movement towards Rwanda.

"Almost all of the population of Ntamba camp are now camped near the Tanzanian border. They are waiting. There is no mass movement towards Rwanda," he said.

Khogaini said only 1,000 refugees were now at Ntamba, where he said soldiers set fire to tents, aided by Burundians who were looting the camp, but there were no reports of violence.

Despite Burundi teetering on the brink in recent months and fighting worsening in the north between rebels and the army, only a trickle of Rwandan refugees have returned. However, until last week they had been relatively safe in the camps despite the deteriorating security around them.

Rwanda's government, whose Tutsi rebels swept to power after the genocide, has kept quiet since the start of the crisis. U.N diplomats are dismayed by the lack of Rwandan initiatives to try to persuade refugees to come home.

"It seems it's Rwanda's government that's least concerned about what's happening to its people," said one U.N. official.

Many refugees fear revenge at the hands of Rwanda's army. Following the evacuation of Mugano and Ntamba about 110,000 Rwandan Hutus remain in four other camps in Burundi.

23-JAN-1996 UN chief sticks by his Bus

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 23 (Reuter) - Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is pressing for some kind of a U.N. force to prevent violence in Burundi from turning into a new wave of ethnic killings in the central African country.

But Security Council envoys said on Monday they were still deliberating about his suggestions to station peacekeepers in neighbouring Zaire or alternatively, get a commitment from nations to earmark a rapid reaction force that could help if trouble broke out.

The council has already approved a mission to investigate sending U.N. guards to Burundi to protect international aid workers, under siege by militia in violence between radical Hutu and Tutsi groups.

Boutros-Ghali six months ago proposed standby troops for Burundi and repeated his suggestions last week.

"We have discussed different options, among them a preventive deployment of forces, among them a blue guard which may help to help to protect our humanitarian people," Boutros-Ghali told reporters after a Security Council session.

Asked if he had new proposals, he said: "I am proposing exactly the same

idea I proposed six months ago."

The current council president, Sir John Weston of Britain, said Boutros-Ghali wanted some sort of green light from the council before he submitted any detailed proposal in writing.

"We will report to our capitals and we will return to Burundi very soon to decide what more, if anything, we want to ask the secretary-general to do," said Weston.

"We realise this is an urgent situation, both here and in capitals," he added.

The Burundi government, particularly its Tutsi-led army, has rejected any troops or guards, regardless of the purpose.

Burundi has the same ethnic makeup as neighbouring Rwanda, where up to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered by Hutu militia and soldiers in 1994.

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright, visiting Burundi briefly on Saturday, warned the Tutsi-dominated army against toppling the country's fragile coalition government.

"Any government imposed by force from any source will only lead to the complete isolation of this beautiful country from the international community," she said.

20-JAN-1996 U.S.'s Albright warns against coup

By Christian Jennings

BUJUMBURA, Jan 20 (Reuters) - The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright on Saturday warned Burundi's Tutsi-dominated army against toppling the country's fragile government, saying Washington would oppose change by force.

"The violence in Burundi must stop and the U.S. government will not support any government that might come to power by force in this country," Albright said.

Asked if she implied a coup by the military, Albright nodded affirmatively, adding: "Any government imposed by force from any source will only lead to the complete isolation of this beautiful country from the international community."

Albright, accompanied by officials from the U.S. State and Defence departments, was addressing a news conference after talks with military and government officials of the ethnically-torn Central African nation.

The tough warning to the army came as witnesses reported that a Burundi army attack on a refugee camp on Wednesday sparked an exodus of thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees to neighbouring Tanzania.

It also came a few days after Tutsi extremists launched a civil disobedience campaign in the capital Bujumbura to back their demands for the overthrow of Hutu President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya.

Albright said she had delivered her message as bluntly as she could to all Burundian leaders, including the military, during her brief stay in Bujumb.

On Tuesday, Tutsi militants staged a strike in Bujumbura demanding the removal of Ntibantunganya, whom they accused of being behind massacres of Tutsis following the killing of Burundi's first freely-elected Hutu president in 1993 by renegade Tutsi troops.

Ntibantunganya presides over a fragile coalition government with little or no power over the military, now locked in a hit-and-run civil war with Hutu rebels.

Burundi says it is investigating the attack on Mugano camp that caused the refugees flight. The Tutsi-dominated army had initially linked the attackers to neighbouring Rwanda's former Hutu army, a charge rejected by the fleeing Hutu refugees.

Hutu groups accuse Burundi's army, which is almost entirely recruited from the Tutsi minority, of backing Tutsi extremists who want to force as many Hutus as possible out of the country.

Tanzania appealed for international help to deal with the latest influx and Defence Minister Edgar Majogo who visited the refugees said they must leave soon.

Albright later travelled to neighbouring Rwanda, where up to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered in genocidal killings by Hutu militia and soldiers in 1994.

23-JAN-1996 Rwandan ex-central banker

BRUSSELS, Jan 23 (Reuter) - Rwanda's former central bank governor, in exile in Belgium since last month, on Tuesday denied charges of embezzlement and protested against human rights violations in his country.

"I categorically deny the allegations made by the Rwandan Information Minister...who said I was involved in...the disappearance of large amounts of cash following the issue of new bank notes," Gerard Nyetegeka said in a statement.

7/89=U9 the revolting strategy of the (Tutsi-led) Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) which, in order to occupy functions held by Hutus, invents false accusations and throws them in jail or harrasses them, forcing them to go into exile," said Nyetegeka, who is a Hutu.

The two ethnic groups have been in conflict for decades and remain divided despite the Tutsi-led government's stated goal of national reconciliation.

Nyetegeka called on the international community to end the human rights violations in Rwanda "where people are killed or jailed based on their ethnic background."

He said that, following threats to himself and his family in November, he resigned as central bank governor on December 22 while he was on an official mission in Europe.

20-JAN-1996 Rwanda genocide probe starts digging up graves

By Elif Kaban

KIGALI, Jan 20 (Reuter) - Forensic scientists have begun digging up a mass grave by a Catholic church in Rwanda to provide evidence for a U.N. tribunal investigating the 1994 genocide of a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus, officials said on Saturday.

The exhumations began this week at a mass grave in the western town of Kibuye.

The scale of the genocide and the vast number of mass graves scattered across the Central African country make the exhumations in Rwanda one of the biggest in history.

"The whole country is a cemetery. There are hundreds of mass graves and new ones are being found. This will be the largest mass grave exhumation ever since Nazi concentration camps," a senior forensic expert of the tribunal told Reuters.

The three-month genocide unleashed by Hutu militias and soldiers backed by mobs and even children ended after Tutsi rebels swept to power in July 1994.

In Kibuye, a town on the shores of Lake Kivu, as many as 12,000 Tutsis -- almost its entire Tutsi population -- are believed to have been hacked to death in April 1994.

A 15-member team of anthropologists, archaeologists and forensic experts have begun the first exhumations in Kibuye at a mass grave outside a Catholic church, where diggers have been working with picks and shovels since December.

Forensic anthropologists are archivists of death who try to solve murders using tape measures, calipers and other investigative methods and study fragments of skeletons to document evidence of violence.

It was forensic experts who contributed to history by finding the skeletal remains of the infamous and elusive Nazi doctor Josef Mengele, the angel of death, in Brazil in 1985. They have also investigated killings in Argentina, El Salvador and Cambodia.

In a boost to tribunal efforts to match evidence with witness accounts of the genocide, volunteers led by a U.S. physicians' organisation, Physicians for Human Rights, will be exhuming the mass graves in Kibuye over the next five weeks.

Like archaeologists reassembling pieces of broken pottery, the experts will sift through skeletal remains, ribs, skulls and pelvic bones, piece them together and document the cause of death by studying bullet holes and machete and shrapnel marks.

"Witnesses can lie, but bones don't," said a tribunal official. "The exhumations will provide crucial evidence."

The tribunal, seated in Tanzania, indicted eight Rwandans on genocide charges in December for the killings in Kibuye.

19-JAN-1996 U.N. fears refugee emergency on Tanzania border

(Updates Rwandan refugees and Burundians in flight)

By Matt Bigg

DAR ES SALAAM, Jan 19 (Reuter) - The head of the U.N. refugee agency in Tanzania said on Friday he feared a "massive emergency" after thousands of Rwandans and Burundians fleeing violence in Burundi massed near the border with Tanzania.

The refugees at the Tanzania border comprised Rwandan Hutus, who fled Mugano refugee camp in northeast Burundi, and a large number of Burundian Hutus also trying to flee, said Andrew Sokiri, the UNHCR representative in Tanzania.

At least 15,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees have crossed the border into Tanzania from Burundi since Thursday despite the fact that Tanzania sealed its borders to refugees last March.

The number of Hutus massing near the Tanzanian border was unclear. Sokiri gave a figure of 100,000 but UNHCR officials in Bujumbura said that was equivalent to nearly all the Rwandan refugee population inside Burundi.

No independent accounts were immediately available.

"We are concerned that if it continues, we do not know the extent to which it could lead to a massive emergency," Sokiri told Reuters.

UNHCR officials in Bujumbura, Burundi's capital, did not know whether the refugees who crossed into Tanzania would be allowed to stay.

Hitoshi Mise, the UNHCR head in Burundi, scotched the figure of 100,000 refugees at the Tanzania border.

"That's nearly the remaining refugee population in Burundi. If they had all left their camps, I could pack up and go home," added Mise, who did not give his own estimates.

Burundi military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Longin Minani said investigations had been launched into the attack on Mugano camp that caused the refugee flight.

Minani linked the assailants to Rwanda's former Hutu army but would not say why such a group would attack their own kin.

Hutu groups accuse Burundi's army, which is almost entirely recruited from the Tutsi minority, of backing Tutsi extremists who want to force as many Hutus as possible out of the country.

Aid sources in Bujumbura said there were no further movements of refugees reported in the northern Burundi camps.

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said shooting by unidentified gunmen caused the flight from Mugano camp, home to 15,000 refugees.

The Federation, which managed five camps in Burundi with a population of 150,000 refugees, said it was reviewing the security of its staff and resources in Burundi as a result of the serious security incident.

The Federation said its teams had treated at its hospital in Benaco camp, Tanzania, eight people who suffered from gunshot wounds, four of them in critical condition.

In Geneva on Thursday, the U.N. human rights investigator for Burundi called for a global plan to force the government to halt "genocide by dripfeed" or face sanctions.

Paulo Sergio Pinheiro said if Burundi authorities failed to heed the warning in the coming months, the international community should consider withdrawing humanitarian aid workers.

"Everyone is waiting for a second Rwanda. It is here already. The figures are shocking," Pinheiro told reporters.

Burundi's Hutu majority and Tutsi minority is the same ethnic mix as in Rwanda, where up to a million Tutsi and allied Hutu were slaughtered by hardline Hutus and troops in 1994.

18-JAN-1996 Some 10,000 Rwandan refugees cross into Tanzania

(Updates with number crossing border, details of casualties)

By Christian Jennings

BUJUMBURA, Jan 18 (Reuter) - Some 10,000 Rwandan refugees, forced by fighting to flee their camp in northeast Burundi, crossed into Tanzania on Thursday with another 5,000 on their heels.

"It appears some 10,000 Rwandese have strayed across the border into Tanzania. We're trying to find out whether they will be taken to a camp (in Tanzania)," said Peter Kessler, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

He said 5,000 more were heading to the Tanzanian border town of Ngara.

Mise Hitoshi, UNHCR head in Burundi, said "very heavy fighting" in the area drove the camp's 15,000 residents out on Wednesday night except for a few hundred refugees who stayed behind.

Hitoshi said UNHCR staff were not in the area of the camp on Thursday but the agency had reports the shooting had stopped.

In Geneva, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said in a statement that Federation medical teams had treated eight refugees suffering from gunshot wounds, four of whom were in critical condition in a Federation-run hospital at Benaco camp near Ngara.

The refugees crossed into Tanzania despite the foreign ministry in Dar es Salaam saying the border remained closed. The frontier is impossible to seal except with a very large force.

Brigadier Sylvestre Hemed, the Tanzanian district commissioner in Ngara, told journalists the border situation was "highly explosive" because of fighting between Burundian government troops and suspected Hutu rebels near Mugano camp.

The Tanzanian border is only six km (four miles) east of Mugano.

Northern Burundi is the centre of a civil war between Hutu Burundian rebels and the Tutsi-dominated army and is also the sight of most refugee camps for the 152,000 Rwandan refugees in Burundi until Thursday.

In April last year, 50,000 Rwandan refugees fled their camps because of ethnic violence and tried to cross into Tanzania but were stopped by Tanzanian troops. Only some 3,500 managed to sneak across.

Tanzania says it is already overwhelmed by 750,000 refugees.

The Rwandan Hutus fled to troubled Burundi in 1994 during the genocide of up to one million Tutsis and Hutu moderates by Hutu troops, militia and mobs. Most say they fear being killed in reprisal for the mass slaughter if they ever return home.

UNHCR head Sadako Ogata has proposed an urgent mission to Burundi to investigate security measures including the deployment of U.N. guards to protect U.N. staff.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had proposed guards for aid workers and a small rapid reaction force of peacekeepers to be stationed in neighbouring Zaire. But the security council backed off the idea of the force for Zaire.

Presenting his report based on Ogata's visit, Boutros-Ghali warned the Security Council on Wednesday there was a real danger Burundi might explode into ethnic violence on a massive scale.

"I continue to believe that it is imperative for the international community to launch a major initiative to prevent another tragedy in the subregion as well as to promote a dialogue embracing all elements of the Burundese political spectrum," he said.

More than 100,000 people of a population of about 6 million have been killed in the last two years since the assassination of Burundi's first freely-elected Hutu president by Tutsi troops.

Most agencies pulled out of the north last month after a wave of attacks but some resumed work in the last two weeks.

Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, visits Bujumbura on Saturday before flying to Rwanda.

18-JAN-1996 "UNHCR staff together with the Tanzanian authorities are

distributing high-protein biscuits and water," said Kessler.

Six of the refugees who crossed the border were suffering from gunshot wounds, including three with serious injuries. They were taken to a local Tanzanian hospital for treatment, he added.

The refugees crossed into Tanzania despite the Tanzanian foreign ministry saying on Thursday that its border with Burundi was closed to the 15,000 who fled to escape heavy fighting on Wednesday night.

18-JAN-1996 France wants European peace mission to Burundi

PARIS, Jan 18 (Reuter) - France, worried by the deteriorating political situation in Burundi, asked the European Union on Thursday to name a diplomatic trouble-shooter to help restore stability to the central African nation.

The special European envoy's goal would be to work with officials of the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity "to help restore a secure and peaceful climate" in Burundi, Foreign Ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt said.

The spokesman also renewed France's demand for a regional conference jointly sponsored by the U.N. and the O.A.U. and uniting representatives of Rwanda, Zaire, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya in addition to Burundi.

Such a conference has been in the works for two years but has run into repeated delays due to differences between the parties.

More than 100,000 people of a population of about 6 million have been killed in the last two years since the killing of Burundi's first freely-elected Hutu president by Tutsi troops.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali warned the Security Council on Wednesday there was a real danger Burundi might explode into new ethnic violence on a massive scale.

He called on the international community to launch a major initiative to head off another tragedy in the region and urged "a dialogue embracing all elements of the Burundese political spectrum."

Hutu rebels and the Tutsi-dominated army are fighting a civil war centred in northern Burundi. It is also the site of most refugee camps for some 152,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees who fled to troubled Burundi in 1994 during the genocide of up one million Tutsis and Hutu moderates by Hutu troops, militiamen and mobs.

Most of the refugees say they fear being killed in reprisal for the mass slaughter if they ever return home.

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18-JAN-1996 "Only a few hundred refugees remain in the camp and 15,000

refugees are moving towards the Tanzanian border through fear of fighting," Hitoshi added. The border is about six km (four miles) east of Mugano.

"UNHCR personnel are not in the camp area today (Thursday). We have received reports the shooting has stopped," he said. "There are no reports of humanitarian or civilian casualties so far but we don't know who the fighting is between. Civilians and refugees are not believed to have been implicated."

Hutu rebels and the Tutsi-dominated army are fighting a civil war centred in

northern Burundi, which is also the site of most refugee camps for some 55,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees.

An attempted exodus by some 50,000 Rwandan refugees fleeing insecurity in northeast Burundi in April last year was halted only when Tanzanian troops deployed on the border and refused to let them in.

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18-JAN-1996 UN's Ogata wants aid workers in Burundi protected

By Evelyn Leopold

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 18 (Reuter) - The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees wants an urgent mission to Burundi to investigate security arrangements, including deployment of guards to protect United Nations staff.

The proposal was given in a report late on Wednesday by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on a recent trip to the volatile central African country by the refugee commissioner, Sadako Ogata.

"Mrs Ogata has recommended the urgent dispatch of a technical security mission to examine ways to improve security arrangements, including the limited deployment of U.N. guards to protect U.N. personnel and premises," he said.

She also suggested that military observers from the Organisation of African Unity in Burundi might serve as a liaison between the aid groups and Burundi's security forces.

Boutros-Ghali again warned that there was a real danger Burundi might explode into ethnic violence on a massive scale.

"I continue to believe that it is imperative for the international community to launch a major initiative to prevent another tragedy in the subregion as well as to promote a dialogue embracing all elements of the Burundese political spectrum," he said.

The secretary-general previously suggested guards for aid workers as well a small rapid-reaction military force of peacekeepers stationed in neighboring Zaire.

Key Security Council members have rejected any peacekeeping force at this time but would accept guards.

More than 100,000 people of a population of about 6 million have been killed in the last two years. Rural areas are being terrorised and that the capital, Bujumbura, has all but ceased to function.

Burundi has the same ethnic composition of a Hutu majority and a Tutsi minority as neighbouring Rwanda, where violence which began in 1994 resulted in genocide of up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus by extremist Hutus.

Relief groups have been attacked in the north where they are caring for 152,000 Rwandan refugees, mostly Hutu, and 80,000 Burundi citizens forced out of their homes. At one point only Ogata's agency was still functioning.

The new report said there were two conflicting views among Burundi's

leadership. Those determined to launch an all-out military offensive against some armed factions were opposed to international military intervention or preventive deployment.

"On the other hand, there are those who advocated a wide political dialogue, including negotiations with the extremist movements and who welcome the idea of an external military presence which might help to stabilise the situation," the report said.

18-JAN-1996 Ireland says Rwanda's plight an EU priority

DUBLIN, Jan 18 (Reuter) - Ireland on Thursday criticised the slow pace of an international tribunal on genocide in Rwanda and said it would make the situation in the African country a priority issue during its forthcoming European Union presidency.

Minister of State Joan Burton told an aid meeting on Rwanda in Dublin that "justice for Rwanda means due process and accountability; it means demilitarisation and encouraging and facilitating refugee return."

She said there was no "quick fix" for the agony of Rwanda, where one million Tutsis and Hutus perished in tribal genocide in 1994.

"The International Tribunal on Genocide in Rwanda has failed to move quickly enough. What is lacking is political will," she added.

Burton, who visited Rwanda last year, said the international community had a responsibility to back the reconstruction of Rwanda and said Ireland would make it a high priority when it took over the rotating EU presidency for six months from July 1. Italy is the current president.

Ireland has hundreds of aid workers in East and Central Africa, many of them trying to help in the return of tens of thousands of refugees from ethnic killings in Rwanda and on the border with Zaire.

The genocide tribunal, set up in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha, is expected to hold its first trial in March.

18-JAN-1996 Canada pulling out of U.N. Rwanda operation

UNITED NATIONS, Jan 18 (Reuter) - Canada has told the United Nations it is withdrawing its contingent from the U.N. Assistance Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR) about a month before the mission is due to end because it disagrees with a decision to reduce the force while retaining its existing mandate.

Canada at one time had just over 400 troops and observers serving with UNAMIR but the number was down to about 100 by the end of December.

In a letter to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali made public (on) Thursday, Canadian U.N. envoy Robert Fowler said they would leave at the beginning of February.

Canada signalled its intention to pull out when the Security Council decided in December to renew UNAMIR's mandate for a final three-month period ending March 8 but to reduce the force then numbering 1,800 troops and 285 military observers to 1,200 soldiers and 200 observers, in response to demands by Rwanda.

The U.N. force, established in late 1993, has been trying to provide a climate of confidence to induce the return of some 1.6 million Rwandan refugees who fled to neighbouring countries after genocidal massacres in 1994 in which up to a million minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed.

"The decision to withdraw reflects the Canadian view that the mandate renewed in December 1995 is not viable, given the authorised force structure," Fowler told Boutros-Ghali.

He said he told the Security Council at the time that "to reduce the strength of UNAMIR by one third, while maintaining a mandate essentially unchanged...was to create false expectations about what UNAMIR could realistically achieve."

Fowler said this should not be construed as a lessening of Canada's willingness to participate in the search for stability in the region or in its commitment to assist the Rwandan government to rebuild its devastated country.

"It is, rather, a sign of our concern that the Security Council has not yet fully absorbed lessons learned from the recent past in peace-keeping operations," he added.

Canada currently has about 1,000 troops, military observers and police serving in U.N. peacekeeping operations in the Middle East, the former Yugoslavia and Haiti.

17-JAN-1996 Belgium closer to handing over Rwanda suspects

BRUSSELS, Jan 17 (Reuter) - Belgium moved a step closer on Wednesday to passing new laws it needs to fulfil a United Nations tribunal's request to hand over three men suspected of involvement in Rwanda's genocide.

The three -- Alphonse Higaniro, Elie Ndayambaje and Joseph Kanyabashi -- have been held by Belgian authorities since early last year.

Belgium has been asked to defer to the Tanzania-based tribunal in its court proceedings and in order to regulate a transfer of the men's cases -- a request normally only recieved on a state-to-state basis -- Belgium needs new legislation.

A parliamentary committee approved on Wednesday a draft law to allow the transfer. "It has been adopted -- 12 in favour and one abstention," a parliamentary secretary said.

The draft legislation now has to go to a full session of the Belgian parliament -- most probably on January 25.

Belgium has already said it will cooperate with the tribunal and is treating the issue as a top priority.

The tribunal set up to investigate the massacre of one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda in 1994 has its seat in the Tanzanian town of Arusha.

Tribunal officials say its first trials, which will involve the Belgian group and four others currently detained in Zambia, could start in March.

The three held in Belgium are accused of organising and inciting massacres in the southern Rwandan region of Butare, scene of some of the most brutal killings unleashed by Hutu militiamen, soldiers and mobs incensed by the murder of Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana.

Belgium is also holding a fourth genocide suspect, university lecturer Vincent Ntchimana who was arrested last April, but the tribunal has not requested he be handed over.

17-JAN-1996 Washington's U.N. ambassador to visit Rwanda

KIGALI, Jan 17 (Reuter) - The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, will arrive in Rwanda's capital Kigali on Saturday for talks with Rwandan leaders, government officials said on Wednesday.

During her 24-hour visit, Albright will meet President Pasteur Bizimungu and Rwanda's military strongman, Defence Minister and Vice-President Paul Kagame, they said. She is also due to visit a memorial to 1994's genocide.

The ambassador will be accompanied by senior U.S. State and Defence Department officials.

Washington has emerged as a close ally of the Anglophone leaders of Rwanda's Tutsi-led army, whose rebels swept to power after ousting the former extremist Hutu government which was backed by France.

Rwandan government sources said the future of the U.N. peace-keeping operation in Rwanda, whose mandate expires in March, is likely to be high on Albright's agenda in Kigali.

Rwanda agreed to a three-month extension of the mandate of the U.N. force after its December 8 expiry following tough negotiations with Western donors which wanted the peacekeepers to stay to deal with any instability.

A quarter of Rwanda's population remains in exile more than a year after fleeing in fear of reprisals for the ethnic slaughter in which up to a million minority Tutsis and allied Hutus died.

Albright is also expected to discuss with Rwandan officials the repatriation of 1.7 million majority Hutu refugees languishing in camps in Zaire and Tanzania, government sources said.

11-JAN-1996 Belgium makes Rwanda tribunal request top priority

By Lorryne Smith

BRUSSELS, Jan 11 (Reuter) - Belgium said on Thursday it was treating as "top priority" a formal request by a United Nations tribunal in Tanzania to hand over three men suspected of involvement in Rwanda's genocide.

A Belgian justice ministry spokesman told Reuters a copy of the request asking Belgium to defer to the international tribunal in its court proceedings had been received.

"It asks Belgium to take legal and administrative measures to regulate the transfer (of the three men's cases)," he said.

"The Belgian Justice Minister (Stefaan De Clerck) already introduced a draft law to parliament on Wednesday to create the legal framework to comply with the request," he added.

Tribunal Judge William Sekule earlier on Thursday announced the request for the handover of the three -- Alphonse Higaniro, Elie Ndayambaje and Joseph Kanyabashi -- who have been held by Belgian authorities since the first half of last year.

The men were named on Wednesday by Chief Prosecutor Richard Goldstone in Arusha, Tanzania, where the tribunal to investigate Rwanda's genocide has its seat. Up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in the 1994 massacres.

"It's the first time an international tribunal has made a request for us to defer -- normally it comes from other states," the Belgian justice ministry spokesman said.

He said the draft law would be considered by a parliamentary committee on January 17 and depending on their decision would then go to a full session of the Belgian parliament, where it would need to be approved by a majority to take effect.

The spokesman said parliament was treating the issue as a matter of priority and it seemed quite feasible for the handover to be arranged in time for the trials -- the tribunal's first -- to start in March as Goldstone earlier said he hoped.

The new Belgian law would be wide enough to cover similar future requests by any such international tribunal, he added.

Tribunal officials said the three men would be brought to Arusha by a special U.N. jet, when formalities with Belgium were sorted out, to await formal indictment and prosecution.

Higaniro was a minister and director of a match factory in the southern Rwandan province of Butare, Ndayambaje was a mayor in Muganza commune in Butare and Kanyabashi a mayor in the same province.

Belgium is also holding a fourth genocide suspect, university lecturer Vincent Ntchimana who was arrested last April, but Goldstone has made no request for his handover.

The Belgian foreign ministry had said on Wednesday that Belgium, which is bringing its own proceedings against the three, would cooperate with the tribunal. Belgium was the colonial ruler in Rwanda until independence in 1962.
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11-JAN-1996 Tribunal asks Belgium to hand over Rwanda suspects

(Adds details, statement by Hutu lobby group)

By Matt Bigg

ARUSHA, Tanzania, Jan 11 (Reuter) - A United Nations tribunal formally asked Belgium on Thursday to hand over three men suspected of involvement in Rwanda's genocide, in a first step towards the start of trials.

Tribunal Judge William Sekule announced the request for the handover of the three -- Alphonse Higaniro, Elie Ndayambaje and Joseph Kanyabashi -- who have been held by Belgian authorities since the first half of last year.

The men were named on Wednesday by Chief Prosecutor Richard Goldstone in the Tanzanian town of Arusha, where the tribunal to investigate Rwanda's genocide has its seat. Up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in the 1994 massacres.

Belgium is also holding a fourth genocide suspect, university lecturer Vincent Ntchimana who was arrested last April, but Goldstone has made no request for his handover.

"The trial chamber hereby grants this application and makes the following formal request to the kingdom of Belgium to defer to the international tribunal in its court proceedings," Sekule said.

Higaniro was a former minister and director of a match factory in the southern province of Butare. According to evidence presented to the court in Arusha he used his position to organise and arm anti-Tutsi militia in Butare.

Ndayambaje was a mayor in Muganza commune in Butare and the prosecution says

he was involved in organising the massacres of thousands of people in his area.

Kanyabashi, who was mayor of Ngoma in the same province, is accused of distributing arms in his area and inciting Hutus to eliminate Tutsis.

Residents who fled Butare said presidential guards and militiamen led the slaughter of Tutsis and Hutu moderates there. Men, women, children and babies were killed in churches or thrown alive into pits filled with burning tyres.

The pits were later covered up in a deliberate attempt to keep the killings secret but rain swept away the earth over at least one mass grave on a hillside, revealing piles of corpses.

The three men will be brought to Arusha and the decision by the court speeds up the progress towards a first trial, a prosecution spokesman said. Goldstone told reporters he hoped the trials would start in March.

"The three men will be brought from Belgium to a court in Arusha which is closer to Rwanda, so we are coming back to to the centre of the drama,"

prosecution spokesman Alain Sigg told Reuters.

Tribunal officials said the three men would be brought to Arusha by a special U.N. jet, as soon as formalities with Belgium were sorted out, to await formal indictment and prosecution.

Belgium, which is bringing its own proceedings against the three, said on Wednesday it would cooperate with the tribunal. Belgium was the colonial ruler in Rwanda until independence in 1962.

It was the first time the tribunal had publicly named any suspect wanted for involvement in the genocide which was carried out by Hutu troops, militiamen and mobs between April and June 1994 after the murder of Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana.

Two million Hutus fled Rwanda in the 1994 civil war as Tutsi rebels of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) stopped the genocide and came to power after driving Rwanda's 40,000-strong Hutu army into exile in Tanzania and Zaire.

Some members of the former Hutu government sought refuge in Europe as well as in Rwanda's Central African neighbours.

A lobby group for exiled Hutus while welcoming the work of the tribunal cautioned it against being dragged into "cheap politicking".

The Rally for the Return of Refugees and Democracy in Rwanda (RDR) criticised the tribunal's move to invite Rwandan Prime Pierre-Celestin Rwigyema

to its inaugural session held on Monday.

"Such gesture may for sure erode the credibility of the Tribunal because it goes against the judicial ethics," said an RDR statement issued in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

11-JAN-1996 Cholera breaks out in Bujumbura, aid agency says

By Christian Jennings

BUJUMBURA, Jan 11 (Reuters) - Cholera has broken out in Burundi's capital, cut off from mains water for a week because of a worsening civil war, the international aid agency Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF-Doctors Without Borders) said on Thursday.

"There are currently 30 cases of cholera being treated in tents erected outside the Maramvya Health Centre, about six km (four miles) north of Bujumbura," said MSF spokesman Andre Le Sage.

He said 61 new cases of cholera were reported around Bujumbura last week and at least two people had died from the bacterial disease caused by contaminated water.

Bujumbura has been without mains water for a week since power lines linking the capital with the main pumping station at Mugere, 25 km (15 miles) south of the city, were blown up by suspected Hutu rebels last Thursday.

Aid agencies have been worried for several days that cholera would break out

because of a lack of clean water in the capital.

"We've had people drawing water from Lake Tanganyika to drink," said an aid worker trying to resupply water to the city.

"It's impossible to stop this sort of behaviour, however much clean water you give them. It was only a matter of time before we had cases of cholera coming up," he added.

Le Sage said while cholera was endemic in Burundi, Bujumbura had been spared until this week because clean water was available.

Amnesty International estimates that 1,000 people are killed each month in Burundi where the Tutsi-dominated army is fighting rebels of the Hutu majority.

Most of those killed are civilians caught up in the fighting or massacred in reprisals.

In another development, French journalist Jean Helene, who was detained and questioned for two hours by police on Wednesday was prevented by customs officials from leaving Burundi on Thursday.

Helene, the East Africa correspondent for *Le Monde* and Radio France Internationale, told colleagues the questioning and searches by customs officials at Bujumbura airport which made him miss his flight was clearly an attempt to intimidate him.

"Now they have kept my passport until they say they've had time to solve the problems," said Helene. "They say that I can leave on the next flight, but they are booked up for the moment."

Helene, who was arrested at his hotel by heavily-armed soldiers on Wednesday before being released, returned to the home of a French diplomat where he spent Wednesday night.

"The French ambassador intervened personally at the airport, but they kept Jean Helene from getting on the flight by making him answer all sorts of questions and by searching his luggage," said Louec Barreau, the French consul in the Burundian capital.

Like other foreign journalists reporting on the ethnic bloodshed, Helene has received death threats in the past.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has proposed U.N. guards for aid workers in Burundi and that a U.N. rapid intervention force be sent to neighbouring Zaire for use in Burundi if insecurity suddenly worsens. But the Security Council has not yet acted on his ideas.

Up to a million Tutsis and Hutu moderates were slaughtered by troops, militiamen and mobs in neighbouring Rwanda in 1994.

11-JAN-1996 Burundi's civil war worsens with no end in sight

By Nicholas Kotch

NAIROBI, Jan 11 (Reuter) - An ethnic civil war in Burundi is worsening with no sign that the Tutsi minority which controls the army is ready to negotiate

with Hutu rebels.

Ridden with guilt about its impotence during the 1994 genocide in neighbouring Rwanda, the international community is frantically ringing alarm bells about Burundi.

But 1995 witnessed a steep deterioration in the small central African country and so far foreign attempts to avert disaster have generated more heat than light, analysts say.

"I don't think that a year ago many people would have expected the rebels to have made such inroads," said one United Nations official in Bujumbura, the sinister capital.

Amnesty International estimates that 1,000 people are killed each month in Burundi. Most are civilians caught up in the fighting or massacred in reprisals.

Aid agencies, forced out of the interior by attacks on their personnel, say accurate death tolls are impossible.

It is too dangerous to travel in northern provinces, where the army is waging a guerrilla war against the Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD), the Hutu rebels led by former Interior Minister Leonard Nyangoma.

The FDD have embarked on economic sabotage with some success. They have cut mains power and water supplies to the capital where business activity has slumped and food prices have risen because peasants have fled their fields in the interior and road transport is unsafe in many areas.

The once-houseproud government is no longer honouring its foreign debt obligations.

"I fear there is a real danger of the situation in Burundi degenerating to the point where it might explode into ethnic violence on a massive scale," U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said on January 2.

The U.N.'s special investigator into human rights abuses in Burundi, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, warns of "a genocidal trend."

The dire New Year speeches by Burundi's President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya and Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo showed that local opinion does not differ.

"If we are not vigilant enough, our country runs the risk of total collapse," said the president, a Hutu whose two predecessors were assassinated.

But there is no unanimity about the solution.

The Tutsi minority, led by the army and the political opposition inside the feeble coalition government, wants no let-up in the war against the rebels and has refused dialogue.

The defence ministry won a 14.5 percent budget increase for 1996 compared with nothing or tiny increases for other sectors.

With no real authority over the 20,000-strong army, the president has been forced into political concessions that have strengthened Hutu support for Nyangoma and his exiled political wing, the National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD).

"We are not killers. What we are doing with the FDD is defending the population," said Innocent Nimpagaritse, a Hutu former minister and the CNDD's Nairobi representative.

The CNDD was formed in September 1994 with the goal of restoring Hutu political supremacy, established in 1993 when Burundi's first free elections ended Tutsi minority rule.

A brief democratic interlude ended when Tutsi soldiers assassinated Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye in October 1993, sparking an ethnic bloodbath in which at least 50,000 died.

The genocide of up to one million Rwandan Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 1994 by Hutu extremists has meant that most Burundi Tutsis reject rule by the Hutu majority.

"The problem of Burundi is the problem of the army," said a senior Hutu government official.

Boutros-Ghali's proposal for a U.N. rapid intervention military force, to be sent to neighbouring eastern Zaire where the FDD is believed to have bases, does not yet have support from a majority on the Security Council.

Burundi's army, knowing such a force would weaken its grip, has rejected the proposal and even Hutus in government oppose any step to further militarise the conflict.

"We have to persuade the antagonists to talk, that is the FDD and the Tutsi army and opposition," the Hutu official said.

"We have under-estimated the force of Nyangoma and at this rate the whole economy will collapse. We cannot put a soldier to protect every electricity pylon," added the official, whose views do not reflect the public stance of the majority Hutu Frodebu party.

10-JAN-1996 Belgium to cooperate with Rwanda genocide tribunal

BRUSSELS, Jan 10 (Reuter) - Belgium said on Wednesday it would cooperate with a United Nations tribunal which wants three men suspected of involvement in Rwanda's 1994 genocide handed over.

The three - Alphonse Higaniro, Elie Ndayambaje and Joseph Kanyabashi - have been held by Belgian authorities since the first half of last year.

"The Belgian government supports the principle of the International Tribunal," a Belgian foreign ministry spokesman told Reuters. "We are cooperating."

The men were named on Wednesday by Chief Prosecutor Richard Goldstone in the Tanzanian town of Arusha, where the tribunal to investigate Rwanda's genocide has its seat. Up to one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed in the massacres.

A formal application for Belgium to hand the men over was expected on Thursday.

The Belgian justice ministry, quoted by Belga news agency, said on Wednesday the request was not technically a question of extradition but of "making the men available to an international body."

Belgium is bringing its own proceedings against the three men, but the

tribunal wants its jurisdiction to take precedence. Rwanda is a former Belgian protectorate.

A fourth genocide suspect, university lecturer Vincent Ntchimana who was arrested last April, is also still being held in a Belgian jail along with the other three, Belga said.

Wednesday was the first time the tribunal had publicly identified any suspect.

10-JAN-1996 Tribunal on Rwanda's genocide names first suspects

By Matt Bigg

ARUSHA, Tanzania, Jan 10 (Reuters) - A U.N. tribunal investigating the 1994 genocide of one million Rwandans asked Belgium on Wednesday to extradite three suspects, the first to be publicly named by the court.

Chief Prosecutor Richard Goldstone identified the three Hutu men as Alphonse Higaniro, Elie Ndayambaje and Joseph Kanyabashi, and told Reuters he hoped their trials would start in March.

Goldstone told three judges in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha, where the tribunal has its seat and was meeting for the first time this week, that Belgium should extradite the three. A formal application was expected on Thursday.

It was the first time the tribunal had publicly named any suspect in the slaughter of a million Tutsis and Hutu moderates by Hutu troops, militiamen and mobs between April and June 1994.

In December, Goldstone issued indictments against eight suspects whom he did not name.

Higaniro was a former minister and director of a match factory in the southern province of Butare, Ndayambaje was a mayor in Muganza commune in Butare and Kanyabashi was mayor of Ngoma in same province.

Residents who fled Butare said presidential guards and militiamen led the slaughter of Tutsis and Hutu moderates there. Men, women, children and babies were killed in churches or thrown alive into pits filled with burning tyres.

The pits were later covered up in a deliberate attempt to keep the killings secret but rain swept away the earth over at least one mass grave on a hillside, revealing piles of corpses.

Two million Hutus fled Rwanda in the 1994 civil war as Tutsi rebels stopped the genocide and came to power. Some members of the former Hutu government

sought refuge in Europe as well as in Rwanda's Central African neighbours.

Belgium was the colonial ruler in Rwanda until independence in 1962.

Belgium is bringing its own proceedings against the three men but the tribunal wants its jurisdiction to take precedence.

Goldstone's strategy to speed up the start of trials is to focus on suspects

already in custody. He said he would also seek the extradition of four more Rwandan Hutus held by Zambia.

Goldstone, a South African who is also chief prosecutor for the tribunal on former Yugoslavia, dismisses criticism that the process is moving too slowly.

"This tribunal has made rapid progress compared to the one for Yugoslavia but it has to operate within U.N. rules and the U.N. moves very slowly," he said.

The courtroom and temporary prison cells in Arusha are still not built, the tribunal has yet to take custody of any defendant and no firm date has been set for the start of the trials.

The court hopes to try all senior members of Rwanda's former Hutu establishment behind the genocide and trials are expected to last until the end of the century. The court consists of five appeal judges and six trial judges.

Rwanda's prisons are crammed with more than 50,000 suspects awaiting trial but the legal system there is virtually paralysed. Those found guilty in Rwanda face execution but the international tribunal's maximum penalty is life imprisonment.

10-JAN-1996 Tribunal on Rwanda's genocide names first suspects

ARUSHA, Tanzania, Jan 10 (Reuter) - An international tribunal identified its first three suspects accused of taking part in the genocide of up to a million people in Rwanda in 1994 and applied for them to be extradited from Belgium.

Filing the application to the court set up by the United Nations to try leaders of the genocide, Chief Prosecutor Richard Goldstone identified them as Alphonse Higaniro, Elie Ndayambaje and Joseph Kanyabashi who are being held by Belgian authorities.

It was the first time the tribunal, holding its first court session this week, had publicly identified any suspect. Last December Goldstone issued indictments for eight but none have been arrested.

"A formal request (should) be made to the kingdom of Belgium that its courts defer to the competence of the tribunal," Goldstone told three judges in the court in the town of Arusha.

Higaniro was a former minister and director of a match factory in the southern province of Butare, Ndayambaje was a mayor in Muganza commune in Butare and Kanyabashi was mayor of Ngoma in Butare.

The panel of judges was expected to grant the application on Thursday for Belgian to hand over the three men to the tribunal.

Wednesday's application marked the start of Goldstone's strategy to speed up trials of the perpetrators of the genocide of Tutsis and Hutu moderates by focusing on people already in custody.

He said he would also seek the extradition of four more Rwandan Hutus held by Zambian authorities since last last year.

9-JAN-1996 UN human rights work in Rwanda faces funding threat

GENEVA, Jan 9 (Reuter) - The United Nations' operation to monitor human rights in Rwanda may run out of funds this month unless member states contribute quickly, U.N. sources said on Tuesday.

Jose Ayala-Lasso, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, has convened an emergency meeting of donor states in Geneva on Wednesday to discuss the funding crisis, they added.

He has also written to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to warn that the annual \$10 million operation may be forced to shut down at a critical time, as UNAMIR prepares to withdraw and a massive return of Rwandan refugees from Zaire is expected.

"There is no money left for beyond January. The whole operation is on the basis of voluntary funding," a U.N. source told Reuters.

"The situation has deteriorated financially at a time when there is the most need for the monitors. UNAMIR is pulling out soon and the refugees will be having to come home from Zaire in large numbers," he added.

More than 90 monitors are deployed under the U.N. monitoring programme, begun in October 1994.

Some \$3 million borrowed at the time from the U.N. Department for Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) now has to be repaid, according to U.N. sources.

Ayala-Lasso will chair the closed-door talks which start at 1400 GMT.