

[1 CONFIDENTIAL]

UN ARCHIVES

SERIES S-1120

BOX 32

FILE 2

ACC. 1998/0278

CNR-258 P1/13

OUTGOING CODE CABLE
MOST IMMEDIATE

UNITED NATIONS
PEACE OPERATIONS

SEP 12 P 1:22

TO: KHAN, UNAMIR, KIGALI

FROM: HANSEN, UNATIONS, NEW YORK



DATE: 12 September 1995

NUMBER: 2969

SUBJECT: Mrs. Ogata's visit to the Great Lakes Region

1. Reference your coded cable MIR-3806 of yesterday, 11 September, on the above-subject.
2. Attached is copy of a report presented to the Secretary-General by Mrs. Ogata on her mission to the Great Lakes Region which was received here only yesterday evening.

Regards.

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NATIONS UNIES
LE HAUT COMMISSAIRE
POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS



UNITED NATIONS
THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES

02

Cable postale 2500
CH-1211 Genève 2 Duple
Suiss

11 September 1995

Dear Mr. Secretary-General.

I have pleasure in forwarding to you my report on the mission you requested me to undertake to the Great Lakes Region.

The report consists of a Summary of Findings and Recommended Actions and a more detailed account of my various meetings and discussions.

I propose to speak to you on the telephone on a few issues I would like to bring to your personal attention.

I am, of course, at your disposal for any further discussions and follow-up on matters raised in my report. For its part, UNHCR will spare no effort in moving forward immediately on accelerated voluntary return. An opportunity would be lost if we failed to do so, but success depends, to a great degree, on political factors beyond our control. As always, I count on your support.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for making Mr. Manoel da Silva available to accompany this mission. His presence was most useful.

With best wishes.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sadako Ogata".

Sadako Ogata

Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General
United Nations Headquarters
New York

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**MISSION BY MRS. SADAKO OGATA,
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
TO THE GREAT LAKES REGION, AFRICA**

At the request of the Secretary-General, Mrs. Ogata visited Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire from 31 August to 7 September with a view to identifying solutions to the problems caused by the massive presence of refugees in the region and notably as a result of the recent forcible repatriation of Rwandese and Burundi refugees by the Government of Zaire.

Meeting with the Prime Minister of Zaire, Mr. Kengo wa Dondo, (also present were Maitre Kamanda wa Kamanda, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs)

At a meeting in Geneva on 29 August, the Prime Minister of Zaire informed the High Commissioner that his Government considered the Security Council Resolution 1011 as an unfriendly act directed against his Government and had aggravated the security situation in the Kivu region of Zaire. The Prime Minister, in particular, asked the High Commissioner to relay this concern to the Secretary-General. He felt that the problems were eminently political and although welcoming the High Commissioner's mission and supporting her pursuit of humanitarian solutions, he considered there was need for a political solution to the causes underlying the refugee problem in the region. It was against the background of its perception of Resolution 1011 that the Government of Zaire for reasons of national security had decided to begin the forcible expulsion of Rwandese and Burundi refugees.

Having received the communication from the Secretary-General and having held discussions with the High Commissioner, the Government of Zaire had now decided to request UNHCR to take charge and to ensure that the repatriation continues on an uninterrupted and massive basis under conditions of safety and dignity with a view to repatriating all Burundi and Rwandese refugees by 31 December 1995. The Government would reserve the right to expel any remaining refugees by that date in accordance with Article 3.3 of Resolution 2312 dated 14 December 1967 on Territorial Asylum. The Prime Minister suggested that repatriation should be based on the Tripartite agreement between Zaire, Rwanda and UNHCR, the final communiqué of the Nairobi Summit of 7 January 1993 and the Bujumbura Plan of Action. To monitor progress, the Government also suggested monthly review meetings.

The High Commissioner informed the Prime Minister that their meeting constituted the first step of a mission she had been asked by the Secretary-General to undertake to the Great Lakes Region in order to pursue urgent solutions to the pressing problems of refugees, intensified by the forcible returns from Zaire. The High Commissioner, while appreciating the burden and security concerns imposed on Zaire by the presence of large numbers of refugees, expressed satisfaction at recent moves halting forced return and agreed on the need to pursue vigorously the voluntary return in conditions of safety and dignity. She, however, indicated that she was not in a position to commit her office to the deadline proposed by the Prime Minister, although she did agree to monthly review meetings and monitoring progress.

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Mrs. Ogata stressed the need to treat return to Rwanda and Burundi differently. Security concerns and lack of access by international organizations did require a much more cautious approach in the latter case. The Prime Minister, although appreciative of this difference, asked the High Commissioner to appeal to the Burundi authorities to "refrain from making inflammatory statements against perceived intentions by Zaire".

Specific measures had to be taken by all parties to realize the goal of voluntary return of refugees. For its part, Mrs. Ogata insisted, Zaire had to take concrete actions to reduce the negative influence of some elements of the Rwandese refugee leaders around the refugees camps in Kivu.

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The Prime Minister and the High Commissioner agreed on the need to mobilize international support to help Zaire and the local population in Kivu with compensation for the damages caused by the presence of refugees on their territory.

compensation
to Zaire

The High Commissioner informed the Prime Minister that she planned to be in Zaire at the end of her mission to brief the Government on her findings and hold consultations on further action.

Visit to Burundi

In Burundi, the High Commissioner met with the President, H.E. Mr. S. Ntibanunganya, the Prime Minister, Mr. Antoine Nduwayo and senior officials of the Cabinet and the military. She also held meetings with members of the Diplomatic Community, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ould Abdallah, UN agencies and NGOs.

The High Commissioner informed her interlocutors that she had been requested to go to the region by the Secretary-General, strongly supported by the Security Council, in order to identify the kind of conditions that could be actively created in order to promote voluntary and orderly return. She was interested in hearing the views of the Burundi Government, including the perceived obstacles for orderly return.

The President agreed that it was the responsibility of Burundi to create the necessary security conditions that would assure the refugees of their safe return. In this connection, he would take whatever action in his power, to assure access for and protection of returnees in areas of return, also as an important confidence building measure. He recognized that it was important not to displace the refugees further upon return although "transit zones" might be used as a temporary measure.

The President informed the High Commissioner of his contacts with President Mobutu on plans for a "mini-Summit" in the context of the "Communauté Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs", i.e. Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire. He thought that the problem of Burundi refugees in Zaire was not insurmountable, whereas that of Rwandese refugees was "immense". The President supported the proposed Conference on Peace, Security and Development but thought that follow-up to the Bujumbura Conference, provided there was the necessary political will, would be useful. In this context, the High Commissioner underlined and the President agreed, that pursuit of bilateral contacts between Burundi and Zaire and the putting into practice of the Tripartite Commission would be important.

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The President stressed the importance of separating armed elements from the refugees as well as Burundi and Rwandese refugees and to avoid the manipulation of humanitarian issues for political purposes. The High Commissioner mentioned that she had raised the issue of separation with the Prime Minister of Zaire and had appealed for action in this regard. She added that the refugee problem in the region was both a cause and a consequence of the political problem. As such, humanitarian solutions might - "through the backdoor" - also contribute to political solution.

The Prime Minister underlined the security concerns linked to the presence of refugees in the region and, in particular, the abuse for political purposes. He felt that UNHCR had not done enough to separate armed elements from genuine refugees and appealed to the High Commissioner to denounce such activities.

He thought that reconvening "big Conferences" such as the Bujumbura Conference risked to alienate those countries directly affected and concerned. In his view, a better strategy would be to focus first on more restricted bilateral meetings of countries in the region through the mechanisms of the Tripartite Commission and then, possibly via a sub-regional meeting, move towards a bigger Conference. The Tripartite Commission with Rwanda had already achieved concrete results. Burundi had suggested a similar meeting with Zaire but had received no response. He summed up by stating that the region would never reach political and economic stability with the presence of more than two million refugees. Burundi, for its part, was ready to receive back its own citizens in a well-coordinated, organized voluntary return operation, and not through forcible return which he found undignified and, potentially, destabilizing.

The High Commissioner agreed on the proposed strategy. For this purpose, she would in Tanzania, Rwanda and Zaire, as a first step, attempt to activate the relevant Tripartite Commission, on the basis of the Bujumbura Plan of Action.

Mrs. Ogata also acknowledged that the presence of armed elements, notably around the refugee camps in Zaire, did pose a serious problem although their influence had been considerably reduced. The links between the military camps, which UNHCR was not assisting, and the refugee camps were a reality but beyond UNHCR's capacity to sever. She had appealed to the Prime Minister of Zaire to assume more direct responsibility in this matter. At the same time, the High Commissioner appealed to the Prime Minister of Burundi to exercise leadership in creating the necessary conditions of security and access in areas of return, and notably in the provinces in the North West to which international agencies had no access. If we were not in a position to accelerate voluntary return, forcible return might be resumed and a new crisis created. We wanted to avoid that.

The Prime Minister agreed but thought that he would rather bring the refugees back to Burundi even if they might be temporarily displaced internally, close to their places of origin, than having them being forced back. The High Commissioner accepted that temporary reception sites might be necessary but advised against further internal displacement which would be counterproductive in terms of stability and reconciliation.

At the end of the meeting, the High Commissioner informed the Prime Minister that she had been requested by the Prime Minister of Zaire to convey a message that the Burundi authorities "refrain from making inflammatory statements directed against the intentions of Zaire". The Prime

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Minister responded by regretting inaction on the part of Zaire in stopping negative radio broadcasts from its own side of the border.

In meetings with the diplomatic corps, UN agencies and NGOs, concern was expressed over the tension and leadership crisis in Burundi. In the view of some NGOs, lack of preparedness and weaknesses in coordination were also issues of serious preoccupation.

While in Burundi, the High Commissioner welcomed a group of 88 returnees from Uvira and also visited a transit camp at Gacumbwe on the outskirts of Bujumbura.

Visit to Tanzania

In Tanzania, the High Commissioner met with the Prime Minister, Mr. C.D. Msuya, and the State Minister of Defence and the Acting Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdelrahman Kinana. The President regretted his unavailability due to other commitments related to his farewell tour of the country. The Prime Minister shared his deep concern over the presence of such large numbers of refugees. For the first time in the history of Tanzania, refugees were now resented by the larger public. He welcomed various diplomatic initiatives but expressed his desire for "more dynamic" efforts by the international community in creating the necessary conditions for safe return. He indicated that the Rwandese Government was deliberately selective on those groups they welcomed back. He was also concerned over the reduction and forthcoming departure of UNAMIR observers. In the opinion of the Prime Minister, three basic conditions had to be met. One, the Government of Rwanda had to make a general statement, clarifying that all those not involved in genocide could come home. A kind of general amnesty was required to build confidence. Two, the land issue had to be resolved. Three, it might be useful to consider the creation of "safe zones" or reception centres in Rwanda as the refugees move on to their home communes. Furthermore, other promotional initiatives such as visits by refugees' representatives to their places of origin should be pursued.

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Fundamental to all these conditions would be, the Prime Minister stated, a continuation of UN presence and monitoring inside Rwanda as a confidence building measure. He concluded by expressing the strong hope that accelerated returns would happen immediately so that the Government of Tanzania would not be pushed into having to take "cruder measures".

The High Commissioner said that she shared many of the Prime Minister's concerns which she would also relay to the Government of Rwanda. She would also transmit his views on the need for continued UN observers to the Secretary-General. On the question of amnesty the High Commissioner had noted some hopeful remarks when she met President Bizimungu in Addis Ababa last June. She acknowledged the necessity to urgently put into practice previous commitments made by the Rwandese authorities. She also urged more intensive direct contacts with UNHCR ready to serve as facilitator within the framework of the Tripartite Commission.

On political initiatives, the Prime Minister felt that African countries were getting "sick and tired" of Conferences. He would much rather see more direct pressures exerted by those external powers with influence on those who had to change their policies, not to force people out and allow refugees to return. The Arusha Accords still provided a good basis for a conflict resolution but "there is a need for arm twisting".

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The Prime Minister appreciated the High Commissioner's concern over the closed border (Tanzania/Burundi) but stressed that all emphasis must now be on repatriation. Time was of the essence. The large number of refugees was incompatible with stability. He concluded by reiterating his genuine hope that his Government would not be forced to take "crude" measures.

The High Commissioner undertook to relay the Prime Minister's "strong messages" to all those concerned. In Dar-es-Salaam, the High Commissioner briefed the diplomatic corps and UN agencies on her mission and received pledges and full support for her intention to accelerate organized voluntary return.

Visit to Rwanda

In Rwanda, the High Commissioner met with the President, H.E. Mr. Pasteur Bizimungu, the Vice President and Minister of Defence, Maj. Gen. Paul Kagame Giterama, the (newly-appointed) Prime Minister, Mr. Celestin Rwigyema and the incoming and outgoing Ministers of Rehabilitation, Mr. Patrick Mazimhuka and Mr. Jacques Bihozagara respectively. She also met with the diplomatic corps, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Shaharyar Khan, the Deputy Force Commander of UNAMIR, Col. Abdelaziz Tounja, Heads of UN agencies and other agencies in Rwanda. At the request of Mrs. Ogata, her Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa held a meeting with a group of NGOs. During her stay in Rwanda, the High Commissioner also visited areas - and a transit centre - of recent returnees in Cyangugu.

The High Commissioner informed her interlocutors that she felt that the new environment in the region pointed to a strong convergence of interests for refugee return in safety and dignity. The pressure of refugees was considered a security risk by both countries of asylum and origin. Furthermore, the presence was becoming an unmanageable environmental and logistical burden on host communities. The treatment afforded to the 14,000 refugees expelled ten days ago also confirmed the willingness of Rwanda to accept back its citizens.

In her talks, the High Commissioner appealed to the Government of Rwanda to: one, confirm its willingness to receive back all of its citizens; two, activate the Tripartite Commission and meet with UNHCR and Zaire at the earliest possible date to discuss the modalities of repatriation and to continue this process with relation to Burundi and Tanzania; three, find satisfactory and fair ways of dealing with the delicate question of return of property; four, engage in direct dialogue with refugees in all camps and in all countries in order to inform them of true conditions in the country; five, reconfirm its commitment to allow international monitoring and access to all parts of Rwanda as a further measure of confidence-building.

She also urged the Government to continue to exercise restraint and due process of law in dealing with criminals and to explore measures to distinguish between different categories of offenders for crimes related to the genocide.

The Government had been taken by surprise by the Zairian action. In the words of the Vice-President, the lifting of the arms embargo gave back to the Government its legitimate rights to defend itself. The High Commissioner was asked by the President of Rwanda to convey to Zaire that it has no unfriendly or aggressive intentions towards Zaire. The forced return, although

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The Government had been taken by surprise by the Zairian action. In the words of the Vice-President, the lifting of the arms embargo gave back to the Government its legitimate rights to defend itself. The High Commissioner was asked by the President of Rwanda to convey to Zaire that it has no unfriendly or aggressive intentions towards Zaire. The forced return, although regrettable, had provided the Government with the opportunity to show its readiness to welcome back its citizens. The Government was therefore agreeable to all points raised by the High Commissioner. It would be ready to meet at ministerial level in the Tripartite Commission if that could help to accelerate returns. There was full recognition of the delicate question of land and housing, and all attention was being given to resolving this problem, for example through enhanced shelter programmes. The Government had already arranged for refugee and official visits from Burundi - and would be prepared to do similarly with Tanzania and Zaire. The Government was also in agreement with the need for and its own interest in international monitoring. Attempts to categorize different groups of crimes related to genocide were being considered. There was a need to find a formula that would satisfy all concerned that justice was being done.

At the end of the meeting with the President, the High Commissioner suggested that a clear statement from the President incorporating all the points agreed upon by the Government on the Government's intentions towards refugees, returnees and reconciliation might be very helpful as a confidence-building measure. The following day, the President made the attached statement in the presence of the High Commissioner, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and representatives of UN agencies and the media. At the end of the statement, Mrs. Ogata thanked the President for the frank and constructive talks in Kigali and for his statement which would go a long way in reassuring the international community and the refugees on Rwanda's intentions and position on refugees and returnees.

Visit to Zaire

In Bukavu, Zaire, the High Commissioner briefed the Vice Prime Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence, H.E. Mr. Gerard Kamanda wa Kamanda and Grand Admiral Mavua Muduna respectively on her mission and other findings. She insisted on the strong convergence of interests that she had noticed and the need to seize on the momentum in moving forward and accelerating return in conditions of safety and dignity. Mrs. Ogata stated that the declaration made by the President of Rwanda in her presence would send a strong signal of its readiness to receive back its citizens. For this purpose, she suggested that reactivating the Tripartite Commission, which had been signed between the Governments of Zaire and Rwanda and UNHCR in Kinshasa on 24 October 1994, at the ministerial level within two weeks might prove useful. She offered to host it in Geneva as a neutral venue. The Zairian delegation proposed to revert on this proposal after the meeting with the President.

In Gbadolite, the President of Zaire, Marechal Mobutu Sese Seko assured the High Commissioner of his and the Government's total support for a programme of accelerated, organized massive return in conditions of safety and dignity. He also offered total support for efforts to control the influence of those leaders among the refugees who were blocking the return. The President thanked the High Commissioner for mobilizing international assistance to compensate Zaire and its people for the infrastructural and ecological damages in the Kivu region.

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The President stressed the importance of such assistance as Zaire had never attempted to profit financially from the presence of refugees.

In a concluding working meeting with the Vice Prime Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence in Kinshasa, the Zairian Delegation told the High Commissioner that it had taken note of the "commitments" made to the High Commissioner in her talks with Government leaders in Burundi and Rwanda. They hoped such commitments would be translated into action and pave the way for a massive, uninterrupted and organized return in safety and dignity by 31 December. Zaire wanted to deal with all refugees in a global manner without differentiation. Those who might have been involved in genocide, since unknown to Zaire, should go back and be processed by Rwanda in their own country. Once formal indictments had been handed down by competent bodies, Zaire would, of course, be prepared to deal with the problem on its territory. Meanwhile the Zairian authorities reaffirmed its readiness to take all "appropriate measures" against those who would block voluntary return. Zaire accepted the High Commissioner's invitation for a ministerial meeting of the Tripartite Commission that she had proposed and was ready to chair in Geneva in two weeks time. However, such a meeting must not, the delegation stated, serve as a delaying tactic nor a pretext for discussing issues unrelated to the refugees' return.

The High Commissioner welcomed Zaire's intention to proceed on the basis of her proposals including the holding of the Tripartite Commission ministerial meeting. She promised immediate and sustained planning and implementation of measures leading to the accelerated return under orderly and secure conditions. In this connection, she found Zaire's intention to intervene with appropriate measures in cases of any obstructions to return by former leaders, military or militia extremely encouraging and helpful.

Mrs. Ogata finally informed the Zairian authorities that whereas she would proceed forthwith on all humanitarian issues, those of a political nature relating to resolutions of the Security Council would be conveyed in her report to the Secretary-General.

During her stay in Zaire, the High Commissioner visited Inera refugee camp near Bukavu where she addressed a large gathering of refugees. Her Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa and her Special Envoy to the Region met, on her behalf, with a group representing the refugees who were asking for repatriation.

In conclusion, the High Commissioner wishes to thank all Governments with whom she met and who, as requested by the Security Council in the Presidential Statement dated 23 August, extended to her their full cooperation.

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The refugee problem in the Great Lakes Region is both a cause and a consequence of the instability and tension that prevail in the region. In the longer-term, only political solutions can tackle the underlying causes. In the short-term, a solution to the humanitarian problem may contribute to political solutions.

The High Commissioner's mission underlined the urgency of promoting return of refugees in safety and dignity. It also confirmed a strong convergence of interest in seeking accelerated and organized return in conditions of safety and dignity. The countries of asylum are carrying a burden they can ill afford, and that they are not prepared to tolerate much longer. At the same time, the large presence of refugees has provoked a major security concern. The countries of origin know that the continued pressure outside their countries of large numbers of refugees is incompatible with stability. They realize that forced return will pose a serious threat and that voluntary return in conditions of safety and dignity will be a prerequisite for reconciliation. For the international community, it will become increasingly difficult to provide the necessary support for maintaining more than two million refugees. The refugees themselves are determined to go back but need to feel secure.

The forcible return initiated by Zaire, although regrettable, has focused on the need for making greater efforts for accelerated, organized and voluntary return. The Government of Zaire has given UNHCR a deadline of 31 December 1995, that the High Commissioner has noted but on which she has made no commitment. Tanzania has expressed hopes that accelerated return will help them not to have to take crude measures. The President and the Government of Rwanda have made a strong statement of their willingness to welcome all their citizens back and agreed to ensure international monitoring. They agreed to direct contacts through the Tripartite Commission with Zaire and UNHCR. The Commission would deal with specific measures and modalities on rates and areas of return. They have also declared their preparedness to consider how to categorize levels of responsibility related to genocide, a measure which would reassure many of those wishing to return. Security conditions in Burundi may make repatriation more difficult although the Government and army have pledged to improve access and security in the areas of return. Clearly, return to Rwanda and Burundi must be treated differently.

If all commitments made during the High Commissioner's mission are respected, UNHCR will be in a position to set in motion with immediate effect an accelerated, uninterrupted organized return in conditions of safety and dignity. For that to happen, however, intimidation and obstruction against return in the refugee camps by former Rwandese leaders, military and militia have to be brought under further control. The Government of Tanzania and Zaire have undertaken to maintain law and order by the presence of Zairian security forces and Tanzanian police.

The international community will have to lend its strong support through assistance to countries of asylum to repair infrastructural and environmental damage and through support to countries of origin towards repatriation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. But there will also be a need for sustained political pressure on all countries in the region to honour their commitments in agreeing to a strategy of accelerated, organized and voluntary return and subsequent reintegration.

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As stated in the beginning, a political solution is fundamental but immediate progress on the humanitarian issues through accelerated and safe return can be an important contribution to the political process. All countries the High Commissioner visited favour an approach based on the Nairobi Declaration and the Bujumbura Plan of Action building on direct contacts, through Tripartite Commissions, then widened to regional meetings. The appointment of Ambassador Jesus was welcomed. It was felt, however, by Governments in the region, that an International Conference on Peace, Security and Development in the Great Lakes Region should build on movement on the bilateral and regional fronts and on the follow-up of the existing agreements. It was made clear to the High Commissioner that the solution to the refugee problem cannot await the holding of an international political conference. Nor should this important initiative be allowed to be used to postpone the solution of the refugee problem.

There is very limited time to act on the voluntary return of refugees. Failure by the Governments in the region and the international community to do so in an accelerated, organized way will no doubt provoke forcible return. Such measures, in addition to being against humanitarian principles and human dignity, will cause renewed volatile displacements and incite further violence and instability in the region with horrifying consequences.

More specifically, the High Commissioner wishes to recommend the following:

- to hold a meeting of the Tripartite Commission in Geneva, at the Ministerial level, following the agreement of the Governments of Rwanda and Zaire to do so;
- to take the necessary steps to accelerate preparations for an organized return including mass information campaigns. The logistical capacity exists to move between five and ten thousand on a daily basis, through transit centres wherever necessary but as directly as possible to the home communes of the returnees;
- to make accelerated voluntary return possible, the governments of asylum must honour commitments given to her to intervene against those intimidating and preventing refugees wishing to return. The governments of the countries of origin must honour their commitment to create the necessary conditions of security as well as allowing for international monitoring and access to all areas of return;
- to find arrangements for a continued and strengthened UN presence through military observers and Human Rights monitors. In an eventual continued mandate, a better structured link between UNAMIR observers and Human Rights monitors would be important. The indication by the Government of Rwanda, at the highest level, that it will continue to exercise restraint and due process of law and order and that it will be exploring measures to distinguish between different categories will also be of decisive importance as a confidence-building measure. Such measures also apply to the early activation of the International Tribunal and immediate solution to the appalling prison conditions.

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to establish within the coming weeks a concerted programme involving all relevant UN organizations and other international and non-governmental organizations in a UNHCR-led repatriation programme. The full cooperation of the UN system is vitally important. An urgent appeal for funding of such a programme must be supported by the international donor community. This programme should be complemented by the UNDP-led Round Tables on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction particularly in shelter-related projects targeted at areas of refugee return. There should be an urgent follow up and implementation of the UNDP Round Table on asylum countries seriously affected by the presence of refugees and displaced persons, as agreed upon in the Bujumbura Plan of Action.

CNR-258

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**PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE
VISIT TO RWANDA OF MRS.SADAKO OGATA,THE UNITED
NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES.**

On the occasion of the visit to Rwanda by Mrs.Sadako OGATA,the UN High Commissioner for Refugees who had brought a special message from the UN Secretary General, the government of Rwanda is pleased to record its appreciation and high regard of the efforts and support by the International Community towards the reconstruction of the country.

The government reiterates its unflinching determination to do everything possible to enable the safe return of all the Rwandese refugees, in the letter and spirit of the Bujumbura declaration. No efforts will be spared to ensure that every Rwandese enjoys equal right to citizenship and protection by the government. The return of all the Rwandese is without preconditions and this right is inalienable whatever the circumstances.

It is on this basis that when Rwandese nationals, in Zaire were expelled under humiliating conditions, the government employed great effort despite our immense limitations to ensure that all those expelled were safely and conveniently settled into their homes. The number of persons that crossed at Cyangungu and Gisenyi were 7,268 and 5,079 respectively. Of the total number of 12,347 persons expelled from Zaire, only 42 persons were separated from the rest at the borderpost of Cyangungu, while the number for Gisenyi was 205 persons. The separation was a safety precaution as 123 of those separated were soldiers of the former army and they have after screening been taken to Gako military Training Centre for a reintegration program. Among those separated were 55 criminals that were in jail in Goma and the rest were suspected criminals of genocide. The total number of persons (69) being held for suspected involvement in genocide constitute about 0.6% of all those expelled.

Within 4 days all the returnees had been settled in their properties, with the support of UNHCR, UNAMIR and other members of the international community. These organisations have followed the returnees into their areas and are working with the government to help these persons to start a new life.