



**Compilation
des communications publiques
du CICR
relatives à ses activités
au**

Rwanda

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- * Front patriotique rwandais

representatives of the RPF, and an international peace force; the two armies were to merge into one national army, following the demobilization of soldiers of the Rwandese armed forces and RPF combatants.

On 5 October the United Nations Security Council approved Resolution 872 authorizing the deployment of UN forces in Rwanda.* This mission to monitor security, especially in the demilitarized zone, officially began in November in Kigali and in the north of the country.

By the end of the year, complete stability had still not been attained and various violent incidents again took place. As a result of the precarious situation in the country, the ICRC played a crucial role for the civilian population in 1993, often under difficult conditions. Relief activities, especially large-scale food distributions, were a priority, but medical, tracing and detention activities were also very important.

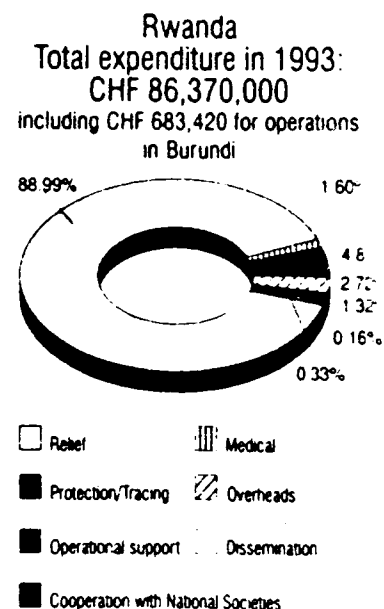
Through their regular presence in places affected by the conflict between the government and the RPF and by ethnic violence the ICRC delegates were able to collect any allegations of abuse and transmit them to the authorities concerned, urging all parties to respect international humanitarian law.

Assistance for the civilian population

After fighting resumed in February, the 350,000 displaced people already receiving aid were joined by another 600,000 displaced civilians in dire need of assistance. The ICRC, in cooperation with the Rwandese Red Cross, promptly expanded its food aid programme considerably and set up five new logistical bases in the regions of Kigali, Ruhengeri and Byumba. A total of some 300 Rwandese Red Cross staff and 25 ICRC expatriates were responsible for coordinating the programme. At the same time the Belgian Red Cross, which had been present in Rwanda for a number of years, increased its operations and personnel to coordinate non-food relief operations in conjunction with the ICRC.

By 24 February the ICRC had established new ways of ensuring that it had enough food to distribute. In addition to food stocks provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) the ICRC organized its own food pipeline, using different means of transport and routes: air transport in conjunction with the WFP from Entebbe (Uganda), transport from Kampala (Uganda) along Lake Victoria by ferry-boat and on to Kigali via Tanzania and direct cross-border/cross-line operations by road from Uganda into Rwanda. The ICRC was thus able to provide over 900,000 displaced people, mostly living in provisional camps, with food aid on a regular basis. By April, some 2,800 tonnes of food were being distributed weekly despite certain distribution problems, while the Belgian Red Cross, under an *ad hoc* agreement with the ICRC, provided 180,000 beneficiaries with non-food relief items such as cooking utensils.

* UNAMIR: United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda.



One major stumbling block was the lack of accurate lists of beneficiaries, which made it very difficult to keep a check on the situation. The absence of local authorities at distribution sites also created precarious conditions for Rwandese Red Cross employees. These points were repeatedly brought up with the authorities in the capital.

In March the ICRC sent a memorandum to the President of the Republic and the President of the RPF expressing its concern for the civilian population, warning them of the risk of famine and severe health problems if the displaced people could not soon return to their homes. In June an agreement was finally reached between the two parties to the conflict regarding the safe return of these people to their homes in the north, in the demilitarized zone.

In July ICRC and Rwandese Red Cross representatives took part in an emergency committee set up to examine the humanitarian situation in the country. It was decided that the ICRC, WFP and the National Society would continue their relief work and the local authorities would be responsible for supervision and security during distributions. Despite these measures three major incidents occurred: from 12-18 August the ICRC was obliged to suspend food aid to certain regions as a result of road blocks, while on 26 September, during riots in Muhura, 26 Rwandese Red Cross volunteers were taken hostage for two days and therefore distributions were again temporarily suspended. The most serious incident occurred on 27 November, when a truck belonging to the Belgian Red Cross was blown up in the demilitarized zone, killing one Rwandese Red Cross employee and seriously injuring three others.

As malnutrition among the displaced population continued to cause concern, an agronomist visited Rwanda in August to study ways of overcoming it and to initiate agricultural rehabilitation programmes, and a Rwanda-based nutritionist made regular surveys in the camps. A special committee coordinated by the ICRC was set up with various non-governmental organizations in order to evaluate this problem. The final report with their recommendations was presented in September. As a result, food rations distributed were readjusted and the nutritional status in the camps improved considerably. However, some major food shortages arose at the end of October when the non-governmental organizations previously working there turned their attention to the sudden influx of Burundi refugees in the south of Rwanda.

By the end of September some 600,000 displaced people had returned to their homes in the demilitarized zone. Agricultural rehabilitation programmes were implemented to enable them to attain self-sufficiency, but the ICRC had to continue providing food relief at least until the first harvest in December.

The remaining 350,000 displacees from the RPF zone were unable to return to their homes in 1993. At the end of the year they were still in camps in government-controlled regions and were expected to remain dependent on international humanitarian aid for the first few months of 1994.

Between May and July the ICRC delegation in Kampala carried out an assistance programme, coordinated by the delegation in Kigali, for 10,500 civilians in the RPF zone in northern Rwanda, providing them with food, soap, jerrycans, cooking pots and blankets.

Medical and sanitation activities

To meet the growing needs created by the ongoing conflict the ICRC stepped up its emergency medical assistance. During the violent demonstrations in Kigali in January two ICRC medical teams helped the teams of the Rwandese and Belgian National Societies. The wounded were evacuated to local hospitals and the main hospital in the capital, and emergency medical equipment and drugs were distributed to local health posts.

Following the RPF attack in February ICRC teams evacuated the sick and wounded from combat zones to medical facilities in safer areas. A surgical team was brought in to support the main hospital in Kigali. A total of 227 operations were performed during their seven-week mission.

The ICRC carried out several medical surveys in the conflict zones, including the RPF zone. In March an ICRC doctor and sanitation engineer visited the overcrowded camps of Nyacyonga, Rusine and Kiziguro, where they found a serious dysentery epidemic. The ICRC therefore set up an emergency water supply system, bringing 350,000 litres of water a day to the region from Kigali, while the various non-governmental organizations present worked to instal more permanent facilities.

Under an agreement with the ICRC, the Belgian Red Cross distributed medical and surgical equipment to Rwandese hospitals caring for the displaced.

At the end of May two ICRC/Belgian Red Cross mobile clinics were introduced to provide basic health care for the displaced civilian population in the demilitarized zone and to evacuate serious casualties to local hospitals. By 19 September, after some 80,000 patients had been cared for, this programme was phased out as local medical facilities resumed work (with the help of other humanitarian organizations). The ICRC was then able to concentrate on supplying the 17 health posts in the demilitarized zone.

Although the number of emergency cases fell sharply after the cease-fire, land-mine injuries continued. In October the delegation in Kigali sent a memorandum about this problem to government authorities, the RPF, embassies, non-governmental organizations, churches and the press.

In the RPF-controlled part of the country the ICRC carried out two medical surveys from its delegation in Uganda, after which 1,300 kg of medical supplies were distributed for the treatment of war casualties and the civilian population.

Tracing activities

In 1993 many calls were made on the ICRC tracing service to restore contact between Rwandese refugees in Uganda and their families back home, and between displaced people in camps in the government zone and the RPF zone. An ICRC team visited Rwandese refugees in Kisoro (Uganda) and ICRC missions were carried out regularly to the RPF zone, registering 17 detainees held by the RPF and taking messages for their relatives living in the part of Rwanda controlled by the government. In all, some 5,000 messages were collected and 8,000 distributed. In November, after the *coup* in Burundi, a delegate carried out a survey in the south of Rwanda to ascertain the tracing needs of the new Burundi refugees. The ICRC subsequently trained 13 new tracing officers of the Rwandese Red Cross to carry out tracing activities in the refugee camps.

Activities for detainees

The ICRC had access to detainees held by the government and by the RPF from the start of the hostilities and in June the ICRC obtained the formal authorization of the Ministry of Defence to visit military camps. In August three RPF and 12 government detainees were released under the auspices of the ICRC. In all, delegates visited 441 detainees.

Dissemination

Over the year a number of dissemination sessions on the ICRC and on international humanitarian law were organized for the armed forces, the National Society, non-governmental organizations, schoolchildren, journalists and all political parties, with a view to spreading awareness of the role of the ICRC and thus facilitating its work in the country.

In July, at a meeting attended by 15 RPF representatives, the head of delegation explained the ICRC's mandate, the basic rules of international humanitarian law and their practical application to the conflict in Rwanda.

In October, representatives of different social groups at a panel meeting organized by the ICRC sought to reach agreement on a universally applicable set of humanitarian rules that would effectively enhance respect for human life and human dignity.

ANNUAL REPORT 1994

RWANDA

1994 THE ICRC:

- *carried out a major relief and medical assistance programme for 1.2 million people;*
- *evacuated thousands of wounded from the streets of Kigali with the Rwandan Red Cross and admitted 2,700 patients to its emergency surgical hospitals in Kigali, Kabgayi and Goma;*
- *brought in medical supplies worth 5 million Swiss francs for use in its hospitals and in other health facilities;*
- *provided equipment worth 2 million Swiss francs for water and sanitation work;*
- *handled over 100,000 Red Cross messages;*
- *registered 38,000 children who had lost their families in the chaos;*
- *registered around 16,000 people detained in connection with the conflict, in 62 places of detention;*
- *distributed 89,000 tonnes of food and other basic necessities.*

The ICRC's humanitarian activities in Rwanda in 1994 can be divided into two distinct periods: the first three months and the rest of the year. At the beginning of 1994 a great deal of turmoil was observed in political spheres, as the implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement was running up against delays and resistance. Tension prevailed, punctuated by political assassinations. Between January and March ICRC activities were marked by two major developments: food distributions were ended to some 600,000 displaced people who had returned to their homes in the demilitarized zone and an assistance programme was begun for displaced people, numbering 40,000 by the end of March, returning to the RPF (Rwanda Patriotic Front)-controlled zone in the north of the country. It came as a major shock to the international community when, on 6 April, the President was killed in a plane crash (The Presidents of both Burundi and Rwanda were killed when the aircraft they were travelling in was shot down while coming in to land at Kigali airport) and a horrifying wave of massacres subsequently swept the country, wiping out hundreds of thousands of civilians.

Armed militia groups led by extremist politicians systematically set about eliminating anyone who did not support their cause, principally people of the Tutsi ethnic minority, but also moderate Hutus. The Prime Minister was executed in the first few days of the violence, along with the United Nations soldiers guarding her. Other moderate members of the government were soon to suffer the same fate. The capital, Kigali, was plunged into total chaos. Killings, generalized looting and lawlessness were the order of the day. The ICRC's immediate decision was to stay on and set up emergency surgical care for the survivors of the massacres, while most other expatriates fled the country. As they were located in the heart of the combat zone, the ICRC's delegation and hospital in Kigali came under shellfire on several occasions and a number of patients and staff were killed.

While massacres were sweeping the parts of the country controlled by the government, the RPF resumed the internal armed conflict and launched a military offensive on 8 April from the territory it already controlled in the north, gradually moving southwards and eventually overrunning the entire country. In addition to the vast population movements prompted by the massacres, the advance of the RPF caused the displacement of much of the Rwandan population, which had numbered some

seven million before April. The ICRC responded to the new needs, deploying logistic and budgetary resources on a scale that made the Rwanda operation its largest relief operation worldwide in 1994.

At the end of the year around two million Rwandan refugees were still living in camps across the borders with Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi, and a further 500,000 people displaced within the country had not yet returned to their homes.

Protection of the civilian population

One of the ICRC's principal *raison d'être* is the protection of civilians in times of armed conflict, and the fact that ICRC delegates remained on the spot during the massacres in Rwanda undoubtedly helped spare many lives. Among those protected in this way were about 50,000 people gathered in pockets around Kigali and other towns; they were visited regularly by delegates who brought them food and other essentials. But the number of lives lost puts this initially impressive figure into perspective: with probably a million Rwandans dead, it is clear that the ICRC's protection work was effective only on a very limited scale.

In the second quarter of 1994, all semblance of respect for human life and dignity was abandoned in Rwanda. Civilians were deliberately targeted in an organized genocide and men, women and children were massacred on a horrifying scale. Atrocious acts were committed, sometimes in blatant disrespect of the red cross emblem. On 14 April, Red Cross ambulances were stopped on their way to hospital by armed militias who then shot dead the patients inside; children were slaughtered at the orphanage in Butare on 1 May; Kigali Central Hospital was shelled on 18 May.

ICRC delegates took up and maintained contacts with as many interlocutors as possible, both military and civilian. The remaining authorities were constantly urged to put an end to the genocide and reminded of their responsibilities. Special emphasis was given to the protection of groups of people at high risk, who had sought refuge in places such as Amahoro Stadium, the Sainte Famille church, the Mille Collines hotel (all three in Kigali), in Kabgayi and in the stadium in Cyangugu. ICRC delegates went to see these groups of terrified people whenever security conditions permitted, bringing them material and medical assistance and thus contributing to their survival. In addition, the delegation in Kigali broadcast its message of neutrality and impartiality on local radio in an attempt to reach all armed groups. Written representations were also made and a memorandum on respect for international humanitarian law was handed over to all parties concerned. After the fall of the former government and the proclamation of a cease-fire by the RPF the ICRC continued to monitor the situation closely, reminding the authorities when necessary of their duty to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of civilians and drawing their attention to cases of abuse.

Activities for the civilian population

As soon as the bloodshed began in Rwanda the ICRC moved swiftly to ensure a comprehensive response. The delegations in Bujumbura and Nairobi became focal points for the relief operation and offices were set up in Ngara, over the Tanzanian border, and in Kabale, on the Ugandan side. Meanwhile, extra expatriate staff were sent to the ICRC's office in Goma (north-eastern Zaire), which had been set up over a year beforehand to follow the situation in North Kivu, and a new office was opened in Bukavu, in South Kivu. There was also a massive mobilization at ICRC headquarters in Geneva, and National Societies rapidly sent substantial support, providing one-third of the expatriate staff needed.

As hundreds of thousands of people fled the killings, land and crops were abandoned and food became scarce. Access to clean water also became a major problem for displaced people. The ICRC did its best to distribute emergency food rations, but as people kept moving, especially in the first few weeks of the crisis, this proved to be extremely difficult in some areas. Nevertheless, a great deal of aid was quickly distributed, especially in central and northern areas and in the south-west of the country. By the end of June the ICRC had distributed some 6,000 tonnes of food to around half a million people. An Ilyushin cargo plane, previously used for the relief programme in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was transferred directly to the Rwanda operation. Eventually four aircraft and over 130 trucks were used to conduct the ICRC's various assistance programmes around the country, which reached a peak of 1.2 million people in September.

In order to lessen the population's dependence on food provided by humanitarian organizations, the ICRC organized the distribution of seed to around 200,000 families (over one million individuals) throughout the country. By the end of the year 1,935 tonnes of seed and 100,000 hoes had been handed out. At the same time an additional 7,700 tonnes of food rations were distributed to ensure that the seed was not eaten. It was thus hoped that the next harvest at the beginning of 1995 would produce sufficient food to enable the population to regain a degree of independence, at the same time reducing the need for food aid.

NGARA (TANZANIA)

Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans streamed across the Tanzanian border within just a few days towards the end of April. The ICRC immediately began distributing an initial shipment of food to 220,000 of these refugees, as the organizations on the spot, specifically mandated to assist refugees, were not yet operational. The food was distributed with the invaluable assistance of the Tanzanian and Rwandan Red Cross Societies. Later, when other organizations were able to assist the refugees, the ICRC phased out its relief activities in Ngara and concentrated its efforts on dissemination, tracing (particularly the registration of unaccompanied children) and activities inside Rwanda.

Once the border was opened to humanitarian convoys in mid-June, food was regularly transported via the ICRC's Ngara office to different parts of Rwanda, including the south-east and some northern areas.

NORTHERN RWANDA

By mid-February the 500,000 people displaced in 1993 who had returned to their homes in the demilitarized zone, which separated government troops and RPF forces, had attained an acceptable level of self-sufficiency. The ICRC therefore ended its assistance and reinstallation programme for these people, although one additional food distribution was carried out in March for the inhabitants of six municipalities in the Byumba region.

From January a steady flow of displaced people began returning to the RPF-controlled zone in northern Rwanda. By the end of March 40,000 had responded to the RPF's appeal to return and benefited from a food, non-food and agricultural assistance programme set up by the ICRC in conjunction with the Belgian Red Cross.

After the events of April, the north of Rwanda was reached through a new office in Kabale, in southern Uganda. In mid-June a survey was carried out by an ICRC nutritionist in the north and south-east of Rwanda, revealing that the food rations initially distributed were insufficient. Rations were therefore considerably increased.

GOMA (ZAIRE)

In mid-July, when over one million Rwandans surged across the border into the North Kivu region of Zaire, the influx of people overwhelmed the Zairian border town of Goma. The ICRC had been working there since mid-1993 in connection with the disturbances in North Kivu, and had transformed its office into a logistics base for its emergency relief operations within Rwanda in mid-June 1994. As more than 1,000 tonnes of food had already been stockpiled in Goma for this purpose, the ICRC was able to begin food distributions for the refugees immediately, with the help of the Rwandan Red Cross, as the organizations on the spot with a specific mandate to assist refugees were not yet operational. Subsequently more supplies were flown in by the ICRC. In August the ICRC handed over responsibility for its relief distributions in Goma to National Societies and to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

In July the ICRC began providing the hospital in Goma with medical supplies and set up another emergency facility in the sports stadium to treat the wounded. A surgical team sent to Goma to man this new facility carried out 80 operations in its first week.

Tracing activities

At the start of the year the tracing agency's activities centred on Burundian refugees in Rwanda and on Rwandan refugees in Uganda. When the massacres began, the continual population movements around the country meant that tracing people's relatives was all but impossible, and delivering Red Cross messages within Rwanda was equally difficult. Moreover, tracing work could have put the people being sought in danger. Nonetheless, the tracing agency was able to accept messages destined for relatives outside Rwanda. In addition, the ICRC set up a telephone link in Kigali at the outbreak of the violence, enabling hundreds of families abroad to obtain news of their relatives in the capital.

When hundreds of thousands of Rwandans crossed into neighbouring countries, the ICRC installed a Red Cross message network in the refugee camps in Tanzania, Burundi and Zaire.

As the international community became aware of what was going on in Rwanda, a number of organizations, with major media backing, began evacuating unaccompanied children to other countries. The ICRC's tracing agency stepped in to assume the role of central data bank for information concerning these children and, in a joint statement with UNICEF, UNHCR and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the institution emphasized that the youngsters must be properly registered. Indeed, many of them were not orphans but had merely become separated from their parents, and would one day return to them. A considerable number of the children transferred abroad had not been registered at all.

ICRC staff were deployed in Rwanda and in neighbouring countries to register children in reception centres, hospitals, churches and camps for displaced people or refugees. The central data bank was set up in Nairobi, where two teams worked in shifts around the clock entering the data on computer. By the end of the year 37,000 unaccompanied children had been registered in cooperation with the UNHCR, UNICEF and non-governmental organizations.

Medical activities

As soon as the massacres started on 6 April the ICRC's team in Kigali began work with the Rwandan Red Cross to try to clear the streets of dead bodies and avert the spread of disease. A first ICRC road convoy was rapidly dispatched from Bujumbura and arrived in Kigali on 13 April, carrying 25 tonnes of medical supplies, mainly donated by the Belgian Red Cross, and more personnel from the ICRC and MSF-France (the French branch of Médecins sans frontières). At first medical needs were met by Kigali Central Hospital, which the ICRC immediately provided with urgently required medical supplies. Very soon, however, the hospital was overwhelmed and the ICRC set up an emergency surgical hospital in buildings adjacent to its delegation. This unit functioned in tandem with Kigali Central Hospital to treat combatants and civilians who survived their wounds, the MSF team working under the ICRC flag alongside an ICRC team which included staff seconded by the Dutch and British Red Cross Societies. However, the terror created on the streets by the militia was such that many people were afraid to come to either hospital for treatment and therefore perished unattended.

The ICRC set up an emergency hospital and sub-delegation on 12 May in Kabgayi, near Gitarama, where around 200,000 displaced people had sought refuge. The hospital in Kabgayi was subsequently moved to Nyanza for security reasons, when the RPF took Gitarama. At the beginning of July the ICRC's hospital and sub-delegation in Nyanza had to be transferred yet again for reasons of security, this time to Rilima, in the Bugesera area. On 19 May an ICRC convoy travelling from Kigali to the hospital in Kabgayi was attacked and the institution's medical coordinator in Rwanda was wounded. He was operated on at the ICRC hospital in Kigali.

In several parts of the country, field teams delivered medical supplies throughout the year to functioning health facilities, including health posts in Nyarushishi camp near Cyangugu. Following the closure of Kigali Central Hospital towards the end of May the delegation in Kigali began supporting the King Faisal hospital on the eastern side of town controlled by the RPF, providing it with medical supplies and repairing the water supply and sanitation systems. The ICRC set up an office in the hospital and maintained a permanent presence there, while an MSF-International team came in on a daily basis to perform surgical operations.

As they were situated right on the front line, the ICRC delegation and surgical hospital came under fire on a number of occasions. On 24 June, when seven patients were killed outright and several others injured, the delegation launched a renewed appeal to the warring parties to respect the red cross emblem. The delegation tried several times to evacuate patients to the King Faisal hospital, away from the fighting, and towards the end of June 107 patients were transferred. At the beginning of July, when the RPF took control of Kigali, the halt in the fighting made it possible to share out the patients evenly between the ICRC hospital and the King Faisal facility.

As other organizations started to work in and around Rwanda the ICRC was able to reduce its medical activities, ending its support to the hospital in Goma at the end of August and closing its hospital in Kigali in September. However, drugs and other medical supplies continued to be delivered to hospitals, health centres and dispensaries throughout the country until the end of the year.

WATER AND SANITATION

From the outset, the aims of the ICRC's water and sanitation programme in Rwanda were twofold: first, to curb the outbreak of disease in the camps for the displaced, and secondly, to rehabilitate the country's main water-treatment plants.

In Kigali an emergency system to supply water to the King Faisal hospital was set up and the supply to the ICRC's surgical hospital was upgraded. Six gravity-fed supply systems in Rwanda were repaired or upgraded and several installations protecting springs were improved to provide water for the many displaced people. Completely new spring protection systems had to be built in Mukarange, Manyagiro and Tabagwe camps. A total of 10 camps for around 250,000 displaced people were equipped with emergency water distribution systems, and materials for the construction of latrines were also provided.

The work carried out to rehabilitate the country's main water treatment stations (Kigali, Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, Cyangugu, Gitarama, Butare, Gikongoro, Kabgayi and Kibuye) consisted mainly in helping the few remaining staff to keep up or resume production. The ICRC provided technical expertise and work incentives, and supplied more than 300 tonnes of aluminium sulphate, 50 tonnes of chlorine, 300 tonnes of lime, spare parts, fuel, emergency generators and equipment such as autonomous welding units.

Water tankers brought 60,000 litres of water per day to ten orphanages and health posts in Kigali until it was possible to repair the distribution system. In addition the electricity lines between Ruhengeri and Gisenyi were repaired by an Electrogaz team with direct ICRC assistance, restoring the electricity supply to the water treatment plant and the main sections of the town of Gisenyi.

In south-western Rwanda the first task was to complete a 4.5 km gravity system supplying water to Nyarushishi camp (10,000 displaced people). This was followed by continuous surveys to monitor the situation in other camps between Cyangugu and Gikongoro. After the departure of the French army, ICRC engineers carried out water and sanitation work in five camps south of Gikongoro accommodating about 65,000 displaced people. The population of the camps were urged to observe the basic rules of hygiene to help reduce the spread of disease.

In rural areas of north-western Rwanda 12 gravity supply schemes were rehabilitated and one new spring protected, providing the local population with an additional 69 water supply points and six local health centres with a supply of drinking water. Similar activities were being started up at the end of the year in the south-east of the country.

The water supply systems in eight of the country's prisons were also repaired, providing inmates with fresh water, and the basic rules of hygiene were promoted to help avoid the spread of disease in the jails. At the end of the year the ICRC was negotiating the delegation of water and sanitation projects for 1995 to various National Societies.

Activities for detainees

At the end of March there were still 136 prisoners in Rwanda falling within the mandate of the ICRC, most of them having been arrested during political demonstrations. Up until the events in April, the ICRC was granted access to practically all detention centres and carried out 20 visits. Once the new government had taken office in July, the delegation negotiated with the new

authorities to gain access to all people arrested, wherever they were held, and by the end of the year had registered around 16,000 people detained in connection with the conflict. Many of the detainees were able to send Red Cross messages to their families, and they were provided with items such as blankets, soap and plates. In view of the unique situation in the country and the difficult conditions encountered in several places of detention, the ICRC initiated a special programme in October to provide the necessary food to all prisoners. Special attention was given to ensuring adequate medical treatment: ICRC nurses upgraded hygiene and set up dispensaries within the prisons, and a programme was conducted to improve the water supply systems (see Water and sanitation).

Dissemination

At the start of the year dissemination efforts were concentrated on incorporating international humanitarian law in the training programme of the Rwandan armed forces. In the first quarter some 3,000 troops attended dissemination sessions held by the ICRC in military camps throughout the country. A session was also held for officers of the Belgian battalion of UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda) to explain the ICRC's activities and mandate and restate the principles of international humanitarian law.

In 1993 the delegation had organized a panel composed of different social groups, whose aim was to reach an agreement on a universally applicable set of humanitarian rules that would enhance respect for human life and human dignity. It became painfully clear in April that this approach was doomed, as the very opposite philosophy held sway throughout the nation. From this point on, the ICRC's traditional dissemination activities were abandoned in favour of making direct appeals to the parties to spare civilians (see Protection of the civilian population).

Once the RPF took control of the country and a new government was installed in July, the ICRC faced a new challenge: to convince all concerned that humanitarian principles must be observed in the event of renewed violence. Although the hostilities had come to an end, a climate of instability still reigned, acts of violence were observed and there was a very real possibility of further fighting. It was therefore absolutely vital to launch a wide-ranging programme of dissemination of international humanitarian law, with a view to helping restore a measure of trust among the population.



COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

ICRC Memorandum on the tragedy in Rwanda

The war and the genocide in Rwanda are having profound effects on the entire Great Lakes region. The ICRC notes with deep concern that no solution has yet been adopted. It fears that the indecision of the international community will leave the door open to an escalation of violence and a resumption of hostilities in the region, with the same horrific results and incalculable repercussions in humanitarian terms.

The infrastructure within Rwanda has largely been destroyed. The country has neither the resources nor the means necessary for a resumption of administrative and economic activity, which would restore a measure of confidence among the people and offer them some prospects for the future.

Under the circumstances, international aid has been almost wholly entrusted to humanitarian organizations, which are striving to meet emergency needs but obviously cannot replace the administration and services of the State in the long term. Humanitarian assistance has alleviated the worst suffering of the population but can in no way be taken as an answer to the fundamental problems. The implementation of lasting solutions and the institution of a state of law sanctioned by the international community require both adequate resources and a degree of good will in order to become reality.

One destabilizing factor is the occupation by many former refugees returning from Burundi and Uganda of the homes and land left vacant by the flight of more recent refugees. Serious disturbances can be expected when large groups of these recent refugees return unless all the necessary means are provided to address this vital issue equitably and scrupulously.

More than 12,000 people suspected by the authorities of having taken part in the massacres have been arrested. The prison system has no budget to maintain these people in detention, and existing means for bringing legal proceedings in these cases are meagre. Furthermore, the present atmosphere and the length of time needed to set up an International Tribunal are not conducive to the peaceable administration of justice.

Generally speaking, the fact that there is no overall and practical prospect of a genuine settlement of the tragic situation in Rwanda fuels a sense of fear and mistrust, increases tension among the parties present and encourages acts of violence and revenge.

The population of the refugee camps in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi has been taken in hand by the former authorities of Rwanda. The militias have not been disbanded. The refugees fear reprisals if they return to their country. Moreover they are being dissuaded from doing so, sometimes by violence.

As time goes by, more and more civilians are falling victim to the insecurity reigning in the refugee camps or in the areas where they have gathered. Weapons are in plain view and the region is rife with rumours and reports of military training activities.

In Zaire, the crisis which has beset State institutions for many years fosters disorder and lack of security.

In North Kivu, in particular in the Masisi area and in certain parts of Walikale, there has been an upsurge of violence between the indigenous inhabitants and Banyarwandan groups as a direct consequence of the crisis in Rwanda.

In Burundi, the presence of more than 200,000 refugees from Rwanda contributes to the mounting tension and exacerbates the country's internal disturbances. The permeability of the borders between Zaire, Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania facilitates the movements and regrouping of armed groups, and the spectre of increasing strife and violence looms over the entire region.

The problem of Rwanda and, more generally, its implications for the Great Lakes region figures on the agenda of many meetings and fora; numerous observation missions have taken place to assess the situation and identify possible courses of action. The United Nations has put forward proposals; a regional conference has been scheduled under the auspices of UNHCR and the OAU. The members of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, in high-level meetings, have attempted to coordinate their approaches.

The ICRC commends these initiatives but nevertheless remains deeply concerned to see that months have gone by without the international community taking any decision or making the necessary effort to halt the deterioration of the situation, and above all to find a political, military and economic solution which would restore a measure of stability to the Great Lakes region and allow the population to live together in safety at last.

The ICRC believes that it is primarily the task of the governments and the various parties in the Great Lakes region and especially the Rwandans themselves to consider the enormous responsibility that is theirs vis-à-vis a decimated, scattered and exhausted population.

Moreover, the ICRC calls upon the States which are Rwanda's traditional partners to arrive rapidly at a consensus which transcends individual interests and to generate the necessary political resolve, financial means and human resources without which even the best settlement plans are doomed to failure.

The stark reality of hatred and bitterness must give way before the vital need of the people to live in peace at last and to offer their children a society with no place for the intolerable notion that their only choice is to be a victim or an executioner.

Geneva, 14 December 1994



ICRC NEWS N° 11 / 17 March 1994

Displaced persons return home

The majority of displaced persons in Rwanda have returned to their homes: some 600,000 have now gone back to the so-called demilitarized zone. Under its emergency rehabilitation programme (see ICRC News No. 7), the ICRC has continued to assist them by providing seed and farming tools. However, 350,000 people who fled in October 1990 from the extreme north of the country under the control of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) are still in camps near Kigali. Very recently 35,000 of them also went back to the RPF zone. As a result,

the ICRC has modified its aid programme and will distribute food rations until the next harvest. In addition, seed, tools, cooking pots, blankets and soap are provided by the Belgian Red Cross.

The ICRC currently has 26 expatriate staff and 133 local employees working in Rwanda. The institution's 1994 budget for the country amounts to 40 million Swiss francs.

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COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS N° 13 / 8 April 1994

RWANDA: ICRC CARRIES OUT EMERGENCY MEDICAL ACTIVITIES

Geneva (ICRC) - The civilian population in Rwanda is currently the victim of spiralling violence, in particular in Kigali, the capital, where delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have observed a large number of dead and wounded.

Today 8 April, a five-member ICRC medical team - one doctor, three nurses and a delegate - provided urgently required medical material to Kigali Hospital, the capital's largest medical centre. The delegates also brought wounded civilians to the hospital and were assisting wounded soldiers.

The ICRC has 26 delegates in Rwanda. They are working with Rwandan Red Cross first-aiders. A surgical team made up of a doctor, an anaesthetist and three nurses is standing by to leave Geneva for Rwanda as soon as the situation permits.

Deeply concerned by the state of affairs in the country, the ICRC is sparing no effort to come to the aid of the victims. The head of its delegation in Kigali has contacted, among others, the Rwanda armed forces chief of staff with a view to obtaining the security conditions required for any humanitarian work.

The ICRC appeals to the authorities of Rwanda to do all in their power to bring a halt to the violence.

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COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS N° 15 / 13 April 1994

ICRC SURGICAL TEAM ARRIVES IN KIGALI

Geneva (ICRC) - A surgical team of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), comprising a doctor, an anaesthetist and three nurses, arrived today in Kigali from Bujumbura to strengthen the ICRC's presence in the Rwandan capital. The team travelled with a convoy carrying 18 tonnes of emergency medical supplies, largely provided by the Belgian Red Cross. A French medical team from *Médecins sans Frontières* with five tonnes of medical materials was also with the convoy. The situation permitting, a second convoy bringing in three ICRC nurses and additional medical supplies is planned for Thursday 14 April.

Since the announcement of the death of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi, chaos has reigned in the Rwandan capital, leaving thousands dead or wounded. The ICRC's 26 delegates on the spot and first-aid workers of the country's Red Cross Society launched an emergency operation within 30 hours of the outbreak of the violence. Hundreds of wounded have been evacuated to the city's main hospital for treatment. Some of them were subsequently taken by the ICRC to a hospital 40 km from Kigali.

The arrival of the new surgical team has enabled the ICRC to open a new emergency medical facility, with 200 beds, two operating theatres and two rooms for minor surgery, in a building near its delegation in the capital.

With the help of municipal officials, the ICRC today organized an initial distribution of 40 tonnes of food to Kigali's population.

As fighting continues in the Rwandan capital, the ICRC calls on all the parties involved to spare the civilian population, and to respect international humanitarian law and the work of the Red Cross.

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COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS N° 16/94 / 14 April 1994

RWANDA: SIX WOUNDED KILLED IN A RED CROSS AMBULANCE

Geneva (ICRC) - Early this afternoon in Kigali armed militiamen shot to death, in the presence of members of the armed forces, six wounded people who were being taken by Rwandese Red Cross volunteers to a field hospital set up yesterday by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

This outrageous act has compelled the ICRC and the Rwandese Red Cross to suspend the collection of casualties in the capital, where the most elementary rules of humanity are being flouted.

The ICRC strongly appeals to all combatants, in particular the armed militia and their leaders, to put a stop to the carnage both in Kigali and in the provinces affected by the violence, and to allow the Red Cross to assist the wounded without discrimination.

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ICRC NEWS N° 16 / 21 April 1994

Humanitarian emergency

The fighting that has raged in central Rwanda since early April has now spread to the entire country, leaving tens of thousands of people dead and as many injured. Hundreds of thousands more have fled their homes to escape the slaughter and are now scattered throughout the country. There is an enormous need for humanitarian assistance.

In Kigali ICRC medical teams are working round the clock at both the central hospital and an ICRC field hospital, where over 600 casualties have already received treatment. The ICRC has also started distributing food aid to several thousand people in various parts of the capital.

Two additional ICRC teams that managed to enter the country from Burundi and Uganda on 16 and 17 April are now conducting a survey of medical and food needs in the north and south of the country. Initial reports indicate that several hundreds of thousands of people have gathered in the north-east and south-east of Rwanda and that some 100,000 more are grouped near Butare in the south. The ICRC will try to get food through to them in an operation organized together with the World Food Programme (WFP), which has made available its food stocks in Burundi.

The ICRC's work would be impossible without the steadfast support of the Rwandese Red Cross staff and its own local employees who are taking part, often at the risk of their own lives, in medical activities and food distributions in the capital.

In their constant contacts with all the parties involved, ICRC delegates are also calling for the lives of civilians and the wounded to be spared and for aid workers to be allowed to perform their humanitarian tasks.

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PRESS RELEASE N° 1772 / 21 April 1994

HUMAN TRAGEDY IN RWANDA

Geneva (ICRC) - Tens, maybe hundreds of thousands killed: the exact number of victims of the massacres that have swept Rwanda over the last two weeks will never be known. Terrified inhabitants have been fleeing the centre of the country and several hundred thousand displaced people are massed in the south and the north. The human tragedy in Rwanda is on a scale that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has rarely witnessed.

In the hospitals in the capital, Kigali, surgeons have managed to save hundreds of lives. However, the wounded can no longer be taken to medical centres for fear that they will be killed before they arrive, and those that have been saved cannot leave hospital because to do so would mean certain death.

The need for humanitarian aid is also immense in outlying areas of the country, where hundreds of thousands of people, some of them wounded, have sought refuge. The displaced, who lack food and medical care, will be assisted by Rwandese medical staff as soon as security conditions allow. In addition, sanitation systems must be installed to minimize the risk of epidemics.

Since the start of the violence, about 30 ICRC delegates, the French team of *Médecins sans Frontières* and Rwandese Red Cross volunteers have been risking their lives to preserve a measure of humanity in the midst of the carnage. What they have done is vital, but is no more than a drop in the ocean.

ICRC delegates on the spot are in constant contact with all parties concerned and are broadcasting messages on local radio stations, calling for an end to the atrocities and demanding that civilians, the wounded and any people taken prisoner be spared.

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ICRC NEWS N° 17 / 28 April 1994

Heart of darkness

The extreme violence that has been tearing Rwanda apart is claiming more victims every day. The refugees streaming across the country's borders give horrific accounts of massacres. ICRC delegates who returned to Geneva on 27 April are badly shocked by the terrible events there. "It was the heart of darkness", said one.

The conflict in Rwanda, which has caused over 100,000 deaths in two weeks, constitutes one of the gravest crises that the ICRC has ever faced. The hundreds of thousands of people displaced throughout the country now face starvation. There is hardly a family in the country that has not been affected by this tragedy, whether because of the death of loved ones, being forced to flee, or hunger. The entire population is suffering.

The unspeakable violence that continues to prevail throughout the country makes it impossible to consider large-scale food distributions. Any activity by humanitarian organizations is hazardous and uncertain. ICRC delegates who last week went to the Butare area were obliged to leave the town after standing by helplessly as numerous people were slaughtered before their very eyes.

Twenty-nine delegates remain in Rwanda

The ICRC is maintaining its presence in Kigali. Fifteen delegates have stayed on there, mostly medical staff, and some 800 casualties continue to receive treatment in two hospitals in the capital. The ICRC also has 14 delegates in other parts of the country. The activities they undertake in the coming days will depend on the security guarantees they are able to obtain. "Whatever we're managing to do at the moment is but a drop in an ocean of horror", commented Daniel Augstburger, the desk officer for Rwanda at ICRC headquarters.

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS N° 94/20 / 3 May 1994

RWANDA: 21 ORPHANS AND 13 RED CROSS VOLUNTEERS KILLED

Geneva (ICRC) - Twenty-one children were killed in Butare on 1 May during an attack on an orphanage. The children had been transferred from the Kakiru orphanage in Kigali to Butare because it was believed they would be safer there. This outrageous act took place in the context of the violence that has swept the Butare area in recent days. Thirteen volunteers of the Rwandese Red Cross - three of them in the orphanage - have also lost their lives in the most atrocious circumstances.

Appalled by the massacres in Rwanda, which have already claimed more than 100,000 lives, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) conveys its deepest sympathy to the families of the volunteers and to the Rwandese Red Cross, whose conduct has been exemplary throughout the current crisis.

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COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS N° 21 / 4 May 1994

RWANDA: 350 ORPHANS EVACUATED TO ZAIRE

Geneva (ICRC) - Yesterday, on 3 May, 350 children and 25 accompanying adults were evacuated from an orphanage in Gisenyi in northern Rwanda to the town of Goma in Zaire, where they were taken into the care of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The evacuation was made possible by the presence of the Rwandese Minister of Social Affairs and logistic support provided by the Rwandese army chief of staff. Government troops escorted the convoy to the border with Zaire.

"I'm certain this is a miracle" said the nun in charge of the orphanage to an ICRC delegate, expressing profound relief. The ICRC had supplied the orphanage with food aid for several days prior to the evacuation.

ICRC NEWS N° 18 / 5 May 1994

Unabated suffering

The grim ordeal of the people of Rwanda remains unabated. Fighting and massacres continue in many parts of the country, driving the population into chaotic flight. The threat of famine also looms: because of the conflict, hundreds of thousands of people have little or no access to food. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has started mass distributions of food aid via its delegation in Kigali and its outposts in the north and south of Rwanda.

In the capital Kigali, thousands of terrified people have taken refuge in parish halls, hospitals, embassies and the national stadium. Their very survival depends upon aid from outside. Despite extremely hazardous conditions the ICRC, in cooperation with the Rwandese Red Cross, is managing to get regular supplies of food through to some 25,000 people. Emergency surgical care is also being provided to the victims of the ongoing violence.

45 tonnes of emergency medical aid dispatched

The ICRC hospital set up in Kigali as soon as the crisis began is submerged with work. On 1 May another 56 casualties were taken there after the attack on the Holy Family church, which left 13 dead and more than a hundred injured. A dispensary was also opened with Red Cross help and has provided treatment for all the other casualties. To date a total of 45 tonnes of medicines and other emergency medical supplies have been distributed in Kigali to hospital facilities assisted by the ICRC.

Surgical team for Kabgayi

At the request of the Rwanda government and in response to the huge needs generated by the tragic events, the ICRC opened a sub-delegation today, 5 May, in the religious centre Kabgayi. Five delegates and a surgeon will take over care of the hundreds of casualties in the monastery hospital there.

The ICRC also intends to provide assistance for the tens of thousands of displaced people in the Gitarama region. An additional surgical team of five people seconded by the Finnish and

Netherlands Red Cross Societies will be sent out from Geneva to Kabgayi within the next few days.

Initial food distributions to 60,000 people in northern Rwanda

According to ICRC estimates, there are now 170,000 newly displaced people of all ethnic groups housed in makeshift camps in the north of the country. The first food distributions have already taken place to 45,000 people to the east of Ruhengeri and 15,000 others in Byumba. For the time being, this Red Cross operation is being carried out from a logistic base in Kabale, in southern Uganda.

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First distributions of ICRC emergency aid in Tanzanian refugee camps

The ICRC was the first organization to start work in the refugee camps in Tanzania. It has carried out a first distribution of emergency food aid to 220,000 people: each person received 1 kg of beans. A unique feature of this operation is that the ICRC is being helped simultaneously by volunteers of the Tanzanian and Rwandese Red Cross Societies. Further distributions will be made until organizations specialized on aid to refugees take over.

39 expatriates in action

In all, 39 ICRC delegates have been assigned to the operation in Rwanda: 15 expatriates based in Kigali, six in Kabgayi, four in Ngara (on the Tanzanian border), five in Bukavu and Goma (on the Zairian border) and nine others in charge of assisting displaced people in the north of the country. In all, there are 39 expatriates working in Rwanda.

ICRC NEWS N° 19 / 11 May 1994

The bloodshed continues

There has been no halt to the massacres in Rwanda. Appalling atrocities are committed every day, in flagrant violation of the most basic principles of humanity, and the number of victims continues to rise. The efforts being made by the ICRC to lessen the suffering of the Rwandan people cannot mask the horror that has the country in its grip.

The ICRC is bringing assistance to about 200,000 people displaced within Rwanda. As soon as the clashes broke out the ICRC distributed food to some 25,000 people seeking refuge in various parts of the capital, Kigali. On 5 May, 60,000 displaced persons in the north of the country were given maize, cooking oil and beans. On 9 May the ICRC began food distributions to 50,000 people gathered in an area between Kigali and Gitarama, and food aid is on its way to 70,000 people in south-eastern Rwanda.

In Kigali ICRC medical staff are continuing to treat hundreds of wounded in the temporary hospital set up when the conflict broke out, the ICRC is regularly providing medical supplies to the capital's main medical facilities, the Cern Hospital and the King Faisal Hospital. About 400 casualties are also being treated by an ICRC medical team in Kabgayi, a few kilometres from the town of Gitarama.

Since 7 May two ICRC delegates and a nurse have been able to make daily visits to the stadium in Cyangugu, near the Zaire border, where 5,000 people have taken refuge. A dispensary has been set up inside the stadium and food distributed. Sanitary conditions are deplorable - there is only one tap supplying clean water - and an ICRC sanitary engineer left Geneva for Cyangugu on 11 May to try to remedy the situation.

ICRC NEWS N° 20 / 18 May 1994

RWANDA

A new threat: shortage of drinking water

Continued fighting between government troops and forces of the Rwanda Patriotic Front has caused more population movements towards the centre of the country. Several hundred thousand people are now massed near the town of Gitarama, swelling the ranks of all the other displaced people throughout Rwanda.

The ICRC is facing a host of urgent needs: its first priority is to try to protect the lives of those who have fled to escape the carnage, but it must also care for the wounded and sick and organize food distributions. To make matters worse, there is now a critical shortage of drinking water. Two ICRC sanitary engineers are trying to put the water treatment plants in Kigali and Kabgayi back into service, and two more will go next week to Butare, Gisenyi and Cyangugu. Ten tonnes of aluminium sulfate, a vital water treatment chemical, have been flown to Kigali from Kenya and another five tonnes to Burundi for use in Kabgayi, south of Gitarama. A reserve stock of 50 tonnes is being kept in Kenya. On 16 May a food convoy of cereals sent by the ICRC delegation in Kigali arrived at the stadium in Gitarama, where several thousand people have taken refuge. A large-scale food distribution is due to begin in the centre and east of the country in the next few days.

An ICRC surgical team is continuing to treat hundreds of wounded people at the Kabgayi complex. The ICRC is planning to transfer to Kabgayi some of the overflow from the central hospital in Kigali, which has a capacity of 400 patients and has now admitted 1,500.

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PRESS RELEASE N° 1776 / 20 May 1994

RWANDA: SAVING THE SURVIVORS

Geneva (ICRC) - The number of victims claimed by the wave of murderous violence that has swept Rwanda can no longer be estimated. Continued heavy fighting in Kigali and other regions has been accompanied by further massacres and prompted a mass exodus towards the centre of the country. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has located hundreds of thousands of displaced people gathered in various places, and in some cases has been able to bring them assistance. Some groups of displaced people, mainly Tutsis, came together as soon as the clashes broke out in the hope of escaping the bloodshed. They are still in mortal danger.

In resolution 918 of 16 May 1994, the United Nations Security Council decided to expand the mandate of UN troops to contribute to the security and protection of displaced persons, refugees and civilians at risk in Rwanda, in particular by setting up secure humanitarian areas. Only rapid action on this decision will ensure that people not participating in the hostilities receive effective protection.

On 19 May mortar bombs fell on the main hospital in Kigali, killing 30 wounded. This is yet another serious violation of international humanitarian law added to the countless atrocities committed in Rwanda. The ICRC calls on all the parties to the conflict to respect civilians, the wounded and staff of humanitarian organizations who are risking their lives to bring help to this stricken country.

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ICRC NEWS N° 21 / 25 May 1994

Violent clashes in Kigali

Fighting between government troops and forces of the Rwanda Patriotic Front has reached a new peak of violence in and around Kigali and at several points along the front line that divides the country. The streets of the capital are so dangerous that the ICRC team on the spot can no longer move around freely.

There have been exchanges of artillery fire in the city centre, near the hospitals. The central hospital, which is treating thousands of wounded, once again came under fire on 23 May. Mortar bombs had already hit the hospital on 19 May, killing 30 patients. The number of victims claimed by the latest onslaught is not known, as delegates have been unable to reach the building. According to hospital staff, the medical facilities are unusable. Some 40 wounded have been taken to the ICRC hospital in Kigali, and on 24 May about a hundred more reached Kabgayi, where another ICRC surgical team is working. During a further attack, the compound of the ICRC delegation in the capital was hit by a rocket on 25 May. Two Rwandan employees were killed and five other people were wounded. The delegation contacted the parties to the conflict, urging them to respect civilians, the wounded and the members of humanitarian organizations still present in Rwanda.

The ICRC delegation in Kigali has had to suspend its food distributions in and around the capital for lack of the necessary security guarantees. The volatile military situation and the incessant movements of hundreds of thousands of fleeing civilians have made it impossible for the ICRC to launch a large-scale food distribution programme. Yet food convoys are regularly arriving in Rwanda from Uganda, and others are shortly to be dispatched from Burundi. Convoys coming in from Tanzania are still held up at the border. The ICRC had built up vast stocks of food in these neighbouring countries with a view to setting up distributions for 700,000 displaced persons.

The needs for medical, nutritional and sanitation assistance are incalculable, but the top priority is to ensure the survival of those who have so far escaped the slaughter. Providing a measure of security for these people will be the task of the new contingents of UN troops.

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PRESS RELEASE N° 1777 / 26 May 1994

RWANDA: TWO ICRC EMPLOYEES KILLED

Geneva (ICRC) - Two Rwandans working for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) were killed on 25 May when a shell landed in the compound of the ICRC delegation in Kigali.

Four other local employees and a child received serious injuries. They were taken to the ICRC hospital near the delegation, where one of them is in a critical condition.

The ICRC made immediate representations to the parties to the conflict. The institution is deeply saddened by the death of its two employees and conveys its sincere condolences to their families.

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ICRC NEWS N° 22 / 1 June 1994

RWANDA

Hundreds of thousands displaced

The magnitude of the tragedy unfolding in Rwanda is immeasurable. A vast number of people have been displaced: estimates vary between one and two million. These people have lost everything. Many of them are wandering around the countryside completely bereft of shelter, food and medicines.

"Wave upon wave of displaced people"

During the past week alone, tens, even hundreds of thousands of people have fled the capital, Kigali. This is how the delegate in charge of the ICRC sub-delegation in Kabgayi, Aalame Fereydoun, described the scene on the road between Kigali and Gitarama: "Wave upon wave of displaced people are moving towards Gitarama. They can't stop along the way because every possible space is already crammed with displaced persons. These people are city-dwellers; they have no cattle with them, so no reserves of food. It is hard to see how they are going to survive the trip. Many of them won't make it." Some of those who have reached Gitarama are now setting off towards Kibuye.

Numerous other towns in Rwanda are completely overwhelmed by this human tide. Several hundred thousand totally destitute people have also gathered in the north and the west, in zones controlled by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (FPR).

A crisis beyond the capacity of the ICRC

The scale of the tragedy in Rwanda is well beyond the capacity of the ICRC. The Red Cross has been present since the start of the conflict and is currently assisting over 200,000 people in both government and FPR-controlled zones. During the last few days food distributions have been carried out in Gitarama, Kabgayi, Nyanza, Cyangugu and Byumba, and in the Ruhengeri area. A thousand casualties are being treated by Red Cross surgical teams in hospitals in Kigali and Kabgayi, and other hospitals have received medicines and medical supplies.

Aid programme for 750,000 people

In the coming days the ICRC will be setting up the necessary logistic structure to bring aid to 750,000 people in Rwanda. This is as much as it can do. "Other humanitarian organizations must step in quickly", said Daniel Augstburger, the delegate at ICRC headquarters in charge of operations in Rwanda.

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS N° 94/24 / 2 June 1994

NEW ICRC BUDGET FOR RWANDA OVER 100 MILLION SWISS FRANCS

Geneva (ICRC) - In view of the scale of the tragedy in Rwanda, where between one and two million displaced people are without any means of subsistence, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has had to increase its budget estimate for operations in the country. A further 65 million Swiss francs are needed over and above the initial 1994 budget of 39 million, bringing the total to 104 million Swiss francs. At present this is the institution's largest budget for the current year.

In recent weeks the ICRC has distributed food to 200,000 displaced people in different parts of the country. Under the new plan of action some 750,000 displaced people will receive food aid, amounting to 8,000 tonnes per month. Logistic bases have been set up in Rwanda itself and in Burundi, Uganda, Zaire and Tanzania to facilitate access to the beneficiaries, who are totally dependent on humanitarian aid. Blankets, plastic sheeting for shelter, soap, and jerrycans for carrying water will also be distributed to 100,000 families.

The hospitals where ICRC surgical teams are working should be able to care for 1,000 seriously wounded. Support will be given to other health facilities to help them meet the medical needs of 750,000 people.

The supply of clean water is a top priority. During the coming weeks the ICRC will do its utmost to keep the country's major water treatment plants in service.

If possible, the ICRC will launch a programme in September, to distribute seeds and agricultural implements to 70 000 families.

The ICRC currently has 87 delegates working for its Rwanda operation, both on the spot and in neighbouring countries. One of their main tasks will be to continue making representations to the various parties to the conflict in order to stop the massacres, and to secure respect for the civilian population.

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COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS 94/25 / 7 June 1994

RWANDA: MORE THAN 600 CHILDREN EVACUATED FROM BUTARE

On 5 and 6 June over 600 children were evacuated to Burundi from Butare in southern Rwanda. More than half were orphans who at the beginning of the crisis had been transferred to Butare from the Kakiru orphanage in Kigali for safety. They came under attack in Butare on 1 May, when 21 children and 13 volunteers of the Rwandese Red Cross lost their lives.

This latest evacuation was organized by *Terre des Hommes*, while the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) provided the logistics necessary to receive the children in the border town of Kayanza. A total of 311 children have already been taken on by Red Cross trucks to the Burundi capital Bujumbura, where they are being cared for by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and *Terre des Hommes*. In the next few days the children will be transferred to the Zairian town of Bukavu, where suitable accommodation has already been found.

Daniel Philippin, head of the ICRC delegation in Burundi, stressed the fact that the operation would not have been possible without the help of officers of the Rwandan army and representatives of the civilian authorities.

The number of children in Rwanda who have been displaced or orphaned is a matter of both immediate and future concern, calling for sustained attention. The ICRC is currently providing assistance in the form of food, cooking utensils, blankets and mattresses to three orphanages in Goma (Zaire), Gisenye and Nyanza, where over a thousand Rwandan children have taken refuge. On Sunday 11 children were evacuated from Kabgayi to the orphanage in Nyanza, and others will probably follow.

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ICRC NEWS N° 24 / 15 juin 1994

ICRC HOSPITALS OVERWHELMED

The ICRC hospitals in Rwanda are overwhelmed. In Kigali and Nyanza ICRC medical and surgical teams are treating hundreds of people, most of them seriously wounded. The main problem facing the two hospitals is obtaining supplies of medicines, food and drinking water.

Over 800 operations in Kigali hospital

Since the beginning of the crisis 712 people have been admitted to the hospital in Kigali, most of them suffering from bullet or shrapnel wounds. The surgical team has performed over 800 operations since mid-April, and hundreds of other casualties have received outpatient treatment. A nearby house has been converted for use by convalescing patients, even though the security conditions are extremely precarious. The hospital has been hit by shells several times. But there is new life too in Kigali: recently there have been eight births at the hospital.

Medical supplies reach Nyanza

The ICRC hospital in Kabgayi was transferred to Nyanza last week. At present 270 wounded are being treated there, in extremely difficult conditions. The main problem, lack of water, has just been solved: an ICRC sanitary engineer has succeeded in tapping springs which provide some 5,000 litres per hour. On 10 June a truck carrying medicines and medical supplies arrived in Nyanza, just as the hospital's stocks were running out. In the next few days an ICRC builder will be carrying out structural repairs to the premises. The ICRC is also providing medicines to dozens of health facilities elsewhere in Rwanda.

ICRC NEWS N° 25 / 22 June 1994

VIOLENT CLASHES IN KIGALI

Hundreds of people have been killed or injured in Kigali in clashes during the past few days. The ICRC has not been spared, either: one employee lost her life and three other employees were wounded when three shells hit the ICRC hospital compound last Sunday morning, 19 June.

Dozens of wounded every day

Dozens of casualties are treated at the ICRC hospital each day, many of them as out-patients. In this 200-bed facility last weekend there were over 600 patients. Since mid-April ICRC surgical teams have carried out more than 1,000 operations there.

Second medical facility in use

In the RPF-controlled area of the city the ICRC has just moved into the King Faisal hospital, where a surgical team from *Médecins sans Frontières* is stationed. An ICRC sanitary engineer has started repairs to ensure that the hospital has an

independent and sufficient supply of drinking water.

Since the ICRC hospital in the other part of Kigali is seriously overcrowded, 107 patients, mainly women and children, were transferred to the King Faisal hospital on 20 June.

4,000 tonnes of food distributed

Over the past two months the ICRC has distributed 4,000 tonnes of food to some 350,000 displaced people. It has set up several logistic bases in the countries bordering on Rwanda, with the aim of getting aid through to as many as 750,000 beneficiaries.

COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS N° 94/29 / 28 June 1994

RWANDA: UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Geneva (ICRC) - Thousands of children in Rwanda are homeless, separated from their families, waiting to receive humanitarian assistance. Some of them have found refuge in orphanages, others in camps for displaced people. In many cases children at risk have had to be evacuated to countries outside Rwanda to save their lives. It has been reported that some children have been transferred abroad without the necessary precautions being taken to record their identity.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) together with UNHCR, UNICEF and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have therefore drawn up guidelines on how to deal with this situation. These guidelines are based on the principles contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977.

As far as possible children should be helped on the spot, in their own cultural environment. In exceptional circumstances transfer out of the country can be envisaged.

In any event, children leaving their country of origin must be properly identified and registered. Systematic registration makes it possible to keep track of them, inform interested persons of their whereabouts and facilitate family reunifications. The ICRC's Central Tracing Agency will centralize the registration cards of all the children concerned.

In the meantime, many relatives have approached the ICRC seeking news of their children. Such information can be provided only if all the children evacuated are registered. On the other hand, as soon as security conditions allow, tracing will be initiated to reunite separated children with their families in Rwanda or abroad. Priority will be given to finding the relatives of children who have been registered.

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ICRC NEWS N° 26 / 29 June 1994

DISPLACED PEOPLE IN DESPERATE NEED

The needs of the displaced people in Rwanda are enormous. To save their lives, full-scale food, medical, supply and sanitation programmes are required.

Help for Nyarushishi camp

The ICRC has been providing assistance in Nyarushishi camp, near Cyangugu, since 20 april. Each month 107 tonnes of food are being distributed to the approximately 8,000 displaced people there, and 884 children suffering from malnutrition are receiving special food at a therapeutic centre. Some 500 people in the camp require intensive medical after-care and approximately 150 consultations are given daily in its four dispensaries. In addition, a sanitary engineer has laid on drinking water.

Medicines and additional staff for the ICRC hospital in Kigali

The extremely difficult conditions in the ICRC hospital in Kigali have improved, thanks to the arrival of a convoy of medical supplies. Travelling with the convoy were a surgeon, a doctor and a logistics expert to back up the staff already on the spot. The stocks of the second ICRC hospital in Kigali, the King Faisal hospital in the RPF-controlled zone, were also replenished. On 27 june, 45 casualties were transferred there from the completely overcrowded ICRC hospital in the government-held zone, and further evacuations will have to be considered to enable it to continue working.

Nyanza hospital and orphanages transferred to Rilima

The hospital run by the ICRC in Nyanza, and the two nearby orphanages with more than 1,000 children, are currently being transferred to Rilima in the east of the country.

108 expatriates at work

The ICRC is now helping some 400,000 people throughout Rwanda. The logistic bases in Zaire (Bukavu and Goma), Uganda (Kabale), Burundi (Bujumbura) and Tanzania (Ngara) are coordinated from Nairobi in Kenya. In all, 108 expatriate staff are working in Rwanda itself and at the operation's five logistic bases.

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ICRC NEWS N° 27 / 6 July 1994

OVER 1,200 OPERATIONS AT ICRC HOSPITAL IN KIGALI

Since mid-April surgical teams at the ICRC hospital in Kigali have performed over 1,200 operations and treated several thousand out-patients in hazardous conditions. Following the city's take-over by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), the number of new patients has dropped, and only 10 casualties were admitted on 4 July. Since the 200-bed hospital currently has more than 300 patients, an extra floor has just been equipped to alleviate the overcrowding.

Nyanza hospital moved

The ICRC's hospital in Nyanza has been moved to Rilima and the transfer was completed on 5 July. Patients there will continue to be cared for by two surgical teams from *Médecins sans frontières* who are already on the spot. ICRC medical activities in the region will focus on the camps for the displaced, where a dysentery epidemic is threatening over 100,000 people.

Orphans in Nyamata

About one thousand orphans whom the ICRC had been assisting for the past few weeks in Nyanza have now almost all made their way to Nyamata. Other unaccompanied children from Ruhango, who had been abandoned near the Busoro bridge, are also being moved to Nyamata as a matter of urgency owing to the threat of epidemics and malnutrition.

Nyarushishi camp: therapeutic feeding centre for 930 children

The lives of many children are also at risk in the camp for displaced persons at Nyarushishi near Cyangugu. Some 930 of them - many suffering from a severe lack of protein - are being cared for at the camp's therapeutic feeding centre. Another 1,430 unaccompanied children in Nyarushishi will be registered by the ICRC in the coming days in order to facilitate efforts to reunite them with their families at a later stage.

Over 6,500 tonnes of food distributed

Since mid-April the ICRC has distributed over 6,500 tonnes of food and medical supplies worth over 2 million Swiss francs. Further distributions are planned in the near future. The ICRC recently provided food aid for the first time to 15,000 displaced persons in the Giseny area and to 6,500 people in Sanza. In the medium term it expects to assist some 750,000 people in need.

10,000 people receive food aid in Kigali

In the first distribution of food aid since the RPF gained control of Kigali, 10,000 displaced people in the St. Michel and St. Famille churches were given food by the ICRC on 5 July. This assistance was possible thanks to the ICRC's stocks in Kigali.

ICRC NEWS N° 28 / 13 July 1994

THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN TO BE REGISTERED

In Rwanda, the problem of thousands of unaccompanied children is as crucial as ever. The humanitarian organizations present there and in Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania are doing everything they possibly can to give these children the protection and assistance to which they are entitled. An essential part of caring for them is to identify every child, keep track of each one at all times and trace their families.

Registration of unaccompanied children has begun

For this purpose large-scale registration is under way. Several thousand children, for instance, have been evacuated to the neighbouring countries of Rwanda and to Europe, where National Red Cross Society tracing services are busy registering them. UNHCR has identified some 3,000 children in the Benaco refugee camp in Tanzania. In Zaire, several hundred children are being identified in the Bukavu area and in Goma by various organizations and institutions. In Rwanda, over 1,400 children are currently being registered by ICRC delegates in the Nyarushishi camps near Cyangugu and at an orphanage in Gisenyi. "Cooperation with all these organizations and institutions is going very well", said Alfredo Mallet, the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency coordinator for Rwanda.

Thousands of parents without news of their children

Meanwhile hundreds of parents have already contacted the ICRC and the tracing services of National Red Cross Societies or other organizations in an attempt to find their children or those of relatives who have lost their lives.

Pooling of information indispensable

To find and reunite children, parents or relatives wherever they may be, the ICRC has offered its services to centralize all information in a single data bank. "This

pooling of information is indispensable to give the parents the best possible chance of finding their children again", explained Coraline de Wurstemberger, a delegate of the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency in Geneva. "It also requires good coordination by all concerned", she goes on, "since every child's file has to be kept up to date".

The data base thus created already contains the names of almost 900 registered children. It is now being installed in all the ICRC's offices in Rwanda, the neighbouring countries and Geneva. The

information will be widely publicized by every means available so that as many children as possible can be restored to their families.

ICRC staff increased

To ensure that the necessary data is collected, centralized and redistributed, the ICRC has increased its expatriate staff in Rwanda: eight delegates have already been assigned to this priority task.

ICRC NEWS N 29 / 20 July 1994

RWANDA/ZAIRE MAJOR ICRC AIRLIFT

The ICRC is setting up a major airlift to bring in the relief supplies and logistic resources needed for its operation to assist the vast numbers of Rwandan refugees arriving in Zaire. During the last few days ICRC delegates on the spot have distributed 300 tonnes of rice, beans and oil to some 300,000 people in refugee camps in the Goma area, and the ICRC has set up tents in the grounds of the town's hospital to provide treatment for several hundred war wounded. About 200 unaccompanied children and orphans have been transferred from Goma to locations outside the town and have been given food and blankets.

An aircraft made available to the ICRC by the LWF (Lutheran World Federation) is already making two or three round trips daily from Nairobi, bringing in 15 tonnes of supplies each time. During the coming days 350 tonnes of food, two trucks and five cross-country vehicles will be flown in aboard this plane.

A cargo aircraft chartered by the ICRC will make eight round trips a day, each incoming flight carrying 16 tonnes of supplies (1,000 rolls of plastic sheeting, 4.6 tonnes of medical supplies and 25 tonnes of soap).

An aircraft provided by the US State Department will make two to four flights a day, transporting 1,443 tonnes of food. Next week, six flights from Europe

financed by the British government and the US Defense Department will take 35 trucks and other vehicles, four trailers and 17 tonnes of emergency medical supplies to Goma.

There is also growing concern about the situation in the Zairian town of Bukavu, where over 200,000 refugees have arrived so far. The ICRC will be increasing its road convoys from Bujumbura, Burundi, in order to come to their aid.

The ICRC is planning to conduct an emergency relief operation for the refugees in Zaire until the specialized agencies are able to step in.

ICRC NEWS N° 30 / 27 July 1994

RWANDA
HALF A MILLION PEOPLE NEED AID IN SOUTH-WEST

Recent surveys carried out in the Gikongoro and Cyangugu areas show that living conditions for some 500,000 people are deteriorating rapidly and that a massive effort is needed to avert a further catastrophe. The ICRC is increasing its staff in the region in preparation for the distribution of 8,000 tonnes of food per month.

The ICRC will provide not only food aid but also clean water, medical supplies and materials for building shelters.

The programme will cover about 30,000 people in the Cyangugu, 120,000 in the Kibuye and 350,000 in the Gikongoro areas.

Aircraft to make four round trips daily

From Friday 29 July, a Hercules C-130 will make four round trips daily between the Burundi capital Bujumbura and Cyangugu, where the ICRC will have about 50 trucks ready to take the supplies on to other destinations. ICRC expatriate staff in the area will be increased fourfold to 38, plus 38 expatriate truck-drivers assigned to the programme.

450,000 litres of water per hour

The ICRC is still working in other parts of Rwanda. The institution's sanitary engineers have taken steps to supply three districts of the capital, Kigali, with 450,000 litres of drinking water per hour. The water will also go to the ICRC hospital, where about 200 casualties are being treated, the King Faisal hospital, and five reception centres for children who have become separated from their parents.

New prisoners registered

The ICRC has registered 65 new prisoners in Kigali, bringing the total number of prisoners visited in the capital and in Rilima to 182.

1,700 children identified

Registration of Rwandan children separated from their parents continues in refugee camps in Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire. Details concerning the identity of 1,700 children have already been sent to the ICRC Tracing Agency in Nairobi, where all such information collected by the humanitarian organizations is being centralized.

ICRC NEWS N° 31 / 3 August 1994

FOOD AND MEDICAL AID

Hospitals and waterworks are being repaired

Every day, several hundred of the Rwandans who fled to Zaire are now heading home across the border. Whilst the return of these refugees is the only long-term solution, it should take place gradually. Another mass migration, this time back into Rwanda, could spell new disaster.

It is vital that the Rwandans currently returning to their country find adequate food, medical care, hygiene and safety conditions when they arrive. The ICRC has repaired the pumping stations providing drinking water to Gisenye and Ruhengeri, the two main towns in north-western Rwanda. The hospitals there will also be restored to working order. *Médecins sans Frontières* and *Médecins du Monde* have set up dispensaries along the routes taken by the refugees on their way home, so that people suffering from dysentery or cholera can be given proper medical care. Every effort must be made to prevent the epidemics which are killing large numbers of refugees in Zaire from spreading into Rwanda.

In addition, the ICRC distributed 50 tonnes of food at the end of July to some 50,000 Rwandans who had returned to the Ruhengeri region.

Soon one million displaced people in Rwanda will be receiving ICRC aid

The ICRC is continuing to step up its food aid distributions for the estimated one to two million displaced people in Rwanda. At present, almost 800,000 of them are receiving food rations in various parts of Rwanda: 370,000 people in the north (Mulindi, Byumba, Rutare), 280,000 in the south-west (Nyarushishi, Gikongoro, Kibuye, Cyangugu), 60,000

in the east (Kibungu, Rusumo), 40,000 in the south (Rilima) and 40,000 in Kigali. In the next few days, food will be distributed to half a million people in the Gikongoro and Kibuye regions alone, bringing the total number of displaced people being helped by the ICRC up to one million. Food is being flown in daily from Nairobi to the airports in Bujumbura, Goma and Cyangugu and then transported up-country by lorry.

Protection of detainees

The ICRC is currently visiting 217 people detained in Kigali and Rilima by the new Rwandan government for reasons connected with the political situation.

Unaccompanied children

In coordination with UNHCR, UNICEF and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the ICRC has set up a programme to register all unaccompanied children now scattered throughout Rwanda and the neighbouring countries, so that attempts can be made to trace their parents or close relatives and thus reunite the children with their families. This programme, which will probably involve several tens of thousands of children and represents a formidable task, has only just begun. To date, 1,800 unaccompanied children have been registered in Rwanda, Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania.

Surgical unit in Goma

At the end of July the ICRC established a field hospital in Goma (Zaire), where a surgical team is now caring for some 500 war casualties.

The ICRC is furthermore continuing to distribute about 100 tonnes of food a day to Rwandan refugees in Zaire to supplement the relief operations conducted in the Goma region by the various humanitarian organizations on the spot.

ICRC staff deployment

There are now 145 expatriates working in Rwanda and the neighbouring countries, including 42 members of various European and North American National Societies and the Australian Red Cross, and several hundred local staff.

ICRC NEWS N° 32 / 10 August 1994

DANGER OF NEW MASS EXODUS TO ZAIRE

A further wave of refugees may be driven by hunger and fear into Zaire from south-western Rwanda, where the security situation is deteriorating daily. Vandalism and looting are rife, making it increasingly difficult to bring in

humanitarian relief supplies. Cereal crops have been destroyed and all the people still in the area - estimated at half a million - are entirely dependent on food aid from outside.

The humanitarian organizations are doing their best to cope with the situation. The ICRC has already provided enough food for some 270,000 people who have gathered in the south of Gikongoro prefecture, and is about to begin distributions to another 200,000 in the north of the prefecture. Although the organizations can go some way towards solving the problem of hunger, they are in no position to guarantee the safety of the population.

Everything possible must be done to avert a further large-scale exodus into Zaire, this time south of Lake Kivu. In view of the current lack of security, such an eventuality cannot be ruled out.

ICRC NEWS 34 / 24 August 1994

RWANDA

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DISPLACED PEOPLE LEAVING GIKONGORO AREA

Following the withdrawal of French troops from the safe zone, ICRC delegates have reported tens of thousands of displaced people on the move from the area north of Gikongoro towards the Zaire border. As yet, no mass exodus of the 250,000 displaced people in nine camps south of Gikongoro seems imminent. The ICRC is distributing about 2,000 tonnes of food monthly in these camps.

The ICRC has also provided medicines, medical supplies, food and a generator to the 150-bed Kigeme hospital, six kilometres from Gikongoro, where local staff are doing remarkable work. The hospital is overwhelmed with patients and the ICRC is considering how best to cope with the serious medical situation, including the possibility of opening another medical facility. Priority is being given to patients suffering from malaria, severe dysentery, acute respiratory infections, meningitis and other conditions prevalent in the camps. The ICRC is already providing assistance to seven dispensaries in the area.

Extra staff

The ICRC has already strengthened its teams in the south-western zone during recent weeks and is sending in ten more doctors and nurses to set up the new medical programme. Some of these staff have been working up to now in Goma, where on 20 August the ICRC closed the field hospital it had installed in the sports centre. The last remaining patients will continue to receive treatment from other humanitarian organizations.

"Since there are so many organizations working with refugees in the Goma area, the ICRC will concentrate its efforts on the population inside Rwanda", explained

Johanna Grombach, head of the ICRC's new Ruhengeri subdelegation. "Here in Ruhengeri we are ready to assist up to 350,000 refugees returning from Zaire", she added.

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RWANDA

NYESHA SAVED BY A PHOTOGRAPHER

Four-year-old Nyesha has not seen his parents for four months, and has had to fend for himself. Last Monday he almost lost his life trying to get on the last truck of the day taking displaced people across the Ruzizi II bridge to refugee camps in Zaire. When about a hundred people surged forward to try to board the truck, Nyesha was trampled underfoot. Luckily a photographer saw what was happening and managed to extricate him. An ICRC delegate who was at the scene immediately took the little boy to a hospital in Bukavu, where he is on the way to recovery.

The Ruzizi II incident was filmed by ITN television. As soon as British viewers saw the pictures, hundreds of people phoned ITN offering donations to the Red Cross.

Nyesha is only one of tens of thousands of Rwandan children who have become separated from their parents. More than 5,000 of them have already been registered by the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations in the hope that they can be reunited with their families.

ICRC NEWS N° 35 / 31 August 1994

RWANDA

THOUSANDS OF DISPLACED PEOPLE RETURN HOME TO SOW THE FIELDS

In northern Rwanda, the camps for the displaced are emptying. Families are returning to their villages to begin planting a new crop. The ICRC has launched a vast agricultural aid programme: 1,800 tonnes of maize and bean seed, as well as 58,000 hoes, will be distributed in September to 136,000 families.

The first distributions took place this week in the far north of the country, "For the

last three years farmers here have been prevented by the war from tilling their land", explained Jürg Eglin, an ICRC agronomist. "The first rains have now fallen in the past few days and if there's a good harvest in December or January, this part of the country could quickly become self-sufficient again". In eastern Rwanda the situation is different; the harvest began in June and is just ending, and the

population have managed to lay in some food stocks. In the safe zone, other organizations are planning to distribute seed.

Seed programme could yield 15,000 tonnes of food

If the weather is favourable, the seed distributions should have a marked effect: 2 kg of maize seed produces up to 30 kg of maize while 2 kg of bean seed yields between 20 and 30 kg of produce at harvest time. Thus, the beneficiaries of the ICRC's agricultural programme may expect to harvest 15,000 tonnes of food by the beginning of next year.

Danger - Mines!

Farmers out sowing their fields will be facing a terrible risk: mines. Two or three victims are already being brought to hospital in Kigali each day.

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RWANDA: 1,097 PRISONERS REGISTERED BY ICRC

As part of its mandate in Rwanda, the ICRC has so far registered 1,097 prisoners being held by the new government now set up in Kigali. They were visited in their places of detention in Kibungo, Rilima, Kigali and Butare. Another visit is also now under way in Gitarama. Some detainees have meanwhile been transferred to the central prison in the Rwandan capital. Delegates distributed relief items (mostly blankets) during the visits. The ICRC plans to make regular visits to places of detention in Rwanda in accordance with its own customary procedures. Delegates will register all prisoners to whom they are given access. A further four delegates are being sent to Rwanda for this purpose in the next few days.



RWANDA THE ICRC STAYED ON WHEN OTHERS LEFT

Before the resumption of hostilities in Rwanda this April, the ICRC was already conducting a huge relief operation in the country. During the whole of 1993 around a million displaced people, forced to leave their homes after the outbreak of fighting in October 1990 and a second attack mounted by the FPR in February 1993, received assistance. The programme was carried out in cooperation with the Rwanda Red Cross and with some help from the World Food Programme.

Priority given to the protection of vulnerable groups

Following the death of President Habyarimana on 6 April 1994, the ICRC was the only humanitarian organization to remain on the spot. Its delegates were direct eye witnesses of the dramatic events in the capital Kigali and did everything they could to prevent the worst from happening. Approaches were made regularly to the civilian and military authorities on both sides, and to militia leaders and other influential people to stress the ICRC's concern. As a neutral, impartial and independent institution, the ICRC tried to bring some humanity into the prevailing chaos.

The main aim of all these efforts was to protect vulnerable groups in the capital Kigali and also elsewhere in the country. For example, in July ICRC delegates were in Kabgayi, in the midst of thousands of displaced people who were in mortal danger. The ICRC presence could not prevent some killings, but it certainly saved thousands of lives.

The ICRC also realized very quickly how bad conditions were for people living in south-western Rwanda, especially for several thousand Tutsis massed in a football stadium in Cyangugu and later transferred to Nyarushishi camp. With the arrival of the French troops the security situation improved and the ICRC was able to continue its humanitarian operation in a safer environment.

Diplomats in Geneva and New York were kept regularly informed about the terrible situation in Rwanda. The ICRC's reports were backed up by the international media, which were briefed by delegates in the field.

Short-term assistance in refugee camps

A huge cross-border medical and relief programme was launched immediately. Throughout the crisis the ICRC remained in Kigali and set up several sub-delegations in different parts of the country. When the flood of Rwandans streamed into Tanzania in May and into Zaire in August the ICRC was in a position to take rapid action and provide the refugees with food during the interim period before UNHCR and other organizations were able to cope with the refugee situation.

THE ICRC'S LARGEST OPERATION IN 1994 *Relief: More than 25,000 tonnes of food distributed to displaced people and refugees*

Since the outbreak of violence in April this year, the ICRC has distributed 25,000 tonnes of food and other supplies and thousands of blankets, cooking pots, plastic sheeting and jerrycans to more than a million displaced people inside Rwanda, as well as short-term assistance to 1.3 million refugees in Tanzania and Zaire. The operation continues, with 8,000 tonnes of food being distributed monthly. It represents a major challenge in terms of logistics: aircraft make regular flights to Kigali, Goma, Cyangugu and Bujumbura and a fleet of 130 trucks is used for distribution within the country.

Medical assistance: more than 1,000 operations performed

Immediately after the outbreak of violence the ICRC provided support to existing medical facilities in Kigali and opened its own field hospital in the city, where its surgical teams performed more than 1,000 operations up to the end of July. ICRC surgeons were also working in hospitals in Kabgayi and Rilima. In Goma the ICRC set up another surgical and medical unit where both military and civilian patients were treated. This was closed at the end of August. Dispensaries all over the country are receiving medicines and medical materials through the Red Cross. Medical supplies worth over half a million Swiss francs have been distributed to date.

Water: a vital need

Ensuring a supply of safe water has been one of the priorities of the current operation. ICRC sanitary engineers have saved thousands of lives by providing water to camps for displaced people, hospitals and other public buildings. As soon as the situation allowed, engineers also repaired the water plants in Kigali (an output of 450,000 litres per hour), Ruhengeri, Gisenye and Butare. The necessary chemicals are regularly supplied to local workers to keep the clean water running.

Distribution of seeds in September

In some areas of other Rwanda displaced people have left the camps and returned to their villages, where they are resuming their normal activities. The ICRC is planning to distribute 1,800 tonnes of bean and maize seeds to 600,000 beneficiaries in September.

Over 2,000 prisoners registered so far

The new government in Kigali has guaranteed the ICRC access to all prisoners. So far more than 2,000 prisoners have been registered in Kigali, Kibungo, Rilima, Butare and Gitarama. Follow-up visits to all these prisoners and the registration of new ones will be high on the agenda of the ICRC in Rwanda.

Thousands of unaccompanied children registered

In this conflict as in so many others children have been the main victims. Thousands, indeed probably over 100,000 of them have become separated from their parents and relatives or have simply been abandoned. Many of them are now living in centres or camps for the displaced in Rwanda or abroad where they are cared for by humanitarian organizations. The ICRC and these other organizations are registering as many children as they can in the hope of reuniting them as soon as possible with their parents. All the information collected is centralized by the ICRC in a data bank in Nairobi and forwarded to all Red Cross offices in the field as well as to the offices of the other organizations concerned. Hundreds of parents have approached these offices and a few family reunifications have already been organized. By the end of August more than 6,000 children had been registered.

Around 160 expatriate staff and several hundred local employees are carrying out the ICRC's programmes in Rwanda.

Budget: 108 million Swiss francs

The budget for the Rwandan operation is the ICRC's largest this year. Some 108 million Swiss francs (76 million US dollars) will certainly be needed to cover all aspects of the operation. At this stage it seems possible that this budget may have extended if the huge remaining needs are to be met.

September 1994

ICRC NEWS N° 36 / 7 September 1994

RWANDA
10,000 UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN REGISTERED SO FAR

Details of the identity of nearly 10,000 children separated from their parents have been registered to date in Rwanda and in refugee camps in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi.

The ICRC is giving top priority to this task. "We are only at the initial stages", said Alfredo Mallet of the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency. "This operation will certainly

keep us busy for years to come."

Efficient cooperation

The ICRC on its own could not collect and process all the details gleaned from the children. It is therefore working in cooperation with other relief agencies, religious institutions and centres for unaccompanied children. Registrations are coordinated by eleven ICRC delegates. The information is then fed into a centralized data bank which can be consulted in all ICRC offices in the region: Kigali, Ruhengeri, Gikongoro and Butare (Rwanda), Kabale (Uganda), Goma and Bukavu (Zaire), Ngara (Tanzania) and Bujumbura (Burundi). This makes it possible to reply to the queries of Rwandans who turn to the ICRC in the hope of finding their children. So far there have been about a hundred such enquiries, and a dozen cases have been solved.

"Many families don't seem to know that the service exists. It was set up by the ICRC and other organizations — UNHCR, UNICEF, the Save the Children Fund, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies — which are all anxious to assist these children. Several radio stations have now started broadcasting information about the tracing service in the local language, Kinyarwanda, so as to make it better known. This is a great help", said Alfredo Mallet.

5,000 Red Cross messages

Another service seeing a rapid expansion in the region is the Red Cross message network. In recent weeks more than 5,000 messages have been forwarded. At first messages could be exchanged only between refugee camps in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi or with other countries, but a few days ago they began to be distributed within Rwanda as well. Messages for Kigali are now accepted if the sender is sure that the addressee is in the capital.

Prisoners too can contact relatives

The refugees are not the only ones using the Red Cross message service. The 2,000 prisoners registered by the ICRC in six places of detention in Rwanda are also given the opportunity to write to their families.

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ICRC NEWS N° 37 / 14 September 1994

RWANDA: WATER IS A PRIORITY

In order to prevent the outbreak of diseases and help the country's recovery, since april 1994 the ICRC has intensified its water and sanitation activities to supply fresh water to people in need. Nine engineers are currently working all over the country. "We are cooperating as closely as possible with the national water and electricity company Electrogaz to ensure that our efforts will have a long-lasting effect", explained Yves Etienne, a sanitation engineer at the ICRC in Geneva.

Situation in Kigali still critical

The water supply situation in Kigali has definitely improved but remains critical, estimated ICRC water and sanitation engineer Sylvie Loth. Production at the Kimisagara main waterworks is now more than 970 cu.m per hour. The main problem is the power supply and the fuel. Some 30,000 litres of diesel have so far been supplied by the ICRC, but solutions have to be found to fill the gap. Until the lines between Kigali and the main power station at Mukungwa have been reestablished, 6,000 litres of fuel are needed per day to keep the water in Kigali running. With the help of ten tankers the ICRC is also distributing 60 cu.m of water daily to ten different places (hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages) in the Rwandan capital.

Nine waterworks have resumed production

Besides the capital Kigali, waterworks in eight other towns - Gisenye, Ruhengeri, Cyangugu, Kibuye, Gikongoro, Kabgayi, Gitarama and Butare - have resumed production thanks to the ICRC's assistance. ICRC engineers have carried out surveys and given the necessary support to the employees of Electrogaz. In all, 150 tonnes of aluminium sulphate, 12 tonnes of chlorine and 62 tonnes of lime have been distributed to date, as well as spare parts, fuel and generators. Another major achievement was the restoration of the electricity lines between Ruhengeri and Gisenye. As a result electricity is now being supplied to the Ghgihira water

treatment plant near Gisenye, which started working again after some repairs at the beginning of August. This is extremely important for the return of the refugees from the neighbouring camps in Zaire.

Water supply in the camps and prisons

Throughout the crisis the ICRC supplied water to five camps inside Rwanda. Whereas the situation has been stabilized in most of the camps, the need for fresh water is currently very high in the camps south of Gikongoro. Five sanitation engineers are working there at present to ensure that 65,000 people have an adequate supply of water. The construction of latrines in all these camps was essential to prevent the outbreak of diseases.

Surveys of the water supply systems in the prisons are also under way. The knowledge acquired during regular visits by the ICRC to the Rwandan prisons since the early 1980s will certainly help its engineers to remedy any water shortage there in the very near future. In the last few weeks more than 2,000 prisoners have been registered by the ICRC in seven prisons in various parts of the country: Kibungo, Rilima, Butare, Gitarama, Kigali (prison and police station) and Ruhengeri.

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A new brochure on Rwanda is available at the ICRC press division: tel: + + 41 22 730 2317

CICR NEWS N° 39 / 28 September 1994

RWANDA

GOOD DONOR RESPONSE

The ICRC is so far satisfied with the donors' response to its 104 million Swiss francs appeal. By the end of the year the expenses of the largest ICRC operation in 1994 should be covered. With 47 million Swiss francs, the European Union is currently the largest donor to this operation, followed by individual States and, with around 8 million Swiss francs, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Over a million displaced persons assisted

The ICRC operation is still growing. Some 12,000 tonnes of food have been distributed to one million beneficiaries this September, and the ICRC intends to distribute another 14,000 tonnes to 1.1 million people in October. The total distributed during the last four months of the year should thus come to more than

50,000 tonnes. "This operation is reaching the scale of the Somalia operation, which was the largest in any single country in the ICRC's history", comments Daniel Augstburger, head of the Rwanda task force at ICRC headquarters in Geneva. A second seed distribution is also planned for early next year so that the population's self-sufficiency can be largely restored by the main harvest in June 1995.

More than 3,000 prisoners visited

The ICRC has another very important task in Rwanda, namely visits to prisons and police stations. The government in Kigali has agreed to the conditions set by the ICRC for them and more than 3,000 prisoners have meanwhile been visited. ICRC delegates assess the conditions in the prisons and provide the prisoners with desperately needed supplies. Reports on the conditions found in all places visited are regularly submitted to the Ministries of Justice and Defence.

Other ICRC activities include the registration of thousands of unaccompanied children and the installation of a message service for adults in and outside Rwanda.

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ICRC NEWS N° 43 / 26 October 1994

***RWANDA
25,000 CHILDREN REGISTERED IN ROUND-THE-CLOCK
OPERATION***

ICRC tracing teams, working in cooperation with other organizations, have so far registered 25,000 children separated from their parents in the Rwandan conflict. At the same time, more than a thousand parents have filed tracing requests with the ICRC in an attempt to find their children.

Fourteen ICRC delegates (in Rwanda, in neighbouring countries and in Nairobi) and over 400 local staff are working hard to process all the registration forms. In Nairobi, where the information is centralized, three teams take turns entering all the details in the database. "It is literally a round-the-clock operation", explained Olga Villarrubia, ICRC regional tracing coordinator in Nairobi, "the three shifts are working day and night". For each registered child at least two or three identities have to be taken into account, usually the names of the mother, the father and another close relative so as to increase the child's chances of being reunited with his or her family. "Since the Cambodian tragedy this is the largest programme for unaccompanied children undertaken by the ICRC", said Catherine Gendre, tracing coordinator for Rwanda.

All the information registered in Nairobi is made available to the ICRC's field offices

in Rwanda and elsewhere in the region: Goma and Bukavu (Zaire), Ngara (Tanzania), Bujumbura (Burundi) and Kabale (Uganda). Families contact these offices to find out whether their children are among those registered. "We are also eager to exchange information with other organizations, such as UNHCR, UNICEF and Save the Children Fund, for this facilitates tracing activities", stressed Coraline de Wursterberger, deputy head of the Africa Sector at the ICRC's Tracing Agency in Geneva.

Over 100 children reunited with their parents

Thanks to the ICRC' efforts, after four months' work the results are very encouraging: over 100 children have been reunited with their parents. For others contact has already been restored through the message system established by the ICRC, in cooperation with National Red Cross Societies, for the victims of the Rwandan conflict (more than 20,000 such messages have been collected and delivered since the beginning of April). The success of this operation, even though only a small part of the problems have as yet been solved, is also due to the efforts of the BBC and Radio Agatashya set up by "Reporters sans frontières", which make daily broadcasts announcing the names of the parents sought.

8,000 prisoners visited

To date the ICRC has registered 8,000 prisoners throughout Rwanda. They are regularly visited by ICRC delegates in accordance with customary ICRC criteria. Between July and October the main detention centres have been given medical and other assistance (4,410 blankets, 5,448 bars of soap and 3,045 plates). All prisoners registered so far also have the possibility to send Red Cross messages to their relatives.

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ICRC NEWS N° 44 / 2 November 1994

RWANDA

A SONG FOR INGABELE

We first met Ingabele in the Ndoshu orphanage in Goma (Zaire), just across the border from Rwanda. The six-year-old was crying silently, tears rolling down her cheeks. Not surprisingly, what she had been through in the previous six months had made a terrible and lasting impression on her.

"Soldiers were everywhere, everyone was screaming. It was dark...". Last May, together with hundreds of other Rwandans, both soldiers and civilians, Ingabele had fled her village before the advance of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, clutching her mother's skirts. In the general panic the little girl lost her grip and her mother was swept away with the crowd. That terrible moment turned Ingabele, like tens of thousands of other little Rwandans, into an unaccompanied child.

An adult noticed that Ingabele was alone and took her to the Ndosho orphanage. There she was given a plastic bracelet on which her name and a number were scrawled. There were no fewer than 1,458 others in Ndosho alone. The child was registered by the ICRC and later her parents, who had been looking for her, contacted an ICRC office in Rwanda. When a delegate went to the family to tell them that their little girl had been located, the mother clapped her hands in delight.

Registering the child's identity and contacting the parents in a remote Rwandan valley were only one aspect of the work of the ICRC's Tracing Agency. When an ICRC car came to the orphanage and the driver went up to Ingabele, the other children knew straight away what was happening. Envious of Ingabele's good fortune, some tried to frighten her. "The whites will eat you", they chanted, and Ingabele got scared. It took a lot of patience and persuasion on the part of the delegates to calm her down. Ever so softly they sang her a little song, made up on the spot just for her.

Ingabele was driven by the ICRC to the border and then to Ruhengeri, sixty kilometres into Rwanda, where her parents were waiting. It was two o'clock in the afternoon and they were all there, from the family's youngest baby to Ingabele's grandmother. They had been looking down the road anxiously since early morning. Clutching her mother's skirts once again, Ingabele said nothing. She just cried.

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ICRC NEWS N° 49 / 7 December 1994

RWANDA

FOOD SITUATION CRITICAL

The health of hundreds of thousands of people in southern Rwanda is currently threatened by an acute food shortage, according to an ICRC agro-nutritional report. A month's field survey by agronomist François Grunewald has shown that in four districts traditional planting has been severely disrupted by the massacres and conflict which have ravaged the country.

Thousands of families scattered in the hills or gathered in refugee camps are afraid to return to their homes and continue to survive from day to day thanks to food aid from humanitarian organizations. The ICRC itself is still feeding a million people in various camps, mostly in the south-western part of the country. As things stand, no economic recovery is possible, and in the long run food aid is likely to breed dependence. The ICRC therefore completed a programme in October for the distribution of seed (beans and maize) and hoes to some 200,000 families which still have access to their land.

Although the threat of a serious famine seems to have been averted for the time being, the fact remains that the population will have no food available locally until the next harvest, in early 1995. The ICRC has therefore begun distributing food to bridge the gap. The situation meanwhile remains alarming in the districts of Kibuye, Gitarama, Gokingoro and Bugesera.

François Grunewald also reports that the tea and coffee plantations that were formerly key features of the national economy are completely ruined; this will have disastrous effects on the Rwandan economy already weakened by the conflict.

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COMMUNICATION TO THE PRESS n° 94/43 / 14 december 1994

AN OFFICIAL CALL FROM THE ICRC: REMEMBER RWANDA!

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) officially called upon the international community to prevent a recurrence of the horror that affected Rwanda only a few months ago. Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, the ICRC president handed over a memorandum to this effect on Wednesday (14.12.94) to the representatives of the permanent missions accredited to the United Nations in Geneva. In this memorandum brought to the attention of all governments, the ICRC expresses its concern that further delay in bringing about a durable solution to the prevailing crisis would "leave the door open to an escalation of violence and a resumption of hostilities in the region".

Among the factors responsible for this instability, one can name the highly problematic and destabilizing presence of vast numbers of refugees in neighbouring countries and the potential disputes for land and property left vacant in their wake within Rwanda... Today, Rwanda has indeed neither the resources nor the means necessary for a resumption of administrative and economic activity, which would restore a measure of confidence among the people and offer them some prospects for the future.

Humanitarian assistance has attempted to alleviate the desperate plight of the population but cannot in any way answer the fundamental requirements of the Rwandan people.

The ICRC believes that it is primarily the task of the governments and the various parties in the Great Lakes region and especially the Rwandans themselves to consider the enormous responsibility that is theirs vis-à-vis a decimated, scattered and exhausted population.

Moreover, the ICRC calls upon the States which are Rwanda's traditional partners to arrive at a consensus that transcends particular interests and to generate the necessary political resolve, financial means and human resources without which even the best settlement plans are doomed to failure.

Full text of ICRC memorandum follows.

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ICRC NEWS N° 50 / 15 December 1994

GENEVA

ICRC PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES OBJECTIVES FOR 1995

During a meeting on 14 December with the heads of permanent missions accredited to the UN in Geneva, ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga announced the institution's objectives for 1995. He explained that these objectives will focus on the protection of vulnerable individuals in conflict situations and prevention of violations of international humanitarian law. "Conflict victims have the same rights everywhere in the world and it is up to the signatories to the Geneva Conventions to respect those rights and ensure that they are respected", he reminded the diplomats present at the meeting.

APPEAL FOR RWANDA AND THE GREAT LAKES REGION

At the same meeting the ICRC President called on the international community to assume its responsibilities in relation to the crisis affecting Rwanda and the entire Great Lakes region. "Your sense of responsibility should measure up to the scale of the tragedy that has befallen this region", he declared.

A communication to the press on this subject was issued on 14 December together with the full text of the memorandum submitted to all governments.

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ICRC NEWS N° 52 / 28 December 1994

RWANDA

A FURTHER ORDEAL: MINES

Since the end of July, the two hospitals in Kigali have admitted 112 people injured by mines, and every week brings another series of casualties whose injuries often necessitate amputation. According to doctors there, those who reach the hospitals account for only some of the victims, many of whom, including a large number of children, die on the spot and do not appear in the statistics.

The whole of Rwanda, particularly the north, is afflicted by the scourge of mines. Although the exact number laid on the paths leading to the fields is unknown, it can be estimated at several tens of thousands.

Mines are obviously very easy to obtain. According to an UNMAR (United Nations

Mission for Assistance to Rwanda) mine-disposal expert, so many have been strewn throughout the country that "in July, you simply had to bend down and pick them up. Seven hundred were found in one go in Nyamirambo, a workers' district of Kigali". The clearance of mines is particularly difficult, since there are practically no records showing their position and they are buried or otherwise concealed in the most seemingly innocuous places.

The ICRC is doing its best to alert the international community to the immense danger they present, especially those still lying in wait from wars that have now ended. Mines are very often used beyond the bounds of military necessity to serve as a means of terrorizing the civilian population. The ICRC therefore urges all States to support the amendments that will have to be introduced in 1995 into the 1980 United Nations Weapons Convention with the intention, among other things, of banning or at least strictly limiting the use of these deadly devices. The Fourth Session of the Group of Governmental Experts to prepare the Review Conference on this Convention will be held in Geneva from 9 to 20 January 1995. At the request of the United Nations Secretary-General, the ICRC will take part as an observer.

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1995

ICRC NEWS N° 1 / 4 January 1995

RWANDA

ICRC CONDUCTING LARGEST-EVER OPERATION FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

The task is unspectacular but vital. Since the end of June last year the ICRC, in cooperation with UNICEF, UNHCR and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, has been registering tens of thousands of young children abandoned or lost while on the move in Rwanda and neighbouring countries. The ultimate aim of the operation, which is time-consuming and requires large numbers of staff, is to reunite the children with their families. "What we are doing in Rwanda", said Coraline de Wurstemberger, deputy head of the Africa sector at the ICRC's Central Tracing Agency, "constitutes the biggest operation for unaccompanied minors in our history."

With the help of other humanitarian organizations such as Save the Children UK, some 37,000 children have been registered to date. The ICRC estimates that there are over 13,000 unaccompanied Rwandan children in Zaire and almost 11,000 in Rwanda itself. There are others in camps in Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda. Most of the children concerned are between the ages of two and eight. "At that age", remarked Ms de Wurstemberger, "a child is too big to be carried on its mother's back, so has to walk on its own. Being so much smaller and weaker than an adult, it is easily left behind, swallowed up by the huge crowds of fleeing people."

By the end of November 1994, hundreds of children had already been reunited with their families. Although the ICRC was pleased to see that the process was gathering pace as the year drew to a close, the situation in the Great Lakes area remains precarious. "If the violence were to resume and people's movements were once again dictated by fear", Ms de Wurstemberger continued, "children might take to the roads once again. If they left the camps, we would lose track of them and all our efforts over the last few months would have been in vain."

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CICR NEWS N° 08 / 22 January 1995

RWANDA: SOWING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

Having helped more than 70,000 needy families, the ICRC's vast seed distribution programme in Rwanda will come to a close at the end of February. The programme has covered 18 communes, mostly in the south-west of the country, where families are especially vulnerable. Many lost everything during the conflict last year and some of those who fled are now returning home empty handed except for what they have received from the ICRC and other humanitarian relief agencies.

Each family is given 13 kg of bean, 2 kg of maize and 3 kg of soya seed, and a ration of maize, beans and oil so that the seed will not be eaten. More than 80% of the Rwandan population live from agriculture, and seed distributions are vital if these people are to become self-sufficient again.

The ICRC relief administrator, Konrad Fisler, who coordinates the distribution of this much-needed assistance in eight communes near the Burundi border, is pleased with the people's positive spirit: "We unload at the sites and oversee the distribution itself, but it is the local farmers who work things out between themselves. The community is coming back together again for the first time since the war ..."

During the previous distribution in January, the ICRC provided families with vegetable and sorghum seed, as well as hoes. According to Hans Peter Giess, the ICRC agronomist on the spot: "Now these people can support themselves and maybe our seed donations will serve as an incentive for the displaced population to return home from the camps!"

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ICRC NEWS N° 11 / 15 MARCH 1995

RWANDA

***ICRC ASSISTING PSYCHIATRIC
HOSPITAL IN KIGALI***

When a country is devastated by armed conflict, psychiatric patients are often the very last in line to receive assistance, but this has not been the case in Rwanda. With support from the ICRC, the Ndera psychiatric hospital, the only one of its kind in the country, was able to reopen in August of last year.

There is an overwhelming need for hospitals such as Ndera. More than one hundred people are currently being treated there, and new patients are admitted every week. Most of the patients are suffering from severe post-war trauma, manic depression and hallucinations. One of the five children currently under treatment said that she constantly saw men with machetes running after her. Other patients were already ill before last year's events, but their traumatic experiences and lack of medical attention while the hospital was closed has aggravated their condition.

The patients receive tranquillizers which in most cases enable them to return to a relatively normal existence. But successful treatment also creates problems. Many patients have lost their families, and have nowhere to go and nobody to return home to. "Of course it is no solution to keep stable patients here," said ICRC field nurse Marcelle Baltzinger, "but for the time being we have no other choice".

What needs to be done is to rebuild the seriously damaged chronic patients' ward where stable cases will then be able to lead a more independent life. This should soon become possible as a National Red Cross Society will be taking over the rehabilitation and management of the hospital, under the auspices of the ICRC.

Although conditions are still rudimentary, there is a marked improvement in the patients' lives once they are transferred to Ndera. Because of their confused and sometimes violent behaviour, many of them arrive in handcuffs, with infected wounds. "In time - and with fresh food and medication provided by us - they will be helped to gradually resume a tolerable existence with less anguish and fear", said Marcelle Baltzinger.

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29 March 1995



Rwanda

Rwandan prisons brimming over

As a result of recent developments in Rwanda the ICRC has had to adapt its operation accordingly. The delegation in Kigali is now implementing a large-scale programme aimed at protecting over 30,000 detainees and improving conditions in the country's severely overpopulated prisons.

Although plans to build more prisons are being discussed, progress is painfully slow, and the authorities have not yet given the go-ahead to the creation of vast prison camps. One such possibility currently being explored, a camp at Nzinda, would hold around 5,000 detainees, but even this would not suffice: the country's 13 prisons contain at least ten times more inmates than they were intended for, while new arrests average 1,300 per week and this figure is climbing. It would take between five and six weeks to construct a camp such as the Nzinda one. It is evident that at least five such camps are urgently required, for within the next five weeks there will almost certainly be at least another 9,000 inmates to accommodate. Immediate action by the Rwandan government, with the support of the international community, is crucial.

ICRC adapts operation to new context

The return to normal of Rwandan society is advancing much more slowly than expected. Although peace prevails, there are certain tensions within the government and a growing incidence of infiltration by troops of the previous government has been noted in the south-west of the country, resulting in isolated violent incidents.

The ICRC's delegation in Kigali has had to adapt its initial programme for 1995, as presented in the *ICRC 1995 Emergency Appeal*, in response to the ever-changing situation in the country. The number of civilians requiring regular food rations and other aid during the first six months of the year has turned out to be less than the estimated half-million, with only 300,000 displaced people receiving food and non-food assistance from the ICRC in camps situated south of Gikongoro. More people than expected have returned to their places of origin, where the ICRC provided them with seed, tools and plastic sheeting to construct shelters.

Nevertheless, the food pipeline foreseen for relief distributions is being put to good use, as the ICRC now regularly



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400 local staff and 18 expatriates work on the Rwandan tracing programme, including staff in Nairobi who work in shifts around the clock to centralize the data.

Health activities

The ICRC's water and sanitation service has restored the water supply to the country's main towns, with particular emphasis on hospitals and prisons. To do this the nation's main water stations had to be renovated, over 900 tonnes of chemicals for water treatment were provided, spare parts, generators and fuel were supplied, and the electricity lines between Kigali and Gitarama were repaired. Water supply systems were installed in six camps for displaced people south of Gikongoro.

As part of the ICRC's project-delegation programme, expatriates from the American (2), Australian (2) and Swedish (2) National Red Cross Societies are working on the repair and rehabilitation of rural water

supply systems in the prefectures of Kibuye, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, respectively.

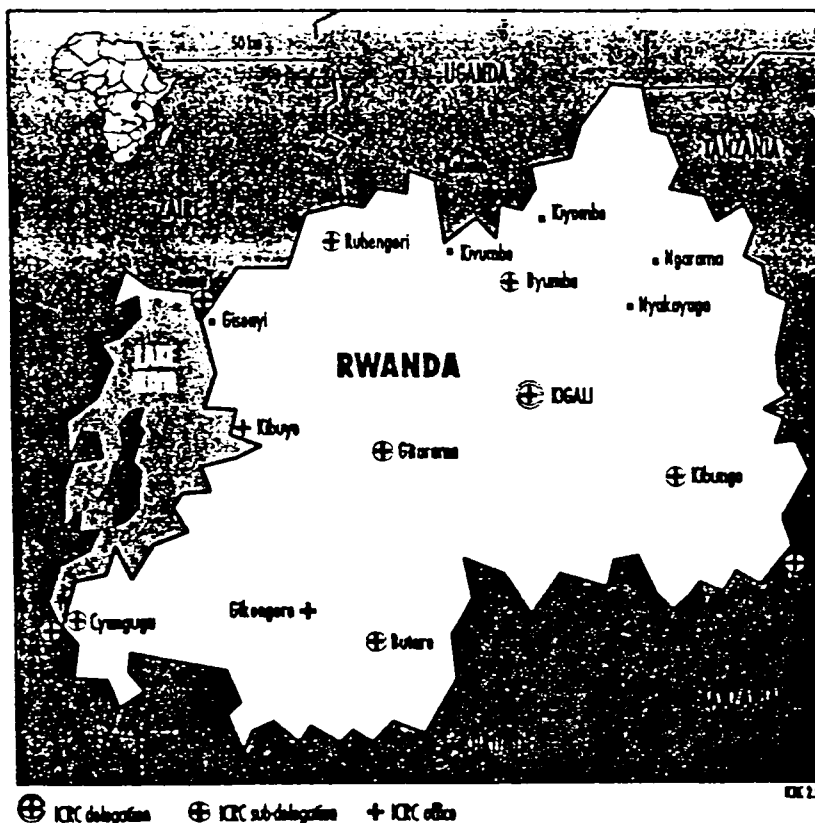
The repair and rehabilitation of health centres has been delegated to the French and German National Societies. Three expatriates from the French Red Cross are working on this project in Gitarama prefecture and three more from the German Red Cross are working in Byumba prefecture and in Kigali. The health facilities in question are in the process of being renovated and are provided regularly with medical supplies, local staff are given health care training, and vaccination campaigns are getting under way.

The ICRC is also supporting Rwanda's main psychiatric hospital at Ndera by carrying out sanitation improvements and distributing medical supplies, and is looking for National Societies willing to take on parts of this programme.

Relief activities

A programme involving the distribution of seed and tools to some 70,000 families has just been completed in the home regions of people returning from camps in the Gikongoro area, namely Butare, Bugesera and Cyangugu. These distributions, which also included plastic sheeting for constructing shelters, undoubtedly helped encourage them to return to their homes, where they had otherwise no certain livelihood to look forward to.

The fact that these 70,000 families have gone back has meant that the number remaining in camps is greatly reduced, making the ICRC's food



Communication to the press No. 95/8
31 March 1995

Rwanda: ICRC sounds alarm on appalling prison conditions

Geneva (ICRC) - Diplomatic representatives were invited to the Geneva headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 31 March by ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga to hand them an appeal and to inform them of his organization's serious concern about the appalling situation in Rwandan prisons.

Mr Sommaruga said that overcrowding was the main cause of a steady deterioration in prison conditions, which were becoming more critical day by day. The ICRC was currently making regular visits to over 30,000 detainees in 135 places of detention, he said. The prison population was growing by 1,500 every week, and in a number of institutions there were now up to four inmates per square metre of floor space throughout the compound and up to six persons per square metre in the dormitories.

Such inhuman overcrowding has many consequences, which include disastrous hygiene conditions - and therefore the rapid spread of diseases, supply difficulties and exacerbated tension between the detainees. Indeed, in addition to the high death rate due to the conditions themselves, the situation has already given rise to incidents which have claimed the lives of a number of detainees.

The ICRC has taken practical steps to try and prevent this tragedy from continuing. Delegates are providing emergency supplies of food and water to the detainees, carrying out sanitation work and supporting the prison health services. In the past the ICRC has made several appeals to the Rwandan authorities and to the international community, in particular on 14 December last. It also issued a memorandum on 1 March 1995 specifically dealing with the conditions of detention. Despite this, no real move has yet been made to ease the extreme overcrowding.

The ICRC therefore today renews its appeal. It calls on the States party to the Geneva Conventions to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and urges them to do everything necessary to remedy the situation. In particular, it solemnly appeals both to the Rwandan government and to the international community to set up new places of detention, as this is the only way to alleviate the present overcrowding. The ICRC further insists on the pressing need to restore the rule of law and a functioning judicial system.

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ICRC NEWS N° 14 / April 5, 1995

RWANDA

ONE YEAR ON

One year after the genocide began in Rwanda in April 1994, the ICRC is continuing to provide assistance and protection for vulnerable members of the country's population. A total of 120 delegates and about 800 Rwandan staff are currently based in Kigali (main delegation), Butare, Gikongoro, Cyangugu, Kibuye, Kibungo, Gisenyi and Byumba. With a budget for Rwanda of

53 million US dollars for 1995, the ICRC is engaged in a variety of programmes, including protection of detainees, reunification of families separated by the conflict, restoration of water supplies and medical facilities and distribution of food and seed.

30,000 detainees held in appalling conditions

"We will continue to monitor the situation in the country and adjust our efforts should new humanitarian needs arise", said ICRC head of delegation Jean-François Sangsue. The situation in Rwanda's 13 prisons and more than 100 other places of detention is still extremely critical. ICRC delegates are doing their utmost to improve the appalling conditions endured by more than 30,000 detainees, distributing emergency supplies of food and water, carrying out sanitation work and providing support for the prison health services.

1,000 children reunited with their families

"In the coming months we shall do everything possible to speed up the rate of family reunifications. More than 1,000 children have already rejoined their families and 57,000 others have been entered in the ICRC database and are waiting to be reunited with their relatives. Furthermore, we shall take a careful look at the results of the next harvest in June and July and are ready to continue our seed programme if it turns out that some farmers have not yet regained self-sufficiency", added Sangsue.

Today, one year after conflict broke out in the country, the situation in material terms appears to have stabilized, as most Rwandans now have access to food and clean water.

Rwandan population still traumatized

In psychological terms the Rwandan population is still traumatized. "Rwanda has now entered a period of remembrance where people will relive the tragic events of last year", concluded Jean-François Sangsue. "It will be a time filled with grief and distress. We can only hope that the collective anguish will recede and that human dignity in this country will be respected in times to come".

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Communication to the press No. 95/11
20 April 1995

**RWANDA: ICRC WARNS ABOUT POSSIBLE HUMAN DISASTER IN
SOUTHERN CAMPS**

Geneva (ICRC) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) today expressed deep concern about the deteriorating situation in the camps for internally displaced persons in Gikongoro prefecture.

The military operation launched on 18 April to close these camps generated panic among the displaced population, resulting in the death of 10 people, including several children. The ICRC deplores the events that led to these deaths and calls for measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents.

Approximately 125,000 people are currently massed in small areas within the Kibeho, Ndago, Munini and Kamana camps, without access to food, water or shelter. The humanitarian situation could deteriorate extremely quickly, and peoples' lives could be threatened by dehydration and epidemics. The ICRC appeals to the authorities concerned to treat the civilian population according to the humanitarian principles.

The Chief of Staff of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) today gave assurances that the ICRC would be allowed to bring assistance to the people of these camps. "The ICRC is ready to provide emergency aid until a suitable solution can be found", said ICRC head of delegation in Rwanda

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Communication to the press No 95/13
22 April 1995

HUNDREDS OF DEAD AMONG THE DISPLACED PERSONS IN SOUTHERN RWANDA

Geneva (ICRC) - Within the last five days the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has witnessed a steady deterioration of the situation in the displaced camps around Gikongoro, resulting in thousands of casualties in Kibeho camp.

ICRC delegates reported throughout the day increasing violence in Kibeho camp that has been surrounded since the 18h April by forces of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), attempting to return the displaced to their communes of origin. The encircled persons became more and more desperate, having been confined under extreme conditions for the last few days. Some have tried to force their way through the army cordon. Automatic rifle fire and grenade explosions were observed by ICRC delegates late Saturday afternoon, resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives and a very large number of wounded.

Earlier in the day, ICRC delegates witnessed an exodus of displaced persons from Kibeho camp towards Butare. In late afternoon, wounded and dead could be seen alongside the road. By nightfall, at least 15'000 people were left behind in Kibeho camp. Given the circumstances, their fate is uncertain.

On Saturday, all attempts by the ICRC to deliver emergency supplies of water and food to Kibeho camp failed, at first due to the lack of cooperation from the authorities on the spot, later on due to the security situation. ICRC medical evacuations were not authorized either.

The ICRC appeals to the Rwandan authorities to refrain from further indiscriminate acts of violence in Kibeho and the other camps. At the same time the ICRC appeals to the authorities to be granted immediate and unlimited access inside the different camps to provide the displaced with urgently needed medical and food aid.

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ICRC NEWS N° 17 / 26 April 1995

RWANDA

WOUNDED FROM KIBEHO CAMP EVACUATED TO BUTARE

On 23 April the ICRC and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) began to evacuate to Butare people who had been wounded the previous day in Kibeho camp. Some 200 patients have already been admitted to the hospital run by *Médecins sans frontières* (MSF) and to the university teaching hospital in Butare, where a wing has been turned over to the ICRC and placed under the protection of the the Red Cross emblem. Two surgical teams have been working there since 24 April and about 100 casualties are receiving treatment.

Kibeho camp is now almost completely deserted, with only upwards of 2,000 people still there. The ICRC is trying to provide these remaining occupants with food and water, and at the same time to act as a neutral intermediary between them and the Rwandan Patriotic Army so that they can be evacuated. Some 200 children abandoned in the camp have been taken by the ICRC to Butare.

Fresh exodus in southern Rwanda

The other camps for displaced people in southern Rwanda are deserted too. Before the events of last week there were an estimated 280,000 civilians living in the camps. At present these people are scattered throughout the region, making the role of the humanitarian relief agencies as crucial as ever. On 25 April the ICRC distributed food to about 35,000 people along the roads and in some villages.

Prison conditions still alarming

The ICRC remains deeply concerned about the situation in the country's prisons. Before the camps began to empty, 35,000 detainees were being held in conditions of extreme overcrowding. The detainees have been able to survive with the assistance of the ICRC, which is supplying them with water, food and medicines.

In view of the current circumstances, the ICRC has decided to strengthen its team of delegates in the field.

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ICRC NEWS N° 18 / 4 May 1995

RWANDA

ICRC INCREASES STAFF FOR PRISON VISITS

The protection of detainees has become the most urgent task for the ICRC in Rwanda, where it has registered more than 36,000 people in 150 different places of detention. Inmates are often living in appalling conditions, especially in some local jails where there is so little space that they are forced to take turns sitting down. "Under normal circumstances", said Brigitte Troyon, ICRC detention coordinator in Rwanda, "these people would stay in small lock-ups for only one or two days before being transferred to a prison with running water, food and medical care provided by the ICRC. But since the 13 prisons in Rwanda are also overcrowded, some detainees are held in these cramped local jails for weeks". Furthermore, the situation is being aggravated by a steady stream of new detainees.

The ICRC is assigning extra staff to its teams which visit both prisons and local jails to register detainees, check on conditions of detention and negotiate improvements with the authorities. By mid-May, 32 delegates specialized in prison visits will be working across Rwanda to protect these thousands of detainees, in cooperation with ICRC medical and sanitation staff.

"Receiving a visit from an ICRC delegate also gives the detainees a feeling of hope", said Guy Dutoit, who visits four or five places of detention per week, including Gitarama prison. "They appreciate the fact that we follow their situation closely and that we take time to listen to their problems and worries."

The ICRC has for several months been urging the opening of new detention centres which could accommodate several thousand detainees and offer the prison population more humane living conditions.

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ICRC NEWS N° 19 / 11 May 1995

RWANDA

ICRC CARING FOR WOUNDED FROM KIBEHO

When truck-loads of wounded people started arriving in Butare following the tragic events of 22 April in Kibeho camp, urgent measures were needed to respond to the emergency. An ICRC surgical team was already working at the hospital run by Médecins sans

frontières in the southern Rwandan town but the facilities had become overcrowded and no more patients could be admitted. The ICRC therefore arranged for two surgical theatres to be set up in a wing of the Butare University Hospital. Within 24 hours the first operations had been performed, while additional medical staff from Geneva and national Red Cross societies were en route to Rwanda.

Now, two weeks after the emergency, there are more than 130 patients in the ICRC wing of the hospital, and it will probably be another six weeks before the last patients can be discharged and the makeshift surgical theatres closed down. "We still have people arriving with machete and gunshot wounds inflicted at Kibeho", said the ICRC medical coordinator in Rwanda, Christian Martin.

The ICRC medical team consists of a surgeon, a physiotherapist, an anaesthetist and 12 nurses. "Under normal circumstances we would have fewer ICRC nurses and more local staff," explained Martin. "But patients from the camps for displaced people are not well accepted by the medical personnel at the local hospital, who prefer to let us treat the wounded".

Although the ICRC team has been able to save patients' limbs in most cases, many require several operations before they are able to leave the hospital. "It is incredible to see how quiet the victims are," says ICRC nurse Hendrika van Beerendonk. "They do not cry even when they are in great pain. It is as if they have been through so much suffering and anguish already that they have no more tears left."

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ICRC NEWS N° 20 / 17 May 1995

RWANDA

WATER FOR SURVIVAL

In Rwanda's 13 main prisons, which currently house more than 36,000 detainees (an estimated 7,000 more are being held in temporary places of detention), the ICRC is working against all odds to ensure that every individual receives at least a minimum amount of drinking water. ICRC sanitary engineers have increased the number of toilets and built new septic tanks. The water thus provided and the maintenance of sanitary facilities have for the time being prevented the situation from deteriorating even further. The possibility of a disaster still remains, however: should a water-line break, ICRC engineers would find it practically impossible to repair it, owing to the extreme overcrowding in some of the prisons. New places of detention need to be built as a matter of urgency in order to resolve this critical problem.

Red Cross provides 80% of population's water supply

Even before last year's war was over, the ICRC had begun restoring water supply systems in many cities and towns, including Kigali and Gisenyi. It also set up emergency water

supplies in camps housing displaced persons within Rwanda, as well as in camps beyond the country's borders. These activities remain vital: an ICRC shipment of 500 tonnes of aluminium sulphate and chlorine has enabled the Rwandan water authorities to ensure that urban populations will have drinking water for at least another six months.

The ICRC's programmes, run jointly with the American, Australian and Swedish Red Cross Societies, are attempting to provide the same type of relief to an estimated 210,000 people living in rural areas in the Kibuye, Ruhengeri and Gisenyi districts. Their work consists in rehabilitating water sources, rerouting pipelines, replacing valves and broken pipes and repairing reservoirs.

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FACT SHEET

RWANDA

In April 1994 Rwanda lapsed into chaos and savagery that resulted over the following three months in the death of almost one million people. A further two million had to flee their homes and sought refuge in other parts of Rwanda or in neighbouring countries. Rwanda's infrastructure and the very fabric of society were severely damaged, if not completely destroyed.

Throughout the period of genocide, the ICRC, and especially its field staff, were severely tested. The organization had to respond to countless emergency needs while reaffirming its humanitarian message in a seemingly crazed environment where the most fundamental human values had been repudiated. The ICRC estimates that in the maelstrom of violence its delegates' tenacious intervention helped save tens of thousands of lives.

Today the situation in Rwanda and in the Great Lakes region remains extremely disquieting from a humanitarian point of view. The closing in April 1995 of the camps for displaced persons in the Gikongoro area resulted in renewed displacement, this time of over 200,000 people. It seems unlikely that those who sought refuge in neighbouring countries will be able to return in the foreseeable future: demographic pressure on sparse agricultural resources, the revival of long-standing ethnic resentments, a feeling of injustice and a desire for revenge all continue to pose major obstacles to the restoration of stability and security. Moreover, the border area between Rwanda and Zaire is the scene of sporadic fighting.

PROTECTING CIVILIANS

Through the regular presence of large numbers of delegates throughout the country and direct contacts with the authorities, the ICRC has consistently endeavoured to ensure respect for the humanitarian principles and fundamental rights of the population. Whenever its delegates note violations of these rights or abuses of power, the ICRC makes representations to the authorities, asking them to put an end to such excesses.



DP (1995) 38b

VISITS TO DETAINEES

Between mid-July 1994 and mid-May 1995, the number of detainees whose situation was monitored by the ICRC rose from about one hundred to more than 43,000 inmates held in Rwanda's 13 prisons and over 170 temporary places of detention throughout the country. This dramatic increase has so overwhelmed the prison system that in some prisons there are now six detainees for every square metre of space. Such extreme overcrowding results in many deaths each day.

The prison administration's lack of material and financial resources and the virtual disappearance of the judicial system has led the ICRC to take exceptional steps to ensure the detainees' survival by providing food, medicine and adequate hygiene conditions. Dispensaries have been set up in some prisons and drinking-water supply systems installed or improved.

These measures have made it possible for the moment to stabilize the mortality rate among detainees. But the overcrowding has created a highly volatile situation, and the slightest incident could spark off a riot in which hundreds of people would probably be killed.

The only short-term answer to the problem of overcrowding is to build new places of detention. To activate the initial stage of the process the ICRC has decided to take part in the setting up of a new detention camp (capacity: 5,000) being built by the Rwandan authorities and UN agencies near Nzinda. The ICRC will supply tents to serve as quarters for the detainees and will also provide the camp's medical and sanitary facilities. The ICRC has agreed to undertake this exceptional task because everything possible must be done to save human lives. It expects the Rwandan government, supported by UNDP, UNAMIR and other organizations, to act without delay to construct other temporary detention facilities.

The Rwanda authorities must also show their determination rapidly to set up an adequate judicial system so that detainees held on insufficient charges can be released. Moreover, arrests must be made in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the law.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Following the Kibeho massacre in late April 1995, dozens of injured people were brought to Butare, where the ICRC had set up two operating theatres in a wing of the local university hospital. Some 200 patients were admitted there for treatment. The ICRC was able to close the facility at the end of May.

ICRC medical teams also make daily visits to the places of detention.

Working in conjunction with the ICRC, the French and German Red Cross societies are in the process of putting back into operation 15 health-care centres that were been damaged during the events of last year. Over 450,000 people rely on the centres for medical services.

FOOD AND OTHER EMERGENCY AID

Even before last year's war had ended, the ICRC began concentrating on helping people living in or displaced within Rwanda and those returning from other countries. By the end of 1994, food and other relief supplies had been distributed to 433,000 people in Byumba prefecture, 750,000 in Gitarama prefecture, 100,000 in Ruhengeri prefecture, 260,000 in Kibuye prefecture, 200,000 to the south of Gikongoro and 100,000 in Kigali itself. The relief operation reached its peak in November, when 1.3 million people received ICRC assistance. **In all, 85,300 tonnes of food and 1,200 tonnes of tents, blankets, plastic sheeting, water containers and other essential items were distributed.**

By the time the camps for displaced people in southern Rwanda were closed in April 1995, the ICRC had provided food aid to over 200,000 people in the Gikongoro area. Some of the camp dwellers, now back in their home communities, are continuing to receive ICRC aid.

AGRICULTURAL REHABILITATION

The ICRC has made a particular effort to revive agricultural production in Rwanda and increase the country's self-sufficiency in terms of food. To make the most of the rainy season it distributed seed (3,400 tonnes to one million people) and agricultural implements last September.

RESTORING WATER-SUPPLY SYSTEMS

During the war and the period that followed, the ICRC helped to put the main waterworks in all of Rwanda's major towns back into operation by providing the necessary chemicals, spare parts, electric generators and fuel.

A shipment of 500 tonnes of aluminium sulphate and chlorine recently arrived in Rwanda, enough to ensure that sufficient drinking water can be distributed in urban areas over the next six months.

Together with the Red Cross Societies of Australia, Sweden and the United States, the ICRC is also working on projects to restore water supplies to a number of rural areas in the prefectures of Kibuye, Ruhengeri and Gisenyi.

RESTORING FAMILY TIES

There are hardly any Rwandans who have not lost track of one or more members of their family. As long as population movements continue and communications within Rwanda and with neighbouring countries remain disrupted, the ICRC must offer its services to restore contact between members of families separated by the events and forward personal messages between them.

In cooperation with the various National Societies concerned, a Red Cross message network has been set up for this purpose both in Rwanda itself and between Rwanda and other countries. Over half a million such messages have so far been collected and delivered

A great deal has been done to help unaccompanied children, who are among the most vulnerable victims of the Rwandan calamity. Working in conjunction with UNICEF, UNHCR, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Save the Children Fund and other non-governmental organizations, the ICRC has undertaken to centralize all available information about these children in a data bank which can be used to assist families looking for them. To date, 63,000 children have been registered and 15,000 families have asked for missing children to be traced. Some 2,000 children have meanwhile been reunited through the ICRC with their families.

SPREADING KNOWLEDGE OF HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

Briefings on international humanitarian law and the work of the ICRC have regularly been organized for the Rwandan civilian and military authorities and for UNAMIR contingents. In the course of their relief and protection activities in the field, ICRC delegates try to promote respect among the general population for the basic humanitarian principles. They also use radio spots and distribute publications in the local language, Kinyarwanda to put over the humanitarian message.

COMREX/PR - 23.5.95

The ICRC currently has 160 delegates and some 800 local employees based in Kigali, Butare, Gikongoro, Kibuye, Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, KIdaho, Byumba and Kibungo. The ICRC's budget for Rwanda is about 55 million US dollars.

ICRC NEWS N° 21 / 24 May 1995

RWANDA

PRISON CONDITIONS STILL APPALLING

In view of the extreme emergency caused by overcrowding in Rwandan detention centres, the ICRC feels compelled to play an active role in building detention facilities on a new site capable of housing some 5,000 individuals. This project will go some way to relieving the pressure of numbers. The ICRC has agreed to undertake this unusual task because everything possible must be done to save human lives. The ICRC expects the Rwandan government, with support from UNDP, UNAMIR and other organizations, to act without delay to construct other temporary detention facilities.

Prison conditions in Rwanda remain alarming. To date, the ICRC has registered over 43,000 detainees. They are all packed into detention centres with no effective judicial system available to investigate their cases, try the accused or release the innocent.

Conditions are dreadful in the prisons where most of the detainees are being held. In some they do not even have enough room to sit down. They have nevertheless been able to survive with assistance from the ICRC, which is supplying them with water, food and medical care. ICRC delegates visit the prisons every day to give each detainee his life-sustaining rations of food and water. In some prisons the delegates have difficulty in moving around because of the huge numbers of detainees.

The ICRC applauds any initiative taken to hasten the entry into operation of the International Tribunal established to try those responsible for the Rwandan genocide.

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**From the Annual Press Conference by ICRC President
Dr. Cornelio Sommaruga,
Geneva, the 30th of May 1995.**

(...)

2) Questions relating to Rwanda:

The ICRC president was asked a) what exactly was the organisation's involvement with the prison building programme in Rwanda, and b) whether the ICRC was concerned by the large presence of weapons in the region:

a) Mr Sommaruga stressed that it was not the ICRC's role to build prisons. But he said faced with the enormity of the Humanitarian problem in that country with respect to the abnormal size of the prison population there, the ICRC had, exceptionally, decided to install basic amenities in new prison structures (kitchens, sick bays...) It is not the ICRC's intention to assist governments in their repressive programmes however legitimate these may be.

Mr Sommaruga stated that negotiations held with the Rwandan authorities in this respect "weren't totally negative but that they lack the means" to respond to the humanitarian emergency.

In this respect, Mr Sommaruga cautioned against the lack of co-ordination between the various organisations involved in relief work in Rwanda and in particular called for a clear line to be agreed on between the ICRC's mandate with respect to protecting the country's prison population and that being adopted by the UN Human Rights observers. The ICRC believes that duplication and over-lapping between the various mandates can only lead to confusion and costly waste, something that in the long run can only be detrimental to those in need of assistance.

b) Many times over, the ICRC expressed concern over the amount of weaponry, often handled by un-trained warriors unaware of any code of conduct, present in the Great Lakes region where the situation can be described as "explosive".

ICRC NEWS N°24 / 14 June 1995

RWANDA

VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

The ICRC is taking part in a campaign aimed at preventing children up to 5 years old from contracting polio. The programme is being implemented in Rwanda by the government and organizations such as UNICEF, with the ICRC being asked to supervise vaccinations in the prefectures of Kigali and Gitarama.

During the coming month, more than 33,000 children will be immunized with ICRC help. Delegates will bring vaccines packed in ice to health centres where the immunizations are to take place, and teach the local staff how to administer them. As there is a chronic lack of medical personnel in Rwanda, many teachers and students are engaged in this campaign, and require close supervision.

"The mothers are arriving with their children in large numbers at our health centres", said Gisela Cischerwski, an ICRC nurse. "They are aware that vaccinations are important. We also vaccinate children against other diseases such as tuberculosis and measles. It's a simple and very effective way of saving young lives."

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ICRC NEWS N° 26 / 28 JUNE 1995

RWANDA

**NEW EMERGENCY APPEAL REACHES
95 MILLION SWISS FRANCS**

The initial budget estimate for ICRC activities in Rwanda in 1995 was 66 million Swiss francs (56.4 million US dollars). The ICRC has decided to increase this amount to Sfr 95 million (\$81.2 million), mainly because the number of detainees needing assistance has risen far beyond last year's estimations.

Lives at risk in the prisons

There are now over 47,000 people detained in Rwanda. Conditions in the prisons are appalling and have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of inmates. The ICRC launched a large-scale assistance programme for detainees earlier this year, providing them with food and medical care and improving hygiene. The ICRC is also working with the authorities and the United Nations to set up a new temporary detention centre at Nsinda, erecting tents

to house detainees and the camp's medical and sanitary infrastructure and providing medical supplies, cooking equipment and food.

Health centres rehabilitated

Under the ICRC's project delegation programme, the German and French Red Cross Societies have begun rehabilitation work on 15 health centres which were damaged in 1994. These centres provide health care for some 450,000 people. Projects to repair water supply systems in the Kibuye, Gisenyi and Ruhengeri areas, carried out by the American, Australian and Swedish National Societies respectively, will continue until the end of the year and will benefit more than 300,000 people.

Food aid for 400,000 people

Food distributions are planned for civilians returning to their homes after the closure of the camps near Gikongoro and for vulnerable local residents. Some 400,000 people will be covered by this programme. The ICRC is also planning to supply around 30,000 families with hoes, bean seed and sweet potato cuttings in time for the next planting season in September.

3,000 families reunited

Since April 1994 over 920,000 Red Cross messages have been handled by the ICRC in cooperation with National Red Cross Societies. The effort to trace the families of unaccompanied minors continues, with 70,000 children already registered and 18,000 tracing requests filed by parents hoping to find their children. So far around 3,000 families have been reunited.

There are currently 1,550 local staff and 150 expatriates working in Rwanda, including 35 from the National Red Cross Societies of Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the USA.

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ICRC NEWS N° 28 / 12 July 1995

RWANDA

ONE MILLION RED CROSS MESSAGES EXCHANGED

The ICRC's Red Cross message service in Rwanda has reached a new peak: in June the staff of the ICRC Tracing Agency managed to handle 360,000 messages, thus reaching an impressive figure of over one million since August 1994. These messages allowed Rwandans to get in touch with relatives inside the country, in refugee camps in Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire or even further away in a third country.

Thirty ICRC delegates and 250 local staff are currently working in Rwanda and the surrounding countries to provide this vital service. "Tracing people in Rwanda is extremely difficult", said Catherine Gendre, head of the Tracing Agency there. "Up-country, in the villages there are often no precise addresses. Our staff have to go from door to door to find out where people live. In the capital Kigali, where the population has changed to a large extent, 12 local specialists are distributing 2,000 messages a week, some of them after only the second or third try".

Tracing staff have also registered around 70,000 unaccompanied children, all waiting to be reunited with their mothers, their fathers or other close relatives. Together with other organizations, such as the Save the Children Fund, the ICRC has so far reunited more than 4,000 children with their families.

As most detainees in Rwandan prisons have lost contact with their families, the ICRC is providing them with the opportunity to write messages to their relatives and to receive news from them through the Red Cross message network. Some 50,000 detainees are currently held in Rwanda in about 200 places of detention.

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ICRC NEWS N° 34 / 23 August 1995

***ZAIRE/RWANDA/BURUNDI
ICRC VOICES ACUTE ANXIETY***

The ICRC is very concerned about developments in the refugee camps in Zaire.

Most of the thousands of refugees being forcibly expelled to Rwanda and Burundi by the Zairian army are women and children. ICRC delegates in the UNHCR transit camps in Gisenyi, Kamembe and Gatumba have observed that several families have been split up by these recent events. Unaccompanied children have arrived there and the ICRC has taken

care to register them. It is also giving all people who have been expelled the possibility to write Red Cross messages to relatives who are still in Zaire.

In addition, the ICRC has begun registering people arrested by the Rwandan authorities.

The ICRC will today try to send medical supplies to the Mungunga hospital in Zaire.

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RWANDA

CONTINUED ICRC SUPPORT FOR RURAL POPULATION

In preparation for the next farming season, which begins in September, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is gearing up to distribute seed, implements and food to more than 63,000 families in southern Rwanda.

Since last autumn the ICRC, which has been working in the country since 1990 and remained active there at the height of the massacres last year, has been carrying out an agricultural rehabilitation programme in aid of more than 270,000 families.

Although most of the Rwandan population are now self-sufficient, needs still exist in the south of the country where many families lost everything during last year's tragedy. Other families have returned home virtually destitute from Uganda, Burundi, Zaire or the camps for displaced persons which were closed in April 1995.

From the end of August, the ICRC will be distributing bean seed and hoes to 63,000 families in seven areas in the south of the country (other humanitarian organizations are taking care of other regions). This should enable each family to harvest about 100 kg of beans early next year. They will also be given some additional food - maize, beans, oil and salt - so that they do not keep up their strength for the arduous task of tilling fields by consuming the seed itself.

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ICRC NEWS N° 36 / 6 September 1995

RWANDA

ICRC AWAITS OPENING OF NEW DETENTION CENTRE

On 5 September the ICRC officially handed over the installations it had just completed at the Nsinda detention centre to the Rwandan Ministry of Justice. The ICRC's work consisted in providing decent quarters for 5,000 detainees, including water supply systems, sanitation and kitchen facilities, and a dispensary. The walls were built and the security

infrastructure set up by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Mission in Rwanda, in cooperation with the Rwandan government.

The transfer of detainees to this new temporary detention centre will hopefully alleviate the severe overcrowding which is the main cause of death in places of detention in Rwanda. "The opening of the Nsinda centre will be a first step to improve material conditions, but other sites urgently need to be set up by the government to prevent further worsening of the humanitarian crisis", said ICRC head of delegation in Rwanda, Philippe Lazzarini.

More than 52,000 detainees are currently being visited by ICRC delegates in 220 detention facilities. They are being held in appalling conditions, with up to four people per square metre in some places. Many inmates have not been able to lie down for months and a lot of them suffer from oedema and gangrene in their feet and legs.

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ICRC NEWS N° 39 / 27 September 1995

RWANDA ***HELPING PARENTS TRACE LOST CHILDREN***

After the horrific events of 1994, close to 80,000 children in Rwanda and neighbouring countries, currently living in orphanages and refugee camps or with foster families, are still listed as "unaccompanied". Since most of them are without news of their families, the ICRC has stepped up its efforts to find their parents or other relatives.

In cooperation with Save the Children (UK) and local authorities, ICRC delegates take lists with names of such children to community meetings in villages where the children lived before the war. The lists are read aloud, and often, somebody recognizes a name: "Many parents have given up hope that their children may still be alive and have simply stopped searching for them", says ICRC tracing coordinator Elizabeth Twinch, "Since these people do not come to the ICRC offices to see whether we have information about their children, we have to look for parents in their home communities." When a connection is made between a parent or relatives and a given child, the ICRC arranges to bring them together.

At this stage, teams visit villages in the prefectures of Ruhengeri and Kigali Rural but the ICRC hopes soon to cover the whole of Rwanda. These visits are also excellent opportunities to reach out to unaccompanied children who have still not been registered by the ICRC.

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ICRC NEWS N° 44 / 1 November 1995

RWANDA
SAVING THE LIVES OF DETAINEES

On his return from a four-day visit to Rwanda (25 to 28 October), ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga once again expressed acute humanitarian concern about the situation in a country which is only slowly recovering from the 1994 genocide.

Mr Sommaruga said at a press conference in Geneva that the ICRC's operation in Rwanda, which provides drinking water, food and medicines for some 58,000 people detained in appallingly overcrowded conditions, was one of the largest in its history. Because of the exceptional nature of the crisis, the ICRC is also working with the Rwandan authorities and various UN agencies to install facilities in new detention centres. The sole purpose of this ICRC project is to save the lives of detainees; it does not imply a long-term commitment to tasks that are the responsibility of the Rwandan government alone. Mr Sommaruga also firmly stated that humanitarian organizations must not bear the burden of helping Rwanda on their own; it must be shared by the international community as a whole.

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