

Document 55 (16.12.96)

Source: UNICEF

Date: 16 Dec 1996

Great Lakes Regional Update No. 26

Tanzania:

Tens of thousands of Rwandan refugees are leaving the camps in north west and going home.

Zaire:

In Eastern Zaire, thousands of refugees are arriving in the Lubutu area in a much worse condition than seen previously - several are almost too weak to walk. According to Philippe Duamelle, who travelled on the road from Lubutu to Walikale, the refugees are in need of emergency medical assistance.

Tanzania/Rwanda:

After spending more than two and a half years in refugees camps in north-western Tanzania, thousands of Rwandans crossed the Akagera river over the week-end. There were 535 000 Rwandan refugees in Tanzania before this new exodus. The biggest camp in the area, Benaco, 26 km from the border, was home to 163 000 people. The camps are now said to be closed. No humanitarian agency has been allowed in, except for ICRC, IFRC and OXFAM. Last Thursday, around 300-350 000 refugees had left the camps and walked away from the border, fearing forced repatriation: the Tanzanian

authorities had earlier urged the refugees to leave Tanzania by the end of the year. On Friday, the fleeing refugees were turned back by Tanzanian forces and forced to return to the refugee camps. In the ensuing chaos, a large number of children are reported to have become separated from their parents. The access to the border is spread out over a wide area, snaking its way between Lake Kivu and the hills to the main crossing point at Rusumu bridge - a trek of several hours for the refugees. On the Rwandan side, if the flow of refugees goes over 10 000 a day, then the Rwandan army will take over the operation. So far (14.00 Geneva time), 51 000 people have crossed the border.

There will not be any way stations along the road except for the transit camp at Nyakarambi. The returnees are mainly from the eastern prefectures of Kibungo and Byumba, with others originating from Butare, in the south-west. The refugees are said to be in good shape.

On the Rwandan side of the border, UNICEF's partner NGOs are ready to accommodate more than 600 UAC in Nyakarambi transit camp, which is 25 km from the Tanzania-Rwanda border. This capacity could easily be increased in a few hours. UNICEF itself is not allowed to operate in Nyakarambi camp, but negotiations are under way. UNICEF's partners - Concern, World Vision, Save the Children UK and Red Barnet - have set up more than 12 sixteen square meter tents that are clearly visible from the road. Children will initially be fed Unimix (a mixture of corn, soja and sugar) and high-protein biscuits provided by Unicef. Rwandan authorities have asked that children who spend more than 48 hours in this transit camp be fed beans and rice, Rwanda's staple foods.

A UNICEF partner, Concern, is looking after children who have become separated from their families on their way to Nyakarambi camp. UNICEF staff

expect that around 1% of the total refugee children population could become separated from their parents on the return journey to Rwanda.

The main bulk of refugees are expected to walk past Kibungo, the main town in the area, 60 km from the border. This is where UNICEF's local warehouse is located. Three lorries arrived on Saturday, carrying 480 boxes of therapeutic milk, 1000 packets of ORS, blankets and cooking sets. More than seven metric tons of high protein biscuits and three metric tons of Unimix are currently in the warehouse. The emergency food supplies are to be distributed to partner NGOs. A banner has been hoisted in front of the Unicef warehouse. In Kinyarwanda, it says Stay close to your children (Mubagumane hafi yanyu). Several more banners were placed along the road in strategic positions.

EASTERN ZAIRE:

UNICEF ZAIRE Programme Co-ordinator Philippe Duamelle in Tingi-Tingi (7 km south of Lubutu) :

Philippe reported that the refugees had installed themselves according to their Prefecture of origin in the area around Lubutu (170 km southeast of Kisangani, 220/250 km northwest of Goma/Bukavu.) - in a similar manner to the way they had done in the camps. In fact, they had undertaken a detailed census of the refugee population by prefecture - which showed around 121,000 as at 12 December 1996.

Refugees arriving in Lubutu are in a much worse condition than the ones we have been seeing so far, said Philippe Duamelle in Lubutu yesterday. Many of them originate from Mugunga camp, north of Goma. They are malnourished, dehydrated, exhausted and, in some cases, even emaciated. Their feet are

terribly swollen after the long walk and some of them, extremely thin, look as if they are dying on their feet. An example: Saidate, a young woman of 19 brought her 9 month old baby Sada for treatment of marasma - an extreme form of malnutrition. Saidate could not breastfeed her child as she was totally emaciated. She had lost her husband on the road from Bukavu.

Several hundred refugees are emerging from under their plastic sheeting and come seeking medical assistance from the two dispensaries UNICEF has set up over the weekend - where emergency medical consultations are being held. Many refugees suffering from severe malnutrition are on a drip receiving glucose. While they wait for treatment, the refugees are given emergency assistance - oral rehydration salts, BP-5 biscuits and water.

Except for some severe and isolated cases, the refugees do not have access to Lubutu hospital, as the authorities have stopped their advance 7 km south of Lubutu at Tingi-Tingi.

Philippe reported that several refugees are helping us by clearing a space suitable for aircraft landing at Tingi-Tingi. Over the weekend, an airlift from Kisangani delivered several tons of emergency relief supplies on an Antonov plane with a capacity of under 2 tons. Today, a DC3 (capacity 3 tons) will be rotating between Kisangani and Lubutu to bring in further supplies of essential drugs, blankets and plastic sheeting. Twelve bicycles for easy movement around the camp area are also being delivered. It is impossible to use larger capacity planes on account of the size of the airstrip.

Two way stations have been set up on the road between Lubutu and Walikale, at a distance of 12 km and 22 km, respectively, from Lubutu. They are located close to local health centres, which have been stocked with medical

supplies. Another three way stations will be opened today further down the road between Lubutu and Amizi, 60 km south. All the way stations are being stocked with oral rehydration salts, BP-5 biscuits and water.

Philippe, together with Dr. Eric Mercier and Dr. Alphonse Toko, have set up several teams among the refugee workers to provide health services and to look after the unaccompanied children among the refugees. Several hundred UAC have been identified and the UNICEF teams are registering them - 300 UAC so far - and providing care and shelter. Two tents have been pitched for this purpose. Several children are being looked after by foster families.

A nutritional assessment is being undertaken and vaccination coverage will be provided to all children, refugee and Zairian as required. Some of the refugees who worked with UNICEF in the camps in Bukavu were able to resume their responsibilities without further training and recreate the same dynamic structures which had existed previously in the camps.

Other news: As of 12 december, 20 National Committees were involved in raising funds for the Central Africa Great Lakes Emergency. So far, US\$6.5 millionYs have been raised or pledged by those Natcoms.

At a meeting of the principal donors held in Kigali on Monday, it was decided that US\$ 500 million would be contributed to the Government of Rwanda for the reintegration of the refugees. The priorities established are housing, support for the judiciary system, and the re-establishment of social services and basic agriculture. The announcement was made by the Canadian Minister of International Co-operation Don Boudria. On 24 November in Geneva, the RwanRwanda had presented a programme which required funding in an amount of US\$740 million.

Document 58 (18.12.96)

Source: UNICEF

Date: 18 Dec 1996

Great Lakes Region Update

UNICEF CURRENT PRESENCE

Zaire: Kinshasa, Kisangani, Lubumbashi, Boma, Bukavu, Goma, Kananga,
Lubumbashi, Mbuji-Mayi

Rwanda: Kigali, Butare, Gisenyi, Cyangugu, Kibungo

Burundi: Bujumbura, Muyinga

Tanzania, Ngara, Kigoma

Uganda: Kampala (logistic base)

Kenya: Nairobi

SUPPLY STATUS

- * 27 m/t (of relief supplies to Kampala - Dutch Air Force (3 November)
- * 3C m/t relief items to KiOi - Italian Government (8 November)
- * 100 m/t emergency supplies to Kinshasa - Swiss Government (14 November)
- * 40 m/t relief items to Kigali - Dutch Air Force (15 November)
- * 50 m/t relief items to Kigali - OFDA sponsored flight (10-11 December)

* discussions underway with the French Government to ship 50 m/t relief items to Kigali.

* a request is outstanding with MCDU for an additional 200 m/t from Copenhagen to Kinshasa, Entebbe and Kigali with basic relief goods (plastic sheeting, ORS, BP-5 biscuits, jerricans, medical supplies, etc.), which have been ready for shipment for several weeks now.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF CURRENT EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

Goma/Gisenyi (Zaire/Rwanda): UNICEF's office in Goma was reopened on 23 November. Following the massive influx of mid-November, the flow of Rwandan refugees crossing the border at Gisenyi from North Kivu diminished considerably to a few hundreds per day. UNICEF is providing support to keep the water system of the town running. It also re-initiated the regional medical committee in Goma with five subcommittees on: (i) reinforcement of health infrastructure; (ii) essential drugs, vaccines and medical equipment; (iii) nutrition and foodsecurity; (iii); water and sanitation; and (iv) epidemiological survey.

Kisangani/Lubutu/Walikale (Zaire): In Eastern Zaire, thousands of refugees are arriving in the Lubutu area, in a much worse condition than seen previously - several are almost too weak to walk. Members of the ICRC and the French Humanitarian Cell, who arrived in the area yesterday were shocked by what they saw. UNICEF has already airlifted over 40 tons of humanitarian assistance from Kisangani in Haut-Zaire on small planes - the only ones able to land in the airstrip at Tingi-Tingi - bringing essential drugs, oral rehydration salts, soap, BP-5 biscuits therapeutic milk, blankets, plastic sheeting and tents. It has set up several teams among the refugee workers to provide

health services and to look after the unaccompanied children among the refugees, a nutritional assessment is being undertaken and vaccination coverage will be provided to all children, refugee and Zairian as required. Yet needs are immense, and there is a danger that thousands of persons, in particular, children could die between now and Christmas unless a massive humanitarian intervention is undertaken.

Bukavu/Cyangugu (Zaire/Rwanda). UNICEF team on standby in Cyangugu, Rwanda, across the border from Bukavu, moved into Bukavu on 27 November. UNICEF as part of the UN inter-agency team, has examined the situation in the surrounding areas. Immediate needs identified include vaccines and water supply equipment which UNICEF will make available from its stockpiles inside Rwanda.

Lubumbashi (Zaire): UNICEF's sub-office in Lubumbashi is preparing for operations to proceed from the south to the area around Kalemie (south of Kivu). Together with OXFAM, UNICEF will assist in water supply provision to people in the Kalemie area.

Uvira (Zaire) On 4 December seven representatives, from WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, DHA, MSF, ICRC and IFRC, travelled by road to Uvira to evaluate humanitarian needs in the region. Life appeared to have returned to normal, with markets and shops functioning. The delegation visited the hospital, where conditions appeared to be relatively good.

Ngara/Kibungo (Tanzania/Rwanda): UNICEF Tanzania has maintained an operational field base in Ngara for refugees in Kagera region since the onset of the mass Rwandan refugee exodus in April 1994. The programme assists refugee children and women, as well as affected Tanzanian communities in the Kagera region and provides logistical

support to UNICEF's operations in Burundli, Eastern Zaire and Kigoma. Over 200,000 Rwandan refugees have returned since the weekend to their country following orders given by the Tanzania authorities for the 535,000 Rwandan refugees on their territory since 1994. The main bulk of refugees are expected to walk past Kibungo, the main town in the area, 60 km from the border. This is where UNICEF's local warehouse is located with stocks of therapeutic milk, ORS, blankets and cooking sets and high protein biscuits and Unimix. The emergency food supplies are to be distributed to partner NGOs.

Kigoma (Tanzania): UNICEF has reinforced its presence in Kigoma and is working closely with other agencies to provide urgent humanitarian assistance. From the influx of over 40,000 people from Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda over 6000 are children under five. In response to most urgent needs, UNICEF: carried out a measles vaccination campaign for 4000 children aged between 6 months and 15 years. In addition, IRC has vaccinated 3000 children under five against polio as of 2 December with support of UNICEF. Our Bujumbura office is delivering health support materials, including. vitamin A, syringes, oral rehydration salts and essential drugs to Kigoma and our Nairobi office arranged 55 tons of UNIMIX.

Cibitoki, (Burundi): An estimated 100,000 internally displaced persons and returnees from Zaire's Uvira region are living in the plains in Cibitoke province where government forces are battling rebels and where UN agencies have had no access for over one year. There is an acute need for clean, water and food. UNICEF continues its work in this difficult area through non-governmental organisations, focussing on water needs assessment and nutritional assistance.

Document 9 (06.12.96)

Source: UNICEF

Date: 06 Dec 1996

Great Lakes Region Update

UNICEF CURRENT PRESENCE

Zaire: Kinshasa, Kisangani, Lubumbashi, Goma

Rwanda: Kigali, Butare, Gisenyi, Cyangugu-u

Burundi: Bujumbura, Muyinga

Tanzania: Ngara, Kigoma

Uganda: Kampala (logistic base)

SUPPLY STATUS

- * 27 m/t of relief supplies to Kampala - Dutch Air Force (3 November)
- * 30 m/t relief items to Kigali - Italian Government (8 November)
- * 100 m/t emergency supplies to Kinshasa - Swiss Government (14 November)
- * 40 m/t relief items to Kigali - Dutch Air Force (15 November)
- * a request is outstanding with MCDU for 200 m/t from Copenhagen to Kinshasa/Entebbe and Kigali with basic relief goods (plastic sheeting, ORS, BP-5 biscuits, jerricans, medical supplies, etc.).

FUNDING

On 18 November, the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali launched an appeal for \$259 million. As at 2 December UNICEF has received \$4.5 million (30 percent) in cash of the \$14.5 million requested. In addition UNICEF received contributions in kind.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF CURRENT EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

Goma/Gisenyi (Zaire/Rwanda): UNICEF's office in Goma was reopened on 23 November. Following the massive influx of mid-November, the flow of Rwandan refugees crossing the border at Gisenyi from North Kivu diminished considerably to a few hundreds per day. UNICEF re-initiated the regional medical committee in Goma with five subcommittees on: (i) reinforcement of health infrastructure; (ii) essential drugs, vaccines and medical equipment; (iii) nutrition and food security; (iii) water and sanitation; and (iv) epidemiological survey.

Kisangani/Lubutu/Walikale (Zaire): Although UNICEF has propositioned relief supplies in Kisangani, it has been difficult to reach the children in need, because of the general insecure situation. After the first UNICEF/MSF/ICRC convoy on 20 November to Lubutu/Walikale area was partly looted, no further convoys could be arranged. Only people in relative good condition make it to Kisangani and can benefit from humanitarian assistance whereas the weaker ones fall exhausted on the roads. Rising insecurity in the area made UNICEF call back their two staff in Kisangani to Kinshasa on 2 December.

Bukavu/Cyangugu (Zaire/Rwanda): UNICEF team on standby in Cyangugu, Rwanda, across the border from Bukavu, moved into Bukavu on 27 November. UNICEF as part of the UN inter-agency team, has examined the situation in the

surrounding areas. Immediate needs identified include vaccines and water supply equipment which UNICEF will make available from its stockpiles inside Rwanda. A main problem is that many of the displaced are out of reach of the humanitarian agencies.

Lubumbashi (Zaire): UNICEF's sub-office in Lubumbashi is preparing for operations to proceed from the south to the area around Kalemi (south of Kivu). Together with OXFAM, UNICEF will foresee in water supply provision to people in the Kalemi area.

Uvira (Zaire): On 4 December seven representatives, from WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, DHA, MSF, ICRC and IFRC, travelled by road to Uvira to evaluate humanitarian needs in the region. Life appeared to have returned to normal, with markets and shops functioning. The delegation visited the hospital, where conditions appeared to be relatively good.

Ngara Kibungo (Tanzania/Rwanda) : Following the decision of the Tanzanian Government to close the Rwandan refugee camps by the end of the year, a UNICEF team left Kigali on 5 December for Kibungo (southeast Rwanda) and Ngara (Tanzania) to prepare for the expected repatriation of the Rwandan refugees. The team will organize training for the prevention of separation of children during the repatriation exercise and will also look into the possibility of setting up an outpost with logistical facilities in Kibungo.

UNICEF Tanzania has maintained an operational field base in Ngara for refugees in Kagera region since the onset of the mass Rwandan refugee exodus in April 1994, staffed by an Emergency Coordinator, CEDC Adviser, Primary Health Adviser and Education Adviser. The programme assists refugee children and women, as well as affected Tanzanian communities in the Kagera region and provides logistical support to UNICEF's operations in Burundi,

Eastern Zaire and Kigoma.

Kigoma (Tanzania): UNICEF has reinforced its presence in Kigoma and is working closely with other agencies to provide urgent humanitarian assistance. From the influx of 37404 people from Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda 5910 children under five have been registered. In response to most urgent needs, UNICEF carried out a measles vaccination campaign for 4000 children aged between 6 months and 15 years ' In addition, IRC has vaccinated 3000 children under five against polio as of 2 December with support of UNICEF. Our Bujumbura office is delivering health support materials, including vitamin A, syringes, oral rehydration salts and essential drugs to Kigoma and our Nairobi office arranged 55 tons of UNIMIX.

Cibitoke (Burundi): An estimated 100,000 internally displaced persons and returnees from Zaire's Uvira region are living in the plains in Cibitoke province where government forces are battling rebels and where UN agencies have had no access for over one year. There is an acute need for clean water and food. UNICEF continues its work in this difficult area through non- governmental organizations, focusing on water needs assessment and nutritional assistance.

Document 30/33 (19.03.97)

Source: UNICEF Date: 19 Mar 1997 -----

Great Lakes Regional Update No. 51

EASTERN ZAIRE

The humanitarian evacuation of unaccompanied children (UACs) from Tingi-Tingi, which started on Monday 17 March, continued yesterday (please see update 50).

UNICEF staff was CEDC Officer Enrico Leonardi and Emergency Officer Charlie Main were in Tingi-Tingi yesterday and returned with 28 children in a very poor state of health. UnUACs were provided with medical treatment at the Goma transit centre. From Tingi-Tingi, a total of 44 UACs have been brought to Goma in the past two days. Twenty-three UACs remain in Tingi-Tingi. They will be brought to Goma as soon as aircraft space permits.

In Amisi, 67 UACs have been registered so far. An additional 111 UACs in Amisi have been identified for registration.

Today, Wednesday 19 March, CEDC Officers Roisen De Burka and Enrico Leonardi are scheduled to travel to Tingi-Tingi.

United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Great Lakes

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Great Lakes will be launched today in Geneva. The Appeal seeks a total of US\$325 million over the period January to December 1997 to meet emergency humanitarian needs relating to the Great Lakes crisis in the countries of Zaire, Burundi and Tanzania and on a smaller scale in Uganda and Zambia. (Acting on the specific request by the Government of Rwanda, humanitarian requirements for Rwanda are not included.) Within this amount, UNICEF is appealing for a total of US\$34,936,667 to cover the following activities:

* Co-ordination support 700,000 * Child health 10,414,410 * Nutrition/Household Food Security 5,225,800 * Water, Hygiene and Sanitation 5,703,800 * Basic Education 3,713,080 * Protection of Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances 3,018,520 * Relief and Shelter Items 6,161,057

Due to the fluidity of the situation, projects have been drawn up on a regional basis or by sector so that material and human resources can be quickly transferred to where they are most needed. Please let us know if you wish to receive more detailed information on the UNICEF component of the appeal.

Document 34/35 (02.04.97)

Source: UNICEF Date: 02 Apr 1997 -----

UNICEF Great Lakes Regional Update No. 52

A telephone conversation with Marie de la Soudiere, UNICEF advisor on UACs, resulted in the following information:

- Marie has just returned from a trip to Kisangani to assess the situation of unaccompanied children (UACs) in the area. The trip covered refugee sites on route going south from Kisangani, towards Ubundu. She was joined by the Country Director local staff from Save the Children Fund/UK (SCF/UK), one of our implementing partners. SCF/UK staff were on hand to begin registration of UACs. In the Lula refugee site, for example, she reported thousands of UACs, many in terrible physical shape. Severe malnutrition is common. On 28 March, in Lulu, 31 refugees died including 24 children, 14 under five.
- The inter-agency operation in the area is concerned with keeping refugees alive while negotiations with Rebel Alliance continue with the aim of allowing refugees to return to Kisangani where they can be airlifted to Goma or other points. According to UNHCR estimates, there are around 90,000 refugees on the road and railway line between Kisangani and Ubundu.
- UNICEF and its partners under the inter-agency operation are still flying out UACs from Masisi several times a week. Total so far evacuated to Goma: 265; 20 have been reunified with family; approximately 200 have been repatriated to Kigali.
- A sizeable UNICEF team, including doctor and UAC expert, are to arrive in Kisangani in coming days. UNICEF team will be bringing supplies including BP5 and Unimix. After Kisangani, humanitarian aid and personnel can only be transported by train or vehicle.
- Total no. of UACs registered in Tingi and Masisi: 525 (of which 22 have already died).
- A group of 30,000 refugees, including 180 registered UACs, heading south from Masisi to Goma. UACs will be cared for in UNICEF-supported transit centres in Goma.

Document 36/25 (22.04.97)

Source: UNICEF Date: 22 Apr 1997 -----

UNICEF Calls on African Leaders to Help Rescue Children in Eastern Zaire

PR/GVA/97/006

Geneva, 22 April --- UNICEF Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, issued a strong call for action today as the situation in eastern Zaire deteriorated further into tragedy.

As the world watches and waits, hundreds of children are at death's door, she said. But food and medicine are close at hand. These innocent children can be saved.

Bellamy appealed to African leaders to use their influence with the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire. In particular, she urged South African President, Nelson Mandela, to intercede directly with Laurent Kabila, to ensure the care and protection of refugee children and the immediate evacuation of the most vulnerable unaccompanied children.

With his overwhelming influence and his unique moral stature worldwide, Nelson Mandela might well turn this desperate situation around, she said.

UNICEF is also contacting several African regional leaders to encourage them to use their influence to halt the looming catastrophe, and has spoken to the UN/OAU Special Representative, Mohamed Sahnoun, to convey a rising crescendo of alarm.

For four days the threat of violence has prevented aid workers from reaching the refugees who are scattered in camps between Kisangani and Ubundu. Humanitarian aid has been looted, fuel for aid flights taken, aid workers threatened and local villagers massacred by parties unknown. Reports of an attack on the refugee camp at km 25 on Monday have raised fears that thousands of refugees living in the camp may have fled into the surrounding forest.

There is no doubt that if aid workers are not allowed access to the refugees, hundreds of children and their families will die of neglect, Bellamy said. The senseless deaths of innocent victims must be prevented.

More than 5,000 unaccompanied children were to be airlifted from Kisangani to Goma beginning last Friday. They were to be the first group in an operation to evacuate 80,000 to 100,000 people over the next three months. But local authorities delayed the evacuation, first saying that there was a risk of spreading cholera to other cities, and then arguing that the airlift would congest the airports.

Aid workers maintain that the cholera outbreak is containable and that evacuation is the populations only chance of survival. Transit centres in Goma, run by NGOs and supported by UN agencies, have been set up to care for unaccompanied children, who are registered and given food and medical assistance, before being reunited with their families.

Recent events run contrary to promises from Alliance leaders. UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, Stephen Lewis, on mission in the region last week, received assurances that the evacuation could proceed as planned, and that aid workers would not be prevented from working in the camps.

Aid agencies have also consistently assured local authorities that the needs of internally displaced people and the local population are being addressed. Basic services, rehabilitated by UNICEF and other humanitarian agencies, are already functioning in eastern Zaire, offering health and educational facilities to local communities.

I urge the Alliance to make the evacuation possible, said Bellamy. Time is running out for innocent children caught in the conflict.

For further information, please contact:

Marie Heuzé, Chief, Communication, Geneva Regional Office - Tel. (41 22) 909 5523
Patrick McCormick, Communication Officer, Geneva Regional Office - Tel. (41 22) 909 55 09

Document 39/34 (13.05.97)

Source: UNICEF Date: 13 May 1997 -----

Attack on UNICEF staff in Goma, Eastern Zaire

The following statement was released at the press briefing in Geneva this morning.

CF/DOC/IN/1997-06

Shortly after 0700 on the morning of Monday 12 May, five armed men dressed in military uniforms entered a house in Goma where two UNICEF international staff were living. The armed men threatened the two UNICEF and the three domestic staff who were in the house at the time. They initially said they were searching for weapons, but later demanded money. Money and a few portable valuables were stolen by the armed men. One UNICEF staff member and one of the domestic staff were beaten. Both the UNICEF staff and the domestic staff were then tied up and gagged. The assailants left the house shortly after 0800.

For reasons of confidentiality, the identities of the staff members involved in the incident have not been disclosed.

UNICEF Executive Director, Carol Bellamy, has condemned the attack which follows two other security incidents involving UN staff and vehicles in the area over the weekend.

"Whatever the motive may have been, it is absolutely unacceptable that UNICEF staff should be subjected to such acts of terror. It is a total affront to the fundamental principles of humanitarian assistance," she said.

The AFDL authorities in Goma have been informed of the attack. AFDL officials have said that it is possible the assailants were trying to discredit the Alliance by wearing Alliance-style uniforms.

"It is imperative that the AFDL authorities responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the area do everything within their power to identify and apprehend those responsible for this barbaric behavior," said Bellamy.

For more information contact: Patrick McCormick, UNICEF Geneva on Tel: 41 22 909 5509
Anna Wright, UNICEF New York on Tel: 1 212 326 7566

Via the UN DHA Integrated Regional Information Network "Wire" mailing list. The material contained in this communication may not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. UN DHA IRIN Tel: +254 2 622123 Fax: +254 2 622129 e-mail: irin@dha.unon.org for more information. If you re-print, copy, archive or re-post this item, please retain this credit and disclaimer.

Source: UNICEF

Date: 10 Jul 1997

UNICEF activities - Burundi

Kenya has announced it will lift fuel and travel sanctions imposed on Burundi following the military coup last July. Kenya has reportedly lost revenue due to smuggling of fuel supplies.

In April, neighbouring countries eased sanctions on Burundi, exempting all food, agricultural items, medicines and education and construction materials. However, the decision has not noticeably altered the availability or price of goods.

To support the government's immunisation programme, UNICEF has provided 50,000 disposable syringes with needles as well as 3,000 syringes and needles which are reusable after being sterilised.

UNICEF has delivered 339,000 litres of water to more than 37,000 internally displaced and war-affected people living in rural Bujumbura, Bubanza and Cibitoke provinces

Source: UNICEF

Date: 22 Aug 1997

UNICEF activities - eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

Health and Nutrition

As part of a vaccination project in North Kivu, UNICEF has so far provided local health authorities with 270,000 doses of vaccines.

The vaccines against measles, polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, tuberculosis and tetanus have been transported to various health zones in the Province.

Water and Sanitation

UNICEF has signed an agreement with a local NGO, ADIF (Action pour le Développement Intègre de la Femme) for the construction and maintenance of water sources in the Bukavu area.

Under the two-month project, ADIF, in collaboration with the local population, will construct or rehabilitate nine water sources in the three urban zones of Bukavu.

It will help establish and train committees - made up of five women and one man - which will be responsible for managing water use and maintenance.

ADIF will also construct separate facilities at each source for the washing of dishes and clothes, to avoid dirtying the drinking water supplies.

The objectives of the project are to:

- * ensure access to potable water for about 30,000 people
- * prevent the spread of water-borne diseases
- * alleviate the burden on women and children for the collection of water
- * improve hygiene conditions around the water sources.

The people who will benefit do not currently have access to Bukavu's main water supply.

Children in Exceptionally Difficult Circumstances

A further 694 children in especially difficult circumstances were identified by a follow-up UNICEF mission to the Rutshuru area of North Kivu, during August. This figure includes 83 unaccompanied children and 61 orphans.

A total of 1,324 Rwandan unaccompanied children have been repatriated from Bukavu between December 1996 and 31 July 1997.

Source: UNICEF

Date: 18 Sep 1997

UNICEF Executive Director deplores flagrant child rights abuses by the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda

NEW YORK 18 Sept.-- Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), said today that new information on atrocities against children by a rebel faction in Uganda have confirmed earlier UNICEF estimates that up to 10,000 children have been victimized.

"The evidence of these unspeakable acts is overwhelming," Bellamy said following the publication earlier today of reports by Amnesty International in London and Human Rights Watch in New York. Both reports describe in horrifying detail how the rebels, members of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), have abducted, tortured - and in many cases killed - thousands of mostly teenaged children.

Unable to enlist adults to their cause, the rebel commanders round up children seized during raids on villages and schools. They break the spirit of their young captives with brutal initiation rites such as forcing them to murder other children with axes and sticks. Children have formed the backbone of the LRA since 1994.

The Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reports confirm previous UNICEF estimates that between 6,000 and 10,000 children have been kidnaped from their homes and schools in Gulu, Kitgum and other districts in northern Uganda. Many of the children are between 11 and 16 years of age when they are captured, according to Amnesty International.

Both the Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch reports state categorically that the LRA receive support from the government of Sudan, whose armed forces allegedly provide arms, food and refuge to the Ugandan rebels. In return, the LRA forces girl and boy child soldiers to fight in the conflict in southern Sudan, as well as putting them in the front line in engagements against the Ugandan army.

"The facts, as laid out by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, are very disturbing," Bellamy said. "The Government of Sudan should separate itself from the allegations by immediately denouncing the LRA publicly and dissociating itself from their activities in a way that will be clear to the entire international community. If the Government of Sudan cannot bring itself to do this, then the United Nations and the international community will draw conclusions that will be extremely incriminating."

UNICEF is joining Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in calling on the recently appointed UN Special Representative on children and armed conflict to investigate, independently, the abuses against children by the Lord's Resistance Army, and in appealing to governments to support the draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child that would raise the minimum age of military recruitment from 15 to 18. The new reports contain scores of firsthand accounts from children who have escaped captivity. They document how the children are made to serve as foot soldiers, sexual slaves and porters. Their descriptions of the brutality are stark.

"One time, a girl who was abducted tried to escape, but was caught by the rebels. The girl was brought in front of us and the rebels told us to stomp (her) to death. If we did not kill the girl we were going to be shot by guns. We prayed for that girl in our hearts, silently, and asked God to pardon us and forgive us because it was not of our will to kill her," said a 17-year-old student in the wake of the abduction of 139 girls from a school run by nuns.

Children who manage to escape are usually debriefed by the Ugandan army and then passed on to a rehabilitation center that is supported by UNICEF and run by World Vision. UNICEF is assisting local government authorities in working with communities to gather reliable data on children who have been abducted. UNICEF has also established a coordination group, consisting of government authorities and NGOs, to improve the psychosocial support offered to children who have escaped their LRA captors, and to all children who are caught up in the conflict.

"There is never just cause for the death or torture of a child -- so why is the world silent about the abuses in northern Uganda?" Bellamy concluded. "Just as there are calls for an investigation into the alleged human rights violations in the Great Lakes Region, so the international community must exercise the same conscience towards the children in Uganda and demand with one voice that every child still held by the Lord's Resistance Army be freed immediately."

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