

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 02/38/96

12 December 1996

Further information on EXTRA 189/96 (AFR 02/36/96, 6 December 1996) - Fear of refoulement

TANZANIA / RWANDA / UGANDA More than 500,000 Rwandese refugees in Tanzania

Following the statement issued by the Tanzanian Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) which stated that all Rwandese refugees in Tanzania were expected to return home by 31 December 1996, thousands of Rwandese refugees have reportedly fled from the refugee camps in the Ngara region.

By 12 December, it was reported that more than 300,000 (more than half the total Rwandese refugee population in Tanzania) had fled, apparently to avoid being forcibly repatriated to Rwanda. Most are reported to have moved eastwards, further into Tanzania (in the opposite direction from the border with Rwanda); their exact whereabouts are not known. Around 500 Rwandese refugees from the Karagwe region of Tanzania have sought refuge in Uganda; others are reportedly making their way to Zambia, Malawi and Kenya.

The mass flight of these refugees away from the camps appears to have been caused by the joint statement issued by the Tanzanian Government and the UNHCR. Members of the Tanzanian security forces are reported to have been deployed around the camps in recent days, possibly to stop further refugee movements.

Between 5,000 and 6,000 refugees are reported to have returned voluntarily to Rwanda since the beginning of December 1996.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or in your own language:

TO AUTHORITIES IN TANZANIA:

In addition to the points in original EXTRA:

- expressing concern that the statement issued by Tanzania and the UNHCR appears to have caused the flight of thousands of refugees to areas of the country where they have no protection;
- asking for assurances that the Tanzanian authorities will refrain from taking any action which could lead to human rights violations against the Rwandese refugees. In particular violence should not be used to force refugees back to the camps or to forcibly repatriate them to Rwanda;
- urging the authorities to make a public statement assuring the refugees that they will not be forcibly returned to Rwanda.

His Excellency Ndugu Benjamin William MKAPA

Office of the President

State House

PO Box 9120

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Fax: + 255 51 469 13

Telegrams: President, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Salutation: Dear President of the United Republic

Edgar MAOKOLA Majogo

Office of the Ministry of Defence

PO Box 9544

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Telegrams: Defence Minister, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Salutation: Dear Minister

The Hon. Ndudgu Ali Amer MOHAMMED

Minister of Home Affairs

PO Box 9000

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Telegrams: Home Affairs Minister, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Telex: 41231

Salutation: Dear Minister

TO AUTHORITIES IN UGANDA:

- asking for assurances that Rwandese refugees from Tanzania seeking asylum in Uganda will not be forced back to Rwanda;
- expressing concern that if refugees are returned to Rwanda, some may be at risk of human rights violations there, including arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment, detention in life-threatening conditions, "disappearance" or extrajudicial execution;
- asking the authorities to use their influence to ensure that the Tanzanian or any other governments do not forcibly return Rwandese refugees back to Rwanda, where they may face serious human rights violations.

APPEALS TO:

Major Tom BUTIME

Minister of Internal Affairs

Ministry of Internal Affairs

PO BOX 7191

Kampala, Uganda

Telegrams: Internal Affairs Minister, Kampala, Uganda

Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Eriya KATEGAYA

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

PO BOX 7048

Kampala, Uganda

Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Kampala, Uganda

Faxes: +256 41 25 8722

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: RWANDESE authorities, as listed on original action.

and to diplomatic representatives of Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 January 1997.