

Thousands of Rwanda refugees pour into Tanzania

Reuters, April 8, 1994

NEW YORK, April 8 (Reuter) - Four thousand refugees from strife-torn Rwanda have poured into neighbouring Tanzania, the first of what could be eventually up to 150,000 refugees, a New York-based relief organisation said Friday.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) said its staff in Tanzania reported the influx of refugees was expected in Ngara, a Tanzanian town near the southeastern corner of Rwanda.

A flood of refugees could be housed in the Ngara area, where there are six refugee camps, three of which could be re-opened after being shut last year, Faye Richardson, the IRC regional director for Africa, told Reuters.

“If huge numbers of refugees cross into Tanzania UNHCR (U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees) would be able to locate them at all six sites if necessary,” Richardson said.

An IRC officer sent a faxed message from Tanzania reporting : “There is great concern of a new influx of refugees from Rwanda to the Ngara region ... The estimate for possible influx is 150,000 refugees.”

In Geneva, a UNHCR spokesman said about 5,000 Rwandans and Burundis had fled their countries for Zaire since their presidents were killed Wednesday in a rocket attack on their plane, sparking a round of tribal bloodletting and renewed civil war.

(c) Reuters Limited 1994