

Thousands of Rwandan refugees overwhelm U.N. officials at tiny Tanzanian border camp

NGARA, Tanzania — A handful of relief workers struggled Sunday to cope with 250,000 refugees who flooded into a camp in Tanzania, seeking sanctuary from weeks of bloodletting in Rwanda.

Refugees spent the night huddled in the open, soaked by an intermittent rain that doused their campfires and left small children wailing in misery.

United Nations officials were stunned by the number of people who left Rwanda, Tanzania's northwestern neighbor. In all, 250,000 Rwandans crossed the border in a 24-hour period Thursday and Friday in what the United Nations called the biggest, fastest exodus ever seen. Thousands of refugees were still trudging in the rain Sunday, walking the 10 miles from the frontier to the camp.

"We went down to the border cross-

ing at about 4 or 5 o'clock Thursday afternoon on a routine check, and when we looked across the hills on the other side of the river were streaming with people," said Maureen Connolly, a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees emergency officer.

In the face of a rebel advance into southeastern Rwanda, the Rwandan army fled without a fight and left the border unguarded for 24 hours - long enough for the massive exodus. The rebels sealed the border Saturday.

Officials fear another 250,000 people could swarm into Tanzania if the border reopens.

"It is quite a mess," said Dr. Etienne Krug, the medical coordinator at the camp.

"Two hundred and fifty thousand people is like a small city and we have nothing organized."

At least 100,000 people have been killed in nearly a month of savagery in Rwanda, and more than 1.3 million have fled their homes.

The United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and some private agencies already had between 30 and 40 staffers and supplies on hand in this small, remote Tanzanian town because of an earlier crisis in Burundi.

But it wasn't enough.

Bradley Guarrant of the U.N. World Food Program said available food stocks, enough for 50,000 people for two weeks, will feed the expanded refugee population only two days.

The first food distribution is scheduled Monday, and Guarrant predicted it would be "chaotic and disorderly" because of the huge number of people

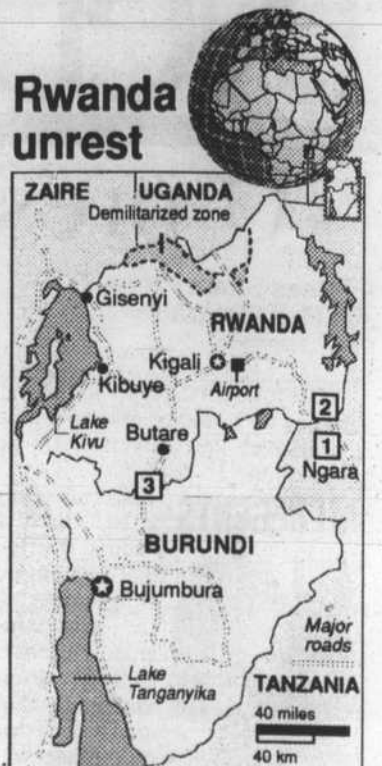
to be fed and the few relief workers on hand to do it.

A U.N. official in Kigali, the capital, said militia gangs responsible for so much of the savagery in Rwanda are withdrawing south from the capital ahead of advancing Tutsi-led rebels.

Fighting in Rwanda began April 6 after President Juvenal Habyarimana and the leader of Burundi - both Hutus - were killed in a suspicious plane crash in Kigali.

U.N. efforts to mediate a cease-fire have been unsuccessful.

Tanzanian President Ali Hassan Mwinyi said Sunday that Rwanda's government and the rebels had agreed to meet Tuesday for peace talks, Tanzanian radio reported, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp.



Developments in Rwanda: 1) 30 to 40 U.N. relief workers struggled Sunday to cope with 250,000 Rwandan refugees who found sanctuary at a camp, just 10 miles from the border in neighboring Tanzania near the town of Ngara. 2) The Rwandan army fled without a fight in the face of the rebel advance into southeastern Rwanda and left the border unguarded for 24 hours. It was through this narrow window of time that the refugees crossed. Rebels have closed the border. An estimated 250,000 more refugees are poised to cross if the border reopens. 3) Rwandans were blocked from going south into Burundi, Friday and turned southeast into Tanzania. The slaughter in southern Rwanda is reportedly even worse than in the capital, Kigali.

Decrease in crime statistics won't be a trend

WASHINGTON — The number of murders rose 3 percent last year but violent crimes overall edged lower, the FBI reported Sunday, reflecting what one criminologist called the "lull before the crime storm."

Preliminary findings of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports, which compile information on crimes reported to law enforcement agencies nationwide, found violent incidents declined 1 percent in 1993. Nearly 1.91 million violent crimes occurred, or roughly the same number as in 1991. There were 1.93 million violent crimes reported in 1992.

The 3 percent increase in murders in 1993 — after a year in which the

number dropped by 3.8 percent — would reflect a total of about 24,500 slain. About 23,760 were killed in 1992, while a record 24,703 were slain the year before.

The FBI provided only percentage changes, not national totals of crime incidents.

Property crimes, meanwhile, dropped by 3 percent, the FBI said, to an estimated 12.1 million.

That caused the overall number of reported crimes to fall by 3 percent, as property crimes account for about 87 percent of all reported crimes.

The FBI said burglaries declined 6 percent, to about 2.8 million; larceny-theft decreased 2 percent, to about 7.8

million, and motor vehicle theft dropped 4 percent, to 1.5 million.

"This may be the last good report that we see in a long time," said Jack Levin, professor of sociology and criminology at Northeastern University in Boston. "This is the lull before the crime storm that we're going to have in this country the next decade."

The reason, he said, is that homicides by juveniles as young as 14 and 15 years old are on the rise. They are in the leading edge of the mini-baby boom of children of the post-World War II baby boomers, and they haven't yet reached the 18- to 24-year-old age group that traditionally commits the overwhelming majority of murders,

he said.

"They aren't even there yet, but they're committing homicide," Levin said. "What are they going to do for an encore?"

One of the worst aspects of the current murders is that many appear to be over trivial matters, said James Alan Fox, dean of criminal justice at Northeastern University.

"What shocks the American public to the core is when they hear of a young boy in Miami killing a homeless person over a piece of pizza, kids in California killing their best friend because they're jealous of her hair," Fox said.

Arafat and Rabin to sign final agreement in Cairo

Control of beaches and legal jurisdiction among minor disputes to be worked out

CAIRO, Egypt — Israeli and PLO delegates opened their expected final round of talks on Palestinian autonomy Sunday, with both sides expressing confidence they would meet a Wednesday deadline.

In Jerusalem, the Israeli Cabinet gave its approval for signing the agreement for limited Palestinian self-rule in the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath said PLO chief Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement had also accepted the agreement, and the PLO's executive committee was expected to approve it soon.

Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin are to sign the autonomy agreement Wednesday at a ceremony in Cairo. They are scheduled to meet Tuesday night to iron out any last-minute disputes.

Maj. Gen. Amnon Shahak, the chief Israeli delegate, brushed past reporters as he entered Sunday's talks, said, "Wait until Wednesday - everything will be finished."

Palestinian negotiator Khaled el-Qudra said the two sides were drafting the final wording of the agreement.

"I think we're near the end and I think we'll finish," he said.

The two sides have been negotiating for more than six months on how to implement the Sept. 13 agreement for Israel to withdraw from Gaza and Jericho.

Under the accord, the Israelis were to start withdrawing Dec. 13 and complete the pullout by April 13. But the deadlines passed with negotiators still arguing over how broad the autonomy would be and how Jewish settlers would be protected in Gaza.

When the scheduled signing was announced last Thursday, differences remained over control of territorial waters and beaches, the freeing of Palestinian prisoners, and jurisdiction over lawbreakers. But both Israeli and PLO negotiators said the disputes were mostly minor and could

be worked out.

Two disagreements have been set aside for Rabin and Arafat to resolve: how much land Israel will give up around Jericho and whether a uniformed Palestinian will be stationed on the bridge between Jordan and the West Bank near Jericho.

Shaath, who heads the Palestinian delegation, returned Sunday afternoon from Tunis, headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization. He said the PLO's executive committee had not yet given its expected approval of the agreement because some members were late arriving in the Tunisian capital.

Responding to criticism in Israel that the PLO is not ready to take over running Gaza and Jericho, Shaath said members of committees that will handle the transfer of power would begin arriving in Cairo on Monday.

"I think that once we are ready and once we know exactly what we are signing, we will be going in as soon as possible," Shaath said.

In Israel, officials expressed doubt that the Palestinians were prepared to take over.

"We are concerned that they have not taken any practical measures whatsoever to take over," Economics Minister Simon Shetreet said. "Our biggest worry is whether or not they are ready."

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said the army would pull out of autonomous areas within five or six days of the signing. Up to 2,000 Palestinian police are expected to deploy there by Thursday.

Palestinian sources who spoke on condition of anonymity said Palestinian police may not be ready to deploy as rapidly as hoped. But Shaath said the police would begin moving into Gaza and Jericho "as soon as we sign."

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and Secretary of State Warren Christopher will attend Wednesday's signing.



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GAO finds troops fail fitness tests

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — Lax training has resulted in National Guard and military reserve troops not being physically fit for combat, a government investigation has found. The March 23 report by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, was obtained by the Corpus Christi Caller-Times, the newspaper reported Saturday.

"We believe that the DOD (Department of Defense) can no longer afford to continue lax oversight, permitting the retention of reservists who repeatedly fail fitness tests, allowing large numbers of reservists to go untested, and creating a testing environment that allows failing scores to be changed to passing ones," the GAO concluded.

Earlier in March, a GAO investigator told a House subcommittee that National Guard and reserve forces may be under-trained for emergency combat duty at a time when the Pentagon increasingly relies on them.

"It became apparent during the Gulf War that Army National Guard combat brigades had significant training-related problems," said Mark Gebicke, a military operations expert.

The GAO studied information from 35 reserve and National Guard units for the report cited by the Caller-Times. At one Navy unit visited by the GAO, eight reservists failed a recent fitness test, but three failures were changed to passing scores on paperwork passed up the chain of command, the newspaper reported.

The Caller-Times has reported that some Texas National Guard soldiers who repeatedly failed tests were allowed to remain in the service, while others who failed a test once were denied a chance to retake it as regulations allow. Lt. Col. Edmond Komandosky, spokesman for the Texas Guard, denied that there were widespread problems.

"To the best of my knowledge, the physical fitness standards are enforced according to the regulation," he said.