

**UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES**

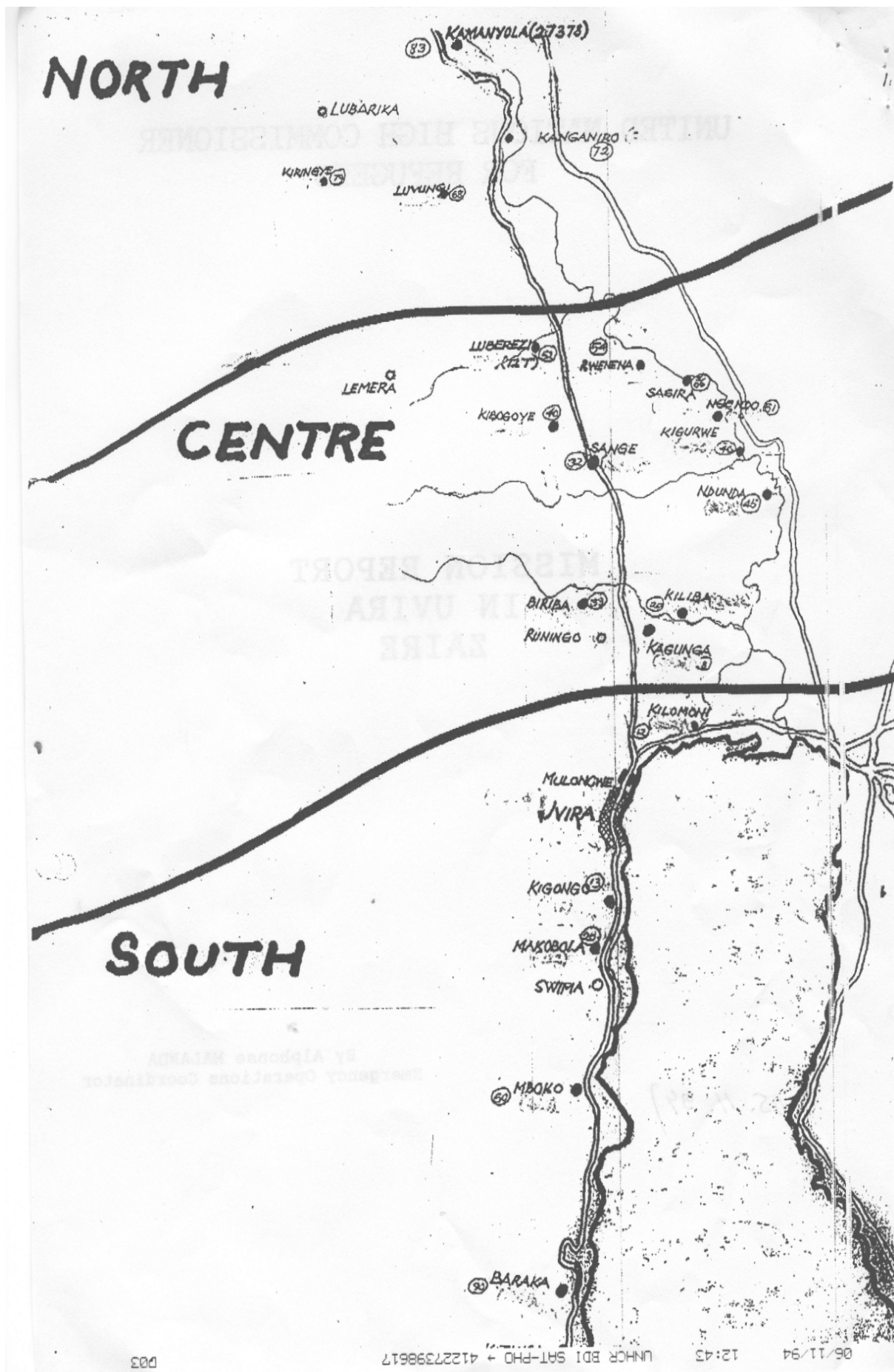
**MISSION REPORT
IN UVIRA
ZAIRE**

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NORTH

CENTRE

SOUTH



MISSION REPORT IN UVIRA ZAIRE

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1.1 . In accordance with UNHCR Headquarters instruction. I was designated to undertake an initial two months mission within the Emergency Response Team for Rwanda as Operations Coordinator in Bukavu. Indeed, I was posted in Uvira in replacement of Mr Bernard Quah, the former Operations Co-ordination, to :

co-ordinate, supervise and monitor. Within a Co-ordinating Committee held every thursday *at UNHCR Field Office*, the main Operational activities implemented in 24 refugee camps by eight implementing partners (Care, CPPS, the Diocese. MSF-HOLLAND, MSF-France, MDM, OXFAM, PSF} ,

maintain good relationships with local authorities, implementing partners and *the existing refugee* committees

organise the functioning of the UNHCR Field Office, in terms of staffing / posting position and the hierarchical responsibility among both international and local staff members.

co-ordinate and supervise a team of 17 international and 48 local staff members who are monitoring on a daily basis. The achievement of the main project objectives.

Report to the Emergency Team Leader in Bukavu, by SITREP, pactor, memoranda and narrative reports on the general situation protection/Security issues and the implementation of the emergency programme

Maintain regular contacts with the UNHCR Sub-Office in Bukavu and with technical units at Headquarters.

2. GENERAL SITUATION

- 2.1. The general situation in the zone of Uvira continues to be dominated by security problems in the main refugee camps, where there are former soldiers and militiamen who are still terrorizing, killing and stealing from civilians. The existence among refugees of political bodies who are involved in military activities is reported to field office. Kamanyola, Kanganiro, Luvungi, Kakunga and Bwegera refugee camps are the camps designated as hosting those military bodies.
- 2.2. The opening of the new refugee camps of Kanganiro, to re-settled rwandese refugees from Bukavu engendered and created additional security problems. A. connexion of military activities between Luvungi, Kanganiro and kamanyola refugee camps is reported to Field Office, due to

the existence of some 300 to 600 ex-soldiers among refugees from Bukavu.

Time and time again, it is reported to UNHCR Field Office that there are many attempts of attacks with guns, that has created insecurity in the zone a since the opening of Kanganiro camp. There are many apprehensions on the possible on-going military/militia activities in those camps where military guns such as kalchnikov and hand grenades are still circulating.

- 2.3. The burundese authorities have expressed their deep concern about the location of the refugee camps along the border, since the opening of kanganiro camp. The UNHCR branch Office in Bujumbura has declared itself to be under political pressure from the Burundese government,
- 2.4. In Uvira City, there are refugees and Zaireans displaced from Burundi/Rwanda who are scattered In Mulongwe quarter. This group visits the Field office, throws stones and uses force to get food. All efforts of the Field Office to transfer them or to encourage them to go to the existing refugee camps are in vain. Those who have been transfered, once, twice or three times came back to Uvira, after selling food and non food items they received. In the absence of a common Strategy between The UNHCR Field Office, the local authorities and the Diocese, the main implementing partner dealing with refugee issues in Uvira, this group continues to put pressure on the Field Office, and has for some time against UNHCR
- 2.5. The lack of the real refugee statistics is engendering the loss of food and non food items, mainly in Uvira city and where refugees are. scattered in the towns such as kamanyola, Luvungi, bwegera, Sande, Luberezi.....etc. The Diocèse who is dealing with registration of new arrivals and food distribution is strongly critisised by the WFP Representative, the SNIP and the other UNHCR implementing partners. There is proof against *the local staff* of the Diocese about malpractice in the distribution of "jetons" used by refugees as ration cards. There are suspicions on their involvement in manipulating refugees scattered in Mulongwe to move against UNHCR and other implementing partners. Moreover, as refugee status is granted on the prima facie basis, the registration exercise of new arrivals, done directly by the Diocese seems to be a refugee status recognition in which only UNHCR and the host government are invested

3. **GEO-POLITICAL CONTEXT**

- 3.1. According to certain Officials we encountered in the field. Uvira seems to be a very strategic zone with regard to the zairean leadership in the subsregion. They ,alleged that Uvira was deeply involved in the main political changes that happenned in Burundi and in Rwanda.

- 3.2 Talking about the *political* picture we have experienced in *Burundi*, it was reported that the *Cout d'Etat* that removed the president Bagaza, was prepared and launched from Uvira, Whereas in Rwanda, the mandate of the *late President Abiarimana* lasted a very long term of monopartite domination because inserted into the geo-political leadership of the zairean government in the " **Region des Grands Lacs** "
- 3.3 . *We undertstood* that zairean government *should be deeply committed in the solving* of burundese and Rwandan refugee problem that the conflicts we are experiencing in *Burundi and in Rwanda*. have their effects on the political picture in zaire that the geo-political interests of each concerned neighboring country deterring the nature of dialogues/peace-meetings/recouciation meetings for the solving of the refugee problem

4. **PROTECTION/SECURTY OF REFUGEE IN THE CAMPS**

- 4.1 There are many stories on what is still happening in the refugees camps. There are stories of Killing of presumed tutsi person. There are stories of former soldiers and militiamen who are still *terrorizing, Killing and stealing from refugees in the camps*, terrorizing and beating those who are willind to go back home. There are stories on the activities of political organisation such as PALIPEHUTU, FDD...etc. yes that is true, that is still going on and we have many problems mainly in Kamanyola, Kanganiro, luvungi, Luberezi, Bwegera, Runingu and *Kakunga Camps*. *Al though* it does not involve all the refugee camps as a whole, there indeed the fact that security of refugees is now a public matter of concern in Uvira areas. on Sunday October 23 1994, transfer and the settlement al Runingu camp of refugees who are residing in Uvira city, had been cancelled, du to the shutting and the Killing of two Rwandese refugees who came along with a group of five to ten Rwandan refugees from *Kagunga camps to be* registered by force and for business reasons
- 4.2 so, we have permanent tensions in the major camps. we have groups of refugees armed with sticks and machette who are erecting barricades along the main road from Kamanyola to Uvira city, because of delays in food delivery insufficient food ration attempts for double / duplicate registration.....etc Thrus, Emergency Operations Co-ordinator Field Officers and protection Officers are always on the spot to try and solve such problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Our perception of what refugees desire in terms of expectations, is to clear refugees camps of former soldier and militiamen as peacekeeper, UNHCR should be involved in discussions with leadership in the camps to find solutions that will jointly announce the cessation of insecurity and of terrorism in the main camps.

And when the two bodies which are controlling quality of the refugee camps pull back. Deseng then the camps will become peaceful and free of. UNHCR will really be able to insert itself better refugees to really assume its humanitarian mandate to try to promote a contingency mass volume repatriation of the security conditions in countries of origin.

UNHCR should persuade refugee leadership to are that the use of force will not give them a permit and a durable solution, that conflicts in the countries will be resolved not by use of force, because people will decide that it is time than has to be voluntary. UNHCR has a responsibility talk to them one to one, if necessary to converse them that as peacekeepers, leaders responsibility of also persuading armed groups to up their weappons.

A process of disarming former soldiers and militians where they are terrorizing civilians, should be seems in close co-operation with the concerned leadership. There is indeed a need to take them back to a civilians existence, to insure that they are fully occupations. There is a need to send them on their way.

- 4.3. we believe that there is a lit of problems in putting through the process of disarming and demobilizing them. Some them cannot return in their localities of residence because have apprehensions about returning as civillians, which is cause them to suffer miserably, in accordance with the nega-aspects of the history in their country, or because the engaged in a process of military / militia activities against to the countries of origin. Such a programme could be very slow to implemented, tackled from time to time due to the linkage, certain geo-political connexions So, it could take a long time implemert such a programme, but we believe that it is possible we do it in that way

5. **OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- 5.1. There is an increase of the refugee population due to the on geo isolated/organised fightings / killings in Burundi, mainly in Rugombo locality of the province of Cibitoke and in Ngozi. The setting-up of concrete refugee statistics, the overall figure 13 about 300,000 persons (Diocese and SNIP sources)
- 5.2. the WFP pipeline which faced many breakdowns, seems to had improved. The distribution exercise of food items, previous covering a one. to two weeks period is being superseded by, monthly food distrlbution. Such an improvement should minimum logistics problems the Field Office was experiencing dissipate existing tensions between UNHCR Field *officers*/NGos Personnel and refugee committees. Unfortunately the Field Officers has just been informed by WPP Bujumbura an the, reduction of the rations of cereal from 350g to 250 and of beens from 120g to 50 that could re-create problems in the camps.

- 5.3. Ten new light vehicles have been provided during the period under review. Thus, there are eighteen light vehicles for the day field visits and the monitoring of the main operationing activities. One bus for the transport of the personnel arrived in Bukavu
- 5.4. Five Rubb Halls required by the UNHCR logistics unit, facilitate the storage of food *and non food items* are better erected. However, there is a need for non food items for 110,000 refugees, among them 30,000 transferred from Bukavu to Kisangani camps. 50,000 refugees scattering in Uvira city who will be settle in the existing camps or in the south and 30,000 new refugees Based on the on-going political pictures in each country origin, and taking into consideration the foreseen transfer refugees to the south, there is indeed a need of non food water supply and sanitation... etc, for more than 110,000 refugees who could continue to refuge in Zaire. However, the transfer refugees to the Fizi zone, based on the. Results recommendations of the of the different finding missions and the feasibility of such a programme has to be concretely evaluated before being implemented, al though it remains the only solution putting refugees through a process of Farming and producing.
- 5.5. There is an increasing caseload of HIV cases in Mulogwe quarter of Uvira city, mainly among, rwandan refugees who were residing Kigali. According to the Diocese which is dealing with refugee issues in Uvira , four AIDS cases already died whereas six other are hospitalised.. The Diocese suspects that the total figure AIDS/HIV, cases should represent at least 60% of the tot population of rwandan refugees in Uvira. Both health/nutrition a social service Sub-Committees within the Coordinating Committees has been instructed to set up an adequate strategy that will able to cope with sexual descases. AIDS problems and sexual abuse / harassment. A Tracing programme is being conducted by the UNHCR social service to identify unaccompagnied minor handicapped persons and *vulnerable groups e.g women* heads household without support.

6. **DURABLE SOLUTIONS : VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION**

- 6.1 In talking to a very segmented refugee population we encountered in the camps we have not been told about reconciliation. Rather, we recognise the ease which refugees are witnessing the extent of the atrocities, the killing the suffering and the burning of the society. It is very difficult to get refugees ready for reconciliation. It pose us although we have to convince them that it that will not happen, they will remain taking refugee from their countries. We hear more often refugees say I am hutu, they are tutsi, lam Burundese hutu, lam not rwandan hutu,.....etc. but we did not hear refugees say lam Burundese or lam rwandan. So it becomes very difficult to have refugees forgive each other, trust each other and begin to embrace each other At the moment, any initiative to promote a voluntary repatriation operation looks like just a symbolic sense that seems so many buildings in countries experiencing multipartism, but not as real sense of putting ethnic conflicts behind them, in recognising the richness of the diversity and the adversity of peoples coming from

different ethnic groups, and building that richness to create a new society that will be democratically elected.

- 6.2. in the absence of a formal tripartite agreement between Burundi Zaire and UNHCR, the Field office is now visited by groups of Burundese refugees who are seeking UNHCR protection and assistance to be voluntarily repatriated further to the election of the Head of the state and the setting up of a new political picture in accordance with the number of the candidates, the implementation of such a programme will be co-ordinated with Headquarters and the UNHCR Branch office in Bujumbura, in terms of project budget code and security / reception / hand-over as per BDI / HCR / /0834 and BDI / UVI / HCR / 0500 of September 08 1994.
- 6.3. Since the signature of the understanding agreement between Rwandan Zaire and the UNHCR in view of the promotion of a mass voluntary repatriation operation for rwandan refugees Field office has not yet been formally instructed to start a sensitization campaign in the: rwandan refugee camps

7 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- 7.1. The enclosed geographical position of Uvira Field office has had negative consequences in terms of the harmonisation of views and approaches within the hierarchical responsibility vis a vis of Bukavu Sub Office, before the improvement of the telecommunication system and the: increase of the logistical capacity which have just been implemented in October 1994 As requested by both the Desk and the Technical Unit at Headquarters, Uvira Field Office is not now able to provide on a daily basis, Situation report on the main operational activities he is invested, including security in the refugee camps, findings and recommendations from local PTSS team " or on any information deemed necessary.
- 7.2 In accordance with the staffing/posting position and the capacity of the staff, the implementation of the programme should be decentralised.

8. ADMINISTRATIVE/PERSONNEL ISSUES

- 8.1. The staffing position for the international personnel has been strengthened with the appointment of seventeen staff members on mission or with short term contracts. In accordance with the results of the last PRG session, and in co-ordination with both Bukavu sub-Office and the regional Office in Kinshasa. Adequate and precise recommendations will be made in favour of international and local personnel already in the duty station.
- 8.2. The move to the new UNHCR office is scheduled for November 1994. The regional telecommunication officer in Bujumbura has *been* requested to re-set up the telecommunication system. The new system is being set-up by a team of the *Telecom Unit* at Headquarters. Office furniture and equipment are being purchased through Bukavu or from Bujumbura

8.3. The living conditions of the international staff remain critical as Uvira locality is enclosed and without adequate facilities. There is a need of a UNHCR compound with a minimum of facilities such as air conditioner, freezer, gaz stove, a generator for electricity supply, water supply system. Such a compound has to be equipped with a security/ warning system, due to the hostility/ pressure from refugees/ local population UNHCR staff is living in from day to day. A mission of a camp manager Officer has been required accordingly.

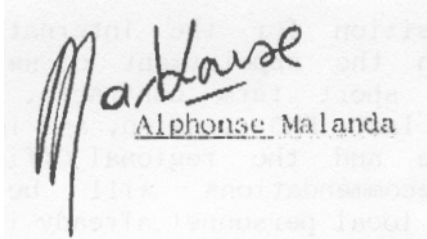
8.4 An order of satellite system / tv/ vhf for Uvira Field Office has been placed in view of the improvement of the living condition of the staff .

9. **CONCLUSION**

9.1 The geo-political context and the competition of leadership in this sub region, the political environment and the security conditions, the emergency programme is implemented in, have negative affects on the achievement of the project objectives and on the perspectives of an immediate promotion of an mass voluntary repatriation operation for both burundese and rwandan refugees.

9.2. As to the desire of the former leaders and soldiers, the militiamen and of the warring political factions remains to take revenge against the respective political new systems in the countries of origin, it becomes extremely difficult for UNHCH to concretly implement durable solutions and to cope with the refugee problem .

9.3. The UNHCR Field Office is very concerned with a possible existence of a warring/ armed corridor Obitoke-Kayanza-Ngozi that could be used from Uvira areas to try to destabilise the political picture in the respective countries of Origin



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