

Rwandan Patriotic Front rebels stop delivery of relief to northern Rwanda

AFP, January 18, 1993

KAMPALA, Jan 18 (AFP) - The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) says it has been unable to deliver relief food to the 350,000 war-displaced people facing starvation in northern Rwanda because the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) has refused to guarantee safe passage for food convoys.

"I am afraid we cannot send any more food there", ICRC head of delegation Francis Junod told AFP by telephone here on Monday.

The last convoy of 570 tonnes of beans was sent on January 7 through the border post of Katuna but since then, the RPF has said ICRC needed fresh permission before more convoys could be guaranteed safe entry into rebel-held territory in northern

Rwanda.

According to the ICRC, the population in camps in northern Rwanda needed up to 16,000 tonnes of grain and beans in the next two to three months if a major famine was to be averted.

A dispute erupted a month ago over the routing of food convoys and stopped the badly-needed relief food from reaching the population suffering from the effects of the war started October 1991 when the mostly Tutsi refugees serving in the Ugandan army absconded with their arms and invaded the tiny central African nation in an attempt to overthrow the majority Hutu regime in Kigali.

eo/lto/fc AFP AFP SEQN-0335