

Rwanda and Burundi require large-scale food aid in 1995: FAO

AFP, January 11, 1995

NAIROBI, Jan 11 (AFP) - Rwanda and Burundi will need large-scale relief aid throughout this year because their food production capability has been severely disrupted by civil war, the United Nations said Thursday.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in its food supply situation report for sub-Saharan Africa released here, said malnutrition rates were high among displaced people in Rwanda, while increasing violence continued to disrupt relief operations for refugees in Zaire.

Food production in Rwanda, which plunged into ethnic bloodletting in April following the death of president Juvenal Habyarimana in a plane crash, is projected to be 1.25 million tonnes this year, about half the 1990 harvest.

"Plantings were reduced by the absence of many farmers, who have either been killed or fled the country

or are displaced within the country," the FAO report said.

It projected the country's population will be 5.6 million in March, compared to 7.75 million people before the escalation of violence in April last year.

With ethnic violence continuing in Burundi, food production for the 1994 season is expected to fall by 19 percent, especially in the northern provinces.

This, along with poor previous harvests and disruption of relief operations, will aggravate the situation.

Good harvests are expected in the Horn of Africa countries of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Somalia.

Although food production recovered sharply in 1994, it remained below pre-civil war levels and large sections of the population will need continued food aid this year.

Sudan will harvest a record 4.9 tonnes of millet and sorghum, 84 per-

cent above last year's reduced crop, but external assistance will be needed to meet continued relief needs in some northern areas, Darfur province and the war-hit south.

Record harvests are expected in countries across west Africa except in Cape Verde where output will be seriously reduced by drought.

Drought also threatens cereal crops in southern Africa, increasing food import requirements.

Sub-Saharan Africa's cereal import requirements are likely to decline slightly during the 1994-95 period, mainly as a result of improved harvests in eastern Africa, but continuing balance of payment difficulties in food deficit countries of the region mean that food aid requirements will remain high, according to FAO.

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