

# Tanzanian security forces arrest thousands of refugees

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DAR ES SALAAM, Sept 23 (AFP) - Tanzanian security forces arrested more than 3,600 refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda and detained them for screening, military sources said Tuesday.

The sources said the 10-day operation to round up illegal aliens in the Kigoma region followed a recent rise in crime blamed on the foreigners.

Many of those arrested had been staying in Kigoma after leaving refugee camps run by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Brigadier-General Benjamin Msuya, contacted by telephone from Kigoma, said 2,156 of those detained were from the former Zaire and 1,459 from Burundi.

Only two came from Rwanda.

The refugees will be repatriated voluntarily or returned to the camps,

the sources said.

UNHCR spokesman Peter Kessler, speaking in Nairobi, said more than 4,000 refugees had been rounded up in Kigoma since Sunday.

He said 1,400 were from Burundi and the rest from the DRC, and they were being detained at a home affairs ministry compound in Kigoma.

Kessler said UNHCR officials had begun screening the detainees because not all were refugees – some were immigrants or former refugees who had lived in Tanzania but had since been integrated into normal life there.

Others were foreigners who had left the refugee camps because they wanted to be first in the boat for repatriation across Lake Tanganyika, he added.

hb/lto/km