

# UN agency issues urgent appeal for food for Rwandans

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NAIROBI, Feb 9 (AFP) - The UN World Food Programme (WFP) issued an urgent appeal Thursday for food for close to three million displaced Rwandans, warning of riots and terrible scenes of famine if donors do not respond.

"Hunger is one of the few things you can't postpone," WFP Deputy Executive Director for Global Operations Daan Everts told a press conference in Nairobi.

"Disaster may befall us if we can't procure food in enormous quantities. Just pledging food is not enough - it takes two, three or four months to come through. We need cash to buy locally. Without food, we are likely to see riots and gruelling scenes of starvation."

Everts said the response from donors for three hundred million dollars in cash and food for 1995 had been "very hesitant," adding that one-third of all WFP aid had gone to

Rwandans last year, and that donors wanted to distribute their aid to other crisis areas as well.

"We are deeply concerned about the amount of food needed to keep victims alive, both in Rwanda and in camps around its borders," he said.

Everts said 153 tonnes of food was needed to provide food to Rwandans up till July, at a cost of 78.6 million dollars. The WFP had already "borrowed, begged, scraped" and "almost stolen from other projects" to make up the shortfall, he said.

"These actions ... will have a major effect on WFP's capacity to respond to emergency needs elsewhere in the world this year. We have only bought time. Resources to feed the conflict victims, mainly women and children, are drying up faster than they can be replenished with new donations, and the need remains the same."

The displaced Rwandans, mostly

members of the majority Hutu tribe, are living both in the small central African state and in refugee camps in Zaire, Tanzania, and Burundi. camps are too frightened to return home, fearing retribution for genocidal massacres by Hutu former government troops and extremist militias during the war.

They fled a civil war last year won by the minority Tutsis.

Many of those in the refugee

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