

# UNHCR to begin registering Rwanda refugees Sunday

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GENEVA, Jan 28 (AFP) - Relief workers will begin Sunday registering the some two million Rwandans still living in refugee camps in eastern Zaire, where the situation has very much improved, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees said.

UNHCR spokesman Sylvana Foa said Friday some 1,400 employees of humanitarian agencies will start issuing the refugees in the camps in the Goma region with identity bracelets to make it easier to distribute aid.

A previous registration attempt last October failed because of opposition from the leaders of the Hutu militia who wanted to maintain their control over the camps and prevent the return of refugees to Rwanda.

Foa said talks with elders and threats to move the camps away from the border with Rwanda had led to food now being distributed directly to families instead of being commanded by the militia.

"In the last two months we have seen a considerable improvement of the security situation, after the violent incidents of November," she said.

"The registration of refugees will be a very serious exercise," Foa said, adding that "we don't expect any problems."

Just in case, Zairean troops would be on hand, Foa said.

So far this month the UNHCR has organised the repatriation of some 2,000 from Goma without intimidation from Hutu extremists, who are held responsible for the massacre last year of hundreds of thousands of Rwanda's minority Tutsis.

The refugees fled largely for fear of revenge from the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front guerrilla movement which has since seized power in Kigali.

Conditions in the camps are expected to improve further with the deployment soon of 1,500 Zairean

troops under 40 foreign liaison officers who have yet to be appointed, Foa said.

United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said Wednesday that he had abandoned the idea of deploying United Nations forces in the Goma camps, following negative feedback from potential contributory states.

In a separate development the UN is also to send an Italian volcanologist, Dario Tedesco, to Goma to as-

sess the risk of eruption of a volcano near the camps.

Foa said the risk appeared less than it was last November, but the UNHCR had prepared emergency plans to evacuate the 200,000 occupants of the Mugunga camp and the 280,000 in Kumbumba.

She said the problem was the lack of available water made it impossible to find alternative sites.

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