

Finding clean water dominates Rwandan relief effort



GOMA, Zaire (AP) — French engineers bulldozed the dead into mass graves Monday as U.S. Air Force planes dropped more aid and equipment to Rwandan refugees.

Yet the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, on her first visit to two camps crowded with more than a million people, predicted "things are bad but they're going to get better."

Sadako Ogata she saw Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders volunteers saving the lives of cholera sufferers with quick infusions of water and minerals. She saw U.S. Army bulldozers shoving aside volcanic rock to create roads for water tankers and French army engineers bulldozing the dead into mass graves.

Ogata said the monumental efforts impressed her but "will have to continue. This is just the first round."

She said doctors warned her that "cholera, which we were most worried about, is going to go down. But dysentery

is going up. And for everything you need water."

The U.N. Children's Fund on Monday estimated 50,000 people have died in the camps in the last two weeks, twice as many as the UNHCR figure of 20,000.

Elizabeth Dole, president of the American Red Cross, visited refugee camps and an orphanage caring for about 4,000 children. The U.S. branch has donated \$18 million toward an International Red Cross appeal for \$100 million of Rwandan aid.

Clearly upset by what she had seen at Kibumba camp about 20 miles north of Goma, Mrs. Dole said: "When you see more than 300,000 people with not enough water or any quick way to get it in ... you don't know what to say."

U.S. Army and Air Force efforts to increase the flow of cholera-free water to Kibumba gained momentum Monday. One transport brought in the first of three U.S. water tankers able to carry 3,000 gallons each, while nine tankers donated from Finland were expected on a U.S. flight Tuesday.

Army engineers bulldozed two paths

through Kibumba, where traffic has slowed to a crawl by so many people. They hope the paths will make it easier for U.N. trucks carrying water from an American water-purification site in Goma to get to the camp, dump their loads and return for more.

Cholera, the intestinal parasite that causes fatal dehydration through vomiting and diarrhea if untreated, has killed many thousands in the camps, which swelled in mid-July with Hutus fleeing the climax of the civil war in neighboring Rwanda.

Up to 500,000 were slain in that three-month conflict, most of them members of Rwanda's Tutsi minority targeted for extermination by extremist Hutu militiamen. When Tutsi-led rebels defeated the Hutu government forces, panicked refugees poured into Goma.

U.N. officials say dysentery, more deadly and difficult to stop than cholera, is overtaking cholera as a killer in the camps and could last up to four months.

Ogata, speaking to reporters after her two-day tour of Rwanda and eastern Zaire, said the new government in Kigali

appeared sincere in wanting a new Rwanda where Hutus and Tutsis would share power.

She said the UNHCR had no evidence to support Hutu claims of revenge slayings of returning refugees. A U.N.-sponsored group of broadcasters from Journalists Without Frontiers are to begin broadcasting this and other information to refugees Wednesday.

Ogata said the new government's ministers, mostly Tutsi with a few moderate Hutus, appear "committed to reconciliation and committed to the return of the people. They are saying all the right things."

"But putting these words in practice is another matter. The new government must persuade the refugees that they will be safe in Rwanda."

Ogata said she supported a package of "confidence-building" measures, including U.N. teams to observe the treatment of Rwandan returnees, U.N. escorts for refugee leaders in and out of Rwanda to report to their people, and the buildup of food and relief supplies within Rwanda.

Annual AIDS conference not expecting good news

YOKOHAMA, Japan (AP) — The world's leading AIDS experts gather on Sunday for their first conference in Asia, where the disease is spreading fastest, to trade successes and setbacks in the global campaign against the pandemic.

Participants say hopes of good news are modest at best. With no breakthroughs expected in the development of treatments or vaccines, this conference is likely to emphasize the only real weapon against the disease — keeping people from catching it.

Numerous smaller AIDS gatherings take place throughout the year. But the biggest and certainly the most watched is this, the 10th International Conference on AIDS. About 10,000 people are expected from perhaps 140 countries to hear 3,400 presentations on all aspects of the disease, from viral genetics and drug development to stress among AIDS workers and risks to "commercial sex workers," the meeting's euphemism for prostitutes.

Last year's conference in Berlin ended on a decidedly glum note. Vaccines to prevent AIDS looked elusive. Other vaccines intended to treat the disease appeared worthless. No significant new drugs were on the horizon. Even AZT, the first anti-AIDS medicine, appeared to do less good than many had thought.

"We won't be as disappointed as in Berlin, where some had unrealistic expectations, but there will not be the elation of some earlier conferences," predicted Dr. Jeffrey Laurence of New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center in New York.

Reports will come out of the meeting on new combinations of AIDS drugs. But no one expects dramatic results. HIV, the AIDS virus, mutates rapidly inside the body, and often builds up resistance to medicines within months.

More than 1,000 volunteers have now taken experimental AIDS vaccines. None seems to have developed the kind of immunity that experts believe will be necessary to keep HIV from getting established inside the body.

Yet organizers say the news will not be entirely grim, either.

"I am moderately optimistic that we will see some progress, but I doubt there will be any spectacular breakthroughs, and it is probably not realistic to

expect a breakthrough at all in this field," said Dr. Peter Piot, president of the International AIDS Society, a sponsor of the conference.

Reports in several areas are likely to hint at new approaches:

- One of the hottest areas of research is long-term survivors. Between 5 percent and 10 percent of HIV-infected men have now carried the virus for 13 years with no sign of damage to their immune systems. Learning what keeps them healthy should provide new treatment strategies.

- AIDS destroys the body's natural immune defenses and some researchers are working on a seemingly odd way of treating it: suppressing the immune system. HIV reproduces in overactive blood cells called T cells. The idea is to use steroids and other drugs to rein in these cells so they are less hospitable to the virus.

- Gene therapy is another tool. Scientists hope to insert genes into the cells that ordinarily become infected with HIV so they will resist the virus.

- New antibiotics are being developed to fight off opportunistic infections. These are assaults by otherwise benign bugs that only harm people when their immune defenses have been destroyed by AIDS.

Most of these approaches, though, are still years from helping people already infected with HIV.

"It looks like a bleak landscape ahead of us," said Jay Blotcher, an AIDS activist from New York City. "Magic bullets? There won't be any at this conference."

Because of this, much of the attention is on keeping people from catching the virus. In the United States and Europe, AIDS has leveled off. The numbers catching the virus are roughly matched by those dying from it.

This is not true, however, in Asia, where HIV is spreading explosively.

"One of the most significant aspects of this conference is that it is the first to be held in Asia," said Dr. Naoko Yamamoto, the conference's chief executive. "We expect a discussion of the issues from an Asian point of view."

In the past year, the number of Asian cases of full-blown AIDS has risen from 30,000 to 250,000, an eightfold increase. The WHO predicts the number of HIV infections in Asia could quadruple to 10 million by 2000.

Haitian leaders prepare for possible invasion

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Supporters of Haiti's military rulers declared their intention Monday to fight back — even if it means death — in the face of a U.N. resolution that paves the way for a U.S.-led invasion.

"To those who are preparing to invade, the Haitian people declare that they will fight them in the cities and in the countryside, they will fight them in the shacks and in the palaces, they will fight them day and night," said presidential aide Carl Denis.

"The blood will flow," said Frantz Robert Monde, president of the lower house of Parliament. "I know I am going to die."

"The foreigners who arrive will land on scorched earth. The world will see what the U.S. is responsible for," Monde said, alluding to the burning by Haitian insurgents of Cap-Haitien, the second-largest city, during the war for independence against France in the early 19th century.

A resolution approved Sunday by the U.N. Security Council lays the legal groundwork for a U.S.-led invasion to oust the military and restore deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

In a radio and television address Monday, Haiti's de facto president, Emile Jonassaint, declared a state of siege and began preparing the population for "the battle of Haiti."

The mood was grim at the presidential palace Monday afternoon. Jonassaint canceled a scheduled interview with The Associated Press. Conversations with Jonassaint's aides and other officials disclosed a sense of resignation about eventual military intervention.

"We waited for the sentence," said Gilles Hendrick, a politician. "It has been pronounced. It's the electric chair, with no appeal. Haiti is on death row."

Jonassaint, 81, was installed as president in May by a minority of army-backed lawmakers. He assumed the prime minister's post and named a group of extreme rightists and nationalists to the Cabinet.

"The battle of Haiti is under way," he said in his 3 a.m. address. "We will fight it with all our might and means. It will be hard and implacable."

Despite the official stance, many Haitians, particularly the poor, would welcome a foreign invasion.

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