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Africa Review



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Articles have been coordinated as appropriate with other offices within the CIA. Comments and queries regarding this publication may be directed to the [REDACTED] Office of African and Latin American Analysis, telephone [REDACTED]

Africa

Briefs

Nigeria

Religious and Ethnic Tensions Rising in the North [REDACTED]

Recent attacks against Ibo Christians in two northern states have heightened longstanding ethnic and religious tensions in the predominantly Muslim north. In late December, Islamic extremists raided a prison in Kano and beheaded a Christian Ibo prisoner who had been accused of defacing the Koran, according to [REDACTED] and press reporting. In a second incident late last month, an Ibo trader in Sokoto was severely beaten by a mob who believed he had insulted the Prophet Mohammed. [REDACTED]

In response, government and other leaders have moved quickly to defuse tensions. The Sultan of Sokoto—Nigeria's preeminent Muslim leader—denounced the attacks and the state administrator warned the public against any further violence. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the 1st Mechanized Division in Kaduna placed several of its units on alert to quell unrest. The state security service arrested two journalists in an effort to suppress information about the clashes and to prevent the situation from getting out of control. [REDACTED]. Ibo leaders sent a delegation from their home area in eastern Nigeria to meet with officials in Sokoto to denounce the violence and encourage efforts to foster greater tolerance. Christians in Kano and Kaduna have observed several days of mourning for the victims, closing schools, shops, and hospitals. [REDACTED]

The government's actions appear, for now, to have quieted the unrest, but the incidents have resurfaced longstanding grievances between Muslim and Christian communities in the north that could spark wider communal violence such as occurred in April and May 1992, when rioting in several northern cities killed hundreds. As in the past, the recent incidents against Ibos reflect more than just religious differences; wealthy Ibo traders are despised by local ethnic groups, who are generally much poorer. Although the military remains greatly concerned about religious and ethnic extremism and committed to maintaining public order, its unwillingness—or inability—to punish those responsible for the latest attacks is likely to encourage extremists on both sides to resort to reprisal attacks or other forms of violence to appease their supporters. Moreover, the country's deepening economic malaise is likely to arouse greater militancy among Muslim and Christian youth as rivalries for scarce resources grow more desperate. [REDACTED]

Rwanda-Burundi

Worried Over Food Shortages for Refugees [REDACTED]

UN and relief officials fear food shortages in the Rwandan refugee camps—particularly in Zaire and Tanzania—by March if new pledges of emergency food aid are not made quickly. Of the 330,000 metric tons of food that UN officials estimate are necessary to sustain the refugee and displaced population from January through this June, a gap of 154,000 metric tons is currently unfilled. On-hand stocks or those already on the way for the World Food Program (WFP)—the largest feeding program in the region—are expected to run out by March or April, according to UN relief officials. Even if the WFP is able to avert the immediate crisis, food shortages over the next five months are likely. [REDACTED]

A coordinated effort by UN agencies and other international relief groups may cover much of the shortfall. They plan to make emergency appeals for food, divert supplies from other WFP programs—especially in southern Africa, where relief officials believe they may have overestimated food needs arising from drought—and from relief assistance already en route elsewhere. The WFP hopes to use new donor pledges to replace the diverted aid. The WFP also is negotiating with the European Union for help in addressing the immediate shortfall and will have to lobby other nonfood donors for cash donations. [REDACTED]

Despite these extraordinary measures, relief officials still predict a shortfall of 9,000 metric tons in March due to transport problems, including the lack of trucks, and the inadequate road network in the region. Moreover, other bureaucratic and logistic hurdles will hamper timely deliveries. Delays by the WFP in issuing emergency appeals and a confused regional pipeline that contributed to the current crisis, for example, have yet to be remedied. If food deliveries were interrupted, the refugees almost certainly would blame Western donors, while food shortages would add to the volatile atmosphere in the refugee camps. Delivery problems could spark anti-Western demonstrations or even attacks on relief workers. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]