

EC INCREASES AID FOR SOMALIA

In view of the worsening situation in Somalia, the European Community will send a new package of emergency non-food aid to the victims of the country's political crisis.

The new package is worth 4 million ECU* and brings total EC aid to Somalia since the beginning of 1991 to 67.5 million ECU (19.8 million ECU in humanitarian aid and 47.7 million ECU in food aid). This year alone, the Commission has supplied (or is in the process of delivering) 145,000 tons of food aid, as well as urgent non-food humanitarian aid worth more than 9 million ECU. In addition, the EC has decided on 3.4 million ECU in aid for neighboring countries Kenya and the Yemen to help them cope with the influx of Somali refugees. It is estimated that 2 million Somalis have been displaced by the violence, while 600,000 have fled across the country's borders.

Acting on reports that aid is frequently blocked for security reasons, the Commission on August 11 called on the Community and its member states to urge the United Nations Security Council and Secretary General to implement measures to protect deliveries of aid to the hundreds of thousands of Somalis threatened with famine and death as a result of the country's turmoil.

The Commission is proposing that the UN increase its protection of distribution operations which international and non-governmental relief organizations (NGOs) currently carry out under UN control. In addition to some 50 UN unarmed "blue helmets" already in Somalia to aid distribution, the Commission is asking the UN to send a larger number of armed troops under an agreement in principle reached in the UN Security Council some months ago.

The Commission considers the situation extremely urgent, given the country's rapidly deteriorating situation and the limited amount of secure territory through which aid can be channeled. Already some NGOs have abandoned efforts because of the danger to their personnel.

*1 ECU = \$ 1.39 on August 12, 1992

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