



UNHCR PAKISTAN IDP Operation

November 2009

Background

In August 2008, the Government of Pakistan (GOP) conducted military operations in the Bajaur Agency of the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) causing the displacement of thousands of families. Over the next nine months some 556,539 internally displaced persons (IDPs) poured into the safer districts of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and beyond. At the end of April 2009, eleven camps in NWFP were housing 93,627 individuals (14,635 families) while the large majority of IDPs, 462, 912 individuals or 77,529 families, lived in host communities with extended family or in rented accommodations.

In May 2009, renewed clashes caused another sudden and massive influx of IDPs, this time from Swat and Buner areas of NWFP. Families fled their areas 'en masse' in cars, buses, carts even on foot. Some two million people are estimated to have left their homes, businesses and land since the GOP launched its operations in late April 2009. These new arrivals joined those already displaced from the earlier waves since August 2008.

As of 10 November 09 over 18,534 IDP families (101,072 Individuals) from the FATA and Buner, Bajaur and Khyber Agencies, Dir and Swat areas of NWFP are accommodated in over 11 camps in NWFP. The vast majority of IDPs live outside camps. A total of 285,406 families (1,808,091 individuals) are living in the host communities of Charsadda, Mardan and Swabi. (Source: Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees -CAR).

Under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)'s global cluster approach, UNHCR leads the coordination of three of the eleven clusters in the humanitarian response: 1) camp coordination and management (CCCM), 2) Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs) and 3) Protection (e.g. registration, attention to the needs of women, children and the vulnerable groups as well as establishment of monitoring and referral mechanisms). Other clusters include

Water & Sanitation, Education and Nutrition (led by UNICEF), Food and Logistics (WFP), Health (WHO), Agriculture (FAO) and Early Recovery (UNDP).

Registration

The registration of IDPs in the camps was conducted by the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) and implementing partner, International Rescue Committee (IRC) with support from UNHCR. Outside camps, registration was carried out by the NWFP Ministry of Social Welfare, with support from UNHCR. The verification of the registration of IDPs was undertaken by National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). As of 29 September, some 384, 512 registered families were verified.

New displacements from Bajaur and Khyber Agency have been observed over the past months. The new arrivals are being accommodated in Jalozaï Camp. As of 9 November '09, a total of 2,947 IDP families (12,316 Individuals) from Khyber Agency and 4,549 families/ 19,029 individuals from Bajaur Agency have been registered in Jalozaï camp and provided assistance in the form of food and non-food items (NFIs).

Camps

In the camps, the Emergency Shelter Cluster (ESC) constructed fencing, lighting, communal and individual kitchens and pardah walls (privacy) in observation of cultural norms of the tribal peoples, and constructed shading structures ('summerization') for tents and communal areas to provide relief against the intense summer heat. As winter season has started, winterization of the camps is in process by replacing the previously used tents by all season tents that will provide relief from intense weather in the coming months.

ESC, also responsible for the distribution of non-food-items (NFIs), in coordination with provincial authorities and partners distributed NFI packages (including blankets, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, sleeping mats, jerry cans, buckets, soap, plastic sheets, etc.) to registered and verified IDPs living in camps and outside camps. In preparation of winter season, NFIs such as blankets and plastic sheets are also in pipeline for distribution in and off camps. In camps, distribution took place at the distribution points. While IDPs living outside camps approach the joint (WFP/UNHCR) humanitarian hubs to receive food and NFI items.

Over 90% of the total IDP population in NWFP currently lives outside camps where life conditions have been more strained and there is increasing pressure on host families whose resources have, by now, significantly dwindled.

Non-food item (NFI) distribution

UNHCR through its implementing partner, Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), has distributed a total of 332,935 NFIs packages to IDP families since the onset of the influx in May 2009. As of 7 November 09, 45,632 NFI packages have been distributed in the camps located in the districts of Charsadda, Nowshera, Swabi and Mardan and Peshawar while 287,303 NFI Packages were distributed to the IDPs outside camps in the districts of Charsadda, Nowshera, Swat, Buner, Swabi and Mardan and Peshawar. Distribution of NFI packages have also started in the return areas.

Return

On 13 July the Government of Pakistan announced its phased return plan 'Naway Sahar' ('Dawn of A New Beginning') and began with assistance of the transportation of IDPs living in camps in NWFP. A total of 23 camps have been closed down as majority of the IDPs are returning to their areas of origin. To accommodate returning IDPs as well as those who lived in schools (now vacated) Wali Kadow camp was set up in Lower Dir (529 families / 3,345 individuals). Munda Camp which was closed down before due to return of IDPs has now been re-opened to accommodate IDPs from Khyber and Bajaur Agencies. Currently there are 400 families/3,142 individuals accommodated in Munda. (Source: Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees - CAR).

Based on GOP figures (Source: Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA)), as of 21 October more than 237,182 families (more than 1.6 million individuals) have returned to their areas of origins in Swat, Buner, Dir and Shangla districts. These returns included government-assisted and spontaneous returns. Out of the Verified number of IDPs (384,512 families) 147,330 families are still displaced, living in and off camps in NWFP.

On 25 August, the GOP announced the re-assignment of the IDP operation in NWFP from the Emergency Response Unit (ERU) to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) / Provincial Reconstruction Rehabilitation and Settlement Authority (PaRRSA).

UNHCR is supporting the GOP return plan through the distribution of NFIs in the areas of return and by contributing to helping in transportation for returns especially for the Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs). UNHCR is committed to providing 30,000 units of temporary shelter through the distribution of temporary shelter kits in 2009 - 2010. A protection monitoring mechanism will refer IDPs in areas of return to relevant GOP channels through dedicated centers which will provide information, assistance, awareness and advice regarding referrals and other protection matters.

Challenges

The Lack of access in many areas of return remains a challenge. Ensuring that the basic principles of return (informed, voluntary, safe and dignified return) remains a concern based on the inability to monitor or adequately assess movement or other conditions in areas of origin.

The overall security situation in NWFP as well as in areas of return limits the movement of the humanitarian community and consequently its direct reach to beneficiaries.

Funding

The revised Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan (PHRP) launched in May 2009 appealed for a total of US\$445 million with UNHCR's initial appeal for US\$105 million of this for its activities. However, UNHCR has since revised its needs to US\$141 million due to a higher number of beneficiaries than previously anticipated (2.5 million rather than 1.5 million), and expected further operations in Waziristan.

2009, 942,259 USD was received from private donors (including Allis Chalmers MA, British Petroleum and anonymous individuals).

As of 29 September, UNHCR has received US\$131 million or 93% of its funding requirements.

UNHCR is grateful to all those governments and private donors who have stepped forward to make generous contributions. UNHCR also apologizes if all contributions are not as yet reflected.

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