



UNHCR PAKISTAN IDP Operation

October 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 26 September over 24,389 IDP families (136,006 Individuals) from the FATA and Buner, Dir and Swat areas of NWFP are accommodated in over 19 camps in NWFP. The vast majority of IDPs live outside camps. A total of 249,851 families (over 1.5 million 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, Swat and Khyber Agency have been observed over the past month. These new arrivals are registered in Jalozai 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 ('summarization') for tents and communal areas to provide relief against the intense summer heat.

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 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 249,740 NFIs packages to IDP families since the onset of the influx in May 2009. 41,802 NFI packages have been distributed in the camps located in the districts of Charsadda, Nowshera, Swabi and Mardan and Peshawar. 207,938 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. As of 27 September a total of 266,519 families have been assisted including 41,802 families in camps and 224,717 outside camps (in host communities).

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 16 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 Kandaw camp was set up in Lower Dir (529 families / 3,345 individuals).

Based on GOP figures (www.helpidp.org), as of 27 September more than 236,000 families (over 1.6 million individuals) have returned to their areas of origins out of which some 130,000 families were from Swat, 70,000 from Buner, 27,000 from Dir and 8,000 families originated from Shangla districts. These returns included government-assisted and spontaneous returns.

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.

**For further information please contact:
Massoumeh Farman-Farmaian, External Relations
Officer, UNHCR Islamabad at farman@unhcr.org**