

UNHCR RESPONSE TO PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE

27 January 2005

UNHCR role

Under the joint UN response to the earthquake, UNHCR is the lead agency for camp management. We are supporting the Pakistan government in the running of camps, by providing material and technical assistance and coordinating the delivery of basic services like health care, water, sanitation and education.

Current priorities

Winterisation: Keeping people dry and warm in camps. Personal insulation with 3 blankets per person, 4 mattresses and 2 plastic sheets for each tent – to insulate and waterproof roof and ground. Also involves stove and kerosene distribution.

Fire safety: Minimising risk of tent fires by exploring safe heating options and educating camp residents on fire safety, prevention and response. Information, fire extinguishers and buckets filled with sand to be provided to camps.

Contingency planning: For possible mass movements from the mountains/valleys as winter starts. UNHCR is working closely with the Pakistan military/civil authorities and the international community to expand existing camps and to build new camps to accommodate an additional 80,000 people.

Relocation: Moving people from congested camps with poor facilities or camps at risk of flooding/landslides to planned camps with better services.

Capacity building: Providing resources and training to Pakistan authorities and NGOs in camp management.

Presence in affected areas

133 emergency staff in Islamabad and four hubs – Mansehra (covers Haripur, Siran Valley), Batagram, Muzaffarabad and Bagh – and three field offices (Abbotabad, Balakot and Bisham).

Number of camps

UNHCR is currently supporting the local authorities and NGOs in 31 planned camps with 62,575 people in NWFP and AJK. We are also assisting 127 spontaneous/self-settled camps with 94,784 people. In all, we have counted 157,359 people living in 158 camps with 50 or more tents in the affected areas. These figures change daily due to fluid population movements.

What's been distributed so far

21,998 tents, 620,651 blankets, 83,476 plastic sheets, 1,733 plastic rolls, 7,527 mattresses, 30,345 jerry cans, 20,291 kitchen sets, 16,469 stoves/heaters and 209,212 bars of soap.

What we need

We've received the initial amount of US\$30 million requested but will be seeking more funds as we increase our field presence and focus on building the capacity of Pakistani authorities and NGOs.

If you need further information regarding the earthquake, please do not hesitate to contact the following persons:

Vivian Tan, Snr. P.I Officer, tanv@unhcr.org at 0300-500-1133
Massoumeh Farman-Farmaian, Snr. External Relations Officer, pakisext@unhcr.org at 0300-856-9038
Office: ++92-300-2829502 – 6/2424, 2426 & 2421

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