

Swat, Pakistan Updates

PAKISTAN: Aid workers bracing for possible new IDP influx

ISLAMABAD, 26 January 2010 (IRIN) - Aid agencies are preparing for an influx of a possible further 150,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northwestern Pakistan in 2010, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other agencies.

According to a 21 December OCHA map, as many as 150,000 new IDPs could pour out of the tribal areas lying along the Afghan-Pakistani border.

"As military operations continue in various areas of the northwest, there could well be new displacements in 2010 from the tribal areas, though we do not expect anything on the scale we saw from the Malakand area in May 2009," Ariane Rummery, a spokeswoman for the UN Refugee Agency, explained.

The summer of 2009 saw the displacement of 2.3 million people at the peak of the fighting. While most of these IDPs have returned, a large number remain in camps or with host families.

"Around 1.1 million individuals are still displaced. Around 113,500 of these are still living in camps and 97,000 are at Jalozai [in Nowshera]," says Billi Bierling, OCHA public information officer.

The rest are staying with host families - 360,000 of them in Mardan District and 200,000 in Tank District in NWFP.

"We expect the IDPs from South Waziristan to start returning home by March," Lt-Gen Nadeem Ahmad, chairman of the Pakistan Army's Special Support Group, told the media recently. He said the "displacement crisis will be over soon."

However, some of those still displaced say they are unable to return. "Our home was badly damaged. It can be repaired but I spent all our savings on supporting my family after we left home in June last year and have none left over to re-build," said Azamullah Jan, from Swat, who is still based at the Jalala Camp in Mardan.

"Times are constantly getting harder for us as there is less and less help from the government or international agencies," he said, describing winter at the camp as "especially bleak" because "the tents offer no protection against the cold and it is freezing at night."

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News compliments: IRINnews.org

Photo compliments: Reuters

Update From The Field

December 2009

The IDP population in Jalalah camp and surrounding remains stagnant. According to the local administrator, the IDPs have various reasons for staying. Some of them are here because their homes have been destroyed and they are not able to reconstruct them without significant aid.

Others were residing in rented houses and have no place to go since those have been destroyed. Some of the IDPs are still not comfortable with the law and order situation and have apprehensions about facing more violence. They are not willing to go until their areas are completely secure. There are also IDPs whose small businesses have been destroyed. They believe it will take them a lot of time and effort to rebuild their businesses to reach profitability, especially since not only have their shops been destroyed but the markets have not resumed normal activity.

Inside the camps, IDPs are living in tents which were more or less tolerable in the fall but not warm enough in this cold winter season. This has led to an increase in illnesses this season. Also, it is rather uncomfortable for a family of 6-10 people to live in the same tent. Such a crowded environment is potentially harmful to family members since it promotes the spread of respiratory diseases.

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PRIME Foundation: Swat Update From the Field

Current Situation of Internally Displaced People (IDP) in Jalalah Camp

October 5, 2009

The IDP counts have reduced significantly since August 2009. Currently there are 286 families residing inside the camp, which represent approximately 1700 individuals, of which 685 are children. However, the surrounding areas still have a large number of IDPs; an estimated

18,000 people are being hosted by local families. The remaining IDP families are not keen on leaving even when free transportation is provided. IDPs are hesitant on going back home since they feel they have nothing to go back to. Their homes and work places along with their communities have been completely destroyed.

In anticipation that most IDPs would have evacuated the camp by the end of Ramadan government run services were rolled back. However, given that IDPs are reluctant to leave, there are still 286 families residing in the camp and in the past month, 23 families have returned to the camp. Although the overall number of IDPs is decreasing it is happening at a slower rate than expected. Since an additional 18,000 IDPs continue to reside outside the camp in adjacent areas, it is difficult to predict when a complete evacuation will take place. Presently it is expected to take at least another 4-5 months.

Although a 24-hour basic health center is functioning inside the camp it does not have lab facilities or services for pregnant women. The only other available health services in the area are provided by IDRF's funded Maternal Newborn Child Health (MNCH) center. The MNCH centre is fully operational with a patient load of 55-60 individuals (including males and females). The clinic currently has 61 registered pregnant women.

The most common types of diseases treated at the MNCH centre include diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, malaria, scabies, skin diseases and anaemia. To further improve the utilization of services in the center, MNCH staff have a presence inside the camps to publicize the services the clinic offers. The MNCH Centre also coordinates with other agencies working in the camp for referral of patients.

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View pictures from the project by clicking on the image below: [{gallery}swat-prime-MNCH project 2009{/gallery}](#)

SWAT Update from SRSP

September 29, 2009

Out of the more than 3.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) 82% have returned to Swat, Buner and Dir. The remaining IDPs are still living in camps and with host families in the neighbouring districts of Peshawar. In the last six weeks SRSP has relocated field offices and extended relief activities to the districts of Dir, Swat and Buner to support the distribution of food/ non-food items, medical camps and psychosocial aid.

Swat District was the main region of conflict resulting in the largest outpouring IDPs. Although the military has cleared many of the union councils from insurgents, the situation for those returning continues to be tough. Basic infrastructure is destroyed, crops are not cultivated, there is wide scale loss of livestock and basic services are non-existent. Most of the areas remain under curfew for long hours and travelling is delayed due to security checkpoints on the roads. Once in Swat one comes across vast areas of population that remained behind and did not have access to any aid. SRSP is working in many parts of Swat including the severely affected part of Matta. The work pace in this area varies depending upon the security situation. In Buner SRSP has also begun reconstruction work. Similarly in Dir area of Swat SRSP has been engaged in supplying food and non-food items as well as psychosocial support and medical camps. In the last several months, people in this region have faced an absence of basic provisions which has led to the current need for emergency relief and rehabilitation activities.

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Update from the Field: Peshewar Medical College (PRIME Foundation)

August 27, 2009

IDPs (Internationally Displaced Peoples) remain in camps despite the government's encouragement to return home. The camp residents are concerned that their home communities are not yet safe. IDRF has partnered with the Prime Foundation (Peshewar Medical College) to reduce diseases and death among internally displaced women and children from the Swat area. The new IDRF-funded clinic for expectant and new mothers will be fully functional beginning next week. For more information about the project or to view project photos, please [click here](#).

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SWAT Factual Update: Addressing Education Needs in Swat, Pakistan

August 20, 2009

Of the over 2 million people displaced as a result of the fighting in northern Pakistan's Swat valley, an estimated 600,000 have returned, with the number increasing each day. However, major problems are very much apparent for many returning to their homes.

The Pakistan government has been returning displaced people to Swat and Buner, two regions where the summer offensive between government and Taliban troops took place. The various schools used for housing displaced individuals and families are now becoming vacant. But possibilities of a return to school for the many displaced children is proving to be challenging.

A UN report suggests that a total of 187 schools have been completely destroyed as a result of the fighting, with another 318 partially destroyed – 314 of which were for girls. Temporary structures for internally displaced persons (IDP) leaving the schooling facilities, as well as repairs to the school buildings themselves are desperately needed, the report suggest.

It is feared that effort must be taken to see these goals through or an estimated one million children may lose their education for the coming school year. UN estimates suggest that over 600,000 children have already missed one school year in Malakand, where the fighting has been concentrated.

Addressing the education needs, compounded with the various other problems are key concerns expressed by inhabitants of the Swat valley. Though having expressed happiness at having returned to their homes, the many problems they have had to face has left many feeling as if they are stuck in a sort of limbo.

(Factual updates courtesy of dawn.com)

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SWAT Update from BBC News

Tuesday, July 21, 2009

The following update comes from BBC's website on what lays ahead for Swat IDPs:

"Pakistan has begun returning home some of the two million people displaced by a military offensive against the Taliban in North West Frontier Province (NFWP). Hundreds of people travelled back to the Swat valley and surrounding areas on buses accompanied by security escorts on Monday as part of a government repatriation programme. However, with security in the Swat valley and surrounding areas still uncertain, many families chose not to leave the makeshift camps and other places where they have been staying since the offensive began. The government has offered \$300 of government aid to all those displaced by the fighting with the Taliban, which destroyed homes, facilities and crops."

(Compliments of bbc.co.uk)

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Relief Aid Reaches the People of SWAT

Friday, July 10, 2009

As the humanitarian crisis in Swat, Pakistan continues, many people can breathe a small sigh of relief knowing that they have the basic supplies to get them through the next couple of weeks. In the past week, IDRF and SRSP delivered non-food emergency supplies such as blankets, towels and basic hygiene supplies (soap, antiseptic, sanitary napkins, etc.) to IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) from the Swat, Bunner, and Dir districts. The bulk aid delivered is expected to supply over 1,000 families with emergency supplies.

Since the army began an offensive against the Taliban in their bastion of Swat, a former tourist valley northwest of Islamabad, an estimated 2 million people have been displaced from their homes and are now residing with families and friends in "host communities" or in camps set up for IDPs. Although hundreds of thousands of IDPs are expected to return to their homes in various parts of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) in the coming weeks, no official date has been set by the government for their return.

In the coming weeks, IDRF will be extending support to IDPs for emergency supplies. Stay tuned for further updates in the coming week and be sure to read the SRSP update from the field which follows on the next page. Masood UI Mulk, CEO of IDRF operational partner SRSP, provides donors with a realistic image of what life is like on the ground in Pakistan.

To view images of the aid being distributed, please click on the image below: [{gallery}SRSP_Jul09{/gallery}](#)

*Factual updates courtesy of SRSP, Reuters, and IRIN news.

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Swat News from the Ground

Friday, July 10, 2009

Our latest update from Masood Ul Mulk, CEO of IDRF operational partner SRSP on the ground in Pakistan, bringing IDRF relief to Swat Valley war-affected people:

"The humanitarian crisis in Pakistan, the result of military action against militants in the four Districts in the northern parts of North West Frontier Province. The Districts affected are Upper and Lower Dir, Swat and Buner. As a result of this war millions of people have been displaced. There have been a number of characteristics of this displacement which makes it unique. It took place over a short time period and was massive in scale. Fortunately for those displaced, the residents of the districts into which they moved displayed a remarkable level of hospitality and generosity and more than 90 percent of the displaced people found refuge in private homes. They have been well served by the strong ties of reciprocity, values of generosity and hospitality which are long ingrained in the traditions of the area.

"The present displacement is the second displacement of population. The first had taken place the previous year when people had moved out of tribal areas of Bajaur and Momand and over five hundred of these had found refuge in camps and host families spread over five districts. The

Social Welfare Department of the government had undertaken the responsibility of registering the IDPs. In the first phase this was done pretty well because the speed at which the IDPs came was slow and spread over many days. Unfortunately the present phase was a deluge making it impossible for the Department to register effectively. As a result, the numbers got inflated as people registered themselves at different registration points repeatedly trying to get more and more food and non food items. The government had to eventually ask the National Registration Authority to come in and clean the data on the basis of national identity cards; As a result of this process it is estimated that the correct figures for the displaced people would be around two million and not over three million as was being initially quoted. It is now estimated that over ninety percent of these are based in private homes, rented quarters and in the fields in sheds etc while the remaining are in schools and camps established by government.

“The camps have been generally well-managed, but are not well protected against the heat wave that now hits this place and makes life in tents very difficult as these people have come from a cold climate and have no experience of living in such heat. The situation in the field has been much more difficult. The population has been widespread and dispersed across the length and breadth of the districts of Peshawar, Charsadda, Mardan and Swabi and Nowshera with the majority concentrated in the districts of Mardan and Swabi.

“SRSP’s response to this crisis has been at two levels. At the first level we have been part of what I would call the overall response to address issues. SRSP has partnered with UNHCR to distribute non food items to the displaced people at the distribution points established by the government where World Food Programme also distributes food. The entire work of UNHCR in the field is implemented by SRSP; This is important because after the bomb blast which killed UN personnel in Peshawar it’s almost impossible for UN Staff to be based here in Peshawar and even cluster meetings now take place in Islamabad which is more than two hours travelling time from Peshawar. SRSP has helped distribute Non Food Items (NFIs) to over 60,000 families which mean that another 37,000 families have been added in the present phase. The distribution of NFIs has been slower than anticipated for a number of reasons. Firstly the registration problems made UNHCR slow down the process and secondly there was a delay in arranging the supplies by UNHCR. Another issue has been that the items in the supplies to each family have not been kept the same because of the supply problems. Only a week ago the supplies have been ensured and the items provided to each household are now a complete set. On the food side World Food Programme has been responsible and has provided the basic food items at the distribution points.

“The problems encountered in the field have changed rapidly in the course of this crisis:

“In the initial days we were under huge pressure to find places of refuge for the displaced people. Accurate information had to be disseminated to those on the move and transportation provided if people did not find space in the camps to which they were directed.

“In the second phase SRSP has tried to reach communities that have been not been helped by the government or other agencies.

“The third phase was the gathering of accurate information and lobbying to change the number of registration points and distribution points to make it easier for people to register and get access to supplies.

“The fourth is to cater for special needs and vulnerable groups like children and women and those households who could not get their requirements or were unable to reach the right quarters to get help. This is where we have looked for help from donors like IDRF and local philanthropy to help. The work by UN agencies focuses on scale and hence uniformity. It is this diversity that we try to address with programmes like those of IDRF. It’s not about scale but special and diverse needs.

“We have also acted as a facilitator and provided a warehouse and information sharing mechanisms for local philanthropists to come and assist the needy population.

“We do not live in normal times over here. Most of us don’t even know if we would return to our homes in the evening either killed by one miscreant or kidnapped for ransom. Gender is a big priority for us and we have programmes in the camps which cater for women like skill development centres and child friendly spaces. We also of course continue to include goods and items for distribution which cater for the needs of women and children.

“As we look forward, the government is already announcing plans for return of the displaced people to their home districts beginning with the districts of Buner and followed by other districts. This is a process which would take over four months. In the meantime as the monsoons come in the need for medicines, protection against rains and flooding become important in camps. We are also starting to plan for early recovery and thinking of livelihoods (seed, fertilizers) restocking of livestock, poultry and rebuilding of enabling

infrastructure (irrigation channels, drinking water projects and repair of schools which are built and maintained by the communities).

“A new theatre of war has opened up in the south with the war now being extended to Waziristan. It's not, however, known if humanitarian agencies will be allowed to operate there.”

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News Story from the Field –Swat, Pakistan

June 25, 2009

Masood UI Mulk, CEO of IDRF operational partner SRSP, bringing IDRF relief to Swat Valley war-affected people:

“I have just been travelling up in the north. A road that took us nine hours in the past took us twenty six hours to reach our destination. That is how war has started to take it toll over here.

This week the bulk of IDRF distribution will be taking place* and we will post photographs for your supporters. There is likely to be some movement back of people from Buner and Swat areas in the coming week. The government insists that this is going to happen, but personally I don't think women and children are going to move back for a long time. In the mean time as the war zone is expanded there is the likelihood of many more IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) streaming to the south."

*IDRF support will provide buckets, mugs, mattresses, bed sheets, pillows, towels, soap, plates, cutlery, cooking pots, propane gas for cooking and lighting, water filtration and other personal items to people who have had to flee their homes and leave everything behind.

Check back soon for more Swat Updates!

*Picture courtesy of SRSP

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Swat, Pakistan -UN Official Appeals for More Support

June 23, 2009

IDRF continues to monitor the situation in Swat, Pakistan and to provide relief aid to the displaced families. The United Nations has reported that the severity of the situation continues to intensify. In the coming months, shelters need to be adapted to cope with the changing seasons. In addition, host families' needs must be taken into account so that they are able to support displaced families and friends who are staying with them. The severity of this humanitarian crisis can be seen in the excerpts below.

DUBAI, 22 June 2009 (IRIN) - The UN Secretary-General's special humanitarian envoy, Abdelaziz Arrukban, after a two-day fact-finding mission to Pakistan, has urged Gulf countries and others to step up support for hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northwestern Pakistan."

I visited IDPs living in camps, schools and with host families in the Mardan area [North West Frontier Province]. The conditions they are living in are very tough. People are struggling to cope with the heat, lack of adequate water and sanitation, and there are entire families living in one tent or a small room," Arrukban told IRIN from Islamabad.

"I appeal to the countries of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] and the rest of the international community to step forward and support their brothers through this crisis," Arrukban said.

"The vast majority of IDPs are living with host families, and the sheer scale of the displacement makes it difficult to reach everyone in need," Arrukban said, adding: "The needs of the families and friends who have taken them in so generously must not be overlooked."

Commenting on the speed of IDP formation, he said: "In Sudan we have about four million IDPs, but they emerged over a few years. Can you imagine about two million people [displaced largely] in two months?"

He said the coming monsoon made it all the more important to act quickly: "Shelters need to be adapted to cope with the

heat, and precautions need to be taken to mitigate the risk of epidemics in the coming months."

IDRF is working with local partners to meet the needs of IDPs. The situation is being re-evaluated daily to recognize the needs of IDPs and the actions IDRF needs to take to help them deal with their sudden state of homelessness. Please continue to generously support this project in the coming months to ensure these disadvantaged individuals receive the care they need in the hot, humid months ahead.

*Excerpts compliments of IRIN (www.irinnews.org)

**Picture courtesy of SRSP

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HELP THE DISPLACED FAMILIES OF SWAT

May 29, 2009

“Children had become hysterical - crying endlessly - and everyone was in a trauma not knowing when the shells would hit them.”

In a relatively short space of time, the serene and indescribably beautiful Swat Valley in North West Frontier of Pakistan has changed into a war zone. Its inhabitants, who have lived peacefully for centuries, making a simple living in the mountains, have suddenly been trapped in the war between insurgents and the Government of Pakistan. The sounds of the war and the scenes of death around them are forcing hundreds and thousands of people to abruptly leave their homes to find safer sanctuaries in other parts of the province. They are leaving in a hurry, as soon as curfews are lifted, unable to take much from their homes to help them through this tribulation.

“Some people carried bundles of spinach, a child carried his family's only hen, some had their goat and sheep with them. Most had nothing.”

IDRF Partner SRSP, as quoted by BBC

The whole area now faces an unprecedented humanitarian crisis as more than 1,200,000 displaced people flee the mountain districts.

IDRF has sent \$20,000 to our partner SRSP (Sarhad Rural Support Programme), to help with desperately needed relief aid, such as food, water, blankets and medical supplies.

In addition, IDRF has partnered with Mir Khalil-ur-Rehman Foundation to raise funds for Pukar initiative.

With your generous donations, IDRF and a number of its partners will help the people of Swat in Pakistan as they cope with their sudden state of homelessness.

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*Quote courtesy of BBC News

*Pictures courtesy of GEO Television Network and AFP