



UNITED NATIONS

Office of the Resident Coordinator
South Africa

Situation Report 8 – VIOLENCE AGAINST FOREIGNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA – 21 JULY 2008

HIGHLIGHTS

- The total number of displaced people now stands at 12,297 in 72 sites nationwide.
- In Durban, 166 Congolese, mostly refugees or documented asylum seekers, of which 38 women and 75 children, that sought refuge at the City Hall on 10 July 2008 were forced to move to the Albert Park. The Municipal-DMC is currently threatening to remove the tents erected at Albert Park.
- On 16 July 2008, violence erupted in the Rifle Range site in Gauteng Province. Reportedly six refugees were injured and 10 others arrested.
- The Exit strategy of the Government with regards to the shelters is flawed as it has become obvious that heavy handed tactics are being used to shut down the shelters.

SITUATION - NATIONAL

Table 1 – Location, number of sites and displaced population as of 4 July 2008

Province	Municipality	Sites	Population displaced
Gauteng	Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, West Rand, Sedibeng, Tshwane, Metsweding	12	6,689
Western Cape	City of Cape Town, Cape Winelands, Eden, Overberg	54	5,291
Kwa-Zulu Natal	Ethekwini (Durban)	6	317
TOTAL		72	12,297

Source: DMCs from GP, WC and KZN and TAC (WC).

On 17 July 2008 the Centre for Development Enterprises (CDE), a South African policy think-tank, called for a commission of inquiry into the xenophobic violence so as to understand the causal factors which will assist in planning and response in case of similar occurrences.

Gauteng Province

About 6,689 displaced foreign nationals remain in 12 sites in Gauteng Province.

Department of Home Affairs (DHA) led registration process for IDPs has been completed at Rand Airport, Wit Road and River Road, Strijdom Park.

On 15 July 2008 registration started in Riffle Range, the largest site with 1,835 persons. On the first day only 120 individuals

registered due to resistance from Congolese refugees who wanted to understand the purpose of the process. UNHCR has been undertaking a sensitization campaign to facilitate the registration process.

Registration at the Akasia site is to start on 25 July 2008. In total, 3,437 persons have been registered in Gauteng. Following the detection of a measles case (5 year old child) identified in the Akasia site, measles immunization coverage and immunization activities were undertaken.

On 16 July 2008 a group of Congolese refugees at Rifle Range site in the Glenanda suburb of Gauteng province, held hostage 4 security guards and a riot with armed security guards ensued. A

group of Congolese refugees refused to be registered and requested UNHCR to relocate them to a third country. On 17 July 2008, police entered the site and fired rubber bullets and stun grenades to disperse the crowd. Reportedly six refugees were injured and 10 others arrested. UNHCR deployed a Protection Officer to the site.

Western Cape

About 5,291 displaced foreign nationals in 54 sites remain in Western Cape Province.

Department of Home Affairs (DHA) registration process started in Harmony Park on 14 July. Registrations at Youngsfield and Harmony Park sites have been completed and in total around 1,730 individuals have now been registered. Flooding affected over 38,000 people, of which 5,000 were displaced and temporarily sheltered in community halls which disturbed the registration process.

The Department of the Premier presented a draft time-specific reintegration plan that includes the creation of a facilitation office. Reintegration is ongoing, and according to a Provincial-DMC report, 75% of the IDPs within Cape Metropolitan District Municipality have been reintegrated into communities.

Consolidation of some sites (Woodstock Methodist Church and Traffic Test Centre site) is still taking place on an ad hoc basis without a clear strategy and support from authorities. Some local voluntary and faith based organisations are providing assistance to reintegrate IDPs by paying their rent for 3 months.

On the night of 12 July 2008, following an altercation, community police entered the Solomon Mahlangu Hall and pepper-sprayed one man, while removing him. The smell was so strong that the 231 residents of the hall had to be evacuated for three hours. Six people were hospitalized- On 14 July 2008, police forced 11 Somalis out of the Eden District community hall in Knysna. They were left outside, until UNHCR was advised by the University of Cape Town law clinic of their case, and in turn informed the Premier's office who sent a mediator and arranged for their transfer to Cape Tow Belle Ville area the following day.

There have been a number of media reports critical of the food delivery to IDPs. At one site the Department of health sent food for testing to confirm that the food is suitable for human consumption.

UNICEF, UNHCR and UNOCHA have completed a site assessment of the 6 largest sites in Cape Town. Preliminary report findings were presented to provincial government on Friday. The final is expected before the end of this week.

Kwazulu Natal:

About 317 displaced foreign nationals in 6 sites remain in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

In Durban, a group of 166 Congolese, mostly refugees or documented asylum seekers, of which 38 are women and 75 children, sought refuge at the City Hall on 10 July 2008 after being thrown out of a hotel where they were accommodated. The municipality as well as Menonite Central Committee, a UNHCR implementing partner discontinued payments for hotel accommodation. The displaced people moved to the city hall where Metro police used tear gas which forced the displaced to seek shelter in Albert Park. Temporary tents for shelter were provided by faith based organisations. The Municipal-DMC is currently threatening to remove the tents erected at Albert Park.



Congolese refugees at Durban City Hall (courtesy of OCHA).

On 11 July 2008, The Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC), a UNHCR cooperating partner, offered to pay accommodation for the group for five days in the Venture Africa hotel. The group turned down the offer, reportedly afraid to jeopardize their situation if they were to take legal action. MCC's offer to assist those who want to reintegrate, including a 2 month rental contribution still stands and is being reiterated on a regular basis.

After the Municipal-DMC reintegration stakeholder meeting initiative planned for 8 July 2008 was cancelled, no further initiatives have been taken. Many persons with refugee status or asylum documents report that their assets and income were lost during the attacks on foreigners and are

requesting for financial assistance to restart their lives. The Diocese of Churches in collaboration with the Social Work Department of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) developed a reintegration strategy for some IDPs. The Diocese held meetings with IDPs and mutually agreed on needs and mechanisms. A pilot project was launched in which IDPs had to find accommodation with the UKZN and the Diocese of Natal providing financial support for one month which included rent and purchase of food and non food items (NFIs). Some 92 IDPs from three Anglican churches (St. Paul, St. Thomas, and St. Aiden) will be assisted under this project. The Manning Road Methodist Church accommodates 47 persons and has been assisting the IDPs in finding jobs and accommodation. The Saint Thomas Church accommodates 50 Congolese, including men, women and children, with most of them having refugee status. The church has set a deadline of 19 July 2008 for the IDPs to find out their own accommodation as their resources can no longer sustain them further.

NATIONAL RESPONSE

Provincial health authorities are monitoring the epidemiological situation in shelters through regular data collection. Provincial Health Departments are providing health care in some sites/camps through mobile clinics.

DHA led registration and issuing temporary identification documents and the development of reintegration strategies is ongoing in Gauteng and Western Cape Provinces

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The health and nutrition sector working group continues to provide technical support to needs assessment in order to address remaining gaps in the affected provinces.

UNICEF continues to provide leadership in nutrition aspects, mainly on infant and young child feeding. A two-day UNICEF mission from 16 – 17 July 2008 assessed protection, education, water and sanitation conditions in 6 sites in Kwa-Zulu Natal province. UNICEF also organised and facilitated training on Emergency preparedness and the sphere project for health workers in Western Cape.

UNFPA supports data collection in the provinces of Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal Provinces, and addresses SRH issues in the shelters. It has also procured reproductive health kits for IDP use in shelters in the three affected provinces.

UNAIDS is working with local NGOs to ensure access to and utilisation of HIV and AIDS services to the IDPs in Gauteng. About 6,000 consultations have been done since the beginning to 27 June 2008. Most of the cases are acute respiratory infections. This could be linked to the winter season.

Médecins sans Frontières Belgium continues to support primary health care in most of the sites.

NEEDS

In Kwa-Zulu Natal Province voluntary and faith-based organisations have exhausted their capacities and are appealing to the government to step in. A two-day UNICEF mission from 16 – 17 July 2008 assessed protection, education, water and sanitation condition in the 6 sites in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

In Western Cape Province the initial findings of a joint UNICEF, UNHCR and UNOCHA site assessment indicates that the quality of food is still reported to create tensions in most sites. Tents are found to be inadequate for the winter season, and in none of the sites (halls or tents) adequate privacy is provided. Communication channels between different levels of government, civil society organisations and IDPs are weak and not systematised. There is a need for better information sharing, especially regarding the DHA registration process that creates a lot of frustration in sites. There are also protection concerns for children and women that were noted.

In Gauteng Province, reportedly tensions between communities are reaching critical levels in Akasia. On 10 July an incident erupted during the food distribution as one individuals tried to join a queue of another nationality (queues have been segregated by nationality). Site residents thereafter decided to have two groups determined by nationality and religion in Akasia.: the Muslim community (Somalis) in the Southern part, and other communities in the Northern part. This has the potential to cause further problems and relief workers are increasingly expressing discomfort and even fear of working in this site.

A joint UNICEF-UNFPA assessment on gender based violence in sites has been finalised and indicates serious protection concerns that include domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and psycho-social support provided but not consistent, fear expressed by children and women for the future, many women lost livelihood assets. It was recommended to support the government of South Africa in strengthening its capacities in responding to gender based violence.

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