



**UNITED NATIONS**

**Office of the Resident Coordinator  
South Africa**

**Situation Report 11 – VIOLENCE AGAINST FOREIGNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA 29 AUGUST 2008**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- The humanitarian situation in some of the CoSS in Gauteng Province is deteriorating and there is a risk for potential crisis in the Akasia site.
- The City and Provincial Government of Western Cape have agreed on the main elements of a consolidation, repatriation and reintegration plan.
- As of 28 August 2008, the total number of displaced people in the Centres of Safe Shelter (CoSS) and other ad hoc sites now stands at 7,806; many in Gauteng Province have left the CoSS due to uncertainty about their futures.

**SITUATION – NATIONAL**

Since the xenophobic violence on foreigners, 421 people have been charged in connection with the attacks. Another 82 people had their charges withdrawn. The number of cases per province is as follows: North West (seven), KwaZulu-Natal (52), Free State (15), Gauteng (139), Western Cape (164), Eastern Cape (43), and Northern Cape (one).

Source: (Independent Newspapers)

[http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set\\_id=1&click\\_id=3069&art\\_id=nw20080825132805226C288455](http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3069&art_id=nw20080825132805226C288455)

Table 1 – Location, number of sites and displaced population as of 28 Aug 2008

Province	Municipality	Sites		Population displaced	
		May	Aug	May	Aug
Gauteng	Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, West Rand, Sedibeng, Tshwane, Metsweding	48	9	17,548	4,260
Western Cape	City of Cape Town, Cape Winelands, Eden, Overberg	90	33	19,654	3,401
Kwa-Zulu Natal	Ethekwini (Durban)	2	3	1,650	145
<b>TOTAL</b>		140	45	38,762	7,806

**Gauteng Province**

About 4,260 displaced foreign nationals remain in nine sites in Gauteng Province.

On 20 August 2008, the Islamic Organization discontinued food distribution in Akasia site. Given that the Provincial Government planned to close the site, camp management was also discontinued in August 2008. As a result, the humanitarian situation for those remaining in the site is expected to decline. To this end, UNHCR has recommended that protection monitoring be carried out on a daily basis to ensure adequate protection and regular food distribution continues. Partners and the Protection Working Group are exploring possibilities to continue food assistance to sustain those at the site.

On 28 August 2008 Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) and Save the Children (SC-UK) reported that government authorities were pressuring IDPs to leave Riffle Range, and threatening them with arrest and deportation. IDPs confirmed that food rations had significantly decreased and that in Akasia water has been disconnected. However, it is reported that water was turned back on 29 August 2008. In Akasia, SC-UK reported that site managers have allegedly received orders to minimize services so as to create a push factor effect.

After legal and human right organizations sought a deadline of the extension of the camp, the court on 21 August 2008 ordered the parties to resolve their differences to ensure the reintegration of those entitled to remain in South Africa and the repatriation of those without legal status in the country.

### **Western Cape**



Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) moving towards consolidated sites.  
Source: AP

About 3,401 displaced foreign nationals in 33 sites remain in Western Cape Province. The large majority of IDPs in Metropolitan Cape Town continue to reside in the five mega camps, whose total population remains stable.

On 28 August 2008, the movement of IDPs into the consolidated sites began and is proceeding smoothly. The IDPs in the 33 sites will be moved two mega sites: Blue Water and Harmony Park. The third proposed site, Youngsfield, was rejected as a possible site on the ground that it is a military base. The provincial government will consult with NGOs to develop a reintegration strategy and prepare the consolidated sites for the arrival of the IDPs.

In several sites, especially Silverstroom and Soetwater, IDP leaders have indicated that they are not willing to move to the consolidated sites. Government communication teams and facilitators will engage them in discussions aimed at encouraging them to move.

### **Kwazulu Natal:**

About 145 displaced foreign nationals remain in 3 sites in Kwa-Zulu Natal Province. The population of IDPs in churches has decreased with about 64 individuals remaining in three churches. Due to the work of faith-based organizations, most of the IDPs have been reintegrated in communities.

## **NATIONAL RESPONSE**

### *Gauteng Province:*

On 25 August 2008, the Consortium of Refugees and Migrants (CoRMSA) and other civil society organizations met to discuss reintegration plans and begin identifying safe communities of return. CoRMSA will work with Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and Refugee Monitoring Committee (RMC), with technical assistance from OCHA and Oxfam, on a questionnaire to be used in the assessment.

### *Western Cape:*

In order to promote the acceptance of reintegration and a respect for cultural diversity within host communities several events will be sponsored by the provincial government. On 31 August 2008, Archbishop Desmond Tutu will speak to IDPs and communities at Khayelitsha, one of the sites where there were violence and displacement. Events will also be held in Strand on 30 August and in Hermanus on 14 September 2008.

### *Kwazulu Natal:*

Faith-based organisations are organizing a city development programme to provide IDPs and refugees with shelter and skills training. Churches have contacted Oxfam to provide expertise and assistance in seeking possible financial support.

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

### *Gauteng Province:*

On 27 August 2008 the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and the Parliamentary task team met with UN Agencies and civil society. The objective of the meeting was to facilitate dialogue between civil society, government and other relevant stakeholders on the broad issue of the closure of sites and the challenges posed by reintegration, in order to define effective solutions. SAHRC will draft a plan to be finalised and presented to government by 8 September 2008.

Save the Children UK (SC-UK), with support from UNICEF, are planning to convene a workshop with their implementing partners in September 2008. The workshop will focus on child protection and education issues and will share lessons learnt from experiences in the sites. The findings will be implemented within a reintegration framework to ensure sustainability and to benefit host communities. The plan will help local partners to approach donors and fund initiatives in the communities of return.

MSF continues to provide medical and mental health assistance in the sites.

### *Western Cape:*

A second meeting of the Cape Town civil society, known locally as the Safety for all working group met on 26 and 27 August 2006 to discuss monitoring and communications during the consolidation of the sites and ensure that the consolidation is completed in a safe and dignified manner.

About 100 UNHCR tents will be arriving this week to provide shelters to the most vulnerable groups (especially women and children) in the consolidated sites.

Following a request from the City of Cape Town, WFP and UNHCR have conducted an assessment of Bluewaters (one of the proposed consolidation sites) and have provided technical advice on communal kitchens, food distributions and food storage requirements. WFP continues to encourage the introduction of dry food and to strengthen nutritional standards. In collaboration with UNHCR, UNICEF and OCHA, WFP is including food security issues in the reintegration strategy.

The Provincial Government and the UN engaged discussions on the consolidation of the sites. To this end it was agreed that the UN will provide advice on how to address Sexual and Gender Based-Violence issues (SGBV). The UN is also available to provide training on how to respond to SGBV matters to site managers and service providers in the communities of return.

## GAPS

Severe food and water shortages are reported in Akasia, in Gauteng Province, as service providers pulled out following the closure announcement and due to a lack of funds. Both national and international organizations report difficulties in finding funds to support the provision of food in the sites. To this end, emergency funding is being sought to provide remaining caseload of about 1,300 IDPs for the remainder of the time the site is open.

In Cape Town, a large number of IDPs have indicated an interest in being reintegrated but lack the necessary funds to pay for rent. A cash transfer and / or skills training would allow a large number to reintegrate rapidly. The government indicated that it can not provide direct assistance to IDPs for fear of sparking more resentment from South African Communities. UN and civil society groups are investigating models to provide for reintegration assistance.

**Contact details:**

**Celine Esposito**

Humanitarian Affairs Officer (Johannesburg), +27 11 517 1624

**Aida Mengistu**

Desk Officer (New York), +1 212 963 5145

**Alfred Nabeta**

Desk Officer (Geneva), +41 22 917 2732

**Elizabeth Byrs,**

Press contact (Geneva), +41 22 917 2653

**Stephanie Bunker,**

Press contact (New York), +1 917 367 5126