



UNITED NATIONS

**Office of the Resident Coordinator
South Africa**

**Situation Report 13 – VIOLENCE AGAINST FOREIGNERS IN SOUTH AFRICA –
19 SEPTEMBER 2008**

HIGHLIGHTS

- Information help desks are launched in all four remaining Centres of Safe Shelter (CoSS) in the Gauteng Province.
- The Constitutional Court has postponed its decision to close camps until 20 November 2008.
- The South African Police Services (SAPS) have responded quickly and strongly to written threats against Somali shopkeepers in Western Cape.
- As of 19 September 2008, the total number of displaced people in the Centres of Safe Shelter (CoSS) and other ad hoc sites in all provinces now stands at 5,790.

SITUATION – NATIONAL

Table 1 – Location, number of sites and displaced population as of 19 Sept 2008

Province	Municipality	Sites		Population displaced	
		May	Aug	May	Aug
Gauteng	Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, West Rand, Sedibeng, Tshwane, Metsweding	48	6	17,548	3,465
Western Cape	City of Cape Town, Cape Winelands, Eden, Overberg	90	3	19,654	2,290
Kwa-Zulu Natal	Ethekwini (Durban)	2	3	1,650	35
TOTAL		140	35	38,762	5,790

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

Gauteng Province

3,465 displaced foreign nationals remain in 6 sites in Gauteng Province.

Acknowledging the fact that there is a court order stipulating that the sites are to be closed on a date to be determined and that the court order also directs all parties to engage meaningfully, the UN drafted a framework to secure a safe and humane closure of the sites. The framework was submitted to and approved by the Gauteng Provincial Government, NGOs, and civil society groups.

In a collective effort, Provincial Government, UN Agencies, NGOs, civil society and faith-based organizations have jointly agreed to support an information help desks in all sites to provide information concerning reintegration options and legal rights. The official launch of the help desk took place on 18 September 2008. The site managers explained the purpose of the

help desk to the residents. In order to reach a maximum people, leaflets in different languages are made available at the help desk. The provision of information was well received by the beneficiaries.

The Constitutional court postponed the camp closure date to 20 November. The current deadline for camp closure on 30 September 2008 is now uncertain.

Western Cape

About 2,290 displaced foreign nationals in 3 sites remain in Western Cape Province. Harmony Park is the largest with a total number of 883 IDPs (36%) of the total number of IDPs, followed by Bluewaters with 570 IDPs (24%). Youngsfield has a total number of 454 IDPs (20%).

Threats were made against the Somali Community from the Zankhanyo Retailers Associations ordering the Somali shop owners to close down their shops by 14 September 2008. The South African Police Services (SAPS) reported that the Chairperson of the Zankhanyo Retail Association was arrested on 11 September 2008, and appeared in court on 17 September 2008 for a bail application. The magistrate opposed the granting of the bail request.

Furthermore, four incidents against foreigners were reported in Kayelitsha Township, of which one case of attempted murder in the latter case was opened.

SAPS reported another murder of a Somali shopkeeper in Kayelitsha bringing the total number of reported incidents against foreigners according to the Somali Association to 31 (15 killed and 16 wounded) since the month of June and nationwide. However the police reports again that these incidents are "crime related", and not linked to xenophobia.

Kwazulu Natal:

About 35 displaced foreign nationals remain in 3 sites in Kwa-Zulu Natal Province. The situation has stabilised with very few people still housed by various organizations.

NATIONAL RESPONSE

Western Cape:

Following threats against the Somali community and fearing another wave of attacks, the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) has developed an operational plan. Teams were deployed in the community to monitor the situation, food parcels and blankets were distributed in preparation for any further incidents.

The Provincial Disaster Management Center (PDMC) has started to draft a contingency and response plan. The plan is designed to support operational agencies and Government Departments in the reintegration effort.

Kwazulu Natal:

Faith-based organizations are setting-up a city development programme to provide IDPs and refugees with shelters and skills training.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Gauteng Province:



Gauteng Government, UN Agencies, NGOs and civil society have jointly set-up information help desks at each site to ensure that residents are aware of their options and available assistance after the sites close. The help desks will be open daily and set-up inside the sites of Rifle Range, Rand Airport, Boksburg, and Akasia. The help desks are to be manned by Independent Development Trust staff (IDT), civil society and UN to provide residents with the information they need to exercise their choices and empower them to think about their futures. The help desk will also refer residents to authorities and service providers as needed.

Launch of the Help Desk – Rand 18 Sept 08

Upon exit, the help desk will facilitate the distribution of an exit package including: food parcel, psycho-social support, legal advice, as well as transportation and financial assistance offered by UNHCR and UNICEF.

The Red Cross will carry-out assessment of the families and individuals that will benefit from the UNICEF exit cash grant. The beneficiaries will cover people who do not fall under UNHCR's scheme and are classified as per the following categories:

- Single men and women
- Families with one child
- Families with two or more children

The Red Cross will also distribute a food parcel upon exit.

The project will benefit 480 people at Boksburg, 267 people at Rifle Range and 1490 people at Rand Airport.

UNHCR notes that funds are still available through Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) for refugees, asylum seekers and Zimbabweans in Akasia, Malas and Stanza sites.

Western Cape:

As per the response in Gauteng, UNICEF has informed the Provincial Disaster Management Centre (PDMC) of its relocation assistance package aimed at providing assistance to the following categories: single person, families with one child, families with more than one child. UNICEF in partnership with the Department of Local Government and Housing, the City of Cape Town, Community Development Workers (CDW) will carry out assessments at the safety sites to evaluate the needs of the IDPs.

GAPS

Various concerns and comments are raised regarding UNICEF financial assistance package to be distributed in Gauteng Province and Western Cape consolidated sites:

- The need to identify a dedicated project manager to both oversee, and be responsible for all processes involved,
- The need to ensure that risk management is considered,
- Clarity on the nature of the assistance-whether it would be cash, in the form of rental assistance, and the way(s) in which this would be processed,
- The possibility of assisting illegal migrants, and the political, social and economic implications involved,

- Sustainability of the assistance-whether it would be once of or not,
- concern over the involvement of CDW's in the process, as they are government staff, which could create confusion with government seen as delivering the package,
- The manner in which these plans and processes would be communicated to IDPs, as well as the timing thereof.

UNICEF requested that all comments and concerns should be forwarded to them in writing, so that they could address these as a matter of urgency.

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