



# Zimbabwe Election Period: Weekly Situation Report

Issue Number 14

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## I. SITUATION ANALYSIS

The political status-quo continues to affect humanitarian agencies and their activities. The suspension of NGOs remains in effect, despite the announced relaxation of restrictions on HIV/AIDS and supplementary feeding activities. Identified priorities include:

- Continued advocacy for opening of humanitarian space
- Carrying out needs assessments
- Reconciliation efforts at national and community level, for perpetrators and victims of violence.
- Addressing the immediate humanitarian needs of people (food, shelter, ART etc)
- Strategies for mitigating the increased shortages of basic commodities and food insecurity, considering the early warning raised by the latest CFSAM.

The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, with support from some humanitarian agencies, has continued to support people temporary sheltered at the National Rehabilitation Centre in Ruwa. Recent fears of attacks and intimidations on the people at the Centre have been brought under control. Efforts are being channelled towards ensuring a safe return of the residents to their preferred destinations. Joint assessments between government and the humanitarian community are already taking place in order to ascertain the conditions that have prompted the displacements from their areas of origin as well as the safety and security of the preferred return destinations of displaced. Meanwhile, there has also been reports of a similar group of people gathered at the American Embassy.

The Government has clarified that the lifting of the ongoing suspension of NGOs was a Cabinet decision. It was understood that the lifting of the suspension was just a matter of time and will be decided once cabinet resumes work. However, the few NGOs under investigation will remain suspended until their cases are cleared.

### *Observed impacts*

- Humanitarian space is still very limited,
- The absence of partners on the ground and lack of assessment make it difficult to map out impacts and plan adequate response.

### *Foreseen impacts*

- More restrictions and field challenges for all humanitarian actors as discussion continue on forming government.
- If not lifted soon, the current suspension of field operations mean that hundreds of thousands of households will not receive agricultural input support for the 2008/09 season, condemning them to another food insecure year due to untimely delivery of inputs.
- Prolonged suspension of NGOs / PVOs under investigations for alleged involvement in politics.
- Best case scenario of subsiding of violence across the country and less political tensions as a result of negotiations.

## II. UPDATE ON HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

### **Food Security**

- The government suspension of NGO field operations has implications to WFP's current programme and the planned start of the Vulnerable Group Feeding programme which is anticipated to be as early as August, 2008. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator continues to hold discussions with the GoZ on lifting of the suspension.
- In July, WFP aims to continue with its safety-net/health-based activities, though the government NGO suspension could affect distribution plans. The target is to reach an estimated 318,000 beneficiaries which would include school children, mobile and vulnerable groups and HIV/AIDS affected. WFP is continuing dialogue with government authorities to facilitate humanitarian access to these food insecure groups.
- On 4 July, WFP assisted some 300 persons seeking refuge at the United States Embassy with food support. In addition, WFP continues to assist approximately 400 persons that sought refugee at the Embassy of South Africa (26 June). This caseload has been moved to a Rehabilitation Centre in Ruwa and the humanitarian community continues to monitor the situation.
- The high rate of inflation in Zimbabwe continues to rapidly erode purchasing power of households, and their ability to access food. Inflation is being accelerated by a shortage of basic commodities and fuel, in addition to the rising production cost off basic commodities. In response, households are engaging in reducing the number and the quantities of meals that they eat and collecting wild food for consumption.
- If not lifted soon, the current suspension of field operations means that hundreds of thousands of households will not receive agricultural input support for the 2008/09 season, basically condemning them to another failure. Timely delivery of

inputs has been identified by Government and independent assessments as one of the main reasons behind the bad agricultural performance of the past few seasons. Every further delay in the planning of agricultural activities (especially summer crop activities) – procurement, beneficiary selection, etc - will jeopardize the food security of households..

## **Protection**

- On 06 July, 2008, there was a security incident at the National Rehabilitation Centre in Ruwa, Harare where about 400 people, who fled alleged political violence, are temporarily being sheltered. Reports suggest a group of armed persons breached the centre's security resulting in a number of injuries. Some persons remain unaccounted for. At a stakeholder meeting following the incident, it was recommended that an increased presence of the Zimbabwe Republic Police and a 24 Hour presence of the UN/international organisations be there. A further incident took place on 8 July where it was reported that an alleged under cover security agent infiltrated the camp. A brawl followed after he was identified by some of the beneficiaries.
- A joint GoZ, Red Cross, UN, IOM and ZCC rapid field assessment to assess areas of return or relocation for the displaced persons currently being accommodated in Ruwa is to be conducted on July 10-11, 2008. The assessments will be led by the Department of Social Services, and will focus on assessing the viability of return or relocation.
- Reports of politically-motivated violence continue to be received. There are unconfirmed reports that 4-6 people, who were seeking refugee in an undisclosed location in Gokwe, were killed.
- There are continued reports of new displacements associated with the post-election phase (i.e. since 27<sup>th</sup> June), such as in Mhondoro, Buhera, Chinhoyi, Masvingo, Mutare and Chegutu. Lack of access to the affected areas severely hinders the flow of information and the ability to verify that information. Consequently and it is impossible to know the full extent of the violence and resulting displacements.
- The total number of displacements so far is estimated at 36,000; with 16,844 confirmed, and 9425 confirmed as assisted by one implementing partner.
- A significant number of persons are reported to be seeking refuge in so-called 'safe houses'. Reports suggest that the humanitarian situation in some of these safe houses is a growing cause for concern. Many such persons have been displaced more than once and exhibit signs of significant distress and fear. There is an urgent need for psycho-social support especially to children and children. Children comprise the majority of those in hiding, and women who have experienced physical and sexual violence.

## **Health**

### Essential Drugs

- The latest NatPharm distribution update indicates that 376 primary health care facilities have been serviced with essential medicines from joint donor funding administered by UNICEF.

### HIV / AIDS

- Last week, the HIV/AIDS and Child Protection sections of UNICEF working in collaboration with CONNECT and HOSPAZ conducted a three day workshop in order to train community based volunteers on trauma and child counselling. The volunteers were drawn from respective implementing partners who are working with both infected and affected children in their communities. A total of 29 (20 females and 9 males) volunteers attended the workshop. Feedback received from the participants indicates that; the workshop was beneficial in improving the volunteers' skills and knowledge in child counselling; the venue was quite and secure thereby enabling the participants to open up and discuss very sensitive and confidential issues. The trained volunteers will submit reports to their respect organisations indicating how many children they would have attended to and the types of problems presented. A similar training will be conducted for 30 volunteers in early August 2008.
- 20 HIV/AIDS and safe migration snakes and ladders game boards were distributed to IDPs-young people and adults at Ruwa by IOM and UNICEF. Copies of pamphlets entitled 'Domestic Violence and Aids: What can we do', are being distributed to the IDPs this week as well.

## **Mobile and Vulnerable Populations**

- Affected households provided with refuge at the National Rehabilitation Centre in Ruwa had a security incident in the early hours of 7 July. Eight persons sustained injuries and there are 14 individuals reported unaccounted. Investigations are ongoing.
- IOM and its partners have provided humanitarian assistance to a total of 9,425 mobile and vulnerable populations.

## **Nutrition**

- Preparations by FNC/MOHCW and UNICEF are in place for first round of 2008 nutrition sentinel site surveillance with data collection planned on the last week of July. This assessment has been postponed twice. Ten most venerable rural districts, from which 8 were identified with high level of malnutrition during the October 2007 national nutrition survey, were selected for the assessment. (Gwanda, Lupane, Umguza, Chipinge, Mbire, UMP, Gokwe South, Hwedza, Zaka, Rushinga) NGOs are welcome to participate in their areas of operation depending on whether their suspension is lifted.
- UNICEF is working toward increasing the capacity of management severe acute malnutrition in hospital and in the community. After the national training of trainers has been completed, UNICEF will support the training of at least 210 health professionals from MOHCW and NGOs on "improved practice on integrated management of severe acute malnutrition", which will be conducted on the 3rd and 4th week of this July. This is part of the plan to revitalize all the 75 hospital based therapeutic feeding units facing difficulties of functioning in the country. The Ministry of Health and Child welfare has for the first time in the last 4 years, authorized the use the pre-packed therapeutic milk F75 for a 6 months emergency response. UNICEF will procure the contingency stock to cover the needs for in-patient care for six months as per MOHCW-NUU request.

- UNICEF is developing a fact-sheet on infant feeding in emergencies for NGOs. This is being developed in view of increasing number of requests for provision of infant formula. The MoHCW gave a presentation at the nutrition cluster meeting on the use of infant formula and a meeting of a small working group on infant feeding in emergencies is planned for next week.
- National Child health days will be held the first week of August. A part from vitamin A supplementation, screening for malnourished children will be carried out in selected districts and all identified severe cases will be referred to the nearby therapeutic feeding programme for treatment. MSF-Spain will provide support to MOHCW in Tsholotsho, Bulawayo and Beitbridge for MUAC screening.
- UNICEF is organizing training on 'Nutrition in Emergencies' for the nutrition cluster members' organizations on the 4th week of July. The aim of the training is to build the capacity of the nutrition cluster members in the area of emergencies.
- Most organizations involved in supplementary feeding programme are still under suspension. School feeding, Early Childhood Development Centre feeding, and community based child supplementary feeding of children under five years old (implemented by few NGOs as a safety net programme rather than an emergency programme) were functioning based on previously pre-positioned stock of food. However, since the stock is being depleted in some districts (e.g Chimanimani), activities have stopped.

#### **WASH**

- With the ban on NGO field operations, by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, still in place, NGO partners continue to be confined to their offices and hence there are virtually no Emergency WASH operations at present. Some NGOs who closed down for two weeks over the run-off period have now re-opened their offices; however they are in the same position.
- UNICEF continues to truck 20,000 litres per day to the Ruwa based IDPs (ex SA Embassy) having provided tanks and tap stands as well as sanitation on that site. Solid waste disposal, as well as insecticide for lice treatment is also being supported. UNICEF is also able to provide immediate WASH support to other situations of a similar nature whenever they occur.
- Water trucking continues in Mabvuku and Tafara where borehole construction is on-going but, due to mainly political disturbances, not as fast as expected. Nevertheless 10 boreholes have now been drilled and are having final works completed. IOM report two of the four boreholes planned in Caledonia (near Tafara) drilling complete. With the arrival of much of the equipment for the Nyamandhlovu (Matabeleland) borehole refurbishment programme, this should now be able to move ahead.
- The WASH cluster has formed a smaller "Crisis Task force" of some seven member organisations more involved in emergency response. This group now meets weekly and will continue to do so for the duration of this more immediate emergency period.

#### **Education**

- Schools officially resumed last week from 2nd July. Given the difficulty in conducting field work with NGOs still banned, little information is available in terms of number of teachers and children attending schools. An Education Working Group Meeting is planned for 17th July, during which the Ministry of Education of Education, Sport and Culture has agreed to make a presentation on the situation obtaining in schools.

#### **Refugees**

- UNHCR's refugee programme in Tongogara refugee camp has remained largely unaffected thus far by the post-election crisis. Urban-based refugees have not reported facing any major protection concerns as a result of recent events. While new applications for asylum have continued to be lodged during this period, the total number of registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Zimbabwe has remained relatively steady so far this year at just under 5,000 persons.

### **III. PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS**

The following arrangements continue to be in place, to facilitate effective humanitarian coordination and in anticipation of resource mobilization:

1. The suggested contingency planning alert window remains up to 31 August 2008. This covers in space and time all possible outcomes of the electoral process, including the impacts of the presidential elections re-run and its aftermaths. OCHA has a collocation agreement with WFP during the period, including essential NGO Staff.
2. OCHA is maintaining an Emergency Relief Supply and Capacity Matrix for Zimbabwe, with the excellent cooperation of humanitarian partner organizations.  
*The emergency stockpiles list is posted on <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc108?OpenForm&emid=ACOS-635PHU&RC=1> and <http://ochaonline.un.org/zimbabwe>*
3. Possible gap areas in coordination support are being monitored, as well as needs for surge capacity from HQ and the regional level. This is in direct link with cluster implementation and the functioning of Working Groups and other coordination structures during and after the crisis.
4. Humanitarian analysis, monitoring and advocacy are being strengthened in view of the increased pressure on ongoing programmes.
5. Weekly situation reports will be issued throughout the entire expanded alert period until 31 August 2008.

6. Daily meetings by the UNCT Crisis Group have strengthened UN security arrangements for the country although there are serious telecommunications issues which WFP has offered support through provision of VHF radios.
7. A Stakeholder Committee has been formed at Head of Agency level, including the UN, Ministry of Public Services Labour and Social Welfare, IOM and the Zimbabwe Red Cross, to oversee humanitarian needs emerging from Ruwa, plan and facilitate the way forward for a safe return and reintegration of the displaced into their communities.
8. Emergency Focal points contact list updated. [Posted on http://ochaonline.un.org/zimbabwe](http://ochaonline.un.org/zimbabwe)
9. Capacity mapping of the key humanitarian agencies/NGOs in Zimbabwe.
10. The IASC is meeting regularly and NGOs participation has been extended. Donors are also briefed regularly.
11. Enhancement of information sharing mechanisms and information management tools where OCHA has stepped up the production of information support tools including situation reports, maps, humanitarian updates and contact lists on a 24-hour basis. Weekly Technical Coordination Meetings are taking place every Monday at 2:00, at UNICEF. They provide a broad forum where humanitarian actors can build consensus on humanitarian analysis, operational challenges and best practices on how to operate in a context of restricted humanitarian access, including violence and intimidation.
12. Mapping and monitoring high-risk geographical areas.

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