



Zimbabwe Election Period: Weekly Situation Report

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I. SITUATION ANALYSIS

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to guide talks on power sharing between Zanu-PF and MDC was welcomed by humanitarian actors in the country as a positive development that could herald opening up of humanitarian space. The MOU contains one clause with specific reference to assistance to the displaced people and the political parties agreeing to work together to ensure the safety of any displaced persons and their safe return home and allowing humanitarian and social welfare organisations to provide assistance as might be required. Although this does not provide for the blanket lifting of suspension of humanitarian field activities as would have been desired, the humanitarian actors see it as an opportunity to continue asking the Government to facilitate access to those in need throughout the country.

OCHA has postponed a planned in-country Humanitarian Response Planning Workshop until further notice. The workshop was intended to review humanitarian needs and gaps for the next six months and seek a way forward to guarantee unfettered humanitarian access as well as a commitment by humanitarians and the Government of Zimbabwe to facilitate access to people in need in a context without political violence.

In the meantime, OCHA is continuing to engage with the Government in a bid to secure free access for activities not covered under the 12 June suspension of field humanitarian activities such as HIV/AIDS and supplementary feeding. NGOs with this type of programming have continued to report blockage of humanitarian assistance due to misinterpretation of the extent of the suspension. However, there are some exceptions as illustrated by reports received by the office indicating that some agencies have managed to resume implementing activities in the field after being allowed to operate by the local authorities.

Identified priorities are:

- Continued advocacy for opening of humanitarian space
- Carrying out needs assessments
- 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 return of displaced people to their areas of origin is likely to start by the end of this week following agreement between the Government and the humanitarian UNCT to offer assistance during the return process. Almost all the people have voluntarily agreed to leave their temporary shelter at the National Rehabilitation Centre in Ruwa. The Stakeholders Committee overseeing the safe return of the affected people has agreed to extend assistance to affected people who did not flee their homes. Reconstruction of homes will be considered if it can be verified that someone lost a home due to political arson activities. The people will

Observed impacts as a result of continued restriction of humanitarian access:

- Humanitarian space is still 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

- 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 continuation of the NGO field operation suspension is affecting the achievement of WFP's planned food distributions. In July, WFP aims to reach approximately 70% of the distribution plan through its social-based and health-based safety nets, which includes interventions like school-based feeding and home-based care. WFP continues to negotiate with local authorities

to facilitate access for its cooperating partners and resume food distributions for those remaining caseloads affected by the restriction.

Despite the NGO suspension, WFP is continuing with its VGF planning and preparations which includes activities such as consultations with local stakeholders and programme training for cooperating partners.

WFP's food security monitoring maintains that large-scale importation of cereals will be required to meet the food consumption requirements in Zimbabwe. The cereal supply situation currently prevailing in the country calls for an urgent intervention in terms of the commercial imports and resumption of the food assistance programme.

Protection

The number of reports received on political violence in the country has reduced, but isolated and sporadic cases of targeted violence in some parts of the country continue to be reported. It is difficult to know whether the reduction in the number of reported cases of violence is due to a decrease in the level of violence. It is also impossible to establish the veracity of the reports on targeted violence, as access problems remain as a major bottleneck to verifying the reports.

There are no reports of new displacement and the estimated total number of people displaced by the politically motivated violence from March to early July 2008 remains 36,000; with 16,844 confirmed and 9,866 assisted by one implementing partner. There are no unusual cross border movements observed for the reporting period.

The protection draft strategy was shared with the PWG members and feedback received. A core group composed of the proposed protection lead agencies - UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM and SC-UK- discussed the points of congruency between the Contingency Plan and the Action Plan, and revised the latter so as to establish a clear link between the planned activities and the protection concerns identified in the strategy draft. The final document is expected to be finalized latest by next week.

Nutrition

Training of 56 district nursing officers (DNO) from five provinces (Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Manicaland and Harare) on immunization in practice and vitamin A supplementation, took place 14-18 July to strengthen routine EPI preparation for child health days (CHDs) which will take place from 5 to 8 August 2008. The remaining provinces will also be trained before the next round of CHDs.

World breastfeeding week will be launched on August 1, 2008 in Harare with road shows in Budiriro. Breastfeeding and CHD activities will be integrated at the district level. A media seminar with at least 50 invited media practitioners will be held on Friday 25 July 2008 at Cresta Oasis Hotel in Harare

The first round of nutritional sentinel sites surveillance is scheduled to start in the last week of July. Training of enumerators for data collection will be held on the 21st to 23rd July and data collection in seven districts will be conducted from the 25th July to 2 August 2008.

MSF-Luxembourg and MSF- Spain (together with UNICEF) will be supporting the MOHCW to screen malnourished children during Child Health Days and refer them to the Therapeutic Feeding Programme, respectively in Manicaland (Buhera) and in Matebeleland (Tsholotsho, Bulawayo and Beitbridge).

Supplementary feeding by Plan Zimbabwe (Tsholotsho district) is on going benefiting 4716 girls and 4356 boys in 24 schools under seven wards of Tsholotsho (Wards 8,9,10,11,12,14 & 16).

WASH

NGO partners are still unable to carry out field work, although some are exploring possibilities of localized access at the district level with local authorities.

Water is supplied daily at Ruwa Rehabilitation Centre where displaced people were given temporary shelter. The centre receives 20,000 litres per a day. A general problem of water in Harare and reduced pressure is affecting the turnaround of this trucking process. On new boreholes, 16 of the 20 planned new boreholes in Mabvuku and Tafara have been drilled, meanwhile UNICEF continues to truck some 190,000 litres per day to those suburbs.

The process of purchasing emergency supplies for pre-positioning continues and materials are being sent to Bulawayo to boost response capacity in that part of the country.

Meanwhile the cluster continues to develop rapid response capacity for the future, it now has a training plan for improving cluster members' emergency capacity and is actively seeking additional funding for immediate response.

Mobile and Vulnerable Populations

IOM and its partners have assisted 9,866 individuals with humanitarian assistance including blankets, shelter, non food items and health assistance.

The mobile health clinic continues to provide health care, treatment and HIV and AIDS and GBV prevention services to Caledonia, Epworth Belapaise, Manyame, Hatcliffe Extension, Whitecliffe and Blackfordby. Static clinics in Dzivaresekwa

Extension Clinic and Hopely clinic were supported with drugs. IOM also donated a phone to Dzivarasekwa extension clinic in order to support the facility to handle emergency cases.

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

No updates were available at the time of writing on the number of Zimbabweans claiming asylum in neighbouring countries.

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. Monthly 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>*
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.

CONTACT DETAILS

Georges Tadonki

Head of Office (Harare), +263 4 792681

Alfred Nabeta

Desk Officer (Geneva), +41 22 917 2732

Mette Tangen

Desk Officer (New York), +1 917 367 3001

Elizabeth Byrs,

Press contact (Geneva), +41 22 917 2653

Stephanie Bunker,
Press contact (New York), +917 367 5126