

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) – Weekly Updates

(July 20, 2009)

Repatriation of IDPs

IDPs' Repatriation Gains Momentum

Repatriation of the IDPs to their respective areas further intensified on the seventh day of the drive as an estimated 82,005 persons returned home on July 19. Buses, trucks, coasters, vans and cars boarded with the displaced families, who spent about two and a half months in camps and with relatives, drove through Malakand Pass to enter Swat district. The official data said the government facilitated the return of 3,492 people to Swat from Jalozei, Ambar, Jalala, Sheikh Yaseen, Sheikh Shahzad, Shah Mansoor and Yar Hussain. Some 11,060 families to Swat and 655 to Buner district moved back on Sunday. It has been noticed during the last seven days of repatriation that a great number of people preferred to return in private vehicles. On July 19, an estimated 77,420 individuals of 11,060 families used private vehicles to go back to their homes in Swat and Buner districts.

The official data said a total of 278,509 persons of 39,787 families had reached their homes since the start of repatriation on July 13. Data collected by local officials in Swat said 219,170 individuals had been received from July 16-19.

Government Lifts Restrictions on IDPs Going Home

The Government on July 14 lifted restrictions on the return of the IDPs, hoping to boost confidence among residents wary that the Taliban might come back. Authorities on July 13 had begun returning the IDPs to their homes, but fearing trouble on the main road into the valley and wary of the Taliban trying to slip back in, stopped private vehicles from entering the valley, only letting government buses and trucks through. That restriction was lifted on July 14, said Lt Col Waseem Shahid, a spokesman for the government unit overseeing the humanitarian effort.

ERU Announces Phase III of IDPs' Return Schedule

The Emergency Response Unit (ERU) announced on July 15, the schedule for the third phase of the repatriation of the IDPs residing in various relief camps. The four-day third phase of repatriation would begin on July 17 and end on July 20. The IDPs who wish to return to their homes in private vehicles would be allowed to proceed after 1pm. ERU officials said private vehicles would be allowed to return without passes or stickers, however, they requested the families to carry their national identity cards and any IDP-related registration documents to avoid any inconvenience or confusion during routine security checks.

The ERU urged the IDPs to abide by the schedule, stressing that only the IDPs belonging to Mingora, Central City, Hajiabad, Malukabad, Gulkadah and Saidu Sharif would be allowed to return on the stated days. It said that detailed information on the schedule was available on the ERU website, www.helpidp.org. The officials said a detailed schedule for IDPs living outside camps, who want to return in government transport, would be announced soon. Around 1,572 displaced families have safely returned to their homes in Swat and Buner since the repatriation process began on July 13.

IDPs in Sindh to Return this Week

The Sindh government has announced on July 18 that the IDPs who had come to Sindh from Swat and other troubled areas of NWFP and FATA would start returning to their homes next week (July 20 onwards). Provincial Home Minister Dr Zulfiqar Mirza made this announcement at an emergency press conference at the Chief Minister's House. He said that the provincial government would provide them vehicles to transport them to their homes. According to him, the government would facilitate the 50,000 IDPs who had settled in the province and mostly in Karachi. The minister said that Chief Minister Qaim Ali Shah presided over a meeting recently, during which all the details were discussed and finalised for facilitating the smooth return of the IDPs of Swat and other areas of NWFP who had come to Sindh. An amount of Rs100 million has been sanctioned for hiring transport and for providing food and security to the returnees who would be dropped at their doorsteps in various areas of NWFP.

Mirza said that two centres have been established for the de-registration of IDPs. One centre has been setup at the office of the former DC West while the other has been established at the office of Landhi town nazim because most of the displaced people are living in these areas. When asked about the numbers of IDPs registered with the government, he said that around 50,000 or more IDPs came to Sindh, 90 percent of them stayed in Karachi while more than one thousand stayed with their relatives in interior parts of the Province.

Rs 24 billion Allocated for Rehabilitation of Malakand: Bilour

NWFP Senior Minister Bashir Ahmad Bilour said on July 13 that the government has reserved an amount of Rs 24 billion for the rehabilitation of the operation-hit Malakand Division. Bashir Bilour said the amount of Rs24 billion would be provided by the centre to the provincial government in four instalments. Bilour said after completion of the return of the IDPs, the government would start work on rehabilitation of the Malakand Division, which would be made a model division in the province. Bilour said in order to ensure lasting peace in the area, the government would double the number of the police force. Similarly, he added, the Frontier Corps and Frontier Constabulary would be strengthened in the region. Bashir said the number of Tehsils would be increased to seven from the existing two. Similarly, the number of police stations would also be raised.

'IDPs Repatriation Needs Effective Strategy'

A seminar on “Challenges of IDPs Repatriation” was organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). All the speakers were of the view that the Government has initiated repatriation of IDPs in haste having no solution insight and without having any comprehensive strategy and no arrangements or planning for their rehabilitation back at their homes. The key speakers who spoke at the seminar including Shah Haroon, Project Manager IDPs Response Program, Oxfam; Kamal Shah Shama Khel, Senior Vice President (PPPP); District Swat; Sheheryar Khan, MS Murdoch University, Perth, Australia; Hassan Khan, Director News and Current Affairs, Khyber TV, presided over the proceedings. Hassan Khan said that IDPs those returning home have some serious concern and apprehension about their rehabilitation as consistent militancy and military operations have ruined their business, destroyed their houses, orchards and crops. Major difficulties now IDPs are facing is fear of high insecurity, brutal killing by Taliban's and leadership of Taliban has not yet been captured. He added that government had enough time to devise a compressive strategy for rehabilitation of IDPs but unfortunately they overlook intensity of situation and aspirations of IDPs. Shah Haroon appreciated and extended his gratitude to the host families who had opened their doors and houses to the IDPs. While highlighting the issues faced by IDPs he said that most important is to ensure safety and security of the people returning to their areas and also creating humanitarian space for organizations to extend support to the people in their areas. Continued curfew in some areas was making hard for the returnees to access food. He said that due to lack of Information people are not sure where and how they can get financial assistance regarding the return package Rs. 25,000/-.

Major Appeals for Support of IDPs

UN Appeals for Bolstering Aid to Displaced People

The international community should make efforts to bolster aid to the more than two million people displaced by the anti-Taliban offensive in the NWFP, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator John Holmes said on July 15. Addressing a press conference on his return from a four-day visit to Pakistan, he said donors had committed the remaining 42 percent of the \$543 million aid requested by the UN to help the displaced. Holmes, also the UN under secretary general for Humanitarian Affairs said, however, that amount would cover food and other basic emergency needs for only a few weeks. Much more would be needed to sustain relief efforts through to the year's end, particularly if the fighting intensified and led to a massive outflow of people from South Waziristan, as was expected in the coming weeks, he added. "I'm reiterating my plea to the donors and the international community that we need continued, accelerated and increased support, including for the early completion of the reconstruction and redevelopment process," he said.

Holmes said international support was limited, noting that the UN had received 60 percent of the funds requested for food aid, but donations for other key areas – emergency agriculture to replace lost crops, healthcare, shelter and emergency education – were woefully inadequate, at 20 percent or less.

Pakistan's IDPs Need More Support, Oxfam Urges

IDPs in Pakistan are returning to their homes but must be supported by more foreign aid, a charity reports. According to Oxfam, there are more than 10,000 IDPs in the country's Katlang region alone, many of whom are in dire need of safe water and sanitation. Sardara, a 35-year-old mother from Katlang, told Farkhanda Wazir of Oxfam: "I think the majority of the people are waiting for the call by the government to go back. We are scared and confused. I don't know what waits for us at home." She added that Pakistani people cannot receive aid from the government without a registration card, which her husband has been applying for months in vain. Oxfam currently provides water, medical supplies, cooking materials and hygienic latrines to the 360,000 men, women and children affected by fighting in north-west Pakistan. The international charity hopes to raise £5.3 million as part of its Pakistan campaign.

International Aid Agencies Seeking Donations

Donations can be made to any of the following aid agencies providing humanitarian aid:

Actionaid: Together with more than 2,000 civil society partners worldwide, we work with and support the poorest and most vulnerable people to fight for and gain their rights to food, shelter, work, basic healthcare and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. [Donate to Actionaid >>](#)

The British Red Cross: The British Red Cross society is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement - All their work is guided by seven fundamental principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. [Donate to the British Red Cross >>](#)

International Medical Corps: International Medical Corps UK is a global, humanitarian, non-profit organisation dedicated to saving lives and relieving suffering through health care training and relief and development programmes. [Donate to International Medical Corps >>](#)

Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF): MSF is an independent humanitarian medical aid agency committed to two objectives: providing medical aid wherever needed, regardless of race, religion, politics or sex and raising awareness of the plight of the people we help. [Donate to MSF >>](#)

Oxfam GB: Oxfam GB is dedicated to finding lasting and sustainable solutions to poverty and suffering around the world. Its members work with poor communities, local partners, volunteers and supporters in over 70 countries to help make this a reality. [Donate to Oxfam GB >>](#)

Save the Children: Save the Children Fund looks forward to a world which respects and values each child, which listens to children and learns from them and a world where all children have hope and opportunity. [Donate to Save the Children >>](#)

The UK Committee for UNICEF: UNICEF is working to meet the most pressing health, nutrition, water and sanitation needs of the population, collaborating with the Government, NGOs, sister UN agencies and other partners in the relief operations. [Donate to UNICEF >>](#)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): UNHCR is an impartial humanitarian organisation mandated by the United Nations to lead and co-ordinate international action for the world-wide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems. [Donate to UNHCR >>](#)

Responses

Government

Federal Government

Some 155,348 Cash Cards Distributed Among IDPs: The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has so far distributed about 155,348 cash disbursement cards among the IDPs, enabling them to draw about Rs2.407 billion. Out of the total, about 145,407 cards have been activated and the remaining are in the process of activation. The government has spared about Rs3.63 billion for IDPs, out of which Rs2.407 billion has been drawn, said NADRA's Deputy Chairman Tariq Malik in a statement. Malik said that the registration exercise had been designed in a manner that un-distributed cards could be delivered to IDPs even after their return to their homes. They would be able to use the cards without any problem, he added.

Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal to Send Teams in Affected Areas for Rehabilitation of IDPs: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) will send a 200- member team of its workers to Swat, Malakand, Buner and other affected areas to start rehabilitation activities for the displaced persons. The team would provide financial assistance and medical facilities for IDPs while PBM has also planned to adopt orphan children to support them through education and providing residence. Managing Director PBM, Zamurrud Khan told that PBM with the support of government made optimum efforts for IDPs during their stay at various camps in NWFP. A total of Rs 500 million financial assistance was distributed among 100,000 affected families in the camps and those residing away from camps, he said. Besides the financial assistance, the PBM provided support to disabled persons of IDPs families while medical facilities and monthly meal packages were given to all of the registered families. The Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education and PBM had setup various centers at all the IDP camps with a prime objective of providing education, entertainment and vocational training to these families at camps, he added. He said the government and PBM would continue concerted relief efforts for displaced persons till they are repatriated to their homes and completely rehabilitated.

CSOs/Private Sector

Support With Working Solutions (SWWS)

SWWS in collaboration with Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) is providing milk (Nestle pack) to more than 9000 children of IDPs camp Shamnansoor. Apart from this, SWWS also providing skill training. For the purpose training centres in all three camps of swabi have been established and uptill now training to 2811 individual have been provided on different trade like Mesonary, carpentry, plumbing, electrician and tailoring. Each trainee was also provided kits and cash stipend. These courses would continue till the return of all IDPs.

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA)

Relief Goods Distributed in IDPs Camps by PTA: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) sent relief goods worth one million Rupees for IDPs of Malakand Division. The relief items were sent from the PTA Zonal Office, Peshawar. The relief goods include electric fans, air coolers, stoves, mattresses and foods items mainly flour, cooking oil, milk, rice, sugar, tea, pulses, baby food items etc. The goods were distributed in various IDPs camps located at Mardan Division. The above mentioned

items were purchased and sent to the IDPs camps after a survey by the PTA team which assessed the immediate needs of the displaced persons in the camps.

Educational Institutes

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU)

AIU Plans to Waive Displaced Students' Fees: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) Vice Chancellor Dr. Mehmood-ul-Hassan said that the varsity plans to waive off the examination fee of internally displaced students of Malakand Division. The VC said that scores of students were enrolled with the university from these areas and the all out efforts would be made to facilitate them. He said that earlier it had been decided to set up examination centres for the student of these areas at their camps to mitigate their suffering. The university staff also contributed generously for the relief of IDPs and one-day salary was also given in relief fund, he added. He said no stone would be left unturned to provide cheap education facilities to internally displaced student and the university would continue it efforts till their proper rehabilitation. The AIU is all set to expand its distance education network to provide access to maximum number of students, particularly living in the far-flung areas.