



**GCAP-PAKISTAN**  
**A Statement upon IDPs Situation**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 29, 2009**

According to the UNHCR, Pakistan is facing the worst kind of human crises of its 62 years history due to growing extremism and military operation in the northern region - Malakand Division. This is the biggest displacement in last 15 years (after Rwanda) in the world. Independent reports from GCAP-Pakistan Coalition Partners and others CSOs suggest that over 2.5 million people, mostly women and children, have been affected due to the military operation with the extremists. Many homes have been destroyed, so are the means of livelihood including shops, hotel industry, standing crops (including fruit orchards) devastated, and livestock have been left without any care. Fortunately the Swat district is among the few districts of the Province Pakhtoonkhwa which have better literacy rate including of women. Unfortunately, however a majority of the schools particularly girls' schools and other educational institutions have been bombed by the militants thus leaving less opportunity for the future generation to get education.

The government backed military operation was so quick that the natives have to leave their homes often with the clothes on their backs. Mostly people left home on foot. They have been displaced into a hostile situation, with scorching heat, poor sanitation and sickness at camps adding to the misery of those already traumatized by the conflict. Various government and independent reports entail that only 15-20% of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) are living in the government or NGOs operated tent camps. While the remaining IDPs are living either with their relatives in big or small cities or in temporary school buildings of Mardan, Swabi and other cities and districts of the province.

There are reports that collateral damage is great and on the increase due to the aerial bombardment by security forces. The army is generally using artillery on pockets from which gunfire is heard. It is also using aerial bombardment by gunship helicopters and warplanes indiscriminately in Matta, Mingora, Bunair and other troubled areas. The IDPs say that shells are regularly pounding the civilian population. They claim that air-strikes are causing increased collateral damage. However, there are no reliable official or unofficial figures available that how many Taliban militants or common people have been killed so far. The civilian casualty figures from places where fighting has raged over the past few weeks has yet to emerged but the indications are it could be large; many homes and lands have been destroyed. Reports from the media and independent sources suggest that there are comparatively more civilian losses than that of militants, and that the army is only collecting the dead bodies so as to identify them as those of Taliban. The Federal Interior Minister has claimed that over 1,100 militants have been killed during the operation but could not provide substantial evidence in support of his claim as journalists and the media are not permitted to enter the main troubled areas, even after 20 days of the operation. Therefore, there is no independent and credible information service available in the area to record the actual position of the casualties. No high profile Taliban militant has yet been killed or captured. However, many of these militants have been reported are found in the Camps with trimmed or shaved beard and haircut.

It was the responsibility of the law enforcement agencies and armed forces to protect the people from the militancy which as a matter of fact has made a state within the state by announcing their own courts, Shariah laws, slaughtering people and carrying out extra judicial killings. The Taliban and the militants were so brutal that they are hanging the bodies of the slaughtered people on roundabouts or prominent place of the cities. People including women were being lashes openly in Bazaars for 'wrong doing' such as not growing beard.

Worse is still to come. The government has imposed a curfew in the area, which has further stranded many in the curfew zones. When the curfew is imposed people rush to safer places and have to cover long distances, and many are trapped between the militants and the army. Many persons have been killed during this exodus because of the poor performance of the government. People reported that they have had to pay an exorbitant sum of money to get transportation. Many have had to travel several miles on foot as the government had not made proper arrangement for their evacuation.

It was the provincial government of the Pakhtoonkhwa that asked the people to leave the troubled areas and migrate to safer places. It is however, a sad fact that the government had not made any



proper arrangements for the IDPs. The provincial government of the Pakhtoonkhwa and the central authorities are making concerted efforts to collect funds, not only from local sources, but foreign donors as well. However, the situation in the camps is so miserable and unhygienic that there are no proper water and sanitation facilities available to the IDPs. The children and women have to run after the food distributors for their families. The Camps for the IDPs have been set in an area which is very hot for the residents of a relatively cold area so skin and stomach diseases like diarrhoea are common. There are reports that many of the children and women have been affected with Malaria. The health facilities in the camps and cities hosting the IDPs are very poor. Then there are reports of snakebites whereas proper anti-snakebite vaccines are not available in the health facilities provided in the camps for the IDPs. Therefore the military operation against militants and the inland displacement of millions of people will not provide any relief to the people as it is a halfhearted effort. In the event of there being no proper arrangements for the displaced people in the sweltering heat, there are chances of many people dying under the open skies. It is unfortunate that despite of not alleviating the travails of displaced persons, the government continues to raise aid in the name of the IDPs.

GCAP-Pakistan fully stands with these IDPs in this time of need and misery. GCAP-Pakistan believes that the issue of IDPs needs urgent, concerted and coordinated effort by all the relevant quarters of the civil society. These human beings and citizens of Pakistan are in a displaced situation not of their own choice but due to the fact that the government has failed to provide them the required protection to enable them to remain in their homes. It is the obligation of the government to treat them as citizens and ensure their every legitimate rights bestowed under the constitution of Pakistan and international covenants and conventions signed by the country. The **GCAP-Pakistan calls upon** that:

The government of Pakistan should make it national priority number one to deal with this problem. The government to come out with the exact number of civilians and militants killed in the operation, and to substantiate their claims with solid evidence and the military should, in any case, avoid collateral damage.

People have the right to seek international assistance and the international agencies, including the UN have the obligation to assist the government at this time.

Appropriate measures must be taken in the Camps and other places where IDPs have been staying. This includes proper but rapid registration process, food having standard calories, health and sanitation facilities, particularly for women and children.

Appropriate measures for the protection of women and children from societal abuses.

Government and CSOs including international humanitarian agencies should give top priority to this issue and take all steps to ensure the rights of the IDPs.

Proper monitoring and accountability systems of the efforts and funds need to ensure.

Displacement can be the beginning of a process where citizens can be made to virtually disappear within the national discourse. There are global examples of displacement leading to massive problems which virtually destroys the displaced is well known. Such a catastrophe should be avoided at all costs.

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