

# Update on IDPs

## Situation of IDPs

### **IDPs' Plight Continues Despite More Funding**

Even though the funding situation for humanitarian assistance has shown remarkable signs of improvement, woes of IDPs go unnoticed by the quarters concerned owing to mal-administration and lack of coordinated mechanism among various departments.

United Nations' data available with this correspondent shows that \$490 million, which make 72 percent of the \$680m, have been generated for reconstruction and rehabilitation of South Waziristan's IDPs. However, despite generation of funds, the absence of well-devised strategy has led to numerous loopholes in humanitarian aid process. Currently, 59,000 families comprising 430,000 individuals are residing in Dera Ismail Khan and Tank. Out of these families, only 36,787 families are verified by NADRA, and brought under registration net while 22,213 families are yet to be registered. According to the government directives, only those families would be provided Rs5,000 a month that are verified and registered. This shows that over 22,000 families are still waiting for financial assistance. Likewise, the individuals' verified number is 260,000 out of 430,000. As many as 170,000 individuals are awaiting verification to receive financial aid in the rehabilitation centres of Tank, Dera Ismail Khan and Peshawar. Apart from that, living conditions have worsened for those IDPs who have moved to Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore. As many as eighty families moved to afore-mentioned cities in November last year but none of them received any governmental aid while some of these families are being supported by the host communities.

[The Nation -- January 3, 2010]

### **Displaced Widows at Jalozai Narrate Tales of Ordeal**

Displaced from their native Swat and Bara areas required to look after small children, several widows at the Familo camp in Jalozai need urgent attention by the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Though peace has been restored in Swat, the widows and their children cannot return to their villages, as the houses where they lived were owned by landlords who now wanted those places for their own use.

During a visit to the sprawling Jalozai settlement reserved for the IDPs, one met a number of displaced Swati widows and heard their heart-rending tales of ordeal. Shahi Lal Bibi, a 50-year-old widow from Devlai village in Swat, said she was displaced along with her five teenaged children when the army ordered the villagers to leave. They first stayed in the makeshift camp in Kund Park in Nowshera and were then shifted to the Jalala camp in Mardan district. Now they are staying in the Jalozai camp, their third destination in the course of a year. "When Swat became peaceful, we were also told to go back. However, we didn't own any house in Devlai. The one in which we lived belonged to Khan Nawab, who annexed it to his own house after the military operation. Being poor and having no male adult in the family I had no option but to stay in the camp." Frail and distraught, Shahi Lal Bibi said that four of her daughters were married while four sons and a daughter were living with her in the camp. She said her 14-year-old eldest son couldn't earn enough from odd work to support her family of six persons. "Before the military action in Swat, the only source of income for my family was a cow. We lost the cow when we were displaced," she recalled. She said she missed Swat but was compelled to live in the camp due to poverty. Showing a worn-out token (VP 00051187-No.101) issued to her by the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) on June 10, 2009, Shahi Lal Bibi said she was yet to receive her computerised national identity card (CNIC). She added that the absence of CNIC was a hurdle for her in claiming rations and other benefits at the Jalozai camp. "Families in the neighbouring camp share their rations with us out of kindness to save us from starvation," she said. When asked if any of the widows were registered for the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) in Jalozai camp, her answer was in the negative. She said the militants had destroyed their life but the government must not abandon people like her before the rough and tough life at the camp devoured her impoverished family.

Another widow Badshah Izzat Bibi, resident of Koza Bandai village in Swat, had almost a similar tale of misery. Mother of six children, the 40-year-old widow said her family also didn't own any house and were living in one

provided by a landlord. She too cannot return to Swat and had no choice but to stay in the camp. "My four sons are not of working age. I have no male breadwinner. Life is tough as we are underfed. The ration given to isn't enough for the six members of my family," she explained. Living in extreme poverty and facing hardship, the widows among the IDPs were yet to receive any special treatment given to the extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs) around the world in conflict zones. Several widows residing in the camp including Sardara Bibi, Jamroza Bibi and Gul Jamala Bibi, all displaced from Bara in Khyber Agency following the military operation and two more widows from Swat asked the government to register them for the BISP.

In Jalozai's Family camp, which was detached from the main Jalozai IDPs camp by several kilometres, there is no school for the displaced children. The children belonging to various age groups were observed in the playing in the dusty wasteland of the camp instead of going to school. The teenagers in the camp also had no opportunity to learn skills to be able to earn their livelihood.

[The News -- January 5, 2010]

### **Katcha Garhi Camp Closed as IDPs Relocated**

Katcha Garhi camp for IDPs has officially been closed as remaining families were relocated to Jalozai camp in Nowshera district, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In a press release, it said some 2,070 families (14,361 individuals), willing to relocate, were provided free transportation. The process that started on December 5 was completed on December 31, 2009 and the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees facilitated it. A former Afghan refugees camp, Katcha Garhi was developed into a proper site to house thousands of displaced families fleeing conflict in Bajaur and Mohmand Agency in August 2008 with basic standards and services. As a lead agency for emergency shelter, protection and camp management, the UNHCR worked on improving conditions in camps by providing urgent shelter relief materials, household goods as well as technical support to the government camp managers. The residents of the camp were informed about the closure of the camp and the relocation option was shared through shura (community) meetings. The relocated families received all-weather tents, additional blankets and plastic sheets for warmth and in-sulation.

With the closure of Katcha Garhi camp, the number of IDPs camps comes down to 10 in NWFP with a population of more than 113,000 individuals. Jalozai camp being the largest has been divided into 15 phases and is currently hosting 96,352 individuals from Bajaur, Khyber and Mohmand regions.

[The News -- January 7, 2010]

## **IDPs Registration & Issuance of Debit Cards**

### **Debit Cards Issued for IDPs**

The National Database and Registration Authority (NDRA) has so far issued 29,598 debit cards to the IDPs of South Waziristan and Tank. Through these cards, an amount of Rs191.481 million has been disbursed among these IDPs, says a press release issued on January 15. Of the 59,019 applications received from the IDPs of South Waziristan, 38,524 families were declared eligible and the data was shared with NGOs for providing food and non-food assistance and preparing their debit cards, Deputy Chairman of NADRA Tariq Malik said. So far, NADRA has issued 22,594 cards to the IDPs. Besides, the authority issued 7,004 debit cards from its Tank site.

[Dawn -- January 16, 2010]

### **Plea for Completing IDPs Registration**

The registration process due to its many complexities has been a tedious one, and while IDPs camp administrators claim otherwise, there have been many cases in which people were either not registered or they fell prey to the loopholes in the system. According to Khalid Aziz, Chairman of the Regional Institute of Policy Research and Training (RIPORT), of the three million people who were displaced, roughly 25 percent remain unregistered. Women, he says, were the worst affected. This was because in most cases it was either the husband or the father, who would put down the details of the family on his form and in the event of his death or disappearance, there would be never-ending transition process — especially the paper work — for the new head of the family to take charge. The delay would keep a number of women from getting the aid due to them. Single women especially faced several problems. Naseem Akhtar, a mother of four, lost all hope of receiving any aid after she returned empty-handed several times from the registration point at Sang-i-Marmar, Mardan, before she came to Karachi to try her luck. Many failed to acquire 'Yellow forms', the document that would form the basis of the registration process which after being filled-out was to be submitted to the Social Security Office so that details of displaced individuals

could be computerised. This blocked access to the 'Green Card' that was imperative to acquire ration at various food points and the ATM cards through which each displaced family would receive the promised Rs25,000 to aid them with the repatriation process.

According to sources, almost 800 camp residents at Shah Masoor Camp in Swabi failed to acquire Yellow forms, which was the main reason for their diffidence to return. Most IDPs allege that they were cheated since promises of them receiving cash cards after reaching Swat, remain unfulfilled even after several months. But can the government solely be blamed for this?

27-year-old Subhan Ali, from Kanju in Swat district disagrees and says that late evacuations contributed largely to hiccups in the registration process. He asserts that by the time some evacuees reached Mardan, all registrations were closed. However, he stresses that close monitoring of the process would have made it more transparent thereby leaving no room for corruption that has had a negative impact on the psyche of the IDPs whose sustenance depended on it. This has led to feelings of alienation which if left untended could cost the region its peace once again. Ali, although registered, could not get aid because he shared the number of his father's family. This was due to the reason that when his father registered, Ali was listed on the form. This has kept him from acquiring an ATM card although he has his own family. His brother faces the same ordeal. An average family in Swat consists of 7-8 members, and if the family has married sons, this adds to the burden, since all are dependent on a single cash card worth a mere Rs25,000. A frequent visitor to the Nadra office in Saidu Sharif, Ali, despite submitting his wife's identity card and their Nikahnama in August, still awaits a decision.

With no concrete reconstruction and re-compensation policies in place and no access to the aid they were promised, the situation has further disorientated the people, who in many cases after a lifetime of toil had constructed an abode for themselves, which were destroyed as a result of the military operation in the region. Resuming registrations and sorting out pending cases, according to Mr Aziz, would not only strengthen the confidence level of the people of the region, but would also reinforce the security situation there. This would give the government complete record of residents, which would make it easier to identify outside elements. This is all the more imperative in view of the volatility that the region experiences due to its proximity to areas in which the military operation continues.

[Dawn -- January 4, 2010]

## Support to IDPs & Affectees

### Danish Govt to Give \$28m for IDPs

Denmark's Minister for Development and International Relations Ms Ulla Tarnaes on January 12 visited Jalozaï camp where she announced \$28 million assistance for the displaced people and appreciated the efforts of the Pakistan government in the 'war on terror.' Accompanied by the Director General, Special Services Group, Lt Gen Nadeem Ahmad and 24-member delegation, she visited health facilities, schools and the outlets of various non-governmental organisations busy in providing different relief facilities to the displaced people of various tribal regions. The Danish Minister also visited a tented village, spoke to the displaced people and listened to them. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said she had come herself to convey to the people of Pakistan that Danish people and government would extend all-out support to the government and people of Pakistan in this hour of trial. She said that reconstruction and rehabilitation of displaced people in tribal region and Malakand division was a big challenge for Pakistan. "The Danish government is also assisting World Bank and United Nations in helping the displaced people," Ms Tarnaes said, adding that she is here to assess the difficulties and hardships of uprooted people.

Ms Ulla Tarnaes also visited Swat and was given a briefing on the military operation in the area at Circuit House Saidu Sharif. While talking to media here, she said the government should focus on the education of the children affected by the militancy. She said the Danish government would continue cooperation with the Pakistani authorities in rebuilding education institutions in the militancy-hit areas of Swat district.

[The News -- -- January 13, 2010]

### **PRCS Announces Relief for 50,000 Swat Families**

Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) announced food packages for 50,000 families and educational support for 15,000 female students in the militancy-hit Swat district of NWFP. The PRCS Vice President, Senator Nilofar Bakhtayar, made the announcement in a public gathering at Kanju Township some 15 kms from here. The PRCS secretary, Muhammad Ilyas, Chairman PRCS, NWFP, Dr Sher Muhammad, Dr Muhibullah Khan and a large number of local notables attended the gathering. The significant aspect of the event was that a large number of mothers and female students also attended the meeting.

[Daily Times -- January 11, 2010]

### **SRSP Rebuilds Seven Schools in Swat**

Working with communities and the Education Department, the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) has rebuilt seven government schools in affected parts of Swat in just 45 days, using a combination of wood, corrugated sheets and insulated material. The buildings constructed near the rubble of the destroyed structures are an excellent contrast and a heartening sight.

[The News -- January 11, 2010]