

Update on IDPs

NWFP Lawmakers Seek IDPs' Status for Orakzai, Kurram refugees

The NWFP lawmakers called upon the Federal Government to give the IDP status to affected families from Orakzai and Kurram Agencies. It has also been demanded to declare the same for affected families from the Jani Khel area of district Bannu. The Frontier session was held with Speaker Kiramat Ullah Khan in the chair. Through a call of attention notice moved by ANP MPA Saqib Ullah Khan Chamkani, it was stated that a large number of people left the Kurram Agency due to sectarian violence. He said that such families were currently living in pitiful conditions in Peshawar, Kohat and other parts of the NWFP. Another lawmaker, Adnan Wazir from Bannu said that hundreds of families from Jnai Khel had fled their homes when a massive military operation was launched in the area against the militants on July 7, 2009. He said Jani Khel tribal area is under the jurisdiction of the provincial government which has a responsibility towards refugees. On the occasion, NWFP Senior Minister, Bashir Ahmad Bilour assured the House that the NWFP Government would take the issue up with the Federal Government and the Provincial Government would try its best to assist the affected families.

[The Nation – March 10, 2010]

Malakand Farmers Seek Loan Waiver

The farmers staged a protest demonstration to demand implementation of Prime Minister's directives about writing off agricultural loans in Malakand division. Led by Kisan Mazdoor Tehrik, Dir chapter, President Altaf Hussain, the protesters chanted slogans against the attitude of the management of Agriculture Development Bank of Pakistan (ADBP) Onezai branch. Later, addressing a press conference, Altaf Hussain said the farmers of Malakand division had suffered huge financial losses during the military operation. He said the prime minister during his visit to the area on May 28 last had announced writing off loans of the farmers in militancy-hit areas. "Despite the prime minister's announcement, the ADBP Onezai branch had been serving notices on the farmers for payment of outstanding amounts," he lamented. The farmers warned of launching a protest movement if their demands were not met. Large number of growers including Muhammad Saleem, Syed Ajab Khan, Jehangir Khan, Muhammad Zeb, Zahir Khan and Hakim were present on the occasion.

[The News – March 13, 2010]

Over 75,000 Tribesmen Displaced from Orakzai

Thousands of tribesmen, living in different areas of Orakzai Agency, have vacated their houses and migrated to safer places in Kohat and Hangu districts and Khyber Agency owing to the ongoing military operation against militants in the region. According to rough estimates so far over 75,000 tribesmen have vacated their houses in Anjai, Ferozkhel, Wuch Pul, Khani Kallay, Dara Gharhi, Toor Khwri, Gonain, Sam, Sheraz Garhi, Spin Garh, Dhand Garhi, Karman, Manyari, Sturikhel and Mairo Cub areas of Orakzai. "More than 62,540 displaced persons from Orakzai have been registered in Hangu and Kohat," said Nazir Gul, in-charge of the District Disaster Management. He said hundreds more people were coming from the region daily and the process of registration was continued. The displaced tribesmen said that through out the province only one relief camp was set up in Mohammad Khwaja area of district Hangu for them. About 611 families consisting of 3,571 individuals have been provided shelter in the said camp. Mr Gul said they had no more room for hundreds of fresh displaced families in Khwaja camp. "The provincial government has been requested and soon another camp will be set up in Hangu to accommodate the fresh IDPs," he added. Shazia Khattak of Social Welfare Department said that a registration point had been set up at Jerma area of Kohat district for Orakzai IDPs. She said that there is no relief camp for displaced persons in Kohat. She said so far 22,000 IDPs had been registered in Jerma but hundreds of families were coming daily for registration. Syed Mubasher Hussain, an official of a relief organization, said that they registered over 1.3 million IDPs from tribal areas out of which about 93,000 were from Orakzai Agency.

Shah Mohammad, an IDP from Lower Orakzai, said most of the displaced families reached Hangu after walking for 15 hours on foot. He said that vehicles were not available for Kohat and Hangu. Malak Dilawar Khan, another tribesman, said that their area Anjni had been turned into a ghost town. The starved children were looking for food, which was not available at the shops. All the markets and shops were closed or destroyed, he said. Mohammad Ghafoor from Meroyan said that strikes by jettifighters and retaliatory attacks by Taliban had sparked panic and fear among the residents. Civilians were the ultimate sufferers of the ongoing clashes.

[Dawn – April 1, 2010]

IDPs from Kurram, Orakzai to be Registered from April 5

Issues concerning the IDPs in the NWFP were discussed in a meeting and decisions were taken to facilitate the affected people. A statement said the operational coordination meeting of humanitarian actors was held at the office of Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) with Director Relief and Donors Coordination Adnan Zafar in the chair. The meeting took stock of issues relating to internally displaced persons (IDPs), their registration and ration distribution. Representatives of PDMA, Special Support Group, United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees, World Food Programme, ICRC, IOM, and UNOCHA attended the meeting. It was decided in the meeting that displaced people from Orakzai and Kurram agencies who were currently residing with host families in Peshawar should be registered in Peshawar instead of Kohat or Hangu. All uprooted persons from the two troubled tribal agencies are being registered in Kohat and Hangu and camp has also been established for the IDPs in Hangu. It was decided that the registration of the uprooted persons living in the provincial metropolis would commence from Monday April 5 at Deaf & Dumb School on Pajjaggi Road in Peshawar. It was also decided in the meeting that food items should be provided to the registered IDPs from Waziristan Agency. The PDMA had received an application from IDPs from Waziristan a few days back requesting the provision of food items to them in Peshawar. They were residing in Dera Ismail Khan and Tank and getting ration from World Food Programme and other relief over there. The participants were informed that another registration point and a food distribution hub would be operational in a day or two at Sherkot in Kohat for the IDPs from Orakzai and Kurram agencies. Moreover, the number of registration counters at Jharma registration point has been increased and separate counters established for females.

[The News – March 31, 2010]

Bajaur IDPs Demand Essential Commodities

The IDPs of the Bajaur Agency living in different camps set up in the Dir Lower demanded of the higher authorities and agencies concerned to provide them best quality of food and other essential commodities as they had been living in severe weather condition for the last few months. Elders of the IDPs at Walai Camp complained that they had been ignored even by their elected representatives as none of the three lawmakers from their area, MNAs Shaukatullah, Syed Akhuzada Chattan and Senator Rasheed bothered to visit the Bajaur IDPs camp. They said that the situation could further worsen if timely facilities were not provided to them. In Lower Dir district, at least 5,000 families have been shifted from the violence-hit Bajaur agency and have been living in miserable conditions. On February 15, two to three feet snow has been recorded while it had been raining frequently since then, making their life even more miserable in relief camps. Children and women are facing enormous difficulties. It is unfortunate that the Bajaur IDPs were living in severe conditions but no elected representative from Bajaur Agency visited the IDPs camps.

[The Nation – March 4, 2010]

Japan to Give \$9m to WFP for IDPs

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a contribution of \$9 million from the Government of Japan which will enable it to continue assistance to the IDPs of the NWFP. The donation will help the WFP procure 12,000 tons food produced and processed in Pakistan. The Japanese contribution is believed to benefit 1.6 million people. Insufficient funding threatens to compromise WFP's ability to implement its assistance plans. The UN agency still needs \$78 million to continue its programme until the end of 2010, and faces commodity shortfall from next month, said a WFP announcement on March 30. WFP's assistance will help address the recovery challenges in volatile areas that share border with Afghanistan. Over the past 10 months WFP has been providing life-saving food rations for up to 2.7 million displaced people. Coming at a time when additional funding is urgently needed, the Japanese donation will allow WFP to start providing early recovery support, as people return to their homes amid widespread damage and few options for meeting their food needs. Welcoming the Japanese donation, the WFP representative in Pakistan, Wolfgang Herbinger, said they were grateful for the generous and very timely donation.

[Dawn – March 31, 2010]