

DISASTER & IDP CRISIS

Situation of IDPs

Operation in Kurram: Thousands Flee On Whatever They Can Find

The operation has been launched to clear the area of terrorists involved in kidnapping and killing of local people, suicide attacks and blocking the road that connects Lower Kurram with Upper Kurram. Civilians were forced to flee conflict-hit areas along the tribal belt made up of seven agencies along the Pak-Afghan border after the operation began on July 3. There is likely to be a displacement of at least 4,000 families and possibly double that number due to this latest fighting. Already 1,000 families – around 7,000 individuals – had been displaced since the operation started. Aid agencies said they were preparing to help the newly displaced. Aid is working closely with the DMA in FATA and government authorities there, as they are not on the ground in Kurram. People displaced from Kurram were being accommodated at Durrani Camp, a former Afghan refugee camp, in Sadda town in Lower Kurram. Following a request from the DMA, the UNHCR has so far provided 700 tents and other non-food items for those displaced in Kurram. According to the DMA, 250 families have reached the camp, while others have moved in with relatives in various parts of Kurram or Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The fresh displacements add to the 34,785 already displaced from Kurram, according to official statistics. The situation in Kurram is looking grim. Other NGOs cite lack of access to conflict-hit areas as a key problem, preventing them from helping people. This means that most welfare activities are being carried out, for now, by local authorities. Local administration has arranged food and non-food items for the displaced. There is real fear in Kurram, because the road linking the agency to Peshawar has been closed for many months due to fighting, it is not easy to leave. People feel trapped, and therefore even more scared.

[The Express Tribune - July 07, 2011]

85,000 Displaced People in Kurram Have ‘No’ Roof Over Their Heads

The number of people displaced from Kurram Agency due to the ongoing military operation has risen to 85,000. To add salt to their woes, many families are finding it hard to find shelter. The displaced families complain they are being ignored by authorities. No one is really helping them. Authorities need tents, food, non-food items, health and washing facilities for IDPs. In the meantime, problems are mounting as more people flee. The district authorities in Hangu have been directed to house IDPs at the Togh Serai camp there. At New Durrani, there is a former camp for Afghan refugees; now it is being used for the IDPs. According to the UNHCR, 700 families (4,900 individuals) have sought refuge at the New Durrani camp, while 8,000 additional families (56,000 individuals) had been registered by local authorities. There is an urgent need to improve infrastructure with proper layout of tents, construction of latrines, washrooms and kitchens, and to conduct a verifiable electronic registration process. IDPs do not like to live in camps. They see this as a loss to dignity and privacy, especially for women and therefore prefer to either rent or move in with relatives. That makes it harder in many ways to deliver assistance to them. According to the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Pakistan currently has 500,000 IDPs, but displacement from Kurram is adding to that number.

[The Express Tribune - July 20, 2011]

Protest against Hunger: With Food Supplies Suspended, IDPs Starving

A protest was held by IDPs residing in Jalozai Camp against the camp administration. The protesters, who belong to the Bara subdivision of Khyber Agency, came all the way to Peshawar in the scorching heat, where they protested. They chanted slogans against the authorities for discontinuing their rations, and demanded a change in the administration. A representative for the IDPs told that the refugees had not received rations for the past four months, and were now facing starvation. Their tents have worn out due to which they cannot protect themselves from the rain or the heat. The camp is in awful condition and the authorities have turned a blind eye towards their issues. IDPs accused Camp Administrator and other officials, of torturing the IDPs and demanded that the authorities remove them from their posts. IDPs had been living in Jalozai for the past two years and had been receiving food stipends during this time. However, for the past four months, they had not received any ration, due to which they were facing serious problems. Rations for refugees in Bajaur and Mohmand were stopped because the government felt that 'peace has been restored there'. However, that was not the case in Bara, where a curfew is still in force. The authorities have not announced any date for refugees' return. They cannot go back to their homes and are not being given any food either. The authorities announced that they would cut food rations to IDPs in April, citing discontinuation of supplies from international agencies. Jalozai Camp is the largest refugee camp in the country, and has provided shelter to most of the IDPs during the ongoing operations. According to official figures, at least 4,678 families, or 20,669 refugees from Khyber Agency are still residing in the camp.

[The Express Tribune - July 12, 2011]

Relief & Rehabilitation Responses

UN Assistance Sought For People Displaced By Kurram Operation

According to sources, security forces did not face any resistance and cleared three areas, Manato, Domeki and Gawaki, of militants. The operation is named Koh-i-Sofaid after the famous mountain range (White Mountain). An FDMA official told that the authority had requested the World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund to provide emergency medical kits and other facilities for displaced families, but so far it had received no response. The federal government was yet to send relief goods. The FDMA said on its website that 6,000 to 8,000 families would be displaced by the operation. The provincial government is providing some relief to people who are arriving at a newly-established camp. Currently, the FDMA and political administration are coping with the situation well, but resources will be exhausted soon. It is learnt that thousands of people, including women and children, have arrived in Sadda. They left all their belongings in their homes and are in need of immediate assistance. The FDMA official said the authority had sent 500 tents and 200 non-food items to the Durrani camp in Lower Kurram. The UNHCR also has provided 500 tents. So far 338 displaced families have been registered at the camp. About 250 families had gone to a camp while the rest were seeking shelter with relatives.

[Dawn - July 5, 2011]

25 Flood-Hit Women Given Sewing Machines

Sewing machines were distributed among 25 flood-hit women after completion of six-month long embroidery course. The training was held at the Govt Vocational Institute for Women in Nowshera

Kalan in collaboration with the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP). Certificates were also awarded to the trainees. Speaking on the occasion, SRSP District Programme Manager Ijaz Khan said the women would now support their respective families by contributing to the family income. He said there was a great demand for the hand-made items which were being sold at reasonable prices in the market. He said the programme would continue in the future to address the issue of poverty at the grassroots level.

[The News – July 11, 2011]

70 Militants De-Radicalized, Sent To Homes in Swat

At least 70 people held by security forces in Swat over suspicion of supporting militants were sent to homes after de-radicalization. A ceremony in this regard was held at Mashal Centre in Swat. The de-radicalization initiative comprises three programmes, including Sabawoon for juveniles, Mashal for elder detainees and Sparlay for family members of detained people. A statement said more than 400 individuals have been reintegrated so far and are leading normal life in the society. The de-radicalization at these facilities has been divided into four main modules including the educational module comprising formal education, especially for juveniles, to enable them to continue their education. Then there is the psychological module that includes psychological counseling and therapy for developing independent thinking and logic.

[The News – July 12, 2011]

\$700,000 Grant for Flood Relief Programme

The PepsiCo Foundation provided a \$700,000 grant to the American Pakistan Foundation (APF) to develop and execute a yearlong flood recovery and rehabilitation programme for the most devastated regions of Pakistan. The grant is part of a broader PepsiCo Foundation commitment to disaster-relief in Pakistan that has so far totalled \$1 million. PepsiCo Foundation's grant has supported and enabled the APF to work with non-government organisations in Pakistan to leverage their expertise in addressing some of the country's most significant recovery challenges after last year's torrential rains and mass flooding. These efforts have focused on improving the infrastructure of damaged schools, supporting livelihoods through livestock programs, and building water and irrigation micro-infrastructure.

PepsiCo Foundation, the American Pakistan Foundation and all of the humanitarian agencies involved, are working closely together to build programmes that are helpful, impact and sustainable over the long-term, he said.

[The News - July 22, 2011]

2010 Flood Aftermath & 2011 Preparedness

One Year Later: Pakistan's Post-Flood Blues

Nearly one year after devastating floods swamped vast tracts of land across Pakistan, affecting over 20 million people, many survivors are still struggling to rebuild their lives as this year's monsoon season is about to start. The first monsoon rains of 2011 have started falling, according to the Meteorological Office, and this is raising anxiety. People have good reason to be afraid. Some days

before flash floods killed seven people in the South Waziristan after heavy downpours led to houses collapsing. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) had worked out a contingency plan to tackle any new flood emergency. NDMA is following two plans for floods, including a plan for a worst-case scenario under which a maximum of six million people can be affected, and a likely scenario under which 2.2 million people can be probable victims. But many remain skeptical. Locals in Lahore told that rehabilitation of the affected areas has started, but most areas are still without basic infrastructure. Similarly, the Watan Card scheme that the government started, to support those affected, has not helped many people, especially widows who were unable to get any money because they did not fulfill the “head of the family” requirement. Oxfam country director Neva Khan said that people want jobs. They are not looking for handouts. They want to work their way out of poverty and rebuild a better life than before. They are calling for food they can afford, health care when they are sick, and somewhere to live – the most basic of basics.

Families affected by the floods continue to need support to rebuild their livelihoods. The 2011 monsoon is about to start and up to two million people are again at risk from flooding, partly due to lack of funds for reconstruction. Major efforts are needed immediately to reduce the vulnerability of these families and implement urgent recovery and flood preparedness work on river banks, irrigation channels and other infrastructure. The [2010] flood had a severe impact on people’s homes, livelihoods and assets. Most people do not know when they would be able to resume their livelihoods. The floods wiped out about 2 per cent of Pakistan’s annual growth rate and “inflicted a massive damage” of US\$10 billion on the economic infrastructure. The areas affected by floods were consistently lagging behind in terms of socio-economic and educational indicators as compared to the areas unaffected by the floods. The loss to infrastructure and livelihood sources will push them behind further. The people most severely affected were predominantly small farmers and unskilled laborers. At least 1,200 people died in the floods, the world’s second worst in 10 years. More than \$600 million is still needed to support early recovery activities including rehabilitating water wells, refurbishing the primary health care system and rebuilding schools.

[The Express Tribune - July 14, 2011]

Monsoon Preparations: 28 Areas at High Risk of Flooding

CDA carried out a detailed survey of the city to identify vulnerable points during the monsoon season. The survey identified 28 flood-vulnerable locations; residents of Katchi Abadis in G-7/ 1, G-7/2, G-7/3, G-8/ 1, F-7/ 4 and F-6 have been warned through public notices to move, failing which, the CDA will demolish all these structures and the residents will be responsible for any risk involved. On the direction of the CDA chairperson, arrangements have been made to monitor the water level at Simly Dam on a daily basis and a monitoring camp has been set up upriver to provide early warnings in case of a flood risk. The same information will be shared with Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration and media. CDA Chairperson Imtiaz Inyat Elahi went to different parts of the federal capital to inspect arrangements made under the Flood Relief Cell (FRC) of the authority and later chaired a review meeting at CDA Headquarters. Elahi directed the concerned departments to take immediate steps to improve the situation at the 28 vulnerable points identified in the survey. During the meeting, Elahi was apprised that a public notice has also been published to inform the general public to remove all illegal sewerage and drainage connections in streets or streams immediately. These illegal connections present a high risk of backflow during the monsoon season. People have also been warned to strictly follow rules and regulations and connect sewerage and drainage lines of their houses and buildings with the main lines. Elahi ordered the concerned departments to expedite the process of cleaning streams to allow the smooth flow of rainwater and avoid any untoward incident. He said that early monsoon rains have given the CDA a chance to have

a real test of the preparations made for the rainy season. The CDA has established a flood relief cell at the Directorate of Emergency and Disaster Management, Fire Headquarters, situated in G-7/ 1, he said. All concerned directorates, including the directorates of Maintenance, Environment, Enforcement, Municipal Administration, Planning, E&M Maintenance, Directorate of Machinery Pool Organization and Capital Hospital are part of the relief services. The flood relief cell functions round-the-clock, and is equipped with the latest relief devices, including 20 dewatering pumps of various sizes, vehicles including pickups, shovels, front-end loaders and dumpers.

[The Express Tribune - July 04, 2011]

Federal Flood Commission: Preparedness to Fight Floods Reviewed

While presiding over the pre-flood inter-provincial meeting of the Federal Flood Commission, the minister also directed the provinces to adopt all pre-emptive measures recommended by the commission in order to avert possible damages in case of heavy rains and subsequent flooding, according to a press release. The meeting was held to review the progress on the restoration work, flood bunds and to check the status of the provinces as well as the federation in terms of preparations for the upcoming monsoon season. A progress report on the restoration work and mid-term flood schemes was submitted, and the commission was directed to monitor the rehabilitation activities of the provinces. They were also asked to mobilize all resources to repair infrastructure, streamline procedures and work on war-footing to ensure safety if faced with the same disaster that Pakistan was hit with last year. The minister said that he would himself visit all the four provinces to review the restoration and reconstruction work by the provinces. The Met Office is asked to ensure a timely weather forecast. Timely and correct flood forecast will certainly help in managing flood situation. Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan have almost completed immediate and mid-term restoration work. All four provinces ensured that the remaining work will be finished soon. The flood damages to irrigation, drainage and flood protection infrastructure as assessed by ADB & World Bank and their reconstruction/rehabilitation cost is around Rs. 83 billion.

[The Express Tribune - July 01, 2011]

Pre-Flood Warnings: Four Bunds Could Develop Breaches

The Qadirpur Loop Bund, Raunti Bund, Gemro Bund and Lundi-Miranpur (LM) Bund are in danger of breaking when the water levels rise during the monsoon. Repairs and strengthening work on these bunds is continuing, and hopefully that everything will be all right. The government says that 90% of the work has been completed. According to what was planned, all the bunds were to be raised six feet, but the Qadirpur loop bund has been raised to only four to five feet along its length. The embankments of other bunds have been earthed but they have yet to be stone pitched. During the floods last year, the Ghotki feeder had developed four breaches at its right side, from RD-35 onwards. The gushing water had entered Reni canal, which was under construction, and had developed breaches in several places. Although all the breaches that occurred in the Ghotki feeder and Reni canal have been repaired, the work is not satisfactory. Last year, the Qadirpur loop bund was overflowing and the situation remained precarious for days. It needs to be fortified to protect Ghotki and other cities of upper Sindh from flooding. This bund already remains under tremendous pressure because of the OGDCL bund constructed right in the middle of the river. All the bunds are being raised six feet and there is no compromise. OGDCL bund was constructed in 1996 with the approval of Indus River Commission. It was constructed to save vital installations from flooding.

SIDA is not authorized to demolish this bund because it is a matter between the OGDCL and government of Sindh. It will be demolished if the provincial government issues orders. However, satisfied with the repair work of bunds, director SIDA was optimistic that everything will be fine.

[The Express Tribune – July 09, 2011]

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