
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS - IDPs

Remaining IDPs of Tirah Claim Administration Delaying Repatriation

Internally displaced persons (IDP) from Tirah Valley protested against the FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA) and political administration (PA) for using “delaying tactics” in their repatriation. Demonstrating opposite the Cantonment Railway Station in the city, protesters held placards and chanted slogans against FDMA for failing to register them with other IDPs in time for repatriation. They demanded the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) governor ensure their registration as soon as possible so they are able to avail relief packages and begin their trek back home. “Efforts are required on an emergency basis to re-settle the IDPs,” said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Khyber Agency President Iqbal Afridi, who was leading the protesters. “The FDMA and PA are delaying the return of IDPs by not registering them on time.” The authorities recently announced peace has been restored in Tirah Valley and all the IDPs residing in different camps across K-P would soon be repatriated.

A relief package of Rs. 25,000 along with transport fee and packets of non-food items were promised for each family. The IDPs were also assured they will be provided ration for six months upon their return. Afridi said they are not from any particular camp but live in rented houses. “More than 0.2 million people left the valley due to the operation,” he said, adding they then settled in various parts of the province. The FDMA, however, estimated 13,900 families were left homeless. “We are not used to scorching heat; our children are now suffering from various diseases at the camps,” Afridi complained, adding thousands of people go to Jarma camp for registration every day, but return back as the authorities are unable to manage the huge number of displaced people and provide them compensation.

The Long Route Home

On March 16, 2013, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants from Swat district, Mohmand, Bajaur, Khyber, Orakzai and South Waziristan agencies infiltrated the strategic Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency and drove away the local populace. After several days of bloody clashes, the valley fell to the Taliban on March 21, 2013. Hundreds of thousands of people subsequently left the valley and were accommodated in Jarma Camp, Durrani Camp in Kurram Agency and Jaloza Camp in Nowshera. In August, security forces launched an operation against the TTP and on September 4, 2013 claimed to have regained control from the militants. Following this, displaced tribesmen living in camps began demanding the government to repatriate them. However, the decision remained in limbo due to lack of funds.

Where the Heart Is

The first phase of the repatriation process took place in October last year, when 6,200 families were repatriated to their respective areas. In early March this year, the federal government released Rs100 million to be distributed among 12,000 registered displaced families from Tirah to expedite the repatriation process. In the second phase, which ended on May 31, 1,110 families from Jarma camp and 3,580 families from Durrani camp, Kurram Agency, were sent back.

The Express Tribune - June 10, 2014

Fleeing Tribesmen Consider Afghanistan Safer

Over 6,000 people from Ahmadzai Wazir and other clans have taken refuge in Afghanistan’s Khost province in the aftermath of the recent targeted military action, suggesting the North

Waziristan tribesmen consider the neighboring country safer than their own. "Keeping in view the long stay and plight of thousands of internally displaced persons of Fata in and off relief camps, I have made my mind to take my family to Afghanistan instead of keeping them in grimy tents in the adjacent Bannu district," said a tribal elder from Miramshah. Several families have already crossed over to Afghanistan due to uncertainty. Afghan official says 6,642 reach Khost from N Waziristan, ready to welcome more. Displaced people from other tribal agencies, including South Waziristan, Orakzai, Kurram and Khyber, have been living in awful conditions in and off camps for seven years.

Over 160,000 displaced families from Fata have been registered in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Taliban shura headed by Hafiz Gul Bahadur has already asked the local residents to move to areas close to Afghan border instead of proceeding to relief camps in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. When contacted, an official of the Afghan government confirmed the arrival of 6,642 people, including 1,492 children from North Waziristan Agency in Khost province, where, he said, basic facilities have been provided to them. He said the families had crossed over to Khost since the fighting between Pakistani security forces and the Taliban began. "The provincial government has provided land for the refugees in Gurbaz, Nadirshah Kot, Mandozai and Esmail Khail districts of Khost, while a site has also been reserved for them in the provincial capital," said Mubariz Zadran, spokesman for the Khost governor.

Talking over the telephone from Khost, he said on the directives of Afghan health ministry, polio vaccination programme had been started for Pakistani tribesmen. The Taliban have placed a ban on polio vaccination in North and South Waziristan agencies since 2012. Officials of the federal state and frontier region ministry dismissed reports about the movement of people of North Waziristan to Afghanistan for taking shelter. An official, however, said there was no fencing on the border, so the North Waziristan residents, who had properties in Afghanistan, could go back and forth. "This is a normal movement. Nomad families, especially those Fleeing tribesmen consider Afghanistan safer from Saidgi, Gurbaz and Sherkhel tribes, regularly go to Afghanistan and come back," he said, adding that the cross-border movement of the tribal people could not be restricted under the Right of Easement. "Many families have properties across the border, so they regularly go to Afghanistan without restriction," he said, adding that the Afghan government might exploit the issue.

The Right of Easement is a unique provision in the Durand Line Agreement between the British India and the then Afghan rulers under which the divided tribes on both sides of the border are allowed to carry out cross-border movement without restriction or formality. The security forces have blocked the Miramshah-Ghulam Khan Road to stop the people from going to Afghanistan. However, families are reportedly using the unfrequented routes to cross the border. There is no management of the Pak-Afghan border and apart from the Right of Easement; the people can cross over easily. Maulana Sufi Mohammad of Tehreek Nifaz-i-Shariat Mohammadi had led thousands of people from Malakand division and the adjoining tribal areas to Afghanistan to join the Taliban's fight against local warlords before the US attack in 2001. As a result, hundreds of people were either killed, imprisoned or went missing in Afghanistan.

However, Mubariz Zadran dispelled the impression that only nomad families, who had houses in Khost, had taken shelter in Afghanistan. "This is not true. Over 361 families, who came from Mirali, Miramshah and other parts of North Waziristan, have no properties in Khost, have arrived here. We've properly registered them all," he said. The spokesman for the Khost governor said the Afghan government had been fulfilling basic needs of refugees and was ready to facilitate more dislocated people from North Waziristan. "The Afghan government is offering refuge to the people of Waziristan only on humanitarian grounds and they can go back to their homes anytime," he said. The officials said the Afghan government had also requested the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations in Kabul to provide relief assistance to the new refugees. "The UN agencies have accepted the request in principle," said Mubariz Zadran.

Dawn - June 13, 2014

23 Terrorists Killed, More Than 70,000 IDPs Out of NWA

At least 23 militants were reported dead in the ongoing aerial strikes and ground action of security forces in the North Waziristan Agency (NWA) as two defense services chiefs held a crucial meeting to review operational progress on the operation Zarb-e-Azb. The security forces and political administration in the NWA continued to relax the curfew hours in the NWA on the second consecutive day as part of three-day relaxation given to the civilian population to allow maximum evacuation of the locals to alternate areas. Moreover, according to fresh update issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), 15 terrorists were killed in Zartatangi mountain heights, East of Miranshah, by the Army gunship Cobra helicopters last night (Wednesday) when spotted. "It was one of the main communication centres of terrorists," the ISPR said.

In a separate sniper action, the ISPR said, eight Uzbeks were killed around Miranshah while planting IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) on Miranshah-Mir Ali Road. "Cordoning off in areas housing terrorists in North Waziristan Agency continues. Continuous attempt of terrorists to flee from area have been foiled," the update said. Evacuation of civil population from Miranshah and Ghulam Khan started, it added. Checkpoints have been established at various places where IDPs are being provided all administrative support including food items and medicine by security forces. The number of registration points at Saidgai Post are enhanced to 20, 10 each for males and females for speedy and organized evacuation and an IDP camp at Bannu has been established, the ISPR stated in its update.

In a linked development, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif visited Air Headquarters to meet with Air Chief Marshal Tahir Rafique Butt. Progress on the ongoing operation Zarb-e-Azb was reviewed and matters of mutual interest were discussed, a brief military statement said. Meanwhile, talking to Daily Times, NWA Political Agent Siraj Ahmad Khan said that more than 70,000 IDPs were out of the agency now. "We have made adequate arrangements to facilitate their stay in Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Kohat, Lakki Marwat and other parts where IDPs camps are established." Khan said that the three-day curfew relaxation would end today (Friday) and the government was not stopping IDPs from staying with their relatives or friends if they wanted to. To a query, the political agent said: "A majority of civilians is out of the NWA and noose is tightened around the militants who would be taken on very soon." He said the militants encircled in Miranshah and Mir Ali would not have any option but to surrender to security forces once their ration and food stocks get exhausted. He refused to share any more details on the NWA operation citing operational secrecy and sensitivity involving the matter.

Daily Times – June 20, 2014

Security Plans: Government Yet To Implement Border Checks As IDPs Arrive

Wajid Mehsud, 27, did not have to go through any strict security measures as he made his way from his hometown in North Waziristan all the way to Karachi. "I only noticed that they [border security forces] were allowing the IDPs in by looking at their national identity cards," he said. "But they did not ask us where we are going or where we will stay." Wajid reached the city by road a few days ago and has been staying, along with his family, at his relative's house in one of Pashtun-dominated neighborhoods of district west. The military action launched in North Waziristan has resulted in the displacement of a large number of people from the tribal area. According to unofficial records, around 90,000 IDPs have moved to various parts of the country, including Karachi, in the past two months. Most of them started moving even before the operation was formally announced. According to the newcomers, only those 'who look like Taliban' are strictly questioned. "All the way from Waziristan via Bannu, DI Khan, DG Khan and

rural Sindh to Karachi, the officials at the check posts were only checking those people whose getup was like that of militants or the ones without families,” said another IDP Abdullah Mehsud. “Their baggage was also being checked.”

Monitoring ‘Sensitive’ Areas

The intelligence agencies, the police and Rangers have started close monitoring of the areas declared ‘highly sensitive’ in the city. Most of these areas fall in districts West and East. “The main issue is that the people living in these neighborhoods are not ready to cooperate with the law enforcers,” said district West police chief DIG Captain (retd) Tahir Naveed. He was talking about the lack of cooperation by the residents to gain information on the presence of militants. “It is too hard for us to recognize who is innocent or who is a terrorist as all of them belong to the same ethnicity.” “In these areas, you will find the operatives of different Taliban groups including Waliur Rehman, Hakeemullah and Fazalullah,” explained a senior Crime Investigation Department officer. “In the past, the clashes between the operatives of these militant groups over turf and fundraising also erupted but now they have joined hands to give a stronger resistance.” Naveed told that the militants have also done their homework to respond to the military operation by carrying out terrorist activities in the cities. “If the situation goes out of control, the army will be there to help us out,” he assured, adding that the police are also on alert and are using modern equipment to avert any kind of terrorist activity.

Biometric Checks

According to Rangers officials, they are checking the people arriving from Waziristan and other parts of the country manually as the government has yet to provide biometric systems and scanners to check the supply of explosives and arms. “You should ask the government why they did not provide these to us despite the operation being launched,” complained a senior Rangers official. Despite the influx of IDPs, the Sindh government has yet to take measures to record the names of those entering the province and verifying their credentials. “It is the responsibility of the federal government to provide biometric systems to us,” Sindh chief minister’s adviser Waqar Mehdi conveniently shifting the blame. “We do not have the budget to settle the IDPs. The federal government should settle them in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the Punjab.”

The Express Tribune - June 20, 2014

Number of Waziristan IDPs Soars Past 200k

As the air blitz continues against the hideouts of militants in North Waziristan Agency, the number of tribesmen fleeing an impending ground offensive has soared past 200,000, officials said, though independent sources put the numbers at 300,000. Over 160,000 people have left this week after the military launched Operation Zarb-e-Azb. The political administration eased the curfew to give civilians a chance to leave before troops begin a full-blooded ground operation. The fighting has triggered a huge exodus of civilians, both into Bannu, Peshawar and Kohat and across the border into Afghanistan. “Some 165,807 people have arrived in Bannu since June 18,” Arshad Khan, the director general of the Fata Disaster Management Authority, told The Express Tribune on Friday. “The total number of displaced people is 22,7049. Of them 56,214 are male, 70,465 female and 100,370 children,” he added.

The military said an organized evacuation of IDPs continues towards FR Bannu. “Until now 200,000 persons have been evacuated from the area. So far 11 families, comprising 92 individuals, have been enlisted in the camp at Bakkakhel area of Bannu,” said the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). It added that 400 Afghan families left North Waziristan for Afghanistan through Ghulam Khan border village. They were provided all required administrative assistance. In Afghanistan, Khost administration spokesman Mubarez Muhammad Zadran told AFP that 1,400 refugee families had registered and estimated that as many as 10,000 families –

or 70,000 to 80,000 people – could be scattered across the border province. Thousands of people including women and children were seen travelling to Bannu by foot on Friday. Women were sitting by the roadside as vehicles and passenger vans kept moving at a snail's pace in long queues – the 60-kilometre journey from Miramshah to Bannu taking 16 hours by car, an AFP reporter said.

In Miramshah and Mir Ali, more than 80% of the population have either left or were planning to leave in next 12 hours. A government official in Miramshah estimated that up to 40% of the whole population could stay behind. In Razmak, almost half of the population has decided to stay as they believe they will be safe as there was no militant activity in their area. The prime minister's point-man for IDPs, meanwhile, said that although the deadline for evacuation has expired military operation would not be resumed in those areas where civilians were still trapped. While speaking at a news conference at Peshawar's Governor House, Abdul Qadir Baloch, who is also a federal minister, refused to give a timeframe for purging North Waziristan of all militants. "The whole nation is on board on the Waziristan operation which will continue till all militants are eliminated," he added.

The Express Tribune - June 21, 2014

Helping IDPs: PM Nawaz Announces Rs. 20,000 Ramazan Package for Each Family

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced a Ramazan package worth Rs. 20,000 for each family of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The prime minister made the announcement while addressing the IDPs in Bannu. The Ramazan package is in addition to the earlier announced monthly allowance of Rs. 20,000 which includes Rs. 5,000 for non-food items and Rs3,000 for rent. Earlier this morning, the premier arrived in Bannu in a helicopter to visit the camps and was received by Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif. Nawaz was accompanied by Information Minister Pervaiz Rashid, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Chief Minister Pervez Khattak, K-P Governor Sardar Mehtab Abbasi and Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) Minister Lieutenant General (retd) Abdul Qadir Baloch. Speaking to the IDPs, the prime minister remarked that helping the IDPs was the government's responsibility and not a favor. Nawaz said that his government will spend as much as money as required. "We are working day and night to solve your problems and we will not leave you in these difficult times," the premier stated, empathizing with the IDPs. Nawaz told the IDPs that they will return to their homes in peace very soon and their houses will be rebuilt as well. The premier remarked that he understands how the IDPs are feeling; further stating that he knows it is not easy to leave one's home. Before addressing the IDPs, Nawaz had a meeting with the people who accompanied him to discuss the situation of the displaced people.

The Express Tribune - June 22, 2014

Centre Releases Rs1.5 Billion for IDPs

Minister of States and Frontier Regions (Safron) Lt Gen (retd) Abdul Qadir Baloch said the federal government had released Rs1.5 billion to provide all possible facilities to the affected population of North Waziristan Agency (NWA). Addressing a press conference, he noted that the Punjab government had also established a fund with Rs500 million, which would go a long way in facilitating the IDPs. He added that the federal government employees would donate one-day salary to the NWA IDPs. The minister said that the party's MPs and cabinet members would also donate one-month salary for the displaced populace, whose number was expected to rise to 600,000. He said Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had been briefed on the facilities and arrangements for the IDPs. He stated the prime minister would soon visit Bannu, which housed around 80 percent of the IDPs, to review the arrangements and facilities there, adding the

premier could announce some more facilities for the IDPs who were 454,207 in number while the number of total families stood at 36,514. He also called upon the philanthropists to come up with contributions. He said that the UAE government had also announced \$2.5 million for the IDPs. He hoped several other countries would follow suit.

To a question, the minister said funds were not a problem and these would be enhanced as the need arose. Presently, he added, the cash amount of Rs. 12,000 was paid to each family in addition to Rs3,000 for those who had rented out houses to live in. He said 80 percent of the IDPs were staying in Bannu, six percent in Lakki Marwat, five percent in DI Khan, one percent in Karak, 282 families were in Hangu while seven percent were staying in other parts of the country. Besides fighting the war against the terrorists, the minister said the army was actively involved in relief activities and had established 33 collection points for raising funds for the IDPs. To another question, he said, the operation would soon be completed in a successful manner, paving way for the IDPs to return to their homes. Answering a question, the minister said there were signs of the presence of foreign terrorists, including Uzbeks, Chechens and Tajiks. However, at this stage it would not be advisable to provide details in this regard.

With increasing number of IDPs from the NWA in the ongoing operation, he said the government had expedited efforts for providing them every possible support. He made it clear that facilities of all kinds were being provided to the IDPs at the camps as it was the government's prime responsibility to look after them. "The government will provide all the basic necessities to the registered IDPs at camps, including electricity, water and medical facilities," the official said. He said that a unanimous decision to launch the operation Zarb-e-Azb was taken following failure of the efforts to resolve the issue through talks.

The News - June 25, 2014
