

## **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)**

Establishing IDP camps and supporting off-camp IDPs in Pakistan.

Endorsed by the Humanitarian Country Team for Endorsement on  
September, 23 2011

### **Background and purpose of SOPs**

The response to displacement of approximately 9,600 families within Mohmand and 13,000 families in Kurram Agency marked a shift in the way that humanitarian agencies provide assistance to FATA IDPs. Until 2011 humanitarian agencies provided assistance and established IDP camps outside the conflict-affected FATA Agencies, in the more distant settled areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

In light of the new and untried nature of this approach, a Lesson Learning exercise (see annex 1) was conducted by which it was discerned that **assistance of IDPs inside FATA has both benefits and drawbacks** to the well being of the conflict-affected populations and the ability of the humanitarian community to provide a principled response. Building on the lessons learned the **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** below have been developed to clarify the process and criteria to be used by the HCT to ensure principled<sup>i</sup> decision making if the Pakistani government requests assistance, from the humanitarian community, to establish IDP camps and assist off-camp IDP populations.

### **HCT Standard Operation Procedure (SOP):**

for establishing IDP camps and supporting off-camp IDPs in Pakistan.

It should be understood from the outset that the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are clear on a government's responsibility to respond to the needs of its IDPs. However, a government may request assistance from the humanitarian community to help meet those needs, to be coordinated through the established cluster system, supported by civil-military liaison. The humanitarian community is willing to assist if: needs are clear; resources are available; and minimum global humanitarian standards can be met. However, it must be recognized that mobilization of effective and large scale responses takes time and that the more advance warning there is, the more timely the response will be.

The following SOP outlines "minimum requirements" for endorsement of HCT support for future responses to displacement. These **recommendations are not area specific, rather they are requirements for HCT endorsement of support anywhere in Pakistan, especially if the response requires the establishment of IDP camps.** Therefore if requirements could be met inside FATA, camps could be established there and likewise not all locations elsewhere in Pakistan, including the Settled Areas in KP would necessarily be acceptable. These SOPs will provide the platform for collective Humanitarian Community action and be used as the basis for negotiations with authorities in that regard:

This SOP has three components: the **decision making process** regarding the feasibility of the humanitarian community support to the national government during an IDP crisis, **assessment of IDP camp site feasibility** and mechanisms for **assisting off-camp IDPs.**

NB: SOPs should be strictly followed by all HCT members unless instructed otherwise by an HCT decision, following a review of extenuating circumstances. For example, if there is independently gathered evidence that the IDPs themselves, despite options (exercising freedom of choice and movement) prefer sites of refuge, either on or off camp that do not meet SOP standards.

### **1. Decision making process.**

The request for assistance may come either from the provincial or federal government and may be directed to agencies at the provincial or federal level. Regardless of the source or channel of the request the following decision making process should be followed.

1.1 The HC must be informed immediately of the request (either directly cc OCHA or via OCHA).

1.2 OCHA will immediately consult with the Government at the Federal and Provincial level on the issue, including government response planning and residual needs.

1.3 The HRT will meet to gather initial background information and discuss **camp site feasibility, and off-camp most likely scenarios** (see sections 2 and 3 below) including: a provisional assessment of the tribal and sectarian make-up of the IDPs and the feasibility of housing them at one site; the tribal/sectarian make-up of hosting populations; and the risk of increasing underlying sectarian or tribal tensions. In conclusion the HRT will report and provide recommendations to the HC. Members of an assessment team will be identified in readiness of a request by HC for deployment.

1.4 An emergency HCT is called to review HRT recommendations, discuss the broader implications including if provision of assistance in a particular situation would increase the risk of Humanitarian Actors by reinforcing the perception of 'partial support' for the government military interventions, and agree next steps including whether or not a UNDSS assessment mission should be undertaken and if so whether it should be combined with an inter-cluster assessment mission.

1.5 HC makes the first official response to the Authorities which may include requesting assurances, through the civil military coordination or regular humanitarian coordination mechanisms, from them as outlined below in section 2 and 3 and marked \*

(Points 1.1 – 1.5 to be concluded within 36 hours of the original request)

If a mission is fielded:

1.6 UNDSS and OCHA in consultation with other concerned agencies plan and execute assessment missions once NOCs are available.

1.6 Mission returns and reports its finding to HRT and ASMT for consideration and onward recommendations to HCT and SMT.

1.7 HCT agrees the next course of action (i.e. agree to support, refuse to support or negotiate for conditions).

1.8 HC communicates directly to the authorities .

1.9 If HCT response is positive assistance begins as coordinated through the established coordination mechanisms.

(NB no assistance should bilaterally be given until point 1.9 above has been reached)

## **2. Assessment of IDP camp site feasibility**

Below are listed the minimum requirements that must be met before the humanitarian community can agree to provide support to government IDP camps, in any location.

### **2.1 Access, Safety and Security.**

- ✓ The location is at least 20 km from the area of conflict zone and/or military installations.
- ✓ In the case of tribal or sectarian antagonisms between IDP factions more than one site is available.
- ✓ A UNDSS assessment is completed and approval for access is given.
- ✓ The site is accessible by road.
- ✓ Communications systems including mobile phones are possible.
- ✓ An interagency site assessment has been facilitated and the site is judged to be technically suitable.
- ✓ MOSS compliant accommodation for male and female humanitarian workers is available near enough to facilitate daily supervision. The location of the respective accommodations must permit ongoing supervision
- ✓ \* Responsible government authorities (Law and Order Department of FATA Secretariat/ Home and Tribal Affairs Department and 11 Corps) have made high level assurances to provide immediate and continuous access NOCs to male and female humanitarian workers to camp sites and critical service centers that serve on and off-camp IDPs e.g. local referral hospitals or water points, other than in the event of specific and short term security risks.
- ✓ \*Responsible government authorities (P/FDMA and 11 Corps) have assured provision of timely project implementation NOCs to humanitarian workers based on response needs as defined by the inter-cluster coordination mechanism.
- ✓ \* Security, including camp, off-camp and en-route, is maintained at a high level throughout the response.

### **2.2 Operational independence and potential for delivery of impartial and neutral assistance:**

- ✓ \* All IDPs will be registered and assisted in line with pre-agreed criteria based on the Guiding Principles (including all children, those without official identification (CNICs) and families who have fled preemptively, i.e. from non-notified areas adjacent to the declared conflict zone). Separate facilities for widows/single women must be made available.
- ✓ The government co-led Protection Cluster finalized standard operating procedures for registration of IDPs is implemented.
- ✓ \* As part of a coordinated, pre-agreed process, Humanitarian Agencies will have direct oversight of targeting and distribution of their assistance based on their independent assessments and own beneficiary lists both on and off-camp.
- ✓ \* Independent protection monitoring will be continuous including consultation within the first few days with IDP male and female representatives regarding freedom of movement and their preferences of where camps should be sited, *based on well communicated options* and an avoidance of ‘pull factors’ associated with only receiving assistance in one site.
- ✓ Respect the right of Humanitarian Organisations, with or without international workers, to be able to reach the site without armed escort, if this is their ‘Organisation Policy’, and recognize that some agencies will not be able to respond if armed escorts are enforced.
- ✓ \* The civilian nature of all parts of the camp and off-camp hubs/distribution centers, will be strictly enforced (i.e. no military personnel armed or otherwise will be allowed to enter and no arms other than those carried by civilian police will be allowed.)

### **3. Assistance for off-camp IDPs**

During any IDP crisis the majority (80% +/-) of displaced families do not enter camps, but take shelter off-camp amongst host communities. Some are housed in public buildings (mainly schools), others stay with family or friends whilst others rent accommodation. They may be scattered thinly over a wide area or concentrated, which could be either relatively safe or alternatively high security risk areas. There is no control over off-camp IDP movement during the displacement or when they return to areas of origin. A combination of these factors makes it very difficult to 'manage' a response to off-camp needs. The difficulties encountered often lead to their needs often being neglected in favour of a focus of relief to IDP camps. However, the needs of off-camp IDPs are usually equal to those of families in camps, especially if they join relatives who may also be IDPs and/or very poor, who have exhausted their coping strategies and thus have no remaining absorption capacity. A lack of response to the needs of off-camp IDPs may have multiple negative implications including lowering the nutritional status of themselves and the host families, consumption of precious assets of host families, protection issues (especially for women and children), encouraging additional families to leave host areas and enter camps and damage to public service buildings and the prevention of their use for the intended purpose. Below are the SOPs required to ensure that all possibilities to assist this group of IDP are maximized.

- ✓ Needs and possible responses to the needs of off-camp IDPs to be included on the agenda of all meeting to discuss and plan for IDP responses from the onset, including the relationship and balance between off and on camp IDPS and hosting families.
- ✓ A UNDSS assessment to off-camp areas is completed as soon as security conditions permit after the onset of the emergency.
- ✓ \* Responsible government authorities (Law and Order Department/Home and Travel Affairs Department and 11 Corps) have made assurances to provide timely and continuous access NOCs to humanitarian workers to off-camp IDPs and hosting communities, as soon as acceptable security risk levels as defined by UNDSS allow.
- ✓ Registration, needs assessments and responses to needs of off-camp IDPs should be undertaken as soon as access is feasible.
- ✓ \*Responsible government authorities (P/FDMA and 11 Corps) have assured to provide timely project implementation NOCs to humanitarian workers based on response needs as defined by the inter-cluster coordination mechanism.
- ✓ \* Security en-route to and within off-camp locations, is maintained at a high level throughout the response.

**Annex 1. Lessons learned from Mohmand and Kurram IDP response experience.**

The following table summarises humanitarian agencies' views on the benefits and drawbacks of providing assistance to IDPs inside Mohmand and Kurram Agencies.

<b>Successes of the Mohmand and Kurram IDP response experience</b>	<b>Challenges of the Mohmand and Kurram IDP response experience</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Life-saving assistance was provided</b> to more than 6,500 IDP families / Mohmand and 2,586/Kurram families in-camp</li> <li>- <b>Food and NFIs were provided</b> to approximately 30% of off-camp IDPs in Kurram (3,500 of 10,000 families +/-).</li> <li>- Humanitarian response was carried out <b>in line with government's request</b> and in support of government strategy.</li> <li>- The 2 INGOs working in Kurram Agency were able to <b>adopt their independent operational methodology</b>, including door to door assessments, profiling and to implement the agency specific approach.</li> <li>- IDPs were able to <b>visit their areas of origin</b> during the course of their displacement to check on homes, livestock, and other assets.</li> <li>- <b>Return of IDPs to their areas of origin was logistically efficient.</b></li> <li>- <b>Duration of the displacement for some individuals</b> was short – in some cases as little as 3 weeks.</li> <li>- <b>Danishkol camp, Mohmand was decommissioned after</b> less than 6 weeks. (Jan, 27- March 4, 2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Government's policies/preference shift in establishing IDP camps in FATA rather than in KP</b> limited the options for negotiation on IDP sites and modalities of operation.</li> <li>- <b>Security situation</b> inside FATA remains volatile. Some INGOs and NNGOs (including UN IPs) decided not to respond due to security concerns. The humanitarian response was at times disrupted due to curfews, military or sectarian security threats.</li> <li>- NOC and other bureaucratic constraints prevented INGOs from engaging with the response.</li> <li>- Varied and often <b>weak en-route security</b> e.g to Danishkol Camp increased risk to Humanitarian workers traveling to camps.</li> <li>- Some camps were <b>sited close to areas of hostility and or military installations.</b> Kurram New Durrani Camp is less than 15 km (FDMA figure) from the area of hostility.</li> <li>- <b>Logistical constraints</b> such as problems of terrain (i.e. inadequate roads) and communication (i.e. lack of mobile phone network coverage) hampered the response.</li> <li>- <b>Lack of professional site assessment</b> resulted in an geologically unsuitable site in Kurram with underlying hard rock constrained in digging pits for latrines</li> <li>- Working within the area of authority of the Political Agent and constant presence of PA staff in the camps inhibited humanitarian actors ability to maintain <b>operational independence</b> from government actors, or fully respect the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality.</li> <li>- <b>Humanitarian access</b> to on and off-camp IDPs and support facilities (e.g. local hospitals) has been affected by , delayed or none-issuance of travel NOCs and government requirement for all official missions to travel with armed escort. Thus the response, both assessments and delivery of assistance has been delayed and independent monitoring extremely limited. (see separate 'Record of NOC applications analysis')</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of access for <b>international and female staff</b> in particular reduced the scope and transparency of response.</li> <li>- <b>Limited access to IDP hosting community areas</b> has resulted in limited ability to assess or respond to needs.</li> <li>- <b>Protection concerns</b> included: Pull factor towards camps inside FATA by lack of option of support else-where; limited assistance to off-camp IDPs; lack of consultation with women; miss-use of humanitarian assets (especially vehicles); and search and security screening inside camps.</li> <li>- <b>Delays in delivery of assistance</b> due to limited presence and inadequate capacity of IPs in FATA.</li> <li>- <b>Lack of monitoring of returns areas.</b> No security mission or go and see visit to the areas of return before the returns process began.</li> <li>- <b>Lack of attention to different needs</b> for men, women, boys and girls was paid and exacerbated by lack of female staff entry.</li> </ul>
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<sup>i</sup> GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT (U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/1998/Add2(1998) [www.idpguidingprinciples.org](http://www.idpguidingprinciples.org)