



Action Alert

Dispatches from the Team



Kenya Emergency

UNHCR airlifts relief to thousands of displaced families

In early January, post-election unrest in Kenya left over 600 people dead and forced another 250,000 to flee their homes. As the UN Refugee Agency rushed to respond to the crisis, Australia for UNHCR was able to provide much-needed emergency funding for refugee and IDP relief.

The Emergency Response Team was deployed to help UN staff and the Kenyan Red Cross deliver emergency shelter, food and non-food relief to families displaced by the violence. Team members immediately distributed 'family kits' to thousands of people sheltering in slum districts of the capital, Nairobi.

On January 18, UNHCR flew in a further 100 tonnes of humanitarian supplies on a chartered Boeing 747 from its emergency stockpile in Dubai. UNHCR trucks carrying non-food essentials managed to get through road blocks north-west of Nairobi to bring relief to desperate families seeking shelter and protection in the western town of Eldoret.

As *Action Alert* goes to press, UNHCR is able to meet the immediate non-food needs of 100,000 people displaced inside Kenya itself and provide assistance for some 6,500 refugees who have crossed into neighbouring Uganda. UNHCR is also establishing a new refugee transit centre on

the Ugandan border to provide registration, food, water and sanitation for new arrivals.

The security situation in Kenya remains extremely fragile and the humanitarian crisis continues in a number of key areas. In Rift Valley Province in the north, aid workers report large numbers of displaced people sleeping outside in the chilly highland air without tents or plastic sheeting. Road blocks erected by locals have so far prevented the delivery of aid and several commercial trucks have been torched on approach.

UNHCR's representative in Kenya, Liz Ahua, has expressed concern for those families who remain beyond the reach of aid organisations. "We hope that with the arrival of these new supplies, we will be able to reach many more displaced people," she said. "We are worried that the situation may further deteriorate now that it is raining in many parts of Kenya."

Your money in action

Kenya: post-election violence results in the displacement of over 250,000 people

Regions of concern: Nairobi, Eldoret, Nakuru and Rift Valley Province

Emergency Response Team members deployed: 11

Relief items delivered (as of 21 January):

Family/household kits: 2,500*

Bales of plastic sheeting: 19,600

Mosquito nets: 40,000

Emergency generators: 15

Additional emergency funds required: AUS\$7.6 million

Emergency funds contributed by Australia for UNHCR – January 2008: \$100,000

* UNHCR's 'family kit' contains 2 blankets, 2 ten-litre jerry cans, 1 kitchen set, 1 large mosquito net, 1 large sheet of plastic and soap.

FUELING THE FLAMES

The firewood crisis in Chad's refugee camps

The environment in Eastern Chad is harsh and fragile. In recent years, the influx of refugees from Darfur has placed enormous pressure on natural resources like wood and water, leading to environmental degradation and growing conflict between refugees and the local population.

For UNHCR and its operating partners, the dwindling supply of firewood is cause for serious concern. In some areas, wood supplies have been completely exhausted. With the surrounding region stripped bare of combustible fuel, refugee women have to travel further from the camps each day to gather kindling for their cooking stoves, making them highly vulnerable to harassment, abduction and rape.

The UN Refugee Agency is coming at the problem from several directions:

- Local contractors have been engaged to deliver truckloads of firewood to the camps. This not only reduces the risk for women but is also providing income for local people.
- UNHCR has begun distributing kerosene to families in the far northern camp of Oure Cassoni where firewood is extremely scarce. However, while an excellent alternative fuel, kerosene is expensive and not a viable option for most camps.

- Elsewhere, we are working to introduce alternative stove technology – solar cookers and Save80 stoves - to reduce the demand for wood and other fuel.

As their name suggests, Save80 stoves use 80% less wood than the traditional “three stone fires” used by the refugee women. The simple metal design not only reduces wood consumption but allows even small pieces of wood to be collected and used as fuel. Nearly a quarter of refugee families in Chad are now using these stoves. Cheaper solar cookers are also being introduced but they have the disadvantage of not being usable at night or during dust storms.

By providing these alternative stoves to refugee families in Chad this year, UNHCR donors are simultaneously helping to reduce the demand for firewood, the threat of rape for women and pressure on the local environment.



Women in Darfur receive training on the usage of the Save80 stoves.

CHAD RELIEF EXCEEDS \$1 MILLION



Students gather to register for another school year at Djabal camp, one of 12 camps on the Chad/Sudan border.

Emergency Response Team supporters in Australia have contributed a record \$1.03 million to refugee relief in eastern Chad during 2007.

After nearly five years, the humanitarian situation in eastern Chad remains desperate. As militia attacks and village burnings in Darfur continue, over 240,000 people remain in twelve sprawling camps near the Sudanese border, dependent on UNHCR and its partner organisations for shelter, food, non-food aid, medicine and protection.

The logistics of this huge relief operation are as complex as ever. Chad is a landlocked country and supplies have to be flown or trucked in. The camps themselves are situated in a remote region where the roads are poor and often impassable during the wet season. Meanwhile, providing safe drinking water for so many people in this semi-arid area is an ongoing challenge: UNHCR has overseen extensive water surveys and public works to pipe water overland or pump supplies from deep underground. As a result, we have achieved the basic standard of 12-15 litres of water per person in the camps this year.

New Challenges

2007 has brought new headaches for both the refugee and local populations. Inter-ethnic violence has increased in Chad itself, leaving 180,000 Chadians displaced within their own country. In February, UNHCR called for extra resources to shelter the growing numbers of people forced from their villages by Chadian militia groups.

Elsewhere, there was growing friction between refugee, IDP and local populations as natural resources like firewood, water and arable land became scarce. To gather fuel for their stoves, refugee women are having to venture further from the camps each day, making themselves increasingly vulnerable to sexual attack. UNHCR has now established Sexual Violence Prevention Projects in all twelve camps and is introducing strategies like the Save80 stove to address the problem from a different angle [see article at left].

Chad Emergency Update

Persons of concern to UNHCR at the end of 2007:

240,000 refugees from Darfur, Sudan
180,000 internally displaced people (IDPs)

UNHCR camps operating: 12

Projected cost of UNHCR's 2007 Chad emergency response: \$89,792,597

Australia for UNHCR's 2007 contribution: \$1,031,567.00 from Emergency Response Team funds.

Australia for UNHCR is now the largest private sector donor to UNHCR's emergency programs in Chad.