

MEDIA UPDATE

South Africa: Emergency Relief Update No. 2.

UNICEF expands contribution to improve relief services for displaced foreign and South African victims of xenophobic violence

Pretoria 4 June, 2008... As nine thousand victims of the xenophobic violence in Gauteng are being registered and relocated to temporary places of shelter, UNICEF and its partners are busy shaping a new plan of action to help the Government respond to the growing need for emergency relief and protection services. In Western Cape, a joint assessment is underway this week, and interventions will be planned based on the assessment findings.

“We are advising the government’s Disaster Management team and Provincial Departments on identifying supplier contacts for emergency procurement and coordination, proper nutrition guidelines for safe infant and young child feeding, and on ensuring that balanced meal packages and age-appropriate play and learning materials are provided for children and women,” said Julianna Lindsey, Deputy Representative at UNICEF South Africa.

“This kind of action also helps us ensure that children’s rights are respected and fulfilled, even in a disaster situation such as this.” she said.

A more targeted humanitarian response geared to rights and needs

Over the past few days, UNICEF in cooperation with other partner organizations undertook a series of assessments at several of the new sites, with a view to offering a better and more targeted humanitarian response to the needs of the traumatized populations.

Results show that of the nine thousand people displaced, there are at least two thousand children from age 0-15 years, and that 22- 25% of the displaced population are women.

Expertise and Technical Assistance

South Africa has the financial resources to attend to this disaster. However, UNICEF is assisting the country’s Disaster Management team to address gaps in its emergency response that may be due to a lack of capacity that can delay relief services to the needy.

UNICEF said it would draw on its regional and global expertise in emergencies to assist the Government in critical areas of need that typically arise during emergencies. At the top of the agenda are child protection and adherence to humanitarian principles.

Additionally, UNICEF has invited one of its global experts on water and sanitation to advise on ensuring that water supplies are adequate and remain pure and safe for drinking.

UNICEF has also been requested to provide technical guidance on the best response to meet the psychosocial support needs of the badly distressed women and children.

In this regard, UNICEF says it will work with the protection cluster - a network of South African governmental and civil society partners, like the Centre for the Study of Violence and

Reconciliation (CSVR) and Save the Children, to establish child-friendly spaces at each of the new temporary shelter sites.

Each site will include a safe, supervised place for children to play; structured activities for different age groups of children and adolescents; educational activities; early childhood development (ECD), life-skills training and psychosocial support.

Further monitoring on the educational needs of the children is also being undertaken, UNICEF said.

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UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and from HIV and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

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To support UNICEF's work to assist the victims of xenophobic violence in South Africa, please he UNICEF South Africa website: www.unicef.org/southafrica