

MEDIA RELEASE

UNICEF responds to emergency needs of children and women affected by xenophobic violence in South Africa

Pretoria, SA, 26 May 2008...Following ten days of violent attacks on foreign nationals, migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers and South African citizens living in some of the country's informal settlements, UNICEF South Africa has joined forces with the cities of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and Tshwane, areas hardest hit by the violence, to provide emergency relief supplies to meet immediate needs of vulnerable women and children.

The provisions, including adult hygiene kits, food, clothing, and blankets for victims of the violence, most of whom fled their homes with few no possessions, will help ensure that babies, young children and mothers are adequately clothed, safely and appropriately fed and that basic hygiene is maintained.

Exact figures vary, but at least 17,000 people have been displaced in Gauteng alone, among them a minimum of 6,000 children and women. Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal Provinces are also reporting large numbers of displaced people.

To date, UNICEF has delivered the following emergency supplies to the South African Red Cross and the City of Johannesburg Migration Desk:

- 500 long-sleeve T-shirts for children
- 510 blankets
- 450 Nespray tins of powdered milk
- 500 infant-feeding cups

Needs exacerbated as temperatures plummet

Today, temperatures plummeted to 5 degrees Celsius in Johannesburg and 10 degrees in the capital city of Tshwane, as South Africa headed into its winter season, exacerbating the need for warmth and shelter. While many charitable organizations are providing for immediate needs with basic food (bread, soup, juice, etc.), many sites still report a shortage of fortified cereals for young children. To ensure adequate nutrition, UNICEF has committed to assist with fortified cereals for young children.

Supporting early childhood care

Current figures from the Government's Disaster Management Services indicate that the number of babies and young children with mothers are significant. Later this week, UNICEF will supply 35 locally procured ECD kits containing basic play and stimulation materials and an instructional booklet with ideas for play and stimulation that can meet the needs of 1000 children. And, to provide traumatized children with a sense of stability in the midst of a disruptive situation, UNICEF will also support ECD partners to organize play groups and establish on-site crèches.

UNICEF contributes to the emergency response effort organized by the Joint Operational Centres (JOCs) of the City of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni Metropole, and the Province of Gauteng and

MEDIA RELEASE

coordinates its efforts through United Nations sister agencies, under the leadership of IOM, with support from OCHA.

Ends

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

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.

For further media information please contact:

UNICEF South Africa: Yvonne Duncan, Mobile: 27-82-561-3970, email: yduncan@unicef.org

Stephen Blight, mobile: 0794994303; email: sblight@unicef.org

Rose September, Mobile: 079 495 5953; email: rseptember@unicef.org

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