

# Civil Society/IDP Meeting

## 10 October 2008

### Minutes

#### I. HRC/Government Meeting Report Back

- a. Closure Agreement reached with UNHCR/Gov to halt closure of Harmony until 10/17
  - i. Civil society and JRLC members were able to raise issues with government about the impacts of closing the camps.
  - ii. Strategic to have press conference to applaud government's agreement not to close the camps this week.
  - iii. Need rental agreement and landlord's rental agreement for reintegration assistance
    1. Expected to take 6 weeks to reintegrate the remaining people.
    2. Hopefully then, BW will stay open for at least 6 weeks.
    3. Hard to find places to rent.
  - iv. Reintegration Assistance
    1. R750 for one month's rent
      - a. When it is confirmed that someone is actually staying there, they will release a second month's rent
      - b. Deposit slips are given as proof of transfer.
  - v. All of civil society, JRLC, government will meet again at HRC to discuss the events of the week and confirm the previous agreements.
- b. "Check-up" meeting 14 October

#### II. Conditions Update

- a. Drafted letter for lawyers
  - i. Corresponding with lawyers to supply information regarding the conditions (esp at Blue Waters) after Marti's story in the Mail and Guardian.
- b. Mitchell's Plain clinic issues – DoH
  - i. People who have been turned away from medical facilities
- c. IDP report back
  - i. List of vulnerable people in the camps
  - ii. The extent to which people have been able to find rented accommodation.
  - iii. Whether you've been able to get the money for the rental.
  - iv. Harmony Park
    1. When a group went to look for housing they were attacked in \_\_\_\_\_ (Nzamo?)

- a. The victims spoke to the mobile unit at Harmony Park; but no charges were laid; the police were not allowing them to lay charges.
    - b. Braam has asked for them to follow up with him so that he can keep track.
  - v. Youngsfield
    - 1. Those reintegrating have all submitted their papers and are awaiting their assistance.
      - a. Many are waiting response to their asylum seekers request
      - b. Concern over the violence that is possible, especially after the horrific events at Queenstown.
    - 2. Mohammed will follow up with Abdul to get additional information.
  - vi. Blue Waters C
    - 1. Most Somalis are ready to repatriate, only a few are asking to reintegrate
      - a. UN has told them that no one can be repatriated to Somalia
      - b. There should be access to papers so that they can travel on their own out of South Africa.
  - vii. Blue Waters B
    - 1. Ready to reintegrate
      - a. 32 singles, 52 families
      - b. 6 vulnerable people (women with children in this instance)
    - 2. The reintegration assistance is troubling to many people at the site, hoping for more information.

### **III. Appeals Process Update**

- a. All the appeals were served by UCT.
- b. The difficulty was regarding manifestly unfounded results, but Fatima Khan said there were very few, and those that were deemed so were genuinely manifestly unfounded so there was no reason to react.
- c. UCT has prepared an application about the ludicrous decision that DHA will not renew any refugee permits.
  - i. The effort is not to renew so that everyone can get deported.
  - ii. They know that it is unlawful
  - iii. Fatima repeated that the lawyers intend to take this issue to court.
- d. Richard Sikakane's father is a part of the parliamentary process for Home Affairs.
- e. Only one lady to take the appeals (from UCT) at Harmony Park; which means that people will not get seen quickly.
  - i. They still have 30 days to file the appeals
- f. Still people at Blue Waters that have not received their letter.

- g. What will happen to people who weren't rejected or accepted; people who did not receive anything:
  - i. The government has promised last week that they will be ensuring all letters are handed out before they close any of the site.
  - ii. People should not reintegrate before they get their letters.
- h. All the rejections were being handed out on one day; the acceptances on another day
  - i. Lead to confusion regarding the percentage of people rejected
  - ii. Need from UCT how many appeals have been lodged
  - iii. Need from Judith the rejection rate from Jurie de Wet.
    - 1. Plus more information about where those who missed the process would be interviewed.
- i. In Blue Waters, there were no 30 day permits accompanying the rejection letters for many people.

#### **IV. Other Updates**

- a. Petition to Premier
  - i. Some extra time since the closures were delayed a week
  - ii. The premier seems to have been sympathetic in the past, hopefully she will be able to put some pressure on the other areas of gov't to keep the camps open.
- b. SJC meeting report back
  - i. Equality and Rights of marginalized groups
    - 1. Three main speakers
    - 2. What are the rights of Refugees that have been violated?
      - a. Safety and security – what the government should provide Killings
      - b. Accessibility of health
      - c. Documentation
        - i. Access to accounts
        - ii. Ability to stay in the country

#### **V. UN Complaint**

- a. Sign on? See Scott
- b. To Geneva on Monday
  - i. Package of supporting documents to accompany complaint.
    - 1. Issues from individuals and organizations
  - ii. Issues raised:
    - 1. Camp consolidation and conditions
    - 2. Refugee advocacy
    - 3. resettlement and
    - 4. communication
  - iii. Will be sent to Geneva to the following people:
    - 1. UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki -moon
    - 2. UN Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Pillay

3. Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and  
Emergency Relief Coordinator, Sir John Holmes
- iv. Will be call for formal investigation into local office

VI. **Outstanding Issues?**

- a. Three children and their mother left from Youngsfield and were killed in Queenstown.
  - i. Charges laid against the suspected killers; arrested three men.
  - ii. The newspaper in East London has donated Monday to support the inquiry
- b. Have a memorial for all those people who have lost their lives during the reintegration process.
- c. Fight with the UNHCR
- d. The conditions have been atrocious all along, but right now we're trying to gather information about the closure of the camps, and how people are getting along with the reintegration assistance.
- e. Address the issue of what happens to people who wish to repatriate to areas that are deemed unsafe with UN next week.
  - i. How to get them papers to travel out of the country.
    1. Only now is resettlement even being considered.
    2. Need more clarity regarding the Congo, especially with regards to the eastern war torn area since some people were rejected.
      - a. Safety concerns
- f. Tuesday 12 PM the JRLC can meet to ensure prepare for the 2 pm meeting