

## **Districts Meeting 14 June 2008 Minutes. 12:00-15:00**

Present: 60+ people from district task teams, sites housing displaced people and organizations working on the xenophobia crisis

### **Agenda**

- 1. Site Updates - from districts and volunteers working in sites.**
- 2. Organization Updates**
- 3. Task Teams Roles Clarified**
- 4. District meetings and feedback**
- 5. Political Update**

Chair: Fatima Hassan (Aids Law Project)

### **1. Site updates:**

#### **Khayelitsha**

1. Need for government intervention – volunteer fatigue
  - a. Delivery of basics (mattresses, foods) unraveling because of poor communication
2. Challenges of moving people
  - a. People are very angry; forced to get on buses, even though Province said that would not happen – disconnect between policy and reality
3. Provision of food: took photos of food provided dated 2004, 2006 – expired food; people sleeping on concrete floors, Mustafadin burnout
  - a. Critical for Provincial and local government disaster plans to address issues that should have already been addressed
4. Problem with political opportunism: happened in a big way in Khayelitsha – there was an event organized by government to welcome displaced people back, but only one organisation invited. Displaced people invited but many found the event insulting, etc.
5. Movement of people in ? one site: # of people: 500, 10% chose to go back to own country, 400-odd people left; 87% Zimbabwean, rest are Mozambican, 1 Malawian, 1 Nigerian; 49% seemed “reasonably ready to return to community with food, security from community”
  - a. 12 want 3<sup>rd</sup> country repatriation

#### **Mitchell’s Plain**

1. Blue Waters survey:
  - 207 people living there, 186 were families, 39 children, 62 single men
  - numbers are increasing – people still being looted, arriving at sites
  - nobody wants to be reintegrated, do not want to go home – want 3<sup>rd</sup> country resettlement

-petitions in Mitchell's Plain center against foreigners selling drugs

### **Northern Suburbs**

- Couldn't visit all sites; group not working very well together
- Belville Methodist Church trying to empty out; paying rent for people – trying to help people find other places to live
- Richwood, Summer Greens, His People – lack of food and other essential items.
- Richwood: people still sleeping on floor (no mattresses, showers) talked to leader of Congolese community; concerned because he said that there are refugees who are from the army and police force, and they can only tolerate xenophobia to a certain point, and then they will probably start to respond with violence.
- tried to talk to refugee leaders
  - many come from Philippi, other places where reintegration is not possible – some have tried to go back to communities, but had to leave again after a few days because of safety issues
  - some people with shops can trade during the day, but can not stay in community at night
  - some people have gone back to home country
- Churches: situation is fine
- Summer Greens: unimpressed with situation – people sleeping on ground, etc.
  - this is what happens when volunteers pull out and others are left to take over

### **Klipfontein**

- Fewer people at Bon Esperanz – some people tried to go to camps, the only ones left are extremely reluctant to go back to communities (Samora Machel, Philippi, Mitchell's Plain)
- Had meeting at police station to strategize, had some marches in community to try to educate people, some people have reintegrated

### **Western District**

- Similar to Northern district; collapse of provisions delivery
- Foreshore people moved – queuing for Home Affairs; about 500 people
- Train Lodge: people are leaving tomorrow (Sunday, 15 June)
- Silverstroom visit – 10<sup>th</sup> June (Tuesday). Met with Provincial reps from WC.
  - 217 people, no Somalis – left on 2 June for March to Parliament and never went back to Silverstroom
    - 84 women, 97 men, 36 children
  - Food: not being delivered on time/according to schedule, being stolen by community
  - Bedding: people say the bedding is enough, but it's too cold on Atlantic seaboard, it gets damp, etc.

- Toilets: there are enough, OK by international standards
- Complaints:
  - Mistreatment by police – 2 people have been arrested for intimidation, slept in police cell only to be released next day – case dismissed
  - Food delivery
  - Cold
- Small NGOs in this district have practically used up funds, volunteers having to use own funds for supplies.

### **Southern District**

- Youngsfield: 14 people arrested on charges of intimidation – one is 15 years old
  - trumped up charges
  - police trying to avoid another Soetwater
  - report of Zimbabwean student (grade 8) beaten up at school, students told to be quiet by police
  - 18 year old in prison, not separated from other South Africans
- Zimbabweans and Burundians sick of food, seen as “Somali” food
- Safety Forum – police, civil society, disaster management – want notification from police before arrests occur, but weren’t told about the arrests in Youngsfield in advance
- 3 small sites in Muizenberg
  - All Saints Church: 65 people
  - Community Church: 25 Zimbabweans
  - Old TAC office: 47 – half Zim, half DRC
  - All sites: basics are okay, all supplied by HDI
    - 2 of 3 sites really don’t like food
  - Running out of supplies (esp. washing)
  - People who wanted to go home, have gone home
  - People are interested in reintegration, but are very, very nervous

## **2. Organisation updates:**

### **Mustadifin**

Notes recieved by email:

Mustadafin Foundation wishes to clarify a few things from the meeting on Saturday and from the notes handed out.

Firstly, the note says that the food supplied in the areas are not nutritional and are lacking in protein. While Mustadafin is part of the city's disaster management team and receive payment for the services we provide, the payment is largely insufficient to cover costs of providing decent meals. Thus the Foundation relies on donations, in cash or kind, to substitute the city's amount.

It is for this reason that we can continue to provide meals that are healthy and protein-rich. Never has Mustadafin provided the victims of the xenophobia outburst with soup. We ensure that our food almost always has meat, mince, or chicken. Just yesterday we provided lentils and chicken to all the areas.

Secondly, the report states that in some areas in Khayalitsha, fears of pork is being served. Cf: Solomon Mahlangu Community Hall. As we are a muslim organization we have never nor will ever serve pork. We do not supply expired food either. We are regularly monitored by a health inspector and thus far in all 22 years of existence we have never had a problem with expired food.

Mustadafin foundation also provides other areas besides those required by the city as well as provides sugar, tea, coffee peanut butter, jam etc to the areas.

Thirdly, when the foundation serves pap it does so with food as well.

The following is an update of the sites that Mustadafin is currently providing meals, sanctioned by the city:

Soetwater: 2000

Blue waters: 250

Rondebosch East: 50

Lentegeur Mosque: 50

Hanover Park Mosque: 100

Bellville Durban road mosque: 150

Tennison mosque: 300  
Site B Comm Hall Khayalitsha: 150  
Solomon Mahlangu: 120  
Desmond Tutu: 250  
Andile Msize: 80  
Khayalitsha Resource Centre: 100  
Belhar mosque: 40  
Chrysalis Academy: 100  
Stellenbosch Municipality: 110  
Portlands mosque: 100  
Methodist Steenberg: 26  
Kasselsvlei Mosque: 120  
Primrose oak 50

This is besides the smaller areas that we feed that are not on the disaster list.

In the meeting it was also mentioned that Mustafin would find it helpful to have a list of the alternative food people would like.

### **COSATU**

Planning mass activities for 21 June (day after World Refugee Day)

- Leave from Nyanga junction, march through Nyanga
- Want people involved in relief effort and refugees as part of that

### **SHAWCO: Student and Health and Welfare Centers Organisations**

Also representing **People's Health Movement UCT**

- When people are sick, refer them to their local clinics and day hospitals
- If there are small groups of people who can't access existing facilities, contact Peoples Health Movement UCT and they can send out a doctor
- Groups of 50+ can contact SHAWCO to send out mobile clinics
- People in sites need information, rather than services, regarding health
  - How to deal with TB, diarrhea, etc.
  - Medical red flags – when to go to hospital
- Nobody can be turned away from medical services, even private, in an emergency.
  - Everyone has a right. Demand attention.

### **Trauma counseling update:**

- Psychologists have been trained and employed in association with Disaster Management
- Social workers in Wynberg district are ready to go to sites and assess needs of communities

**PASSOP**

Braam (PASSOP) wants to be contacted Re: arrests and police complaints.

**Black Sash**

They should also be contacted Re: arrests and police complaints. Action by black sash in the immediate aftermath of the attacks results in arrests.

Both Black Sash and PASSOP sit on the **Safety Forum** which is a group of NGOs responsible to respond to further attacks.

### 3. Role of district teams (Gilad Issacs)

-Most important task: information

-4 key areas:

1. Monitor – sites (via telephone and visits), relief agencies, reintegrated people
2. Action – to assist in whatever needs
3. Communication of information back to central team and sub-teams
4. Work which needs to be done in communities which falls outside of the actual sites – e.g., advocacy work (see: Sea Point community advocating for opening civic center)

Need to expand District Tasks Teams – need a team of at least 6-10 people to meet every week, should include any volunteers and professionals (doctor, lawyer)

Flow of information:

- Information coordinator (hopefully an expert) to work in task team operation room
- Information gathering teams: 4 components
  - district task team
  - site leadership (volunteers and refugee leaders)
  - professional
  - Faith Based Organisations

What kind of information?

- sites need to be visited 2x/week at the moment
- daily phone call
- allocate one person per site

Task team should meet every week together outside of the Saturday meeting.

- Information fed to central team. It can then be collated for:
  - Distribution centers
  - Advocacy groups
  - Health services
  - To take action on rights: health, education, transport
  - Government
  - Faith based organizations
  - Safety forum

LUNCH BREAK – District team meetings

#### **4. Feedback from district team meetings:**

**Western/Northern:** Next meeting – 5pm 18 June at Scalibrini office

-Priorities: to be discussed on Wednesday – groups caved, trying to rebuild

**Mitchell's Plain:** Next meeting – 7pm 17 June at Mitchell's Plain police station

-Priorities: anti-drug mobilization, make sure marches don't turn into attacks

**Southern:** Next meeting – not sure, planning volunteer workshops (next Sat AM)

-Priorities: plan volunteer workshops

**Klipfontein:** Monday 16 June 2pm

-Priorities: get a proper list of sites and allocate people to monitor them (coordination)

**Khayelitsha:** Thursday 19 June 10-12pm either Black Sash CT or national office

-Priorities: governance, how to act in the absence of government

Andy (database designer Igiveada.mn): will bring SHADE people on Wednesday 10-12pm at 122 Longmarket St. – to avoid duplication of monitoring sites; discuss coordination, invite them into district task teams



## 5. Political update

### Community and Camps

On Monday Province said they wanted City to open community halls. Province took city to court for City to be ordered to open community halls. Province asked for TAC support, TAC gave supporting affidavit.

Province put a list on affidavit of 15 halls – most in Coloured/black areas, few white areas.

Affidavit called for opening of “all” community halls, but added – those 15 first, then the rest on 18 June

City showed Province all the Province buildings that are unused right now – Woodstock hospital, unused schools, etc.

In response, Province withdrew their interdict.

Caledon Square want UN to intervene, want to be relocated, not reintegrated.

- Their accommodation came to an end
- TAC et al occupied Civic Centre
- 5 demands:
  - Open all unused spaces
  - Close camps
  - Do the three Rs – reintegrate, resettle, repatriate
  - UNHCR must assist with reintegration, resettlement, and repatriation
  - Joint plan by City and Province that addresses these concerns
- Results:
  - Joint task team: mayor and premier together – developed framework for a plan
  - Meeting again Tuesday to draft plan; plan due Tuesday 4pm (TAC’s deadline)

-If we don’t get the plan by Tuesday, need to act – either legal or illegal/protest

### *Terms of reference:*

There are plans to have an agreed way of raising issues with City and Province. It was noted:

- Principles under which we agree to work with government are based on constitutional, statutory, and humanitarian law
- Dispute resolution mechanism needs to be set out – between City and Province, as well as between government and civil society
  - urgent, humanitarian issues need to be sorted out in 12-24 hours
  - policy issues: 3 working days
  - need independent arbiter

We would then have to agree as civil society not to go public on issues until the outcome of the dispute mechanism.

-Thoughts?

-Elroy: must try to negotiate privately first to avoid bad faith

-Fatima: must reserve our rights/options to go to court for an urgent interdict during the dispute resolution process

-Evan: at the end of the day, it's about co-governance. They (government) are tied in as much as we would be tied in. If you co-govern, you must give something up.

-Annie: Is this taking away the rights of people who need an urgent interdict?

-Zackie: In a real emergency, there is nothing binding that would keep law clinics, etc., from taking action on someone's behalf.

\*\*\*-Fatima: resolution offer not to go to media during dispute resolution process, but maintain right to go to court in urgent cases (will tell government when an issue is "urgent")

### **Meeting with EU ambassadors:**

EU ambassadors very helpful, Int'l Committee of Red Cross was not – said UN didn't need to come in, wasn't a crisis, defended national government decision to not ask UN to come in.

-number of ambassadors asked what they can do other than relief

-made requests for them to take to Geneva and the SA government

-facilitate visits from UNHCR senior officials

-request (as member states) UNHCR exec committee to meet to make decisions about repatriation, resettlement

Politicians are courting xenophobe vote – this is a problem.

-listening to difficulties, social justice issues, etc., using them as barriers rather than opportunities

Social Justice Workshop on Monday, 16 June 14h30-16h30pm, at TAC offices:

-must organize people on very clear issues – end xenophobic violence and hate crimes, end GBV, safety and security for all members of communities, Marshall Plan for southern Africa (similar to post-WWII)

-can't ignore real issues: inequality, competition among poor people for scarce resources

Everyone thanked for coming.

Meeting dismissed.