



Report of the Black Sash, CoRMSA and Oxfam Monitoring Team

De Doorns, Western Cape

The Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa (CoRMSA), the Black Sash and Oxfam have put together a team of independent monitors to assess conditions in the temporary safety site as well as in areas outside the site that relate to the current displacement of Zimbabwean nationals in De Doorns. This monitoring team will collect information on conditions and processes at the safety site as well as on information from areas beyond the site so as to provide information that will be useful in developing ways to resolve the current displacement crisis. This information will be distributed to key role players and will also be published on the CoRMSA website.

Report 2

26th November 2009

MONITORING AT THE SAFETY SITE

1: SHELTER:

The large tents are to be removed today. They will be replaced by 200 UNHCR tents, allowing families to stay together. Single women and single men will have separate accommodation. The replacement exercise will be conducted by UNHCR and the Disaster Management (DM) site management team, with the assistance of SAPS and capable male site residents who are at the site during the day. Community Safety Forum representatives have raised concerns that the erection of the smaller tents and the consequent crowding of the site will present a safety and health risk, as well as reducing the play area for children.

2: FOOD & NUTRITION:

DSD reported on Wednesday, 25th November, that they have increased food portions and have incorporated Zimbabwean women in the preparation and cooking of food.

3: WATER & SANITATION

There is a problem with littering on the site and it has been recommended that the IDP committee should organise IDPs who are available at the site during the day to volunteer in cleaning the site. Local health professionals have stated concern that there are not enough water taps at the site.

4: PROVISION OF SPECIAL ASSISTANCE for the MOST VULNERABLE:

A Zimbabwean site resident with a deaf-mute son born in South Africa has requested clarity on access to a disability grant.

5: HEALTH CARE

DM reports that there are 19 patients on the site.

DSD have arranged that a hall in one of the schools can be used as a venue for psycho-social support so that counselling and debriefing sessions, trauma counselling and pastoral care can be offered to IDPs. DSD therapists are available.

Staff at the De Doorns East Clinic is liaising with MSF regarding conditions at the safety site. They have recorded the presence of nine pregnant women. Three babies were treated for diarrhoea but they have no record of injured foreign nationals. A nursing sister from the clinic has been assigned to work at the safety site, which she visits daily with supplies of bandages, sugar and salt water bottles and other medical supplies.

6: INFORMATION PROVISION TO THE DISPLACED

The Disaster Management (DM) site management team are organising regular daily meetings (except on Monday).

Information dissemination from the IDP committee to safety site residents would appear to be inadequate. There was not, for example, clarity for some site residents regarding the proposed tent replacement.

IDPs have also expressed concern about the registration process and questionnaire and requested clarification regarding the question that refers to 'Other' as an option. Some IDPs expressed feeling ill equipped to adequately answer the questionnaire.

7: SECURITY PROVISION AT DISPLACEMENT SITES

UNHCR tokens were issued to site residents on Tuesday, 24th November, to control access. This is a temporary measure as the long term aim is to issue photo identities to all residents of the safety site.

DM has confirmed that it is committed to ensure safe access to the site, with no restraint but with registration. The main gate at the entrance to the site is open during the day, but closed at night. There is also a pedestrian gate. DM has informed organisations working at the site that DM reserves the right to remove every role player from the site in case of any threats to security, with the safety of the IDPs their prime concern.

8: ACCESS to JUSTICE for VICTIMS who HAVE LAID CHARGES

SAPS have confirmed that IDPs who have criminal charges to report will get protection to report their cases in the police station. SAPS do not have the resources to set up a satellite station on the safety site.

9: INCLUSION OF DISPLACED in PLANNING PROCESSES:

IDP Committee representatives were present at the stakeholders information sharing meeting on 25th November.

10: REINTEGRATION

Personnel from the Office of the Premier will coordinate a process of meeting with all existing organisations involved in the field and information gathering in the community so as to assess the situation prior to any talks of reintegration with local and IDP communities. They will also meet with the SACC with a view to holding a service or prayer meeting on Sunday in the community hall. Their tentative plans for a public meeting with the De Doorns community next week Tuesday will depend on the situation on the ground at the time.

11: SCHOOLING:

DSD have started Early Child Development play group provision at the site. Monitors have visited some of the ten local schools to assess the situation with regard to learners who are foreign nationals. At one school there were indications that the Department had instructed staff not to speak to outsiders on the matter. Indications are that school exams finished prior to the displacement. Whilst some Zimbabwean children were reported to be attending regularly, others only attended inconsistently. There were also reports of some children having been moved to other areas—either to Cape Town or to local farms.

12: ACCOUNTABILITY:

An information sharing meeting, involving all major stakeholders, was held on Wednesday, 25th November.

Concerns have been raised in connection with the relationships of collaboration adopted by certain organisations working to assist the IDPs. The Department of Social Development (DSD) will assist with coordination of the roles of NGOs in the site. DSD will appoint someone to be permanently on the site to provide information, material assistance and support for NGOs.

DSD have advised that Red Cross will be responsible for distributing material and for the process of reintegration. A Trust Account has been opened for the deposit of cash donations. DSD stated that no money, cash or in kind donations can be distributed or given in the site.

DSD will lead in facilitating the drafting of a code of conduct for operations in the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- IDP Committee to arrange for volunteers to clear litter from safety site during the day.

MONITORING OUTSIDE THE SAFETY SITE:

There are suspicions that community members who have romantic relationships or are married to Zimbabwean women are responsible for giving to the police the names of those arrested. Consequently, there is a brewing anger towards these men and they are potential targets for forced removal from the community.

Meetings have been held with representatives of Women on Farms (WoF), the farm labourers' union Sekule Sonke and PGWC Cape Winelands. WoF reported on their work in local communities, including Stofland. They shared their observations of community concerns that underlie the recent violence. These include claims that

- children are staying at home because Zimbabweans are 'taking over our jobs'
- labour is being feminized
- councillors and police can not protect vulnerable people
- work is only guaranteed until the end of the season
- the arrest of the community leaders came as a surprise

It is planned that an Open Day be held on 5th December, focussing on violence against women. The hope was stated that role players would include:

- DHA to conduct a very visible drive to provide IDs for locals *and* foreign nationals.
- SASSA and DSD: to supply financial support for photos and application fees.
- NGOs and civil society organisations: to monitor and support the exercise.
- SAPS: to be visible and effective, bearing in mind that women are often 'afraid' of police.
- Immigration Department: as they have only been to the site once, but it should be clear that their role should be to provide information and not to conduct policing activities.
- Monitors.
- Community leaders.

Monitors met with 7 of the people from De Doorns detained in Worcester Prison. One man amongst the detainees has TB and should be released on a compassionate discharge. The detainees were concerned about:

- The process of arrest: they report being dragged from their beds, without being shown any warrants.
- Lack of information: they report feeling confused about their situation and state that they have no idea why they were arrested. They thought it might be because they had spoken at the Portfolio Committee (in connection with enquiry into labour broking).
- Discrimination: the detainees report that they feel victims of the situation and do not understand why they were not given bail.

Monitors have met with representatives of labour brokers and with the Hex River Valley Table Grape Association in their ongoing attempts to create understanding of the background to the current conflict.

This briefing report was compiled by Vicki Igglesden from reports dated Monday 23rd November and Tuesday 24th November 2009. The monitoring reports are compiled by a team of independent monitors and do not necessarily reflect the view of CoRMSA, the Black Sash or Oxfam.