

IASC Weekly Meeting
1 June 2005
Notes



1: Afghanistan: Status of Civil Military Relations and Coordination
(Introduction by Afia Ali Blasco, OCHA; Presentation by Diego Osorio, CMCoord Officer, OCHA/United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA))

Ms. Afia Ali Blasco, Humanitarian Affairs Officer in OCHA's Africa I, North Africa, Middle East and Afghanistan Section introduced the theme, and gave a short briefing on the expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), civil-military relations as well as OCHA's support to UNAMA.

Mr. Diego Osorio, Civil-Military Coordination Officer in OCHA/UNAMA briefed on his role as CM coordinator as well as the general status of the civil-military relations.

A vital task is to improve the interface between the civil and military actors, which includes the adoption of the IASC civil-military guidelines to the situation. The position of OCHA is that an ISAF expansion should be done to promote security, and that Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) should always distinguish themselves as military. Civil assistance should be given only when necessary, for instance if the location is remote and no civil actor is in place.

The CM Coordinator act as liaison officer and coordinates the flow of information from both civil and military actors as well as arrange and set up meetings between the two sides. Three working groups have been set up: i) PRT working group; ii) NGO civil-military working group; and iii) UN agencies Civil-military focal points collective.

The civil-military relations in Afghanistan are ambiguous, and the legal framework for the coalition soldiers is unclear. The reconstruction strategy is national, central and Government-led, and includes humanitarian actors, development actors and the military forces. Coordination however remains unclear.

Mr. Osorio underlined that the position of UNAMA is that the military forces are not humanitarian actors, but are at times when it is needed, and are getting better in this work. PRTs are considered useful when rightly applied.

In the discussion following the briefing it was stressed that the situation in Afghanistan is still not post-conflict.

Action points:

- The IASC Secretariat to disseminate PowerPoint presentation displayed by Mr. Osorio.

2: Briefing on IDD mission to Liberia (by Marc Vincent, Inter-agency Displacement Division (IDD))

Mr. Marc Vincent, Acting Chief of IDD's Protection and Policy Section, briefed on the IDD mission to Liberia, 8-22 May, which was a follow-up to the mission of October 2004. The purpose was to review the implementation of the November 2004 Action Plan for the Return and Reintegration of IDPs and to assist the HC and the IDP Consultative Forum in establishing a comprehensive monitoring mechanism to address protection issues for IDPs in camps and during the return process.

In November 2004 the return process was initiated for an anticipated total number of 314.000 IDPs. The WFP, UNHCR and IOM provided transport assistance, to over 145.000 IDPs, many of who have returned to their place of origin. Since then the procedure has changed. Instead of providing transport, IDPs are now given cash-allowances and are left to make their own way from the camps. The change of procedure was urged upon the CT by the Government who wanted the return process speeded up to get people home before the election in October this year.

These changes were not followed by a clear Action Plan, and there is a clear lack of protection monitoring and transportation. Furthermore the returnees are having difficulties in getting the return package back on foot, which will be made even more difficult by the approaching rainy season. Also, the voluntariness of the return has become difficult to determine.

Among its conclusions, Mr. Vincent mentioned, that the mission recommends that the transportation facilities be restored; that a resettlement policy is developed for those who wish to stay in the camps for the time being; that the protection monitoring is improved (UNHCR is asked to expand its presence and NGOs to do more protection monitoring, especially on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), which remains a major issue in Liberia. UNICEF has been requested to provide support to NGOs when needed); and that coordination should be improved (the departure of OCHA in November 2004 has created major coordination problems as no proper follow-up structure was set up).

Mr. Vincent furthermore underlined that the return process is hampered by lack of pull-factors, with no infrastructure or job-opportunities in the return areas. A major concern and constrain in this regard, is the lack of funding.

In the discussion following the briefing the question of Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) was brought up, and the need to re-integrate the former combatants reiterated. Finally it was underlined that the areas of return must be able to provide the returnees with basic services upon return.

Action points:

- The IASC Secretariat to circulate the IDD mission report

MSF Briefing on Sudan)

Before going through the IASC Standard briefing, the Chairperson gave the floor to Mr. Emmanuel Tronc, MSF, who reported on the arrestment of two MSF staff members in Sudan. The two had been released, but with accusation of false reports, spy activities etc. Accusations came from the release of the MSF report on Darfur in March 2005, where the Sudanese government's interference is stated.

3: IASC Standard Briefing (by Marilena Viviani, IASC Secretariat)

- The IASC Task Force on Gender will meet for a videoconference this afternoon, Wednesday, 1 June, from 15h00 to 17h00. Details for the venue will be communicated to the members of the TF shortly.
- Tomorrow, Thursday, 2 June, a Humanitarian Liaison Working Group (HLWG) Meeting will be held with Mr. Holdbrook Arthur, WFP Regional Director for East and central Africa. It will take place from 9h30 to 10h30 in Room 22 of the Palais.
- Also on Thursday, 2 June, OCHA has invited for a meeting on the Secretary General's Report on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development in order to discuss the outline as well as the division of labour for the drafting of this report. The meeting will be held from 15h00 to 16h00 in Room A-R of the Palais des Nations.
- The IASC Sub-working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning will meet on Thursday and Friday, 2 and 3 June, in New York for two full days. The agenda includes the validation of the Early Warning – Early Action Report for the upcoming IASC Working Group in June.
- On Friday, 3 June, an IASC Meeting with the Humanitarian Coordinator of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mr. Ross Mountain, will take place from 10h30 to 11h30 in Room I of the Palais. Further details on the agenda will follow shortly.
- A launch of the "Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction" will take place on Friday, 3 June from 10h45 to 12h30 in the International Bureau of Education (UNESCO), Route des Murrillons, 15.
The launch is coordinated by The Foundation for the Refugee Education Trust (RET) in close association with UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and International Rescue Committee (IRC). The launch will include a briefing on the consultative development process and the content of the standards, the standards

handbook, and a discussion of plans to promote and implement the minimum standards around the world.

- Later on Friday, 3 June from 15h00 to 16h30 the World Bank Equity and Development meeting will be held at ILO in room IX.
- Friday evening, 3 June from 17h00 to 18h00 a meeting to discuss the draft of the "Manual on Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups" will be held. As the meeting takes place in New York, Geneva based colleagues are invited to participate via conference call.
- Next Tuesday, 7 June, the inter-agency working group on mental health and psychosocial support in crises will be convened for the second time. It will take place from 15h00 to 17h30 in videoconference room E230 of the WHO building. One objective of the meeting is to prepare for the IASC Working Group Meeting in Geneva on 22-23 June.

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List of Participants**



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