

**1: Central Asia – contingency planning and preparedness**  
(by UNHCR and UNICEF)

*Abstract: In general participants welcomed the discussion on the issue. The briefings and discussions underlined the volatility of the situation in the region, both regarding the political situation and natural/environmental hazards. The need for increased contingency planning and preparedness was stressed as well as the need to view the regional aspects. Capacity building of the Country Offices was urged along with the need to ensure IASC collaboration in the field as well as to ensure the link to IASC collaboration at HQ level.*

Mr. Arafat Jamal, Special Assistant to the Assistant High Commissioner. (UNHCR) gave a short update on the situation in Uzbekistan/Kyrgyzstan following the events in the Uzbek city of Andijan on May 13, and the consequent outflow of refugees into Kyrgyzstan.

The situation surrounding the approximately 450 Uzbek asylum-seekers in Kyrgyzstan is developing rapidly. The Uzbek authorities are putting pressure on the Kyrgyz government to return the refugees, all of whom have been offered asylum, claiming that many are terrorists and criminals. Powerful neighbours have been backing the Uzbeks and the entire issue is becoming part of the regional geo-political situation. Considering the context, and furthermore that the Kyrgyz government is in transition with many acting ministers, Kyrgyzstan is in many respects not considered a secure country of asylum.

The Uzbek Prosecutor General submitted to the Kyrgyz a list of ‘criminals’ among the refugees, on the basis of which 29 were detained. Mr. Jamal stated that the UNHCR is of the opinion that the majority of asylum-seekers are indeed legitimate refugees and furthermore that many of them, if sent back, would face an eminent threat of torture.

Mr. Jamal stated that there is a real possibility that the Uzbek security forces could cross the border and force the refugees back into Uzbekistan. An emergency resettlement, or even a humanitarian evacuation, of the refugees may be the only way out.

The Secretary-General has called upon the Kyrgyz President not to return the refugees. Furthermore, the Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees has been in Kyrgyzstan conducting a series of high-level meetings with, among others, the President and the Foreign Minister, as well as the asylum-seekers themselves. The High Commissioner is presently in the US, where he will address the issue with senior UN and US officials.

Frank Remus, UNHCR Senior Desk Officer for Central Asia, briefed on UNHCR’s strategy for contingency planning and preparedness in the region.

Given the volatility of the situation, UNHCR is preparing for different scenarios: 1) A 'classic refugee' scenario with a large influx into different neighbouring countries from Uzbekistan. A draft appeal is in preparation being made, staff members are being alerted and non-food items made ready for deployment; 2) An 'IDP' scenario foreseeing that large masses of people will depart from different part of the country, for example the Uzbek Ferghana Valley, to go to the capital in an attempt to topple the government; and 3) This scenario could be a mixture of the two mentioned above with the addition of an outbreak of ethnic conflicts.

UNHCR's budget for Kyrgyzstan has already been increased in order to deal with the present crisis.

Ms. Angela Raven-Roberts (UNICEF), who was part of the Inter-Agency mission to look at contingency planning in Kyrgyzstan in May this year, stated that UNICEF is doing contingency planning on a regional basis and Uzbekistan and Kyrgystan have completed one round of preparedness planning and have updated their contingency plans covering the next six months. In addition a regional workshop will be taking place in Almaty in October bringing together country teams from Kyrgystan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, kazakstan and Tajikistan.

Commenting on the situation in the region Ms. Raven-Roberts underscored the continuing political volatile situation. Furthermore she referred to a DfID report from 2002 on the Ferghana Valley, which contains information on a number of political, social and environmental risks and vulnerabilities, which are still relevant today and would be useful reading for all concerned. She also reiterated the fact that along with natural and political disaster risks there is also ongoing concern over the dangers of contamination from the number of chemical and uranium plants in the region, which are at risk from flooding and poor maintenance.

Ms. Maria-Olga Gonzalez (UNDP), who was also part of the Inter-Agency mission to Kyrgyzstan, outlined the status of the Country Offices in the region, underlining that they are over stretched with work and needs further capacity. Also the Country Offices/Country Teams must make sure to include non-UN entities. Tadjikistan was highlighted as an example of regional best practice regarding IASC collaboration in the CT.

Following the mission, a group of people started sharing information on the situation and preparedness in four Central Asian countries, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan and Kazakhstan.

Ms. Marilena Viviani, Chief of the IASC Secretariat, informed that in the last IASC Working Group, the IASC Sub-Working Group on Contingency planning and Preparedness was recommended to assist HC/RCs and CTs on how to insure better links with the Inter-Agency collaboration at HQ-level.

IFRC underlined that representatives from the national societies in the region are meeting regularly to discuss the regional component.

**Action points:**

- IASC Secretariat to share the summary notes of this meeting with the Country Offices/Country Teams in Central Asian for information.

**2: AOB:**

Einar Bjorgo, Head of UNOSAT's, Rapid Mapping, Innovations and User Relations, gave a short briefing on UNOSAT's mapping support to the UN, NGOs and local governments. Mr Bjorgo showed examples of the satellite images and maps provided by UNOSAT:  
Services can be obtained through UNOSATs website: [www.unosat.org](http://www.unosat.org)

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

- Today at 10.00 the Mid-Year Review of "Humanitarian Appeal 2005" will be launched in Room 7, 3rd Floor, Palais des Nations.
- On 30 June the IASC Tsunami Task Force will meet from 17.00-18.00 in the Videoconference Room, door 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (next to C.3), Palais des Nations.
- The IASC Secretariat is preparing the final summary note from the IASC Working Group, held on 22-23 June, and will circulate to members shortly.

**IASC Weekly Meeting**  
**29 June 2005**  
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