

Humanitarian Situation

INTRODUCTION

Several key concerns remain in Nimpala despite the political stability. Numerous areas throughout Nimpala continue to lack shelter, potable water, sanitation, and waste management, driving several health concerns. The threat of sporadic violence continues to cause hardships and suffering for portions of the civilian population. Several instances have been reported where militias continue to harass, sexually abuse, and terrorize IDPs in the Northern areas.

Overall, the security situation in Northern Nimpala remains clam, despite small pockets of violence that disrupt humanitarian operations. Unlike the conditions present during the civil war, delivery of services has been relatively unhindered and the disarmament of violent groups has reduced the instances of robbery and disruption of aid delivery.

As the dry season approaches, humanitarian efforts are focused on supporting the return of IDPs to the Southern areas.

Funding shortages pose an additional threat to the continuation of humanitarian operations in most regions. This diminished instances of conflict and initial success of the peace accord has changed donor funding, shifting to development and scaling down of humanitarian related projects.

POPULATION MOVEMENTS

Displaced communities continue to grow despite efforts to initiate relocation programs and programs for returnees. Some efforts for organized return of IDPs and refugees are underway, although a greater and untracked number of spontaneous returns continue. At the same time, large numbers of IDPs remain in camps and continue to demand government services. International groups are currently maintaining the refugee camps. Conditions in the IDP camps are of particular concern. Hopes continue that many of the IDPs will return home now that there is a continued cessation of violence.

FOOD

Food insecurity is greatest during at the end of the dry period. There are serious concerns regarding food insecurity in the East and North, where climate conditions and increased population pressure threaten the limited harvests. There is also concern that a spike in prices due to limited supplies and global markets could quickly restrict access even further. It is already estimated that over 50% of household's income are spent on food. Many families in the East are thought to be surviving on just one meal a day. The perceived looming threat of famine and related deaths has prompted several small protests from local communities and demands for

government action, but the government has insufficient capacity for any form of intervention.

During the civil war, militias targeted refugee camps during the distribution of food aid, causing widespread fear from camp residents, as women and girls were often victims of sexual violence during these raids. Many camp residents continue to leave portions of their rations outside at night hoping militias will take the food and leave them unharmed.

HEALTH

Cholera, Avian Flu, and Meningitis Updates

The last cholera outbreak was reported in 2004. Humanitarian groups moved quickly to contain the spread of the outbreak. Despite this effort, the challenges of containment in Nimpala became quickly clear. Over 12,240 cases were reported in the Northern areas alone, with over 469 deaths. WHO, UNICEF, and OCHA's Emergency Preparedness and Response Unit have requested funding to prepare a cholera response plan. This has not yet received funding approval.

The rainy season also brought an increase in cases of acute watery diarrhea. WHO has led an effort to increase surveillance in the camps and provide kits for water chlorination and hygiene promotion.

Meningitis presents another serious threat to the population with a total of 357 reported deaths. Delivery of vaccinations and medical supplies continue to arrive in central areas of the country and remote areas in the East. The Ministry of Health has been a key partner in this effort and managed the distribution of key supplies.

Avian flu has been reported in Nimpala for several years and has a high vulnerability due to the large migratory bird paths through the country. The Ministry of Health has coordinated surveillance and effective response to the disease. A taskforce was created by OCHA to deal with avian and human influenza. Public policy actions at this stage focus on raising awareness on the way the disease spreads and the risks involved with animal contact. The level of the alert in Nimpala remains high as outbreaks in poultry industry remain frequent.

WAT/SAN

Various organizations continue interventions throughout the country. Boreholes are continuing to be drilled throughout the country, providing thousands of people with access. This process has increased due to cheaper technology, but has not yet reached a critical mass. Also, many water sources are quickly contaminated due to poor location planning and the absence of protection of the surrounding areas from livestock and human waste. A majority of the country remains without access to clean water and sanitation services, far above the internationally defined levels.

EDUCATION

Appropriate educational infrastructure is inadequate in many areas, particularly the places that underwent the most severe destruction during the civil war, where large numbers of IDPs are returning. This lack of infrastructure creates major constraints on the education sector since there is an insufficient number of schools for all children. Aid agencies are targeting these regions heavily damaged during the war, trying to get students back into classrooms. Rehabilitation work on schools is increasing the number of facilities available. Accelerated programs are also helping students catch up on missed schooling and reintegration into the formal schooling system.

PROTECTION

This security throughout the country has remained relatively stable, with isolated instances of reported fighting or violence, mostly in the Northern and Central zones. There has been reported movement of several armed groups, military personnel, and equipment in the North.

Land disputes continue to be registered in the West and North. A few areas have as many as 3 disputes per week.

The small conflicts in the Northeast region have led to continued displacements heightening civilian vulnerability, despite an overall ceasefire and suspension of hostilities.