

# Emergency Operation in Georgia

Daily Report for 17 August 2008

<b>Displacements caused by recent conflict over South Ossetia</b>	
<i>Displacement within Georgia excl. South Ossetia</i>	98,600
<i>Displacement within South Ossetia</i>	30,000
<i>Sub Total Georgia</i>	<b>128,6003</b>
<i>Displacement to Russian Federation</i>	30,000
<b>Displacements Total</b>	<b>158,600</b>

*In addition, Georgia has a caseload of 220,000 IDPs from previous crises.*

## First UN convoy to make it to Gori after the fighting

A joint convoy of the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNHCR managed to enter Gori on Sunday. This was the first time since the outbreak of the conflict on 8 August that UN organizations were given access to that city. UNHCR delivered non-food Items (NFIs) for some 1,500 persons, which included jerry cans, kitchen sets and blankets. The goods were unloaded in a warehouse and will be distributed by local authorities

Earlier that same day, a UNHCR security mission was unable to get through to Gori along the same route, which clearly illustrates the volatility and unpredictability of the security situation. It remains to be seen whether the UN will be allowed to bring more assistance in upcoming days.

UNHCR staff reported that the Gori was deserted apart from some 50 - 60 people gathered in the center and waiting for assistance. While the buildings did not appear to be very damaged, there are clear traces of massive looting of both shops and private accommodations.

## Airlift to Batumi planned for Monday

UNHCR is trying to start airlifting non-food items (NFI) to Batumi at the Black Sea in western Georgia as early as Monday. On the receiving end, an emergency team is trying to reach Batumi by land from Tbilisi using rough and difficult back roads in order to avoid road blocks where they might be turned back.

Currently, the country is practically cut in two and UNHCR has no land access to some 15,000 IDPs trapped in western Georgia. On Saturday, a railway bridge was blown up some 35 km west of Tbilisi affecting the country's arterial railway line. At the same time main roads are impassable due to roadblocks.

An airlift is the only possibility to bring urgently needed relief to the western provinces. NFIs for some 35,000 to 40,000 persons which are stockpiled in the capital of Tbilisi but cannot reach western Georgia and will be distributed locally.

## UNHCR started planning for winterisation

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While Georgians experience temperatures deep in the thirties, in planning terms winter is just around the corner. UNHCR together with its partner organizations has already started preparing for the cold season.

Winterization programmes usually include repairs of existing heating systems and roofs where necessary, the provision of stoves, fuel, winter quilts and in some cases cash grants to host families so they can cover increased needs fuel.

## Tented camp in Tbilisi

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The first tented camp emerged in Tbilisi. It was erected by the government in the vicinity of the airport and currently hosts between 260 -270 people. UNHCR went there last night to see what is needed and found the camp to be well organized. Water, electricity, latrines, garbage collection and health care are in place, the IDPs (internally Displaced Persons) have food and NFIs.

## UNHCR assists government with registration

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Today UNHCR reached an initial agreement with the Central Registry Agency (CRA) regarding funding and support for the registration of new IDPs. Detailed information on the whereabouts and needs of persons of concern enables UNHCR and other aid agencies to optimize their assistance programmes and make sure that no person in need is left behind.

UNHCR made a commitment for USD 2 million which will be used to purchase the necessary computer hardware, to develop adequate software for the registration process and to conduct information campaigns for the beneficiaries.

Also, this project will enable CRA to issue provisional documents to IDPs who lost their papers during the crisis. Identity documents are necessary to access public services such as education, health care and social assistance.

## Turkey

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UNHCR is currently verifying media reports according to which thousands of Georgians are said to be fleeing to the northwestern Turkey. Regular checks by UNHCR's office in Ankara with local authorities in northwestern Turkey indicated that there was no unusual movement across the Georgian-Turkish borders.