

# Emergency Operation in Georgia

Update, 28 August 2008

## No new arrivals from “buffer zone” to Gori

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Today 2,300 were registered as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Gori, including:

- a small number of persons who have fled from villages in the so-called buffer zone north of Gori within the last three days due to security conditions on the ground,
- would-be returnees from Tbilisi who were headed to the buffer zone villages but not able to continue:
- old IDPs from the 1990s.

The Georgian civil registration authorities started a more detailed data collection today in order to obtain a break down of IDP groups and an assessment of the damage in their places of origin.

The tented camp Gori now hosts over 800 persons. The camp has been erected within 48 hours when the unexpected need for additional accommodation suddenly transpired on 26 August. Already today, camp life appeared rather settled and organised.

In a dynamic partnership, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP collaborated to create dignified living conditions. The imminent distribution of ration card will further streamline the assistance for each resident. UNHCR is coordinating the operation, and providing shelter and non food items (NFIs), particularly much needed mattresses. UNICEF is taking care of water/sanitation facilities and of friendly spaces for the children while WFP is in charge of nutrition.

Today, unlike the two previous days, no new arrivals from villages from the “buffer zone” in Gori were registered.

A UNHCR assessment team went to visit newly returned people in villages north of Gori that are under Georgian control and have been declared safe. The villagers were found to be still very traumatised and scared. Rumours of mines, atrocities and destruction in the area further north are widespread but could not be confirmed by eye witnesses.

The returnees told UNHCR that government authorities had strongly advised them to leave their shelters in Tbilisi over the weekend and return to their villages. However, UNHCR found that the IDPs were sent back to areas lacking police and government services, medical care and food supplies. Also, in some villages, the inhabitants told UNHCR that water lines supplying their irrigation system had apparently been cut from Tskhinvali. Farmers now fear that their entire harvest might be lost.

## Return from Western Georgia is still a trickle

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UNHCR has delivered almost the entire stock of non-food items (NFIs) to the Georgian Minister for Refugees and Accommodation (MRA) and has started monitoring the distribution. In most places, NFIs have been distributed to IDPs, in some cases complemented by private donations.



In a few places, such as Batumi or Lanchkhuti, distribution teams found that up to 20 percent of the IDPs had already gone back. However, in most locations in Western Georgia, the displaced still live with host families and relatives as well as in a few collective centres. There, the return movement is still a trickle. Most families have sent the head of household to Gori to assess the situation. The remaining family members intend to return as soon as security conditions allow. UNHCR is recommending them not to rush their decision as long as the situation is not favourable.

The security situation in the field remains calm.