



**TAC NEWSLETTER #4
TO ALL DISPLACED PEOPLE
STAYING IN CAMPS AND
SAFETY SITES
8 AUGUST 2008**

It has been more than eleven weeks since xenophobic violence drove thousands from communities around Cape Town and into camps and 'safety sites'.

This is a summary of actions and meetings with which TAC has been involved (together with/on behalf of displaced people) over the past week.

TAC GOES TO COURT

The court case that is seeking a court order for norms and standards in humanitarian aid in the camps and 'safety sites' (better conditions) made its' first appearance in the Cape High Court.

On Tuesday 5 August 2008 the attorney acting on behalf of TAC met with the judge presiding over the case in his chambers. The Provincial Government and the City of Cape Town asked for more time to review documentation submitted by lawyers acting on behalf of TAC. The judge then set a date of September 1 2008 for the hearing of the case to commence in the Cape High Court. TAC continues to put pressure on government to urgently improve conditions in the camps.

CAPE HIGH COURT DEMONSTRATION

TAC and representatives from the camps organised a demonstration outside the Cape High Court on Tuesday 5 August 2008. There were 90 people, and interviews were given to three radio stations and three newspapers. The demonstration helped to give exposure to the court case, and was lively and effective.

EVICCTIONS AND CLOSURE OF CAMPS

There were two developments over the past week regarding government and the closure of camps and safety sites. Two dates were mentioned: The first date, September 1 2008, was discussed by Dr Hildegard Fast, head of Disaster Management for the city as being the date by which the camps will be closed.

From media reports it appears that government believes that all people remaining in the camps will be reintegrated by that date. She did not

mention how government will make this possible, in terms of providing resources and security for those returning. Also not mentioned in connection with this date was government's plan for those not willing or able to be reintegrated, for reasons of awaiting repatriation, lack of resources, or afraid to return to potentially dangerous situations. TAC wrote letters and press statements calling for clarity on this issue from the Provincial Government and the City of Cape Town. TAC condemns any announcement that camps will be closed, especially when there is no apparent plan for displaced people who will not be reintegrated. Also condemned is the government's lack of consultation with representative leadership of the displaced people in the camps.

The second development was the circulation of a notice to some community halls belonging to the city saying that people must leave by 31 August 2008.

Again, no plan was proposed for sheltering those currently staying in these halls.

TAC will oppose any closures or evictions, especially when government has provided no plan for those unable or unwilling to be reintegrated. TAC has written a letter to government and released a press statement condemning this notice.

MEETINGS AND ACTION

REPORT UPDATE

TAC released an update to the big report released two weeks ago. The update report went to all levels of government, the media and to many others. It included updated statistics from the camps and sites, including numbers of people and an assessment of areas of need. The press have already written articles on the report update. Site assessments continue to provide information regarding the changing situation, and has proved to be the most effective way of finding out what areas of need exist and for how many people. The information has helped to document the biggest humanitarian disaster ever experienced in the Western Cape.

EDUCATION TASK TEAM

A team including teachers and representatives from displaced people in the camps met to discuss concerns regarding access to education and issues with displaced children of school-going age.

The intention is to follow up issues with the new MEC in the Department of Education, and to make sure that all children have safe access to education and schools, and also to highlight individual cases where children are not accessing education, or are struggling with issues arising from previous trauma as refugees or trauma owing to displacement. This team will continue to meet together and with government.

TAC- BEHIND THE SCENES

Throughout the crisis TAC have been constantly organising meetings, arranging transport from camps and food for meetings, buying cell phone airtime for representatives and volunteers, and generally providing necessary support to displaced people who often have no access to transport, money and other resources needed to campaign for better treatment for displaced people.

Much of this work has been organised from the offices of TAC and the AIDS Law Project in Cape Town, where space, computers, stationery and telephones have been made available.

Thousands of pages have been printed and circulated to camps, support workers and other organisations. While TAC has been dealing with government agencies in order to improve conditions for displaced people, many volunteers have been working long hours providing back-up to the different teams involved.

TAC, DISPLACED PEOPLE AND THE MEDIA

TAC has made databases of media contacts available so that all press statements, conferences, protests and demonstrations have been well attended by the media. This has helped to keep relevant issues in the news, and also provided opportunities for displaced people to speak out regarding their situation.

From the first days of the crisis, the TAC website has been made available, and has helped to attract donations and volunteers. The website has also made public letters, memorandums and opinions and documented the entire crisis. The website is currently being adapted to contain a complete archive of TAC's involvement with the xenophobia crisis.

SATURDAY MEETINGS

There have been meetings of refugee representative leadership, civil society organisations and volunteers (the District Task Team meetings) every Saturday, where updates regarding situations in camps and 'safety sites' are discussed, as well as plans for the following week. These meetings have been essential in organising a response to specific areas of concern.

SAHRC MEETINGS

Meetings have been held twice a week at the South African Human Rights Council offices in Cape Town between TAC, other representatives of civil society organisations and government in an effort to coordinate humanitarian relief and deal with issues around security, reintegration, repatriation and resettlement and all other issues affecting displaced people.

IMPORTANT UPDATE- RUNNING OUT OF MONEY:

Since the start of the crisis the TAC has spent more than R 2,900,000.00 on direct humanitarian aid.

TAC is running out of money, and is unable to continue providing humanitarian relief beyond Monday 11 August 2008. Donated funds enabled TAC to provide relief: these funds are now finished. TAC will continue to monitor the camps and safety sites to ensure that humanitarian relief is being provided. All requests that the TAC receives will be passed onto the JOC, and we will continue to insist they provide the requested goods.

We understand that this may be difficult, but we are left with no other option.

We have notified all levels of government including the JOC
If you have requests for specific needs for supplies for the camps and safety sites, contact your site representative, leadership representative or the site manager.

Contact: JOINT OPERATIONS CENTRE: (021) 937 0791, (021) 937 0788