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RETURN

Information Update

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Security: The security situation in Afghanistan has been generally stable; however, several significant security incidents have been reported. The coalition forces aided by Afghan National Army units continued their operation against suspected Taliban elements in the Southeast of the country. Reports of rocket attacks in Paktia, Paktika, Khost and Ghazni provinces have been received. One of the rockets, which did not explode, landed within 100 meters of the UN compound in Gardez on the evening of 3rd June. In the morning of 4th June a remote-controlled device was detonated along a road in Gardez without any casualties. A similar device exploded on the side of the Kabul-Pul-I-lam main road. Three delegates from the Ministry of Defence were injured in the incident.

Attack on ISAF caused 4 deaths and 20 injuries: At 0800 am on Saturday 7 June, two buses containing ISAF German peacekeepers were travelling between Kabul centre and the ISAF base along the main Kabul-Jalalabad road on the outskirts of the city, when a Toyota Corolla taxi started to overtake the rear bus. As it came alongside the bus, the taxi exploded killing the occupants of the taxi and destroying the bus. According to news reports 4 German peacekeepers were killed and 20 injured in what is believed to have been a suicide terrorist attack. The injured have already been transferred to Germany for treatment.

Spin Boldak and Arghistan (Kandahar): News media reported fighting between the coalition and suspected Taliban elements in Arghistan and Spin Boldak districts on 3, 4 and 5th of June 2003, with 4 soldiers dying in the first day. In another incident in Spin Boldak on 4 June 2003, 40 Taliban and 7 Afghan Government soldiers died in a battle that broke close to the Pak-Afghan border. The Coalition campaign continued for a week and a number of arrests of suspected Taliban activists has been reported.



Areas of concern

Hilmand, Kandahar and Zabul Provinces: This area continues to experience fighting between suspected Taliban and Al Qaeda groups and the Coalition forces, which has resulted in general tension and disruption.

Shah Joy, Ghazni: Returnees were robbed on two occasions in Shah Joy in Ghazni.

Sayid Karam, Chamkani, Jaji and Aryub Districts, Paktia Province: The Mangal and Jaji tribes have reportedly agreed to address the concerns of refugees in Pakistan in order to facilitate a sustainable return. It is planned that Jaji and Ahmed Kheil delegations will visit refugees in Pakistan to answer questions from refugees.

Warras District, Bamyan: There are reports that houses and haystacks were burnt in Siel Burda village in Surkhjoy valley. The reasons behind this attack are unknown although it may have been linked to poppy cultivation.

Sayed Abad, Wardak: There are reports that a school for women and girls was targeted and partially destroyed in Sayed Abad.

Roads

Road Safety: Road robberies are a major security problem for returnees from both Pakistan and Iran. Areas of particular concern includes:

- The road from Kunduz city to Shirkhan border.
- Route from Hirat to Farah and Kandahar (Shindand to Dilaram)
- Roads in the districts of Farsi, Gulistan and Ghormach (route to Bala Morghab)
- Main road from Nili to Tirinkut, Uruzgan
- Road between Ghazni centre and Malistan district and on connecting road between Malistan and Nawur.
- The road from Ghazni to Kabul, especially in Saalar area of Said Abad district of Maidan/Wardak province.
- Main road between Qalat and Ghazni.
- The road linking Qalat to Lashkargah, Helmand Province.

Road Accident: DoRR Taluqan reported that a truck of returnees turned over on 7th June at 7:00 AM on the way from Taluqan to Kishem district. As a result, a woman lost her life while four passengers seriously injured and others got small injuries. The returnees were brought to a hospital in Taluqan for treatment. A girl whose neck was broken was feeling severe pain. Others left after treatment except a woman whose leg was broken, and her son was staying with her. UNHCR Field Unit Kunduz provided the woman and her son with some necessary medicine, and hired a vehicle for them from Taluqan to Kishem, as they were not able to join others on the journey.

Fire Incident on the way home: On Monday 12 May 2003, a truck carrying the luggage of six returnee families and two single men caught fire between Islam Qala and Hirat City. The entire



luggage and the truck were completely destroyed. It appears the fire was caused by a returnee smoking and a gas cylinder deposited in one of the luggage.

Message to Returnees: Returnees are advised to refrain from smoking while travelling with their luggage, to ensure the safety of their inflammable items, and to avoid sitting dangerously on the top of the trucks. Returnees are solely responsible for their own safety and that of their belongings. UNHCR assumes no responsibility for accidents while travelling.

The Afghan and Coalition forces have established joint check-posts on the main Kandahar-Spin Boldak road to inspect all traffic for security purposes.

Note: All returnees are advised NOT to travel during the night hours, and should seek shelter in one of the major settlements.

Salang Tunnel: The tunnel is currently closed during the day, and is open to traffic only from 7pm to 7am. The tunnel will be closed completely from mid June for at least 3 months while the rehabilitation work is carried out by the Turkish Construction Company (Cukurova), that intends to complete the task before December when winter sets in. An alternative route to the north is through Maidan Shahr (Wardak) and up through the Haji Gak passes to Bamyan. And from Bamyan it passes north to Doshi, Sayghan and Doabe Mikh Zarin, and then on to Pul-I-Khumri and north. There have been problems with this route as at least 2 bridges have been washed away, but the government is to make immediate efforts to replace these bridges in order to make this route accessible before the full closure of the Salang in June.

The trip from Kabul to Pul-I-Khumri through Bamyan - Dosi takes at least 2 days with a good vehicle under optimal conditions. During the rehabilitation process of the Salang Pass, returnees who return to the North through this alternative route, will receive a UNHCR additional cash grant between 20 - 35 dollars per person depending on the distance they travel.

From Torkham, Nawa Pass, Chamkani, Joji Ariub, Babrak Tana, Ghulam Khan and Joji Maidan, those travelling

- (i) to Faryab, Jawzjan and Badakhsan will receive \$30; \$15 in the Pul-e-Charkhi, and \$15 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.
- (ii) to Balkh, Kunduz and Takhar, will receive \$25; \$15 in the Pul-e-Charkhi, and \$10 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.
- (iii) to Baghlan and Samangan will receive \$20; \$10 in the Pul-e-Charkhi and \$10 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.

From Spin Boldak, those travelling

- (iv) to Faryab, Jawzjan and Badakhsan will receive \$35; \$15 in the Ghazni and \$20 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.
- (v) to Balkh, Kunduz and Takhar, will receive \$30; \$15 in the Ghazni and \$15 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.
- (vi) to Baghlan and Samangan will receive \$25; \$10 in the Ghazni and \$15 in Pul-e-Khumry encashment centers.



125 IDP families returned to Bamyan and 184 further families are now being registered in preparation for return. A return shura has been established in Bamyan to help facilitate return of IDPs from different communities to the area.

Return Commission: The return commission was initially established in the north of the country in October 2002 with the following objectives:

- (i) to identify obstacles to the return of Afghans who have fled the north after the fall of the Taliban, and who are presently internally displaced persons (IDP) or refugees to return to their areas of former residence
- (ii) to recommend appropriate actions in order to allow a voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return,
- (iii) to provide accurate information on a regular basis so that IDPs and refugees can make an informed decision on whether to return to their areas of origin
- (iv) promote activities enhancing respect and understanding between different communities living in the five provinces: Balkh, Samangan, Saripul, Jawzjan and Faryab
- (v) to promote among the local communities and authorities awareness of and respect for the relevant national decrees and legislation, relevant international conventions and standards pertaining to the returns of refugees and IDPs, and human rights.

The working group of this commission has so far visited 200 villages in the five northern provinces of Balkh, Samangan, Saripul, Jawzjan and Faryab, finding facts that hinders IDPs, especially Pashtun IDPs, return to the north of the country. The Commission fact finding report has been submitted to the concerned authorities and has had positive impact on the human rights and security situation in the above five provinces.

The Commission is planning to pay visits to IDP camps in Kandahar and Herat to discuss place of origin and to provide information on conditions in the north.

Composition: The Commission is chaired by Enayatullah Nazari, Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, while General Abdul Rashid Dostum, Ustad Atta, Sardar Saeedi are its members. The Afghan Human Rights Commission, UNAMA, and UNHCR also have membership in this Commission.

As many as 43,000 people have been displaced in the north; they are currently stay in four camps located in the urban and rural areas of the northern zone. There are 2125 IDPs in Faryab province, 1,645 in two camps of Kunduz and 973 in Baghlan. IOM has relocated 4,455 IDPs to their places of origin during the current year. Currently, majority of the IDPs are staying in Herat and Kandahar.

The Return Commission has no specific office in the north. Its work and discussions take place in the UNHCR, Human Rights Commission, UNAMA, or in the local government premises. Those who want to voice their views can contact the Return Commission through its member organizations.



So far the Commission has facilitated the return of 170 Tajik families from the center of Samangan to the Kholm Sarbagh district, 20 Pashton families from Balkh district to Hazrat Sultan district of Samangan province, and 12 Pashton families from Kholm to Piroz Naqshi district in Samngan.

150 Pashtun families who are originally from Dawlat Abad, Maimana have been displaced to Balkh. The Commission has discussed this issue with the authorities of Dawlat Abad so that they area of origin. IOM, meanwhile, has started the registration of these families who would soon be relocated to their places of origin. In addition, the problems of 200 Pashtun families who had been displaced from Sheerin Tagab district of Faryab province to the center of Maimana, are being currently discussed by the Commission with the authorities and they would soon be able to return to their homes.

The Return Commission has established two sub-commissions, which deal with illegal taxation and forced recruitment.

2003

1. From Neighbouring Countries: Important points to be remembered:

Returnees have the free choice of either returning to their village (location of origin) or to P camps.

Iris Validation Centres: All refugees returning from **Pakistan** to Afghanistan with UNHCR assistance will have to go through an iris machine, a computer-based technology that examines the eye and can detect if someone has been tested before. **(Iris Recognition Centres are located at Hayatabad in Peshawar, Alizai in Kurram Agency and Chaman in Balochistan in Pakistan, and in Khost in Afghanistan.)**

Anyone who is discovered to have received assistance before will not receive assistance. Returnees who want to receive the UNHCR assistance package have to go through the Iris screening; otherwise they will not receive their entitlements. Returnees are advised to have their VRFs with them while travelling in the host country and Afghanistan.

Single returnees will have to join other single returnees or families to make a minimum distribution unit.

Returnees should not approach just any Distribution Centre, but only the one marked on their VRFs, otherwise they will not receive assistance.

Transport assistance in cash will be provided to returnees at the Encashment Centres in Afghanistan located in **Pul-I-Charkhi, Ghazni, Mohmand Dara, Zaranj, Daman, Mazar-I-Sharif, Pul-I-Khumri, Kunduz, Herat, Gardez and Khost.**
are assisting only



northern provinces (Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan, Samangan, Balkh, Jawzjan, etc) should receive their entitlements at the first EC or in Pul-I-Khumri

Properly filled, signed and stamped VRFs will be valid for seven days (from the day the returnees (from **Pakistan**) leave the Iris Scan Centre and returnees from Iran from the day they leave the registration centre, and arrive at the Encashment Centre inside Afghanistan.

Depending on final destination in Afghanistan, each family member will receive between 3 - 30 dollars, and is limited to 7 persons per family. **Children** under 12 months of age (less than one year) will receive only half of the amount given to other members of the family. **Returnees from Karachi will receive an additional 5 dollars per person at the first Encashment centre.**

Returnees from camps in Pakistan will receive 5 dollars per family in addition to the established amount if they transport construction material **only** from their dismantled houses. The transportation of construction material will be certified by a special note made on the VRF at the Registration point in Pakistan

Note: The Returnees' personal belongings are exempted from all customs duties. But please note that returnees neither can take commercial amounts of any item nor can they export

Children under 5 families are advised to have the previous vaccination cards at hand, if they have them.)

Working Days: The UNHCR-assisted repatriation operation in **Pakistan** will run from Sunday to Thursday. There will be no UNHCR-assisted repatriation on Friday and Saturday. In **Iran**, the operation will run from Saturday to Thursday. There will be no operation on Friday.

Note: All refugee students must have their school certificates stamped by Afghan embassies/consulates before returning to Afghanistan. There have been reports that some Afghan embassies and consulates in the region have been charging Afghan refugees for validation/stamping of the school certificates of the students. The Afghanistan Foreign Ministry has now issued a directive to its missions in the region that they should NOT charge validation/stamping fees on academic certificates of repatriating Afghan students. Those graduates who want to work as teachers in Afghanistan should also have their documents stamped by Afghan embassies/consulates.

Messages to women:

- (i) The Ministry of Public Health has urgent need of women health professionals in all provinces of the country. **Women with interest in professional training as nurses, midwives and community health workers are advised to register their interest with**
can be contacted when opportunities arise.



- (ii) Tetanus (TT) vaccination campaign to women between 15 – 45 years of age is ongoing inside Afghanistan. All women returnees who have been vaccinated against TT are p the records - before they return.
- (iii) Refugee Women are advised to seek professional training in safe delivery, early infant nurse.
- (iv) They are advised to bring certificates of education of courses they have taken. Single women should link with a family for the journey and identify themselves immediately on arrival.

2. From Non-neighbouring countries: There are two types of voluntary repatriation schemes;

- (i) The first type includes schemes paid for by the host governments or in support of host governments. Such schemes are currently in place in the UK, France, the Netherlands and Nauru, the latter with funding from Australia. The host countries provide a return package and ensure safe return to final destination, including coverage of travel expenses. Some of these programmes are administered by IOM in conjunction with UNHCR.
- (ii) The second scheme is a UNHCR-assisted project for the repatriation of Afghans from countries where the host government cannot be expected to pay for the return (such as in India, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan). The project has also benefited Afghans repatriating from other countries such as Georgia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Thailand and Zimbabwe, which covers a pre-departure grant of US\$ 20 per person (maximum \$100 per family), as well as the travel and visa costs. Returnees are eligible for the same assistance (inside Afghanistan) as those returning from neighbouring countries.

The International Organisation for Migration can also help Afghans to return home through the IOM Assisted **Voluntary** Returns Programme of Afghans.

Note: For further information about IOM programmes, please contact your local UNHCR or IOM office, or see their website: www.iom.ch, to find out whether a return programme operates in your country of asylum.

Shelter: To help returnees in their initial phase of reintegration, the UNHCR is planning shelter for 60,000 families in the year 2003. The shelter project is **NOT** for every returnee family but only for the neediest of the needy, who have been identified from returning IDPs and refugees and returnees receiving communities. The beneficiaries are selected with the help of local Shuras, local authorities and UNHCR partners. They have to build the shelter on their own land or property, in their places of origin. Shelter (a **standard** two-room, one corridor and one latrine unit) programme is self-help assistance, and while building material (timbers, lintels, doors, windows and tool kits) is provided by UNHCR, the beneficiaries should do the construction work. The recipients are also entitled to a sum of money or food for work for standard and domed type shelters.

Important Message: Refugees prior to their voluntarily return should note that:



1. Shelter programme is only for the neediest of the needy.
2. UNHCR shelter programme is not for every returnee family
3. The conditions for benefiting from the shelter project are; for the returnees to be in their village of origin, be identified through the help of local Shuras and UNHCR partners, and to build the shelter on their own land or property.
4. From about 2 millions returnees in the year 2002, UNHCR could only provide about 40,000 units of shelter for returnees.
5. In the year 2003, UNHCR will only provide 60,000 units of shelter for returnees.

Shelter Material and Kits: To help returnees in their initial phase of reintegration, UNHCR expects to distribute building material (timbers, lintels, doors, windows), and tool kits.

Shelter Material are: Wooden beam for roofing (20 pcs.), Wooden lintels for doors and windows (15 pcs.), Doors (1 pcs.), Window (2 pcs.), Window glasses, and a Small signboard. The recipients are also entitled to a sum of money or food for work amounting to \$50 (fifty US dollars) for standard shelter, and \$100 (one hundred US dollars) for other (domed) type shelters.

Shelter Kits: The **shelter tool kit**, to be given only to the identified beneficiaries of shelter, consists of Nails (1 Kg), Hammer (1 PC), Shovel (1 PC), Door Hinge (1 set), and Pick Axe (1 PC). The families of between 4-8 people will receive one tool kit and those with more than 9 people are entitled to 2 tool kits. They should fill out de-mining certificate before starting the work. They will receive the material in two phases; 1) at lintel stage, 2) at roofing stage. The size of the rooms is up to the beneficiaries, but the shelter unit should not be smaller than 32 sqm.

Legal Aid Centres in the Region:

The Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) have been established in the region. These centres can be approached by all Afghan refugees and returnees who require information or legal advice on matters that affect their rights and daily lives as well as for those who would like to receive information on the conditions in Afghanistan in order to make an informed decision to repatriate.

These centres are providing free legal advice and counselling on various issues. These centres are assisting refugees to make admissions to administrative bodies, lodge complaints and petitions before courts, and render legal representation. They also disseminate information about conditions in Afghanistan, helping refugees who want to return in obtaining personal status documents such as birth and divorce certificates, and assisting them in tenancy and rent disputes that hamper repatriation, reimbursement of security deposits and complications in closing a Pakistan-based business or moving of personal effects to Afghanistan, providing legal assistance to Afghans detained in jails (teams of lawyers represent their cases in the court on humanitarian basis.).

1. Pakistan: In total, there are currently 11 Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) in Pakistan, and 3 implementing partners (NRC, ICMC and SHARP) are working under the ALAC project.



Punjab: There are 4 ALACs in Punjab province; 2 ALACs (one by ICMC and one by SHARP) are functioning in Islamabad, one by SHARP in Rawalpindi, and one by SHARP in Mianwali.

Balochistan: There is only one Advice Centre run by ICMS located in the Quetta City.

NWFP: There are 6 Legal centres; 4 of them (3 NRC centres and one ICMC centre) are located in Peshawar city, one NRC centre is based in Haripor, and one by NRC in Kohat.

2. Afghanistan: Inside Afghanistan, these centres are helping returnees by advising them on issues of land disputes, property issues, detained family members etc.

Kabul: NRC office: Qala-e-fatullah, House No. 570, Between Street 8/9, KABUL
Mob: (0093)(0) 702.843.65
Sat. Ph: 008821.689.801.273

Nangarhar: NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council): House No. 4, Street No. 1, North of Sehat-e-Ama, (Beside UNDP Implementation Office)

3. Iran:

Tehran: These centres addresses are:

(i) Afghan Embassy, Pakistan Street, Corner of 12th Street, Tehran-Iran
Tel. (98 21) 875-3089 / 873-7531 / 873-5040

(ii) Legal Commission of Vahdat Party, c/o Office of Vahdat Party, Vali-asr Street, Corner of Mahdi-ye Tehran- Iran, Tel. (98 21) 537-1479

(iii) Afghan Constitution Commission office recently opened in Tehran and located at:
Office of the Afghan Constitution Commission in Tehran, North Sohrevardi Street, No. 3-161
98 21) 874-3943

Mashad: The LOHK (Law Office of Ms. Haleh Keshawarz) provides legal assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in Khurasan province and it is located at:

LOHK representative works two days a week (Sundays and Tuesdays from 08:30 to 1200) in UNHCR, Mashad office -No. 45, Sajjad Boulevard, Mashhad 91877.

Tel: 785081, Fax: 783017).

And on Mondays from 16:30 to 19:00 at the Mediation Commission, with the participation of an Afghan elder and an Iranian official (judge), located in BAFIA Office.

Ms Hale Keshawarz could be reached at:

Tel (mobile): 0911 511 6090, Fax: 8412926

Areas of Return: repatriation process on 1 March 2002 from Pakistan and on 9 April 2002 from Iran, 329,632 families (1,891,945 individuals) have returned to their homeland. Of these returnees, Central provinces received 151,670 families (86,1846 individuals); Eastern provinces 71,426 families (395,587 individuals); Northern provinces 69,874 families (413,793 individuals), Southeastern provinces 4,486 families (32,256



individuals); Southern provinces 19,691 families (106,502 individuals); and Western provinces received 12,485 families (81,961 individuals).

It shows that the Central region (Kabul, Bamyan, Kapisa, Logar, Parwan and Wardak provinces) received the highest returnee population in the country.

This year 46,678 families (140,168 individuals) have so far returned to the country from both Pakistan and Iran, with highest number returning to the Central Region.

Since the beginning of UNHCR-assisted repatriation (2002-2003), the majority of returnees went to the provinces of Kabul (637,491 individuals), Nangarhar (346,922 individuals), Baghlan (112,767 individuals), Parwan (94,579 individuals), Kunduz (83,446 individuals) and Hirat (18,373 individuals).

Matriculation (University Entrance) Exam: The Ministry of Higher Education is calling on grade 12 graduates to participate in the University Entrance Exam to be held in Kabul in late June or early July 2003 to get admission to evening classes in Kabul University. Exact date would be announced one week before the exam. The evening classes will start on 23 August 2003. More than 1500 students are expected to write this exam, with 600 (40% girls and 60% boys) already signing in.

Eligibility: In addition to the fresh graduates from the provinces of Kandahar, Nangarhar, Helmand, Farah, and Konar, former graduates, returnees included, who have either missed or failed the previous exam are eligible to participate in the exam. Examinees must have their graduation certificate, be under 35 years of age, and submit their applications (along with one picture) for registration to Applicants would be issued a university admission card.

The Exam and the Faculties: There will be a total of 210 questions (50 questions in each of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences, and 60 questions in Religion and Languages), with 2 hours and 50 minutes time allowance. All the papers are computerized and each participant can have three choices of admission to one of three faculties that hold evening classes, i.e. Engineering, language and literature, economics, fine arts, social/natural sciences, law, journalism, and geology. Evening classes will be held everyday for four hours between 4:00pm to 8:00pm, but this will change according to seasons. The classes will be year-round with no summer or winter holidays. Evening University bachelor degree will take a year longer than the regular day university program.

Nation Building:

(i) The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission: The Commission was established on 9 March 2002 and has recently opened its branches in Kabul, Herat, Mazar, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Gardez. It has already recruited the required staff and its activities are underway; these include: Supervision of the Human Rights issues, Human Rights instructions, enhancement



The Commission, along with UNHCR, UNAMA, and NRC, also deals with illegal land and property occupation, and has formed a land task force with the above organization. In addition to the land and property issues, the task force is also following harassment of civilians, detention, discrimination, extortion, and forced recruitment into the armed groups.

(ii) Military Decree: In order to create a national army, the Interim Government of Afghanistan issued a Decree in May 2002, explaining the process and the voluntary nature of the military service. Here is a summary of the Decree:

-All male Afghans between the age of 22-30 are offered to join the military, **on voluntary and contract** basis, for a period of 4 (four) years.

-The volunteers will be provided with means of subsistence and lodging as well as monthly pay equivalent to \$30 (thirty US dollars) in Afghani during their training period. The payment will increase to the equivalent of \$50 (fifty US Dollars) in Afghani for the rest of their service in the army.

-The governor of each province is responsible for providing transportation to carry volunteers to the provincial capital.

-The volunteers will be given arms and ammunition **after** medical checks and selection process has been completed.

According to the latest reports, the following additional decrees were issued by the President of the Transitional State of Afghanistan:

and the basic adaptation of the army fundamentals, and in accordance with the decree number 175-dated 24/09/1381, the following issues for the recruitment of soldiers in the National Army have been approved:

1. The terms of recruiting the volunteer new soldiers to the National Army are approved after issuance of the decree number 162-dated 14/02/1381 and the rest of decrees are cancelled.
2. The governors of the provinces for the better adaptation and fulfillment of the above mentioned process should procure appropriate opportunities to the provincial commissioners and should immediately vacate the commissioners' possessions and hand them over as soon as possible.
3. For the general awareness, the Ministry of Defence in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Culture should organize wide dissemination campaigns so that the issue would reach all the population.

(iii) Constitutional Commission: On 5 October 2002 (13 Meezan 1381), the Transitional Islamic Government of Afghanistan announced the members of the Drafting Committee of the Constitutional Commission, which has already completed its work. On 13th Saur 1382 (3rd May 2003), reviewing committee with 35 members started its work. Its activities are to publicised the



constitution document, and to have a database and have discussions with the Afghans inside and outside Afghanistan. Then the document will be submitted to the Constitutional Loya Jirga to be convened.

The Constitution Commission has opened eight offices in Jalalabad, Hirat, Kunduz, Faizabad, Gardez, Kandahar, Mazar and Bamyan as well as in Peshawar and Quetta (Pakistan), and in Tehran and Mashhad (Iran).

Its members will travel to the provinces to carry on public consultation. The questionnaire prepared for consultation would be given to the public to fill in their views and comments in order to find out about their views on the constitution for discussion. Women members of the constitution team would separately consult women on their views. Participants, men and women regardless of their origin, ethnicity, religion, belief and political affiliations would be able to express themselves freely and openly on the major constitutional issues about which they are concerned, and the type of constitution they want for Afghanistan. The public would also be asked for their suggestions and proposals.

The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and UNAMA issued a joint statement on 1 June about the Constitutional Consultations, which already began on 10 June 2003 and which will be carried out in all Provinces over the next 6-8 weeks. UNAMA and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission called upon the Afghan Transitional Authorities, in particular the law enforcement and security agencies, to refrain from unlawful interference in the consultative process. They also requested the agencies to take all necessary measures to guarantee the enjoyment by all Afghans of their inalienable rights to freedom of expression and association. As envisaged by the Bonn Agreement, the Constitutional Loya Jirga will adopt the new Constitution in October 2003.

Regional offices of the Commission would visit the refugee camps and using the questionnaire, intend to send representatives to non-neighbouring c

which is disseminated through the regional offices of the Commission and UNAMA. In addition, the Commission has also printed posters, leaflets and brochures, which provide further information on the constitution and the working procedures of the Commission.

Mazar Community Radio Station: The Institute of Media, Policy and Civil Society and UNHCR will establish a committee to oversee the operation of the community radio station in

the first women-led radio in the northern area. Additional radio stations will be established in Kunduz and Badakshan in July.

UNHCR/BBC Radio Programme: There is a joint BBC/UNHCR radio programme specifically aimed at Afghan refugees, IDPs and returnees. The programme deals with the situation in Afghanistan, including security, development activities of the Afghan government, United Nations and other aid agencies, and the difficulties that the Afghans, especially returnees, are



the situation in Afghanistan to those wishing to return home, and to offer a forum for a wider debate on all aspects of repatriation and reintegration.

The programme is broadcast from Saturday to Wednesday (5 Days a week):

- **1st edition:** 0730 to 800 GMT = 1100 to 1130 Iran time, 1200 to 1230 Afghan time, and 1230 to 1300 Pakistan time.
- **2nd edition:** 12.00 to 1230 GMT = 1530 to 1600 Iran time, 1630 to 1700 Afghan time and 1700 to 1730 Pakistan time.

The programmes are broadcast on Short wave frequencies of 15420 kHz (19-meter band, and 17870 kHz (16-meter band).

questions please write to the following addresses. The BBC will include them in the programme:

- **Afghanistan:** BBC, Post Box No. 1, Central Post Office, Kabul, Afghanistan.
- **Pakistan:** BBC, Post Box 255, University Town, Peshawar, Pakistan.
- **Iran:** 91775 1876, Mashhad, Iran.

UNHCR/ARTV Radio Programme: UNHCR has also a joint radio programme with , as part of its mass Information efforts. The programme is broadcast on Sundays and Fridays (2 days a week) at 9:00pm for 30 minutes in Dari and Pashto languages.

Corrigendum: Correction of the information of the **Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD)** program in the MI Update dated 1 June 2003.

(i) The MRRD has launched a new program called National Solidarity Program (NSP) initially in five provinces of Parwan, Kandahar, Herat, Bamyan and Farah to be implemented by UN Habitat. The \$95-million program is targeting villages in all the 32 provinces in the country, in its pilot phase three districts will be selected in each province. A block grant of \$20,000 will be allocated to each community/village for a community project. In a district 72 villages/communities will benefit from these grants. The Minister of MRRD, the Defence Minister, a number of UN agencies and donors participated in the inauguration of the program on Panjshir Valley on 23 April 2003. According to Mr. Hanif Atmar, Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, an amount of \$20 000 block grant will be transferred to each of 72 communities/villages in Panjshir under NSP.

(ii) The Recovery and Employment Afghanistan Program (REAP) started in 2002 in some of the major cities for example Kabul and Jalalabad, and is about to end in June 2003. This programme created job opportunity for a large number of skilled and unskilled laborers (including a large percentage of returnees) during the mentioned period of time.



(iii) Labor-intensive public works implemented by UNOPS , CARE and other agencies are now part of the National Emergency Employment Programme (NEEP). This program intends to provide a safety net for vulnerable population through the creation of productive employment opportunities. Some 5% of the total budget of this national program is intended to target vulnerable returnees through the provision of gainful employment in labor intensive public works.

VACANCY NOTICE: UNHCR is inviting applications for the posts of 2 translators/interpreter to work with MoRR initially for 6 months with a salary of USD (300 – 400) depending on their qualification and experience. The applicants must be able to translate from English into the local languages and vice versa. The candidate should also have proofreading and editorial skills, be familiar with computer knowledge, be able to do oral translation in the meetings, and should have at least one year of working experience in the same field. The applicant would be required to pass a test. Female candidates are especially encouraged to apply.

Applications to be submitted to Mr. Latif Salehi, Head of Admin Section, MoRR, Tel# 070280857, or Mr. A. Wakil Shergul, HR Section, to UNHCR Afghanistan, House # 41, Peace Avenue, Kabul, Afghanistan not later than 22 June 2003.

shergul@unhcr.org or tel # 070279215.



Questionnaire: The aim of this information update is to provide refugees, IDPs and returnees with accurate information on the situation inside Afghanistan and other related issues. You are kindly requested to reply to the following questions. You can cut this piece from here and return it to the near-by UNHCR office or its staff in your camp or area:

Question No. 1: Do you think information of this update is useful to you?

Answer: Yes. No.

Question No. 2: If your reply to the above question as yes, please explain why?

Answer:

Question No. 3: What kinds of information you would like to read in this update in the future?

Answer:

For More Information Contact
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