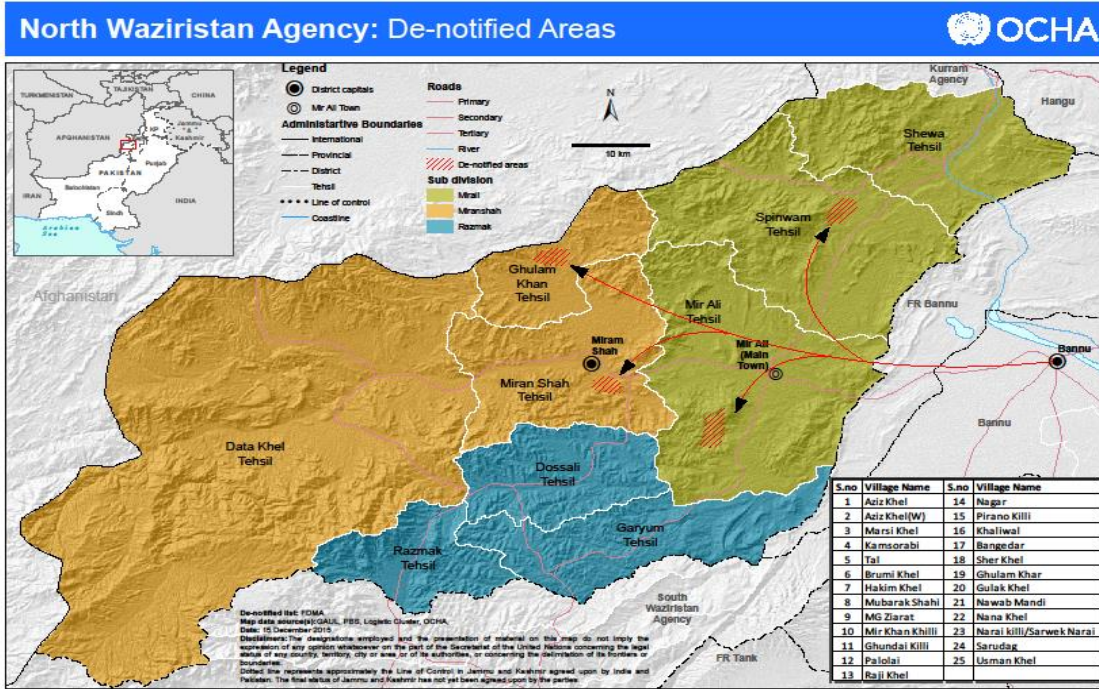


**Inter Cluster Rapid Assessment Mission  
North Waziristan Agency  
7 – 10 December 2015**



**Summary:**

In addition to visiting 11 newly de-notified villages at Spinwam, Mir Ali and Ghulam Khan Tehsils; the Inter Cluster Rapid Assessment mission held meetings with the military and with returnees. The Security situation of the area was deemed feasible for return. Returns to the recently de-notified villages of Spinwam, Miranshah and Ghulam are planned in March 2016. It was noted that the military and local administration are progressing in the rehabilitation of health, WASH and education facilities in the villages of Mir Ali and Miran Shah, but further complementary assistance will be required to support their efforts and to make these basic facilities fully operation. Rehabilitation of the electricity supply, the restoration of shops and markets for the purchase of daily use items, leveling and re-cultivation of lands and the establishment of play grounds and parks for recreational activities are in progress. It was noticed that there has been negligible damages to the houses in most areas.

Upon their return, the families go through challenges regarding limited access to basic and necessary items, including scarcity of drinking water, inoperational health and education facilities, the unavailability of resources to cultivate their lands and restrictions imposed on their movement. The said challenges directly affect the women and children of the returned families. The continuing support of the military, the local administration and the government coupled with the steady decrease in the movement of the returnees make the environment favorable for return but there are substantial issues which cannot be ignored in order to ensure the sustainability of return. Given the increase in number of returnees on the Mir Ali – Miranshah route, the establishment of a food distribution hub in the near future would be a prerequisite.

## **(A). Background Information:**

Geography: Waziristan is a mountainous region of northwest Pakistan, bordering Afghanistan and covering 11,585 square kilometers. The region became an independent tribal territory in 1893, remaining outside of the British Empire and Afghanistan. The region became part of Pakistan upon its independence in 1947. In 1910 Waziristan is divided into North Waziristan Agency (NWA) and South Waziristan Agency (SWA). Geographically, whole Waziristan is a single unit. However, for administrative convenience it has been split into two agencies. The two parts have quite distinct characteristics, speak a common language. It is inhabited by the Pashtun Wazir and Dawar tribes. It is bounded on the north by Afghanistan, Kurram Agency and Hangu District, on the east by tribal areas adjoining the Bannu and Karak Districts, on the south by SWA and on the west also by Afghanistan. The total area of NWA is 4,707 square kilometers.

Demography: NWA estimated population (as of 1998 census report) is 361,246 (but more than one million individuals are reported as dislocated from NWA during last year's displacement). They have a famed reputation as formidable warriors and are known for their frequent blood feuds. The tribes are divided into sub-tribes governed by male village elders who meet in a tribal *jirga*. Socially and religiously, Waziristan is an extremely conservative area. Women are carefully guarded, and every household must be headed by a male figure. Tribal cohesiveness is strong because of "Collective Responsibility Acts" in the Frontier Crimes Regulation.

Institutional Set up: NWA is under the general charge of a Political Agent who administers civil, criminal and revenue cases in accordance with Frontier Crimes Regulation and Customary Law. Miranshah is the headquarters of NWA. NWA consists of three sub-divisions and nine Tehsils. Each of the sub-division is headed by 'Assistant Political Agent'. The Political Agent is assisted by three Assistant Political Agents in criminal cases and other official work including matters maintaining law and order in the agency. A new post of 'Additional Political Agent' has been established who looks after the developmental sector of the whole agency. The need was felt for a high level intervention in the developmental sector by both governmental and non-governmental organizations. In addition to these duties the Additional Political Agent acts as Political Agent in his absence. Furthermore, all the Line Directorates work under supervision of the Additional Political Agent.

Background of Emergency: The Government commenced military operation in NWA on 15 June 2015, targeting non-state armed actors' hideouts. The operations prompted displacements of 104,002 registered families to neighboring districts of Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan and other parts of the country, as well as to Afghanistan. Humanitarian assistance was extended to the NWA IDPs but it was not sufficient to cater to their necessities in their entirety. In March 2015, returns to NWA commenced, and till 3 December 2015, 31, 378 families have returned to their areas of origin. During the initial phase of the returns, conditions in the areas of return did not fulfill basic human needs. Due to initiatives undertaken by the concerned authorities (i.e. the local administration and the military), the circumstances in the areas of return have improved and have become conducive to supporting a normal rhythm of life.

In the Return Task Force (RTF) Meeting convened on 17 November 2015, FDMA indicated that 25 new villages at Spinwam, Mir Ali, Miranshah and Ghulam Khan have been de-notified, and to which approximately 12000 – 15000 families are expected to return. Consequent upon the positive outcomes of Inter Agency Security Assessment Mission undertaken between 23 and 26 November 2015; the rescheduled Inter Cluster Rapid Assessment Mission was fielded from 7 to 10 December 2015.

**(B). Mission Objectives:**

The purpose of the mission is to assess the availability of services and identify any gaps in needs in the newly de-notified villages in NWA.

**(C). Limitations:**

The assessment seeks to identify major issues which require immediate humanitarian attention. There are some recently de-notified villages where the assessment could not be conducted due to time constraints, heavy rainfall and difficulties in access due to slippery terrain. The mission was rescheduled due to the unavailability of NOC. Female staff were not a part of the mission, and the resultant findings can potentially overlook the specific needs of the returning women. The villages of Miranshah were not visited by the assessment mission owing to a gap in coordination and a misunderstanding between the FDMA, the Political Agent's Administration and the military.

**(D). Methodology:**

The mission held meetings with the military and the returnees. The mission conducted field visits to the health, education and WASH facilities and to agriculture fields. According to the mission members, the 'Checklist for Inter Cluster Assessment Mission' could not be utilized in this current rapid assessment mission, but will be applied in the post-return assessment.

**Below are the outcomes of various discussions and the assessment recommendations:**

**(I). Security Situation:**

The security situation of the newly de-notified villages was observed to be effectively under control and no serious security incident was reported before and after the mission dates. The first return phase to the de-notified villages of Mir Ali and Spinwam was completed successfully by mid-November and no unpleasant incidents have been reported so far. The returned families at Aziz Khel revealed that they are satisfied with the security situation and feel no threat in their native areas. Level-3 clearance (including the removal of the physical presence of militants from the de-notified villages, unexploded ordnances, explosives & IEDs and mine sweeping) has been done in all the de-notified villages and most of the access routes were found favorable for the movement of Armored Vehicles. It is anticipated that the situation will further improve following the conclusion of the military operation in NWA. It should be noted that the military operation is still underway in some parts of NWA and the likelihood of a security incident as a reaction to the operation cannot be ruled out. Therefore, it is recommended that UN agencies providing humanitarian assistance in the de-notified villages to support the return process adhere strictly to the existing UN travel modality, recommended mitigation measure and the Government's security advice.

**(II). Situational Overview:**

With the exception of visiting the de-notified villages at Miranshah, the mission managed to accomplish its objectives due to facilitation by the Political Agent's administration, the military and the FDMA. With the exception of the Mir Ali area, the taking of photographs was not allowed. However, the authorities agreed to share pictures later on. The villages of Tall, Kamsoribi, Aziz Khel (East & West), Hakim Khel, Mubarak Shahi and Momingul Ziarats are newly de-notified for return in the next phase, and returns will soon be in progress according to the RTF. The mission team managed to physically observe the status of

health, education, WASH facilities, the agricultural fields and houses in the villages where return is presently in progress and also planned for the next phase. The administration, military and the returnees all indicated that there is negligible damages to the houses, which is mostly due to exposure to seasonal elements. Approximately 6 houses were completely destroyed, which were militant compounds and hideouts. Shops and markets are yet to be operational in the planned return areas and are partially serviceable where people have already returned. The Political Agent's administration, government line department's staff and the military have a presence in the area.

### **(III). Engagement/Discussions with respective Stakeholders:**

Meeting with Returnees: Returnees specified that they were depressed during the displacement and are experiencing substantial challenges in access to basic necessities. Subsequent to return, people are facing concerns regarding a lack of necessary items and furnishings in their dwellings, a lack of access to drinking water, the unavailability of health and veterinary facilities, the absence of resources to cultivate their lands and restrictions in their mobility. Most families have returned as a complete unit, therefore the aforementioned challenges are directly affecting the education, health and hygiene of the women and children as well. The support of the military and line departments in gradually rehabilitating the services of basic facilities and diminishing number of returnees shifted the condition in the areas to origin to one that can be considered conducive to return, but still there is a considerable space for improvement until they can be considered sustainable. In addition, food assistance is a crucial component in ensuring an area's conduciveness to return.



Meeting with the Military: The mission members meet with military officers i.e. Colonels and Majors. It was noted that security is well under control. The military assists the returnees in making their shops functional for the purchase of items for daily use. The Military is rehabilitating the basic health, education and WASH facilities with their limited resources but it will require complementary contribution from local concerned authorities/line departments and humanitarian actors to ensure a sustainable and productive intervention. For recreational activities, some parks and playgrounds were prepared in Spinwam areas and more are in the pipeline in other areas of return. The military is advocating a food distribution hub at a feasible point in Mir Ali given the increase in the amount of returnees. During the meetings, it was noted that some villages which have been recently de-notified according to the RTF already have returns in progress. It was also stated that the inhabitants of Ghulam Khan, who fled to Khust province, could return to their area of origin by passing through the established procedure of return i.e. after acquiring VRFs from the Baka Khel embarkation point.

As mentioned above, owing to a lack of coordination between the FDMA and the Political Agent's administration, meetings with local administration and line departments were not arranged.

### **(IV). Cluster specific findings/key challenges and correlating recommendations:**

#### **CoRe:**

The security situation seems stable in the visited areas as attested to by the Army and returnees in Aziz Khel, Mubarak Shahi, Hakim Khel and Sher Khel. The Pakistan Army has completed mine-sweeping

procedures. It is observed that no livelihoods opportunities exist in the area and most houses are constructed with stones, mud and timber (wood).

#### Challenges:

- Due to harsh winters and extreme cold, accessibility to the area is a major challenge to consider while planning any interventions.
- Obtaining NOCs for local and international NGOs is a key challenge.
- The link roads and sidewalks are unpaved and rough, causing the accessibility issue.
- The market places and irrigation channels are damaged and livelihood opportunities are minimal.

#### Recommendations:

- The rehabilitation of market places, the paving of streets and link roads through cash for work activities.
- The provision of livelihoods grants to vulnerable households who require support in order to re-establish a source of income for their families.
- The rehabilitation of irrigation channels and electricity supply, protection walls and tube wells, and possible installation of solar panels to ensure sustainable energy supplies to the area.
- The Rehabilitation of school buildings, and the implementation of measures to ensure school staff availability.
- The provision of tool kits for the maintenance of housing infrastructure.

#### **Education:**

The delegation visited 5 Schools (4 Government and 1 private school), during the 2 days in the de-notified villages in the vicinity of Tehsil Mir Ali & Tehsil Miranshah. The exact number of enrollment and facilities could not be ascertained as a formal meeting could not be conducted with the line department (i.e. Office of the AEO NWA). However, the field visit and briefing from the military administration in the area presented an overall picture of the situation. It was observed that almost all the schools in the locality were either intact or sustained only partial damage in the conflict. Since a meeting with the Education Officials was not conducted, there were no means of obtaining primary data about the schools.



#### Recommendations:

- The immediate deployment of Government teaching staff in the return areas.
- The provision of 6 school tents (2 for village Shamiri) once the return process to these areas has completed.
- The provision appropriate teaching aids (i.e. School in a box).
- The distribution of required textbooks (with stationary and school bags) to the school children.
- The implementation of an Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) at least for the current year in order to recuperate the time wasted during the displacement (If required).
- The Pakistan army is constructing a building (high school) through its own resources at village Bobali. Upon completion, this school will be handed over to the Government's education department. The school will cater to 450 students and will need immediate assistance in teaching and learning materials. In addition, the military official escorting the delegation requested the



provision of furniture for the school. The education cluster will advocate with education authorities for deployment of staff and the provision of learning materials to the school.

### **Food Security:**

As per the discussion with the community, it was discovered that in NWA agriculture and livestock are a key source of livelihood for nearly 70 per cent of the tribal families; fulfilling the food security needs at the household level. Community members indicate that due to the recent military operation in the area, agricultural livelihood patterns were disrupted and losses of livestock were incurred. During the inter-Cluster mission, discussions were conducted with the returnees of Mir Ali and Ghulam Khan in the presence of the FDMA, the Political Administration and the military. Overall, the agriculture land has become barren and the orchards are completely ruined. No veterinary center or hospital is functional in the three Tehsils. The communities stated that productive livelihood assets (specifically livestock assets) were lost due to mobility affects during displacement movement, diseases, the non-availability of supplements in areas of displacement and the sale of animals during displacement. More than 60 per cent of the livestock was left behind during displacement, and became either wild, or succumbed to starvation and fatal diseases. Poultry has completely disappeared in the entire area. The restoration of agriculture-based livelihoods is considered a main need for returning and returned TDPs in their areas of origin.



Assess to food will be one of the biggest challenge for the returnee families. A food hub will be required in the middle of Tehsil Ghulam Khan and Miranshah. The extent of the food insecurity situation will become clear once the return process is completed in these tehsils and the geographic layout of the villages is apparent following their re-establishment. Returnees will rely on the unconditional food assistance package of six months. A food hub in village Edak, Mir Ali, was requested by the military officials. However, WFP's existing Mirkhan Khel hub can also serve the returning families near Edak village. The planned villages in Spinwam Tehsil can also receive food assistance from WFPs existing food hub inside Mirkhan Khel, as those villages are not too distant from Mirkhan Khel, and have a low population. It was observed that no livelihood opportunities exist in these areas.



### Challenges:

The major challenge would be access (NOC) to the local and international NGOs. Some of the villages that the mission visited are located on difficult terrain and access to them is difficult unless all-terrain vehicles are utilized.

### Recommendations:

- The provision of medical supplies for existing livestock, including vaccines and de-wormers, through mobile veterinary clinics and the rehabilitation of veterinary centers in Eidak, Spinwam, Mir Ali and Ghulam Khan till services are rehabilitated/restored.
- The provision of feed for existing livestock in Ghulam Khan.
- The provision of livestock to families in Eidak, Spinwam, Mir Ali and Ghulam Khan.
- The provision of poultry in Eidak, Spinwam, Mir Ali and Ghulam Khan.
- The preparation of land, the provision of crop seeds for the upcoming growing season and the provision of agricultural toolkits in Eidak, Spinwam and Mir Ali.

- The rehabilitation & de-siltation of critical *Kacha & Packka* irrigation channels in Eidak, Spinwam, and Mir Ali.
- The rehabilitation of flood protection walls and water diversion structures in Spinwam and Eidak
- The provision of fruit plants and nurseries in Eidak, Spinwam and Mir Ali.
- The provision of a six-month food package as unconditional food assistance accompanied with parallel assessments of the situation to design the future rehabilitation strategy of the returnees
- The provision of livelihood support to create short-term employment through conditional assistance of food for work and food for training, once the returnees are phased out of the six month food assistance. The program will help the returnees to rehabilitate their community physical infrastructure, social services schemes and most importantly build their capacities in different components of livelihood activities.
- The restoration of the agricultural sector of NWA through the provision of agricultural inputs, the rehabilitation of the irrigation infrastructure, the restocking of livestock and building the capacity of the community through trainings.
- Cash Based Interventions (CBI) is not currently recommended in the area as the markets are not functional and financial service providers do not exist. A quarterly assessment will help assess any changes in the scenario for CBI.

The above mentioned areas and inputs were identified as critical start-up interventions for ensuring a sustainable returns process and promoting a resilient livelihoods structure. In addition, market-based livelihoods have been totally lost, as shops in these villages have either been completely destroyed or are completely non-functional, while central markets in areas such as Mir Ali and Miransha have been leveled to the ground. The need for market based livelihoods revitalization should also be prioritized in these areas. The aforementioned recommendation could be supported through humanitarian partners.

In the short term (six to twelve months), beneficiaries should be supported to restore their productive capacity through: (i) assisting farmers to resume agricultural production through the provision of selected agricultural inputs; (ii) reducing or preventing losses of livestock and poultry while optimizing production from stock through the provision of livestock feed; vaccination and shelter (iii) restoring and rehabilitating water-related infrastructure and land management (iv) capacity development and (v) coordination.

In the medium-term to long term (one to three years) the program should aim to: (i) assist the Government of Pakistan (GoP) and FATA authorities to re-establish agricultural support services; and (ii) rehabilitate agriculture-related infrastructure to facilitate increased agricultural production and diversification and marketing (iii) restore the productivity of rangelands, (iv) policy formulation to strengthen the agriculture and natural resources base and (v) institutional and capacity development and strengthened coordination mechanism at all levels.

#### **Health:**

The health facilities in NWA require major rehabilitation work to be fully functional. Since there is currently no population in the area of return as return process has not commenced, no staff has returned to the health facilities in the de-notified villages. Agency health authorities are committed to send back the staff once returns have started. Agency Head Quarter Hospital (AHQ) Miransha is functional but needs EmONC services, EPI and emergency response teams to cope with emergencies that could arise in the post-return situation. LHWs program is non-functional. In case of health emergencies, patients will be referred to DHQ Hospital Bannu. A coordination meeting could not be arranged with the Agency Surgeon to determine the situation of health facilities, human resources, disease trends and challenges

to cater the need of returnees of NWA. Polio vaccination is ensured by the Pakistan Army in NWA and a Field Treatment Center (FTC) has been established to treat critical patients and victims of mine explosions. Most of the villages are located on difficult terrain and are only accessible by foot. Health facilities are located far apart and timely access is difficult. The community members and Political Administration highlighted the gap concerning essential medicines and advocated for support in providing the essential medicines. Common diseases in the area are diarrhea, T.B, Malaria, Hepatitis C and other waterborne diseases. Nonexistence of routine immunization, proper sanitation and WASH systems will also complicate the situation.

#### Recommendations:

- All the health facilities need to be made functional, with proper staff deployment such as doctors/paramedics, LHWs, LHVs, EPI technicians in the de-notified areas and strengthening of AHQ Hospital Miranshah, THQ Hospitals Mir Ali and Spinwam.
- In areas where there are no health facilities (Nano Khel, Usman Khel, and Sur Dag Tehsil Spinwam) in the de-notified areas need to be provided with medical tents, health staff and essential medicines for the returnees.
- A complete package of Primary Health Care services including MNCH should be ensured and strengthened with the possibility of establishing disease surveillance system in NWA.
- A 24/7 EmMONC service needs to be ensured.
- The presence of female health staff needs to be ensured. A lady doctor with experience in Gyny/Obs should be deputed, or the presence of LHVs/Midwives should be ensured with the provision of clean delivery kits for safe deliveries.
- Routine immunization activities and polio immunization needs to be ensured, with the provision of equipment such as solar panels and ILR for maintaining cold chain of vaccines etc.
- Linkages with other programs must be developed, such as Nutrition and WASH, to address the priority issues such as mitigating the risks of outbreaks of waterborne diseases and acute malnutrition.
- A huge gap was observed in medicines and supplies, hence all essential medicines and supplies need to be ensured so that unimpeded services are provided to the returning population
- A 24/7 referral mechanism needs to be adopted in case of any medical emergency which requires prompt referral.

#### **Nutrition:**

The briefings were mostly taken from the accompanying army squads and a few community elders. It was noted that health infrastructure was present in a few villages but was not functional even before the displacement. Structures were which were referred to as Health facilities but there were no signs of health services ever being provided there. Until the Health Department FATA recruits new staff and calls back all the old staff for the provision of services there will be no nutrition and health services for the returning population. The road access was over rough terrain and was distant from the one BHU present at Spinwam Tehsil. The supply chain of medicines was also reported insufficient for the need of the community, as medicines are exhausted within the first 10 days of provision to the health facilities. The community elders reported the presence of malnourished children in the families that will return to these areas. They also reported that some of them are under CMAM treatment at Bannu. The families are also receiving food packages from WFP General Food Distribution. The lack of routine vaccination acceptance was reported, and there is a lack of EmONC service. The community is dependent on Bannu DHQ which takes about two hours from their villages by vehicle. There is a risk of communicable diseases immediately after return, particularly the risk of acute respiratory diseases and pneumonia, especially for children under 5. The pre-



crises health staff is not easy to trace according to the PA officials and the Army. The nutrition indicators in FATA region are already very poor, verified by numerous sources. Malnutrition rates exist above emergency threshold levels. Similarly NIS screening rates for the TDP population under treatment reported the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) at 16.2 per cent above the emergency threshold, while Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) was 3 per cent for FATA population. These represent an alarming rate of acute malnutrition that may worsen in the absence of nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions. The return areas may currently be considered food insecure as the families missed out on the cultivation seasons due to displacement dating back to several years. Hence the population will remain dependent on food distribution until the agriculture activities are restored. The food insecurity may further exacerbate the malnutrition status of children and women if proper nutrition services are not established. The therapeutic nutrition services along with IYCF promotion will be required along with the food and/or cash disbursement program.

#### Recommendations:

- There is a need for Civil Dispensaries to be established and equipped with health staff, medicines and nutrition supplies. There is a need to hire health and nutrition staff as surge capacity in the acute phase until the rehab phase of post-return. This funding gap support shall be provided for a period of 6-12 months through humanitarian funding resources.
- The only functional BHUs are 30-60 minutes by road from the visited villages. These BHUs shall be scaled up to have EmONC services and Infectious Disease Units to cope up with the emergent needs that will arise in the post-return scenario. There is also a need to establish a functional LHWs cadre to ensure a good outreach for Health and Nutrition activities and also to promote the EPI services which were least acceptable in the pre-crisis term.
- The establishment of appropriate maternal, infant and young child nutrition services for vulnerable children (girls and boys), pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, especially protecting and supporting exclusive breastfeeding by dissuading and monitoring the donation of breast milk substitutes and providing safe breastfeeding areas for nursing mothers, and promoting timely and appropriate complementary feeding. These services shall be an integral part of the government led Health systems while UNICEF, WFP, WHO and other Nutrition actors can support in the interim phase for establishment.
- The establishment of appropriate feeding services, including provision of essential supplies (therapeutic and supplementary foods) for management of severe and moderate acute malnutrition through Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) approach.
- Interventions to address micronutrient deficiencies through enhancing access of children and mothers to micronutrients from fortified foods, supplements or multiple micronutrient preparations (home fortifications).
- The establishment of inpatient services for the management of severe acute malnutrition with underlying medical complications at Agency Headquarter Hospitals.
- A detailed nutrition status assessment through the SMART survey methodology and KAP IYCF survey of the returning and existing population after a significant number of returns have concluded to will provide a clearer picture of the Nutritional status. These assessments can be led and/or supported by UNICEF/WFP.

## Protection:

The team visited nine out of the 25 de-notified villages in three tehsils of Spinwam, Mir Ali and Ghulam Khan. Overall, the security situation was stable in the de-notified areas; which was confirmed by the returnees in Aziz Khel, Mubarak Shahi, Hakim Khel and Sher Khel. The military had completed mine sweeping in all the de-notified villages of the return areas. Road leading to Spinwam village are jeep-able tracks. According to the security forces, the return to Spinwam villages is linked with the rehabilitation of water supply and restoration of electricity and returns will probably start in March next year. The issue of the de-registration of 22,000 families of 4 tehsils i.e. Razmak, Dosalli, Garyum, Shewa and some part of Spinwam of NWA is worth mentioning as the deregistration also includes IDPs from the four villages of Spinwam i.e. Nana Khel, Narai kali/Sarawak Narey, Surdag and Usman Khel. Although the Government shared that IDPs from four above mention tehsil has been deregistered, the FDMA later shared two lists of IDPs from Spinwam in which all of the Spinwam families were marked as either spontaneously returned or returned. It also included families of these four villages and they are marked as "Spontaneously Returned" and **their monthly food ration and cash assistance has been discontinued**. However, during the mission the team visited these four villages and found that no return has taken place in these four villages and IDPs from this area are still living in displacement. The issue was discussed with the representative of the political authority and they confirmed that these IDPs shall be included in the registered caseload and ensured their inclusion in the cash grant and humanitarian assistance during displacement and upon return.

In Mir Ali Tehsil, the security forces briefed the mission that around 2500 families have returned to Aziz Khel, Hakim Khel, while returns are in progress in Mubarak Shahi. During the interaction with the returnees in the above villages, they said that they returned voluntarily and received VRF and facilitation card, however their movement is still restricted in the area of origin and each time they want to travel, they have to inform the security forces and get registered if they have to leave the village and travel to Bannu. In case of emergency, the security forces are allowing them to travel but only once they show the facilitation card. Returns have already started to the above mentioned villages in Mir Ali Tehsil without following proper return SOP by the Government. During the interaction with the returnees, they showed their willingness to return and confirmed that their return is voluntary and without any pressure from government authorities. The Majority of the returnees were aware of the return process, including the return package. Some of the returnees in Aziz Khel of Mir Ali tehsil were complaining that they had not yet received their return cash assistance.

In Ghulam Khan the team visited Sher Khel village. Due to heavy rain, the team could not visit the other four villages. During interaction with the local and security forces they learnt that some of the families went to Afghanistan while most of the families returned spontaneously in split families from Bannu. Upon an enquiry about the return of families from Afghanistan, the security forces representative replied that these families shall come through Baka Khel camp return center. During discussion with the community, some returnees mentioned that their women are lacking CNICs and it creates problems as they face problems during the return at the security check points.

Due to targeted operations, the collateral damages is minimum i.e. only 3-5 per cent of the houses and governments building such as schools and hospital were damaged in all the three Tehsils. Currently, the security forces are doing minor repairs and renovation of the schools and BHUs from their own resources. The biggest challenge is the lack of health workers and teaching staff, while the schools are also lacking furniture, stationery and books. Children are in distress as their education has been disturbed due to displacement and again upon return as most of the schools are still not functional. In Spinwam and

Ghulam Khan, most of the people are in government jobs and have livestock, while in Mir Ali the main source of income is agriculture and daily wages. There are no proper facilities for persons with specific needs and they will remain a high risk group in terms of accessing basic services such as health, education etc. Some of the returnees complain about the SMS messages due to lack of mobile network in the return area and also ATM facilities are not available in areas of return and all of them have to travel out from NWA to Bannu to access grant. It will also be a challenge for female-headed households and the uneducated population to operate an ATM card for the first time in their life.

#### Recommendations:

- Information campaigns about the place of return, return process and return package to be disseminated to the returning families in a timely manner to enable them to make informed decisions about their intended date of return so the families can have enough time to sort out their luggage and settle other issues before embarking on the return journey.
- Infrastructure, such as roads, health services, schools, agriculture, and drinking water need to be rehabilitated, with a special focus on women and children.
- The Government should restore the registration of families from Nana Khel, Narai kali/Sarawak Narey, Surdag and Usman Khel and ensure their inclusion in the cash grant and humanitarian assistance during displacement and also ensure return assistance upon return.
- For Refugees, UNHCR shall liaise with Afghanistan and a proper mechanism shall be devised to facilitate those refugees from Afghanistan.
- Civil documentation support should be enhanced in the area of return, especially for women, to improve mobility and reduce the risks of restrictions or security searches often perceived as harassment.
- There is a need to enhance monitoring of protection concerns, especially women and children, as well as the elderly and persons with disabilities in the area of return.
- All the returning families will require food assistance, livelihood support and cash assistance. It is suggested that WFP food for work activities should also be introduced in the return areas while FAO shall provide Agriculture inputs, seed and fertilizer to the returnees in order to provide them food security and to facilitate small rehabilitation of irrigation channel and infrastructure and communications.

#### **Shelter:**

During the briefing, the military informed the mission that the level of damages is very low in the de-notified areas. During a field visit, the team has confirmed the military statement and in the de-notified 25 villages, there are hardly 10-15 houses which appear damaged due to the military operation. The



mission visited some compounds during the visit where it was observed that, except a few, the houses are intact. However, there are partial damages (cracks in walls, damage of mud plaster of walls) due to seasonal changes and non-maintenance in the absence of inhabitants for the period of displacement. It

was observed that the area is mountainous terrain and the houses are constructed with locally available stone, mud and timber. In some compounds, the T-iron and brick tiles are used as roofing material. The military set a SOP that upon return the returnees will demolish the security towers made for signaling purpose on the top floor of the house. This will not affect the quality of the houses; This SOP is for the soul purpose of discouraging the armed culture in the area. In Ghulam Khan Tehsil, the military also briefed that the houses of gypsies (*Kochi* - local term) are demolished and as mostly the unregistered and unverified population resides in such settlements and non-state actors can easily seek refuge in them. The shelter cluster observed that according to the dry room principal, the shelter tent need is almost nil. However tool kits are required for the maintenance of the partial/minor damages.

#### Recommendations:

- Based on the information provided and observation during the visit, it is concluded that the returnees have at least one dry room available as shelter. According to them, as well as in accordance to the visible outdoor status of the houses there is negligible requirement of emergency shelter (tents).
- As the houses are made of locally available mud and stones, material assistance is not required. However for maintenance purpose the provision of tool kits in the second phase can benefit the returnees.
- The duration of Inter-cluster missions should be target based as planning to visit 25-villages in two days is unrealistic.

Challenges: For any intervention in the area the cold weather and difficult accessibility to the area is a challenge.

#### **WASH:**

On the first day, the team visited some villages in Spinwam Tehsil. There was one water supply scheme in village Usman Khel, where rehabilitation work was in process by Pakistan Army. Surface water, dug wells, hand pumps and pressure pumps were the other sources for drinking water. Average water table in the areas is around 100 ft. In some areas near the river, the water table is around 50-60 ft. There was one primary school and one health facility. Latrines were unavailable in the facilities and needed to be restored. On the second day, the villages of Tehsil of Mir Ali and Ghulam Khan were visited. In Aziz Khel village, where returns took place, water supply schemes was rehabilitated by Pak Army and two water collection points were installed. Women and Children were fetching water from the collection point and the average water fetching time was 30 minutes. Open defecation was a common practice. In Mubarak Shahi village, where returns were in-process, the main sources of drinking water were surface water, dug wells, and hand pumps. In Tehsil Ghulam Khan, three out of five water supply schemes were rehabilitated by Pak Army, while work was in process on the remaining two schemes. Surface water, dug wells, hand pumps and pressure pumps were the other sources for drinking water. Open defecation was a common practice.



#### Challenges:

- In terms of sanitation, the available latrines in schools, health institutions and community were badly damaged due to seasonal damages. Reconstruction of these latrines is required.

- Prior to the conflict and military operations, most of the population was practicing open defecation. The same practice is expected to remain after return which will affect the overall health status of communities. Incidence of waterborne diseases will be common and will especially affect children and women.
- A meeting with the Government line departments could not be held and the mission members only had interaction with the Military.

**Recommendations:**

- People lack adequate supplies for drinking water handling and storage. There is a need to provide household water storage containers including small water tanks, buckets and jerry cans.
- Apart from WSS, other feasible options such as hand pumps and pressure pumps may be considered.
- WASH facilities in schools and health facilities are in poor condition, and need to be restored, with separate facilities constructed for males and females.
- It is necessary to support community-based hygiene promotion using multiple communication methods to allow for low literacy levels. The provision of IEC materials (including pictorial messages, pamphlets, brochures etc.) that highlight the linkages between hygiene, water safety and health are required.
- The provision of WASH-related non-food items (NFIs) including hygiene kits, soap, culturally acceptable sanitary items, and locally produced water containers where possible, in close cooperation with other NFI distributions (e.g. shelter), are required.
- Regular water quality surveillance should be conducted in the affected areas, and routine distribution of microbial water quality results and trends to all WASH partners is beneficial.
- Close monitoring of the environmental health conditions (safe water surveillance, sanitary and hygiene conditions) of affected communities is recommended.

**(E). Overall Recommendations:**

These recommendations will be recorded on the basis of HRT meeting's outcomes.

**(F). Mission Members:**

1. Irshad Khan – UNDSS
2. Syed Abbas Ali – WASH Cluster
3. Attaullah – Shelter Cluster
4. Abid Nawaz Khattak – CCCM Cluster
5. Imranullah Jan – Protection Cluster
6. Bilal Bahrawar Khan – Health Cluster
7. Shahid Fazal – Nutrition Cluster
8. Hassan Raza - Food Security Cluster
9. Malik Bilal - Food Security Cluster
10. Farukh Zeb – Education Cluster
11. Raza Ullah Jan – UNOCHA