

Umphang NGO Coordination Meeting, ARC Office

Tuesday, Sept. 16, 2014

Present: ADRA, ARC, HI, RTP, PU-AMI, TBC, UNHCR (see scan of attendance record)

Facilitator & minutes: Chuck Schumacher, ARC

1. **Thai Military position on camps.** The Thai military has taken an active interest in the camps since July. May from UNHCR gave a brief on what she knows:
 - a. Headcounts were conducted in 7 camps (not Tham Hin or Don Yang)
 - b. 7 camps are now under Military Task Force 4
 - c. They are concerned the camp populations has not decreased and that resettlement was a pull factor
 - d. Refugees should stay in camps, not outside
 - e. Military wants to solve the problem of illegal migrants
 - f. Military issued deadline for refugees to return to camp
 - g. Meeting with Task Force 4 and Tak camp commanders was held. Naresuan Task Force HQ controls Task Force 4. The military asked, "How should the "unregistered" be treated?" They decided that MOI should manage the screening. UNHCR proposed doing a proper verification exercise.
 - h. Further meetings were scheduled for September in Bangkok and Tak.
 - i. Military (Gen. Prayuth) never mentioned "forced return".
 - j. Military did not indicate any decision on consolidation of camps.
2. **UNHCR.** There is not a good voluntary repatriation population management tool yet. There is a need to have a screening mechanism for people who enter camp.
3. **Refugee reaction to military involvement.**
 - a. Refugees feared deportation could occur, but felt safer after the headcount. They are nervous.
 - b. UNHCR has observed a spike in number of refugees coming to resettlement counseling from about 60/session to 150/session.
 - c. Refugee shops in Maela reported their business declined 70-80%.
 - d. ADRA observed an increase in refugee interest in vocational training. NGO staff are also more interested.
 - e. PU-AMI observed an increase in mental health patients, especially Nu Po.
4. **MOI regulations.**
 - a. Regulations have not changed.
 - b. More refugees are staying in camp, and not going outside to work.
 - c. TBC has observed an increase of number of refugees appealing their ration level. Some do not get rations because they are not registered in the ration system database. E.g., 172 registered refugees in Umpiem do not have ration books.
 - d. Teenagers are returning to camp and looking for jobs.
 - e. Impact will be greater 2-3 months after July.
 - f. Refugees can still work outside in nearby agriculture fields.
 - g. NGO supplies sent to camp need to be authorized by MOI and the Military.
 - h. Camp commanders are allowing refugees to leave camp, but have not announced it to section leaders. Umpiem Camp Commander has allowed PU-AMI medic trainees to go to Maela. Nu Po Camp Commander has not allowed refugees to have vehicles or motorcycles.
 - i. ADRA has observed that they are allowed only one approval per week for sending materials to camp.
 - j. PU-AMI has to request authorization for Nu Po supplies through Bangkok MOI, but it is good for 6 months.
 - k. IOM now has to get approval to send refugees from Mae Sariang to Mae Sot from the Military.
 - l. Students from camps have been allowed to return to Mae Sot.

5. **Water, Umpiem.** 6 sections have complained about not being able to pay the rent to Hmong villagers to use their water sources. ARC explained the background. 6 sections have been managing to get extra water (12-24 hours per day) for many years by paying the Hmong. ARC only provided the pipe. Since the rice rations have been more strictly controlled and increased restrictions on refugees going outside camp to earn income, the sections do not have money to pay the rent. They asked ARC to pay for them. However, this would be unfair to the 10 other sections who receive water 4-6 hours per day.
6. **Shelter.** There are shelter working groups in all 9 camps; TBC is working through them. Guidelines were just established this year, but they need to be discussed in the camps.
7. **Information Sharing centers.** The center in Umpiem is in the KYO office. In Nu Po, it is temporarily in MOI and the TBC training room. UNHCR sends weekly media and other information to the centers. There is no information about headcount in the centers. The centers seem to have much written information, but many refugees are not literate. It would be better to produce a weekly news audio tape. *Decision/action: Suggest that the centers produce an audio tape for broadcast on camp loudspeakers. Inform Gemma.*
8. **SGBV.** There is a need to do a workshop for all NGOs to improve understanding of the protocols. There is the Automatic Response Mechanism (ARM), but it is not clear what the protocols are. ARC is funded by UNHCR to support the SGBV committees. *Decision/action: Ask Adriani who the contact is for ARM in Tak Province. UNHCR will contact Hannah of ARC about the workshop.*
9. **Camp Hall, Nu Po.** Camp Committee spent about 30,000 more than they had. UNHCR explained that Mae Fah Luang volunteered to support it, but the Camp Committee did not ask for the full amount. Camp Committee is asking for more support, but the NGOs had no decision.
10. **TBC annual population verification (APV).**
 - a. The APV is scheduled for Nu Po (Oct. 13-17) and Umpiem (Oct. 20-24).
 - b. It will update the TBC database. It includes a photo update for the unregistered.
 - c. Refugees need to be verified to get a ration book for TBC assistance.
 - d. Art will send an exception list for NGO staff who cannot attend APV because they are working.
 - e. Students in Mae Sot need to return to camp to be verified.
 - f. Cases with no ration book who left and returned to camp:
 - If they have a good reason, they may be reinstated.
 - Temporarily, TBC is using vulnerability criteria for "return" cases.
 - Camp leaders will set the return criteria at their camp management border-wide meeting in Don Yang in November
 - g. TBC will distribute new ration books in December.
 - h. MOI only allows TBC to feed the registered population, but it depends on each Camp Commander.
 - i. TBC has not been informed of any APV restrictions from MOI for this year.
11. **Meetings in Nu Po and Umpiem, Sept. 17-18.** Camp Committee in Nu Po will provide lunch because they will stage the opening ceremony of the new camp hall. ARC will arrange for lunch in Umpiem.
12. **Next Umphang NGO Meeting:** 15:00, November 11, PU-AMI office. Facilitation/minutes: PU-AMI.