

Food Delivery to IDPs in the Vanni

NORTH | SRI LANKA

March 2009

Caseload

150,000 to 190,000 – number of IDPs remaining in Mullaitivu according to the UN and ICRC
70,000 - number of IDPs remaining in Mullaitivu according to Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL)

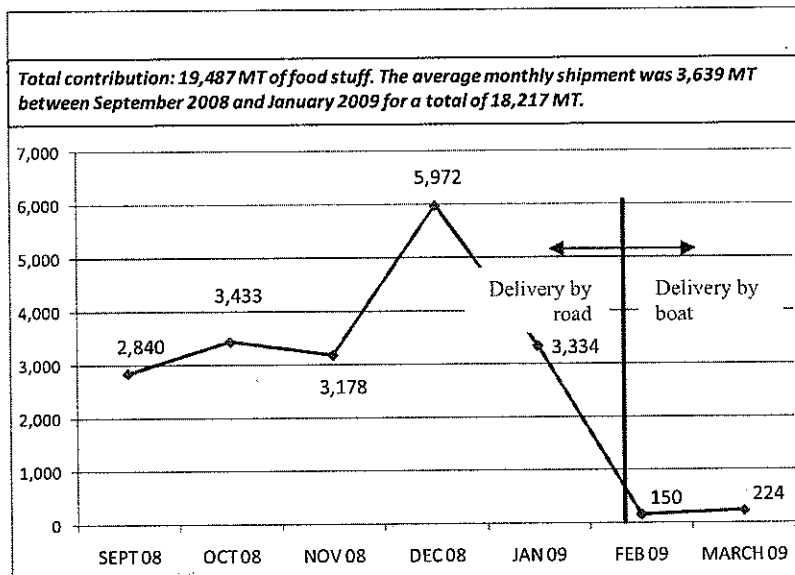
Deliveries

18,217 MT¹ - total food quantity delivered by road into the Vanni between September 2008 and January 2009 (average of **3,639MT** per month).

There was a gap of two weeks after the end of January.

150 MT - monthly food shipments in February 2009 by boat². This represents **4.1%** of the average delivered by road in previous months.

224 MT³ - food shipments in March 2009 by boat⁴. This represents **7%** of the monthly average delivered by road in previous months.



20,000 people – number of IDPs that current food supply supports per month⁵ but excluding the negative effects of one month without regular delivery.

Food stocks are on standby outside the Vanni but delivery of required food to IDPs is restricted by GoSL access. The latest negotiation with the Government allowed 500 MT mixed food commodities to be dispatched, using the sea.

We need to send to the NFZ at least 3,000 MT of food per month for a caseload of 200,000 people

Situation

- After several weeks of reports of food shortages, it's highly predicted that mortality could set in as a significant number of the IDP population is reportedly weakened and the likelihood of malnutrition across the same population group could translate into a rapid increase of nutritional and health deterioration. A recent report from Mullaitivu also stressed the seriousness of the food situation in Mullaitivu that people's nutritional condition shows significant deterioration.

¹ Contributions from GoSL, Indian Government, UN and NGOs - This total includes 781.4 MT through local purchase between Dec 2008 and Jan 2009

² WFP, INGO and Government figures combined

³ There has been 10 shipments to date from 17th February – this includes Government dispatched 70 MT food as well

⁴ WFP, INGO and Government figures combined

⁵ Based on WFP figure of 500g per person per day

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- Reports indicate that only limited stock was transferred to the new NFZ and that limited food reserves that some IDPs carried onto the coastal strip are becoming depleted.
- Previous months saw IDPs spread across significantly greater areas, with agricultural land still in use and local markets more accessible to a larger proportion of the IDP caseload. The destruction of crops during the floods in December 2008, closure of banks, and the subsequent confinement of the IDP population to a coastal strip this year has highly restricted the access to locally available produce.
- A recent rapid food security review performed by WFP and covering the North indicated that the already anticipated reduced harvests from the Maha season (main) have been lost as the people fled their land and associated livelihoods. Furthermore, the possibility for planting during the Yala season (March/April) is also unimaginable due to the current crisis. The two districts: Killinochchi and Mullaitivu are traditionally the surplus producing districts that also covered the needs of other districts (e.g. Jaffna).
- A limited market still exists for a few items (coconut, fish, etc.) though prices are exorbitant with most items beyond the reach of all but a few. Most IDP families do not have the purchasing power to access those items.
- Estimates of the caseload vary but the nutritional value of the current food delivered remains significantly low, compared to the requirements - even for the lowest figures presented.
- High congestion, lack of sanitation and access to clean water for many, and a reduced availability of firewood to facilitate food preparation and cooking will be factors that further contribute to the deterioration of health conditions.

