

## 3. Scope, Extent and Impact of the Operation

### 3.1 Introduction

Operation Restore Order started on or about 17 May 2005. Still underway as the mission left Zimbabwe on 9 July 2005, it has affected a wide cross-section of Zimbabwe's urban and rural population. Initially targeted at street vendors and those operating in the informal urban economy, the Operation rapidly extended to the demolition of informal and formal settlements, and small and medium enterprises countrywide. Although a cross-section of the population was affected, the poor and disadvantaged are the worst off. They include those who lost their homes, those who lost their livelihoods, and those who lost both.

### 3.2 Scope and Extent of the Operation

The Operation has had a major economic, social, political and institutional impact on Zimbabwean society. The effects will be felt for many years to come, across all four dimensions. In social terms, the Operation has rendered people homeless and destitute, and created humanitarian and developmental needs that will require significant investment and assistance over several years. Economically, substantial housing stock has been destroyed, and the informal sector has virtually been wiped out, rendering individuals and households destitute. Local municipalities that used to collect taxes from informal traders have now lost this source of income. In political terms, the Operation has exacerbated an already tense and polarized climate characterized by mistrust and fear. It has resulted in a virtual breakdown in dialogue between Government and civil society. Institutionally, the Operation was conducted by central Government authorities, including the military, in an area that legally falls under the purview of local government.

#### 3.2.1 Methodological considerations

The full scope and extent of the Operation cannot yet be determined or assessed with any degree of certainty, and perhaps never will. Firstly, the Operation was still underway as the mission left the country. Secondly, no independent and systematic assessment has been carried out. Thirdly, organizations involved in enumeration were using different methods and focusing on different but overlapping groups.

The mission was able to draw on four sources of information on the number of people affected. The first source is comprised of data collected by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). Based on effective demand for assistance, it does not include people who have found temporary shelter with, for example, relatives. Nor does it include those unable to get assistance or having sought assistance from parties that are not in contact with the UNCT.<sup>45</sup> These figures are considered **low-end estimates** and are presented in various sections dealing with sectoral issues.

The second source of information includes reports from special interest groups and membership organisations. These figures are considered **high-end estimates** owing to overlaps in enumeration. They are presented as part of the testimonials in this report.

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<sup>45</sup> Mobility is highly restricted owing to nation-wide shortages of fuel for transport.

A third source of information is based on observations derived from extensive field visits by the mission team and on-site interviews.

The fourth source of information is based on official figures provided by the Government to the on the last day of the mission. They are provided in Annex 1 – Households Affected by Operation Restore Order and "Murambatsvina".

The present assessment is based on Government figures while taking into account other indicators, such as the percentage of the population engaged in the informal economy, reports from various stakeholder organizations and academic research. The figures are broken down into two broad categories – those directly affected and those indirectly affected through knock-on effects and the inter-relationships that characterize the survival mechanisms of the poor and disadvantaged segments of the population.

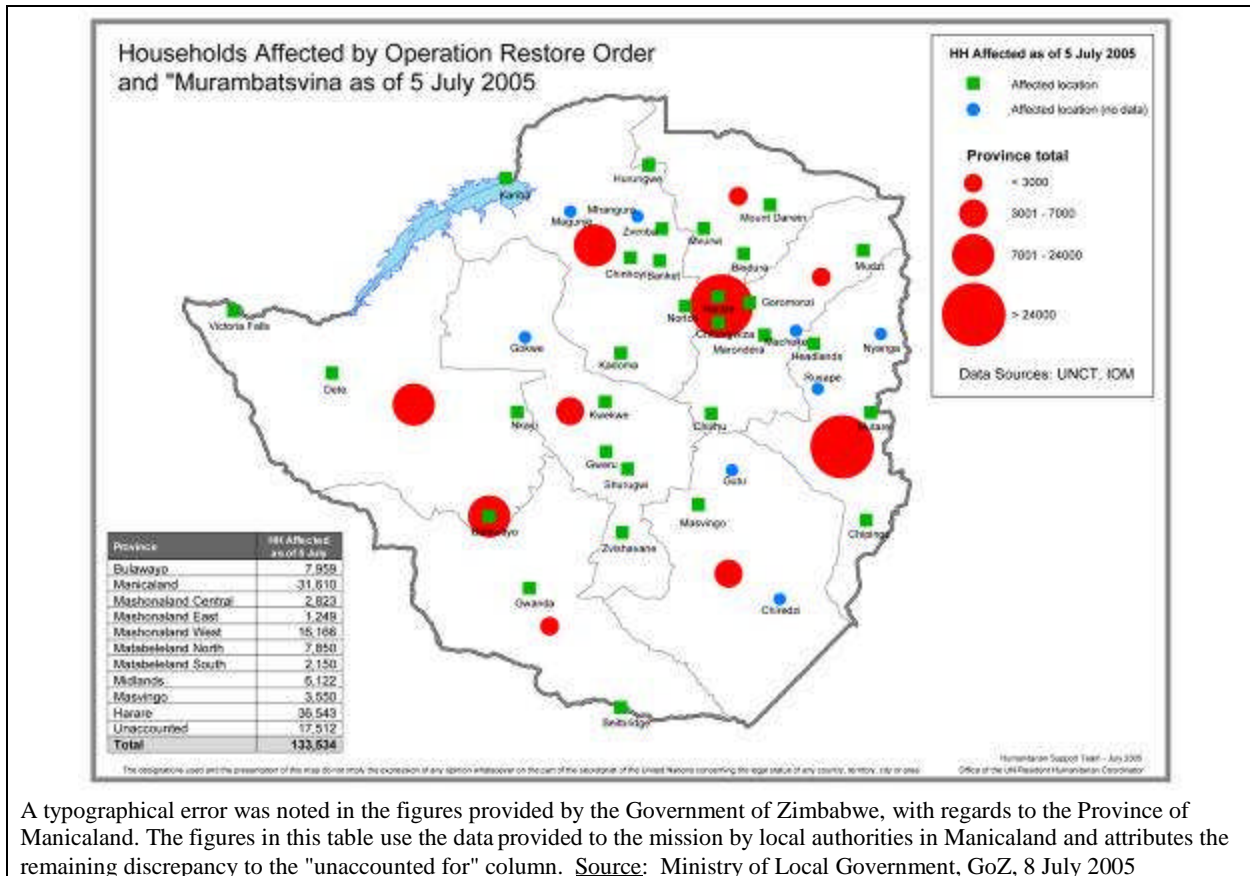
### 3.2.2 Population directly affected by Operation Restore Order

Official Government figures released on 7 July 2005 revealed a total of **92,460** housing structures that had been demolished directly affecting **133,534** households<sup>46</sup>. At the same time, the structures of **32,538** small, micro and medium-size enterprises were demolished. Based on average household size derived from the 2002 census, and authoritative studies on the informal economy, the population having lost their homes can be estimated at **569,685**, and those having lost their primary source of livelihood at **97,614**.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> For the purpose of this report, households include conventional family structures, multi-generational and/or extended family structures and individuals. The average family size has been taken to be 4.2 persons.

<sup>47</sup> Official sources have intimated that most demolished structures were occupied by 1 or 2 people. This appears to be highly improbable given the significant number of households affected which is likely to be a representative sub-sample of national and provincial averages. Furthermore, independent studies including Government surveys and policy statements systematically refer to overcrowding in informal settlements as a major issue. Some surveys have indicated 4-6 people per room as the norm, with some shacks harbouring up to 8 people.



While there is a degree of overlap between those who lost their homes and those who lost their businesses, the total figure of **650,000 to 700,000** people directly affected by the Operation is considered plausible. This takes into account other reports of the number of people arrested for alleged illegal or criminal activities (40,000), the substantial number of street vendors and hawkers who were omnipresent in all cities and towns prior to the Operation, and discrepancies noted between the figures provided by the Central Government, and those provided directly to the mission by Resident Ministers (Governors) and Mayors in the course of on-site visits.

### 3.2.3 Indirectly affected population

The above figures does not, however, include those whose livelihoods are indirectly affected by, for example, loss of rental income and the disruption of highly integrated and complex networks involved in the supply chain of the informal economy. The upstream and downstream linkages include, for example, transport and distribution services, suppliers of foodstuffs from rural areas and, conversely, suppliers of inputs to rural areas, formal and informal micro-credit institutions, and a wide range of part-time and casual labour. Based on several studies and surveys conducted in the past five years, a reasonable multiplier effect would bring the number of indirectly affected people to over **2.1 million**.

Another approximation is based on the percentage of the active population engaged in the informal economy. Several authoritative studies indicate a steady growth in the share of the informal economy, from 10% of the labour force in 1982 to 20% by 1986/87, 27% by 1991 and close to 40% by 1998. As the formal economy is estimated to have shrunk by up to 40% over the last six years, it is safe to assume that the informal economy, at the time of the Operation was

providing jobs and a source of income for at least 40% of the labour force, compared to 16% for formal sector employment and 44% for communal sector occupations, including farming. Interviews conducted with a broad cross section of the population tend to confirm that the informal sector has been, for all intents and purposes, wiped out. Assuming that 10% of this sector was still active at the time of the mission<sup>48</sup>, the total population indirectly affected by the Operation would be **2.56 million**.

Based on the above, the mission estimates that the total population directly and indirectly affected by Operation Restore Order is about **2.4 million** or 18% of the total population. This figure, which is still increasing owing to ongoing evictions and destruction of structures, will have considerable short-term and longer-term impact in social and economic terms.

### 3.3 Impact on population and categories of victims

There are three main categories of victims: those who have lost their homes, those who have lost their livelihoods, and those who have lost both. The impact is particularly severe for vulnerable groups such as orphans, widows, pregnant women, women and child-headed households, the chronically ill, the elderly and the disabled. Among those who have lost their homes<sup>49</sup>, there are a number of sub-groups, namely:

- j. People who remain where their housing structures were destroyed, sleeping either in the open or in remaining structures. With nocturnal winter temperatures as low as 8°C, many people are likely to fall ill or could die of exposure;
- k. People who stay with family and friends in urban areas. While this traditional coping mechanism based on kinship ties is capable of ensuring survival for periods ranging from a few weeks to a few months, it translates into very high densities of occupation, congestion, increased stress, and in the higher propagation of communicable diseases;
- l. People who are temporarily being sheltered in churches across the country. While the churches have offered invaluable, life-saving assistance, they often lack the resources to respond to all the needs of the displaced persons over long periods of time;
- m. People who have found alternative rental housing in urban areas. As the Operation eliminated a substantial portion of available housing stock, rents have doubled or tripled, exacerbating poverty and forcing households to make trade-offs between expenditure items such as food, schooling, health care and remittances to rural areas;
- n. People who have no fixed place to stay, but move around in urban areas and sleep mainly in the open (parks, roadside etc.). This category is likely to suffer the most in terms of breaking up of families, parental care and supervision, spouse abandonment, interruption of education, extreme hunger and destitution. Contrary to the claim of fighting crime, youth in particular are likely to resort to illicit or illegal activities as a means of survival;<sup>50</sup>
- o. People who have moved to transit points/camps. At the time of the mission, the main such camp was Caledonia Farm near Harare, which held about 5,000 persons. Another camp located in the Sports Oval of Mutare held about 100 persons, while an additional camp was planned in Bulawayo, and;
- p. People who have moved to rural areas.

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<sup>48</sup> Statements made by various Government officials during the mission intimated that Operation Restore Order was 90% complete.

<sup>49</sup> In addition, a number of people previously living in the street, including unaccompanied children, have been placed in institutions.

<sup>50</sup> The crime statistics provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs for the period 2003-2005 indicate that there was no statistically significant impact on crime incidences.

A rough estimate of where people are located is as follows: 114,000 or 20% living in the open with no shelter; 114,000 or 20% having gone or forced to go to rural areas; 170,000 or 30% absorbed by families, friends or the extended family; and 170,000 or 30% seeking refuge within the community in churches and other temporary accommodation.

Those affected include tens of thousands of people of Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian origin who have established themselves for decades, and in some cases for generations, in Zimbabwe. They have no rural home to go to. Similarly, many widows and divorcees have no rural homes to return to, because property often stays with the former husband's side of the family. Others are in need of medical care which is difficult to get in rural areas. The mission was also presented with testimonials of families transported to rural areas had been rejected by traditional leaders who claimed that they did not want to be exposed to "the immorality of urban lifestyles and increased risks of HIV propagation."<sup>51</sup>

Government officials repeatedly asserted in the press and in official statements to the mission that a major expected outcome of Operation Restore Order is the "return" of people to rural areas. It is the informed opinion of the mission, based on two decades of research by UN-HABITAT and its partners, that this is a misinformed assumption. Rural-urban migration is driven by economic factors. It lies in the search for better livelihoods and escaping rural poverty. Moreover, urban-rural relocation, whether forced or voluntary, would exacerbate the present situation in rural Zimbabwe, characterized by several years of continuous drought, shortages in food supply and falling incomes.

In **Mutare**, a group of churches reported that immediately following the demolitions of about 32,000 housing structures at the end of May, some 50,000 people were sleeping in the open near the sites of the evictions. However, this number had dropped to 3,000-5,000 when the mission arrived on 1 July. Approximately 15% of those rendered homeless in Mutare were reported chronically ill. At the time of the mission, there were 17 churches in **Bulawayo** sheltering evicted persons.

### 3.4 Impact on livelihoods and the Economy

The livelihoods of all directly affected households have either been destroyed or placed in serious jeopardy. In many instances, there is compounded suffering as homeless and displaced people are unable to pursue their occupation or maintain their source of income. All households accommodated in transit centers have become entirely dependent on emergency relief for their survival. People who moved in with relatives or neighbors are, without a doubt, taxing the capacity of their hosts in meeting their basic needs.

For many of those rendered homeless, housing structures were their most valuable asset. Many traders in the informal sector, including vulnerable groups such as people living with HIV/AIDS and widows with disabled children, have had their stock confiscated or destroyed.<sup>52</sup> The loss of capital is therefore substantial. Many people who had taken out loans to build a home or start a small business now have no means of repaying their debts.

Homeowners who used to rent out parts of their plots to shack dwellers have lost this source of income as a result of the demolitions. Many of them were retired public sector employees whose

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<sup>51</sup> Confidential submission.

<sup>52</sup> Confidential submission.

pensions had been eroded by hyperinflation to as low as USD 2 per month. However, remaining landlords are reported to have sharply increased rent, increasing the pressure on tenants and making it more difficult for evictees to find alternative accommodation in urban areas. In Mutare, rents tripled in the weeks following the demolitions, while in Victoria Falls rents doubled.<sup>53</sup>

Thousands of those who used to work in the informal sector have lost their livelihoods as a result of the crackdown on flea markets, tuck-shops, craft markets, vending stalls and urban agriculture. At least seven office buildings in Harare's central business district have been temporarily shut down for overcrowding and breach of licensing agreements.<sup>54</sup> A large group of small businesses and college students using these buildings have been affected. Markets in rural growth points have been closed and roadside vending has been banned, resulting in net loss in livelihoods. The economic environment, with unemployment levels between 70% and 80%, provides few immediate prospects for rebuilding livelihoods.

Agriculture and export horticulture has also been adversely affected. Wholesale businesses which used to sell their produce to informal vendors have now lost a major portion of their retail network. Some workers have been dislocated and the small-scale supply chain disrupted.

In some examples, formally employed people have been forced to leave their jobs as a result of the loss of shelter or the forced relocation. Street people have also been forcibly removed, and many street children have been rounded up and transferred to transit camps or overcrowded centers for delinquents. These youth centers are generally unable to provide adequate care, support and follow-up assistance for street children.

### 3.5 Humanitarian consequences of the Operation

Depending on their location, the population affected by the evictions is in immediate need of tents, blankets, food, water, sanitation and medical assistance. Many households which have temporarily absorbed evictees are congested and increasingly strapped for resources, and also require support including shelter, blankets and food.

There is a special need to protect and assist women and children and vulnerable groups such as orphans, widows, the disabled and chronically ill. The paragraphs below attempt to assess the consequences for each of these groups and for major sectors.

What is evident is that Operation Restore Order took place against the backdrop of deepening vulnerability in the Zimbabwean society. Factors fueling this vulnerability include food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and limited capacity in basic services.

### 3.6 Analysis of impact by sector

#### 3.6.1 Shelter and non-food items

A large number of displaced persons are staying on or near the site of their demolished homes with very limited shelter. Tens of thousands are in immediate need of tents and blankets, especially with the onset of winter. The shelter situation at Caledonia Farm, which now holds an

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<sup>53</sup> Fact sheet submitted by a group of churches on 1 July 2005 in Mutare and interviews conducted in Victoria Falls.

<sup>54</sup> "7 city buildings closed", *The Herald*, 25 June 2005.

estimated 5,000 persons, is woefully inadequate. In urban areas such as the Mbare neighborhood of Harare, the mission observed a large number of plots where there had previously been one main house surrounded by 3 to 4 additional housing structures. In most cases only the main house remained and was becoming overcrowded as the community had sought to absorb as many evicted families as possible. Because of overcrowding in what have now become multi-family homes, many men reportedly sleep outside at night, while women and children sleep inside.

A 19 year old woman from Chitungwiza in Harare told the mission: *“I was living in a cottage with my younger sister and my disabled brother. My parents had already passed away. Then the clean-up operation came and destroyed the cottage. Now we have nowhere to go and we are sleeping outside. Our blankets and our other property were stolen. We are not going to school because we have no place to stay. We are sleeping outside with my disabled brother in a cold place.”*

In other testimony to the mission, the affected population expressed a strong wish to be allocated stands/plots where they could settle permanently, with secure tenure. Several people forcibly moved from the settlement at Porta Farm to the transit camp at Caledonia Farm told the mission that they had been displaced up to three times in recent years.<sup>55</sup> Evicted families at Hatcliffe Extension also testified that they had been moved upon the Government’s insistence several times in the past.<sup>56</sup>

Without legal reform, any future allocation of stands/plots would not in itself provide a solution, since the current laws and regulations do not allow people to live on “un-serviced stands/plots”. The mission met with several people and households across the country who had been allocated stands/plots as far back as five years ago, but were unable to build their houses because local authorities had not connected the stand to the sewer network. The limited resources of local authorities, combined with the high regulatory standards, have been a major and unnecessary obstacle to people’s own efforts in creating permanent housing solutions in Zimbabwe.

The Special Envoy brought this anomaly to the attention of the authorities, and there were indications in the local papers that this recommendation would be considered.

The UNCT interim response plan aims to provide temporary shelter and non-food items for 40,000 households (200,000 persons), at a cost of USD 4.5 million over three months. Priority short-term interventions include the provision of tents, plastic sheeting, blankets, cooking utensils and soap.

**It is the view, however, of the mission that such assistance would be meaningful only if people are provided tents with stands/plots and the right of occupation during construction, and security of tenure, together with a relaxation of the provisions of the Regional Town and Country Planning Act to enable affected households to gradually rebuild their homes. UN-HABITAT is fielding a resettlement specialist to assist the UN Country Team with this approach.**

### 3.6.2 Water and Sanitation

Many of the displaced are staying in overcrowded conditions or out in the open without adequate access to water and sanitation. Unless their situation is improved, there is a serious risk of transmission of disease and of epidemic outbreaks related to water-borne diseases such as diarrhea,

<sup>55</sup> Visit of the mission of the Special Envoy to Caledonia Farm on 1 July 2005.

<sup>56</sup> Visit of the mission of the Special Envoy to Hatcliffe Extension 30 June 2005.

dysentery and cholera. This threat is exacerbated by the lack of access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Many displaced persons were observed to be collecting drinking water from rivers, streams and unprotected shallow wells while using open areas for sanitation. The risk of an epidemic is likely to increase dramatically with the start of the rainy season towards October-November.

The UNCT interim response plan aims to provide assistance in water and sanitation to 40,000 households (200,000 persons), at a total cost of USD 1.7 million over three months. Immediate required interventions include: water supply to affected populations; distribution of water treatment tablets; plastic containers and soap; plastic sheeting for temporary pit latrines; supply of chloride/lime for environmental disinfection; and management of solid waste.

**It is the opinion of the mission, however, that this figure will have to be revised upwards.**

### 3.6.3 Food and Nutrition

The displacement of people has reduced access to food, owing to loss of income as well as loss of supply from the informal sector, the latter having been largely dismantled. Furthermore, commodities such as bread, oil and sugar are in short supply and prices have been rising. In the month prior to the Operation, prices of sugar and cooking oil went up by 61% and 53%, respectively.<sup>57</sup>

It is therefore likely that a high number of affected households will be hard placed to purchase food and to ensure adequate nutrition in coming months.<sup>58</sup> This will have considerable impact on pregnant women, breast-feeding mothers and children.

Because many among the displaced remain scattered in different locations and are highly mobile, it is difficult to identify all those in need of immediate food assistance. Furthermore, many among those being moved to rural areas are arriving in communities that are already food insecure, where there is little humanitarian presence.

The UN interim response plan is targeting 27,000 households (135,000 persons) for food assistance over three months, at a cost of USD 1.1 million. Priority interventions include: the provision of food packs to particularly vulnerable households; distribution of cooked meals at transit camps; interventions to prevent deterioration of nutrition among children; and the establishment of a nutrition surveillance system in areas where people have resettled.

**It is the opinion of the mission, however, that this figure will have to be revised upwards.**

### 3.6.4 Basic Health Services

The combination of overcrowding for evicted persons living with friends and relatives and hardship for those sleeping out in the open will have a direct consequence in terms of other communicable diseases such as pneumonia and tuberculosis. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this trend is already emerging with reported deaths among displaced children due to respiratory infections. The most affected group will likely be the chronically ill and people living with

<sup>57</sup> FEWS: Zimbabwe Food Security Update, May 2005.

<sup>58</sup> WFP Zimbabwe: Critical Resource Needs, June 2005.



HIV/AIDS, while pregnant women as well as young children will also be at high risk. Furthermore, several cases of women giving birth in the open<sup>59</sup> after being cut off from reproductive health services were reported in the areas visited by the mission. In Caledonia Farm, the mission observed that some of the people were infected with scabies.

Testimony by, an 18-year old woman from Zegeza: *“Both of my parents left me when I was very young and I stayed with my grandparent living in the city. Then my grandparent fell ill and died in 2000, and my neighbors helped since I was homeless. I pushed myself into a marriage because of the living conditions. I don’t know any of my relatives. Before the clean-up operation, I was a pregnant housewife and my husband was working in one of the tuck-shops. We used to pay rent with that money and it bought enough food for us to survive. Life changed when our cottage and the tuck-shop were destroyed. I gave birth in the open space where we are now staying with our seven days old baby. We don’t have enough blankets to cover our baby. We are spending the whole night outside with our newborn baby and our property.”*

There will also be need for psycho-social support to help individuals and households overcome the traumatic experience of having witnessed the destruction of their homes and, in many cases, having been forced to demolish their homes with their own hands. Testimony from the affected population suggests that there are examples of people adopting self-destructive behavior patterns following the evictions.<sup>60</sup>

Some people also suffered physical injuries during the demolitions. In one case reported to the mission, a man sustained fatal head injuries on 19 June 2005 when a wall he was breaking down collapsed on him, leaving his family and relatives in mourning.<sup>61</sup>

According to the UNCT, priority needs in basic health services including child health (diagnosis and treatment of common illnesses; immunization; Vitamin A supplement), maternal health (antenatal care; delivery, post-natal care) and care of the chronically ill. The UN interim response plan is targeting 40,000 households (200,000 persons) for basic health care over three months, at a cost of USD 600,000.

**The view of the mission is that these figures will have to be revised upwards.**

### 3.6.5 HIV and AIDS

An estimated 24.6% of adult Zimbabweans are infected with HIV/AIDS.<sup>62</sup> Assuming that the displaced population had an HIV/AIDS prevalence rate similar to the rest of population, the mission estimates that over **79,500 persons over 15 years of age living with HIV/AIDS have been displaced**. The Operation has led to an increase of vulnerability and, probably, risky sexual practices and gender-based violence. It has also led to a disruption in HIV/AIDS services, particularly ARV treatment, home-based care and prevention. Immediate consequences likely include shortened life expectancy and death owing to lack of treatment and care in a situation where life expectancy has already dropped to only 33 years, malnutrition and exposure to the elements. Medium to long-term consequences include increased transmission of HIV, leading to higher infection rates and a more rapid progression of the disease that may only be detected over the next few years.

<sup>59</sup> Confidential source.

<sup>60</sup> Testimonies submitted by women’s groups in meeting with the Special Envoy in Harare.

<sup>61</sup> Confidential source. The mission did not receive confirmation or negation of this fatality from the authorities.

<sup>62</sup> UNAIDS: AIDS epidemic update, December 2004.

Testimonies from the affected population and service providers indicate that a number of AIDS patients have had their ARV treatment disrupted as a result of the evictions. Several hundred persons receiving such treatment have been reported displaced in Harare alone.<sup>63</sup> As many displaced persons are reported to have requested formal transfers to alternate ARV treatment providing sites, it is difficult at this point to assess to what extent the Operation has led to higher ARV treatment default rates.

In cases where ARV treatment has been interrupted, this could result in drug resistance, declining health, and ultimately death. Furthermore, displacement could affect the ability of ARV patients to maintain a healthy and balanced diet, thereby undermining the treatment regime. The Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights have expressed grave concern that the displacements could lead to an increase in HIV across the country, and that a large proportion of the new infections could be resistant to first-line treatment (Nevirapine).<sup>64</sup> Other medical groups have also expressed concerns that a more aggressive strain of TB<sup>65</sup>, which was previously only found in Harare and requires more expensive, complicated treatment, could spread to other parts of the country.<sup>66</sup>

Home-based care (HBC) for AIDS sufferers has been disrupted in many places, and several organizations have indicated a 15-25% reduction in the number of patients accessing their programmes. A significant number of HBC clients and other chronically ill patients appear to remain without adequate shelter, with serious health consequences. Some also have problems accessing hot meals even if they are able to obtain food rations, as water, firewood and cooking facilities often are missing. Many trained volunteers have themselves been displaced, leading to interrupted services for those patients that have not been directly affected by the evictions.

One volunteer caregiver, a single mother whose story was shared with the mission, described how her 24-year old daughter had been receiving home-based care for HIV long before the Operation.<sup>67</sup> Following the demolition of their home, the care programme for the sick daughter was interrupted. The mother also had to spend most of her time looking for alternative accommodation and was therefore unable to look after other HIV patients in the community whom she had assisted in the past. Furthermore, she was unable to take care of her sick daughter, whose condition was worsening as a result of homelessness, destitution and lack of care.

HIV prevention is an area of great concern following the evictions, as displacements often put people at greater risk of being infected with the virus. Potential risk factors in the current situation include the separation of couples, increased stress, transactional and commercial sex, sexual violence, as well as interruption of services and supplies. Family separation is a particularly important risk factor in the spread of HIV, and previous experience indicates that displacement and separation of couples could lead to an increased frequency in unsafe sex.

Access to services such as HIV information, counseling and condom distribution has been severely disrupted in many places as a direct consequence of the Operation. Nationwide sales of male condoms are reported to have dropped by over 20% from May to June 2005, while sales of

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<sup>63</sup> “Interim United Nations Multi-Sectoral Response Plan to the Recent Evictions in Zimbabwe”, 27 June 2005.

<sup>64</sup> Submission from Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights.

<sup>65</sup> The spread of HIV/AIDS and TB are closely related in developing countries.

<sup>66</sup> Confidential source.

<sup>67</sup> Story shared during meeting of the Special Envoy with women’s groups in Harare.

female condoms dropped by about 40%.<sup>68</sup> Condom marketing programmes in some areas have reportedly come to a complete standstill, mostly because outlets such as tuck shops and informal vendors have been shut down. For example, at least half of the hair saloons involved in one NGO's marketing program of female condoms had stopped functioning by the time of the arrival of the mission.

The UN interim response plan includes targeted assistance to 10,000 persons living with HIV/AIDS, in addition to broader prevention interventions, at a cost of USD 1.7 million over three months. Priority interventions include: care for the chronically ill; continued home-based care; monitoring ARV compliance; information on HIV prevention; voluntary counseling and testing; promotion of condoms; and care for orphans and vulnerable children.

**It is the view of the mission that the target of this plan will have to be revised upwards.**

### 3.6.6 Education

Between 2000 and 2005, Zimbabwe experienced a reversal of gains previously made in primary education. The trend has been characterized by reduced enrolment rates, increased dropout rates, re-emergence of gender disparity and deterioration of the quality of teaching. Since 2000, net attendance has dropped by about 24%, from 85% to 67% for boys and from 86% to 63% for girls.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, primary school completion rates that had peaked at 83% in 1990 declined to 75% by 2000, and dropped further to 63% in 2002.

Education for a substantial portion of the school age children directly affected by the Operation has been disrupted, as the evictions took place in the middle of the academic/school year.

An estimated 113,000 children aged between 5 and 11 while 109,000 children aged 12-18 were directly affected by the Operation. While there is, at present, no means of assessing the number of children not attending school as a result of the Operation, the UN inter-agency working group on the protection of children has reported that school enrollment may have dropped by about 25% following the Operation.

Many displaced children are no longer within their original school catchment areas and have no ready or affordable means of transportation.<sup>70</sup> One women's organization told the mission that as many as 300,000 children were out of school as a result of the operation, but the mission was unable to verify this information.<sup>71</sup> In Sakubva Township in Mutare, 80% of school-going children were reported as seriously affected by the operation.<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, many teachers have also been displaced and are unable to get to work, thus compromising the quality of services offered in remaining schools. The mission saw several schools that were closed, as well as schools where teachers had to refuse pupils because of overcrowding.

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<sup>68</sup> Confidential submission.

<sup>69</sup> The State of the World's Children 2005.

<sup>70</sup> "Interim United Nations Multi-Sectoral Response Plan to the Recent Evictions in Zimbabwe", 27 June 2005.

<sup>71</sup> Testimony made during meeting with the Special Envoy with women's groups on 30 June 2005. GoZ did not provide school statistics to the mission, while several newspapers reported that 300,000 children were out of school.

<sup>72</sup> Fact sheet submitted by a group of churches on 1 July 2005 in Mutare.

The education of children in rural areas has also been affected by the evictions. Some of the rural children were living with friends or relatives in towns while attending school on weekdays. In Mvurwi, for instance, 226 commuting farm children are reported to have dropped out of primary and secondary school following the Operation, 28% of whom were orphans.<sup>73</sup> In Bindura, a primary school located near a farming area reported that 20% of its enrolled students had recently left school as families were forced to relocate.

In a few areas such as Dzivarasekwa Extension and Hatcliffe enrolment in some primary schools reportedly went up during the first phase of the Operation, following the destruction of other schools deemed illegal and the influx of evictee families from other areas.<sup>74</sup> Owing to uncertainty over rules governing transfers of evicted teachers and children, school heads are reportedly reluctant to offer placement for children who have moved into a new area. It is still not clear how displaced children registered for the June examinations will be accommodated.

There are currently no education facilities in or near the Caledonia Farm transit camp despite the growing number of children living in the camp. There are also no education facilities in the camp at the Sports Oval in Mutare. Many displaced parents who lost their homes as well as their livelihoods can no longer afford to send their children to school. For example, all school children residing at the Caledonia Farm 26 km from the city of Harare, were expected to pay their bus fares to attend school in the city. Many could not afford to do so.

### 3.6.7 Children and Youth

Highly vulnerable children, including orphans as well as children with disabilities or HIV, and those with special needs, were generally disregarded by the authorities during the Operation. An estimated **83,530** children under four were directly affected by the Operation.

Child-headed households are particularly vulnerable following the evictions. There have also been examples of children being accidentally separated from their parents during forced relocations.<sup>75</sup> The mission was unable to identify any comprehensive measures by the Government to: prevent further separations; register separated children; ensure appropriate care and protection; and institute immediate measures for tracing and reunification. The destitution has also made children more vulnerable to various forms of abuse. The psycho-social impact on children worst afflicted is likely to be profound.

The UN interim response plan is targeting 50,000 children for educational assistance at a cost of USD 460,000 over three months. Priority interventions include: rapid assessment of schools, children and teachers affected; advocacy for a Government policy on access to education for evicted children; setting up of temporary learning spaces; procurement of tents and movable boards; play and learning materials for displaced children; psycho-social support services for affected children; and help for displaced orphans with school fees, uniforms and other support.

**The view of the mission is that this figure will have to be revised upwards. Special support must also be targeted for affected teachers.**

<sup>73</sup> Confidential submission.

<sup>74</sup> “Interim United Nations Multi-Sectoral Response Plan to the Recent Evictions in Zimbabwe”, 27 June 2005.

<sup>75</sup> Confidential submission.

Many of Zimbabwe's 1.3 million orphans have been affected by the operation. These include orphans who had been living in orphanages which have now been destroyed; orphans left alone because guardians are forced to look for accommodation or take care of other family members; and street children rounded up and placed in institutions and transit camps.<sup>76</sup>

The forced placement of street children into institutions meant for delinquents is generally not considered appropriate under international humanitarian standards such as the Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children. It recommends that institutionalization of unaccompanied and separated children should be avoided in favour of community and family-based care.<sup>77</sup>

According to UN agencies working on child protection in Zimbabwe, there have been reports that some children are being prevented from enrolling at schools in rural areas because they cannot obtain letters of transfer from their previous school, which may no longer be in operation. In some cases, these letters are reportedly being withheld until all overdue fees and levies are paid. As most heavily affected households have had both their home and their source of livelihood destroyed, they are unlikely to be able to raise the necessary funds.

### 3.6.8 Women and Girls

Already socially and economically disadvantaged, many women and girls have suffered greatly and been rendered more vulnerable through the sudden loss of homes and livelihoods. Single mothers, widows and mothers with sick or disabled children have been put in a particularly difficult situation. While households are being encouraged to "return" to the rural areas, many widows, divorcees and those married to men of foreign origin do not have a rural home to go to.<sup>78</sup>

In Sukubva, Mutare, the mission met a 44-year old woman living in the open with her 4 children. She said she is of Zimbabwean origin, but would not go back to her rural home, even though she had lost her home as well as her work trading vegetables, because that would mean that her children would have to drop out of school. Now she and her children were sleeping in the open on the remnants of the foundation that used to be their home. With nocturnal temperatures as low as 8° Celsius, the family was huddled around an open fire. *"Our family stays around the fire until we run out of wood, and then we fall asleep from sheer exhaustion – and hope to wake up alive"*

An estimated **40,800** families directly affected by the operation were headed by women. The mission heard testimony from many female-headed households severely affected by the demolitions. For example, a widow with a 6-year old disabled son and a 5-month old baby explained how her home had been demolished and her informal business destroyed during the Operation.<sup>79</sup> She had previously been selling tomatoes in the market, but was now unemployed. A friend had provided temporary shelter, but the loss of livelihood had made the small family destitute. Other single mothers explained how family and friends in many cases had proffered shelter at first, but later been obliged to give priority to close family members as the scale of the crisis grew.

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<sup>76</sup> "Interim United Nations Multi-Sectoral Response Plan to the Recent Evictions in Zimbabwe", 27 June 2005.

<sup>77</sup> See Art. 4 of Inter-Agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children.

<sup>78</sup> Confidential submission.

<sup>79</sup> Story shared during consultation of the Special Envoy with women's organizations on 30 June 2005.

An 82-year old woman who lost her cottage during the demolitions told the mission how she had previously lost all her children and now was looking after nine orphaned grandchildren. Rent from the cottage was her sole source of income, and helped provide funds for school fees, uniforms, water, electricity and food. However, the cottage had been demolished leaving her and her dependents completely destitute, with nowhere to go.<sup>80</sup>

A Catholic priest told the mission how he had met three women taking care of 11 children, all Zimbabwean-born, but of Malawian origin. They had been evicted from their homes in the Mbare neighbourhood of Harare and had nowhere to go. The priest decided to provide them with water and sanitation at his church, but had no long-term solution to offer. In the end, the women and the children got a ride to Mount Darwin with a driver who promised them a place to stay. The women knew neither the driver nor the area they were going to, and were leaving to an uncertain future.

Many of the evicted traders in informal markets were women who have now lost their livelihoods. The impact on these women and their dependents is therefore very serious, and the burden of family care for some can become too heavy to bear. For female-headed households, a complicating factor is that women in many cases do not own land in the rural areas from which they can earn an independent livelihood.<sup>81</sup> In particular, there is a risk that displaced women and girls could be forced into transactional sex, because of economic destitution. One women's organization noted that the displacement of women to rural areas made them more vulnerable, as they were moving to an unfamiliar environment often without their husbands.<sup>82</sup> There is therefore a strong need to assess the added vulnerabilities of women created by the Operation and to provide adequate support and protection. The rhetoric by some officials that the operation was meant to curb prostitution was not only offensive, but hardly credible. As one observer retorted angrily during civil society consultations in Mutare" "Does prostitution cause poverty or vice versa?"

### 3.6.9 Refugees

UNHCR reported that there were about 10,000 registered refugees in Zimbabwe prior to the Operation. Eighty percent of the refugees were staying in urban areas in contravention of official encampment policy. However, during the Operation, Government started to implement this policy more aggressively. Arrests of refugees and asylum seekers in urban centers have continued throughout the Operation, and many refugees staying in urban areas have lost their homes. While many of these refugees used to be self-reliant, they are now entirely dependent on assistance. UNHCR reported that, although it had earlier managed to secure the release of refugees on the condition that they relocate to Tongogara Camp, it had become increasingly difficult to gain access to the refugees and asylum seekers detained as part of the Operation.<sup>83</sup>

Government policy is to relocate all refugees and asylum-seekers to the official Tongogara Camp. By 6 July, the camp population had swollen to 2,500 which exceeded the camp's maximum capacity of 2,000. If this trend continues without the necessary expansion of facilities (shelter, water, sanitation etc.), living conditions in the camp are likely to deteriorate sharply.<sup>84</sup> UNHCR

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<sup>80</sup> Testimony made during consultation with women's organizations on 30 June 2005.

<sup>81</sup> Confidential submission.

<sup>82</sup> Confidential submission.

<sup>83</sup> Submission by UNHCR, 6 July 2005.

<sup>84</sup> Submission by UNHCR, 6 July 2005

has made repeated appeals to the Government for sufficient time to plan and mobilize resources for expanding the camp's facilities, but is yet succeeded in establishing a constructive dialogue.

### 3.6.10 Other Vulnerable Groups

The clean-up operations have had a particularly severe impact on vulnerable groups such as the disabled, the chronically ill, the elderly as well as widows taking care of many children. These groups often require additional support and generally find it more difficult to cope with the evictions. There is little evidence that the Government had made special provisions for particularly vulnerable groups before launching the "clean-up operation."

An estimated **26,600** people aged 60 and above were directly affected by the Operation. Many of these victims relied on renting out backyard shacks to supplement their retirement or disability pensions that have been seriously eroded by inflation over the years.<sup>85</sup>

Testimony provided to the mission showed that the increased mobility and insecurity triggered by the sudden loss of shelter and livelihoods have pushed the victims deeper into poverty, reduced their access to basic services and left women and girls more vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse. This is supported by official crime statistics, which show an increase in assault during the period of the Operation. Furthermore, existing programmes to assist vulnerable populations have been affected or disrupted by the Operation.<sup>86</sup> In some cases, evictions have led to the disruption of family units, as men have opted to stay temporarily near the site of the evictions while sending women and children to rural areas. The context of economic decline adds further to the vulnerability of these victims.

In Caledonia Farm, the mission found a group of about 50 physically and mentally challenged persons who were being held separately from the rest of the people living in the camp. This group was in dire need of special attention and support, but it was not clear that such assistance was forthcoming.

According to the UNCT, priority interventions for the protection of especially vulnerable populations include: improving situation assessment and increasing capacity for child protection partners to respond; preventing family separation and providing rapid reunification; sensitizing affected people on prevention and abuse of children and women; and providing emergency support to targeted groups including the disabled, those suffering from mental illness, orphans for whom support has been interrupted; children without adult caretakers and children taking care of sick adults.

## 3.7 Concluding Observations

While arbitrary evictions are being documented and monitored worldwide by UN-HABITAT and its partners, and such evictions are underway in several African countries, Operation Restore Order has rendered people homeless and economically destitute on an unprecedented scale. Most of the victims were already among the most economically disadvantaged groups in society, and they have now been pushed deeper into poverty and have become even more vulnerable. The scale of suffering is immense, particularly among widows, single mothers, children, orphans, the elderly and the disabled persons. In addition to the already significant pre-existing humanitarian

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<sup>85</sup> Interviews indicated that some pensions amounted to less than 2 USD per month.

<sup>86</sup> Confidential source.

needs, additional needs have been generated on a large scale, particularly in the shelter, water, sanitation and health sectors.

The humanitarian/development response to the Operation will have to take into account:

- a. Economically disadvantaged and vulnerable populations pushed deeper into poverty by the Operation;
- b. Humanitarian programming must be based on a comprehensive assessment of the humanitarian needs of the population as a whole, including those affected by the Operation;
- c. Hundreds of thousands of people have had their basic rights infringed upon and their dignity violated during the Operation;
- d. Work in the informal sector, once the primary source of livelihood for the majority of the urban poor, has been eliminated at the same time as people have suffered economic and social shock;
- e. Traditional support structures and safety nets have been undermined by the disruption of family and community life;
- f. The UNCT's early estimates for the number of affected people will need to be revised upwards, and;
- g. A major effort will be needed to provide sustainable housing and livelihood solutions in the medium term.