



UNHCR

Geneva, Wednesday 23 June 2010

PRESS STATEMENT: UNHCR stresses need for sustainable returns for refugees and other displaced in southern Kyrgyzstan

UNHCR has noted government and media reports today of increasing numbers of people returning to their homes in southern Kyrgyzstan, both from neighbouring Uzbekistan and among groups of internally displaced persons.

Although we are unable to verify precise numbers at this point in time it is apparent that these returns are being encouraged and may already exceed 30,000 people.

UNHCR applauds efforts on the parts of both countries to find a resolution to the current crisis and to address the needs of people who have been forcibly displaced. It is essential, however, that where people are returning, they are able to do so on an informed basis and in conditions of safety and sustainability.

UNHCR welcomes the return of refugees and other displaced people to their homes and appreciates that readmission across the Kyrgyz border is being permitted. Returns should be orderly, voluntary and in conditions of safety and dignity. We call upon authorities and communes to refrain from demanding return against the will of refugees and other displaced people. We also urge that voluntary returns should happen foremost to areas that humanitarian agencies have access to.

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