Left Without a Choice

Chechens forced to return to Chechnya

"If the camps are closed, I will dig a pit in the ground and sit in it together with my children"
A Chechen living in a camp in Ingushetia.

"Only 89 [of more than two hundred thousand] Internally Displaced Persons from Chechnya were granted forced migration status in Ingushetia during the period from 1st October 1999 to 31st December 2002"
UNHCR report Feb. 2003 citing Statistics of the Ministry of Federation, National Migration Policy of the Russian Federation.

A survey carried out by Médecins Sans Frontières
April 2003

MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES

Arjan Erkel, MSF head of mission in Daghestan, was kidnapped on August 12th, 2002 in Makhachkala. His whereabouts remain unknown.

MSF IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS

MSF has been present in the North Caucasus since 1992, bringing assistance to the displaced from the Ingush – Ossetian conflict

Following the beginning of the war in Chechnya, MSF began programmes in Ingushetia, Chechnya and later in Daghestan, helping victims of the conflict.

In Ingushetia MSF runs ante-natal and gynaecological clinics, paediatric clinics and general practitioner clinic in Nazran, Karabulak, Sleptsovskaya and Malgobek.

In Ingushetia, MSF also rehabilitated a clinic to treat tuberculosis patients. However, no patient was ever treated as the programme was cancelled by the Ingush Ministry of Health.

Donations of medical material, equipment and medicine to most of the government health structures in Ingushetia are carried out.

MSF also works in improving the basic living conditions of the displaced people from Chechnya living in Ingushetia, through the provision and repair of shelter, targeted distribution of heating stoves, blankets, mattresses and other non-food items, as well as wood in case of gas cuts. MSF carries out water and sanitation programmes, providing water points, latrines, collective showers and washing areas.

In Chechnya, MSF provides medicine, medical material and medical equipment to 30 structures. MSF has also carried out small rehabilitation works in the health structures in Chechnya.

In spring 2002, MSF also began a psychosocial programme in Chechnya, but since the kidnapping of Arjan Erkel, all activities have been suspended in Daghestan, and only emergency donations are carried out in Chechnya.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2001, the international medical humanitarian organization Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has been constructing shelters for civilians from Chechnya in Ingushetia who have been living in makeshift substandard conditions.[1] Most of the beneficiaries were families living in "spontaneous settlements" or kompaknikis – (primarily abandoned factories and farms), and families living in tented camps. Throughout 2001 and 2002, MSF rehabilitated dilapidated Kompaknikis and built 230 accommodations. In 2002, MSF also provided 200 new tents to the displaced families living in Aki Yurt, Logovaz and Rassviet /MRO camps.

Following the signing of the 20 point plan (May 2002) of return of Chechen families to Chechnya, by Ingush, Chechen and Federal authorities, a process of pushing people out of the tented camps has been taking place. In July 2002, Znamenskoe camp in Northern Chechnya was closed. Six months later, Aki Yurt camp in Ingushetia was also closed.

Throughout the summer of 2002, the displaced people from Chechnya living in the tented camps in Ingushetia were constantly informed that they would return to Chechnya and that the camps would be closed. No other option was offered. Some of this came through official sources, such as the Chechen Committee for Forced Migrants visiting the camps, or through TV and radio interviews with officials[2]. Various deadlines were announced by officials on the closure of the camps. People's fears of the closure of the camps were also fuelled by rumours spread around the camps, for example rumours concerning deadlines for the cutting of gas and electricity, or rumours that the federal army had moved next to the camps in order to dismantle tents and kick people out, as well as rumours that humanitarian organisations were cutting aid in Ingushetia in order to push people back to Chechnya.
All the information people received was -

- A 20 point plan exists for the return of the displaced population to Chechnya
- Camps will be closed
- Return has already started
- Gas, water, and electricity will be cut
- The displaced will receive money, housing and aid in Chechnya
- The sooner families go back to Chechnya the better support they will get, if they don't go back soon they risk not getting any support
- NGOs should leave or diminish aid in Ingushetia

One of the only exceptions to this is Bart Camp, which, in between pressures from some officials, has received several visits and assurances from the President of Ingushetia that the camp would not be closed.

Other forms of pressure were also used, such as threats, intimidation and cutting of electricity and gas. Chechen families who carried out peaceful protests were accused of being manipulated by Chechen separatists. In the same period insecurity for the displaced also increased in Ingushetia (see chronology in annex for details).

By December 2002, Aki Yurt was the first camp in Ingushetia to be closed, amid protests from the International Community and human rights organisations who did not consider it to be a voluntary return to Chechnya.

In the end of December 2002, with the increased pressures on Chechens to leave Ingushetia, and the closure of Aki Yurt, MSF accelerated its shelter programme in order to offer alternative accommodation for vulnerable families in the tent camps who did not want to return to Chechnya. 180 single-room shelters were constructed, and more than 1,200 more were planned for construction with the financial support of ECHO and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In total, approximately 3,000 alternative shelters were to be provided by humanitarian organisations working on providing shelter in Ingushetia.

[1] According to Danish Refugee Council database, 93,436 refugees were registered on their aid list in Ingushetia on February 2003.
[2] See chronology in the Annex for details.

However, since the end of January 2003, all provision of alternative shelter in Ingushetia has been blocked by the government of Ingushetia. The 180 shelters that were already completed by MSF now stand empty, as they have been declared illegal and families have not been allowed to move in. The 28th of January 2003, the Ingush government passed a directive whereby all construction had to comply with permanent construction regulations. The rooms built between December and January by MSF were then retroactively considered illegal and were ordered to be destroyed. The additional 1,200 rooms planned for construction were stalled.

Despite repeated discussions between Russian and Ingush officials, including President Zyazikov, and representatives of MSF, the United Nations (UN), ECHO, and the European Commission, as well as several Ambassadors, there has been no resolution to the problem.

Meanwhile, the displaced families from Chechnya in Ingushetia are left without a choice. There is no other choice but to go back to Chechnya. A return is voluntary only if there are other viable options besides the option to return.

The 180 rooms constructed for Chechen displaced families by MSF, which have been declared illegal.

Need for a Vulnerability Survey

The objective of the following MSF survey was to understand the needs and choices of Chechen families in the tented camps who are in need of shelter in Ingushetia. Ultimately, the survey was to help us identify the most vulnerable families who could first benefit from the MSF shelter programme.

The survey was carried out in 8 tent camps[3], targeting all the displaced families living in tent camps in Ingushetia. These consisted of the 5 'official' camps (Alina, Bella, Satzita, Sputnik in Sleptsovskaya and Bart in Karabulak) and 3 'unofficial' camps[4] (Logovaz in Nazran, Rassviet/MRO in Sleptsovskaya, and Uchkhoz in Yandare).

The survey was carried out by 25 MSF monitors, between the **3rd and 16th of February 2003.** (Families who were absent during this period, however, were followed up with through mid March).
One semi-structured questionnaire was carried out per family, totalling 3,209 questionnaires. Another 39 families were absent during repeated visits and have not been included in the survey.

As most displaced living in Ingushetia live in precarious conditions, selecting which families were more vulnerable than others was extremely difficult. The main criteria used to determine vulnerability was whether a family did not want to go back to Chechnya and had no alternative shelter in Ingushetia. Families living in spontaneous settlements (or Kompaknikis) were not included in this survey even though many live in worse condition than families in tented camps, as for the moment they have not been the main target for forced return.

Following this, other criteria were applied - those families with children under 5 years old, families with pregnant women, families with elderly (75 years old and above), families with disabled members, and families under particularly special circumstances which would be verified on a case by case basis (for example those families who had already lost their tents and were in immediate need of shelter).

The condition of a family's tent (i.e. leaks, insulation against the cold, proper flooring) was also taken into account as well as any other special observations made by the monitors.

[3] For detailed information on methodology and questionnaire please refer to the annexes.
[4] The unofficial camps are those which are not counted as tented camps neither by the authorities nor by mainstream humanitarian actors, but that do contain families living in tents

MAIN FINDINGS

The main purpose of this survey was to identify the most vulnerable families in order to provide them with alternative housing in the perspective of the planned closure of tented camps.

A total of 16,499 persons were seen and counted by MSF monitors (out of the 19,035 people reported by the displaced families interviewed) and 3,209 families interviewed for the survey, covering almost all the displaced population living in eight tent camps (including Logovaz, Rassviet, and Uchkhoz). Only 39 families were not interviewed as they were not found after repeated visits.

More than 98% of the interviewed population, do not want to return to Chechnya in the near future.

Insecurity is the main reason why the displaced from Chechnya living in the tent camps in Ingushetia do not want to go back to Chechnya. 93% of those who declare they do not want to go back to Chechnya express fear for their family's safety.

Lack of housing in Chechnya is the second main reason why the displaced do not want to go back to Chechnya. 74 % of families stated having no home in Chechnya as a reason for not going back.

Humanitarian Aid is not a decisive element in people's choice to go back to Chechnya or to stay in Ingushetia. 88 % of families did not talk about aid at all as a reason for them not to go back to Chechnya.

Most families interviewed continue to live in poor conditions, with 52% of families living in tents that either leak, do not have cold protection or even have no floor.

Out of the 98% of families who do not plan to go back to Chechnya, 90% do not know of an alternative shelter where they can stay in Ingushetia. This represents 2,827 families out of 3,151 families, or 14,443 people, that are in need of immediate shelter.

In spite of this, it is visible in the camps that families have been returning to Chechnya, without prior knowledge of possible alternative shelter. Till this day the provision of alternative shelter in Ingushetia continues to be blocked.

***

A. Demographics – Population profile [5]

Global population figures

A total of 3,209 families from all of the eight camps for Chechen families in Ingushetia were questioned and entered into the database. (This does not include families living in spontaneous settlements in Uchkhoz, Logovaz, and MRO / Rassviet).

In these families, MSF monitors saw and counted a total of 16,499 persons. The families themselves reported a total of 19,035 persons. The discrepancy between the number of people seen by the MSF monitors and the number reported by the displaced families themselves is due to the fact that some family members were out at the moment the survey was carried out. Though families that were absent were revisited, individual family members who were absent were not revisited. We can thus consider that the MSF figures for number of people are lower than the real figures.

Camp	N° of families	N° of people as counted by monitors	N° of people According to families interviewed
Bart	480	2,640	2,858
Logovaz*	47	239	265
Alina	553	2,526	2,952
Bella	500	2,276	2,886
Rassviet / MRO*	192	1,075	1,128
Satzita	603	3,314	3,950
Sputnik	786	4,184	4,718
Uchkhoz*	48	245	278
TOTAL	**3,209**	**16,499**	**19,035**

*Note: In Logovaz, Rassviet / MRO, and Uchkhoz, families living in *Kompakniki* are not included in these figures.

Age profile

14% of the total population is under 5 years old (2,327 children under 5), and 1% above 75 years old (195 elderly)

Pregnancies

Pregnant women represent 2% of the total population (292 women).

Disabilities

5% of the total number of families (150 families) have at least one member who suffers from a disability, such as paralysis, amputation of the legs, blind, or mentally retarded.

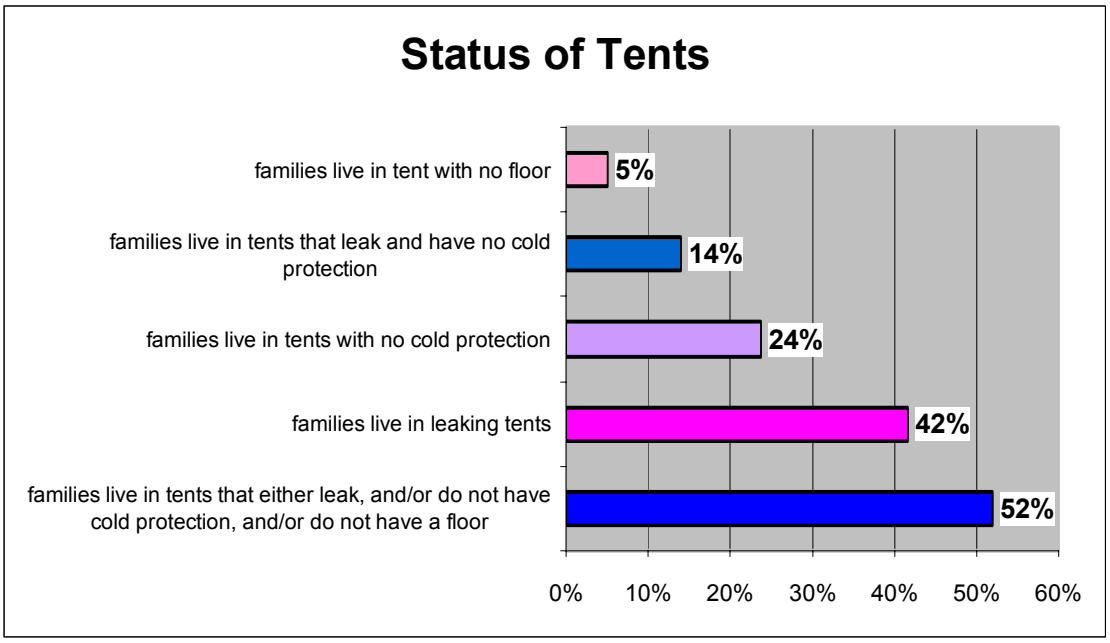
[5] Note – all figures given are the numbers of people / families that MSF monitors directly observed, unless mentioned otherwise

B. Status of Tents

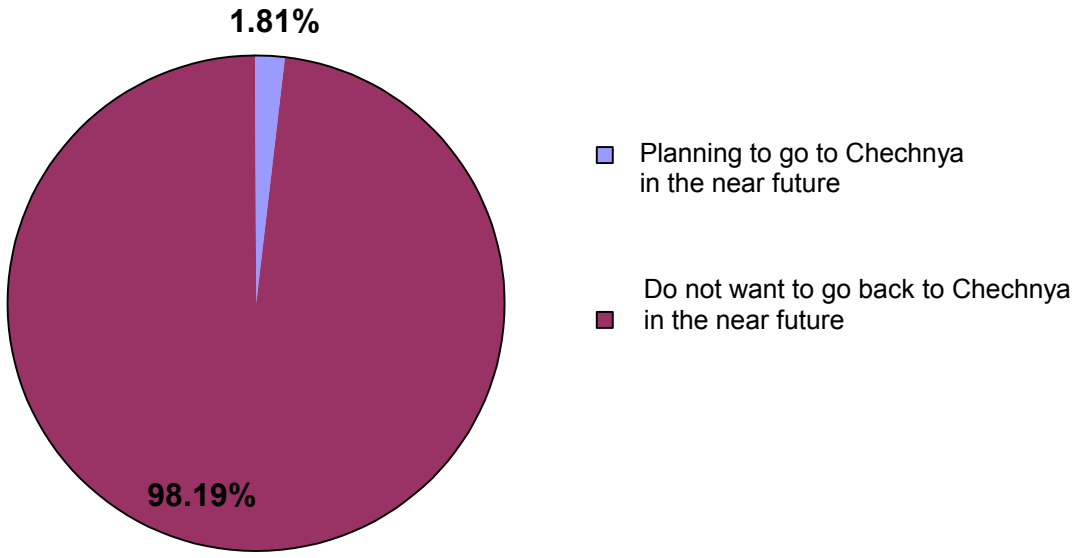
98 % of interviewed families live in tents (3,159 families out of 3,209)

Of these :

- 52% (1,653 families out of 3,159) of families live in tents that leak, and /or do not have insulation against the cold, and/or do not have a floor (either concrete or wooden)[6].
- 42 % of families (1,317 families out of 3,159) live in leaking tents
- 24 % of families (749 families out of 3,159) live in tents with no insulation
- 14% of families (437 families out of 3,159) live in tents that leak and have no insulation.
- 5% of families (1,45 families out of 3,159) live in tents with no floor
-



C. Return to Chechnya ?



Families who are planning to go to Chechnya in the near future

Camp	N° of families
Alina	20
Bella	20
Sputnik	8
Bart	6
Satzita	4
Grand Total	58

i. More than 98% of families do not want to return to Chechnya in the near future[7].

Despite the unacceptable living conditions in the tent camps, **98% of the interviewed families do not want to go back to Chechnya in the near future** (3,151 out of 3,209 families).

a. Insecurity is the main reason why Chechens living in camps in Ingushetia do not want to go back to Chechnya.
93% of those who declare they do not want to go back to Chechnya express fear for their family's security. (2,921 out of 3,151 families)

"Day time I am afraid of the Russian soldiers, at night I am afraid of the Boeviks[8]"

[7] Questions were left with open answers for families to say what they wished. These answers were then classified into groups. For this reason multiple answers were possible. Most families interviewed gave two reasons for not going back (1924 families), followed by those who gave one reason for not going back (932 families) and those who gave 3 reasons for not going back (280).
[8] Chechen armed rebels.

b. Lack of housing is the second reason given for why they do not want to go back to Chechnya. 74 % (2,337 out of 3,151) of families answered not having a home in Chechnya as a reason for not going back.

67% (2,111 out of 3,151 families) of families gave both insecurity and not having a home in Chechnya as their main reasons for not wanting to return to Chechnya. 6% (197 families out of 3,151) of families gave not having a home (homes destroyed by war) in Chechnya as the only reason for not going back.
For 23% of interviewed families, fear for their family's lives is the only reason mentioned for not going back (731 families out of 3,151) to Chechnya.

c. Aid is not a decisive factor in willingness to go back to Chechnya or not.

"Living conditions are worse than in Grozny but at least here we fear less for the lives of our sons and husbands"

88 % of families (2,777 families out of 3,151) did not make any mention of aid (neither lack of aid in Chechnya nor aid given in Ingushetia) as a reason for them not to go back to Chechnya.
Only 10% (321 families out of 3,151) of families gave lack of aid in Chechnya as a reason for not going back.
Only 2 % (67 families out of 3,151) of families gave aid in Ingushetia as a reason for them not to go back to Chechnya.

These results clearly show that the very poor quality of aid in Ingushetia is not an incentive for people to stay. This is contradictory to statements made by Chechen, Ingush and Russian officials arguing that assistance to the displaced in Ingushetia is one of the main reasons which keeps people from going back to Chechnya. However, aid in Chechnya is also insufficient, notably because the insecurity threatening Chechen civilians is also threatening humanitarian workers.

ii .Less than 2% of interviewees (1.81%, 58 families) plan to return to Chechnya in the near future.

The most common answer given by these 58 families was '*want to go back home'* with no further comments (about 40% of families). This was followed by 'want to go back home and have a house in Chechnya' with 17% (of 58 families) of families answering this as a reason to go back.

D. Closure of camps & Options in Ingushetia

More than 98% of families do not want to return to Chechnya in the near future

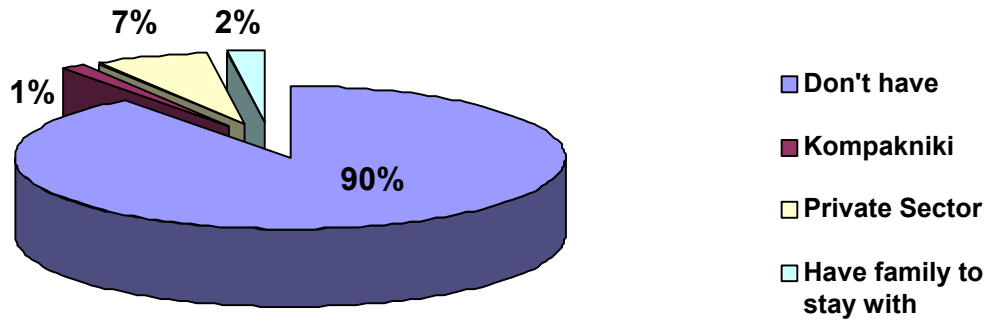
1. No alternative place in Ingushetia

90% of all families surveyed said that they did not have an alternative place to stay in Ingushetia other than where they were living now. This represents 2,878 families out 3,209.

Of the 58 families who are planning to go back to Chechnya in the near future, 51 families did not know of an alternative place in Ingushetia where they could stay. Only 7 families said they had other places where they could stay (in the private sector or with family and friends.)

Of the families who are not planning to go back to Chechnya in the near future, 90% didn't know of an alternative shelter in Ingushetia. This represents 2,827 families out of 3,151, totalling 14,443 people**. If staying in Ingushetia is to be an option for Chechen families, at least 2,827 shelters will have to be built.**

Alternative shelter in Ingushetia for families not planning on going back to Chechnya



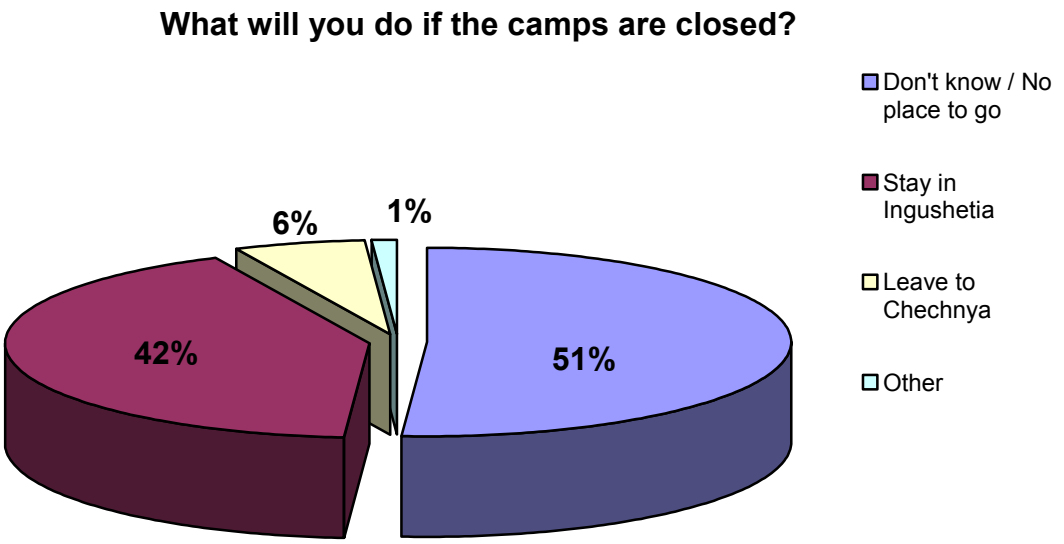
Families who do not want to go back to Chechnya in the near future and have no alternative place in Ingushetia to stay		
Camp	N° of families	N° of people
Sputnik	698	3,695
Satzita	526	2,838
Alina	479	2,163
Bart	434	2,376
Bella	410	1,830
Rassviet	185	1,047
Uchkhoz	48	245
Logovaz	47	239
TOTAL	2,827	14,433

2. What will you do if the camps close?

« If camps are closed then only option right now is to go to TACs[9] in Chechnya. » Chechen displaced family.

Of the 3,151 families who are not planning on going back to Chechnya *:*

- **6 % of families** (202 out of 3,151) **said they would leave to Chechnya** if the camps were closed. Of these :
  - 92% of these families (185 out of 202) said they knew of no place where they could stay in Ingushetia
- **42 % of families** (1,319 out of 3,151) **said they would stay in Ingushetia** if the camps were closed. But of these :
  - 81 % of the families (1,071 out of 1,319) said they knew of no place in Ingushetia where they could stay,
  - 19 % of these families (248 out of 1,319) said they knew of a place in Ingushetia they could go to.
- **52% of families** (1,638 out of 3,151) **said they did not know where to go/ had no place to go to if the camps were closed**



[9] TACs are Temporary Accomodation Centres rehabilitated by the Chechen administration to house the people who return. (Referred to in Russian as PVR)

E. Most vulnerable families identified

"If the camps are closed I will address the UN. I raise 5 children alone. My 8 year old child is an invalid of the second group. My Uncle was crossed out of the lists. The Chief of Migration service promised to put him back for an application that he wants to go home [Chechnya]" Chechen displaced Woman

Of the 2,827 families (representing 14,443 people) who have no alternative place in Ingushetia and do not want to return to Chechnya in the near future , 2,029 families have one or more additional vulnerability factors.

The main additional vulnerability factors are -

- *46 % of families (1,285 out of 2,827) have children 0-5 years old, (totalling 2,041 children 0-5 years old)*
- *41 % (1,150 out of 2,827) have 6 or more family members.*
- *9 % of families (245 out of 2,827) have pregnant women (totalling 248 pregnant women);*
- *5 % of families (150 out of 2,827) have elderly 75 yrs old or above (totalling 163 elderly);*
- *5 % of families (134 out of 2,827) have a member who is severely disabled*

.

F. Displaced families in Ingushetia are being pushed back to Chechnya

Since the 20 point plan of return of displaced families to Chechnya (May 2002), and the closure of two camps (Znamenskoe in North Chechnya during the summer 2002 and Aki Yurt in Ingushetia in December 2003) families have been progressively returning to Chechnya from Ingushetia.

VESTA, a UNHCR partner organisation, has recorded 3,184 people returning to Chechnya between 1st of January and 28th of March 2003, from all over Ingushetia (people living in the private sector and spontaneous settlements as well as the camps).

BELLA CAMP

April 2003 figures from the Chechen Committee for Forced Migrants[10], say that between 30 to 40 families in Bella camp do not wish to return to Chechnya. According to MSF figures, 480 families in Bella (out of 500) do not wish to return, with 453 families mentioning security as a reason.

The Chechen Committee for forced Migrants also says that they plan to give alternative shelter to those 30 – 40 families who expressed their desire to stay in Ingushetia. However, the MSF survey shows that in February 2002, 429 families in Bella Camp did not know of a place in Ingushetia where they could stay if the camps were closed. They do not have any other option

The **types of pressures** currently being exerted by the authorities for people to leave the camps are less visible than those used during 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002[11], though some are similar and represent a continuation of pressure from those previous years.

1. The people are still being told that the camps will be closed. Different dates are given (the latest one being by spring 2003). The displaced families are aware that the closure of the camps is not just a verbal threat, but a real possibility as they have already seen the closure of Znamenskoe camps in Chechnya and Aki Yurt camp in Ingushetia.

2. The Chechen administration announced that between 2,000 and 15,000 USD compensation will be given to families for property damaged by the war. However, so far the displaced families have been informed that it will be only given to those families living in Chechnya. Even though 93% of displaced families in the tented camps do not want to return due to security, this would mean they will not be eligible for this compensation unless they return.

3. The refugees have deliberately been enduring a strategy of non assistance[12] by the government and by the aid community which has accepted the obstruction and limitations imposed by the authorities on the delivering of humanitarian assistance to the displaced[13]. People are exhausted of their unacceptable living conditions, particularly after having spent a fourth winter in the same state.

4. Alternative shelter is not offered when the closure of the camps is announced.

The MSF survey shows, without any doubt, that displaced families from Chechnya do not want to return to Chechnya, and that they are given no other place to stay in Ingushetia. People do not return on a voluntary basis, they simply give up under the pressure to push them back.

[10] Chechen Committee for Forced Migrants is part of the Chechen Administration in charge of organising the return of the displaced to Chechnya.

[11] For more details on pressures exerted and forced returns between 1999 – 2002, see « UNHCR paper on Asylum Seekers from the Russian Federation in the Context of the Situation in Chechnya », February 2003, UNHCR.

[12] Refer to MSF report « Chechnya/Ingushetia: A Deliberate Strategy of Non-Assistance to People in Crisis", MSF 2002.

[13] « In November 2002 the Federal Migration Service requested international organizations and NGOs including UNHCR, to stop the replacement or torn tents », UNHCR, Feb. 2003.
The provision of alternative shelter by MSF has been blocked since January 2003, 180 rooms stand empty and have been declared illegal.

CONCLUSION

"I am afraid of the cleaning operations . I don't even want to think about the closure of the camps. I hope humanitarian organisations will help us"

"I am afraid for my family in Chechnya. Our house was destroyed. I don't know what to do if the camps are closed. I will do the same as everyone else. I am afraid of the camp closure".

The MSF survey shows that 98% of the Chechen population living in tents in Ingushetia, do not want to return to Chechnya, mainly because they fear for their life.

Today, the situation in Chechnya continues to be insecure for civilians. 93% of families who were not planning on returning to Chechnya in the near future, give insecurity as a reason. The high levels of violence and insecurity in Chechnya are well documented elsewhere: Zatchiskas (cleansing operations), disappearances, murders, torture, bombings, are constantly threatening civilians' lives. Official sources from the Chechen administration[14] have told MSF that since the beginning of 2003, 217 people have disappeared, of which 99 people were taken away by Armoured Personnel Carriers, meaning by the federal army. 76 people were kidnapped and disappeared in the month following the referendum (23rd of March). Bombs and explosions also continue to be part of reality in Chechnya. The largest of these was the destruction of the Chechen administration government building in Grozny in December 2002. Since then war related incidents continue on a weekly basis.

Chechen families refuse to go back to Chechnya even though their living conditions in the tent camps continue to be totally unacceptable with more than half of the families interviewed living in tents that either leak, and/or do not have adequate insulation against the cold, and /or do not have floor (either wooden or concrete). Most importantly, they have no alternative place to stay in Ingushetia when the camps close.

The very poor quality of humanitarian aid in Ingushetia is not an incentive for people to stay. 88% of interviewed families did not mention aid as a reason for not wanting to go back to Chechnya. This is contradictory to statements made by Chechen, Ingush and Russian officials arguing that assistance to the Chechen refugees in Ingushetia is one of the main reasons which keeps people from going back to Chechnya. However, aid in Chechnya is also insufficient, notably because the insecurity threatening Chechen civilians is also threatening humanitarian workers.

In spite of people's choice to stay in Ingushetia and of official statements that no one will be forced back, the provision of alternative shelter by humanitarian organisations continues to be blocked[15]. The families identified by the MSF survey are being offered no alternative. The results speak for themselves, showing the need for construction and provision of alternative shelters for at least 2,827 families (14,443 people) in all tent camps[16], with those in the official camps probably being in more urgent need. A key point in the provision of options to people, is informing them that alternative shelter in Ingushetia is a possibility.

The Chechen displaced families living in the tented camps in Ingushetia are subject to forced return in a subtle yet extremely efficient way. As more families leave, pressure grows on the ones who have decided to stay, as they feel the process is ineluctable. Families are not presented with the option to stay in Ingushetia. The latest date given by the authorities for the closure of tent camps is the end of May 2003. MSF rooms remain empty and the provision of shelter for the displaced Chechens in Ingushetia remains obstructed by the Ingush government. A return is voluntary only if there are other viable options beside the option to return.

***

[14] Also see article published by Le Monde on the 11th of April 2003 *« Massacres en Tchétchénie : un document officiel accable l'armée russe »*

[15] Other provision of aid is also being stalled by bureaucratic procedures. For instance, in order to install one latrine for IDPs in Ingushetia, MSF has to write a special request to the Prime Minister of Ingushetia. The letter was sent on the 23 of April, and authorities have informed MSF to call on the 5th of May for more information.

[16] We refer only to people in the tent camps as these are the ones primarily being targeted for closure. However, people living in spontaneous settlements are also in need of shelter due to their terrible living conditions.

ANNEXES

1. Methodology
2. Questionnaire
3. Chronology
4. Data

Methodology -

Location

The survey was carried out in 8 tent camps of displaced families from Chechnya in Ingushetia. These consisted of 5 'official' camps (Alina, Bella, Satzita, Sputnik in Sleptsovskaya and Bart in Karabulak) and 3 'unofficial' camps[17] (Logovaz in Nazran, Rassviet/MRO in Sleptsovskaya, and Uchkhoz in Yandare).

Not all families live in tents. Some families live in shelters they have constructed in between tents. These families were included in this survey.

In Sputnik, a spontaneous settlement (chicken farm) was included in the survey as these families are included under Sputnik in Migration Service lists and Danish Refugee Council list.

In Uchkhoz families living in spontaneous settlements were not surveyed. In Logovaz and Rassviet / MRO, families living in spontaneous settlements were surveyed but not included in these results (212 families). Only those families living in tents or in mud huts between the tents have been included.

Organisation

The survey was carried out by 25 MSF monitors between the 3rd and 16th of February 2003. (However, families who were absent during that period were revisited up until mid March). The monitors were given one day training prior to the survey.

The survey was coordinated by two people in Nazran who checked the questionnaires after completion and coordinated the monitors on the field. The survey was also coordinated from Moscow where the questionnaires were checked again and then entered into a database. The survey and database were designed jointly in Nazran and Moscow.

Questionnaire

One questionnaire was carried out per family, with a final total of 3209 questionnaires completed (not including spontaneous settlement). Another 39 families were absent during repeated visits and have not been included in the survey. Another 212 families living in kompakniki / spontaneous settlements were surveyed but not included in these results.

The questionnaires were semi-structured, whereby the interviewer asked a question and the interviewee answered freely and the monitor wrote the answers and then classified them according to a pre-established list of possible answers.

Only those people with severe disabilities defined as 'not being able to take care of him / herself', were recorded, and those with partial disabilities such as blindness, deafness, or amputation of the legs.

Compensation by the government and / or place in temporary accommodation centre was not included in the definition of 'humanitarian aid' when asking people why they wanted to go back to Chechnya or why they wanted to stay in Ingushetia.

Criteria

The main criteria determining vulnerability was families who did not want to go back to Chechnya but had no alternative shelter in Ingushetia.

Following this, other criteria were applied - those families with children under 5, families with pregnant women, families with elderly (75 yrs and above), families with disabled members, and families under particularly special circumstances which would be verified on a case by case basis (for example those families who have already lost their tents and are in immediate need of shelter).

[17] The unofficial camps are those which are not counted as tented camps neither by the authorities nor by mainstream humanitarian actors, but that do contain families living in tents

The conditions of the tent were also taken into account (i.e. leaking, cold protection, floor) as well as any other special observations made by the monitors.

Limitations

The criteria of 'single parent family' was not included in the format of the questionnaire. It was included in the training of monitors as a systematic question to be asked and recorded under observations. As some monitors did not comply with this, the results for single parent families have not been included in this report.

The factor of having young male family members was considered an additional vulnerability factor, as these are the main victims of arbitrary arrests and disappearances in Chechnya. However, it was not included in the questionnaire so as not to intimidate the family being interviewed.

Two health questions - scabies and psychiatric illness requiring isolation, were not answered properly.

VULNERABILITY QUESTIONAIRRE TENT CAMPS INGUSHETIA

1. Date: / / 2003

2. Code: _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ _
TOWN /CAMP / N° OF QUESTIONARY

3.Code Monitor :…….

4. Name and surname of person interviewed……..……

☐ Mother ☐ father ☐ grandparents

5. Tent: yes / no → ☐ given as humanitarian aid ☐ renting ☐ bought

6. Exact address: block N°…….....……. Tent / Room N°…… section N°…….....

7. Number of families living in section/room :	Answer IDP:	Observation of monitor:
8. Number of people living in section/room	Answer IDP:	Observation of monitor:
9. Number of people in the family interviewed who live in the section/room:	Answer IDP:	Observation of monitor:
10. Number of children 0 – to 5 in the family interviewed who live in the section/room:	Answer IDP:	Observation of monitor
11. Number of pregnant women in the family interviewed who live in the section/room:	Answer IDP:	Observation of monitor:
12. Number of elders (over 75) in the family interviewed who live in the section/room	Answer IDP:	Observation of monitor:

13. Is there someone with TB in the family living in section? Yes / no number of people with TB: …. Ages ……..

14. Is there someone with psychiatric illness requiring isolation? Yes / No

15. Is there someone with scabies? Yes / No

16. Is there someone with a disability? Yes / No

17. If 15 yes, which disability? ……..……

18. Does someone in the family have a job / occupation? Yes / no

19. If yes, which occupation? ……..……

ПОДТВЕРДИТЬ БУМАГАМИ

20. Are you planning on moving back to Chechnya in the next few months? Yes / no

21. When do you plan to go? ☐ 2-3 months ☐ 6 months ☐ don't know

22. If you plan to go and live in Chechnya in the following months, explain why:
……
……

☐ Want to go home ☐ have home in Chechnya ☐ aid in Chechnya
☐ No aid in Ingushetia ☐ pressure to go home
☐ Other ……..……..……..

23. If you don't plan to go and live in Chechnya in the following months, explain why:
……..……
……
☐ No place to return/no home ☐ no assistance in Chechnya ☐ assistance in Ingushetia
☐ Security ☐ other ……..……..…….

24. What will you do if the camps are closed?
……..……
☐ Stay in Ingushetia ☐ leave for Chechnya ☐ don't know ☐ no place to go
☐ Other ……..…….....

25. Is there any precise place where you can stay in Ingushetia if the camp is closed?
……..…….……
☐ Stay with family/friends ☐ kompakniki .
☐ Private sector ☐ don't know
☐ Other ……

---

26. Status of Room / Tent:

Is the tent new?	Yes	No	
Is roof leaking?	Yes	No	
Is there cold protection?	Yes	No	
Is there a Floor?	Yes	No	☐ concrete ☐wooden

27. Any other observations by the person carrying out the questionnaire? Yes / No

(Observations on extraordinary circumstances of the family, such as their living conditions, or any chronic diseases in the family or any other special circumstances)

……

……

……

CHRONOLOGY –

Evolving Context in Ingushetia, Pressures on IDPs to return to Chechnya and MSF operations within this backdrop

December 1999 Under Order N° 110 the Federal Migration Service instructed the Regional Migration Services of Daghestan, Stavropol, Ingushetia and North Ossetia Alania, to suspend registration under form N° 7 of all new IDP arrivals and to facilitate the return to their place of origin in Chechnya, or alternatively, to safe areas in Chechnya. (UNHCR report February 2003)

January 2000 The Ministry for Civil Defence and Emergencies of Ingushetia, issued an instruction according to which IDPs coming from regions under the control of Federal Authorities should be "deprived from all kind of allowances they were entitled to on the territory of their present accommodation" (UNHCR report February 2003)

April 2001 The Ingush territorial organ of the Ministry of Federal Affairs, Nationality and Migration Policy, suspended registration (under form N° 7) of all new IDP arrivals. Without registration by the migration authorities, IDPs do not have access to government assistance, including accommodation in government managed camps and food.(UNHCR report February 2003)

December 2001 Presentation of the intersectional MSF survey on the precarious living conditions of the Chechen IDPs in Ingushetia. MSF sections in Russia denounce the conditions of the worn out tents in the tented camps of Ingushetia.

Dismissal of President Aushev on the 28th December. Start of a deterioration of the operating conditions for humanitarian actors in Ingushetia.

January 2002 – MSF presents the report « Strategy of Non Assistance »

Agreement is signed between MSF and Ingush Minister of Health on opening of TB hospital for IDPs in Ingushetia.

April 2002 1st and 2nd round presidential elections in Ingushetia.

May 2002 MSF replaces 200 tents throughout Ingushetia.

Inauguration of the newly elected President Ziazikov.

New Minister of health suspends agreement with MSF. Though hospital is rehabilitated, it will never open.

Presentation of the governmental twenty point plan for the return of displaced Chechens to Chechnya signed between the Chechen administration, the Ingush government and the presidential plenipotentiary envoy in southern Russia, Mr. Kazantsev.

Increased presence of military forces in Ingushetia and with an increased number of incidents involving displaced Chechens in Ingushetia. At the end of May a unit of the federal army settles close to the Sleptsovskaya camps. When the unit arrived, soldiers entered the camps and frightened the residents by shooting in the air. Many people immediately left and hid in the fields and only returned the following day. At the entrance of Aki Yurt village and tent camp checkpoints were reinforced and became more permanent.

July 2002 Closure of Znamenskoe tented camps in northern Chechnya. Around 5000 former internal displaced Chechen from the tented camps of Znamenskoe were forced to relocate to newly erected temporary accommodations centres (TACs) in Grozny. Several assessments in the newly constructed temporary accommodation centres showed that the living conditions in the TACS are unacceptable and inferior to their previous conditions in Znamenskoe.

On July 10, 2002, the FSB advised to UNSECOORD that because of an imminent kidnapping threats no missions involving expatriates should be undertaken in Chechnya, till a review is done.

MSF suspension of activities in Chechnya after the kidnapping of Nina Davidovitch, which started from the end of July 2002

August 2002 Distribution of leaflets of the Russian Federation's Ministry of Interior in the tented camps in Ingushetia. The leaflets contained information from Chechen Prime Minister Ilyasov on the facilities available to those wishing to repatriate to Chechnya. The leaflet claimed that, for those wishing to return to

Chechnya, food will be provided on a constant basis by the World Food Programme, and that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will provide non-food packages, monitor living conditions, and provide tents and construction materials where conditions are inadequate.

August 1st 2002, Migration officials inform all Chechen IDPs of the Aki Yurt tent camp that the camp would be dismantled and all Chechen refugees would have to move to collective centre in Malgobek. Chechen families said they did not want to leave, they got used to this tent camp, they lived there already for 2 years.

Kidnapping of Arjan Erkel, the Head of Mission of MSF Switzerland on August 12 2002 in the capital of Dagestan, Makhachkala.

August 13 2002. Extension of the MSF suspension to the whole of the Northern Caucasus.

September 2002

Resumption of MSF activities in Ingushetia in the beginning on September 2002.

Federal officials from the migration services declare that Aki yurt tent camp will be closed by October.

Aki Yurt residents sign petition - During early September the displaced Chechens of Aki Yurt tent camp issue petitions to ambassadors of European countries, the UN, the OSCE, PACE, towards the President and the people of Ingushetia, and towards Chechen displaced in other camps in Ingushetia claiming that they did not want to be moved out of the camp, to Chechnya or to other locations in Ingushetia.

Petition representatives taken for questioning - Two female representatives and one male representative of the displaced Chechen families who petitioned for non-relocation were taken to the Ingush MVD for questioning on Thursday September 19 and only released after several hours.

Visits by Migration and Emercom officials pressurising the displaced – throughout September officials visit Aki Yurt tent camp telling people to leave. Contradictory messages are given – there will be no forced displacement but the tent camp will be closed down. According to the displaced Chechens, on one occasion, the head of Ingush Malgobek Migration service threatens to shoot a man in the head when expressing unwillingness to leave.

On Thursday September 19th, the FSB and the Ingush MVD prevent demonstrations in the Aki Yurt tent camp. The camp was sealed off and journalists and representatives of humanitarian organisations were not allowed to go in. One MSFB medical team bus and a member of the coordination team managed to get in the camp without any problem. Activities of the humanitarian organisations CARE in the camp were hindered.

Incursion of a group of armed Chechen fighters into Ingushetia. This incident further fuelled arguments of the Ingush and Federal migration services and the military that the tented camps were posing a security threat to its surrounding areas. It also further speeded up the efforts to close the tent camps and reinforced already established screening methods of all movements in and out the tented camps.

Chechen families start to leave the tented camp of Aki Yurt. On September 22-23 2002 a representative of the migration services and Emergency Ministry representatives dismantled two tents in the tent camp located in Aki-Yurt village. According to the refugees, a family who lived in one of the dismantled tents, agreed to go to a spontaneous settlement in Malgobek as a result of propaganda. However when the family arrived at the site and seen that the offered conditions were not better than those in the camp, they refused to leave the camp. But the migration service head in Malgobek Mr. Khashiev and the deputy head of the Ingush migration services, Akhmed Parchiev ordered their subordinates to remove the tent and leave the families' property at the place where a tent stood. Having been left without a roof, this family had to rent a room in a small shack in the vicinity of the tent camp.

UNHCR shelter experts concluded that the proposed sites for resettlement of Aki Yurt Chechen refugees were not suitable for humane habitation. Donors, who invested much in camp infrastructure, pointed out that they considered the conditions in the tented camps in Ingushetia as acceptable and therefore refused to fund temporary resettlement sites for Chechen displaced in Ingushetia. It became clear that nothing would be prepared neither by the government nor by the UN or western donors to host the Aki Yurt Chechen refugees neither in Ingushetia nor in Chechnya in alternative accommodations.

October 2002

Hostage crisis in the Nord-Ost theatre in October 2002, with MSF maintaining a presence at the theatre in order to help the hostages if needed, during the crisis and organising deliveries of medical supplies to hospitals in the direct aftermath of the crisis. Immediately after the theatre crisis, the pressure grew significantly on the Chechen refugees in the tented camps in Ingushetia. This pressure

resulted in the open presence of more military around the camps and a refusal for humanitarian organisations to conduct tent replacements as well as a refusal to install the UNHCR box tents.

Bart Camp – representative of Chechen administration visits camp and tells people to leave before November 15th in order to receive place in Grozny. Those not returning would be moved out of Ingushetia anyway.

Warning given to MSF of possible kidnapping of MSF or ICRC workers after the 12th of November.

November 2002

The head of the federal migration services informs UNHCR in Moscow that all tent camps will be closed in Ingushetia by December 20.

Deterioration in the security situation in the Malgobek district. The Malgobek district declared out of bounds for the humanitarian community by UNSECOORD for about 10 days starting from November 15. Law enforcement agencies report that a remainder of an armed group involved in the Galashki fighting found shelter in the Malgobek district and that therefore special operations were under way in the district. At the same time, this coincided with several reports of abductions and disappearances of displaced Chechens all over Ingushetia including in the Malgobek district and reports of the presence of armed officers belonging to the pro Russian administration on the territory of the Malgobek district. So was a bus explosion in Malgobek city, that killed four people and injured nine more, prompted by an attempt by Chechen security officers to kidnap two of the passengers.

Abduction of two ICRC drivers on November 13 on the road to Grozny – Malgobek between Pobedinskoye and Goragorsk in Chechnya. They are released in the evening of November 17.

Bart Camp – when temperatures drop to - 20°C, the camp is left without gas and water for 3 weeks.

December 2002

UNHCR obtains approval from the Federal and Ingush Migration services for pre-positioning additional box-tents on alternative relocation sites selected by the authorities in Ingushetia. (UNHCR report February 2003)

Authorities closed the Iman camp in Aki-Yurt, which accommodated 1,700 Chechen displaced according to the DRC database and only 700 according to the Migration services database. Chechen displaced families had been subjected during several months to intimidations, legal pressures, psychological pressures. People were transported into the wilderness of the private sector in Chechnya by trucks and buses provided by Emercom and Migration Services in the last days of November 2002. The campaign culminated **Sunday December 1st** when Ingush policemen and an OMON detachment, which occupied a school belonging to an NGO, began to dismantle the tents of those families who had refused to leave. Only the 700 Chechen IDPs registered with the federal migration services were offered financial incentives to resettle in the private sector in Chechnya as all temporary accommodation centres in Grozny were already occupied.

Closure of Aki Yurt tented camp by **December 2 2002**. Memorial described the events as a deportation in Stalinist tradition of Chechen displaced people being forced into the wilderness of war torn Chechnya. UN reported that according to their initial figures around 40 % of the former Aki Yurt residents found shelter in spontaneous settlements or the private sector in Ingushetia.

On December 3 The federal representative of migration services Rostovtsev threatened that the MSF field team should dismantle the medical facility.

An aide to the Russian President, Mr. Yastrajemsky, commented on **December 4th, 2002** to the liquidation of the tented camps, that there are "attempts to politicise the problem" of the return of Chechen families from Ingushetia and "to make it seem that it is solved by inhuman means". Igor Yunash, deputy head of the federal migration services, stated that Mashkadov's representatives are carrying out a propaganda campaign in the tent camps. They are paying money and trying not only to convince but also to
intimidate people in an effort to keep the tent camps open.

On December 11, The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, has promised to suspend the resettlement of displaced Chechens from tent camps in Ingushetia back to Chechnya. Putin was speaking at a meeting in the Kremlin with members of the Presidential Commission on Human Rights. He said resettlement should stop until a specially set up body looks into the problem and comes up with solutions on how to ensure the rights of the displaced. After this statement pressure on the big tented

camps in Ingushetia decreased.

January 2003 : Nina Davidovitch released.
MSF meets with President Ziazikov, where he gives verbal approval for the provision of alternative shelter by MSF.

Completion of 180 alternative shelter by MSF for people living in the tented camps that do not want to go back to Chechnya. Activities are coordinated primarily with the migration service as well as local services. On the 27th of January, rooms are declared illegal by the Ingush government, following a new law whereby all construction must follow the same rules. However, the construction of rooms was finished before the new law. To this day, no families have been able to move into the rooms, nor has MSF been able to continue with the construction of other 1020 rooms. All provision of alternative shelter for displaced Chechens in Ingushetia is stopped.

Camp administration of camps Bella, Sputnik and Alina, announce that all families who paid for tents would have to go back to Grozny.

February 3rd Ingush government orders the suspension of erection of temporary and / or movable shelter units (including UNHCR box tent) by aid agencies until it is determined whether such units meet the technical requirements under the local construction code. (UNHCR report February 2003)

March 2003 23 March - Referendum for new Chechen constitution carried out in Chechnya and in Ingushetia for Chechen families.

MSF receives letter from Procurator ordering demolition of rooms by the 26th of March.

April 2003 President Ziazikov and MSF meet again to discuss rooms. The president announces the creation of a commission to help solve the problem of alternative shelter for displaced.
Kidnapping of a PINF worker.
Kidnapping of Russo-Chechen Friendship Society representative

May 2003 No progress with the commission created by the president.