



UN-Iraq Humanitarian Update October 2005

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

Introduction

As part of the UNAMI mandate to coordinate and deliver essential humanitarian assistance, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in collaboration with Iraqi authorities and NGO partners, has a leading role in emergency preparedness and response activities for Iraq. By using the Cluster approach to address areas of common concern, UN agencies combine resources and expertise to implement coordinated emergency humanitarian responses and

regular programme assistance.

When emergency situations arise, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator manages the humanitarian response of the UNCT and its NGO partners through the Emergency Working Group (EWG) in Amman. The EWG benefits from the participation of the UN Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator in Baghdad as well as NGOs and other stakeholders there. EWG members focus on the material and protection needs of communities affected by either military conflict or ethno-religious tensions.

Emergency Situations and Humanitarian Response Activities

Support to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO): At the request of the PMO, UNAMI temporarily deployed a Humanitarian Advisor to Baghdad to provide support and advice to the Emergency Coordination and Response Cell established in the PMO. The PMO is developing a coordination structure in Baghdad similar to the EWG to consist of two coordination groups: the first will bring together core ministries; and the second will link with other humanitarian partners including the donor community, the UNCT and NGOs. A first training session for the PMO support team was held and this focused on the development of humanitarian

information management tools. A second meeting on contingency planning took place which analysed the government's national preparedness and response framework to mitigate natural disasters and man-made emergencies. The humanitarian advisor will eventually be replaced by a full-time UNAMI consultant to be deployed to the PMO for four months.

Anbar: Over 4,500 families were estimated as newly displaced in October as a result of military operations in western Anbar. This brought the estimated total number of displaced families in Anbar Governorate to 11,000. Priority needs were identified as access to potable water, intermediate food items and shelter. EWG members agreed to coordinate a response for the 4,500 families already displaced in the

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Governorate, and to ensure there was a response capacity for an additional 4,500 families if necessary.

IOM provided emergency distributions of non-food items to 4,230 internally displaced families, of whom 1,350 also received targeted food distributions consisting of a two week ration. Furthermore, UNHCR organised tents, UNICEF distributed hygiene kits, and WHO supported health facilities in the affected areas to cover urgent needs for shelter, potable water, and basic healthcare. These distributions were in

addition to emergency assistance provided to over 8,000 displaced families in Anbar in September.

Tal Afar: Towards the end of the month, NGO monitors reported an increase in the number of displaced families from Tal Afar to approximately 2,700 compared to earlier in the month when figures were estimated as 1,100 families. Although military operations ceased, a reverse displacement took place due to a lack of basic services and job opportunities in the city. Basic services such as water, electricity, sewage, healthcare, schools, and fuel supplies remained disrupted, and assessments estimated that between 20% and 30% of houses and buildings inside the city were damaged.

UNHCR released 400 tents and UNICEF provided water and hygiene kits for distribution to IDP families from Tal Afar in the surrounding areas. UNAMI facilitated the provision of OCHA funding to a local NGO to undertake emergency food distributions to 1,500 vulnerable families inside Tal Afar. Similar plans were initiated to cover the needs of a further 750 families from Tal Afar with food and non-food items in their current locations of displacement through an OCHA emergency grant.

Providing Regular Programme Assistance

UNICEF maintained the daily trucking of water to certain residential areas and hospitals in Baghdad using private contractors, permitting approximately 180,000 people to have continued access to potable drinking water in October. In addition essential chemicals were delivered to the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works (MoMPW) and the Mayorality of Baghdad to assist the authorities with water purification.

WFP dispatched 880 metric tonnes (MT) of food commodities to Iraq in October which brought the cumulative total to 7,781 MT of high energy biscuits and 1,985 MT of vegetable oil delivered into the

country. An estimated total of 5,201 MT of biscuits and 806 MT of vegetable oil were distributed to schools up and down the country under school feeding activities benefiting approximately 800,000 school children to date.

Since the beginning of WFP vulnerable group feeding activities, a total of 15,096 MT of wheat flour, vegetable oil and pea-wheat blended food was sent to Iraq. From this amount, 11,035 MT were so far distributed to over 900,000 beneficiaries in various health facilities. As well as providing essential supplementary food to the beneficiaries, the distributions also contributed to the success of immunisation programmes supported by WHO and UNICEF. These programmes achieved high coverage rates as the immunisation schedules were linked to the food distribution schedules at which pregnant and lactating women, TB patients and

malnourished children came to collect their rations.

WHO delivered five different types of drugs to the Ministry of Health (MoH) sufficient to treat approximately 1,000 people for a two month period. The consignments included drugs used to manage hypertension; medications to induce labour at term and to control bleeding; and drugs used in the management of anxiety disorders and in open heart surgery. A 13 ton consignment of quadruple blood bags procured by WHO was airlifted to Baghdad as part of an emergency response to an acute shortage of blood. These blood bags will be used by the National Blood Transfusion Centre to collect blood which is needed all over the country and in particular in the areas most affected by armed conflict.

Advocacy and Human Rights

UNCT resources such as those used in Tal Afar and western Anbar, are becoming increasingly strained by consecutive emergency responses. The current level of support cannot be indefinitely sustained, particularly if care and maintenance activities for internally displaced people become necessary. This situation will become more serious in the context of the onset of winter and a greater need for items such as heaters, blankets, and stoves.

The UNCT and its partners continued to urge the relevant authorities to respect humanitarian space and the human rights of civilians, and to facilitate the safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian actors to those in need. It also continued to stress the importance of public facilities, such as hospitals and clinics, remaining accessible and civilian in nature in combat areas.

WFP noted that access to full and regular food rations through the Public Distribution System (PDS) deteriorated in Iraq, particularly in conflict affected areas. The UNCT is undertaking advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Trade and other stakeholders to try to resolve this issue.

The UNAMI Human Rights Office released its second bi-monthly report on the human rights situation in Iraq. While the report recognizes efforts made by the Iraqi authorities in improving the law and order situation in the country, it also highlights areas that continue to be of concern, noting that hundreds of Iraqi civilians were killed or wounded in the period due to random and targeted killings, terrorist actions, criminal and militia activities and by continuous military operations in several parts of the country. (Go to www.uniraq.org/aboutus/HR.asp to read the full report.)

IDPs, Refugees and Durable Solutions

In October, the relocation began of the remaining 2,000 Iranian Kurdish refugees from the Al-Tash camp in Anbar Governorate. The camp, which is decades old and badly affected by the most recent security situations in the area, was no longer a suitable location for these refugees. By the end of the month, UNHCR registered the first batch of 431 persons who moved to the new camp in Erbil Governorate. Upon arrival in Erbil, all refugee families were provided with a US \$ 250 transportation allowance and US \$ 100 as the first part of a US \$ 400 installation grant. UNHCR, in cooperation with the central and regional authorities, reached an agreement to close the Al-Tash camp by the end of 2005.

UNHCR facilitated the return of 817 refugees to Iraq in five convoys through northern border crossings and 32

individuals were facilitated to return from Jordan. However, the security situation in Basrah City and the surrounding areas meant all repatriation convoys to the south of the country were suspended.

188 Ahwazi refugee families in 35 locations in Basrah Governorate, and 36 Syrian refugee families in Ninewa Governorate were registered and issued with UNHCR refugee certificates. Additionally, an assessment survey for a group of 138 Sudanese nationals in Anbar Governorate was conducted to gather basic bio-data and other necessary information.

A UNHCR partner progressed rapidly with the implementation of a self-build housing project for 181 vulnerable IDP families in 11 villages in Erbil Governorate. By the end of October, families completed 87% of the construction work. Other achievements with these communities include: a water project and school building project which were 70% completed; health and hygiene training which was provided to 148 persons in six locations; and income generation activities which were conducted using recently trained labourers on ongoing shelter projects.



UNHCR – Bricks prepared by a returnee for a self build house
(Photo Credit: IRD)

UNHCR reintegration activities for returnees in the southern Iraq were nearing completion: 15 schools were rehabilitated; 39 quick impact projects were completed; and one third of the 380 income generation grants were distributed. Rehabilitation work on one health centre began in October.

UNOPS finalized a pilot project with a partner to assist the heads of 35 returnee families in Anbar Governorate whose businesses were affected when their workshops and assets were totally or partially destroyed. A second project to support the re-integration of returnees in the local community through income generation activities was initiated. The project provided small in kind grants to promote community activities and self-help initiatives thus reducing returnees' dependency on external assistance.

UNCT Cluster F members requested for the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) to take a lead role on the issue of evictions from public buildings at an inter-ministerial committee to coordinate a comprehensive approach to this issue. To this end, a paper entitled 'A Coordinated and Comprehensive Approach to Evicting Persons Occupying Public Buildings' was developed and shared with the MoDM.

A total of 127,880 claims were received by the Iraq Property Claims Commission (IPCC) to date, of which 12,432 were decided upon by IPCC regional commissions. IOM upgraded the reporting and search capability of the IPCC Database Application to help expedite and improve the claims resolution process. IOM is preparing the migration of the existing IPCC claims data from stand alone databases to the integrated IPCC database application.

A coordination meeting was held in Amman between IOM and representatives of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) to define areas for further IOM technical assistance to the Iraqi government and to discuss the establishment of an inter-ministerial committee and migration policy task force.

In addition, two reports on migration management in Iraq were sent by IOM to nine Iraqi ministries for review. The first report described the current status of migration management in Iraq, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in the existing distribution of migration portfolios among various ministries, and offering recommendations for the streamlining of migration management through a better distribution of functions among relevant ministries. The second report set out a two-year timetable for tasks to be carried out by the concerned ministries in order to establish an integrated and well balanced migration management system in Iraq.



UN-HABITAT – School to be rehabilitated in southern Iraq



UN-HABITAT - Classroom for rehabilitation



UN-HABITAT - Damaged school roof for rehabilitation