



# UN-Iraq Humanitarian Update November 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

**Anbar:** The western province of Anbar remained a focus of insecurity and humanitarian need throughout the period. An estimated 7,000 families in the Al Qa'im area were displaced in November due to military operations. Many were temporarily housed in tented camps or in public buildings in neighbouring locations. Health facilities near affected zones were reportedly overcrowded and overwhelmed and this was compounded as medical staff was unable or unwilling to work at these facilities. NGO monitors estimated that the total number of displaced families in Anbar exceeds 11,000. The affected populations require both short term emergency relief but also longer term care and

maintenance assistance as a result of successive waves of displacement.

In support of Iraqi government activities and in coordination with the relevant ministries and NGOs, the UNCT organised a coordinated response to distribute non food items to cover 7,100 vulnerable IDP families across Anbar. These distributions focused on winterisation items including: 962 ten person tents and 1596 blankets from UNHCR; 2,367 sets of children's winter clothing from UNICEF; 291 water tanks provided through OCHA small grants; and 781 mattresses, 2,507 kerosene stoves and heaters, and 3,041 pieces of plastic sheeting from IOM. In addition, UNICEF undertook the water trucking of over 7.7 million litres of water to cover the needs of 11,000 IDPs in Anbar.

The government's Public Distribution System (PDS) rations were distributed except in certain sensitive areas where Ministry of Trade drivers were either unable or reluctant to travel. UNAMI

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provided an OCHA small grant to an international NGO to undertake emergency food distributions to 2,500 vulnerable IDP families in the province.

**Tal Afar:** NGO monitors reported that more than 1,600 families remained displaced and reluctant to return due to insecurity and poor conditions inside the city. IDP figures fluctuated throughout the month and in a number of return cases, only some members of the family returned, leaving mainly women and children still in displacement.

One reason for the overall rise in displacements was attributed to the lack of basic services and job opportunities in Tal Afar. The provision of basic services such as water, electricity, waste disposal, healthcare, schools, and fuel supplies remained disrupted. The shortage of water

was mainly due to the low capacity of the network, so water trucking by UNICEF of over 220,000 litres of water addressed some of the immediate needs. WHO noted that the main hospital inside the city was functioning and well-supplied, but access to it was limited. Of the six health clinics inside Tal Afar, only one was fully operational and accessible.

As part of a coordinated UNCT response facilitated through the EWG, UNHCR released 400 tents and UNICEF provided water and hygiene kits to the Iraqi Red Crescent Society for distribution to IDP families from Tal Afar. An OCHA small grant was provided to a local NGO enabling it to complete emergency food distributions for 1,500 vulnerable returnee families inside Tal Afar. A second grant was given to an international NGO for the provision of food and non-food items to 750 Tal Afar families in their current locations of displacement.

Working closely with the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM), the Prime Minister's Office, the Iraqi Red

Crescent Society and national NGOs, the UNCT supported the government in pre-positioning contingency supplies of food, medicines, and non-food items in nearby depots to enable a swift response. Country wide there is sufficient stocks to cover 50,000 families.

**Support to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO):** The next phase in establishing an Emergency Coordination and Response Cell (ECRC) within the PMO is underway. This includes the recruitment of a full-time UNAMI Humanitarian Consultant to work in the PMO for at least 4 months to provide technical support to the ECRC with humanitarian coordination, contingency planning, and implementation. To date, the Spokesperson for the Prime Minister has been appointed Head of the ECRC, and the legal framework for the presence of the ECRC within the PMO structure is under review by the government.

## 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 residents and 4,000 hospital patients and staff to have continued access to potable water. In addition essential chemicals were delivered to the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works (MoMPW) and the Mayoralty of Baghdad to assist the authorities with water purification.

In November, WFP dispatched

880 metric tonnes (MT) of food commodities to Iraq, bringing the total to 24,862 MT of food delivered during the last 10 months. Under vulnerable group feeding activities, an estimated total of 11,035 MT of wheat flour, vegetable oil and pea-wheat blended food was distributed to approximately 1,588,989 beneficiaries including pregnant and lactating women, TB patients and malnourished children. Under the Food for Education activities, approximately 6,408 MT of high energy biscuits and 700 MT of vegetable oil were distributed 2,953 schools so far benefiting 1,752,453 primary school children.



WFP – High Energy Biscuits to primary school

## Advocacy and Human Rights

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. UNAMI continued to work with the relevant military and

government authorities to ensure that the security and independence of humanitarian aid workers is both respected and protected. It also stressed the importance of public facilities, such as hospitals and clinics, remaining accessible and civilian in nature in combat areas.

Access to some IDP locations remained sporadic and hindered by checkpoints or

strict security cordons around towns. The EWG shared these concerns with UNAMI civil-military focal points in order to encourage dialogue with the concerned parties and to develop practical measures to facilitate access of humanitarian convoys to insecure areas. UNAMI facilitated an information exchange between interested NGOs and the military

authorities to promote the possibility of humanitarian corridors.

Persistent humanitarian crises are increasingly exhausting the resources and funding of UNCT agencies and their partners to respond to consecutive emergencies. The current level of support cannot be indefinitely sustained particularly if care-and-maintenance and winterization activities will be

necessary to assist the estimated 13,000 recently displaced families. As such, the EWG strongly supports the idea of launching a local appeal and donors in Baghdad were already approached for their support, with many reacting positively to this suggestion.

Towards the end of the period, many NGOs and civil society institutions reported that their Iraqi bank accounts were frozen by the Central Bank of Iraq, under a 2003 Coalition Provisional Authority order which required Iraqi banks

to freeze the accounts of non vetted NGOs. This situation is preventing many NGO partners from accessing their funding deposits thus limiting their ability to work. In close coordination with the UNCT and other bilateral donors, UNAMI is leading the response to the situation on behalf of the NGOs and in coordination with the donor community, to address the relevant Iraqi banking and government authorities to resolve this issue.

## IDPs, Refugees and Durable Solutions

The suspended voluntary repatriation of Iraqi refugees from Iran resumed in November. UNHCR organised three convoys enabling 329 persons to return to Iraq, bringing the total number of persons repatriated to 16,288 individuals since 2003. A further 98 Iraqis who spontaneously returned were identified and registered.

The relocation of Iranian Kurdish refugees from Anbar to a camp in Erbil Governorate continued throughout the month. Out of the 350 families living in the original camp in Anbar, only 105 families remain. UNHCR facilitated the relocation and registration of 26 refugees. 398 tents were erected at the new

camp of which 302 were immediately occupied by refugees. UNHCR assisted families with food, kerosene, and concrete blocks for the construction of cooking areas. Two common buildings were erected for use as a health centre and a school. To date, 1,414 refugees from the camp in Anbar were registered and assisted with relocation.

The status of approximately 190 Iranian Kurdish refugees currently in a camp in 'no man's land' on the Iraqi Jordan border is a pressing concern. Jordan has denied entry to the refugees - half of which are under the age of eighteen. Conditions in the camp are hazardous, movement is restricted and access to medical assistance, food and water is limited. UNHCR strongly encouraged the refugees to relocate to the site in Erbil Governorate in order for them to receive UNHCR protection. However, refugee representatives unequivocally stated that resettlement to a third country is the sole solution open to this population. UNHCR will organize meetings with the relevant authorities to plan future stabilization and settlement steps.

19 Palestinians who left Iraq were granted entry clearance and were transferred to a camp in Syria. 231 Syrian refugees in Ninewa Governorate were registered and 98 were issued with UNHCR refugee certificates. UNHCR successfully completed registration of 788 Ahwazi refugees in Basrah Governorate, despite a lack of documentation and the refugees' fear of national authorities.

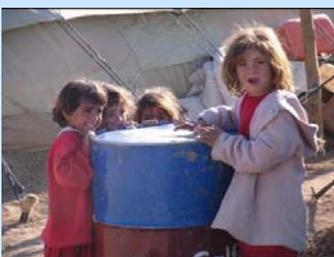
209 Sudanese refugees living in Anbar Governorate were visited and assisted by

the MoDM. UNHCR released medical supplies from its Baghdad warehouse to be included with NFI and food distributions carried out by an NGO partner.

All 46 quick impact projects funded by UNHCR in southern Iraq were completed including swamp drainage, the provision of boats for fishermen, the maintenance of bridges, the cleaning of reeds, and the rehabilitation of schools, clinics and water systems. One Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) was rehabilitated and the rehabilitation of two more is ongoing. Seven mobile health teams continued to deliver basic health care and maternal and child care services to affected IDP and returnee populations.

UNHCR's implementing partners achieved substantial results in infrastructure development. In total, 14 schools and 152 houses were completed this year. A total of 232 shelter units were finished and handed over to their beneficiaries. The construction of 100 houses for Iranian refugees in Sulaymaniyah Governorate is proceeding quickly. The tasks completed so far include site preparation and excavation, casting of foundations and manufacturing concrete blocks for 25 percent of the houses.

On 29th November, the Iraqi National Assembly voted on and agreed to the proposed Iraqi



UNICEF – Children Gathering at a relocation site



**UNICEF – A returnee family check their new home**

Property Claims Commission (IPCC) statute which will be for enactment as legislation and endorsement by the President. As of November, 128,676 IPCC claims were registered and 15,826 decisions were issued by the Judicial Committees.

IOM continued overseeing the delivery of computer and scanning equipment to the IPCC offices in Iraq. Data entry staff at the IPCC Headquarters in Baghdad began entering claims data into the IPCC database application, developed by IOM. Computer equipment and software is scheduled to be delivered to the IPCC offices located outside the capital. Currently, the IPCC has set up a network of 30 Regional Offices and 35 Judicial Committees.

1,388 individual cases approached four UNHCR-supported legal aid and information centres in three southern Governorates. Among this total, 521 cases were seeking legal aid and 327 cases were seeking legal advice and information. A total of 765 cases were admitted for action and further follow up.

IOM approved two grants to fund extensive capacity building activities within the MoDM. One of the grants will be used to train 31 MoDM officials on the institutional framework of the MoDM's organisational structure. A second grant will provide training for 60 MoDM officials in various departments.

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