

Alert

Iraq

Iraq IDP Crisis

Geneva, 10 September 2015

1. Brief description of the emergency and impact

Iraq is experiencing long decades of humanitarian crises resulting from the continuous war with neighbouring countries, internal political as well as ethnic conflicts. The worst disaster started with the dramatic events in June 2014 and again renewed in August creating humanitarian crises in Kurdistan region after a huge influx of IDPs from Mosul, Nineveh plain and Sinjar Mountain. The new influx of more than 450,000 IDPs was just added substantially to the humanitarian crisis in Iraqi Kurdistan where more than 200,000 Syrians were already living in Kurdistan under refugee status. Armed groups of the Islamic State (IS) took over the swaths of land in the north and west of Iraq from the Iraqi central government's control. Mosul, the second largest city in Iraq was overrun quickly, with little resistance put up by the Iraqi national army. This drove large numbers of non-Sunnis (Christians and Yazidis) out from their homes. With these two largest groups of displaced people in Kurdistan, the crisis was classified at level 3, the highest level of humanitarian crisis in 2014.

The number of displaced people in Iraq has topped three million, as of 21 May, according to the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). Anbar Governorate currently hosts the largest number of IDPs with 531,996 individuals, followed by Baghdad and Dahuk governorates, with 483,648 IDPs and 445,164 IDPs respectively¹.

While host governments and local communities have generally welcomed displaced Iraqis alongside Syrian refugees, the strain on local resources is substantial. Host countries themselves face their own domestic challenges including political and social unrest and harsh economic conditions. The scale of the crisis and the financing requirements has escalated, leading to a considerable increase in the urgency and scale of humanitarian needs with 5.2 million people requiring urgent humanitarian assistance².

2. Why is an ACT response needed?

Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 2015/2016 prepared by UN and Iraqi government reads that the humanitarian needs in Iraq are staggering. Country-wide OCHA Humanitarian crises report no 58, shows that 3.2 million Iraqi IDPs require some form of humanitarian assistance throughout the rest of 2015, and beyond. More than 452,000 (14%) IDPs live in Duhok Governorate alone. 60% of them are living in non-camp settlements which have more desperate needs.

¹ https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/ocha_iraq_crisis_situation_report_no_47_3_june_-_9_june_2015.pdf

² http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&task=download&id=762_d023b8edb1922a647bee15ae3877f18e&lang=en

Lise Grande, Deputy Special Representative of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq released a statement on 4/6/2015 outlining the need for continued humanitarian efforts in Iraq. Critical aid operations that have been supporting millions of crisis-affected people Iraq are at risk unless continued funds are made available immediately. The UN are appealing for \$500 million to cover the immediate needs of 5.6 million Iraqis for the next six months. *“Humanitarian partners have been doing everything they can to help. But more than 50 per cent of the operation will be shut down or cut back if money is not received immediately3”.*

3. National and international response

Nationally the country is experiencing economic troubles of its own: The structures of the state are not sufficient to support the level of the crisis alone. There are many national and international NGOs who are working with the IDPs but these tend to be on a small scale with most working individually. The UN continues to work through their agencies including some local NGOs but as funding is short this is likely to deteriorate in the coming months.

When the IDP influx started in summer 2014, the UN agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP) and national as well as international NGOs started their interventions for life saving programs. The Kurdish government also extended their support. Currently the government has provided some unconditional cash assistance of approximately USD 40/month and some food assistance through a public distribution system. During the cluster meetings, the members have concluded that the level of assistance is far low for the dignified life of the people. A handful of INGOs are working in Duhok for IDPs.

4. ACT Alliance response

LWF and Christian Aid have implemented ACT appeal IRQ141. The implementation period of the appeal is up to end of September 2015. LWF intervention sectors are food security; WASH, shelter, psychosocial support, education and livelihood. In addition to the support through the ACT appeal, LWF also mobilized resources from its funding partners and complimented to its sectors of response with a significant support for a winterization program.

Christian Aid’s IRQ141 emergency response has been carried out with the expertise of its local partnered NGOs. In Federal Iraq [RESTRICTED] partner distributed cash assistance to 364 families in order for them to purchase personal items or to pay for transport to travel to an area they feel safe in and have access to other sources of assistance. In Iraqi Kurdistan Christian Aid partner REACH distributed 12,148 food kits, 1316 NFI kits, 2543 hygiene kits, 285 winterization kits, 200 summarization kits and cash assistance for 133 families. In addition, 279 individuals were employed under a cash for work (CfW) scheme.

Outside the ACT appeal NCA works in Duhok in the WASH sector.

A new appeal will be launched in the last week of September 2015 which will run until 2016.

5. Planned activities

Planned activities for Christian Aid in the Federal Iraq region include: hygiene kits; food items (raw items & ready-made/processed food); chronic diseases medications; clothes and underwear items; Bedding (Mattresses, pillows, sheets, blankets). Planned intervention in the Iraqi Kurdistan region by Christian Aid includes: food items; winterisation Items; cash assistance and cash for work livelihood activities; and vocational training courses and small grants.

³ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51050#.Vev87xGeDGc>

LWF plans to respond in the following sectors: food security; WASH; NFI; psychosocial support; and school facility improvement.

6. Constraints

- The security situation remains volatile and may collapse which would not only exacerbate the level of IDP suffering but would also cause difficulty for humanitarian actors in responding to the needs. Gaining security clearances continues to be a challenge in some cases and can mean constraints on fully informed decision making and coordination of response.
- Most of the new arrivals of the IDPs have settled outside of camps, in open areas, out of the city centres or with host communities which makes them a difficult group to communicate with and reach with assistance items on a large scale.
- There is a risk of the host community no longer enabling safety for refugees and IDPs living amongst them, which according to the local authorities in the region is at breaking point due to the sheer amount of IDPs and the overall strain on essential services.
- Some IDPs have developed fear and trauma of unknown people and places and have gone into hiding which can add to the challenge of communication with them and supporting them with relief and assistance items.
- Difficulty in finding the skilful human resource for IDP assistance programs is an area of constraint.
- More than 50% of Dohuk Governorate IDP's, live in non-camps, which makes it challenging for humanitarian NGOs to find and identify their needs.
- As IDPs continue to move around in search of sanctuary, lost family members, affordable housing and employment it can be difficult to continue to keep in contact with them and support them.

Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to the Head of Finance and Administration, Line Hempel (Line.Hempel@actalliance.org).

For further information please contact:

ACT Regional Representative, Gorden Simango (gsi@actalliance.org)

ACT Web Site address: <http://www.actalliance.org>