

Iraq Operational Update¹



Goal: Improve protection and well-being of refugees, returnees, IDPs, stateless people, and new refugee arrivals from Syria while promoting the realization of durable solutions for all.

This report reflects UNHCR’s response to the Global Strategic Priorities in Iraq.

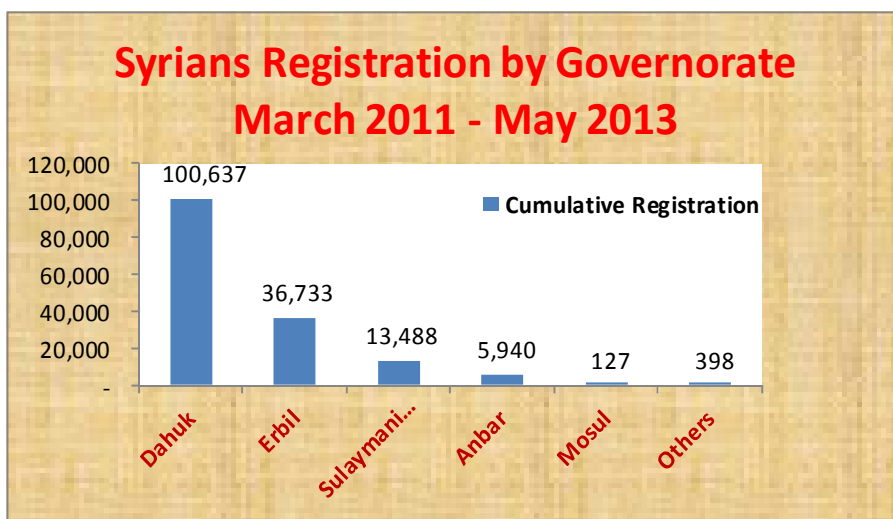
1- Objective: Quality of registration and profiling improved or maintained

D) Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers

157,323 Syrian refugees have been registered with UNHCR Iraq as of 31 May 2013.² Of the total refugee population, 150,985 individuals are in the Kurdistan Region (KR) of Iraq, 5,940 are in Anbar Governorate, while 398 are scattered in other governorates in the south, north, and central Iraq.

Approximately, 45,000 individuals are accommodated in Domiz camp, while 3,055 have been living in Al Qa’im camps (1 & 2). Syrian refugees in urban areas

make up more than 60 per cent of the registered population and are settled in the town of Al Qa’im as well as various urban and peri-urban locations in Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah governorates.



¹ This report needs to be read in conjunction with Iraq Country Fact Sheet, the Return Monitoring Report, the RRP5, and the 2013 Country Strategy.

² All Syrian refugees arriving in Iraq are registered (level 2) immediately and there is no registration backlog.



At the time of reporting, all border entry points were closed by Iraqi authorities for Syrians wishing to enter Iraq. In Kurdistan, the entry and exit border point with Syria has been closed (Peshkapor) since May 19. The closure of the border drastically effected access to Iraqi territory for Syrians. On May 28, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) announced the opening of the border for Syrians who wish to return home.

Photo: Children making a tent from cloth in Domiz camp

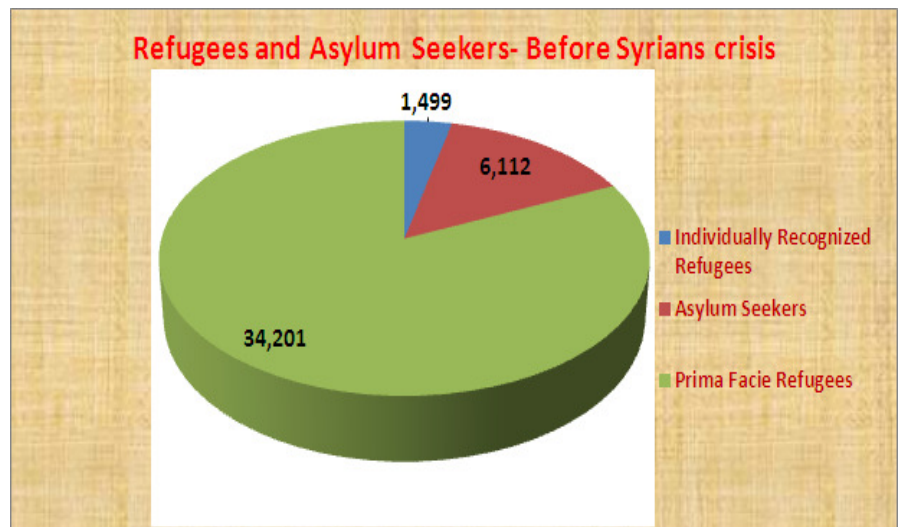
A total of 832 refugees (registered with UNHCR) returned to Syria in the last week of May bringing the total number of Syrians returning to Syria from the KR to 7,693 individuals. UNHCR’s monitoring

team provided counseling to make sure that Syrians are making a well-informed decision as there is a strict no re-entry policy by the Iraqi authorities.

Similarly, there has been no change in the Al Qa'im border since it was closed on 21 October 2012. However, 5,092 refugees have returned to Syria from Al Qa'im. Approximately, 2,768 returned between January and May. The main reasons of return include increased frustration over living conditions, lack of freedom of movement, no access to the labour market or any other source of income, as well as the inability to visit relatives in the Al Qa'im area, and the reported improvement of the security situation in the Albu Kamal area of Syria.

II) Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Iraq

There are 41,812³ refugees and asylum seekers of Palestinian, Iranian and Turkish origin, scattered in camps, settlements and urban areas across Iraq. Of these, 34,201 are prima facie refugees, 6,112 asylum seekers and 1,499 individually recognized refugees. A large number of these refugees (29,550) are in the KR, while 11,772 are in the centre and another 490 are in the south of Iraq.



Furthermore, UNHCR will start a verification and profiling exercise of Palestinian refugees in Baghdad, which is scheduled to start next month. The exercise aims to update basic bio-data information and gather additional information regarding specific needs for follow-up on individual cases and programming for protection and assistance. Prior to the actual profiling, preparatory work for the verification exercise was conducted. This included information and awareness raising campaign with the refugees to stress the importance and benefits of the exercise, information sharing with the relevant ministries (Ministry of Interior - MoI and Ministry of Migration and Displacement - MoMD), development of the questionnaire, recruitment and training of the staff (on UNHCR mandate, refugees, Palestinians, code of conduct, proGres database, specific needs and family composition), to conduct the verification exercise, and procurement of equipment and laptops.

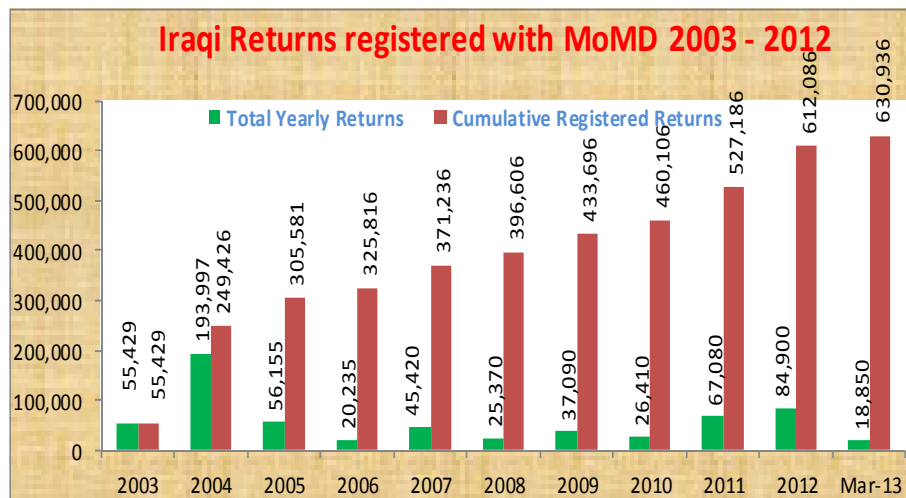
³ This number does not include the new Syrian arrivals in northern and western Iraq.

In addition, an RSD support mission was conducted in Erbil in January 2013. Based on the mission of the Regional RSD Officer, the RSD strategy in the north was fine-tuned and further developed to prioritize the pending RSD caseload. The protection unit took actions to implement the strategy and thus far many RSD pending cases have been cleared in the reporting months.

Moreover, the Permanent Committee for Refugees/MoI in Baghdad and Erbil advocated with the Ministry of Trade and the Governor of Ninewa to resume the issuance of the PDS cards to the Turkish refugees in Makhmour. An agreement was reached to issue the PDS cards and UNHCR supported the process by providing desks and office equipment in the camp for the assessment team deployed by the Governor office in Ninewa to complete the process. UNHCR continued to monitor the issuance of the refugee ID cards to the Turkish refugees in Makhmour camp. The process is ongoing and at the time of writing a total of 1,032 cards were issued to the refugees. The distribution of the remaining 1,248 cards is expected to be completed by the end of next month.

III) Iraqi returnees

The number of cross border movements immensely decreased during the reporting period. Closure of Al Qa'im and Rabiaa crossing points, the security situation in Syria, kidnaping, killing and ongoing demonstrations at the highway between Baghdad and Anbar were the main reasons behind the decrease. 22,616 Iraqis crossed the Syrian border back into Iraq during the reporting



months bringing the total number of cross-border movement since July 2012 to May 31 to 87,398.⁴ During the same period of time, a total of 49,718 Iraqi crossed the border back to Syria. Moreover, a total of 825 Iraqi voluntarily repatriated from Syria, Iran, Jordan and Egypt under the UNHCR voluntary repatriation programme during the reporting period. Furthermore, following the registration of 18,850 Iraqi as returnees with MoMD has raised the total returns population in Iraq since 2003 to 31 March to 630,936.

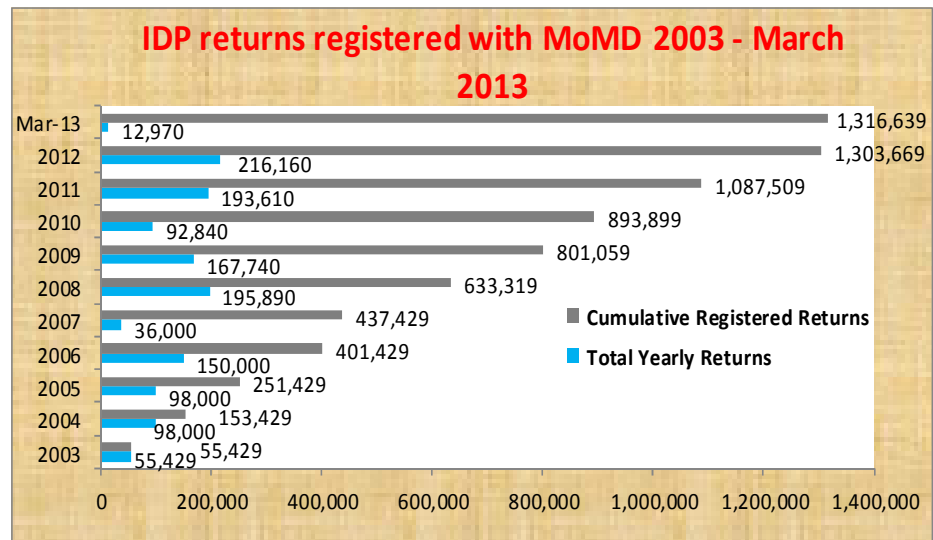
UNHCR continued the distribution of cash assistance through the Trade Bank of Iraq (TBI) to families (\$400) and singles (\$200) registered as returns with the MoMD; a total of 3,116 households (18,815 individuals) received the grant by end of January 2013. More recently, UNHCR has signed an agreement with ISHO for another round of cash assistance for Iraqi returnees. It is expected that some 1,340 households (4,918 individuals) are to benefit from UNHCR's one-time cash assistance project.

In addition, UNHCR Iraq continued to liaise with UNHCR Syria, IOM and the US Embassy for the continued processing of the resettlement cases of Iraqi returnees who were submitted for resettlement while in Syria, due to the circumstances of their departure from Syria. To date, this concerns 935 cases / 2,614 individuals.

⁴ This number includes registered and unregistered Iraqis with UNHCR Syria, as well as those who are crossing the border for personal related issues.

IV) IDPs

UNHCR through its Protection Network was able to reach many IDPs living in established neighborhoods and informal settlements in several governorates of Iraq. The Protection Network in the governorates supported the process by providing information and guidance to IDPs on the rules and procedures for registration with MoMD.



As result of extensive advocacy by UNHCR for the registration and information on registration procedures for IDPs, a total of 12,970 individuals were registered as returnees with MoMD by 31 March 2013. Between 2003 and March 2013, 1,316,639 individuals were registered as returnees by the MoMD. Despite this, over 1.1 million Iraqis still remain internally displaced, pending durable solutions. An estimated 467,000 persons – comprised of IDPs, returnees and conflict-affected persons - remain in more than 382 informal settlements throughout the country, with more than 191,000 persons living in 125 settlements in the capital, on public land or public buildings. The living conditions in these settlements are harsh and under the constant threat of eviction from the make-shift settlements they built on land which is not theirs.

Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan on Displacement in 2011, MoMD had further developed the ‘Stabilization Program’ in 2012 and proposed the expansion of assistance to IDPs in order to accelerate return, settlement, relocation, local integration, and thus gradually close Iraq’s internal displacement ‘file’. However, the focus of the assistance is the provision of financial grants, while other components to support (re)integration of returnees remains limited.

In 2013, MoMD requested UNHCR’s assistance in developing the second stage of the aforementioned Stabilization Program, which was due to commence on 1st June 2013. While agreeing in principle to support MoMD in this process, UNHCR suggested that MoMD first conducts an evaluation of the implementation of the first stage prior to developing plans for the second stage. Accordingly, MoMD agreed to postpone the second stage, and implement an interim plan meanwhile.

UNHCR has been undertaking a survey in order to find durable solution for IDPs in Kirkuk. The survey exercise has started in February and scheduled to be completed end of June. A total of 5,000 IDPs have been targeted for the exercise. Out of the 2,333 families surveyed so far, a total of 1,778 have expressed their willingness to remain in Kirkuk, while 555 families are willing to return to their places of origin. UNHCR will closely work with local authorities to facilitate the return of those IDP families who are willing to return to their places of origin or advocate for the rights of those who are willing to remain.

V) Camp Hurriya

On 9 February a series of rockets were fired at the Hurriya Temporary Transit Location (TTL). The attack killed six members of the MeK and injured many more. Two residents later died after succumbing to injuries making it a total of eight killed from the attack. UNHCR resumed activities at Iraq House on 17 February giving the residents one week for mourning period. Residents, however, elected to boycott UNHCR processing activities at Iraq House. All residents committed not to attend for scheduled interviews until the security concerns in Hurriya were addressed. The boycott continued for the duration of the reporting period, with the exception of interviews for Albanian resettlement cases after the MeK provided a “priority list” for Albania. These interviews were completed in late March.

Various initiatives have been employed to encourage a return to interviews, including the delivery of individual letters as well as seeking out residents in the camp to inform them that they have been scheduled for interviews, but to little avail. The delivery of appointment slips was necessary as the MeK leadership informed UNHCR at the end of April that it would no longer share the interview schedule with residents, which had until then been the established practice. The MeK reverted on 23 May to informing applicants invited for interviews at Iraq House, but residents have since then still refused to come, with a no-show rate of about 99 per cent since 17 February.

The heavy presence of Protection monitors in Hurriya has been maintained since the end of April. Protection monitoring continues in order to maintain access to individuals, to conduct special needs assessment for those with medical conditions, and to ascertain who is interested in solutions outside Iraq - with current focus on Albania.

Between 1 January and 31 May, a total of 368 individuals were interviewed, and 382 applicants were recognized as persons in need of international protection. As of 31 May, there are 1,084 cases pending interviews (including RSD interviews), excluding Tier II and complementary interviews. The UNHCR's Solutions Unit, which was established in April 2012, has been engaged to identify durable solutions for those determined as requiring international protection. The durable solutions for the Hurriya population are sought through resettlement, consular readmission, and through humanitarian burden-sharing mechanisms with the international community.

As of 31 May, 1,601 individuals are under processing for solutions. Thus far, 70 individuals have departed to third countries, of which 49 departed in the reporting period. 44 of the 49 were relocated to Albania in successive moves on 16 May and 31 May. Further movements to Albania are currently being planned, as Albania has offered 210 places for Hurriya residents.



Photo: Camp Hurriya residents departing to Albania

Despite recent progress in solutions, UNHCR is concerned that the majority of Hurriya residents either fail or refuse to attend UNHCR interviews scheduled for protection counselling and/or solutions processing, and that a number of residents have refused relocation offers (as of 30 May, 68 individuals refused to go to Albania and an additional 31 residents refused to be relocated to other countries). With the MeK residents refusing to attend for interviews in Iraq House, there has been a reduction in the amount of work that can be undertaken by UNHCR in regard to this caseload, and therefore UNHCR has concluded it will have to restructure its operation. UNHCR will begin to reorganize the format of the team, which will be smaller in composition, from the end of June.

VI) Stateless Persons

There are an estimated 120,000 stateless people in Iraq. The population consists mainly of Faili Kurds and Bidoon. UNHCR has been closely working with the GoI on mapping statelessness to identify their location, protection needs and seek durable solutions for them. However, the advancement of rights and protection for the stateless in Iraq is constrained by the lack of clear data, actual locations and numbers of the people of concerned. UNHCR and the Government of Iraq are collaborating to obtain accurate and reliable statistics on the number of stateless people in Iraq. Following the workshop on statelessness held

in Amman in December 2012, three joint UNHCR, GOI committees were established with aim to identify and analyse the remaining instances of statelessness in the country (mapping).

During the reporting period, three missions were carried out to the north and south where several interviews were conducted with stateless of different origin. Stateless persons that are extremely vulnerable have also been included in UNHCR assistance scheme for Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVI) for 2013. An SOP has also been established to distribute funds to undocumented Iraqis to help them obtain documentation by reimbursing travel costs and/or paying for procedural and court fees. Moreover, 21 UNHCR and Implementing Partner staff from southern Iraq were trained on statelessness, Community Services, SGBV and EVI assistance

Furthermore, two specialized parties have been invited to submit a Concept Note to conduct a statelessness mapping exercise in Iraq. A dedicated registration procedure for new stateless Syrian arrivals is currently being established. Mobile registration teams are collecting data on the current number of stateless residents of Domiz camp in order to extrapolate this number to the wider Syrian Kurdish presence in the North. A two-year capacity building project on statelessness and refugee law was also approved for co-financing by the Ministry of Interior. UNHCR offered regular protection-related support in individual cases involving statelessness and will advocating with the Iraqi authorities to establish a dedicated legal framework to address cases of statelessness.

2- Objective: Access to legal assistance and legal remedies improve

I) Legal Assistance

Eight UNHCR implementing partners continued providing legal assistance to refugees, asylum seekers, deportees, stateless, IDPs and returnees through its protection network Protection Assistance and Reintegration Centres (PARCs) across Iraq.

According to PARCs reports, 3,867 persons of concern (PoCs) to UNHCR requested legal assistance in order to obtain civil status

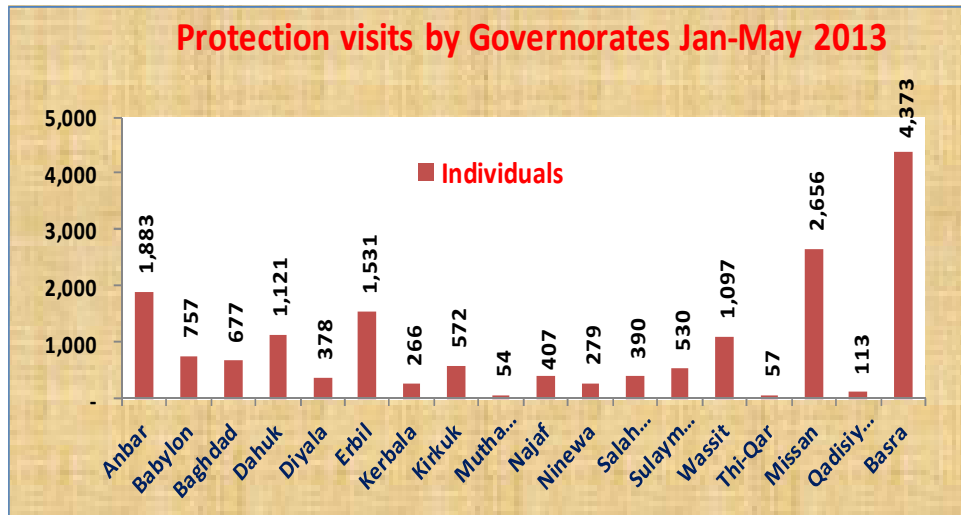
documentations, legalize marriages and divorces and obtain custody over children. The Protection Database statistics shows that 52 per cent persons of concern were assisted with obtaining various documents such as Civil IDs, residence, public distribution system (PDS), health care cards, citizenship cards, death and birth certificates, divorce, land deeds, pension, passports, residence cards, government grants for return and displacement, cases related to child rights and SGBV while approximately 30 per cent of the cases are still in progress. Forty three per cent of solved cases were related to the issuing of various kinds of certificates, SGBV, detention, inheritance and common criminal cases, while the remaining were for ratification of documents, return and displacement grants, registration with MoMD, pension, civil identification, passports and residency cards.

Legal Cases January – May 2013							
Regions/Govt.	Case Close and Solved	%	Case Closed but not Solved	%	Case In Progress	%	Total
Center	1,412	47.90%	109	3.70%	1,427	48.41%	2,948
Anbar	89	24.93%	9	2.52%	259	72.55%	357
Babylon	152	58.69%	40	15.44%	67	25.87%	259
Baghdad	303	28.32%	42	3.93%	725	67.76%	1070
Diyala	256	85.33%	6	2.00%	38	12.67%	300
Kerbala	214	58.47%	1	0.27%	151	41.26%	366
Salah al-Din	87	38.67%	7	3.11%	131	58.22%	225
Wassit	214	94.27%	2	0.88%	11	4.85%	227
Najaf	97	67.36%	2	1.39%	45	31.25%	144
North	172	35.54%	4	0.83%	308	63.64%	484
Dohuk	53	59.55%	0	0.00%	36	40.45%	89
Erbil	12	9.60%	0	0.00%	113	90.40%	125
Kirkuk	35	50.00%	0	0.00%	35	50.00%	70
Ninewa	28	31.82%	0	0.00%	60	68.18%	88
Sulaymaniyah	44	39.29%	4	3.57%	64	57.14%	112
South	407	93.56%	8	1.84%	20	4.60%	435
Basra	4	40.00%	0	0.00%	6	60.00%	10
Missan	158	93.49%	4	2.37%	7	4.14%	169
Muthanna	40	88.89%	0	0.00%	5	11.11%	45
Qadissiyah	71	92.21%	4	5.19%	2	2.60%	77
Thi-Qar	134	100.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	134
IRAQ	1,991	51.49%	121	3.13%	1,755	45.38%	3,867

II) Protection Visits

The UNHCR Protection monitoring network comprising of 18 Protection Assistance Centres (PACs) and PARCs in each of Iraq's governorates, and six Returnee Integration Community Centres (RICCs), based in Baghdad have provided protection assistance to refugees and asylum seekers, Iraqi returnees, IDPs and Syrian

refugees during the reporting period. PACs/PARCs recorded 621 protection visits to various locations throughout Iraq, assessing 17,141 individuals for protection needs in the reporting months.



3- Objective: Risk of SGBV is reduced and quality of response improved

Despite provisions for gender equality and respect for human rights in national and international law, protection gaps still remain for women and girls and with regards to prevention and response towards SGBV in Iraq. Serious abuses against women and girls occur, particularly amongst persons of concern to UNHCR. Female heads of household, women and girls in informal settlements, and girls in child labour are at heightened risk of SGBV, exploitation, and abuse. The cultural context also inhibits women from disclosing experience of violence and sees sexual violence in particular as a cause of “dishonour” for the survivor and her entire family.

Together with other actors, UNHCR is conducting a mapping on SGBV related services, actors and response mechanisms in place with the aim to develop a five year SGBV strategy countrywide. The strategy will cover all persons of concern to UNHCR and includes an overview of SGBV among persons of concern, the protection environment in Iraq, UNHCR and partner's initiatives for prevention and response, gaps in protection and recommendations for UNHCR and partners interventions.

The first SGBV sub working group was held in Baghdad on 26 May, which was previously integrated under the protection working group. Also, an Extremely Vulnerable Individual (EVI) panel was conducted on 15 and 22 May together with Health, Protection and Community Services colleagues in Baghdad. Six of 21 cases are Syrian refugees and were approved for financial assistance. SGBV issues are also being discussed as part of Protection Working Groups countrywide. SGBV trainings are on-going in the field through UNHCR Protection Network PARC. Two country wide SGBV and Community Services workshops were also conducted by UNHCR and partners in April and May in Erbil. Similarly, Standard Operating SGBV Procedures were drafted for North and South as well as various Participatory Assessment exercises needs assessment was conducted country-wide.

Photo: Women's Listening Centre, Al Qa'im

Regarding the Syrian response, SGBV prevention and support mechanisms in Domiz were consolidated at the first SGBV sub-working group



meeting, which was held on 8 May. The meeting was attended by various organizations including the Department for Combating Violence against Women (DVAW). Given the importance of addressing SGBV, the Working Group was established to support existing psychosocial and legal support, which includes the listening centre and the women's safe place; to improve SGBV identification and referral mechanisms; and, to strengthen the working relationship with the DVAW. Similarly in Al Qa'im, ensuring security from violence and exploitation through the establishment of listening centre for women was achieved. Staff were recruited and two caravans were delivered. SGBV prevention and support mechanisms in the camp are enhanced through the establishment of this listening centre, which supports existing psychosocial and legal support. The listening centre improves SGBV identification and referral mechanisms.

Accurate figures are difficult to obtain as SGBV related incidents often occur in the private sphere and/or survivors fear reporting them due to the stigma attached to such incidents, cultural barriers, culture of impunity, for fear of retaliation by the perpetrator or because law enforcement and courts treats SGBV leniently. Thus, only few SGBV cases are currently being identified. However, UNHCR and partners respond to SGBV cases through PAC/PARCs, RICCs and Listening Centres refers survivors to service providers and collect data.

Between January and May, the PARCs network organized 35 awareness raising campaigns, 40 SGBV formal and informal training sessions for IDP men, women, stakeholders, local authorities, religious clerics, judges and police. A total of 1,525 SGBV survivors were counselled and 98 were referred to other service providers for required assistance. All reported cases of survivors counselled are recorded using UNHCR's standard forms and are kept confidential.

4- Objective: Potential for resettlement realized

UNHCR continues to seek durable solutions for individuals recognized as refugees who meet resettlement criteria. Three cases comprising of three persons from Iran and Libya were submitted to Sweden and Denmark in the reporting months⁵. A total of four cases comprising of eight persons were accepted during the same period; seven Palestinians were accepted by the USA, while one Iranian was accepted by Sweden. Two cases were rejected; one Libyan was rejected by Sweden and a Palestinian by the USA. Two cases/12 persons, all Palestinians departed to the USA during the reporting period. The identification of resettlement cases was strengthened to identify the refugees most in need of resettlement, in particular in the women and girls at risk category. This resulted in the identification of a total of twelve cases that are being prepared for submission.

5- Objective: Shelter and infrastructure established, improved and maintained

UNHCR extended the RIRP, Qandil and ISHO 2012 agreements to enable them complete the on-going shelters construction projects. All pending work on shelters were completed by partners in the reporting months bringing the total number of shelters for 2012 to 3,126. Moreover, land allocation being a pilot low-cost shelters projects implemented in Sabe Al-Bour, and was established for IDP families from Al-Mukhaymat informal settlement; 385 low-cost shelters were completed on 31 December 2012. However, on 16 January 2013, before the intended beneficiaries could move in, the shelters were illegally occupied by squatters who were not selected through the extensive beneficiary selection process. The enormous efforts by UNHCR, US embassy, General Secretariat of the Office of the Council of Ministers as well as office of the Baghdad Governor are yet to yield positive results, with the shelters being still illegally occupied. As a result, works on other four low-cost shelter projects (one in Al-Nahrawan consisting of 222 shelter units; two in Babylon consisting of 220 units and one in Mosul consisting of 300 units) have been suspended, pending resolution of the Sabe Al-Bour occupation.

⁵ January to March 2013

To continue addressing the IDPs, returnees as well as refugee returnees shelter needs, UNHCR signed several agreements with IHLHR, Qandil, IRW, RIRP, ISHO and REACH for the shelter renovation, rehabilitation and new construction country-wide. A total of 1,350 shelters are planned for 2013; 1,200 for construction and 150 for rehabilitation. Of this, 1,050 new shelters will be constructed in the central governorates, 150 in the south while 150 shelters to be rehabilitated in the northern governorates.

One hundred shelters are being constructed by IHLHR in Missan governorate in southern Iraq, while REACH started rehabilitation work on fifty shelters in April 2013. The work is ongoing with 60 per cent progress and expected to be completed by the end of June. Fifty families with 270 individuals will benefit from the renovations in Kirkuk governorate. Another 100 shelters identified for rehabilitation by IRW in Ninewa neighborhoods are being rehabilitated as well. 500 individuals will benefit from UNHCR rehabilitation intervention in Ninewa.

Similarly, 52 shelters are being constructed by ISHO in Al-Fahama'a, Baghdad. However, Qandil, and RIRP started the 1st phase shelter projects in Baghdad, Diyala, Anbar, and Salahiddine governorates with the assessment and forming of the beneficiary selection committee, which consist of site engineers, UNHCR representatives, and local authority representatives in each location. The assessment process in all governorates has been completed by identifying the targeted locations and beneficiaries in selected locations. After the tendering and bidding process, the work is expected to commence soon.

In addition, 35 vulnerable families who returned from Iran have been living in the Sheladze tented site in Deralok, Dohuk Governorate since 2008. The families received land from the government without financial grants to construct houses for themselves. Following a rapid assessment undertaken by KURDS in coordination with camp representatives, UNHCR and DDM determined the families are in urgent need of shelters to protect them from cold weather in winter and extreme heat in summer hot weather. Therefore, an agreement was signed with KURDS aimed to assist the 35 targeted vulnerable families with shelter materials package- mats and timbers- to complete the building of their shelters. In the reporting months, materials for all the shelters was procured and the distribution to beneficiaries is expected to be carried out in June.

Moreover, UNHCR implementing partners RRIP, Qandil and ISHO will undertake the minor rehabilitation of 1,080 shelters in six IDP settlements in Diyala, Baghdad and Salahadeen. The minor rehabilitation includes roofing, installing toilets, aluminum doors, septic tanks, fixing window glasses and upgrading of sanitation facilities.

Emergency Shelters

Al Obaidy: The 520 shelters which were erected by UNHCR partners in Al Obaidy had to be removed due to a strong wind early this year. However, following the request from the GoI for relocation of refugees from Al Qa'im camps 1 and 2 to Al Obaidy (Camp 3), UNHCR partners began re-erecting the tents in Camp 3. The tent wiring will be initiated once all tents are erected. All minor works are expected to be completed by mid- June.

Domiz Camp: Domiz camp remains congested despite intensive work to accommodate all refugees settled in the camp. Lack of space and sharing of shelter makes new arrivals particularly vulnerable and requires special attention. During the reporting period, work on the additional phases was completed and a total of 1,714 new tents were erected in all new phases to accommodate new arrivals.

Prior to the recent border closure at Peshkapor, the increasing number of refugees coming into the KR is placing pressure on basic services and consequent challenges to provide these services and assistance to the Syrian refugees. Particularly to those living in the urban communities, the KRG authorities agreed upon consultations with UNHCR that two more refugee camps will be established, one in Sulaymaniyah and one approximately 40 kilometres from Erbil.

Darashana camp: Work on the camp started during the reporting period by clearing, removing black soil and levelling of the site. 85 per cent of the levelling work is complete and the remainder should be completed next month. The government installed three caravans and a tent for their office space. UNHCR installed four tents to be used as temporary office space. The camp capacity will be 12,000 individuals.

Photo: The ongoing construction of Darashakran Camp in Erbil



Sulaymaniyah: Following the request from the Governor, the construction of the camp is set to commence after the harvesting season (mid June 2013) for a capacity of 15,000 Syrian refugees with the possibility of expansion. However, the immediate proximity of electrical power lines at the proposed camp location, observed by UNICEF, may be considered as safety hazard and could affect the camp's development.

6- Objective: Population has sufficient basic and domestic items

UNHCR has been assisting Syrian refugees, vulnerable IDPs and Iraqi returnees with various kinds of NFIs in Iraq. Through the delivery of basic domestic items such as kitchen sets, plastic sheets, mattresses, jerry cans, hygiene kits or fuel UNHCR supported persons of concern to meet their immediate basic needs. During the reporting period the distribution of 57,874 NFI kits were carryout by UNHCR through partners to its PoCs in IDP settlements, refugee camps and returnee areas Iraq-wide.

Syrian Refugees: With the onset of winter season, distribution of winter NFI items were undertaken in both Al Qa'im and Domiz camps by UNHCR. The major winter items distributed in Al Qa'im were quilts (14,400), plastic sheeting (1,700), fleece blankets (3,400), kerosene jerry cans (2,000) with distribution of kerosene during the first four months of the reporting period.

Photo: Distribution of NFIs in Domiz



Similarly, 4,190 families (19,938 individuals) received winter kits from UNHCR in Domiz camp. The most commonly distributed items were thermal blankets (9,300), fleece blankets (20,000), quilts (1,636), heaters and rechargeable lights (2,850), jerry cans and kerosene. Moreover, vulnerable urban families identified in Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, Dohuk and Al Qa'im were also assisted with winterization items including fuel, blankets, and heaters. The authorities made available public buildings for distributions and provided UNHCR with the government rate for fuel. Further to the above distribution, all new Syrian refugee arrivals following registration were provided with a NFIs kits by UNHCR in Domiz and Al-Qa'im camps. A total of 53,978 NFI kits were distributed in the reporting months in the entire Syrian refugee camp populations of Iraq. In addition to the regular distribution of NFI kits, a total of 14,727 sanitary napkins were distributed to women in Domiz camp while 11,609 different sizes of baby diapers and 1,084 various items of NFIs such as mattress, quilts, cooking stoves, kerosene jerry cans, blankets were distributed to Syrians in the Al Qa'im camps.

IDPs: In the first part of the reporting period, over 6,000 individuals in various villages of Salaaheen and 80 families in Baghdad were severely affected by heavy rains and floods. A rapid assessment was undertaken by UNHCR followed by the distribution of 1,475 NFI kits among the most vulnerable IDP populations in the affected governorates. Furthermore, 80 families in Baghdad also received 525,000 IQD (USD 420) in cash assistance for the renovation of their heavily damaged houses. 100 re-chargeable fans were also distributed to flood affected vulnerable individuals in Wasit.

Returns: UNHCR agreed with MoMD that NFIs will be distributed among all registered Iraqi returnees based on vulnerability. Identified vulnerable cases monitored by the Protection network are provided with an NFI package and/or one-time cash assistance. A total 1,283 NFI packages were distributed during the reporting months.

7- Objective: Population has optimal access to education



Photos: Expansion of schools in Ninewa and Kirkuk

In close coordination with Ninewa education directorate, two schools have been identified by UNHCR implementing partner Islamic Relief Worldwide for rehabilitation and expansion this year. The extension will assist to accommodate 500 IDPs and host community students in Ninewa. Following necessary assessment and procurement of materials, work on the schools was started during the reporting period.

Seven schools' are under renovation and expansion by REACH in Kirkuk city and its outskirts (four in Kirkuk Center, two in Hawija and one in Alton kopry). Five school renovations that began in late April 2013 achieved an average progress of 54 per cent. The remaining two school renovations were started in early May. The implementation process is on-going and the average progress reached to 50 per cent. The total number of students who will benefit (at the primary level) from the seven activities is estimated at 2,295.

Six schools have been targeted for rehabilitation and construction of additional classrooms in Kirkuk by IP Qandil. Three schools are inside Kirkuk city and three outside (one each in Laylan sub-district, Taza sub-district and Daquq district). Following foundation, water and sanitation works, laying pipes for fresh water, provision of materials, construction of manholes, installation of toilets and wash basin, the overall percentage of work progress in all schools is 55 per cent.

8- Objective: Supply of potable water increased or maintained

30 Reverse Osmosis will be implemented by RIRP, ISHO and Qandil for IDPs in the central governorates. Assessment for identification of project beneficiaries and sites has been completed pending bidding and tendering by partners to commence the work. Moreover, REACH completed the renovation of 3,000 meters of water pipe network. Preparation for the handing over to the local authorities in Kirkuk is ongoing. 130 IDP returnee families will benefit from the renovation project. Another 1000m water network was started by REACH for 80 IDP returnee families in Faylaq and progress of the project is 80 per cent.

The evaluation of 97 Reverse Osmosis (RO) units implemented by UNHCR between 2010 and 2012 were undertaken in the reporting period. Several gaps such as contaminated borehole water, lack of necessary training for RO operators, maintenance for generator, lack of fuel, spare parts, were cited by the evaluation team. A rapid plan has been developed to address the gaps in order to ensure the continued operation of RO units by improving efficiency to ensure displaced people receive healthy drinking water. Three training courses were organized by UNHCR to build the capacity of partners -RIRP, Qandil and ISHO- and field staff. The trainings covered topics such as contamination of water sources, water production, and water treatment planning. Twenty eight participants attended the trainings.

9- Objective: Coordination and partnerships strengthened

National NGOs (NNGO) are important actors in any humanitarian action plan for Iraq. The majority of humanitarian actors and development agencies in Iraq work closely with NNGO partners for implementation of their activities. The increasing interest in NNGOs should accompany in-depth knowledge about NNGO capacities, weaknesses, gaps, challenges and opportunities and training and other capacity building efforts made. A comprehensive empowerment process is taking place to develop strong partnerships between international actors and NNGOs. NNGOs with strong capacity are able to evolve from having a limited impact to being key actors in humanitarian and development assistance. Investment in empowering NNGOs will support the implementation of effective participatory projects and deliver appropriate services to the communities.

UNHCR recognized these facts and has, for the last few years, begun focusing on developing the capacity of NNGOs to assist vulnerable populations and disseminate services. Following the successful implementation of National NGOs Empowerment Programme (NNEP) in 2012, UNHCR has signed two agreements with NCCI and IRW to capacitate a total of 30 NNGOs in 2013. Accordingly, 25 NNGOs will be trained by NCCI in the central governorates while another 10 NGOs will be trained in the north of Iraq.

25 NNGOs have been selected from Baghdad, Diyala and Anbar governorates by UNHCR and NCCI for this year empowerment programme. Two training workshops were organized by NCCI for 50 participants in the reporting months. NNGOs were trained on drafting quality project descriptions, action plans, and developing budget. Fifteen proposals were selected following a comprehensive review and evaluation of 25 project proposals submitted by NGOs. All 15 projects which are designed to provide support to IDPs, host communities and on job training to NGOs; they will be implemented in the month of June to August 2013. Similarly, six NNGOs have been nominated by IRW and UNHCR in Ninewa governorate of KR. The selected NGOs will be trained and then awarded with grants to implement the agreed projects which will benefit UNHCR PoCs in Ninewa governorate. The training workshop for the NGOs is scheduled in the month of June.

10- Objective: Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

In the recent years UNHCR was able to improve the livelihood situation through the implementation of various community empowerment activities to encourage vulnerable and marginalized communities of PoCs to improve their income and become more self-reliant. In order to make the return and integration

sustainable and create a favourable environment in the community, UNCHR will continue its intervention to build the capacity of the PoCs.

Greenhouses

During the reporting period, 40 sites were identified by UNHCR, MoMD, MoA, local councils and community leaders for 50 greenhouse installations in the five southern governorates. Forty eight greenhouses have been installed while two greenhouses are being worked on. Farmer trainings were given to all greenhouse beneficiaries to increase their capability in managing and maintaining the greenhouses. The construction of the greenhouses will be completed by end of June and the seed will be planted in the autumn.



Photo: Construction of a greenhouse in Sulaymaniyah.

Twenty eight greenhouses have been provided and installed for 28 IDP families in Laylan, Qarahanjeer and Shwan villages of Kirkuk. Work started with the implementation process in the beginning of May 2013 and the greenhouses were completely installed and handed over to the beneficiaries during the same month. Another five greenhouses will be implemented by Qandil in the centre region. Site identification and the selection of the beneficiaries have been on-going at the time of reporting. Likewise, 40 greenhouses have been completed by REACH and handed over to beneficiaries in various refugee settlements of Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah.

Beekeeping

One hundred and fifty beehives and all beekeeping related equipment was supplied and distributed to 30 IDP families in Laylan, Qarahanjeer and Shwan villages of Kirkuk. Two training courses on the beekeeping were conducted and all beneficiaries participated in the training sessions. Another two sessions will be conducted for the beneficiaries in June 2013.



Photo: REACH beehives project in Hareer, Erbil

Twenty vulnerable Turkish refugee families were selected by REACH and UNHCR beehives project in Darato, Dohuk. After distribution of the 100 populated beehives and empty boxes with necessary tools, the required skills and trainings for beekeeping were provided to beneficiaries in close coordination with the Department of Agriculture. Another 19 vulnerable families have been identified in Malambwan village in Dohuk governorate for the beehives project. Following the necessary training, each family was provided with five beehive boxes in the presence of the Department of Agriculture, Dohuk.

Quick Impact Projects (QIPS)

During the reporting period, five QIPS were implemented in three governorates, Basra Thi Qar and Missan of South. The first project was a bakery implemented in Missan. The primary objective of the project was to solve one of the most critical challenges that the IDPs and returnees have been facing in Al-

Rahma area. The families were in an urgent need for a bakery to provide them with bread. This market gap also intends to improve the living standards of five IDP families by providing them with work opportunity. The second project was the construction of desks for two schools which were affected by the IDP influx. 250 desks were built and donated to two schools in Shatt Al Arab villages of Al Naeisa and Al Kabasy in Basra. The third project was in line of the PoCs primary health concerns. After including the assistant doctors in the mobile teams of PARC, the doctors have recommended to undertake a high coverage hygiene promotion campaign. Health training for 100 PoCs was also conducted in Al Dier district followed by distribution of 100 pharmacies with healthy items.

Vocational Training- Phase I Completion

In southern Iraq, welding as a profession has great potential with high probability of finding employment or to open a small business. In all five governorates welding courses were successful. As for the rest, each governorate had their own courses based on the market needs and the availability of trainers. A total of 200 beneficiaries attended the first phase of the vocational training. Other courses completed were mobile maintenance, generator maintenance and sewing course.



Photo: Sewing course in Gardachal, Erbil

Several vocational trainings such as handcraft-traditional shoes, sewing course, hair dressing, decorative accessories, business cap, windows and doors manufacturing, air conditioning and refrigeration appliances maintenance have been implemented by REACH in Erbil, Dohuk, Sulaymaniyah. Over 200 refugees and asylums seekers will benefit from the trainings.

Community Technology Access (CTA)

Four CTA Projects are being implemented by Qandil and IRW for IDPs and refugees in the central governorates.

Photo: A visit of UNHCR team to the CTA project in Baghdad.



Qandil took over two CTA centres this year and has been implementing them for IDPs in RICC 5 and 6 in Baghdad. 720 beneficiaries from different IDP settlements in Baghdad will benefit from the intervention. All beneficiaries have divided in several groups consisting of 30 individuals who attended the course in two shifts. By 27 May, four groups completed the courses and after final examinations, they were awarded with certificates on information technology. The fifth group of beneficiaries will commence their course on 9 June.

190 Palestinian refugee beneficiaries were registered in ICT training implemented by Islamic Relief in AL-Baladiyat, Baghdad. The project started on 20 May and includes English language and computer training courses. The participants of the course have been divided into two groups containing 50 beneficiaries, i.e. 25 for English and 25 for computer course. A similar course has also been implemented

by IRW for 500 Syrian refugees in Al Qa'im camp. The beneficiaries are attending courses in two groups: English language and computer training. The courses for the group started on the 2 May 2013 to cover 100 Syrian Asylum seekers while the second group of 100 participants is planned to commence in the first week of June.

Moreover, 24 refugee students completed a computer course in Sulaymaniyah while another 22 are being trained by REACH as of 16 April. The course consist of introducing the computer parts, user interface environment, and basic skills in word and excel, the course is being conducted three days in a week each day for 2.5 hours and will be completed on 16 June 2013.

11- Objective: Services for persons with specific needs strengthened

On 12 May 2013, UNHCR started the cash assistance pilot project targeting some 700 extremely vulnerable Syrian refugee families living in urban communities in the KR. The pilot phase will target the caseload in urban centres of Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah. UNHCR together with partner teams is engaged in the process of verifying vulnerabilities through a house-to-house visit. Cash Assistance concluded in Erbil on 27 May 2013. All but one cheque were distributed to 250 vulnerable families that UNHCR has identified alongside with the PARC teams. This exercise also provided insight into the livelihood challenges, medical needs, education needs of Syrian refugees living in urban areas. Similarly the exercise concluded in Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk on May 30, whereby 150 and 300 families respectively will have received cheques. Families entitled for cash assistance of over USD 250 will subsequently start receiving their second installment from mid-June.

Moreover, Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVI) among refugees were identified at the registration stage in camps and referred to the relevant service providers. In addition, EVIs have also been included in UNHCR assistance scheme for 2013. The EVIs scheme has been mainstreamed within all pillars of the operation and various capacity building initiatives were conducted to ensure that staff are fully trained on the standardized EVI formats and Protection Monitoring Database entries.