

IRAQ

UNHCR IDP OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1-31 December 2015

KEY FIGURES

1,083,960

IDPs provided with shelter and core relief items since January 2014

1,573,000

IDPs reached through protection monitoring since January 2014

108,000

Individuals received winterization support since 1 October 2015

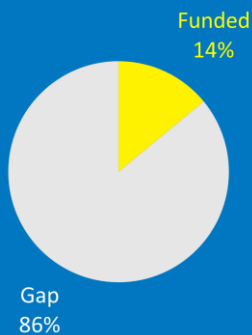
86,560

People provided with legal assistance since January 2014

FUNDING

USD 466 million

requested for the operation in 2015



PRIORITIES

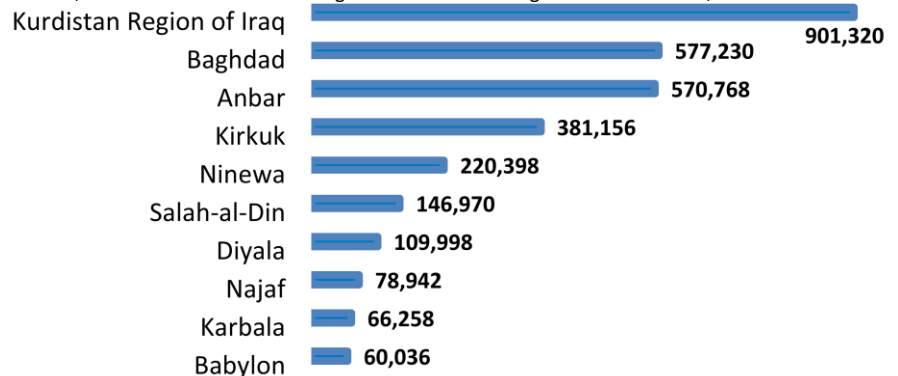
- Registration and needs profiling
- Increase access to legal assistance
- Prioritize the most vulnerable
- Reduce risk of SGBV
- Provide essential shelter and NFIs
- WASH facilities in camps

HIGHLIGHTS

- The campaign on 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence took place from 25 November to 10 December, with awareness-raising sessions promoting women's and girls' rights organized in IDP camps and urban areas.
- UNHCR continued to deliver essential assistance to help the displaced families cope with harsh winter temperatures. 108,000 displaced people have received winterization support since 1 October 2015.

More than **3,195,390** people of concern (Source: IOM-DTM Round XXXIV, Dec. 2015).

There are about 81,200 IDPs in the five southern governorates according to local authorities, not included below.



Children celebrate the 16 days of activism campaign against Gender-Based Violence with a day full of activities in Basra. UNHCR/A. Alsalami

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

According to IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), as of December, the estimated number of internally displaced Iraqis exceeds 3.19 million, spread across more than 3,500 locations countrywide.

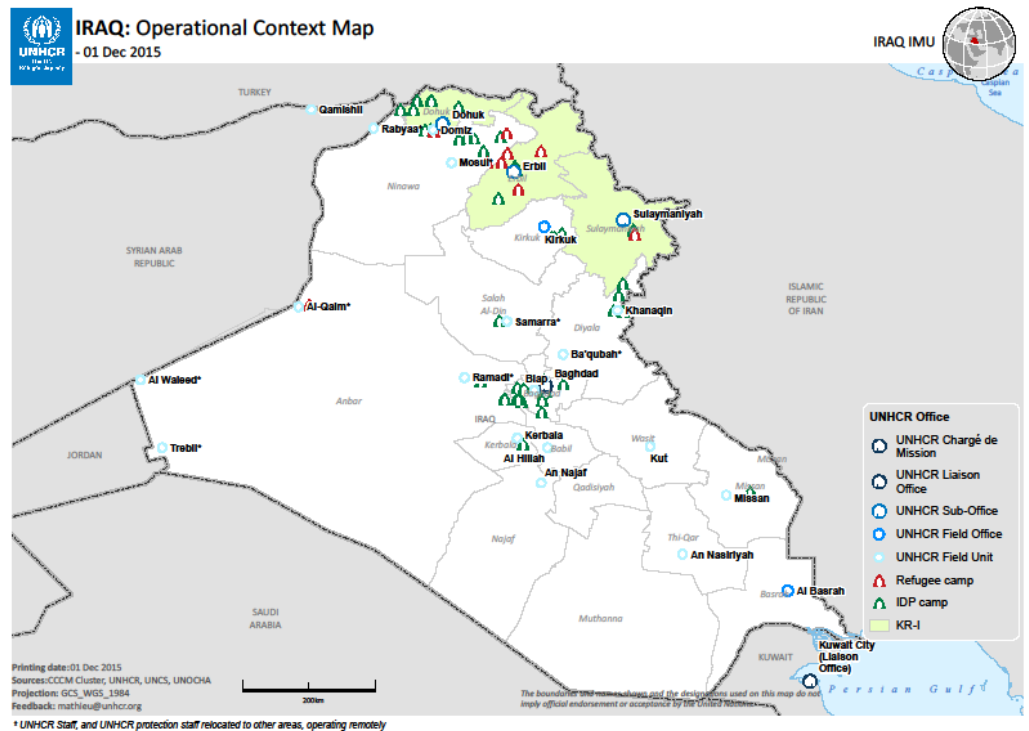
Conflict and violence continue to affect most of Central and North-Central Iraq, including Anbar, Ninewa, Salah al Din and Kirkuk governorates.

Displacement continued throughout Anbar, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al Din governorates. Access to safety for IDPs continues to be a challenge across Iraq. Access to many of Iraq’s governorates remains contingent upon sponsorship and many families cannot cross checkpoints and remain stuck at governorate borders. The inability of civilians to access safety is a major protection concern, both on account of being prevented from fleeing areas under the control of armed groups or due to restrictions imposed by authorities.

On 28 December 2015, the Iraqi Government declared full control of Ramadi, the capital of Anbar Province. However, militants were still in control of some parts of the city and fighting continued, simultaneously trapping some civilians while others were displaced.

As of end December, IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix identified more than 458,000 people who have returned to Anbar, Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al Din governorates. Returnee families remain vulnerable as they face a lack of livelihood opportunities, destruction of property, contamination by explosive remnants of the conflict, limited availability of food and non-food items, documentation problems as well as poor access to services, health, clean water and education. UNHCR and the UN humanitarian country team do not encourage organized returns of IDPs in view of the continued absence in many locations of protection conditions conducive to return. However, support is provided to spontaneous IDP returnees whenever it is safe to do so.

Temperatures continued to drop across Iraq as winter set in, with displaced families living in tents and unfinished building struggling to cope with heavy rains and cold. This is particularly challenging in the mountainous areas of Duhok and Sulaymaniyah in the KR-I, where the conditions remained challenging for the displaced, despite the assistance given by the international community.



Protection

The monitoring teams of UNHCR and its partners have reached more than 1.5 million individuals throughout Iraq since January 2014, in order to determine needs, vulnerabilities, registration status, demographic information, and accommodation circumstances.

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and partners completed the construction of 15 community centers in all IDP camps in Duhok Governorate.
- A campaign on the importance of birth registration was conducted in Arbat and Ashti camps as well as other locations in Sulaymaniyah Governorate.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Loss of civil documentation remains a concern for IDPs across Iraq. Without civil documentation IDPs cannot access basic rights, services or employment and may be at risk of arrest or detention.
- In Erbil Governorate, poor road conditions in Harsham camp limit the mobility of persons with disabilities and the elderly to access services, including water points.
- Additionally, the secondary school in the camp currently only offers classes for male children, despite advocacy by UNHCR to provide an additional shift for female students.



Children play in Al Jamea'a camp in Baghdad. UNHCR/N. Micevic

NON-CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR staff and partners conducted protection monitoring assessments for 6,475 families reaching 38,000 people across Iraq to identify vulnerable families in need of legal assistance, cash assistance, and referral to other services.
- In the Centre of Iraq, legal assistance was provided for 534 cases while 1,316 individuals received legal counselling in the central governorates. Additionally, 175 legal guides were distributed. In the southern governorates, 131 IDPs received legal assistance, mainly on the issuance of documentation.
- During the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, a series of awareness-raising activities in schools and universities as well as radio broadcasts were organised in Basra. Events were also organized in Najaf Governorate for a total of 130 persons, including members of the IDP community, governmental organization and NGOs. Attendees participated in group discussions on issues that affect women, including domestic violence. Additionally, three awareness-raising sessions on first-aid and on gender-based violence were held in Kirkuk Governorate, while two seminars on gender-based violence targeting 90 individuals (including 68 women) were organized in Diyala Governorate.
- Cash assistance was distributed to 11,125 families in KR-I and 2,737 families in central and southern Iraq since April 2015.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Restriction of movement in some areas of Iraq is a concern for many IDP families preventing them from accessing livelihoods, education and basic services. Involuntary relocation continues to be a concern in some governorates.
- Families continue to be at risk of eviction due to requests from landlords or authorities to vacate properties.
- Some female IDPs who are separated from their husbands are unable to register as authorities require them to present a divorce certificate.

- Families who have returned to their areas of origin face challenges accessing services and, in some areas, security is poor. Thus, some of the returnee families are displaced a second time but face barriers returning to the areas of displacement, particularly in Diyala Governorate.
- UNHCR partners in Thi-Qar Governorate are concerned with IDPs safety crossing a road leading to a marsh inhabited by IDP families. Advocacy continues with local authorities to construct a bridge to improve safety.
- Families in Basra Governorate face risk of eviction due to lack of local sponsorship.

Shelter and NFIs

As the inter-agency Shelter/NFI Cluster lead agency, UNHCR continued to promote the implementation of the national Shelter/NFI Cluster shelter strategy, complementing the work of local authorities and other humanitarian actors in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable IDPs throughout Iraq. Those prioritised for assistance include people living outdoors, in sub-standard structures, or with particular vulnerabilities.

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- In Baghdad Governorate, UNHCR completed the replacement of tents damaged by the October floods by refugee housing units (RHU) in the Al Dora and Al Khadra camps, providing improved shelter conditions for 121 and 105 families respectively. In the Al Salam camp, UNHCR replaced 124 damaged tents, elevated the floor and covered the tents with plastic sheets to prevent further damage in case of heavy rains.
- In Erbil Governorate's Darashakran camp, UNHCR relocated 215 families to 220 newly constructed slabs (concrete blocks to raise the floor of the tents).
- In Kirkuk Governorate, UNHCR replaced 66 tents in Laylan camp that had been damaged due to weather condition and normal wear and tear.



Constructions works in Al Khadra camp in Baghdad. UNHCR recently replaced the 105 tents that had been damaged by the floods in October by refugee housing units. UNHCR/N. Micevic

NON-CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- In Kirkuk Governorate, UNHCR partners completed the rehabilitation work on 292 shelters for families in Khalobazyani and Farqan villages.
- In Ninewa Governorate, UNHCR completed WASH infrastructure works in four conflict-affected villages of Rabiaa, providing access to clean water to the local community and befitting a total of 758 families.
- UNHCR completed the rehabilitation of accommodation facilities in the collective center in Basra Governorate, reducing risks from electrical wiring.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Families living in unfinished buildings need shelter support to cope with winter weather.
- Shelter continues to be a pressing concern across the country, as countless IDPs live in informal settlements, unfinished and abandoned buildings, public and school buildings and religious sites.

UNHCR Accelerates Winterization Programme

- With temperatures falling steadily across Iraq, UNHCR continued distributions to help vulnerable IDP families survive the harsh winter weather. UNHCR is distributing supplementary winter household items to 60,000 vulnerable families including blankets, kerosene stoves, kerosene jerry can, water jerry cans and plastic sheets.
- In terms of shelter families, in the coldest locations, will also receive an inner tent liner and insulating floor boards specially designed to insulate UNHCR's tents by providing protection from the cold ground, and a second layer to prevent moisture from entering the tent and to help retain heat inside the living area. Other families will receive a shelter sealing off kit to insulate unfinished houses.
- The Government of Iraq has reportedly agreed to provide kerosene to an additional 200,000 IDP families, located primarily in the northern regions, with the Ministry of Oil agreeing to reduce the price by 90 per cent. Distribution has started in Duhok Governorate reaching out to the IDPs in the camps, followed by the non-camp population. UNHCR complements the Government's kerosene distribution, and in December UNHCR distributed 3,139,800 litres of kerosene to more than 17,000 IDP families in Duhok, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah governorates. Furthermore, UNHCR has distributed US\$ 3,519,000 in cash to 17,595 families, in Duhok, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah governorates to purchase kerosene. Distribution of supplementary kerosene for some 20,000 IDP families in Kirkuk, Anbar and Baghdad governorates will start in January 2016.
- UNHCR began distributing winter CRIs to vulnerable families on 12 October and, as of 19 December, UNHCR had distributed winter items including plastic sheets, heating stoves, kerosene jerry cans, and blankets to 44,661 families in Anbar, Baghdad, Basrah, Duhok, Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, Missan, Ninewa, Najaf, Sulaymaniyah, Thi-Qar and Wassit governorates, including cash for winter items to 4,000 families.



Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)

CAMPS

Achievements and Impact

- In Sulaymaniyah Governorate, the extension of Ashti camp is close to completion, accommodating almost 1,600 additional families. This will reduce overcrowding and improve water, health and sanitation standards in the camp. Moreover, renovation works are ongoing in Arbat camp. 400 out of the 416 RHU units have already been installed. Expansion works for an additional 500 shelters in Qoratu camp are also taking place. Upon completion, the camp will host up to 6,000 people.
- In Mam-Rashan camp in Ninewa Governorate, UNHCR partners have installed 250 caravan units, allowing the relocation of vulnerable families living in unfinished buildings in Delal City, in Duhok Governorate's Zakho district.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The lack of solid waste management and a sustainable water system at Tadeze Camp in Sulaymaniyah Governorate remains of concern.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

- On 20 December, a delegation from the Government of Japan in Iraq visited Baharka IDP camp in Erbil Governorate to learn about the challenges faced by IDPs and monitor the impact of Japanese funding.
- On 21 December a delegation comprising the Speaker of the Arab Parliament, the Deputy Speaker for the Kurdistan Parliament, the Counselor of the United Arab Emirates based in Erbil, in addition to the Governors of Erbil and Ninewa, visited Baharka camp to examine the impact of Arab donations.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

A Temporary Home - BAGHDAD, Iraq, 3 December (UNHCR)

I first met Saad, a 26-year-old father of three from Ramadi, Anbar province's capital, in November in Al Jamea'a camp, in Baghdad's Mansour district. As he welcomed me into his refugee housing unit (RHU), I was amazed at how beautifully decorated it was, with colourful fabrics covering the walls, rugs on the floor, as well as stuffed animals and fairy lights hanging from the ceiling.

UNHCR recently installed 800 of these new shelters in six locations across Baghdad province, providing improved living conditions, protection and safety for up to 4,800 displaced Iraqis.

Saad introduced me to his newborn daughter, two days-old Ritaj, by far the smallest baby I had ever seen. Yasmin, Saad's wife, had to be rushed to Yarmouk hospital's emergency room in Baghdad when she was only seven months pregnant.

As her dad took Ritaj out of her crib to lay her on the mattress on the floor of their RHU, she remained fast asleep and entirely unfazed, resembling a tiny doll. I was surprised that she was out of the hospital already. Premature babies are often kept in hospital for weeks after birth, where they are given special assistance.

"We were lucky. She is healthy, thank God," he said, confirming Ritaj spends most of her days sleeping and feeding on his wife's breast-milk. Saad and Yasmin could never afford a long hospital stay, anyway. Back home in Ramadi, Saad worked for the municipality. But as is the case for 85% of the camp's inhabitants, he cannot find employment in Baghdad and is struggling to make ends meet.

"We had no choice but to leave, the security situation was so bad," said Saad recounting the day in April when militants arrived in Ramadi. "We drove until we could, and then had to leave our car behind to cross the river. The next day, we walked from 7 am to 4pm to reach the bridge," he said.

Saad was referring to the Bzeibiz bridge connecting Anbar and Baghdad provinces over the Euphrates River. After the fall of Ramadi, some 250,000 people fled the city and surrounding areas in a matter of weeks, with countless Iraqis left stranded at the bridge, facing security-driven restrictions to enter Baghdad. Thousands of Iraqis have been fleeing violence in Central Iraq since 2014, with Baghdad province hosting the largest number of internally displaced people – close to 580,000. Across Iraq, some 3.2 million people have been forced to flee their homes due to conflict.

Eight months have passed since Ramadi fell. Saad has had little contact with his relatives who stayed behind. While he managed to re-create some sense of home in his new shelter in Al Jamea'a, he dreams of returning to the life he once led. "I want to go back home and raise my children in Ramadi. That's my only hope", he said.

While Iraqi forces have now regained control of large parts of Ramadi, the level of destruction of the infrastructure is unimaginable and the city is reported to be littered with improvised explosive devices.



Saad poses with his new-born daughter, Ritaj, inside their refugee housing unit in the Al Jamea'a camp, Baghdad. UNHCR/N. Micevic

Returning families will face huge obstacles in starting to rebuild their lives: a lack of livelihood opportunities, access to health services, food, clean water, shelter and schools. It will take time before returns to Ramadi can be considered safe and sustainable. Until conditions are safer, UNHCR and the UN humanitarian country team do not encourage organized voluntary returns of IDPs. However, support is provided to spontaneous IDP returnees whenever it is safe to do so.

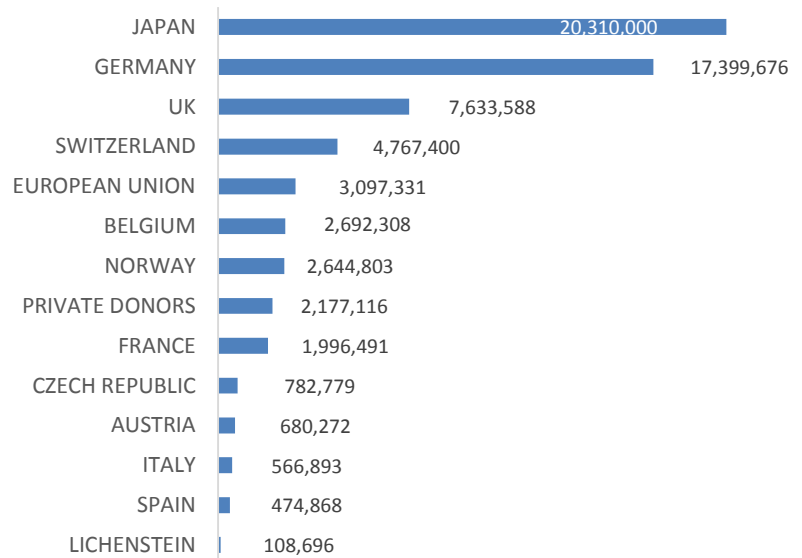
By Natalia Micevic

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 65.3 million**.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation, especially to those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2015: United States of America (251 M) | Sweden (80 M) | United Kingdom (53 M) | Netherlands (45 M) | Priv Donors Spain (45 M) | Norway (44 M) | Denmark (28 M) | Australia (24 M) | Priv Donors Italy (19 M) | Japan (18 M) | Canada (18 M) | Priv Donors Japan (16 M) | Switzerland (16 M) | France (14 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (14 M) | Priv Donors Sweden (13 M) | Finland (10 M)



Funding received in 2015 (USD)

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