

Iraq



Main objectives

In 2005, UNHCR's main objectives in Iraq were to continue to protect and pursue solutions for refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless persons in Iraq, through strengthening the capacity of national, regional and local institutions; coordination and facilitation of the voluntary, safe and orderly return of refugees and asylum-seekers to Iraq and the assistance to the reintegration of targeted returnee communities; and the development of a comprehensive and inclusive national policy on displacement challenges and durable solutions within Iraq.

Impact

- Information gathered through UNHCR's returnee-monitoring programme and carried out in various governorates in Iraq allowed some 6,000 Iraqis to make an informed decision to return voluntarily to Iraq. The facilitated voluntary repatriation programme ensured their safe and orderly return.
- The Al-Tash camp relocation programme, launched in July 2005, allowed the 3,000 Iranian Kurdish refugees who remained in the camp to transfer to safe areas in Sulaymaniyah and Erbil, where they received adequate accommodation and material assistance.
- The reintegration programme implemented in 2005 improved the conditions of up to 70,000 returnees through individual and community-based assistance, including infrastructure, housing and income generation projects, as well as promotion of peace and reconciliation.
- The establishment of a network of eight independent Legal Aid and Information Centres (LAICs) throughout Iraq gave over 35,000 refugee and IDP returnees access to legal advice and information on basic issues such as restitution of property rights, national identity documents, and family certificates and, in selected cases, legal representation.
- About 27,000 newly displaced people from Fallujah, Al-Qaim and Tal Afar received timely emergency assistance from UNHCR within the framework of the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Emergency.

Working environment

While a number of important steps were achieved in 2005 on the political front, as well as towards the full re-establishment of national sovereignty, insecurity remained the primary obstacle to stability and socio-economic recovery. The steady deterioration of the security situation meant a growing risk of far more widespread sectarian conflict among the main ethnic and religious communities. The level of risk varies between regions, but the overall situation remained unpredictable and dangerous for the Iraqi people and expatriate workers alike. In central Iraq, insecurity led to recurrent episodes of internal population displacement.

Owing to the dangers within Iraq, operations continued to be managed remotely from Amman and Kuwait by international staff, while implementation was coordinated on the ground by UNHCR national staff and carried out through a network of over 20 NGO partners.

Administrative and staffing changes within line ministries had a disruptive effect on UNHCR's capacity-building programme.

Funding

The Iraq operation was adequately funded.

Achievements and impact

Protection and solutions

The main protection interventions in Iraq related to the safety and protection of refugees (Palestinians, Syrians

and Iranian Ahwazis) who are extremely vulnerable. To ensure the physical safety of Iranian refugees in Al-Tash camp in the highly insecure Governorate of Al-Anbar, UNHCR closed the camp and relocated 2,300 refugees to safer areas in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq. With increasing concerns over the security situation of Makhmour camp in northern Iraq, UNHCR began to search for durable solutions for over 11,300 Turkish refugees, with a view to an eventual camp closure in 2006. UNHCR continued to build the capacity of relevant Iraqi authorities as well as national and international NGOs to protect and assist persons of concern.

In 2005, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary and orderly return of over 5,600 Iraqi refugees, through the provision of country of origin information and advisory notes on return, while urging host governments to avoid forced or induced returns. Through its returnee monitoring programme, UNHCR gathered important information on the return and reintegration of returnees, which was used to provide accurate information to returnees and to better target material assistance. The network of LAICs was expanded in 2005 and continued to assist returnees in overcoming reintegration obstacles. UNHCR provided limited housing, communal facilities and income generation opportunities in returnee areas. In addition, UNHCR used the Working Group on IDPs and Durable Solutions and Cluster F (see "Working with others" below) as a channel through which to support the Ministry of Displacement and Migration and the Kurdish Regional Government in developing a process for drafting the National Policy on Displacement Challenges and Durable Solutions.

Activities and assistance

Community services: Community centres were maintained in all refugee camps and settlements. One new

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
IDPs		1,200,000	-	-	-
Returnees (IDPs)		196,000	-	-	-
Returnees	Islamic Republic of Iran	55,300	5,300	-	-
Stateless	Bedouins	100,000	-	-	-
	Other	30,000	-	-	-
Refugees	Occupied Palestinian Territory	22,700	22,700	49	35
	Islamic Republic of Iran	13,400	13,400	48	42
	Turkey	13,300	13,300	51	50
	Syrian Arab Republic	600	600	50	36
Asylum-seekers	Islamic Republic of Iran	1,000	-	-	-
	Syrian Arab Republic	800	-	-	-
	Turkey	200	-	-	-

centre was established in Kawa camp for former Al-Tash refugees. Through a number of projects, UNHCR helped refugees, returnees and IDPs to establish several community-based organizations.

Crop production: Over 150 families benefited from various types of support to their pastoral livelihood activities, including training in accepted practices, a community veterinary station, distribution of sheep, goats and chickens to vulnerable families, a machine repair shop for agricultural equipment and support to date-palm farming.

Domestic needs and household support: UNHCR, through its partners and the Ministry of Displacement and Migration, continued to provide rental subsidies to 470 Palestinian families in Baghdad and over 300 Iranian refugees in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah Governorates. In the North and South, about 17,000 refugees and returnees also received kerosene rations for heating and cooking. Nearly 500 transportation and reinstallation grants were paid to some 2,300 refugees who had relocated from Al-Tash camp to the Governorates of Erbil and Sulaymaniyah.

Education: The schools in Al-Tash and Makhmour camps were maintained throughout the year, while a new school was constructed in Kawa camp. In areas with large concentrations of returnees and IDPs, UNHCR constructed or rehabilitated schools, and provided furniture and school supplies to 14 primary schools in the South, four in the North, and one in central Iraq.

Food: The more than 5,600 refugees who returned to Iraq through UNHCR's facilitated return programme received individual food and water rations in the reception centres in the North and the South. The Iranian refugees who opted to go to Kawa camp from Al-Tash received food rations.

Health and nutrition: More than 900 refugees, returnees and IDPs, as well as the local population throughout Iraq, participated in health, hygiene and environmental awareness training, including education on HIV/AIDS. UNHCR also established health centres and supplied clinics in the camps. Two mobile health teams were established to reach out to persons of concern as well as local communities in the governorate of Dohuk. In all refugee camps and many returnee areas, women received sanitary kits. In the South, UNHCR rehabilitated five primary health centres in areas housing large numbers of Marsh Arab IDPs (the governorates of Missan, Wassit and Thi Qar). UNHCR also established seven mobile health teams and organized training sessions for some 200 doctors and health workers.

Income generation: UNHCR promoted self-reliance among refugees, returnees and local communities in

returnee-hosting areas through quick-impact projects involving livelihood grants and training in hairdressing, mechanics, sewing, car repairs, and agricultural income-generation activities.

Legal assistance: UNHCR monitored over 8,300 returnee households, more than 300 returnee groups and over 1,800 villages across Iraq and provided information on conditions of return through the dissemination of reports and leaflets. LAICs within the relevant ministries in the Kurdish Regional Government area, as well as a network of eight independent centres (five in the South, two in the North and one in the centre of the country) were either established or consolidated to ensure greater access to justice and services for the various groups of concern. UNHCR, in cooperation with IOM, contributed to strengthening the Iraq Property Claims Commission and its work by providing expertise and legal advice on the Commission's legal framework and structures, giving advice and promoting best practices on fair and efficient resolution of claims, as well as by commissioning legal research papers. Representatives of international and national NGOs, the Ministry of Displacement and Migration and the Kurdish Regional Government attended training covering topics such as refugee law, the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, general protection principles, returnee monitoring and human rights, strategic planning, emergency response and registration. The joint UNHCR-IOM capacity-building programme reached over 250 participants during 2005.

Livestock: UNHCR set up two animal livestock dipping stations in communities in the South hosting relatively large numbers of returnees.

Operational support (to agencies): Partners received funds for management, staff safety, and communication. Training sessions, workshops and coordination meetings for partner agencies were organized regularly.

Sanitation: In Al-Tash and Makhmour refugee camps, sanitation facilities were adequately maintained, hygiene education was provided and garbage collection organized. In Baghdad, the plumbing and kitchens of some 80 Palestinian refugee houses were rehabilitated to meet basic hygiene standards and were connected to the central sewage system.

Shelter and infrastructure: Over the course of the year, UNHCR, through its partners, provided more than 800 new houses and rehabilitated 160 for refugees and returnees as well as for IDPs in the North. In the South, UNHCR projects included the construction of 250 new houses for the most vulnerable returnees and the rehabilitation of another 80 existing houses.



Northern Iraq: In order to facilitate the return of Kurdish refugees and IDPs, UNHCR has set up quick impact projects, with a strong emphasis on providing girls and boys with equal opportunities for education. *UNHCR / A. Eriksson*

Transport and logistics: UNHCR organized the transportation of over 5,600 Iraqi refugees, mainly from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Most refugees crossed the border through Shalamshah in the South and Haji Omaran in the North. UNHCR maintained its returnee reception centres in Basrah and Diyana (Erbil), each managed by an NGO partner, where returnees were provided with food, non-food items (such as blankets, kitchen sets), primary medical assistance when needed, mine-risk education and transport to final destinations. UNHCR released relief items such as tents, plastic sheets, blankets, kitchen sets and stoves from its regional stockpile to provide emergency assistance to some 10,000 newly-displaced families from Fallujah, Al-Qaim and Tal Afar.

Water: UNHCR ensured the supply of drinking water and storage facilities for refugees, returnees and IDPs as well as local host communities in the three regions. Activities ranged from the construction and rehabilitation of six wells, as well as pipes and pumps, to the maintenance, construction and rehabilitation of pumping stations, treatment plants and distribution networks in 14 locations. Over 43,000 people in returnee, IDP and host communities benefited from these water projects.

Organization and implementation

Management

UNHCR had eight offices inside the country: one in Baghdad; five in the North (Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dohuk, Mosul, Kirkuk); and two in the South (Basrah, Nassriyah). These offices were supervised by the UNHCR Iraq Operations Unit in Amman and the sub-office in Kuwait. By the end of 2005, UNHCR had 49 national staff inside Iraq and 13 international and 14 national staff based in Amman and Kuwait City.

Working with others

Iraqi ownership and leadership are fundamental principles that guide the work of UNHCR and its partners. UNHCR works in close coordination with the Iraqi authorities, in particular the Ministry of Displacement and Migration, Kurdish Regional Government authorities, and other relevant line ministries as well as the Iraqi Property Claims Commission. In addition, UNHCR works closely with United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the UN Country Team, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, local and international NGOs and also

collaborates with IOM on property restitution issues and capacity building. As Coordinator for UN Cluster F (refugees, IDPs and durable solutions) and Chair of the IDP Working Group, an advocacy and policy-making body attached to Cluster F, UNHCR coordinates a system-wide protection response to the needs of IDPs, returnees and refugees. The Office has developed a network of over 20 national and international NGO partners in the three regions of the country on whom it relies to implement most of its interventions inside Iraq.

Overall assessment

While UNHCR was able to make headway on some important issues, such as the Al-Tash relocation, the Iraq operation in 2005 remained severely hampered by the security situation and the restriction on staff movement to and within Iraq. As a result, the operation was mostly managed remotely from Amman and Kuwait.

The capacity-building programme of the Ministry of Displacement and Migration, carried out in partnership with IOM, met most of its objectives. However, its impact on institutional building remained minimal, due to the inability of the Ministry which was established in 2003 to take ownership and leadership on important issues related to displacement in Iraq and refugee matters. Readjustment of the programme will be introduced in 2006.

Fewer refugees than originally estimated decided to repatriate with UNHCR's assistance. The implementation of the repatriation programme, however, was carried out smoothly and people were able to return home in safety and with dignity. The advisory on return updated in 2005 was widely consulted and followed by countries hosting Iraqi refugees.

In the context of reintegration, while implementation of community-based and other quick-impact projects continued throughout the year, the returnee monitoring programme and the LAICs provided an effective and much appreciated service to the population.

The situation of Palestinian and Syrian refugees remained a subject of concern throughout the year. Finding adequate solutions was one of UNHCR's main challenges in 2005 and will continue to require concerted international efforts in 2006.

The internal displacement situation in Iraq is emerging as the single most complex issue. Solutions will require time and effort. Throughout 2005, UNHCR remained engaged with IDPs through its involvement in and coordination of the UN cluster for refugees and IDPs.

Offices

Amman (Jordan)

Kuwait City (Kuwait)
Baghdad
Basrah
Dohuk
Erbil
Kirkuk
Mosul
Nassriyah
Sulaymaniyah

Partners

Government agencies

Ministry of Displacement and Migration

NGOs

Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
Amara
Comité d'aide médicale
Danish Refugee Council
International Medical Corps
International Relief and Development
INTERSOS
Islamic Relief
Mercy Hands
Millennium Relief and Development Services
Mission East
Movement for Peace, Disarmament and Liberation
Norwegian People's Aid
Ockenden International
Peace Direct
Qandil
Reach (Rehabilitation, Education and Community Health)
Relief International
Shelter for Life
The Salvation Army
War Child

Others

Basrah University Law School
UNOPS

Budget, income and expenditure (USD) Annual and supplementary programme budgets

	Final budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
Annual programme	956,238	1,226,080	(275,027)	951,053	951,053
Supplementary programme ³	27,645,177	11,682,547	12,797,979	24,480,526	24,480,526
Total	28,601,415	12,908,627	12,522,952	25,431,579	25,431,579

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

³ The supplementary programme figures apply to the Iraq Operation.

Note: The supplementary programme budget does not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Prior years' projects
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	Annual and supplementary programme budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	274,088	2,917,539	3,191,627	0
Community services	0	748,357	748,357	125,256
Crop production	0	28,515	28,515	14,050
Domestic needs and household support	0	369,777	369,777	134,228
Education	0	1,204,042	1,204,042	611,378
Food	0	52,236	52,236	5,700
Health and nutrition	0	489,736	489,736	(173,196)
Income generation	0	510,524	510,524	408,674
Legal assistance	0	1,730,573	1,730,573	356,075
Livestock	0	16,460	16,460	126,525
Operational support (to agencies)	0	2,646,686	2,646,686	857,610
Sanitation	0	57,325	57,325	21,399
Shelter and infrastructure	0	3,993,646	3,993,646	3,805,660
Transport and logistics	0	992,493	992,493	208,369
Water	0	417,666	417,666	354,558
Instalments with implementing partners	0	7,453,844	7,453,844	(6,856,287)
Sub-total operational activities	274,088	23,629,419	23,903,507	0
Programme support	676,965	851,107	1,528,072	0
Total expenditure	951,053	24,480,526	25,431,579	0
Cancellation on prior years' expenditure				(417,428)
Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	0	18,914,338	18,914,338	
Reporting received	0	(11,460,494)	(11,460,494)	
Balance	0	7,453,844	7,453,844	
Prior years' report				
Instalments with implementing partners				
Outstanding 1 January				8,108,050
Reporting received				(6,856,287)
Refunded to UNHCR				(1,032,327)
Adjustments				(28,879)
Balance				190,557