

# IRAQ

## SITUATION REPORT



UNITED NATIONS

3-9 May 2004

### OVERVIEW ►

Concern for the Occupying Power's adherence to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights laws has dominated discourse across Iraq. Outbursts of fighting through targeted and indiscriminate militia attacks continued. Renewed armed clashes occurred in Najaf. A welcome calm finally descended upon Falluja. Insecurity in central and southern regions continues to make the delivery of United Nations (UN) humanitarian assistance problematic. The UN electoral and transitional missions continued their work inside Iraq.

### HUMANITARIAN ►

**Falluja** The decrease and subsequent halt in fighting allowed some displaced families to return to Falluja. During last week, the majority of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the vicinity of Naymiya, have returned. IDPs returning from others areas has continued at a slower pace. IDP return may be slowed by significant damage to buildings in the city (at least 10% of houses are reported to have been destroyed) and by sporadic outbursts of violence. Water and fresh food remain primary needs. The UN Children's agency, (UNICEF) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM) together with their various implementing partners, are carrying out water-trucking activities benefiting residents of the city and IDPs. The non-governmental organisation (NGO) community provided food and medical supplies to the population. Access of the population to Falluja's general hospital has improved significantly. The hospital premises, as well as three primary health centres in central Falluja have nonetheless sustained damage.

**Najaf** Access to potable water continues to be a concern in Najaf, caused by damage to the water supply network and frequent electricity cuts. The UN World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF, in cooperation with the Iraq Ministry of Health (MoH) are undertaking measures to prevent the spread of water-borne diseases. Public distribution of food (PDS) is being impaired by problems experienced in transporting food supplies to the city and the temporary closure of the PDS registration centre due to recent fighting. Significant amounts of medical supplies have been stockpiled in the city, with more medical assistance being provided by the humanitarian community.

**Kufa** A majority of Kufa's population appears to have left the city seeking shelter with relatives or friends in Najaf, Hilla, Karbala and other nearby cities. Despite the considerable numbers, the movements are not reported to be *en masse*. IDP families are reported to be lacking water, food supplies and non-food items (NFI), such as hygienic products, jerry-cans and bedding. Some of those displaced, predominantly men, are reported to be returning home to protect their properties.

**Emergency Response** As focal point for the emergency response to the humanitarian situation created by the crisis in Falluja and other combat zones, WHO coordinated the emergency response of other agencies and NGOs involved in providing items requested by the MoH, including the International Committee for the Red Crescent (ICRC), Iraqi Red Cross Society (IRCS), Premiere Urgence (PU), Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and Mercy Malaysia (MM). In this context, WHO has delivered over US\$100,000 worth of emergency relief items covering a wide range of uses, to treat trauma cases.

**Emergency IDP Assistance** In the last two weeks IOM, through its implementing partners, has provided assistance to meet the identified needs of more than 7,500 displaced Iraqis in and around Falluja. Intermediate food goods, water from four tenders (as a supplement to UNICEF's distributions) and over a thousand jerry-cans have provided timely emergency assistance on the ground. 153 mattresses have also been distributed to alleviate the needs of the displaced. In anticipation of further immediate needs in both Falluja and Najaf, IOM is in the process of procuring 100 family sized tents, 500 cooking stoves, 500 kitchen sets, 500 cold boxes, water purification tablets, 250 kerosene lamps, and clothing for 1,500 persons. IOM is also making available four Emergency Medical Kits for use in medical treatment facilities in conflict areas. Each kit provides general medical needs for a population of 10,000 for three months. It is envisaged that two kits will remain in Baghdad and one each in Samawa and Muthanna, where they will support the displaced populations stemming from the crisis in Falluja and Najaf, as well as a contingency in case of further flooding in the Upper South.

# IRAQ

## SITUATION REPORT



UNITED NATIONS

3-9 May 2004

### CLUSTER COORDINATION FOR IRAQ ►

#### Health (Cluster 2)

In addition to resources mobilised for Falluja (see Emergency Response section) there was continuous contact with the focal points in the governorates. A spraying campaign for control of Malaria and Leishmaniasis has started in all governorates (except the north, which will start within one week). The Hepatitis E outbreak in Sadr City is under control. Efforts are ongoing to provide the Hepatitis E diagnostic kits as soon as possible and conduct health education initiatives.

UN agencies across the Health Cluster collaborated on the UN Fund for Population (UNFPA) and WHO-led drafting of the 'Emergency Obstetric Care' proposal, for submission to the UN Steering Committee. A technical paper entitled: "Vitamin A supplementation Time for Action" was produced by WHO and sent to the Ministry of Health Paediatric Advisory Committee, to support Vitamin A supplementation during National Immunisation Days.

**Medicine Supplies** During the month of April 2004, some \$500,000 worth of anti-TB drugs procured by WHO through the Global Drug Facility (GDF) were delivered to Baghdad. The drugs included five different items in sufficient quantity to meet patient needs for one year. After meeting with the MoH Directorate of Public Health Clinics, WHO determined that the stock of 23 drugs for chronic diseases out of the 32 commonly used, were in sufficient supply to meet patient demands. Meetings were also held with the managers of the two main warehouses for drugs and medical supplies/equipment in Baghdad. The managers advised that the most urgently needed items have been delivered in most of the governorates, particularly those most affected by the current insecurity.

**Health Infrastructure** WHO attended the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) seminar held on the 29<sup>th</sup> April. The main objective of the meeting was to present the results of a study on the Programme Formulation for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation in Iraq. The study conducted basic surveys to formulate a support programme for Iraqi reconstruction focusing particularly on infrastructure. Proposed projects for reconstruction and rehabilitation for various sectors were presented. For the Health Sector, reconstruction support consists of development of general hospitals, at least one secondary level hospital in each governorate and one teaching hospital in each region of the north, centre, and south areas as well as development of junior nursing colleges in Basra.

**Medical Training** With support from WHO, four MoH staff participated in a two-week international course held in Islamabad (Pakistan) from the 18<sup>th</sup> April to the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2004, designed for physicians, pharmacists, health programme managers, officials from ministries of health, universities, non-governmental organisations and the private sector, on improving the use of drugs. The course focused on methods of studying and remedying inappropriate drug use, including problems with ways in which drugs are prescribed, dispensed and consumed.

#### Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons - IDPs (Cluster 8)

**Refugees** The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) assisted repatriations from Iran resumed on Wednesday 5 May, having been placed on hold for a month for security reasons (the last convoy was on 7 April). A total of 114 refugees returned to Basra via the Shalamsheh border crossing. The 114 (26 families) came from Mottahari and Ansar camps in Khuzestan province. The total number of returnees from Iran is now 6055.

**IDPs** (*see Emergency IDP Assistance*) UNHCR through its partners are presently assessing the needs for additional assistance to returning IDPs in Falluja. The UN refugee agency has requested one of its NGO partners undertake a quick survey of those who have returned to the town (numbers, conditions, shelter situation, access to services, degree of damage caused to their houses/property) and advise on potential needed intervention by UNHCR and other Cluster 8 member agencies. UNHCR implementing partner, Intersos, has just visited Al-Tash camp for the first time since the fighting in Falluja commenced earlier last month.

# IRAQ

## SITUATION REPORT



UNITED NATIONS

3-9 May 2004

**Third Country Nationals (TCN)** IOM staff have liaised with the Bangladesh Embassy and authorities at the Jordan/Iraq border on behalf of 11 Bangladeshi nationals who are requesting assistance to return home. IOM is awaiting final clearance from the relevant authorities and expects to be able to provide assistance in the near future.

**Medical Assistance** IOM's Medical Evacuation and Health Rehabilitation Programme for Iraq (MEHRPI) has supported the evacuation of two patients from Baghdad and facilitated the return, after the successful treatment, of 1 patient and escort from Greece. Work continues on the rehabilitation of the Basra burn ward, and two short term contracts for medical disposal and consumables have been awarded.

**Capacity-building with Iraqi authorities** Ten Employment Centres in various governorates across Iraq have been identified and recommended by the Iraqi Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs for the provision of communications and internet systems by IOM. After finalising installation plans, IOM expects to begin work on these vital national resources next week. The systems will help integrate these countrywide Employment Centres and greatly enhance the scope and reach of current services offered to job seekers and potential employers.

In Baghdad, eight Independent experts working on behalf of IOM continue to provide technical assistance and advice on a range of employment matters to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

### TRUST FUND ►

In Amman, the UN Development Group (UNDG) Iraq Trust Fund (ITF) Steering Committee, chaired by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq *ad interim*, Ross Mountain, held its first meeting on Monday 3 May and reviewed seven programmes/project proposals submitted by Clusters (1) Education and Culture; (4) Infrastructure and Housing; and, (5) Agriculture, Water Resources and Environment. Five proposals were approved by the Committee for financing under the UNDG ITF, totalling \$ 45,340,000. Four more proposals are to be reviewed at the next Steering Committee meeting, to be attended by the Chairperson of the IRFFI Donor Committee, Ambassador S. Nakamura of Japan.

### HUMAN RIGHTS ►

**Concern expressed for abused prisoners** Mr. Theo van Boven, the UN Commission on Human Rights' Special Rapporteur on the question of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, issued a statement [Monday 3 May] calling on all countries with forces serving in Iraq "to take prompt and effective steps to investigate, prosecute and impose appropriate sanctions on any persons guilty of the alleged violations, as well as provide an effective remedy and adequate reparation for the victims of these abuses."

**UN calls for Independent Falluja enquiry** The Special Rapporteur on the right to health of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Paul Hunt, wrote [Monday 3 May] to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) strongly recommending that it establish an independent and impartial enquiry into the health situation of the civilian population of Falluja, in light of the military operations conducted by the Coalition Forces (CF) since the beginning of April. The Special Rapporteur stated that while reliable information is difficult to obtain, credible allegations persist that the CF have been guilty of serious breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law in Falluja in recent weeks. According to some reports, of the estimated 750 civilian deaths, 90 per cent were non-combatants. "These are extremely serious allegations", the Special Rapporteur said.

"An independent investigation can establish whether or not they are true. If they are not true, the Coalition should not be falsely accused. If they are true, steps must be taken to ensure these grave breaches of international law do not recur. Lives are at stake, and so is the Coalition's credibility", he said. "An independent enquiry is especially important because recent events in Falluja have been shielded from international scrutiny", he added. "Access to the city has been severely restricted, and the extreme insecurity has meant that very few independent monitors have been able to report on events".

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## SITUATION REPORT



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UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR IRAQ

**UN seeks clarification on Arbitrary detention** The Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group on arbitrary detention of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Mrs. Leïla Zerrougui, issued a statement [Wednesday 5 May] expressing her "serious concern regarding the uncertainty of the legal status of many detainees currently subjected to interrogation in Iraq, in the context of reports of torture of people in detention by United States and United Kingdom military officers serving under the CPA."

According to the information received by the Working Group, the majority of persons in detention in Iraq have been arrested during public demonstrations, at checkpoints and in house raids. They are being considered "security detainees" or "suspected of anti-Coalition activities". The Working Group's Chairperson-Rapporteur is seriously disturbed by the fact that these persons have not been granted access to a court to be able to challenge the lawfulness of their detention, as required by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 9). The Working Group calls upon the CPA and the Iraqi Governing Council to allow the clarification of the legal status of each person detained in Iraq and to apply the rules and norms enshrined in Articles 9 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 9 and 14 of the civil and political rights Covenant.

**UN Iraq Human Rights Report** The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) will present a report on the human-rights situation in Iraq to the Commission on Human Rights on 31 May 2004. Acting High Commissioner Bertrand Ramcharan had announced the preparation of the report at the closing of this year's Commission session on 23 April. The report, which will look at the period between April 2003 and May 2004, will cover the following subjects: The military/security situation, including acts of terrorism; The protection of civilians; The treatment of persons in detention; Displacement; The situation of women and children; Freedom of religion or belief; Other civil and political rights; Economic, social and cultural rights; Oversight and accountability, and; Human-rights institutions, including the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights.

### UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ►

**UN Resolution** UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said [Sunday 2 May] that he expects the Security Council to authorise a multinational force to remain in Iraq as part of a resolution that will cover the period after the return of sovereignty on 30 June, saying it's in everyone's interest to do "whatever we can" to stabilise the country.

### UN MISSIONS ►

**Special Advisor to the Secretary-General** The Special Advisor to the Secretary-General, Lakhdar Brahimi arrived back in Baghdad [Thursday 6 May] and immediately started work on seeking agreement for forming a caretaker Iraqi government by the end of May, ready to succeed the United States-led CPA on 30 June.

**Electoral Assistance Mission for Iraq** The UN-led exercise to gather nominations for posts in Iraq's Independent Electoral Commission is progressing on track. The nomination period for the seven-person Commission, which will be the exclusive authority to organise and conduct Iraq's transitional elections, will close on 15 May. The appointment of the Electoral Commissioners and the Chief Electoral Officer is scheduled for 31 May.

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