



Humanitarian Situation Report Sadr City, Baghdad

Humanitarian Coordinator and the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Tuesday, 15 April 2008

Summary

Iraqi security forces have been clashing with militias, notably Moqtada Al Sadr's Medhi Army, since the Government of Iraq's crackdown on so-called "criminals and outlaws" in Basra on 25 March. The situation in Basrah is relatively calm: the current operation is limited to house-to-house searches for the purpose of collecting weapons.

There is renewed fighting in the eastern suburb of Baghdad's Sadr City, considered a Moqtada Al Sadr stronghold. The Sadr City clashes came a day after police imposed a curfew in Najaf city¹ following the killing of Riyadh al-Nuri, a senior aide to Al Sadr in Kufa on Friday 11 April.

In the 21 days since clashes began a total of 597 people were killed in Baghdad City, of which 272 were Iraqi civilians (an average of 13 civilian casualties per day). Of the 597 casualties, 195² were killed in Sadr City. This compares to a total of 300 casualties in Baghdad in the 21 days prior to clashes, of which 164 were civilians (an average of 8 civilian casualties per day).

Sadr City

Movement restrictions and curfew

A curfew is imposed in the south of Sadr City, sectors 1,2,4,5 and 7. This area of around 150,000 people is most critical where military operations are most intense and local residents report that their movement is almost completely stopped.

The vehicle curfew has been lifted in the northern parts of Sadr City, and the movement of civilians and essential assistance has improved. The Deputy Prime Minister's Emergency Focal Point confirmed that 50% of the checkpoints are now open but that some roads are still closed within the district because of suspected IEDs. Movement through the entrances to Sadr City at Al-Talibiayah Bridge, Palestine St. and Al-Hamzeh circle is unreliable, with the entrances closed intermittently.

Water and Sewage

The main affected areas are Al Gaiara, Sector 60, Shwader as well as Al-Jewader, al-Dakel, al-Falah, al-Quyeria and sectors 4 and 9, according to WHO and UNAMI. In these areas, lack of potable water is critical because armoured vehicles have torn up the road exposing drinking water pipes to raw sewage. Repair of damaged water networks is stalled until there is an improvement in the security situation.

Food

Sadr City is facing shortages in food due to the fire damage to Al Jamila market, the main wholesale food market for Baghdad in Sadr City on 6 April. This has resulted in increases in food prices, according to WHO. Food shortages are acute in Sector 7 where an estimated 2,000 families live, according to NGO reports³.

1. As of 13 April, the curfew in Najaf has been lifted.

2. Currently it is not possible to provide a break-down for civilian and non civilian casualties in Sadr City specifically.

3. Due to security concerns, the names of organizations and agencies on the ground may be omitted.

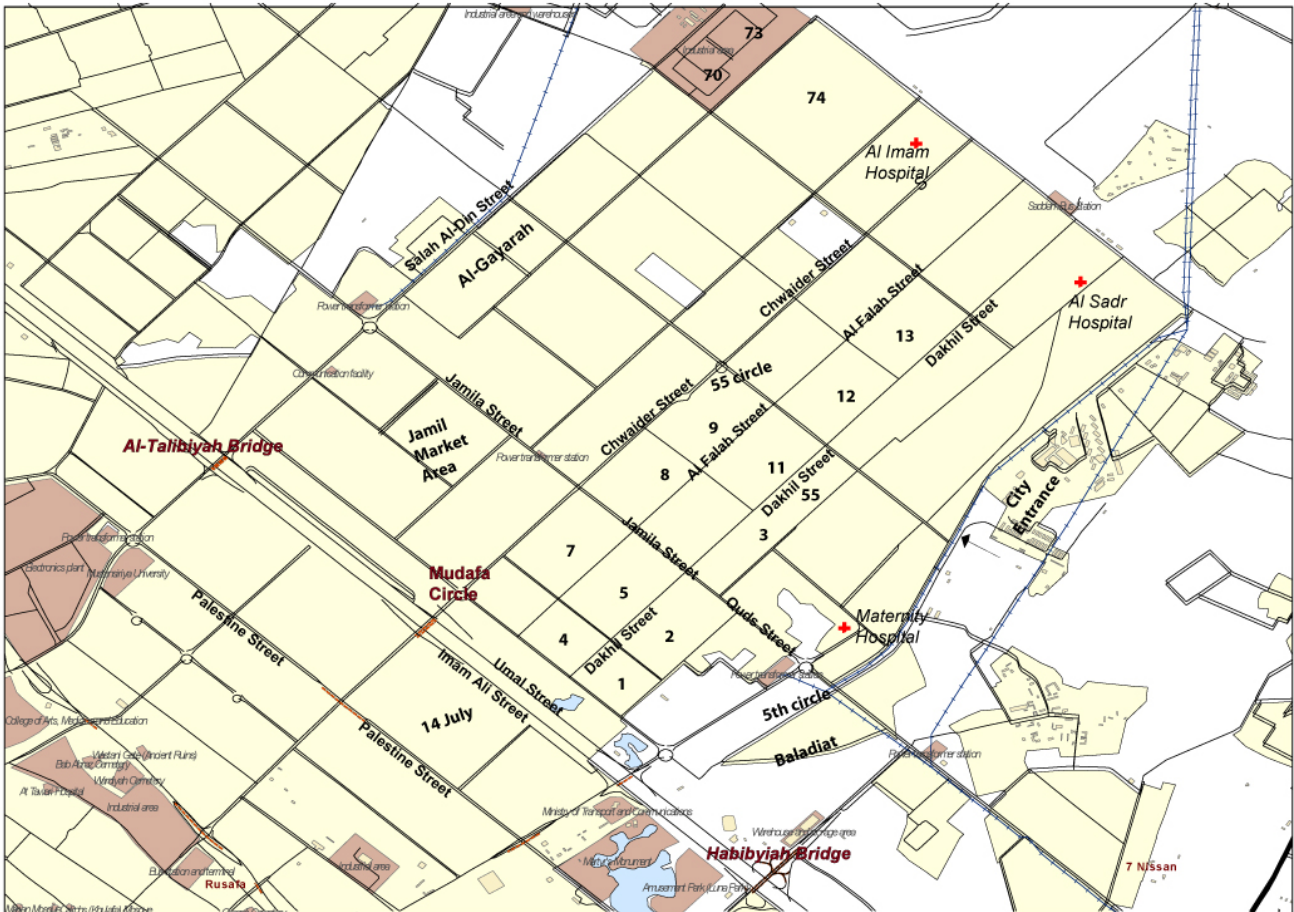
Education

Schools in areas directly affected by clashes are closed, and only some schools on the outskirts of the city are functioning, according to UNICEF. The Directorate of Education of Rusafa 3, Sadr City is currently not operational and some staff and functions have temporarily moved to Al Hammza School.

Some primary schools are now occupied by displaced families from sectors 70-79, where clashes between Mehdi Army and government security forces have been most intense.

Over 22 school buildings have been damaged by the fighting, although the exact extent of the damage is unknown.

Baghdad- Sadr City, April 2008



Humanitarian Response

Water and Sanitation

UNICEF has, since 8th April, distributed 2.1 million litres of water in two locations in Sadr City serving between 12,000 and 13,600 families (avg. 702,667 litres per distribution day).

Distribution of water purification tablets (WPT) is scheduled for 13th April to five locations including four inside Sadr city (Alawrfali, Alrashad, Alma'amil, and one other). A total of 1,200 families will receive WPT equivalent to one-month water needs. This will be distributed directly by UNICEF facilitator networks. Expansion to other areas will be considered as access allows.

Three million WPT (equivalent to 4,200 families needs for one month) have been delivered to the Ministry of Health (MoH).

IMC has distributed more than 40,000 litres of water in Sadr City on 11th April. These distributions specifically targeted Sectors 32, 36, 55, 44, 26, Al Akid, Kefa'a and Tariq Sectors.

ICRC: The standard water trucking activities for Sadr City are on-going. On a daily basis the following quantities are delivered:

IDPs in Sadr City sectors 52 and 53 - approx. 140,000 litres per day

Iman Ali hospital - approx. 40,000 litres per day

Al Rashad hospital (outskirts of Sadr City) - approx. 40,000 litres per day

Health

WHO has delivered medical supplies to the Ministry of Health in Baghdad on 13th March, for distribution to two hospitals in Sadr City. Stocks are based on WHO needs assessments.

The pre-positioned ICRC war wounded kit (to treat 100 patients) was used by Imman Ali hospital on 10th April. On the same day, an additional war wounded kit (stock replenishment) was supplied to the hospital, as well as various other medical supplies of injection modules, dressing sets and x-ray supplies. No further requests have been received from the hospital since 10th April.

UNICEF has delivered various disposable medical supplies (gauze, bandages, cannulas, surgical gloves, cotton, plastic draw sheets, paraffin compress as well as first aid kits) to Medical City Hospital and Rasafa Department of Health (for 2 hospitals in Sadr City: Imam Ali and Sadr Hospitals).

Food and non-food items

WFP has dispatched 300mt of wheat flour to Sadr City for distribution through the Iraqi Red Crescent in coordination with MoT.

IOM currently has 2,250 food baskets and 3,250 NFI baskets in stock in Baghdad. Some of these baskets could be diverted to Sadr City to respond to an emergency. IOM is looking into more food procurement and pre-positioning as the situation allows.

On 11th April IMC distributed 300 food packages to Al Sadr City residents (50 Packages - Sector 19 (near Felah Street), 200 Packages - Ghyara District and 50 Packages - Sector 22).

Education

UNICEF: Quick repair of the 22 damaged schools is planned as soon as the security situation permits;

If necessary, provision of temporary schools (tents) will be provided to resume schooling and to ease overcrowded class rooms;

UNICEF will provide recreational materials for psychosocial support, hygiene materials and basic school supplies.