



Humanitarian Situation Report Update: Humanitarian Implications of Ceasefire

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

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Summary

On Sunday 30 March, aides to Moqtada al Sadr issued a statement in Najaf calling on his followers to stop battling government forces in Basrah and all other provinces. This followed the Iraqi government crackdown on so-called 'criminals and outlaws' in Basrah on 25 March, which sparked a spiral of violence in southern Iraqi towns and cities, as well as in Shi'a-dominated areas in Baghdad.

In the two days since the last situation report (30 March), violence in Baghdad, Basrah, Wassit and Babylon has claimed 30 dead and 25 injured civilians and non-civilians (in Baghdad, 24 civilians and non-civilians have been killed and 25 injured; in Wassit, 5 dead and Babylon, one dead). In total, between 25 March and 1 April, 713 civilians and non-civilians have been killed and 1,541 injured in Baghdad, Basrah, Wassit and Babylon, according to UNAMI. The majority of casualties are civilians.

It is too early to tell if the restored sense of calm in most areas will continue but early indications are positive. However, the situation remains volatile and can quickly escalate.

Governorate Updates

Baghdad

The curfew imposed in Baghdad between 26-30 March was lifted during daylight hours on 31 March. However, in Shi'a dominant neighbourhoods including Shula, Kadhimiya and Sadr City, where Jaysh Al Mahdi militants operate, people continue to stay in their homes and shops are closed. Humanitarian agencies are however, resuming operations in Sadr city.

Basrah

A number of NGOs report that Basrah is returning to normal following the fighting of the past week. In Khamsa Mile and Hayaniya neighbourhoods, people are in the streets and markets are open.

A number of neighbourhoods reportedly remain under militia control and will be the focus of ongoing Iraqi security force operations. These neighbourhoods are located in the south of the city, home to at least half a million poorer families. Movement in these areas remains restricted and there are reports of sporadic fighting and gunfire.

Electricity and water is functioning as normal throughout Basrah, including Jumoriaya and Maaqal neighbourhoods.

The Kuwaiti-Iraqi border is now open (following its closure between 25 March and 9.15 a.m. on 1 April). However, there are reports of problems in the transportation of goods across the border to Iraq from Kuwait and Iran.

Reports from Basrah indicate inflated fuel prices. MercyCorps reports that a cylinder of cooking gas now sells for about 25,000 dinars instead of 5,000 dinars and the price of a litre of fuel has risen from 450 dinars to 8,500 dinars. However, there are reports of fresh food in the markets, which is expected to bring down prices.

Wassit

The curfew continues from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.. Schools remain closed. Water and electricity has been restored. The main market remains closed due to severe damage.

Humanitarian Response

Water and Sanitation

UNICEF has completed three days of water tankering operations in 15 sites across Basrah city, including the Basrah Blood Bank, Ibn Ghazwan Hospital and Al-Jumhori Hospital. Over 4,000 families are receiving safe drinking water through this operation, in collaboration with local stores. Total water delivered to date is 323,000 litres.

Mercy Corps is distributing potable water to Basrah's Al Hayaniya neighborhood as well as Maaqal and Al Jumhoorya, which sustained clashes over the last two days.

UNICEF will resume water tankering in Sadr City (40,000 litres daily), access permitting.

Health

UNICEF has delivered medical / surgical supplies to the Department of Health in Sadr City and Medical City, Rosafa, Baghdad and to two general hospitals in Basrah city (Aljomhoory and Almawanee). Further deliveries are planned in the coming days.

UNICEF intends to deliver medical/surgical supplies to Kut Department of Health in the coming days.

Additional UNICEF supplies are being pre-positioned in accessible locations in Baghdad and Basrah in the event of the resumption in conflict in the coming days.

On 31 March, the ICRC organised two special flights to continue its delivery of war-wounded kits to Iraqi medical infrastructures¹. An ICRC charter flight with 14 metric tons of emergency medical supplies delivered a total of 7 war wounded kits (to treat a total of 700 patients) for hospitals in Kut, Hilla, Najaf and Baghdad.

Food and non-food items

On 02 April, IOM delivered 500 food packages to Tameem educational hospital in Basrah to serve as a distribution point for other hospitals in Basrah. IOM is procuring food and non-food items for immediate distribution to hospitals in some of Iraq's southern governorates including Basrah, Wassit, Qadissiya and Thi Qar as well as to any newly displaced people.

IOM has pre-positioned emergency food items for distribution to two main hospitals in Baghdad's Sadr City area once all movement restrictions are lifted. Food baskets will also be delivered if needed to the neighbourhoods of Qadimiya and Shulla, which are still under curfew.

Mercy Corps emergency interventions in Basrah will focus on the distribution of food items (rice, oil, sugar and biscuits) to 3,000 families living in the four poorest neighbourhoods of Basrah.

UNHCR distributed 500 jerry cans (250 families) in Basrah on 1 April and intends to deliver a further 1,900 jerry cans (950 families) in Basrah on 2 April. These distributions are in conjunction with UNICEF's water tankering operations.

The distribution of the PDS ration for April commenced on 02 April, in Basrah and other southern governorates. In the ration for Basrah there will be rice, sugar, milk, oil and detergents.

Mercy Corps has secured assistance from four mosques in Maysan that will provide logistics for the distribution of water, hygiene kits and food (rice, oil, biscuits & sugar) for 800 vulnerable families in Amarah.

¹ As one of the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the International Committee of the Red Cross is a neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian organization. The ICRC participates in an observer capacity in the OCHA-chaired Iraq Humanitarian Working Group.