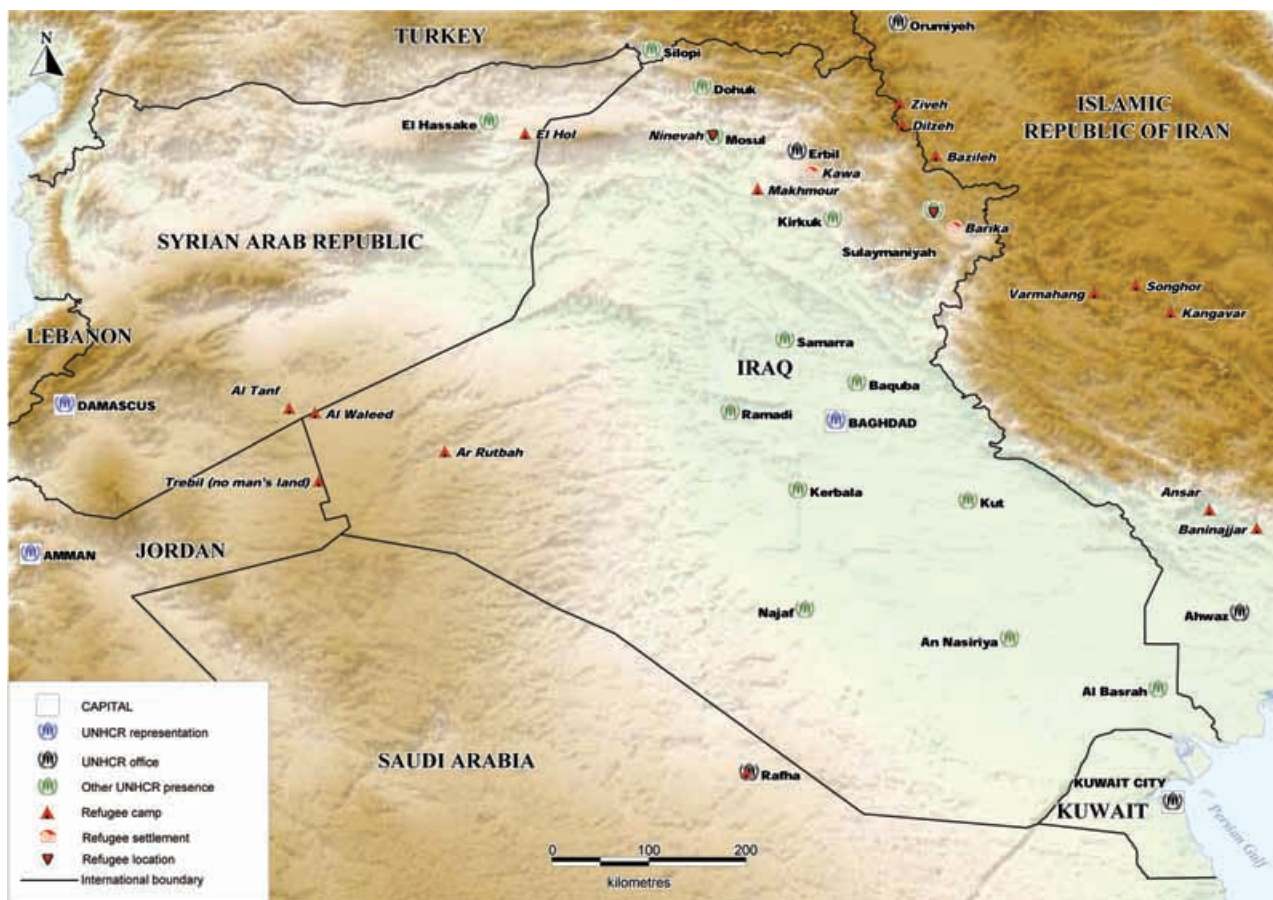


IRAQ SITUATION



Operational highlights

- In 2008, UNHCR strengthened its ability to protect and assist people of concern inside Iraq. The Office's shelter programme in some conflict-affected areas of the country played a critical role in the initial reintegration of returning IDPs and the prevention of further displacement.
- UNHCR protected and assisted some 40,000 refugees inside Iraq. It also helped improve the living conditions of the Palestinian refugees in the Al Waleed border camp. It sought options for the relocation of these refugees: 215 of them were assisted to move to Brazil and Chile.
- In the countries neighbouring Iraq, UNHCR worked towards maintaining and expanding the protection space. In general, the principle of *non-refoulement* was respected. The Office registered a total of 102,000 Iraqis in these countries in 2008 alone. The total number of registered Iraqi refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Gulf States reached 310,000 at the end of 2008.
- As the economic situation deteriorated in the countries of asylum, UNHCR's assistance proved essential to the survival of the most vulnerable Iraqi refugees. This group represents about 30 per cent of those registered with the Office.

- Resettlement remained the main durable solution for vulnerable Iraqi refugees in the countries neighbouring Iraq. The Office submitted 33,000 Iraqi refugees for resettlement in 2008. On the repatriation front, UNHCR began providing assistance for return on a case-by-case basis. Some 3,500 Iraqis returned to their country with UNHCR's assistance in 2008.

Working environment

Relative calm returned to Iraq in 2008 following a reduction in sectarian violence. By the middle of the year an increasing number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) began to return to their places of origin. The IDP return figure was estimated at some 10,000 as of June and had reached 195,000 December 2008. On the other hand, the number of refugees returning from neighbouring countries remained low, as many considered the overall situation still too precarious to return.

In most countries hosting Iraqi refugees in the region, a general increase in commodity prices—which reportedly tripled or quadrupled in some cases—significantly affected Iraqi refugees as well as local population. Unable to work, and with most of their savings depleted, many of these refugees found themselves in an extremely vulnerable situation. In light of these difficulties and the relative improvement in security in Iraq, some Iraqi refugees began to return

spontaneously, even if only temporarily, to judge the situation for themselves.

Despite fears that the generous reception of Iraqis in the neighbouring countries would be affected by the global economic crisis and other pressures, the protection space for this group was to a large extent upheld.

Achievements and impacts

Main objectives

- Address the protection and assistance needs of Iraqi refugees, internally displaced Iraqis, returnees and refugees from third countries in Iraq.
- Improve protection standards in Iraq; ensure protection and access to essential services for refugees inside Iraq.
- Address the immediate needs of displaced persons and, where possible, prepare for their return.
- In the countries neighbouring Iraq, enhance protection and meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable Iraqi refugees.
- Improve access to public services for Iraqi refugees in the neighbouring countries, with emphasis on education and medical care.
- Promote resettlement for vulnerable Iraqi refugees and some other refugees inside Iraq.

Protection and solutions

By expanding its presence in Iraq, the Office increased its monitoring, protection and assistance activities on behalf of refugees and asylum-seekers, IDPs, returnees and other conflict-affected populations. Among the achievements in 2008 were:

- Cooperation between UNHCR and the Government of Iraq in preparation for the adoption of a National Policy on Displacement.
- The closing of the Sudanese refugee camp known as K-70, following the transfer of 140 Sudanese refugees from Iraq to the Emergency Transit Centre in Romania pending their resettlement in third countries.
- The continuation of negotiations for the relocation of some 1,400 Palestinian refugees in Al Waleed camp to Sudan. Other options, such as resettlement, continued to be pursued. In the meantime, the refugees were moved to a better site.
- The re-registration of some 11,000 Palestinian refugees in Baghdad and another 1,400 in the Al Waleed border camp.
- The submission of some 700 Palestinians, either inside Iraq or living in the border areas with Syria, for resettlement in 2007 and 2008. Of these, 300 were accepted, including 108 Palestinians from the Al Tanf camp who departed for Chile.

Persons of concern Inside Iraq					
Type of population	Origin	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Turkey	15,700	15,700	51	46
	Palestinian	12,300	12,300	48	34
	Islamic Republic of Iran	10,800	10,800	49	40
	Syrian Arab Republic	500	500	49	37
	Various	130	130	74	18
Asylum-seekers	Syrian Arab Republic	1,000	1,000	45	46
	Islamic Republic of Iran	600	600	38	43
	Turkey	400	400	48	-
Returnees (refugees)	From various countries	25,600	4,100	49	45
IDPs		2,647,300	416,400	49	-
Returnees (IDPs)		195,900	-	49	-
Stateless persons	Stateless	230,000		49	45
Total		3,140,230	461,930		

Persons of concern Outside Iraq					
Type of population	Origin	Total in country ¹	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female ²	Per cent under 18
Iraqi refugees in neighboring countries	Jordan	500,000	52,700	52	33
	Syrian Arab Republic	1,100,000	224,300	49	40
	Lebanon	50,000	10,200	29	26
	Egypt	10,100	10,100	49	39
	Turkey	7,500	7,500	44	34
	Iran	44,400	4,900 ³	38	44
	Gulf States	30,400	700	-	-
Total		1,742,400	310,400		

¹ Estimated by the authorities in Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon

² Demographic data in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic refers to registered population only

³ Newly registered in 2007 and 2008



An Iraqi girl receives a new school bag from UNHCR staff in Damascus, Syria

UNHCR / P. MUKHTAR

UNHCR continued to advocate for the upholding of protection principles in the countries neighbouring Iraq. Although most of these States are not signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Iraqi refugees continued to be hosted generously and are allowed access to public services, including health care and education.

The Office registered and provided documentation to a total of some 102,000 Iraqi refugees in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Gulf States in 2008. The total number of registered Iraqis in those countries at the end of 2008 was some 311,000; of whom, about 30 per cent have special needs.

The offices in the region also intervened in cases of detention. In Lebanon, an amnesty policy for detainees was negotiated and continued to be in effect throughout 2008. There were 772 refugees and asylum-seekers in detention in Lebanon at the end of 2007, but by the end of 2008 the number had fallen to 159.

Resettlement remained the main durable solution for most vulnerable Iraqi refugees. Local integration is not a viable option in the region, and repatriation is not promoted due to the fragility of the security situation in Iraq. Nevertheless, in 2008 UNHCR assisted individuals who made free and informed decisions to return to Iraq. Some 3,500 returned with UNHCR's assistance from Egypt, Jordan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Syria and the Gulf States. Another 4,400 persons were reported to have returned through movements organized by the Iraqi embassies in Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

UNHCR assisted and recorded return of 91 persons from Egypt, 266 from Jordan, 641 from Syria and 131 from Saudi Arabia to Iraq. Of those Iraqis returning from the Islamic Republic of Iran, 508 received assistance through UNHCR,

while another 2,080 returned with an in-country transportation grant. The returning refugees indicated that the security situation had improved. They also noted that high unemployment and difficulties in moving back into their homes, in addition to the continuing localized violence, were major concerns.

The Office submitted 33,000 Iraqi refugees to 16 resettlement countries in 2008, bringing the cumulative total to some 54,000 since 2007. Of these, more than 22,000 had departed for their resettlement countries by the end of 2008.

● *Activities and assistance*

Community services: UNHCR conducted participatory assessments and provided social counselling to refugees, including through home visits. In Syria and Jordan, the Office employed more than 250 refugee outreach workers. Some 100,000 social counselling sessions were conducted for Iraqi refugees in Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey.

In Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, a total of 9,000 Iraqi and ex-Iraq Palestinian refugees benefited from language, computer, sewing, handicraft, hairdressing, plumbing, electrical works, car mechanics and cooking courses. In Iraq, similar training benefited some 1,300 IDPs. Some 1,200 IDP and returnee families were given tools for metal-working, farming and sewing.

Domestic needs and household support: UNHCR-provided non-food items, including quilts, mattresses, stoves, lanterns, jerry cans, plastic sheeting, kitchen sets and blankets, as well as cash assistance, were essential for the survival of IDPs and refugees. In Iraq, some 58,000 IDP, returnee and

host-community families, as well as some 12,000 refugees, were assisted with non-food items. In Syria, 155,000 Iraqis received non-food items. In Jordan, 2,800 families received heaters and other relief items.

Sanitary materials were supplied to more than 46,000 refugee women in Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey and Syria. Some 1,200 Palestinian refugees in the Al Hol and Al Tanf camps were provided with non-food items, diesel fuel and clothes. At the regional level, UNHCR also built a contingency stock of non-food items and made standby arrangements to cover 100,000 people.

In Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey, UNHCR assisted over 20,000 vulnerable families with monthly cash assistance to help with rent and the purchase of basic items. The Office also provided cash grants and rental subsidies to 120 Palestinian orphans and 270 Palestinian families in Iraq.

Education: To increase the number of Iraqi refugee children in formal education, UNHCR supported local educational structures, thereby benefiting both Iraqi and host-country children and avoiding the creation of parallel systems. The Office also supported non-formal and informal education for those children who found it difficult to follow the non-Iraqi curriculum.

UNHCR supported the rehabilitation of 118 schools, thus benefitting an estimated 61,000 Iraqi and Syrian children in Syria. In Jordan 17 kindergarten classrooms were renovated and the capacity of 270 public schools was enhanced by support for double-shift programmes. In addition, remedial classes, home schooling and after-school tuition benefited more than 15,000 children in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

The Office distributed some 41,000 school kits, including uniforms and stationery, in Syria and Jordan. In Lebanon, Egypt and Turkey UNHCR provided education grants for some 4,100 refugee students both in primary and secondary education to help them pay for uniforms, books, stationery and transportation. Scholarships were provided to 154 Iraqi first-year students who attend Syrian public universities.

In Iraq, the Office supported 900 vulnerable IDP and refugee students with transportation costs, and rehabilitated and provided equipment for 54 schools in areas with many IDPs. Educational facilities in the refugee camps and settlements were also supported.

Food: In Iraq, monthly food baskets which met the standard of 2,460 kcal per person were distributed to some 3,500 Palestinian and other refugees in Baghdad and in camps and settlements. The Office also covered 50 per cent of public food rations for some 6,000 Turkish refugees and other asylum-seekers. An average of 150,000 Iraqi refugees (about 70 per cent of those registered) in Syria were assisted with basic and complementary food rations, including rice, oil, pulses, bulgur and sugar. In addition, UNHCR provided basic and complementary food items for 1,200 Palestinian refugees in the Al Tanf and Al Hol camps.

Health and nutrition: The medical needs of persons of concern increased in 2008. In order to share the burden of

the refugee-hosting countries, the Office supported public health facilities and supplemented them with supporting clinics for primary health care. In Syria, UNHCR funded health interventions in 2008 totalled 420,000.

The needs for secondary and tertiary medical care among the refugee population are enormous. In Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt and the Islamic Republic of Iran, over 500,000 medical consultations were made. Over 100,000 patients with secondary and tertiary health care needs, including for cancer, cardiac conditions and diabetes were assisted. In Syria, UNHCR supported and provided equipment to 33 hospitals and clinics. In Jordan, the Office provided drugs and medical equipment to 53 clinics and hospitals.

In Iraq, UNHCR rehabilitated 23 public health facilities and provided medical equipment in order to improve access to health facilities for IDPs and returnees, and 210 wheelchairs were distributed to disabled IDPs. UNHCR's mobile medical teams visited Al Waleed camp, Makhmour camp, the no-man's land between Iraq and Jordan and the Trebeel camp on the same border, and treated more than 3,000 refugees.

Income generation activities: In Chile and Brazil, resettled Palestinian refugees were assisted with activities for insertion into the labour market. In Iraq, 580 in-kind grants were distributed including tools and irrigation machines.

Legal assistance: UNHCR has extensive registration and resettlement referral mechanisms to provide legal and other forms of counselling to Iraqi refugees. Iraqi women who had faced sexual or gender-based violence received particular attention and legal advice through an established system of safe houses and an extensive network of Iraqi social counsellors throughout the region.

In Iraq, UNHCR's protection and assistance centres covered all 18 governorates with 14 centres and 34 mobile teams. The centres contributed to the collection of information on places of displacement and origin, including the situation of IDPs and prospects for return, besides acting as a referral mechanism for some 10,000 cases. Some 27,000 persons, of whom 38 per cent were women, benefited from the centres. For instance, they received documents which were necessary to receive basic assistance from the Government, support court proceedings, organize inheritance matters and resolve issues related to land allocation and restitution.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR's activities in 10 countries were implemented through 73 international and local NGOs, four governmental counterparts, IOM, UNOPS, UNDP and UNV.

Sanitation: In Iraq, some 11,000 IDP, returnee and host-community families benefitted from sanitation projects, including the installation of toilet units, the construction of sewage networks and the rehabilitation of sewage channels and pump stations.

Shelter and other infrastructure: Some 4,400 shelters and 270 shops were rehabilitated in the conflict-prone areas of Iraq, including Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. The Office also

distributed 8,500 shelter kits for IDP and returnee families and rehabilitated four sections of road.

Transport and logistics: Ten warehouses were maintained in Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Kuwait. Appropriate transport support was provided to facilitate distribution of assistance both by UNHCR and through implementing partners.

Water: In Iraq, some 30 water projects, including the construction of water storage tanks and wells, the drilling of wells and the rehabilitation of the supply system helped to provide clean water to some 10,000 IDP, returnee and host-community families in areas with a high concentration of IDPs. Water was tanked to the K-70 refugee camp for the Sudanese refugees until its closure, as well as to settlements in the north of Iraq where 1,000 asylum-seekers and refugees reside.

○ Constraints

Inside Iraq, the fragile security situation hampered UNHCR's mobility and complicated logistical arrangements. Access to beneficiaries remained restricted in the centre and south of the country, and reliance on national and international partners remained critical to the Office's ability to protect and assist people of concern.

In the neighbouring countries, an overall increase in the cost of living exacerbated the vulnerability of Iraqi refugees. This affected UNHCR's programming—as did exchange-rate losses. The urban nature of the Iraqi population in the countries neighbouring Iraq made identifying and assessing the needs of the most vulnerable a challenge. Mobile teams improved outreach and access to vulnerable groups in the suburbs, outskirts and other cities. Still, fundamental difficulties related to the urban dispersal of refugees persisted, necessitating a community-based approach.

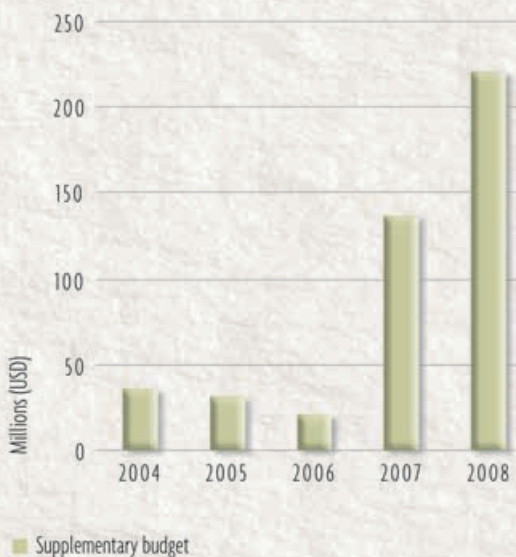
| Financial information |

The Iraq Operation was well funded in 2008 at 98 per cent, enabling sufficient implementation of planned activities and improvement of assistance and protection services. The Iraq Operation has continued to receive notable donor support over the years since its initiation in 2003, with average contributions of over 80 per cent.

| Organization and implementation |

In order to strengthen its protection and assistance capacity in Iraq, UNHCR posted its Representative and two Deputy Representatives to Baghdad and increased the number of international staff serving in the country. The Office also expanded its field presence from 8 to 15 staff, who covered 11 provinces. UNHCR staff across the region included some 500 national and international staff in seven countries.

Expenditure for the Iraq Situation
2004 - 2008



| Working with others |

UNHCR worked closely with the respective authorities in advocating for protection and in dealing with the displaced. It developed partnerships with a wide network of non-governmental actors across the region, and strengthened relations with local Red Crescent Societies. UNHCR led the Consolidated Appeals Process in the countries neighbouring Iraq in 2008, working with sister UN agencies and NGOs and participated in the preparation of the CAP covering activities inside Iraq under the leadership of UNAMI.

| Overall assessment |

Despite a wide array of complex challenges, UNHCR largely met its objectives and was able to sustain improvements in the condition of people of concern inside Iraq and in neighbouring countries. The Office was able to expand its physical presence inside Iraq despite the security situation. This allowed it to obtain more information on population movements in the country and the needs of refugees, IDPs, returnees and conflict-affected populations. It also helped enhance its capacity to provide protection and assistance and strengthen relations with the Iraqi authorities, the United Nations as well as other national and international partners. UNHCR worked with local partners on the Sadr City rehabilitation initiative.

The Office consolidated protection space in 2008 through advocacy and support for government institutions providing assistance, especially in health care and education. Dealing with such a large urban refugee caseload in the Middle East continues to require creativity in the provision of protection and assistance, and the Office has developed efficient systems tailored to this particular

situation. These include the use of telephone networks, text messages, the internet, ATM cards and the extensive network of community centres. In the case of Syria, a bar-code system is used in distributions. Community-based approaches continued to be given priority, as did efforts to develop the capacity of local institutions and structures in the neighbouring countries.

In terms of durable solutions, UNHCR established an efficient referral mechanism and actively sought resettlement for eligible cases. Since returns were sporadic, the Office applied a pragmatic approach by introducing a case-by-case assistance facility for those choosing to return. For Palestinian refugees at the border areas, the Office highlighted the need for durable solutions and continued to pursue all options for their resettlement or relocation, including to Sudan.

UNHCR continued to mobilize public interest to the plight of displaced Iraqis and refugees in Iraq. Greater engagement from regional and international actors continues to be needed to ease the heavy burden borne by Iraq's neighbours and to mitigate the growing vulnerability of refugees whose savings are running out.

Partners	
Government	
Syrian Arab Republic: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Higher Education, Office of the Governor of El Hassake	
Jordan: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation	
Iraq: Ministry of Migration and Displacement, Kurdish Regional Government	
NGOs	
Al Bassel Hospital (Heart Institute), Syria; Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers/Migrants, Turkey; Beiruni Hospital, Syria; CARE, Australia; CARE Austria; CARITAS, Brasil; CARITAS, Egypt; CARITAS Migrants Centre, Lebanon; CARITAS, Jordan; Catholic Relief Services USCCB, United States; Common Charity Committee, Syria; <i>Couvent Ibrahim Al-Khalil</i> , Syria; <i>Croix Rouge Francaise</i> (CRF); Danish Refugee Council; Evangelical Christian Alliance Church, Syria; Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, Syria; Human Resources Development Foundation, Turkey; International Catholic Migration Commission; International Medical Corps, UK; International Relief and Development Foundation, United States; INTERSOS, Italy; Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization; Jordanian Alliance Against Hunger; Jordanian Red Crescent Society; Jordanian Women's Union; Life Makers Society, Jordan; Maison du Bon Pasteur, Syria; Mercy Corps, Middle East Council of Churches, Lebanon; Mizan, Jordan; Japan International Cooperation Agency; Norwegian Refugee Council; Palestinian Red Crescent Society; <i>Première Urgence</i> , France; Questscope, Jordan; Refugee Egypt; Relief International, United States; Save the Children Federation, United States; Syrian Red Crescent Society; Syrian Women Association; <i>Terre des Hommes</i> Italia; <i>Terre des Hommes</i> , Syria	
Others	
IOM, UNAMI, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNRWA, WFP, WHO	

Budget, income and expenditure of the Iraq Situation (USD)

	Final budget	Income from contributions	Other funds available	Total funds available ¹	Total expenditure
Iraq Situation SB	271,056,000	256,844,685	(5,966,421)	250,878,264	221,609,857
Total	271,056,000	256,844,685	(5,966,421)	250,878,264	221,609,857

Note: Supplementary programmes do not include seven per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR. Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

¹ Total funds available and income from contributions include currency adjustments.

Financial report for the Iraq Situation (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects	Prior years' project
	Annual programme budget	Annual and supplementary budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	15,752,998	0
Community services	5,017,985	29,113
Domestic needs and household support	43,597,157	5,015
Education	22,698,799	2,579,283
Food	16,385,235	78,125
Health and nutrition	26,575,773	10,854,173
Income generation	511,564	0
Legal assistance	7,837,471	52,428
Operational support (to agencies)	7,722,276	(159,180)
Sanitation	261,129	0
Shelter and infrastructure	9,822,638	181,789
Transport and logistics	9,949,107	45,525
Water	973,292	48,517
Instalments to implementing partners	42,418,412	(13,714,788)
Subtotal operational activities	209,523,836	0
Programme support	12,086,020	0
Total expenditure	221,609,856	0
Cancellation on previous years' expenditure		(1,247,666)
Instalments with implementing partners		
Payments made	124,741,508	
Reporting received	(82,323,096)	
Balance	42,418,412	
Outstanding 1st January		16,718,167
Reporting received		(13,714,788)
Refunded to UNHCR		(1,807,342)
Currency adjustment		2,556
Outstanding 31st December		1,198,593

Financial Report for the Iraq Situation (USD)

Activities and services	Argentina	Armenia	Brazil	Egypt	Iraq	Islamic Republic of Iran	Jordan	Lebanon	Saudi Arabia	Sudan	Syrian Arab Republic	Turkey	Regional activities in the Middle East Region	Headquarters	Grand Total
Protection, monitoring and coordination	871	0	20,771	41,121	4,361,880	76,833	3,063,182	2,423,483	394,191	4,756	4,660,303	705,609	0	0	15,752,998
Community services	80,812	69,082	40,386	8,788	881,467	15,440	2,710,509	36,033	0	0	873,318	302,150	0	0	5,017,985
Domestic needs/household support	185,208	0	81,757	259,027	9,514,313	217,700	8,412,624	195,040	0	0	23,092,235	526,317	1,112,935	0	43,597,157
Education	30,141	0	89,079	344,253	1,426,927	0	6,405,527	392,878	0	0	13,986,667	23,326	0	0	22,698,799
Food	0	0	0	0	1,110,407	0	1,814,049	0	0	0	13,460,780	0	0	0	16,385,235
Health/nutrition	3,290	10,000	24,140	188,710	1,028,883	176,503	3,372,032	394,773	0	0	21,352,869	24,573	0	0	26,575,773
Income generation	2,634	97,318	0	7,143	404,469	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	511,564
Legal assistance	80,373	19,686	97,055	30,182	3,216,185	2,527	1,199,161	801,251	0	1,770	2,009,312	374,743	5,226	0	7,837,471
Operational support to agencies	149,244	91,130	24,558	90,465	3,574,344	314	2,132,554	541,024	0	893,667	1,023,365	1,956	3,955	0	7,722,276
Sanitation	0	0	0	0	259,864	1,265	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	261,129
Shelter/other infrastructure	84,043	544,392	85,648	0	8,884,701	75,756	0	0	0	0	147,284	816	0	0	9,822,638
Transport/logistics	0	0	3,988	64,336	2,739,943	65,117	47,021	0	0	0	5,611,998	29,871	1,386,833	0	9,949,107
Water	0	0	0	0	973,292	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	973,292
Installments to implementing partners	6,765	107,302	532,330	718,315	7,941,069	74,006	13,429,141	1,097,168	0	0	17,502,175	-73	1,010,214	0	42,418,412
Subtotal operational activities	623,380	938,910	999,712	1,752,342	46,317,743	705,461	42,585,802	5,881,651	394,191	95,893	103,720,303	1,989,288	3,519,163	0	209,523,837
Programme support	0	0	0	48,647	4,054,914	0	1,904,143	312,830	0	0	3,298,743	115,498	0	2,351,244	12,086,020
Total Expenditure	623,380	938,910	999,712	1,800,989	50,372,657	705,461	44,489,944	6,194,481	394,191	95,893	107,019,047	2,104,786	3,519,163	2,351,244	221,609,857