

# IRAQ

## SITUATION REPORT



UNITED NATIONS

24-30 May 2004

UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR IRAQ

### OVERVIEW ►

United Nations (UN) agencies continued to undertake a wide variety of activities inside Iraq through implementing partners and in cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), other international organisations and Iraqi authorities. In support of humanitarian and development efforts inside Iraq, key meetings occurred this week, including a donor meeting in Doha, Qatar, the second of its type since the UN Secretary-General called for international support for the rebuilding effort in Iraq at the inaugural donor meeting held in Madrid in October 2003.

### IRAQ DONOR MEETING ►

Under the motto "From Commitment to Action" the second Donor Committee Meeting of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) was held in Doha (Qatar) on May 25, at the invitation of the Government of Qatar. The meeting was chaired by the Japanese Ambassador. Key activities included three break-out sessions chaired by donors, covering: (i) Employment Creation through Housing, Construction and Public Works; (ii) Education and Health; (iii) Basic Services (Electricity and Water). IRFFI will focus its activities on re-establishment of essential services (especially education and health), infrastructure rehabilitation, job creation, poverty reduction, governance and capacity building, including support for the transitional authorities. The UN and donors stressed the importance of moving ahead with programme and project implementation in coordination with Iraqi authorities. Officials from 35 countries, including the UN and other organisations, SRSG *a.i.* Mr. Mountain, and representatives of clusters related to the UN Strategic Plan and the World Bank, participated in the meeting.

Since the last session of the Donor Committee in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates), Italy joined as a full member (based on a contribution of US\$10 million and above to IRFFI) and Finland was nominated to represent contributors of less than US\$10 million on the Donor Committee as one of the two rotating members. The membership of the Donor Committee was confirmed as follows: Australia, Canada, European Commission, Finland (rotating member) India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Spain, Norway, Qatar, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The Committee welcomed the firm commitment by the Government of Turkey to contribute \$1.2 million to IRFFI – the 20th donation, and the strong interest of Iran to participate in the near future. Donors stressed the importance of moving ahead quickly with project implementation in coordination with Iraqi authorities. It was also agreed that the activities of the Fund Facility must be integrated into Iraq's overall development plan and programmes of assistance by other sources. A third Donor Committee meeting will take place in Tokyo in autumn 2004.

### HUMANITARIAN ►

**Falluja** Civilians in the city have been able to access the markets and purchase fresh food, in short supply during the city's siege. One of the primary concerns of the population remains water supply, as the city's system was damaged during the recent fighting.

*Water and Electricity* Frequent blackouts render the water pumps and purification plants inoperable. The UN Water and Sanitation Cluster has initiated emergency repairs of the water supply system and provision of back-up generators for the water supply installations, supplemented by a health education campaign implemented by the UN Health Cluster. Many residents of Falluja, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the vicinity of the city, depend on water trucking, implemented by the UN Children's Agency UNICEF and International Organisation for Migration (IOM) through their implementing partners. The UN Education and Culture Cluster is planning to facilitate the rapid return of children to schools through the provision of education kits, monetary incentives and other assistance.

*Landmines* In wake of the use of cluster bombs and alleged use of landmines by the Coalition Forces (CF) in Falluja and the surrounding areas, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Iraqi Red Crescent Society conducted a mine risk awareness campaign.

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*Non Food Items (NFI)* In order to meet the needs of 280 people (40 families), partners of the IOM distributed on Sunday 23 May, 40 tents (fit for 8-10 persons), 80 plastic sheets, 240 mattresses, 40 cold boxes, 40 jerry cans, 40 cooking stoves, 40 kitchen sets, and 40 kerosene lamps to IDPs in Falluja's poorest neighbourhood, Joolan. It has been assessed that roughly 100 homes have been struck with armaments, with 40 of those being completely destroyed. Additional assistance was distributed on Wednesday 26 May meeting the needs of an extra 175 people (25 families). IOM partners distributed 25 tents for families as well as a distribution of NFI to an additional 1,505 people (215 families) in Joolan.

IOM this week approved the grant proposal from an implementing partner NGO for food and NFI procurement, storage, and distribution. In addition to the food and NFIs, IOM will provide two Emergency Medical Kits to the partners for additional response capacity should it be required. This grant is to enhance the capacity of partners in the Upper and Lower South region in case of man-made and/or natural disaster.

**Najaf** Intensive clashes continued in Najaf, resulting in number of people killed and wounded. Between the 25-26 May, reports indicate at least 24 Iraqis were killed and at least 50 others wounded as a result of the CF actions. While sizable quantities of medical supplies, including fourteen UNICEF emergency kits, were pre-positioned in the city before the recent clashes erupted, the humanitarian community continues to be concerned by the limited access of the population to medical services, and the availability of operation theatres in particular. Najaf's General Hospital, where 80% of city's operating theatres are located, is reportedly closed due to the failure of the hospital's sewage system. The sick and wounded are treated in an ad-hoc department created within Najaf's maternity hospital, as well as relying upon services provided by local public health centres in the center of the city.

*Food* The availability of fresh and rationed food has become more difficult. In recent days truck drivers tasked with delivering Public Distribution (PDS) food supplies have cited the increase in fighting as obstructing their operational ability. The main wholesale point in the city for fresh vegetables was reportedly destroyed on Saturday 22 May.

*Water and Electricity* Water continues to be a major problem in Najaf. Damage caused to the water supply network during the recent fighting and frequent electricity cuts were the prime causes for this disruption. The electricity situation deteriorated further after some of the generating and transmission units were damaged by bombing, which rendered the water pumps inoperable, with blackouts lasting as long as 20 hours each day.

**Contingency Planning** The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq *ad interim* (SRSG a.i.) and Humanitarian Co-ordinator for Iraq, Mr. Ross Mountain, recently initiated a review of UN inter-agency contingency planning for humanitarian assistance in Iraq (including sub-regional considerations) for the second half of 2004. As part of this process, a one-day contingency planning workshop will be held next week in Amman, Jordan. The workshop will bring together UN humanitarian agencies, the Red Cross/Crescent organisations, implementing partners and representatives of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) sub-group on contingency planning. The meeting will focus on potential operating scenarios, humanitarian needs and response mechanisms for Iraq.

**Coordination (Gender)** The UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) facilitated a coordination meeting that was held in Amman, Jordan, on 25 May bringing twelve Iraqi women together with representatives from the UN and the NGOs to discuss and identify ways gender and civil-society needs could be better supported in Iraq. UN agencies and NGOs briefed participants on activities currently being implemented inside Iraq. A question and answer session was held allowing the Iraqi women to voice their concerns and identify pressing needs. Principal among their requests was the need for further UN support and funding, capacity building of local NGOs and emerging civil society organisations, and training at the organisational, information technology and managerial levels. There was also a unanimous call for an improved coordination mechanism to be established between the UN/NGOs and the local Iraqi NGOs. Representatives from UNIFEM, the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and NGOs reiterated that many activities are currently being implemented to address many of the needs they themselves had articulated, and confirmed they are dedicated to assisting the Iraqi people.

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**Refugees** With the security slightly improved in the south of Iraq, the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, announced that repatriation of refugees voluntarily wishing to return to Iraq, will resume as of Wednesday 2 June. Refugees from the camps in Khuzestan Province signed up for return after they deemed the improvement of security enough to return. UNHCR do not know the total number of potential returnees as refugees have the freedom to change their mind until the very last moment. The return will only take place to Basra city and Basra Governorate. Other return movements have been scheduled for the 8th and 10th of June, pending security. UNHCR is still not encouraging people to return to Iraq, and has advised against forced returns of Iraqi's from abroad. For those insisting to return, UNHCR facilitates convoys in cooperation with the Iraqi authorities. To date, more than 11,100 have returned since last July, mainly from Iran, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon.

According to UNHCR, last year Jordan accepted nearly 400 Palestinians with Jordanian spouses who had fled Iraq. While the remaining 350 or so Palestinians wanted to go to their homes in the West Bank and Gaza, and even to Israel, the agency could not get parties to accept the return of this group, nor are any other States so far willing to accept them.

**Returnees** Since the 15th of May a total of 69 Palestinians have opted to return to Iraq, after having spent up to a year in Ruweished camp in eastern Jordan. UNHCR has provided them with return packages and financial assistance for transport and rent of houses upon their return to Baghdad. Thousands of people, including hundreds of Palestinians, fled Iraq for the safety of Jordan during last year's conflict. More than 1,500 are in UNHCR-assisted camps, including some 1,100 people in a makeshift site in the no-man's-land on the Iraqi frontier, and nearly 400 in Jordan's Ruweished refugee camp. UNHCR has worked very closely over the past year with the Jordanian Government, which has long been very hospitable to refugees and found solutions for individual cases.

**Displaced** In the south of Iraq, UNHCR through its partners Intersos and the Salvation Army in Ammara, has provided assistance to more than 6000 people who had been displaced several weeks ago by floods in Missan and Thi Qar governorates. As a result of the deteriorated security situation it was impossible to supply much needed aid. In a lull in conflict this last week, discussions with the Marsh leaders on the distribution to, and identification of, the most needy was finally made possible. On 30 May a total of 250 tents, 500 jerry cans, 2400 blankets and 250 kitchen sets were provided to the displaced. Unfortunately on Saturday, UNHCR was informed that during the previous night, the Glory Canal (which had been used to drain the marshes) had been severely breached, causing renewed flooding and displacement in the Missan area. It has now been estimated that an additional 2000-3000 people have been displaced and are in urgent need of assistance.

### HUMAN RIGHTS ►

**Protection of Civilians** On 21 May the Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed shock over the killing of some 40 civilians near the Syrian border. In a statement issued in Geneva, the Acting High Commissioner, Bertrand Ramcharan, stressed the responsibility of the occupying forces to ensure the safety and welfare of Iraqi civilians and to refrain from excessive use of force and indiscriminate attacks. He "calls on all belligerents to respect human rights and humanitarian law, and to demonstrate at all times paramount concern for the safety and protection of civilians," the statement said. "He reiterates that even if there are security-related concerns, there can be no license to commit carnage."

### CLUSTER COORDINATION FOR IRAQ ►

#### Health – (Cluster 2)

**Preventive Measures** The UN World Health Organisation (WHO) advise that preparations are ongoing for the communicable disease workshops (based on the prevention of Malaria, Leishmaniasis, TB and Diarrhoeal diseases), which will be conducted in the Primary Health Care Department of the Department of Health (DOH), Basra.

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Professionals from the Lower South governorates will participate in the workshops, which will be led by lecturers from the Basra Medical College, Department of Health (DoH) and WHO staff.

In the Ta'ameem Governorate, Malaria and Leishmaniasis spraying campaigns were completed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May and fogging will start in the beginning of June and will continue for an extended period. In Basra, the spraying is completed while fogging and rodent control activities are ongoing.

*Emergency Response* As part of the ongoing emergency response to humanitarian needs in the affected areas, particularly in Najaf and Kerbala, WHO has finalised the procurement of urgently needed items as identified by the Ministry of Health. These include dressing materials, blood grouping kits and HIV and Hepatitis kits for screening blood donations. The first truckload of blood grouping kits and absorbent cotton left Amman on the 26<sup>th</sup> May and was received in Baghdad on the 27<sup>th</sup> May. WHO is also finalising the procurement of 40 Hepatitis E diagnostic kits for delivery to Iraq. Final arrangements for WHO to deliver a surgical kit and a set of electro-ardiogram equipment, to Najaf DoH, has been completed. Delivery will take place as soon as security permits.

WHO continued to follow up the pending issue of replacement of vital drugs, previously supplied by Glaxo-SmithKline (GSK) under Security Council Resolution 1472, which were reported to have failed quality control. GSK has agreed to replace the two items and the actual shipment is expected to take place in the coming days.

### **Employment Assistance Services - (Cluster 10)**

The IOM installed satellite communication systems in five Employment Centres of the Iraqi Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA). The systems will help integrate the national network of employment centres and greatly enhance the scope and reach of current services offered to job seekers and potential employers.

### **UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ►**

The Spokesman for the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) Kofi Annan, Mr Fred Eckhard stated on Friday 28 May that the UNSG respects and welcomes the choice of Iyad Allawi nominated as the Prime Minister-designate of Iraq by the Interim Governing Council (IGC). In a separate development, the Security Council commenced meeting in closed session to discuss a draft resolution on Iraq.

### **UN MISSIONS ►**

UNSG Kofi Annan's Special Adviser, Lakhdar Brahimi, respects the decision taken by the Iraqi Governing Council to name Iyad Allawi as Iraq's Prime Minister-designate, said the UNSG Spokesperson, Mr. Fred Eckhard on Friday 28 May. Mr. Eckhard told reporters in New York that Mr. Brahimi will be discussing the results of his wide-ranging consultations with the Prime Minister-designate soon. Since early May, the envoy has been meeting with a broad spectrum of Iraqis with the aim of helping them come to an agreement among themselves on the formation of an interim government that will take over on 30 June and guide the country until elections are held in January 2005.

The Spokesman noted that the Governing Council will be dissolving itself very soon and that a preparatory committee will then be established to begin work on a national conference. Mr. Brahimi, who has been advising the Iraqis on these matters, expects to continue this work. Mr. Eckhard said the national consensus the envoy has been trying to forge was not focused on the office of the Prime Minister but rather on the kind of institutions and government that are being established: the Interim Iraqi Government, the Preparatory Committee for the National Conference, the National Conference itself, as well as the Election Commission.

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