



UN-Iraq Humanitarian Update September 2005

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)

Introduction

As part of the UNAMI mandate to coordinate and deliver essential humanitarian assistance, the UN Country Team (UNCT) in collaboration with Iraqi authorities and NGO partners, has a leading role in emergency preparedness and response activities for Iraq. By using the Cluster approach to address areas of common concern, UN agencies combine resources and expertise to implement coordinated emergency humanitarian responses and regular programme assistance.

When emergency situations arise, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator manages the humanitarian response of the UNCT and its NGO partners through the Emergency Working Group (EWG) in Amman. The EWG benefits from the participation of the UN Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator in

Baghdad as well as NGOs and other stakeholders there. EWG members focus on the material and protection needs of communities affected by either military conflict or ethno-religious tensions. In September, the EWG met twice to assess humanitarian needs, to coordinate the implementation of emergency responses and to update contingency plans in regard to the emergency situations mentioned below. In addition to this, the UNCT in Baghdad continued to work closely with the office of the Prime Minister to support the development of a specialized cell to enhance coordination of the Iraqi government's emergency response efforts. UNAMI agreed to temporarily second a Humanitarian Advisor to the Prime Minister's Office in Baghdad to provide support and advice. This Advisor will directly assist the government in setting up an Emergency Coordination and Response Cell, and will be replaced by a full time staff member to be deployed in the last quarter of 2005.

Emergency Situations and Humanitarian Response

Al Aemma Bridge Update: The UNCT continued to implement a coordinated response to the terrible human tragedy which occurred on 31st August at al-Aemma Bridge in northern Baghdad, where an estimated 1,500 pilgrims were killed or injured from a stampede on the bridge. UNOPS led the UNCT effort to deliver aid packages to the victims and families involved

or affected by the tragedy. Based on verified lists, 800 bereaved families received food and cash grants totaling US \$190 per package per family to help cope with the immediate aftermath. A further 500 families of the injured are due to receive cash grants each of US \$190, although the total number of beneficiaries may increase as casualty lists are updated with additional victims. Distributions were undertaken in close cooperation with local community charity organizations, including

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the Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS) which provided the beneficiary lists, volunteer staff, and managed distribution points. Out of the estimated total US \$ 500,000 pledged by donors including IOM, the Italian government, and the United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund, approximately US \$200,000 was committed to date. It is expected that any remaining funds will be used to provide assistance in other humanitarian emergencies such as in Tal Afar and western parts of Anbar Governorate.

Tal Afar Update: The humanitarian situation in Tal Afar continued as a focus for UNCT humanitarian activities throughout the month. NGO monitors reported that as of 18th September an estimated 5,579 families fled due to fighting in the city with some families moving to locations as far away as Najaf, Karbala and Sadr City in Baghdad. Access to residents and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in locations near the city was difficult and sporadic due to security constraints. However, the UNCT was able to provide emergency relief assistance and to make contingency stocks and funds available to further respond if necessary.

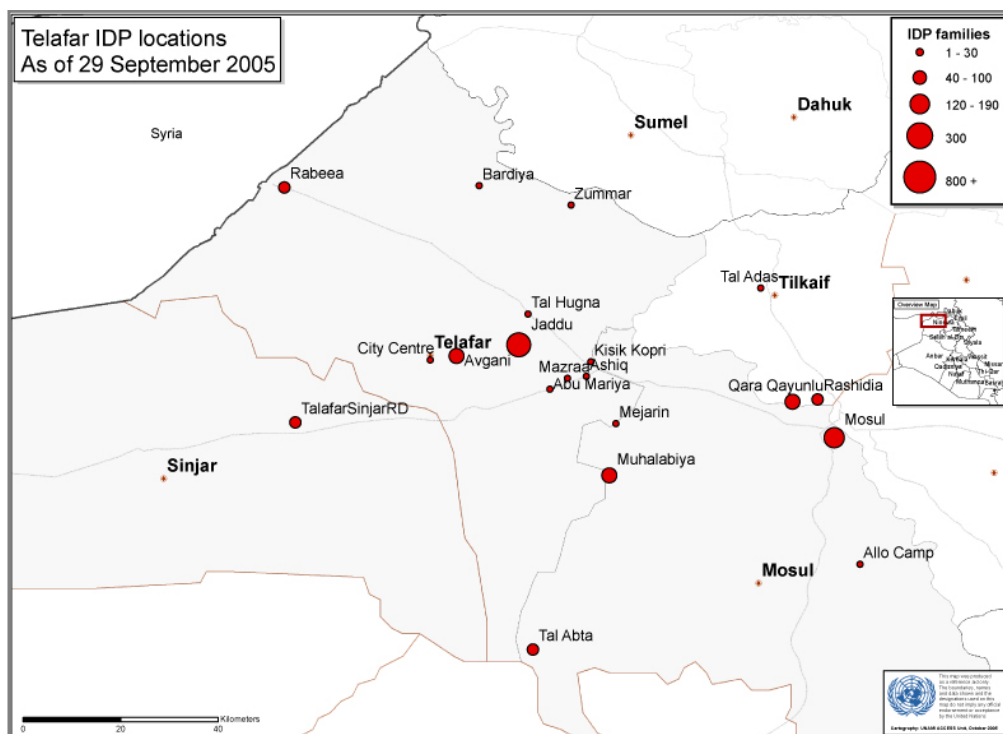
To respond to the immediate needs around Tal Afar, IOM completed another cycle of distributions of intermediate food and non-food items including clothing to 340 IDP families in Ninewa governorate. UNICEF organised the trucking of 40,000 liters of water per day to various IDP locations and provided partner NGOs and the IRCS with relief items for distribution

including 15,000 jerry cans, 3,000 collapsible bags, 43,200 water purification tablets, 14,400 bars of soap and seven New Emergency Health Kits sufficient to cover the needs of 1,000 people for three months. UNHCR released 400 tents and other non food items to partner NGOs and the IRCS. WHO delivered US \$ 100,000 worth of emergency drugs and medical supplies to support affected health facilities. In addition, the UNCT pre-positioned emergency stocks in depots in nearby Mosul and Erbil to expedite the further delivery of assistance as required. By the end of the month, many families started to return to the city and as of 30th September, the total number of displaced families decreased to approximately 1,164. The Ministry of Trade was beginning some food distributions inside the city and the rehabilitation of some basic service institutions commenced. However, access to water, health care and electricity remained disrupted.

Anbar Update: Insecurity continued to affect the western districts of Anbar Governorate, where according to IOM monitors, over 11,000 families are currently

living in displacement. At the beginning of the month, 800 families were displaced from Huseeba, Karabla and Ubaidi. Towards the end of the month, reports suggested an increase in humanitarian displacement around locations such as Sadah near the Syrian border. However, access to the area for humanitarian actors remained sporadic due to insecurity in the area, making accurate assessments of IDP movements difficult.

To respond to immediate needs, IOM provided intermediate food and non-food items to over 1,300 recently displaced vulnerable families, while 3,500 families benefited from IOM and UNICEF funded water trucking support in IDP locations. In coordination with WHO, the Ministry of Health also sent a convoy of urgent medical supplies to western Anbar to support the delivery of health services.



Providing Regular Programme Assistance

UNICEF maintained the daily trucking of water to certain residential areas and hospitals in Baghdad using private contractors, permitting approximately 180,000 people to have continued access to potable drinking water in September. 468 tons of essential chemicals were delivered to the main warehouse of the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works (MoMPW) and a water treatment plant operated by the Mayorality of Baghdad to assist the Baghdad authorities with water purification.

UNICEF delivered 100 basic emergency health kits to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Baghdad to increase the emergency response capacity

of the MoH, and these kits will cover the immediate health needs of a total of 100,000 people.

In September 2005, WFP delivered 206 metric tonnes (MT) of wheat flour and 107 MT of vegetable oil into Iraq bringing the total number of commodities dispatched to date to 23,982 MT. During September, WFP implementing partners distributed 1,518 MT of commodities bringing the total distributed so far to 17,042 MT. WFP used these commodities to support both the Ministry of Education (MoE) with school feeding activities in primary schools in Iraq; and the MoH with vulnerable group feeding activities in Iraqi health facilities to malnourished children under the age of 5, pregnant and nursing mothers, and TB patients.

Data collected by MoE project implementation staff indicated that school

attendance rates increased by 10% and female student enrolment increased by 12% in those districts where vegetable oil was distributed as an incentive for school attendance.

Similarly, data collected from primary health care centres and community child care units during routine monitoring visits revealed that, using the Height-for-Age scale, 23% of measured children were below normal growth before the WFP intervention and this fell to 21% after the intervention. Likewise, using the Weight-for-Height scale data revealed that some 6.7% of measured children were below normal growth before WFP intervention with this figure dropping to 4.4% after the intervention.

IDPs, Refugees and Durable Solutions

During September, some 884 Iraqi refugees were assisted by UNHCR and its partners to return from Iran to northern Governorates in Iraq in a series of eight convoys. The deteriorating security situation in the south of the country brought assisted returns to a halt and only 33 Iraqi refugees could be assisted to return from Iran. This brings the total number of people assisted to return to 23,429 since August 2003. UNHCR released a new advisory on return to Iraq which is available on its public web site (click [HERE](#)).

A three-day workshop on assessment reports, returnee monitoring and Legal Aid and Information Centres (LAICs) was organised in Amman for staff from UNHCR partners, the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) authorities. The workshop successfully achieved its

objectives, namely: to have a common understanding on the drafting of assessment report and various data gathering methods; to improve participants' skills in conducting returnee monitoring interviews and using the returnee monitoring database; and to enhance participants' understanding of the objectives and operational requirements of LAICs.

Activities in various UNHCR-supported returnee reintegration projects progressed rapidly. By the end of the month, from a total 334 housing units to be constructed in the south of the country, 159 were completed and construction of a further 125 units was ongoing. Out of 41 quick-impact projects funded by UNHCR, 27 projects were completed. These village-level projects include activities such as refurbishing schools, providing equipment to health centres, cleaning rivers, connecting remote villages to existing water networks, and developing income-generation projects for women. In northern Iraq, the site preparation, excavation, laying of concrete foundations and building of walls to the level of the roof was completed for 182 housing units.



The journey to Iraq – UNHCR



Preparing assistance for returnees - UNHCR

IOM, UNHCR and an international organisation partner organised a seven-day workshop in Amman for 27 Iraq Property Claims Commission (IPCC) staff on the lifecycle of an IPCC claim. The purpose of the workshop was to ensure that there was a common understanding of the IPCC claims process as well as identifying aspects of the process which could be made

more efficient. To date, a total of 127,610 claims were received by IPCC offices, out of which 11,296 were ruled upon by the IPCC Regional Commissions.

Under the auspices of the IOM Capacity Building Programme with the MoDM, six training events in three different countries were organised for 25 MoDM officials. Additionally, UNHCR transferred the ownership to the MoDM of nine vehicles and one crane intended for use by the MoDM in three southern Governorates.



Being re-united with loved ones
- UNHCR

Advocacy and Human Rights

The UNCT and its partners continued to urge the relevant authorities to respect humanitarian space and the human rights of civilians, and to facilitate the safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian actors to those in need. It also continued to stress the importance of public facilities, such as hospitals and clinics, remaining accessible and civilian in nature in combat areas.

The UNAMI Human Rights Office organised a four-day meeting in Amman to finalise preparations in the establishment of a National Centre for Missing and Disappeared Persons in Iraq. Participants came from all over Iraq and included families of missing persons, representatives from the Ministry of Human Rights from

Baghdad, Erbil and Basrah as well as representatives of international organizations and other interest groups.

The purpose of the Centre is to support the survivors of persons who have involuntarily disappeared. It will be established in accordance with Iraqi Government Decree number 18 issued on 20th February 2005.

As part of the UNOCHA-supported assistance to emergency preparedness and response activities in Iraq, UNAMI organised a four-day workshop in Amman on the Sphere Standards - the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards for

Emergency Response. The workshop was facilitated by a Sphere certified instructor and was conducted entirely in Arabic. In total, there were 29 participants drawn from the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) as well as international and national NGOs, with preference given to field-based staff assessing, managing and implementing actual emergency response activities in Iraq.

The overall objective of the Humanitarian Charter and the Minimum Standards is to contribute to an operational framework for accountability in humanitarian assistance efforts.

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