

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

The estimated number of internally displaced Iraqis now exceeds 2.5 million, according to IOM's February Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). IDPs are found in 2,857 locations across the country; approximately 800,000 are in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I).

On 1 March, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) began a military operation in Tikrit, causing displacement to Samarra in the Salah al Din Governorate and to Baghdad, Kirkuk and Diyala Governorates.

The Kirkuk Governorate continues to experience conflict, particularly in Hawija District. Spontaneous IDPs returns have been reported from Kirkuk to Al Alam district, in Salah al Din Governorate.

IDP families have spontaneously returned to Muqdadiya District, in Diyala Governorate, requiring the reconstruction of the infrastructure.

The on-going conflict in Anbar Governorate resulted in displacement from Fallujah. IDPs and host communities throughout Anbar are in need of food, shelter and non-food items.

Protection

Monitoring teams of UNHCR and its partners have reached 1.1 million individuals throughout Iraq, to determine needs, vulnerabilities, registration status, demographic information, and accommodation circumstances.

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- A working group was formed to prevent and respond to harassment of women and children in Arbat IDP Camp, Sulaymaniah Governorate.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Some Peshmerga forces visited family members in IDP camps in Dohuk whilst wearing their uniform, raising protection concerns for IDPs living in camps. Local authorities are addressing the matter in cooperation with UNHCR.
- Garbage collection and WASH issues remain a concern in IDP camps in the Duhok Governorate, particularly in Chimashko camp. UNHCR is following up on the matter with the WASH Cluster.
- Some 3,300 people displaced from al-Baghdadi, Anbar Governorate to the surrounding areas require urgent assistance.



IDPs in Wassit Governorate receive non-food items (UNHCR/A. Al-Zuhairy)

NON-CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR partners completed 47 rapid needs assessments reaching 6,366 individuals displaced from the Salah al Din Governorate; priority needs include shelter, food, and healthcare support.
- UNHCR and its partners commemorated International Women's Day with events in the Governorates of Najaf, Erbil, Kirkuk and Thi-Qar. Activities highlighted the importance of equal enjoyment of rights and services and women's participation in community leadership roles.
- In the Erbil Governorate, UNHCR and its partners supported the election of the first community-based committee, with 15 members elected representing IDPs, refugees and the host community in the Kaznazan area of Erbil. In the same city, UNHCR and government joint registration missions registered some 600 families in the Dibaga sub-district.
- UNHCR trained its partner protection staff on the use of digital protection monitoring tools for IDPs in the Erbil and Sulaymaniyah Governorates.
- UNHCR held six community meetings in the Sulaymaniyah Governorate for IDP women and girls to discuss protection issues, psychological awareness, early marriage and gender-based violence. Additionally, UNHCR reached out to 107 IDP women with health, gender-based violence and education awareness sessions.
- UNHCR conducted a two-day workshop on coordination and protection in the Governorate of Basra.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Spontaneous returns were reported in al-Muqdadiyah district in the Diyala Governorate. Local authorities requested assistance from the humanitarian community for peaceful coexistence and psychosocial support programs, water and sanitation support, rehabilitation of irrigation channels and electricity systems.
- Eviction risks continue to be a concern in the Kirkuk Governorate for families from the Diyala, Ninewa and Salah al Din Governorates. UNHCR continues to advocate for IDPs to remain in Kirkuk.
- Reports have been received of alleged security-related arrests of IDPs in the Kirkuk Governorate; UNHCR has however not been able to access the detainees.
- IDPs, including unaccompanied minors, face challenges in accessing Sulaymaniyah Governorate and exercising freedom of movement.
- In the Erbil Governorate, IDPs from Ninewa Governorate face difficulty in obtaining new and/or replace elapsed civil identification documents. While a Nationality and Civil ID office was recently established in Sheikhan District, Ninewa Governorate, individuals displaced to the Erbil Governorate are unable to easily access this service due to movement restrictions.
- Throughout Iraq, the need for significant livelihood support increased as IDPs' financial conditions are generally deteriorating.

Shelter and NFIs

As the inter-agency Shelter/NFI Cluster lead agency, UNHCR promoted the implementation of the national Shelter/NFI Cluster shelter and winterization strategy, complementing the work of local authorities and other humanitarian actors in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable IDPs throughout Iraq. People living outdoors, in sub-standard structures, in colder climatic conditions, or with particular individual vulnerabilities were prioritized for assistance.

Rapid Response to displacement in the Salah al Din Governorate

In the Salah al Din Governorate, in response to the forced displacement caused by the on-going military operations near Tikrit, on 5 March, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency mission to Samarra. UNHCR partners distributed 800 core relief items kits benefitting some 4,800 individuals. This was the first distribution of assistance to IDPs in Samarra since armed groups took control of the area in the summer of 2014.

CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- As part of the inter-agency response to the forced displacement from Tikrit to Samarra in the Salah al Din Governorate, UNHCR provided technical support in assessing the suitability of two potential camp sites, in cooperation with the Samarra authorities.
- In Garmawa Camp in the Ninewa Governorate, 1,200 concrete tent slabs were completed, along with the construction of the UNHCR office and a rub hall.
- In the Sulaymaniyah Governorate, land preparation is on-going at Ashti camp, with an anticipated opening in late June. Qoratu camp development continues; works for tent slabs, block walls, earthworks and kitchens were completed. Work is in progress with regard to kitchen window installation, electrical connections and health and WASH facilities. Construction works in Zargwez Collective Centre were completed and the settlement was handed over to UNHCR.
- In the Duhok Governorate, in the Khanke camp, the UNHCR office and rub hall works were completed, while the concrete tent slab constructions were completed in the Sharia camp.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- In the Baharka camp extension, in Erbil Governorate, WASH facilities and water supply need improvements.
- In the Sulaymaniyah Governorate, Arbat IDP camp is over its maximum capacity and WASH facilities need improvement. The construction of new camps would help decongestion.



UNHCR site planner oversees the construction of Ashti Camp, Sulaymaniyah Governorate, designed to accommodate some 6,000 people (UNHCR/ D. Tilakamonkul)

NON-CAMP

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and its partners distributed core relief items to 800 families displaced to Samarra in the Salah al Din Governorate due to on-going military operations near Tikrit. The distributions benefitted some 4,800 people. In total, some 2,500 families throughout central and southern Iraq received NFI kits.
- UNHCR assisted in the distribution of tents to 410 families in the Yayawa and Tuzkhormatu areas in Kirkuk Governorate.
- In Duhok Governorate, UNHCR distributed 38 tents to families at risk of eviction in the Sharia collective centre area.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gap

- Some 24,000 people displaced from the Salah al Din Governorate were assessed as being in need of shelter and NFI support.
- An increasing number of urban IDPs in the Erbil Governorate indicated a need for shelter support. In particular, they expressed the desire to relocate to camps due to the risk of eviction and in connection with their precarious financial resources. As Erbil-based camps are at full capacity, the need for more shelter options for IDP families remains a priority concern.



Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)

Achievements and Impact

CAMPS

- In the Dohuk Governorate, as part of its capacity-building programme, the CCCM Cluster conducted camp management training for 11 staff from NGOs, Government and UN partners.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Particularly due to the scarce resources available, care and maintenance of camp infrastructure remains a gap across Iraq.

Working in Partnership

On 5 March, Dr. Ali Sindi, the Minister of Planning of the KRG, Mr. Nawzad Hadi, the Governor of Erbil and Emmanuel Gignac, UNCHR Coordinator for the KR-I, accompanied Mr. Rob Nicholson, the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Baharka IDP camp, Erbil Governorate. This was Mr. Nicholson's first visit to the region. The mission met with the camp manager, ACTED, the Barzani Foundation, the International Medical Corps and some IDP families to discuss the protection, health and education needs in the camp and host communities.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Finding the strength to overcome forced displacement at the church

Dawodia, Dohuk Governorate, 12 March 2015 (UNHCR) – Hanan cried when she attended the new church in Dawodia. The unique experience reminded her of sad memories. After praying, she felt safe, comfortable and left the church with a positive spirit, which enabled her to carry on with her life as a forcibly displaced woman.

Hanan, thirty two-years old, fled her hometown of Al-Hamadaniya, in Ninewa Governorate, eight months ago. She escaped with her family, including her husband, parents, younger sister and three children just before armed groups stormed the town. They found shelter in Dawodia town where they now feel at home. Hanan later moved to the newly constructed Dawodia Camp, while her parents continue living in the town, just a five minute walk from the camp.



IDP Hanan with one of her daughters and nieces at church in Dawodia, Duhok Governorate. (UNHCR/H. Suliman)

In Al-Hamadaniya, Hanan had a small dry-cleaning and dress shop, which she enjoyed very much. “Life was very good” she recalls. “We used to visit family members in our free time, hang out and just have fun.” Now, her husband works in Duhok city and visits the family in the camp every week. The children attend school in Dawodia town. Her fifteen-year-old daughter quickly made new friends and adjusted to the new environment. But still: “The school back home is better,” observes Hanan’s daughter.

Hanan always found comfort in church. At home, she used to attend it regularly; fortunately, the new church in Dawodia is near her parent’s home. She attends church twice a week. It is her source of relief. Hanan still remembers her first day there – she prayed and cried, asking God to end the conflict and to allow all the displaced children to go back to school. “It [home] has always been peaceful; this is first time in history our town went through this,” says Hanan. Now, she seems happy as at least they are all safe, and she can always go to church for some comfort.

Hanan, thank you for sharing your experience; now more than ever, your story is a vivid reminder of how important freedom of religion and respect for religion is; and how a prayer can make a difference in someone’s life, someone like you, someone like us.

By Husam Eldin Mustafa

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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