

Iraq: Little new displacement but in the region of 2.8 million Iraqis remain internally displaced

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The number of civilian casualties fell significantly in 2009 but violence remains endemic. The rate of displacement has fallen with only isolated instances of new displacement. The rate of return of IDPs and refugees did not increase as many had anticipated and no other durable solution for IDPs is promoted by the Iraqi government. Iraqi society remains deeply divided and the neighbourhoods of Baghdad which were most affected by displacement are now more ethnically or religiously homogenous than at any time in Iraq's history. Tensions are high in many areas, particularly in the northern governorates of Kirkuk and Ninewa, and there is rising violence in the run-up to national elections taking place in March 2010.

The Iraqi government has taken steps to address displacement but has proven unable to meet the needs of IDPs or to dedicate the resources needed for them to be able to achieve durable solutions. IDPs have inadequate access to basic services and face considerable obstacles to enjoyment of their rights. Preliminary indicators suggest many IDPs will be unable to vote in coming elections.

The United Nations has increased its presence but its role remains limited. It works in previously inaccessible areas through implementing partners, but it is still constrained by insecurity. International NGOs, remotely managing programmes through local partners, are cautiously increasing their in-country presence but face numerous challenges. In many areas, Iraqi NGOs and faith-based or politically-affiliated agencies have provided assistance where the government has not.

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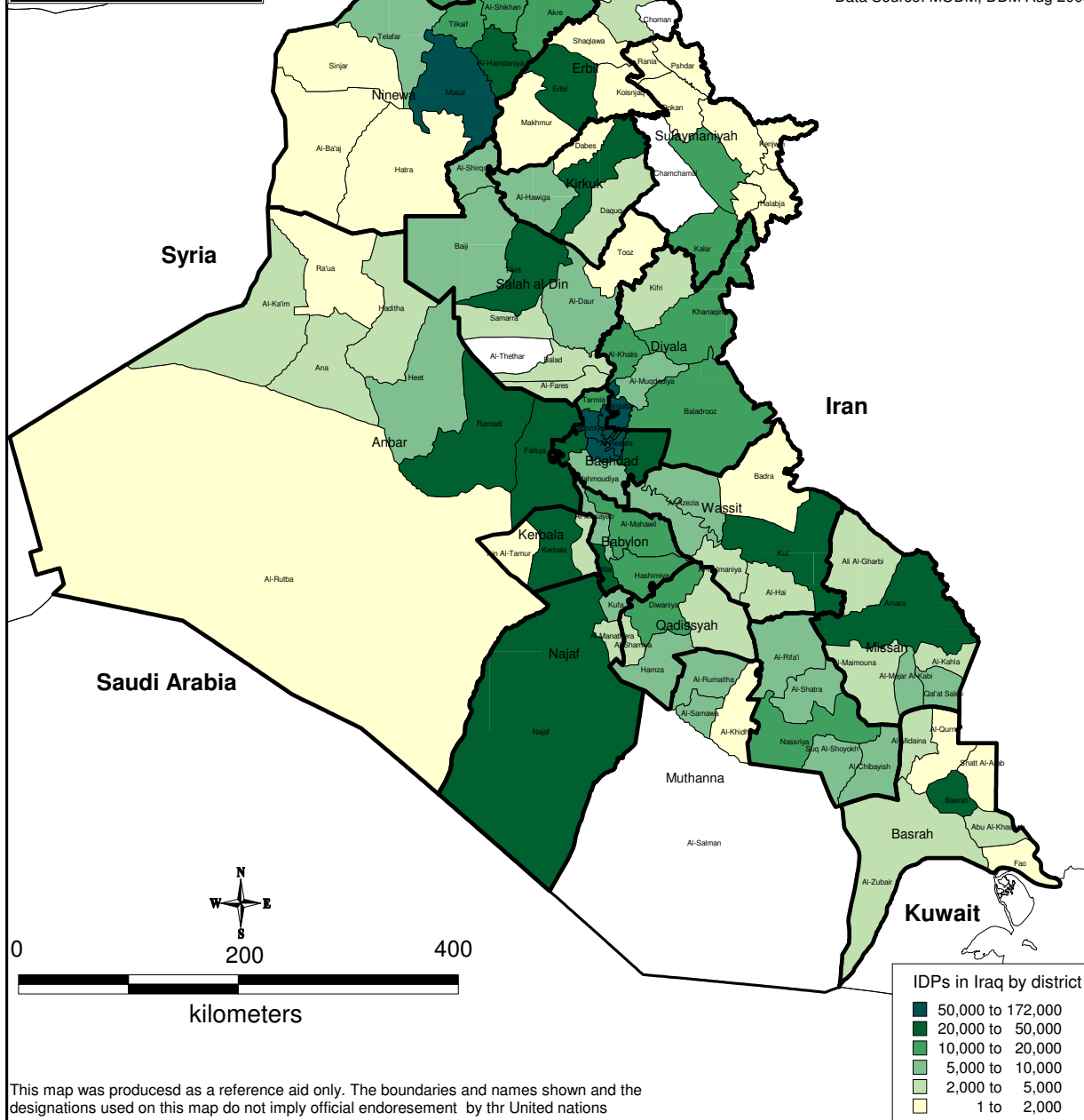
IDPs in Iraq by district January 2010



Top 15 Districts		
Governor	District	IDPs
Baghdad	Karkh	171,400
Baghdad	Al Resafa	123,239
Ninewa	Mosul	91,959
Baghdad	Adhamiya	78,673
Baghdad	Kadhmiya	69,463
Diyala	Ba'quba	62,128
Kirkuk	Kirkuk	43,869
Kerbala	Kerbala	42,865
Baghdad	Al-Sadr	41,364
Dahuk	Dahuk	38,087
Ninewa	Al-Hamdar	35,181
Najaf	Najaf	32,837
Erbil	Erbil	32,465
Baghdad	Mada'in	31,974
Anbar	Falluja	31,641

Governorate	Families	Family Members	Percentage
Anbar	11,621	70,532	5%
Babylon	9,795	60,286	4%
Baghdad	95,338	572,783	37%
Basrah	5,647	35,226	2%
Dahuk	13,708	63,331	4%
Diyala	20,286	121,001	8%
Erbil	8,125	37,584	2%
Kerbala	7,595	48,038	3%
Kirkuk	9,049	52,041	3%
Missan	6,042	42,525	3%
Muthanna	2,185	15,837	1%
Najaf	8,068	46,732	3%
Ninewa	32,328	174,475	11%
Qadissyah	3,721	24,362	2%
Salah al-Din	9,393	56,449	4%
Sulaymanyah	7,224	33,375	2%
Thi-Qar	6,517	44,188	3%
Wassit	8,857	53,238	3%
Total	265,499	1,552,003	100%

Data Source: MODM, DDM Aug 2009



Source: UNHCR

More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org

Background

In March 2007, the UN acknowledged that Iraq was facing a humanitarian emergency (UNSC, March 2007; UN News, March 2007). Military operations, generalised violence adding to successive wars and 13 years of UN sanctions had eroded living standards. Policies pursued both by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the interim administration established in the aftermath of the March 2003 invasion, and subsequent Iraqi governments had exacerbated sectarian divisions (ICG, February 2006). The Sunni community was marginalised following Shi'ia and Kurdish gains in January 2005 elections and subsequently in the drafting of the constitution which was passed by referendum in October 2005 (ICG, February 2006). Sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'ia militias following the February 2006 bombing of the Al Askari Shi'ia shrine in Samarra led to unprecedented civilian casualties (ICJ, February 2008). In Baghdad, militants sought to establish sectarian boundaries across what had been mixed neighbourhoods, systematically displacing members of opposing sects to consolidate territorial and political control. Several sectarian groups, affiliated to political actors and supported by state institutions, were involved (Brookings, August 2008).

In February 2007, a US military "surge" coincided with the realignment of some Sunni insurgent groups and the emergence of pro-government "awakening councils". In March 2007 Muqtada al Sadr's Shi'ia militia declared a ceasefire. These developments resulted in a significant decline in violence (UNSC, March 2007; ICG, April 2008). However, Iraq was left fragmented along sectarian lines, and by mid-2009 hundreds of civilians were still being killed each month (CSIS, November 2009; ICRC, August 2009).

The US armed forces withdrew from Iraqi cities by the end of June 2009, leaving the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to take charge. The US government has announced plans to withdraw its forces by

January 2012 (Al Jazeera, November 2009; BBC, December 2009). Initiatives to accommodate Shi'ia, Sunni and Kurdish parties and actors have included modification of the "de-Baathification" law of 2003, an amnesty for insurgents in February 2008, integration of Sunni Arabs into political and security institutions, provincial elections in January 2009, and parliamentary and presidential elections in July 2009 for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) which rules over the three northern governorates of Duhuk, Irbil, and Sulaymaniyah.

Forthcoming parliamentary elections, which are taking place in March 2010, could be a significant marker of progress towards national consensus and reconciliation. However, disputes about candidates' eligibility and ongoing violence are a sombre reminder of the fragility of the situation (UNAMI, November 2009; HRW March 2010).

Though the number of civilian casualties fell significantly in 2009 violence remains endemic. Attacks in Baghdad and Mosul killed hundreds, while sectarian and ethnic-based tensions and generalised violence have continued in Ninewa, Anbar, Babylon, Salah-al-Din, Diyala, and Kirkuk (ICRC August 2009; HRW, November 2009; BBC, December 2009; CSIS, November 2009; IRIN January 2010).

Figures and patterns of displacement

Forced displacement in Iraq is commonly considered to have taken place in one of three periods: under the former Ba'ath government; from the March 2003 invasion until the February 2006 Samarra bombing; and since then.

Somewhere in the region of 2.8 million people were internally displaced as of July 2009, of whom an estimated one million had been displaced before 2003, approximately 190,000 between 2003

and 2006, and 1.55 million subsequently (UNHCR, November 2009, and March 2010). Though the government has recognised the situation of pre-2003 displacement, it only registers displacement following 2006. Figures from the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) are based on registration of IDPs in 15 central and southern governorates while KRG undertakes registration in the northern governorates (IDP WG, November 2008).

These figures should be approached with caution. Registration remains voluntary, and contingent on documentation which IDPs may lack. Multiple patterns of displacement also complicate the figures (Brookings, October 2006). The estimates of displacement up to 2003 are outdated and contested; observers suggest that displaced populations, particularly in northern Iraq, have been overestimated or underestimated according to parties' claims over disputed territories (IDMC interviews, November 2008). Current pre-2003 figures are based on data obtained in 2005 by the UN Office for Project Services, by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (IDP WG, February 2008).

Monitoring and assessments undertaken by the humanitarian community, MoDM and KRG are mainly based on post-2006 figures. It is estimated that 60 per cent of the 1.77 million people internally displaced since then originate from Baghdad. The majority are Shi'ia and Sunni Arab (57 and 30 per cent respectively) but there are also significant numbers from minority populations, notably Shabaks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Armenians, Faeli Kurds, Yazidis and Sabeen Mandeans (IOM May 2009; MRG, September 2009; IRIN, July 2008).

Host governments have suggested there are 1.9 million Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries but these figures may be overestimated, since far fewer have registered with UNHCR. Iraq also hosts

close to 35,000 refugees in 13 locations, principally in Irbil, Anbar and Duhuk. Most refugees are of Palestinian, Turkish or Iranian origin (UNHCR, November 2009).

Displacement before 2003

The former government forcibly displaced political opponents, particularly Kurds in northern Iraq and Shi'ias in the south. In the north, "Arabisation" campaigns were designed to thwart Kurdish aspirations to independence and strengthen control over oil reserves adjacent to the ethnically diverse city of Kirkuk. Land and houses belonging to evicted Kurds were offered as incentives to encourage Arabs to move there (RI, November 2003; UNCHR, February 1999). The end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988 saw an intensification of atrocities against the Kurds. The Al-Anfal campaign in the late 1980s caused over 100,000 deaths and the destruction of some 4,000 villages (USCR, 2000; Dammers, 1998; HRW, August 2004). After the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq was divided: the northern governorates of Dohuk, Irbil and Sulaymaniyah came under Kurdish control, supported by a no-fly zone, and separated by the "green line" from the rest of the country.

In the predominantly Shi'ia southern governorates over 340,000 people were internally displaced. The government drained the Arab marsh land to facilitate movement of military units during the Iran-Iraq war and subsequently burnt villages and used chemical weapons. Between 100,000 and 200,000 of the marsh land's estimated population of 250,000 were displaced (UNHCR, August 2004; UNOHCI, June 2003). Many thousands more were displaced from the border with Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, of whom 80,000 people were still displaced within Basra province in 2004 (UNCT, August 2004). Political and religious persecution was a further cause of displacement in the south and in Baghdad (UNHCR, August 2004). In 1998, at least 25,000 people were reportedly expelled from Baghdad (Fawcett and Tanner, October 2002).

Post-2003 displacement

It is estimated that 190,000 people were displaced between 2003 and the end of 2005 as result of military operations (IOM, January 2008; Cluster F, 2007). Following the 2003 invasion, thousands of people were displaced by air strikes and urban warfare in Anbar, Thi'Qar, Basra and Baghdad (UNCT, August 2004). In the first post-invasion years, operations by the Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNF-I) and Iraqi units against armed insurgents were the main causes of displacement, particularly in predominantly Sunni western areas. Most displacements were temporary (Brookings, October 2006). In November 2004, almost the entire population of Fallujah was temporarily displaced. Meanwhile, after the fall of the former government, thousands of displaced Kurds, Turkomans and others began returning to the north, while Iraqi Arabs were forcibly displaced from northern areas (RI, November 2003).

Post-2006 displacement

The most significant cause of displacement since the invasion has been sectarian conflict, following the bombing of the Al-Askari shrine in Samarra in February 2006. By December 2007, close to 1.6 million people were estimated to have been displaced since early 2006. Those at most risk were Sunni and Shi'ia in locations where they were members of minorities, and mixed Sunni/Shi'ia households (HRW, November 2006). Triggers for displacement included abductions, assassinations, and intimidatory phone calls, graffiti and leaflets (IOM, February 2007; Brookings, October 2006). Most violence and displacement took place in and around Baghdad but it was also significant in Ba'quba, Samarra, Abu Ghraib, Mosul and Basra.

Professionals, intellectuals and those associated with the coalition forces were also targeted and forced to flee (UNAMI, January 2007). Refugees, particularly Palestinians, and members of minority groups such as Chaldeans, Assyrians, Yazidis, Shabak, Turkmen, Sabean-Mandean and Roma also faced persecution, and many sought refuge

in Kurdish regions. Iraqi Arabs have continued to be forcibly displaced from the north. In the second half of 2007 at least 2,000 families fled Kirkuk (UNHCR, January 2007; IRIN, September 2007). Clashes between Sunni and among rival Shi'ia militias in southern Iraq also caused displacement (UNSC, December 2006).

Decline in rates of displacement since 2007

The rate of displacement has substantially declined since late 2007 but this has coincided with an increasingly pronounced sectarian divide, most visibly in Baghdad. The MNF-I and ISF cordoned off areas of Baghdad with concrete barriers; some have since been removed but others have been erected, leaving many formerly diverse neighbourhoods ethnically homogeneous.

In 2008 and 2009, MNF-I and ISF waged large-scale counter-insurgency operations in Basra, Sadr City in Baghdad, Amarah, Baquba, and Mosul. Operations against the Mahdi militia in Sadr City in 2008 led to the temporary displacement of approximately 4,700 families (IOM, June 2008).

Sectarian and ethnic tensions, fuelled by disputes over governorate borders, continued to cause displacement, although it has become less frequent. Hundreds of families were reportedly displaced in Kirkuk due to ethnic tensions in 2008 (IOM, September 2008). In October 2008, some 2,000 Christian families fled Mosul, following sectarian violence and intimidation (UNHCR, November 2008).

In 2009, while there was no further major conflict-related displacement, there were ongoing isolated cases of displacement. Meanwhile, observers warned that rising tensions over disputed territory in northern Iraq could trigger further displacement (IOM, July 2009 and September 2009; HRW, June 2009). In early 2010, approximately 4,300 Christians fled sectarian violence in Mosul (OCHA, March 2010). Flash floods and drought have displaced over 4,200 families mostly in Kirkuk,

Ninewa and Salah-al-Din but also in Missan, Thi-Qar and Basra (OCHA, December 2009; UNAMI and OCHA, November 2009).

Protection and assistance needs

Despite the decline in violence, the UN and the humanitarian community have continued to report human rights abuses against civilians by militias, criminal gangs and security forces (UNAMI, December 2008; UNAMI December 2009). In mid-2009 it was reported that 500 civilians were being killed and over 2,000 injured each month, mainly in Ninewa, Baghdad and Diyala (ICRC, August, 2009). Kidnappings, assassinations, forced recruitment, explosions, unexploded ordnance and mines, sexual and gender-based violence and generalised criminality and violence are still experienced by IDPs and host communities. Perpetrators of human rights abuses have continued to enjoy impunity (UNAMI, December 2009; UNHCR, December 2009; IDP WG, November 2008).

In a survey in the second half of 2009, 11 per cent of post-2006 IDPs and 28 per cent of returned IDPs reported being targeted due to their religious and political affiliation. Six per cent reported having been targeted simply because they were IDPs (UNHCR, December 2009). 30 per cent of IDPs surveyed reported that family members, including children, were absent after being kidnapped, abducted or detained (UNHCR, December 2009).

Many Iraqis have been forced to flee to areas where employment and public services are limited, overstretched or non-existent. Host communities have increasingly found it a burden to share limited resources (Cluster F, February 2007; IDP WG, November 2008). There have been tensions over scarcity of resources, overburdened social services, shortages of housing, property disputes and rising prices (UNHCR, December 2009).

Over 70 per cent of IDPs are women and children (IOM, May 2009). Displaced female heads of household, households headed by older people, widows, divorced people, women without male relatives, and orphans are acutely vulnerable (UNHCR, December 2009) but their numbers are not known. There is concern that gender issues are not sufficiently addressed in the national response to displacement (NCCI, January 2010; RI, July 2009; ICRC, March 2009).

Freedom of movement, registration and voting rights

Checkpoints, curfews, permission requirements, and security barriers continue to restrict the movement of both displaced and non-displaced Iraqis, particularly in and around Baghdad (IDP WG, November 2008; UNHCR December 2009). Though most governorate authorities allow IDPs to enter, there have been obstacles to registering. In 2009, the government issued an order halting further registration of IDPs (IOM, February and May 2009). However there were reports of continuing registration in some governorates (IOM, May 2009).

Reasons for non-registration include bureaucratic delays, lack of documentation, perceived lack of benefit, or fear of being identified by the authorities (IDMC interview, January 2010; UNHCR, December 2009). Unregistered IDPs are unable to rent or purchase property, vote, obtain land title and access services specific to IDPs (IOM, January 2008; UNHCR, August 2008; UNHCR November 2009). The number of unregistered post-2006 IDPs identified may rise as more areas are assessed (IDMC interview, December 2009).

Each governorate has different requirements for IDPs trying to register. These may include an original residency card, the card needed to access the Public Distribution System (the PDS, Iraq's long-established basic food distribution programme), the national identity card or a letter of approval from municipal councillors, mayors, local police or

the MoDM (IOM, June 2008; UNHCR, September 2008). Registration has been tightly restricted in areas with high levels of sectarian violence such as Kirkuk. In northern governorates, IDPs without sponsorship were reportedly blocked from registration until recently. In late 2008, IDPs were also reportedly denied registration due to sectarian, ethnic or tribal bias (UNHCR, September 2008). This continues to be observed on a small scale (UNHCR, December 2009). Some newly displaced people are reportedly not being registered (IDMC interview, January 2010).

There is growing concern about IDP participation in the scheduled March 2010 elections. Surveys show IDPs and returnees are well informed about voter registration procedures but over 30 per cent fear they will be unable to register due to lack of required documentation and bureaucratic delays in updating voting registries (UNHCR, December 2010).

Shelter, livelihoods and access to basic services

There has been an overall reduction in the standard of living of all Iraqis since 2003 (OCHA, February 2008 and December 2009). Most IDPs are concerned about shelter, food, employment and access to basic services (IDP WG, November 2008; OCHA December 2009). Unemployment particularly affects IDPs, as they move to areas where their skills might not be marketable (IOM, June 2008). Most IDPs, particularly women, cannot find work. Over 60 per cent of IDP families have no members employed (IOM, May 2009; IDP WG, June 2008).

Shelter remains a high priority for all Iraqis. Many dwellings are dilapidated, overcrowded and unsafe. The government reports a housing deficit of some two million units and that 57 per cent of the urban population lack access to clean water, sanitation or secure tenure (OCHA, December 2009). Over 60 per cent of post-2006 IDPs are thought to live in rented housing, 15 per cent with host families and over 20 per cent in collec-

tive settlements, tents, former military camps, and public buildings. In 2008 it was thought that over 250,000 IDPs were occupying public property (UNHCR, September 2008). In 2009, UNHCR estimated over 450,000 IDPs resided in informal collective settlements (UNHCR, December 2009). IDP tenants often endure overcrowded conditions in substandard dwellings and are at risk of eviction. IDPs in public buildings or on public land live under constant threat of eviction by local authorities (IDP WG, November 2008; OCHA, December 2009).

Government directives in January 2009 called upon squatters to vacate public buildings, and although a postponement was subsequently announced, IDPs have continued to report being evicted or facing the threat of eviction (IDMC interview, January 2010; UNHCR, December 2009).

Most IDPs, like many other Iraqis, rely on the PDS for basic food, but they face considerable obstacles accessing the system. A third of IDPs interviewed in late 2009 did not have a PDS card valid in their governorate of residence and only 15 per cent of those with one reported receiving their full monthly entitlement (UNHCR, December 2009). Though over 90 per cent of IDPs assessed by UNHCR reported being able to obtain health care, a quarter could not afford health care fees (UNHCR, December 2009)

Prospects for durable solutions

The rates of return of IDPs and refugees have not increased in the last year. As of November 2009, UNHCR and IOM estimated that around 350,000 IDPs displaced since 2006 had returned. 60 per cent of them had gone back to Baghdad and 30 per cent to Diyala. This returnee monitoring focuses mainly on post-2006 displacement (IOM, November 2009; UNHCR, November 2009). By December, MoDM had registered only 44,000 returnee families, or approximately 260,000 people

(MoDM, December 2009). While some families do not meet all necessary specifications, the high number of returnees has created a registration backlog (IOM, February 2009; IDMC interview, January 2010). Most returnees are Shi'ia and Sunni Arabs going back to areas where they are a majority, but minority returns have also been noted (IOM, November 2009; UNHCR, February 2009). In the past two years an additional 60,000 refugees have been repatriated (IOM, November 2009; UNHCR, December 2009).

Return is the preferred option of only an estimated 52 per cent of post-2006 IDPs. A quarter express a preference to integrate in their place of displacement while 20 per cent wish to resettle elsewhere (IOM, November 2009). Nonetheless, government programmes have focused primarily on return, with no policies on resettlement or integration. NGOs have repeatedly warned of the dangers of encouraging premature return and failure to consider other durable solutions (RI, July 2008, and April 2009; IDMC interview, December 2009).

UNHCR did not in 2009 encourage refugees to return to Iraq, due to the fragile security situation, though it has facilitated voluntary return (UNHCR, July and November 2009). IOM, following a 2007 government request, has worked with MoDM to facilitate voluntary returns of refugees (IOM, November 2008).

The Iraqi government has sought to encourage and support IDPs wishing to return to their place of origin. In mid-2008, the MoDM opened two centres in Baghdad to help returnees register, receive assistance and resolve property issues (Gol, July and August 2008). A third was reportedly established in Diyala in mid-2009, and branch offices opened in Anbar and Salah-al-Din. As of 2008, returnees could receive around \$850 after returning to their place of origin and formally renouncing their IDP status. Registered IDPs in Baghdad who agreed to vacate premises of returnees they have illegally occupied could apply for rental

assistance worth around \$250 per month for six months. Those who refused to leave risk prosecution under anti-terrorism legislation (Gol, July and August 2008). In Baghdad and Diyala, returnees are also reportedly provided additional protection by local authorities.

In September 2009, the Iraqi government extended measures adopted in Baghdad to Diyala, one of the governorates worst affected by sectarian violence (Gol, July 2009; UNHCR, October 2009; UNAMI, February 2010). It allocated some \$78 million for reconstruction and facilitation of sustainable returns to 27,500 families (UNHCR, October 2009). Priority is being given to 400 villages with high returnee populations many of which are ethnically heterogeneous. There are plans to expand the Diyala model in late 2010 to three key areas in Baghdad (Mada'en, Doura and Sabalbour) and subsequently to the governorates of Salah-al-Din, Ninewa and Anbar (UNHCR, October 2009).

Government initiatives to promote or facilitate return have had mixed results and are limited to registered IDPs displaced between 2006 and January 2008, thus excluding many from minority communities. Returnees are concerned about lack of protection, inadequate state support, bureaucratic procedures and sectarian bias (UNHCR, December 2009; IOM, November 2009; NCCI, January 2010). By the end of 2009, only 40 per cent of returnees interviewed had registered and applied for a grant, and only 30 per cent of those who applied had actually received one (IOM, November 2009). 70 per cent of returnees interviewed in 2009 said they had not received any government assistance (IOM, November 2009).

Continuing insecurity, destroyed or occupied housing, limited access to livelihoods and basic services, and the ethnic or religious make-up of return areas are leading obstacles to the return of refugees and IDPs. In 2009 there were only a few reported incidents of returnee families being specifically targeted but these cases have had a pow-

erful deterrent impact on would-be returnees. A survey of returnees found 38 per cent reported not always feeling safe (IOM, November 2009).

Secondary occupation and property restitution

There are significant numbers of unresolved property issues for pre- and post-2006 IDPs. The current extent of secondary displacement is not known, though an estimated 15 per cent of returned IDPs and 56 per cent of repatriated refugees were in 2009 reportedly unable to access their property (UNHCR, December 2009). In September 2008, MoDM reported that almost 3,500 properties were illegally occupied, including houses, flats, other buildings and land, though anecdotal evidence suggests higher rates of secondary occupation. Nearly 36 per cent of IDPs report their property has been destroyed or damaged and 18 per cent that it is being occupied illegally by militias, local residents or other IDPs; many fear harassment should they attempt to reclaim property (UNHCR, December 2009).

The government has taken steps to facilitate property restitution but its mechanisms are fraught with difficulties. In 2009, approximately 60 per cent of IDPs surveyed reported not seeking assistance from relevant institutions as they lacked required documents, did not trust state institutions, could not afford required fees, or feared retribution (UNHCR, December 2009). The main government measures only relate to property disputes for registered IDPs, exclude businesses and other non-residential property, and do not assist returnees who have been forced to sell property under duress or who were tenants prior to displacement (USIP, April 2009; Brookings-Bern, February 2010). Neither do they include compensation for those who do not wish to return but would prefer to integrate in their place of displacement.

To date, the two MoDM centres in Baghdad have processed over 3,000 property restitution cases. In almost 1,900 cases, property has reportedly been restored (MoDM, December 2009; IRIN, January

2010). However critics note that many of those whose property has been adjudged to have been illegally expropriated have not recovered it (IRIN, January 2010).

These mechanisms complement other property restitution mechanisms for pre-2003 IDPs. The Commission for the Resolution of Real Property Disputes (CRRPD) aims to settle land and property disputes arising from displacement caused by the former government's policies between July 1968 and April 2003. The CRRPD has been criticised for delays and non-enforcement of decisions. By October 2009, it had received over 152,000 claims and ruled on almost 43,000 (CRRPD, October 2009). As of April 2009, only 1,000 decisions had been enforced. At the current rate of progress it will take two decades to finalise all claims (USIP, April, 2009; Brookings-Bern, February 2010). The CRRPD does not address property destruction, leaving many victims of the former government without redress (Brookings-Bern, February 2010). This is particularly problematic in areas where whole villages were destroyed.

In early 2010, legislation was reportedly passed establishing the Real Property Claims Commission (RPCC) which shall replace the CRRPD and include a compensation programme for movable and immovable property expropriated or damaged under the former government.

National and international responses

The government has taken several important steps to address the needs of returnees and IDPs, however its ability to respond to the needs of IDPs and provide for durable solutions has been weakened by insecurity, sectarianism and lack of national reconciliation, and also lack of institutional capacity, corruption and bureaucracy (RI, April 2008; Brookings, August 2008; IDMC interview, January 2010).

MoDM is mandated to address IDP and refugee issues, and the Ministries of Trade, the Interior, Health, Education and others are also engaged. MoDM has extended its presence in most governorates, enhanced national registration procedures, and facilitated returns. It played a pivotal role in the July 2008 adoption of the National Policy on Displacement, but has not developed a plan to implement the durable solutions it proposes (MoDM, July 2008; IDMC interview, December 2009).

The Iraqi government allocated \$210 million to IDP programmes in late 2008 but cut financial assistance to \$42 million in its 2009 budget. Approximately \$170 million has been allocated in the 2010 national budget, which is yet to be approved as of February 2010. The Iraqi Parliamentary Committee on Displacement and Migration has consistently appealed for increased budgetary allocations and criticised slow (or non-) disbursement of funds to returnees and IDPs (IRIN, September 2008 *and* January 2010).

UN and bilateral assistance

After the withdrawal of UN international staff in 2003, the UN faced significant challenges in responding to humanitarian needs. In December 2007, the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) established "sector outcome teams" (SOTs) to link development, reconstruction and humanitarian interventions, including displacement responses. A complementary UN-led working group on IDPs until early 2009 played a crucial role in highlighting IDP issues.

IOM and UNHCR, working through implementing partners, are the leading displacement response organisations and also help enhance MoDM's capacity. UNHCR has also sought to enhance the capacity of over a hundred national NGOs.

UN agencies have continued to expand their presence in Baghdad, Basra, Najaf, Kirkuk, Mosul and Irbil (UN SC, July 2009 *and* February 2010).

UNAMI's ability to undertake effective humanitarian work has continued to be impaired by its operational restrictions and dependence on MNF-I for security (Brookings, August 2008; NCCI, January 2008). While the UN, through implementing partners, has access to all governorates, observers question the effectiveness of its coordination mechanisms and its ability to accurately monitor operations (FIC, December 2008; IDMC interviews, October 2008 *and* December 2009).

In December 2009, the UN announced the \$194 million Iraq Humanitarian Action Plan (IHAP). The IHAP, intended to build on the greater cohesiveness demonstrated by the launch in Iraq in 2008 of the inter-agency Consolidated Appeal Process, has prioritised 26 vulnerable districts where integrated humanitarian assistance projects are to be implemented (OCHA, December 2009). The IHAP does not include UNHCR Iraq's \$264 million programme.

These funds are separate from the International Reconstruction Fund Facility, other bilateral assistance, and humanitarian and reconstruction support provided by military-led humanitarian and reconstruction efforts. Assistance provided in the name of counter-insurgency continues to overshadow that provided by traditional humanitarian actors and blurs boundaries between military and civilian endeavours. Up to January 2008, the US Congress allocated over \$4.5 billion to such military-led mechanisms in Iraq (Washington Post, November 2008).

International and National NGOs

National and international NGOs play a significant role, often delivering assistance to IDPs at considerable risk to staff. Since 2003 over 98 aid workers, mostly national, have been reported killed, including several targeted in Baghdad in January 2010 (NCCI, January 2008; IWPR, January 2010). Several international NGOs have relocated international staff to central and southern Iraq, but due to insecurity many have continued to operate remotely

Iraq: Little new displacement but in the region of 2.8 million Iraqis remain internally displaced

from KRG-controlled governorates or neighbouring countries (NRC, August 2009; FIC, November 2008).

There are thousands of national NGOs, many established after 2003. Many appear to lack credibility and capacity (NRC, August 2009). Mosques and Islamic charities, churches and informal community groups have actively assisted IDPs. In addition, sectarian parties and institutions affiliated to militias or political parties have filled the vacuum caused by the limited state response (Brookings, October 2006; FIC, February 2007).

National and international NGOs have called for wider support for IDPs and returnees and have continued to underline the need for a more creative and adaptable operational response and coordination system (IRIN, December 2009; IDMC interview, November 2009).

Note: This is a summary of IDMC's internal displacement profile on Iraq. The full profile is available online [here](#).

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About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

Based on its monitoring and data collection activities, the Centre advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people.

In its work, the Centre cooperates with and provides support to local and national civil society initiatives.

For more information, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre website and the database at www.internal-displacement.org.

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