



UNHCR Syria Update November 2008

Highlights

Palestinians from Iraq endure floods at border camps



A Palestinian refugee in Al Tanf wades through water to reach some of his belongings after heavy rains caused the flooding of the camp© UNHCR/B. Auger

Heavy rain on the night of 28 October resulted in flooding at the two camps for Palestinians from Iraq stranded at the Syrian-Iraqi borders, causing tents to be inundated, sewage systems to overflow, the electricity supply to fail and the makeshift camp mosque to catch on fire after an electrical short cut.

While UNHCR was able to send new tents, mattresses, plastic sheeting and blankets to Al Tanf on the next day, it is estimated that the tents of over 100 families were destroyed in Al Walid on the Iraqi side of the border, where assistance always takes longer to arrive.

Arrival of Iraqi Refugees from Mosul

Following reports that thousands of Iraqi Christians had fled their homes in Mosul in October to escape violence and threats and that several hundreds had come to Syria, UNHCR has been closely monitoring the situation in order to ensure these refugees are given proper assistance upon arrival in Syria.

So far, UNHCR has registered or is in the process of registering around 45 families from Mosul (20 in Aleppo and the rest in Damascus) and has begun assessing them for emergency grants and food assistance.

Voluntary Repatriation

UNHCR does not at this time promote voluntary repatriation to Iraq as it considers that the basic requirements for sustainable, large-scale return of Iraqi refugees in conditions of safety and dignity are not yet in place. However, UNHCR does recognize that individual families are currently repatriating and consequently has begun assisting families who express a free and informed decision to return, after individual counselling.

During October 68 families received financial assistance to return to Iraq following counselling. Most of the families counselled until now have opted to return using the free flights organised by the Government of Iraq. The assistance provided by UNHCR amounts to US\$100 per adult and US\$50 per child (up to a maximum of US\$500 per family).

The Iraq Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) for 2009

The Syrian part of the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) for 2009, a component of the Iraq CAP for 2009 is in the process of being finalised in cooperation between UN Agencies (UNRWA, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, IOM, ILO, UNDP, WFP) and NGOs in Syria, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society and representatives of the Syrian Government. The main objective of this CAP is to present a consolidated and coordinated humanitarian response to the needs of Iraqi refugees in Syria.

The Appeal comprises 54 projects covering:

- Protection
- Education
- Health
- Food
- Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
- Livelihoods and Skills Development
- Palestinians from Iraq

The appeal for Syria currently amounts to US\$217 million, of which US\$136.4 million requested for UNHCR Syria (final figures are subject to confirmation by appealing agencies).

This first joint effort to consolidate the humanitarian response of UN agencies, NGOs and Government of Syria to the needs of Iraqi refugees in Syria has highlighted the necessity to continue direct support to Iraqi refugees. Given the refugees' urban environment, new strategies have been devised to reach them thanks to training and collaboration with Iraqi refugees. Support to the Syrian ministries of health and education will continue as well as UNHCR's resettlement programme for a limited but increasing number of vulnerable refugees.

The consolidated appeal document, combining the response plans of Iraq and all Iraqi refugee hosting countries (including Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt) was reviewed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and by head offices of the appealing agencies and was launched on 19 November 2008 by OCHA in Geneva. A second launch by the High Commissioner will take place on 24 November in Abu Dhabi.

Iraqi Refugee Numbers

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there are 1.2 million Iraqi residents in Syria with current valid visas. It is not known how many Iraqis are staying without valid visas. The MFA will give a further breakdown of this information in the future.

To date, there are **219,690** Iraqi refugees with active records in UNHCR's database of registered refugees (51% male, 49% female). This figure represents the total of those registered with UNHCR minus the individuals whose files were closed/inactivated for various reasons, such as verification, spontaneous departures, and resettlement departures.

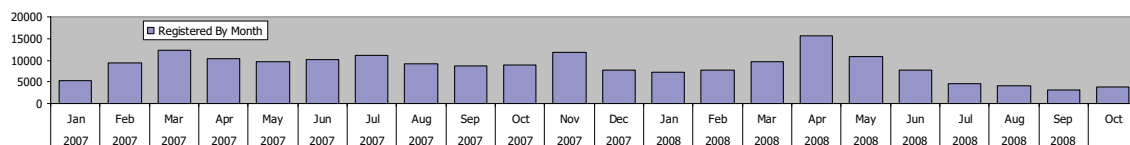
Registered active Iraqi population by Ethnicity (as of 1/11/08)

Nationality	Individuals	Percentage
Arab	187,678	85.4%
Armenian	1,486	0.7%
Assyrian	7,451	3.4%
Chaldean	15,835	7.2%
Kurd	2,791	1.3%
Turkmen	546	0.2%
Other	3,903	1.8%

Registered active Iraqi population by Religion (as of 1/11/08)

Religion	Individuals	Percentage
Muslim – Sunni	132,381	60.3%
Muslim – Shiite	39,464	18%
Christian	28,921	13.2%
Sabeen-Mandean	8,590	3.9%
Yezidi	1,223	0.6%
Islam (not specified)	6,964	3.2%
Other	2,147	1%

Monthly New Registrations since January 2007



UNHCR Registration

UNHCR's main registration centre in Syria (in Douma, just outside Damascus) is the first point of contact between UNHCR and refugees who wish to register to benefit from UNHCR's protection and assistance programmes. It is also where UNHCR is first able to identify vulnerable refugees.

A registration team made up of 10 international Supervisors, 4 Senior Registration Clerks and 40 national registration interviewers carries out in-depth registration interviews with refugee families in Douma, in Aleppo and in various sites across Syria during "mobile registration" exercises.

The waiting time for refugees to obtain a registration appointment is currently 8 weeks and 10 weeks for renewal appointments (when a refugee certificate expires or whenever information about a registered refugee needs to be updated). For both first-time registration and renewal registration, a fast-tracking system is in place to speed up the registration of urgent cases. All refugee certificates issued or renewed are now valid for 2 years.

Registered Iraqis across Syria

Since October 2007 UNHCR has launched mobile registration exercises for Iraqi populations residing in Hassakah, Abu Kamal, Deir Ezzor, Aleppo, Homs, Tartous and Lattakia.

As of November 2008, 2 registration interviewers are permanently based in UNHCR's Aleppo Field Office. Mobile Registration will continue in other parts of Syria, in particular Hassakeh, Qamishli and Abu Kamal.

The table below shows the breakdown of Iraqi refugees registered at the registration centre in Damascus and during mobile registration exercises according to their governorate of residence in Syria:

Governorate	Individuals Registered
Hassakah	7,293
Lattakia	2,425
Qunaytrah	47
Ar Raqqah	311
As Sweida	64
Dar'a	2,476
Deir Ezzor	2,249
Damascus	167,549
Aleppo	15,178
Hama	1,020
Homs	8,198
Idlib	1,445
Tartous	1,500
Unspecified	9,935
Total	219,690

Visa and Residence Issues for Iraqis

According to the Syrian visa regulations which came into force in October 2007, 14 categories of Iraqis (including families with children registered in Syrian schools, individuals with a serious medical problem or people with Iraqi Chamber of Commerce identification) are allowed entry or residence visas for Syria. Iraqis can usually obtain a temporary residency permit of three months which is renewable by the immigration department.

Although UNHCR does not monitor border crossings, recent reports appear to indicate tighter control of the validity of documents used to obtain a visa for Syria at the border between Syria and Iraq. Consequently, the daily crossing of Iraqis into Syria in October seems to have dropped from an average of 1,800 individuals to approximately 900-1000 at Al Tanf and 200-250 at Al-Yaroubia in northern Syria.

Reports also indicate additional administrative measures for Iraqi refugees applying for the renewal of their residency. UNHCR intervenes in case of complex situations or if the refugee's request for extension of residency is rejected and is usually successful in enabling Iraqi refugees to remain in Syria.

Iraqis facing a greater risk of deportation are those who:

- Have been arrested or detained for security reasons
- Have destroyed their documents or do not have documents
- Have entered Syria illegally
- Have committed any type of criminal acts (such as forging documents, involvement in prostitution and petty crimes)

Outreach

UNHCR's greatest challenge is to identify vulnerable refugees in an urban environment such as the one in which the Iraqi population is living in Syria. While the registration team is able to identify many, difficulties remain such as many refugees not being registered and harsh economic conditions increasing the vulnerability of those already registered.

Outreach at a community level is essential to gain access to the unregistered vulnerable population and identify new vulnerable cases among registered Iraqis. There are currently 55 Iraqi outreach volunteers working with UNHCR in all areas of Damascus and rural Damascus where Iraqi refugees are known to reside. Apart from bringing unidentified vulnerable refugee families to UNHCR's attention, the Iraqi outreach volunteers also raise issues of concern to the refugee population, such as:

- The price of fuel and the difficulties families will face this winter to heat their homes
- The absence of financial resources forcing people to return to Iraq
- The problems faced by female headed households
- The lack of support for families with disabilities
- The increasing numbers of juvenile domestic workers (young girls) and street workers (boys) supporting the family income

The target is to continue expanding the outreach network (to around 100 volunteers) in Damascus as well as in Aleppo.

Iraqi Refugee Vulnerabilities in Syria

Since 2007, UNHCR has identified the following vulnerabilities among the registered Iraqi population in Syria. Over 35% of Iraqis currently registered are considered as having special needs:

Special Needs	Individuals	Percentage
Child or Adolescent at Risk	9,417	8.5%
Disabled	5,252	4.8%
Serious medical condition	39,671	36.0%
Older Person at Risk	3,627	3.3%
Single Parent	418	0.4%
Special L/P Needs*	44,087	40.0%
Unaccompanied/Separated Child	117	0.1%
Woman at Risk	7,736	7%

*Of those persons with Legal/Protection Needs, 25,729 are classified as victims of torture/violence in Iraq.

Due to refugees' rapidly diminishing financial resources, UNHCR Syria is focusing on preventing the negative consequences of this impoverishment which include homelessness, child labour, early marriage and survival sex.

With no immediate prospect of Iraqi refugees massively returning to Iraq and the rising cost of living in Syria, pressure is mounting to cope with their growing assistance needs.

Food and Non-Food Item Assistance

The distribution of food rations covering July to October in cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) inside and outside Damascus ended in November with over 175,000 beneficiaries.

As agreed with WFP and SARC, the names of 29,000 Iraqi refugees who had failed to pick up their rations at the last two food distributions, were taken off from the beneficiary lists on the assumption that the individuals concerned had left Syria. This did not bar some from receiving their food rations when they did come to this distribution cycle.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, 47,677 individuals did not receive their rice ration. It is hoped that the situation will be resolved in the very near future.

Apart from the ration provided by WFP (oil, rice and lentils) and the complementary food items provided by UNHCR and other complementary items provided by UNHCR (such as sugar, tea, tomato paste, pasta, cracked wheat), the current distribution will include diapers for babies up to 18 months-old and sanitary napkins for women and girls between the ages of 12 and 45. Around 2,305 babies and 43,936 women/girls are expected to benefit from this distribution.

Cash Assistance

UNHCR started the distribution of ATM cards to Iraqi refugees identified as urgently needing financial assistance in December 2007. So far, 11,590 families (33,865 individuals) are benefiting from the monthly financial assistance through ATM cards.

Heads of households receive approximately US\$100 (SYP5000) per month, with an additional US\$10 (SYP500) for each dependent. The cash assistance primarily aimed at single women head of households is intended to support the enrolment of Iraqi children in Syrian schools and prevention efforts against problems such as sexual and gender based violence, homelessness and child labour.

The global cost of the cash assistance scheme rose to US\$1.7 million per month as of 1 July 2008. With UNHCR in the process of continuing the distribution of new ATM cards (to benefit some 37,700 individuals).

A special UNHCR committee was set up in November to oversee the disposal of all food ration and ATM cards not yet picked up by beneficiaries believed to no longer be Syria.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Over 600 survivors of SGBV have been identified since January 2008, the majority during the registration process. 4% of the registered population is identified as Women at Risk. Common forms of SGBV identified by UNHCR include rape, forced prostitution, trafficking, forced marriage, economic and sexual exploitation and domestic violence. UNHCR is supporting survivors and working towards prevention partly through direct assistance (both financial and material).

UNHCR has secured access to over 70 Iraqi women in Douma Prison, and 7 Iraqi Girls (12-17 years old) in the Juvenile and Rehabilitation Centre (Damascus). The majority of the girls and women are survivors of SGBV including rape and forced prostitution.

UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM, UNDP and UNHCR are working on a joint strategy and initiatives to assist refugee women in detention.

UNHCR is supporting several safe houses in Damascus which provide accommodation, food, social counselling, vocational training, legal and medical services for women and children who have suffered any form of violence (domestic, sexual) either in Iraq or in Syria.

Community Services

All UNHCR Community Centres are now being administered by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The eight centres are located in the main four areas around Damascus that have the largest refugee concentration, namely: Masaken Barzeh, Saida Zeinab, Jaramana and Qudsaya.

Community Centres offer English, French, Arabic, computer skills, and classes for the disabled and Library services. After school activities prioritize curriculum support for Iraqi refugees struggling at school.

Some Community Centres also provide important venues for weekly social and legal counselling to several hundred vulnerable Iraqi refugees, closer to their homes.

Education

The Syrian government welcomes all children from the Arab world living in Syria to enrol in school thus offering free education to all Iraqi children. UNHCR is supporting the Ministry of Education (MoE) in coping with the impact made by the large number of Iraqi students attending Syrian schools.

Despite 49,132 Iraqi children attending Syrian schools during in 2007/2008 according to the Ministry of Education, there is concern that many are not enrolled or are dropping out mostly because of schools being overcrowded, financial difficulties, child labour, difficulties with the Syrian national curriculum, psychological trauma and lack of documentation.

UNHCR 2008 Education Programme in Syria

Since 2008 the UNHCR Education Programme has established partnerships with local and international partners while continuing to support the MoE, its biggest implementing partner in the field of education.

Partnerships

- UNHCR has increased the budget allocated to the Ministry of Education to US\$18,603,486 for the construction of 9 schools.
- US\$400,000 agreement with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch & all the East (GOPA) for informal educational support and vocational training activities.
- US\$200,000 agreement with the Common Charity Committee (Caritas Syria) for vocational and skills training support and recreational activities.
- UNHCR signed a US\$995,988.10 agreement with Première Urgence to construct 2 schools in Jaramana which should welcome 2,400 schoolchildren.
- US\$600,000 agreement with the Danish Red Crescent (DRC) in order to renovate, expand and equip 7 Syrian schools in Damascus that welcome a significant number of Iraqi refugee children.

UNHCR Syria Direct Implementation

UNHCR has established Education Information Units (EIU) at the UNHCR DRC-managed Community Centres in Jaramana, Saida Zeinab and Qudsaya to help Iraqi children pursue their education by counselling Iraqi parents and organising educational activities at the community level such as remedial classes.

Higher Education

In August 2008, UNHCR reached an agreement with the Ministry of Higher Education to award 200 Iraqi students with full scholarships for public universities in Damascus, Aleppo, Tishreen, Al Baath or Al Furat. The allocation of places (per university) will be determined by the Ministry of Higher Education based on criteria decided on with UNHCR, such as academic excellence and vulnerability.

Health

Over 40,000 Iraqi refugees currently registered are suffering from an important medical condition. So far, there have been over 410,000 consultations at UNHCR-funded Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) clinics from January to October 2008. UNHCR is finding new partners in order to meet the growing medical needs of refugees.

UNHCR completed a full round of consultations with the Syrian government, SARC and NGO partners to gradually introduce changes in its current medical coverage at the primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare levels. A standardized healthcare system supported by the Government of Syria, UNHCR, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and international NGOs as well as a unified approach to health data collection are expected begin in early 2009.

UNHCR's Health Partners

- The Ministry of Health (MoH): UNHCR is supporting the MoH with medical equipment, vehicles, medication and staff training.
- UNHCR is supporting Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) hospitals with equipment and medication and covers the medical cost of refugees referred to these hospitals.
- UNHCR supports 10 Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) clinics across Syria: 7 in Damascus (including one administered by the French Red Cross) and one in Aleppo, Homs, and Idlib. All refugees who are registered with UNHCR have access to subsidized health care at Red Crescent clinics. UNHCR covers 80% of all medical costs, including consultations and prescriptions, and has created a committee to decide on the

full coverage of particularly vulnerable cases. Clinics in Damascus are currently providing over 45,000 consultations a month.

- UNHCR is supporting the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) International Medical Corps (IMC) which has three clinics in Saida Zeinab and Masaken Barzeh.
- The Palestinian Red Crescent (PRC): UNHCR signed an agreement with the Palestinian Red Crescent to provide emergency health services in the Palestinian refugee camp of Al Tanf.
- Al-Bairouni Hospital: UNHCR covers the treatment costs of patients referred to this cancer hospital on a monthly basis and also provides medication through the agreement signed with the MoHE. So far over 200 patients have received cancer treatment in this hospital.
- The General Assembly of Damascus Hospital (Al Mojtahed Hospital): an agreement was signed in April 2008 for specialties including urology and renal failure/dialysis. So far over 400 patients have received treatment there. Additionally SARC clinics have started referring around 40 patients a day to this hospital for in-depth diagnoses.

Other Partners:

- Ibraheem Al-Khalil Convent provides medical treatment and mental health and psychosocial support to refugees.
- Terre des Hommes is providing rehabilitation services and health care to refugees in need of surgery, orthopaedic prostheses, and vision and hearing apparatuses. 409 individuals were treated there between January and July 2008.
- Al-Amal Centre for autism, speech disorder, cerebral palsy and visual impairment is currently treating 30 refugees with special needs.

Mental Health

A UNHCR-commissioned survey of trauma among Iraqi refugees at the end of 2007 indicated widespread depression and anxiety among the refugees interviewed. So far, UNHCR has referred patients to: Al Tob Al-Nafssi Hospital, Ibn Sina Mental Health Hospital and Ibraheem Al-Khalil Convent.

Resettlement

UNHCR is encouraging resettlement countries to receive the most vulnerable Iraqis.

In 2007, UNHCR Syria submitted 7,852 Iraqi refugees for resettlement to all countries. That same year, only 833 Iraqi refugees actually departed for resettlement countries. So far in 2008, an additional 10,244 individuals have been submitted and 5,736 have departed.

October 2008 Iraqi Resettlement Submissions (number of individuals)

Country of submission	October 2008
AUL	94
CAN	157
SWE	18
USA	1432
Total	1701

October 2008 Iraqi Resettlement Departures (number of individuals)

Country of submission	October 2008
AUL	80
CAN	30
FRA	35
NOR	6
NZL	47
SWE	36
USA	198
Total	436

Total Iraqi Resettlement Submissions and Departures since February 2007 (number of individuals)

Country of Submission	Individuals Submitted 2007+2008	Individuals Departed 2007+2008
AUL	1767	268
CAN	1942	532
DEN	14	5
FIN	601	109
FRA	101	62
GBR	93	5
IRE	9	0
NET	209	118
NOR	280	42
NZL	284	80
POR	5	5
SWE	393	179
USA	12398	5164
Total	18096	6569

UNHCR's Partners

UNHCR currently has agreements with the Syrian Government (including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Governorate of Al Hassakah and the Ministry of Higher Education), the Palestinian Red Crescent, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, local charities, international NGOs and UN Agencies.



The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

UNHCR's main implementing partner is the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC).

UNHCR 2008 agreements with SARC include support and management of new and existing clinics, the expansion of medical services outside Damascus, support to community outreach,

distribution of food and non-food items, management of community centres and distribution of school supplies to Iraqi children.

To date the Syrian Arab Red Crescent has opened clinics (7 in areas of high concentration of refugees in Damascus and clinics located in Homs, Aleppo and Idlib) to provide subsidized health services for Iraqi refugees that have either registered or applied for an appointment to register with UNHCR. The agreement also includes financial support for the referral of patients to Syrian public hospitals for cases that cannot be treated at primary health care facilities.

SARC also receives support from the Danish Red Cross, the Dutch Red Cross, the Qatari Red Crescent, the French Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs)

So far, ten international NGOs have signed MOUs with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and have officially been authorized to work with Iraqi refugees in Syria. They currently cover:

Education: Première Urgence (PU), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Help (Germany).

Vocational Training: the Institut Européen de Coopération et de Développement (IECD, France)

Psychosocial support to children: Enfants du Monde Droits de l'Homme (France).

Health: International Medical Corps (IMC, UK) and Médecins du Monde.

Community Services: Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

Distribution of clothes and hygiene kits: Islamic Relief (France), Turkish Blue Crescent.

Palestinian Refugees from Iraq

While the exact number of Palestinians who fled Iraq and are now living in Syria is unknown, around 2,600 are stranded in three camps on or near the Syria-Iraq border. They are in a particularly vulnerable situation owing to their non-admission (temporary admission in the case of El Hol) into Syrian territory and the fact that many fled Iraq after 2006 because of persecution. The living conditions vary according to each camp but can be very difficult and unsafe, further lowering refugees' morale. All three camps are entirely dependent on assistance from UNHCR and its partners (mainly UNRWA, WFP, UNICEF, the Palestinian Red Crescent). UNHCR is seeking other solutions for these Palestinian refugees, such as resettlement inside and outside the region. 161 individuals from Al-Tanf have recently departed for Sweden and 12 to Switzerland.

Al Tanf Camp

Located in the area between the Iraqi passport control and Syrian passport control.

Refugee Population: 774 (as of 20 Nov 2008).

The first refugees began arriving from Iraq in May 2006 when they were barred from entering Syria. Since October 2007, when the population was around 350, all new arrivals are Palestinians who had been residing in Syria with Iraqi documents obtained fraudulently and who have been deported or left voluntarily to Al Tanf Camp. Despite some departures for Chile, Sweden and Switzerland in 2008, the continued arrival of Palestinians from Damascus is putting further strain on the already difficult living conditions in the camp.

Living conditions: the camp is makeshift and located right next to a large motorway. Hazards include: extreme temperatures and harsh weather conditions; outbreak of fires in tents; accidents caused by passing trucks; poor medical facilities. With great numbers of refugees continuing to arrive at Al Tanf, the camp has reached its limit in size without expanding across a dangerous motorway or across the border.

Assistance: UNHCR and its partners are providing essential food/non-food items, drinking water, infrastructure and community programs administered in coordination with UNICEF, the Palestinian and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent organisations as well as UNRWA (including medical team, school, sewing workshop, recreation centre for children and work-incentive scheme).

El Hol Camp

Located in Hassakah Province in north-eastern Syria.

Refugee Population: 334 (as of 20 Nov 2008).

In September 2005, 286 Palestinians ex Iraq stranded near the Iraq-Jordan border were exceptionally allowed entry into Syria and transferred to El Hol Camp under UNHCR auspices. Since then, only a very few new cases have been admitted to El Hol.

Living conditions: refugees are allowed to travel within Hassakah Governorate and have access to basic medical care and education. However there is no possibility of local integration and residence in the camp is mandatory.

Assistance: basic food items are provided by WFP and the distribution of complementary food items and the running costs of the camp are covered by UNHCR. The food distribution takes place twice a month through UNHCR's implementing partner, the Governorate of Hassakah. There is one clinic inside the camp operated by 3 doctors working in alternate shifts, 6 days a week. Additionally refugees have access to a public health centre in El Hol village, although it was already overburdened before their arrival. UNHCR's support allows refugees to receive

free medicine. Access to primary education has been given to over 100 school aged refugee children in Grades 1-9 at El Hol village school, with textbooks and school uniforms provided by UNHCR. Access to secondary education in Hassakah, however, remains extremely rare.

Al Walid Camp

Located 200 meters inside Iraq after the passport control at the Al Walid border crossing.

Refugee Population: 1,390 (as of 26 Oct.), hoping to be admitted in either Syria or Jordan, many of whom have family members in Al Tanf Camp.

Residents of this camp are assisted by UNHCR's Iraqi Operation Unit in Amman, ICRC, ICS (Italian Consortium of Solidarity) and Islamic Relief.

Living conditions: Refugees in Al Walid live under conditions totally unsuited to prolonged human habitation. Conditions there are particularly difficult: harsh physical environment; risk of outbreak of fire in the tents; accidents caused by passing trucks; infestation with snakes and rats; very few facilities and extreme temperatures (+50 C to sub zero).

Work for construction of a new site for the residents of Al Walid is underway; it is anticipated to finish at the end of October.

The health of refugees in the camp continues to deteriorate due to poor sanitation conditions and with limited access to medical assistance. The medical dispensary in the camp (staffed by Palestinian refugee health workers) sees an average 70 patients a day among refugees. The nearest medical facility is 400 km away. There is no ambulance service and patients have to be transported in taxis. Neighbouring countries have restricted medical evacuation and patients are rarely admitted

There is high level of frustration and desperation among the refugees with no viable alternatives, including a lack of proper services to refugees injured and psychologically traumatized by violence in Iraq.

Assistance: Al Walid Camp receives little assistance and few services owing to the difficulty of access for international organizations and security conditions in Anbar Province. UNHCR and its partners distribute food and non-food items to meet basic needs: daily food rations, non-food items, power supply, and kerosene for cooking and heating as well as health care services and referral services including medical evacuations. UNHCR has also rehabilitated 12 classrooms and pays for 42 teachers. A total of 340 students attend school in Al Walid. Monitoring visits are carried out by UNHCR staff, including undertaking detailed profiling exercises to identify protection and vulnerable families for possible resettlement. ICRC provides water and sanitation services as well as medical supplies.

UNHCR, in coordination with the authorities and partners, has set up camp management structures that include refugee committee members elected by the camp population.

UNHCR SYRIA would like to thank the following donors for their generous contributions to UN programmes assisting Iraqi refugees in Syria:

