



Credit: OCHA/Themba Linden

HIGHLIGHTS

- Humanitarian community responds rapidly to earthquake affected areas of northeastern Iraq.
- Some 16,500 people displaced locally or to camps in Anbar, Salah Al-Din and Ninewa since 26 October military operations.
- Towns in Hawiga report return of 80 percent of pre-2014 populations.
- UXO hazard decontamination needed.
- Humanitarian access constraints in northern Iraq hamper delivery of humanitarian services.
- Heaters, fuel and sanitation upgrades urgently needed in camps across Iraq as winter approaches.

FIGURES

# of people in need	11m
# of people targeted for assistance	6.2m
# of internally displaced persons (IDPs)	3.2m
# of IDPs who live outside camps	2.5m
# of affected ppl within host communities	3.2m
# of returnees	2.3m
# of Syrian refugees	0.23m

Source: 2017 Iraq HRP/HNO/IOM DTM

Humanitarian Response Plan

FUNDING

985 million

requested for 2017 (US\$)

83% (\$822 million)

(reflects funding on FTS as of 3 December 2017)

Source: <http://fts.unocha.org>

In this issue

- Earthquake response in northeast Iraq P.1
- People displaced in west Anbar operations P.2
- Voluntariness of returns a critical issue P.2
- Impediments to aid delivery in northern Iraq P.3
- 2017 HRP 83 per cent funded P.4

Earthquake in northeast Iraq

Humanitarian community rushes to support Government-led response to earthquake affected areas of northeastern Iraq

On 12 November 2017 at 21:18 local time, northeast Iraq experienced an earthquake of 7.3 on the Richter scale, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The epicenter of this earthquake was located on the Iraq/ Iran border, 32 km from the city of Halabja in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

Nine fatalities were reported and over 550 people were injured due to the earthquake, according to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Most earthquake-related injuries were reported in Darbandikhan district of Sulaymaniyah governorate, and in the Halabja and Garmiyan districts of Quratu governorate. Many houses in Bamo, Darbandikhan and Sharazur and Maidan were damaged or destroyed. The Darbandikhan dam, a multi-purpose embankment on the Diyala river, was also damaged and there initially was a fear of a possible flooding event.



Civil Defence and UNDAC team inspect a collapsed building in Darbandikhan town. Photo Credit/UNDAC

The authorities led immediate rescue and relief efforts and provided food, shelter and medical assistance to the affected areas. In concert with a Council of Ministers Secretariat (CoMSec) assessment team, an OCHA-led inter-agency assessment team completed rapid assessments in the first week and mobilized partners to respond through the cluster system. At the request of the Government of Iraq, a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team, specialized in disaster response, was deployed on 14 November to support authorities with the humanitarian response and future emergency preparedness measures.

Immediate emergency response included providing emergency medical support to injured people and extracting injured people and bodies from the rubbles of the collapsed structures. Turkey mobilized national humanitarian actors, including the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management (AFAD) and the Turkish Red Crescent, just hours after the earthquake. Humanitarian aid was sent also by the Government of Italy, including medical supplies, tents and non-food items. Health actors provided Sulaymaniyah Hospital with trauma kits immediately after the earthquake and mobilized resources to support

Darbandikhan hospital, heavily damaged by the earthquake. Longer term rehabilitation of water treatment plants in the most affected areas needs to occur, and some landslides near the Darbandikhan dam need further buttressing, however there is no imminent threat of flooding.

People displaced by Anbar anti-ISIL operations

Government and humanitarian partners respond to humanitarian needs, despite remote location

By 3 November, Iraqi forces seized control of Al-Qa'im town in Ka'im district from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and, by 18 November, had also retaken Rawa city in Ru'ua district, securing access to at least 1,800 people (300 families) who remained in their homes. Some 16,500 people have been displaced locally or to camps in Anbar, Salah Al-Din and Ninewa since the resumption of the military operations in West Anbar on 26 October.

The Ministry of Migration and Displacement (MoMD) provided emergency food and water to more than 19,600 people. Humanitarian actors delivered assistance to more than 22,700 people, primarily food, emergency kits, and mobile health services, including in the recently retaken Rawa city. Multi-sectoral assistance reached more than 31,900 people in newly accessible areas.

Humanitarian partners are scaling up humanitarian assistance in this remote area of Iraq due to the inexistence of local markets and unavailability of basic items and services. More specifically, due to damaged water infrastructure, the water situation is of concern as people are using water directly from the river and untreated wells posing a potential health hazard. The overall lack of services in the area is compounded by the presence of explosive hazards, which also impacts prospects for IDP returns.

On 23 November, Iraqi forces also resumed anti-ISIL operations in the Jazeera desert area, between Anbar, Salah Al-Din and Ninewa governorates. Some 610, of an estimated 6,000 people residing in the area, have been displaced to Salah Al-Din and Ninewa. MoMD, the Iraqi Red Crescent (IRCS) and other humanitarian actors provided emergency services for IDPs in transit sites, and full services in camps.

Voluntariness of returns is a critical issue

Voluntary returns to Kirkuk continue, but UXO decontamination needed

In November, voluntary returns to Hawija and Al-Riyadh towns in the Hawiga district were limited due to significant explosive hazard contamination. Conditions in surrounding towns and villages have been conducive to returns, however, as seen in Abbasi and Al-Zab towns, where 80 per cent of the pre-2014 population has spontaneously returned. More returns are expected, with the reconciliation agreement, signed by district authorities, community and religious leaders, intended to protect returnees affiliated to ISIL both in camps and in their places of origin. Decontamination of unexploded ordnance (UXO) in return locations is considered a priority for the increased sustainable returns in the district.

Across the Hawiga district, immediate life-saving assistance is required – primarily, drinking water, food, household items and warm clothing in Al-Zab, Al-Abbasi and the surrounding villages of Hawiga and Al-Riyadh towns. The restoration of basic services, including WASH, health, education, power, as well as support for re-establishment of governmental offices across the Hawiga district is a priority.

Forced returns remain a concern in Anbar and Salah Al-Din

Throughout much of November, arbitrary evictions and forced returns escalated, mostly in Anbar and Salah Al-Din governorates, affecting over 23,000 people. In Anbar, since 18 November, more than 6,000 people were affected in the Habbaniya Tourist City (HTC)

Over 80 percent of pre-2014 population in some areas of the Kirkuk district have returned; however, clearance of explosive hazards remains a top priority.

Following focused high-level advocacy, the Prime Minister's Office has instructed local authorities to cease evictions and forced returns and, instead, ensure full support to fair

camps and Al-'Ameriyat Al-Fallujah in the Falluja district. In Salah Al-Din, since mid-October, over 17,000 people were removed from camps, governmental and private buildings in Tikrit district, especially after an imposed 15 November deadline for IDPs to return to selected retaken areas in the Shirqat and Baiji districts. As many people were unable to return to their homes due to property damage, perceived ISIL affiliations, or inter-communal tensions some of these people were re-displaced to other locations.

Following focused high-level advocacy, the Prime Minister's Office has instructed local authorities to cease evictions and forced returns and, instead, ensure full support to fair and principled durable solutions, including voluntary, safe and dignified return. However, advocacy on the voluntary nature of returns will continue, as government plans to support the returns of IDPs to their areas of origin.

Impediments to humanitarian access continue

Humanitarian access constraints in northern Iraq have hampered the delivery of humanitarian assistance and services.

Since the military realignment between Iraqi and Kurdish forces in mid-October, key access points in disputed areas of northern Iraq have remained closed throughout November, affecting humanitarian access and response to people in need, primarily in Ninewa and Kirkuk governorates.

The closure of the Sahela and Nawaran checkpoints in northern Ninewa governorate affected the access of humanitarian partners based primarily in Dahuk to an estimated 340,000 people in need across the Telafar, Sinjar, Tilkaif and Hamdaniya districts. Service delivery impediments have resulted in increased humanitarian needs of local, displaced and returnee populations, particularly food, healthcare, shelter, education, and kerosene. The alternative route from Erbil via Khazer and Mosul city is long and logistically challenging, requiring many hours of travel and overnight arrangements in insecure areas. Authorities in Dahuk governorate agreed to re-open a route from Dahuk via the Mosul dam road to better enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance to these areas. At the end of November, the governorate process had not yet started.

The closure of the Makhmur checkpoint in the southwest of Erbil governorate has primarily affected access from Erbil to key emergency sites, camps and out-of-camp locations in the south of Ninewa that hosts over 207,000 displaced people. Limited assistance has been provided through the much longer alternative route via the Khazer checkpoint.

As the Altun Kupri checkpoints in north Kirkuk governorate, the primary route from Erbil to Kirkuk, also remain closed, humanitarian actors are using a longer route via the eastern Debaga-Dibis road. There is concern that this route may also close due to tension between Iraqi and Kurdish forces in the area. This would mean that all assistance would have to be delivered by a more circuitous western route or provided from Kirkuk and possibly other areas.

Iraq Humanitarian Fund field monitoring continues despite access constraints

The closure of checkpoints around the disputed areas since mid-October has hampered the Iraq Humanitarian Fund (IHF) team's field monitoring efforts, including to Ninewa and Kirkuk governorates. On 16 November, the team was joined by a representative of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency on a visit to Al-Mansour district in western Mosul, where an IHF-partner is implementing an emergency livelihood project supported by the Fund. In November, the IHF team also conducted monitoring missions to Fallujah and Ramadi in Anbar governorate, and to Qayyarah and east Mosul in Ninewa governorate. With 195 projects currently under implementation, monitoring is an integral part of the Fund's accountability framework.

Humanitarian impediments, including bypassing blocked checkpoints via long and logistically challenging routes, has hampered the timely delivery of assistance and services.

The IHF received notification of a EUR30 million contribution from the German Federal Foreign Office, bringing Germany's total 2017 contribution to US\$45.7 million.

2017 Humanitarian Response Plan

Iraq HRP 83 per cent funded

The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is 83 per cent funded as of 3 December, leaving a shortfall of US\$163 million. Projects under the HRP represent the most critical life-saving assistance targeting the most vulnerable 6.2 million out of 11 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Iraq.

Humanitarian partners are now drafting a new HRP for 2018, to be released in December, informed by the latest developments shaping the overall humanitarian context, updated needs assessments and vulnerability analysis, and strategic priorities in the response. Continuous political and financial support from donors remains essential for humanitarian partners to reach the people most in need with the right aid at the right time, whether they are newly displaced, preparing to return home or requiring support upon returning.



16 November 2017, Al-Mansour, west Mosul. Through the cash-for-work programme to rehabilitate the city's destroyed infrastructure, the IHF supports families affected by the conflict to rebuild their livelihoods and communities. Photo credit/OCHA

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