

Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq: Relief Assistance Underway for Victims of Flooding, Pledges Continued Support for Government of Iraq Emergency Response Effort

Baghdad, Iraq – 24 November 2018 - The United Nations and international and local humanitarian partners have joined the Government of Iraq’s specialized agencies in providing support for the tens of thousands of victims of the severe flooding which swept many areas of Salah al Din and Ninewa Governorates.

The floods caused by heavy rainfall have resulted in multiple deaths and injuries and displaced tens of thousands of people. Ninewa and Salah al Din are the most heavily affected governorates, with multiple reports of bridges, roads and villages being inundated; damage was also recorded in the southern part of the country. An estimated 10,000 people in Salah al Din and 15,000 people in Ninewa are in need of assistance, including thousands of families living in IDP camps.

“The UN is here, as always, to provide support to the government and authorities of the country in the discharge of their responsibilities to provide assistance to their citizens,” said Ms. Marta Ruedas, Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq.

Ms. Ruedas commended the Government of Iraq, which is leading the disaster response effort, for its immediate mobilization in response to the floods, including the deployment of civil defence personnel. The Humanitarian Coordinator noted that Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi convened a meeting of the governmental Crisis Management Cell on 23 November to coordinate the emergency response activities of relevant ministries and the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

Ms. Ruedas pledged continued UN support during this emergency situation. “We are assessing the situation to see where we could further assist the Government of Iraq in its response to this severe flooding.”

Losses are still being assessed, but initial accounts from flooded areas include the destruction of homes, livestock, and household items. Initial reports from partners indicate that the Shirqat district in Salah al Din, and Qayyarah and Jeddah IDP camps in Ninewa, are among the worst affected. Several needs assessments are already underway, led by the Rapid Response Mechanism and Logistics clusters.

In Salah al Din, the Governor’s office began distributing food baskets to 1,000 displaced families in Shirqat, while UNFPA is planning to distribute 400 hygiene kits in coordination with their local partners in the area. International humanitarian partners are planning health assistance through mobile medical clinics in coordination with the Directorate of Health. Two thousand food rations will be distributed together with blankets, mattresses and household items in coordination with an international NGO.

In Ninewa, IOM distributed non-food items (NFI) kits to 2,350 families from the Qayyarah and Jeddah IDP camps who lost all their belongings. The Rapid Response Mechanism will send 2,000 kits to displaced families, with essential items including drinking water, emergency ready to eat food, and hygiene kits. WFP reported that its partners had successfully delivered 4,000 Immediate Response Ration parcels to affected areas, in coordination with Mercy Hands and camp management.

The Humanitarian Coordinator stated that additional needs assessments by health, WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) and protection partners are already planned for Sunday 25 November. She noted that the Iraq Humanitarian Fund could grant a reserve allocation for flood response, once there was a clearer sense of where the most urgent gaps remained.

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