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**UN agencies launch call centre to provide displaced communities across Iraq with information on humanitarian assistance**

A national hotline for Iraqi citizens affected by the on going humanitarian crisis has been launched to provide timely information on humanitarian services such as food distribution points, medical services, and shelter options across Iraq.

The renewed conflict in Iraq has resulted in a displacement crisis of an unprecedented scale. Over 3.2 million people have been forced into displacement since January 2014 alone. People are scattered in over 3,000 locations across the country. This continues to present an enormous challenge for aid agencies trying to provide emergency and life-saving assistance to displaced populations. Many internally displaced persons (IDPs) are residing in hard to reach areas and are in desperate need of assistance and information about available services.

“More than 3.2 million Iraqis have been internally displaced since the beginning of 2014 and we are simply not able to reach everyone due to the sheer size of the crisis. People continue to be on the move and many more are being displaced as we speak. While the call centre will help identify and respond to the most urgent needs of the displaced, it will also ensure that up-to-date information is available to them, so that they can access the assistance and services they require”, said Bruno Geddo, UNHCR Representative in Iraq. “This is particularly important for displaced people living outside formal camps and settlements, who may otherwise not be easy to reach to help them meet their needs and harness their resources”, Geddo concluded.

The IDP Information Centre was established as a joint initiative of the Iraq Humanitarian Country Team in an effort to enhance two-way communication between displaced populations and aid agencies. IDPs and affected communities will be able to seek information about humanitarian aid, request assistance, and provide confidential feedback on the humanitarian agencies’ services and outreach activities.

“First and foremost, the call centre serves as a quick and easy way for IDPs to find out about how the humanitarian community can help. But more importantly, it offers us a chance to connect to, and better understand, the people we serve,” said Jane Pearce, WFP Iraq Country Director. “Through the participation and feedback of IDPs in listening exercises and consultations, we are able to tailor the type of assistance we provide. The affected populations thus become stakeholders in the assistance process, and the humanitarian community more accountable to them”.

Following a successful pilot in July 2015 in Erbil Governorate, the information centre is now operational across Iraq and can be reached via any Iraqi mobile phone by dialling 6999.

“The IDP Information Centre represents a truly cooperative effort among humanitarian agencies”, said Kareem Elbayar, UNOPS Programme Manager. “UNOPS established and operates the information centre through the financial contributions of UNHCR, WFP, and OCHA; in-kind support has been provided by IOM. Most importantly, the information we give to callers is provided and regularly updated by dozens of NGOs and UN agencies working through the humanitarian cluster system in Iraq”.

The IDP Information Centre is currently open from 8:30a – 5:30p Sunday through Thursday, but plans are in place to extend the working hours and add additional operators as needed.

For additional information about the IDP Information Centre, please contact:

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