

# UNHCR Iraq Fact Sheet September, 2012



Sabe Al Boure shelter project for IDPs

## UNHCR in Iraq

UNHCR has been present in Iraq since the 1980s, working with the Government of Iraq (GoI) to protect and assist, as appropriate, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Iraq is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. However, the country has hosted and assisted, with UNHCR's support, refugees of Palestinian, Iranian and Turkish origin. The fall of the previous regime, coupled with sectarian violence that erupted in 2006, resulted in various waves of internal displacements. Consequently, UNHCR's mandate expanded to respond to the protection and assistance needs of IDPs throughout the country.

## Refugees

The 40,170 refugees and asylum seekers in Iraq are scattered in camps, settlements and urban settings, mainly in Ninewa and Anbar governorates, the Kurdistan Region, as well as Baghdad, where some 10,000 reside.

UNHCR provides protection and relief assistance to the refugees, whilst actively seeking durable solutions to their situation, through voluntary repatriation, resettlement or local integration.

Since January 2012, an **additional 36,248** Syrian refugees have entered Iraq to seek protection from the violence in their home country. See specific update.

## Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

According to the latest Government statistics, there are an estimated 1,332,382 million IDPs in Iraq, mostly in Baghdad, Diyala and Ninewa governorates. Most IDPs fled their homes owing to fear in connection with sectarian violence triggered by the bombing of the Samara shrine in February 2006.

IDPs live either with families, in rented accommodations or in informal settlements. Some 467,000 persons – comprising of IDPs, returnees and squatters - remain in more than 382 settlements throughout the country, with 191,163 of them living in 125 illegal settlements in the capital, on public land or in public buildings, facing harsh living conditions, with limited access to electricity, adequate sanitation, schools, as well as job opportunities, in addition to being at risk of eviction by the authorities.

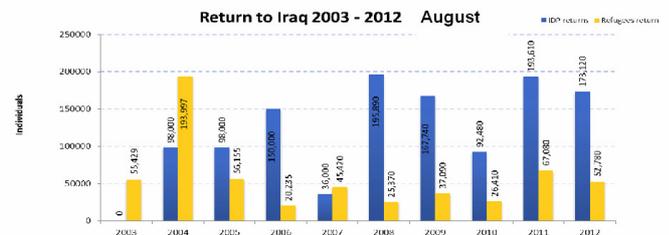
UNHCR has been working with the GoI on a Comprehensive Plan to end displacement. The plan incorporates the development of integration policies regarding livelihood and employment opportunities, as well as shelter programmes in areas of displacement or in new land allocated by the GoI. Security and access to basic services in area of displacement or of return remains a major priority.

## Population of Concern – August

Population of Concern – August	Individuals
Refugees	35,310
Asylum Seekers	4,860
Iraqi refugee returnees registered 2003 - 2011	527,186
Iraqi refugee & IDPs returns registered in 2012	225,900
Iraqi refugee returns registered in 2012	52,780
New Syrian refugees fleeing conflict in Syria ( <b>end of September</b> )	36,248
IDPs ( <i>MoDM source</i> )	1,332,382
IDP returns 2003 - 2011	1,031,720
IDP returns 2012	173,120
Stateless persons (estimation)	120,000

## Returnees

UNHCR facilitates the return of people who have decided to voluntarily go back home on an individual basis. UNHCR has recorded 1,007,350 Iraqi refugee and IDP returnees between 2008 and July 2012. IDPs constitute some 85% of the returnee population, and 90% of them have returned to Baghdad and Diyala areas. By end of July UNHCR has registered some 148,925 Iraqi refugees in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and other neighbouring countries. In Iraq, returnees receive assistance from MODM in addition to support provided by UNHCR through its Return, Integration and Community Centres (RICCs). Due to the unrest in Syria, there is an increasing return from Syria.



## Stateless persons

An estimated 120,000 persons are believed to be stateless in Iraq. These comprise of mainly Faily Kurds and Bidoons. This figure is gradually decreasing with increasing numbers of Faily Kurds regaining their Iraqi citizenship in accordance with the Nationality Law of 2006. UNHCR is assisting in the identification of stateless persons, raising awareness about their problems and facilitating their access to ID and other legal documents.

## UNHCR presence

The Iraq Operation is managed from a Country office in Baghdad, sub offices in Erbil, Field presence in Sulaymaniah, Dahuk, Kirkuk, Basra, Diyala, Baqubah, Babylone, Hilla, Kut, Wassit, Karbala, Najaf, Missan and Liaison office in Amman. A total of 47 international and 152 national staff members are engaged in the Operation.

**UNHCR Iraq budget 2012: \$US 190,500,000**  
Currently allocated \$US: 65,000,000

## Latest developments

- In mid-September, the GOI agreed to reopen the Al Qaim border, with restrictions: around 100 individuals are permitted to cross on a daily basis; these are directed to the Al Qaim camp number 2 which has a capacity of about 4000 individuals. An additional area has been identified in Al Qaim to build a third camp with a capacity of 800 tents; it is anticipated that the final authorisation will be received soon. By the end of September, the majority of refugees in Al Qaim had been transferred to the camp, with only 58 remaining in public buildings. In Ninewa, the construction of the 100 tents camp in Kasak started.
- UNHCR Registration is ongoing in each camp; more over, In KRG Duhok Residency Directorate has started, jointly with UNHCR Protection, the issuance of residency permits valid for 6 months for all Syrian refugees.
- UNHCR, in cooperation with IP Islamic Relief (IRW) started the establishment of the Syrian refugee camp in Kasak area in Ninewa. The initial plan for the camp is to receive 100 refugee families with the possibility of future extension.
- The Special Envoy of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee Angelina Jolie visited Iraq on 14-16 September. During her mission Ms. Jolie met with Iraqi Governmental officials in Baghdad and Kurdistan, visited an IDP settlement where she talked to IDPs and returnee families from Syria, and also met with Syrian refugees in Domiz camp, Duhok. Ms. Jolie pledged further UNHCR support for the government in receiving and hosting more Syrian refugees.
- Work is in progress to construct 384 new shelters for IDPs in Saba' al-Bour in Taji, north of Baghdad. UNHCR IP "ISHO" has implemented 30% of the project which will benefit IDPs now living in informal settlements in Baghdad.
- Baghdad Governorate has approved UNHCR site plan for the 220-shelter project that will be implemented in Nahrawan district, southeast of Baghdad, for IDPs inhabiting informal settlements. Two plots of land have been allocated for low-cost shelter projects for IDPs in Mosul and another in Wasit
- UNHCR, in cooperation with WDSO, a local NGO in Mosul, has started the implementation of mobile clinics project that will target 15 IDP locations in Ninewa. The project is to continue until the end of the year and will provide various medical services for IDPs.
- In the southern governorates a pilot agriculture project was launched by UNHCR in partnership with IOM, and with close cooperation with Ministry of Agriculture. The project will benefit 150 head of households. A complete hands-on farmers' training was conducted on agricultural techniques, the use of modern tools, planting techniques, as well as harvest and post-harvest management. 50 greenhouses have so far been installed and are operational.
- A vocational training programme has been started in 4 southern governorates, run by the Scientific Forum Centre (Ministry of Youth & Sport), and managed by UNHCR's PARC. A total of 200 students have joined the programme, which involves diverse activities designed to meet market demand. At this stage most of the students (head of households) have enrolled in welding, generator maintenance and electrical works.
- UNHCR IP "REACH" handed over the renovation of 65 shelters, 5 schools and 3 water extension to the contractor who won the bidding process in Kirkuk.
- In Sulaymaniya, a project consisting of 11 green houses has been established by REACH, UNHCR implementing partner. 22 female refugee headed-households are benefiting from this project (each two families per/house). REACH linked up the refugees to the Vegetable/Fruit Market in Sulaymaniya. The project has been highly successful and has secured a good income for each family.
- In Makhmour camp (Erbil) ,a total of 4,883 IDs have been distributed since 12 March 2011



UNHCR Iraq External Relations Unit: [irqpi@unhcr.org](mailto:irqpi@unhcr.org) [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

## UNHCR partners

### Government of Iraq & Kurdistan Regional Government

Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Human Rights, Implementation and Follow up Committee for national reconciliation (IFCNR), Bureau of Displacement and Migration (BDM)

### Collaboration with UN entities and operational partners

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), World Food Programme, UNICEF, UN-Habitat, IOM, WHO, OCHA

### Implementing partners

21 non-governmental organizations: Al Khair Humanitarian Organization, Resurrecting Iraqi People Centre ,Danish Refugee Council, HADYA, Happy Family Organization for Relief and Development, Iraqi Humanitarian League for Human Rights, Save the Children Federation, Iraqi Salvation Humanitarian Organization, Iraqi Humanitarian League for Human Rights , International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Islamic Relief Worldwide, HARIKAR, Norwegian Refugee Council, Association Development for Civil Society, Qandil, REACH, Rebuild Iraq Recruitment Program, Women Development and Support Organization, Civil Development Organization, International Organization for Migration

### UNHCR assistance at a glance- July

- Through its 14 Protection Assistance and Reintegration Centres (PARCs) and 1 PAC, Baghdad, UNHCR and its partners work to ensure that IDPs and returnees are able to enjoy their fundamental rights. Lawyers in the Centres as well as 43 mobile teams provide legal assistance, interventions and referrals on behalf of the persons of concern. Inter alia, UNHCR teams are following up closely on potential evictions of IDPs from informal settlements. The total number of the legal cases opened solved, closed without solutions, cases in progress or pending) in July is 695 (43,66%females 56,34%males).The cases categorized as 246 concerning IDPs,88 IDP returnees, 184,refugees and refugee returnees,29 asylum seekers and 136 vulnerable community members.
- UNHCR distributed a total of 1,745 NFI kits to Iraqi returnees from Syria through its six RICCs in Baghdad. Another 575 NFI kits were distributed to returnees in the central governorates of Anbar, Diyala, Babylon, Najaf, Karbala, Wassit and Salah-al-Din.
- The process of beneficiary selection has started for Phase III of UNHCR 2012 shelter project within the central governorates. During this phase, 900 shelters will be constructed for IDP returnees in Baghdad and Diyala. The construction of another 450 shelters in Baghdad and Diyala within Phase II of the project is at final stages. UNHCR IPs ISHO and RIRP have completed 99% of the 300 shelters planned for Baghdad while 88% of IP Qandil's 150 shelters have been implemented in Diyala At the same locations, 21 water projects have been completed
- A total of 42,581 Iraqis are reported to have returned from Syria since 18 August, including 5,997 by air.