For Immediate Release

Japan Provides Ambulances to the Kurdistan Regional Government to assist internally displaced persons and refugees

ERBIL, 17 November 2015 – Building on Japan’s continuing support to the government and people of Iraq, twenty fully-equipped paramedic ambulances were handed over to the Kurdistan Regional Government’s Bureau for Migration and Displacement (BMD) in a ceremony today at the Baharka Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp in Erbil, Iraq. The ambulances are being provided as part of the project “Increasing Access to Emergency Response Services for IDPs and Refugees in the Kurdistan Region”, implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) on behalf of the Government of Japan and in partnership with BMD. The project aims to support the BMD in providing emergency medical services to IDPs and refugees residing in three Iraqi governorates – Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Kirkuk.

The handover ceremony was attended by the newly-appointed Japanese Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Fumio Iwai; Mr. Hoshang Mohammed, Director General of the Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Interior Joint Crisis Coordination Centre; and Mr. Shokr Yassin, Director General of the BMD.

Ambassador Iwai said, “I am confident that this project will ease the plight of internally displaced persons in the region who were forced to leave their homes by Daesh”. Receiving the ambulances on behalf of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Mr. Shokr Yassen said, “We highly value this donation as it addresses the needs of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq for ambulances, which could save the lives of thousands of women, men and children in the IDP camps”.

Ms. Bana Kaloti, Director of the UNOPS Middle East Regional Office, expressed, “Contributing ambulances enables the Government to provide Iraqis with critical emergency services and shows Japan’s engagement with Iraq and the Kurdistan Region”. The ambulances help improve capacities of the BMD to provide emergency response services in IDP and refugee camps and host communities. The government of Japan extended grant assistance of USD 1,540,000 for the provision of the ambulances to bolster emergency health services.

Iraq is now home to more than 3.1 million internally displaced persons, with more than 28% currently residing in the Kurdistan Region. Another 250,000 Syrian refugees are hosted in Iraq, almost all of whom have settled in the Kurdistan Region.

#   #   #
For press inquiries, please contact Marija Bateman: marijab@unops.org; tel: +962 797 555 761