European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Iraq

Introduction

Conflict and instability have ravaged Iraq for decades. The latest war, between the Islamic State group and the Iraqi government, has triggered a major humanitarian crisis. Intense conflict through 2014-2017 forced as many as 5.8 million people from their homes across Iraq (4.5 million have been able to return) and left more than 6.7 million in need, including approximately 450,000 displaced people in camps and more than 250,000 refugees from Syria. Humanitarian relief agencies in Iraq assisted around 3.4 million people in 2018 and plan to assist nearly over 1.7 million in 2019.

What are the needs?

In wake of national elections in May 2018, Iraq entered a new phase of international engagement with an increased focus on early recovery and development. Civilians who remain in camps need to be cared for, with camp conditions brought up to basic minimum standards. Outside camps, in severely affected but neglected areas, there is a continuing need to deliver essential healthcare, education, water and sanitation services. Both inside and outside camps, many people still suffer from the effects of the conflict, requiring physical rehabilitation, including prosthetics and other kinds of assistance. Many people and communities face movement restrictions (either forced or obstructed returns to their areas of origin), protracted displacement in camps and, in some cases, an alarming lack of access to basic services. More broadly, the Iraqi economy remains disrupted resulting in widespread poverty.

Most children have missed years of school. In many parts of west Mosul and in pockets of Anbar, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din governorates, homes and infrastructure remain destroyed, damaged or contaminated by unexploded ordnance. Many people are suffering from mental health problems or recovering from sexual violence, or both. A majority of hospitals and clinics in conflict-affected areas have been extensively damaged and lack equipment, medicines and trained medical staff.
How are we helping?

The European Union is a leading donor to the Iraq humanitarian response, supporting those in greatest need, in line with the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.

Through its humanitarian partners, the EU continues to deliver lifesaving assistance such as emergency healthcare, basic shelter, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, and humanitarian protection to those in the greatest need, with a particular focus to people who remain displaced. The EU also supports the resumption of basic public services including healthcare and education in war-affected areas, such as western Ninewa, western Anbar, and Hawija.

In addition, the EU supports activities that attempt to protect people at risk of mistreatment and abuse, for example by funding legal and psycho-social assistance for minors in detention centres as well as community-based mechanisms to reintegrate former child soldiers. The EU has also funded the provision of legal assistance to families, to help them obtain essential identification papers that were lost during the conflict between the government and the Islamic State group.

The EU has also reinforced its partnerships with aid groups specialised in protection and healthcare to deliver assistance for people in need, including those who suffer long-lasting impacts of the conflict. Some examples include increasing services for survivors of sexual violence, increasing access to potable water in overcrowded prisons, and provision of physical therapy and rehabilitation support for the victims of the conflict.

Since 2015, €423 million have been provided in humanitarian aid to displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees inside Iraq. For 2019, the European Commission commitment million in humanitarian funding amounts to €38 million.