The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to mobilize and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors.

Highlights

- The humanitarian situation remains fragile, in particular in Anbar governorate, where weeks of airstrikes and ground fighting continue to jeopardise the safety and security of civilians.
- Access routes for people and basic commodities for the civilian population remain limited.
- Sufficient and safe drinking water remains a challenge amidst high temperatures; safe water is trucked on a daily basis to 24,000 displaced people in Anbar governorate.
- Life-saving medicines and medical supplies have been airlifted to health facilities in Haditha city in Anbar governorate, facilitated by the Ministry of Health.

Situation Overview

The past weeks in Iraq have been characterised by political reform plans and processes. On 16 August, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi reduced the number of ministers to 22 from 33, changes aimed at improving the lives of the Iraqi people, rationalising state institutions and rooting out corruption. The eliminated positions include the three deputy prime minister positions and the minister of human rights. Some ministries are to be merged, which in turn could lead to a need to define or redefine interlocutors for humanitarian clusters at the federal level.

The humanitarian situation remains fragile, in particular in Anbar governorate where weeks of airstrikes and ground fighting continue to jeopardise the safety and security of civilians. In Falluja, reports unable to be verified directly by the UN indicate that airstrikes may have caused civilian casualties. Access routes for people to leave the areas hardest hit by conflict remain limited and supply routes for basic goods for the civilian population are also impacted. Concerns persist about displaced people being prevented from crossing checkpoints into safer territory. The approximate 700 displaced people who were stranded for nearly two weeks in Rahaliya, south of Ramadi in Anbar governorate, and unable to cross the Razaza checkpoint in Kerbala, were allowed passage on 14 August along with other displaced people. They continued onwards to Bzeibiz bridge and the Ameriyat al Falluja area. The number of people reaching the Bzeibiz bridge linking Anbar and Baghdad governorates continues to fluctuate while access across the bridge remains limited.

For more information, see “background on the crisis” at the end of the report.

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Coordination Saves Lives
Efforts are ongoing to improve the situation for people residing in proximity of the Bzeibiz bridge and in the Ameriyat al Falluja area. On 16 August, water, sanitation and hygiene partners visited 11 camps and sites where internally displaced people reside in Anbar and Baghdad. Response priorities include ensuring the water quality and quantity meets basic standards, refurbishment and provision of latrines, activation of hygiene promotion and initiate preparedness and response planning with health partners to address disease outbreaks. Partners are also looking at how to improve water and sanitation coverage such as linking camps to municipal water services where possible to reduce costly water trucking services and to better ensure safe supply. Access to sufficient and safe drinking water remains a challenge amidst high temperatures. 492,000 litres of safe water is trucked on a daily basis to alleviate the situation for 24,000 displaced people in locations across Anbar governorate, including displaced people living in and outside camps in Ameriyat al Falluja, near Bzeibiz bridge and Habbaniyah Tourist City.

The situation in Haditha, also in Anbar, remains of concern with about 80,000 people having limited access to basic services and commodities. The Iraq Ministry of Health supported the airlifting of life-saving medicines and medical supplies to health facilities in Haditha city in Al Baghdadi district. The consignment contained seven inter-agency emergency health kits, including one basic kit with essential medicines, two surgical kits and trauma kits. The total consignment is sufficient to treat 16,000 people for three months.

**Humanitarian Response**

**Needs:**

- The humanitarian situation in Haditha in Anbar remains fragile and protection risks are increasing amidst limited access to basic services and commodities. A lack of electricity has been reported due to decreased water levels in the Haditha dam.
- People stranded at checkpoints leading out of conflict areas have limited access to services, putting them at increased risk. On 14 August, about 1,200 displaced people were allowed to pass the Razaza checkpoint in Rahaliya, south of Ramadi in Anbar, after having been stranded for weeks. People moved towards Ameriyat Al Falluja and onwards Bzeibiz bridge and Baghdad.
- Legal aid and psychosocial support services for displaced women and girls continue to be a need. There is a demand for women's centres in camps that offer vocational skills as well as personal development and life skills trainings. Awareness sessions are needed on prevention of gender-based violence, women's rights and reproductive health.

**Response:**

- Protection assessments covered 7,400 displaced people in central governorates. 297 cases were registered for legal assistance and 611 for legal counselling. At least 1,765 vulnerable people were referred to organizations that can provide food, household items (primarily water jerry cans and hygiene kits) and cash assistance.
- Advocacy initiatives focused on displaced people’s access to safety at checkpoints and registration with the Ministry of Displacement and Monitoring (MoDM). Access to basic services, and information and support relating to detentions and evictions is also a priority.
- Child protection actors have distributed 2,000 dignity kits to children and their families in select camps in Anbar. They have also ensured that vulnerable children had access to ad hoc medical assistance.
- Protection partners distributed 2,000 dignity kits in four areas in Anbar in proximity of the Bzeibiz bridge.
- In southern governorates, protection partners provided lighting to collective centres, identified 21 cases for legal aid, provided assistance to 14 cases of gender-based violence and helped 90 people to be registered as displaced with authorities.
- Women's centres are now operational in Laylan and Yahyawa camps in Kirkuk and skills development sessions have begun. In Yahyawa camp, 300 individual dignity kits were distributed.
- In Sulaymaniyyah, 28 awareness sessions on gender-based violence, women's rights under Iraqi law and reproductive health were conducted in eight locations. 639 women and girls visited the women's social centres.
- 129 women and girls participated in 10 recreational activity sessions in Sulaymaniyyah city, Kalar and Kolajo and Arbat IDP camp in Sulaymaniyyah. To further increase the awareness, 128 home visits were conducted.
Gaps and constraints:
- About 200 people remained stranded at the Bzeibiz checkpoint and are in need of assistance. While the deployment of child protection units has increased in the areas close to Bzeibiz bridge, limited presence of humanitarian actors limits response capacities.
- In Kerbala, the rate of relocations from hotels to the camp remains relatively low, but is increasing compared to last week. People who have moved to the camp are experiencing water and electricity shortages.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs:
- About 6,000 people in Rahaliya in Ramadi district in Anbar need water and sanitation support
- The pressure on water and sanitation services for displaced people in Khalidiyah in Ramadi district has increased due to defects in the water network, lack of fuel, and an increasing number of displaced people.
- An estimated 26,100 displaced people in Habbaniyah Tourist City in Anbar need improved access to safe water.
- In Al Rasheed caravan camp in Mahmoudiya district in Baghdad governorate, 450 newly displaced people require sanitary units, plastic garbage bags and hygiene items.
- The water treatment plant in proximity of Akrad Zobaa camp in Mahmoudiya district needs to be rehabilitated and connected to the network to supply potable water to 2,400 displaced people.
- Ensuring enough potable water in Al-Janabi camp in Karkh district in Baghdad remains a challenge.
- 250 displaced people residing in Najaf, along the road to Kerbala need water, hygiene and sanitation items.

Response:
- 492,000 litres of safe water trucked on a daily basis is benefitting 24,000 displaced people in Anbar governorate.
- Maintenance of sanitation facilities is ongoing in White camp (1,400 displaced people) and al Amal al Manshood II camp (1,440 displaced people) al Ameriyat in Falluja district in Anbar.
- In Rahaliya sub district in Ramadi district, 12,000 displaced people have been provided with water coolers.
- In Habbaniyah Tourist City, daily water trucking continue. 26,100 displaced people received water kits including purification tablets. 117 m³ solid waste was collected from the site and disposed of.
- Provision of WASH services continues in Sadr Al-Yousifiya camp, in Mahmoudiya district in Baghdad. Thus far, eight water tanks, 26 latrines and 26 showers have been installed.
- 480 displaced people benefitted from the installation of water tanks in Al Rasheed (al-Wahda) Caravan camp, in Mahmoudiya district in Baghdad.
- In Bzeibiz transit camp in Mahmoudiya district in Baghdad, five latrines and four showers were provided for 408 displaced people. Further installation had to be postponed until tents in the camp could be rearranged.
- 2,200 displaced people in the Albo Salih region in Mahmoudiya district in Baghdad benefitted from targeted water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion activities.
- 7,200 displaced people in Al Takia Al Kasnazaniya camp in Karkh district in Baghdad benefitted from the installation of new latrines, maintenance of existing latrines and solid waste services.

Gaps and constraints:
- High temperatures across the country continue to make the water, sanitation and hygiene situation critical, putting pressure on already limited drinking water supplies.
- For the ongoing response in Anbar and Baghdad, there is need to: activate hygiene promotion for all camps; establish and initiate cholera preparedness and response planning in consultation with health partners; and better assure and monitor water quality and quantity.
- With new funding allocated through the Iraq Humanitarian Pooled Fund, efforts will focus on improving WASH service coverage in camps to meet WASH standards and commitments under the Humanitarian Response Plan.

Shelter and Non-Food Items

Needs:
- About 69 per cent of the 3.2 million internally displaced people across Iraq currently live in private settings, including with host communities, whereas 20 per cent live in critical shelter arrangements.
- 2,400 returnees from Ameriyat al Falluja are currently living in Karma camp and are in need of shelter support.
- The transit centre at Bzeibiz bridge in Anbar has poor surface water drainage and lacks stable electricity.

Response:
- 400 caravans have been installed in Mamrashan camp in Dahuk governorate.
• Household items have been distributed across several governorates including to 4,920 displaced people in Erbil, Shaqlawa, Choman and Mergasur districts in Erbil governorate; 7,200 people in Falluja district in Anbar; 3,600 people in Karkh and Resafa districts in Baghdad; 6,600 people in Tikrit and Samarra districts in Salah al-Din; 1,200 people in Diwaniya district in Quadissiya; and 840 people in Tilkaif district in Ninewa.

Gaps and constraints:
• Limited funding continues to constrain the cluster in terms of provision of shelter and household items.

Health

Needs:
• Essential primary and secondary health care services for displaced people and refugees, host communities and other conflict-affected people are needed.
• Supporting the fixed health facilities and deployment of mobile teams in areas of emerging conflict to support displaced people who live outside camps, including in Ninewa, Anbar and Kirkuk governorates remains a priority.
• Early detection and investigation of disease alerts and timely response to outbreaks is essential.

Response:
• A consignment of life-saving medicines and medical supplies has been dispatched by air, facilitated by the Ministry of Health, to health facilities in Haditha city in Al Baghdadi district in Anbar. The consignment contained seven inter-agency emergency health kits, including one basic kit with essential medicines, two surgical kits and trauma kits. The total consignment is sufficient to treat 16,000 people for three months.
• 28,209 health consultations were undertaken between 8 and 14 August.
• 2,243 births were assisted by a skilled attendant and 754 caesarean sections were performed in areas where many displaced people reside.
• Efforts are ongoing to strengthen the disease surveillance system in camps through establishing sentinel sites and distribution of electronic devices (tablets) to focal points. Weekly reports are received from 67 health facilities on epidemic prone diseases covering all camps in Kurdistan and some sentinel sites in conflict areas, including Anbar, Kirkuk, Baghdad and Basrah.
• Specialized services such as treatment and medication for chronic disease, including mental health and psychosocial support to displaced and conflict-affected people. In week 32, 3,980 cases were served, including 2,305 hospitalized.

Gaps and constraints:
• Health services in the Kurdistan region are overburdened by the high number of displaced people.
• Hard-to-reach areas remain a concern, particularly for health, with limited capacities left within the local health service delivery system and few partners available on ground.

Food Security

Needs:
• At least 4.4 million people are estimated to need food assistance. Food partners aim to reach up to 2.2 million affected people under the 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan.
• Vulnerability assessments by the World Food Programme (WFP) show that food insecurity increased in the second quarter of 2015. In Anbar governorate, the percentage of households with poor and borderline food consumption rose from about six per cent to 18 per cent between April and June.
• The agriculture community in Iraq require about 5 million metric tons of wheat seeds and fertilizers for the forthcoming planting season (October/November).
• Due to the disruption caused by ongoing violence, and the lack of access in many central and western areas, analysts have identified a gap of 2 million metric tons for wheat.
• Tens of thousands of displaced people have returned to their homes in Tikrit and Samarra districts in Salah al-Din governorate. Many of these families require food assistance.

Response:
• Food vouchers for US$16, a reduction from the original $26, were distributed to 83,000 affected people in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah governorates.
About 100,000 displaced people living in camps in Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil, Kirkuk, and Ninewa governorates received family food parcels.

About 17,000 displaced people on the move received immediate response rations in Anbar, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din governorate through the rapid response mechanism.

2,500 returnees received food parcels and hygiene kits in Samarra town in Salah al-Din governorate.

3,500 displaced people received food and hygiene kits this week in the 5-Hasarok area in Erbil governorate.

In the first half of August, food parcels were distributed to about 15,000 affected people in Erbil city, Sulaymaniyah city and Dukan in Sulaymaniyah.

Gaps and constraints:

The current funding shortfall is putting the emergency response at risk. Food partners will be forced to make further cuts in its food assistance if additional funds are not received. This could include a complete cut in food assistance to some beneficiary groups and or a reduction in geographical coverage.

Under the current resourcing scenario and despite cost cutting measures, WFP will be forced to terminate food vouchers for about 450,000 people in October. It would also run out of monthly food rations for a further 1.6 million people at the end of November.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

Needs:

The mentorship consortium, which provides support to 16 camps in Dahuk, comes to an end in August due to lack of funding.

School tents in camps in Dahuk are in need of replacement, according to local authorities.

Ashti IDP camp in Sulaymaniyah needs to be expanded with 2,600 plots.

Response:

Air coolers were distributed in Bersive 1 and Chameshko camps. 2,000 air-coolers have been purchased to cover gaps in other camps.

Local authorities distributed 1,900 fridges in Bersive 1 camp and have also purchased 150 family tents to cover the gaps in some other IDP camps.

Gaps and constraints:

The mentorship consortium is seeking funds to maintain activities until the end of the year.

Funding constraints impact planned support with garbage collection and transportation in Dahuk.

Education

Needs:

About 3.2 million school aged children are affected by the current crisis. Over 1 million of these children are school aged girls and boys. About 70 per cent of the displaced children have lost almost a full year of education.

Where available, most schools are full, overcrowded and cannot accommodate all displaced students. High pupil to teacher ratios, inadequate number of qualified teachers, and a limited number of teachers with training either on psychosocial care and support or special needs categorise these schools.

The number of displaced learners has increased with about 35,000 people in Anbar since April.

Response:

221,000 school-aged displaced boys and girls have been supported to access education opportunities.

Education partners’ summer school activities including catch-up classes, non-formal education and recreational activities and psychosocial support are ongoing for displaced children in Baghdad (in response to the Anbar crisis), Dahuk, Erbil, Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah for children who have missed out on a significant part of the last school year. To support these activities, 164 recreational kits were distributed to locations in and outside camps in Dahuk governorate, which benefitted over 6,900 girls and boys.

Cluster partners are coordinating back-to-school activities advocating for earlier registration, promotion of school attendance, and finalizing distribution plans of school supplies in preparation of the new school year, which will commence in October.

Gaps and constraints:

Security is hindering provision of services to learners in Anbar and Salah al-Din governorates. Limited capacity in warehouses prevents pre-positioning of supplies at the governorate level.
There is limited capacity to provide space to provide displaced children access to education across Iraq. There is a lack of resources and funding within the education sector. Schools lack the necessary desks, books and additional school materials to ensure the basic quality of education. Families need support for expenses for learning materials and transportation.

**Logistics**

**Response:**
- The Logistics Cluster is enhancing efforts to support partners in need of common services in the Kurdistan region, with logistics hubs in Erbil and Dahuk. The cluster also has a newly established coordination and logistics hub in Baghdad to serve humanitarian operations in southern and central areas.
- 12 logistics and security officers from nine partner organizations were trained on GPS and road assessment in Erbil. The training focused on road assessment forms, and collecting and managing GPS data.
- The warehouse stock balance in Dahuk stands at 57,038 metric tons (466,892 m³) of relief non-food items belonging to three partners. During the week, 12,376 metric tons (56,222 m³) of items donated by the Qatar Charity Foundation were released to two partner organizations from Erbil to serve humanitarian operations in Kirkuk and Dahuk areas.
- Challenges for the cluster include limited storage capacity for pre-positioning and contingency stocks, mainly due to access constraints, the rapidly changing security environment and increasing humanitarian needs.

**Emergency Telecommunications**

**Response:**
- An 18 metre telecommunications mast has been installed at the UNHCR office in Sulaymaniyah. Telecommunications infrastructure is being transferred to the new mast.
- The cluster is maintaining radio room operations for UN staff in Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah and Erbil.
- The cluster is supporting local ICT capacity including maintenance and project work.

**General Coordination**

The humanitarian operation in Iraq is currently being rebalanced to ensure assistance to vulnerable people is provided throughout the country. This involves expanding and increasing the presence in Baghdad. The Humanitarian Country Team met in Baghdad on 16 August and the capital is now the seat for the meeting with video link to the humanitarian hub in the Kurdistan Region. The presence in the Kurdistan Region is also being restructured including with stronger coordination between line ministries and cluster coordinators.

The inter-agency call centre for internally displaced people in Iraq has received 237 calls in its first six weeks of operation. The call volume remains low, but is expected to increase following wider publicity and advertising campaigns. As seen in the initial phase, most calls continue to be related to food assistance and were made by men living outside camp settings. The second most common topic of incoming calls was related to protection, with many callers requesting assistance to find places to live. The hotline provides internally displaced people with information on services available to them, including registration, education, health, and shelter provision. The call centre can be reached at 6999 using any Iraqi mobile carrier.

**Background on the crisis**

Wide-scale violence and armed conflict erupted in Iraq in January 2014. Initially concentrated in Anbar Governorate, with the cities of Ramadi and Fallouja particularly affected, the violence and its impact quickly grew, displacing over 500,000 people by May. In June 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), together with other armed groups, attacked and seized control of Mosul and large portions of northern Iraq, including areas of Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din governorates. This has led to ongoing armed conflict, massive internal displacement, serious and systematic violations of civilian protection and basic human rights, interrupted access to basic services, and severe strain on host communities. As a result, Iraq is now contending with one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world, with over 8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

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