

United Nations



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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Iraq

The UN is rushing assistance to help people fleeing Ramadi but funds are running out and stocks are almost gone

18 May 2015: UN agencies are rushing humanitarian assistance to people fleeing Ramadi for the second time in a month.

Close to 25,000 people have fled Ramadi following ISIL attacks and fierce fighting in the city. Most of the displaced are fleeing towards Baghdad, with many trying to enter through security checkpoints.

In response to urgent requests from Iraqi authorities, the World Food Programme has distributed thousands of immediate response rations, sufficient for three days, and will be distributing food in Amiriyat Al Falluja, Al Khalidiya, Al Habbaniyah and Al Khalidiya, where IDPs are concentrating for safety.

UNICEF, and its partners the Norwegian Refugee Council and the International Organization for Migration are distributing thousands of emergency kits with drinking water, hygiene items and other essential supplies.

The World Health Organization has sent mobile health teams and ambulances to areas where the displaced are fleeing.

UNHCR is working to help assess and equip reception areas and temporary camps and UNICEF is providing mobile latrines, showers and hygiene items to IDP camps.

Within the past month, UN agencies and non-governmental organisations have provided life-assistance to more than 130,000 people who fled Ramadi following ISIL attacks in April. Tens of thousands of kits and rations have been distributed to more than 35 locations across Anbar Governorate. Thousands of families who had fled earlier had returned to their homes in Ramadi, when fighting again broke out, forcing them to flee a second time.

UN agencies are mounting this operation with stocks running low and funds running out. More than 2.5 million displaced persons and refugees are receiving assistance each month from UN agencies and front-line partners. But funding for these life-saving programmes is nearly exhausted. By June, 56 health programmes will be forced to close; the majority in camps and settlements where IDPs are concentrated. In July, the food pipeline will break.

"Nothing is more important right now than helping the people fleeing Ramadi. They are in trouble and we need to do everything possible to help them." Lise Grande, the UN's Humanitarian Coordinator said. "Thousands of people had to sleep in the open because they didn't have places to stay. We would be able to do much more if we had the funding."

"Abandoning the victims of violence is unthinkable; more has to be done," Grande said.

The United Nations is launching a humanitarian appeal for Iraq on 4 June in Brussels. The appeal includes highly prioritised programmes to meet the most urgent needs of vulnerable people in Iraq, including people who have been displaced from Ramadi.

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