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Foreword by the Chief of Mission

First and foremost, on behalf of all of us at IOM Iraq I would like to convey New Year’s greetings ‘Kul aam wa antum bi khair!’ to all of our readers, counterparts and the donor community. We hope that 2006 will bring increased stability and a return to a more peaceful Iraq.

For me personally the year started with a special occasion as I was able to perform Hajj. While work in and for Iraq can be frustrating, as I am sure all of us would have hoped for much more progress during the last couple of year on all fronts, the experience of Hajj gave me again a very positive impulse. While mingling with pilgrims from all parts of the world, all with good intentions and the same prayers, I felt the positive power - enabling me to again come back and work with full strength for the benefit of Iraq, Inshallah.

The new year is already off to a flying start! January saw a series of bilateral meetings between our liaison officer in Baghdad, and the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We are pleased to announce that preparations are underway for Iraq to become a member of IOM, to join the other 116 countries worldwide who form the governing council of IOM and make high level policy decisions. Additional good news is that over 560 Iraqis voluntarily returned to the 3 northern governorates during the first two months of the year. Increased peace and stability in this region is attracting many Iraqis to return home after years of exile.

January also saw re-commencement of the ‘Medical Evacuation Programme’ which IOM is implementing jointly with the Ministry of Health and NGOs. This life saving programme assists Iraqis who urgently require medical treatment which is currently unavailable in Iraq. To date, IOM has assisted to save the lives of over 300 Iraqis (over half children) with complex medical cases such as heart surgery, leukaemia and cancers. IOM is currently seeking urgent funding for the programme. The more funding we obtain, the more lives will be saved. I urge you to access our website www.iom-iraq.net where donations can be made to this very worthy endeavour.

Also in the medical sector, I am pleased to announce that the Interventional Cardiology Center in Basrah is preparing to accept its first patients. We will continue to monitor this completed project, and I look forward to sharing its progress with you in the coming months. This clinic, made possible through a generous donation from ECHO will also assist to treat some of the approximately 6000 Iraqis who require medical treatment which is currently not available in Iraq.

Sincerely yours,

Rafiq A. Tschannen
Chief of Mission IOM Iraq
The Iraq Property Claims Commission (IPCC) has been operational since March 2004, and has received a total number of 130,720 claims regarding property disputes resulting from actions of the former regime. To date, 20,016 claims have been decided, and IPCC, UNHCR and IOM continue to improve processing of claims to increase the speed and efficiency of the claims procedure.

One of the key interventions in this respect is training for IPCC staff. Recently, four of IPCC IT staff attended at IOM’s Headquarter in Geneva, for IT training in developing and writing statistical reports by using the IPCC Claims Database.

The training aimed at showing the IPCC staff the ways in which they can analyze relevant claims-related information from the IPCC database. Database-generated statistical reports have proven to be a powerful management and claims-processing tool in other claims programs in the past.

As a preparatory step towards a future IOM hand-over of service-hosting to the Iraqi Commission, the Iraqi IT staff were introduced to the structure of the three IPCC servers currently hosted in Geneva. They were also familiarized with the software used on the servers and the current security operation procedures.

The delivery of computer equipment to the IPCC offices outside of Baghdad is continuing as planned and will be completed by end February. IOM continued to monitor the distribution of computer equipment, software and related licenses to the IPCC’s offices.

For updates on the latest political developments and legal changes relating to IPCC please visit. www.ipcciraq.org

IPCC completes second year

IRAQI PROPERTY CLAIMS PROGRAMME (IPCP)
Through its Iraq Property Claims Programme, IOM provides legal, technical and other assistance and advice to the Iraq Property Claims Commission (IPCC), the Iraqi authorities and other interested parties in the establishment of the property claims programme. IOM assists the IPCC in part by advising on best practices from other relevant international and national claims programmes and by proposing solutions to specific needs and problems IPCC encounters in its work.
"Not long ago, there were ten experts in my field of medicine in Iraq" says Dr. Ahmed, a senior Iraqi Professor who has been living abroad for several years "now there is only one remaining in the country. Almost all of us left because of the security situation".

Dr. Ahmed (not his real name), a medical expert, is returning to Iraq for a one year assignment, as part of the "Iraqis Rebuilding Iraq" programme. The joint initiative by IOM, UNDP and the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation of Iraq, sponsors qualified Iraqi expatriates to return to Iraq and assist with development efforts.

Dr. Ahmed’s assignment will be to improve the standards of teaching and training in medicine at a University in northern Iraq. He also hopes to be able to link Iraqi teaching institutions with foreign medical centers and universities, to promote exchange of best practices and further improve medical services in Iraq.

"Particularly in specialized fields such as Anesthesiology, many of the experts have left Iraq – so the IRI programme is very valuable in attracting these experts to return to help rebuild our country" says Ahmed.

IRI assignments are for a maximum of one year, and prioritized by the 21 Iraqi ministries involved, over a wide range of sectors. Recently placed experts are working in areas including database management, human resources, communication, medical, administration and finance.

IRAQIS REBUILDING IRAQ (IRI)
The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are jointly implementing the IRI programme in coordination with the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation to assist the Iraqi Government in recruiting and placing qualified nationals for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country. The project aims to contribute to the sustainability of the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in post conflict Iraq by establishing viable mechanisms to bolster the country’s human resources base in key areas of the public sector. A total of 60 Iraqi experts currently living abroad will be selected to undertake short to long term deployments to enhance the institutional capacity of the Iraqi Ministries and other Iraqi public sector institutions.

http://www.iom-iraq.net
SICC: Preparing for Work in Iraq

By Soo-Rae Hong

Thick smoke billows out of a room while in the background an alarm pierces the air. Debris and blood are littered across the floor as fourteen people rush about administering life-saving procedures to young students lying on the floor. It looks like the tragic aftermath of a bomb attack, but there was no bomb and no attack. Rather, the scene is just one of many training simulations that are a part of IOM's newest program, the Serious Incidents Control Course (SICC).

The SAIT (Security Awareness Induction Training) branch of IOM has been working for weeks to develop the SICC, a training course which prepares UN security officers for potential scenarios they may encounter whilst working in Iraq. These courses are intended to teach workers how to manage and respond to different serious incidents through an extensive curriculum and realistic practice simulations.

The first SICC was conducted a few weeks ago, attended by fourteen UN security officers from Iraq and the surrounding region. It lasted for two days and included intensive lessons, lectures coupled with simulation training. These simulations were performed with the help of students from the University of Jordan, who played the role of victims in the scenarios, including bombings and earthquakes with multiple casualties. These scenarios offered trainees the opportunity to actively apply their knowledge from the course to plan and execute their own rescue operations.

"At the end of the second day, both the trainees and instructors were ready to collapse with exhaustion from the excitement and challenges of the training," describes a SAIT team member. IOM hopes that this training will better enable officers and UN workers to look after themselves and their colleagues while working in Iraq.

UNAMI Security Awareness Induction Training (SAIT)

In Amman, during January and February 2006, 38 trainees attended IOM SAIT. 37 trainees received certification. Also, 6 trainees from the Iraq mission received additional communications training.

UNICEF Security Awareness Training (SAT)

In February, SAT gave training to 48 UNICEF staff and family members, of which 42 received completion certificates. In addition, SAT trained 19 UNICEF Jordan and Iraq staff in Communications, of which 15 received completion certificates.

The mobile Security Awareness team delivered training to 22 UNICEF personnel in Beirut, in February.

The IOM Security Awareness Induction Training (SAIT)

SAIT course provides pre-departure security training for all UN and some international NGO staff prior to deployment to Iraq.

Security Awareness Training for UNICEF MENA (SAT)

SAT course provides Security Awareness Training for UNICEF offices in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Each course is tailored to the specific security environment of country office concerned, enabling staff to carry out their work while minimizing risk to themselves and their colleagues.
A Journey for Recovery

By Feras Jaber and Soo-Rae Hong

Today, you will find Hussein lying on a hospital bed in the United States, recovering from his operations. He is a ten-year old boy from Iraq, and is missing his left hand and his left eye, with severe burns covering most of his body and face. He has been going from hospital to hospital for two years now, trying to get treatment for injuries that he obtained after he stepped on a land mine in Najaf Al-Shareef, an area in southern Iraq.

During the accident, Hussein incurred some memory loss and when asked about what happened, says "I can’t remember anything except that I was on a trip with my father and my uncle." His father was able to describe the accident somewhat, saying "We were on a visit to the cemetery, and Hussein was running and playing in front of us. All of a sudden, everything changed around us. There was a flash from the ground, a horrible sound, ...we rushed to bring him to the nearest hospital. The sight was painful, very painful."

Nonetheless, his doctors consider Hussein among the lucky few, as most people that encounter land mines either die directly from the explosion or before they arrive at a hospital. Fortunately for him, Hussein was able to reach a hospital in time to save his life.

Following the explosion, Hussein entered a coma that lasted for many days, and his medical treatment continued for more than a year and a half. He underwent four subsequent operations to treat his injuries and alleviate the pain, much of which affected his brain. Hussein was then moved to a specialized hospital in Baghdad where he was only allowed to stay for a short period of time. After that, doctors were forced to remove him due to the limited medical facilities and resources facing the large number of patients that still required medical attention. The future looked grim for Hussein, for it was unlikely that he would be able to get the proper treatment in Iraq after leaving the hospital.

During that time, IOM’s Physicians learned of Hussein’s situation, and through the IOM / MoH Medical Evacuation Programme arranged a host institution and medical evacuation for Hussein.

Today over 6000 Iraqis urgently need medical evacuation outside of Iraq for medical treatment which is not available in country. Many of these are children, suffering from conditions such as leukemia and cancers which can not be treated within the country due to the ongoing conflict and breakdown in medical infrastructure. IOM is working closely with the MoH to find solutions for as many patients as possible, whilst at the same time working with donors and the UN Health Cluster to build existing health infrastructure within the country.

Hussein dreams of being able to see again and play with his friends in Iraq. "I hope to play football, and that I will be healthy," he says, his eyes shining with excitement and anticipation. Thanks to the work of Iraqi and foreign medical team and IOM Iraq, that dream is now a possibility.
During January and February 2006, IOM assisted over 560 Iraqis in their voluntary return home through the 'Regional Operations Center'. Abdullah’s story is but one of them.

As with many of his countrymen and women, Abdullah fled his homeland in 2001, seeking to reach Australia’s shores and request asylum there as a result of persecution. In doing so, he was forced to leave his wife and children behind.

Unfortunately, as with many asylum seekers who follow the perilous route to Australia via human smugglers, he ended up risking his life on a wooden fishing boat in the Indian Ocean. Surviving one of the worst nights of his life, Abdullah along with many victims from the Tampa crisis, was admitted into one of Australia’s offshore asylum processing facilities on the island of Nauru, where he was placed under the care of IOM for over a year. Abdullah was subsequently granted refugee status and offered a temporary protection visa by the Australian authorities.

However, life in Australia was not as Abdullah had hoped for. His poor English language skills led to lack of good employment opportunities, he experienced severe homesickness and felt alien in his new surroundings. With the changes in Iraq over the past years, Abdullah decided it was time to return home, and applied for voluntary return assistance, in accordance with the return and reintegration programme established by IOM, in coordination with Australia’s Department for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

In January 2006, IOM arranged his travel from Sydney to Basra via Kuwait. Additionally, IOM also arranged for his family to meet him at the border.

“I can not believe I am finally going home! It is like a dream and I am very happy to be reunited with my family after all of these years” said Abdullah, finally on his way home and eager to make up the lost years with his family.

By Feras Jaber

A long journey home

Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR)

7614 Iraqi nationals have been assisted by IOM in their voluntary return to Iraq in the period starting from 12 Jun 2003 until the end of February from 30 different countries.

560 persons have returned during the past three months from 11 different countries.

Third Country Nationals (TCN)

As of 1 March 2006, 6173 foreign nationals have been assisted by IOM upon their leaving Iraqi territory. The overwhelming majority of them were provided with return assistance to their home country, while a small number benefited from resettlement programmes to third countries. Large groups of migrants placed in vulnerable situation in Iraq remain in need of voluntary return assistance. Whether they are stranded, victims of persecution and economic discrimination or placed in detention as a result of their being considered irregular migrants, IOM remains committed to the provision of humanitarian assistance to those groups willing to return home but who find themselves unable to do so on their own.

Regional Operations Center (ROC)

The Regional Operations Centre is the coordination body overseeing and coordinating the IOM activities as well as developing policies concerning movements of Iraqi nationals (Assisted Voluntary Return AVR) and third country nationals stranded in Iraq (TCN). The ROC operates in coordination with the local authorities in Iraq as well as with relevant agencies, national authorities, non governmental partners and IOM missions in all countries involved in these operations.
Helping Iraqi Women to Help Themselves

The rural districts of Missan in southeastern Iraq, like many other rural areas throughout the country, face economic hardship and lack of medical infrastructure, particularly for vulnerable Iraqi women. Women frequently give birth at home with the assistance of a midwife or in many cases only family members. Unfortunately, when performed without trained assistance, high infant and maternal mortality often results.

IOM is implementing a Community Assistance Project (CAP) in Missan to simultaneously address these two prominent problems faced by women. The objective of this project is to offer training to women to be birth attendants in the districts of Ali Al Garbi, Al Maimona, Al Majer Al Kabeer and Qalat Salih.

These training programs are directed towards women who are generally uneducated, with no source of income or who are living alone. They will provide instruction in child delivery and newborn child care; specific topics will include baby growth stages, risks and dangers for pregnant women, hygiene and nutrition, the delivery process, sterilization of tools, post-delivery care, and special treatment cases. Attendants will also obtain information on domestic animal delivery and avian influenza.

The training session is provided to participants free of cost, and includes a methodology book, transportation, and the chance for them to work with medical equipment.

One full month has been dedicated to the selection process for participants, as this is key to the project’s success. IOM’s implementing partner has obtained informal lists of birth attendants in each district from the local hospital, and is currently visiting the birth attendants and their families personally to inform them of the trainings and encourage participation. For the most part, women will be selected based on their vulnerability status, IDP status (at least half of the participants must be IDPs), with priority given to households headed by women and women with no or limited sources of income.

Thus far, the implementing partner has visited over 50 villages and spoken with over 60 potential birth attendant trainees.

In order to make this possible and to create long-standing results, the actual training for the birth attendants will be performed by local officials through the 'Training of Trainers’ methodology. The trainers for the program were selected from the district hospitals in the region and attended a conference in mid-February with the project manager, medical staff, veterinarians, and the heads of the Department of Health in Missan. All eighteen trainers received an authorized handbook about child delivery and child care and were given thorough instruction and preparation for this and future sessions.

IOM hopes that this project will inspire similar campaigns in other districts and governates throughout Iraq. With the skills and knowledge to assist in child delivery, vulnerable women will have a means to support themselves and their families. At the same time, they will be able to provide improved and qualified medical care for the women and other people in their district, and bring about change in more ways than one.

Phase II Monitoring Reports Completed

IDP Phase II Monitoring Reports were written and disseminated for the 13 governorates covered during Phase II monitoring. These reports give detailed information on Pre- and Post-2003 Conflict IDPs, IDP Returnees, and Others at Risk. The information was gathered through monitoring partners who visited Phase I IDP group locations. The reports address IDP and other group compositions, locations, intentions, and needs broken down by sector.

Each Governorate Report includes:
- A Summary, Governorate Overview,
- IDP Overview and statistics,
- Displacement History,
- A description of the caseloads,
- Assistance Needs,
- Protection Concerns.
The Internally Displaced Persons Programme (IDP) January-February 2006

An excerpt of the monitoring report for Baghdad is given below:

**Caseload Report: Post-conflict IDPs in Baghdad: 1,586 families**

Post-conflict IDPs represent over half of the IDP population in Baghdad. Of those interviewed, the majority was Arab. The majority is Shia Arab, and the next largest population is Sunni Arab. Most of these Arab families have fled Tameem and Diyala governorates since May 2003 as a result of forced recovery of land by returning Kurds and forced evictions by the Kurdish militias, and fear of further attacks.

A small minority of post-2003 IDPs in Baghdad are Roma. The Roma people have dwelled in Iraq for a long time, though some investigations indicate that the origin of the Roma is India. The Roma have their own language and Islam as their religion (some being Sunni and others Shia). The population is a very distinct group in Baghdad and thirty years ago they were scattered across various parts of Iraq living a nomadic existence without identification. Most of them lived in tents, though some were settled in Al-Amil. In 1983, the former regime forced them to participate in the Iraq/Iran war, and in exchange they were given ID cards as third-class citizens and housing in the newly created ‘First of June’ village (also known as ‘White Gold’ village) in Abu Ghraib district and in Al-Kamalia area in the southeastern part of Baghdad governorate. As such they enjoyed a protected existence in Iraq under the former regime.

Following the fall of the former regime, the local communities forced the Roma to move from their locations in Baghdad for differing social norms. It was estimated that the population of Kawliya in Baghdad before the war was 10,000 individuals. After the war many of them left the country, others are hiding their identity as Kawliya. Reports of Roma displaced in the outskirts of Najaf, Diwaniyah and Wassit have also been circulated.

During Phase II monitoring, 535 new families were identified. Of there, 415 were displaced after the 2003 conflict. Baghdad experiences a great fluctuation in IDP numbers, as continuous conflict and ethnic violence is a daily occurrence, and displacement can last several days to years.

**IDP Intentions:** Over 65% of the post-2003 conflict IDPs plan to integrate into their current location. About 30% wish to return to their place of origin. The remaining IDPs plan on resettling in a third location.

Monitoring Reports are available on the IOM website www.iom-iraq.net

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDP)

The Internally Displaced Person (IDP) Programme has made a transition from IDP relief, assessment and registration activities to addressing the needs of IDPs and the communities within which they reside through Community Assistance Projects (CAPs). The IDP programme is an implementing partner of the Office of U.S Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the U.S. Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), the Government of the Netherlands, the Government of Denmark, and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO).
In mid-February, heavy rainstorms arrived earlier than expected, flooding most of eastern Iraq and destroying hundreds of houses and villages countrywide. The floods forced nearly 6,000 families to leave their homes, seeking shelter in improvised camps or with relatives in safer areas.

On February 13th, the Emergency Working Group (EWG) met to address the flooding emergency and determine the assistance to be provided to send relief to affected areas. IOM delivered food baskets, jerry cans, water buckets, kitchen supplies, hygienic kits, chlorine tablets, and plastic sheeting to villages in the governorates of Salah Al-Din and Diyala in northern and central Iraq. As of February 26, 2006, the organization has assisted a total of 1,405 IDP families displaced by the floods.

According to IOM’s project manager, the consequences of the rainstorms were especially devastating this year due to the removal of concrete barriers at the Kuwaiti border, which had restrained heavy floods in the past. And as the snow continues to melt in the North, flooding is expected to occur again.
On the 2nd of February 2006, IOM held in Amman a consultation meeting with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) to further discuss the bilateral cooperation between IOM and MoI and to set up an implementation plan for activities including language and document examination training.

Six Iraqi officials representing the MoI Internal committee and two officials from the Directorate of Residence Affairs (DoRA) have participated in the meeting, as well as representatives from the Australian Embassy in Amman and American Embassy in Baghdad.

Training center ready for classes

In January, IOM completed the renovation of the training center of DoRA. The training center will provide training for not only MoI officials, but also officials from other ministries with migration related functions.

In recent months, IOM, upon MoI request, have already been training Iraqi residence and passport officers in Baghdad and Northern region of Iraq. Up to date over 100 residence and passport officers have attended the elementary language course organized by IOM in DoRA Headquarters in Baghdad and at Suleymania Airport. The Language training aims to improve the capability of immigration/residence officers to interact with foreign travellers and better examine their travel documents. Throughout these courses a standard training support package has been developed and tested. The package is enriched with migration terminology and will be used for similar courses across the country.

In Baghdad, a pre-intermediate English course for 15 officers from DoRA and Department of Passports (DoP) was also completed. A similar course will soon commence for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) legal and consular department.

IOM is also sponsoring the development of an English Spelling Dictionary for the Arab & Kurdish names to be used in travel and identity documents. The first draft of this Dictionary, prepared by national experts jointly with MoI and DoRA was finalized in January.

CAPACITY BUILDING IN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT (CBMM)

The Programme aims to assist Iraqi authorities to further define and align inter-ministerial roles and responsibilities in the field of migration, assess needs, develop institutional relationships, coordinate international assistance, and respond to immediate needs of concerned ministries. The Programme will establish a strategy for a long term development of migration management in Iraq and facilitate integration of the Iraqi Government into regional and international migration policy forums and training initiatives.
MoDM Training Workshops

Recently, IOM - MoDM Capacity Building Programme in partnership with UNHCR, sponsored two training workshops in Amman on institutional framework development and job descriptions for the MoDM Legal and Humanitarian departments.

These two trainings are part of a series of five MoDM workshops on functional statements scheduled for the next half of the year. Other planned workshops are for the Branch Offices, Administration and Finance, Minister’s Office and General Secretariat, Planning and Programming, and Research and Studies. IOM in partnership with UNHCR will be developing and financing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Information and Branches departments.

The MoDM CB Programme has also assisted MoDM in producing the tri-lingual desk-top reference. This tool is a circular glossary on 30 migration-related terms translated in Arabic, English as well as Kurdish languages. The desk-top reference will help MoDM staff to better understand important migration terms.

Other news

IOM has received a letter of appreciation from the Minster of MoDM, H.E. Ms. Suhaila Abd Jaafar for its efforts to support the injured families resulting from the recent terrorist explosion in Jadiriya, Baghdad.
IOM - Iraq

IOM is a member of the UN Country Team for Iraq, and works closely with the UN Cluster system and the Iraqi authorities in support of the Iraqi National Development Strategy 2005 – 2007.

Who supports us?

IOM Iraq Programme has been supported by the Governments of Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, The Netherlands, Kuwait, Portugal, United States of America, European Commission and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO).

UN Clusters

IOM Iraq is integrated into three of the UN programme clusters:

Health and Nutrition (Cluster-D)
Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Durable Solutions (Cluster-F)
Governance and Human Development (Cluster-C)

IOM also has the role of Deputy Task Manager for the Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Durable Solutions Cluster.

IOM and the Iraqi Government

IOM maintains valued partnerships with National and Local Iraqi Authorities. IOM Iraq greatly depends on the support of the Iraqi Government and people for the continued success of joint activities throughout the country.

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