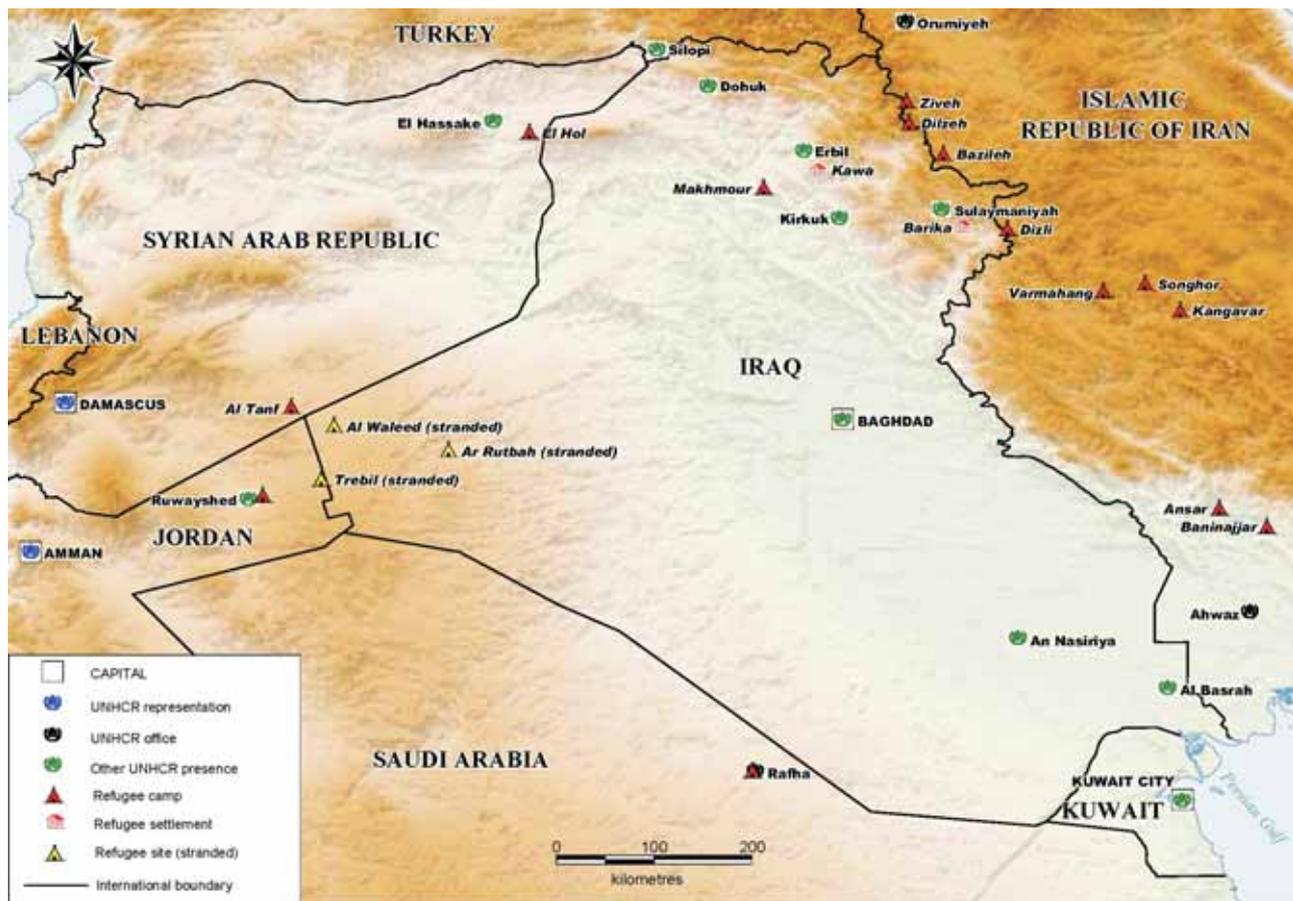


Iraq Situation



Working environment

The context

The complexity of the operational, logistical and political environment in Iraq affects UNHCR's ability to implement its programmes for displaced Iraqis both within and outside the country. The working environment is further complicated by insecurity in Iraq, and the immense economic and social challenges facing neighbouring countries hosting large numbers of Iraqi refugees. Most of the countries affected by the Iraq situation have not acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol.

Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic are the countries with the largest groups of Iraqi refugees and Palestinian refugees (under UNRWA's mandate) on their territories. The social infrastructure and economies of the two countries have been strained to breaking point as they cope with the massive displacement from Iraq without adequate help from the international community. As a consequence, both Jordan and Syria have introduced visa restrictions for Iraqis.

By September 2007, the number of internally displaced Iraqis was estimated at more than 2.2 million, with over a million of the total having been displaced since February 2006. The current rate of displacement is some 40,000 to 60,000 persons per month. The humanitarian situation inside Iraq is dire and continues to deteriorate.

It is estimated that some two million Iraqis have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, mainly in Syria (1.2 -1.4 million) and Jordan (500,000 - 750,000), but also in Lebanon, Egypt and further afield. In addition, there are more than 41,000 non-Iraqi refugees inside Iraq who have been equally affected by the violence and the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Palestinians, who comprise around 15,000 of the total refugee population in Iraq, have been particularly hard hit. In neighbouring Jordan, 100 Palestinians, who fled Iraq and had lived in Ruweyshid camp for more than four years, were resettled at the end of October 2007. Another 1,700 Palestinians remain stranded at the Iraq-Syrian border in extremely difficult conditions.

The needs

The massive influx of Iraqis into Jordanian and Syrian urban centres has overwhelmed infrastructure and social services. This is particularly the case in the education,

housing and health sectors, with rising prices affecting nationals and refugees alike.

The perilous operating conditions inside Iraq impose unprecedented constraints on UN agencies, including UNHCR, and NGO partners. Thus, addressing the needs of the Iraqi population both inside and outside Iraq is a massive undertaking which will require substantial financial, human and material resources.

The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) estimates that 15 million people in Iraq are extremely vulnerable to violations of their human rights. They include IDPs, refugees, widows, the disabled, the wounded and others suffering from food shortages. It is estimated by WFP and UNAMI that the food security of more than eight million people would be compromised if the public distribution system were to fail. The chronic child malnutrition rate in the southern areas of Iraq stands at 23 per cent, of which 17 per cent suffer from acute malnutrition, according to a report based on UNDP's Iraq Living Conditions Survey.

In Syria, government sources indicate that food prices have increased by some 35 per cent, electricity by 27 per cent, water by 21 per cent and real estate by up to 300 per cent. Both refugees and nationals are affected by this phenomenon.

In Jordan, the Government reports that only 150,000 of the estimated 500,000-750,000 Iraqis in the country have renewable residence permits, with many believed to be living illegally in the country. Although the Government commissioned a survey of the Iraqi population in 2007, the results have yet to be released. In the absence of accurate statistical data, UNHCR estimates that 20-30 per cent of the Iraqis in Jordan are vulnerable.

Inside Iraq, UNHCR monitors humanitarian needs through six offices and 17 protection and assistance centres. In 2008, the Office will focus on emergency assistance to the most vulnerable while enhancing the ability of the Government and civil society to provide effective protection and assistance. Where possible, it will support inter-agency efforts to establish "humanitarian hubs" or "depots", where emergency relief items for internally displaced persons will be stored, to facilitate swift distribution mechanisms, taking into account security, accessibility and humanitarian and rehabilitation needs.

In the neighbouring States, UNHCR operates several registration centres, including fixed points and mobile registration units. The centres collect detailed information on refugees and refer the most vulnerable for follow-up assistance, including facilitating access to

health care and schools, providing protection for women and children, and submitting those with special needs for resettlement. It is expected that some 200,000 Iraqis will have been registered in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt by the end of 2007.

Women and children, both inside Iraq and in neighbouring countries, continue to be affected by gender-based violence and other forms of exploitation, including child labour. Refugee women and children in such circumstances are UNHCR's highest priority. UNHCR will direct individual assistance to the extremely vulnerable, support community centres or safe houses for women, and engage the relevant ministries in each country to develop a cooperative and responsive effort.

Main objectives

- Provide direct and immediate humanitarian assistance, including food and non-food items and cash assistance where necessary for the survival of vulnerable populations both inside and outside Iraq.
- Engage host countries and other humanitarian players in providing meaningful assistance and protection to displaced Iraqis and other refugees in Iraq through institutional support; advocate increased bilateral assistance to the countries hosting large numbers of Iraqis.
- Provide and facilitate access to essential health services in close cooperation with the respective ministries of health and other UN agencies in the affected countries.
- Enrol all school age children in educational facilities in cooperation with the ministries of education and other UN agencies in each country. (UNHCR and UNICEF launched a joint education appeal for the 2007-2008 academic year).
- Provide basic rations and supplementary food in coordination with WFP to the most vulnerable groups identified by the UNHCR registration system in partnership with other humanitarian and charity organizations and community centres.
- Provide social and legal counselling and referrals to relevant partners. Psycho-social counselling is essential due to the prevalence of trauma among the Iraqi population.
- Address the major problems of shelter and housing by designing creative assistance packages on a case-by-case basis. For example, in Iraq, provide locally procured shelter materials, rehabilitate vacant public buildings, support host families and, exceptionally, give cash assistance in the absence of other alternatives.

Key targets for 2008-2009

While the strategy, operational plan and key targets are currently being refined, UNHCR plans the following activities. A detailed supplementary appeal will be issued towards the end of 2007.

Neighbouring states

- In Syria, a total of 400,000 Iraqis are registered by the end of 2008.
- In Jordan, a total of 100,000 Iraqis are registered by the end of 2008.
- Some 100,000 children are enrolled in schools in Syria and 50,000 in Jordan in 2007-2008.
- Food is provided for 100,000 vulnerable Iraqis in Syria.
- Emergency distribution of non-food items benefits 300,000 vulnerable Iraqi IDPs and refugees in neighbouring States.
- Emergency cash assistance is given to 30,000 families.

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- Between 200,000 – 300,000 displaced Iraqis and members of their host communities are provided emergency assistance.
- Ten or more humanitarian depots or hubs are established in areas of primary displacement inside Iraq.
- Protection and assistance centres are located in all governorates of Iraq.
- Identity documents are issued for all non-Iraqi refugees and progress is made in the search for durable solutions for them.
- Some 20,000 Iraqi refugees will be submitted for resettlement in 2008.

upholding protection space and seeking durable solutions for the most vulnerable individuals among Iraqi IDPs and non-Iraqi refugees inside Iraq as well as Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries. To broaden its reach, UNHCR has developed partnerships with key local actors such as the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, which has proven instrumental in reaching out to vulnerable Iraqis in Syria. In Jordan, the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO) has been one of UNHCR's main partners.

Inside Iraq, UNHCR continues to work closely with local authorities to assess the basic needs of the displaced Iraqis and other populations of concern. However, much more robust support from the international community is needed in this area.

UNHCR works closely with the Ministry of Displacement and Migration, the Iraqi Red Crescent, local authorities and community leaders as well as national and international NGOs and sister agencies.

Constraints

Because of the ongoing internal violence and unresolved political situation, security in Iraq remains the primary constraint affecting operations within the country.

The legal status of Iraqis in neighbouring countries is fragile and insufficient to address their legal, social and humanitarian needs. The refugees find themselves in a situation of prolonged stay and vulnerability, possess limited coping mechanisms and face resentment among host communities affected by their presence.

Refugees and asylum-seekers in the region reside mostly in urban areas. Formal employment is limited, and most refugees and asylum-seekers depend on UNHCR assistance. Local integration for refugees is not an option. Pending an improvement of conditions in Iraq that would allow for voluntary repatriation, resettlement is the only realistic durable solution.

Strategy and activities

In 2007, UNHCR undertook a major review of its Iraq operation with a view to responding to the escalating violence in Iraq and the continued mass internal and external displacements. This has entailed a shift of focus to providing immediate humanitarian assistance,

Organization and implementation

Pending the approval of the 2008 Supplementary Programme Budget, the following numbers are provisional as of September 2007. A supplementary appeal for Iraq (2008) will be issued towards the end of 2007.



UNHCR/K. Brooks

A woman fled her home town after a mortar attack killed several children.

UNHCR presence

Number of offices	7
Total staff	60
International	16
National	40
Others	4

UNHCR presence in neighbouring States¹

	Syria	Jordan
Number of offices	2	2
Total staff	119	113
International	17	13
National	52	47
Others (UNVs, JPOs, deployees)	50	53

¹ Includes only staff focusing on the Iraq Situation.

Coordination

In Iraq, UNHCR works in close partnership with national, regional and local authorities, international organizations, national and international NGOs, community-based organizations and other civil-society actors. The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq coordinates the country team. UNHCR coordinates the UN Cluster for refugees, IDPs and durable solutions and chairs the working group on IDPs.

In neighbouring countries hosting large numbers of Iraqis, mainly Syria and Jordan, UNHCR is responsible for the overall coordination of protection and assistance to the displaced Iraqis as well as all the other refugees, with the exception of the Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate.

Partners

Iraq

Government partners: Ministry for Migration and Displacement (MoDM) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

NGOs: Iraqi Red Crescent Organization (IRCO), the NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq (NCCI), and an array of international NGOs, amounting to some 15 implementing partners.

Syria

Government partners: Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health.

NGOs: UNHCR has over 10 implementing partners, with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent being the primary one. UNHCR also works closely with UNRWA, and other sister UN agencies in Syria.

Jordan

Government partners: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation.

NGOs: UNHCR has some 10 local and international NGOs acting as implementing partners for UNHCR in Amman, and in the Ruweished refugee camp which is due to close in 2007.

Budget (USD)				
Activities and services	2007 Supplementary Programme Budget			2008 Supplementary Programme Budget
	Iraq Situation Response	Joint Education Appeal	Total	Joint Education Appeal ¹
Protection, monitoring and coordination	10,496,195	1,300,000	11,796,195	2,137,500
Community services	4,328,773	7,575,537	11,904,310	11,363,306
Crop production	150,000	0	150,000	0
Domestic needs	8,023,355	0	8,023,355	0
Education	33,438,283	27,695,779	61,134,062	41,543,669
Food	2,197,203	0	2,197,203	0
Health	18,372,612	0	18,372,612	0
Income generation	5,350,689	0	5,350,689	0
Legal assistance	7,430,525	0	7,430,525	0
Livestock	1,300,000	0	1,300,000	0
Operational support (to agencies)	3,378,413	303,684	3,682,097	455,526
Sanitation	630,744	0	630,744	0
Shelter and other infrastructure	6,604,307	0	6,604,307	0
Transport and logistics	6,896,998	0	6,896,998	0
Water	1,264,619	0	1,264,619	0
Total operations	109,862,716	36,875,000	146,737,716	55,500,001
Programme Support	6,151,116	125,000	6,276,116	0
Total ²	116,013,832	37,000,000	153,013,832	55,500,001

¹ The 2008 Supplementary Programme Budget includes activities in the Syrian Arab Republic (USD 23,775,000), Jordan (USD 4,896,332), Lebanon (USD 1,275,000), Egypt (USD 75,000) and regional activities (USD 25,478,669). Only requirements for the Joint Education Appeal are finalized at the time of writing this Appeal. Requirements for the supplementary programme for the Iraq Situation Response are being finalized.

² The Supplementary Programme Budgets exclude 7 per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR for the following amounts:
 2007 Iraq Situation Response: USD 7,675,309
 2007 Joint Education Appeal: USD 2,590,000
 2008 Joint Education Appeal: USD 3,885,000